

Second-party Counterinsurgency

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Second-party counterinsurgency

Mark O'Neill

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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This dissertation examines the theory and conduct of counterinsurgency operations by interventionist states, defined and labelled herein as second-party counterinsurgency. The conduct of such second-party counterinsurgency has been (and is) commonplace in the contemporary era, yet a large proportion of extant counterinsurgency theory and practice – indeed much of the commonly accepted counterinsurgency paradigm – fails to meet the challenge of its subject adequately.

In line with this assertion, contemporary Western counterinsurgency practice has all too often defaulted to a formulaic approach, characterised by an overly simplistic 'hearts and minds' archetype. This model has held the imagination of counterinsurgency theory and scholarship since the early 1960s. It is a basic argument of this dissertation that blind acceptance of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm has often led second-party counterinsurgents to adopt of inappropriate ways and means to attain their strategic objectives. This increases the risk of defeat in what is already a complex and difficult enterprise. The most important original contribution made by this study is to identify the need for, and propose, a suitable alternative framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. The central hypothesis is that the principles of counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption, supported by the enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptation, provide a new and more appropriate theoretical framework to inform the successful conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. Central to the proposed framework is a method that seeks to focus and capitalise on the relative ubiquity of insurgent ways in order to create a defeat mechanism that invokes Clausewitz's rational calculus.

The research underpinning this study derives from a literature review and analysis of archival, primary and secondary source material, the conduct of personal interviews, the use of research questionnaires with select personnel, and the establishment and verification of the framework using three critical historical case studies. The key conclusion of this thesis is that strong correlation appears to exist between the dependent variables of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework and successful counterinsurgency operations.

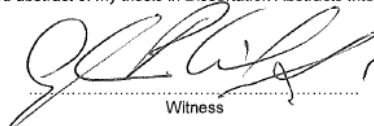
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the theory and conduct of counterinsurgency operations by interventionist states, defined and labelled herein as second-party counterinsurgency. The conduct of such second-party counterinsurgency has been (and is) commonplace in the contemporary era, yet a large proportion of extant counterinsurgency theory and practice – indeed much of the commonly accepted counterinsurgency paradigm – fails to meet the challenge of its subject adequately.

In line with this assertion, contemporary Western counterinsurgency practice has all too often defaulted to a formulaic approach, characterised by an overly simplistic ‘hearts and minds’ archetype. This model has held the imagination of counterinsurgency theory and scholarship since the early 1960s. It is a basic argument of this dissertation that blind acceptance of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm has often led second-party counterinsurgents to adopt of inappropriate ways and means to attain their strategic objectives. This increases the risk of defeat in what is already a complex and difficult enterprise. The most important original contribution made by this study is to identify the need for, and propose, a suitable alternative framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. The central hypothesis is that the principles of counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption, supported by the enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptation, provide a new and more appropriate theoretical framework to inform the successful conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. Central to the proposed framework is a method that seeks to focus and capitalise on the relative ubiquity of insurgent ways in order to create a defeat mechanism that invokes Clausewitz’s rational calculus.

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Originality Statement

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Lyn O'Neill (nee Coe), 1945 – 1997, for her love, support and belief.

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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
BATT	British Army Training Team
Bn	Battalion
BPTT	Border Police Training Team
CANU	Caprivi African National Union
CAT	Civil Aid Team
CERP	Commander's emergency relief program
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CSAF	Commander Sultan's Armed Forces
DLF	Dhofar Liberation Front
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
FAPLA	Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
GOI	Government of Iraq
GVN	Government of (South) Vietnam
HAM	'hearts and minds'

IED	Improvised explosive device
ISAF	International Stabilisation and Assistance Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
JAM	Jaish al-Mahdi
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
JSS	Joint Security Station
JUSMAG	Joint United States Military Advisory Group
LSO	Loan Service Officers
LSP	Loan Service Personnel
MiTT	Military Training Team
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MNF-I	Multi-National Force – Iraq
MND	Multi-National Division
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq
MoD	Ministry of Defence (UK)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDFLOAG	National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf
NPTT	National Police Training Team

OC	Officer Commanding
OIS	Oman Intelligence Service
ORD	Oman Research Department
OMS	Office of the Martyr Sadr
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PFLOAG	People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. From January 1971: Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf
PFLO	People's Front for the Liberation of Oman
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
RAF	Royal Air Force
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana.
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAF	Sultan's Armed Forces
SAP	South African Police
SAS	Special Air Service
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SEP	Surrendered Enemy Personnel
SOI	Sons of Iraq

SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
TTP	Tactical technique and procedure, or Tactics, techniques and procedures
UNITA	Uniao Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
WHAM	Winning 'hearts and minds'

Chapter one. Introduction

This dissertation examines the conduct of counterinsurgency by interventionist states, defined and labelled herein as second-party counterinsurgency. The conduct of such second-party counterinsurgency has been (and is) commonplace in the contemporary era, yet a large proportion of extant counterinsurgency theory and practice – indeed much of the commonly accepted counterinsurgency paradigm – fails to meet the challenge of its subject adequately.

The most important original contribution made by this study is to identify the need for, and propose, a suitable alternative framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. The central hypothesis is that the principles of counter-violence, counter-organisation, counter-subversion and pre-emption, supported by the enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptation, provide a new and more appropriate theoretical framework to inform the successful conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. Central to the proposed framework is a method that seeks to focus and capitalise on the relative ubiquity of insurgent ways in order to create a defeat mechanism that invokes Clausewitz's rational calculus. As suggested by Clausewitz, war is an enduring feature of the international system and its core nature is permanent. While its logic remains constant, its normative form and character are forever changing. Since the last half of the 20th century, irregular warfare, typified by insurgency, has become the most common form of conflict globally.¹ As one counterinsurgency practitioner has observed '[i]n a remarkably short period of time, counterinsurgency has become the new Kuhnian paradigm, or normal science,

¹ Ian F.W. Beckett, *Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective* (Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 1. See also: Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency in the Post-Imperial Era*, ed. Ian F.W. Beckett, *War, Armed Forces and Society* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 142. Beckett notes that of 98 conflicts examined occurring during the period 1990 to 1996; only seven of them involved 'conventional' state-on-state conflict. The remaining 91 conflicts were intrastate in nature, typified by insurgency conflict and the practice of guerrilla warfare.

for non-kinetic (or limited-kinetic) warfare'.² Moreover, counterinsurgency has traditionally been conceptualised as the response by a threatened state to insurgency within its own borders. The principal military doctrinal frameworks adopted by the United States and its Western allies reflect this.³

Increasingly, the pattern is that the participants in counterinsurgency are non-sovereign state actors.⁴ This pattern is both historical and contemporary. It was evident in the support offered by the United States and other nations to the Government of South Vietnam during the Vietnamese War. Moreover, it is a feature of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Participation in these conflicts has led to engagement in extensive counterinsurgency campaigns that have clearly exceeded the original strategic ambition of the intervening nations. John F. Kennedy, the architect of America's engagement in the Vietnam War, came to view United States' involvement in that conflict as an increasingly 'nasty, untidy mess'.⁵ By any objective measure, the same description could apply to the contemporaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The many difficulties evident in the conduct of these campaigns suggest there are serious theoretical and practical problems.

Success in war is vital to the state, yet success for interventionist states in the current normative form of war is proving particularly difficult and elusive. While these wars are invariably wars of choice rather than nation survival, it is difficult to conceive of a situation where defeat is a desired outcome by the political elite of a protagonist state. In his analysis of the failure of United States' counterinsurgency policy, D.M. Shafer used an analogy of the 'dogs that

² Douglas A. Ollivant, "Review Symposium: The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual as Political Science and Political Praxis.," *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 2 (2008): 358.

³ For example, see: United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Field Manual No. 3-24: Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No.3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago 2007); British Army, *Countering Insurgency*, vol. 1, Part 10, Army Field Manual (United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2009). Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0-1 Counterinsurgency*, Land Warfare Doctrine (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009).

⁴ That is, states or their agents and proxies, conducting counterinsurgency activity within a state where they are not the sovereign or legitimate authority.

⁵ Theodore C. Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 660.

didn't bark'.⁶ An alternative analogy to describe the problem interventionist states face when attempting counterinsurgency might be 'the dogs that caught the car'. Just like the proverbial dog chasing an automobile and actually catching it, these states have acquired an unanticipated problem of surprising complexity. Exacerbating these issues are flaws at the heart of the contemporary counterinsurgency approaches many Western states employ in such interventions. Not the least of these is the approach that conceives the insurgency problem and its solution through the lens of the indigenous counterinsurgent state, but seeks to execute a response through the medium of the interventionist state.

Contemporary Western counterinsurgency practice has thus all too often defaulted to a formulaic and paradigmatic approach. This dissertation contends that acceptance of such a faulty paradigm has led second-party counterinsurgents to adopt inappropriate ways and means to attain their strategic objectives. This increases the risk of defeat in what is already a complex and difficult enterprise. Indeed, contemporary Western approaches (incorporating theory, doctrine and practice) to counterinsurgency are in fact antithetical to the successful conduct of counterinsurgency by interventionist states. This thesis identifies three key aspects of contemporary Western counterinsurgency theory and practice as problematic with the practice of counterinsurgency and the scholarship surrounding it.

The first problem is that contemporary approaches fail to account adequately for the circumstance of a non-sovereign state power waging irregular warfare in support of, and within, another sovereign state. This creates a circumstance that is sufficiently anomalous to the epistemology of contemporary counterinsurgency scholarship that it warrants the adoption of a new term – 'second-party counterinsurgency' - to account for it. Fuller development and provision of a definition of the term second-party counterinsurgency occurs later in this introductory chapter.

⁶ D.Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3.

The second problem for second-party counterinsurgency is that contemporary Western counterinsurgency practice has defaulted to a formulaic and paradigmatic approach, characterised herein as the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.⁷ This paradigm has held the imagination of counterinsurgency theory and scholarship since the 1960s. It arose when 'a tendency developed to formularize into simple and rather simpleminded rules a most complex group of concepts' combined with 'a pervasive, compelling, but distorted vision of the Third World state as a beleaguered modernizer and the United States as a manager of modernization'.⁸ The 'hearts and minds' paradigm has inevitably led second-party counterinsurgents to the adoption of inappropriate ways and means to attain their strategic objectives. These ways and means are more often than not at odds with the basic 'ends' or strategic objectives that originally lead states into second-party counterinsurgency situations. The conflict involving the International Stabilisation and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan provides a ready and illustrative example.

President George W. Bush described the strategic objectives that led the United States to intervene in Afghanistan in late 2001 in an address from the White House:

On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. These carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime.⁹

⁷ Another contemporary name for this paradigm is 'population-centric counterinsurgency'. 'Hearts and minds' is favoured in this dissertation over the more recent term because of its wider historical usage and more obvious relationship to the phenomena it seeks to characterise. 'Population-centric counterinsurgency' has been used contemporaneously to denote the form of 'Hearts and minds' favoured by recent U.S. Army and Marine Corps doctrine. An example of its use is in: Gian P. Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army," *Parameters* XXXIX, no. 3 (2009).

⁸ Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), 1. Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 6.

⁹ George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation from the White House Treaty Room, October 7, 2001," <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html>, Accessed 3 August 2013.

A decade later, it has become an article of faith at the highest levels of the United States' strategic thinking that the *only* path to achieve this often re-stated aim is by building capacity, economic growth and good governance.¹⁰ There is an obvious dissonance between the original strategic aims of the United States' intervention in Afghanistan, its declared strategic policy about what became that nation's longest war, and what became an increasingly expensive and protracted exercise in nation building by ISAF.¹¹ Further reinforcing this strategic dissonance (or confusion) is the statement attributed to President Barack Obama – 'This is neither counterinsurgency nor nation building'.¹²

Thirdly, there is the consequential, but nonetheless vital problem that contemporary scholarship has failed to propose a valid theoretical framework for the conduct of counterinsurgency. This is a long-standing concern. John J. McCuen, a United States Army Officer and counterinsurgency theorist, wrote in 1966:

Although most authors end their discussions with conclusions on how to fight a revolutionary war, I know of none who has succeeded in evolving a broad, unified counter-revolutionary strategy. This void has left us without any philosophical foundation or point of departure from which to base evaluations or actions in specific situations.¹³

Further examination of this issue illustrates that progress on this matter has been minimal, notwithstanding the nearly five decades that have elapsed since the publication of McCuen's work. One reason may be the commonly held view that 'COIN [Counterinsurgency] theory works best when applied selectively in consideration of specific local circumstances'.¹⁴ This thesis argues that the apparent validity and wide acceptance of such a view reflects two real problems. The first is a problem with the rigour of counterinsurgency 'theory' developed to date. The second is the seemingly inevitable contingency of extant theory's

¹⁰ United States Government, "National Security Strategy," (Washington DC: The White House, 2010), 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 325.

¹³ John J McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 1st ed. (Harrisburg PA: Stackpole Books, 1966), 19.

¹⁴ Anita Gossman, "Lost in Transition: The South African Military and Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no. 4 (2008): 543.

paradigmatic focus upon the contextual ends of insurgency rather than the agency of insurgency. Both of these issues distort perceptions of what is possible from counterinsurgency theory. The theoretical framework postulated in this thesis confronts both, and offers a different approach.

Lawrence Freedman has described strategy as involving the search ‘for the optimum relationship between political ends and the means available to obtain them’.¹⁵ Central to the hypothesis presented in this thesis is that there are flaws at the heart of the contemporary counterinsurgency strategies employed by Western interventionist states, since the ways and means currently employed are sub-optimal for the political ends sought. This thesis asserts the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm is unsuitable for the timely and appropriate achievement of second-party counterinsurgent political ends. In response, this thesis proposes a new framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. This framework describes a method inspired by the precepts of ‘indirect strategy’ and which identifies the application of four principles: counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption as the key to success for interventionist states. Underpinning the framework are two enabling functions. These are adaptation and intelligence. Evidence supporting the case for adoption of the proposed framework by second-party counterinsurgents is from the analysis of three comparative case studies. These are the South African campaign in South West Africa, the British campaign in Dhofar (Oman) and the 2003 Iraq War ‘surge’ of 2007-2008.

Scope, constraints and assumption

This thesis does not address questions of why or when states might or should become second-party counterinsurgents. Such issues are matters of grand strategy, international relations and statecraft. Addressing them adequately would require exhaustive academic inquiry in these fields and as such, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The conduct of these

¹⁵ Lawrence Freedman, ed. *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*, 2003 reprint ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15; *Ibid.*, 15.

campaigns is the focus of this study, not why they are undertaken. Similarly, it will become apparent that the term 'counterinsurgency' is taken literally to represent the study of 'counters' to insurgency rather than the manifest other tasks or meanings that have become popularly associated with the term. The next section explores this issue further. Neither is this study a history thesis seeking to analyse the selected campaign case studies in order to understand what occurred and why. Rather, the structure is deliberately one of a problem-solving investigation. It seeks to answer the simpler question 'is there a better way?' Accordingly, the case studies are a supporting means to an end rather than the primary objective of the research question. Their role is to provide the independent variables to evaluate the dependent variables of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework against. Some constraints are evident with the case studies; brief examination of these follows.

One constraint is that all three case studies reflect the conduct of counterinsurgency by states that broadly fit into a category of Western, English speaking and democratic. The highly conditional and subjective nature of the 'democracy' that the apartheid-era South African regime claimed for itself, and the presence of the Afrikaans language notwithstanding, all three second-party counterinsurgent states are arguably somewhat similar across a number of cultural, religious, political, military and international norms. The absence of a case study involving a counterinsurgent state that does not fit these criteria (for example one from Asia, the Sahel Belt of Africa or Latin America) will necessarily constrain the 'universality' of any conclusions drawn about the second-party counterinsurgency framework from evaluation of the cases. A related concern arises from the size of the sample set of case studies. Any conclusions drawn from correlations within an 'n' of three will be more cautious than those from a far larger number of case studies.

The focus on Western counterinsurgency campaigns herein does not deny the scope, range of experience and relative importance of other campaigns. It does, however, reflect to some degree the reliance of the researcher upon texts written or translated into English. To a large extent these generally reflect Western counterinsurgency practice and tradition, particularly

that which arose during the West's imperial era – the period between the Enlightenment of the 18th century and the era of decolonisation that followed the Second World War.¹⁶ Steve Metz emphasises this point with his observation that 'counterinsurgency is a common function for most states and an inevitable one for empires'.¹⁷

A further assumption this study makes is that the pattern of conflict established over the last 60 years will most likely continue. This assumption is important insofar as the ambition of this study is to provide practical answers to an ongoing question, rather than seek to understand a past event or circumstance. Supporting this assumption is a speech made by the United States' Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates at West Point on 24 February 2011.¹⁸ He acknowledged the likelihood of the United States' national interests continually intersecting with matters of irregular warfare in other nations. Gates also indicated a lack of enthusiasm for prosecuting such costly and lengthy campaigns in the manner the United States and its allies have been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This inquiry into the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency identifies and highlights the shortfalls in our understanding of this significant form of contemporary and ongoing conflict. Through the proposition and development of the second-party counterinsurgency framework, it seeks to address 'what should be done.' suggesting an alternative approach to the conduct of both current and future campaigns.

Definitions and critical concepts

¹⁶ Porch in fact argues that counterinsurgency is a 'western construct'. See: Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 2 (2011): 240.

¹⁷ Steven Metz, "Counterinsurgency and American Strategy: Past and Future," *World Politics Review Feature Report: Counterinsurgency in the post-COIN era*(2012), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/features/78/counterinsurgency-in-the-post-coin-era>. Accessed 7 February 2012.

¹⁸ Robert M. Gates, "Speech by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates to the United States Military Academy (West Point, New York), Friday, February 25, 2011," (U.S. Department of Defence, 2011).

A number of terms are fundamental to this thesis and it is therefore important to define them in sufficient detail to provide a suitable contextual understanding of their use and meaning in respect of this study. Examination of several of these terms will occur in detail as part of the literature review of insurgency and counterinsurgency theory and scholarship in the next chapter, and analysis of theoretical approaches to counterinsurgency in chapter three. While offering definitions and explaining critical concepts is unremarkable, it is worth acknowledging that within the study of insurgency and counterinsurgency these matters often have a contested nature.

Writing in a RAND corporation study in 1968, Charles Wolf Jnr complained that scholarship about the terms insurgency and counterinsurgency used the terms so loosely that their meaning was unclear.¹⁹ He went on to observe how the terms had become value-laden and generated considerable emotion within the then contemporary scholarship. Thomas Mockaitis suggested in his study of British counterinsurgency that 'the language of irregular warfare has become as elusive as the guerrillas themselves'.²⁰ In this, he highlights a problem about the lexicon of this form of war that has troubled, and remains problematic for, both practitioners and the academy. In short, the language of counterinsurgency is both confused and contested. The detailed examination of approaches to the conduct of counterinsurgency, which follows in chapter three, highlights how the explosion of interest in this area within academia after 11 September 2001 has contributed to this issue. However, it is also a long-standing problem. Frank Kitson wrestled with this in the opening chapter of *Low Intensity Conflict* in 1971 before he concluded:

It is not easy to cover every set of circumstances by exactly defined terms, nor in the last resort is it necessary to do so. The purpose of this book is to consider the action which should be

¹⁹ Charles Wolf Jr, "Controlling Small Wars," (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1968), 2.

²⁰ Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60*, ed. Michael Dockrill, Studies in Military and Strategic History (London: Macmillan, in association with King's College London, 1990), p 1.

taken in order to make the army ready to deal with subversion, insurrection and peacekeeping.²¹

Kitson somewhat undermined his own advice not to worry about 'exactly defined terms' by highlighting the problem that can result: arbitrarily picking a term and making it what you mean will lead to confusion.²² Gray contradicts Kitson on the matter of why definitions are important to students and practitioners:

So, are we talking about irregular warfare, insurgency, low-intensity conflict, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and so forth? The answer is yes, and more than those. Do the distinctions matter? Well, they can, because some words carry a heavy load of implicit and explicit implied diagnosis, wisdom and advice. But always remember that conceptual sophistication can be overdone.²³

Cognisant of the potential for the definitional dilemmas posed, this study will seek to strike a balance between the simplicity of arbitrary and simple definitions, and the complexity of overdoing the conceptual sophistication that Gray warns against. This then leads to the definition of the fundamental terms and concepts used in this dissertation. These are the terms irregular warfare, insurgency, counterinsurgency and subversion; and the concept of second-party counterinsurgency.

Irregular warfare is a term routinely associated with insurgency and counterinsurgency. Use of the term irregular warfare in this thesis will be taken to mean warfare that is essentially different in character (conduct and participants) than that of conventional (state on state) warfare. In this paper the *warfare* aspect of irregular warfare retains an important and central emphasis. For, paraphrasing Clausewitz, just as the conduct of conventional war is the pursuit of policy by different and violent means, for interventionist states (second-party counterinsurgents) the conduct of irregular war is also the pursuit of policy by different, violent means. The key point to take away from this

²¹ Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping*, 1st ed. (London: Faber and Faber limited, 1971), 6.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

²³ Colin S. Gray, "Irregular Warfare, One Nature, Many Characters " *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2007): 37.

paraphrasing of Clausewitz is that 'irregular warfare does not have a distinctive nature. Warfare is warfare, and war is war'.²⁴ This consideration becomes an important factor in evaluation later in this thesis of the suitability of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as a strategy for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency.

It is common to acknowledge insurgency and counterinsurgency as being appropriately included in the broad category of conflict known as irregular warfare.²⁵ This is entirely uncontroversial, and as such this thesis will adopt the same stance. A critique of recent United States' counterinsurgency doctrine suggested that insurgency and counterinsurgency have in fact become the sine qua non of irregular warfare.²⁶ Whilst beyond the scope of this study, this suggests a possible future path of academic inquiry which may examine the applicability of the second-party counterinsurgency framework proposed herein to more broadly inform the conduct of other aspects of irregular warfare. Whatever the merits of such a study, it is certain that awareness of the broader concept of irregular warfare will remain useful for engagement with the study of insurgency.

Insurgency is a unique form of warfare whose practice and analysis has challenged both combatants and scholars alike since antiquity. Ian Beckett tells us that the earliest surviving record of insurgency is on a piece of parchment dating from the 15th Century BCE.²⁷ The Hittite king, Mursilis I, had invaded Mesopotamia and sacked the city of Babylon. He was to have the enjoyment of his victory marred by protracted conflict with Mesopotamian insurgents. From ancient Mesopotamia to modern Iraq, insurgency has endured. Yet mankind's

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁵ A typical example of this is the link made within the United States' military counterinsurgency doctrine. See: Headquarters Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24: Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Washington DC: United States Government, 2006), 1-1.

²⁶ Ollivant, "Review Symposium: The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual as Political Science and Political Praxis," 358.

²⁷ The reference was found in a Hittite parchment document known as 'The Anastas'. See: Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1; also: Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 3.

long association with insurgency has not resulted in anything like a universally accepted definition of the term. This is problematic, since suitable definition is clearly important to correct analysis in academic inquiry. As Michael Howard has noted: 'If we misdiagnose the problem we are not likely to come up with a solution'.²⁸

Insurgency actually describes or represents a serious rift within a state that has developed beyond normal non-violent political discourse. The 1648 Peace of Westphalia established the modern norm that states are the sole legitimate users of internal violence. In exchange for acknowledging state sovereignty and ceding the right to use violence, populations expect governments to protect, serve, enable and support them. Where governments do not meet the expectations of their people, and political negotiation fails, tensions build. Aggrieved elements of the population may then reject the state's monopoly on the use of violence. This creates the necessary conditions for insurgency, perhaps best understood as a form of societal warfare.

Yet there is no universally accepted definition of insurgency. While certain elements inevitably recur in nearly all definitions offered, emphasis varies and nuance is obvious. Typically, any reasonably useful definition will include reference to the fact that insurgency is conducted by non-state actors, has a political objective and involves the use of violence. This is apparent in this representative academic definition of insurgency as: 'A protracted violent struggle by non-state actors to obtain their political objectives – often independence, greater autonomy or subversion of existing authorities – against the current political authority (the incumbent)'.²⁹ However, significant variation is common, as shown by this recent definition offered by Steve Metz:

Insurgency is not a type of organization or war, but a strategy by which a non-state entity or, in some cases, a state undertakes protracted,

²⁸ Michael Howard, "A Long War?," *Survival* 48, no. 4 (2006): 8.

²⁹ Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, "Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization* 63, no. Winter (2009): 70.

multi-dimensional and ambiguous violence because it is not strong enough to use conventional war-fighting.³⁰

While Metz's definition highlights the common distinction that military weakness often necessitates the adoption of the techniques of insurgency, the inclusion of state actors as potential insurgents is in one sense problematic. This dissertation argues that the adoption of such a strategy by a state actor represents an embrace of *irregular warfare* rather than insurgency. A vital distinction between state and non-state actors is that non-state actors have few or no tangible sovereign assets. States on the other hand have many – indicatively including things such as cities, productive infrastructure, land and other assets, to identify but a few. The lack of obvious targetable assets owned by non-state actor insurgents presents an important characteristic of the counterinsurgent's challenge. In stark contrast, a state waging such irregular warfare against another presents many opportunities for retaliation, should the attacked state have the will or means to respond.

The definitions offered by various Western militaries generally conform to the archetype. The United States' military defines insurgency thus: 'Insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power or other political authority while increasing insurgent control'.³¹ For the British Army, insurgency is 'an organised, violent subversion used to effect or prevent political control, as a challenge to the established authority'.³² These definitions, while all quite similar and certainly adequate, do not fully convey the sense and nature of insurgency sought by the investigation in this thesis. For the purposes of this study, insurgency is thus defined as:

An organised, violent and politically motivated activity conducted by non-state actors and sustained over a protracted period that typically utilises a number of methods, such as subversion, guerrilla warfare and terrorism in an attempt to achieve change within a state.

³⁰ Metz, "Counterinsurgency and American Strategy: Past and Future". 5.

³¹ United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army: US Field Manual No. 3-24*, 1-1.

³² British Army, *UK AFM Vol. 1, Part 10, COIN*, 1, Part 10, 1-4.

This definition of insurgency, while incorporating all of the elements ‘common’ to the majority of insurgency definitions, facilitates easier identification of the constituent elements of insurgency. This in turn aids analysis for the purposes of theorising about counterinsurgency.

The first observation to make when seeking a definition of counterinsurgency is that it is a purely reactive phenomena – it cannot and does exist without insurgency. This naturally leads to the requirement for any useful definition to contain reference to insurgency, which most definitions invariably embrace. Any divergence or disagreements in the literature about the definition of counterinsurgency appears to centre on what other elements the definition should include. David Galula paraphrased Clausewitz’ dictum on the nature of war to suggest that: ‘Insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means’.³³ A review of the contemporary literature on counterinsurgency suggests that this view has gained a wide degree of acceptance. Many definitions of counterinsurgency seek to specify the means necessary. The example of the military doctrine of three allies (the United States, United Kingdom and Australia) in the current counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan illustrates this point. The United States defines counterinsurgency as: ‘Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency’.³⁴ The United Kingdom and Australia are very similar, respectively: ‘Those military, law enforcement, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency, while addressing the root causes’;³⁵ and ‘Political, social, civic, economic, psychological, and military actions taken to defeat an insurgency’.³⁶ However, a problem can arise with such an approach to the definition of counterinsurgency - it potentially and unnecessarily rules possible actions by the counterinsurgent as ‘in’ or ‘out’. Accordingly, the definition of

³³ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 1.

³⁴ United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army: US Field Manual No. 3-24*, Glossary, 4.

³⁵ British Army, *UK AFM Vol. 1, Part 10, COIN*, 1, Part 10, Section 1-11.

³⁶ Australian Army, *LWD 3-0-1 Counterinsurgency*, Developing Doctrine ed., Land Warfare Doctrine (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2008), Para 3.3.

counterinsurgency for the purposes of this thesis is simply 'a comprehensive strategy enacted by the state in order to defeat an insurgency'.

Having defined insurgency and counterinsurgency the next key term for definition is 'subversion'. The issue of subversion is an important one in any consideration of counterinsurgency, yet one that has been subject to light treatment in the majority of contemporary theoretical and practical considerations. In one of the few recent investigations of subversion and insurgency, William Rosenau describes how 'terrorists and insurgents employ a double-edged sword, with subversion forming one edge, and the "armed struggle" the other'.³⁷ Subversion is an enduring and important feature of irregular warfare, and insurgency in particular. For example, Kitson's analysis of low intensity conflict noted the dual role subversion plays in insurgency – that of radicalising the population into action, and as a catalyst for violence – the latter by either the state or the rebellion.³⁸ Understanding subversion is important in any consideration of insurgency and counterinsurgency because of the role it can play in the creation of an environment within a state or society where the use of force becomes a norm.

Unsurprisingly, the definition of subversion is just as broadly contested as any other definition encountered within the bounds this academic enquiry.³⁹ During the Cold War the term acquired a connotation associated with the spread of Marxist ideology and communism, but that is not particularly useful within the parameters of this inquiry.⁴⁰ A widely used military definition describes subversion as 'actions designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a governing authority'.⁴¹ While

³⁷ William Rosenau, *Subversion and Insurgency*, Rand Counterinsurgency Study (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 5.

³⁸ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 4.

³⁹ For example, see: R.J Spjut, "Defining Subversion," *British Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 2 (1979).

⁴⁰ For discussion of this see: Rosenau, *Subversion and Insurgency*, 1. Also: D.J Kilcullen, "Subversion and Countersubversion in the Campaign against Terrorism in Europe," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no. 8 (2007): 655.

⁴¹ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, United States Department of Defense Joint Publications (Washington DC: United States Department of Defense, 2001), Military Doctrine.

this definition correctly conveys the sense of corruption of authority or politico-social status that is implicit in the term, it is too broad to be useful in defining subversion in relation to insurgency. Problematically, it also fails to address the issue of it being a largely non-violent activity, leaving considerable scope to blur this definition (perhaps confusingly) with others such as those of insurgency or unconventional warfare.

From within the rather limited the body of recent scholarship on subversion, David Kilcullen has conceived of subversion as: 'the conscious, clandestine manipulation of grievances, short of armed conflict, in order to weaken states, communities and organizations'.⁴² This definition is unsuitable for the purposes of this study for two reasons. The first is that it conveys the impression that subversion is a wholly clandestine activity. This is clearly not the case. As an example, mass civil disobedience can clearly be subversive, but it is difficult to conduct (and perhaps logically, even pointless) as a clandestine activity. The second problem with the definition is the association of subversion with the manipulation of grievance. While grievance is commonly associated with susceptibility to subversion, the presence of grievance is by no means a pre-requisite. Kitson proposed a relatively simple and clear definition of subversion in 1971 that does not suffer as many of the conceptual limitations that others introduce by attempting to be specific. Kitson contended that subversion was: 'All illegal measures short of the use of armed force taken by one section of the people of a country to overthrow those governing the country at the time, or to force them to do things they do not want to do'.⁴³ Henceforth this thesis will use the term subversion in the sense defined by Kitson.

Having established a functional definition for subversion, it is worth nothing two further points. While this definition highlights that the host nation is a target, interventionist states must assume that they will also be targets of subversion, either within the host nation or domestically, in order to create pressure their withdrawal from the conflict. This suggestion leads to a second

⁴² Kilcullen, "Subversion and Countersubversion in the Campaign against Terrorism in Europe," 655.

⁴³ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 3.

point: that second-party counterinsurgents cannot assume that subversion is solely a matter of concern (and hence, treatment) by the host nation. This implies that any strategy they adopt must address subversion. It also suggests that it is time to address the term 'second-party counterinsurgency' more fully, before making many more statements about it.

The typical picture of irregular warfare is that suggested by the definitions of insurgency and counterinsurgency: that of a two-sided contest with the insurgent on one side and the counterinsurgent on the other.⁴⁴ History and the contemporary patterns of insurgency warfare, however, tell us otherwise. Insurgents and counterinsurgents often have a wide range of supporters and partners in their endeavours, whether state or non-state actors. Addressing the issue of support for insurgents is a common consideration in a wide range of the academic literature, yet it lacks detailed consideration of the issues that arise from an external state supporting the counterinsurgent state.⁴⁵ The early paragraphs of this chapter noted how common this situation actually is, from the Vietnamese war through to the contemporary conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Interventionist parties actually create a circumstance that is sufficiently anomalous to the epistemology of contemporary counterinsurgency scholarship that it warrants the adoption of a new term – 'second-party counterinsurgency'. The definition of second-party counterinsurgents herein is 'Interventionist states, their agents or proxies, who conduct counterinsurgency activity within a state, territory or region where they do not have sovereign or legitimate authority'. It follows that second-party counterinsurgency is the conduct of such activity.

The presence of second-party counterinsurgents fundamentally changes the dynamics of insurgency warfare and challenges the characterisation previously offered which describes insurgency as 'a form of societal warfare'. A quote attributed to Winston Churchill suggests why: 'It is the primary right of men to die and kill for the land they live in, and to punish with exceptional

⁴⁴ Such as those occurring in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan

⁴⁵ For examples see: Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (St. Petersburg, Florida: Hailer Publishing, 2005), John J McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 1st ed. (Harrisburg PA: Stackpole Books, 1966), Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*.

severity all members of their own race who have warmed their hands at the invader's hearth'.⁴⁶ Second-party counterinsurgency raises a series of problems that covered inadequately by either the extant scholarship on counterinsurgency or the methodology of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. This section highlights some of these, while all will be subject to further detailed analysis in Chapter three.

The presence of second-party counterinsurgent troops obviously presents an inflammatory element to an insurgency. It also creates a legitimacy dilemma for the host nation government, which may often prove to be exponentially more problematic than the legitimacy challenge originally posed by the insurgency. Legitimacy features prominently in the literature about the characteristics required for counterinsurgency success. For example, the United States' military doctrine states that 'legitimacy is the main objective' and expands the point with 'the primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government'.⁴⁷ Yet the very presence of second-party counterinsurgents can call into the question the legitimacy of the counterinsurgent state's polity. This is due in part because of the well-established convention and modern statehood norm that the state is the sole legitimate user of violence within its borders. The presence of second-party counterinsurgents participating in combat strongly attacks this convention. Participation of second-party counterinsurgents in the struggle can powerfully reinforce the insurgent message of state illegitimacy. So, paradoxically, the presence of second-party counterinsurgents seems to work against the interests of the counterinsurgent state they are nominally supporting.

Concepts of vital national interests can create tension in second-party counterinsurgency. The realist tradition in international relations theory describes the international system as anarchical and suggests that ultimately each state will always act in its own 'selfish' national interest. The potential for

⁴⁶ Cited in: Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 166.

⁴⁷ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-21.

a conflict of between the perceived interests of two or more states cooperating in the conduct of a counterinsurgency campaign is obvious. The level of balance or dependency in the relationship between the counterinsurgency partners will determine the impact upon both the 'policy sovereignty' of the counterinsurgent state and the vested interests of its governing elites. Douglas Blaufarb drew particular attention to this with the example of the 1960s:

When, in response to counterinsurgency, the U.S. called upon a threatened government to carry out a program of self-reform in the midst of a crisis, it seemed to be insisting that the regime jeopardise its hold on power in order to defeat the communists. To the ruling group this was no mere technical question, but one of survival, for, not unnaturally, the members place their continued hold on power ahead of defeating the communists, whereas, in the U.S. view, the priorities were reversed.⁴⁸

This is a significant point. Put bluntly, if the insurgency wins, the second-party counterinsurgents do not share the ultimate price of failure with the counterinsurgent state. The governing elite of the counterinsurgent states are, naturally, acutely aware of this. This leads to circumstances that can distort either the development of counterinsurgency strategy or, more often than not, its implementation.

Finally, second-party counterinsurgency introduces the concept of an 'exit strategy' to the counterinsurgency arena. The inevitable need for some form of exit strategy from a counterinsurgency campaign is a unique requirement (and sometimes preoccupation) of second-party counterinsurgents. The 'host nation' counterinsurgent state does not have any discretion with respect to its ability to exit the conflict. There are essentially only two options available to it: victory or defeat. The fact that the second-party counterinsurgent has a third option, withdrawal, can have a profoundly distorting effect upon the conduct of a counterinsurgency campaign. The example of the United States' withdrawal from the conflict in South Vietnam - and the subsequent relatively rapid collapse of the South Vietnamese state - provides an example of the potential impact of second-party counterinsurgent's departure. The various

⁴⁸ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 86.

concepts surrounding second-party counterinsurgency introduced thus far – primarily insurgency, counterinsurgency and subversion – will be comprehensively dealt with throughout this paper. In addition, one final issue, the idea of ‘indirect strategy’, as an important enabler of the framework proposed by this thesis, is the last term which from the outset requires some degree of explanation and examination.

The description of indirect strategy is difficult without first addressing the notion of ‘strategy’ itself. Clausewitz explained strategy by defining it with respect to tactics. Whereas he defined tactics as that which ‘teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement’, strategy ‘teaches the use of engagements for the object of the war’.⁴⁹ This description is useful for gaining an initial understanding that strategy is a higher-level concept for the conduct of a war. However, when seeking a framework to understand counterinsurgency this definition suffers from its ‘conventional’ war sense and definition with reference to its relationship with tactics. In critical commentary, Beaufre suggested ‘this definition is too restrictive because it deals with military forces only’.⁵⁰ Strategy, as described by Moltke the Elder, ‘is based on, and may include, the development, intellectual mastery, and utilisation of all of the state’s resources for the purpose of implementing its policy in war’.⁵¹ Evident in Moltke’s conception of strategy is the understanding that whilst the use of force is necessary, it is but one approach available. His emphasis of ‘all of the state’s resources’ echoes the requirement for comprehensive strategy that was identified in the definition of counterinsurgency. However, Colin S. Gray suggests that the ‘comprehensive’ approach aspired to in counterinsurgency is neither that novel nor divorced from ‘traditional’ approaches: ‘As for the

⁴⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret, Paperback ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 128.

⁵⁰ Andre Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, trans. C.B Major General R.H Barry, C.B.E., 1st (American edition) (English Translation by Faber and Faber Ltd 1965) ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 22.

⁵¹ Peter Paret, ed., *The makers of modern strategy, from Machiavelli to the nuclear age*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1986, 3.

“comprehensive approach”, this excellent idea has long been known by another name, grand strategy’.⁵²

The concept of indirect strategy derives initially from the separate work of Liddell Hart and Beaufre, who, after witnessing the shocking toll of industrial-age warfare, sought to develop alternative approaches. Liddell Hart believed that the perfection of strategy would be to produce a suitable outcome without the need for the attrition and destruction of World War I.⁵³ Beaufre wrote in 1965:

The game of strategy can, like music, be played in two ‘keys’. The major key is direct strategy in which force is the essential factor. The minor is indirect strategy, in which force recedes into the background and its place is taken by psychology and planning.⁵⁴

Liddell Hart’s view of the indirect approach owed much to his study of conventional warfare and his views regarding geography and terrain. The ultimate point of Liddell Hart’s indirect approach was the achievement of military victory. Beaufre offered a different view. He believed that since Liddell Hart’s approach was really only indirect in the preparatory movement towards a military result, that it ultimately was an example of the direct approach.⁵⁵ Beaufre went on to say that ‘the essential feature of indirect strategy is that it seeks to obtain a result by methods other than military victory’.⁵⁶ It is in this sense, and tying back to the idea offered in the definition of counterinsurgency that it is necessarily a ‘comprehensive’ strategy (after Moltke, involving ‘all of the state’s resources’), that the concept of indirect strategy is important to the conduct of counterinsurgency. The utility of such an approach in the implementation of the principles proposed in the second-party counterinsurgency framework will become evident in subsequent analysis.

⁵² Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 324.

⁵⁴ Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

It is important to note that seeking to use an indirect strategy is not the same as refuting the use of violence. The adoption of an indirect strategy as an enabling concept of the second-party counterinsurgency framework does not recoil from the use of violence by second-party counterinsurgents. The framework recognises that violence is an inevitable and defining characteristic of war. This thesis foreshadows its use by the inclusion of the principle of counter-violence as one of the four principles of the proposed framework for second-party counterinsurgency.

Case studies and methodology

In his book *Deadly Paradigms*, Shafer described how the case studies that he selected were necessarily 'critical case studies'.⁵⁷ His definition of a 'critical case study' was that they were those cases in which his theory was either going to be least likely or most likely to hold true. The logic behind this is both obvious and attractive. If his hypothesis applied where it was least likely, then the hypothesis had promise. Similarly, if it did not apply in a case where it should be most likely, then the explanation was flawed. The three case studies selected for examination in this thesis - the South African campaign in South West Africa, the British campaign in Dhofar (Oman), and the Iraq War 'Surge' of 2007-2008 - were selected for similar reasons in that they all are critical case studies for substantiating the proposed framework for second-party counterinsurgency. In addition, each has a different extraneous variable that makes it a critical case study.

In each case study under investigation the same phenomenon, second-party counterinsurgency (the control variable) is analysed. Yet each is a critical case study for a different reason. Dhofar falls squarely into the category of the 'most likely'. In this case study all of the variables – the dependant, independent, and controlled- align well with the described conceptual elements of second-party counterinsurgency and the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The Iraq surge case study, on the other hand, falls into the

⁵⁷ Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 14.

category of 'least likely'. This is because of the theoretical and rhetorical alignment of the declaratory strategy at the heart of the 'surge' with the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, rather than the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Alternatively, the South West Africa case study is critical because of two extraneous variables – the contested nature of the legitimate sovereignty in the territory at the time and the physical presence of significant foreign support to the insurgency. These three case studies, each in different ways, stretch both the concept of second-party counterinsurgency and the application of the second-party counterinsurgency framework considerably.

Consideration of other case studies that meet the 'controlled variable' requirement of second-party counterinsurgency occurred in the design of this thesis. Others, while discrete counterinsurgency cases, did not meet the criteria of second-party counterinsurgency – examples include the French in Algeria and the British in Northern Ireland and Palestine. Amongst the possible alternative cases – indicative examples include the US in Vietnam or in the Philippines against the Hukbalahap (1946-1956) – each present extraneous variables that potentially hinder analysis of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. For example, in Vietnam the conflict narrative enmeshes the counterinsurgency fight against the Vietcong guerrillas, the strategic bombing campaign against North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and what was essentially conventional land conflict, adjacent to the demilitarised zone, between US and Allied forces and the North Vietnamese Army. The Hukbalahap campaign case study suffers other potential difficulties. Amongst these are complications from the impact of the United States' colonial legacy in the Philippines and limitations about extrapolation and generalisation for theory from the role, size and restrictions of the American Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG). The criteria influencing the selection of the three case studies included alignment with the control variable (second-party counterinsurgency), sufficiently broad coverage of discrete independent variables to allow inference of universality, little confusion from extraneous variables and the availability of unclassified research material in English.

The case studies in this thesis are structured, focused and comparative.⁵⁸ Each is set up with two distinct components: descriptive and configurative. The employment of a historical narrative covers the descriptive part of each case study. Each narrative takes an ontological approach to what occurred in each case, setting the scene for subsequent comparative analysis. Each case, as described by Martha Finnemore:

lays out a chronological sequence of events with attention to how one affects another, but each then goes on to articulate a “coherence structure” for these events by configuring them in particular ways that emphasise aspects important for the inquiry at hand.⁵⁹

Vital to the internal configuration of each case study and the creation of a ‘coherence structure’ across them is the consistent examination of the dependent variable of the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

The descriptive component of each case study consists of a historical narrative describing the irregular conflict at the heart of the particular case. The analytical component of each case study will examine the dependent variables, which derive from the four principles of the proposed second-party counterinsurgent framework (counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption) and the two enablers identified for its successful implementation, of adaptation and intelligence. Each case study will establish to what extent these principles and enablers were present in each case. Use will also be made of supplementary lines of investigation to expand upon the variables.

The research methods used in the compilation of this thesis are varied. Textual analysis and interpretation are central to the theoretical chapters. Archival research, semi-structured interviews and the use of questionnaires, all supported by relevant textual analysis, were the primary methods used to

⁵⁸ After: Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, BSCIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 70.

⁵⁹ Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 13.

establish the case studies. The synthesis of the deductions made and the conclusions drawn utilise all of the research products from these techniques.

Thesis outline

This dissertation has a nine-chapter structure. This introductory chapter identifies the 'problem' under investigation and why this research is both important and original. Having outlined a central hypothesis and suggested an alternate framework for the theory and practice of second-party counterinsurgency, it defines key terms and concepts and introduces the case studies and methodology. The next three chapters review and address various theoretical matters in order to construct and establish the second-party counterinsurgency framework as the dependant variable in the three case study chapters.

Chapter two examines extant Western counterinsurgency thought, practice and paradigm. It begins with a review of the epistemological challenges associated with the study of counterinsurgency. It then establishes the context of our contemporary understanding of insurgency through the identification and review of four distinct eras of counterinsurgency thought or practice. It identifies these periods as 'imperial policing', 'the counterinsurgency era', 'post-Vietnam' and 'post 9-11'. The chapter then conducts a critical evaluation of the dominant 'hearts and minds' paradigm in order to establish the current gap and the opportunity for a new approach. It does this through analysis of the efficacy of extant and contemporary counterinsurgency theory. The chapter highlights and confirms the problematic 'gaps' claimed in outline in this introductory chapter with respect to counterinsurgency generally, and second-party counterinsurgency in particular. It confirms that 'hearts and minds' has become the Western counterinsurgency paradigm.

Having established the problem, the next chapter proposes a possible solution. Chapter four introduces the detail of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework. It details the assumptions made by this framework and describes the method, principles and enabling concepts that

constitute the framework as a whole. Importantly, this chapter also anticipates likely criticisms of the second-party counterinsurgency framework and responds to them. By the end of Chapter four, the stage is set for the introduction and examination of the three case study campaigns – the tests through which the proposed framework must pass.

Chapters five to seven inclusive are the presentation and examination of second-party counterinsurgency in South West Africa, Dhofar and Iraq during the ‘surge’. These chapters necessarily share several configurative similarities in order to support the subsequent evaluation. The control variable common to all three case study chapters is that each campaign is an example of second-party counterinsurgency. Similarly, the same dependent variables (the elements of the second-party counterinsurgency framework) provide structure to the review of each case. Consideration of the independent variables in each case (indicatively, a historical, geographic and political overview and review of the insurgents and counterinsurgents) support each chapter’s narrative description of what occurred during the campaign.

Chapter eight analyses the efficacy of the second-party counterinsurgency framework through the prism of the case studies presented in the previous three chapters. It uses comparative analysis, which aims to deduct inferences or reasonable conclusions about the validity, applicability and scope of the assumptions, method, elements and enabling concepts of the second-party counterinsurgency framework in light of the facts apparent in the case studies. Its purpose is to establish whether the second-party counterinsurgency framework, without excessive qualification, does in fact offer a viable alternative to the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm as an appropriate conception of second-party counterinsurgent strategy. The concluding chapter summarises the key deductions made because of this research. In doing so, it assesses the relative strength of the findings and highlights any concerns about constraints. It also identifies secondary questions arising from this research study and concludes by highlighting potential areas of further research inquiry.

Chapter two. Counterinsurgency thought, practice and paradigm

The first chapter introduced the conception and conduct of Western second-party counterinsurgency as an important issue for inquiry. It highlighted the predominance of counterinsurgency-related conflict over the last century and its common contemporary practice by interventionist states. It also suggested a paradox - that despite the frequency of these wars and the extensive experience of many participants, they remain relatively poorly understood. Furthermore, it asserted that the body of knowledge is often constrained by paradigm and deals inadequately with the contemporary conduct of counterinsurgency and the phenomenon of second-party counterinsurgency in particular. There are two elements essential to the substantiation of such claims. The scale and scope of the task suggests dealing with them separately and sequentially. The first step, and the subject of this chapter, is to review and account for the extant body of thought about counterinsurgency. The second step, and the subject of the next chapter, is the critical evaluation of these concepts and the 'hearts and minds' paradigm in particular.

This chapter is neither a detailed history of counterinsurgency practice nor an exhaustive description of the extant counterinsurgency bibliography. There will be no delving into exposition of the arcane minutiae of historical counterinsurgency tactics and operational techniques. To examine *quadrillage*, *ratissage*, *tache d'huile* or 'clear, hold, build' would generate 'white noise' about tactics at the expense of analysing thought about counterinsurgency. A systematic analysis of counterinsurgency thought, rather than an exhaustive and detailed review of every counterinsurgency campaign or author's work, is more beneficial in this regard. According to Andrew Bacevich: 'The beginning of wisdom about war lies not in tracing how it has changed, but in grasping how its core nature is permanent. Good insights into the nature of war and politics

are of enduring value'.¹ Yet it will become apparent that many authors over the historical sine wave that represents the popularity of inquiry into counterinsurgency theory and practice have produced relatively few novel insights. Such a relative lack of variation in perspective that suggests the advantage of a systemic rather than an encyclopaedic (and inevitably long and repetitive) approach.

The aim of this chapter is to review objectively the body of work regarding counterinsurgency warfare that has informed contemporary understanding and practice. The purpose of this is threefold. First, a review of the scholarship will assist in clarifying the nature of the counterinsurgency problem. Second, understanding what the extant scholarship and practice hold as important or true will assist in identifying the 'gaps' for critical evaluation in the next chapter. Finally, such an analysis serves to provide a foundation and context for proposing a theoretical framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency and the subsequent investigation of the selected case studies within this thesis. To achieve these goals the chapter has two distinct sections. It begins with a brief examination of the epistemological challenges associated with the study of counterinsurgency. The second part of the chapter outlines the key tenets that such study has produced, describing the dominant common scholarly and literary narratives about counterinsurgency.

There is no question that, over time, perception, bias and methodology have all played a role in shaping contemporary Western thinking about counterinsurgency. The former U.S. Army General John Galvin believes there is a tendency to develop a 'comfortable' vision of war that 'fits our plans, our assumptions, our hopes and our preconceived ideas'.² Paraphrasing Bernard Brodie, it often appears that counterinsurgency scholarship can be 'a field where truth is ignored in pursuit of a preferred solution'.³ Awareness of this fact is more than useful; it is in fact necessary in order to understand how and why

¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, "Fear and Folly: Learning from Mistakes in Iraq," *The Futurist* 40, no. 6 (2006): 23.

² John R. Galvin, "Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm," *Parameters* XVI, no. 2 (1986): 2.

³ Brodie wrote that 'Strategy is a field where truth is sought in pursuit of viable solutions.' See: Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 452.

thinking about counterinsurgency in general terms, and the “hearts and minds” paradigm in particular, has developed. This section highlights that sound counterinsurgency scholarship is both challenging to produce and somewhat rare in occurrence, and suggests some reasons for this circumstance. This, in turn, establishes a suitable context for the examination of the literature on counterinsurgency.

The long history and multi-faceted nature of counterinsurgency thought has suggested a range of various approaches used by scholars past and present. Some publish works reflecting an encyclopaedic approach, while others attempt to explain through extrapolation of ideas from select counterinsurgency conflicts case studies.⁴ This body of literature can be divided thematically and by era into four distinct parts - ‘imperial policing’, ‘the counterinsurgency era’, ‘post-Vietnam’ and ‘post 9-11’. The identification and use of themes has utility as a writing device, yet decisions to organise material in this manner also infer a set of choices made. In this case, each of the identified thematic eras reflects the author’s judgement of discrete periods where counterinsurgency has had a different but internally homogenous salience.

It is obvious, at the outset, that an examination of the literature from the thematic eras in this section reveals, despite the relatively lengthy period involved and the varying salience of counterinsurgency during each, that few substantive changes have occurred in the evolution of conceptual discourse about counterinsurgency. Shafer identifies the issue that arises here:

⁴ Examples of the encyclopedic approach include: Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerilla in History*, 1994 ed. (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1994); Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750*; Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2004); Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*. Examples of a more selective approach include: John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, paperback ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (St. Petersburg, Florida: Hailer Publishing, 2005).

The problem here is to explain continuity *despite*⁵ changes in the international distribution of power, presidential administrations, bureaucratic coalitions and capabilities, the locale of conflict and the nature of insurgencies, and the governments they threaten.⁶

This consistency, despite marked variance in the circumstance of each conflict supports the position offered in the first chapter that a 'dominant paradigm' has a hold on the study and practice of counterinsurgency.⁷

Epistemological issues

As Leonardo da Vinci is reputed to have declared: 'All our knowledge has its origins in our perception'.⁸ Closer to home, in 1972 Hedley Bull suggested that within the realm of international relations a subject under investigation could not meet the same rigorous criteria of proof of confirmation as a subject within the physical sciences.⁹ Here, Bull was echoing the thoughts of the father of modern social science, Emile Durkheim. Durkheim's belief was that social phenomena are presented and understood by *notions vulgares* – that is, crudely formed 'lay concepts'.¹⁰ The study of counterinsurgency scholarship bears out all three observations. The certainties and truisms of popular counterinsurgency doctrine often appear as articles of faith rather than logically established fact.¹¹ The purpose of this section is to account for why this may be so. In doing so, it suggests why material in the canon of counterinsurgency scholarship has its origins as much in lay concepts as in rigorous empirical analysis. Such a review sets the scene for the thematic exploration of

⁵ Emphasis in the original text.

⁶ Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 3.

⁷ David Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," *Survival* 48, no. 4 (2006): 111. The 'dominant paradigm' Kilcullen refers to was identified in the introductory chapter for the purposes of this dissertation as the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.

⁸ Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.

⁹ Hedley Bull, "The Theory of International Politics, 1919-1969," in *International Politics 1919-1969*, ed. Brian Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 217.

¹⁰ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, ed. Margaret Levi, 1st, reprint ed., Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

¹¹ This appears to be an increasingly common criticism amongst scholars critical of the United States and its allies' contemporaneous use of counterinsurgency theory in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indicative arguments include: Jeffrey H. Michaels and Matthew Ford, "Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice and the Politics of Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 2 (2011); Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN."

counterinsurgency scholarship in the next section of this chapter and the critique of its dogma in the next chapter. It provides important contextual insight and qualification to both.

The essential nature of counterinsurgency gives rise to many of the challenges associated with any academic inquiry into it. Counterinsurgency typically presents as a multi-faceted and complex form of warfare. That is, rather than 'simply' involving martial conflict between two or more opposing military forces, the conduct of counterinsurgency almost invariably involves a wide range of actors. It involves political, social, culture, legal and economic factors to a degree normally unknown at the tactical and operational levels of 'conventional' warfare. Similarly, comprehensive academic inquiry into counterinsurgency necessitates engagement with subject matter areas and schools that are substantive fields of academic inquiry in their own right. These fields include but are not limited to history, political science, international relations, strategic studies, anthropology, developmental studies and so forth. The difficulty that this situation represents should not be underestimated. An old military truism about friction in war suggests that any significant and complex battlefield activity will always take place at the intersection of four separate map sheets. Counterinsurgency scholarship exemplifies the concern lying at the heart of this military adage. It is effectively a hybrid area of academic inquiry, bringing with it both the advantages and concerns routinely associated with hybridisation. As a hybrid field of academic inquiry it lacks many of the normative rules of inquiry associated with other fields.¹² However, on the other hand, it does often demonstrate a certain type of rigour commonly associated with hybrids.

A 2006 RAND Corporation study about counterinsurgency lessons observed that 'literally hundreds, if not thousands, of articles, monographs, and books have been written on the topic by academics, analysts, military officers,

¹² Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*. Chapter 1, passim.

and journalists'.¹³ It is evident that since September 2001 the previously described 'sine wave of inquiry and writing about counterinsurgency' is at another historical peak. Aaron and Regina Karp suggest a reason why: '[p]reviously, guerrilla and terrorist methods were something seen mostly at the periphery of international conflict. But in a world without periphery, they have greater global importance than ever before'.¹⁴ Furthermore, the United States' and their allies' wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have undoubtedly contributed to generating significant interest in the field. Counterinsurgency is apparently both 'back' and 'fashionable', which surely must rank amongst the strangest juxtapositions ever between the study of warfare and popular culture.¹⁵ But it does not follow that the increase in the quantity of material written about counterinsurgency should automatically equate with an increase in the quality of the material written. This issue in particular raises issues germane to the subsequent analysis and assessments made about counterinsurgency later in this thesis.

The RAND corporation study cited in the previous paragraph identified 'academics, analysts, military officers, and journalists' as those predominately writing about counterinsurgency.¹⁶ An analysis of this group suggests several factors likely to impact upon counterinsurgency scholarship. The first is that the academics necessarily come from fields as diverse as the wide range of disciplines that contribute to the broad field of counterinsurgency. That is to say, they are academic specialists, but not necessarily counterinsurgency specialists. There is no 'College of Counterinsurgents' or any other similar professional body in academia. Two issues arise from this, perhaps best highlighted through comparison. When a physician writes an article for an academic journal about their specialisation, there is a more than reasonable

¹³ Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of Rand Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 1.

¹⁴ Tim Benbow and Rod Thornton, eds., *Dimensions of Counter-Insurgency, Applying Experience to Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), vii.

¹⁵ Andrew Mumford, "Sir Robert Thompson's Lessons for Iraq: Bringing the 'Basic Principles of Counter-Insurgency' into the 21st Century," *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): 177. Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," 111. Alex Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (2010): 233.

¹⁶ Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of Rand Counterinsurgency Research*.

likelihood that other physicians will undertake peer review. These reviewers will almost inevitably be appropriately academically qualified and practised in the field written about. This is an important convention – a vital ‘quality assurance’ mechanism for any field or discipline. However, there is no such surety in counterinsurgency scholarship. The argument can be made that similar efforts can be (and are) undertaken to assure quality – *The Small Wars and Insurgency* journal (Taylor and Francis) is an example in this regard. However, these efforts cannot have either the same authority or credibility of more coherent academic fields because of the essentially inchoate nature of the ‘discipline’ of counterinsurgency. On top of this is the near impossibility of an academic researcher or teacher becoming ‘practised’ in counterinsurgency warfare. Of course, there are some military personnel that have such experience, and they do write about it, – which in turn creates other difficulties.¹⁷

The first observation made about military officers writing about counterinsurgency reflects problems associated with individual experiences. Writing about war by its participants is necessarily a subjective act. The maintenance of disciplined objectivity is difficult in the face of the emotional engagement they may have in conflict. Furthermore, the often cited moral ambivalence or equivocation around many issues of conduct brought out by terrorism and guerrilla warfare can raise questions of ‘reputation management’ in the construction of personal narratives (the issue of ‘myth-making’ is dealt with later in this section). Seegers identifies another concern in that:

Military advice about COIN is constrained by the need to show military subservience to political authority. More fatal, however, is the combination of militaries’ characteristic ‘can do’ mentality and soldiers’ heavy reliance on the literature produced by staff and war colleges. Convinced by the lessons of COIN literature that they have the keys to

¹⁷ Michael Howard cites Hans Delbruck to point out succinctly the possible difficulties in a military man who turns to writing history or an academic who turns to military affairs. The latter, Delbruck said, ‘labours under the danger of subscribing to an incorrect tradition because he cannot discern its technical impossibility,’ while the former ‘transfers phenomena from contemporary practice to the past, without taking adequate account of the difference in circumstances.’ See: Michael Howard, “The Use and Abuse of Military History,” *Royal United Service Institution Journal* 107(1962): 5.

COIN wisdom...soldiers can advise – indeed, have advised – to go where angels fear to tread.¹⁸

Seegers clearly makes the connection between the manner in which the military service shapes the views and actions of military authors.

It is, furthermore, in the nature of military officers to reflect the culture, values and organisational biases of their parent service. In addition, there exists a further tension at the heart of Western militaries between study of counterinsurgency and long-standing preoccupations, preferences and stakes in conventional 'state on state' or 'Clausewitzian' warfare.¹⁹ Even when engaged in counterinsurgency conflict there is a type of friction in Western militaries between what has been characterised as 'the wars we have versus the wars we like'.²⁰ As Brian Linn has observed about the United States Army, 'Unconventional warfare has often been the Army's task but seldom its calling'.²¹ Lawrence Freedman claims 'lesser' contingencies such as counterinsurgency are 'resented as a distraction from the main business of preparing for a major war'.²² This preference has an understandable logic – such conflicts are rarely wars of necessity or survival for Western nations and hence of lesser concern for their militaries. An example of this tension surfacing can be seen in the recent debate in the United States between what can be characterised as 'pro' and 'anti' counterinsurgency elements.²³ The potential for this to influence the output of a typically conservative, if not reactionary, professional body such as that of military officers should not be taken lightly. A

¹⁸ Annette Seegers, "Making Sense of Counterinsurgency," in *South Africa and Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects*, ed. Deane-Peter Baker and Evert Jordaan (Claremont: UCT Press, 2010), 14.

¹⁹ Editor's comments in the preface to: Benbow and Thornton, *Dimensions of Counter-Insurgency, Applying Experience to Practice*.

²⁰ Mark O'Neill, *Confronting the Hydra, Big Problems with Small Wars*, Lowy Institute Papers (Sydney: Longueville Media, 2009), 59.

²¹ Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 91.

²² Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, ed. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, vol. 379, 2006 Adelphi Papers (London: Routledge, 2006), 59.

²³ The debate has been characterised by Andrew Bacevich as between 'crusaders' who favour developing greater policy for the conduct of counterinsurgency and the 'conservatives' who favour leaving the military's policy focus on conventional conflicts. See: Andrew J. Bacevich, "The Petraeus Doctrine," *The Atlantic Monthly* 302, no. 3 (2008): John Nagl is typically associated with the 'crusaders', whilst Gian Gentile typifies the arguments made by the conservatives.

perspective on the possible impact of this phenomenon might be drawn from a quick assessment of the contributions to date. For every Hubert Lyautey, Frank Kitson or David Petraeus who has had some influence, there are literally thousands of military officers, senior or otherwise, who have remained mute on the subject. Some of the most important figures in modern counterinsurgency, such as Gerald Templar, did not publish anything significant on the subject, leaving students of counterinsurgency to rely upon other people's accounts of their supposed thoughts.

Notwithstanding their relatively small numbers, it is nevertheless abundantly clear from the counterinsurgency literature that military officers do write about the subject – and their views can be influential. Yet the vocal minority does not fully address the 'hole' that exists in the counterinsurgency canon from the views and experiences of practitioners. It is an obvious but important generalisation that very few military officers are also academics by either professional training or employment – most do not spend their spare time writing for peer-reviewed academic publications, even those sponsored or administered by military organisations such as the US Army's *Parameters*. Unsurprisingly this has some implications for the methodological rigour, and often the quality, of their writing. A ready example of this can be seen in recent assessments made about the standard of a common aspect of military writing about counterinsurgency – that of military counterinsurgency doctrine. David French argues that much of contemporary British counterinsurgency doctrine is based upon 'historical arguments that are at best ill-informed, and at worst almost the opposite of what actually happened'.²⁴ For Andrew Mumford, a 'painful element' of British counterinsurgency doctrine is the use of template solutions and 'the short-circuiting of context'.²⁵ Assessments of the writing standard in the United States reflect similar conclusions. The implied criticism arising from Robert Chamberlain's observation that 'counterinsurgency writing is

²⁴ David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

²⁵ Which he puns should perhaps be known as 'Templar solutions'. Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth, the British Experience of Irregular Warfare*, Cass Military Studies (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 148.

riddled with [unhelpful] Zen-like proverbs and paradoxes' is vindicated by reading some of the slogans proffered within United States military counterinsurgency doctrine.²⁶ Of course, military officers writing about counterinsurgency do not restrict themselves to the field of military doctrine. With various motivations, they also write narrative accounts of their counterinsurgency activities, contributing with many others to what becomes the 'military history' of counterinsurgency.

Michael Howard suggested in 1962 that there is a 'basis of truth' in the belief of some in academic circles that military history was a form of 'myth-making'.²⁷ He defines myth making as 'the creation of an image of the past, through careful selection and interpretation, in order to create or sustain certain emotions or beliefs'.²⁸ There is evidence to suggest that the study of counterinsurgency, which is often reliant on military history, is also stained with this taint and, further, that 'the facts of guerrilla warfare have been covered by a vast overgrowth of mythology'.²⁹ There is, in fact, a long-standing awareness about the association between counterinsurgency writing and myth making - John McCuen noting in 1966 that 'in writing on revolutionary warfare it is most difficult to tell truth from fiction'.³⁰ This idea resonates from the romanticised accounts of colonial-era warfare popular in Europe during the 19th century through to Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and the contemporary narratives about the Iraq War Surge.³¹ Yet keeping in mind myth-making is not

²⁶ 'Zen' quotation is from: Robert M. Chamberlain, "With Friends Like These: Grievance, Governance, and Capacity-Building in COIN," *Parameters* XXXVIII, no. 2 (2008): 84. An example of these slogans in action can be seen in the 'Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency Operations' in: Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*. Paragraphs 1-148 to 1-157 inclusive.

²⁷ Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, xv.

³⁰ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 20.

³¹ Thomas Edward Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (London: Cape, 1935). Walter Laqueur expressed exasperation with the myth making aspect of Lawrence's book with the comment 'Seldom in the history of modern warfare has so much been written about so little.' See; Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, 155. Indicative examples of contribution to mythologising the 'surge' include: Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: PublicAffairs, a member of the Perseus Books Group, 2008); and Thomas E Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009). Joshua Rovner examines the

the only concern to note about the use of history when examining counterinsurgency.

Michael Howard further advised three general rules for approaching the study of military history – width, depth and context.³² Michael Oakeshott has provided further advice on how to approach such tasks:

The activity of being an historian is not that of contributing to the elucidation of a single coherence of events which may be called 'true' to the exclusion of all others; it is an activity in which a writer, concerned with the past for its own sake and working to a chosen scale, elicits a coherence in a group of contingencies of similar magnitudes.³³

The study of counterinsurgency has seen the inconsistent application of such approaches. The dominant 'hearts and minds' paradigm falls foul of elucidating a 'single coherence of events which may be called "true" to the exclusion of all others'.³⁴ Adam Roberts argues that some counterinsurgency specialists have often ignored context and their approaches to the subject are ahistorical.³⁵ Other criticisms are common, including (indicative) strong claims that 'arguments are usually ill-informed by actual analysis,' and that 'historical claims for COIN success...are at best anchored in selective historical memory, when not fantasy fabrications'.³⁶ Of course, poor historical technique is not a unique blight on counterinsurgency writing or universally present in the field. However, critical comment about it occurs frequently enough in the literature to warrant careful assessment of the provenance of the narratives and validity of the claims made within the body of counterinsurgency scholarship.

In summary, counterinsurgency scholarship is neither a tightly defined discipline nor (and in many ways, as a consequence) is it guided by strict normative rules of academic enquiry. Participants in counterinsurgency writing

contemporary myth-making about the Iraq conflict in: Joshua Rovner, "The Heroes of COIN," *Orbis* 56, no. 2 (2012): passim.

³² Explained in detail at: Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," 7.

³³ Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, New and expanded ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), 182.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Adam Roberts, "The 'War on Terror' in Historical Perspective," *Survival* 47, no. 2 (2005): 103-06.

³⁶ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 239; Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 239.

have widely varied subject matter knowledge, skill sets and levels, reflecting the broad church of disciplines that can rightly claim an interest in the subject. Unlike other fields of academic study, one does not gain counterinsurgency 'expertise' through formal education, training, certification and accreditation. Rather, it is often acknowledged through one or more of a combination of practical experience (successful or otherwise) in counterinsurgency warfare, recognition by peers, self-selection or public acclaim. As discussed, while several epistemological challenges arise from these factors, counterinsurgency nonetheless remains a valid object for inquiry and study. It is, however, necessary to approach it aware of its context as a multi-disciplinary field and cognisant of the issues.

The development of counterinsurgency thought

A systematic analysis of the development of counterinsurgency thought is usefully conducted, as noted previously, through a thematically defined review of four eras - 'imperial policing', 'the counterinsurgency era', 'post-Vietnam' and 'post-9-11'. The following examination of each thematic era will follow a consistent format. First, the era is identified chronologically and contextually defined. It will describe and account for the significant counterinsurgency ideas and issues that emerge from the era, as well as any relevant texts. Again, this approach does not seek to be an exhaustive bibliographical study of all the writing emerging from a particular era or subsequently written about it. Rather, it seeks to provide an appropriate context for understanding the contribution of certain key texts to the development of counterinsurgency thinking. Where relevant, each section will also include a brief description of any significant aspects of military doctrine for the era. Military doctrine for counterinsurgency has considerable importance because it is 'what is taught'. An assumption, openly acknowledged, is of a likely causal relationship between what is taught, advised by military leaders to political leaders, then implemented by those conducting counterinsurgency campaigns and subsequently analysed. As noted, the focus here is on the 'Western' tradition of counterinsurgency practice and literature, as described in texts written or translated into the English language.

The imperial policing era

Ted Robert Gurr wrote: 'The institutions, persons, and policies of rulers have inspired the violent wrath of their nominal subjects throughout the history of organized political life'.³⁷ Walter Laqueur colloquially dates guerrilla warfare as being 'as old as the hills' and certainly predating regular or conventional warfare.³⁸ Acceptance of Gurr and Laqueur suggests a nominal start of the imperial policing era with the first civilisations of antiquity.³⁹ 1946 delineates the end of the imperial policing era, for almost immediately after the Second World War the tide of 'traditional' empires ebbed quickly.⁴⁰ A key, and defining, characteristic of the imperial policing era was the use of counterinsurgency tactics and strategy for the maintenance of empire. While the term 'counterinsurgency' was unknown in the military lexicon prior to the 20th century, it will be used in conjunction with the analysis of the imperial policing era for the purpose of consistency throughout this paper.

An immediate and obvious challenge for examination of this era is its sheer time scale – well over 14 centuries. For the purposes of this review only the later period will be looked at, covering roughly 400 years before the present with the rise of European colonialism in Africa, Asia and the Americas. That is not to diminish the significance of earlier counterinsurgency thought and practice, but rather acknowledges three factors. The first is sheer difficulty imposed by the scale of the period, recognising that any review would necessarily become a narrative of 'historians repeating one another'.⁴¹ The second is recognition of the enduring nature of the challenges of insurrection and the maintenance of empire. This suggests that the thoughts, practices and learning of earlier times are to some significant extent inherently and sufficiently

³⁷ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Second Hardcover Printing, 1970 ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 3.

³⁸ Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, xvii.

³⁹ The earliest written record of counterinsurgency was found on a Hittite parchment from around the 15th century BCE. See: Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750*, 1; Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, 3.

⁴⁰ This circumstance, and the reasons for it, are discussed more fully at the start of the next section in this chapter, 'The counterinsurgency era.'

⁴¹ Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," 5.

‘swept up’ and reflected in the practices of the chosen focal period. The one factor is the idea offered by Shy and Collier that ‘fully developed’ concepts of revolutionary warfare are closely associated with two aspects of modernity – industrialism and imperialism.⁴² Whilst they acknowledge that resistance to imperial rule is as old as imperialism itself, they argue that revolutionary war concepts as specific strategic solutions to this problem only gained shape and acquired momentum relatively recently.⁴³

Many of the topical ideas familiar to students of contemporary counterinsurgency literature have their origins in the imperial policing era. Imperial counterinsurgents grappled with concerns such as counter-terrorism, the rule of law, the use of minimum force, culture, development and governance and then developed, implemented and practised their responses.⁴⁴ Importantly, they subsequently codified and wrote about these experiences in texts and doctrine.⁴⁵ The era also serves as a rich source of inspiration for many of the enduring shibboleths in counterinsurgency thought and writing. These range from the trivial and mildly annoying, such as the insistence on using colloquial French military terms from the 19th century in contemporary writing, to potentially serious misconceptions about ‘minimum force’ or a ‘British way of counterinsurgency’. Since the last two concepts are important to the constituent catechism of the contemporary ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm (as explained in Chapter one), understanding their origin assists the critical review conducted in the next chapter. It is also apparent in this chapter that the emergence of the

⁴² John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in *The Makers of Modern Strategy, from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 822-23.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Alex Marshall makes the point that the era gave birth to a 'powerful' military-anthropological culture that still thrives today. See: Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 235. For examples of how this culture is alive in contemporary counterinsurgency and anthropological debates, see: Beatrice Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007); or Montgomery McFate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Story of Their Curious Relationship," *Military Review* 85, no. 2 (2005); and Montgomery McFate, "Building Bridges or Burning Heretics?," *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 2 (2007): 21.

⁴⁵ Examples of such writing include: C.E Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed. (London: General Staff - War Office, 1906; repr., Reprinted 1914); Charles W. Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co, 1939); United States Marine Corps, *The Small Wars Manual* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1940).

'hearts and minds' conception of counterinsurgency from the imperial policing era is paradoxical.

The focal point of this era saw the height of European empires in Asia, Africa and the Americas. From the Cape of Good Hope east to China and from Cape Horn north and west to California, lands and peoples were subsumed and organised into competing empires at a hitherto unprecedented rate, with rule remaining centred in remote Europe. The acquisition of these colonies did not always involve violence, at least between European powers (a few being acquired by political treaty or commercial arrangements alone), but their maintenance invariably did. At the same time this era also saw the 'Age of Enlightenment' in the 18th century, closely followed by the development of the Romanticism movement. In many ways this was an awkward alignment of circumstance, with Europe benefiting materially from the subjugation of whole races and cultures at the same time that, on an intellectual level, many embraced their humanity, rights and nobility. Thomas Rid provides an example of the sort of tension this caused when he narrates political unease in Paris in 1840 stirred up by the harsh tactics being used by Bugeaud's troops against Abd-el-Kaders' insurrection in Algeria.⁴⁶ Metropolitan Europeans wanted the benefits of empire; however, their newly 'enlightened' sensibilities were increasingly unsettled about the means whereby they acquired and maintained the same. Many texts that examine the colonial era reflect these widespread concerns.⁴⁷ Such tension eventually resulted in changes to the manner in which colonial counterinsurgents described their role and actions to both their political masters and domestic metropolitan audiences.⁴⁸ Ultimately it would

⁴⁶ Thomas Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (2010): 733.

⁴⁷ A typical example is Thomas Pakenham's book examining the 'carve up' of Africa by European colonial powers. Each chapter describing the relationship between the various colonial figures and their parent country contains details of such concerns. See: Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876-1912* (London: Abacus, 1992).

⁴⁸ Douglas Porch's description of Lyautey's brutal expansion of French rule by force in Morocco in the early 20th century provides a suitable example of this. Lyautey 'sold' colonial expansion by suggesting that Colonial Army was to be seen as a 'civilising force,' getting involved and settling troublesome issues of 'native politics.' See: Douglas Porch, "Bugeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *The Makers of Modern Strategy, from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 390-94. Shy and Collier note that he

contribute to a 'modernisation and development' narrative that became a key element of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.

Despite the concerns described in the previous paragraph, 'coercion, repression, annihilation, intimidation and fear' emerge as the key principles driving counterinsurgency thought and practice during the imperial policing era.⁴⁹ Recognition of these principles is endemic in both the post-facto academic explorations of the various campaigns of the imperial policing era that provide historically and geographically wide ranging anthologies, and in those looking at specific campaigns.⁵⁰ The accounts of actual 'imperial policemen' also echo these principles, in a manner that is generally pragmatically reflective of their necessity rather than sentimental or sensational about their occurrence.⁵¹ Tempering such heavy-handed approaches was, relatively late in the era the emerging concept of 'minimum force', often cited as a key element and indicative of a 'British' approach to counterinsurgency.

The acceptance of the principle of minimum force is often seen as deriving from repulsion to the massacre of civilians by British Indian Army troops under Brigadier General Reginald Dyer at Amritsar in April 1919.⁵² However, Rod Thornton has argued that the British Army had, in effect,

wrote and published a widely read article about how this should be done, prior to going and doing it. See: Shy and Collier, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 830. Thomas Rid compared the British and French styles of Imperial expansion during the 19th century. He concluded that the French were more likely to achieve expansion through purely military means. See: Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," 728.

⁴⁹ Michael Fitzsimmons, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 3 (2008): 339.

⁵⁰ Examples of the former include: Asprey, *War in the Shadows*; Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750*; Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*; Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, Also; Porch, "The Makers of Modern Strategy." An example of the latter is provided by Brian Linn's account of the United States' war in the Philippines, 1899-1902: Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, ed. Theodore A. Wilson, *Modern War Studies* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2000).

⁵¹ Texts such as Callwell, Gwynn and Skeen are indicative of this type of approach. See: Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*; Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*; Andrew Skeen, *Passing It On: Short Talks on Tribal Fighting on the North-West Frontier* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1932).

⁵² Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60*, 23.

accepted the principle several decades prior.⁵³ This, for Thornton, was the consequence of a combination of peculiarly British 'Victorian Values,' and basic pragmatism 'that was to prove essential in controlling large territories and large populations with small numbers of troops'.⁵⁴ For his part, Charles Gwynn supports Thornton's observations with his suggestion that 'excessive severity may antagonise...add to the number of the rebels, and leave a lasting feeling of resentment and bitterness'.⁵⁵ Yet Gwynn qualified this argument when he added, 'on the other hand, the power and resolution of the Government forces must be displayed. Anything which can be interpreted as weakness encourages those who are sitting on the fence to keep on good terms with the rebels'.⁵⁶ Gwynn's reputation as an advocate for minimum force is further brought into question with his argument against troops using non-lethal weapons: 'The moral effect of the appearance of troops depends largely on the fact that they carry lethal weapons. It is a warning to spectators that it is time to get away and it awakens the more moderate element to the seriousness of the situation'.⁵⁷

In actual fact, there is little contradiction between these concepts. Whilst the concept of 'minimum force' did exist in the imperial policing era and was widely acknowledged, care must be taken when making assumptions about just how 'enlightened' this concept and its associated similar ideas truly were. David French highlights the paradox: 'Where they failed to nip trouble in the bud, colonial authorities pursued strategies based on a paradoxical combination of Western liberal thinking and repression'.⁵⁸ In such a way British counterinsurgency thought in the imperial policing era could simultaneously bring together seemingly disparate ideas and practice such as 'minimum force'

⁵³ Rod Thornton, "The British Army and the Origins of Its Minimum Force Philosophy," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 15, no. 1 (2004): 86.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 86-95, passim and 99.

⁵⁵ Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁸ French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*, 59.

and the concept of 'aerial policing' – the often indiscriminate practice of bombing from the air civilians suspected of being insurgents.⁵⁹

The enduring idea thought that there could even be a 'British' way of counterinsurgency, or in fact any other distinct 'national tradition', has its origin in the comparative studies done of this era.⁶⁰ Such thinking, and indeed the whole notion that one tradition or another was the 'right' way of doing counterinsurgency has had, over time, a firm hold on some counterinsurgency scholarship.⁶¹ Douglas Porch describes a view of a 'French colonial school' of counterinsurgency warfare 'whose main theories were developed by Bugeaud in Algeria and later refined by Gallieni in Tonkin and Lyautey in Morocco'.⁶² Porch goes on to argue that upon close examination such a view (of a universal 'French school') does not measure up to logical analysis:

Given the great variety of French military experience abroad, the different levels of sophistication of the opponents that French troops encountered, and the extremes of terrain and climate in which they fought, it must have been difficult, if not impossible, to distil a set of tactical principles applicable in all situations.⁶³

Yet the view of there being a 'British way' of counterinsurgency is perhaps the most popular preconception of national counterinsurgency tradition. The mantra is that the British could fashion a unique way because 'history has given them the kind of military establishment and colonial administrative experience necessary to defeat revolutionary movements'.⁶⁴ John Shy and Thomas Collier, citing what they call the British 'colonial tradition at its best', provide an exemplar generalisation about this already over generalised concept. According to them the 'British way' meant:

⁵⁹ Practised by the British in what was then Mesopotamia in the early 1920s. See: Priya Satia, "The Defense of Inhumanity: Air Control and the British Idea of Arabia," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 1 (2006).

⁶⁰ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 233.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Porch, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 377. The names cited all refer to senior French Army Officers: Thomas-Robert Bugeaud. (15 October 1784 – 10 June 1849), Joseph Simon Gallieni (24 April 1849 – 27 May 1916), and Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey (17 November 1854 – 21 July 1934).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 377.

⁶⁴ Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60*, 180.

Tight integration of civil and military authority, minimum force with police instead of army used when possible, good intelligence of the kind produced by "Special Branch" operatives, administrative tidiness on such matters as the resettlement of civilians in habitable, sanitary camps, and a general readiness to negotiate for something less than total victory.⁶⁵

However, such bold assertions seem to be describing either a purely theoretical case or a policy aspiration when examined against the overall and actual record of British counterinsurgency during the era.

Numerous examples diminish many of the claims made for a 'British' way founded in the imperial policing era. Examples such as the Special Night Squads in Palestine during 1938 (with allegations of the use of torture and summary execution), the invention and use of concentration camps during the Second Boer War, the previously cited 'Aerial Policing,' and the tactics of the 'Black and Tans' during the Irish rebellion of 1919 – 1922 are just as typical as any 'minimum force' tradition with respect to British counterinsurgency during this era - and such drastic applications of force are hardly a 'British way'.⁶⁶ Noting that the British would have had the same challenges with 'universal applicability' that Porch ascribed to the French, it is more likely that any 'British' way, as characterised by Shy and Collier, is better understood as an ambition rather than a widespread reality. As French further elaborates:

But there was a large gap between the recognition of the need to win the 'hearts and minds' of the innocent majority and what colonial governments and their security forces actually did. The cornerstones of most British counter-insurgency campaigns were coercion and counter-terror, not kindness and economic development. Such policies had a long and not always unsuccessful history.⁶⁷

A further blow to the idea of 'national traditions' of counterinsurgency developing during the imperial policing era comes from an examination of the record of the United States in this era. Andrew Birtle sums up the net body of

⁶⁵ Shy and Collier, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 854.

⁶⁶ For material on the night squads see: Simon Anglim, "Orde Wingate and the Special Night Squads: A Feasible Policy for Counter-Terrorism?," in *Dimensions of Counter-Insurgency, Applying Experience to Practice*, ed. Tim Benbow and Rod Thornton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 22. The actions of the Black and Tans are addressed in: Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60*, Chapter 2.

⁶⁷ French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*, 65.

United States thinking and practice with respect to 'small wars' in the era as: 'a loose body of broadly defined concepts that blended aggressive military action, punitive measures, and enlightened administration into a carrot-and-stick approach to the suppression of irregulars and their civilian supporters'.⁶⁸ This description is so similar to the French and British 'traditions' as to be indistinguishable in either any theoretical or practical sense. The conclusion is that rather than 'national traditions' associated with a defined doctrine emerging from the imperial policing era, a more universal series of almost ubiquitous thoughts on the nature of counterinsurgency emerged, and these were applied as circumstances required.

The following pithy summation of Hubert Lyautey provides a further, apt and concise précis of the true focus on pragmatic methods during the imperial policing era: 'Although he [Lyautey] paid lip service to political necessities, he never forgot that the rifle, the French rifle, ruled'.⁶⁹ Reflection on the counterinsurgency practices and writing of the era favours the existence of a more universal rather than nation-specific model of conduct. The literature of the imperial policing era, notwithstanding the role it occasionally served by providing 'ripping yarns' for a curious metropolitan public, also reflected the values and attitudes of those (almost exclusively men) who wrote it – and their pragmatism about the nature of task at hand - as much as any idealism concerning 'enlightened' conduct in the colonial world.⁷⁰

This body of literature also served an important doctrinal function. The published work on counterinsurgency during the imperial policing era was both a 'how to' manual for the soldiers of empire and a codification of imperial governance. As much as one may ascribe some practices to the tradition of

⁶⁸ Birtle is looking back at the imperial policing era in his introduction to his study of US doctrine in the post-World War Two era. See: Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942 - 1976*, First ed. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2006), 9.

⁶⁹ Robert Asprey's pithy summation of one of the French leaders (Hubert Lyautey) of the imperial policing era. See: Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 157.

⁷⁰ There were few exceptions to this 'rule'. The British woman Gertrude Bell (1868-1926), an expert on the Middle East, is perhaps one. A slightly hagiographic account of her life can be found at: Georgina Howell, *Daughter of the Desert: The Remarkable Life of Gertrude Bell* (London: Macmillan, 2006).

European enlightenment, they equally reflect 'enlightened self-interest'.⁷¹ This 'self-interest' was recognition of hard-learned 'best practice' with respect to risk mitigation in the imperial task of managing indigenous peoples. Always innate and latent in the doctrine was the threat of repression and coercion. Such was the intellectual legacy of the imperial policing era. Importantly, it was to combine in unanticipated ways with liberal peace theory and anti-communist doctrine during the counterinsurgency era.

The counterinsurgency era

Inspiration for the name of this era derives from Douglas Blaufarb's book of the same title.⁷² The era commenced at the end of the Second World War and effectively ended with the fall of Saigon in 1975. Whereas counterinsurgency had previously primarily been a 'profoundly imperial, state-centric phenomenon', its principal drivers during this new counterinsurgency era were to evolve markedly.⁷³ The defining characteristic of the era was that the conduct of counterinsurgency (and especially second-party counterinsurgency) reflected wider concerns and interests about the composition and nature of states in the *international order*. Accordingly, it is worth investing a little time to set up the context for the concerns that drove counterinsurgency during the period 1945-75.

The period immediately following the end of the Second World War saw a rapid expansion in both the occurrence and intensity of guerrilla warfare in the European colonies of Africa and Asia. While the underlying complaints, points of friction, local imperatives and geographical locations were familiar to the pre-war 'imperial policemen', several important factors had, in the post-1945 world, changed. Diminishing the European colonial powers was either the experience of occupation, near financial exhaustion or both because of the war. The United States would ultimately seek to assist and address this through the Marshall Plan, which itself created a unique and important precedent for the United

⁷¹ Thornton, "The British Army and the Origins of Its Minimum Force Philosophy," 99.

⁷² Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*.

⁷³ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 233.

States' development assistance and counterinsurgency thinking. This precedent would come to inform other United States' initiatives at various locations in the 'developing world' during the counterinsurgency era, in response to concerns about Communist expansion.⁷⁴

Enhancing the Soviet Union's status and power at the end of the Second World War was its achievement in the face of Nazi invasion: its subsequent military and industrial mobilisation and its central role in defeating Germany. Added to this, the victory of the Communists in China during 1949 provided a demonstrative example of the possible for nationalist-inspired insurgents elsewhere. 'Radical' ideas had been spreading out since the early 20th century – witness the influence of metropolitan communism on Ho Chi Minh in his relative youth. However, this process accelerated in the new international environment that existed in the aftermath of the war. Advances in communications had effectively 'shrunk' the world and this had a two-way effect. As well as facilitating the spread of radical ideas from the 'centre', it also allowed news of radicalisation and insurrection in the far-flung reaches of empire to reach London, Paris and Brussels (or Washington) mere hours after an event, rather than the long days and weeks of the imperial policing era.⁷⁵ Furthermore, news from the developing world had a recurring theme – rebellion.

While the Cold War between the two superpower blocs dominated the political landscape of the counterinsurgency era, the 'limited' insurgency conflicts within it shaped the character. The war in Vietnam, beginning with the involvement of the French and subsequently of the Americans and their few allies, dominates the era, not only in terms of scale, scope and cost, but also in terms of the hold it has had on much of the body of counterinsurgency scholarship at the time, and since. In addition, the insurgencies in Algeria and

⁷⁴ The threat was made palpable to the United States' administration(s) of the time by the examples of Greece, the Philippines and Malaya. Douglas Blaufarb relates these in: Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 22-51. and Chapter 2.

⁷⁵ Or even ideas in general. Robert Thompson wrote about 'the awakening of the Asian rural population to the modern world in general' that occurred during this period. See: Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 15.

Malaya were also significant 'support acts' and, it can be argued, ultimately contributed more to practical counterinsurgency thought than the Vietnam War.

Beyond these three key conflicts, other insurgency conflicts played out across Asia, Africa and Europe. From Aden and Oman to Angola and Mozambique to Northern Ireland and Cyprus, Western involvement in counterinsurgency was endemic. At the same time the seeds of later insurgent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa were germinating, with South Africa and Rhodesia at the forefront of efforts to confront them. The motivations behind each of these insurgencies were almost as varied as the locations where they occurred. However, there is no doubt, in this context, that they contributed to the phenomenon described by Julian Paget that 'insurgency has emerged as a science in its own right since the end of World War Two'.⁷⁶

The 'science' of various insurgency theorists that emerged during this era was, (and remains) formulaic.⁷⁷ This is hardly surprising, however, considering the nature of the audience – most often highly motivated, anti-colonial, commonly leftist forces with highly variable circumstances of culture, education and training. Such theorists knew their audience and wrote accordingly. Robert Thompson in the foreword to John J McCuen's *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* wrote: 'The pattern and techniques of modern Revolutionary War have been developed by Mao Tse-tung, Vo Nguyen Giap and Che Guevara and recorded in their writings'.⁷⁸ Of these three, the basic text for ideas about revolutionary war was Mao's.⁷⁹

Three elements were to give Mao's writing a very broad stage. First, the success of the Communists in 1949 drew attention to his ideas.⁸⁰ Success on this scale attracted attention to Chinese writings that previously only a few sinologists and students of strategy knew. Next were the potential and willing

⁷⁶ Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1967), 15.

⁷⁷ The term 'theorist' is somewhat loose in this context – its use is in the sense of someone developing linked ideas about the subject of counterinsurgency, rather than a precise or 'scientific' theory per se.

⁷⁸ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 16.

⁷⁹ Shy and Collier, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 839.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 844.

audiences that existed at the time and eagerly digested Mao's words – which included most of the nationalist-inspired movements of the colonised developing world. The final ingredient was the perception of threat in the West, however misplaced that may have proven to be.

As is it is now common to acknowledge, communism was not the monolithic heart of all insurrection problems during the era. In fact, as Frank Kitson observed, 'most of the counter-insurgency campaigns waged by the British since 1945 have not been concerned with fighting communists'.⁸¹ Julian Paget noted the same, providing a list of insurgency campaigns motivated by nationalistic, ethnic or local political or economic causes.⁸² Indeed, it is clear that the move by some rebels to adopt versions of Maoist insurgency was often a tool rather than a political objective per se. That is, Maoist insurgency was a 'way' rather than communism as a dedicated 'end' for indigenous nationalist movements that sought to hasten the process of decolonisation. Supporting this idea is the observation that insurgent movements who were clients of the USSR, China and Cuba during the Cold War sought and received arms, resources and military skills training as much as they did a political doctrine. Yet from a Western perspective the era remains irrevocably associated with idea of war against communist-inspired or -led insurrection. The French military coined a unique phrase, *guerre révolutionnaire*, to account for it. This term 'was more than the French phrase for revolutionary war; it described a diagnosis and a prescription for what an influential group of French career soldiers saw as the chief illness of the modern world – Western failure to meet the challenge of atheistic Communist subversion'.⁸³ The Americans chose a different label – counterinsurgency. Blaufarb argues that 'as the word implies, counterinsurgency was conceived of as a response to a danger that appeared to threaten U.S. global interests'.⁸⁴ But the Americans were to go beyond mere creation of a new label. They went on to fashion an entirely new way of thinking about the problems of insurrection. This approach subsequently drove their

⁸¹ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 14.

⁸² Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning*, 16.

⁸³ Shy and Collier, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 852.

⁸⁴ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 2.

efforts in Vietnam, but also and importantly for this study, informed and codified the development of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.

The evolution of the 'hearts and minds' concept and model during the Kennedy Administration required more than just Cold War concerns about communist expansion or renewed enthusiasm amongst elements of the United States polity for Wilsonian ideals of liberal peace. Rather it needed a unique combination of both, mixed with misunderstanding of both why insurrections were occurring in the former European colonies, and the legacy lessons of the imperial policing era with respect to combating insurrection. A key aspect in the evolution of American thinking in this regard was that the developing world was perceived as a 'beleaguered modernizer and the United States as a manager of modernization'.⁸⁵ Supporting this was the view, shared by both Eisenhower and Kennedy, that saw 'international communism as monolithic and perceived any failure to respond to its challenge as irresolution and weakness'.⁸⁶ The remarks presented by Walt W. Rostow, an influential former academic and a relatively senior staff member in the Kennedy Administration, during a speech at Fort Bragg in June 1961, are indicative. Rostow considered that communist movements were the 'scavengers of the modernization process' and that '[c]ommunism is best understood as a disease of the transition to modernization'.⁸⁷ Blaufarb sums up:

The salient points of the doctrine at this early stage thus boiled down to a very few general propositions: that insurgency was a major global threat, that it derived from the exploitation by the Communists of certain powerful worldwide social forces summed up in the term "modernization" and that the United States was both able and determined to meet this threat by the proper application of its resources.⁸⁸

Views, of course, by themselves are not policy; although the actual evolution of counterinsurgency as a policy objective of United States is easily tracked.

⁸⁵ Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 6.

⁸⁶ Gerald J. Protheroe, "Limiting America's Engagement: Roger Hilsman's Vietnam War 1961 - 1963," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 19, no. 2 (2008): 265.

⁸⁷ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 58.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

Early attempts by the Kennedy Administration to develop a comprehensive counterinsurgency policy were not particularly effective. William Colby noted of one attempt in late 1960 that 'the final result was in the main a consolidation of the preferred ideas of each American agency on Vietnam for its own activities. There was a minimum of integration into an overall strategy'.⁸⁹ This state of affairs was not to last, as Kennedy took an intense personal interest in the development of robust counterinsurgency policy. Indicative of this interest was the issuing of 23 separate National Security Action Memoranda (NSAM) relating to counterinsurgency during his three-year tenure as President.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in January 1962, he formed an interagency task force, the Special Group (Counterinsurgency) with the mission of ensuring 'Proper recognition throughout the United States government that subversive insurgency ('wars of liberation') is a major form of politico-military conflict equal in importance to conventional warfare'.⁹¹

Central to the policy that emerged from Kennedy's Special Group was 'Modernisation Theory'. Within the administration there was recognition of the points made by Roger Hilsman that modernisation could 'create instability and thus fuel an insurgency' and that the problems associated with it as a concept were 'stubborn and complex'.⁹² But it appears dismissal of these concerns happened easily in the enthusiasm to embrace the President's passion for the potential of counterinsurgency success. Alexis Johnson, United States Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, summarised the new creed in an influential and widely read article addressed to the bureaucracy, published in the government's *Foreign Service Journal* in 1962.⁹³ Johnson's summary is worth quoting, as it encapsulates what was to be a new but enduring US vision, and indeed, *raison d'être* for counterinsurgency:

⁸⁹ William Colby and James McCargar, *Lost Victory, a Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 82.

⁹⁰ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942 - 1976*, 227.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 61 and 62.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

It has been recognized as never before that what we in the United States are seeking in the less-developed world is not the building of military forces for their own sake, or economic development for its own sake, or pro-American propaganda for its own sake, but rather the use of all available resources for assisting these new nations in building the kind of society and government that can maintain itself, develop in step with the modern world and, above all, remain free from domination or control by Communist forces hostile to us.⁹⁴

Notwithstanding his earlier reservations, Hilsman was influential in shaping the American philosophical approach to counterinsurgency in Vietnam. His report to United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk in February 1962, entitled: 'A strategic concept for South Vietnam', was heavily influenced by the views of Robert Thompson (who was at that point advising at the British Embassy in Saigon).⁹⁵ It laid out a blueprint that reinforced the basic tenets of modernisation theory, calling for a phased plan of 'political, military and civic' action that is still familiar to the contemporary 'hearts and minds' paradigm.⁹⁶ The subsequent formalisation of this approach to counterinsurgency as a matter of United States' policy by the Kennedy Administration is a matter of record.

Kennedy's approach, however, was not without criticism. Two RAND Corporation analysts and authors, Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Junior, offered a contrary view to the suitability of modernisation theory as a counterinsurgency strategy in that:

Control of insurgency should not be viewed as identical with nation-building and with economic, social and political development in the underdeveloped world. Counter-rebellion is an important problem, and a difficult program, in its own right, but it is not the same problem as modernization and development. The former is a smaller universe than the latter.⁹⁷

And:

"Effective government" is too ambitious and too unrealistic a requirement for dealing with insurgency situations or threats. The authors of this paper are as enthusiastic as others for "effective" (democratically-oriented and progressive)

⁹⁴ U. Alexis Johnson, "Internal Defense and the Foreign Service," *Foreign Service Journal* (1962): 20.

⁹⁵ Protheroe, "Limiting America's Engagement: Roger Hilsman's Vietnam War 1961 - 1963," 269-70.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁹⁷ Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr, "Rebellion and Authority: Myths and Realities Exposed," (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1966), 13.

government, and for economic and social development. But to say that this is what has to be accomplished to deal with insurgency is to specify too ambitious a set of requirements to be interesting or useful. Pies in the sky are too remote to be tasty. Of course, it may be that it is only in the sky that some pies can be produced and consumed; but we ought to make sure that there are no mundane sources before grasping at inaccessible ones.⁹⁸

Such criticisms, however, essentially represented a minority dissenting view in the counterinsurgency thinking of the era.⁹⁹ It would not be until the post-mortem analysis of where American policy had gone wrong during the counterinsurgency era, well after the fall of Saigon in 1975, that such criticisms would be re-examined and evaluated.¹⁰⁰

Despite the emergence and advocacy of the constituent elements of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm during the counterinsurgency era, there is evidence to suggest that other thinking about the practice of counterinsurgency neither forgot nor abandoned the hard-won lessons inculcated during the previous imperial policing era. In French's words:

A commitment to waging counter-insurgency operations by employing coercion and intimidation continued to be the mainstay of British practice after 1945. Policymakers remained convinced of its efficacy. They assumed that their subject populations were rational beings who would calculate that any benefits they might gain in the future by supporting the insurgents would be outweighed by the immediate costs of doing so. That the innocent were bound to suffer alongside the guilty was inevitable, acceptable and could be beneficial.¹⁰¹

French's summation about British counterinsurgency thinking in the counterinsurgency era is consistent with their practice of the imperial policing era. Furthermore, supporting this is a review of the military doctrine from that most stereotypical of 'hearts and minds' case studies, the Malayan

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁹⁹ Trinquier's book, with its focus on the practical combative aspects of counterinsurgency was also 'cool' on development led responses, whilst noting (p.7) that 'the unconditional support of the population' was the sine qua non of victory. See: Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, ed. Praeger Security International, trans. Daniel Lee, 2006 ed., PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).

¹⁰⁰ For an example of such work, see: Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*.

¹⁰¹ French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*, 65.

campaign.¹⁰² Nor is it at odds with either the narrative provided by Frank Kitson or some of the theory proffered by David Galula. Kitson's account of his service on counterinsurgency operations throughout the era and on three continents, *Bunch of Five*, reflects a mood amongst British campaigners that violent actions inevitably and appropriately begat more violence.¹⁰³ More known and embraced by the Americans than his own nation for his writing on counterinsurgency, David Galula explicitly highlighted the role that physical coercion played in the counterinsurgency era.¹⁰⁴ Galula noted that the population asks itself 'which side threatens the most?'¹⁰⁵ Substantive examples of the maintenance of coercive and violent practice by the French during the era are provided throughout accounts of the Algerian War such as Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace*.¹⁰⁶ Yet, notwithstanding the fact that 'officers like Galula took many theoretical lessons for granted that had been distilled from more than a century or practice' the writing of the late counterinsurgency era developed and reflected the predominant policy concerns of the era.¹⁰⁷ That is not to say protagonists were unaware of dialectic tensions between approaches. The RAND counterinsurgency symposium in April 1962 at the mid-point of this virtual era and the record of its proceedings reflects such debate.¹⁰⁸

Many writers responded to the perception previously described: that insurgency had become both a science and systemised. While they often addressed insurgencies that were not manifestly communist, they acknowledge,

¹⁰² Even a cursory reading of the 'Emergency Regulations' detailed in Chapter IV of the ATOM pamphlet suggests the role 'legal' intimidation and coercion played in state and security force actions. See: Malaya Director of Operations, *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: British Army, 1958), Ch. IV.

¹⁰³ Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Rid refers to him as 'an influential albeit overrated French officer and author' and observes that Galula's work was not well known amongst French counterinsurgency doctrine experts as late as 2006/2007, and was only published for the first time in the French language in 2008. See: Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," 728-32.

¹⁰⁵ David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria 1956 - 1958*, 2006, with a new foreword by Bruce Hoffman ed., RAND Monographs (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2006), 247.

¹⁰⁶ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962*, New York Review Books Classics (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," 728.

¹⁰⁸ Hosmer, Stephen T. and Crane, Sybille O. *Counterinsurgency, A symposium, April 16-20, 1962*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2006

at least tacitly, many of the concerns of the modernisation theory. There was also broad acceptance of the idea that counterinsurgency could, like Maoist insurgency, be reduced to a few simple rules or principles.¹⁰⁹ The work of Kitson and Paget engages with the spectrum of counterinsurgency thought that remained firmly anchored in the precedence of the writing of the imperial policing era. That is, helping ‘make the army ready to deal with subversion, insurrection, and peacekeeping operations’.¹¹⁰ Others had loftier ambitions – for McCuen his writing sought to provide ‘officials and the informed public’ a ‘philosophical foundation or point of departure for counter-revolutionary warfare’.¹¹¹ In addition, it is clear from his opening and concluding chapters that Thompson’s work is an ‘awakening call’ about the spread of communist insurgency as much as it is an account of how to deal with it.¹¹²

Of the work done in this era, Galula and Thompson appear to have had the most enduring impact on shaping contemporary counterinsurgency thought. Galula’s work, in fact, is credited with being the most influential in shaping the United States military’s current counterinsurgency doctrine for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹¹³ The writer believes this influence is partially attributable to the alignment of Galula’s ideas with the enduring sensibility of the nature counterinsurgency that the Kennedy administration’s enthusiasms had created within the United States. The label applied to Thompson’s analysis was ‘seductive,’ and it is regularly claimed that its intellectual underpinnings run through to the present day in the United Kingdom’s military doctrine.¹¹⁴ The writing of both men epitomises the dominant conceptual legacy of the

¹⁰⁹ For example, see Thompson’s principles detailed in Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*. Chapter four, McCuen’s revolutionary and counter-revolutionary principles in McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, Chapter III, or Galula’s ‘Laws and Principles of Counterinsurgency Warfare’ in David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, ed. Praeger Security International, 2006 ed., PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 50-54.

¹¹⁰ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 2.

¹¹¹ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 19.

¹¹² Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, Preface, Chapter 1 and Chapter 15.

¹¹³ John Nagl in the Foreword to the University of Chicago Press edition of FM3-24. See: United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army US Field Manual No. 3-24*, xix.

¹¹⁴ French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*, 3.

counterinsurgency era. It also provides important intellectual seed stock for the growth of the modern 'hearts and mind' paradigm.

In conclusion, the counterinsurgency era represents both continuity and discontinuity for counterinsurgency thought. While the intellectual trends of the imperial policing era carried forward, responses to both de-colonisation and Cold War concerns about Communist expansion led to the development of new thinking about counterinsurgency. Fighting insurrection was no longer only about maintaining control or influence over a distant imperial possession. Rather, counterinsurgency now emerged as a declaratory and in many ways 'crusading' political policy. It not only suggested or indeed imposed a global narrative about issues in the developing world, but provided specific guidance about how a desired order in the international order was to be achieved, one modernising state at a time.

The Kennedy Administration added considerable impetus to this trend, but at the same time this led to difficulties. Blaufarb explains:

Moreover, due to the sometimes brash 'new breed' style of the administration, counterinsurgency acquired the trappings of a fad, a subject which some discoursed knowingly to demonstrate their closeness and sympathy with the new powers in the land – but with little understanding of the hard choices involved.¹¹⁵

One of these 'hard choices' was the Vietnam War, a conflict that more than any other remains indelibly associated with the counterinsurgency era, notwithstanding the relative paucity of significant counterinsurgency thought that was to emerge from it when compared to the other conflicts of the era. As subsequent examination of the post-9-11 era will show, the counterinsurgency era would not be the last time that Western thought about counterinsurgency acquired 'the trappings of a fad'.¹¹⁶

The post-Vietnam era

¹¹⁵ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 87.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

The post-Vietnam counterinsurgency era is book-ended by the fall of Saigon in 1975 and the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. Both events shocked the United States' psyche to the extent that each ultimately heralded new eras in counterinsurgency thinking and practice; (the changes resulting from the latter considered in the next section of this chapter). Of the four thematic counterinsurgency eras identified and examined in this chapter, the post-Vietnam era is the only one where the changes that define the era were not related to *why* counterinsurgency was fought, but *how*. For Western nations such as the United States, this was a significant change. For others, such as the United Kingdom, it made little appreciable difference.

John Nagl has claimed that in the wake of defeat in the Vietnam War the United States Army turned its back on counterinsurgency.¹¹⁷ The historical record, however, belies this blanket claim. Jeffery Michaels and Matthew Ford suggest the alternative, and more historically correct view: 'Throughout the 1980s a great deal of political and military attention was focussed on the perceived need for developing a US capability to deal with Third World insurgencies'.¹¹⁸ Central to understanding approaches to counterinsurgency during the post-Vietnam era by the United States is the realisation that one of the primary lessons coming out of that war, for policy makers, was not about counterinsurgency per se, but about the limitations of American power.¹¹⁹ The imperatives that had led to engagement in Vietnam – concerns about communist expansion and Cold War competition - had not dissipated. Rather, the key change was that the cathartic experience of losing in Vietnam led to a loss of enthusiasm for large-scale military commitments to counter such perceived threats. William Colby summed up the lesson learnt in this regard:

¹¹⁷ He makes this claim in several publications, including: John Nagl, "Counterinsurgency in Vietnam," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 147. And, in the introduction to the University of Chicago edition of the FM3-24: United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army: US Field Manual No. 3-24*, xiii-xiv.

¹¹⁸ Michaels and Ford, "Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice and the Politics of Counterinsurgency," 364.

¹¹⁹ See: Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 311; Colby and McCargar, *Lost Victory, a Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*, 8.

The lesson is not that the United States should avoid involvement in revolutionary situations or that counterinsurgency is a hopeless, and dangerous, art for Americans. Rather, such programs may be the easiest and least violent way to protect real American interests and allies. But their foundation must be intelligence of the enemy and his strategy and tactics and of the ally and his culture, strengths and weaknesses.¹²⁰

The result for the United States was, in order to avoid any more costly Vietnam-like experiences, a drive for continued engagement in counterinsurgency through 'proxy' wars – utilising a doctrinal concept known as 'Foreign Internal Defense' (FID).¹²¹

The conduct of counterinsurgency in this 'proxy war' manner offered the United States a range of benefits suggested by Paget, including the political benefit of not having to 'declare' war, the ability to carry fight to the enemy at a distance from the homeland, the use of indigenous personnel to prosecute the fight, and an overall economy of effort.¹²² The United States sought these benefits during the post-Vietnam era through the conduct of 'support to counterinsurgency operations' in places such as El Salvador and Colombia, and in the proxy support to anti-leftist insurgencies in places such as Nicaragua and Angola. In many ways the conduct of these 'proxy' wars can be seen to mirror many of the 'ways' that counterinsurgency objectives had been pursued by the colonial powers during the imperial policing era. It is worth noting, however, that the United States' level of political and material commitment to these conflicts was very low relative to the commitments of others to counterinsurgency during this era.

Other counterinsurgency conflicts of note during this era include the Rhodesian War that had begun in 1965 following Prime Minister Ian Smith's Universal Declaration of Independence, but concluded in 1980. South Africa's

¹²⁰ Colby and McCargar, *Lost Victory, a Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*, 367.

¹²¹ FID is defined in US military doctrine as 'The participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programmes taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.' See: United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-22 Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington DC: United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), I-1.

¹²² Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning*, 18.

war in South-West Africa and the British campaign in Northern Ireland had similarly begun in the counterinsurgency era but were to drag on in desultory fashion well into the post-Vietnam era.

Another key feature of the post-Vietnam era is the relative paucity of 'new' thinking about counterinsurgency. Three issues account for this. The first is what may be termed the 'Vietnam hangover' – people spent a considerable amount of time creating narratives to account for the outcome of the war and retrospectively analysing what had 'gone wrong'. As well as works previously cited from Colby and Blaufarb, 'military scholars' in the United States such as Harry Summers and Andrew Krepinevich produced works addressing this subject.¹²³ Another contributing factor is the relative lack of 'new' counterinsurgency activity to stimulate new thinking. For example, in the case of the United States, the few possible ongoing case studies were small in scale and often secretive – and thus unlikely to attract a lot of interest. Intellectual consideration of the conflict in Northern Ireland also suffered from its protracted nature, relatively small scale and the consistent adherence by the British counterinsurgency forces to the well established doctrine of 'framework operations'.¹²⁴

Accounting for the lack of new, original thought about counterinsurgency out of the Rhodesian and South Africa wars may be two different factors. First, because of their unique circumstances, both counterinsurgency forces pursued campaigns that can be characterised as largely conceptually derivative of the imperial policing era. Annette Seegers describes a second reason for the South Africans: 'COIN theory lagged behind practical experience' and 'very little COIN practice originated in theory. Rhodesian improvisation was too valuable.

¹²³ See: Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982); Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

¹²⁴ For an account of this, see: Richard Iron, "Britain's Longest War: Northern Island 1967-2007," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2008), 177-78.

Theory would follow it'.¹²⁵ Finally, it is possible that the end of the Cold War in 1991, and the subsequent emergence of an unprecedented period of peace-keeping and peace-enforcement (and conventional conflict in the form of the first Gulf War) occupied the intellectual curiosity of many during the last decade of this era.

The post-Vietnam era can ultimately be characterised as an interregnum between two periods of more vigorous Western engagement with counterinsurgency. The concerns with insurgency that had been salient during the counterinsurgency era remained though; however, tempering the response to them was the experience and demonstration effect of the United States' failure in Vietnam. During the first half of the era the ongoing Cold War had the effect of renewing the idea of using proxies to achieve counterinsurgency interests that had often been a feature of the imperial policing era. The end of the Cold War effectively brought an end to these proxy competitions and a focus away from counterinsurgency onto issues of peace-keeping / enforcement or conventional warfare. The development of counterinsurgency thought mirrored this.

¹²⁵ Annette Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, International Library of African Studies (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 138 and 141.

The post 9-11 era

The beginning of this era is 11 September 2001. While the end of this era remains open, its closure will undoubtedly remain a subject of speculation until some point after the cessation of Western engagement in the counterinsurgency conflicts that have effectively defined it.¹²⁶ It is not certain, for example, that the anticipated withdrawal of the United States, NATO and their allies from Afghanistan will necessarily mark the end of the era. The fact that this era is ongoing restricts its consideration in this section. While the circumstance of the era is identifiable and its key features traced, the primary purpose is to enable the analysis that will follow in the next chapter. No attempt occurs herein to draw substantive or definitive conclusions about the defining nature of the era, as they would necessarily be premature.

Whilst the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are the 'key note' or dominant counterinsurgency conflicts of this era to date, they alone do not define it. A range of more indirect counterinsurgency activities have also featured. These include campaigns such as the United States' Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines (OEF-P).¹²⁷ Another is the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Horn of Africa (CJSOTF-HOA) – an operation which has had very little written about it at the time of the research for this thesis.¹²⁸ Similarly, comprehensive academic analysis of the efforts of various American, British and Australian agencies in building counterinsurgency or counterterrorism

¹²⁶ For example, see the views of the various authors at: "World Politics Review Feature Report: Counterinsurgency in the Post-COIN Era," *World Politics Review*(2012), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/features/78/counterinsurgency-in-the-post-coin-era>. Accessed 7 February 2012.

¹²⁷ For an account of this operation see: Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review* LXXXVI, no. November - December 2006, No. 6 (2006).

¹²⁸ The following resources provide some insight into its activities: Mark Mazzetti, "U.S. Is Set to Expand Secret Activities in Mideast," *The New York Times* 2010; Donna Miles, "Panetta Thanks Troops in Djibouti," *U.S. DOD Press Release*(2011), <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=66446>; Sean D. Naylor, "The Secret War in Africa," *Military Times*, <http://www.militarytimes.com/projects/navy-seals-horn-of-africa/>. Accessed 2 Mar 2012.

expertise in nations as diverse as Pakistan and Indonesia, while contributing to the new era, have yet to be comprehensively analysed.¹²⁹

Rather than focusing on the actual counterinsurgency conflicts defining the character of the yet to close post - 9-11 era, the period is best understood by examining the concerns or interests that lie at the heart of it. While imperial policing era counterinsurgency was fought about imperial and state-centric ideas, and the counterinsurgency and post-Vietnam eras about the composition and nature of states in the international order (albeit on different scales), the post 9-11 era represents a period where counterinsurgency has been conducted about 'values'.

Superficially, the origin of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq typifies Callwell's third category of small wars, namely: 'campaigns to wipe put an insult, to avenge a wrong, or overthrow a dangerous enemy'.¹³⁰ Their ongoing prosecution, however, is better interpreted as echoing the Western response to perceptions of communist expansion through insurrection during the counterinsurgency era, but substituting the spread of Islamic fundamentalism for communism. The language of Western leaders, whether Presidents Bush and Obama, or Prime Ministers Blair, Gordon, Cameron, Howard, Rudd and Gillard, in explaining the nature of the threat and the required response, is similar to the rhetoric and narrative of the counterinsurgency era. Basil Liddell-Hart's lament from four decades ago again seems topical in that:

These problems (of guerrilla warfare) are of a very long standing, yet manifestly far from understood – especially in those countries where

¹²⁹ An example of effort in Pakistan is the support to Border Security, described at: United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "Border Security Programme: Pakistan," United States Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/fs/141576.htm>. Accessed 2 Mar 2012; The UK has also been involved in support to Pakistan Internal Security. See: Chris Woods and Declan Walsh, "Pakistan Expels British Trainers of Anti-Taliban Soldiers," *The Guardian* (2011), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/26/pakistan-expels-trainers-anti-taliban-soldiers>. Accessed 2 Mar 2012. For an example of cooperation on counter-terrorism between Australia and Indonesia, see: "Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Indonesia and Singapore by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (Legislation) June – July 2010," ed. Department of the Senate (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2010), 17-21.

¹³⁰ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 25.

everything that can be called “guerrilla warfare” has become a new military fashion or craze.¹³¹

The renewed enthusiasm for things ‘counterinsurgency’ amongst scholars has even led to instances where activity that cannot reasonably be characterised as counterinsurgency is being categorised as such, or interpreted through a counterinsurgency lens.¹³² Of particular note in this era has been the re-emergence of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm as the dominant body of thought about counterinsurgency.¹³³ Typifying the current iteration of the paradigm is the content of the contemporary United States military counterinsurgency doctrine, Field Manual (FM) 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*.¹³⁴ According to one claim, the ideas and principles of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm have become both ‘transcendent and supported by a “COIN lobby” of influential warrior scholars, academics and commentators’.¹³⁵ These claims are subject to investigation in the analysis undertaken in the following chapter.

Conclusion

A reviewer of a history of the United States’ military counterinsurgency doctrine during the counterinsurgency era wrote: ‘A full read of this comprehensive work also unambiguously reinforces the notion that the irony and the repetition of history, with attendant doctrinal ideas, are indeed inexorable’.¹³⁶ This sentiment applies equally well to the review of counterinsurgency by thematic era in this chapter. The review suggests that three distinct, consistent and persistent and occasionally paradigmatic

¹³¹ Basil.H Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd revised ed. (New York: Meridian, 1991), xv.

¹³² For an example of this see: Russell W. Glenn, *Counterinsurgency in a Test Tube, Analyzing the Success of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)* (Santa Monica CA: RAND National Defense Institute, 2007). RAMSI was addressing a problem of the state capacity of the Solomon Islands to maintain the rule of law in the face of corruption and widespread criminality and rather than a counterinsurgency task.

¹³³ Also contemporarily and alternatively classified as ‘population–centric counterinsurgency’ by various authors and critics.

¹³⁴ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*.

¹³⁵ Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army," 5. Michaels and Ford, "Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice and the Politics of Counterinsurgency," 352.

¹³⁶ Robert M. Cassidy, "Review Essay: Current US Counter-Insurgency Operations," *RUSI Journal* 151, no. 5 (2006).

approaches are evident. All have their origins rooted in a time when counterinsurgency was a 'profoundly imperial, state-centric phenomenon' that is quite different to the contemporary circumstance of second-party counterinsurgency.¹³⁷ The first strategic approach, labelled 'policing', is perhaps best characterised by the European colonial conduct, although its practice and advocacy clearly dates from antiquity. The second, labelled the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, has its origins in the 'enlightenment vision' of colonial Europeans, refinement during the post-colonial Cold War era with liberal peace theory and anti-communist modernisation doctrines and subsequent evangelisation as 'population- centric counterinsurgency' in the wars following 9-11.¹³⁸ A final approach seen is that characterised as 'foreign internal defence' (FID). This approach has generally been used when the relative scale of commitment (reflecting the engagement with core or vital interests and resourcing) is low. Examples of this approach are relatively more common than is often revealed in the volume of recent writing on counterinsurgency.

The aim of this chapter was to review the extant and dominant bodies of thought concerning Western counterinsurgency thought and practice. It is thus more descriptive than analytical. The subject of the next chapter is the critical evaluation of these concepts in order to identify and analyse the theoretical and practical problems they represent for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency.

¹³⁷ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 233.

¹³⁸ Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 240.

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Chapter three. Critical evaluation of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm

The aim of this chapter is to build on the evolutionary context provided in the preceding chapter in order to analyse the efficacy of extant, contemporary counterinsurgency theory. It will highlight and confirm the problematic 'gaps' in the current paradigm that were claimed in the introductory chapter with respect to counterinsurgency generally, and second-party counterinsurgency in particular. The previous chapter provided a brief overview of the origins and development of counterinsurgency thought, eschewing highly detailed analysis in favour of providing a clear narrative description. In contrast, this chapter's critical evaluation of the dominant counterinsurgency paradigm embraces detail in order to specify clearly the theoretical and practical problems the 'hearts and minds' paradigm presents. The identification and definition of the specific shortcomings in the current paradigm will set the scene for the proposal of an appropriate second-party counterinsurgency framework in the next chapter. However, before making any judgements about contemporary counterinsurgency theory, it is useful to confirm expectations of military theory in general terms in order to provide a relative benchmark to inform the assessment process.

Clausewitz argued that the primary purpose of theory was to provide clarity for concepts and ideas that may otherwise appear confused and entangled.¹ Colin Gray expands upon the situations where this clarity should be realised with his note that 'in the social sciences theory aspires modestly only to provide most-case understanding for explanation. Exceptions are permissible'.² These observations suggest an underlying purpose for theory generally that will suffice for this analysis – that it provides *conceptual clarity* in *most* cases.

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), p 132.

² Colin S. Gray, *Categorical Confusion? The Strategic Implications of Recognizing Challenges as Either Irregular or Traditional*, Strategic Studies Institute Monographs (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2012), 5.

However, this is itself generic, providing insufficient guidance about any unique requirements of counterinsurgency theory. For this, context is required, and the context for counterinsurgency is war. The definition of counterinsurgency from the introductory chapter squarely situates counterinsurgency activity within the Clausewitzian definition of war – ‘an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will’.³ Without attempting to pre-empt the subsequent analysis in this chapter, counterinsurgency is neither ‘armed social work’, ‘nation building’ nor ‘a governance competition’. While it may be complementary to other social, political and economic objectives, its end is finite and discrete – the defeat of insurgency.⁴ Contextually and logically then, it follows that the specific purpose of counterinsurgency theory is to provide conceptual clarity, in the majority of cases, about the strategy and tactics associated with the defeat of insurgency. It follows that the relevant measure for evaluating counterinsurgency theory is its reliability and clarity in directing, predicting or accounting for success or failure in any given attempt at counterinsurgency.

Logically, there are three steps required for the critical evaluation that is the purpose of this chapter. The first step is that of identification and definition of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm referenced many times in the preceding chapters. The next two steps form the structural sections of this chapter – establishing that the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm is indeed dominant in contemporary counterinsurgency thought, and then undertaking critical analysis of it. To assist with clarity, structure and understanding, the critical analysis section of this chapter itself is divided into parts. The first will analyse philosophical and theoretical concerns identified with the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm. Following this is an examination of the practical concerns for policy, strategy and counterinsurgency practice that arise from the paradigm. The chapter will conclude by framing the gap with respect to current second-party counterinsurgency thinking and practice that the framework proposed in the next chapter seeks to address.

³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

⁴ The definition of ‘defeat’ herein is that the insurgency is not capable of using insurgent ways and means to successfully pursue or attain its desired objective(s).

A dominant paradigm

The contemporary 'hearts and minds' paradigm remains essentially unchanged from its origin in the counterinsurgency era, acknowledging that there have been different philosophical interpretations taken in different contexts over time. Introduced within the introductory chapter to this thesis, the concept is neatly characterised for the purposes of this analysis as: 'A unified political, economic, diplomatic, administrative, and social effort to win broad popular allegiance alongside a strictly limited military campaign to destroy the politically marginalized insurgency'.⁵ Even the most superficial examination of contemporary Western news media suggests that the concept, under the catch phrase 'hearts and minds', is now in fact ubiquitous with counterinsurgency. The term rolls from the lips of politicians, journalists and think tank commentators with a familiarity that is perhaps inversely proportional to any understanding associated with its implications. Shafer has suggested that beyond familiarity, the ideas associated with 'hearts and minds' have explanatory, prescriptive and ideological utility that account for its longevity despite 'academic attacks and real world failure'.⁶ He highlights that the phrase (and concept) provides parsimonious explanation of third-world complexity, suggests readily available policy prescriptions for managing it, and serves an importantly ideological reference point.⁷ Supporting this observation, the idea that selecting a counterinsurgency 'model' or 'strategy' is 'ideologically charged' emerges elsewhere in contemporary literature analysing counterinsurgency.⁸ Compared to the very long history of counterinsurgency operations, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm has existed for a relatively short period, and yet it proves Bernard Brodie's observation that 'Axioms need not always be old in order to be powerfully entrenched'.⁹ Before examining the evidence supporting the

⁵ Jacqueline L. Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare" (PhD Dissertation, Brandeis, 2011), 3.

⁶ Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 280.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ For example, the editors of this work note it as a theme. See: Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 13.

⁹ Brodie, *War and Politics*, 3.

assertion that 'hearts and minds' is the dominant contemporary Western counterinsurgency paradigm, it is worth digressing briefly to look into why this may be so.

A close examination of case studies from the counterinsurgency era provides little empirical evidence from the conduct of counterinsurgency to support an assumption of the inevitability of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm becoming dominant. Other conceptual approaches are also evident, and their interpretation arises from the same cases of counterinsurgency often cited in support of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. For example, Gerard Chaliand looks at the same period and cases of the counterinsurgency era and deduces quite a different counterinsurgency concept emerging for the British, French and American practitioners.¹⁰ The (unnamed) counterinsurgency approach described by Chaliand encompasses the organisation of what he terms 'parallel hierarchies', population resettlement, local knowledge (supported by specially developed intelligence techniques), mobile and aggressive specialised security forces and attacking and 'liquidating' the nascent insurgency infrastructure as early as possible.¹¹ Some low-level, 'tactical' concepts in this approach (such as gaining local knowledge) align with similar ideas from 'hearts and minds'. However, this is likely because they are matters of pragmatic military common sense. The 'ways' identified from Chaliand's analysis and their 'end' – the focus on the *destruction of the insurgency* rather than its defeat in a '*governance and service delivery competition*' differ remarkably from the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. Notwithstanding the obvious impetus of the Kennedy Administration's enthusiasms, what might account for the selection of one paradigm over another when the analysis of identical cases produces arguably two very different concepts? A possible answer lies in the political culture of modern Western democratic states.

¹⁰ Gerard Chaliand, ed. *Guerrilla Strategies, an Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1982), 29.

¹¹ Ibid.

The selection of the 'gentler' 'hearts and minds' paradigm by Western states reflects sensitiveness and political preference. This is understandable and entirely reasonable when the nature of Western liberal democracy is considered. Luttwak, Peters and Zhukov have all variously argued that the nature of a state matters in selection of counterinsurgency approaches.¹² One of their arguments is that authoritarian regimes are more likely to use repressive measures in counterinsurgency, and that such repression works well. However, such a repressive approach is unlikely to pass the 'acceptability' test in a liberal democracy. Shy and Collier observed that because the language of revolutionary war is 'politically hyperbolic and hypersensitive' it has shaped the nature of theory about it.¹³ They assert it is difficult to make assumptions about either the objectivity of theory or its relationship to practice.¹⁴ The clear implication here is that the narrative about counterinsurgency theory, and its palatability, is as important to the governing body politic as its usefulness in fighting insurgency. Moreover, questions of efficacy aside, there is greater attraction for modern liberal democracies in a narrative of development and *nation building* than one of *control* and *violence*. Reinforcing the view that policy choice can be as much about preference as pragmatism is the observation that 'participation in, and contributions to the policymaking process are restricted to those strategic analysts who share a worldview congenial to the policy-makers'.¹⁵ Since the 'hearts and minds' paradigm theorists operate within the context of the liberal peace theory and its prescription of freedom, democracy and free enterprise', there is perhaps little surprise that many contemporary policy makers in modern Western liberal democracies will find their views congenial.¹⁶

¹² Edward Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," *Harpers Magazine*, February 2007; Ralph Peters, "In Praise of Attrition," *Parameters* XXXIV, no. Summer, No. 2 (2004); Yuri M. Zhukov, "Counterinsurgency in a Non-Democratic State, the Russian Example," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012).

¹³ Shy and Collier, "The Makers of Modern Strategy," 821.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 822.

¹⁵ Colin S. Gray, "Strategists: Some Views Critical of the Profession," *International Journal* 26, no. 4 (1971): 780.

¹⁶ Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 240.

While there is widespread and diverse support for the view that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm constitutes the dominant model in contemporary Western approaches to the issue of counterinsurgency, it is still a contested view.¹⁷ Since the dominance of the hearts and mind paradigm is a key tenet of what this thesis asserts is problematic with contemporary second-party counterinsurgency, it is necessary to examine claims to the contrary. The view that it is not the dominant paradigm can be characterised by an argument from David Kilcullen. In 2006, he invoked the exegesis of the 'received wisdom' from texts of the counterinsurgency era by counterinsurgency practitioners to assert the dominance of the paradigm in approaches to contemporary counterinsurgency.¹⁸ However, he has since retreated from this view, stating in an awkward double negative that it is 'not only *not* the dominant paradigm for contemporary conflict, it arguably should not be'.¹⁹ This thesis is in clear agreement with Kilcullen's second point, but refutes his first.

The argument for the 'hearts and minds' paradigm *not* being dominant relies on Kilcullen's assertion that contemporary Western counterinsurgency practice does not follow its prescriptions.²⁰ The problem with this contention is that it takes a literal Kuhnian view of the term paradigm and then applies it in a way that Kuhn himself regarded as inappropriate. Kuhn asserted that a paradigm described a set of practices that define a scientific discipline at a given point in time, but he rejected that it could do so within the social sciences, a field within which the study of counterinsurgency assuredly sits. Paradigm is thus not a synonym for strategy. While the latter is necessarily about pragmatism and practicality, the former is as much about common perception and how that subsequently frames understanding. That is, the paradigmatic view is in part independent of the reality of any actions; it is a creation of the

¹⁷ For indicative examples, see: Frank G. Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?," *Parameters* 37, no. 2 (2007); Michaels and Ford, "Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice and the Politics of Counterinsurgency"; Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN."

¹⁸ Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," 111.

¹⁹ Emphasis in the original text. David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency, the State of a Controversial Art," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 149.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

acceptance of the narrative covering those actions. Such dissonance between the narrative of theory and practice is clearly demonstrable in analysis of current and recent campaigns. For example, analysis of the Iraq surge case study reveals such dissonance between what actually occurred on the ground and the narrative offered by both the White House and MNF-I to explain it. The assertion of paradigm dominance is evident in both policy and doctrine.

The maxim 'policy is king, but often is ignorant of the nature and character of war,' assists with the beginning of understanding of how a less than satisfactory paradigm may be accepted and applied to what is regarded as a vital interest.²¹ Bernard Brodie provides further perspective:

Vital interests, despite common assumptions to the contrary, have only a vague connection to objective fact. A sovereign nation determines for itself what its vital interests are (freedom to do so is what the term *sovereign* means), and its leaders accomplish this exacting task largely by using their highly fallible and inevitably biased human judgement to interpret the external political environment. To save wear and tear on their always overburdened and frequently limited analytical powers, they cling obsessively to commonly accepted axioms, some of which may be old enough to have the aura of 'traditional' policy.²²

Reinforcing that the commonly accepted axioms of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm may be old enough to have the aura of 'traditional' policy is consideration of the age of contemporary Western policy makers and their advisors. Even the oldest must have lived with the precepts of the 'hearts and minds' conception since their youth; while for those under 50 years of age, it literally is 'received wisdom' from another era.

The introductory chapter suggested that it has become an article of faith at the highest levels of the United States' strategic thinking that the only path to achieve counterinsurgency effect is by building capacity, economic growth and good governance.²³ It appears as a Pavlov-type behaviouralist policy response to the ringing of the counterinsurgency bell. The list of assumptions about

²¹ Colin S. Gray, *Fighting Talk: Forty Maxims on Peace, War and Strategy* (Westport CT: Praeger Security International, 2007).

²² Brodie, *War and Politics*, 2.

²³ United States Government, "National Security Strategy," 26.

counterinsurgency provided by Eliot Cohen in a significant contemporary bureaucratic policy guide supports this idea in that:

American counterinsurgency practice rests on a number of assumptions: that the decisive effort is rarely military (although security is the essential prerequisite for success); that our efforts must be directed to the creation of local and national governmental structures that will serve their populations, and, over time, replace the efforts of foreign partners; that superior knowledge, and in particular, understanding of the 'human terrain' is essential; and that we must have the patience to persevere in what will necessarily prove long struggles.²⁴

Cohen's words are a concise creed of the contemporary hearts and mind paradigm. However, asserting the paradigm's policy dominance does not rely solely on the word of an academic scholar or bureaucrat's tome. Examination of the words of Western political leaders provides further proof of both its continuity and hold on policy.

President George W. Bush affirmed the 'hearts and minds' paradigm in February 2007 when he stated that the United States' goal in Afghanistan was to establish a stable, moderate, and democratic state that respects the rights of its citizens, and governs its territory effectively.²⁵ The next year he listed as progress in the war that 'millions of young girls go to school that didn't have a chance to go to school before in Afghanistan....[H]ealth care needs are being met for the first time....[T]here are roads being built so farmers can get product to the market'.²⁶ His successor continued the 'hearts and minds' policy dominance in December 2009, significantly during a speech to the next generation of junior military leaders at the United States Military Academy at West Point . President Obama's words did not focus on the military defeat of the Taliban; but he did single out service delivery, anti-corruption and

²⁴ Eliot Cohen in the preface to:United States Government, "U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide," (Washington DC: Bureau of Political - Military Affairs, Department of State, 2009).

²⁵ George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses Progress in Afghanistan, Global War on Terror, the Mayflower Hotel, Washington DC, 15 February 2007," (Washington DC: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2007).

²⁶ George W. Bush, "President Bush Meets with General David Mckiernan, Commander for NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the Oval Office, 1 October 2008," (Washington DC: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2008).

agricultural assistance.²⁷ The United States is not alone in adherence to this policy paradigm – it crosses the Atlantic Ocean. In the United Kingdom the document 'Our political strategy for Afghanistan' states:

A political settlement can only succeed if it is underpinned by effective, inclusive and democratic governance. We are working with the Afghan government as it seeks to reinforce democratic processes, improve service delivery and reduce corruption...Neither the international community nor the Afghan Government will succeed in bringing sustainable security to Afghanistan by military means alone. A political process, culminating in a sustainable settlement is vital for lasting peace in Afghanistan.²⁸

Finally, reinforcing the ubiquity of the policy paradigm amongst Western allies, Australian policy statements also align. Prime Minister John Howard in a statement to the Parliament in 2006 explained:

The security challenge is twofold: firstly, to provide a secure environment to allow Afghans to rebuild their society free from violence and extremism and, secondly, to strengthen Afghanistan's institutions so that they can provide a stronger framework for democratisation, religious tolerance and economic growth.²⁹

Even more recently, Prime Minister Julia Gillard told the Australian Parliament that a core task of Australian involvement in the war in Afghanistan was 'helping improve the Afghan Government's capacity to deliver core services and generate income earning activities for its people'.³⁰ The diversity of the sources of these policy statements: across three different Western polities, years and political parties, combined with their alignment with the core tenets of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, are string indicators of a dominant hold on declaratory policy. This is also true with respect to military doctrine.

²⁷ Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Eisenhower Hall Theare, United States Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York," (Washington DC: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2009).

²⁸ Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, "Our Political Strategy for Afghanistan," Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/afghanistan/political-strategy/>. Accessed 13 March 2012.

²⁹ John Howard, "Ministerial Statements - Afghanistan, Speech, Wednesday 9 August 2006, Hansard - House of Representatives," (Canberra: Australian Government, Parliament of Australia, 2006), 84.

³⁰ Julia Gillard, "Ministerial Statements - Afghanistan, 19 October 2010, Hansard - House of Representatives," (Canberra: Australian Government, Parliament of Australia, 2010).

Consideration of military doctrine is important in establishing the dominance of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm because it is 'what is taught'.³¹ The implication of this for the development or inculcation of paradigmatic belief or behaviour is obvious. Since the military leaders in Western democracies are a primary source of advice about the conduct of war for the civilian political executive, their views, advice and actions can profoundly shape policy and strategy. Apart from actual experience, a source of Western military professional views about war is the body of military doctrine that all modern western militaries develop and maintain. Hew Strachan suggests that military doctrine has even occasionally exceeded its role of guidance for thought, and filled the void created in an absence of strategy.³² Therefore, any inclination by military doctrine to embrace a particular approach for counterinsurgency is likely to have powerful ramifications for wider policy. To varying degrees, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm has provided the rootstock for the recent regrowth of contemporary Western military counterinsurgency doctrine.

In terms of doctrine, the United States' Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual reflects the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.³³ It opens with a foreword that has a veritable shopping list of 'hearts and minds' tasks that soldiers and marines undertaking counterinsurgency are expected to perform. After labelling the United States' troops 'nation builders as well as warriors', it lists activities including: re-establishment of local institutions, rebuilding infrastructure and basic services, establishing local governance and the rule of law.³⁴ Two virtual canon texts of the counterinsurgency era, Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* and Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* are two of three works noted as influential on the acknowledgement page.³⁵ Counterinsurgency scholars have noted that the influence of Galula and Thompson 'pervaded' the

³¹ As described in the foreword to: British Army, *UK AFM Vol. 1, Part 10, COIN*, 1, Part 10.

³² Hew Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," *Survival* 52, no. 5 (2010): 168.

³³ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

manual.³⁶ One commentary on the United States' field manual reinforces the idea that adoption of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm reflects political and ideological preference as much as pragmatism: 'The manual's Rousseauian outlook had its roots more in political theory than actual experience'.³⁷ Further heightening the perception of the doctrine as the reflection of paradigm, 2009 saw the publication of another manual by the United States, this one titled *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*.³⁸ Military doctrine at the 'field manual' level is necessarily practical – it tells soldiers what they must do in the field. The fact that the US Army felt the need to provide an amplifying, practical and 'tactical' manual so soon after the publication of *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency* suggests that the first publication embraced the dogma of the hearts and minds paradigm over the practicality required by the military in conflict.

Once again, as with the circumstance with declaratory counterinsurgency policy, the United Kingdom's approach is similar. Whilst more restrained and pragmatic than the United States' ambitious doctrine, the British Army's counterinsurgency manual is in alignment with the key concepts of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. At its core, the British Army counterinsurgency doctrine attributes success or failure for insurgents to the attitude of the population towards them.³⁹ The alignment of United Kingdom doctrine with the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is also across that nation's joint force. John French asserts that the United Kingdom's 2009 Joint Doctrine on security and stabilisation is essentially a re-statement of the core of Robert Thompson's work.⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, contemporary Australian counterinsurgency military doctrine

³⁶ Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?," 71.

³⁷ Bing West, "Counterinsurgency: A New Doctrine's Fading Allure," World Politics Review Feature Report: Counterinsurgency in the post-COIN era(2012), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/features/78/counterinsurgency-in-the-post-coin-era>. Accessed 7 February 2012.

³⁸ United States Department of the Army, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24.2* (Washington DC: United States Government, 2009).

³⁹ British Army, UK AFM Vol. 1, Part 10, COIN, 1, Part 10, 1-2. Section 1-3

⁴⁰ French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*, 4. Implicitly, this re-statement also picks up some of the 'harder' edges of Thompson's approach.

reflects a combination of the pragmatism of the United Kingdom's doctrine and the enthusiasm of United States' doctrine for 'Galula-centric' ideas.⁴¹

This section argues that the key tenets of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm align sympathetically with many of the political values of many Western liberal democratic states. This, and the fact that the binary alternative concept frequently offered (one that is much more confrontational, violent and 'ugly') is generally unpalatable and unacceptable to these states, highlights a Western cultural pre-disposition to accepting 'hearts and minds' as an attractive concept. However, there remains a wide gulf between attraction to and courting of ideas and the marriage of minds implied by the adoption of a policy paradigm. Yet several factors have facilitated the uncomfortable and pre-arranged the courtship. These include the intuitive preference of the policymaking apparatus and elites of Western states for advice reflecting a view that is homogenous to theirs, analytical fallibility, and an acceptance of 'common' axioms. The consummation of the marriage of the 'hearts and minds' conceptual paradigm and Western policy preferences to create a dominant paradigm is evident in contemporaneous declaratory policy and military doctrine. Establishing that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is the dominant strand of contemporary Western counterinsurgency theory addresses the first objective of this chapter. The next task is to analyse its efficacy and evaluate any gaps with respect to counterinsurgency generally, and second-party counterinsurgency in particular.

Philosophical and theoretical issues

Despite the demonstrated dominance of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, one philosophical issue at its core remains inchoate: reconciling the central and 'gentle' themes of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm with the actual purpose of counterinsurgency. A wide review of the extant literature and current discourse surrounding counterinsurgency reveals little debate about the

⁴¹ The contemporary Australian military doctrine is: Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0-1 Counterinsurgency*. Unlike its US and UK counterparts, it has not been released to the public.

issue, although Jacqueline Hazleton's recent dissertation obliquely touches on it with the observation that: 'There is an inherent tension between the strategic goals of the population-centric approach and the tactical necessities of defeating an insurgency'.⁴² Put simply, fundamental friction and confusion exist at the heart of the paradigm between addressing the ways and ends of insurgency. An analogy is useful here to assist with explanation. Imagine if the presence of an insurgency in a state is similar to a fire threatening to burn down a building, and the counterinsurgent state is the municipal fire department. Adoption of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is analogous to fighting the fire by modifying the building code to create more fire resistant structures, expanding the capacity of the municipal fire department and instituting a public awareness campaign about the dangers of arsonists and playing with matches. Each of these measures is worthy, and ultimately may reduce the incidence of fire and the subsequent risk of catastrophic destruction, but they do not help much with extinguishing the immediate fire. Such initiatives are of little utility when the building is already alight. In the same way, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm focuses on the ends of an insurgency, and represent an effort to undermine the likelihood of its recurrence, rather than the immediate peril afforded to the state by the ways of insurgency.

Complicating the issue further is the fact that second-party counterinsurgency's adoption of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm pre-supposes that the development of stable, democratic states and (citing the earlier quote from Cohen) 'creation of local and national governmental structures that will serve their populations' is the strategic end sought by intervention. More problematic still is the implicit assumption, highly difficult to test empirically, that the 'ways' favoured by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm – primarily development and modernisation - will actually serve to extinguish the fire of insurgency. Further examination of this assumption follows later in this chapter.

The first issue raised which throws into question the efficacy of 'hearts and minds' is whether the insurgent 'ends' would be 'allowable' should the

⁴² Hazleton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 27.

insurgents renounce violence and seek them through engagement in the improved political and governance processes that are amongst the ends of the hearts and mind paradigm. If this is not the case for the second-party counterinsurgent then an inherently problematic tension exists between use of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm and the seemingly neo-imperialist ends sought by the intervention. Alexis Johnson, one of the progenitors of the contemporary 'hearts and minds' paradigm perhaps unwittingly telegraphed that national self-interest, not altruism, lay at the heart of intervention when he wrote in 1962 that the United States' purpose was:

Assisting these new nations in building the kind of society and government that can maintain itself, develop in step with the modern world and, above all, remain free from domination or control by Communist forces hostile to us.⁴³

Johnson's words belie the philosophy he and his cohort developed, and which has endured in the form of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm from the counterinsurgency era. Through adherence to the precepts of modernisation theory the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, to use a common idiom, 'bells the cat' with respect to the ends required from counterinsurgency. Echoing Leites' and Wolf's previously cited criticism; the ambition of 'hearts and minds' eschews simplification of a complex problem in favour of needless complexity.⁴⁴ Once again, the real objective of counterinsurgency is neither nation building nor winning a governance competition. Through its focus on the distant ends of insurgency rather than the immediate and problematic ways of insurgency, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm raises two further immediate problems. It creates a dissonance that potentially highlights hypocrisy and reveals self-interest (both of which impact upon legitimacy) in second-party counterinsurgency and it generates philosophical confusion as to the true purpose of counterinsurgency in general. Such fundamental concerns at the heart of the concept suggest a requirement for scrutiny of its theoretical underpinnings.

⁴³ Johnson, "Internal Defense and the Foreign Service," 20. This is an excerpt from a quote cited in the previous chapter.

⁴⁴ Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, ed. Julius Margolis and Aaron Wildavsky, Markham Series in Public Policy Analysis (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970), 7-8, 13.

The preference that Western states have for the 'hearts and minds' paradigm and the endorsement of its acceptability as a concept is not the same as validating its feasibility, since:

Intellectually pleasing filters through which to view and categorize the phenomena of a disorderly world are not knowledge. Systematic knowledge requires us to propose and test and reformulate and retest statements about how and why things happen.⁴⁵

There is very little evidence in the actual practice of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm that would enable empirical data about its conduct to be tested and systemised. Supporting this idea is the point made by David Kilcullen that 'the empirical base of the insights is extremely small, using and referring to only a handful of cases'.⁴⁶ The paradigm remains a theoretical model in search of a 'proof' case. This is a long-standing problem, as this critique of the paradigm from over four decades ago reveals:

Discussion and studies of insurgency are replete with anecdotes, and assertions, but one finds little application of sensible, let alone scientific, methodology. Explicit hypotheses confronted by data are rare. Writers and commentators seldom suggest or recognize that there is a high probability that assertions they make may be wrong. Affirmations are made about what policies should be followed and what mistakes have been made, with almost no attempt to formulate and test the implicit assumptions and models underlying the assertions.⁴⁷

Alternatively, as succinctly explained by Alex Marshall: 'Counterinsurgency theory today may retain its own grammar, but nonetheless finds itself applied in scenarios where that grammar no longer corresponds to any wider political logic'.⁴⁸

Chapter two examined the reasons how and why this could have occurred. They included a lack of systematic and disciplined study of the phenomenon; the influence of romanticism, myth-making and faddism;

⁴⁵ Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 15.

⁴⁶ Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "The Study of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 13.

⁴⁷ Leites and Wolf Jr, "Rebellion and Authority: Myths and Realities Exposed," 2.

⁴⁸ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 244.

development of a Western crusading political ideology to counter communism and a relative lack of military intellectual capital investment in thinking and theorising about small wars. Gray further highlights the problem that arises when theory develops in isolation from demonstrable phenomena or practice:

When real-world experience is absent, logic unharried by empirical evidence will have to suffice to explain the structure of a subject. When logic rules, the creative energy of highly intelligent people will produce impressive intellectual artifacts that are both monuments to reason, and offensive to the reason inherent in common sense.⁴⁹

Yet the view that the theoretical basis of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is both a 'monument to reason, and offensive to the reason inherent in common sense' has sympathetic support in varied contemporary analysis. Whether specific criticism such as those of Luttwak and Peters' criticisms of the policy making process, or more nuanced critiques of certain aspects, the idea that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm suffers from empirical theoretical inadequacies is widespread.⁵⁰ One such theoretical inadequacy is the positioning of the political nature of counterinsurgency as being somehow separate from that of war generally.

The idea that counterinsurgency is different from 'normal' war because of 'politics' is a central plank in the floor upon which the 'hearts and minds' paradigm rests. It has its origin in Galula's empirically unproven assertion that: 'A revolutionary war is 20 per cent military action and 80 percent political'.⁵¹ The fact that this idiom has retained explanatory favour amongst

⁴⁹ Gray, *Categorical Confusion? The Strategic Implications of Recognizing Challenges as Either Irregular or Traditional* 13.

⁵⁰ See: Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice." *passim*; Ralph Peters, "The Hearts-and-Minds Myth: Sorry, but Winning Means Killing," *Armed Forces Journal*, no. September (2006), *passim*. Broader, general criticisms are covered throughout Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*, OUP paperback edition 2006 ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Specific criticisms about the policy process with respect to 'hearts and minds' are throughout: Michaels and Ford, "Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice and the Politics of Counterinsurgency;" Paul Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009); John Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago: From Mao to Bin Laden* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); and Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency." *all passim*.

⁵¹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 63.

counterinsurgency theorists over the last half century is supported by a recent hyperbolic assertion that counterinsurgency is now apparently '100 percent political'.⁵² The problem that arises here is that undue emphasis on the so-called 'political nature' of counterinsurgency distorts understanding about its conduct, based on a serious misapprehension about politics and war. Once again, this has implications for the utility of the 'hearts and mind paradigm' for counterinsurgency generally and second-party counterinsurgency specifically. As is often the case, Clausewitz provides insight:

War is not an independent phenomenon, but the continuation of politics by different means. Consequently, the main lines of every major strategic plan are *largely political in nature*, and their political character increases the more the plan applies to the entire campaign and to the whole state....According to this point of view, there can be no question of a *purely military* evaluation of a great strategic issue, nor of a purely military scheme to solve it.⁵³

Clausewitz's description clearly encapsulates revolutionary war and insurgency as much (and as adequately) as it does conventional war. The issue with insurgency being 'uniquely' political in character seems to arise for the first time with the Western response to analysis of Mao's arguments about revolutionary war during the counterinsurgency era. Birtle offers a correction to this:

The assertion by Mao's Western disciples that prior guerrilla conflicts had been apolitical was historically incorrect. Past revolutionary movements may have been less sophisticated in organization and technique, but their leaders certainly had been aware of the political and psychological components of their struggles.⁵⁴

Quite simply, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm mistakenly asserts a unique importance for politics in insurgency warfare that is fallacious. It is both an oversimplification and dangerous because 'approaches to the problem that

⁵² Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," 123.

⁵³ Clausewitz in a letter to a contemporary, Carl von Roeder, 22 December 1827. Cited in: Peter Paret, "The Genesis of *on War*," in *On War*, ed. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 7. Emphasis in the original text.

⁵⁴ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976*, 26.

unduly stress either military or non-military action are the worst kinds of oversimplification'.⁵⁵ Leites and Wolf more deftly handle the real issue with respect to politics than Galula when they write that: 'The differences between counterinsurgency and other conflicts relate to the content and conduct of political and coercive roles, not to their relative importance'.⁵⁶ This misapprehension about insurgency being political and therefore a separate kind of war raises an awkward question of logic for second-party counterinsurgents that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is conspicuously silent on. It fails to account for how second-party counterinsurgents might win a local political argument that the political elite of the host nation cannot. Moreover, how they might impose a viable political alternative attractive to insurgent aspirations but likely to be abhorrent to host nation political elites. Perhaps more critically, and addressing counterinsurgency generally, it diverts attention from the immediate problem of violent action by insurgents by shaping focus towards the more distant, albeit perhaps no less problematic, political ends of the insurgency. The 'hearts and minds' paradigm's problem with the relative importance of politics in counterinsurgency has an echo in its approach to popular support.

A key tenet, in fact the 'naming rights tenet' of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is that counterinsurgency is a competition for the support of the population:

'Hearts and minds' is both an ideational and material concept. Counterinsurgency authorities are obliged to shore up ideological support within a population for the political system they are preserving or installing while also legally, socially and politically invalidating the ideological premise of the insurgency.⁵⁷

Stathis Kalyvas' extensive study on violence in civil war examined the claims for popular support in detail and highlighted several concerns arising from it.⁵⁸ He suggests that taking an attitudinal stance for assessing popular support is

⁵⁵ Peter Paret and John W. Shy, "Guerrilla Warfare and U.S. Military Policy: A Study," in *The Guerrilla - and How to Fight Him, Selections from the Marine Corps Gazette*, ed. T.N. Greene (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962; reprint, Fourth 1965), 53.

⁵⁶ Leites and Wolf Jr, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, 75.

⁵⁷ Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth, the British Experience of Irregular Warfare*, 7.

⁵⁸ Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*; especially Chapter four, examining 'collaboration'.

problematic because attitudes are unobservable and must be inferred, and unrelated factors can shape this assessment.⁵⁹ Kalyvas' study suggests that given a choice between the preference and allegiance of the population or control of the behaviour and actions of the population, the latter is preferable. One of his conclusions leads to the view that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's simple conception of a competition for popular support as a binary activity of choice is hopelessly simplistic:

Actual behaviour is difficult to observe in civil war environments; and even when reliably observed, support is the outcome of a dynamic, shifting, fluid and often inconsistent confluence of multiple and varying preferences and constraints. This turns the search for one overriding motivation across individuals, time, and space that dominates much of the literature on rebellion into a highly improbable and potentially misleading enterprise.⁶⁰

When extrapolated into thinking about how a counterinsurgent may practically use something as complex as altitudinal support or preference, it calls into question the very utility of the notion.

Further highlighting the difficult nature of this foundation 'hearts and minds' tenet, Leites and Wolf state that the only 'act' that insurgents really need from the majority of the population is what they term 'nondenuciation' and 'noncombat' against it.⁶¹ They go on to suggest the theoretically small percentage of the population actually required to actively support the guerrilla could be as low as one percent. Their view finds support from Kalyvas: 'An empirical regularity supported by considerable evidence is that only a small minority of people are actively involved in civil wars, either as fighters or active supporters'.⁶² Through making the attainment of popular support the 'sine qua non of counterinsurgency effort' as suggested by Roger Trinquier, the evidence suggests that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm mandates an inefficient

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁶¹ Leites and Wolf Jr, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, 10.

⁶² Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 102.

approach to achieve an inherently uncertain outcome.⁶³ Hazelton suggests a further theoretical shortfall in logic, in that:

Framing COIN as a competition between insurgents and state for popular support based on good governance fails to account for cases in which the state succeeded without providing good governance and cases in which the insurgency succeeded without popular support or good governance.⁶⁴

One possible hypothesis for success in such conflicts where there is evidence of a lack of either good governance or popular support for either side points to the use of coercion.

The prescription of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm that enticing the population is the key to strategic success is theoretically complex and practically problematic. The idea itself goes against the large body of historical evidence of coercion being an instrument of choice.⁶⁵ Clausewitz described the idea that 'kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed' as a fallacy.⁶⁶ Yet the 'hearts and minds' paradigm preferences the minimum use of force in counterinsurgency warfare. For example, contemporary United States military counterinsurgency doctrine, shown previously to be firmly rooted in the paradigm, enshrines the principle by using seemingly paradoxical statements in that: 'Sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is' and 'Some of the best weapons for counterinsurgents do not shoot'.⁶⁷ The true problem with the endorsement of minimum violence is that it prefers recognition of the difficulty of Western liberal democracies using violence, as described by Gil Merom, over the effectiveness of the appropriate use of violence.⁶⁸ Ironically, an iconic figure in the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's pantheon of

⁶³ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 6.

⁶⁴ Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 24. Hazelton cites as examples the Taliban defeat of the Afghan state, Fidel Castro's overthrow of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba, and the mujahedeen victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan.

⁶⁵ Rich and Duyvesteyn, "The Study of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," 13.

⁶⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

⁶⁷ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-27.

⁶⁸ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam*, First ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

counterinsurgency notables had no such qualms. Gerald Templar wrote in 1958 that: 'The job of the British Army out here is to kill or capture Communist Terrorists in Malaya. If we can double the ratio of kills per contact, we will soon put an end to the shooting in Malaya'.⁶⁹ Similarly, Frank Kitson was pragmatic about the use of violence, writing that 'the very fact that a state of insurgency exists implies that violence is involved which will have to be countered to some extent at least by the use of force'.⁷⁰ The position with respect to violence and coercion, like that on taken politics and popular support, continues the echo of the philosophical confusion at the core of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. The paradigm's inherently ahistorical basis may account for some of this confusion.

The previous chapter spent a considerable amount of time examining the potential pitfalls of 'poor' history with respect to counterinsurgency. The observation that 'military history is replete with "Magenot lines," illustrating the dangers of relying on historical precedents' gives a clue as to the perils that may await those who misuse case study precedents.⁷¹ An examination of the archetypal 'hearts and minds' case study, the British campaign during the Malayan emergency, illustrates the problem. For every text on that campaign that supports the 'hearts and minds' interpretation of success in Malaya, there are equally compelling accounts that refute them.⁷² Accounts such as Hew Strachan's place interpretation of the Malaya Campaign in the context of an imperial policing approach rather than a 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency era one: 'When we speak about "hearts and minds" we are not talking about being nice to the natives, but about giving them the firm smack of government.

⁶⁹ Written in the foreword to: Director of Operations, *The ATOM Pamphlet*.

⁷⁰ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 283.

⁷¹ Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975): 198.

⁷² For examples supportive of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as having explanatory value see: Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*; and Andrew Mumford, "Sir Robert Thompson's Lessons for Iraq: Bringing the 'Basic Principles of Counter-Insurgency' into the 21st Century," *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010). Accounts critical of a hearts and minds explanation include: French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967*; Karl Hack, "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009); and Hew Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *Royal United Service Institution Journal* 152, no. 6 (2007).

“Hearts and minds” denoted authority, not appeasement’.⁷³ This position finds support from Dixon, who argues:

[t]hat the phrase “hearts and minds” does not accurately describe Britain’s highly coercive campaign in Malaya. The British approach in Malaya did involve high levels of force, was not fought within the law and led to abuses of human rights.⁷⁴

Similarly, there is an argument that the actual impact of any social reform by the British in the Malayan campaign is overstated. As far back as 1962 a RAND Corporation analyst noted ‘both in the Philippines and in Malaya, large-scale, structural social reform seems to have been less important in bringing insurgency under control than is often assumed’.⁷⁵ The same report went on to state ‘what was successfully accomplished in both countries and contributed perhaps more to the control of insurgency was the re-establishment of the authority of the government’.⁷⁶ Other observers question even the relative merits of this accomplishment, and to what extent the British actually were second-party counterinsurgents in Malaya, as opposed to Strachan’s imperial policemen:

The most important advantage of the British in Malaya lay in the fact that they were in charge and that consequently the main instruments - police, civil service, military services – were either their own or under their exclusive management during the critical years. The first and most obvious benefit of this situation was that it obviated the cumbersome, wasteful, and confused management of strategy and programs that resulted when the principal party was forced into the role of adviser or ally, legally a mere guest on foreign soil..... In most matters, the British had only themselves to consult and direct – a priceless advantage.⁷⁷

The bottom line is that many of the claims made on behalf of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm from historical analysis are clearly open to challenge – they often derive from very selective ‘cherry-picking’ evidence from cases such as

⁷³ Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 8.

⁷⁴ Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 355.

⁷⁵ Guy Pauker, "Notes on Non-Military Measures in Control of Insurgency," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1962), 11.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁷ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 48.

Malaya. The practical aspects of implementing the paradigm are equally difficult.

Practical concerns

The development of legitimacy in the eyes of the population is an important concept in the 'beauty contest' between the insurgency and the home state (or second-party counterinsurgents) within 'hearts and minds' based strategies. A further and significant practical problem for the paradigm arises, however, from the fact that legitimacy is often perceived to arise from development and delivery of 'good' administration. The problem here is that if the source of dissatisfaction is something other than government efficiency, the rote response of the paradigm will struggle to make a difference, for:

Good governance is not the only basis for claims to legitimacy, especially in environments where ethnic or religious identities are politically salient. Some experience in Iraq suggests that in environments where such identities are contested, claims to legitimacy may rest primarily on the identity of *who* governs, rather than *how* whoever governs, governs.⁷⁸

The singular 'modernisation and development' narrative of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm lacks explanatory flexibility to account for such divergence. More importantly, it is silent on the practical responses the counterinsurgent must adopt to respond appropriately and effectively. The 'hearts and minds' paradigm is also largely mute on many of the specific challenges to legitimacy that second-party counterinsurgency brings.

A forum sponsored by the United States Government in 2007 to review new counterinsurgency doctrine noted a serious contemporary problem with the attainment of legitimacy through second-party counterinsurgency:

When engaged in counterinsurgency, the United States focuses on restoring or augmenting the capacity and legitimacy of a partner state....This may be inadequate in the 21st century since very few

⁷⁸ Fitzsimmons, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," 377. Emphasis in the original text.

national governments in conflict-prone regions can sustain this degree of legitimacy and control.⁷⁹

The problem is far broader than even the 'legitimacy capacity' of a struggling host nation. The presence of second-party counterinsurgents, seeking and talking about legitimacy, itself creates a legitimacy dilemma for the host nation government. If, for example, an insurgency is inspired in part by a rejection of foreign influences within a state, the mere presence of a second-party counterinsurgency force may undermine, or even preclude, the establishment of 'legitimacy' for that force. Further, and paradoxically, this problem may often prove to be exponentially more problematic than the legitimacy challenge originally posed by the insurgency. Yet the concept of legitimacy features prominently in the 'hearts and minds' literature about the characteristics required for counterinsurgency success. For example, United States' military doctrine states that 'legitimacy is the main objective' and expands this point with 'the primary objective of any COIN operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government'.⁸⁰

Even where foreign influences were not originally part of the foundation motivations of any given insurgency, the very presence of second-party counterinsurgents can still call into question the legitimacy of the counterinsurgent state's polity. This is due in part to the well-established convention and modern statehood norm that the state is the sole legitimate user of violence within its borders. The presence of second-party counterinsurgents participating in combat strongly runs contrary to this convention. Thus, participation of second-party counterinsurgents in the struggle may powerfully reinforce the insurgent message of state illegitimacy. As noted in the early stages of the Kennedy Administration's enthusiasm for counterinsurgency: 'A government under guerrilla attack might find it impossible to accept help from an aggressive United States without discrediting itself in the eyes of its own

⁷⁹ Ralph Wipfli and Steven Metz, "Colloquium Brief: COIN of the Realm: U.S. Counterinsurgency Strategy," in *'Future Defence Dilemmas' Seminar Series* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute and The Brookings Institution, 2007), 2.

⁸⁰ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, 1-21.

population as a tool of imperialism'.⁸¹ Worse, the actions of a second-party counterinsurgent seeking to 'build legitimacy' can create problems of differentiation in the eyes of the population as to which organisation is actually sovereign. The perceptions of neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism that result from this can be highly problematic. A recent study looking at success or failure in counterinsurgency concluded that 'the counterinsurgent's status as an occupier was associated with an increased probability of state defeat'.⁸² The issues created by the 'legitimacy' question have a parallel in the concerns created by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's quest to reform governance and institutions.

John McCuen specifically discounted what he called 'colonial' and 'proxy' counter-revolutionary warfare in the scope of his work, citing concerns about the 'degree of control by the outside power or the responsiveness of the indigenous governing authorities'.⁸³ These concerns go to the heart of many issues that make second-party counterinsurgency problematic for current theoretical and doctrinal frameworks. Investigation of such issues occurs further throughout this dissertation.

Concepts of vital national interests can also create tension in second-party counterinsurgency. The realist tradition in international relations theory describes the international system as anarchical and suggests that ultimately each state will (and does) always act in its own 'selfish' national interest. Arnold Wolfers highlights the potential for a conflict of between the perceived interests of two or more states cooperating in the conduct of a counterinsurgency campaign, in that:

When political formulas such as "national interest" or "national security" gain popularity they need to be scrutinized with particular care. They may not mean the same thing to different people. They may not have any precise meaning at all. Thus, while appearing to offer guidance and a basis for broad consensus they may be permitting everyone to label

⁸¹ Paret and Shy, "Guerrilla Warfare and U.S. Military Policy: A Study," 49.

⁸² Lyall and Wilson III, "Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," 67.

⁸³ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 21.

whatever policy he favors with an attractive and possibly deceptive name.⁸⁴

The level of balance or dependency in the relationship between the counterinsurgency partners will determine the impact upon both the 'policy sovereignty' of the counterinsurgent state and the stakes of its governing elites. Blaufarb continues:

When, in response to counterinsurgency, the U.S. called upon a threatened government to carry out a program of self-reform in the midst of a crisis, it seemed to be insisting that the regime jeopardise its hold on power in order to defeat the communists. To the ruling group this was no mere technical question, but one of survival, for, not unnaturally, the members place their continued hold on power ahead of defeating the communists, whereas, in the U.S. view, the priorities were reversed.⁸⁵

Schlesinger suggested in his 1977 biography of Robert Kennedy that the notion that reforms can be carried out in a wartime situation by a beleaguered regime is 'the fatal fallacy in the liberal theory of counterinsurgency, with the United States so often obliged to work through repressive local leadership, the reform component dwindled into ineffectual exhortation'.⁸⁶ This is a significant point. Put bluntly, if the insurgency wins the second-party counterinsurgents do not share the ultimate price of failure that the counterinsurgent state does. The governing elite of the counterinsurgent states are, unsurprisingly, often acutely aware of this. It leads to circumstances that distort either the development of reform, or more often than not, its implementation. As Shafer notes: 'for certain elites, the aim of fighting is to defend power and privilege; thus the prescribed "good government" may be even less palatable than toughing out the insurgency as long as possible before flying into exile in Miami or Monaco'.⁸⁷

Interestingly, this problem was neither new nor unknown when the 'hearts and minds' paradigm emerged in the counterinsurgency era. Commenting on a United States Army manual on military governance written

⁸⁴ Arnold Wolfers, "'National Security' as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1952): 481.

⁸⁵ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 86.

⁸⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York: Mariner Books, 2002), 466.

⁸⁷ Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 121.

during the Second World War in anticipation of the occupation of Germany and Japan, Birtle notes:

Although charged with the task of transforming German and Japanese society, the Army's social engineers were aware that, in the words of one Army manual, "in general, it is unwise to impose upon occupied territory the laws and customs of another people." Past experience had shown that such endeavours often produced much turmoil and little results, as the indigenous body politic often rejected transplanted institutions.⁸⁸

Writing specifically about the counterinsurgency era, Blaufarb succinctly sums up the dilemma arising from the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's enthusiasm for reform, '[t]he problem of self-reform in the midst of crisis is one of the factors which lay, like a concealed mine, in the path of the counterinsurgency program in many of the countries'.⁸⁹

Another practical problem that emerges, fundamentally related to the 'hearts and minds' paradigmatic quest for reform and development, is that of corruption and outright criminality. Studies have examined and demonstrated the nexus between criminal activity and insurgent group funding. They have also accounted for the relatively common phenomenon of 'pure' insurgent groups gradually shedding any political ideology or objectives they may have originally had as their criminal enterprises become more lucrative and attractive.⁹⁰ The injection of second-party counterinsurgency funds to assist with development, as envisaged by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, may well help address grievances in the host nation. At the same time, practitioners commonly recognise, and see demonstrated from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, that the injection of large amounts of developmental aid in these situations exacerbates problems with corruption and criminality.⁹¹ It is the case that the prescriptions of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm introduces a counter-

⁸⁸ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942 - 1976*, 15.

⁸⁹ Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*, 87.

⁹⁰ Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, ed. Margaret Levi, Paperback ed., Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7 and 47; R.T. Naylor, "The Insurgent Economy: Black Market Operations of Guerrilla Organizations," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 20, no. 1 (1993): 24.

⁹¹ Naylor, "The Insurgent Economy: Black Market Operations of Guerrilla Organizations," 19.

beneficial situation and further practical difficulties within the conflict environment. The paradigm can also introduce a similar unintended consequence with respect to time.

The 'hearts and minds' paradigm invariably, tacitly or overtly, commits the second-party counterinsurgent to a long-term plan of nation building and developing resilience within the host nation. It is ironic in this regard that the paradigm's focus on nation building and development actually mandates commitment to the form of protracted warfare that lay at the heart of Mao and Giap's design for revolutionary war. Galula on the other hand believed that the longer the war went, the more time favoured the counterinsurgent. Who was correct of these theorist / practitioners may perhaps be best assessed by consideration of which of them were on ultimately on the winning side. A particular danger that arises for the second-party counterinsurgent through adopting such 'hearts and minds' based approaches is that they not only cede a degree of initiative to the insurgency, they also enter into a form of time-based asymmetry that Arreguin-Toft, Mack and Merom variously describe in their work.⁹² Mack notes '[i]n such asymmetric conflicts, insurgents may gain political victory from a situation of military stalemate or even defeat'.⁹³ Another identifies as a key determinant that 'modern democracies have limited political tolerance for protracted overseas wars against irregular enemies'.⁹⁴ There is an obvious link between these concerns and the issue of leaving (and losing) the conflict.

Second-party counterinsurgency introduces the concept of an exit strategy to the counterinsurgency arena. Indeed, defining and implementing such an exit strategy has all too often become the guiding preoccupation or infatuation of second-party counterinsurgency forces. Using the example of the United States, William Colby usefully highlights the inevitability of this tendency:

⁹² Ivan Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001); Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict"; Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*.

⁹³ Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," 177.

⁹⁴ Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, First ed. (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2007), 134.

The American attention span is short. We insist on near-term results. The frequent American elections, during which American policy is subject to popular review and candidates are pressed to offer simple solutions to complex problems, reinforce this demand. Within the American political process, it is difficult to justify the small steps and gradual progress that are frequently necessary in the pursuit of long term policy goals.⁹⁵

The same is arguably true of any modern Western liberal democratic state. In contrast, the host nation state does not have any discretion with respect to its ability to exit the fight. There are only two options available to it: victory or defeat. The fact that the second-party counterinsurgent has a third option, withdrawal, can have a profoundly distorting effect upon the practical conduct of a counterinsurgency campaign conducted under the aegis of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. It can create pressure to hasten artificially the development of institutions, society and political processes envisaged by the paradigm that may in fact require decades or longer for true achievement. It also allows for the creation of a potentially powerful counter-narrative by the insurgency about the long term prospects of reforms after the departure of the second-party counterinsurgents. Most telling though, the paradigm directs the focus of second-party counterinsurgency effort away from action that might be practical and achievable in the (always) limited time available. That is, neglect of the physical defeat of the insurgent organisation in favour of pursuit of an uncertain developmental outcome that is unlikely in the inevitably limited time available.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the 'hearts and minds' approach remains at the heart of dominant Western counterinsurgency paradigm. This is despite it being a theory still in search of a definitive and supporting case study, and it so often being a rhetorical policy device rather than a practical concept. Rather than representing a panacea for the ills of insurgency, the paradigm suggests and even imposes a pandemic of problems for second-party counterinsurgency. Fitzsimmons' summary of United States counterinsurgency

⁹⁵ Colby and McCargar, *Lost Victory, a Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*, 14.

strategy and doctrine sums up equally well the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as a: 'hodgepodge of modernization theory, anti-communism, and a set of historical experiences that had been only partially digested in any coherent intellectual or strategic sense'.⁹⁶ The dominance of the paradigm is problematic because of the potential for the issues analysed in this chapter to affect adversely the successful conduct of counterinsurgency and second-party counterinsurgency efforts. The review undertaken clearly demonstrates that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm does not meet the measure set for it at the start of this chapter – reliability and clarity in directing, predicting or accounting for the defeat of insurgency. Of all the factors identified and analysed, one stands out as the major failing. This is worth highlighting here, as the alternative framework proposed in the next chapter will necessarily need to avoid the same pitfall.

The most significant flaw of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm lies in the inchoate philosophy and dialectic confusion at its core. As a result, the paradigm ultimately neither directly nor adequately addresses the key question required of any framework that informs war policy – 'how do we win?' The confusion and inadequacies analysed in this chapter about poor logic, politics, popular support, coercion and violence, legitimacy, reform, time and exit strategy all stem from this central question. The true nature of counterinsurgency is war, not nation building. Winning wars requires an approach that, directly or indirectly, accepts the violent nature of the endeavour and makes the defeat of the enemy in the most efficient and effective manner the priority.

⁹⁶ Fitzsimmons, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," 351.

Chapter four. A second-party counterinsurgency framework

Although most authors end their discussions with conclusions on how to fight a revolutionary war, I know of none who has succeeded in evolving a broad, unified counter-revolutionary strategy. This void has left us without any philosophical foundation or point of departure from which to base evaluations or actions in specific situations.

John J. McCuen¹

The review of the development of counterinsurgency thought and the critique of 'hearts and minds' paradigm in the previous two chapters highlight that McCuen's 1966 remark stands true today. Neither scholarship nor practice has yet produced a broad, successful and replicable theoretical approach to counterinsurgency in general or second-party counterinsurgency specifically.² The 'hearts and minds' paradigm is confused. It eschews a focus on the actual problem – the existence of an active, violent and subversive insurgency, to focus on issues better understood under the label of 'nation building'. The 'hearts and minds' infatuation with building, in the hope or belief that such efforts will somehow inspire a cessation in insurgency, flies in the face of historical experience and contemporary evidence. Though attractive to Western democratic sensibilities, it is both fanciful and illogical. Importantly, this is *not* the same as saying that all of the principles espoused or counterinsurgency activities undertaken under the umbrella of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm are invalid or unsound. Most of these can actually be characterised as 'best practice' evolved from centuries of counterinsurgency experience, rather than organic to, or reliant upon, the 'hearts and minds' theoretical paradigm. A ready and illustrative example concerns Robert Thompson's 'Basic principles of Counter-Insurgency'.³ Thompson's principles, which can be summarised as 'have an aim, obey the law, have a plan, prioritise actions and secure your

¹ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 19.

² This includes McCuen's work – he sought to counter what can be safely characterised as a Maoist insurgency model and specifically ruled out theorising about what he labelled (p.21) 'colonial governing authorities'.

³ Explained in detail in Chapter 4 of Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 50-62.

base,' are clearly prudent and useful suggestions for 'hearts and minds' campaigns. They are also equally prudent and useful suggestions in any military campaign, counterinsurgency or otherwise. The point is that rejection of the suitability of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as a theoretical basis for second-party counterinsurgency does not, therefore, require automatic rejection of any sound practice or idea that it may have embraced.

The aim of this chapter is to propose and explain an alternate theoretical framework for the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. The framework was synthesised by the author through personal critical reflection on operational experiences, discussions with participants from a wide range of campaigns and reading over nearly three decades as a professional military officer. The framework may serve as a philosophical foundation or point of departure for the development of counterinsurgency strategy for a specific campaign. The framework proposes four guiding principles: counter-violence, counter-organisation, counter-subversion and pre-emption; enabling these are intelligence and adaptive behaviour. Annette Seegers wrote that counterinsurgency theory often provides merely a collection of general principles that do not constitute a sound base for theorising.⁴ The most cursory review of counterinsurgency literature suggests that Seegers' observation is valid. However, the second-party counterinsurgency framework proposed forthwith addresses the concern raised by Seegers, in that it goes beyond merely listing principles. The framework provides a methodological design that *illustrates how* insurgency *may* be defeated through the adoption of its guiding principles and enabling concepts. Thus the second-party counterinsurgency framework provides a sound basis for understanding *what* must be done and *why*, rather than the detailed *how* which is the normal prescriptive outcome of stark lists of general principles.⁵ It therefore provides an actual theory of second-party counterinsurgency rather than a list of possible actions.

⁴ Annette Seegers, "If Only....The Ongoing Search for Method in Counterinsurgency," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 8, no. 1 (1989): 206.

⁵ Ibid.

The further ambition of the second-party counterinsurgency framework proposed herein is to provide the conceptual clarity, logical rigour and practicality that is lacking in the dominant 'hearts and minds' paradigm. This is, without question, an ambitious goal, but as Samuel Huntington notes: 'One measure of a theory is the degree to which it encompasses and explains all the relevant facts. Another measure, and the more important one, is the degree to which it encompasses and explains those facts better than any other theory'.⁶ The review of the development of counterinsurgency thought and the critical analysis of the dominant paradigm conducted in the previous chapters exposed serious flaws in how current theory encompasses and deals with the problems associated with contemporary second-party counterinsurgency. The framework proposed in this chapter will address both Huntington's 'more important' measure of theory and Gray's 'most-case understanding' cited at the beginning of the previous chapter in addressing the shortfalls of extant theory.⁷

The outline of the second-party counterinsurgency framework in this chapter has four parts. It will begin with the assumptions that underpin the framework. This is an acknowledgment of the truism 'all theories have assumptions and implications embedded in them. Theories stem from cultural and historical contexts that lend them meaning and influence how they are understood and implemented'.⁸ The previous chapters outlined the development and ongoing acceptance of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. They described the dissonance between the core (albeit implicit rather than explicitly stated) assumptions of the paradigm and the requirements of successful counterinsurgency. Whereas some fields of study can aspire to produce a 'universal theory of everything', such an aspiration is perhaps reasonably beyond counterinsurgency inquiry. Theorising about counterinsurgency is subject to the dual risks of countless possible

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State, the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, 3rd Printing ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), vii.

⁷ Gray, *Categorical Confusion? The Strategic Implications of Recognizing Challenges as Either Irregular or Traditional*, 5.

⁸ Brent D. Slife and Richard N. Williams, *What's Behind the Research? Discovering Hidden Assumptions in the Behavioral Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1995), 9.

circumstances, and the chaotic, non-linear and passionate nature of war itself. For any theoretical counterinsurgency framework to encompass and explain the facts better than alternative models in 'most cases,' it must address these risks. To do this, the second-party counterinsurgency framework embraces both specificity and generality. Specificity (serving assessment of context and applicability) comes from stipulating the assumptions that underpin the framework. Embracing generality provides a degree of theoretical resilience and flexibility in response to the perennial struggle between theory and the unpredictable and chaotic nature of war. Generality arises through explanation of the framework methodology, which is the subject of the second section of the chapter. The following section explains the four framework principles of counter-violence, counter-organisation, counter-subversion and pre-emption. The penultimate section of the chapter briefly examines the enabling concepts of adaptive behaviour and intelligence to the successful implementation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Through highlighting the universal utility of these concepts, it affirms them as key enablers of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The final substantive section of the chapter reinforces areas of commonality with extant theory and practice as well as evaluating the theoretical advantages and possible criticisms of the proposed framework.

Assumptions

This section details the four assumptions that underpin the second-party counterinsurgency framework. It aims to support a theoretical rigour that will distinguish the second-party counterinsurgency framework from the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. From the early enthusiasts such as David Galula and Robert Thompson, through to the FM 3-24 writing team and others, proponents of the 'hearts and minds' school have uniformly failed to state the assumptions inherent in their theory. The apparent universality implied by the lack of recognition of assumptions, however, necessarily leads to questioning the quality and rigour of the theory proposed. The assumptions underpinning the second-party counterinsurgency framework assist with context for

understanding its applicability and utility. No assumption illustrates this better than the first one.

Shafer has summed up the hearts and mind approach as three 'great oughts'. He lists them as:

Governments ought to secure the population from insurgent coercion. They ought to provide competent, legal, responsive administration that is free from past abuses and broader in domain, scope and vigor. And they ought to meet rising expectations with higher living standards.⁹

By contrast, the second-party counterinsurgency framework is simpler. It has only one 'great ought'. It is this: the government (and, by implication, its second-party counterinsurgency partners) *ought to defeat the insurgency*. The assumption is that the primary aim of counterinsurgency is to defeat insurgency. This is directly derived from the definition of counterinsurgency offered in the introductory chapter as a 'strategy adopted by the state in order to *defeat* insurgency'. It means that the aim of counterinsurgency ought not to be the three 'great oughts' of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm identified by Shafer. Specifically, the aim is neither nation building, population security nor any form of 'political beauty competition' between the counterinsurgent state and the insurgency. That is not to say that such activities should not have a role - they can and do have some utility in supporting the aim - but that they are not the 'end' of successful counterinsurgency. Gray supports this view, writing 'COIN is about the control of people and territory, not the remaking of civilisations or even cultures'.¹⁰ Interventionist states that prioritise agendas other than deliberate action to defeat the insurgency they are fighting are thus acting as strategically inept second-party counterinsurgents, or else seeking something other than a counterinsurgency outcome. Both of these are reasonable possibilities; examination of their implications occurs later in this section.

⁹ D. Michael Shafer, "The Unlearned Lessons of Counterinsurgency," *Political Science Quarterly* 103, no. 1 (1988): 62.

¹⁰ Gray, "Irregular Warfare, One Nature, Many Characters," 36.

The assumption that 'defeat' of insurgency is the aim of counterinsurgency may seem self-evident, so it is worth clarifying the underlying logic and explaining what is meant by the term 'defeat'. The core issue here is to understand the nature of the problem presented to the state by insurgency. Insurgents seek political change within a state through violent and illegal means. The problem, and the issue that subsequently characterises dissidents as insurgents, is not that they seek change per se. Rather, it is that they abandon normative, legal forms of political discourse and instead adopt violent and subversive ways to achieve them. The simple fact is that a non-violent, non-subversive 'insurgency' is not an insurgency at all – it is an opposition political movement. One of the key difficulties arising from the 'hearts and minds' paradigm is that it focuses on the insurgent's political ends (ideas) at the expense of what is actually the critical (and dangerous) issue – the ways and means through which the insurgency pursues those ends. The 'defeat' of insurgency then should not be about defeating insurgent ideas. History shows insurgent ideas, invariably 'desirable...and worthy of any sacrifice' to the insurgency's supporters are remarkably resilient in the face of adversity.¹¹ It has been repeatedly demonstrated that neither coercion nor the provision of 'public goods' are effective in defeating the ideas that can motivate people to take violent action against their state or society. 'Defeat' for an insurgency is better defined as when it no longer has either the ability or the will to use violence and subversion in the pursuit of its political objectives. Of course, the issue of unresolved insurgent political ends leaves potential for further conflict to arise from unsatisfied ambitions. Addressing this is the role of the second-party counterinsurgency framework's second assumption – that of compromise.

Alderson has asserted that: '[i]n every case, insurgency develops when those in power ignore the particular demands of a group which feels that it has no alternative but to resort to violence to pursue its objectives'.¹² Similarly, Anthony James Joes wrote: 'to defeat guerrillas, a government needs to present

¹¹ Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*, First (Brassey's) ed. (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's 2002), 154.

¹² Alexander Alderson, "The Validity of British Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine after the War in Iraq, 2003-2009" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cranfield, 2009), 4.

to the population a peaceful alternative to revolution'.¹³ If the issues that inspired the insurgency are to be 'retired' so that they are unlikely to provoke further conflict, this is the obvious and desirable sequel to defeating insurgency's use of violence and subversion. This is the realm of compromise. Che Guevara observed that it is difficult to wage insurgency against a government that is 'democratic or at least wears the trappings of democracy'.¹⁴ This is because a feature of states that 'wear the trappings' of democracy is their ability to negotiate legitimate political outcomes without violence, and within the rule of law.

The assumption of an ability or willingness to compromise in the second-party counterinsurgency framework is not synonymous with the total surrender of either side's objectives. While Cicero believed 'an unjust peace is better than a just war', any unjust peace within a society is inevitably but an interregnum between civil conflicts. Further, the historical record supports the idea of compromise being a component of enduring counterinsurgency success. The three case studies examined in this dissertation provide evidence of the willingness or ability of the counterinsurgent state and its partners to accept compromise. With the exception of victory through campaigns of annihilation, (something which is not an option for 'Western' liberal democratic second-party counterinsurgents), compromise can be seen at the heart of every enduring counterinsurgency success. The idea of compromise segues into the linked third and fourth assumptions – host nation primacy and pragmatism.

Compromise in the case of second-party counterinsurgency can be fraught. The potential difficulties amongst allied sovereign states with competing national interests in counterinsurgency conflict cannot be understated. Key to addressing this is an assumption of the host nation's primacy and recognition of ultimate and enduring sovereign ownership of any compromises. As Hazelton states, the record suggests '[g]reat powers who

¹³ Anthony James Joes, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical, Biographical, and Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 190.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

intervene to back client governments against insurgencies are most likely to succeed when they have modest goals and focus on achieving interests shared with the client'.¹⁵ When interventionist states or second-party counterinsurgent forces cannot or will not defer to the host nation's primacy, their involvement in the conflict becomes something other than counterinsurgency. Regime change, imperialism or neo-colonialism is not second-party counterinsurgency, so the adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy in such situations is more than inappropriate; it is nonsensical.

The assumption of pragmatism dictates an objective assessment of possible 'ways' to avoid egregious strategic error by interventionist states. Gray tells us '[t]he strategist will try to select a theory of victory and a strategy for its execution that favors his country's (or other kind of security community's) strengths, and provides compensation for its weaknesses'.¹⁶ The design of the framework aims to achieve the effects Gray describes, but it clearly cannot have universal applicability for all interventionist scenarios. In the sense that Beaufre defined strategy, the framework is a 'method of thought'.¹⁷ Neither the second-party counterinsurgency framework nor any other theory can be a panacea for strategic or even tactical incompetence.

Pragmatism requires more than assessment of the alignment of interventionist state ways with ends. Shafer describes the pragmatic assessment of the host nation required of putative second-party counterinsurgents when considering intervention in that '[f]or policymakers contemplating involvement for whatever reason, the issue is not what threatened governments ought to do, but rather sober analysis of what they can do'.¹⁸ Finally, pragmatism would suggest second-party counterinsurgents carefully consider the narrative they develop for their domestic constituencies

¹⁵ Jacqueline L. Hazelton, "Paper: Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," in International Studies Association Conference (Montreal, Canada: unpublished paper, 2011), 45.

¹⁶ Gray, *Fighting Talk: Forty Maxims on Peace, War and Strategy*, 55.

¹⁷ Andre Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, trans. C.B Major General R.H Barry, C.B.E., 1st (American edition) (English Translation by Faber and Faber Ltd 1965) ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 13.

¹⁸ Emphasis in the original text. Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy*, 281.

regarding the purpose of conducting counterinsurgency in a foreign state. The historical record suggests modern secular democratic states find it difficult to justify and sustain long term such wars for broad liberal objectives like the development of democracy, society, education or gender equality. A pragmatic approach would see a narrative with clear and finite objectives, described in terms of vital interests and aligned with the selection of counterinsurgency as an appropriate way to achieve them.

The four assumptions detailed provide context for the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The first assumption effectively rejects the unrealistic ideal promoted by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm of a universal 'key' to defeating a possibly infinite number of plausible insurgent objectives. Instead, it directs focus to defeating the immediately problematic but invariably finite 'ways' used by insurgents. The second assumption, willingness to compromise, provides the 'carrot' to the first assumption's 'stick'. It directly suggests how to extinguish any embers burning in the ashes of defeated insurgency that may otherwise ignite future conflagrations of insurrection. The third and fourth assumptions, host nation primacy and pragmatism, are effectively 'shaping' guidance to second-party counterinsurgents about their approach to the problem of intervention in foreign counterinsurgency. These assumptions delineate the 'best case' circumstances that favour selection of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The next section of this chapter further develops the theoretical approach by describing how the framework methodology works, the concepts it shares with extant theory and evaluation of possible criticisms.

The framework's methodology

The previous chapter concluded that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm had difficulty simply answering the most fundamental question that second-party counterinsurgent policy makers must ask – 'how do we win'? This section answers that question for the second-party counterinsurgency framework by explaining its design and the methods it employs to defeat insurgency. At the heart of the framework is a design that seeks to move the dialectic between the

state and its dissenters back within acceptable and normative forms of domestic political discourse. To do this the framework rejects the ‘hearts and minds’ emphasis on the teleology of the insurgency in favour of an emphasis on insurgent actions. While the question of ‘why’ people rebel is important, the countless circumstances of rebellion make the development of any theory based on addressing causative factors highly impractical. The approach taken herein is to recognise that while the causes and ends of insurgency are potentially infinite, the historically identifiable and practical methods of action available to insurgents are finite, and hence feasibly the subject of theory development.

The second-party counterinsurgency framework seeks at its heart to defeat insurgency through denial of the ‘ways’ adopted by insurgents. The application of the principles of counter-violence, counter-organisation, counter-subversion and pre-emption by the counterinsurgent attack the core of what defines insurgency. André Beaufre wrote that the dialectical contest of war is one for freedom of action.¹⁹ The purpose of the four framework principles is to deny the enemy the freedom of insurgent methods, forcing a move back towards more acceptable and normative forms of dissent. A detailed explanation of how each principle individually contributes to this purpose follows later in the chapter. Clausewitz’s ‘rational calculus’ of war provides the inspiration for how they may combine collectively in that:

Since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced.²⁰

The application of the framework’s principles accords with the Clausewitzian idea of rational calculus by increasing the costs and diminishing the utility of adopting insurgent ways to pursue rebel ends. Defeat is through either one or a combination of two mechanisms: the physical denial of insurgent ways, thus preventing attainment of desired ends or the defeat of the

¹⁹ Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 110.

²⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 92. Emphasis in the original text.

insurgent's will to pursue them. Clausewitz highlighted the advantage of the latter mechanism:

When we speak of destroying the enemy's forces we must emphasise that nothing obliges us to limit this idea to physical forces: the moral element must also be considered. The two interact throughout: they are inseparable....[T]he moral factor is, so to speak, the most fluid element of all, and therefore spreads most easily to affect everything else.²¹

The idea of a defeat mechanism, and one that uses this method in particular, is no mere armchair theoretical musing. It has real-world utility – as the case studies in the following chapters will demonstrate. Rather than preempt them, another example will suffice at this stage. The African National Congress (ANC) had attempted to fight an insurgency war against the apartheid-era white minority government in South Africa for many decades. In response, the government conducted a violent and highly coercive counterinsurgency campaign. By the late 1980s:

The ANC realised that it had been defeated in the military security realm by the government's draconian security actions, and turned instead to negotiating a settlement with the apartheid government, as well as to increased emphasis on the international sphere as the forum for forcing change in South Africa.²²

This example is not an endorsement of the South African regime's policies; rather it is demonstration and validation of how denial of insurgent's ways and means can lead to engagement in more acceptable and normative forms of discourse and negotiation.

The ideas of manoeuvre warfare expounded by Liddell Hart and later 20th century theorists such as Robert Leonhard, William Lind and Richard Simpkin, as well as the 'indirect strategy' of André Beaufre, have influenced the development of the second- party counterinsurgency framework.²³ The

²¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

²² Kevin O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress / South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 14, no. 2 (2003): 30.

²³ See: Robert R. Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver, Maneuver-Warfare Theory and Airland Battle*, First paperback 1994 ed. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1991) ; William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, Westview Special Studies in Military Affairs (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1985); Richard E. Simpkin,

framework's method rejects the slow attritional grind of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's nation building approach. Its bias is towards a 'manoeuvrist' approach by creating a defeat mechanism that disrupts and ultimately dislocates insurgents from the ways they require in order to pursue successful insurgency. Yet, despite this unorthodox methodology, the second-party counterinsurgency framework is a composite of otherwise orthodox Western counterinsurgency thought and practice.²⁴ A few comparative examples demonstrate that the framework is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. This brief review is not a case of what Heuser has called 'pacifying the worshippers of the old god when building a temple to the new god'.²⁵ Rather, it will serve to confirm the grounding of the intellectual roots of the framework firmly within an established tradition and experience. This is an important point; it means that the framework need not empirically re-establish common and broadly accepted concepts that are recurrent in the literature.

The framework's focus on defeating insurgent actions and subsequently ameliorating insurgent objectives through compromise and accommodation has precedent. In fact, in many ways, it echoes practice from the imperial policing era. Colonial authorities accepted that a degree of dissent amongst indigenous peoples was inevitable. Douglas Porch cites three experienced British colonial-era officers and authors - Gwynn, Simson and Kitson, to assert that a 'continuum of defiance' was recognised and tacitly accepted.²⁶ When dissent escalated through the continuum to an unacceptable level of violence, action taken by the colonial authorities focussed on returning dissent to the non-violent end of the continuum as soon as practicable. Political concessions (compromises) by the authorities complemented physical attacks aimed at defeating the means of violent dissent.²⁷ This pragmatism recognised that dissent was inevitable and tolerable insofar as it did not break the *modus*

Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985); Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 134.

²⁴ In comparison to the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.

²⁵ Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," 166.

²⁶ Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 249.

²⁷ Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 181.

vivendi of the colonial peace. Some contemporary scholars have also recognised the utility of such an approach. They have argued that the historical record provides support to success through ‘compellence with accommodation’ or a sequence of coercion and conciliation.²⁸ An alignment in this regard with elements of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework methodology is evident.

The second-party counterinsurgency framework’s advocacy of disaggregation and the application of ‘counters’ to insurgent method also reflects a systems analysis based approach to the problem. The use of a systems analysis as an approach to counterinsurgency was common amongst many of the theorists of the counterinsurgency era. McCuen advocated such when he wrote ‘the solution to defeating revolutionary warfare is the application of its strategy and principles in reverse’.²⁹ Similarly, support for such an approach is evident in writing by *guerre révolutionnaire* advocates such as Galula and Trinquier, or in the endorsement of counter-gangs by Kitson. The ‘cost-benefit’ theoretical model of counterinsurgency developed by Leites and Wolf is also rooted in a systems approach; Richard Shultz claims a link between that model and the premise of *guerre révolutionnaire*.³⁰ In turn, some parallels between the framework’s pursuit of the insurgent’s rational calculus and the Leites and Wolf model’s cost-benefit calculation are also evident, although they work on different premises. These observations reinforce the idea that despite countless counterinsurgencies over the span of history, relatively few novel or unrelated approaches are discernible. An observation from Tony Jeapes concerning one of the case studies examined herein reinforces this view: ‘The Dhofar War was a classic of its type, in which every principle of counter-insurgency operations built up over the last fifty years in campaigns around the world by the British and other armies, often by trial and error, was employed’.³¹

²⁸ This is the central theme argued in a recent thesis on counterinsurgency success. See: Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare." Rovner, "The Heroes of COIN," 231.

²⁹ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 77.

³⁰ Richard Shultz, "Coercive Force and Military Strategy: Deterrence Logic and the Cost-Benefit Model of Counterinsurgency Warfare," *The Western Political Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1979): 447.

³¹ Tony Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*, 1st U.S. ed. (Nashville, Tennessee: The Battery Press, 1980), 14.

It is apparent then that the second-party counterinsurgency framework broadly nests within established precedents of Western counterinsurgency thought. Its claim to originality lies in the manner it synthesises established counterinsurgency norms into a new methodology.

The framework's principles

The first chapter introduced the second-party counterinsurgency framework's four principles and two enabling concepts. This section explains them in detail, building upon the understanding of the framework's assumptions and methodology. The explanations that follow are about what the principles represent, and why they are important, rather than instructions for their application. The latter will clearly depend upon the circumstances of a particular counterinsurgency campaign and, as such, they are beyond the ability of general theoretical model such as this to anticipate or specify. It is also obvious that these principles are interconnected. While each principle is vitally important in its own right, the framework's design anticipates achievement of greater impact upon insurgency through their simultaneous application by counterinsurgents. Finally, the principles have both theoretical and practical utility. They provide conceptual and thematic guidance for counterinsurgent strategists, planners and policy makers, while suggesting and directing the practical scope of activity for physical counterinsurgency action at the operational and tactical levels of the campaign. The analysis of the three case studies in subsequent chapters will identify and highlight specific examples of 'real world' evidence to support these claims. Prior to addressing these, however, the explanations that immediately follow theoretically justify the principles' utility and inclusion within the framework.

Counter violence

Violence is a defining characteristic of insurgency. The use of violence by insurgents to achieve their political purpose highlights a critical difference between insurgency and other forms of political activism. Further, as Stathis

Kalyvas observed, 'violence is important only because it produces results'.³² This truism has a neutral bias – it is equally as valid for the counterinsurgency as it is for the insurgency. The use of violence by insurgents serves four primary purposes. Firstly, it has a demonstration effect – that the state is either inept or powerless, as the insurgents appear to use violence against it at their will. Such actions undermine a fundamental tenet of state power - the monopoly on the use of force.

Beyond demonstration, the next purpose of violence for an insurgent is to degrade both physically and morally the ability of the state, and its security apparatus in particular, to respond to the insurgency. The third purpose relates to the first. It is that the use of violence against the state and its agencies conveys to the population a subliminal message of a latent threat to use it violence against it. Logically, the final purpose is the realisation of that latent threat and the actual violent coercion of the population by the insurgency – whether for support, acquiescence or even just benign neutrality to allow the conduct of unhindered operations. Counterinsurgents simply cannot afford to allow insurgency the unfettered use of what is arguably their most effective tool. Counter violence, defined herein as 'those measures, forceful or otherwise, taken by counterinsurgents to restrict, degrade or deny the use of violence by insurgents' is the principle whereby the second-party counterinsurgency framework addresses this issue.

Force has been an effective tool in countering violence throughout history. The second chapter recorded Fitzsimmons' observation that 'coercion, repression, annihilation, intimidation and fear' accounts for much of the success in imperial policing.³³ Recent research by Hazelton supports the idea that the utility of force in counter violence has endured beyond the time of *ratissage* in Saharan and Sahel Africa or the technique of 'butcher and bolt' in Waziristan during the time of the British Raj. Hazelton's research into counterinsurgency

³² Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War," *The Journal of Ethics* 8, no. 1 (2004): 101.

³³ Fitzsimmons, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," 339.

case studies demonstrated that: '[t]he use of force, including large and small operations, plays a key role in COIN success....But without a military focus on the direct targeting of guerrillas, success is less likely. These findings do not support the HAM prescription of limited force'.³⁴ Hazelton further clarified the relationship between the use of force and success thus: 'Success is not primarily about killing, although at times the counterinsurgent may kill many people. It is primarily about using force to deny victory to the insurgency'.³⁵ Yet despite the 'hearts and minds' paradigm's prescriptions of limited force, many of the figures inspirational to its progenitors and advocates knew the value of the currency of violence. Galula explains the role of coercion at length in *Pacification in Algeria*. The previous chapter already detailed both Kitson's pragmatism about the use of force and Templar's directness in Malaya about the requirement for, and benefits of, force.³⁶

Applying the principle of counter violence means second-party counterinsurgents (and counterinsurgents more generally) should not resile from the lawful use of force within the socially acceptable and cultural normative bounds of their domestic societies. The requirement for the use of force to be lawful is self-evident for Western democracies. The requirement for the use of force by second-party counterinsurgents to be 'acceptable' for domestic constituents reflects the findings of separate research by Andrew Mack and Gil Merom.³⁷ However, Merom overstates the difficulties when he writes that 'democracies fail in small wars because they find it extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory'.³⁸ The discriminate, legitimate and proportionate use of force advocated by the principle of counter violence is neither synonymous with brutality or any of the other hyperbolic extremes occasionally envisaged or advocated by some

³⁴ Hazelton, "Paper: Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 44. (HAM = 'hearts and minds').

³⁵ Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," vii.

³⁶ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 283. And, in the foreword to: Director of Operations, *The ATOM Pamphlet*.

³⁷ See: Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict."; Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* [passim]

³⁸ Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 15.

commentators.³⁹ Nor should it be characterised as the unthinking application of force, for as Clausewitz also noted, 'the maximum use of force is in no way incompatible with the simultaneous use of the intellect'.⁴⁰ The principle of counter organisation is another area demanding full use of the counterinsurgent's intellect.

Counter organisation

The most fundamental task in prosecuting a campaign of insurgency is 'building an organization capable of challenging the government militarily'.⁴¹ Without organisation, and the benefits derived from it, there can be no effective insurgency. This accounts for why organisation (along with violence) is one of the principal characteristics offered in the definition of insurgency accepted in this paper. Insurgents and counterinsurgents alike have widely recognised and addressed the subject. Mao dwelt on the importance of organisation for the conduct of guerrilla warfare. Suggesting its relative importance to Mao is the fact that it is the topic of one of only two prescriptive chapters in the seven that make up *On Guerrilla Warfare*.⁴² John McCuen noted Giap's similar enthusiasm for the topic of organisation in his writing about the Vietnamese insurgency; McCuen himself flagged the importance of organisation when he suggested that Giap's work 'should be closely scrutinized by counter-revolutionary strategists'.⁴³ To the revolutionaries, mobilization of the masses requires more than mere persuasion, it requires intimidation and, most important, organization'.⁴⁴ Frank Kitson also considered the importance of organisation, and highlighted that counter organisation was about action:

The last of the three main ways in which the army can contribute to a counter-subversive campaign in the early stages concerns the process of counter organization, which is a term used to describe a method by

³⁹ For indicative examples of such positions, see: Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice."; Peters, "In Praise of Attrition." Both *passim*.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

⁴¹ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 7.

⁴² See: Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith II, First Illinois paperback, 2000 ed. (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000), Chapter 5.

⁴³ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 329.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

which the government can build up its control of the population and frustrate the enemy's efforts at doing so. In its simplest form, counter organization involves putting the government's views over to the population by action rather than by propaganda.⁴⁵

To use a simple physiological analogy, organisation provides the essential skeletal and muscular elements that hold the body of the insurgency movement together, enabling it to function. The proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework seeks to target the insurgency's functional outcomes directly through counter violence and counter subversion. Through adopting the principle of counter organisation the framework not only disrupts or destroys the insurgent movement's capability to address essential organisational imperatives; it also indirectly addresses its capacity for violence and subversion. Such an indirect attack, diminishing the capacity for insurgent violence and subversion, effectively pre-empts insurgent capability. This observation reinforces the point made in the introduction to this section about the interconnectedness of the principles and their mutually supporting effect when implemented in accordance within the intent of the framework.

Once again, fine detail as to 'how' second-party counterinsurgents should conduct counter organisation is not germane to the aim of this thesis. The possibilities are almost infinite, depending upon the specific problem and the context and circumstances of the intervention. For, as Callwell helpfully notes, '[i]n different small wars the hostile mode of conducting hostilities varies to a surprising extent'.⁴⁶ Like considerations about how to enact counter violence, how to counter organise it is essentially a lower level matter for campaign and tactical planners. However, examination of 'what' counter organisation should address is a useful line of enquiry. Gerard Chaliand suggests that the 'underground political infrastructure' coordinated by 'middle-ranking cadres' is the most important element in the organisation of a guerrilla campaign⁴⁷ While the record of a great many counterinsurgency campaigns

⁴⁵ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 79.

⁴⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 32.

⁴⁷ Chaliand, *Guerrilla Strategies, an Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan*, 10.

suggests he is conceptually correct, this is also perhaps a little too generic and obvious to be a useful practical guide.

Others offer greater, more useful specificity about the important elements of organisation. Weinstein helpfully lists five challenges of rebel organisation: recruitment, control, governance, violence and resilience.⁴⁸ The United States' military counterinsurgency doctrine provides even greater fidelity about what might be the focus of counter organisation. It suggests a number of insurgent vulnerabilities, which it lists as secrecy, mobilisation and message, base of operations, external support, financial weakness, internal divisions, maintaining momentum and informants.⁴⁹ These 'vulnerabilities' affect the capacity and strength of the insurgent organisation and accordingly represent appropriate targets for the application of counter organisation effort.

Counter subversion

If organisation provides the musculoskeletal structure of the insurgency organism, then subversion surely provides the environment in which it can thrive. During the counterinsurgency era, the term was synonymous with perceptions of an internal threat to Western states posed by communist or leftist elements. However, since the end of the Cold War the term has regained recognition as a general technique of state or societal attack and diminishment. Through weakening of the state and the 'normal' fabric of society, successful subversion simultaneously creates further opportunities for insurgent attack and retards the state's ability to respond effectively. Kitson's analysis of low-intensity conflict noted the dual role subversion plays in insurgency – that of radicalising the population into action, and as a catalyst for violence – the latter by either the state or the rebellion.⁵⁰ William Rosenau has highlighted the imperative that confronts second-party counterinsurgents:

Subversion is an important element of the insurgent repertoire, and if the U.S. armed forces, the intelligence community, and civilian

⁴⁸ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 42-5.

⁴⁹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*, Section 1-95.

⁵⁰ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 4.

agencies expect to wage effective counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, they will have to develop more sophisticated approaches to counter subversion.⁵¹

It is important to note that, while the literature frequently highlights the host nation as a target, second-party counterinsurgents should also assume that they could be targets of subversion. Such subversion could occur either within the host nation or domestically. These acts of subversion may have various intents, such as creating pressure regarding withdrawal from the conflict or degrading the ability of the second-party to co-operate with the host nation. It follows that second-party counterinsurgents cannot assume that subversion is solely a matter of concern for the host nation, an idea that again reinforces the importance of the principle of counter subversion.

Rosenau identifies three forms of subversion commonly used by insurgents – front groups, infiltration and civil unrest.⁵² Such techniques echo those variously described by McCuen and Kitson.⁵³ These suggest that, while the understanding of who conducts subversion may have progressed beyond the understanding of the Cold War, the actual techniques of subversion, like those of insurgency, have endured consistently. Two main schools of thought emerge about counter subversion action. Kilcullen characterises what may be termed the ‘indirect’ approach which: ‘[s]hould focus primarily on strengthening, protecting and building networks of trust with at-risk communities, and only apply active measures to neutralize subversive actors as a secondary task’.⁵⁴ In contrast, Robert Thompson’s view characterises the ‘direct’ approach. He rejected the idea that because the threat of subversion maybe seen as ‘ill-defined and abstract’ softer community approaches of the type suggested by Kilcullen are necessary.⁵⁵ While subversion may be a slightly abstract concept, Thompson argued that its manifestation is tangible, and as such is targetable by the intelligence system because it is ‘the individual who plans to subvert others

⁵¹ Rosenau, *Subversion and Insurgency*, 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 6-8.

⁵³ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 30-31; Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*; Ch 5.

⁵⁴ Kilcullen, "Subversion and Countersubversion in the Campaign against Terrorism in Europe," 655.

⁵⁵ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 84.

to carry out illegal acts against the state, and it is the individual, acting singly or in a group or in an armed unit, who carries out subversive or insurgent acts'.⁵⁶ The direct approach echoes the British approach to counter subversion from Palestine to Northern Ireland in the 1970s, and numerous campaigns in between. Kitson's writing on the subject in *Low Intensity Operations* typifies the lessons learnt from the direct approach and serves as virtually a doctrinal primer for its conduct.

While both the indirect and direct approaches are equally valid, the selection of one method over another will again depend on the circumstance of the campaign. That said, two concerns arising from the consideration of the indirect approach suggest that the direct approach may often prove superior for use by second-party counterinsurgency. The indirect approach's call for building trust within communities of the host nation may present an awkward cultural and social obstacle for effective action by foreign personnel. Secondly, the requirement of a reduced priority for active neutralisation measures is philosophically at odds with the deliberately activist approach of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Given the importance of counter subversion, and the potential for circumstantial variance in any particular campaign, counterinsurgents may need to consider using both approaches at different times or even a hybridised version that combines both.

Pre-emption

Pre-emption in the conventional strategic sense envisages striking a blow in self-defence in the anticipation of otherwise receiving one.⁵⁷ Reflecting Ted Serong's comment that 'the only good counter-insurgency operation is one that never had to start,' pre-emption in a counterinsurgency sense of its traditional use would be a form of 'anti-insurgency'.⁵⁸ That is, actions undertaken by a state to prevent the development of an insurgency. Tom

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁷ A typical examination/explanation of this concept is in: Walter B. Slocombe, "Force, Pre-Emption and Strategy," *Survival* 45, no. 1 (2003): 123.

⁵⁸ Francis P. Serong, "An Australian View of Revolutionary Warfare," *Conflict Studies* 16, no. September (1971): 1; O'Neill, *Confronting the Hydra, Big Problems with Small Wars*, 68.

Mockaitis describes just such a United States military doctrinal concept from the 1980s: 'Pre-emption involves eliminating the causes of the insurgency and developing the security apparatus of the threatened nation, collectively referred to as "Internal Defense and Development"'⁵⁹. A related United States military doctrinal concept, foreign internal defense or FID, still exists today.⁶⁰ However, it is problematic to associate foreign internal defense with second-party counterinsurgency. Firstly, FID strictly involves non-combat support from the intervening nation's troops, whereas second-party counterinsurgency envisages direct involvement in combat action. Secondly, second-party counterinsurgency as a defined concept is a reactive measure to the established existence of an insurgency, rather a pro-active measure to prevent the development of one. The principle of pre-emption within the framework is neither representative of the 'anti-insurgency' sense of FID, nor the traditional strategic meaning of the term.

Pre-emption within the context of the framework is therefore defined as 'action taken that makes it either pointless or impossible for the insurgent enemy to do what they intended'.⁶¹ The principle is about the counterinsurgents gaining and then maintaining the initiative. This was a key lesson from the imperial policing era. Callwell argued it 'cannot be insisted upon too strongly that in a small war the only possible attitude to assume is, speaking strategically, the offensive'.⁶² While the pre-emptive method may be anticipatory action, its ultimate purpose is to degrade and ultimately deny the initiative that normally resides with the insurgency in such conflicts. This achieves two things. Most obviously, having the initiative makes the

⁵⁹ Thomas R. Mockaitis, "A New Era of Counterinsurgency," *The RUSI Journal* 136, no. 1 (1991): 77.

⁶⁰ See: United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-22 Foreign Internal Defense*.

⁶¹ There is an important distinction here between the second-party counterinsurgency framework's use of the term pre-emption and the 'regular' sense of the term commonly associated with strategic studies. Pre-emption in the sense used herein can occur anywhere along the temporal scale of an insurgency conflict – not only at or before the start. The critical sense of the term here is that the use of pre-emption *anticipates* and *denies* the insurgency the possession and use of an objective, technique or resource(s) through the deliberate action(s) of the counterinsurgent. In some cases, where an insurgent practice is established, applying the principle of pre-emption may effectively attack or undermine the established insurgent practice while simultaneously pre-empting it in another locale, time or situation.

⁶² Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 75.

counterinsurgents task easier by reducing the asymmetric advantage its possession normally offers the insurgency. The other benefit is the potential to achieve what Beaufre termed 'erosion' and Liddell Hart 'dislocation' of the insurgent leadership within the psychological sphere.⁶³ Callwell summed this point up in the language of his era as when he argued that: 'It is not a question of merely maintaining the initiative, but of compelling the enemy to see at every turn that he has lost it and to recognise that the forces of civilization are dominant and not to be denied'.⁶⁴ Effective pre-emption, accentuated by the physical effects of enacting the principles of counter violence and counter organisation, thus builds upon the framework's manoeuvre warfare approach to second-party counterinsurgency.

Having established the 'why' and the 'what' of pre-emption, it is apparent that the 'how', like that of the other three principles already examined, will largely depend upon an assessment of the situation in any specific campaign. The scope of possibly pre-emptive action is wide and limited only by understanding of the insurgency's methods and intent. Like each of the framework's principles, the impact of effectively applying pre-emption grows when applied in support of another principle. The Malayan Emergency provides an appropriate historical example of this. The resettlement location of over 500 000 rural ethnic Chinese squatters and up to 600 000 estate labourers under the rubric of 'population control' effectively pre-empted the insurgent Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) by denying access to a large pool of disaffected people and potential sympathisers or recruits.⁶⁵ The relocation of these people into the tightly controlled 'new villages', in association with emergency regulations on food control, also resulted in a very strong counter organisational effect. Karl Hack has established that the insurgent leader, Chin Peng, regarded the adverse impact of these methods upon the MNLA's operations as significant.⁶⁶ Understanding the insurgent 'system', as in the shown Malayan example, is obviously an important factor in planning pre-

⁶³ Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 116; Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 326.

⁶⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 75-76.

⁶⁵ Figures cited in: Hack, "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," 388.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 396-400.

emptive activity. Intelligence informs and enables understanding, which it is why it is one of the second-party counterinsurgency framework's enabling concepts.

Framework enabling concepts: intelligence

Inevitably, studies about counterinsurgency must pay what John Nagl referred to as the 'ritual obeisance to the importance of intelligence in counterinsurgency operations'.⁶⁷ This paper also does, albeit sparingly, in recognition of the largely uncontroversial and uncontested nature of the many truisms offered about intelligence within contemporary counterinsurgency thought. David Richards provides a succinct summary of the truisms about why intelligence is important:

Good intelligence, on which all sound military operations are built, is essential in any form of warfare but especially so in COIN. Insurgents try not to stand out, so they have to be identified and separated from the population, and the population safeguarded from military operations to neutralise insurgents. This needs accurate and timely intelligence because without it security operations risk being blunt, blundering and indiscriminate.⁶⁸

Meanwhile other writers encapsulate the widely accepted view that the form of intelligence actually required for counterinsurgency is distinctly different (and, perhaps, more difficult) than that routinely undertaken by state intelligence agencies. According to Manwaring and Fishel, '[t]he means for understanding the discrepancies of an insurgency and preventing its members from planning and carrying out illegal actions is not automatically available. An intelligence capability several steps beyond the usual is required'.⁶⁹ Rather than repeating generic platitudes about intelligence and counterinsurgency, this section will focus on identifying the unique intelligence concerns that arise from the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency.

⁶⁷ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, xiii.

⁶⁸ David Richards, "A Soldier's Perspective on Countering Insurgency," in *Victory among People* ed. David Richards and Greg Mills (London: RUSI and The Brenthurst Foundation, 2011), 22.

⁶⁹ Max G. Manwaring and John T. Fishel, "Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency: Toward a New Analytical Approach," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 3, no. 3 (1992): 293.

The first challenge of enabling intelligence for second-party counterinsurgents is to assess the scope and nature of what is required. As Trinquier asserts, 'Since modern warfare asserts its presence on the totality of the population, we have to be everywhere informed. Therefore, we must have a vast intelligence network, which ought to be set up, if possible, before the opening of hostilities'.⁷⁰ This assertion is correct and problematic. It immediately highlights the two key problems arising with second-party counterinsurgency and intelligence. The first is that the advantages of the imperial policing era and, in some instances, the early counterinsurgency era in circumstances such as the French in Algeria or the British in Malaya, do not exist in the post-colonial world. Second-party counterinsurgents are highly unlikely to have the necessarily extensive intelligence operations in place in a host nation before the commencement of their intervention. The record of the situations in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 is indicative of the likely situation at the commencement of a contemporary intervention. The fact is that such apparatus needs time and effort; the experience of Afghanistan and Iraq highlights the sheer magnitude difficulty of this task. Moreover, this challenge informs the second problem.

The second problem is the complication arising in such conflicts involving issues of trust and sovereignty. Whilst the host nation and second-party counterinsurgent necessarily have goals regarding the insurgency that are broadly in alignment, this cannot be assumed as being the same as having either a shared intelligence system, or a willingness to share either intelligence or such a system. Intelligence work is by nature secretive and sovereign nations, for sound reasons, invariably try to shield both their intelligence activities and domestic information from foreign powers. Contrast these facts with the assertion that 'the governing authorities must organize their intelligence networks around a clandestine apparatus which spreads its roots deep into the population' and the problem is starkly revealed.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 31.

⁷¹ McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, 114.

There is no obvious or easy answer to either of the problems outlined. It is overwhelmingly likely that interventionist states will not have the requisite intelligence capabilities in a host nation when operations start. As usual, Callwell reliably provides a pithy summary of the reason, noting that often 'small wars break out unexpectedly and in unexpected places'.⁷² Potential second-party counterinsurgent states could mitigate this to some extent by developing and maintaining generic contingency plans for the rapid development of such capabilities upon the requirement eventuating.

It is also an enduring truth that sovereign nations will be reticent to share intelligence, intelligence systems or welcome a foreign power building clandestine networks within their territory, no matter what the shared purpose. The reality for second-party counterinsurgency is that, irrespective of the concerns outlined, there will need to be at least some degree of co-operation and accommodation between the 'allied' intelligence services in order for the enterprise to be successful. Once again, being aware of the probable difficulties and having policy prepared for such issues may assist with the negotiations and accommodation that will be required.

Another intelligence-related concern for second-party counterinsurgency is that 'perfecting intelligence production does not necessarily lead to perfecting intelligence consumption'.⁷³ Counterinsurgents must be as good at being effective consumers of intelligence as they are at being developers of intelligence. The art of an effective intelligence system is not merely collection; it involves making correct assessments about its purpose and uses. A senior United States Army intelligence officer highlighted the problem that he observed in Afghanistan:

Eight years into the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. intelligence community is only marginally relevant to the overall strategy. Having focused the overwhelming majority of its collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to

⁷² Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 43.

⁷³ Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable," *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978): 63.

answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people that they seek to persuade.⁷⁴

Remembering that the aim of second-party counterinsurgency is to defeat insurgency through the process of bringing the political discourse within normative, non-violent bounds, this is an important observation. While intelligence in second-party counterinsurgency operations necessarily identifies insurgent personnel for targeting, effective decisions need to inform which of the framework principles are engaged in the targeting process. Therefore, whilst violent and potentially irreconcilable actors may be subject to so called 'kinetic' action as part of counter violence, others may be subject to psychological operations in order achieve counter subversion or counter organisational objectives. The deduction from this is that the second-party counterinsurgent must develop and promulgate a plan stipulating how intelligence will enable the framework principles and support the design for insurgency defeat. Equally important is the review of such a plan in light of assessments of its effectiveness once the campaign commences. This connects to the other enabling concept, adaptation.

Framework enabling concepts: adaptation

The characteristics of insurgency examined in the first chapter lead to the conclusion that successful insurgencies are complex adaptive systems. That is, they are '[a]ble to improve their "fitness" or success in their environment, through continual variations and fitness-linked selection operating on the systems to eliminate those variations that decrease success'.⁷⁵ It logically follows that the counterinsurgent needs to recognise this complexity and adaptation and make provision for adaptations of their own. Robert Gates highlighted the recently re-learned importance of this with his observation that '[t]he [US] Army's ability to learn and adapt in recent years allowed us to pull

⁷⁴ Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," in *Working Papers* (Washington DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 7.

⁷⁵ Anne-Marie Grisogono and Alex Ryan, "Operationalising Adaptive Campaigning," in *12th International Command and Control and Technology Symposium* (Newport, Rhode Island: Defence Science and Technology Organisation, 2007), 8.

Iraq back from the brink of chaos in 2007'.⁷⁶ Problematically though for all involved, the nature of the adaptation in insurgency and counterinsurgency is not a simple manifestation of Isaac Newton's third law.⁷⁷ Reductionism of the 'cause and effect' or 'unit/actor' type of analysis often does not make sense because of the systemic nature of interactions in such conflicts.⁷⁸ Robert Jervis provides a relevant illustrative example from the Vietnam War:

In Vietnam, critics argued for shifting resources from large search-and-destroy operations, which had yielded few results, to the pacification program, which had established government control where it was put in place. But the army's reply may have been valid: pacification worked only because conventional offenses contained the enemy's most effective forces, which would destroy the program if American policy changed.⁷⁹

This leads directly to the question of how might second-party counterinsurgents approach the issue of adaptation.

Examples of adaptation within the literature are often misleading. Adaptation may well rate with the other enabling concept of intelligence for 'motherhood statements' and misunderstanding. A simple example is the frequent claims about second-party counterinsurgents learning the host nations' language and culture.⁸⁰ Nor should adaptation be mistaken for changes to military organisational structures or the simple tactical lessons identified and implemented in response to learnt enemy actions. Many of these, such as Nagl's example of Vietnamese guerrillas learning to 'hug' close to United States' forces when in contact in order to restrict the use of close air support and artillery, are about instances of inspired tactical commonsense rather than

⁷⁶ Gates, "Speech by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates to the United States Military Academy (West Point, New York), Friday, February 25, 2011."

⁷⁷ The 18th century physicist Isaac Newton proposed three laws of mechanics. His third law simply describes how when one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction to that of the first body.

⁷⁸ Robert Jervis, "Complexity and the Analysis of Political and Social Life," *Political Science Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (1997): 572.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 584.

⁸⁰ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, xv.

exemplars of a true adaptive process.⁸¹ Rather, the kind of adaptation envisaged to enable the framework is:

An iterative process that continually generates and tests variations in a complex adaptive system, and selects and incorporates for retention those that increase its success, and discards and inhibits those that reduce it; leading to a better fit between the system and its context.⁸²

Several issues for the second-party counterinsurgent to address are immediately apparent. Once again, in order for adaptation to enable the second-party framework, there must be a plan for its use and implementation. This mirrors the situation previously discussed for the other framework enabler, intelligence. However, this issue differs from the situation with intelligence insofar as while intelligence staff and agencies are relatively common, adaptation staff or agencies within indicative second-party counterinsurgency forces are rare to non-existent. It follows that consideration be given to the development of a suitable staff or organisation with the appropriate skill set to implement the adaptation plan and manage the subsequent adaptive process. It should be understood that this may prove challenging. The nature of the insurgency/counterinsurgency environment, the difficulties of understanding complex systems and the scope of activity required to enact the framework's principles mean that the requisite depth of talent is highly unlikely to be routinely resident within either the second-party or host nation counterinsurgents militaries. Nevertheless, it is vital that it is attempted. War is always uncertain, and there can be no guarantee that a counterinsurgent force that can develop an effective adaptation program will be victorious. However, it is reasonable to assert that a counterinsurgent without an effective adaptation program is more likely to lose.

The examination of the two enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptation completes the theoretical presentation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework model. The presentation of assumptions and the examination of method, principles and enabling concepts have delineated

⁸¹ Nagl, "Counterinsurgency in Vietnam," 138.

⁸² Grisogono and Ryan, "Operationalising Adaptive Campaigning," 7.

where the framework differs conceptually from other approaches and established its design to work. However, understanding how a theory works is not the same as understanding any of the advantages or disadvantages it offers over existing approaches that would justify or rule against its adoption. Such understanding is the result of critical evaluation and assessment. The evaluation and assessment of the second-party counterinsurgency framework occurs in two ways. This chapter will evaluate the theoretical aspects of the framework, while the evaluation of the practicalities of the framework in achieving its purpose occurs in the subsequent three case study chapters and assessments made in the concluding chapter.

Critical evaluation of the theoretical framework

The ambiguity at the core of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm’s ‘design’ for victory presents second-party counterinsurgents with a dilemma. Centuries of Western military strategic thought have emphasised ‘selection and maintenance of the aim’ as a fundamental principle of war. Strategic analysts since Thucydides have stressed the importance of appropriately aligning ends with the ways and means available. Yet selection of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm offers confusion of both the aim and the way to attain it. In contrast, the second-party counterinsurgency framework is unambiguous. It suggests a clear and singular aim – the defeat of insurgency - and aligns this with a clear method (defeat mechanism) – the denial of insurgent ways and means. There is no confusion regarding political development, modernisation, nation building or any of the other shibboleths routinely associated with the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm. The framework does not deny that the pursuit of such things may indeed be desirable for the host nation. However, it neither confuses their attainment with the practice of counterinsurgency, nor mandates their achievement as an essential core task for second-party counterinsurgents. Clarifying and simplifying the task confronting second-party counterinsurgents is of clear benefit with the eternal quest to reduce complexity and friction in warfare. Analysis suggests several other important advantages of the second-party counterinsurgency framework over the ‘hearts and minds’ approach.

Further to the alignment of *aim* and *method* already outlined, the second-party counterinsurgency framework also aligns *method* with the characteristically available *means* of intervention. A review of recent and historical cases suggests that the 'hearts and minds' approach has considerable difficulty in achieving this. Paul Rich and Richard Stubbs sum up the 'hearts and minds' approach '[t]he fight against the insurgents is not set apart from the normal practises of government; rather the campaign is fought on all fronts: political, economic, cultural, social, administrative and military'.⁸³ Logically, and intuitively, for second-party counterinsurgents to 'fight the campaign' on 'political, economic, cultural, social and administrative fronts', civilian personnel with the appropriate skills in these areas should be deployed. This occurs rarely, and never in sufficient numbers to be effective. The requirement for such personnel has been established and understood for decades, yet from the height of the CORDS campaign in Vietnam, to contemporary Iraq and Afghanistan, the necessary people have not materialised.⁸⁴ Instead, the normative profile of second-party counterinsurgency sees a relatively token deployment of the civilian personnel required to achieve the 'hearts and minds' 'method' and, by default, military personnel tasked to act in lieu. A case study from the Iraq War used by Alex Alderson highlights this: 'as the example of 1-4 CAV illustrates, soldiers had to carry out far more non-military tasks than was ideal, since civilian agencies could not or chose not to be present on the ground'.⁸⁵

Alderson's example of the United States Army's 1-4 CAV is not an isolated case – a pattern of uniformed personnel tasked to make up for shortfalls in deployable civilian expertise is well-established. The United States'

⁸³ Paul B. Rich and Richard Stubbs, eds., *The Counter-Insurgent State: Guerilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1997), 7.

⁸⁴ Blaufarb and Colby extensively cover the understanding of this in their works on the Vietnam war and the counterinsurgency era. Contemporary understanding is evident in the U.S. government 2008 guide, largely drafted by Kilcullen. See: Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*; and Colby and McCargar, *Lost Victory, a Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*; United States Government, "U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide," ed. Department of State (Washington DC: Bureau of Political - Military Affairs, 2009).

⁸⁵ Alderson, "The Validity of British Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine after the War in Iraq, 2003-2009," 248.

FM 3-24 goes as far as to mandate ‘if adequate civilian capacity is not available, military forces fill the gap’ and states ‘soldiers and marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors’.⁸⁶ There are many reasons why appropriate civilian capacity might be unavailable, although an investigation of them is not germane to the argument at hand. The important point is that the military is simply not the right ‘means’ to enact ‘political, economic, cultural, social and administrative’ reform. Western states do not use their militaries for such purposes domestically; it is equally implausible to do so in a foreign intervention and expect success. In stark contrast, the same military means, supported by the relatively small amount of civilian expertise traditionally available, are fully ‘fit for purpose’ for the method promulgated by the second-party counterinsurgency framework. In the language of strategic scholarship, the framework’s advantage is that it aligns the ‘ways’ with the available ‘means’.

Another advantage becomes evident when the related issues of multiple insurgencies or multi-causation are considered. The comedic portrayal of dissent between multiple Judean rebel groups in the 1979 comedy movie *Life of Brian*, while parody, was also illustrative of a common ‘real world’ problem that is not at all humorous for counterinsurgents. The contemporary conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan provide examples of conflicts with multiple insurgencies, pursuing sometimes related but more often differing ends. The logic of the ‘hearts and minds’ paradigm requires acceptance that the universal application of its approach will defeat all of these disparate groups and their divergent aims. This premise appears not only illogical, but is without a demonstrable historical precedent of success. The second-party counterinsurgency framework’s comparative agnosticism regarding insurgent ends means that it does not suffer the same difficulty. While the causes of insurgency and the ‘ends’ sought may be infinitely different, the few discrete ‘ways’ available to either an insurgency or multiple insurgencies render them all equally susceptible to attack by the framework method. The framework also offers an advantage in those relatively common circumstances where insurgency degenerates from political purposes

⁸⁶ Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*; Section 2.5 and in the foreword of the manual.

into retail organised criminality or warlordism. The provision of public goods and services for developmental purposes under 'hearts and minds' approaches can encourage or exacerbate corruption and other forms of criminality. The framework largely avoids this trap while at the same time providing methods that can combat aspects of criminally inspired violence as well as politically motivated violence. The maintenance of the initiative in response to such violence is another clear area of benefit.

Sun Tzu advised 'what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy'.⁸⁷ It is its strategy of organising and systematically using violence that distinguishes insurgency from other forms of internal political dissent. It is this violent, militant challenge that creates the immediate and direct challenge to the state. Charles Gwynn summarised the aim of this strategy as: 'To show defiance of Government, to make its machinery unworkable and to prove its impotence; hoping by a process of attrition to wear down its determination'.⁸⁸ The 'hearts and minds' paradigm does not counter this strategy well. It subordinates it to address the more distant (in time) and abstract threat posed by the insurgent's alternate vision for the threatened state. Engaging in such an argument about vision, legitimacy and governance cedes the initiative to the insurgency. It effectively represents a choice, often made sub-consciously as result of adherence to the 'hearts and minds' dogma, to fight the insurgency on its own terms. In doing so, the 'hearts and mind' approach allows the insurgency vital time to build and organise an asymmetrical advantage over the state. Moreover, all of this is before any consideration of the obvious practical difficulties and implausibility of second-party counterinsurgents successfully engaging in host nation domestic arguments about sovereign vision, legitimacy and governance. Amongst the advantages of the proposed framework, one is that it side-steps these arguments, and uses the interventionist states' invariably asymmetric advantage in physical power to attack a vital element of insurgent strategy. A similar advantage accrues with

⁸⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 77.

⁸⁸ Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 11.

respect to analysis and consideration of another factor of insurgent strategy - time.

A refrain commonly heard in 'hearts and minds' advocacy is that counterinsurgency is 'long war'.⁸⁹ This epochal framing perhaps reflects less the actual duration of such conflicts than acknowledgement that the preferred method of nation building is an inevitably long process. Yet acceptance of time in this manner defies both long-established wisdom and recent analysis about the time imperative in such conflicts. The observation attributed to Sun Tzu that 'there is no instance of a country having been benefitted from prolonged warfare' finds support in Callwell's concern about 'how essential it is to prevent the struggle from degenerating into desultory warfare'.⁹⁰ Steve Metz suggests why time aids the insurgent: '[w]ithin the strategy of insurgency, the weak organization seeks to postpone resolution of the conflict while it adjusts the power balance in its favour. Thus the strategy deliberately seeks to extend the conflict'.⁹¹ In his analysis of why big nations lose small wars, Andrew Mack also highlights the concern for second-party counterinsurgents which arises from this: 'Provided the insurgents can maintain a steady imposition of 'costs' on their metropolitan opponent, the balance of political forces in the external power will inevitably shift in favour of the anti-war faction'.⁹² Merom's work further supports the assertion that the time engaged in such conflicts frustrates second-party counterinsurgent achievement of goals.⁹³ The second-party counterinsurgency framework mitigates this risk through eschewing wholesale nation building and prioritising conflict resolution through the defeat of the insurgency's ability to fight.

⁸⁹ For example, see John Nagl's introduction to the University of Chicago edition of FM 3-24:United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: US Field Manual No. 3-24: Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No.3-33.5*, xix.

⁹⁰ Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, xi; Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 97.

⁹¹ Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 38.

⁹² Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," 195.

⁹³ Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*.

Time, and its associated perils for interventionist states, is not the only cost that the framework potentially minimises when compared to the 'hearts and minds' approach. While war is traditionally and inevitably expensive in terms of personnel, material and national fiscal health, the pursuit of 'interventionist' nation building brings new and higher costs. For the host nation there is the concern articulated by Blaufarb that 'many nations simply cannot implement the counterinsurgency principles devised by resource-rich and organizationally strong countries or host-nations'.⁹⁴ Porch highlights a particularly contemporary concern about cost for political leaders in Western nations: 'The "liberal peace" justification for intervention is becoming less attractive to Western populations, if for no other reason that it has become horribly expensive'.⁹⁵ However, highlighting how the second-party framework minimises costs associated with development also suggests one of several possible criticisms. An examination of these follows.

Some potential criticisms of the framework

It appears logical to suggest that many of the potential criticisms of the second-party counterinsurgency framework may relate to how or why it differs from the dominant 'hearts and minds' paradigm. Over time, familiarity with the dominant 'hearts and minds' viewpoint tilts them towards becoming 'truths rather than points of view'.⁹⁶ It makes sense that the understanding of such 'truths' would serve as a critical point of departure in challenging any newly proposed theoretical frameworks. An obvious criticism that follows from the previous paragraph's analysis of the cost is that the framework is silent on the issue of pushing development in the host nation. A recent work co-authored by the British Chief of Defence encapsulates the perceived truth about development thus: 'While it undoubtedly has a kinetic dimension...dealing with modern insurgency is a profoundly political and developmental task. It is as much about governance as guns, and providing jobs and economic security as

⁹⁴ David R. Haines, "COIN in the Real World," *Parameters* 38, no. 4 (2008): 53.

⁹⁵ Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 253.

⁹⁶ Slife and Williams, *What's Behind the Research? Discovering Hidden Assumptions in the Behavioral Sciences*, 11.

military activity'.⁹⁷ Contemporary advocates of the 'hearts and minds' approach thus remain besotted with the idea of the 'beleaguered moderniser' syndrome as a source of insurgency-related instability. The proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework clearly does not support this view, and accordingly, is open to criticism from those who do. The logic underpinning the framework's position that counterinsurgency is not synonymous with development need not be re-iterated here. Rather, tempering this potential criticism is historical perspective regarding 'development'.

Put bluntly, the idea of development as an essential element of counterinsurgency is a theoretical and historical aberration of the counterinsurgency era that has endured. Chapter two described how this originated, culminating in the particular worldview of the Kennedy Administration about modernisation, insurgency and the developing world. The third chapter offered an explanation as to how and why the idea has endured. Critical examination of the record supports the assertion of it being historically unusual, and perhaps even historically contingent. During the imperial policing era, the purpose of development was to enable expansion and suppression – techniques such as the *tache d'huile*, *quadrillage* and *ratissage* evolved and rode on the backs of 'European' development. The idea of development as a rational 'end' in the manner envisaged by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm may have occasionally been considered in the enlightened domestic salons of the imperial powers, but there is scant evidence of it in the writings and actions of the imperial policing practitioners of the era.

Examination of the post 9-11 era again calls into question the utility of development as a counterinsurgency objective. A common characterisation of the insurgencies of the era is that they are about identity, culture and religion. How development as envisaged by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm can satisfactorily address such concerns lacks suitable explanation in the literature. David Kilcullen has even asserted that contemporary insurgents are fighting for

⁹⁷ Richards and Mills, "Introduction: Contemporary Insurgency," 7.

the status quo and that the second-party counterinsurgents are revolutionary.⁹⁸ If Kilcullen's assertion is correct, the logical implication is that the principle of development is a potentially dangerous anachronism rather than a counterinsurgency essential.

Another possible criticism derived from the basic tenets of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, and related to issues already examined regarding development concerns, is the framework's approach to the 'politics' of insurgency. Notwithstanding the broad agreement amongst strategists and security scholars that war is a political act, 'hearts and minds' advocates continue with the claim that insurgency and counterinsurgency in some way possess a 'uniquely' political nature. The criticism of the framework that may arise from such a perspective is that delaying accommodation and conciliation of political issues until the insurgency's capability to use effective violence is severely degraded or defeated avoids the true problem. There are three rebuttals to this critique. The first concerns the claim for political uniqueness. The only discernible difference between so-called 'conventional war' and insurgency are the nature of the actors rather than the fact that the ends of the conflicts are one or more political imperatives. The 'hearts and minds' paradigm has not logically established why conflict between intra-state actors and inter-state actors requires different treatment of political imperative. This links to the next point of rebuttal. The purpose of war is to compel the enemy to accept one's will – that is, a set of political circumstances favourable to the victor. In light of this traditionally accepted point, the 'hearts and minds' paradigm requirement to address the enemy's political imperatives in order to 'defeat' them is perversely illogical. The final point is that the framework does not deny the requirement for political action and accommodation. It merely suggests the postponement of such until circumstances are more advantageous to the counterinsurgent. This focus on addressing the 'fighting aspect' of counterinsurgency conflict first leads to a third possible criticism arising from the 'hearts and minds' paradigm regarding the use of force.

⁹⁸ Kilcullen, "Counter-Insurgency Redux," 113.

The fact that the second-party counterinsurgency framework embraces the requirement for the wholehearted use of appropriately discriminatory, proportionate and legal force is another possible source of criticism. Such criticism, however, is an expression of preference for a certain form of warfare rather than evidence of counterinsurgency malpractice. The record of evidence is on the 'side' of the appropriate use of force. Callwell's study of small wars led him to conclude that 'tactics favour the regular army while strategy favours the enemy – therefore the object is to fight, not manoeuvre'.⁹⁹ Fighting requires force. Hazelton's research has suggested a strong correlation between force and counterinsurgency success at the campaign level. Supporting Hazelton's findings is other recent research suggesting that there is also a correlation at lower levels of counterinsurgency campaigning.¹⁰⁰

Another clichéd criticism regarding the use of force in counterinsurgency suggests that every insurgent killed generates a score to take his or her place. Rob Johnston has called this the 'martyrdom effect'.¹⁰¹ During General Stanley McChrystal's time in command of NATO forces in Afghanistan a similar association arose with civilian (that is, non-combatant) deaths, where it was referred to as 'insurgent math'.¹⁰² While an intuitively seductive and logical idea, it is also academically unsubstantiated - 'Insurgent myth' may be a better label. There is no empirical valid data available that supports such a global assertion. In contrast, Weinstein and Kalyvas' works demonstrate that logical calculus, rather than emotional response, accounts for the majority of decisions to engage in insurgency.¹⁰³ Johnston also argues that the use of force to kill

⁹⁹ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 85.

¹⁰⁰ Alex S. Wilner, "Targeted Killings in Afghanistan: Measuring Coercion and Deterrence in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 4 (2010).

¹⁰¹ Patrick B. Johnston, "Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," *International Security* 36, no. 4 (2012): 52.

¹⁰² As Commander ISAF, McChrystal issued specific direction on the matter within: Stanley McChrystal, "ISAF Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," NATO, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/official_texts/counterinsurgency_guidance.pdf. Accessed 23 August 2013. McChrystal discusses civilian casualties in: Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task, a Memoir* (New York: Portfolio / Penguin, 2013), 311-13.

¹⁰³ Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

insurgents provides a sobering reminder of the state's power, thus acting as a deterrent rather than a rallying point.¹⁰⁴

The discussion of the 'martyrdom effect' and possible emotional responses from insurgents or potential insurgents opens the question of insurgent rationality as another possible point of criticism of the framework. The framework's design is vulnerable to the charge that it is unduly reliant on 'rationality' through its attempt to influence the insurgent 'rational calculus' of cost and benefit. It might also follow that irrational or potentially fanatical insurgents would not only be impervious to the rational calculus, but that their fanaticism could also make them more resistant to coercion. Both are possibilities, albeit the record suggests irrationality or fanaticism are perhaps nowhere near as common amongst insurgents as countless Hollywood depictions would suggest. Jeffrey Record offers a counter-perspective on this subject when he writes 'even the strongest will, if hitched to a bad strategy or denied minimum material resources, can be defeated'.¹⁰⁵ Another consideration is that, while it is the aspiration of the second-party counterinsurgency framework to achieve an indirect approach to victory through influencing the insurgent rational calculus, it is not solely reliant upon it. Should fanaticism, or any other circumstance, deny that opportunity, effective and relentless application of the framework's method and principles should still degrade and ultimately defeat the insurgency.

A further potential criticism is that the second-party counterinsurgency framework is silent on topical issues within counterinsurgency such as the role of ethnic and religious identity or culture.¹⁰⁶ The framework does not resile from any suggestion that these are issues of varying importance for second-party counterinsurgents at the proverbial 'coal face' of fighting a particular campaign. However, the potential for variations in any specific campaign makes any

¹⁰⁴ Johnston, "Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," 53.

¹⁰⁵ Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Fitzsimmons, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," 351. For an indicative discussion of culture see: Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," *passim*.

discussion of them below the sensible discrimination threshold of a generic theoretical framework such as the one proposed herein. Additionally, in seeking to be as universally applicable as possible, the framework's design and method deliberately seeks to work through attacking the common requirements of insurgency and minimising the impact of divergent independent variables within insurgent systems.

Conclusion

Ted Robert Gurr suggested, with some wisdom for those approaching the issue of counterinsurgency theory, that:

No pattern of coercive control, however intense and consistent, is likely to deter permanently all enraged men from violence, except genocide. No extant or utopian pattern of social and political engineering seems capable of satisfying all human aspirations and resolving all human discontents.¹⁰⁷

The second-party counterinsurgency framework and the 'hearts and minds' paradigm approach fall across different elements of Gurr's perspective in their approach. They even overlap in part. Gurr tells us that there are no black-and-white or binary choices to address the complexity inherent in counterinsurgency – just nuanced shades of grey. The art of strategy is selecting and aligning appropriate ways and means to achieve desired ends. This chapter has presented a theoretical framework that seeks to meet second-party counterinsurgency objectives effectively in a manner superior to that the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. The assumptions listed are vital to comprehension of when and why the proposed framework may be applicable. Given the pragmatic aim of the framework, the approach described herein has been biased towards effectiveness rather than theoretical neatness. Effectiveness should always trump neatness for the strategist.

An analogy from Kenneth Waltz recalls key elements of the framework's method:

¹⁰⁷ Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 358.

What causes a man to rob a bank are such things as the desire for money, a disrespect for social properties, a certain boldness. But if obstacles to the operations of these causes are built sufficiently high, nine out of ten would-be bank robbers will live their lives peacefully plying their legitimate trades.¹⁰⁸

The framework is relatively calm about what causes people to become insurgent, but highly energetic about presenting obstacles to them remaining so. While the framework proposes a new method that is at odds with the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, it is neither ahistorical nor revolutionary in the context of irregular warfare. Rather, the presentation and analysis of the method, principles and enabling concepts have demonstrated the evolutionary nature of the framework's approach, consistent with established practices, knowledge and other contemporary research. The exposition of the framework stressed how its principles are interrelated and mutually supportive. For example, application of an effective counter organisation can support counter violence through degradation of the insurgency's ability to procure arms and munitions, thus potentially reducing the instance of armed attacks. This chapter has also evaluated the theoretical aspects of the framework and identified the advantages it offers over the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. The next three chapters will analyse and evaluate its performance against the historical cases selected.

¹⁰⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 2001 ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 232.

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Chapter five. South West Africa

Introduction

The second-party counterinsurgency campaign conducted by the South Africans in the territory of South West Africa (now Namibia) between 1966 and 1989 was, from a Western perspective, one of the longest but most obscure and under-reported counterinsurgency wars.¹ While the campaign is often mischaracterised or misunderstood, those who either participated in, or have subsequently analysed it nonetheless make very strong claims about it. An indicative example is this statement: 'The COIN effort against SWAPO in South-West Africa or Namibia (1966-1989) is the only case of a clear-cut victory by security forces...against a communist-backed insurgency with considerable foreign support'.² Claims such as this help justify the inclusion of this campaign as a comparative case study in the evaluation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Key to the development of the case, however, is identification of what is being examined and delineation of the scope of the study.

Delineation and demarcation of the counterinsurgency campaign by the South Africans in South West Africa is not as simple as might be expected. The counterinsurgency conflict in South West Africa overlapped in the politico-strategic, geographic and temporal spheres with several other distinct but ultimately related conflicts, which are commonly conflated in historical analysis. An example is the writer who warns *against* seeing two distinct wars in the war between the South Africans and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the war between the South Africans (and its ally, Uniao Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola - UNITA) and the Angolan Government

¹ Francis Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," in *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, ed. Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1985), 190.

² John W. Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 1st ed., The Insurgency Wars in Africa 1960 to the Present (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1998), 34.

of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and its ally, Cuba.³ These conflicts are often merged into a single continuum, for example: 'What began as an unconventional counterinsurgency war for South Africa in Namibia would eventually end as a conventional war in Angola'.⁴ This chapter argues that such conflation is erroneous and that whilst some overlap exists, two distinct wars are evident: the former a counterinsurgency conflict and the latter having the nature of a 'conventional' or 'state on state' war. Importantly for the distinction being attempted herein, South African General Jannie Geldenhuys supports this view.⁵ He describes two distinct fights: 'trying to fight the Soviet Union, Cuba and SWAPO allies – and another trying to fight PLAN [People's Liberation Army of Namibia]'.⁶

Adding to the potential for confusion, the South African state was engaged in two additional conflicts during this period. The first was the (often covert) international campaign conducted by the South African National Party government against the so-called 'Frontline States' in sub-Saharan Africa. The other can be characterised as the domestic insurgency / terrorism threat within South Africa itself that the white minority-led regime faced from black opposition groups seeking majority rule. That these four conflicts were in some ways inter-related and overlapped in time is not in dispute. Brief examination of their relationship occurs later in the chapter with description of the South West African campaign's context. However, the conflict, which is delineated as the subject of this case, is the counterinsurgency war between the South Africans and SWAPO / PLAN, fought primarily in the Territory of South West Africa, and

³ Abel Esterhuyse, "The Strategic Contours of the South African Military Involvement in Namibia and Angola During the 1970 / 1980s," *Journal for Contemporary History* 34, no. 1 (2009): 17.

⁴ Abel Esterhuyse and Evert Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," in *South Africa and Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects*, ed. Deane-Peter Baker and Evert Jordaan (Claremont: UCT Press, 2010), 114.

⁵ General (ret'd) Jannie Geldenhuys is a significant figure in South Africa's counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa. A career infantry officer in the South African Defence Force (SADF), he served as both the GOC in South West Africa and the Commander of the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) during the war. He became the Chief of Staff of the SADF. In that role he was a key member of the South African delegation that took part in the international peace negotiations that led to the New York Accords of 1988.

⁶ General (ret'd) Jannie Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September," (2009). PLAN was the military wing of SWAPO.

occasionally in the contiguous regions of neighbouring states, between 1966 and 1989.

The focus of the narrative and contextual scope of the case study is towards an analysis of the counterinsurgency campaign in light of the second-party counterinsurgency framework's principles. Many issues are commonly (and understandably) associated with studies examining conflict and the South African state during the era of white minority government. While acknowledging and describing the contextual role of wider South African domestic and foreign policy, this chapter is a study neither of the broader security mechanisms of the South African state, nor of the iniquitous policy or practice of apartheid. Nor is what follows a study of the motivations, machinations and political record of all the many political parties, black, white or mixed, which were involved in the domestic politics of South West Africa during the era.

Similarly, many published studies about of the 'war in South West Africa' are actually accounts of what was more often than not the relatively conventional or semi-conventional military campaign conducted in Angola by South Africa and its few allies against the forces of the MPLA government and its allies. This chapter's consideration of the fight 'north of the cut-line' – described earlier in a quote from Geldenhuys as 'trying to fight the Soviet Union, Cuba and SWAPO allies,' is limited to description and analysis of its impact upon the counterinsurgency campaign within South West Africa.⁷

Use of the name 'South West Africa' instead of the alternative 'Namibia' is a deliberate choice throughout this case study. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the name Namibia in June 1968, and most indigenous nationalist movements and UN member states subsequently used it, whilst the South African government continued to use the name South West

⁷ The 'cut-line' was a term used by the SADF and the SWATF to describe the border between South West Africa and Angola. The term arose because along much of the actual border the South Africans had cleared a broad swath through the vegetation. As well as clearly delineating the border, this also served to improve observation and tracking of militants crossing into South West Africa from Angola.

Africa until Namibian independence in 1989.⁸ No judgement is implied by the use of the label 'South West Africa' in this case study. Its use reflects the legal status of the Mandated Territory as designated by the League of Nations, and subsequently by the United Nations, as neither an integral part of South Africa nor an independent sovereign state in its own right. The use of 'South West Africa' also reflects that the counterinsurgency campaign conducted by the South African government in the Territory aligns with the concept of 'second-party counterinsurgency' defined in the first chapter.

The case study begins by establishing that the conflict is an example of second-party counterinsurgency. Following this is description of the background and context for the counterinsurgency campaign conducted by the South Africans against SWAPO/ PLAN in South West Africa between 1966 and 1989. This includes an examination of the physical, social and cultural effects of the operational area. These are covered in sufficient detail for an understanding of how these affected the conduct of the campaign. This section will also provide an understanding of the wider regional geo-political and security issues associated with the campaign. The following section examines the conduct of the campaign in order to inform analysis of the South African counterinsurgency effort against the second-party counterinsurgency framework. This will in turn inform the comparative analysis and evaluation of all three cases and the second-party counterinsurgency framework in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Second-party counterinsurgency

Often the depiction of the insurgency in South West Africa is of a rebellion against a repressive white minority-led state rule or a war of liberation from colonial rule. Such descriptions occur in accounts sympathetic to the aims of the rebellion.⁹ Whilst acknowledging the reasoning behind the 'colonial

⁸ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 219.

⁹ An indicative example is the work by Peter Katjavivi, who was a SWAPO activist in exile for much of the conflict. See: Peter H. Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (Paris: UNESCO / James Currey Ltd / OAU, 1988).

liberation' description (after all, the Territory was emerging from nearly a century of non-indigenous rule), a case can be made that the conflict is an example of second-party counterinsurgency. This argument rests on two premises – that the South Africans did not have legal and enduring 'sovereignty' over the territory of South West Africa, and that they did not intend to acquire it through the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign within the territory. There is ample evidence to support these premises.

Under the norms of international law in the 20th century, there was no recognition of South African sovereignty over South West Africa. This is due to the manner in which it gained responsibility for the territory, and how that responsibility was subsequently recognised and practised. In late 1914, at Britain's request, South Africa invaded what was then the German Colony of South West Africa.¹⁰ The campaign ground to an almost immediate halt due to a republican rebellion of German sympathiser Afrikaans speakers within South Africa which had to be addressed. The campaign resumed in February 1915, and German forces surrendered in July 1915. Subsequently, the League of Nations entrusted guardianship of territory under a 'Class C mandate' to South Africa in 1920. That many South Africans came to regard South West Africa as South Africa's 'fifth province' is not in doubt.¹¹ However, the status quo of occupation and subsequent administration was not the same as internationally recognised legal sovereignty. A series of South African leaders clearly saw this. For example, Prime Minister Jan Smuts responded to calls in 1943 for incorporation of the territory by noting that South Africa could not act unilaterally, as the mandate was an international agreement.¹²

In 1949 the newly formed United Nations claimed the right to govern the territory of South West Africa, a claim that was effectively ignored by the South Africans who continued to administer the territory 'in the spirit' of the old League

¹⁰ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 28.

¹¹ Rialize Ferreira and Ian Liebenberg, "The Impact of War on Angola and South Africa: Two Southern African Case Studies," *Journal for Contemporary History* 31, no. 3 (2006): 44.

¹² Ronald Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa: Regional Dynamics of Decolonization, 1945-90* (London Kegan Paul International Ltd, 1994), 11.

of Nations mandate of 1919.¹³ This 'spirit' also saw the white occupants of South West Africa enfranchised by the National Party government to elect seven members of the South African Parliament, a move seen by many as a de facto allocation of 'Provincial' status within South Africa. The United Nations mandate claimed in 1949 ended when the UN General Assembly revoked it in October 1966; yet despite this, Pretoria refused to withdraw.¹⁴ In July 1971 the International Court of Justice at The Hague decided that South Africa's continuing presence in South West Africa was illegal.¹⁵

The South African political and military leadership made two arguments in support of their ongoing control of the territory. These were that South Africa had a moral and legal responsibility to look after Namibia, and that the United Nations had not been the 'legal successor' to the League of Nations.¹⁶ It may also be construed from South Africa's 'Total Strategy' (outlined later in this case study) that an alternative reason for ongoing control related to South African national security concerns. Notwithstanding its ongoing control of the territory, South Africa's actions suggest the role of an unwanted caretaker rather than a sovereign power. SWAPO's stated position that the South Africans were 'occupiers' in South West Africa also indirectly supports such a claim.¹⁷

South African policy on this issue included the statement by the South African Prime Minister John Vorster in 1973 that the people of South West Africa would have to decide their own future.¹⁸ By 1974, South Africa effectively conceded that the territory would be independent, and elections under a universal franchise in 1978 were to be a step towards that eventuality.¹⁹ Senior

¹³ Leopold Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 34, no. 1 (2006): 31.

¹⁴ Anita M. Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," in *South Africa and Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects*, ed. Deane-Peter Baker and Evert Jordaan (Claremont: UCT Press, 2010), 84.

¹⁵ Ferreira and Liebenberg, "The Impact of War on Angola and South Africa: Two Southern African Case Studies," 45.

¹⁶ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

¹⁷ A claim frequently made in the text of SWAPO activist and historian Peter Kajavivi's book. See: Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*.

¹⁸ Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 32.

¹⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 309.

former South African Defence Force (SADF) officers involved in the campaign, interviewed during research for this case study, have reiterated their understanding that independence for the territory was part of their grand strategy.²⁰ The fact that there was a universal franchise in South West Africa in 1978 also stands in stark contrast to the domestic political situation in South Africa at the time. This provides further support to the idea that the South Africans were always, in fact, conducting second-party counterinsurgency. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude that during the counterinsurgency campaign conducted by the South Africans between 1966 and 1989 there were several claimants to enduring sovereignty over the territory of South West Africa – but that the South Africans were not one of them. This, of course, is not the same as saying they did not have strong views about how such sovereignty or independence should look. Their counterinsurgency campaign clearly had strategic objectives aligned with this point which will be discussed when the South African strategy is examined.

South West Africa

Map 5.1 (below) shows the location and size of South West Africa (present day Namibia). The majority of the conflict occurred in the Northern Border zone – in the provinces (running from west to east) of Kaokoland, Ovamboland, Kavango and Caprivi. A noteworthy feature of the border region is the ‘Caprivi Strip’. This is a long thin finger of land running towards the east, bordered by Angola and Zambia to the north and Botswana to the south, stretching to touch on a border with Zimbabwe at its far eastern extremity. This feature played a role early in the conflict as, initially, a relatively easy infiltration point for insurgents into the territory from sanctuaries in the neighbouring states.

²⁰ General (ret'd) Jannie Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September," (2009); and Major General (ret'd) Johan Jooste, "Interview, West Pretoria, 18 September" (2009). Johan Jooste was a professional SADF officer who served in South West Africa as a battalion commander. Amongst other roles, he commanded an ethnic 'Bushman' Battalion (31, later 201 Bn) during the campaign; he later rose to the senior ranks of the South African Army.



Map 5.1 South West Africa²¹

Qualifying the definition of the northern border regions as the primary operational zone is recognition that PLAN could and did penetrate well beyond it. For example, in February 1980 a group of insurgents killed two white civilians in the Tsumeb–Grootfontein–Otavi triangle (roughly halfway between the Angolan border and the capital, Windhoek). This region, commonly referred to by the South Africans as the ‘death triangle’, proved a popular target for SWAPO’s Special Unit because the presence of white farming communities, commerce and industry offered targets of considerable propaganda value.²² Subsequent to the February 1980 incursion, a lengthy pursuit by the security forces ranged widely over the southern area. This resulted in the killing of 30 insurgents and three members of the security forces before the group changed

²¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook," United States Government, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/wa.html>.

²² Major General (retd) Roland De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow-up Questions," (Pretoria, 2012). Major General De Vries was a career SADF officer who had extensive operational experience in South West Africa and Angola. He commanded 61 Mechanised Battalion in the theatre in 1981 and 1982, as well as serving on various brigade and divisional headquarters during the war. He subsequently became the Deputy Chief of the South African Army.

course and dispersed northwards into the relative shelter of Ovamboland in late March.²³

Dominating the South West Africa operational area were two large deserts – The Namib Desert in the west along the South Atlantic coastline and the Kalahari Desert in the east. Lying between the two in the northern half of country is the Etosha Pan, a large (120 km) long salt lake, surrounded by a sandy savannah region subject to inundation during the wet season. These features also shaped the demography of the region, which in turn influenced both the location and conduct of the insurgency and hence the manner in which the South African counterinsurgency effort developed in response.²⁴ The arid desert climate meant that only about one per cent of the territory's 823 290-square kilometre area is regarded as arable or suitable for permanent agricultural cultivation.²⁵ The physical characteristics described produced several effects that have bearing upon the conflict.

First, the nature of the terrain had a direct impact on the ability to conduct guerrilla-type operations. Ovamboland, in the heart of the primary operational zone, provides a useful example. This province is essentially very flat – running from Mopani bush veldt in the west towards open forest in the east. In the dry season grass cover is scarce and water can be even scarcer, making operations difficult for insurgents. Yet the rainy season from April to October provides adequate surface water and vegetation cover for guerrilla penetration.²⁶ The attraction of Ovamboland for insurgents at this time is neatly summarised in this extract:

Ovambo was a guerrilla's dream in the rainy season. Dense foliage provided cover. Rain wiped out tracks and made roads impassable to heavy traffic. Ovambo also contained a high population density,

²³ Jannie Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, first paperback ed. (Jeppestown: Jonathon Ball publishers (pty) Ltd, 2009), 128.

²⁴ Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 107.

²⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook".

²⁶ Paul L Moorcraft, *African Nemesis, War and Revolution in Southern Africa (1945-2010)* (London Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1990), 103.

offering food, shelter and information, and various connections across the border informed people of what and who was coming and going.²⁷

In turn, this resulted in the development of cyclical patterns of conflict, with periods of more intense activity during the rainy season when conditions were more amenable to insurgent operations. The pattern became so pronounced that the South African security forces began to refer to the period as the annual 'winter games'.²⁸ Such a pattern came to have several unintended consequences for insurgents. It ceded to counterinsurgent forces periods of relatively uninterrupted access to targeted populations, allowing for sustained counter-organisation and counter-subversion activity. Furthermore, periods of reduced insurgent activity eased the otherwise wearing concurrency and sustainment dilemmas that a persistent 'war of the flea' might otherwise place upon the security forces.²⁹

The lack of arable land also shaped the distribution and nature of the region's population. The territory has traditionally had a very low population density – estimations ran to around 500 000 people when the conflict began to form in the mid-1960s.³⁰ The desert regions, inhospitable and not suitable for either agriculture or reliable pastoral grazing, were largely uninhabited except for some small nomadic groups of Bushman (San) people. The remaining areas, with their relatively low potential for secure and reliable food production, could not support large population concentrations. This resulted in a low-density rural population, with small villages, hamlets or extended family group kraals rather than large towns, particularly in the northern border regions where the majority of conflict took place.³¹ Accordingly, the conflict had an essentially rural nature - there were neither large towns nor cities where insurgents could

²⁷ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 223.

²⁸ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA."

²⁹ Robert Taber gives us an analogy associating the nature of an insurgency against the state as akin to that of the relationship between fleas and a dog. While there is an obvious size and power disparity, the persistence of the flea causes the dog a great deal of trouble. The analogy also informed the title of his book, see: Taber, Robert. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*.

³⁰ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 199.

³¹ A *Kraal* is a traditional form of housing used by family groups who raise cattle within sub-Saharan Africa. It typically has a form of fencing (often made from thorn bushes) around a series of domicile huts that allow cattle to be kept within the compound at night, adjacent to the domestic quarters.

easily mobilise a mass base whilst 'hiding in plain sight'. The physical effects of the terrain created a situation akin to Mao's model description for the initial stages of mobilisation of a dispersed rural insurgent base. In doing so, it also provided a ready correlation for the South Africans with John McCuen's analysis of the Maoist model in his counterinsurgency study.³² It is evident later that McCuen's work was an important influence in shaping the SADF understanding of counterinsurgency.

The 'human' terrain of the territory had as much bearing on the counterinsurgency campaign as the physical terrain. The first human occupation of the area of South West Africa was by the San or 'Bushmen'. Bantu expansion from the north and east arrived in the area around the time of the first European settlers; following them were many other ethnic groupings. The earliest record of European involvement was that of Portuguese explorers along the coast in the late 15th century, followed by Dutch traders in the mid-17th century. Subsequently, Dutch settlers moving north and west out of the Cape Colony settled in parts of the region during the late 18th century. Following Imperial Britain's annexation of the area around Walvis Bay in 1876, Germany signed a 'protection treaty' with the indigenous Herero people in 1885.³³ A period of conflict between German settlers and the indigenous Herero and the Nama people followed that was similar to the pattern of colonial frontier expansion that had occurred, first under the Dutch and then the British, into the Eastern Cape areas of South Africa. However, by 1911 the Germans were in control as the colonial power, with the German military having finally broken the Herero and Nama in 1908.³⁴ Estimates suggest that up to 80 per cent of the Herero population and 50 per cent of the Nama population died during this conflict.³⁵

Despite the decimation of certain groups during the colonial era and the subsequent presence of the South Africans from 1914, Europeans or people of

³² McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*.

³³ Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 7.

³⁴ Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 1188.

³⁵ Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 10.

European descent remained a very small minority within the population of South West Africa. The largest majority indigenous population group in South West Africa at the time were the Ovambo, who accounted for approximately 50 per cent. Other indigenous groups in the population are the Kavango (9 per cent), Herero (7 per cent), Damara (7 per cent), Nama (5 per cent), Caprivian (4 per cent) and Bushmen (San) (3 per cent).³⁶ The white descendants of the colonial Dutch, Germans or South Africans and mixed ethnic groups made up the balance. Despite the fierce record of resistance of the Herero and Nama during the colonial era in South West Africa (or perhaps because of its impact), it was the Ovambo who were central to the rebellion initiated by SWAPO, and the insurgency between 1967 and 1989. Ovamboland also had a relatively higher population density than the rest of South West Africa, reflecting a combination of the interplay between the sustenance capacity that the rains brought to the area and the larger population that it sustained. The strong association between the Ovambo and SWAPO proved both a strength and weakness in the subsequent conflict. Considering the eventual outcome after the decades of war, it also ultimately reinforced the old truism that 'demography is destiny'.

The insurgency: SWAPO

SWAPO began with the radicalisation of a relatively small group of Ovambo working in South Africa after the Second World War. In 1957 a group of migrant labourers, led by Herman Toivo ja Toivo, formed the Ovambo People's Congress in Cape Town, largely in response to concerns about worker's rights and labour issues. Contact with South African organisations like the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) had raised their political consciousness and the organisation acquired a broader, nationalist agenda. In 1959 Sam Nujoma led its evolution into the Ovambo People's Organisation which, in 1960, became SWAPO. The organisation's nationalistic approach was 'complemented by a socialist ethos', most likely informed by its members' association with and exposure to the

³⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook".

SACP and the ANC within the Western Cape of South Africa.³⁷ SWAPO was not the first modern nationalist movement to emerge in the territory – that distinction belonged to the South West African National Union (SWANU), formed in 1959 by the Herero.³⁸ But there were important differences between SWANU and SWAPO. Apart from ethnicity and relative size (itself simply based on the respective scale of their ethnic bases), another key difference emerged. The former remained largely only a political organisation, whilst the latter embraced armed struggle in order to remove the South Africans from South West Africa by force. SWAPO's aim was for an independent, socialist Namibia run by one party (SWAPO). PLAN, the armed wing of SWAPO, was responsible for the conduct of the violent revolutionary struggle. SWAPO initially organised bases in Tanzania and members of PLAN received training in a variety of sympathetic African and communist nations. During 1965 the first groups of armed, trained PLAN insurgents infiltrated Ovamboland, established base camps and began recruiting. An attack on one of these camps at Ongulumbashe, by the South African Police (SAP) on 26 August 1966, is widely seen as the commencement of the actual counterinsurgency campaign.³⁹

Unlike the situation in South Africa, where organisations such as the ANC and SACP were banned and their members criminalised, SWAPO was never outlawed in South West Africa.⁴⁰ This was despite clear and obvious links between SWAPO, its rhetoric, and the actions of its armed organisation PLAN in conducting guerrilla operations within the territory. This created understandable tension for elements of the security forces, whose direction was to remain as neutral as possible in dealings with all of the legal political parties in South West Africa.⁴¹ This policy was itself part of a deliberate strategy to keep moderate elements engaged in political dialogue.⁴² This approach of keeping the 'political fight' open stood in stark contrast to the zeal and

³⁷ Ferreira and Liebenberg, "The Impact of War on Angola and South Africa: Two Southern African Case Studies," 44.

³⁸ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 200.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁰ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁴² Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

determination with which the South Africans pursued the destruction of the insurgency's military capability.

The ability of SWAPO to organise, and that of PLAN to fight is assessed, relative to the standards of many other Nationalist / Marxist groups operating in Sub-Saharan Africa at the same time, as being quite high. The SWAPO / PLAN insurgency strategy invariably followed the 'classic' Maoist guerrilla model.⁴³ The application and pursuit of this approach was consistent and often effective. By way of simple comparison, unlike the ANC and its military wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation - more commonly known by the acronym 'MK') in South Africa, PLAN 'regularly infiltrated Namibia and engaged the SADF and the South African Police'.⁴⁴ The South African politicians and security forces respected PLAN as a worthy and dangerous enemy. A comment by a retired SADF senior officer, Roland De Vries, illustrates this. Commenting on PLAN's annual 'winter games' incursions into the south out of Ovamboland, he notes 'I could therefore not but otherwise admire the immense effort our foe undertook to infiltrate so deeply by foot, even though each annual escapade was assuredly marked for death'.⁴⁵ Geldenhuys is similarly respectful in recalling that 'PLAN was good. We kept them running, sometimes 50 kilometres a day. They escaped and evaded extremely well, and lived in desperate circumstances, but they knew well how to survive. And if they were in trouble, they fought bravely and well'.⁴⁶

Insurgents are invariably at a disadvantage against the conventional superiority of the security forces when stripped of the protective anonymity that comes from the clandestine nature of guerrilla warfare. Yet it is clear from

⁴³ This model anticipated three stages in a successful guerrilla campaign. First, the population is radicalised and mobilised. In the second stage limited but escalating attacks are carried out against the government and its institutions and forces. The final stage anticipates an outbreak of general war, followed by rebel victory. See: Mao Tse-Tung. *On Guerrilla Warfare*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith II. First Illinois paperback, 2000 ed. Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000. The specific manner in which this was conducted within SW Africa is covered in further detail on page 158.

⁴⁴ O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress / South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990," 61.

⁴⁵ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA."

⁴⁶ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 298.

these personal accounts that the ability of PLAN guerrillas in an open fight meant that the insurgent threat and SWAPO's ambition were respected and taken seriously by South African military leaders. Similarly, SWAPO was an equally effective political organisation.

SWAPO was not the only active indigenous nationalist movement operating in South West Africa, but it had several characteristics that distinguished it from most of the others. Perhaps the most obvious of these was its willingness to adopt violent struggle as the means to achieve its political objectives, and the subsequent development of PLAN into a relatively effective guerrilla organisation. The 'leftist' radicalisation and consciousness of SWAPO gained from exposure of members of the nascent organisation to the ANC and SACP during its formative years in South Africa's Western Cape doubtless influenced its zeal for violence as a revolutionary tool. But it also served to deliver very useful alliances, support bases, (relative) safe havens and fighting material for the organisation. It is clear that the newly independent socialist, communist or otherwise left-leaning states of sub-Saharan Africa during the era, along with links to other leftist revolutionary organisations in the region, provided SWAPO with advantages many other groups lacked. Similarly, whilst nominally a multi-racial party, SWAPO's deep roots in the dominant ethnic Ovambo population offered several benefits. These included mass (which was ultimately to prove telling, somewhat ironically perhaps, in the free elections conducted in 1989), with access to a large number of potential recruits and a domestic base within Ovamboland where guerrillas could stage, hide and draw other support. It was well understood by the South Africans that the key elements of SWAPO's liberation stratagems were: '[t]he continuous mobilisation of the people and their unending quest for foreign political and military support'.⁴⁷

Despite the useful attributes described above, the pursuit of SWAPO's insurgent strategy was inevitably fraught with difficulties. These arose from

⁴⁷ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA," 18.

obvious issues such as the 'simple' problem of actually conducting insurgency in the terrain available, issues of organisational coherence and stability, and perhaps most importantly, the effectiveness of the counterinsurgent enemy. While terrain as outlined had impact, there were other difficulties - SWAPO also had many well documented organisational issues that tested its resilience. Amongst these were the moves of bases and support areas at various stages from the Caprivi region of South West Africa and Zambia to various parts of Southern Angola, and internal crises such as internal 'purges' which took place in 1976 in Zambia (the 'Shipanga Crisis') and in Angola during the 1980s (at the Lubango base).⁴⁸ But as difficult as each of these issues were, the South African counterinsurgency campaign was obviously SWAPO's greatest obstacle.

The counterinsurgency: the South Africans

Notwithstanding that this case study is about the campaign in South West Africa, to understand all the elements of it, it is necessary to examine the wider context affecting the South African counterinsurgents. The case that the South African campaign in South West Africa was second-party counterinsurgency has been made. However, understanding the situation within South Africa at the time further illuminates why the South African government prosecuted the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa for so long and what their policy objectives were in doing so.

The governing party in South Africa since the general election in 1948 (and for the duration of the war in South West Africa) was the Afrikaner-dominated National Party. Known for the development and implementation of apartheid as state policy, the white-minority government was also characterised by deep concern about the pattern of de-colonisation and the rise of black majority rule amongst the states of sub-Saharan Africa during the Cold War. This led to the development of a particular mindset amongst the South African polity and the rise of what the state labelled as a 'Garrison State' or 'National

⁴⁸ Colin Leys and John S. Saul, "Liberation without Democracy? The SWAPO Crisis of 1976," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1994): 123-25.

Security State'.⁴⁹ The white South African political elite saw the world in Manichaeian terms: 'Black political power was the equivalent of Communist control of South Africa, and thus the defence of apartheid was the defence of Western Christian values'.⁵⁰ Given the iniquitous nature of apartheid such a conflation with Christian values now seems incredible, but there is ample evidence to support the view that South African government policy elites and their white Afrikaner constituency believed they were in a battle for survival against Marxist black nationalism being supported by international communism. A statement by the South African Defence Minister to the parliament in May 1983 is indicative of the views consistently held throughout the era:

All the leaders of the so-called frontline states and certain other states in Africa have thus far promised their absolute support...to the communist-inspired terrorist organisations such as the ANC, the PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] and SWAPO in their so-called liberation struggle... [T]his struggle has only one aim and that is to overthrow the government....In this they have the tangible support of the Russian Marxists....The Russian aim is to build up a force in this way to be able to attack South Africa....[T]he Russians and their surrogate forces have also contributed millions of rands towards the training of terrorists within and outside Africa....We cannot permit Russia to proceed unhindered with its diabolical plans in our subcontinent.⁵¹

Public opinion polling from South Africa in 1982 shows that the Minister was just echoing what the white minority population already believed.⁵² In short, '[a]partheid South Africa saw itself as the defender of free market Western Christian-Judean democratic values in a region that was increasingly dominated by Pan-African values and interwoven with that of the Kremlin'.⁵³ The extent to which the nature and extent of such threats were a creation of the National

⁴⁹ Philip H. Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians, Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 29.

Chris Alden, *Apartheid's Last Stand*, Great Britain ed., The Rise and Fall of the South African Security State (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 10.

⁵⁰ Steven Metz, "Pretoria's 'Total Strategy' and Low-Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa," *Comparative Strategy* 6, no. 4 (1987): 439.

⁵¹ Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 88.

⁵² Kenneth W. Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics* (London: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd., 1986), 12.

⁵³ Esterhuysen, "The Strategic Contours of the South African Military Involvement in Namibia and Angola During the 1970 / 1980s," 19.

Party government to serve a domestic political narrative remains an issue of intense debate.⁵⁴

The security policy response to these concerns from the South African government was the gradual development of a grand strategy that was characterised as 'total strategy'. The total strategy label arose in response to the characterisation of the threat of a 'total onslaught' facing the Republic by 'Black Nationalist' movements and their communist backers by then Defence Minister PW Botha. The underlying assumption for the total strategy was that threats within the borders of the Republic were inextricably linked to the regional situation.⁵⁵ A vital component of this was the belief that South Africa's problem 'was not attributable to legitimate black demands for political and economic participation, but to manipulations by forces from outside the region'.⁵⁶ It is useful to explore and understand the total strategy further because, along with an understanding of the 'siege mentality' which developed amongst the white minority government, it goes some considerable way to explaining why South Africa chose to fight a difficult counterinsurgency war in South West Africa for over two decades.

There is evidence that the South Africans studied the British, French and American strategies and approaches to counterinsurgency during what has been previously characterised in this work as the 'counterinsurgency era'.⁵⁷ Yet the intellectual origins of the 'total strategy' are almost fully attributable to the French General André Beaufre, who first used the phrase in his 1965 work *An Introduction to Strategy*.⁵⁸ In his work analysing the relationship between the South African state and the South African military during the apartheid era, Philip Frankel claims that 'total strategy' was totally derivative, with 'very little intellectual content independent of these [Beaufre's] writings, very little

⁵⁴ Abel Esterhuysen, "South African Counterinsurgency, a Historiographical Overview," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 349.

⁵⁵ Metz, "Pretoria's 'Total Strategy' and Low-Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa," 446.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 439.

⁵⁷ See: Gossman, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview." Esterhuysen, "South African Counterinsurgency, a Historiographical Overview."

⁵⁸ Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*.

authenticity of its own'.⁵⁹ Beaufre's concept of total strategy relied upon three core premises. The first was an emphasis on the psychological aspects of war, 'the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute'.⁶⁰ The second was the value of the 'indirect approach', which relates back to the psychological in that: 'The game of strategy can, like music, be played in two 'keys'. The major key is direct strategy in which force is the essential factor. The minor is indirect strategy, in which force recedes into the background and its place is taken by psychology and planning'.⁶¹ The final Beaufrean premise addressed the concept of 'totality'. Warfare in the 20th century could no longer be viewed as primarily a military activity – victory would go to the state 'who appreciates the coherency of effective strategic action and who is able to weld his military and non-military capabilities into an integrated programme'.⁶² Understanding the three effects sought by the 'total strategy', in combination with the circumstance of the South African white minority government, begins to provide insight into the underlying logic of South African actions.

The key strategic objective (the 'ends') of 'total strategy' for South Africa was to prevent the emergence of full scale Maoist people's war within its own borders. While this end was primarily domestic and aimed at the internal black majority insurgent threat (the ANC, PAC and similar organisations), it also generated significant external linkages and activity. Associated with the need to prevent an outbreak of 'people's war' within South Africa's boundaries, this was perception of the need to prevent guerrillas seeking to operate within South Africa from using neighbouring countries as force projection bases. The impact of this was to be played out not only in South West Africa, but also in the other

⁵⁹ Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians*, 46.

⁶⁰ Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 22.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶² Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians*, 47.

‘frontline states’ in an arc across the southern third of the continent, from Angola to Mozambique.⁶³

The external aim of the ‘total strategy’ can be generally characterised as ‘destabilization for a purpose’.⁶⁴ It was also effectively an indirect approach to addressing an internal problem, as well as serving an important psychological domestic role in sustaining public support for enduring counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts. Pretoria had taken on the lesson of the United States’ experience in Vietnam that ‘in an open political system, the nature of counterinsurgency makes public preparation vital’.⁶⁵ This accounts for a description in a contemporaneous journal article of the ‘total strategy’ having important ‘internal’ objectives. One was to increase tolerance for indeterminate low-intensity conflict by numbing the white population’s sensitivity to the costs involved.⁶⁶ This is assessed as a key factor, in combination with the previously described ‘siege mentality’, in accounting for how the South Africans were able to persist in sustaining over two decades of counterinsurgency conflict in South West Africa.

While understanding the nature of ‘total strategy’ is important, it would be incorrect to see it as omnipresent or as a heavy hand over the routine conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa. Clearly, while the campaign strategy was nested in grand strategy, it also grew and evolved as the nature of the conflict changed. South African understanding of strategy was that it was ‘inconstant and in need of continual adaptation to meet changing situations’.⁶⁷ In this the South African military was consistent with both Beaufre and broader Western schools of strategic theory. Geldenhuys has identified

⁶³ ‘Frontline’ states: a term referring to a grouping by the Organisation of African Unity in 1976 to support the liberation struggle in Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe, the group included Zimbabwe after independence in 1980. The term ‘Frontline’ states also became synonymous with the independent black majority rule nations in sub-Saharan Africa that supported organisations in their struggles against the apartheid-era South African state. Esterhuyse, “The Strategic Contours of the South African Military Involvement in Namibia and Angola During the 1970 / 1980s,” 22.

⁶⁴ Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics*, 94.

⁶⁵ Metz, “Pretoria’s “Total Strategy” and Low-Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa,” 440.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 442.

⁶⁷ Gossman, “The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview,” 90.

three major elements that were enduring in the South African campaign strategy. These were 'normalcy, holding on (outlasting) and targeting the PLAN'.⁶⁸

It has been previously established that Pretoria had gradually resigned itself to having to withdraw from the Territory, but in keeping with the aims of the total strategy, it did not want to hand over power to the Marxist-aligned SWAPO.⁶⁹ The aim of the counterinsurgency campaign then was to create favourable conditions for a South African withdrawal and conditions whereby SWAPO would lose any subsequent election.⁷⁰ Geldenhuys provides a pithy summary of the key tasks required of the counterinsurgency campaign: 'We had to make a contribution which would enable the political process to succeed in establishing an independent South West with democratic form of government....We had to prevent military adventures and violence from becoming a means to seize power, or unduly influencing political decisions'.⁷¹ The conflict, in keeping with so many other insurgency-related conflicts, was a battle to determine both the nature of the future sovereign, independent state and the distribution of political power within it.

The counterinsurgency campaign

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the campaign between 1966 and 1989 in order to broadly inform the analysis of the South African approach against the second-party counterinsurgency framework which occurs in the next section. Having established the broader strategic imperatives, it begins with examination of the protagonist's operational approaches. Following this is a brief thematic narrative account of the conduct of the campaign and key events that occurred within the course of it.

The operational approach taken by SWAPO will be instantly familiar to students of the Maoist guerrilla warfare in the post-Second World War

⁶⁸ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

⁶⁹ Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 87.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷¹ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 89.

counterinsurgency era. Anita Gossman succinctly and accurately encapsulates SWAPO's adoption and implantation of this approach in this summary:

Insurgency in Namibia resembled a typical anti-colonial struggle. SWAPO waged a classic guerrilla war, and primarily within the border areas of Kaokoland, Kavango, Caprivi and Ovambo. It was an essentially rural insurgency with bases across borders in neighbouring states, over which small groups of insurgents were infiltrated, and made use of hit-and-run tactics, sabotage and assassination.⁷²

Within this approach SWAPO generally organised three types of forces. So-called 'Typhoon units' were tasked with deep infiltration attacks into South West Africa against civilian targets; more 'traditional' guerrilla units numbering between 80 and 150 combatants, who attacked military targets through means such as ambushing and hit-and-run attacks, and political cadres which infiltrated the Ovambo population for the purposes of political mobilisation.⁷³ The nature of these forces and their indicative tasks are readily identifiable as being associated with a Maoist approach to guerrilla warfare. So too is the tactic of developing support bases for their use within friendly territory.

SWAPO's ethnic base in Ovamboland was the obvious place for the development of 'safe' bases within South West Africa, although the term 'safe' needs to be qualified given the subsequent effectiveness of the counterinsurgency forces. The problem of the external safe bases and support envisaged by Maoist doctrine proved a little more difficult and changed several times over the course of the conflict, in response to evolving circumstances. Initially, SWAPO had training and support bases in Zambia, and even as far afield as Tanzania. This required a long infiltration process from the safe bases, either south or then west via the Caprivi Strip or westward into Angola and then southwards into South West Africa. During the period from 1966 to 1974, many small groups attempted infiltration along these routes, almost

⁷² Gossman, "Lost in Transition: The South African Military and Counterinsurgency," 545.

⁷³ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 111.

invariably equipped only with light weapons due to weight considerations over such long distances.⁷⁴

Both routes were problematic for SWAPO. As well as the difficulty of being able to carry sufficient material over the considerable distances involved, both routes left the PLAN fighters open to interdiction. The SAP very often effectively interdicted the Caprivi Route.⁷⁵ Likewise, insurgent movement along the Angolan route was interdicted by the colonial Portuguese, South Africa's partners in the shared experience of fighting black revolutionary movements in sub-Saharan Africa. A SWAPO commander is on the record providing a narration of the difficulty of infiltration through Angola in the later 1960s – and of fighting the Portuguese in the long and arduous march from Zambia.⁷⁶ The SWAPO activist and historian Peter Katjavivi addressed the difficulties of the route in recalling:

We had to walk a long distance from Zambia through Angola. Some of our people also died in Angola and some missions could not reach Namibia, because they had to fight through Angola...The battles we were involved in, most of them were in Angola with the Portuguese.⁷⁷

This all changed dramatically following the Carnation Coup in Portugal on 25 April 1974.

The Portuguese military coup and subsequent rapid withdrawal from its African colonies was a gift to SWAPO who, with the swift rise of the MPLA to power in Angola, no longer had to make their way through Portuguese lines to get into Ovamboland.⁷⁸ The MPLA taking power in Angola thus changed the nature of the infiltration battle fight for SWAPO. It provided closer sanctuary and presented direct access to a 1 460-km long border with easy exfiltration routes for recruits from South West Africa, and infiltration routes for returning trained guerrillas.⁷⁹ While the MPLA was naturally sympathetic to SWAPO's

⁷⁴ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 202.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Moorcraft, *African Nemesis, War and Revolution in Southern Africa (1945-2010)*, 104-5.

⁷⁷ Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 85.

⁷⁸ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 210.

⁷⁹ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 105.

aspirations, the decision to host SWAPO bases and cadres in Angola was not motivated solely by either socialist fraternalism or altruism. The MPLA had its own enduring problem with South African-backed UNITA guerrillas operating in Angola's east and south-east attempting to destabilise the regime in Luanda.

Perhaps taking a leaf out of the South African playbook, the MPLA's 'adoption' of SWAPO not only reinforced the old truism that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. It also helped populate the battlefield between the *Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola* (FAPLA – originally the armed guerrilla wing of the MPLA, and after independence, the armed forces of Angola) and UNITA with another ally, although perhaps to the detriment of SWAPO's primary ambition in South West Africa. Ironically, the MPLA required SWAPO to provide troops to assist in the Angolan counterinsurgency effort against UNITA. The mid-1980s saw more than one-third of the total SWAPO strength tied up in security and counterinsurgency tasks in Angola. This is a figure roughly twice as many as those available for raids into Ovamboland.⁸⁰ Such a number was clearly detrimental to the ability of SWAPO to generate wider insurgency within South West Africa.⁸¹ Highlighting the complicated nature of the overall situation, Geldenhuys noted in interview that UNITA, and Jonas Savimbi in particular, maintained a sound and intimate relationship with SWAPO leadership throughout much of the period, wryly observing that 'you have to maintain the anomalies too'.⁸²

Two significant elements emerge from SWAPO's approach to the conduct of the insurgency that shaped both the nature of the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa, and more broadly of the conflict in the region. The geographic location of SWAPO's ethnic heartland in Ovamboland, combined with the support bases in Zambia and Angola, shaped the primary operational zone into a broad 'border' swathe of Northern South West Africa and southern Angola. Notwithstanding that insurgent activity did occasionally

⁸⁰ Helmoed Romer Heitman, "The Other Edge of Asymmetry: South Africa's Bush War Strategy," *Journal for Contemporary History* 34, no. 1 (2009): 10.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸² Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

occur south of this zone, this factor, combined with the region's physical and cultural characteristics, had the effect of creating a relatively discrete (albeit large) and remote area of 'classic' Maoist rural insurgency operations.

The second significant element was the use of Angola and SWAPO's support from the MPLA government. This not only brought counterinsurgency activity aimed at SWAPO / PLAN north of the 'cutline' into Angola, it also served to reinforce both the South African polity's views about the 'total onslaught' and the utility of the destabilisation aspects of the 'total strategy'. Much of the 'conventional' fighting that occurred in Angola between the SADF, UNITA, FAPLA and Cuban forces during the era can be assessed as having more relationship with broader South African grand strategy than campaign strategy for the counterinsurgency fight within South West Africa. However, a strategic nexus nonetheless developed between the conventional war in Angola and the counterinsurgency war in South West Africa whereby resolution of both conflicts become inextricably linked in the eyes of the South Africans and, ultimately, the international community.⁸³

Whilst the SWAPO insurgency campaign's operations remained essentially grounded in a Maoist approach, the South African operational approach to counterinsurgency evolved from a combination of several inputs. These included extant South African strategic preferences, knowledge of previous 'Western' counterinsurgency practices during the imperial policing and counterinsurgency eras; the influence of a few select counterinsurgency theorists of the 1960s; South African military culture; and the actual experiences of South Africa (and its allies) conducting counterinsurgency operations in sub-Saharan Africa.⁸⁴ Each of these factors and the unique circumstances of South

⁸³ Crocker provides a detailed account of this in: Chester A. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992); Geldenhuys offers a South African 'insider' perspective of this in Chapter 15 of: Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 224-55.

⁸⁴ All of the former SADF officers interviewed spoke about their *understanding* of the common contemporary imperatives of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, such as the primacy of politics and the need to earn and keep the support of the civilian population. They also invariably mused upon the difficulties of such an approach in the circumstances in which they often operated.

West Africa interacted to produce an approach that was broadly aligned with the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, yet at the same time distinctive.⁸⁵

Notwithstanding evidence of broad acceptance and understanding of contemporary Western counterinsurgency thought, the views of two theorists in particular - Beaufre and John McCuen – are instrumental in explaining and understanding much of the South African approach to counterinsurgency in South West Africa. Examination of the impact of Beaufre's work on higher South African strategy is complete, but his ideas were also highly influential at the operational and tactical level within the SADF. This occurred not only through the expected 'trickle down' effect from higher strategic guidance, but also because of advocacy by several senior officers who were impressed by his work. In 1968, C.A. 'Pop' Fraser (later a Lieutenant General and Chief of the South African Army) returned from a posting as the military attaché in France, where he was exposed to Beaufre and his work. Fraser and another SADF officer, Deon Fourie, subsequently wrote a local strategic analysis that incorporated Beaufre's concepts and was influential in teaching done at the SADF staff college.⁸⁶

McCuen's book, *The Art of Counter-revolutionary War* was also studied at the South African staff college and it too became highly regarded – a former senior SADF officer stating in an interview that 'I never came across a better book on the subject'.⁸⁷ A key message that the South Africans derived from McCuen was that: 'The aim of counterrevolutionary warfare was to deny the insurgents the capability to get and maintain the support of the general population through force'.⁸⁸ This aphorism melded with the idea they had gained from Beaufre about force in the 'dialectic battle of wills' to incorporate the deliberate and calculated use of force as a key tenet of the South African approach to counterinsurgency.

⁸⁵ The South Africans routinely using the acronym 'WHAM': 'Winning 'hearts and minds'.

⁸⁶ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 133.

⁸⁷ Jooste, "Interview, West Pretoria, 18 September".

⁸⁸ Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 70.

There was also considerable alignment between Beaufre and McCuen regarding the coordination and integration of all the functions and functional elements of the state (the bureaucracy) into a coherent counterinsurgency response. Yet while both theorists were clearly influential, a note of caution informs the extent such influence extended into the practical aspects the counterinsurgency fight. As Seegers explains: 'As time went by, however, Beaufre's indirect strategy and McCuen's guidelines would be quoted repeatedly. Yet very little COIN practice originated in theory. Rhodesian improvisation was too valuable. Theory would follow it'.⁸⁹

There is ample evidence that practice informed and shaped South African operational counterinsurgency practice, to an extent where it has been claimed that 'overall, the SADF generally discounted theory and preferred to rely upon experience'.⁹⁰ Even a brief comparative analysis of the literature supports the assertion that the SADF learnt from the Portuguese wars in Mozambique and Angola, as well as from its own participation at various levels in the war in Rhodesia.⁹¹ But the extent to which such experience was the key to the development of a distinctive South African operational approach in South West Africa is also debatable. Particularly telling, given the centrality of his various roles over the course of the campaign, is Geldenhuys' view that whilst such experiences were both of interest and understood, the unique circumstances of each meant that little of it was directly applicable in the design of the campaign in South West Africa.⁹² He is insistent that learning from Rhodesia was of tactical rather than operational value.⁹³ This view is backed by Jooste, who acknowledges that these experiences of Rhodesia were 'very well studied – but the two conflicts were a lot different – terrain, doctrine, ideology, politics, geo-politics'.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 141.

⁹⁰ Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 90.

⁹¹ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 105.

⁹² Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September."

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Major General (retd) Johan Jooste, "29 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions" (Pretoria 2012).

An enduring theme that emerges from the literature about the SADF during the era, and the research interviews undertaken with former SADF officers during the course of this study, is that of the *pragmatism* which imbued the military culture of SADF during the conflict. Rather than identification of one particular aspect of knowledge, strategy, doctrine or experience as explaining the development of the South African operational approach, it is reasonable to adopt a view that an understanding that all of these elements, tempered in large part by the SADF culture of pragmatism, contributed to formulation of the essential aspects of the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa.

The counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa effectively began on 28 August 1966 when a joint force of SA police and SADF paratroopers under the command of an SADF officer, Commandant Jan Breytenbach, attacked a SWAPO base at Ongulumbashe in Ovamboland.⁹⁵ The campaign ended 23 years later upon the withdrawal of the majority of SADF forces from the Territory in mid-1989, following the arrival of UN peacekeepers (UNTAG) to oversee elections, and the transition to the sovereign nation of Namibia.⁹⁶ Commonly, two distinct phases are seen within the counterinsurgency campaign.⁹⁷ The first is as a 'classic' low-intensity conflict with the SAP having primacy in operational activity until 1974, whereupon overall primacy responsibility for countering SWAPO was handed over to the SADF.⁹⁸ The transfer of operational primacy to the SADF was not because anything was amiss with the SAP approach; rather it was because of the limited number of SAP available due to commitments arising from the effectiveness of general strikes organised by SWAPO in 1971 and 1973.⁹⁹ In response, during 1973 the SADF had markedly increased its presence in the operational area.¹⁰⁰ The second phase, from 1 April 1974 onwards, saw the military being 'officially

⁹⁵ Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 26.

⁹⁶ UNTAG = United Nations Transitional Assistance Group. UNTAG was authorised under the mandate of UN Security Council Resolution 435 in 1978. It was not actually established until after the New York Accords were signed between Angola, Cuba and South Africa in 1988.

⁹⁷ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 190.

⁹⁸ Ferreira and Liebenberg, "The Impact of War on Angola and South Africa: Two Southern African Case Studies," 45.

⁹⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 138 and 40.

¹⁰⁰ Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 87.

responsible' for the conduct of counterinsurgency activity within the operational zone.¹⁰¹ The early period of this phase also aligned with the changes within Angola and the subsequent opening up of bases and the northern border for SWAPO. Notwithstanding the other pressures identified upon the SAP, it is probable that increasing SWAPO operational tempo into the Territory, resulting from the changes in Angola, would have necessitated the change anyway.

An understanding of the mindset of South African white minority government and the total strategy makes it appear inevitable in hindsight that the changes in Angola and the rise of the MPLA would lead to South African military intervention in that country. It is worth noting, however, that the operations of the SADF in Angola have been the subject of exaggeration and hyperbole by the protagonists and analysts, both during and since. Geldenhuys is highly critical of such exaggerations, noting about Operation *Savannah*: 'I haven't met any soldier yet who says that he saw the lights of Luanda'. Geldenhuys similarly challenges Cuban claims about Cuito Cunavale.¹⁰² But there are greater concerns for the study of the counterinsurgency in South West Africa than those arising from the self-aggrandisement of combatants or the misconceptions of writers. From Operation *Savannah* in 1975, through the Cassinga Raid (Operation *Reindeer*) in 1978 and the large conventional battle at Cuito Cunavale in 1988, the role of the war in Angola has served to confuse analysis of the counterinsurgency conducted within South West Africa. This study is only concerned with examination of 'external' operations in Angola insofar as they are germane to the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa, rather than the context of the broader purpose of the total strategy and South African perceptions of confronting international communism. For example, while the 'hotly debated and divisive in high places' Operation *Savannah* was initially effective in pushing FAPLA and SWAPO away from the border zone, it also had the unintended consequence of the Cubans arriving to

¹⁰¹ Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 28.

¹⁰² The quote about Op SAVANNAH was made in an interview: Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September." Criticism of Cuban claims about Cuito Cunavale is in Chapter 15 of :Geldenhuys, *At the Front*.

back the MPLA.¹⁰³ The arrival of the Cubans effectively made the South African concern that had led to the mounting of Operation *Savannah* a self-fulfilling prophecy. Cuban involvement subsequently complicated future external South African operations in Angola and the eventual peace negotiations. So while the role of the South African–Cuban nexus in the eventual peace negotiations that led to the New York Accord may be germane to this study, description or analysis of combat between their forces in Angola is not.

The SADF external operations relating to the campaign suggest the typical military counterinsurgency tasks of securing borders, denying sanctuary and creating defence in depth through physically isolating the insurgents from the population. The SADF pursued these tasks with relative vigour. Between 1978 and 1984, as well as many smaller 'hot pursuit' operations, seven major codenamed operations were launched into Southern Angola.¹⁰⁴ Some of these, such as Operations *Meebos 1* (March 1982) and *Meebos 2* (July–August 1982) were denial operations aimed at creating depth through clearing SWAPO command, communications and logistics elements.¹⁰⁵ Others, such as Operation *Carrot* (April 1981) and Operation *Yahoo* (April–May 1982) were to target the physical destruction of specific SWAPO Special Units.¹⁰⁶ Sometimes the effects sought led to deep (and potentially high-risk) incursions. For example, Operation *Reindeer*, the parachute force-led raid on Cassinga, aimed to pre-empt an anticipated incursion into Ovamboland through the destruction of a major training and mounting base.¹⁰⁷

External operations were not confined to Angola. The SADF conducted a raid into Zambia in 1978 after attacks by SWAPO and Zambian elements at Katimo Mulilo in the Caprivi Strip. Subsequently, Zambian President Kaunda restricted SWAPO to the eastern Caprivi, effectively ending the insurgency in

¹⁰³ Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics*, 88.

¹⁰⁴ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 227.

¹⁰⁵ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA."

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Heitman, "The Other Edge of Asymmetry: South Africa's Bush War Strategy," 3.

that region.¹⁰⁸ External operations were also aimed at creating the conditions for the success of internal framework operations in the primary operational zone within South West Africa. For example, during Operation *Savannah*, a 10-km area north of the border was cleared. This buffer subsequently allowed the literal clearance of an area 1 km wide south of the border – the so-called ‘cut line’ and the erection of both electric and fixed plant fences.¹⁰⁹

In general terms, internal counterinsurgency operations in South West Africa took place in a manner that would be quite familiar to students of the French colonial techniques of *quadrillage* and *ratissage*. The primary operational zone along the border was divided into sectors. Subsequently, the sectors were allotted to commanders for the conduct of operations. Such operations invariably consisted of a combination of presence, patrolling and civic action (*quadrillage*) and the very vigorous pursuit and destruction or capture of insurgent elements if they were detected (the *ratissage*). The priority area was Ovamboland – and priority was weighted by the allocation of resources and manpower. Other areas were cleared and then held in order to release resources for Ovamboland¹¹⁰ This approach evolved after the SADF assumption of responsibility from the SAP. Previously the SAP had, unsurprisingly, adopted a ‘search and capture’ investigative approach ‘consistent with policing that aims at a criminal trial’.¹¹¹

The nature of the South African response to locating insurgents within the operational zone merits further examination. The security force’s follow up to insurgent contact is best characterised as swift, violent and persistent. Aggression characterised the follow up to any contact – if the security force element in contact had insufficient combat power to deal with the insurgents, assistance would come from other highly mobile forces. In cases where the insurgents broke contact they would be tracked and pursued relentlessly – over time the SADF, SWATF and SAP special units (such as Koevoet) developed

¹⁰⁸ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 111.

¹⁰⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 222.

¹¹⁰ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September."

¹¹¹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 137.

considerable skill in utilising the skills of indigenous soldiers as trackers. When combined with the South African advantages in aerial reconnaissance and surveillance this skill made matters very difficult, although not impossible, for insurgent groups trying to elude pursuit. If the spoor was 'hot' the follow up could involve airmobile 'Fire Force Teams', made of 'light' forces such as paratroops, supported by helicopter gunships. This was a tactical concept that the South Africans had adapted from observation of and participation in the Rhodesian war. If the spoor was older, the situation not amenable for aviation operations or the threat required heavier forces to respond, then so called 'Romeo Mike Teams' would be used.¹¹² These were troops mounted in high mobility, mine blast protected (another lesson learnt from Rhodesia) vehicles. Pursuits would only end when the insurgents were killed, captured or had successfully 'evaded' and lost the pursuing security forces – some developed into marathon games of deadly 'hide and seek' that lasted for weeks.¹¹³

The influence of Beaufre and McCuen is clear in the manner of the South African tactical response to contact with the insurgents. The relentless and more often than not deadly pursuit of insurgents aligned with their approaches to force and the psychological aspects of counterinsurgency. Importantly, this tactical approach was demonstrably effective in the operational zone right up until the South African withdrawal. Incidents that the SADF attributed to SWAPO in the operational zone remained just about steady after 1984, and then declined.¹¹⁴ By the following year South Africa's counterinsurgency war against SWAPO inside South West Africa had been successful to a large extent, allowing the SADF to shift more focus towards military support for UNITA in Angola.¹¹⁵ The period from 1984 to 1988 saw what has been

¹¹² 'Romeo Mike' derived from the Afrikaans phrase 'Reaksie Mag', meaning 'Reaction Force'.

Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 113.

¹¹³ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA."

¹¹⁴ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 252.

¹¹⁵ Esterhuyse, "The Strategic Contours of the South African Military Involvement in Namibia and Angola During the 1970 / 1980s," 17.

characterised as 'the clear ascendancy of the security forces' within the operational zone south of the cut-line.¹¹⁶

By early 1989 and with the deployment of the UNTAG mission SWAPO's leadership had become concerned at the relative lack of success in establishing an enduring PLAN presence within South West Africa which could bring influence to bear on polling day.¹¹⁷ With the drawdown of South African forces occurring in the presence of UNTAG, the SWAPO leadership initiated a bold offensive, sending an estimated 1 800 to 1 900 armed members of PLAN south of the cut-line on 1 April 1989.¹¹⁸ Their aim was to establish a presence that would either pre-empt or shape the planned transition of sovereignty within the territory under the UN mandate. Yet, in what became known as the 'Nine Day War', the South Africans, using elements of Koeveot, the SWATF and hastily reconstituted SADF elements that had been in the process of withdrawing, inflicted a telling defeat upon the offensive and SWAPO ambitions.¹¹⁹ PLAN suffered an estimated 500 casualties, including approximately 200 killed in action, and upon failing to establish a 'liberated zone', withdrew and resumed the peace process.¹²⁰

The tactical success of the South Africans on this occasion did not merely hinge on their successful application of force. It also related to their understanding of and adherence to, wherever possible, the idea of presence. The SADF well understood the principle that if it did not dominate the country side at all times the insurgent would move in to fill the vacuum.¹²¹ Yet this was no simple problem in a large operational zone with relatively few troops available – an enduring lesson of counterinsurgency across the eras is that it is always a 'numbers game'. Furthermore, the frequent external 'adventures'

¹¹⁶ Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 45.

¹¹⁷ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 293.

¹¹⁸ Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 54.

¹¹⁹ Author Peter Stiff has written an extensive, albeit uncritical account, of the South African operation based on interviews with SAP participants and access to the police battle records. See: Peter Stiff, *Nine Days of War* (Alberton, South Africa: Lemur Books (Pty) Ltd, 1989). A more nuanced picture of the operational and strategic situation is in Chapter 18 of: Geldenhuys, *At the Front*.

¹²⁰ Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 54.

¹²¹ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 111.

north of the cut-line would often take away some of the more elite, mobile or protected forces. Geldenhuys later rhetorically mused: 'We never had more than 3 000 troops available. How the hell did we manage what we did?'¹²² One key to solving this problem was the extensive use of indigenous troops within the operational zone, for as Jooste observes: 'Without a local gendarmerie you will never have enough troops to cover off an area - you must use locals'.¹²³

The South Africans became adept at recruiting, developing and utilising indigenous units.¹²⁴ The formation of the SWATF and the South West Africa Police in 1981 were important developments. By 1982 they accounted for 60 percent of all the forces in the operational area.¹²⁵ The SWATF was a standing force, with units more often than not commanded by South African officers. Its battalions were largely recruited and organised along ethnic lines, some of whom were transferred into the SWATF from the SADF. To some extent this practice took advantage of existing prejudice and preference amongst the various tribes of South West Africa. A ready example was the recruitment of San (Bushmen) into 31 Battalion SADF / 201 Battalion SWATF. The San were a nomadic minority who had long suffered under the actions of other ethnic and political groups – service in the security forces was an opportunity to re-assert identity and strength. The SADF also cast its net of recruitment outside South West Africa. During Operation *Savannah* they encountered bereft and disillusioned elements of Holden Roberto's Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) guerrillas near the Zaire border. These men subsequently turned into the SADF 32 Battalion, which became an extremely effective unit and served well over the next decade.¹²⁶ However, it was not just the Army who recruited indigenous forces: the SAP's special unit, Koeveot, grew to around 3 000 men. Ninety percent of these were locally recruited special

¹²² Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September."

¹²³ Jooste, "Interview, West Pretoria, 18 September".

¹²⁴ Toase and Turner go into some detail about this. See: Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 208; and Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 73.

¹²⁵ Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 118.

¹²⁶ A comprehensive personal account of 32 Battalion, told by a SADF officer who served with them, is: Colonel Jan Breytenbach, *They Live by the Sword* (Alberton, South Africa: Lemur Books (Pty) Ltd, 1990).

constables, and the majority of them Ovambo.¹²⁷ A considerable number of these were members of SWAPO, 'turned' after capture. As well as these 'formal' units, many South West Africans were organised into classical part-time 'home guard' or 'civil defence' groups for the organic defence of villages and localities. Much of this activity was integrated into South African civil-military affairs or so-called 'civic action'.

Civic action had begun in 1974, conducted under the 'Winning hearts and minds' (WHAM) rubric – it was aimed at the goodwill and cooperation of the people through alleviation of grievance.¹²⁸ The utility of civic action for the South Africans can be understood as nested in Beaufre's 'total' approach to the utilisation of all aspects of state power, and McCuen's theoretical urging to counter guerrillas at their own game, as well as broader SADF understanding of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. South African military leadership continually emphasised to subordinate commanders that civic action was to be deliberate and planned.¹²⁹ Over time the civic action evolved into a broad program that sought to address issues germane to the largely rural, poor indigenous populations in the operational zone. This saw an emphasis develop on education and agricultural science, through the use of South African teachers and veterinarians (often SADF reservists), supported by information operations.¹³⁰ In support of the latter, sectors were assigned Communication Operations Sections (Compos) to support the conduct of psychological operations – another Beaufrean conceptual theme.¹³¹ There are contrasting assessments about the overall success of South African civic actions.

One view is that the forceful nature of South African counterinsurgency, combined with the external operations, rendered any civil affairs benefit moot:

South of the border Koevoet's coercion had already taken a big bite of winning-hearts-and-minds (WHAM) operations. Cross-border

¹²⁷ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 225.

¹²⁸ Gossman, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 96.

¹²⁹ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

¹³⁰ Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 117.

¹³¹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 222.

operations killed what was left of COIN's more civic methods of persuasion, simply because such methods could not be practised on foreign soil.¹³²

Other assessments are more generous. Seegers argues that the 'civic action programme bore fruit in Kaokoland, Kavangoland and Caprivi, while the amnesty policy encouraged, inter alia, Caprivian members of SWAPO to defect in 1980'.¹³³ The approach and focus for South African commanders is perhaps best summed up by Jooste as 'very involved, but real operational success always was the priority'.¹³⁴ 'Operational' success was a clearly identifiable measure and more readily associated with more traditional military lines of effort. While the advent of the SWATF in 1981 certainly allowed a softer 'local' face on the delivery civic action, it was perhaps to the detriment of SADF and SAP engagement in the task.

Another important aspect of the South African approach to counterinsurgency in South West Africa, and again aligned with the precepts of the 'total strategy', was the political dimension. A sense of the relative importance assigned to this effort is gained from the realisation that discussion and analysis of political strategy, activity and manoeuvring actually constitute the major part of Geldenhuys' written account of the war.¹³⁵

The strategic focus of South African political strategy from the late 1970s onwards was to build a strong, cohesive political structure.¹³⁶ The hope was that such a structure would deliver a coalition of moderate parties that would act as a bulwark against SWAPO. The South African approach evolved considerably over the last few decades of its time in South West Africa, with the rate of change accelerating as the conflict progressed. It has already been noted that at one stage after the Second World War the Territory had been virtually considered as a de facto province of South Africa. The findings of the South African 'Odendaal Commission' in 1964 had ruled out a central

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 217.

¹³⁴ Jooste, "29 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions."

¹³⁵ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*.

¹³⁶ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 107.

government for South West Africa based on universal suffrage; it recommended each of the Territory's eleven main ethnic groupings should have self-government within its own separate area.¹³⁷ This was effectively recommending a replication of the apartheid system extant in South Africa at the time, with the creation of so-called 'Bantustans' along ethnic lines.

Yet with South African realisation and acceptance that South West Africa would eventually become independent, the approach changed to address policy that would shape the Territory to a form of polity that would be resistant to outcomes antithetical to South African strategic objectives.¹³⁸ Instead of trying to incorporate the Territory, the war became an attempt to win enough time for other political parties to defeat SWAPO in an election.¹³⁹ A constitutional conference was held in Windhoek in 1975, which became known as the 'Turnhalle talks,' (Turnhalle being the name of the old German colonial era gymnasium in Windhoek where the meetings were held). Convened by the South Africans, the talks involved representation from all the majority of groups within South West Africa. SWAPO called the talks a farce, claiming they 'aimed at the perpetuation of white minority rule under which South African domination would continue'.¹⁴⁰ The conference agreed that the Territory should become an independent unitary state, and decisions were made about the structure of the government that should be created.¹⁴¹ Subsequently, in 1977 the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) formed – described as 'a conservative, multiracial party that wished to achieve independence under South African tutelage and military protection'.¹⁴² In 1978 the South Africans supervised elections within South West Africa which SWAPO and the 'popular front' boycotted, and the UN denounced. The DTA won around 80 percent of the vote with a 75 percent voter turnout (notwithstanding the boycott) and henceforth 'governed' the

¹³⁷ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 200.

¹³⁸ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September."

¹³⁹ Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 33.

¹⁴⁰ Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 95.

¹⁴¹ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 205.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 206.

territory, although the South African's remained in control of security and foreign affairs.¹⁴³

The ambition of both the relative liberalisation of politics within South West Africa (compared to the situation within South Africa) and support for the Turnhalle Conference processes by the South Africans was clearly aimed at the creation of a viable, 'democratic' alternative to that offered by SWAPO. This process was not always easy for the South Africans; in trying to create the perception of neutrality in dealings with the Turnhalle Conference found it was 'not only a cobweb, it was a nest of cobwebs'.¹⁴⁴ The DTA was to prove a worthy opposition party to SWAPO, but it always had limited access to and acceptance by the Ovambo people, as 'Anti-SWAPO party politics in Ovambo had a very low profile'.¹⁴⁵ From his position of dealing with the non-Ovambo troops under his command and listening to their views, Jooste came to the conclusion that the DTA's association with the South Africans was, in the eyes of the non-Ovambo population 'not a penalty, but also no real advantage'.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps aware of this view, the South Africans did not place all of their political eggs into the DTA basket. Further to SWAPO not being banned within South West Africa, disillusioned SWAPO leaders were allowed back into South West Africa as free men, in the hope they might provide a political counterweight to SWAPO. Several former SWAPO leaders subsequently established political parties of their own. Andreas Shipanga created and led a party called the SWAPO-Democrats, while Mishale Muyongo established the Caprivi African National Union (CANU).¹⁴⁷

The ultimate test of the effectiveness of these political actions is surely the result of the 'free and fair' elections held under UN supervision in 1989. With a voter turnout of 97 percent, SWAPO won 57 percent of the vote (giving it 41 seats in the constituent assembly) while the DTA won 29 percent (giving it

¹⁴³ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 206; Moorcraft, *African Nemesis, War and Revolution in Southern Africa (1945-2010)*, 220.

¹⁴⁴ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 17 September."

¹⁴⁵ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 83.

¹⁴⁶ Jooste, "29 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions."

¹⁴⁷ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 210.

21 seats in the assembly).¹⁴⁸ Arguably, a SWAPO vote of at least 50 percent was inevitable given the demographic dominance of the Ovambo population in South West Africa. It can be speculated that the failure to achieve the two-thirds majority SWAPO required in order to unilaterally write the new constitution (and thus be able to adopt a one-party socialist state model) was the result of South African political efforts to develop an alternative political consciousness and tangible choice for the non-SWAPO adherents within the population. This idea has led to the suggestion that 'one could even argue that the covert funding of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Operation *Agree*, during the Namibian elections did as much as the military measures to prevent SWAPO from obtaining a two-thirds majority'.¹⁴⁹ While correctly acknowledging the importance of the political effort, this view is erroneous because it discounts that it was SWAPO's original intention to take political power through violent revolutionary means. Without the successful military measures taken by the South Africans to counter the violence inherent in SWAPO's strategy there would not have been any democratic elections.

Second-party counterinsurgency framework analysis

The preceding outline of the South African counterinsurgency campaign has established that the use of force, and various psychological aspects, was central to their doctrinal and operational approach. The association between this and the use of counter violence by the South Africans is readily established. McCuen's insistence on adopting counter violence as a principle of counterinsurgency found a willing and receptive audience amongst his South African disciples. At the tactical level this translated into the 'hot pursuit' and follow up operations identified as key activities in response to acts of insurgent violence.¹⁵⁰ Highlighting the characterisation of such activities as 'swift, violent and persistent' is a brief statistical look at Koevoet's efforts in this regard. In one decade Koevoet fought 1 615 contacts and killed or captured 3 255 PLAN

¹⁴⁸ Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa: Regional Dynamics of Decolonization, 1945-90*, 192.

¹⁴⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 265.

¹⁵⁰ Esterhuysen and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 110.

soldiers.¹⁵¹ This is telling in terms of the South African view of counter violence because '[u]nlike the SADF, Koevoet had no formal COIN doctrine and never fell in line with the Army's WHAM efforts. However, although arguably counter-productive to WHAM, the unit was generally tolerated due to its effectiveness'.¹⁵² Unconstrained by any 'hearts and minds' doctrinal convention, the SAP special unit defaulted to the use of violence to counter insurgent violence. Geldenhuys' view as a senior army commander about this is also illustrative. He remarked that relationships with police were 'not always on a good footing' and the relationships with the Koevoet element in Rundu were often 'strained' yet managed.¹⁵³

One reason for this is probably a degree of professional competitiveness regarding the success that Koevoet achieved. Equally though, the SADF achieved similar success, so was also ultimately unlikely to push inter-service rivalry too far towards hypocrisy. An illustrative example is the record of Operation *Yahoo* in 1982:

Of the original surge of two hundred fighters of Special Unit, one hundred and fifty six succeeded in infiltrating the Death Triangle. Of the latter number fifty six of Special Unit was killed and sixteen captured. All of the captives were convinced to work with the security forces in the end. All together seventy two of their fighters were thus taken out of the fighting equation. Many, many more were wounded and some probably succumbed later on in the wide expanse of Africa's bush.¹⁵⁴

The conclusion made is that the South Africans generally preferred the 'immediate outcome' of the effective application of counter violence over an adherence to other doctrinal niceties such as WHAM. The rapid and frequently comprehensive destruction of insurgent units infiltrating the operational zone served not only to 'restrict, degrade or deny the use of violence by insurgents,' but also to reinforce the psychological aspects of security force's power to SWAPO and its supporters.

¹⁵¹ Figures cited in the foreword to: Peter Stiff, *The Covert War, Koevoet Operations Namibia 1979-1989* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago Books, 2004).

¹⁵² Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 96.

¹⁵³ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

¹⁵⁴ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA," 13.

The previous chapter established that the most fundamental task in prosecuting a campaign of insurgency is 'organisation'. Without organisation and its benefits, there can be no insurgency. The South African counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa, in keeping with the precepts of the total strategy, can be seen to have used counter organisation efforts across the depth and breadth of SWAPO's endeavours. One obvious example is the 'sustained disruption' of SWAPO efforts to support infiltration into the territory, undertaken in two primary ways.¹⁵⁵ The external operations into Southern Angola previously described cleared and denied SWAPO/PLAN easy access. The second way infiltration was disrupted was through the South African support of UNITA. As well as serving wider South African regional strategic objectives, support to UNITA served two counter organisation purposes against SWAPO. UNITA dominance sealed off the Caprivi as an easy infiltration route and the threat of insurgency from UNITA presented a problem to the MPLA government in Luanda.¹⁵⁶ It has been previously noted how this threat to SWAPO's MPLA hosts served to divert PLAN manpower from South West Africa into support to FAPLA in Angola. The counter organisation through supporting UNITA has parallels with Rhodesian (and later, South African) efforts in the creation and support of Resistância Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) in Mozambique. By the early 1980s South African support for UNITA began making infiltration very difficult for SWAPO, and by 1982 SWAPO's ability to threaten white settled areas was virtually neutralised.¹⁵⁷

Another example of counter organisation was the development and use of indigenous troops, and in particular, the SWATF. Service in the security forces did more than merely deny the insurgency potential manpower. It was assessed that 'defending their own with South African forces, brought about a special motivation that did rub off onto the local population and made them less susceptible to the OPFOR ideology and mobilization against "us"'.¹⁵⁸ There is

¹⁵⁵ Heitman, "The Other Edge of Asymmetry: South Africa's Bush War Strategy," 5.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Gossman, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 84.

¹⁵⁸ 'opfor' is a common military contraction of the term 'opposing force'. Major General (ret'd) Johan Jooste, "26 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions," (Pretoria 2012).

evidence that in part, this was also in response to complaints from locals to the SADF about 'being defenceless against SWAPO'.¹⁵⁹ The development of indigenous forces remained an enduring objective of the South Africans – by 1988 the SWATF had grown to approximately 30 000 men, or about 72 percent of the counterinsurgent force.¹⁶⁰ This aspect of counter organisation was to prove to have other, broader social benefits that indirectly assisted within other counterinsurgency themes. In Moorecraft's words, '[o]ften the security forces provided the only form of paid employment in the Caprivi and parts of Kavango. One study estimated that as much as 44% of the total buying power of Kavango was generated by the resident SWATF 202 battalion'.¹⁶¹ The political actions undertaken by the South Africans, whether constitutional reform or supporting the development of other forms of political organisation such as the DTA, SWAPO-democrats or CANU, are further clear signposts of counter organisation. All of these actions can be linked to a clear intent to disrupt or destroy the SWAPO capability to address essential organisational imperatives.

While there is ample evidence and discussion of what were obviously counter-organisation initiatives, the literature on the counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa is largely silent on discussion of South African counter subversion. The issue was obviously considered by South African commanders, Geldenhuys stated that, while GOC South West Africa that, '[o]ne of the cornerstones of my strategy was that we must get the population to live as normally as possible. Security was not to be at the expense of normalcy'.¹⁶² Implicit in this statement is that SWAPO cadres were not to define what 'normalcy' was for the population, suggesting an immediate objective for counter subversion effort. The assessment made from the information available is that the South Africans employed both direct and indirect approaches to counter subversion. The direct approach was applied to SWAPO and known affiliates when found and identified, and the indirect to others.

¹⁵⁹ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 220.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁶¹ Moorecraft, *African Nemesis, War and Revolution in Southern Africa (1945-2010)*, 231.

¹⁶² Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

South African counterinsurgency forces also made considerable efforts to destroy SWAPO in counter organisational efforts. The draconian South African Internal Security Act of 1976 was extended into SW Africa and 'security districts' were established.¹⁶³ Military intelligence established a Directorate of Covert Collection (DCC), which created networks of informers and recruited former Rhodesian and FNLA soldiers. The DCC acted much like the police Security Branch and was active in all areas.¹⁶⁴ Other direct methods are summed up by Toase:

The Security Police monitored SWAPO's political activities and when it was deemed necessary detained known or suspected SWAPO adherents, though SWAPO's internal wing was never banned as such. Detentions were legalised by new legislation passed by the South African Government, such as the Terrorism Act of June 1967. The Terrorism Act was made retrospective to July 1962 (when recruits were first sent for guerrilla training) and authorised the Police to hold suspects incommunicado for indefinite periods.¹⁶⁵

Supporting such direct methods aimed at SWAPO and its sympathisers were a range of indirect techniques. The previous section detailed the use of civic action programmes. Over time and in keeping with the underlying guidance the South Africans had taken from Beaufre, the psychological aspects of this were increased. This included posting of 'psychological action' officers to each battalion of the SADF and a 'psychological action' manual issued to SADF personnel, instructing them on maintaining good relations with the population. The indirect psychological operations were described as 'a constant production of various forms of media designed to persuade the population to cease support of the insurgents and to support the government'.¹⁶⁶

The net effect of the counter subversion efforts in support of the counterinsurgency was mixed. In some areas, especially those without a significant Ovambo presence such as Kaokoland, Kavangoland and Caprivi, the

¹⁶³ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 211.

¹⁶⁴ Gossmann, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 98.

¹⁶⁵ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 202-3.

¹⁶⁶ Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 62.

civic action programmes produced good results.¹⁶⁷ In many other parts, success was more elusive. The tribal nature of South West African society within the operational zone had a definite bearing in this regard. Put simply, tribally structured societies in rural areas respond to subversion and counter subversion in collective rather than individual ways. Jooste observed that addressing tribalism and subversion required some effort on the part of SADF commanders in that the 'common goal [is] not always clear and ambiguity will not go away – we have to deal with it. Your success must go into managing civil relationships – tribal councils etc. This is not your war fighting infantry battalion CO'.¹⁶⁸ Along with the mixed results of the civic action programme, Geldenhuys concedes that 'one war we did lose was the propaganda war'.¹⁶⁹ However, looking at the examples he provides, it may be reasonably concluded that this is less about either a lack of effort or ability by the South Africans and more about SWAPO's ability and other nations' views about the nature of the South African regime. Notwithstanding the mixed results of counter subversion, the South Africans had considerably more success with pre-emption.

The existence of nationalist movements other than SWAPO, across the range of ethnic and cultural groupings of South West Africa, indicated that the desire for independence and self-determination was not a uniquely Ovambo phenomenon. Yet a unified front never emerged during the campaign. The South African political line of effort within their counterinsurgency campaign essentially split the vote along tribal/ethnic lines, effectively pre-empting the emergence of a unified nationalist indigenous front across the Territory. Two aspects are important here. The emergence of South African acceptance of the eventual independence of the Territory had the effect of pre-emptively undoing much of SWAPO's 'liberation' message. Recognition that independence was probably inevitable amongst non-SWAPO supporters or non-Ovambo people meant that the SWAPO proposition was essentially about an Ovambo dominated one-party socialist state. The results of the 1989 election show that

¹⁶⁷ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 216-17.

¹⁶⁸ Jooste, "29 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions."

¹⁶⁹ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 144.

this was not an attractive proposition for a significant portion of the population. A parallel can be drawn here with the British campaign in Malaya three decades earlier. Britain's declaration that Malaya would be independent, but not on terms dictated by violent revolutionaries, was also a factor in pre-empting support for the MCP.

Pre-emption was also a strong characteristic of South African military operations conducted during the campaign. Indeed, pre-emptive attacks became a standard feature of South African counterinsurgency strategy in South West Africa.¹⁷⁰ These operations, whether limited clearances in the zone just north of the cut-line, or deeper attacks into Angola such as the Operation *Reindeer* parachute assault at Cassinga, saw the South Africans retain the initiative and consistently dislocate the effective mounting of SWAPO's Maoist guerrilla campaign. Military pre-emption was not only 'kinetic'. The establishment of the SWATF and the recruitment of indigenous troops (even Ovambo into the 101st Battalion SWATF) effectively removed many thousands of potential recruits from SWAPO's grasp. Another impact of this pre-emption was upon South African intelligence effort.

Chapter four highlighted the validity of many of the rote truisms about intelligence in counterinsurgency and described some of the peculiar problems this important enabler presents to second-party counterinsurgents. The application of these to the South African campaign is somewhat mixed. The South Africans confronted the 'usual' difficulties of counterinsurgency intelligence work, with one former senior officer succinctly summing their efforts up: 'we were not good at it'.¹⁷¹ But notwithstanding the routine challenges of intelligence work, the South Africans did not face the same degree of difficulty that the subsequent case studies about Dhofar and Iraq will highlight. This is because despite being second-party counterinsurgents, the long association of the South Africans with South West Africa and its people in a quasi-colonial

¹⁷⁰ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 213.

¹⁷¹ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA," 19.

role, and the fact that the South Africans are 'of' the region itself, mitigated many of the disadvantages routinely associated with second-party counterinsurgency with respect to intelligence. Assisting with this was the fact that the indigenous battalions recruited and organised into either the SADF or the SWATF by the South Africans retained their links into their communities. A senior SADF officer later wrote that the intelligence gained from such links had '[s]ignificant if not determining value. Intelligence is important in all military operations, but in COIN it is almost paramount. [There was] no better source than the indigenous people'.¹⁷²

An area of intelligence in which the South Africans developed some considerable expertise was the development of a very fast information-intelligence-action cycle at the fighting group level. Koeveot became particularly adept at this, 'turning' captured insurgents very quickly and thus making very quick reaction and follow up practicable.¹⁷³ The ability to run this cycle quickly, facilitated by cooperation and sharing of the intelligence between the police and the SADF, became a vital enabler of the successful counterinsurgency framework employed by the South Africans within the operational zone.¹⁷⁴ It will be seen in the Iraq case study that in many ways South African success at this presaged Coalition 'best practice' in Iraq by several decades.

The adaptive behaviour demonstrated by the development of the information-intelligence-action cycle by South African forces in South West Africa was not unique. The broader strategic circumstances that the South Africans found themselves in, combined with the relative austerity imposed upon the campaign in South West Africa, necessitated adaptation as part of routine performance.¹⁷⁵ Much of this adaptation was low-level and tactical – an example being the adoption of the 'fire force' concept learned from the

¹⁷² Jooste, "Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions."

¹⁷³ Heitman, "The Other Edge of Asymmetry: South Africa's Bush War Strategy," 14.

¹⁷⁴ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in SWA."; Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

¹⁷⁵ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

Rhodesians. But the campaign was also 'a laboratory on which COIN strategies were tried and tested'.¹⁷⁶ Chapter four identified having a plan for the use and implementation of adaptation by second-party counterinsurgents as essential. The South Africans went beyond this, developing 'an organisational willingness to accept trial and error and, at times, of accepting failure without blame'.¹⁷⁷

Counterinsurgency victory?

Detailed conclusions about the implications of this case study upon the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework will be made in conjunction with the evidence from the other two case studies in the penultimate chapter of this dissertation. For its part, this section will address the outcome of the campaign and sum up this case in anticipation of that analysis and subsequent conclusions.

Assessments of the outcome of the conflict in South West Africa are contested. Unsurprisingly, opinion often rests on national or political perspectives. Given that counterinsurgency outcomes are invariably complex, simplistic indicators at the cessation of hostilities are not necessarily good measures of overall success. Geldenhuys' statement outlines the South African claim to victory:

During the 1970s and early 1980s commentators regularly made statements to the effect that after World War II all the revolutionary organisations had won their wars. Furthermore, they declared, nobody could stop such movements if they had the support of Soviet Russia and Cuba. But in our case it did not happen. We effectively reduced and isolated the insurgent-activated area to merely one part of Ovamboland, itself merely one region of South West Africa. We, the security forces, won the struggle on the field of battle.¹⁷⁸

Objectively, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that the South Africans 'won' the physical fight. Conclusions from analysts such as 'the SADF avowed goal to limit the insurgency to Ovambo land was a resounding success'

¹⁷⁶ Gossmann, "Lost in Transition: The South African Military and Counterinsurgency," 546.

¹⁷⁷ Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 120.

¹⁷⁸ Geldenhuys, *At the Front*, 298.

and 'in the end, the only realistic option left to SWAPO / PLAN was the ballot box',¹⁷⁹ support Geldenhuys' claim.

The South African counterinsurgency approach towards the campaign was rooted in the notion that the military can buy time, but that ultimately a political solution was necessary.¹⁸⁰ The interviews and correspondence conducted with former SADF officers in the course of this research overwhelmingly support the view that the South African military believed that it was fighting to negotiate a suitable political settlement from a position of relative power. The question then becomes one about the nature of the 'suitability' of the political settlement attained. Again, the answer seems to favour the South Africans. 'South Africa's militarist option' worked in getting 'accommodation on their preferred terms'.¹⁸¹ SWAPO's lack of success as an insurgent organisation was instrumental in forcing it to accept the results of a democratic election to determine the fate of South West Africa.¹⁸² The results of that election – an enduring democratic, peaceful and multi-party state clearly reflect the attainment of South African strategic objectives rather than the objective of a one-party socialist state that the SWAPO manifesto sought through two decades of insurgency.

This case study has revealed many aspects that align with the principles of the second-party counterinsurgency framework and the tenets of its methodology. The South African counterinsurgency campaign employed counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption. Some of these efforts worked better than others, and many of these effects were nested and complementary (further investigation of this nesting occurs in conjunction with the evidence from the other case studies in the penultimate chapter). The example of South African success in the denial of SWAPO's insurgent 'ways and means' forcing the insurgency to seek recourse to an

¹⁷⁹ Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 47; Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 69.

¹⁸⁰ Esterhuyse and Jordaan, "The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990," 106.

¹⁸¹ Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics*, 2.

¹⁸² Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 34.

acceptable political process, accords with the second-party counterinsurgency framework's tenet of enacting the insurgent's rational calculus.

The defeat of SWAPO's military campaign was comprehensive and conclusive. PLAN's roll of the dice in the 'Nine day war' of April 1989 merely represented the apogee of a failed strategy; the effective SADF and SAP response confirmed the futility of that approach. The South African counterinsurgency campaign created the conditions whereby the normative non-violent form of discourse envisaged in the second-party counterinsurgency framework could occur. The New York Accords 'paved the way to victory in multi-party elections in Namibia supervised by the UN in 1989, that the movement [SWAPO] had no hope of ever achieving on the battlefield'.¹⁸³

Assessments of the South African regime and through the lens of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm often qualify South African success. Anita Gossman's assessment is indicative: 'Unlike other COIN encounters, the fatal flaw in the SADF's COIN campaign was neither in its theory nor its practice, but rather in its inescapable alignment with a repressive and amoral government'.¹⁸⁴ Gossman's point about South African 'legitimacy' is accurate, yet also somewhat irrelevant. Chapters two and three discussed how the 'hearts and minds' paradigm makes a virtue out of 'legitimacy'. The second-party counterinsurgency framework is necessarily more pragmatic; recognising that successful achievement of legitimacy by second-party counterinsurgents will often require herculean contortions of logic. This is not a justification for immorality in counterinsurgency – rectitude is clearly a powerful tool in such conflict.¹⁸⁵ Rather it is recognition that theory in general and counterinsurgency theory in particular, is most useful when it addresses the conditions prevailing in the campaign space where it is to be applied. Any reasonable objective analysis of the South African circumstance in South West Africa viewed through

¹⁸³ Fred Bridgland, *The War for Africa, Twelve Months That Transformed a Continent* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing Limited, 1990), 373.

¹⁸⁴ Gossman, "The South African Military and Counterinsurgency: An Overview," 98-99.

¹⁸⁵ The writer examined the utility of rectitude within counterinsurgency in: Mark O'Neill, "Back to the Future: The Enduring Characteristics of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *The Australian Army Journal* V, no. 2 (2008).

the lens of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm would have to conclude that the South African's prospects of achieving their strategic ends were remote. Yet their ends were, in the most part, achieved - notwithstanding the 'repressive and amoral government' behind the campaign. The argument is that it was precisely because of their unique take on theory and practice that they won. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the theory and practice they followed is in substantial alignment with the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Further analysis of this occurs in the comparative analysis that follows in Chapter 8.

Chapter six. Dhofar

This chapter examines the counterinsurgency campaign conducted in Oman's Dhofar Province during the 1960s and 1970s as the second case study used to assess the second-party counterinsurgency framework presented by this thesis. The Dhofar case is similar to the South West Africa and Iraq surge case studies insofar as a strategic imperative existed that drove engagement in a foreign counterinsurgency campaign by non-sovereign powers.¹ Yet Dhofar has unique aspects that compel its inclusion as a case in the comparative evaluation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Prominent amongst these is that the Dhofar campaign ended with a clear-cut victory for the counterinsurgents.

While it can be established that the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency in South West Africa and Iraq produced a qualified version of 'success' for second-party counterinsurgency, the result achieved in Dhofar is unequivocal. Dhofar is a case study that provides proof of the possibility of the unqualified achievement of strategic ends for second-party counterinsurgents through the application of appropriate measures.

The conflict in Dhofar was on a very small scale, in spatially confined (and difficult) topography, and with relatively small numbers of combatants. There were never more than the equivalent of a small brigade grouping of troops on the government side confronting, at their peak, no more than a few thousand insurgents and their sympathisers. The contrast between the distances involved and the scale of manoeuvre in South West Africa or the complexity of urban counterinsurgency across Iraq's sprawling cities and towns is stark. An important inference arising from this smaller 'scale' is that fewer extraneous variables are confronted that may confuse analysis of the campaign with respect to the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

¹ Iran and Jordan eventually joined the United Kingdom in participating in the conflict on the side of the Omani government.

Uniquely amongst the case studies discussed within this dissertation, the counterinsurgency campaign in Dhofar did not have an over-arching counterinsurgency doctrine. The previous chapter established that the 'total strategy' shaped the campaign approach in South West Africa. It will become clear in the next chapter that the United States' counterinsurgency field manual published in 2006 informed the approach to operations in the Iraq surge of 2007-2008.² Yet, despite Britain's counterinsurgency success in Malaya during the previous decade, no distinct and unifying counterinsurgency doctrine accounts for the approach taken by the second-party counterinsurgency force during the Dhofar campaign. In fact, the British in Dhofar appear to have made an effort to deny the utility, and eschew the use, of established counterinsurgency practice. A military manual on the conduct of anti-guerrilla operations in Dhofar even had a section titled 'Some misconceptions on Dhofar'. It essentially advised incoming British officers that 'what you know about counterinsurgency will not work here'.³ This may account for an observation in a later memoir written about the campaign, which contended they tried *every* principle of counterinsurgency from the preceding fifty years in a process of 'trial and error'.⁴ Regardless, the absence of a doctrinaire overlay simplifies evaluation of the case. It means examination of the development, adoption and sustainment of counterinsurgency activities in Dhofar occurs solely through the lens of their utility to the campaign rather than to achievement of any pre-determined institutional paradigm.

Similar to the South West Africa case study, the campaign in Dhofar has remained relatively obscure in the West, both in general terms and with respect to academic inquiry. Accounting for the former is the low-key and often covert approach adopted by the British government, the campaign's juxtaposition in time with other significant conflicts (for example, the Vietnam War and the various Israeli-Arab conflicts) and the 'small scale' nature of the war already described. The paucity of academic inquiry to date follows on from these

² Specifically, Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-24*.

³ "Anti-Guerrilla Operations in Dhofar," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1972), Section 8.

⁴ Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*, 14.

factors.⁵ A handful of memoirs by British officers and a few secondary source accounts inform much of the understanding about the war.⁶ The conventional account arising from these is frequently summarised thus: A Special Air Service (SAS) campaign on the Jebel (the local term given to the terrain where much of the fighting took place) that 'turned the tide through building self-defence forces and engaging in a "hearts and minds" campaign to improve the quality of life for its inhabitants'.⁷ This is an oversimplification. Examination of the campaign reveals complexity in both conduct and understanding the causality of its outcomes. It is also apparent that the second-party counterinsurgency framework has greater explanatory utility than "hearts and minds" in evaluation of the British Dhofar campaign and its success.

Oman and Dhofar

Understanding Oman's geography, history and demography provides important context for the conflict in Dhofar. Oman's geography brings with it strategic significance. More than any other single reason, it accounts for why the United Kingdom participated for over a decade in a difficult war in an obscure and remote province of a relatively small and backward Sultanate. Map 6.1 (below) shows the location of Oman on the south-eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabian Sea bounds Oman's coastal border in the east, while the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz are in the north. The south is contiguous with the Gulf of Aden. During the period from the 17th until the early 20th centuries, Oman's location meant that it dominated the maritime approaches for the valuable trade between Europe and the sub-continent, and from the sub-continent down the East African littoral. The rapid development of Middle Eastern oil production during the mid-20th century saw a new strategic significance emerge from Oman's Musandam Peninsula's dominance of the

⁵ For example, a review of scholarship about the Dhofar Campaign did not find any PhD dissertation solely examining the war or an aspect of it. In a similar fashion to this study, the campaign has been a case study in wider research. An indicative example is: Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare."

⁶ Geraint Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 2 (2009): 273.

⁷ Thomas R. Mockaitis, "The Minimum Force Debate: Contemporary Sensibilities Meet Imperial Practice," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4-5 (2012): 769.

Strait of Hormuz. Control of the Musandam Peninsula affords the possibility of the control of these straits and the globally significant oil-shipping route that passes through them. Simply put, the takeover of Oman by a radical anti-Western regime could potentially sever sea lines of communication with the Gulf oilfields, creating a situation no Western government would relish.⁸



Map 6.1 Oman⁹

Oman is also a rugged country. Some 95 per cent of Oman's land mass (estimated at about 275 000 square kilometres) is either sand and gravel desert (80 per cent) or bare, rugged mountains (15 per cent).¹⁰ Of the remaining 5% of potentially arable land, less than 1 per cent is regularly under cultivation. The greatest single constraint inhibiting the development of social structures in Oman is the shortage of water.¹¹ This was certainly a factor in Dhofar, which is the most southern province in Oman. Dhofar was and remains somewhat of 'a distinctive region whose links with the rest of the Sultanate are highly tenuous

⁸ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 277.

⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook".

¹⁰ The 'approximate' figure arises from the uncertainty associated with the precise location of some of Oman's land borders. The descriptions of Oman in this paragraph have been derived from the following sources: John Townsend, *Oman* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1977), 15-23; Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook".

¹¹ Townsend, *Oman*, 24.

despite its contiguity'.¹² The reality is that modern Oman's sovereign identity was itself a relatively tenuous matter for much of the 20th century.

The Treaty of Sib signed in 1920 recognised Omani autonomy regarding the Sultanate of Muscat and the Imamate of Oman. Prior to this, the region now known as Oman had been loosely viewed as a British Protectorate for a long period – a 'Treaty of Friendship' had been signed in 1798 and the Al bu Said dynasty has ruled the Sultanate, centred on the city of Muscat, since 1774. It remains to the present the oldest dynasty ruling its own country in the Middle East.¹³ Traditionally, much of the Sultanate's focus was on littoral and maritime trade and interests that stretched east to intersect with parts of the British Raj and southwards down the African coast as far as Zanzibar. The Imamate, where tribes gave allegiance to a traditionally elected Imam, was adjacent to the Sultanate in the north and interior. Conflict developed in the northern interior after the death of the traditional Imam of the interior in 1954.¹⁴ Saudi-backed tribes centred on the Jebel Akhdar range rebelled in response to Muscat seeking to assert greater control. The impetus and heightened interest for control of the interior by the Sultanate and the Saudis coincided with the British search for oil in the region.¹⁵

The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), supported by a small numbers of British troops fought a successful campaign in the Jebel Akhdar against the rebels between 1957 and 1959.¹⁶ A legacy of this conflict was the development of an enduring association between the British military and the SAF. On 1 August 1958, Colonel David Smiley of the Royal Horse Guards became the first commander of the newly re-organized SAF.¹⁷ This marked the beginning of an

¹² J.C. Wilkinson, "The Oman Question: The Background to the Political Geography of South-East Arabia," *The Geographical Journal* 137, no. 3 (1971): 361.

¹³ Donald Hawley, "Some Surprising Aspects of Omani History," *Asian Affairs* 13, no. 1 (1982): 29.

¹⁴ A succinct account of this conflict is: J.E Peterson, "Britain and 'the Oman War':An Arabian Entanglement," *Asian Affairs* 7, no. 3 (1976): 63-189. A more detailed account from the same author is in Ch. 2 of: J.E Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies* (London: SAQI, 2007).

¹⁵ John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 136.

¹⁶ This campaign is described from the British perspective in Chapter eight of: Michael Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars* (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1984), 83-93.

¹⁷ Peterson, "Britain and 'the Oman War':An Arabian Entanglement," 291.

extended period of SAF reliance on British 'Loan Service Personnel' (LSP) and, on average; 'about 200' contracted former British military personnel. This arrangement reflected both the lack of sufficient numbers of adequately educated people to develop an 'officer class' in Oman and the Sultan's fear that the existence of such a class may lead to the development of potential coup threats.¹⁸

The ruler of the Sultanate at the time, Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur, subsequently created the shape of modern Oman by formally incorporating the Imamate and the region of Dhofar. There had been a Sultanate presence in Dhofar since 1829, but the authority of the Sultan scarcely went beyond the coastal plain around the major town in the region, Salalah.¹⁹ Notwithstanding these developments, the day to day impact of the Sultan's government on the average Omani was not great.²⁰ Sultan Said 'maintained a rule of narrow and puritanical autocracy, determined to preserve his country from the contamination of modern ideas'.²¹ The net impact of this was that modern development by-passed Oman for much of the 20th century under what has been characterised as Sa'id's 'tyranny of indifference'.²² In Dhofar, described by one writer as effectively a 'colony of Oman', the lack of development was particularly evident.²³

The province of Dhofar has a long, narrow and lush coastal plain with tropical vegetation. This green belt exists because of a monsoon (known locally as the *Khareef*) which normally occurs between June and September each year. Separating the coastal plain from the vast desert to the north and west is a long, mountainous and arid plateau referred to as the Dhofar Jebel. It is the preponderant and characteristic geographical feature of Dhofar, and part of the

¹⁸ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 282.

¹⁹ Townsend, *Oman*, 96.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

²¹ David Smiley, the British commander of the SAF in the late 1950s, cited in Calvin H Allen Jr and W. Lynn Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 1.

²² Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 132-33.

²³ *Ibid.*, 140.

broader Hadhramaut Range. This description by a British SAS soldier who fought there provides insight into the difficulties this terrain presented:

The terrain held by the rebels was horrendously difficult to attack, a 200-mile range of mountains rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet above the narrow coastal plain. Never more than ten miles wide, the coastal strip narrowed in places to as little as a few hundred yards. The mountain plateau was cut with scores of wadis. Some were broad valleys, others narrow, precipitous ravines. Almost the only source of fresh water in the mountains lay in the streams among the dense scrub at the bottom of the wadis. Beyond the mountains was an arid, gravel plateau stretching away to the Rub al Khali – the Empty Quarter of Saudi Arabia.²⁴

Dhofar not only contained difficult terrain, key to the development of conflict there, it also contained difficult people. The Dhofar Jebel was home to a nomadic people, commonly and colloquially referred to as *Jebalis*.²⁵ The Jebalis were ethnically distinct from both the northern Omanis and the coastal inhabitants of Dhofar and they spoke a language closer to Aramaic than Arabic.²⁶ The Jebalis were fiercely tribal, and blood feuds were common between them. Self-interest, in the absence of either a connection to or external assistance from the state, was the prime motivator of tribal activity. A senior British officer writing some years after the war characterised the Jebalis thus: 'The people of Dhofar were not educated but they are alert, aggressive and highly intelligent'.²⁷ Having outlined the geographical, historical and demographic context from which conflict was to develop in Dhofar, we now can examine the insurgency itself.

The insurgency

²⁴ Ken Connor, *Ghost Force* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 158.

²⁵ Their language, which is unwritten, is *Jebali*. One thing that becomes apparent when examining the literature about the Dhofar conflict is the wide variation in the transliteration of various Arabic words commonly associated with the conflict into written English. For the sake of consistency, this paper will routinely use the forms Adoo, Firqat, Jebel and Jebalis. Explanation of each of these terms occurs when first used in the text. Note: an exception to this is that direct quotations will use the form of the term used in the source text or document.

²⁶ Walter C. Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no. 1 (2008): 64.

²⁷ John Akehurst, "The Dhofar War (Undated 20 Page Lecture / Presentation Script)," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College), 3-4.

The period when 'modern' Oman emerged after the defeat of the rebellion on the Jebel Akhdar in the late 1950s coincided with an emerging tide of Arab nationalism across the region and a sense that Sultan Sa'id's style of government was increasingly anachronistic.²⁸ A further fillip to the prevailing mood was a growing awareness of the scale of the oil production developing in the region and the latent wealth this foreshadowed. These issues, combined with the relatively poor position of Dhofar regarding development and the ethnic, social and linguistic differences between Dhofaris and other Omanis, served to heighten dissatisfaction within the province. During 1962, a minor rebellion emerged, with a small group of dissidents under Mussalim bin Nufl blowing up oil exploration vehicles and sniping at oil workers.²⁹ This rebellion started as a small 'non-ideological tribal revolt against a distant and neglectful government'.³⁰ It grew at the height of its success in 1970-71 to number an estimated 2 000 full time, fighting personnel, supported by up to 4 000 part-time militia and numerous sympathetic civilians in tribes related to the insurgent fighters.³¹ These are significant numbers where, in the absence of a reliable census, the estimated population was 50 000 people.

Mussalim bin Nufl's rebellion gradually gathered support from regional states caught up either with the growing pan-regional Arab nationalism, such as Egypt and Iraq, or with long-standing hostility to the Al bu Said dynasty, such as Saudi Arabia.³² This support led to increasing capability and, by August 1964, the rebels had progressed to the point where they could conduct a successful, lethal ambush on a SAF patrol in Dhofar.³³ On 9 June 1965 the rebels adopted the name 'Dhofar Liberation Front' (DLF), reflecting the initial aspirations of the

²⁸ Townsend, *Oman*, 75.

²⁹ Mussalim bin Nufl was also a 'disgruntled former employee' of Sultan Sa'id. John McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance" (MPhil, Cambridge, 1981), 21.

³⁰ Marc DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," *Cold War History* (2011): 3.

³¹ John Akehurst, *We Won a War* (Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell (Publishing) Ltd, 1982), 30.

³² Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 279.

³³ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 27.

movement.³⁴ The SAF and its British advisers and leaders simply called the rebels 'Adoo' – a colloquial Arabic word meaning 'enemy'.

The withdrawal of the British from neighbouring South Yemen (Aden) in November 1967, and the subsequent installation of a Marxist revolutionary government committed to liberating the Gulf region from British and Arab allied control, changed things significantly for the DLF.³⁵ The situation for the DLF in early 1968 with respect to the new government of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) was similar to that faced by SWAPO following the departure of the Portuguese from Angola in 1972 examined in the previous chapter. The Marxist nature and regional ambitions of the new government in the PDRY had a twofold effect upon the DLF. First, it greatly increased the direct military aid and support available to the rebellion, conveniently supplied from a new cross-border sanctuary in the PDRY. A new rebel organisational structure subsequently emerged with its command element located behind the border in the Yemeni town of Hauf, itself directing rebel regiments in turn controlling small groups operating in given areas on the Jebel, aligned with the Jebel tribes.³⁶ The PDRY also provided another base at al Ghayda, just beyond the Omani border. These changes had a significant and positive impact upon the DLF's ability to fight. The second effect had a significant impact upon *why* the DLF was fighting.

PDRY sponsorship (itself supported by the Soviet Union and China) of the DLF brought with it pressure for the rebellion to adopt a broader, Marxist agenda.³⁷ By late 1968, this had led to a dramatic change in the nature of the insurgency in Oman, forcing Bin Nufl and other nationalist leaders out of leadership positions in favour of leaders with a more Marxist orientation, and the adoption of a new name, the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied

³⁴ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 13.

³⁵ Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 141.

³⁶ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 29.

³⁷ Clive Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," *The Middle East Journal* 65, no. 4 (2011): 560.

For more on Russian and Chinese support see: Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 14 and 29.

Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG).³⁸ The new name, taken at the movement's second congress in late 1968, confirmed a swing towards Marxist ideology and an ambitious agenda that was larger than the original aspiration of Dhofari autonomy.³⁹ Indicative of this swing was that the new 25-man General Command Committee elected at the Congress included only three of the original 18-man DLF executive.⁴⁰

This development ultimately had a negative impact upon the rebellion within Dhofar. The Jebalis, whilst rebellious, were also to prove quite reactionary - something discovered by the PFLOAG as an unintended consequence of inflicting a Marxist doctrine upon hitherto Muslim tribesmen. For while the Adoo wanted material change in Dhofar, they approached it through a centuries-old social and cultural paradigm of tribal relationships, patronage and Islamic teaching. This of course was incompatible with the teaching of the new PFLOAG political cadres and their Yemeni, Soviet and Chinese advisers. An examination later in this chapter demonstrates how the SAF were able to use this successfully against the insurgency.

Nonetheless, the DLF / PFLOAG proved an effective fighting force for much of their existence. Even as late as 1975, the British Ministry of Defence assessed that the insurgents were better fighters than the SAF on equal terms.⁴¹ The published memoirs of British officers who fought in the campaign are invariably complimentary of the martial abilities and tenacity of the Adoo. The assessment of a SAS squadron commander is illustrative of the common view:

I had plenty of evidence as to the adoo's fighting capability. They were brave men, not afraid to push home an attack if SAF made a blunder. They were skilful at using ground to provide covered approaches...Whereas the SAF tended to stay in one place, the adoo were constantly moving, probing the SAF flanks, working around them

³⁸ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 67.

³⁹ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 27. For a more detailed and nuanced examination of the PFLOAG and its wider, Marxist agenda see: J.B. Kelly, "Hadramaut, Oman, Dhufar: The Experience of Revolution," *Middle Eastern Studies* 12, no. 2 (1976).

⁴⁰ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 40.

⁴¹ Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 96.

to cut off their withdrawal and using every dip and fold of the ground to advantage....I had already developed a sneaking respect for the adoo.⁴²

Supporting these tactical skills was a ruthless approach to coercion of the population when required. A contemporary British military report described how: 'The bedu were terrified of Aadoo reprisals. They would not willingly even sell the firqat a goat, saying that if the Communists discovered they would kill them'.⁴³ This fear was evidently well founded, the commander of the SAF noting in his diary on 13 February 1971: 'Int report to-day about camels being seized by communists in central area for resupply convoys. Owners protested so four sub-sheiks had their throats cut and bodies flung over a cliff'.⁴⁴

Aadoo tactical acumen and ruthlessness were often combined to good effect. Between 1968 and 1970, the PFLOAG launched a general offensive that conquered 80 per cent of Dhofar territory and rebel ambushes had become so deadly that government forces only operated at great peril in Dhofar's hinterland.⁴⁵ There is no debate about the fighting abilities of the Aadoo. Ultimately less certain was the PFLOAG's ability to develop fighting skill into a viable insurgency campaign.

The year 1971 saw further development of the insurgency's objectives along Marxist lines at the third congress of the PFLOAG. The congress emphasised protracted popular (armed) struggle as a fundamental principle, and confirmed the necessity to use violence.⁴⁶ A history of Oman concludes: 'What had begun as a simple national struggle against an acknowledged tyrant had become transformed into the well-known ideological battle of words against the forces of imperialism'.⁴⁷ In short, broader objectives supplanted the

⁴² Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*, 22-23.

⁴³ 'Bedu' is a colloquial term for Bedouin, in this instance referring to nomadic Arab tribes found on the Jebel. 'Firqat' were irregular militia raised by the SAF with British SAS assistance. A.S Jeapes, "Use of Irregular Forces in Dhofar," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Undated), 1.

⁴⁴ J.D.C Graham, "JDC Graham Oman Diary January 1971-October 1972," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1971).

⁴⁵ Marc DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 1 (2012): 149.

⁴⁶ Townsend, *Oman*, 114.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

relatively discrete and Dhofar-focussed objectives of the original DLF. Buoyed by Marxist doctrine that denied agency to tribalism and religion, the PFLOAG's guerrillas and commissars had confused the opposition of Dhofar's conservative tribes to Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur's rule with support for a Marxist agenda.⁴⁸ The PFLOAG, unsurprisingly, also sought to broaden the rebellion beyond Dhofar.

A group of Omani exiles living in Kuwait had formed the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (NDFLOAG) in 1969 from leftists and others dissatisfied with the Sultan's rule. The NDFLOAG conducted a relatively unsuccessful small-scale attack on a SAF base at Izki in the north of Oman on 12 June 1970.⁴⁹ The NDFLOAG subsequently merged with the PFLOAG in January 1971; the new entity retained the acronym PFLOAG but it now represented the 'Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf'.⁵⁰

The PFLOAG was ultimately unsuccessful in opening up a second front and significantly expanding the conflict beyond Dhofar. An attempt failed in 1972 when a former PFLOAG fighter (termed a 'Surrendered Enemy Personnel' or SEP) saw Mohammed Tali, a PFLOAG commissar, in a market in Muscat. A subsequent intelligence-led operation led to the arrest of over 40 people in early 1973 who were working towards the establishment of the second front.⁵¹ This setback coincided with the impact of other external factors upon the PFLOAG's operations.

Chinese support dwindled from 1970 on the back of increasing Sino-Soviet hostilities and the PFLOAG's PDRY patrons aligning themselves with Moscow. The thaw in China's relationship with the West in 1972 and its subsequent abandonment of revolutionary ideology as state policy saw the end

⁴⁸ Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 561.

⁴⁹ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 28.

⁵⁰ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975."

⁵¹ Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 571-72.

of useful Chinese support to the PFLOAG.⁵² In August 1973, the PFLOAG, weakened by counterinsurgency operations in Dhofar, and defections in particular, held another congress. Here the PFLOAG was renamed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO), signifying the end of aspirations for the wider gulf objective and a renewed focus on armed struggle within Dhofar.⁵³ Ultimately, this refocus proved insufficient. The gradual haemorrhaging of external patronage contributed to the insurgency's defeat.⁵⁴ Its coincidence with the increasing resources and effectiveness of the counterinsurgency effort, combined with loss of support on the Jebel, was ultimately conclusive.

The counterinsurgency: The SAF and the British

The SAF was created in 1958 after the Foreign and Commonwealth Office facilitated an exchange of letters between the British Conservative government of Harold Macmillan and Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur.⁵⁵ The immediate concern of both governments was the rebellion in the interior, centred on the Imamate and the Jebel Akhdar. After the defeat of the rebellion, the SAF remained a combined venture between the Sultan and the British – paid for by the Sultan and, as previously described, led by a combination of British LSP and contracted former officers. The SAF was not a large force in the 1960s (around 3,000 in total), its size largely a by-product of the Sultan's parsimony.⁵⁶ The SAF land forces consisted of four 'Omani' infantry regiments (the Muscat, Northern Frontier, Desert and Jebel Regiments) who rotated between duty in Dhofar and garrison duties in the North of Oman – two of them were in Dhofar at any given time.⁵⁷ Two other regiments permanently garrisoned Dhofar – the Frontier Force and the Southern Regiment. Recruitment of the soldiers in these regiments occurred in Baluchistan – parts of which were a former province of

⁵² Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 296.

⁵³ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 83.

⁵⁴ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 297.

⁵⁵ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 31.

⁵⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 280.

⁵⁷ The description on the SAF land forces largely relies on: Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 33-34.

the Sultanate, now part of Pakistan. These soldiers, whilst relatively good when measured against the overall standard of the SAF, were regarded as mercenaries and as such 'were generally distrusted and loathed by Omani soldiers and civilians alike'.⁵⁸ Other defence elements under Sultan Sa'id were in a parlous state – the maritime force consisted of a few small craft and the Air Force's aircraft (the SOAF – Sultan of Oman's Air Force) were obsolete and did not include helicopters.

The organisational structure of the SAF remained largely unchanged for the duration of the war in Dhofar. However, the resourcing of the SAF changed markedly after 1970, and this had a readily observable and quick impact upon the conduct, and ultimate success, of the counterinsurgency campaign. Nonetheless, at no stage could one characterise the quantity of forces available to fight the counterinsurgency as generous, although by the time the conflict ended they may ultimately be characterised as 'robustly adequate' when the use of available allied Iranian and Jordanian troops and Firqat are considered. The number of British troops committed to the conflict was perennially low. Beyond the LSP (and contracted officers), British forces were inevitably assigned at or below the 'sub-unit' level and in roles aimed at supporting and enabling the SAF rather than engaging in manoeuvre and direct combat as formed British elements.⁵⁹ Examples such as the assignment of SAS squadrons as British Army Training Teams (BATT) in support of Firqat development and leadership, or the allocation of a weapon locating battery to support the defence of RAF Salalah, are indicative.

The net effect of the SAF's size and the level of British and other allied support was that the availability of 'troops to task' was continually a factor in planning and conduct of counterinsurgency operations. The impact of this consideration in generating operational tempo against the Adoo is a recurring

⁵⁸ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 280.

⁵⁹ 'Sub-unit' is a military term used by British Commonwealth forces. It refers to a military unit of company / squadron / battery size (generally comprising between 100-200 soldiers). Three or more 'sub-units' make up a 'unit' – commonly referred to as a battalion or regiment.

theme throughout accounts by British LSP commanders.⁶⁰ Unhelpful was the fact that the size of the physical commitment of British forces to fighting the counterinsurgency was inversely proportional to Britain's longstanding interests in Oman and the outcome of the war. It has been established that the key contemporary strategic driver of British commitment to the Dhofar counterinsurgency campaign was Cold War concerns about Oman falling into anti-Western hands and any subsequent impact upon oil supplies. In this respect, it echoed centuries of interest in the Sultanate. The circumstances of involvement changed, but paraphrasing Viscount Palmerston's 1848 speech to Parliament, British strategic and economic interests in the region appeared to be 'eternal and perpetual'.

British involvement with the Sultanate dates from the early days of the British East India Company in the 17th century, through to competition with the French and the Dutch in the Indian Ocean during the 18th century, cooperation on the issue of piracy in the 19th century, and de-colonisation of the region and Cold War competition during the 20th century.⁶¹ Throughout, Britain maintained what has been termed an 'informal empire' in the Gulf in order to protect British India and its trade and communications routes.⁶² Having at various stages fought a number of Gulf rulers over issues as diverse as trade, access, piracy and slavery, Britain signed a 'Perpetual Maritime Truce' with many of them, including the Sultanate in Muscat, in 1853.⁶³ Subsequently, Britain referred to these states as the 'Trucial States'. Enduring British interests included denial of imperial competition and the security of trade routes from the sub-continent. This interest lasted well into the 20th century. That only Britain (and India in the post-independence era) maintained a resident consul in Muscat between 1915

⁶⁰ Such as Akehurst, *We Won a War*; and Graham, "JDC Graham Oman Diary January 1971- October 1972."

⁶¹ Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars*, 83; J.F Standish, "British Maritime Policy in the Persian Gulf," *Middle Eastern Studies* 3, no. 4 (1967): 325-26.

⁶² James Onley, "Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820-1971," *Journal of Social Affairs* 22, no. 87 (2005): 42.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31.

and 1970 demonstrates the relative importance with which Britain viewed this relationship.⁶⁴

British assistance in dealing with the Jebel Akhdar rebellion in the late 1950s had further enmeshed British and Omani interests through the creation of the SAF. Another aspect of British interest in Dhofar came through the Royal Air Force (RAF). It had maintained an airfield at Salalah (the administrative capital of Dhofar) since before the Second World War. Its survival into the 1960s was in a large part a quid pro quo for British rights to operate a strategically more important RAF installation on Masirah Island, which lay further north nearer the mouth of the Gulf.⁶⁵ Yet despite these interests, the demonstrated commitment to the security of the Sultanate and the larger Cold War strategic imperative associated with Gulf oil, the physical commitment of British forces to the counterinsurgency campaign remained modest. Geraint Hughes suggests a list of factors that both account for the initial small-scale British involvement and the fact that it did not grow much over the campaign.⁶⁶ The impact of decolonisation (including how difficult that process was proving in adjacent South Arabia and Aden) and Prime Minister Wilson's 'East of Suez' policy announcement of January 1968 set clear political markers. Britain's economic difficulties following the 1967 devaluation crisis and the 1973 oil shock provided a financial constraint upon military adventurism, as did standing NATO commitments and the increasing security demands in Britain's own restive province of Northern Ireland.

A clear tension thus existed between the strategic imperatives driving British engagement with counterinsurgency in Dhofar and the ways and means available to achieve them. This tension is common problem across the three case studies in this paper and other examples of second-party counterinsurgency within the available literature, albeit with differing concerns regarding ways and means. The guiding principle of the British strategy with

⁶⁴ Peterson, "Britain and 'the Oman War': An Arabian Entanglement," 285.

⁶⁵ Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 327.

⁶⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 276-77.

which to address this tension was to provide 'breathing room' for the Sultan's own forces so that they might develop to the point where they could win against the PFLOAG.⁶⁷ This supports the assumptions of the second-party counterinsurgency framework regarding both host nation primacy and the importance of pragmatism. It also fits comfortably as an approach within the methodology described in Chapter four. The following overview of the campaign in the next section of this chapter will inform its subsequent evaluation against the framework.

The counterinsurgency campaign⁶⁸

Analysts of the Dhofar war generally divide the counterinsurgency campaign into two phases – pre- and post-1970, when a palace coup removed the incumbent Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur and replaced him with his son Qaboos bin Sa'id.⁶⁹ The first phase is invariably characterised as having poor governance and the absence of an overall strategy on the side of the counterinsurgency forces, the second phase as having a plan and better governance, which led to victory. The problem with such characterisations is that the generalities they proffer suggest absolutes that obscure subtle, yet important, nuances in the conduct of the campaign that in turn may lead to incorrect conclusions. For example, it is apparent that an overall plan did exist prior to 1970 – authors have merely confused its lack of effectiveness with an absence.⁷⁰ Similarly, it is demonstrable that the British believed poor governance, and understanding of the need for improvement in it, existed right up until the point of victory and beyond. The commander of the Dhofar Brigade wrote in 1974 (four years after the coup) that the introduction of civil

⁶⁷ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 71.

⁶⁸ This section is necessarily an overview of the conduct of the campaign in order to inform the subsequent evaluation against the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Highly detailed narratives of the campaign are provided in: McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance,"; and Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*.

⁶⁹ Indicative examples are DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," 144. and Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 54.

⁷⁰ McKeown's thesis provides accounts of a series of relatively often effective plans between 1965 and 1970 that were ultimately hindered by a lack of resources and support from the Sultan. See: McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," Chapters 2-3.

development would be key to victory.⁷¹ Moreover, a month after Sultan Qaboos declared the insurgency defeated, the visiting chief of the British General Staff still found no grasp within the Omani government of the need for civil development.⁷² To militate against painting too broad a picture, it is more useful for us to think of the counterinsurgency campaign in four phases. These are characterised as pre-coup, coup, post-coup (until late 1972) and end game.

Just as the insurgency started slowly with limited activity against soft civilian targets, the initial counterinsurgency effort was similarly low key. For several years, the insurrection followed a regular annual pattern dictated by the monsoon.⁷³ The SAF responded in kind, effectively ceding the Jebel to the Adoo because of the difficulties of conducting operations during the khareef. Part of the problem for the SAF in this regard arose from previously described difficulties concerning the availability of adequate numbers of troops and suitable equipment. Sultan Sa'id's legendary frugality meant that the SAF initially had to make do with the structures and equipment that had previously garrisoned the province during peace. Compounding the Sultan's neglect of the SAF during the campaign was a broad indifference by the majority of his subjects to the situation and its potential perils. John Townsend's history of Oman neatly sums up the national mood:

The conflict was never regarded as by a majority of Omanis as a national struggle. It was 'the Sultan's concern', or 'a British war'. Very few Omanis (as distinct from Dhofaris) cared about the military crises or successes in battle of the Sultan's Armed Forces. For most of them, Dhofar was as remote and as inaccessible as the moon.⁷⁴

Yet during the early years (1965-67), despite having limited forces and equipment shortages, the SAF managed to fight the DLF to a stalemate. The Adoo at this stage were in a poor moral and physical state.⁷⁵ They lacked many of the basics normally associated with a successful rural insurgency. External sanctuary was hard to access – the British were in neighbouring South Arabia

⁷¹ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 64.

⁷² Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 79.

⁷³ Connor, *Ghost Force*, 154.

⁷⁴ Townsend, *Oman*, 103.

⁷⁵ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 33.

and sympathetic elements in Saudi Arabia lay on the far side of the desolate Empty Quarter. Any material external support (such as arms) coming from either Saudi Arabia or Iraq had to be smuggled through that difficult terrain. Nor was the 'human terrain' on the Jebel helpful in establishing unity of purpose amongst the insurgents. Notwithstanding that the distinct cultural, language and social differences between Jebalis and the wider population of Dhofar and Oman, more than 450 different tribes, clans and sub-groupings identified amongst the Jebalis themselves presented a challenge to any unity of effort.⁷⁶ Despite all these issues, the SAF's material shortages consistently prevented them from capitalising on the DLF's relative weakness.⁷⁷

Matters changed dramatically during the period from late 1967 until 1970. The British withdrawal from South Arabia and the formation of the PDRY with a Marxist revolutionary government provided the rebellion with sanctuary, training bases and superior weaponry. PFLOAG fighters were increasingly equipped with modern weapons supplied by the Soviet Union and Cuba.⁷⁸ These weapons included Kalashnikov assault rifles, machine guns, mortars, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), 122mm Katyusha rockets and surface-to-air man-portable missiles.⁷⁹ In stark contrast, Sultan Sa'id's frugality meant that the SAF, still equipped with Second World War-era bolt-action rifles, was often outgunned.⁸⁰

Lacking adequate troop numbers to address the scale of the conflict, and the commensurate firepower to match it with the Adoo, the SAF's tactics from 1967 sought to deter Jebalis from joining the insurgency. The Sultan's intransience concerning wider social reform meant that the public goods commonly associated with modern states were not available to offer as an incentive for cooperation with the government. Instead, the SAF, at Sa'id's

⁷⁶ The figure of 450 was determined by SAF intelligence work in 1969. See: Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 564.

⁷⁷ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 33.

⁷⁸ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 4.

⁷⁹ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 67.

⁸⁰ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 280.

direction, resorted to collective punishments.⁸¹ Such punishments included mass detention of military age males, capping wells and burning villages. These, combined with the apparent refusal or inability of the Sultan to address the desire for progress that lay at the initial heart of the rebellion, drove increasing numbers of Jebalis to side with the PFLOAG. Many LSP personnel became disillusioned with these punitive tactics, leading to questioning about the worth of pursuing support to Sa'id.⁸²

The autumn of 1969 saw government forces driven from almost all of western Dhofar by the PFLOAG.⁸³ By early 1970, the entire Jebel was in rebel hands with government forces only holding parts of the coastal plain.⁸⁴ At this time, the British sent the commanding officer of the SAS, Lieutenant Colonel John Watts, incognito to Dhofar in order to make an assessment. Watts' personal account of what he found, given in a later interview, provides a useful summary of the situation at the end of the pre-coup period:

I was horrified. The road was cut and the only resupply was by air or sometimes by sea...There were no Dhofaris in SAF, which was virtually an army of occupation. Everybody on the jebel was with the enemy, some convinced, some out of boredom, some intimidated: SAF [had] only a few Jebali guides. It was crazy – we were on a hiding to nothing fighting a people. There were signs of counter-revolution, with Muslim-Communist arguments. The latter were better armed and organised and ruthless, absorbing some Dhofaris and shooting others. A clash was coming and therefore the Government had a chance of getting some Dhofaris on their side.⁸⁵

At the conclusion of his visit Watts conducted an appreciation and proposed a 'five points' plan to address the situation.⁸⁶ The five points encompassed the: establishment of an effective intelligence apparatus; the

⁸¹ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 10.

⁸² Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 280.

⁸³ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 27.

⁸⁴ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 280-81.

⁸⁵ Then Major General John Watts, in an interview with Lieutenant Colonel John McKeown, 16 May 1981. Cited in: McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 46.

⁸⁶ Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*, 31.

Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 282.

provision of medical treatment to Jebalis; the provision of veterinary assistance and agricultural development on the Jebel; the establishment of a psychological warfare capability within the Dhofar force; and the development of a government militia comprising Jebalis (the Firqat).

Sultan Sa'id, however, rejected the recommendations made by Watts.⁸⁷ The Dhofar insurgency thus reached an apogee in 1970, with many British policymakers fearing that the war was being lost and that Oman had become 'a kind of micro-Vietnam in the Arabian Peninsula'.⁸⁸ Sa'id's continual rejection of the types of reform that might avert further decline compelled the British government to consider how they would avoid such a situation – and act they did.

British foreknowledge, support and planning for the coup that deposed Sa'id, long suspected, was confirmed with the relatively recent disclosure of previously classified material.⁸⁹ During the spring and summer of 1970 British government officials had established covert contacts with Sa'id's son, Qaboos. Officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) feared Oman was on the brink of an all-encompassing revolution. They pre-empted the possibility by instigating a palace coup. In an almost bloodless coup on 23 July 1970, Qaboos bin Said became the Sultan and Sa'id went into exile in Britain.⁹⁰ Qaboos pragmatically reconciled the change thus:

He knew five languages, but he wasn't cultured. Knowledge is one thing and culture is something else. He adopted a policy and would not agree to give it up, because he believed that this policy was the best one. He was headstrong and bigoted. He didn't believe in change. His thinking went back to an age which is not this present age. So he had to fall from power, and this is what happened.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 28.

⁸⁸ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 2.

⁸⁹ DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975." Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 561.

⁹⁰ Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 142.

⁹¹ Townsend, *Oman*, 79.

Qaboos almost immediately announced a set of new liberal policies that would address the original Dhofari cause for the rebellion. However, by 1970 the PFLOAG had moved onto a wider, Marxist agenda – the communists were firmly in control and the aims had changed.⁹² A general amnesty for insurgents came into place soon after Qaboos assumed power. Almost 2 000 Adoo surrendered and subsequently joined the Firqat (Qaboos had also approved the Watts Plan).⁹³ British advisors had suggested the offer of amnesty, mirroring that in Malaya in the 1950s, and it appealed to those Dhofaris who wanted reform rather than revolution.⁹⁴ Noting the schism identified within the PFLOAG between the tribal, sub-nationalist and Islamist inclinations of the original DLF and the Marxist inclination of the new PFLOAG leadership, this proved to be a well-calculated initiative. From February 1970 the increasingly radicalisation of the PFLOAG had seen the number of defections away from the insurgency increase because of a perceived hostility to Islam by the emergent insurgent leadership.⁹⁵ However, the amnesty also inadvertently aided the PFLOAG's ongoing offensive in that the new Sultan directed the Desert Regiment to cease operations temporarily on the Jebel against the enemy to allow defecting SEP to come forward. The PFLOAG used this lull to build up its strength and bring in more heavy weapons.⁹⁶

It is important at this stage to note that the coup was not immediately decisive in the counterinsurgency campaign. It was rather an enabler of subsequent, necessary activity, not a guarantor of success. The PFLOAG remained on the offensive during the first year after the coup. It secured full control over the 'Red Line' (the road between Salalah and the small military base at Thumrait) by destroying the four remaining SAF posts along this route by May 1971.⁹⁷ This road divided Dhofar from north to south and was vital to governance and administration. It would not be until late 1973 that the

⁹² Akehurst, "The Dhofar War (Undated 20 Page Lecture / Presentation Script)," 4.

⁹³ Townsend, *Oman*, 102.

⁹⁴ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 283.

⁹⁵ Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 144.

⁹⁶ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 52-53.

⁹⁷ Allen Jr and Rigsbee II, *Oman under Qaboos, from Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996*, 68.

government was to regain full control of this road with the assistance of the Iranian Battle Group.

Some observers have, in fact, noted a continuation of the pre-coup stalemate in the period immediately post-coup.⁹⁸ Yet this assessment does not give due credit or recognition to the importance of the necessary groundwork with respect to the counterinsurgency campaign in this period, which shaped and set the conditions for success that followed between 1971 and 1972. Qaboos, for example, embarked upon an expansion of the SAF and an update of its equipment, including new aircraft and modern weapons. Britain also provided more troops – initially a small Army medical team, replaced by the end of August with a RAF field surgical team that was soon treating 600 Dhofaris a day in Salalah.⁹⁹ An advance party of the SAS arrived in September, following acceptance in Britain of Watts' plan after the change in the political circumstances.¹⁰⁰ This special forces element would become the BATT, and subsequently led the development of the Firqat. The SAS detachment also helped form civil aid teams (CAT) that provided Jebalis with tangible benefits to address dissatisfaction with what the government provided.¹⁰¹ These benefits would eventually range from provision of simple medical services to advice on agricultural science.¹⁰² The amnesty announced by Qaboos undoubtedly helped with the initial set up of the Firqat, as did the attendant financial incentives of up to 500 Omani riyals for the surrender of automatic weapons by SEP.¹⁰³

In early 1971 the plan to train small groups of SEP into Firqat so Dhofaris could carry the war back into their Jebel was well underway.¹⁰⁴ In an undated report, the officer commanding the first BATT recommended establishment of series of forts on key features (major water / airstrip) for occupation by the

⁹⁸ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 17.

⁹⁹ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 53.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰¹ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 72.

¹⁰² Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 144.

¹⁰³ Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 569.

¹⁰⁴ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 55.

Firqat.¹⁰⁵ This suggested a further benefit from the development of the Firqat in that it would free regular SAF elements from having to garrison tribal areas of the Jebel.

However, the raising of Firqat was never a straightforward or easy task. In fact, one of the first Firqat 'rebelled' in April 1971, refusing to follow orders and with some of its members deserting. Reasons for early Firqat discontent included 'general irritability caused by inadequate weapons, equipment and support...a leadership struggle between the established leaders and those who thought they should be leaders....tribalism'.¹⁰⁶ Such problems were, however, quickly resolved through the expedient measure of sacking several miscreants (although the majority of these later re-joined). At the same time the April 1971 Firqat difficulties presaged a range of problems associated with working with irregular forces, it highlighted that using ones comprised of spirited tribesmen from the Jebel would remain challenging. This merits further examination, as it will assist us with evaluating the overall utility of Firqat as the campaign developed.

From its unsteady initiation, the Firqat grew steadily. By mid-1974, there were about 1 000 Jebalis, often SEP, employed in the Firqat and organised along tribal or clan lines.¹⁰⁷ Initially, the effectiveness of the Firqat was 'mixed'; the desertions of April 1971 and other difficulties during that year led to the realisation that organising along tribal lines went some way to ameliorating unnecessary issues amongst people pre-disposed to being fractious. The 'difficulty' of the Firqat, however, would become an enduring theme. The commander of the SAF (CSAF) noted in his diary on 11 July 1971 that 'BATT say they are having a difficult time with the firqats; unreliable and self-centred

¹⁰⁵ Jeapes, "Use of Irregular Forces in Dhofar," 3.

¹⁰⁶ "Operation Storm Fortnightly Report - 18 April to 29 April 1971," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1971).

¹⁰⁷ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 42.

Dhofaris, good at times, bloody at others'.¹⁰⁸ His view remained consistent, writing in an assessment seven months later:

Some have, on occasions, operated brilliantly and with outstanding courage and zeal. All are however unreliable; they operate not as ordered but as their own interests dictate. Thus no firm military plan can be made to which their participation is indispensable.¹⁰⁹

The Firqat had other limitations. It was quickly apparent that any advantage gained from their use was almost inversely proportional to the investment in kit and training provided. One SAS officer (Peter de la Billière) pointedly made the link to the fact that the more like the SAF the Firqat became, the less mobile and useful they were.¹¹⁰ The art in getting the most from the Firqat involved recognition and acceptance of what they really were – government-controlled Adoo - and planning accordingly to maximise the advantages that offered the counterinsurgency.

The post-coup period involved more than just SAF expansion and Firqat development. The benefits afforded by greater military resources and the willing support of the new Sultan allowed the SAF for the first time to develop a credible campaign plan. The first and most important task was to establish a base on the Jebel in order to launch offensive operations and thus provide some relief to the Jebalis and their livestock from the uninterrupted attentions of the Adoo.¹¹¹ CSAF noted his intent on 6 May:

The major aim in our strategy now ever must be to establish SAF, and a convincing government presence, in strength and permanently on the Jebel. This we will do as soon as this year's Khareef is over. This means helicopters (which although purchased have not yet been delivered) and Firqats (the majority still under training or being formed).¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Graham, "JDC Graham Oman Diary January 1971-October 1972."

¹⁰⁹ J.D.C Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1972), 9; paragraph 24, with a heading 'Unreliability of the Firqats'.

¹¹⁰ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 283.

¹¹¹ Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 273.

¹¹² Graham, "JDC Graham Oman Diary January 1971-October 1972."

This period also signified the end of the traditional monsoon hiatus – the monsoon was still underway when activity to shape the re-possession of the Jebel commenced. Subsequently, the ability of the SAF to stay on the Jebel throughout the monsoon season became a major psychological blow to the PFLOAG's perceived invulnerability.¹¹³ The operational design developed for the campaign was to bring Dhofar under government control again from east to west.¹¹⁴ That is, from the area most distant from PFLOAG support and sanctuary in the PDRY towards it. The technique planned reflected the classic 'imperial policing' French colonial technique of *quadrillage*. The SAF, supported by Firqat, would seize key terrain on the Jebel. Establishing a series of lines on that key terrain would follow; these were roughly orientated east-west and often fortified and mined. The purpose of these was threefold. First, they would disrupt and channel the movement of enemy forces; perhaps also affording the opportunity to conduct attrition upon Adoo numbers should the enemy choose to invest them. Second, the lines would interdict and disrupt the south-west to north-east movement of the supply camel trains from the PDRY that were vital for the PFLOAG regiments in the field. Finally, they would support the pacification of the Jebel in the areas held after clearance.

While the post-1970 Dhofar campaign design has clear alignment with the 'clear, hold, build' mantra of contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine, the emphasis of the SAF and the Sultan were emphatically on the 'clear' part of the task. The mission given to the new British commander of the Dhofar Brigade in early 1971 made it clear that the enemy were the focus. CSAF's directive to Colonel Mike Harvey on 12 Feb 71 gave him the mission: 'By the end of 1971 to have crippled the enemy's capability of dominating the Jebel by military

¹¹³ Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 296.

¹¹⁴ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 20.

means'.¹¹⁵ CSAF assessed that this mission, supported by pacification in areas cleared and held, would remain in place at least until the end of 1972.¹¹⁶

Colonel M.G. (Mike) Harvey appreciated that methods of pacification such as those used in Malay would be difficult in Oman because of the forces available and the specific circumstances on the Jebel.¹¹⁷ In a March 1971 instruction to OC [Officer Commanding] BATT about pacification, Harvey noted that concept of protected settlements was invalid in Dhofar.¹¹⁸ His assessment was that the nomadic grazing of the Jebalis frustrated the development of fixed settlements that for protection; similarly, the same lifestyle militated against relocation and settlement of Jebalis in towns such as Salalah. Compounding the problem of pacification was the campaign design, which emphasised that 'mobility is the first operational requirement for the SAF' – meaning static security tasks were not acceptable for the SAF.¹¹⁹ The conclusion Harvey arrived at was that the Firqat would have to be the lead means whereby the Jebel was pacified after clearance.

In line with its new campaign plan, the government launched Operation *Jaguar* during October 1971 in the east of Dhofar with the aim of seizing and maintaining a permanent major base on the eastern Jebel.¹²⁰ This was to be first of several such operations over the next eighteen months, each one gradually building on the success of the previous one and each one gradually moving the clearance of the Jebel further south and west. The use of (newly acquired) helicopters to insert troops, and subsequently keep them re-supplied on the Jebel, also allowed the SAF to avoid Adoo dominance of the roads.

¹¹⁵ J.D.C Graham, "CSAF's Review of Situation in the Sultanate, July 1971 Northern and Central Oman," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1971), 5.

¹¹⁶ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 10.Paragraph 28.

¹¹⁷ Harvey was then commander of the SAF Dhofar Brigade.

¹¹⁸ M.G. Harvey, "Operational Methods FSD Apr-Jun 71 - Pacification Tasks," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1971), 1.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁰ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 62.

The initial results of Operation *Jaguar* were encouraging given CSAF's direction to Harvey. Some 82 enemy were killed and 53 surrendered or were captured, while government forces between 2 October 1971 and 14 February 1972 suffered 14 dead and 58 wounded (the SAS / BATT/ Firqat had 2 dead and 19 wounded.)¹²¹ Operation *Jaguar* was a turning point in that the government campaign had displayed initiative and offensive spirit.¹²² Following *Jaguar*, Operation *Leopold* began in late October 1971. This operation led to the establishment of the 'Leopard Line' – a linear blockade that was the prototype for many others as the campaign developed.¹²³

The results of these actions in the east were encouraging. In February 1972, the CSAF was able to write that government control of the plains area had strengthened such that the Adoo no longer interfered with that civilian contractors and Royal Engineer well-drilling teams, nor had RAF Salalah received any enemy indirect fire since 8 August 1971.¹²⁴ This assessment further noted that having tasked the Dhofar brigade commander to cripple the enemy's capability of dominating the Jebel by military means, '[t]his aim has in the main being achieved. Government Forces now dominate the eastern area'.¹²⁵ Colonel Harvey was formally congratulated on the achievement in March 1972.¹²⁶

Notwithstanding the improvement in the government's situation in the east, the PFLOAG still 'held' over half of Dhofar. Moreover, it retained the capacity for offensive surprise. On 19 July 1972, the PFLOAG mounted a major offensive against a SAF post in the small coastal town of Mirbat.¹²⁷ The government garrison was relatively small, comprising some BATT members, miscellaneous SAF elements and some gendarmerie. Under the cover of the

¹²¹ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 4.

¹²² Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 276.

¹²³ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 68.

¹²⁴ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 2. paragraph 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ J.D.C Graham, "Directive for Commander, Dhofar for 1972," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1972), 2. paragraph 4.

¹²⁷ A detailed account of the battle of Mirbat is available in: Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*; Chapter nine.

khareef, the Adoo achieved tactical surprise and for a period the small government garrison, which generally fought well, was in dire danger of annihilation by a superior force. Several turns of fortune, however, aligned to see the garrison repel the attack at considerable cost to the PFLOAG fighters. Amongst these were the presence of a relief squadron of SAS at Salalah that had just arrived in Dhofar and were available to deploy by air to Mirbat, and a break in the khareef that allowed an SOAF ground attack aircraft to make a decisive contribution to the defence of the post.

Both the attack and its defeat were noteworthy actions. In subsequent myth-making about the event, some have claimed Mirbat as a turning point.¹²⁸ One hyperbolic analysis has claimed 'Mirbat was the death pang of the insurgency'.¹²⁹ Such claims, however, need assessment within the context of both the relative PFLOAG/SAF strengths at the time, the fact that the campaign was to run for almost another four long years, and a range of wider factors at play. In the available literature regarding the insurgency, the quest to identify 'turning points' in the Dhofar has uncovered many – ranging from the DLF becoming the PFLOAG and adopting Marxism, the 1970 coup, the raising of Firqat, the expansion of the SAF, to the thwarting of the PFLOAG 'Northern Front' in late 1972. All of these have greater (and plausible) explanatory utility than a mere five hours of isolated tactical activity at Mirbat.

The 'surprise' of Mirbat notwithstanding, the post-coup period gradually witnessed steady progress for the counterinsurgency campaign. In a move complementary to the pacification programme of the SAF, Qaboos approved a Dhofar Development Programme on 18 October 1972.¹³⁰ It addressed topics such as peace, civil administration, education, health and 'community pride'. To contemporary eyes, the eleven points of Qaboos' programme appear modest. Yet it is noteworthy in that it was the only published development plan for *anywhere* in Oman at the time and represented a radical departure from the

¹²⁸ Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 147.

¹²⁹ Ian Illych Martinez, "The Battle of Mirbat: Turning Point in the Omani Dhofar Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 523.

¹³⁰ Townsend, *Oman*, 108.

previous Sultan's approach. On the military front the last half of 1972 saw the replication of the success of *Jaguar* and *Leopard* in other operations across eastern and central Dhofar and the consolidation of post-coup developments. Meanwhile, the SAF during the period 1970 to 1972 had expanded from 4,000 to over 10,000 personnel and the SOAF had acquired 50 additional aircraft.¹³¹ Diplomatic initiatives by the Omanis, supported by the British, had been successful and Oman was now a member of both the Arab League and the United Nations. This had in turn led to other Arab states such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joining in various degrees with the international support offered to Oman. Iran then declared its support for the Omani government in 1973.

The end-game for the counterinsurgency campaign in Dhofar began in 1973. The characteristic 'consolidation' campaign approach in the immediate post-coup period transitioned to the Sultanate going on the offensive. New allies (the Iranians and Jordanians) joined the SAF in the field and Oman's oil revenues received a timely boost in the wake of the 1972 oil shock.¹³² This injection of funds finally allowed development of the SAF and funding of civil development.¹³³ January 1975 saw the creation of a Civil Aid Department (CAD). Such a move reaffirmed the priority of 'development', alongside the 'military' prosecution of war in the Qaboos era.¹³⁴ Ongoing military operations saw the relief and opening of the 'Midway road' between Salalah and Thumrait in late 1973, held by the PFLOAG since May 1971. This operation was one of the first successes involving the use of an infantry battle group that Iran had sent to Dhofar to aid the SAF.¹³⁵

In the spring and summer of 1974, British and Jordanian engineers constructed the 53-km long barrier, the Hornbeam Line. The line ran inland from the coast near the small town of Mugsayl. The barrier's purpose was to

¹³¹ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 18.

¹³² Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 308.

¹³³ DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," 161.

¹³⁴ Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 393.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 317.

prevent the enemy supplying the central and eastern region from the west. The development of the Hornbeam Line saw operations on the border between the centre and the western areas accelerate in a bid to clear the region of Adoo influence.¹³⁶ The SAF momentum was such that Brigadier John Akehurst, newly arrived as the commander Dhofar Brigade, assigned his formation a mission 'to secure Dhofar for civil development'.¹³⁷ Contrasting the ambition of this mission to Graham's aspiration three years earlier to deny PFLAOG the routine military use of the Jebel shows how far the counterinsurgency campaign had progressed in the government's favour. It is worth examining Akehurst's views further from his initial assessment of his task, as they illuminate the state of the counterinsurgency campaign in mid-1974.

Two weeks after assuming command of the Dhofar Brigade, Akehurst's view was that '[t]he keys to victory are: (a) Cutting enemy supplies as far west as possible. (b) Civil development, especially roads and encouraging normal commerce'. He goes on to note that 'Civil Action Teams are disappointing. They need a bigger, more powerful organisation, and more money'.¹³⁸ The Firqat 'were the key to the centre and the west'.¹³⁹ Despite the large expansion of the SAF, there were still not enough 'regular' manoeuvre elements. This was because the size of the area of operations kept expanding with each SAF success.

The construction of the Hornbeam Line was a complete success.¹⁴⁰ It effectively ended large-scale enemy activity in the east and central regions. The western region, between the Hornbeam Line and the international border, was to be the focus for the remainder of the war. A two-pronged SAF offensive towards the locales of Rakhuyt and Sherishitti (west of the Hornbeam Line) in December 1974 and January 1975 was a mixed success, but achieved enough to allow the Jordanians and Iranians to begin construction of the Demavend

¹³⁶ Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars*, 176.

¹³⁷ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 65.

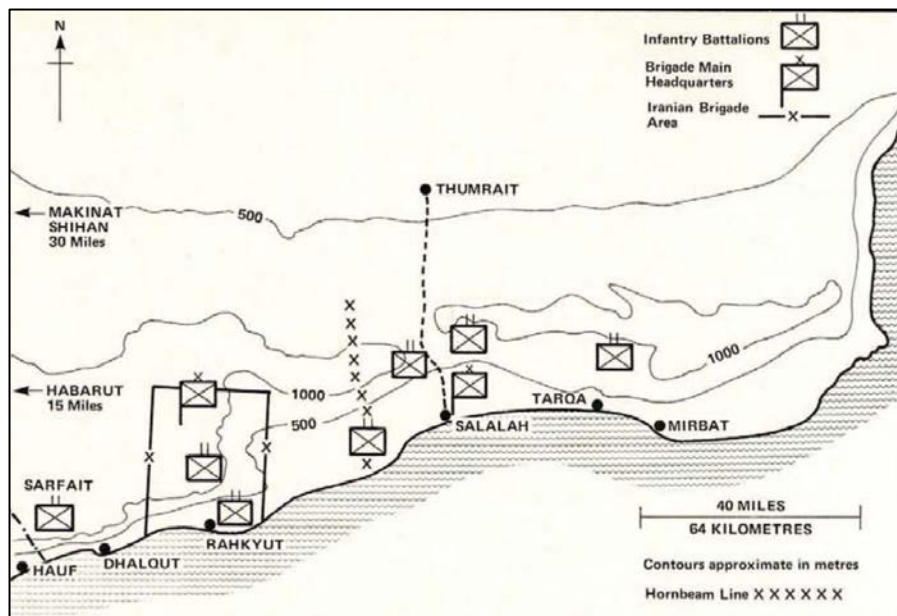
¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁴⁰ Francis Tusa, "Responses to Low Intensity Warfare: Barrier Defences in the Middle East," *The RUSI Journal* 133, no. 4 (1988): 38.

Line.¹⁴¹ The Iranians eventually occupied the Demavend Line and it continued the established pattern of linear blocks interdicting all east – west movement by the enemy.

By this stage of the war, integration of Firqat into SAF operations was routine. During Operation *Dharab* (code-name of the Sherishitti assault), each company of the Jebel regiment had Firqat allocated.¹⁴² The Iranians subsequently captured Rakhuyt, previously regarded as the 'rebel capital' of the western region on 5 January 1975.¹⁴³ Map 6.2 (below) depicts the military situation in Dhofar at the time.



Map 6.2 The military situation in Dhofar, January 1975.¹⁴⁴

The mixed results of the Rakhuyt and Sherishitti operations (the Adoo had inflicted relatively heavy casualties on both the Iranians and the SAF) was

¹⁴¹ Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 149.

¹⁴² B.N. Crumie, "Operation Order: OP DHARAB," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1974). paragraph 3. Note: this document is not paginated, hence the reference to the order's paragraph number instead.

¹⁴³ DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," 163.

¹⁴⁴ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 286.

regarded as the result of SAF impatience to deal a 'death blow' to the enemy.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, these operations ultimately hastened the end of war. Somewhat inexplicably, the PFLO leadership decided to counter the government offensive in the west quite conventionally.¹⁴⁶ In doing so they abandoned the protection normally afforded the guerrilla by only choosing to fight when the odds were favourable. In a series of counter attacks on fixed positions, the Adoo faced the now superior firepower of the SAF and their new allies. One analysis suggests that the battles from December 1974 until March 1975 destroyed the insurgency as an effective military force.¹⁴⁷ Certainly, Brigadier Akehurst told the Sultan on 20 March that the enemy in much of Dhofar was incapable of significantly interfering with development and 'everywhere fled' before the SAF.¹⁴⁸

The last major counterinsurgency offensive of the campaign was after the monsoon in October 1975. Operation *Hadaf* aimed to finish off the insurgents in the western region. At this time, the PDRY's intervention in Dhofar had increased in inverse proportion to the PFLO's decline. In late 1975, the war could have looked to the casual observer like a border confrontation between Oman and the PDRY, as along the border there were significant exchanges of conventional artillery barrages and cross-border Omani air strikes.¹⁴⁹ At least two companies of regular PDRY troops were also apparently operating in the region between Sarfait and Sherishitti.¹⁵⁰ Yet despite provocation on both sides, the situation never developed into unrestricted warfare between the PDRY and Oman, helped in part by Saudi Arabian diplomatic intervention.¹⁵¹

Operation *Hadaf* progressed steadily and achieved the majority of its objectives by the end of November. On 4 December 1975, Akehurst sent a

¹⁴⁵ Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 346.

¹⁴⁶ DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," 163.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁴⁸ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 124.

¹⁴⁹ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 296.

¹⁵⁰ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 92.

¹⁵¹ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 159-61.

signal from the Dhofar Brigade to the Sultan: 'I have the honour to inform your Majesty that Dhofar is now secure for civil development'.¹⁵² At the beginning of 1976, the SAF noted 'No active enemy were left in the West and there were about 100 active enemy left in the central and eastern areas....The enemy were no longer capable of operating in large groups, and battalions could now operate at platoon or section levels and cover much larger areas'.¹⁵³ The remaining insurgents had lost the will to fight.¹⁵⁴ A ceasefire announced in Muscat on 10 March 1976 came with a two-month immunity period for PFLO exiles, as long as they returned and cooperated with the government. The British government terminated its last active military involvement on 14 September 1976.

Second-party counterinsurgency framework analysis

The counterinsurgency campaign in Dhofar provides a range of evidence to support the use of counter violence. The examples vary from the obvious and directly destructive actions to more indirect forms of coercion and persuasion against the enemy and the broader Dhofari population. Overall, the principle of counter violence changed little in the intent and manner of its use pre- and post-coup – despite arguments by a range of authors that the post-coup campaign was an enlightened embrace of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. There was, in fact, little or no practical difference in the use of counter violence either side of the coup. Rather, the difference is in the effectiveness of its application, as government forces acquired greater lethality through enhanced firepower and manoeuvre capabilities. The most obvious and simplest example is the application of force on force violence against the Adoo from the SAF and Firqat.

Archival records reveal the CSAF envisaged military success occurring through 'fragmenting, hunting down and destroying groups of armed rebels

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁵³ D Houlton, "Minutes of the Comd's Conference Held at 1430 Hrs on 27 January 1976 in Villa Dhofar," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1976), 1. paragraph 3.

¹⁵⁴ Townsend, *Oman*, 105.

wherever they are'.¹⁵⁵ This method was to 'force the enemy to fight in large groups and therefore suffer heavy losses'.¹⁵⁶ This principle applied equally to regulars and irregulars. Graham's diary entry of 30 September 1971, prior to Operation *Jaguar*, states 'SAS say firqats rearing to go into battle on account of recent enemy atrocities in the tribal areas. We do not expect firqats to take many prisoners. We encourage this as they have old scores to settle and I want no residual long-term political agitators to hinder Dhofar development in the future'.¹⁵⁷ The quite conventional and attritional battles of 1974 and early 1975 around the Hornbeam Line and westward do not represent an aberrant swerve towards violence as a measure to defeat the insurgency. They are the achievement of a long-held objective to damage the insurgency through the destruction of as many enemy fighters as possible.

The campaign once again emphasises that meeting insurgent violence with the superior application of military violence will invariably pay a dividend. If every time an insurgent force enters a fight it loses thanks to the superior application of violence against it, then the insurgents are violating fundamental laws of survival. This form of counter violence echoes the relentless pursuit to destruction of PLAN fighters detected south of the cut-line by SADF, SWATF and Koevoet elements in the South West Africa case study.

Using a 'carrot and stick approach', the use of force in Oman also focused the minds of the population on the reality that the government's strength could potentially harm them more than the insurgency could. The violence 'stick' appeared in a variety of ways – from aerial bombardment of villages and crops to a range of coercive measures such as food control, detention or intimidation.¹⁵⁸ The 'carrot' came through the CAT's provision of public goods and the Firqat's provision of a 'path' to reconciliation with the

¹⁵⁵ J.D.C Graham, "Warning Order: Operation Simba," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1972), 1.Paragraphs 1 and 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Graham, "JDC Graham Oman Diary January 1971- October 1972."

¹⁵⁸ See: Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 91-93; and Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 144. An example of intimidation was the public display of insurgent corpses after the battle of Mirbat in 1972. See: David C. Arkless, *The Secret War* (London: William Kimber, 1988), 211.

government. Yet coercion remained a strong and open element of the counterinsurgency campaign throughout. Even benign terms could hide a coercive purpose. 'Civil Action' could include food control 'whenever you have reason to believe that the enemy significantly benefit from supplies obtained by jebali from the Government Controlled Area'.¹⁵⁹ Such actions were endorsed with the caveat: 'These measures should, as far as possible, be applied by and on the initiative of the firqats'.¹⁶⁰ The Firqat also had an important role in counter organisation.

The conception, development and use of Firqat in the Dhofar campaign remain a very useful example of the benefit of cooperation between second-party counterinsurgents and a host nation in counter organisation. A contemporary commentary observed: 'As Guevara and others have pointed out, it should be the guerrilla force that recruits and arms itself at the enemy's expense: not the other way round'.¹⁶¹ While they invariably represented the challenges routinely associated with irregulars with regard to reliability and military 'good order', the ledger balance regarding the overall impact of Firqat was positive. A key method of counter organisation is encouraging desertions to weaken the insurgency. Qaboos' offer of amnesty appealed to ex-DLF guerrillas who favoured reform rather than revolution, and who by the summer of 1970 were increasingly involved in clashes with the PFLOAG's hardline Marxist-Leninists.¹⁶² The Firqat provided additional attractions (pay and the 'prestige') above the opportunity afforded by amnesty itself. It also denied the Adoo further recruitment opportunities and clearly harnessed Jebalis' martial spirit and enthusiasm to the government's cause.

Further, as a counter organisation tool, the Firqat represented more than additional troops – and needed to, given their erratic nature and cost. Indeed, a casual look at the Firqat suggests it developed into a quasi-protection racket

¹⁵⁹ Graham, "Directive for Commander, Dhofar for 1972," 4. paragraph 16.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4. paragraph 17.

¹⁶¹ Penelope Tremayne, "Guevara through the Looking Glass: A View of the Dhofar War," *The RUSI Journal* 119, no. 3 (1974): 41.

¹⁶² Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 283.

worthy of a plot in a gangster movie. Between August 1974 and August 1976 alone, Sultan Qaboos paid out nearly one million pounds sterling in various payments to ensure Firqats' ongoing 'loyalty'.¹⁶³ Herein lay the other part of the genius associated with using Firqat. Although it could occasionally look like several thousand Jebalis being paid for not much work at all, it became a very satisfactory means of distributing some of the national wealth among the Jebel tribes – an interesting form of social security. The income received by the men in the Firqat meant that for the first time Jebalis were able to match the prosperity of other Dhofaris.¹⁶⁴ This arguably represented good security for the government at a reasonable cost, considering the dissatisfaction that had led to some of the DLF's early grievances. Paying the Jebalis was simply better than fighting them. With increasing revenues from the early 1970s onwards, the state could out-bid the insurgency in this counter organisation game. This is a lesson that the next chapter will show was echoed over 30 years later in Iraq, with insurgent members of the Sunni minority tribes being shaped into the 'Sons of Iraq' program.

Other forms of counter organisation are evident. Britain's MI6 supplied arms and money to Mahra tribesmen from 1969. The tribesmen then attacked South Yemen from Saudi Arabian territory.¹⁶⁵ A similar scheme aimed to disrupt PFLOAG logistics and create a buffer between the PDRY and Oman. This saw cross-border operations carried out by the Mahra, trained by a six-man team from the SAS, for attacks on the PDRY's security forces and ambushing Adoo supply convoys.¹⁶⁶ The establishment of lines such as Leopard, Hornbeam and Damavand served a counter organisation purpose as well. Graham assessed that the establishment of the Leopard Line significantly reduced and inhibited enemy resupply from the west into the central and

¹⁶³ Jacqueline L. Hazelton, "The Use of Guerrilla Defectors as Fighting Forces in Counterinsurgency: Preliminary Lessons Learned from Five Campaigns," in *American Political Science Association Conference* (Seattle, Washington State 2011), 10.

¹⁶⁴ Will Clegg, "Irregular Forces in Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Security Challenges* 5, no. 3 (2009): 18.

¹⁶⁵ DeVore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963-1975," 159.

¹⁶⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 294.

eastern areas of Dhofar.¹⁶⁷ When linked with food control, it could have good effect. One example of food control in April 1971 led to a large rise in SEP numbers as insurgents were 'driven off the jebel' by hunger.¹⁶⁸

The PFLOAG actively subverted the tribes on the Jebel. They also had some success in subverting parts of the security forces. In December 1972, it became apparent with the discovery of the 'Northern Front' plan that the PFLOAG had established cells in the north of Oman that included serving Omani officers and members of the Omani Intelligence Service (OIS).¹⁶⁹ On the limited evidence available, it appears that the British left such aspects of counter intelligence subversion to the OIS (which from 1974, was renamed the Oman Research Department [ORD]). The counter subversion effort by the British had a natural focus on support to operations in Dhofar. The focus was on psychological operations, and the insurgency's doctrine provided a powerful counter subversion message.

The PFLOAG's assault on Islam and tribalism in Dhofar after that organisation's embrace of a Marxist agenda allowed government psychological operations to portray Qaboos as the defender of Islam and established cultural traditions against atheistic communists.¹⁷⁰ British psychological warfare specialists undermined popular support for rebellion by mobilising the Dhofari population's attachment to traditional cultural and religious norms against PFLOAG's vision of an atheistic post-tribal society.¹⁷¹ Given the inherently conservative nature of the Jebel tribes, this was a sound approach, and it contributed to an increase in SEP numbers. These SEP often joined Firqat, where they in turn contributed to the counter-subversion effort by 'demonstrating to the uncommitted that PFLOAG was increasingly a busted flush and that Dhofaris, alongside Omani Arabs and Baluchi troops, were

¹⁶⁷ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 10. paragraph 20.

¹⁶⁸ Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970-1976," 567.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 572.

¹⁷⁰ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 291.

¹⁷¹ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 13.

prepared to nail their colours to the Sultan's mast'.¹⁷² The Firqat also had a direct influence on messaging – they naturally spoke to and influenced their cousins and brothers within the insurgency when they considered it in their interest to do so.¹⁷³ Supporting the counter subversion messages of the psychological warfare effort were efforts to pre-empt the insurgent narrative.

The core grievance that lay at the heart of the initial rebellion was the lack of development. What may have happened with respect to the rebellion if Sultan Sa'id had addressed Dhofari concerns prior to the militancy of the DLF emerging is a subject for speculation. However, the actions taken after the coup in 1970 effectively 'pre-empted' the rationale underpinning the original rebellion and undermined PFLOAG's message. Qaboos' relatively liberal approach to development and provision of public goods for the province effectively neutralised many of the grievances his father had caused. After Qaboos' accession, the Dhofari population attracted much higher per capita development expenditure than the Northern Omani population.¹⁷⁴ This development, often delivered or facilitated by the SAF, had a follow-on effect observed by CSAF: 'There is clear evidence that the help rendered to the civil population is appreciated and has led, in the rural areas, to a heightening of the esteem in which the SAF soldier, and the British officer, is held'.¹⁷⁵ With the matter of development addressed, it was increasingly apparent that: 'The rift between ex-DLF fighters and the Marxist-Leninist leadership which followed Qaboos' accession showed that numerous Dhofaris did not oppose the Sultanate as an institution, but had instead taken up arms against Sa'id's despotism'.¹⁷⁶

Other efforts in pre-emption were also evident. The PFLOAG stance on the 'liberation of the Arabian Gulf' was predicated on the idea that Omani

¹⁷² Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970-1976," 270.

¹⁷³ Hazelton, "The Use of Guerrilla Defectors as Fighting Forces in Counterinsurgency: Preliminary Lessons Learned from Five Campaigns," 6.

¹⁷⁴ Townsend, *Oman*, 107.

¹⁷⁵ Graham, "CSAF's Review of Situation in the Sultanate, July 1971 Northern and Central Oman," 1.

¹⁷⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975," 291.

sovereignty in particular, and wider Gulf State sovereignty in general, was somehow under compromise. This rebel agenda was also effectively pre-empted. The admission of Oman into the Arab league and the United Nations as a sovereign state deprived PFLOAG of the legitimacy it sought as an anti-colonial resistance movement.¹⁷⁷ These actions were Omani initiatives, but after an initial rebuff British diplomats 'probed for ways to enhance Oman's diplomatic standing' in order to pursue the membership bids'.¹⁷⁸

On the other hand, the intelligence 'enabling' of the counterinsurgency effort did not always go as well as other aspects of the campaign. Sultan Sa'id had deliberately hamstrung the development of an effective intelligence service, afraid it might become an opposition force. Only skeletal intelligence staff initially existed within the SAF. It was mainly a mix of LSO and contracted officers known as Desert Intelligence Officers (DIOs) and Sultan's intelligence Officers (SIOs) respectively. Besetting the intelligence staff at this time were problems of friction, knowledge retention due to 'churn' and the mixed quality of the abilities.¹⁷⁹ Attending to these matters became a priority after the coup. An intelligence cell was established and it began to run a 'normal' intelligence staff cycle. Creation of a psychological warfare cell assisted with the counter subversion tasks detailed already.¹⁸⁰ The leadership of the SAF quickly came to regard this capability as 'invaluable'.¹⁸¹ A senior British intelligence officer who served with the SAF captured the interaction between the staff and the counter-subversion role: 'The intelligence system in Dhofar was often deliberately used to project the Government as offering a better alternative to the insurgents'.¹⁸²

The post-coup changes in Oman resulted in significant intelligence improvements. By the end of 1971, the government intelligence staff could

¹⁷⁷ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 18.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷⁹ Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970-1976," 563.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 565.

¹⁸¹ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 12.

¹⁸² A.J. Abbott, "Intelligence Script Delivered by Major AJ Abbott MBE Int Corps in the Dhofar Presentation at the Staff College on 30 Jun 82," in *John Graham Collection GB165-0327* (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 1982), 6.

develop sufficient intelligence about the enemy logistic system that they could predict and mount successful operations to interdict and block them (when the SAF could generate sufficient forces to do so).¹⁸³ However, the challenges routinely associated with intelligence cooperation between second-party counterinsurgents and host nations endured, noted as late as 1974:

Dhofar Brigade Headquarters had its own Intelligence staff officer with a small section, but most of the information was obtained and assessed by the Omani Intelligence Service which was a government department in its own right and not under SAF control. This arrangement often created problems of coordination.¹⁸⁴

A British intelligence officer offered another, blunter, interpretation:

The Oman Intelligence Service was a petty, self-indulgent and often downright obstructive organisation which was not above withholding information from the Army. Conversely, it viewed the Army as being full of amateurs in the intelligence field, who just wanted short-term successes.¹⁸⁵

Other aspects of the intelligence program were more successful, particularly in overcoming second-party counterinsurgent shortfalls with indigenous collectors, namely the *Firqat*. It was not just the British who benefited from the *Firqat*; it provided a critical source of local knowledge and intelligence for an Army that contained few Dhofaris, let alone Jebalis'.¹⁸⁶ Brigadier Akehurst regarded the *Firqat* as providing 'invaluable intelligence' during his time commanding the Dhofar Brigade.¹⁸⁷

Throughout the Dhofar campaign, the British also appear to have been comfortable with 'adaptation'. Jeapes' observation that the British tried 'every COIN principle from the previous fifty years' suggest a force willing to experiment and valuing the benefits of adaptive behaviour. While it is normally common to talk of adaptation in terms of modification of operational and tactical

¹⁸³ Graham, "CSAF's Assessment of the Military Situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972," 12.

¹⁸⁴ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 44.

¹⁸⁵ Abbott, "Intelligence Script Delivered by Major AJ Abbott MBE Int Corps in the Dhofar Presentation at the Staff College on 30 Jun 82," 2-3.

¹⁸⁶ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 73.

¹⁸⁷ Akehurst, *We Won a War*, 77.

techniques, the Dhofar case provides an extreme example of adaptation in the pursuit of counterinsurgency success.

The coup procured by the British in 1970 ultimately changed the war. The audacity of such a move by second-party counterinsurgents seems extreme to contemporary observers accustomed to the deference to host nation sovereignty evident in conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan. However, it stands as a powerful example of the value of adaptation in changing second-party counterinsurgency outcomes. That noted, Dhofar also clearly demonstrates clear recognition by the British as second-party counterinsurgents that Qaboos was in charge and that the primacy of policy direction remained with the Omanis.

Taken in total then, the Dhofar case study, just like the South West Africa study, bears out many of the central tenets of the second-party counterinsurgency framework proposed in this thesis. The British approach as second-party counterinsurgents did not rely on the often inappropriate 'hearts and minds' approach. The pragmatic model they and their Omani partners developed, particularly after Qaboos' coup, clearly reflects the four principles of counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption. Similarly, implementation of the enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptation are evident, albeit with varying degrees of success. It remains to conclude, like the previous case study, that the theory and practice followed in Dhofar is in substantial alignment with the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

Chapter seven. The Iraq surge

This chapter examines the military 'surge' conducted between 2007 and 2008 during the Iraq War as the third and final case study in second-party counterinsurgency. This case study differs markedly in context from the previous two in terms of its size and familiarity for contemporary readers. This differing scale encompasses more than mere geography, cost and numbers of protagonists – although these were all of a significantly larger quantum than either the South West Africa or the Dhofar cases. This case also introduces three new variables - a large component of the counterinsurgency effort takes place in a highly urbanised environment with high population density; the enemy comprises a myriad of groups with diverse objectives; and the principal second-party counterinsurgency force was a modern, networked post-industrial military force.

This is not a case study about the wider Iraq war in any sense – it deliberately 'boxes' the 'surge' as a finite period in the conflict for examination. Three reasons underpin this choice. The 'surge' period is definitively one where the majority of the coalition nations fighting the war acknowledged that they were undertaking counterinsurgency operations. It will become apparent that for most of the period prior to 2007 there was widespread denial about the true nature of the conflict in Iraq. Second, not only was there acknowledgement of counterinsurgency during the 'surge', a deliberate counterinsurgency method was attempted. The final reason for selecting this case study is more prosaic – the scale and scope of the wider Iraq provides a data set far larger than that required for evaluation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

The arguments surrounding the success of the 'surge' in Iraq are as widespread and contested as that for the wider Iraq war. Proponents of the 'surge thesis' argue that the addition of extra United States troops in 2007, combined with innovations in tactical methods, led to a reduction in violence and the suffocation of the insurgency. Critics of the 'surge', on the other hand, have suggested alternative explanations for the reduction in violence, including

matters such as the 'Sunni Awakening', the dynamics of sectarian violence and interaction with other multiple factors.¹ Both sides of the argument do agree, however, that the situation in Iraq prior to and during the 'surge' was complex. Furthermore, it is difficult to attribute causality for the reduction in violence with any degree of certainty based on the evidence currently available and the studies completed to date. Thankfully, the purpose of this case study is not to offer a judgement on the success or otherwise of the Bush Administration's surge stratagem. It is to examine the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency in Iraq during the 'surge' years (2007-2008) in order to inform evaluation of the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

A few explanatory qualifications are useful. The 'surge' was distinctly and primarily an American and Iraqi activity. Notwithstanding the common usage of the terms 'Multi-National Force-Iraq' (MNF-I) and 'Coalition forces' throughout the literature, the reality is that it was only American and Iraqi forces who increased their numbers and capabilities during the 'surge'. Indeed, the majority of the United States' and Iraq's coalition partners' efforts during the period of the 'surge' can be reasonably characterised as attempts to 'draw down' and exit the campaign. Related to this is the observation that the geographical centre of the 'surge' was Baghdad and the so-called 'Sunni Triangle'.² This reflects where the United States 'surge brigades' were sent upon arrival into Iraq and where the main effort was, notwithstanding an exception in the Iraqi government 'surge' into Basra during Operation *Charge of the Knights* (COTK) in first half of 2008. Finally, a further clarification helps with respect to second-party counterinsurgency, in that initially the United States was the sovereign authority in Iraq as the 'occupying power' after the removal of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party in 2003. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was thus not technically a second-party counterinsurgent. The restoration of Iraqi sovereignty on 28 June 2004 and the introduction of an Iraqi

¹ Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (2012): 8.

² The term 'Sunni Triangle' describes an area in the centre of Iraq where the Sunni minority constitutes the majority of the populace. It is a rough triangle with an eastern apex near Baqubah, its southern axis passing through Baghdad, the western apex near Ramadi and the northern apex centred on Tikrit.

interim government under Prime Minister Ayad Allawi changed this situation and the subsequent exercising of Iraqi sovereignty became robust. Any suggestion that the United States was practising anything other than second-party counterinsurgency as previously defined after mid-2004 simply wrong.

Iraq and the war

It is tempting to believe that the Iraq conflict is more familiar to the contemporary observer than either South West Africa or Dhofar because of its prominence in international affairs after 2003. Nevertheless, it is useful to examine aspects of Iraq germane to providing context for understanding the 'surge'. Map 7.1, below, depicts Iraq.



Map 7.1. Iraq³

³ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook".

Several physical features of Iraq are noteworthy with respect to influence upon the conduct of insurgency and counterinsurgency there. The south and centre of Iraq is largely arid desert, with the area between the Euphrates River in the west and the Tigris River in the east being the most arable due to seasonal flooding and the use of irrigation. In turn, this has led to the area between or adjacent to those rivers being the site of most towns or cities in this part of Iraq. The location of Baghdad on several broad, sweeping bends of the Tigris in central Iraq is indicative of this phenomenon. The north and north-east of Iraq are more temperate and become mountainous towards the northern borders with Syria, Turkey and Iran. As well as being distinctly different physically, the north-east area is demographically and culturally distinct, being home to Iraq's Kurdish Sunni minority.

Iraq has a population estimated at 30 million.⁴ This comprises two major ethnic groups – Arabs (75-80 percent) and Kurds (15-20 percent), with up to 5 percent comprising small minority groups of Turkomen and Assyrians. In the main these groupings have tribal structures, but the significance of these structures waxes and wanes depending upon interplay of circumstance and location. Religion further divides these ethnic groups: the Shi'a grouping is the majority at 60-65 percent, followed by Sunni at 32-37 percent, and Christian or others at 3 percent. While members of each religious and ethnic group live throughout Iraq, it is reasonable to characterise their primary geographic dispersion as being Shi'a Arabs in the centre and south, Sunni Arabs in the centre and west / north-west and Kurds in the north / north-east. Parts of these populations are highly urbanised, with five cities accounting for over one-third of Iraq's population. Baghdad is the largest city with an estimated population of 5.5 million, followed by Mosul (1 million), Erbil (1 million) and Basra (1 million). This urbanisation meant that a great deal of the fighting in the insurgency occurred in 'built-up' terrain, unlike the rural insurgencies that were a feature of South West Africa and Dhofar.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Two other features of Iraq are worthy of note. The first is the degree to which Iraq is essentially a land-locked country is immediately apparent in Map 7.1. The security of borders is a perennial concern in any counterinsurgency and Iraq has very long land borders that are difficult to secure. The borders to the south and west served as avenues for support from Saudi Arabia and Syria for Sunni insurgents. The border to the east with Iran was a source of support for Shi'a militants. All borders were valuable avenues for extensive criminal smuggling activity that financed insurgents and wider criminality after 2003. The second point is Iraq's possession of one valuable natural resource – oil. Iraq produces over 3.3 million barrels of oil a day; it is the fourth largest exporter of crude oil in the world. The implications of this are important. First, control of the state brings with it power to distribute the benefits of the actual and potential oil wealth of the nation. This naturally raises the stakes in internal disputes in Iraq, as the potential benefits are high. Second, Iraq's oil fields are not evenly geographically distributed – they are predominantly in the south and east, creating tensions about which ethnic or religious grouping 'owns' the resource and should thus benefit most from it.

In historical terms Iraq followed a convoluted path of governance during the 20th century. Formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, Britain occupied the country during the course of the First World War and in 1920 the League of Nations declared it a mandated territory under British administration. The various Iraqi tribes soon rebelled against this arrangement, however, and Britain had to use often-coercive means to suppress rebellion. By stages over the next dozen years, Iraq attained its independence as a kingdom in 1932. The proclamation of a 'republic' in 1958 meant little, in actuality, as a series of strongmen ruled the country until 2003.⁵

The Ba'ath party took power in 1968 under President Ahmed Hasan al-Bakir. Socially and economically, the Sunni benefitted more than the Shi'a

⁵ *Ibid.*

under Ba'athist rule as it was largely a Sunni-based party.⁶ Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979. In 1980, Saddam voided a treaty with Iran and the Iran - Iraq War began. It ended eight years later with a cease-fire, but a pattern of violence involving the Iraqi state continued. In 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait, leading to Operation *Desert Shield* and Operation *Desert Storm*. Although ejected from Kuwait Saddam remained in power. Afterwards he brutally suppressed a Shi'a rebellion that occurred in erroneous anticipation that the coalition that had evicted Iraq from Kuwait would support them. While the Shi'a majority took a considerable blow, this event marked the beginning of a sustained interaction with Saddam's regime by the United States and others with the institution and enforcement of a 'no-fly zone' over southern and northern Iraq to protect the Shi'a and the Kurds.

The tension between the United States, its allies, and Iraq lasted over successive presidential administrations and for over a decade. Saddam practised a form of brinksmanship with the United States over a number of issues that heightened tensions, both between the two nations, and between Iraq and the West more broadly. This continued past the events of 9-11, but the experience of the attacks in 2001 in the United States changed the perceptions of large segments of the US public and key policymakers, on the matter.

Subsequently, the United States led Operation *Iraqi Freedom*, and removed Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party from power in the second quarter of 2003. At the time and in the intervening years, there has been wide debate about the reasons behind this action and its legitimacy. The members of the United States-led 'Coalition of the willing' have consistently maintained that they acted because of the belief that Iraq maintained a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. The broader justifications used in combination have been summarised as 'to strike a blow at terrorism by ousting a long-standing adversary, eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and

⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq in Transition: Security, Iraq Forces and US Security Aid Plans," (Washington DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011), 6.

implanting a moderate and pro-American state in the heart of the Arab world'.⁷ As improbable as some of these may now seem, for the purposes of this case study the reasons for the initial invasion are largely irrelevant. The case is concerned with a quite different Iraq than that of 2003. The reasons for invasion are germane insofar as they allowed the introduction of the *dramatis personae* of the subsequent insurgency conflict and to the degree that they perhaps contributed to the motivations of various insurgent groups or released pent-up tensions within Iraq.

By any reckoning, the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and removal of Saddam Hussein's regime was a showcase of modern military operational art and science. It also set the stage for what any reasonable description would label a debacle. The United States, and the world more broadly, were to re-learn that the old adage 'quantity had a quality all of its own' was just as appropriate in the era of information age warfare as it was when the Mongols conquered Baghdad in the 13th century.⁸

The CPA Regulation One issued on 16 May 2003 declared that the 'CPA will exercise temporary executive, legislative and judicial powers of government'.⁹ At a stroke, the United States had assumed sole responsibility for all and any problems in Iraqi society at a time when that society was in greater turmoil than arguably anytime since the Ba'ath Party took power in 1968. A week later, the CPA issued CPA Order 2 that dissolved all Iraqi security institutions.

As erroneous as CPA Order 2 appears in hindsight, it is even more curious considering that around the same time the United States Secretary of Defense, and the Commander United States Central Command were exchanging telephone calls about the requirement for more occupying troops as

⁷ Michael Gordon and General Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II, the inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, Paperback ed. (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 571.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

⁹ Cordesman, "Iraq in Transition: Security, Iraq Forces and US Security Aid Plans," 3.

lawlessness was becoming a serious problem.¹⁰ The local reaction to Order 2 in Iraq was incendiary.¹¹ In an instant, a state that had been effectively run by a totalitarian regime for decades was now unregulated. The Coalition Force that had removed the pervasiveness of state control under the Ba'ath Party was patently inadequate in size, capability and authority to replace it. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who had security and status under the old regime heard a message that they did not have a place in Iraq's new order – and the Sunni insurgency was born.¹² Further fuelling the problems that were to arise from de-Ba'athification, the associated purge of the top layer of management of the civil service removed the Iraq state's institutional memory of governance.¹³

United States strategists had made several errors in their thinking about the aftermath of a successful invasion. They overestimated the ability of Iraqis to govern themselves; and underestimated both the rapid spread of crime and how long before an Iraqi resentment of occupation would spark violence.¹⁴ The state model under the Ba'athist regime had been a unique combination of institutionalised state welfare based on oil revenues – a form of the modern rentier state that exists in other oil-rich Arab states – guaranteed by the security apparatus of a totalitarian regime. The CPA's actions guaranteed that the incorrect assumptions of US strategic planners would bear early and unpleasant fruit. Coalition planners also either failed to appreciate, or mis-appreciated, the centrality of honour and justice in Arab culture and how this manifested as a deep intolerance for outside intervention or occupation.¹⁵

As fighting by irregular elements in Iraqi society persisted through to early June 2003 some observers began to warn of an organised guerrilla war -

¹⁰ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II, the inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, 543-44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 556.

¹² Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 3.

¹³ Toby Dodge, "The Causes of US Failure in Iraq," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 49, no. 1 (2007): 88.

¹⁴ Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2003): 27.

¹⁵ Steven Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*, 1st ed. (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books Inc., 2008), 195.

a suggestion initially rejected by United States officials.¹⁶ Admitting the existence of an organised insurgency in Iraq would have carried the immense political costs of admitting serious flaws in pre-conflict planning.¹⁷ It would also have hindered the Bush Administration's plan to expand the multinational coalition attempting to stabilise Iraq and thus aid the United State's withdrawal.¹⁸ Yet as 2004 arrived, many Sunnis refused to compromise in their resistance because they believed that the coalition was weak and that the insurgency would succeed militarily.¹⁹

In March 2004 the ambush and killing of United States civilian contractors in Fallujah led to what became known as the 1st Battle of Fallujah. It began on 5 April, and after a series of heavy and intense conventional battles ended inconclusively when Marine forces transferred security to the Iraqi 'Fallujah Brigade' on 10 May. The intensity of the battle shocked many; it did not sit easily with the narrative that the resistance was a few remnants of the former regime and their supporters. The 2nd Battle of Fallujah in November 2004, while equally intense, was won conclusively by the Coalition.

Meanwhile, the Bush Administration had linked the end of the United States occupation of Iraq to the establishment of a new constitution and national elections – which it had expected to take two years. However, prominent Iraqis managed to convince the Administration to accelerate the process.²⁰ 15 October 2005 saw approval of a new draft constitution, developed over the previous 10 months, in a national referendum. Then national elections were held for a Council of Representatives (the new Parliament) on 15 December. The election result was a deadlock, with no party or grouping getting a clear majority. It was four months until Nouri al-Maliki, representing a Shi'a party, was installed as Prime Minister in April 2006. It is significant that many

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁷ Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹ Carter Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 17, no. 3 (2006): 367-68.

²⁰ Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Elections, Government and Constitution," (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 2006), 1.

moderate Sunnis, having lost their traditional Ba'ath party when it was banned, and with few new Sunni political parties to replace it, found they had no stake in the new government.²¹

The transfer of sovereignty back to the Iraqi government on 28 June 2004 compounded a perception of Coalition irresolution amongst the Sunni-based insurgency, resulting from the ceasefire in Fallujah a few months prior.²² The period between 2004 and 2006 may be reasonably characterised as one of dissonance between Coalition rhetoric and planning and the realities of what the troops were facing on the ground. The higher strategy was one of transition. Yet, at the coalface, Coalition forces and their Iraqi Security Force (ISF) partners were facing an intense insurgency and, increasingly, a sectarian civil war. The strategic and operational guidance given to the force did not adequately account for the reality on the ground.

The common critique of the Coalition during this time was that its leadership was detached from the problem by living on large secure bases; its tactics were large counterproductive sweeps; and that the problems identified at the front line were being ignored or denied.²³ Like many generalisations this contains elements of truth, but the reality is far more nuanced and complex. Some things did go well – a good example is the safe conduct of the series of nationwide elections during 2004 and 2005. However, the provision of security for these created a large impost on what were already inadequate troop numbers. So did other matters, such as the running sore represented by the battles for Fallujah for much of 2004, or the requirement to protect key infrastructure from increasingly sophisticated insurgent attacks. Contemporary accounts confirm that the troops on the ground clearly recognised that they were confronting an insurgency conflict.²⁴ They just had neither the coherent

²¹ Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," 374.

²² *Ibid.*, 382.

²³ Rovner, "The Heroes of COIN," 225.

²⁴ An indicative account is: Peter R. Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq*, ed. Donald Kagan and Frederick Kagan, The Yale Library of Military History (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

strategic and operational guidance, nor the right resources, to deal with it and the emerging Iraqi-upon-Iraqi sectarian conflict.

Sectarian civil war, in parallel to the insurgency, had broken out in 2003 as Shi'a militias sought to redress three decades of disadvantage and oppression under the Sunni-led Ba'athist regime. As one infantry officer observed: 'When the old power structure broke down and when we disbanded the Army and de-Ba'athified the political leadership and those things we sort of inadvertently set up a sect on sect (power struggle)'.²⁵ While degrees of 'ethnic cleansing' had begun almost immediately after the effective removal of state control in April 2003, it reached an apogee in 2006. The February 2006 bombing of the Shi'a Askariya Shrine in Samarra triggered a wave of escalating and reciprocal sectarian violence.²⁶ In July 2006, up to 150 civilian bodies, victims of sectarian violence, were being recovered from the streets of Baghdad each morning.²⁷ The Iraqi government estimated that 13 896 Iraqi civilians, police officers and soldiers died during 2006.²⁸

The situation escalated throughout the remainder of 2006. Shi'a militias, with either the active or passive support of elements of Iraqi security forces, attacked Sunnis and became the dominant force in previously Sunni or mixed neighbourhoods.²⁹ The Maliki government did not allow Coalition forces to take action against the militias without specific approval, which was rarely forthcoming.

A significant part of the problem in this regard was that the election results of December 2005 had helped entrench sectarianism. Pandering to sectarian issues was the only way in which Maliki had been able to form a government in April 2006. In doing so his position was weakened and his ability to make suitable appointments to his ministry was compromised. One example

²⁵ Jenna Fike, "Interview with Maj Mark Battjes," in *Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 10.

²⁶ Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*, 173.

²⁷ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 17.

²⁸ Dodge, "The Causes of US Failure in Iraq," 90.

²⁹ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 22.

was the appointment of a former commander in the Shi'a militia known as the Badr Brigade to the highly influential Ministry of the Interior (MOI).³⁰ As the sectarian war continued it, was not uncommon for MOI elements to be complicit in extra-judicial violence.

During the last quarter of 2006 perceptions in Washington began to change - President Bush became persuaded that things were not going well.³¹ In September that year, the White House initiated a comprehensive review of the situation in Iraq. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, similarly launched a military review in October. In December 2006, a congressionally mandated, independent and bipartisan 'Iraq Study Group' co-chaired by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, finished a yearlong review. It made seventy-nine recommendations, the prime military proposal being that the United States should wind down combat operations and move to training, advisory and counter-terrorism roles. President Bush rejected this advice and instead announced a 'surge' in January 2007. The principal elements of this surge were to be an increase of approximately 30 000 troops (five combat brigades), the appointment of then-Lieutenant General David Petraeus to replace General George Casey as Commander of MNF-I, and a new approach for the use of United States forces.³²

Also in 2006, an important development took place amongst the Sunni tribes of Anbar Province that had a significant impact upon the security situation in Iraq. Led by Sheik Abu Sittar, more than 50 Sunni sheiks made a declaration of the 'Anbar Awakening' on 9 September 2006. By the late spring of 2007, well before any reasonable casual attribution could be made to surge forces, the Awakening saw parts of Anbar province, such as the city of Ramadi which had been 'horrifically violent', become largely peaceful.³³ The Awakening represented a formal declaration by many Sunni that they would align with the Coalition. Several factors explain this volte-face.

³⁰ Dodge, "The Causes of US Failure in Iraq," 97.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

³² Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," 7.

³³ Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 50, no. 2 (2008): 81.

A schism had emerged between the Sunni tribes and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Al Qaeda had mounted a violent and coercive campaign to ensure the Sunni tribes compliance and participation with their objectives. They had also gradually begun taking control of the lucrative money-making activities (such as smuggling), traditionally run by the tribes.³⁴ The Coalition forces offered a viable alternative to al-Qaeda's grim rule in Anbar.³⁵

Another contributing reason was the success of elections during 2005; this development had shaken Sunni resolve, while the failure of the AQI strategy to disrupt the elections had discredited its military capability.³⁶ Moreover - ironically given the ongoing Sunni insurgency against the Americans - fewer American troops after a post-election transition would leave them exposed to the Shi'a-dominated central government and the new Iraqi Army. An analysis at the time observed that: '[t]his future appears at least as unpleasant to them as al Qaeda's brand of Salafist intolerance'.³⁷

A final reason for the Awakening was the military defeat of the Sunnis by the Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM) and other militias.³⁸ The Shi'a had first cleared their neighbourhoods, then the locales around the Shi'a sacred shrines (the majority of Shi'ism's sacred places are in Iraq) and finally the pilgrimage routes to those shrines. The Sunni were feeling exposed and vulnerable and the Coalition was the 'lesser evil' confronting them.

Some Coalition units, such as the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armoured Division working in Ramadi, saw the change in Sunni attitudes associated with the Awakening; they were directed by their command chains to make the most

³⁴ John A. McCary, "The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2009): 43.

³⁵ Colonel Dale C. Kuehl, "Unfinished Business: The Sons of Iraq and Political Reconciliation," (Carlisle PA: United States Army War College, 2010), 9.

³⁶ Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," 384.

³⁷ Jon R. Lindsay, "Does the 'Surge' Explain Iraq's Improved Security Position?," ed. Center for International Studies Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2008), 2.

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Douglas Ollivant, "Interview, 29 June," (2012).

of the opportunity.³⁹ Engaging the Sunni tribes to assist with their own security echoed past precedent – the British had done it in the 1920s, as had Saddam during the 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁰ The tactical alliance that became the ‘Anbar Model’ saw the marriage of coalition firepower with Sunni tribal local muscle and resulted in the loss of the province as an AQI stronghold.⁴¹ The Awakening in Anbar subsequently inspired local Sunnis in Baghdad to support the Coalition forces – a transition in attitude that was be essential to securing the capital.⁴²

A flow on effect from the Awakening was the creation of a Coalition-resourced and -controlled Sunni militia to work on the government side. In June 2007 MNF-I began the ‘Sons of Iraq’ (SOI) program. In many ways (in organisation and challenge), the SOI echoed the Firqat of the Dhofar war three decades prior. A detailed analysis by American scholars has examined the correlation between the creation of individual SOI units in a given location and subsequent ‘Significant acts of violence’ (SIGACTs) reported by MNF-I in the location. The analysis led to the conclusion that ‘SOIs played a crucial role in reducing Iraq’s violence in 2007’.⁴³ A United States infantry officer noted: ‘The Sons of Iraq were extremely valuable and they were the key ingredient that led to the ultimate decrease in violence within our area of operations’.⁴⁴

With the Awakening already established in Anbar, General Petraeus and his new team decided that securing Baghdad was the main effort of the ‘surge’. Even with an extra five brigades of combat troops, there were still patently not enough forces to secure a country as large and populous as Iraq. Difficult decisions were still to present and priorities had to be set. President Bush had

³⁹ A good account of how some US forces recognised the changes underway in the Sunni Tribes in 2006 and took steps to engage with them is provided in: Major Niel Smith and Colonel Sean MacFarland, “Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point,” *Military Review* March-April(2008).

⁴⁰ David Hastings Dunn and Andrew Futter, “Short-Term Tactical Gains and Long-Term Strategic Problems: The Paradox of the US Troop Surge in Iraq,” *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): 199.

⁴¹ Andrew Phillips, “How Al Qaeda Lost Iraq,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 1 (2009): 65.

⁴² Kuehl, “Unfinished Business: The Sons of Iraq and Political Reconciliation,” 3.

⁴³ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, “Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007,” 28.

⁴⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Morgado, “Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008,” (University of New South Wales, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2012), Lieutenant Colonel Morgado was a Major serving as a planning officer in the G5 Branch (Plans) of the HQ 1st Cavalry Division (Multi-National Division-Baghdad) during the surge.

agreed to provide the 'surge' forces over an eighteen-month window; failure to achieve suitable improvement with the extra resources would be highly problematic. Baghdad was symbolic for many reasons. It was the seat of government, the centre of the sectarian violence (and hence a large number of the civilian casualties) and it appeared to be the enemy's main objective.

Figure 7.1 (below) is a graphic representation of AQI's scheme to make Baghdad ungovernable. It planned to do so by securing what were to be effectively 'liberated zones' in the 'belt' around Baghdad which would support operations within Baghdad. As well as providing support bases for operations within the city, AQI sought to secure the supply 'rat lines' that brought fighters, money and material for the insurgency from various cross-border sanctuaries.

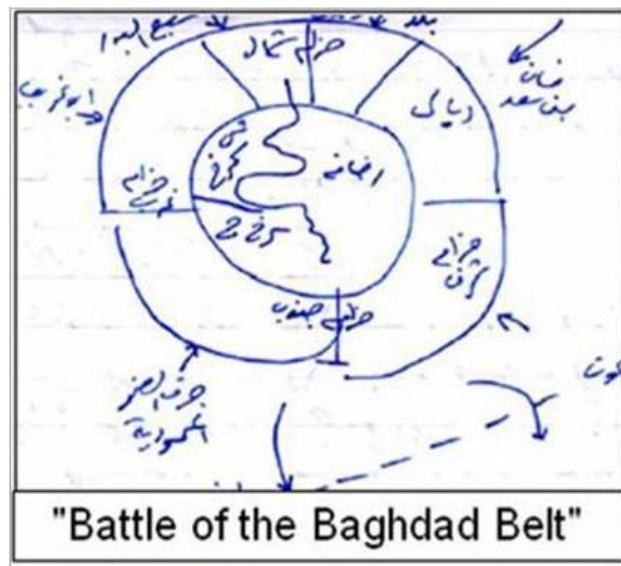


Figure 7.1. AQI schematic outline plan – 'Battle of the Baghdad Belt'⁴⁵

US awareness of the AQI plan led to the decision that the additional surge forces would be split between Baghdad and these so-called 'belts' around it, in Anbar and Diyala Provinces. 26 US battalions would undertake external operation in the belts, with 28 more inside Baghdad.⁴⁶ In addition to force allocation decisions, a new US Baghdad security plan emerged. It looked a lot

⁴⁵ Graphic sourced from declassified material sourced by the writer at MNF-I Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence, Taji, Iraq, 2007-2008.

⁴⁶ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 104-05.

like a scheme that a pair of relatively junior US Army officers had developed after their experience in Iraq in 2004, and written about in a military professional journal in 2006.⁴⁷ The central premise of the scheme was '[t]he combined arms maneuver battalion, partnering with indigenous security forces and living among the population it secure[s], should be the basic tactical unit of counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare'.⁴⁸ General Petraeus had been sufficiently impressed with the article that, when he found out that he would be the Commander in Iraq, he contacted one of the authors of the article, Lieutenant Colonel D.A. Ollivant, and encouraged him to keep feeding him ideas.⁴⁹ By this stage, Ollivant was already in Baghdad as the Chief of Plans for the Multi-National Division Baghdad (MND-B). Ollivant would not only get to see his ideas implemented in his own divisional area, but versions of it set in motion throughout other MND areas in Baghdad and the belts. By April 2007 an aggressive operation was underway to secure the population in Baghdad. United States forces were taking a very active role in supporting the ISF, living, working and fighting alongside them in Baghdad.⁵⁰

Speaking in London in June 2013, Petraeus stated that he saw the surge was as much as a 'surge of ideas' as one of troop numbers.⁵¹ He described six key elements in his strategy: securing the population through living amongst them; 'aggressive' support towards reconciliation; an increase in the tempo of special operations raids to capture or kill irreconcilable insurgent leaders; reform and building of the ISF; an overhaul of detainee operations and, finally, coordinated civil-military initiatives to restore basic services, infrastructure and local institutions.⁵² While the sixth element is obviously harmonious with the dogma of hearts and minds, the other five can perhaps best be understood as directly relating to the pragmatic matter of control, and of control of violence

⁴⁷ The journal article was: Lieutenant Colonel Douglas A. Ollivant and First Lieutenant Eric D/ Chewning, "Producing Victory: Rethinking Conventional Forces in COIN Operations," *Military Review* July-August(2006).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁹ Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 125.

⁵⁰ Alderson, "The Validity of British Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine after the War in Iraq, 2003-2009," 158.

⁵¹ David H. Petraeus, "Reflections on the Counter-Insurgency Era," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 4 (2013): 83.

⁵² *Ibid.*

specifically. There is obvious alignment with the tenets of the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

In order to have sufficient numbers of ISF troops to work alongside US forces, the Americans initiated a second surge. Moreover, this surge was perhaps more decisive than the five additional US brigades. By September 2007 there were 140 Iraqi Army, National Police and Special Operations Forces Battalions engaged in combat operations, with 95 of those estimated as being able to take lead combat roles, albeit with Coalition support.⁵³ A quick contrast with the 54 United States battalions committed to Baghdad and the belts during the surge provides a telling perspective.

The Iraqi surge was not without its difficulties. While the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) had good success in assisting with the training and development of additional ISF units, for example, their quality remained variable. The response to this was developing mentoring teams of American service personnel who would embed themselves within ISF units at all levels, and fight with them while coaching them. These were Military Training Teams (MiTTs), National Police Training Teams (NPTTs) or Border Police Training Teams (BPTTs) dependent upon the role and designation of the mentored unit. Iraqi generals were often ‘passive participants’ in coordination of planning and activity with MNF-I – a common perception was ‘they told us what we wanted to hear’.⁵⁴ This perhaps reflected cultural differences between the partners and Iraqi experience of what might happen if you courted displeasure during Saddam’s rule. Yet the overall assessment is that the ISF performed credibly during the ‘surge’, given the rapid growth it experienced and the additional responsibilities that changed circumstances forced upon it.

The work of MNSTC-I, combined with the implementation of the SOI program, addressed the perennial ‘numbers game’ problems that always confront counterinsurgents. Their efforts meant that the additional five combat

⁵³ David H. Petraeus, "Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 10-11 September 2007," ed. Department of Defense (Washington DC: US Department of Defense, 2007), 5.

⁵⁴ Colonel Alexander Alderson, "Interview, 29 June" (2012).

brigades of the United States' surge worked with an Iraqi surge that was greatly superior numerically. This effort was crucial to the successful military outcome of operations during the 'surge'.⁵⁵ Consequently, in September 2007 General Petraeus reported to Congress that 'the military objectives of the "surge" are, in large measure, being met'.⁵⁶ Subsequent analysis has noted 'By the end of 2007, U.S. military fatalities had declined from their wartime monthly peak of 126 in May of that year to just 23 by December'.⁵⁷

US troop numbers associated with the 'surge' began at 132 000 in January 2007. They peaked at 170 000 in November 2007 and fell to 147 000 as the last surge brigades began leaving in July 2008. The statistics regarding civilian casualties had peaked in the last quarter of 2006, but security incidents were to peak in May 2007 at over 7 000 in that month.⁵⁸ Usually, the cause of the latter is attributed to the impact of new surge troops' disposition and tactics of 'hitting the streets' and interacting with previously unengaged malign actors. Security incidents by November 2007 were just over 3000 – under half the number of the peak of six months prior. One year later and at the effective end of the 'surge', they were just over a 1 000 per month.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Colonel (retd) Peter R. Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," (University of New South Wales, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2012), 7.

⁵⁶ Petraeus, "Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 10-11 September 2007," 1.

⁵⁷ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," 7.

⁵⁸ Cordesman, "Iraq in Transition: Security, Iraq Forces and US Security Aid Plans," 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

The insurgencies

Unlike the previous two case studies, the enemy in the Iraq war was a 'myriad of groups'.⁶⁰ Their structure was also invariably different to the rigid Maoist models of SWAPO and the PFLOAG, involving 'flatter, more linear networks rather than the pyramidal hierarchies and command and control systems (no matter how primitive) that have governed traditional insurgent organizations'.⁶¹ Moreover, contrary to the sense presented in many narratives, most insurgents in Iraq were Iraqi nationals rather than foreign fighters. Furthermore, the majority had little to do with AQI; they were in the main 'focussed on Iraqi problems of security, distribution of power and money, and sectarianism'.⁶² The various Sunni insurgencies tried to topple the Iraqi government with violence from the outside, while Shi'a groups, typified by organisations such as JAM and its political arm, the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), sought to subvert the government from within. Prime Minister Maliki's reliance on a loose alliance of Shi'a political groups for support was particularly unhelpful in this regard.⁶³

The Sunni elements of the insurgency morphed over the years leading up to the US surge. After the invasion in 2003, a 'marriage of convenience' had developed between local Sunnis and the foreign and local jihadists who made up the group that emerged under the label AQI.⁶⁴ Initially they comprised mainly former regime loyalists, but gradually and increasingly were driven by a Salafist element under the broad banner of AQI.⁶⁵ By late 2004 and early 2005, two broad groups were in the Sunni Triangle: Sunni insurgents who sought

⁶⁰ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June," Colonel Alderson was the Chief of Campaign Plans in Headquarters MNF-I during the surge.

⁶¹ Bruce Hoffman, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 2 (2006): 115.

⁶² Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq, a First Look at the Sinjar Records," (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy, 2007), 6.

⁶³ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 5. Mansoor was the Commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armoured Division in Baghdad, 2003-2004. During the Surge he was the Executive Officer to the Commander MNF-I, General David Petraeus.

⁶⁴ Steven Simon, "The Price of the Surge, How U.S. Strategy Is Hastening Iraq's Demise," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2008): 61.

⁶⁵ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

political power, and jihadists who wanted to create a religious and/or anarchic environment conducive to terrorist activities.⁶⁶ From 2006 the Sunni AQI-influenced elements were the primary focus for MNF-I targeting operations, with Shi'a groups primarily addressed through the political process.⁶⁷ The Chief of Campaign Plans at MNF-I described it as a 'single minded determination to destroy AQI'.⁶⁸ This also perhaps reflected United States and Maliki government interests and pre-occupations.

As well as JAM – also commonly known by the English language transliteration of its Arabic name as the Mahdi Army - Shi'a insurgent groups included the Badr Corps and the so-called 'Special Groups,' which were supported by Iran. The Badr Corps was associated with one of the large Shi'a Arab political parties, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).⁶⁹ SCIRI had actively resisted Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Regime, even fighting on the Iranian side during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. SCIRI had returned from exile in Iran soon after Saddam's removal and quickly became an influential player in domestic politics. During most of the 'surge' JAM abided by a cease-fire. While Moqtada al Sadr could mobilise a large number of Shi'a military age males, they had proven to be marginally better than a rabble in direct combat with Coalition troops.⁷⁰ A heavy defeat after battles between JAM and coalition elements in Najaf and Karbala in mid- 2004 had led to a ceasefire there. Fighting continued between JAM and the Coalition in Sadr City (a Shi'a stronghold in eastern Baghdad) until a peace agreement with Moqtada al-Sadr was signed on 9 October 2004. This agreement saw JAM members paid to turn in weapons and let ISF and Coalition forces patrol Sadr City.⁷¹

This agreement held in large part until Operation *COTK* commenced in Basra in 2008. The agreement demonstrably did not have great impact upon

⁶⁶ Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," 371.

⁶⁷ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Thomas S. Mowle, "Iraq's Militia Problem," *Survival* 48, no. 3 (2006): 46.

⁷⁰ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

⁷¹ Mowle, "Iraq's Militia Problem," 49.

JAM's vigorous participation in sectarian violence over the next two years, nor would it totally remove 'kinetic' exchanges between the Coalition and JAM during that time. It did, however, allow the Coalition forces to adopt a 'risk management' approach to JAM and focus on the US's favoured enemy, AQI. Regardless of which group of insurgents is being considered, however, the one thing that did unite Shi'a and Sunni fighters alike was the desire to resist occupation. Even at the height of their internecine fighting, they would rarely miss an opportunity to have a chance at Coalition forces.

Second-party counterinsurgency framework analysis

Counter violence during the 'surge' took two major forms - an offensive campaign by special forces to kill or capture AQI 'terrorists' and insurgent leaders, and a defensive effort to deny insurgents the ability to kill large numbers of people.⁷² The former is somewhat self-evident. The latter was a part of the Baghdad Security Plan by hardening key facilities, creating 'gated communities' and instituting a system of route controls and surveillance. The defensive portion of the US plan was not necessarily about just denying insurgents. It had a counter violence security effect upon the population. As discussed, much of the targeted killing of civilians was about sectarian violence rather than a by-product of insurgents targeting the state or second-party counterinsurgents. However, MNF-I also recognised that it had to do something, because the image of lack of control was telling in Iraq and abroad.

The 'surge' troops also believed that their tactical efforts to clear routes of IEDs, reconnaissance operations and patrols conducted as movements to contact centred on terrain denial and disruption, could all be classified as counter violence. Despite the pro-activity built into the Baghdad Security Plan, there remained a sense that: 'Our counter-violence actions were largely reactive or passive'⁷³. This view is supported by other observations by tactical commanders commenting on patrol activity and the insurgents that: 'They

⁷² Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 4.

⁷³ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008."

weren't as targeted as I would have liked. They were a little bit more sweeping'.⁷⁴ Of all the measures undertaken by the Coalition to conduct counter violence, the implementation of the SOI program was arguably the most important and demonstrably effective.⁷⁵ The success in counter-violence was hand-in glove with some success in counter organisation operations.

Colonel Peter Mansoor was a brigade commander in Iraq before the 'surge'. He wrote that:

Early in the war counter-organization was ineffective because U.S. and coalition forces did not fully understand the enemy or the mosaic of groups that made up the insurgency...This situation changed with the implementation of the surge in 2007. As the surge progressed in 2007 and 2008, our knowledge of enemy forces grew exponentially and ultimately that knowledge and the intelligence derived from it allowed Multi-National Force) Iraq to defeat or co-opt large numbers of insurgent forces.⁷⁶

Counter organisation would develop to the point that another officer involved in the 'surge' would feel compelled to write: 'As a counter-insurgent at the tactical level, I would classify counter-organization as the decisive effort'.⁷⁷

Since the shifting, collaborative network of insurgencies in Iraq did not have a central leadership model or organisational structure like SWAPO or the PFLOAG in the previous case studies, traditional approaches to counter organisation were problematic. However, they did have a shared doctrine and narrative that assisted with cohesion and focus.⁷⁸ The former aided counter organisation; the latter, counter subversion. The label MNF-I put on counter-organisation during the 'surge' was 'attacking the network'.⁷⁹ Implicit in this descriptor is the recognition that the enemy was not a monolithic or unitary insurgent force as had been seen in other historical counterinsurgency efforts. A suitable example in this regard is that insurgents shared information about

⁷⁴ Fike, "Interview with Maj Mark Battjes," 7.

⁷⁵ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," 33.

⁷⁶ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 3.

⁷⁷ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008."

⁷⁸ Martin J. Muckian, "Structural Vulnerabilities of Networked Insurgencies: Adapting to the New Adversary," *Parameters* 36, no. 4 (2006): 16.

⁷⁹ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 3.

IED operations, such as techniques, tactics, enemy vulnerabilities and target priorities.⁸⁰ This act of sharing was targetable. Intelligence was developed from technical and forensic information about the IEDs. The act of sharing led to linkages traced through technical means such as signals intelligence (SIGINT) and more traditional means such as human intelligence (HUMINT). When these led to substantive evidence or indicators, then time sensitive targeting (TST) could occur. Either Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Task Forces or regular troops conducted TST, depending upon circumstance. Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) conducted on a targeted objective after it was secure would then inform the next iteration. That is, intelligence gained from one operation – often time critical - rapidly became a departure point from which to attack more of the network.⁸¹ SSE was not only conducted by special forces; regular tactical units in the MND's became quite adept at it.⁸²

The counterinsurgency 'machine' that MNF-I evolved by 2008 was unlike any that had been seen before in terms of technical intelligence ability and TST. One of the keys to this was a decision taken early in the 'surge' to push technical assets, often held and controlled at a high level, to brigade level and lower.⁸³ At the coal face where the 'surge' battalions held ground, these counter organisation actions took the form of targeting enemy local command and control mechanisms and resources.⁸⁴ At the height of the 'surge', the conventional units of MND-B were going 'toe to toe' with the JSOC Task Forces in locating and killing key insurgent leaders.⁸⁵

Offsetting this is a familiar refrain – that of the fundamental limitations of foreign interventionists in an alien society and culture. Ollivant observed, 'I am not sure we ever understood the organisation(s) well enough to attack them

⁸⁰ Muckian, "Structural Vulnerabilities of Networked Insurgencies: Adapting to the New Adversary," 16.

⁸¹ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 3.

⁸² Ollivant, "Interview, 29 June."

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Colonel Thomas Boccardi, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," (University of New South Wales, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2012), 7.

⁸⁵ Ollivant, "Interview, 29 June."

well'.⁸⁶ This is a subtle but important point. Overall MNF-I counter organisation activity, whilst undoubtedly important, robust and pursued with vigour, lacked a holistic view because the force never fully saw or understood the entire array of insurgent threat networks. The approach evolved beyond 'whack a mole' insofar as once a 'hold' or 'bite' and been gained on a network, it would be subject to ruthless pursuit attack. However, one level up it remained essentially reactive rather than predictive – hence the imperative for both rapid exploitation and TST approvals.

Surge counter organisation operations also attempted to embrace other non-lethal forms. The Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) was a program that the CPA established with captured Iraqi money; it allowed military commanders to fund small civil affairs projects with a minimal amount of administrative overhead.⁸⁷ CERP funding was to outlast the CPA by many years, although the source of funding evolved over time. At its simplest, CERP provided a means for the United States military in Iraq to address low level development and the provision of public goods that FM3-24 and the 'hearts and minds' paradigm suggested lay at the heart of most insurgencies. A lot of money was spent, yet given that insurgent motivations invariably embraced nationalist, religious, ethnic and cultural spheres the utility of CERP as a counter organisational tool is questionable.⁸⁸

The implementation of SOI, like the Firqat and SWATF in the previous case studies, was also a counter organisation activity. Beyond the intrinsic security effect achieved by flooding Sunni neighbourhoods with militia working for the government's side, the SOI increasingly denied the various Sunni insurgent groups' access to suitable fighting age males.

Moving from counter organisation operations to the realm of counter-subversive activities, a consensus view emerges. The primary source material

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*, 157.

⁸⁸ The author was unable to identify suitable studies that established a causal logical path between the employment of CERP and addressing insurgent nationalist, religious, ethnic or cultural motivations.

amongst MNF-I participants indicates that, while counter subversion was regarded as important, MNF-I was relatively ineffective at it. Typical of the various explanations offered, these two by officers in key positions during the 'surge' campaign reflect frustration with the system of governance that developed between the Government of Iraq and MNF-I as second-party counterinsurgents:

Our efforts against the operatives of these organizations [Shi'a militia groups] – particularly National Police Officers implicated in sectarian cleansing – were mostly ineffective because they heavily relied on the Iraq court system to try cases. Judges were often corrupt or intimidated; in either case, few convictions resulted.⁸⁹

In addition: 'The complicated cultural and political map made counter-subversion very difficult to put into practice. I am pretty certain we never really got a proper handle on the rapidly evolving political groups'.⁹⁰

The difficulties inherent in counter-subversion were obvious at the lower tactical level amongst the 'surge' combat battalions.⁹¹ Also, at this level of the campaign, MNF-I organisational challenges may have been as telling as a lack of cultural understanding or compatibility:

Though this is an important part of a counter-insurgency; we did not do this well. I believe our failings were largely due to our lack of speed in getting messages out and countering enemy information. My assessment is that our bureaucracy and approval process were the main culprits that inhibited our ability to do this better. We were risk adverse in this department.⁹²

It was not all poor with respect to US surge counter subversion. In one bright note, collaborating with ISF elements could serve as a counter-subversion tool through the engagement by ISF commanders with local sheiks and other leaders. Such engagement led to talks, often 'very interpersonal and dealt within the context of Iraqi culture'.⁹³ In addition, just like other government

⁸⁹ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 5.

⁹⁰ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

⁹¹ Boccardi, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 6.

⁹² Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 6.

⁹³ Name withheld at request MiTT Team Leader, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," (University of New South Wales, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2012), 5.

militia in other campaigns, the SOI served to insure their communities against some subversive efforts.

Similar to the effect of counter subversion, US success during the 'surge' at the achievement of pre-emption was mixed. At one level MNF-I practised physical pre-emption. When intelligence provided evidence of enemy forces massing for large operations, such as prior to the Ramadan period, strike operations would be mounted to pre-empt and disrupt enemy attacks.⁹⁴ Yet at the same time, this was somewhat compromised: 'We lost the ability for pre-emption because we had handed political authority to the Iraqis way too early. We subordinated our ability to manoeuvre to host nation sovereignty'.⁹⁵ The surge in ISF numbers also had a pre-emptive effect. A MiTT team leader describes an indicative example here:

The Iraqi Army (IA) knew who the insurgent leaders were and the IA actively engaged the local populace to locate the insurgents....As the populace and local leaders engaged the IA on a continual basis, some insurgent leaders decided not to oppose the IA but cooperated with them in return for not being taken into custody.⁹⁶

Actions such as these invariably contributed to the intelligence function of the counterinsurgency.

An impressive and technically advanced US surveillance network that included the use of drones and extensive monitoring of the electromagnetic spectrum, supported by sophisticated data analysis techniques, enabled intelligence during the 'surge'. As the 'surge' developed, the SOI increased HUMINT. As suggested by Biddle: 'Many SOI members were in fact former insurgents. These former insurgents did indeed provide important intelligence and other support to U.S. forces'.⁹⁷ Despite this, the Chief of Campaign Plans at MNF-I, Colonel Alex Alderson, noted: 'We had highly impressive technical intelligence abilities. However, I never felt that that the intelligence effort

⁹⁴ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 6.

⁹⁵ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

⁹⁶ MiTT Team Leader, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 3.

⁹⁷ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," 33.

established what the various insurgents were doing or why. There were a lot of assumptions being made'.⁹⁸ There is considerable scope to be more certain of the role of adaptation in enabling the 'surge'.

The ability of MNF-I to learn and adapt was crucial to the successful shift to counterinsurgency operations in Iraq during the 'surge' period – General Petraeus called it the 'engine of change'.⁹⁹ Commanders encouraged innovation and it occurred throughout the force to the lowest levels.¹⁰⁰ 'Lessons learned' briefings were 'a decisive element in pre-deployment train-up', while 'best practices shared throughout units enabled quick tactical technique and procedure (TTP) learning' across MNF-I.¹⁰¹

Not only regular formed units took part. The irregular units formed for specific tasks (their actual existence itself evidence of adaptive behaviour by the force) also benefitted from the culture of learning and adaptation within MNF-I during the 'surge'. A MiTT team leader lists a wide array of inputs that informed learning and adaptation. These included 'feedback from previous teams, lessons learned, AARs [After Action Reviews] and the COIN Academy training'.¹⁰² An important facet of this adaptive practice of information sharing was that it was not only a formally directed activity. An extensive web of informal communications between junior officers and non-commissioned officers developed that utilised electronic mail and the internet for sharing emerging ideas and information.¹⁰³

US counterinsurgent adaptations during the 'surge' were in fact the result of a series of cumulative 'distinctions of a degree or two' that eventually became a larger distinction.¹⁰⁴ An example of this provided by Ollivant illustrates the point of using the TST process employed in counter organisation efforts. The

⁹⁸ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June."

⁹⁹ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 8.

¹⁰⁰ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 9.

¹⁰¹ Boccardi, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 9.

¹⁰² MiTT Team Leader, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 8.

¹⁰³ Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*, 162.

¹⁰⁴ Ollivant, "Interview, 29 June."

targeting cycle for the 1st Bn, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (1/5 Cav) during the second battle of Najaf in August 2004 typically took three days. By mid-2007 the first of the 'surge brigades', the 2nd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division, operating in MND-B, was routinely executing two complete targeting cycles a night, on most nights.¹⁰⁵

While the wider Iraq war holistically is not an example of second-party counterinsurgency, the 'surge' that formed the case study investigated in this chapter certainly was. Significantly, the examination of the 'surge' has shown that while rhetorically conducted under a 'hearts and minds' mantra, the observable measures undertaken by the second-party counterinsurgents have considerable alignment with the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework. Of further considerable interest is that, despite the profound differences in the independent variables between the Iraq case study and the previous two, the second-party counterinsurgency framework appears to have, again, considerable explanatory value in accounting for the conduct of successful counterinsurgency operations. This will be examined further in the comparative analysis of the next chapter.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Chapter eight. Comparative analysis

This chapter analyses the efficacy of second-party counterinsurgency framework through the prism of the case studies presented in the previous three chapters. Whereas the case study chapters took an ontological approach, this chapter is less descriptive. It uses comparative analysis, which aims to deduct inferences or reasonable conclusions about the validity, applicability and scope of the assumptions, method, elements and enabling concepts of the second-party counterinsurgency framework in light of the facts apparent in the case studies. Crucially, the chapter will establish the impact of the independent variables introduced by the differing circumstances of each case study upon the dependent variable of the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The purpose is to establish whether the second-party counterinsurgency framework, without excessive qualification, does in fact offer a viable alternative to the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as a stratagem for second-party counterinsurgents.

Notwithstanding the ambition of this analysis, a few constraints exist. Clearly, the second-party counterinsurgency framework did not inform the planning and conduct of any of the case study counter-insurgency campaigns. This means caution is essential in either the correlation of case study facts with the framework, or associating causality between the perceived use of 'framework like' approaches and counterinsurgency outcomes. This is a problem familiar to historians – the assignation of meaning to events post facto, and in light of non-contemporaneous information. Similarly, the issue of extraneous variables inferring competing explanations is another possible limitation. A ready example of this is the tension arising in the Iraq case study as to whether the 'surge', the Sunni awakening or some other combination of variables were causal in reducing the violence in that war during 2007.¹

¹ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, "Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007," 10-11; Douglas A. Ollivant, "Countering the New Orthodoxy: Reinterpreting Counterinsurgency in Iraq," in *National Security Studies Program Policy Paper* (Washington DC: New America Foundation, 2011), 1.

Addressing the concern about correlations between the proposed framework and the interpretation of historical case studies requires conservatism with respect to any claims made. Assisting with this conservatism are the definitions and descriptions of the framework's elements, previously provided in Chapter four. The clear definition of these elements facilitates their possible correlation with observable effects identified in the campaign case studies. The issue of extraneous variables and competing explanations is potentially more difficult – addressing some of these may be worthy of major research projects in their own right, and as such are necessarily outside the scope of this study. Noting such cases and the potential effect (if any) upon the validity of any conclusions drawn about the second-party counterinsurgency framework addresses the issue.

In outline, this chapter adopts a linear approach to the comparative analysis of the second-party counterinsurgency framework and the case studies. It begins by testing the validity of the assumptions introduced in Chapter four about the conditions anticipated as necessary for the successful use of the framework. Following this is examination of whether effects akin to those of the second-party counterinsurgency framework's proposed method are identifiable in the case studies. Analysis of the role of the framework's four principles and enabling actions is next. A key question addressed in this regard is the degree to which the framework elements were present at the start of each campaign, or whether they emerged as the counterinsurgents learnt and adapted. Not only does this inform the answer about the use of the 'adaptation' element of the framework, it provides us with a pragmatic indication of the perceived usefulness and practicality of the framework's elements by the case studies' counterinsurgents. The penultimate section of the chapter analyses the degree to which the use of elements of the second-party counterinsurgency framework explains success in the counterinsurgency case studies. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the overall validity of second-party counterinsurgency framework based on the case studies and analysis.

Validity of the framework assumptions

The outline of the second-party counterinsurgency framework presented four assumptions about the circumstances necessary for the framework to function as anticipated. If the assumptions are cogent to the use or application of the framework, then the conditions they presage should necessarily be evident in the case studies. The first assumption was that the primary aim of undertaking counterinsurgency is to defeat an insurgency. Chapter two described how thinking about counterinsurgency and common understanding of the term have evolved from the simplicity inherent in its definition to become a polyglot term loaded with vastly different meanings. Chapter three highlighted the contribution that this had made to the confusion at the core of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm. The assumption highlights the requirement to commit to the Clausewitzian 'true nature' of *counterinsurgency warfare* and avoid the confusion and conflation with other issues that lie within the 'hearts and minds' paradigm.

An examination of the case studies readily supports the idea that the primary aim of British involvement in the Dhofar campaign was the defeat of the insurgency. The pattern of gradual escalation of involvement in the campaign and the relatively rapid disengagement and return to near pre-conflict levels of the British / Omani strategic relationship after the defeat of the insurgency supports this claim, as does the limited, military focus of British involvement. It was Qaboos, not the British, who drove the (limited) 'nation building' that occurred during the campaign, paid for by Oman's emerging oil revenue streams. The case for the South West Africa and Iraq surge cases is less immediately clear-cut.

Potentially confusing the South West Africa case is South Africa's role as a quasi-colonial actor in the territory; conflation with South Africa's domestic security agenda to maintain white minority rule; and South Africa's wider 'military adventures' within the other so-called 'Frontline States'. Disavowing the first of these is Prime Minister Vorster's 1972 acknowledgement that the

people of the Territory would ultimately determine their own fate.² Credible evidence also exists that the situation in South West Africa with respect to white minority rule was regarded differently by the South African state to that in the homeland. The 'non-banning' of SWAPO as a political organisation and the constitutional conference in Windhoek in 1975 are two ready examples of how the South African approach differed. As to the broader military incursions into the Frontline states, the case study clearly established the effects of disruption and denial that the SADF incursions into Southern Angola and support to UNITA inflicted upon the PLAN. These actions relate to a 'defeat insurgency' mission. Finally, there is the direct evidence offered by the protagonists that their aim was the defeat of the insurgency. General Geldenhuys' assertion that the elements of South African strategy were 'normalcy, holding on (outlasting) and targeting the PLAN' clearly highlights intent to defeat the insurgency.³

When considering the question of whether the assumption is applicable to the Iraq surge case study, it helps to make a clear distinction between the wider story of the Iraq War from the invasion in March 2003 and the specific circumstances of the 'surge' between 2007 and 2008. The former is a story of changing strategic narratives and ends. These range from that of a pre-emptive conventional war to prevent Saddam gaining or spreading weapons of mass destruction to one of nation (re)building, stabilisation and neo-conservative hopes of democratisation in the Middle East. Yet none of these aims addressed the essential problem that arose within Iraq – multiple insurgencies contributing to escalatory levels of internecine violence that threatened to overwhelm both the new Iraqi state and the military capabilities (and political will) of the 'Coalition of the Willing'. A telling observation presented in the Oval Office during December 2006 identifies the problem that 'nowhere in the military strategy did we have the mission to defeat the insurgency'.⁴ The aim of the 'surge' was to provide the answer to this critical shortfall, so the conclusion is, during 2007 to 2008 at least (the period of the case study), that the primary aim

² Scholtz, "The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy," 32.

³ Geldenhuys, "Interview, Waterkloof, Pretoria, 16 September."

⁴ Attributed to retired General Jack Keane in: Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends, General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way out of Iraq*, 32.

of the second-party counterinsurgency effort in Iraq was the defeat of the various insurgencies present.

The second framework assumption – that the second-party counterinsurgent and its partner host nation must be willing to compromise - is evident in all three case studies. In South West Africa compromise was evident in the white-minority South African regime's acceptance of universal suffrage for the black majority in the Territory in free and fair elections supervised by the United Nations. In Oman, Qaboos' amnesty for the Adoo SEP, their frequent acceptance into the Firqat, and the provision of previously denied developmental aid to the province all indicate compromise in the Dhofar case. Similarly, the acceptance by both the Shi'a Government of Iraq and the United States of former Sunni insurgents into the Sons of Iraq (SOI) programme is evidence of a willingness and ability to compromise in order to achieve a counterinsurgency effect during the Iraqi surge.

The third assumption, that of host nation primacy, is somewhat difficult to establish readily in the South West Africa case. The quasi-colonial role played by the South Africans, and the tight rein they maintained on the Territory's finances and security, make it hard to see South West African host nation sovereignty, or even primacy, in play. This of course reflects the contested nature of the sovereignty of the Territory following the League of Nations mandate after the First World War. It may be possible to argue that through the creation of the SWATF and the development of an administrative system, both later integrated into the sovereign Namibian state, the South Africans recognised the need for host nation primacy. Certainly, the use of host nation indigenous security forces to fight the insurgencies in all three case studies reflects more than second-party counterinsurgents seeking to avoid combat with their own troops. It reflects practical recognition that the problems arising from insurgency belonged primarily to the host nation and they, more than anyone else, should have primacy in dealing with the issue. Clearly, a necessary step in this is the development of suitable and adequate security forces. The examination of all three cases thus presents evidence of the efforts made by the

second-party counterinsurgents to assist in the development of indigenous troops.

Pragmatism, the fourth and final framework assumption introduced in Chapter four, emphasised the requirement for second-party counterinsurgents to have '...a narrative with clear and finite objectives, described in terms of vital interests and aligned with the selection of counterinsurgency as an appropriate way to achieve them'.⁵ All three cases ultimately displayed such a pragmatic approach and 'modest goals'.⁶ The South African approach to the conflict within South West Africa certainly reflected this. It was noted in Chapter five that '[a]partheid South Africa saw itself as the defender of free market western Christian-Judean democratic values in a region that was increasingly dominated by Pan-African values and interwoven with that of the Kremlin'.⁷ The finite objective of defeating SWAPO's aim of creating a communist state in South West Africa clearly aligned with what the South African state and its influential white minority saw as their vital interests, and counterinsurgency was both an obvious and logical way in which to pursue it.

In Dhofar, Britain's relatively low-key approach and restrained commitment of resources also pragmatically reflected the situation. Post 'East of Suez', suffering a period of economic decline and fiscal restraint and confronting growing troubles in Northern Ireland and a seemingly endless 'Cold War', Britain's government could ill-afford a large scale military adventure in the Middle East. Yet, as Chapter six described, it was also in Britain's (and the West's) vital interest that Oman, and by default the Straits of Hormuz, did not 'fall' into the communist bloc's sphere. The almost covert approach to the conduct and support of counterinsurgency in Dhofar fitted Britain's strategic and domestic circumstances pragmatically and very well.

⁵ Chapter 4, 98.

⁶ Referring to Hazelton's research finding that interventionist states in counterinsurgency were more likely to succeed where they had modest goals which they shared with the client / host nation. See: Hazelton, "Paper: Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 45.

⁷ Esterhuyse, "The Strategic Contours of the South African Military Involvement in Namibia and Angola During the 1970 / 1980s," 19.

The situation in Iraq during the 'surge' with regard to the assumption of pragmatism in many ways reflects the circumstances in the examination of the first assumption. Before the implementation of the 'surge', it is difficult to identify much in the way of pragmatism within the United States' approach. Unhelpful in this was the continual denial evident at the highest levels of both the MNF-I and the Bush Administration regarding the true nature of the problem. However, this changed with the implementation of the 'surge' strategy. Facing the real possibility of strategic defeat, the decision to surge troops accompanied a move to pragmatic objectives related to reducing the levels of violence rather than nation and democracy building. Associated with this was a more pragmatic (and palatable to the United States' public) strategic narrative that related the adoption of a counterinsurgency approach to an exit strategy.

This review has established that all of the four assumptions described in the second-party counterinsurgency framework are evident in varying degrees within each of the case studies presented. Accounting for the variation may be the impact of the independent variables presented in each unique case. The assumption of host nation primacy was a little weak in the South West Africa case study. The contested issue of legal sovereignty in the Territory and the associated qualified nature of the control variable of 'second-party counterinsurgency' may account for this weakness in this case.

Another example of the nature of independent variables appearing to impact upon the framework assumptions was that of the Iraqi case. Consideration of the 'wider' arc of the Iraq war potentially challenges the first and fourth assumptions pertaining to 'defeat of insurgency' and 'pragmatism'. Yet focussing on the specific circumstances of the defined and bounded 'surge' reveals greater correlation with these framework assumptions. While not an unqualified association, it is reasonable to conclude on the evidence available that the conditions in each case support the assertion and validity of the assumptions made within the second-party counterinsurgency framework. Determining the case for the framework's method is the purpose of the next section.

Analysis of method

The aim of this section is to determine whether a correlation is identifiable between the method of the second-party counterinsurgency framework and the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaigns examined in the three case studies. There is no intent to attempt to 'retro-fit' the strategy, operational techniques or tactical methods employed in any of the case study campaigns into a 'second-party counterinsurgency framework' mould and claim validation if they fit. Rather, the case studies will be compared against the 'method of thought' identified in the presentation of the framework's method in Chapter four.⁸ In doing so, the analysis will also be careful to distinguish between the declaratory method or policy of the second-party counterinsurgents and the reality of the methods actually employed in the studied campaigns. In the Iraqi surge case study in particular, it becomes apparent that there is considerable distance and even dissonance between the two. However, this is not unique to the Iraq case. One analysis of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm noted how it is a product of 'dialectical tension' as 'the manner that doctrine was formulated and discussed was often also remarkably removed from the reality of how COIN itself was actually practised, and was also frequently less successful than posthumously advertised'.⁹ First, though, it is useful at this point to refresh the essential elements of the method from the description of the framework.

Chapter four established that the second-party counterinsurgency framework places greater importance on *how* insurgents fight rather than *why* they fight. This rejection of the teleological approach emphasised the point that the countless circumstances of rebellion make valid theoretical development of a universal and replicable method to defeat insurgency by addressing causative factors or motive, such as that envisaged by the 'hearts and minds' paradigm, highly impracticable. It did not refute the requirement to understand insurgent motivation – simply that it is unlikely that such motivation would be common

⁸ After Beaufre, as introduced in Chapter 4. Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 13.

⁹ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 249.

enough across all cases to form a useful basis for developing a useful theory. Further complicating the situation is that such motivations often change during the course of an insurgency.¹⁰

A review of the three case studies herein confirms a disparate variety of insurgency motivational ideations and their changing nature. In the South West African case, the primary initial motivation is characterised as a quest for indigenous majority independent rule, with a supporting motivation that the form of such rule should have been a state ordered on Marxist principles. In Dhofar, the initial motivation was rejection of an ultra-conservative monarchical ruling system regarded by Dhofaris as depriving them of the development and associated benefits they expected or desired. Later supplanting this initial motivation was one of replacing the state and regional polity with a socialist system. For the third case, the various Iraqi insurgencies presented a potent mix of motivations ranging from resistance to occupation; from religious, social, ethnicity and political concerns through to outright criminality. The independent variables of three case studies demonstrably conform to the expectation of the framework regarding the likelihood of divergent insurgent motivations in different conflicts.

The second-party counterinsurgency framework presented further addresses theory's requirement for a universally replicable method by addressing the universal 'ways' of insurgency rather than the disparate 'ends'. These ways are the use of violence, organisation, subversion and pre-emption. Without belabouring the point, the analysis of the various insurgencies presented in the case studies did reveal these 'ways' commonly applied in the insurgency campaigns. It has been described how the second-party counterinsurgency framework methodology seeks to attack these insurgent means in order to establish a defeat mechanism that works in one or a combination of two ways. Chapter four identified these as either the physical denial of insurgent ways in order to prevent the attainment of desired ends, or the defeat of

¹⁰ Weinstein addresses this phenomena extensively in: Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

insurgent will to continue with their violent path through relentless pressure and escalation of the costs associated with their method. Implicit in this method (and with an obvious relationship back to the assumptions of compromise and pragmatism) is the counterinsurgency identifying and working towards an acceptable 'continuum of defiance'.¹¹ This reflects agreement with the idea that it is not dissent or desire for an alternative policy that is the fundamental problem with insurgency. Rather, it is the embrace of violent means rather than normative forms of political discourse as the way to attain the desired ends. For second-party counterinsurgent states with a liberal democratic background, this may provide part of a useful domestic narrative to counter the accusation that participation in other states' counterinsurgency efforts is itself an illiberal act.

Summarising this recap of method for the purposes of informing the analysis to follow, a counterinsurgency campaign with alignment to the second-party counterinsurgency framework's method would display:

- a sustained focus on attacking, degrading or denying insurgent ways and means;
- identifiable measures (direct or indirect) likely to precipitate the insurgent's engagement with their rational calculus; and
- acceptance of some compromise and the presentation of paths to reconciliation so that the issues at the heart of the rebellion may be addressed in an acceptable, non-violent form.

The scene is now set to evaluate each case study against these criteria to determine whether correlation exists with the framework method.

The evidence of the South West Africa case study presents an unequivocal 'yes' to each of these questions. A key message that the South Africans had taken from McCuen was that 'the aim of counterrevolutionary warfare was to deny the insurgents the capability to get and maintain the

¹¹ Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 26.

support of the general population through force'.¹² Displayed by the South African Security Forces (SADF, SAP and later, the proxy SWATF) plans and deeds was a relentless organisational drive, almost bordering on enthusiasm, to deny SWAPO its desired ways and means of victory. This denial is evident in circumstances ranging from the deep combat incursions into Angola to deny PLAN sanctuary, support and easy access to the Territory, to the organisation and support of alternative South West African indigenous political movements. Supporting that the South African measures were effective in denying SWAPO is the stabilisation of the operational zone after 1984 and then the 'clear cut ascendancy' of the counterinsurgency forces south of the cut-line between 1984 and 1988.¹³ There is also ample evidence that the effectiveness of South African denial of insurgent means changed SWAPO's calculus.

SWAPO's objective was to achieve one-party socialist rule in an independent Namibia. Its plan to achieve its goal was to attain it via success in violent insurrection, at the expense of not only South African interests, but all other indigenous political entities as well. Yet in the end South African military success was to prevent this path of action and SWAPO was ultimately forced to rely on a UN supervised free and fair ballot to achieve political power. The attempt by PLAN to pre-empt the election by violent means at that time represents more than just a serious miscalculation of the South Africans' residual military ability and will during their drawdown in the presence of the UN. It flags the frustration of SWAPO's calculus at having to go down the electoral path rather than the desired revolutionary path to political power.

The fact that elections were organised and the results were abided in South West Africa is itself evidence of the correlation of the South African actions with the compromise element of the second-party counterinsurgency framework method. Amongst other clear evidence of South African compromise from the examples presented in the case study is the encouragement of universal suffrage and political diversity in South West Africa

¹² Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 70.

¹³ Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, 252. Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 45.

– something that was unthinkable domestically in South Africa at the time. These facts, and those previously outlined, allow a strong inference of a correlation between the methodology detailed by the second-party counterinsurgency framework and the effect of the techniques employed by the South Africans in the South West Africa case study.

The situation with the second case study, Dhofar, is even clearer in this respect. The campaign design employed by the counterinsurgency, post-Qaboos taking power, took a deliberative and methodical approach to denial of insurgent means. The attention paid to the careful development of the SAF, along with enlisting the help of new allies such as the Iranians, provided the means to attack the insurgent's methods. The gradual '*quadrillage*' of the Jebel region enacted by the Dhofar Brigade, and the subsequent blocking of vital Adoo supply lines which this enabled, had an increasing impact upon the Adoo's ability to organise and sustain the insurgency. Similarly, the creation of the Firqat, the amnesty generally offered to SEP, and the limited (but targeted) developmental opportunities offered to the Jebel Tribes directly attacked the insurgent campaign plan. These issues, although 'owned' by Qaboos, were widely and genuinely supported by the British – a clear example of willingness to compromise by both the host nation and the second-party counterinsurgents.

What is more ambiguous, however, is ascertaining the degree to which the counterinsurgents' methods influenced the rational calculus of the PFLOAG's leadership. In determining this, the paucity of records available concerning the internal deliberations and thoughts of the insurgent leadership are unhelpful. The lack of primary evidence in this respect requires some deduction and conjecture. For example, one may speculate from the time of PFLOAG's name change to the PFLO in 1973 and the renewed focus on armed struggle in Dhofar that the counterinsurgency affected aspects of the insurgent calculus.¹⁴ However, this is not conclusive proof. Furthermore, while the increasing number of SEP as the war progressed is indicative of individual insurgents arriving at their own rational calculus and acting accordingly at the

¹⁴ McKeown, "Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance," 83.

individual level, there is scant evidence of the PFLOAG / PFLO at the organisational level doing the same and seeking formal negotiations or reconciliation. The conclusion is that rather than defeating the insurgency's will to pursue their objectives, the defeat mechanism in the Dhofar case was the first one suggested in Chapter four. Evidence for this is the SAF report in the beginning of 1976 noting: 'No active enemy were left in the West and there were about 100 active enemy left in the Central and Eastern areas...[T]he enemy were no longer capable of operating in large groups'.¹⁵ The insurgents failed because the counterinsurgency (eventually) denied them the ways and means to conduct their insurgency. Once again, the conclusion drawn is that the case offers a strong correlation with the model postulated by the second-party counterinsurgency framework.

The Iraqi surge case study is not as conclusive in its verdict as the other two. It is seen that two of the criteria exist in the evidence available, but one is less certain. MNF-I, and as time progressed, the ISF as well, did display a sustained focus on the degradation and denial of insurgent ways and means. The adaptation and development of a sophisticated TST cycle and the commitment of troops to operate from joint security stations (JSS) amongst the population are two ready examples of such a focus. Similarly, measures such as the development and support for the SOI programme that occurred in the wake of the Sunni Awakening are strong evidence of compromise and the promotion of paths to reconciliation. The evidence of impact upon insurgent rational calculus is not as strong.

Ollivant offers a compelling and plausible explanation regarding the Iraqi calculus around Iraq's relative stabilisation around the time of the 'surge':

First, the Sunni Casualties in the civil war reached an accumulated total that made it clear that continued conflict would not result in a favourable outcome for Sunnis, which incentivised Sunni elites to find a political settlement. Second, Shi'a leaders generally, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki particularly desired to consolidate power and accumulate

¹⁵ Houlton, "Minutes of the Comd's Conference Held at 1430 Hrs on 27 January 1976 in Villa Dhofar," 1. paragraph 3.

wealth. This desire required a certain level of stability. Third, the development of key Iraqi governmental institutions, most notably the army, gave the central government the ability to counter other destabilizing elements – in particular AQI and the various Sadrist militias – as the civil war began to taper off.¹⁶

The problem is that only one of these reasons, the development of the Army, requires the 'surge' to account for it. Even then, this is only in part, as the development of the ISF began well before the 'surge' and continued well after it finished. Ollivant's view is that the decisive aspect of the 'surge' was 'the political signal by President Bush that the United States was decisively committed to Iraq for the duration of his tenure in office'.¹⁷ Supporting this is Malkasian's observation that 'political reform may not succeed without a clear and credible commitment, often signalled through military action, to endure the prolonged costs of fighting an insurgency'.¹⁸ This leads to the conclusion that any agency that the 'surge' brought to Iraqi insurgent calculus may be associated as much with President Bush's initial commitment as any subsequent military action by the second-party counterinsurgents. Notwithstanding this qualification, it appears reasonable on consideration of the other factors already noted, to regard the Iraq surge case study as having a reasonable correlation with the second-party counterinsurgency framework method.

The principle of counter violence

This thesis recognises the use of controlled violence as both an important tool for producing results and a defining characteristic of insurgency.¹⁹ Chapter four defined counter violence as 'those measures, forceful or otherwise, taken by counterinsurgents to restrict, degrade or deny the use of violence by insurgents'. All three case studies demonstrate that the counterinsurgents readily accepted the notion first championed by McCuen of counter violence as a principle of counterinsurgency.

¹⁶ Ollivant, "Countering the New Orthodoxy: Reinterpreting Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," 390.

¹⁹ Kalyvas, "The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War," 101.

The South West Africa case study showed that, while the South Africans acknowledged the doctrinal niceties of winning 'hearts and minds', a large part of their military activity above and below the cut-line focussed on reciprocating insurgent violence, with interest. As the campaign went on, the rapid and often comprehensive destruction of insurgent units after their detection became a common feature. Whether they encountered highly specialised units such as the SAP's Koevoet, the SADF's 32 Battalion and 61 Mechanised Battalion, or more 'normal' indigenous troops from the SWATF, PLAN's guerrillas came to know that violent action by them would be countered with an overwhelming violent response. The South African use of force as a counter violence technique had a psychological as well as a physical aspect. The casualty figures for PLAN guerrillas operating south of the cut-line during the 'annual winter games' were consistently high.²⁰ In time this led to increasing reticence for infiltration on behalf of the PLAN as they came to realise that if detected by the South African's they were 'assuredly marked for death'.²¹ Perhaps the ultimate recognition of the impact of the South African use of violence as a counter violence technique is SWAPO's attempt at a *coup de main* in April 1989. The timing of this activity, when both the UN was present and the South African Security Forces weakened by their retrograde operations from the Territory to South Africa, is telling of the psychological impact of the counter violence applied by the counterinsurgency.²²

The British approach in the Dhofar case study has some obvious parallels with respect to counter violence to those seen with the South Africans in the South West Africa case. The counterinsurgency plan here sought to engage attrition as a technique to reduce the ability of the Adoo to use violence, described by Graham's method seeking to 'force the enemy to fight in large groups and therefore suffer heavy losses.'²³ Coercive techniques such as aerial bombardment of suspected enemy villages, food control, detention and

²⁰ De Vries, "9 November Electronic Mail Response to Follow up Questions - Role of 61 Mech in Swa."

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Turner, *Continent Ablaze*, 54.

Geldenhuys, *At the Front*. Ch. 18.

²³ Graham, "Warning Order: Operation Simba," 1.

physical intimidation were also part of a counter violence culture.²⁴ The British approach to meeting insurgent use of attempted use of violence with superior military violence supports the notion previously offered from Kalyvas: that the only reason insurgents and counterinsurgents use violence is because it works.

Shaping counter violence in Iraq during the 'surge' period was the experiences of the various insurgencies fighting MNF-I and the ISF before the 'surge'. Both the Shi'a and Sunni had learned important lessons regarding the likely outcome if they confronted organised counterinsurgent forces in open and large-scale battles. For the Shi'a, and the JAM in particular, this lesson was apparent from Najaf in August 2004. The Sunni insurgents experienced it in the second battle of Fallujah between November and December that same year. The experience of these battles saw the insurgents largely seek to avoid open battle from this point onwards and adopt a lower profile in the use of violence from amongst the population of Iraq. In the previous chapter, a principal adviser and staff officer to General Petraeus described how this situation led to a two-pronged counter violence plan during the 'surge'. These were an offensive campaign to target and kill or capture insurgents and a defensive campaign for the Iraqi population to counter insurgent use of violence against them.²⁵ An important element in the latter was the use of the SOI programme to create sufficient local security to counter insurgent violence in the absence of either the MNF-I or the ISF.

²⁴ Hazelton, "Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare," 91-93. Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 144.

²⁵ Mansoor, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008."

The principle of counter organisation

The most fundamental task of an insurgent campaign is building an organisation capable of challenging the government militarily.²⁶ This highlights the absolute importance to a counterinsurgent force of achieving a counter organisational effect. The definition of counter organisation offered herein: 'measures which frustrate, degrade, destroy or deny an insurgency the benefits and advantages which it may otherwise accrue from the development of adequate organisational structure, processes and command and control' is seen in application in each of the case studies. Kitson stated 'in its simplest form, counter organization involves putting the government's views over to the population by action rather than propaganda'.²⁷ Each of the case studies demonstrates a bias for action for counter organisation over an information campaign.

The course of counter organisation efforts in the Iraq case study goes hand in glove with that of counter violence. This is because the outcomes of counter organisation activity had a counter violence effect by denying the procurement and organisation of violence. Again as noted by Ollivant:

An often understated factor in the reduction of violence was the decimation of AQI and—to a lesser extent—Iranian-sponsored Shi'a groups in greater Baghdad. The adaptation of various tactics and technologies by Coalition Special Operations Units (primarily American and British), but also by the Brigade Combat Teams, facilitated the destruction of AQI networks faster than the leadership could regenerate them.²⁸

Chapter seven provided evidence that counter organisation developed from a very poor base and level of effectiveness in the early stages of the war to the point during the 'surge' where, at the tactical level, it was described as the decisive effort.

²⁶ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 7.

²⁷ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 79.

²⁸ Ollivant, "Countering the New Orthodoxy: Reinterpreting Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 7.

While the Iraq case provided ample evidence of effective counter organisation by the second-party counterinsurgency, the different nature of the insurgency problem confronted in that campaign in comparison to those in the Dhofar and South West African cases led to different approaches. Whereas the insurgent enemy in the two other cases was largely unitary, the Iraq war presented multiple and diffuse insurgent adversaries. The lack of a 'traditional' leadership model or organisational structure by comparison to those of PFLOAG and SWAPO meant previously known or practised counter organisational techniques required new approaches such as the idea of 'attacking the network'.²⁹ Yet despite the novelty claimed by many pundits for post 9-11 insurgencies, the principle of counter organisation in Iraq appears to have been able to be applied at least as adequately as in the other two cases. This suggests that the validity of the principle has wider application beyond 'simple' mono-insurgency conflicts.

An important facet of counter organisation ubiquitous in all of the case studies and regarded as successful in all was the organisation and development of indigenous counterinsurgency security forces. In all cases these ranged across the gamut from relatively conventional forces such as the Iraqi Army or the SWATF to militias such as the Firqat and the SOI. The development of these forces in the campaigns studied served two important counter organisational roles. Not only did they provide the means through which to actually enact counter organisational measures; their recruitment was often at the insurgency's opportunity cost. In the case of militias such as the SOI or Firqat, paying them not to organise and fight for the enemy would prove to be a far better outcome than having to combat them. The latter point also suggests a pre-emption benefit, highlighting again that the second-party counterinsurgency principles have mutually supporting roles and often overlap in the effects generated.

The South West Africa case study described many military activities by the South Africans that create a 'traditional' counter organisation effect familiar

²⁹ Morgado, "Research Questionnaire - Iraq Case Study 2007-2008," 3.

to theorists of the counterinsurgency era such as Kitson and McCuen. The cross border ventures into southern Angola and the efforts to support UNITA are examples that clearly had a counter organisational impact upon SWAPO. South Africa's sustained disruption of SWAPO's efforts to infiltrate the Territory in turn prevented SWAPO's easy organisation of its domestic support base in Ovamboland.³⁰ However, the South West Africa case study also demonstrates the possibilities and benefits of non-military counter organisational effort. The support offered to the DTA and non-Ovambo political movements within the Territory (such as CANU) are illustrative in this regard.

Examples of counter organisation from the Dhofar case have parallel effects to those seen in South West Africa. The payment and supply of the Mahra tribesmen echoes the intent of support provided to UNITA. The *quadrillage* effect and associated disruption of PFLOAG's supply lines from the PDRY from the creation of the Hornbeam and similar permanent defensive lines had similar counter organisational benefits to South African efforts along the outline and into southern Angola.

The principle of counter subversion

Chapter four described how if organisation provides the skeleton and muscular structure of the insurgent body, then subversion creates the environment that allows it to thrive by undermining intra-state, societal and cultural norms. It also highlighted the potential difficulty for second-party counterinsurgents in taking an indirect approach to counter subversion because of the obstacles to building the effective trust required with the host nation populace. The examples of the case studies showed these factors at play, reinforced the importance of counter subversion inferred in the second-party counterinsurgency framework, and demonstrated how difficult it is to achieve in practice.

³⁰ Heitman, "The Other Edge of Asymmetry: South Africa's Bush War Strategy," 5.

A factor apparent in all three cases is the sheer difficulty of conducting counter subversion in either a tribal or sectarian society, or one that is a combination of both. The reasons for this are readily apparent, but understanding them seemingly does little to ease the problems, particularly for 'outsiders' such as second-party counterinsurgents. The protagonists in each case study attempted to conduct psychological operations to support their fight against subversion. The results in each case were mixed – they can be assessed as sometimes useful, but rarely definitive. The Dhofar case's use of psychological warfare was perhaps one of the more effective. Following the PFLOAG's enthusiastic embrace of communism and its precept of atheism, it is clear that the SAF was able to use the strong Islamic faith of the Jebali effectively in a psychological campaign to counter PFLOAG subversion.³¹ Yet whilst some British psychological warfare personnel supported this operation, there is evidence presented that the British left the majority of the counter subversion task to the OIS / ORD.³²

The pattern in South West Africa demonstrates that success in counter subversion was elusive. The tribal structures within the operational zone often had the effect of leading responses to subversion and counter subversion equally to a collective rather than individual level. Jooste related how success in dealing with this dynamic through tribal councils and the like presented challenges atypical for the 'war fighting Infantry Battalion CO' in the operational zone.³³

The assessment of the overall results of the South African efforts is mixed. Unsurprisingly, evidence of better results occurs in areas without a significant Ovambo presence, such as Kaokoland, Kavangoland and Caprivi.³⁴

The Iraq case study represents a repeat performance – counter subversion is important, and difficult. Interviews and research questionnaire

³¹ DeVore, "The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975," 13.

³² Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970 - 1976," 572.

³³ Jooste, "29 October Electronic Mail Response to Post-Interview Follow up Questions."

³⁴ Toase, "The South African Army: The Campaign in South West Africa / Namibia since 1966," 216-17.

responses used during the research phase of this dissertation show it as universally poorly accomplished. The blame for this often and predictably sheeted to an inability of the second-party counterinsurgents to comprehend the complex cultural, political and social map of post-Saddam Iraq. This improved with increased engagement with indigenous Sunni leaders post the Awakening and through programmes such as the SOI. MNF-I, however, never really reached a satisfactory level of understanding.³⁵ This built an inherent weakness into MNF-I's counter subversion efforts that was difficult to overcome.

Overall, counter subversion, albeit with relatively weak results in all cases, appeared easier in the South West Africa and Dhofar case studies than in Iraq. This may be due to the relatively binary nature of those conflicts. The Iraq case, with multiple actors pursuing different agendas (often not understood by the MNF-I), perhaps was more difficult. It may be that, notwithstanding the importance of counter subversion, the likelihood of success is inversely proportional to the number of opposition protagonists. This is an area that would benefit from further research to test such a hypothesis, and if necessary to confirm a codification of the framework principle.

Another area related to counter subversion that would benefit from further research and analysis concerns the impact of enlisting indigenous personnel, potentially vulnerable to subversion, into the security forces. The assumption in each of the case studies, supported by the literature and anecdotal evidence, was that this had a counter subversion effect. However, despite this being seemingly intuitive, no evidence of serious qualitative research, which actually establishes such a correlation, is apparent.

The principle of pre-emption

Pre-emption was defined earlier in this thesis as 'action taken that makes it either pointless or impossible for the insurgent enemy to do what they intended.' The purpose of this principle goes to counterinsurgents gaining and

³⁵ Alderson, "Interview, 29 June." Ollivant, "Interview, 29 June."

maintaining the initiative during a campaign. This idea is not new – as Petraeus noted in a ‘lessons’ piece about Iraq: ‘we have relearned the old lesson that momentum in counterinsurgency operations requires constant effort to get ‘out in front’ of the enemy’.³⁶ Counterinsurgent sustainment of the initiative can have an impact upon insurgent calculus by ‘compelling the enemy to see at every turn that he has lost’.³⁷ The question is to what degree do the case study campaigns display the principle of pre-emption?

The South West African case shows a degree of strategic pre-emption evident after 1973 and Vorster’s acknowledgment that ultimately the future of the Territory lay in the hands of the locals. This pre-empted the SWAPO argument that the future independence of Namibia would be reliant upon the success of a violent revolution conducted by them. It effectively signalled to non-Ovambo and non-SWAPO aligned people that the guerrilla war fought by SWAPO was as much about the nature of power in a future independent state (communist and Ovambo majority led if the SWAPO insurrection was successful) as anything else. This pre-emption gazumped SWAPO. Evidence for this is that SWAPO remained a predominantly Ovambo organisation and the result of the UN supervised election, which saw SWAPO fail to gain the absolute majority it sought to enable it to ‘own’ the constitution when the vote basically spit along ethnic lines.

Another element of pre-emption evident in South West Africa is the recruitment and organisation of indigenous personnel into the SWATF and local militias by the South Africans during the campaign. The enlistment of so-called ‘military age males’ into the security forces and the subsequent maintenance of their service and loyalty denied the insurgency significant potential manpower which may otherwise have been co-opted. This same aspect of pre-emption is apparent with the SAF and the Firqat in the Dhofar case study and the ISF and the SOI in the Iraq surge case study.

³⁶ David Petraeus, "Counterinsurgency Concepts: What We Learned in Iraq," *Global Policy* 1, no. 1 (2010): 117.

³⁷ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 75-76.

In Oman, Qaboos' decision to recognise the needs of the Dhofar region, combined with British support for development, had a pre-emptive effect upon the insurrection's original objective. With the counterinsurgent state addressing the initial motivating factor of the rebellion, the PFLOAG had to move to other, broader, and ultimately less appealing objectives. The Dhofar case clearly reveals that the Jebeli were not as enthused about fighting for 'communism' and the ultimate wider 'liberation' of neighbouring regions as they were about fighting for more prosaic and tangible public goods and benefits from the state.

The Iraqi surge case study presents slightly weaker evidence of the implementation of pre-emption, notwithstanding the organisation of the Iraqi security forces and the SOI. Tactical, physical pre-emption - that is, the attack and destruction of insurgent elements when detected - is evident. Two political actions of the Bush Administration may have pre-empted Iraqi insurgent claims about the objectives of the counterinsurgency effort. The declaration of Iraqi sovereignty, and actions to enact it practically, pre-dated the 'surge'. Nevertheless, it pre-empted and curtailed any claims of enduring American imperial ambitions. A similar effect arose from the declaration of the duration of the 'surge' and a detailed draw-down strategy that MNF-I enacted.

Enabling concepts

This section asks the question about whether the case studies support the second-party counterinsurgency framework's identification of intelligence and adaptive behaviour as key enabling concepts. The 'upfront' conclusion is that they do. Bounding the cases are the specific constraints of intelligence that second-party counterinsurgency brings, as identified in Chapter four. A key consideration of intelligence is the ability of the second-party counterinsurgent to generate adequate, actionable intelligence within the constraints of the unique second-party environment. Kitson described a version of this task: '...it is the responsibility of the intelligence organization to produce background information and that it is then up to the operational commanders to develop it to the extent necessary for their men to make contact with the enemy, using their

own resources'.³⁸ The operational commanders in each of the three cases, notwithstanding obvious difficulties in many instances, achieved this. In South West Africa the achievement of such an intelligence outcome enabled the rapid battlefield cycle within the operational zone of 'information-intelligence-action (result)' to become an important driver of military success. The TST cycle used during the Iraq surge case study was a similar achievement. In Dhofar the recognition of the unique intelligence requirements of second-party counterinsurgency is reflected in the use of the Firqat to develop actionable intelligence and the trust and cooperation the British necessarily gave to the OIS / ORD.³⁹

On the other hand the adaptation ideal for second-party counterinsurgency described in Chapter four was: 'an iterative process that continually generates and tests variations in a complex adaptive system, and selects and incorporates for retention those that increase its success, and discards and inhibits those that reduce it; leading to a better fit between the system and its context.'⁴⁰ In all three case studies there is ample evidence of adaptation being a key enabling concept of success.

It is clear that the South Africans willingly and often adapted their actions based on the 'best practices' seen in other counter revolutionary wars. The adoption of the 'fire force' concept used by the Rhodesians is a simple illustration of the ability to recognise and apply lessons identified by others. A far more sophisticated form of adaptive process was evident in the South African development and refinement of the fast information-intelligence-action cycle implemented to great effect at the fighting group level. In many ways this process presaged the TST cycle developed and used to similar good effect during the Iraqi surge. In Oman, the Dhofar case shows that the need for and importance of adaptation was recognised early. The advice in the Dhofar Brigade's anti-guerrilla pamphlet that 'what you know will not work here' was

³⁸ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 96.

³⁹ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," 73.

⁴⁰ Grisogono and Ryan, "Operationalising Adaptive Campaigning," 7.

explicit recognition that adaptation was going to be required.⁴¹ Wryly supporting this obvious openness to adaptation was Jeapes' observation that the British tried 'every COIN principle from the previous fifty years'.⁴² The Iraq case study also demonstrates engagement with adaptation. With respect to Iraq, the previous chapter traced the phenomenal growth in the capabilities and the effects generated through the TST cycle by MNF-I. Other evidence exists. The recognition of the need to things differently by late 2006 and the development and subsequent implementation of the 'surge', itself arguably represents the greatest (and most successful) adaptive effort of all those undertaken in the war. Other action, while less dramatic and visible than the 'surge' contributed to constant adaptive action by the MNF-I and the ISF. A suitable example is the counterinsurgency 'Center for Excellence' established in Taji under direction from General Casey in 2006. This organisation ensured that 'best practice' being identified on the battlefield became a timely and 'very useful training block of classes and presentations' passed to troops as they entered the theatre.⁴³

Conclusion

The relative success of the second-party counterinsurgencies investigated in the three case studies is evident. It remains to decide whether they support the hypothesis offered in the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The question is: does the evidence demonstrate sufficient correlation with the dependant variables of the framework so that we may infer its suitability and utility to address the 'most-case understanding' criterion of theory with respect the problem of second-party counterinsurgency? The answer drawn from the comparative analysis in this chapter, and qualified by the constraints noted in the introductory section, is 'yes'. The correlation established is strong, but not absolute. Identified difficulties remain with some aspects. Amongst these is the qualified nature of the control variable with respect to sovereignty in the South West Africa case, the challenge of

⁴¹ "Anti-Guerrilla Operations in Dhofar."

⁴² Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman*.

⁴³ Daniel Van Every, "Interview with Maj Eric Melloh," in *Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 5.

establishing the 'surge' as a causal factor regarding rational calculus in the Iraq case, and the general problem of second-party counterinsurgents undertaking counter subversion operations acknowledged in all three cases.

Chapter nine. Conclusion

I hope...I could not be accused of wishing to make this art a mechanical routine, nor of pretending on the contrary that a single chapter of principles is able to give, all at once, the talent of conducting an army. In all the arts, as in all the situations of life, knowledge and skill are two altogether different things, and if one often succeed through skill alone, it is never but the union of the two that constitutes a superior man and constitutes success.

Jomini¹

This thesis examined the conduct of counterinsurgency by interventionist states. It defined and labelled such campaigns as second-party counterinsurgency and established that although the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency is commonplace in the contemporary era, extant counterinsurgency theory, practice and paradigm fails to address the subject adequately. It further established that many counterinsurgency theories are not theories at all. They also invariably fail the basic requirements of universality, parsimony and replicability in differing circumstances without excessive qualification. It was further shown that a dominant 'hearts and minds' paradigm exists within contemporary counterinsurgency scholarship and practice. The paper describes the origins and outlines inadequacies of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm in some depth.

The original contribution this study made was to identify the need for and propose a new suitable framework for the conduct of such second-party counterinsurgency. The central hypothesis was that the principles of counter violence, counter organisation, counter subversion and pre-emption, supported by the enabling concepts of intelligence and adaptive behaviour, provide a new and suitable theoretical framework to inform the successful conduct of second-party counterinsurgency. Central to the proposed framework is a method that seeks to focus and capitalise on the relative ubiquity of insurgent ways in order to create a defeat mechanism that invokes Clausewitz's rational calculus. In

¹ Cited in: Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver, Maneuver-Warfare Theory and Airland Battle*, 4.

doing so the framework rejects many of the assumptions and conclusions that arise from the use of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm as a strategy. This is particularly so with respect to its prime tenets of development and nation building, in favour of an overall approach which preferences the defeat of the insurgency over all other goals. Importantly though, the use of proven 'hearts and minds' operational techniques was acknowledged as a useful and appropriate part of the repertoire available to the second-party counterinsurgent.

Another important facet in this thesis' approach was to eschew the 'doctrine of escapism' and romanticism that is routinely associated with consideration of counterinsurgency issues.² Pragmatically, the study focussed on the key question of how best to succeed in the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency through the attainment of the strategic ends sought by second-party involvement in 'someone else's' counterinsurgency campaign. This is because 'the ultimate determinant of the success or failure of counterinsurgency theory and practice is the attainment of national objectives'.³ This necessarily drives pragmatism. A counterinsurgency theoretical framework cannot make up for strategic error in this regard if misapplied in pursuit of inappropriate or unrealistic ends. Though, in keeping with the pragmatic approach, the framework proposed does not seek or anticipate universal explanatory value. Its ambition was and remains a 'better fit' explanation in test cases than either the 'hearts and minds' paradigm or other contemporary alternatives.

The methodological procedures used to conduct research included a literature review of archival, primary and secondary source material; the conduct of personal interviews or a research questionnaire with select personnel; and the establishment of three critical historical case studies. The three case studies shared the same control variable – the case represented a second-party counterinsurgency campaign. All were analysed against the

² Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," 252.

³ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, p 29.

dependent variable of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework.

The results obtained through the presentation and analysis of the case studies and research material support the central hypothesis. A strong correlation exists in the evidence provided by the case studies between the dependent variables of the proposed second-party counterinsurgency framework and the successful achievement of second-party counterinsurgent strategic ends. At the same time, the thesis identifies and acknowledges the constraints or limitations associated with this conclusion. The bottom line, however, is that the second-party counter-insurgency framework proposed by the thesis appears to provide a suitable stratagem to serve as a basis for interventionist states to conduct counterinsurgency.

Several other conclusions or implications may be drawn that lie outside the relatively narrow confines of the research question. For example, all of the case studies featured second-party counterinsurgents that were 'Western' and, with some serious qualification with respect to South Africa at the time, liberal democracies. Further research into the conduct of second-party counterinsurgency by non-Western and / or non-democratic states would further test the utility and applicability of the framework in broader circumstance. Similarly, this suggests a possible future path of academic inquiry, which may examine the applicability of the second-party counterinsurgency framework proposed herein as a technique to inform more broadly the conduct of other aspects of irregular warfare.

Another important avenue of scholarly enquiry opened up by this thesis relates to the overlap noted in the case studies between the campaign or battlefield effects achieved by the different framework principles. Such study may serve to either refine the existing framework principles, or identify and codify new ones. An obvious principle for consideration and evaluation arising from the demonstration of South Africa, Britain and the United States is that which may be characterised as 'political commitment' within the polity of the interventionist state in the face of domestic political pressures. In addition to

this dissertation, such a study may have Mack and Merom's work as a departure point.⁴

A further implication arising from this research concerns the fact that no party has actually conducted a second-party counterinsurgency campaign informed by the framework proposed herein. Necessarily, the conclusions drawn are based on identifying correlations and deducing possible causation. This will remain the case unless the framework escapes the world of academic theory and is engaged with by a future putative second-party counterinsurgent.

A final consideration is the further comparative investigation of the relative merits of the 'hearts and minds' paradigm and the second-party counterinsurgency framework. The use of a gaming model and / or computer-supported simulation utilising identical parameters may well shed further light on the respective claims of both approaches.

⁴ Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict." Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*.

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