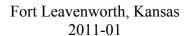EFFECTIVE LOCAL SECURITY FORCES:
SOME IDEAS FOR THE COUNTERINSURGENT

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Art of War

by

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The security force framework devised for prosecuting a counterinsurgency campaign is essential. A security framework identifies roles and responsibilities for the different organizations that comprise the overall counterinsurgent force. Part of this overall force is responsible for security in a defined geographical area, or the task of local security, and often takes the form of militias, police, or even military forces. In an effort to understand the factors that most influence the effectiveness of such a force, four historical counterinsurgency case studies are briefly examined to identify any common themes. These factors are then rigorously compared against the Vietnam Conflict and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Five dominant factors emerge that most determine the effectiveness of a local security force. They include the ability to organizationally survive, local recruitment and employment, threat-based training, equipping and mentoring, proper vetting, and mitigating the effects of expansion. These factors are offered as ideas for counterinsurgents to consider during the raising and employment of security forces.

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTIVE LOCAL SECURITY FORCES: SOME IDEAS FOR THE
COUNTERINSURGENT, by Major Dustin R. Mitchell, 307 pages.

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Although an individual may get credit for many things, nothing can be accomplished without a team. The team for this undertaking included my family who spent weekends without me, both my American and British peers and mentors who sharpened my learning and development, and the Command and General Staff College faculty who taught and pointed me in a better direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

1-26 IN	1st Battalion, 26th Infantry
1/502	1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry
1-5 CAV	1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry
1 ID	1st Infantry Division
2MOI	2nd Ministry of Interior Commando Battalion
3POB	3rd Public Order Battalion
4 ID	4th Infantry Division
7IA	7th Iraqi Army Battalion
202IA	202nd Iraqi Army Battalion
AIF	Anti Iraqi Forces
APC	Accelerated Pacification Campaign
AQI	Al-Qaeda In Iraq
BATT	British Army Training Team
CAF	Combined Action Force
CAG	Combined Action Group
CAP	Combined Action Platoon
CENTCOM	Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CJTF-7	Combined Joint Task Force - 7
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Team
COAC	Combined Action Company
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support

COSVN	Central Office for South Vietnam
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPATT	Coalition Police Assistance Training Team
DLF	Dhofar Liberation Front
DWEC	District War Executive Council
IA	Iraqi Army
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ING	Iraqi National Guard
IP	Iraqi Police
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
FOB	Forward Operating Base
JAM	Jaysh Al-Mahdi
JSS	Joint Security Station
MAAG	Military Assistance and Advisory Group
MACV	Military Advisory Command Vietnam
MAF	Marine Amphibious Force
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps – Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Force – Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MSR	Main Supply Route
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer

NLF	National Liberation Front
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam (North)
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PF	Popular Forces
PFLOAG	Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf
PSDF	People's Self Defense Force
PSIAB	Police Station In A Box
RF	Regional Forces
RVVAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SAF	Sultan's Armed Forces
SAS	Special Air Service
SOI	Sons Of Iraq
SWEC	State War Executive Council
TAOR	Tactical Area Of Responsibility
U.N.	United Nations
U.S.	United States
VBIED	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In attempts to optimize campaigns to achieve political objectives, armies hope to harness all of their efforts onto a single solution that will make the horrors of battle that they face disappear. There even exist valid military theoretical concepts such as centers of gravity and defeat mechanisms that at first glance seem to imply that certain victory will follow given the right formula or correct node to attack. War practitioners, however, have rightly concluded that although fictional monsters can be slain with a single silver bullet, there are no easy answers in the art of war.

This paper is no different. Although it focuses on local security forces in counterinsurgency, it does not assume that their effectiveness will ultimately result in a counterinsurgent victory. Indeed its purpose is to examine one of the many aspects of a counterinsurgent campaign in the effort to determine what factors primarily contributed to the successes and failures of local security forces. The case study approach is applied to see if some general combination of factors exist that can inform the counterinsurgent as to the potential success or failure of his grassroots security apparatus.

One of the limitations in using a case study approach and qualitative research in general is that the research examines episodes of the human experience in which human action changes the environment. Once the infinite changes have occurred there is no turning back to reset the conditions and run another experiment. It is therefore impossible to isolate all of the variables to discover how the outcome of an event might have changed especially with Clausewitzian chance and friction ever present in the study of conflict. Further limiting the study, as John Shy and Thomas Collier point out, is the fact

that insurgencies themselves are —episodes" and attempts to abstract a —strategy of revolutionary warfare" misses —the specific social, political, and psychological conditions that make a revolution possible. Without those conditions, strategic technique is meaningless."[1] However, war is war and in the Jomini tradition one may expect a certain set of general principles to remain despite the changing environment. Although the equation of history ultimately determines the outcome one can potentially derive general inputs, such as a general set of Principles of War, which significantly influence the result. Thus, the following examination attempts to discover what general factors predominantly determine the security outcomes of local security forces in counterinsurgency campaigns.

      Chapter 2 of this paper describes the contributions of several counterinsurgency theorists with the aim of examining the common themes in their writing. The chapter concludes with where the theorists believe local security forces fit into the counterinsurgent campaign. Chapter 3 will provide a brief overview of local security forces in four historical case studies to attempt to derive a set of factors that determine the success of the security effort. Chapters 4 and 5 will test this derivation against in-depth case studies of the U.S. in Vietnam (1954-1972) and the U.S. in Iraq (2003-2011). Chapter 6 provides the conclusions which will hopefully arm the military professional and academic alike with a set of ideas or considerations that most impact the success or failure of local security forces.

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[1] John Shy and Thomas Collier, —Revolutionary War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 818-819.

CHAPTER 2

COUNTERINSURGENCY

<u>Counterinsurgency Definition</u>

Although ―war is war,‖ counterinsurgency campaigns deserve unique study due to

the internal nature of insurgency conflict.[2] An insurgency is a contest for political power

within a geo-political entity or as French counterinsurgency theorist David Galula simply

stated, ―a civil war.‖[3] U.S. Army doctrine defines insurgency as ―an organized movement

aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and

armed conflict.‖[4] Both the words organized and overthrow narrow the scope of the

definition unnecessarily, as there are many conflicts that scholars, military leaders, and

politicians often classify as insurgencies that fit neither the organized or overthrow

requirements. For example, the majority of the insurgent combatants in present day

Afghanistan are not necessarily engaged in armed conflict to overthrow the Afghan

government nor does each insurgent organization fit into some larger organized

movement.[5] To allow for a more inclusive definition to examine internal conflicts,

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[2]Daniel Marston, ―Counterinsurgency Seminar 4: Irish War of Independence 1919-1921‖ (Lecture, Lewis and Clark Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 17 December 2010).

[3]David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), 5.

[4]Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 1-1.

[5]In fact many such conflicts do not fit this definition. For example, only a select few of the many groups in Iraq from 2003-2011 sought to overthrow the government. The Vietnam conflict saw an organized insurgency but also a large outside conventional force that ultimately decided the conflict.

insurgency will be defined in this paper as a movement aimed at the overthrow or

reduction in power of a national or local government through the use of subversion and

armed conflict.[6] Counterinsurgency is fairly intuitive as the word counter implies the

opposite. In other words, government action aimed at the defeat of a subversive and

violent movement or government action taken to defeat an insurgency.

<div align="center">Counterinsurgency Theory</div>

Examining the body of work from counterinsurgency theorists, a historian or

counterinsurgency practitioner can find everything from a step by step guide to

counterinsurgency to general books of ideas on the subject.[7] Despite the diversity of the

theorists' approaches to developing their frameworks, they paint a strikingly similar

picture of the overall nature of an insurgency. Given the uniqueness of the societies in

which insurgencies occur, a reoccurrence of a common set of themes that take on

increased significance with respect to insurgencies is somewhat unanticipated. In general,

the theorists view underlying cause, propaganda, external influence, intelligence and the

population as significant factors in relationship to the impact they have on the course of

the campaign for all sides of the conflict. Certainly an infinite number of variables

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[6]Author's definition. For a discussion of the definition and types of insurgencies see Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder: CO, 1980), 1-5.

[7]Theorists are often classified into Maoist and post-Maoists groups. However, this classification implies that there was a revolutionary development in counterinsurgency theory rather than the more accurate evolutionary nature of counterinsurgency theoretical development. Thus, primary theorists will be presented by nationality origin followed by the general time period of their writings. The national origin order of France, Britain, the U.S., and Australia was chosen arbitrarily. On the first mention of a theorist a footnote will provide some brief information on him.

interact with one another determining the outcome of a conflict. Thus, the insurgency themes distilled from the theorists in this chapter are most representative of their ideas and believed by them to be the most germane to the outcome.

In addition to the themes presented, the theorists also agree that in counterinsurgency campaigns ―political factors are primary."[8] However, Clausewitz spelled out that war itself was ―not merely a political act, but also a political instrument, a carrying out of the same by other means."[9] Thus, political primacy is a characteristic of all war and does not necessarily merit special mention with respect to counterinsurgency. As Colonel Gian Gentile aptly explains, ―there is nothing more political in a platoon leader in the Korengal Valley talking to a sheik about local governance then there was of a rifle platoon leader storming the beach at Normandy."[10] Of course many of the theorists' themes are also present in all wars but the theorists believed that they gained heightened importance over other variables of war in terms of the impact that they had on the direction and outcome of an insurgency.

Tactics such as terrorism and resettlement will be discussed when examining some of the theorists' general themes, but the tactics championed by various theorists differ with some offering no immediate practical application. Such is the nature of theory, and perhaps rightly so. The situational differences of insurgencies all require different

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[8]Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 1-22.

[9]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

[10]Gian Gentile, ―A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army," *Parameters* (Autumn 2009): 13.

tactical, operational, and strategic approaches as well as continued adaptation by all parties of the conflict.

Theme 1: Cause

First, all counterinsurgency theorists generally agree on the significance of grievances, ideology, and narrative which combine to form the overall insurgent cause. The insurgent cause is the entire reason for a movement's existence and the driver of the conflict. David Galula referred to the insurgent's cause as a ―formidable asset" and that an insurgent movement cannot hope to pose a serious threat to the government's power without it. He further states that the best cause is one that provides the maximum number of supporters with the least number of opponents.[11] Sir Robert Thompson noted that a primary requisite for an insurgency was a cause and that a multitude of grievances or

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[11]Galula, 7, 13, 18-20. Galula was a French army officer who developed and practiced his theories on counterinsurgency as a company commander in Algeria. Prior to his experience as a counterinsurgency practitioner he was shaped by his personal observations of the Chinese Civil War. In 1964, he wrote his classic counterinsurgency work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* was published. For more information on Galula see Ann Marlowe, ―David Galula: His Life and Intellectual Context" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, 2010).

ideologies could be added to the cause.[12] Mark O'Neill goes as far to say that the cause is the ―centre of gravity for insurgents and sustains their fight."[13]

Other counterinsurgency theorists have been less than enamored with a single cause championed by an insurgency, but rather have discussed grievances, ideology, or narrative in the insurgent motivation toward violence. Roger Trinquier, believed that internal conflict complaints arose from ideology, social conditions, religion, and economic conditions but noted that any conflict grievance could be elevated in importance and exploited.[14] John Mackinlay believes that neither ideology nor narrative can ensure persistence in an insurgency, but rather that a ―genuine grievance" must be the basis for continued conflict.[15] Peter Paret and John Shy emphasized the issues of land

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[12]Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 21. Sir Robert Thompson was a British Royal Air Force Officer who served in Malaya as Secretary of Defense for Malaya during the Malayan emergency. He also served as the senior British advisor to South Vietnam in the early 1960s and was influential on the formation of the United States' and South Vietnam's counterinsurgency strategy. He wrote numerous articles and books on both the Vietnam and Malayan conflict, in addition to his most widely read book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (1966).

[13]Mark O'Neill, *Confronting the Hydra* (Sydney: Lowry Institute, 2009), 17. Lieutenant Colonel O'Neill has served in Somalia, Mozamique, and Iraq, where he served as the senior advisor to the Multi-National Force Iraq's Counterinsurgency Center of Excellence in Taji.

[14]Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), 6. Trinquier was a French infantry officer who served as a commander and staff officer in China, Indochina, and Algeria. He wrote about his experiences and theories on counterinsurgency including his most famous work, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (1961).

[15]John Mackinlay, *Rethinking Counterinsurgency*, Counterinsurgency Study 5 (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), 52. Dr. John Mackinlay is a British theorist currently working in the War Studies Department of Kings College London where he is a teaching fellow. He is most known for his work *The Insurgent Archipelago* (2009).

reform, corruption, and poverty to win people to the guerrilla's side.[16] Steve Metz also focuses on grievance drivers of insurgency conflict as he writes that, ―Without a gun, most insurgent soldiers are simply poor, uneducated, disempowered people with no prospects and little hope." Although Metz acknowledges the importance of narrative, grievance, and ideology in building an insurgent cause and the subsequent initiation of hostilities, he also posits that as the conflict continues that these political factors become secondary and economic factors tend to dominate continued actions by various actors in the conflict.[17] Frank Hoffman disagrees that economic factors are powerful enough to overcome religious beliefs but does agree that perceived injustices are important foundations of insurgencies.[18]

From the insurgent's standpoint, Mao and Giap were both masters at exploiting drivers of instability to achieve their political aims. Both used elements of anti-

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[16]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. Green (New York: Praeger, 1962), 41. Dr. Peter Paret is a modern European historian who is one of the world's leading Clausewitzian scholars. He has written numerous books concerning guerrilla warfare and French counterinsurgency experiences. John Shy is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Michigan whose primary area of interest is on Europe and North American history from the seventeenth century to present.

[17]Steve Metz, ―New Challenges and Old Concepts: Understanding 21st Century Insurgency," *Parameters* (Winter 2007-08): 23-24, 27. Dr. Steven Metz (U.S.) is Chairman of the Regional Stability and Planning Department and Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute. He has written numerous monographs concerning counterinsurgency theory and the war in Iraq.

[18]Frank Hoffman, ―Neo-Classical Counter-insurgency?" *Parameters* (Summer 2007): 78-82. Mr. Hoffman is a national security consultant and retired U.S. Marine Corps Reserve officer. He has authored numerous articles concerning military history, military policy, strategy, and counterinsurgency. Additionally, he was a member of the writing team that authored the counterinsurgency manual (FM 3-24) for the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps.

colonialism, anti-imperialism, and nationalism in defining their causes and used

communism as a common ideology for political indoctrination. Finally, both successfully

capitalized on the rural population's land based grievances to further their aims.[19]

Theme 2: Propaganda

Once opposing sides have determined a cause, communication of their cause and

its components, while undermining their opponent's cause, is important as the

communication effort will influence the ability to persuade internal elements of the

population, the ability to garner outside support, the ability to weaken the will of their

opponent, and the ability to continue the campaign. Propaganda is important in an

insurgency because persuasion is generally seen as a more effective long term human

behavioral changer than coercion. Although coercion may be all that is needed to end a

conflict in some circumstances, unchecked propaganda will enhance the spreading of the

cause, shape the historical narrative of the conflict, and may contribute to a resumption of

hostilities as conflicting ideas remain to arouse human emotions.

General Sir Frank Kitson demonstrates the importance of propaganda by stating

that ―campaigns of insurgency . . . are primarily concerned with the struggle for men's

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[19]Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerilla War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Baltimore, MD: N&A Publishing, 1992). Mao was a Chinese warlord who rose to become the first Chairman of the People's Republic of China after waging a protracted insurgency against Chinese nationalists and the Japanese. His works on guerrilla warfare are the most widely read of any insurgent leader in history. Vo Nguyen Giap, ―Inside the Vietminh,‖ in *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him: Selections from the Marine Corps Gazette*, ed. T. N. Green (New York: Praeger, 1962). General Giap was the leader of the Vietminh's armed forces against France in Indochina and People's Army of Vietnam forces against the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and U.S. Army during periods in the Vietnam Conflict. He is widely credited with adapting and innovating Mao's theories of revolutionary warfare to achieve communist victory in Vietnam.

minds."[20] Hoffman concurs with Kitson's assessment as he believes that the outcome of

an insurgency is decided in the minds of people.[21] Even the 2006 U.S. National Security

Strategy concurred with the theorists in a larger sense noting, ―In the long run, winning

the war on terror means winning the battle of ideas, for it is ideas that can turn the

disenchanted into murderers willing to kill innocent victims."[22]

Galula wrote extensively about propaganda and its role in both the insurgent's and

counterinsurgent's campaigns. From both he and other theorists, counterinsurgents have

three target audiences for their propaganda: the host nation population, the interventionist

population, and the insurgents. Although Galula prescribed various propaganda focuses

and themes for counterinsurgents at various stages in the campaign, he saw significant

limitations of the counterinsurgent's propaganda efforts. He believed the

counterinsurgent would be judged by the population according to their deeds, not their

words.[23]

For the insurgent, Galula saw propaganda as potentially the most potent weapon

in the insurgent's arsenal. Even if the insurgent had no real platform but had effective

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[20]Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (London: Faber & Faber 1977), 282. Sir Frank Kitson is a retired General of the British army who served in the Malaya, Kenya, and Northern Ireland. His two primary classic counterinsurgency works are *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peacekeeping* (1971) and *Bunch of Five* (1977).

[21]Hoffman, 80.

[22]U.S. National Security Council, *National Security Strategy*, March, 2006, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionIII.html (accessed 26 December 2010).

[23]Galula, 14-15.

propaganda he believed that ―the insurgent still may win.‖[24] Thompson believed that insurgent weapons of propaganda could be so effective that one of his principles of counterinsurgency was that the counterinsurgent should focus on defeating ―political subversion, not the guerrillas.‖[25] Kitson comments on the psychological effects of terrorist tactics calling them ―armed propaganda‖ as he believed terrorism could coerce the population into cooperation or create the appearance of an eventual insurgent victory.[26] Mackinlay has further stressed the power of propaganda from acts of terror by labeling it ―propaganda of the deed‖ and cites this as a primary factor in the fueling of Islamist global jihad.[27] Metz noted another propaganda benefit of terrorist attacks in the appearance of insurgent success that terrorism provides.[28] This perception of winning was seen to be crucially important by nearly all of the prominent counterinsurgency theorists, as they believed that the population would render support, in effect hedging their bets, to the side that they believed would achieve final victory.

Propaganda was also essential for the insurgency not only to influence the population, but also to control its own armed forces. Propaganda provided the indoctrination necessary for insurgents, particularly guerrilla fighters, to maintain

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[24]Galula, 14.

[25]Thompson, 50-58. Thompson‘s five principles of counterinsurgency are the government must have a clear political aim, the government must function in accordance with the law, the government must have an overall plan, the government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas, and in the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first.

[26]Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 282.

[27]Mackinlay, 50.

[28]Metz, 26.

discipline and continue fighting in harsh conditions with little support. Galula cites a

Vietminh regimental commander in 1952 pleading for reinforcements to which the

Vietminh command replied, ―Impossible to send you replacements now; they have not

yet received full political indoctrination."[29] Mao would certainly agree and expect his

officers to continue the indoctrination of their soldiers to ensure discipline and ultimate

success.[30] Giap continued to implement Mao's ideas on discipline and saw the routine

need to educate and persuade members of his organization to instill and maintain it.[31]

Theme 3: External Influence

Wars are seldom merely two-sided and insurgencies are no different despite the

fact that they are internal conflicts.[32] However, external influence may deserve special

mention in a discussion of counterinsurgency due to the prime requisite of its presence as

a factor in the campaign for an insurgent to succeed. Where counterinsurgents have been

successful in eliminating outside support, they seem to have largely achieved their

political objectives and where they have failed to eliminate extensive support from

external actors they have largely failed to achieve similar political objectives.[33]

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[29]Galula, 57.

[30]Mao, 108.

[31]Giap, 161-163.

[32]In fact, nearly all of our western theorists derive much of their influence from the perspective of an interventionist or occupying power supporting a weak government.

[33]Brian Linn, *The Philippine War: 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), 190. For example in the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines (1899-1902) island archipelago geography coupled with a strong U.S. naval presence prevented large material support, particularly arms, to the insurgency. Malaya

Galula viewed external support as a necessary requirement for an insurgent

victory. He categorized external support for insurgents into moral support, political

support, technical support, financial support, and military support.[34] Kitson is also

concerned with the power of external support noting that the ―propaganda battle‖ must be

won both internally and in the arena of world opinion where state and non-state actors are

in position to render aid to an insurgency.[35] In other words, attempting to gain

international legitimacy for the counterinsurgent has a direct practical application in

limiting the ability for the insurgent to gain external support.

John McCuen agreed with Galula and thought that a vital principle of insurgent

strategy was to seek and gain outside support. McCuen also viewed outside support as

equally important for the counterinsurgent due to the large expenditure of resources that

his counterinsurgency strategy required. He comments on the importance to isolate the

insurgency from outside political support to deny cross border sanctuaries and ensure the

neutrality of potential insurgent supporters. Also, McCuen described the necessity of

controlling borders to limit the ability for the insurgency to receive outside support and

cited the Morice Line, constructed by the French in Algeria along the Tunisian border, as

an effective example of border control. Further, he stated that the construction,

maintenance, and constant defense of borders was extremely resource intensive and that

the counterinsurgent may instead choose to conduct limited attacks into a zone nearby the

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and Vietnam are also good examples where isolation was achieved in Malaya and where
isolation was not achieved in the case of the U.S. conflict in Vietnam.

[34]Galula, 39-42.

[35]Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 286. This was similar to Galula‘s moral and political
support which could lead to other forms of physical support later.

border to limit outside support to insurgents. In his conclusion on the subject, he stated that —outside support is often decisive in revolutionary war."[36]

Outside support, although essential for both the counterinsurgent and insurgent, can cause its own set of problems that may outweigh the advantages if not carefully managed. For the counterinsurgent, overt outside support, particularly in the form of foreign troops, can do significant harm to the counterinsurgent's political power and bolster the insurgent narrative. Additionally, any form of support can tend to create dependency and a sense of moral hazard for either side and may delay necessary political reforms. Mao was cautious of this potential dependency and instructed his officers to ensure that they could conduct self-sustaining operations —primarily on what the locality affords."[37]

Theme 4: Intelligence

Intelligence becomes increasingly significant in an insurgency due to the insurgents' ability to blend in with the population. Often devoid of any immediately recognizable insurgent formations or uniforms, precise intelligence is required for the counterinsurgent to kill or capture the actual insurgent while maintaining the goal and lawful requirement of minimizing civilian death and destruction to otherwise civilian infrastructure. As Kitson articulately captures the essence of the problem, —The problem

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[36]John McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* (Harrisburg, PA: Stockpole Books, 1966), 65-69, 245-251. John McCuen retired as a Colonel in the U.S. Army. His work *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* (1966) was widely read at the time of its publishing within the U.S. Army and remained on the professional reading list until the late 1970s.

[37]Mao, 77.

of destroying enemy armed groups and their supporters therefore consists very largely of finding them."[38] Not only are insurgent combatants a target of intelligence, but the ideological cadres attempting to organize, intimidate, and shower the population with propaganda must be a part of the intelligence collection and targeting effort. Intelligence is just as critical for the insurgent as he requires it to maintain surprise and avoid contact with the counterinsurgent unless on favorable terms.

The counterinsurgent theorists have commented so frequently on intelligence that Galula critiqued previous theorists of only contributing dogma rather than methods to generate intelligence. Thus, Galula's overall step by step counterinsurgency approach includes techniques and methods on generating intelligence. For example in his Step 3, Contact and Control of the Population, he outlined the importance of a census, he prescribed considerations in selecting informants, and he discussed legal ways of applying pressure to a population to generate intelligence if it was initially not being produced.[39] Trinquier went into further detail describing an overall population organization scheme that would allow for generation of human intelligence at the grassroots level.[40] Additionally, both Galula and Trinquier commented on the significance of a method allowing the anonymous transfer of information between the

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[38]Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peacekeeping* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 95.

[39]Galula, xii, 120. Galula thought the best informants in a population were those who had similar political or ideological view as the government or who had the most to lose if the insurgency was successful.

[40]Trinquier, 29-40. Trinquier's population organization was based initially on a census like many of the other theorists. See also Galula, 116-117; Thompson, 144 for other discussions on census operations.

population and security forces.[41] Trinquier expanded Galula's scope on the selection of

suitable informers and agents to include captured and subsequently turned insurgents.

Trinquier also recognized the need to quickly take action on intelligence and proposed

the creation of a quick reaction force under the direction of the intelligence service to

quickly prosecute insurgent targets.[42] Thompson's writings contain discussions of

intelligence throughout, and he included an entire chapter on intelligence but omitted it

from his principles of counterinsurgency.[43]

Building on Thompson's theory in the British counterinsurgency tradition, Kitson

adds intelligence as one of the four parts of his counterinsurgency framework. Kitson,

like those before him, writes concerning the immediate requirement of establishing an

effective counterinsurgent intelligence organization. Kitson differs slightly from

Trinquier on the organization and control of the intelligence service seeing the need for

decentralization while Trinquier viewed central control of the intelligence organization as

important.[44] Additionally, Kitson sees more difficulties than Trinquier did in gaining

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[41]Galula, 119; Trinquier, 36.

[42]Trinquier, 37-38.

[43]Thompson's inclusion of an entire chapter on intelligence in his book *Defeating Communist Insurgency* was seen as a measure to rectify a perceived omission in Gwynn's *Imperial Policing* (1934). Gwynn discussed intelligence but did not set it apart either as a principle or a separate chapter in his writing most likely because he believed it blatantly obvious that a large part of the success of the counterinsurgent effort would depend on intelligence. In continuing the evolution of the British school of counterinsurgency theory, Kitson goes a step further than Thompson and makes it one of his principles in addition to an entire chapter on the subject of intelligence in his book *Low Intensity Operations* (1971).

[44]Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 287-291. Kitson's framework for counterinsurgency consists of four parts including —good coordinating machinery at every level for the direction of the campaign, arrangements for ensuring that the insurgents do not win the

precise intelligence that would enable immediate action by the counterinsurgent. As such, Kitson broke down intelligence into background information and contact information; the former going through an iterative intelligence process to be turned into the latter. He views that the primary role of the operational commander is to develop background information and through analysis, continued collection, and operations turn the information into contact information.[45] Kitson is especially important in this regard, as he views intelligence to be the primary purview of the commander rather than of a single intelligence apparatus. Instead of comments concerning the direct handling of intelligence, O'Neill perceives a need for counterinsurgents to adapt and views intelligence as one of the four primary ways that enable adaptation throughout a campaign.[46]

Examining the insurgent's requirement for intelligence, Paret and Shy view most insurgents, particularly guerrillas, as militarily weak when compared to the counterinsurgent and requiring intelligence to counter their weakness.[47] Mao's writings support their assertions when he stated that one of the roles of the organized population is to provide information concerning the government's security forces. Mao also routinely

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war for the minds of the people, an intelligence organization suited to the circumstances, and a legal system adequate to the needs of the movement."

[45]Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 96-98.

[46]O'Neill, 26.

[47]Paret and Shy, 38-39.

wrote of the insurgent requirement for alertness and initiative which are enabled by accurate intelligence.[48]

Theme 5: The Population

According to the overwhelming majority of counterinsurgency theorists, the population is at the center of the conflict. Galula attributed the impetus for the insurgent to fight amongst the population to his inferior military strength. Additionally, he predicted that if the insurgent can control and gain support from the population that he would certainly triumph. As he noted, ―in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness." It is important to note the distinction that Galula makes in his words. He did not write that the insurgent or counterinsurgent needed to gain ―explicit agreement" from the population but that ―its submissiveness" may suffice. Emphasizing the importance of the population, Galula described it as ―the objective" and noted that the insurgent will try every effort to further involve the population in the conflict.[49]

Trinquier also viewed support of the population as essential to a favorable insurgent outcome of the conflict but viewed destruction of the political infrastructure subverting the population as the primary task for the counterinsurgent. Destroying this insurgent organization was deemed vital because of its ability to control the population, causing Trinquier to label this organization as ―the master weapon in modern warfare."[50]

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[48]Mao, 48-50, 117-124.

[49]Galula, 7-9.

[50]Trinquier, 8, 30.

In general, Thompson agreed with both of the French theorists on the importance of the population by stating that, ―An insurgent movement is a war for the people.‖ Additionally, Thompson submitted that the population may be won by the counterinsurgent but only after it is first controlled. Thompson also agreed with Trinquier on the importance of destroying the insurgent campaign of subversion rather than focusing on destroying insurgent combatants. He believed that ―If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population . . . then their destruction becomes automatic.‖[51]

As previously mentioned, Kitson describes insurgency as a struggle for men‗s minds. In the struggle, he views insurgents relying on the population primarily for material support.[52] In the counterinsurgent‗s efforts to influence the population, Kitson, like many other theorists, explains the importance of soldier conduct. He also makes a strong case for a counterinsurgent not choosing a legal course of action if he believes it to be morally wrong due to the ―adverse effects which is likely to have on people‗s attitudes.‖[53]

Paret and Shy agree with Galula in that the insurgent requires active support of some of the population and apathy of the remainder. Also, they believe that the population solves the insurgent‗s problems of ―logistics and intelligence.‖ Further, they propose that this reliance on the population is turned into an advantage by the insurgent

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[51]Thompson, 51, 55-57.

[52]Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 282, 302.

[53]Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, 282, 302. For example, rules of engagement specify to the counterinsurgent force conditions under which it may employ force to accomplish its missions. So although some level of force may be authorized by the rules in a situation, Kitson‗s writing suggests that a purely legal view is too simplistic and that the moral aspects of employing force should also be considered.

because it forces the insurgent to seek to control the population and develop a political program if none existed previously. Paret and Shy, like Galula, also speak to the dual potential of either controlling or alienating the population through insurgent use of terrorist tactics. They offer that an insurgent's use of terrorism is a risky tactical undertaking that could potentially alienate the desired target audience. For the counterinsurgent, Paret and Shy believe it necessary to sever the link between the insurgent and the population. To break this link, they admit, like many other theorists, that some —harsh coercive measures" may have to be used and likewise arrive at a consensus with other theorists that the measures must be within a legal framework. Finally, Paret and Shy stressed the importance of soldier conduct in conducting operations in and amongst the population.[54]

McCuen is perhaps the most interesting theorist because his overall strategy to design and execute a counterinsurgency campaign is to simply mirror the insurgent campaign. So with respect to the population, the counterinsurgent must not simply stop the insurgent from mobilizing the population but mobilize the population himself. As the insurgent will be unable to entirely mobilize the population by persuasion, McCuen argued that the counterinsurgent will also need a program of coercive measures designed to mobilize them. To clarify, although McCuen is advocating the adoption of the insurgent strategy, he is not advocating the use of insurgent tactics which are generally outside the law. So rather than terrorism, McCuen advocates legal population control

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[54]Paret and Shy, 39, 41, 43-45, 50-51.

measures such as curfews, resettlement, food control, and maximum penalties for assisting insurgents.[55]

Metz does not offer much with respect to the importance of the population other than that they will be brutalized by the effects of protracted conflict occurring in their midst and for their allegiance. Thus, Metz advocates a quick resolution to the conflict rather than attempting an outright defeat of the insurgency as he believes the potential post-conflict export of violent individuals outside of the national boundaries of the original conflict will cause more damage in the long run.[56]

Hoffman poses some interesting points with respect to the population indicating the evolutionary nature of counterinsurgency theory. He suspects that urbanization is making control of the population more difficult and that the insurgent has more opportunity than ever to blend into the larger urban population. Hoffman also poses a seemingly problematic notion to many of the other theorists. He states that, ―The presumption that the insurgents still seek or need popular support from a neutral mass of undecideds requires reconsideration.‖[57] However, previous theorists such as Thompson have already proposed the notion that any idea of insurgent support from a mass of people or the idea of a People‗s War was pure mythology. As Thompson stated,

> a communist armed insurgency is not a ‗People‗s Revolutionary War‗ . . . the insurgent‗s strengths, including active supporters, in both Malaya and Vietnam (until the end of 1964) were at no stage any more than one per cent of the population, and initially a great deal less than that. This does not qualify an insurgency as a ‗People‗s Revolutionary War‗, but only as a revolutionary form of

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[55]McCuen, 56-57.

[56]Metz, 27.

[57]Hoffman, 76-77.

warfare designed to enable a very small ruthless minority to gain control over the people.[58]

From the insurgent's perspective, Mao's comments on the population mirror many made by the counterinsurgent theorists undoubtedly because they were significantly influenced by his works and the result of his insurgency. Additionally, Mao made the widely referenced fish to water analogy comparing the guerrilla to a fish that swims in the water of the population. Mao made this analogy when discussing the operational advantage that the population provided. Support of the population provided the ability of the guerrilla to operate behind the enemy's front, causing the counterinsurgent to garrison the territory extensively. Thus, the military advantage gained for Mao by the population was the creation of a non-contiguous battlefield.[59]

Counterinsurgency Security Force Framework

The combination of the theorists' general themes invariably influence the tactics, operational approach, and strategy that all sides of a conflict pursue. One decision facing the counterinsurgent is the organization and subsequent employment of a security force framework under these themes that will be combined with other instruments of national power to defeat an insurgency. For example, options will be considered as to whether to employ a host nation or an interventionist security force in certain situations which will have an impact on cause, propaganda, external support, intelligence, and the ability to control the population.

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[58]Thompson, 49.

[59]Mao, 113.

In setting up his vision of a security force framework, Galula described the dilemma facing the counterinsurgent. He wrote, "The insurgent blows up a bridge, so every bridge has to be guarded; he throws a grenade in a movie theater, so every person entering a public places has to be searched. When the insurgent burns a farm, all the farmers clamor for protection; if they do not receive it, they may be tempted to deal privately with the insurgent." Due to the relative ease at which insurgents were able to create disorder according to Galula, the counterinsurgent force had difficulty providing enough security forces to simultaneously enforce population control measures, guard key infrastructure, protect people and their property, and hunt insurgents. Additionally, the typical enemy that Galula saw "has no territory" and "is everywhere but nowhere." To solve this dilemma Galula proscribed the need for two types of forces, static and mobile. The static forces were charged with control and protection in specific areas while the mobile forces were charged with hunting guerrillas wherever they may be. Of interest Galula not only championed ultimate civilian control of the security effort but also advocated temporary command authority of mobile forces by static forces when the former is operating in the latter's area. His rationale is provided by

> The static units are obviously those that know best the local situation, the population, the local problems; if a mistake is made, they are the ones who will bear the consequences. It follows that when a mobile unit is sent to operate temporarily in an area, it must come under the territorial command, even if the territorial commander is a junior officer.

Galula did not rigidly specify which organization or organizational mix should comprise the static or mobile forces. He merely recognized that both are required and that both the police and the armed forces comprised a part of the control apparatus of the counterinsurgent. In recognizing the high manpower requirement associated with the

counterinsurgent's forces having to remain partially static, he advocated choosing particular geographical areas and methodically defeating the insurgency in those areas. Once the insurgency had been defeated in a particular local area, he stated that the bulk of the counterinsurgency force could move on to another area, leaving behind a force to retain government control over the area.[60]

Trinquier's writing focused primarily on the creation of a nationwide militia to defeat an insurgency which he calls the inhabitant's organization. Methodically built up from the local level yet responsive to central directives, the inhabitant's organization is designed to share responsibility of community defense between the government and the individual. Trinquier advocated limits on the authority of the militia such as information gathering but does leave himself the option of employing the organization in simple police duties. Also, Trinquier viewed counterinsurgency as generally ―a extensive police operation" with the army taking over the task if the police were unable to handle the insurgency in a particular area. Although viewing counterinsurgency as a police operation, Trinquier did not agree that the police should conduct operations solely alone in contested areas. He believed that the police, organized for law enforcement under peace time conditions, would not be able to defeat an insurgent organization and thus would require army support in populated areas.[61]

Trinquier offered extensive criticism of the tactics used by the French military in both Indochina and Algeria including outposting, patrolling from outposts, isolated

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[60]Galula, 11, 27, 71-72, 80, 82, 93. This strategy is often known as the oil spot or ink blot strategy. In U.S. Army doctrine it is known as clear-hold-build.

[61]Trinquier, 29-35, 43, 51.

ambushes, and "sweeps." His basic premise was that these operations were largely ineffective because the insurgent retained control of the population during their execution which allowed the insurgent a host of benefits including evading capture or battle. He did, however, have high praise for tactics used by indigenous security forces such as the native ―maquisards" in Indochina and attributed their success to the fact that they were recruited from and lived amongst the population. Like Galula, Trinquier viewed a static force in charge of an area which he calls ―sector forces" having boundaries that he termed ―gridding." In his discussion of sector forces, his critique of outposts is based on his observation that sector forces had the tendency to turn outposts into ―strongholds" that served no purpose because the sector security force remained separated from the population. Rather than a stronghold, Trinquier envisioned local security forces occupying a few houses, and then organizing the inhabitants for the overall defense a village. The stronghold Trinquier did envision was comprised of the outer perimeter of the entire populated area and saw this step along with the inhabitant organization allowing for the second type of force, ―interval troops," which would comprise a reserve and be mobile between various fortified populated areas. In efforts to defeat potential large guerrilla fighting organizations, Trinquier also discusses a fourth echelon in the security force framework, the ―intervention troops." The intervention troops are comprised of an uncommitted reserve belonging to the overall zone commander. Finally, Trinquier outlines a top tier in his security force framework, the theater level reserve which is employed by the theater commander to regain control of previously pacified areas or to reinforce efforts of intervention troops. In summary, Trinquier prescribed a counterinsurgent security force framework to be comprised of the militia or inhabitant

organization at the lowest level working with the local police, followed by Army sector forces working with police and the inhabitant organization to secure areas and control the population, followed by interval troops as a sector reserve, followed by interventionist troops as a zone reserve, followed by a theater reserve. This overall security force framework was known as quadrillage.[62]

Overall, Trinquier's theory is somewhat contradictory on specific points with respect to security forces and their tactics. For example, he critiques the French Army's use of outposts and the patrols originating from them to kill or capture guerrillas but then praises the U.S. Army's use of outposts and patrols in Korea to defeat guerrillas as part of the U.S. Army's Operation Ratkiller.[63] He sees the Army as complementing the police in counterinsurgency and taking over the operation if the police are not up to the task but cites militias and his inhabitant organization as the most successful local security forces. Both he and Galula mention police and talk of political aspects of a counterinsurgency campaign but neither define clear roles and responsibilities for them, as both of their experiences likely indicate that the French Army performed traditional police tasks to fill the absence of police effectiveness and capability.

Thompson accounted for this lack of specificity in the body of counterinsurgency theory concerning police in the security force framework in his work. Using the British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya as a model, he cited the army, police, and the home guard as the three security forces required to defeat an insurgency. The home guard was primarily a static force that assisted the police in population control and defense of

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[62]Trinquier, 52-60, 72-75, 81, 86-87.

[63]Trinquier, 66.

their village. The regular police, primarily responsible for law enforcement and small scale defensive operations, also established a para-military wing that was organized into platoons and companies for hunting insurgents or reinforcing police and a constabulary, which in the case of Malaya, was primarily concerned with defending key infrastructure. A small portion of highly trained police formed the Special Branch, which was responsible for all intelligence pertaining to the insurgency.[64]

Thompson saw the terrain and enemy situation broken down into three basic areas and suggested appropriate security force mixes to defeat the insurgency in each locale. The first of these areas were towns, where the primary threat was terrorism and subversion. Thompson proscribed the police as sufficient to defeating this threat coupled with a militia, the home guard, in the villages to complement the police. The second area consisted of rural areas and villages where government control was contested. Thompson proscribed the entirety of police security force capabilities to defeat the insurgency here and military support available to initially clear insurgents from areas or respond to large scale insurgent attacks. As the area was eliminated of insurgents, the police, with the establishment of a home guard, would be able to maintain control. The final area consisted of remote rural areas where insurgents were known to have control. This area was entirely the Army's responsibility. Due to Thompson's view, which was consistent with all of the other theorists, of civil over military primacy, he also believed that the

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[64]Thompson, 103. Thompson also notes that the police were approximately twice as large as the army.

Army that supported the civil authority must be ―a highly trained and disciplined professional army, not a massive popular army.‖[65]

Thompson‗s security force framework theory, which he calls the ―balance of forces,‖ is consistent with the British military tradition in imperial policing. The British have sought to defeat insurgencies and deal with various emergencies primarily through a police apparatus comprised of regular police, para-military police forces, and a police intelligence organization in efforts to maintain civil primacy of the counterinsurgency campaign. Despite traditions of British police successes in counterinsurgency, they have not come without support from the British military including the British army performing many of the tasks that Thompson‗s model defined for police.

Kitson views Thompson‗s idea of the balance of forces through an economic lens as he believes that there exists some optimal number of total security forces for the counterinsurgent‗s campaign. He thinks that a security force too numerous would provide the insurgents with a target rich environment, while too few may risk mission failure. Kitson also believes that the key to executing a clear-hold-build strategy resides with the ability of local security forces to hold areas. Finally, Kitson advocated an adjustment to both quadrillage and the security force framework used in Malaya in that the same forces should be used to conduct offensive clearing operations that conduct local security. If a near or slightly less than optimal number of security forces were available in an area, he believed that intelligence could provide the necessary targetable information to eliminate

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[65]Thompson, 104-105.

the insurgency with precision. Thus, with precise intelligence available, outside forces would not be required to clear areas.[66]

McCuen does not offer a specific security force framework in defeating an insurgency but rather uses case studies from historical counterinsurgencies to demonstrate the importance of various types of security forces. He did, however, advocate forming militias, or self defense organizations, to complement the police or army efforts and called them ―possibly the most important part of counter-organization of the population." Additionally, he recognized the need for territorial forces, mobile forces, indigenous forces, and counter-guerrilla forces to defeat an insurgency.[67]

Through more of a historical rather than a theoretical lens, Paret and Shy comment that successful counterinsurgencies have always utilized some system of division of territory with territorial security forces combined with a force capable of mobile strikes. They perceive that the mobile striking forces should be comprised of the ―best regulars" with the territorial forces comprised of mainly ―police or home-defense units."[68]

Other than Thompson's balance of forces, the theorists do not overly advocate a particular organization of security forces in terms of a police, army, and self-defense mix. What they do all generally advocate is that forces must be able to perform the tasks of law enforcement, population control, local security or territorial security, key infrastructure security, and attacks into insurgent held areas. Additionally, all of the

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[66]Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 132-135.

[67]McCuen, 107-108, 119-124.

[68]Paret and Shy, 50.

theorists generally advocated the use of militias for self defense and to incorporate the population into the government security apparatus. Some also advocated a tiered approach to security force establishment in terms of geography and military capability, progressing from smaller to greater in both cases. Finally, the theorists recognized the value of using indigenous forces in many of the various roles or tiers of the security force framework rather than relying on interventionist forces exclusively or even primarily.

Local Security Forces

In the discussion of the security force framework, the theorists all emphasized the importance of controlling the population, isolating the insurgency from the population, and protecting the population through the use of local security forces. Galula referred to local security forces as "static forces." Trinquier referred to them as ―sector forces" and specified various reserves that the sector forces would require, while Thompson referred to them specifically by name in reference to Malaya including the home guard and various elements of the police. Kitson did not specify them by name but indentified the ability of local security forces to hold areas as essential in the security effort while McCuen referred to them as self defense forces and territorial forces. In essence, local security forces are those security forces responsible for defeating the insurgency in coordination with civil authorities within the confines of the specific geographic area to which they are assigned. They often take the form of regular police, constabularies, militias, or even army formations. Within the counterinsurgency theorists' overall approach to defeat of an insurgency, the clear-hold-build phased approach, local security forces are the force which are primarily responsible for control of the population and defeat of isolated insurgent groups during the hold phase of a counterinsurgency

campaign in a specific geographic area. During the build phase, local security forces are responsible for coordinating efforts with civil authorities while defeating insurgent remnants in the same geographic area that they previously held. Although charged with defense or holding of an area, most local security forces will retain small unit offensive capability which is used routinely to patrol, ambush, raid, and attack isolated insurgent combatants. The next chapter will provide an overview of the use of local security forces in four historical campaigns. The following chapters will deal with local security forces in greater detail during the American phase of the Vietnam War and the operations in Iraq from 2003 to 2011.

CHAPTER 3

LOCAL SECURITY FORCES IN COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGNS

A historical examination is required to demonstrate the counterinsurgent's dual requirement of local security and offensive operations. As counterinsurgency campaigns are briefly examined with respect to this basic security force framework, particular emphasis will be placed on the contribution of local security forces. The purpose of this emphasis is to extract factors that heavily influenced the success or failure of a particular local security force in a specific campaign. These specific factors will then be examined to determine if they routinely surface in multiple campaigns or if the factors are applicable merely to that unique campaign. Following this chapter, the U.S. conflict in Vietnam (1954-1972) and U.S. conflict in Iraq (2003-2011) will be explored in greater detail to achieve a deeper analysis of local security forces successes and failures within their respective security frameworks. Those two in-depth case studies will serve to test the validity of the factors derived in this chapter.

The Philippine War (1899-1902)

The U.S. security force framework evolved over time during the Philippine War[69] from 1899-1902. Initially, the U.S. Army fought a conventional campaign to eradicate massed units of Philippine regulars who had recently finished destroying many of the

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[69]For an overall synopsis of the war, Brian Linn's *The Philippine War 1899-1902* is the lead work in the field. Alfred McCoy's, *Policing America's Emprire,* is the most comprehensive with respect to the Philippine Constabulary. One of the most highly acclaimed campaigns in the guerrilla war was General Bell's campaign in Batangas that is captured in Robert Ramsey's *A Masterpiece of Guerrilla Warfare: BG Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902*.

remaining Spanish outposts in the archipelago.[70] Following primarily conventional

operations, the U.S. Army chose to garrison many of the islands to perform security as

well as civil functions.[71] Joining the U.S. Army in the local security role in a few of the

garrisoned towns were the municipal police.[72]

Problems with the municipal police at the beginning of the U.S.

counterinsurgency effort included gross incompetence through abuse of their authority

toward the civilian population. Some police were rather adept at assisting U.S. forces in

hunting insurgents, such as the San Miguel de Mayumo and the police in Pasay.

However, the more aggressive insurgent hunters were also prone to brutality and U.S.

commanders were warned that they would be held responsible for any infractions

conducted by the police on combined operations.[73]

Throughout General Elwell Otis' tenure as military governor of the Philippines

from 28 August 1899 to 5 May 1900, subordinate U.S. Army commanders recruited

indigenous personnel to serve as guides, trackers, interpreters, and also unofficial

constabularies in support of the Army's and police's efforts. Otis was generally opposed

to the formation of any indigenous security forces, primarily because Filipino forces were

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[70]Anthony James Joes, ―Counterinsurgency in the Philippines,‖ in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), 41-43.

[71]Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 68.

[72]Richard Millett, *Searching for Stability: The U.S. Development of Constabulary Forces in Latin America and the Philippines*, Occasional Paper 30 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 8.

[73]Brian Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), 203-204.

generally viewed as untrustworthy and prone to abuse their position of authority, but did not completely terminate local commander initiatives. He did, however, restrict weaponry and other logistical supplies required to adequately equip his subordinate commanders' indigenous forces. Otis' opposition led to a variety of indigenous local security forces that were ill-equipped to fight guerrillas. Further, at least part of the tendency for the indigenous security forces to operate outside the law can be attributed to his lack of support and formalization of these subordinate commander initiatives.[74]

General Arthur MacArthur assumed command from Otis and immediately issued General Order 87. The Order authorized arming of municipal police and the creation of a constabulary. The municipal police remained jurisdictionally restricted to the boundaries of towns and barrios while the constabularies retained freedom to operate throughout a province. Although he authorized the creation and arming of local security forces, MacArthur's authorization did so in small numbers. When faced with the imminent reduction of U.S. forces in late 1900, MacArthur expanded indigenous force personnel authorizations. Additionally, in January 1901, MacArthur authorized the expansion of the native scouts which later became the Philippine Army.[75]

With the authorization of the native scouts, MacArthur now had the beginning of a three tiered indigenous security force consisting of the local police, constabulary, and

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[74]Linn, 204.

[75]Linn, 204, 210, 215-216. Initially, MacArthur had only authorized 2,000 constabularies and 1,400 Native Scouts. MacArthur was actually reinforced with additional soldiers bringing his total number of U.S. troops up to 70,000 in December 1900. However, the number of total U.S. troops would drop to 45,000 by March 1901. Due to MacArthur's new directive on expanding the native scouts, his subordinates had raised over 4,000 new Native Scouts by June 1901.

native scouts.[76] The municipal police were responsible for immediate security, population control, and law enforcement within their own villages or towns. The constabulary was responsible for reinforcing the police and for overall security and population control of a province. As noted in the first Philippine Constabulary handbook, the constabulary was "authorized and empowered prevent and suppress brigandage, unlawful assemblies, riots, insurrections and other breaches of the peace and violations of law." The constabulary units were formed such that the indigenous constabularies were all from the same tribe or spoke the same dialect. Efforts were also made to ensure constabulary units were recruited from the same province that they would later secure. Many of the constabulary units were also equipped with horses to enable them to better respond to insurgent actions and to cover the wide area they were assigned to secure. The constabulary was also charged with oversight of the municipal police, which after many years, assisted the police in becoming a much more professional force.[77] Comprising the final tier of the security force framework were the native scouts that were responsible for reinforcing the constabulary and for hunting insurgents in their mountainous or jungle base areas and were recruited from multiple provinces.[78] Part of the initial strength of the scouts resided

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[76]Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 83. Although MacArthur had the embryo a final security force framework, it would take three years before the force would be fully developed.

[77]*Philippine Constabulary Handbook* (1901), 3-8.

[78]Linn, 204.

in the fact that U.S. commanders recruited rival ethnic groups to those represented in the insurgency which undoubtedly helped to ensure the scouts loyalty and motivation.[79]

Although the Philippine Insurrection formally ended on 4 July 1902, fighting would continue, until as late as 1916 in some areas, with the constabulary returning mixed results initially. A primary reason was due to its lack or armament. Although designed as a paramilitary force, due to the Americans' and particularly the U.S. Army's distrust of indigenous forces, constabularies were initially issued revolvers and shotguns rather than the more effective repeating rifles carried by the army. Despite this challenge, at the end of 1903 constabularies were involved in 357 engagements that resulted in an estimated 1,185 insurgents or criminals killed with 2,722 captured. A primary reason that contributed to some of their early success was their local knowledge which in turn provided them the capability to speak the local dialects and establish informant networks.[80]

Over time the Philippine Constabulary became a much more effective force. A key reason for the general success of the constabulary was its paramilitary nature. Organized into company sized formations that could fight as squads or platoons, the constabulary had the necessary manpower to effectively fight the similarly organized guerrillas.[81] Their armament steadily improved through U.S. distributions and although it

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[79]Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 109.

[80]Millett, 8-11.

[81]In the normal, yet lethal, environment of many provinces this proved true. However, provinces in a state of open rebellion against the government, such as Samar in 1905, required assistance from the native scouts and U.S. Army to regain control.

was not on par with the native scouts, it proved slightly better or equal to that of the guerrilla. Finally, with the simultaneous creation of the native scouts, the constabularies had a force that could reinforce them in heavily infested insurgent areas. For example, the still poorly armed constabulary suffered defeat on the island of Samar at the hands of a warlord's guerrillas in the spring of 1905. However, in early June the army responded defeating the insurrection within 10 days.[82] An important part of the constabulary relationship with the native scouts was that if the constabulary requested native scout support, then the native scout unit was subordinated to the legal civil authority of the constabulary. The subordination of the military to the constabulary occurred despite any disparities of commander rank between the organizations as police primacy and the rule of law were deemed highly important. This formal relationship undoubtedly also caused the native scouts to be more judicious in their application of force when operating in populated areas under constabulary control. Although survival was essential, perhaps even more germane to the constabulary's success were its leaders and internal command structure.[83]

The Philippine constabulary was commanded by U.S. Army officers from its inception and continued in this tradition until exceptional Filipinos could be identified

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[82]McCoy, 130-132. Although this campaign gave the constabulary a —black eye" and made them —the laughing stock of Manila" according to some observers, it also demonstrated both the inappropriate armament (at the time) of the constabulary while simultaneously demonstrating the security force framework functioning appropriately. Blame for this failure partially rests on Chief Allen as due to his pride and desire to demonstrate the internal security capability of his constabulary he committed his men in a situation that was more appropriate for the army to handle or at a minimum required a joint effort between the constabulary and the army.

[83]Bureau of Insular Affairs, U.S. War Department, *Fourth Annual Report of the Philippine Commission* (1903), 33-34.

and mentored into command positions. Due care was taken in the selection of U.S. constabulary commanders to include selecting officers who demonstrated the aptitude to work with forces from a very different culture. The Chief of the Philippine Constabulary described American constabulary commanders as requiring a liberal education, language proficiency, administrative talent, tact, and versatility. Chief Henry Allen, then only a Captain, personally selected the initial 68 officers from the U.S. volunteer regiments to lead the constabulary. Evidence of the high quality of the constabulary officers can be found in the fact that of the 17 American officers who held senior leadership positions in the constabulary from 1901 to 1917, 13 would achieve the rank of General officer. Allen would replace General John Pershing as European commander at the end of World War I while his constabulary successor, Harry Bandholtz, would found the Army's military police corps. The third chief of the constabulary would serve as Pershing's Chief of Staff in World War I.[84]

Despite their high quality, a few constabulary officers would become embroiled in a detainee abuse scandal originating the pacification campaign in Cavite in 1905. Although the officers successfully suppressed the rebellion with the assistance of the native scouts, some demonstrated a gross failure of leadership as actions including torture were found in a Philippine court to have been perpetrated by one constabulary officer with more abuses conducted by constabulary recruited agents from the campaign. It was clear that although the initial crop of Army officers were of high war fighting caliber, a new team of officers, unburdened by the baggage of previous pacification campaigns, needed to be brought in that could be reoriented and trained toward the moral, legal, and

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[84]McCoy, 83-84, 86-87, 90.

civil responsibilities of their duties. These new officers did much to regain the lost national legitimacy of the constabulary.[85]

A final contributing factor to the success of the constabulary was its ability to integrate former insurgents successfully into its formation. These former revolutionaries, many of whom were guerrilla officers, provided the constabulary with similar advantages that the remaining guerrillas enjoyed such as local knowledge, survival skills, intelligence gathering, and small unit tactic mastery. There was always concern that these former insurgents would turn on their foreign officers but these fears were rarely manifested. Despite these fears, vetting was accomplished rather informally with Allen accepting the word of American commanders and officers even accepting some of the most notorious former insurgents into the constabulary.[86]

In summary, the constabulary was ultimately effective for several reasons. First, they could survive as a unit against the routine guerrilla threats throughout the archipelago. Second, they were effectively commanded by many of the most talented officers available at the time, some of whom were justifiably replaced by equally

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[85]McCoy, 132-142. Although difficult to precisely determine, U.S. officers and observers believed that some of the charges concerning coercive measures were overblown given the open rebellion in Cavite. The area was home to many of the political elites who had been supporters of the Aguinaldo led insurgency from 1899-1902 and many of these elites or their Manila acquaintances had been under constabulary surveillance. Additionally, these political elites were denied a voice by the constabulary through the shutting down of their printing presses and other actions of censorship. This was also seen by the judiciary as a key moment to assert its independence and many of the Filipinos were tiring of a large portion of the government's top positions, including officers in the constabulary, being filled with former U.S. military officers. Thus, part of the sensationalism surrounding the trial was due to efforts of the political elites to get some of their larger political grievances addressed rather than mere outrage over the constabularies' conduct.

[86]McCoy, 90-91.

exceptional officers, and their leadership was grown slowly. Third, the constabulary was

locally recruited and employed which gave the force advantages such as intelligence

cultivation and terrain familiarity. In addition, former insurgents bolstered their ranks

which further extended the geographical advantage of the constabulary to guerrilla

remote sanctuary areas. Finally, constabulary members went through an informal word of

mouth vetting process. When the formal constabulary was created, the campaign was two

years old. During this time U.S. Army officers who operated loosely within Otis' intent

rather than fully comply with specific directives, developed a small pool of trustworthy

Filipinos, including former guerrillas, who were available to integrate into the force. Due

to a period of demonstrated loyalty of working for U.S. forces, the informal vetting

process proved mostly adequate in ensuring future loyalty.

<div align="center">The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960)</div>

Thompson's theoretical work discussed in chapter 2 used Malaya[87] as his model

for a security force framework, which he refers to as the balance of forces, and therefore

does not need to be repeated in its entirety in this discussion. In review of Thompson's

balance of forces the police coupled with the home guard were responsible for security in

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[87]For further historical information on the Malayan Emergency, Richard Stubbs'
Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare provides an overall synopsis of the emergency
while Robert Komer's RAND study *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect:
Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* provides additional information
on the mechanics of the counterinsurgency effort. John Coates' *Suppressing Insurgency*
provides a thorough operational analysis of the emergency while Noel Barber's *War of
the Running Dogs* provides a multi-perspective British narrative. Leon Comber's
*Malaya's Secret Police 1945-1960: The Role of Special Branch in the Malayan
Emergency* provides an in depth account of the Special Branch while James Corum's
Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies provides
information on all of the Malayan security forces.

the towns and villages. If the populated area was contested, he believed that the army would be required to clear the area from insurgents and subsequently turn security functions over to the police and home guard. Security of areas outside of the populated areas was the responsibility of the army. This basic security force framework was used throughout the Malayan Emergency, although the army and police conducted routine combined operations in areas until the guerrilla threat had been reduced to a manageable level for the police force. However, there were other forces that were part of the security force framework that deserve mentioning before examining the police and home guard in greater detail.

One such addition to the basic framework were tribal forces which Thompson saw as a small but effective way of fighting insurgents on the fringes of populated areas or in the remote jungles. Thompson believed that tribal forces could only be raised if insurgents were incapable of massing into large formations and the government embarked on a serious campaign to wrest control of frontier areas from the insurgents. Thompson believed these tribal forces operating in the remote areas solved the problem of trying to erect a complex fortification system which would tie up a large portion of manpower indefinitely. He saw one of the roles of interventionist or host nation special forces as raising these tribal forces. To highlight the success that Thompson attributes to the tribal forces he provides the Senoi Pra'ak aboriginal force in Malaya as an example. According to Thompson, the Senoi Pra'ak were responsible for killing more insurgents

during the last two years of the conflict in Malaya than the rest of the security forces combined, despite the fact that they numbered only three hundred total members.[88]

In addition to tribal forces, the Special Branch, which was briefly mentioned in chapter 2 greatly contributed to the decline of the insurgency. The Special Branch of the police was responsible for all intelligence relating to the insurgency. With this responsibility it controlled agents and informers, interrogated captured or surrendered enemy personnel, and provided tactical intelligence to the military and police forces. The branch was, for all serious purposes, non-existent at the onset of hostilities due to the Japanese occupation of Malaya during World War II. Efforts to build this force included establishment of a training school in Malaya that was regarded as the best in the region. Additionally, experienced British intelligence personnel were brought in to serve in leadership positions and mentor the growing branch. Seconded British military officers were also sent to work in service staff positions to provide intelligence to the army in a militarily useful form. Emphasis was placed on recruiting not only Malays into the service but also ethnic Chinese as only Asian officers were believed to have the ability to directly handle the agents operating in communist organizations. As early as 1953, Special Branch was providing detailed dossiers that included an individual terrorist's associations and his pattern of life. These efforts were highly successful in insurgent

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[88]Thompson, 152-154. Thompson stated that ―A ong jungle frontier cannot be sealed off," and that ―It is a waste of time and resources to build forts, frontier roads or fences, all of which will tie down a large body of troops for no effective purpose."

eradication as evidenced by the near simultaneous arrest of over 100 suspected

communist supporters in Pahang based off Special Branch generated intelligence.[89]

In initial stages of the campaign, the police as a whole were a significant focus of

the counterinsurgent strategy to provide security and control of the population. They were

also a focus of insurgent attacks as small numbers of police were often stationed in

isolated posts and were ill-equipped to fight guerrillas.[90] With a focus on the police,

enormous efforts were made to rapidly expand this force from a mere 9,000 at the outset

of hostilities to 50,000 in just six months in response to a growing insurgency.[91]

Unfortunately for the British the pace of police growth resulted in an ineffective force. In

order to achieve this rapid growth rate, the British brought in police auxiliaries from

Palestine who were known for their heavy handed dealings with the population and had

no knowledge of local language and customs.[92] To address these shortcomings, the

British recruited indigenous police but did not have time to adequately train them as the

new recruits were desperately needed in the security force. Additionally, building quality

leaders took time and there were insufficient numbers of British police officers to

compensate for the absence of widespread leadership competence in the Malay police

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[89]Leon Comber, *Malaya's Secret Police 1945-1960: The Role of Special Branch in the Malayan Emergency* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2009), 183, 187, 201-207.

[90]Robert Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972), 39.

[91]Moyar, 112-113.

[92]Richard Stubbs, —From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-1960," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 104.

force. Some of the results of inadequate training were abuse of power, gross incompetence, and avoidance of contact with insurgents.[93] In this rapid expansion nearly all police recruits were ethnic Malays as the campaign had not yet been successful enough to attract any significant voluntary service of ethnic Chinese. Nor did the British necessarily believe that the Chinese could be entirely trusted as they lacked intelligence on specific insurgents or supporters in the beginning of the campaign which prevented formal vetting. The ethnicity of the police resulted in initial poor results in intelligence collection amongst the Chinese squatter population due to language barriers and a perception of local illegitimacy.[94]

Due to their poor performance in the early part of the campaign, the Malayan Police Commissioner pulled many of the police out of their duties and sent them to lengthy retraining.[95] A key component of this retraining was the emphasis on community policing, Operation Service as it was called, which provided the police force with the civil skills necessary to be effective. The Commissioner also sent promising leaders to police academies and made a concerted effort to recruit ethnic Chinese into the force. Additionally, large numbers of police were dismissed due to corruption and incompetence as the force was cut by 10,000 personnel between 1952 and 1953.[96] ̶Re-bluing" the police force during the campaign was made possible by the presence of the

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[93]James Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), 5-8.

[94]Moyar, 117.

[95]Stubbs, 110.

[96]Corum, 18-19, 22.

British, British colonial, and allied military forces, who assumed local security duties in the police void.[97] Retraining was also made possible due to both the progress of the resettlement program and the general weakening of the insurgency by that point in the campaign.[98]

Although retraining, recruiting, and eliminating poor leaders addressed some of the issues with the police force, other issues also required attention. For example as late as 1951, there were only enough tactical radios to field a mere 10 of 45 police jungle companies. The police were not provided armored vehicles initially although they were on the receiving end of an increasing number of enemy ambushes. Barbed wire and floodlights were also not furnished in a timely manner for many of resettled villages leaving the police in these areas more vulnerable. These issues were addressed later in the campaign but contributed to early ineffectiveness.[99]

The home guard, a militia force that worked under police command, also had an inauspicious beginning. Shotguns were scarce and many early militia members were armed with only batons.[100] Even if shotguns were available the government hesitated arming some of the home guard units due to insufficient leadership to maintain

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[97]Daniel Marston, ‒Counterinsurgency Seminar 5: Malaya Part 1" (Lecture, Lewis and Clark Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 4 January 2011).

[98]Comber, 180. The high point of security force contacts with guerrillas in the campaign was 6,000 in 1951 followed by a drop in 1952 to 3,500, followed by another drop two years later to 1,000 in 1954. Thus, a combination of the Briggs plan and a change in communist strategy in late 1951 contributed to a lower level of activity that could allow both a cut in the police force and rotate units out for retraining.

[99]John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 98-99.

[100]Coates, 97.

accountability and direct employment of the armed force.[101] The first home guardsmen

underwent no training and even when training began it was not under the purview of the

police who were responsible for the guards employment.[102] The problem of

predominantly Malay ethnicity found in the initial police force was also prevalent in the

home guard. As resettlement gained momentum, better procedures governing the home

guard were implemented that allowed them to be effective members in the defense of

their villages. The police initially assumed security duties while they were being trained

this time by the police.[103] Training was centrally directed by Malayan state home guard

headquarters that focused on weapons training and basic security tasks.[104] Once trained

and a period of time passed where a home guard proved trustworthy, they were issued

weapons and increasingly employed on census operations, stationary security duties, and

some conducted joint counter-guerrilla patrols with the police.[105] Effective British and

Australian officers were brought in to provide initial leadership to the home guard while

they groomed their successors in the ranks.[106] Previous fears of arming ethnic Chinese

were overcome with 50,000 Chinese joining the militia.[107] Over time, the home guard

assumed increasing responsibility for their own security with 150 new villages

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[101]Moyar, 118-119.

[102]Coates, 97.

[103]Komer, 55.

[104]Corum, 22.

[105]Coates, 96; Corum, 22-23.

[106]Moyar, 124.

[107]Corum, 23.

transferred to home guard protection in 1954.[108] Not only was the home guard an effective security force in some villages, it also allowed the police and army to move to other more contested areas and tied resettled communities, comprised primarily of former illegal residents, into the government.[109]

In parallel to the efforts taken to improve the static forces, a coordinating system in the form of councils was established to synchronize the security effort. At the national level a war council was formed that included civilian, police, and military leaders. The effort was mirrored down at the state level with the State War Executive Committee (SWEC) and at the district level in the form of the District Ware Executive Committee (DWEC). All of the committees were chaired by the appropriate echelon of civilian leadership. The SWECs and DWECs were comprised of the commanders of military and police organizations allowing for decision making during their meetings. Additionally, when military and police areas of responsibilities overlapped the army commander and police chief co-located their headquarters. These efforts helped to achieve unity of effort in the counterinsurgency campaign. Also of particular importance for the police it allowed them to coordinate operations with military forces and provided the command and control infrastructure that allowed for timely reinforcement against enemy attacks.[110]

The British experience in Malaya highlights the need for local security forces to be properly trained and exposes the danger in proceeding too quickly in expanding

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[108]Moyar, 124.

[109]Wade Markel, ―Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy of Population Control,‖ *Parameters* (Spring 2006): 39.

[110]Komer, 27-29.

security forces that fight the war amongst the population at the grassroots level. It also demonstrates how a lack of armament, equipment, and leadership contribute to ineffectiveness. Equally important, the Malayan campaign demonstrates the importance of an established system of coordination across the security force framework that enables paramilitary forces to survive. The military role in this framework was key as it routinely provided enough of a protective shield through constant patrolling, which sought contact with the insurgents in their jungle sanctuary, that insurgent forces were never able to mass more than a company sized force against any protected location. The Home Guard, demonstrated the need for a lightly armed, part time, local security force to be properly mentored; in this case by a combination of retrained Malay police and British or Australian officers.

<div align="center">The Dhofar Rebellion (1965-1975)</div>

Mussalim bin Nufl's Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) was active in the beginning of the insurgency primarily in the jebel, a mountainous tribal region of Dhofar.[111] Although the insurgency attempted to spread to the Northern coastal areas of Oman, the Sultan's security forces quickly eliminated insurgents in those areas. As a result the insurgents, called adoo, remained confined to the Southwestern Omani province of Dhofar which shared a border with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). By 1967, communist influences and cadres overtook the more local interests of the DLF

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[111]For more information on the Dhofar Rebellion, John Akehurst's *We Won a War* offers a firsthand account of the Dhofar campaign from the British perspective. Tony Jeapes' work *SAS: Operation Oman* provides another firsthand account of the campaign focusing on the contribution of the SAS and firqa, Ian Beckett's chapter in Daniel Marston's and Carter Malkasian's *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* provide a short but thorough overview of the war.

and transformed the movement into the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG).[112]

In 1965 no security force loyal to the Sultan, let alone any government administration, existed in the jebel. The Sultan's Armed Forces, or SAF, consisted of a mere two battalions which were officered primarily by British seconded and contract officers. SAF's ranks were comprised mainly of ethnic Balouchis and Arabs who were not Dhofaris. Only a handful of SAF officers were Arabs, who were limited to the rank of lieutenant. As one SAS officer commented, ―There were no Dhofaris in SAF, which was virtually an army of occupation.‖[113]

SAF faced several obstacles in their initial counterinsurgency efforts. Its tactical operations were described as ―bit bashing‖ or in other words conducting short duration operations into the jebel, exchanging fire with the adoo, and then withdrawing. Although they may have killed a few insurgents, in the larger campaign these operations accomplished ―absolutely nothing.‖ SAF's insufficient manpower prevented them from holding any terrain that they cleared, however, even if they had additional manpower during this point in the campaign it is unlikely that those areas would remain uncontested due to their perceived foreigner status by the jebelis.[114] The Sultan was simply missing a

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[112]Bard E. O'Neill, ―Revolutionary War in Oman,‖ in *Insurgency in the Modern World*, ed. Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 216-217, 219-220.

[113]Ian Beckett, ―The British Counter-insurgency Campaign in Dhofar, 1965-1975,‖ in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), 178.

[114]BI070, Retired General Officer, interview by Mark Battjes, Benjamin Boardman, Robert Green, Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Dustin Mitchell, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, United Kingdom, 30 March 2011.

viable hold force in his framework. SAF also was ill-equipped to fight the insurgents as they were armed with bolt action weapons and WWII era supporting weapons. As the adoo were increasingly equipped by external communist nations through PDRY, SAF was increasingly overmatched in terms of firepower. Adding to the lack of armament was the lack of equipment. For example, even basic items such as boots and uniforms were of such poor quality that many became unserviceable within weeks. Despite these issues and signs that the insurgency was growing, Sultan Said did little to improve the size or capability of his armed forces.[115]

With the overthrow of Sultan Said by his son Qaboos in 1970, the British were able to assist the new Sultan in devising a security force framework to defeat the insurgency. Direct assistance on the ground consisted of two British squadrons of SAS which formed the British Army Training Team (BATT), with a small complement of enablers, to fight in a primarily advisory and training capacity. SAF was expanded to 20,000 soldiers by the end of 1975. Important factors in the expansion which eventually led to a capable force included training, equipping, and leader development. With respect to training, the British deployed an experienced cadre in a seconded status which improved training continuity and the language capability of the trainers. Basic training lasted six months and included Arabic reading and writing to produce a more educated force that would eventually improve the technical competency in SAF's enlisted ranks. Also, BATT established realistic live fire training exercises for SAF to improve their ability to defeat the adoo in battle. With respect to equipping, SAF was fielded a semi

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[115]Walter Ladwig, ―Supporting Allies in COIN: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion,‖ *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 1 (March 2008): 69-70.

automatic basic infantry rifle along with a general purpose machine gun to upgrade the armament in the close fight. They also received night optics, radios, and armored cars. Although SAF also received a small contingent of helicopters, the British successfully steered Qaboos away from highly technical purchases that he did not have the capability to maintain nor employ. In addition to the training and equipping, the British also developed an Omani officer corps, sending several promising officers to attend Sandhurst while improving their practical skills in tactics, navigation, and administration in Oman.[116]

As SAF was improving with British assistance, another interventionist power, Iran, also performed an important military role by securing some of Oman's lines of communication into Dhofar and over watching obstacle belts designed to isolate the PFLOAG from PDRY support. Although not well trained they were generally appropriately employed in the task of over watching sections of some of the obstacle belts designed to prevent infiltration of supplies from PDRY. As one former SAS commander stated, ―The Persians just shot anything . . . they had not really been trained very well . . . At night anything that moved, camels, men, women, children, BATT, firqa, they shot. So actually it was a rather nice position to be in . . . if the Persians were there nothing was going to move." Jordan also contributed engineer support and a small contingent of special forces. Despite the expansion and improvement of SAF and

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[116]Ladwig, 72-75.

additional direct support from Muslim allies, an adequate security force for Dhofar still remained absent from the Sultan's security framework.[117]

During Said's reign, he was vehemently opposed to any consideration of amnesty for the Dhofari insurgents wishing to see them completely destroyed rather than co-opted. However, Qaboos recognized that the SAF lacked local language capability and knowledge of the jebel which were of vital necessity to generate the intelligence required for military effectiveness in the region. Initially Qaboos was unable to find appropriate volunteers, as those who possessed the requisite attributes and skills were either active insurgents or controlled by the insurgency in the jebel. However, Qaboos' institution of a full amnesty policy allowed Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) to recruit and establish a local security force called the firqa, of which 80 percent were co-opted insurgents.[118]

The first firqa was known as the Firqa Salahadin, was a very successful unit. In one operation, they were able to turn a village literally overnight from one actively supporting the adoo into one that pledged support to the Sultan. Part of the reason for their initial success was due to the group's leader, Salim Mubarak, whose charisma and credibility persuaded jebelis to switch sides. However, his strong leadership was also the only reason that this first firqa remained cohesive. The Firqa Salahadin was comprised primarily of former DLF insurgents who were from numerous tribes. Upon Salim's death, there was no other leader in the organization that the various tribes would fight under so the group disbanded. However, other sheiks who had seen the benefits of forming firqas

[117]BI070, Interview. Although the Iranians were primarily employed in the over watch of fortified lines or the Midway Road, they also conducted some limited operations into the jebel where their poor training led to a high amount of friendly casualties.

[118]Beckett, 179, 183.

would shortly contact the Sultan's representatives to see how they could form their own.[119] By the end of the campaign, 20 firqa units were raised.[120]

The firqa were organized into either platoon or company strength fighting units that were led by no more than a dozen SAS. The SAS were not only instrumental in command and control of these irregular units but also served as the firqa's connectivity to fire support, close air support, casualty evacuation, logistics, and administration.[121] Leading these tribal irregulars required special competencies and a certain temperament that a SAS officer described as ―a great deal of patience, understanding and tolerance.‖[122] The inability to get the firqa to do what the SAS wanted them to do on some occasions was explained by a former SAS officer as he stated, ―Their [the firqa's] loyalty is to the tribe, first and foremost. If, therefore, what you are asking them to do will benefit the tribe, then they'll do it. If not, they don't want to.‖ They lacked training for purely military operations and lacked common values displayed by military forces such as duty and discipline. However, the firqa's strengths more than compensated for their lack of professionalism. First, the firqa were from Dhofar which provided several advantages. As one former SAS officer stated, ―Only the Dhofaris could've done this. They knew, or very soon found out, who were the adoo.‖ Adding to their ability to generate intelligence, the firqa also had a better sense of general threat situations when operating in their tribal

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[119]BI070, Interview.

[120]BI050, Dhofar Veterans Panel, interview by Mark Battjes, Benjamin Boardman, Robert Green, Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Dustin Mitchell, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, United Kingdom, 28 March 2011.

[121]Ladwig, 73.

[122]Beckett, 183.

areas. The SAS were known to patrol with ―one eye on the ground and ne eye on the firqa" as they could tell whether or not contact with the adoo was likely from how the firqa conducted themselves on a patrol. If the firqa seemed alert, carrying weapons at the ready, then contact was likely. If their posture was more relaxed, then contact was unlikely. The firqa were known for their tremendous eyesight being able to identify friend or foe at long range, their fitness level from a lifetime of rugged living in the mountains, and their bravery instilled from the belief that they were fighting for their homes and a general *enshallah* attitude when in contact with the enemy. They spoke the jebeli language and knew their enemy. For their part, the SAS provided the firqa the ability to survive as an organization with their access to fire support and additional weapons, such as the general purpose machine gun. With the addition of the firqa, the counterinsurgents began to improve the tactical execution of their strategy.[123]

Tactical execution began with the firqa selecting an area that they believed dominated their tribal area. The SAF, with firqa in a supporting role, would then clear the immediate area of guerrillas, bring in engineers to build a road into the site, potentially an airstrip, and drill a well. The SAF would continue to move further out from the site as the firqa took over responsibility for security. The tribal people in the area were naturally drawn to a new source of water as well as rudimentary medical services provided by SAS medics. Finally, Civil Assistance Teams established other components of rudimentary

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[123]BI070, Interview. *Enshallah*, loosely translated, means if God wills it or God willing. Thus, many of the firqa thought whether they were killed in a battle or not was for God to decide and not them. As a result, many did not seek cover when engaged by the adoo and fought with great physical courage. However, *enshallah* also meant that they saw little need to do anything with a sense of urgency.

infrastructure, such as a school, mosque, and store, and provided agricultural and animal husbandry assistance to the people in these new oases.[124]

A concern voiced by some British officers was the fear that the firqa would turn their weapons on the SAS advisors working with them, a valid concern as the majority of the firqa were former insurgents. The SAS conducted a short vetting process which involved sending a ―surrendered‖ enemy fighter to be debriefed by an intelligence officer. Once complete, he was returned to the firqa that he surrendered to and became a member. Although a brief vetting process was conducted, the SAS mitigated the risk of assassination by a relationship described by one former SAS officer as ―a coincidence of aims.‖ The aim of the SAS was to get Omanis fighting on behalf of the Sultan. The firqa had several motivations to work with the SAS that included freedom to practice their religion, tribal hospitality once the SAS did not appear to pose a threat to their way of life, and basic developmental benefits for their tribal areas including new water sources. Additionally, the SAS provided all of the heavy weapons and other support needed for the firqa to consistently win against the adoo. Finally, the SAS paid the firqa a salary which provided a measure of general control over them.[125]

All of the counterinsurgency forces played vital roles in the campaign and complemented each other. However, Major General Tony Jeapes, a former SAS commander, cited the firqa as the ―most important Government department‖ that enabled the success of the counterinsurgency campaign.[126] During the insurgency, the firqa were

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[124]Ladwig, 76.

[125]BI070, Interview.

[126]Tony Jeapes, *SAS: Operation Oman* (London: William Kimber, 1980), 231.

the only security force either committed or raised that were viewed as legitimate by the tribal population of the jebel. They possessed the knowledge of the jebel and language skills to generate intelligence and persuade the Dhofaris to support the Sultan. They were led by many of the finest officers and soldiers in the British Army and their survival chances against the enemy were enhanced by the enablers that supported the small groups of SAS who led them. The SAS learned from their initial mistake of a multi-tribal firqa and formed future firqas along tribal lines which provided a more cohesive unit.[127] A ―coicidence of aims‖ maintained firqa loyalty throughout the conflict. The firqa could not have won the campaign alone, but were significant contributors to the Sultan‗s victory.

The Rhodesian Bush War (1966-1980)

The insurgency in Rhodesia[128] sought to address the long standing disparity of opportunity between whites and blacks. The internal Rhodesian conflict was part of a much broader phenomenon taking place in the Southern African continent as black nationalists sought majority rule from white settlers or self determination from white colonialists. The Zimbabwe African People‗s Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) formed the primary nucleus of the insurgency, secured cross

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[127]Beckett, 184.

[128]For more information on the Rhodesian Bush War, JRT Wood‗s chapter in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* by Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian provides a short but thorough overview of the war. Norma Kriger‗s *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War* provides political and social context for the war. Peter Stiff‗s *Selous Scouts Top Secret War* offers a through account of the Selous Scout operations while J. K. Cilliers‗ *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* provides detailed information on numerous Rhodesian security forces as well as the Protected Village program.

border sanctuaries, and received outside support from sympathetic Communist nations. Loosely adhering to Maoist insurgency doctrine, both insurgent groups used their military wings to wage rural guerrilla warfare in Rhodesia although ZANU exerted more effort trying to either persuade or coerce the rural population to support their cause.[129]

Rural insurgent activity increased in April 1966 causing the Police Commissioner to activate the Police Reserve to suppress the threat. Although the police were successful in the end, lessons learned from the operation led to the creation of Joint Operations Centers to coordinate the efforts of the security apparatus. In 1966, the Rhodesian counterinsurgency security force framework consisted of 5,000 Rhodesian army regulars, eight battalions of Army reserves, 7,000 Police regulars, 30,000 Police reserves, and a Central Intelligence Organization that contained the Special Branch. At the time the British South African Police were charged with security of the interior, and served as the local security force in larger towns but were not always present in many rural areas, particularly the Tribal Trust Lands. The Army focused its primarily offensive operations against guerrillas in the rural areas of the interior to provide greater firepower to the security force effort facing a guerrilla threat. The Army reserves were used as a territorial force. However, the reserves were primarily employed in white settler areas to maintain security, occasionally employed to augment Army regular offensive operations, and would not be employed in rural black communities in a meaningful local security role.[130]

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[129]Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 82.

[130]JRT Wood, ―Counting the CHIMURENGA: The Rhodesian Counterinsurgency Campaign," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), 195-197.

From a military perspective, the Rhodesians adapted rather impressively to the increased insurgent threat during the campaign, often forcing the insurgents to change tactics or strategy due to effective Rhodesian operations. A unit called Fire Force was created that utilized air mobility assets and small vehicles to conduct hasty attacks on identified insurgent locations. The Selous Scouts, an organization consisting of primarily surrendered enemy personnel, were often the ground element that identified insurgent locations for destruction by the Fire Force. Tracing their conceptual origin to the pseudo gangs used in Kenya during the Mau Mau insurgency, the Selous Scouts blended into contested or insurgent controlled areas by mirroring an insurgent formation. They subsequently provided intelligence information on the insurgent movement to the Central Information Office and immediate time sensitive targeting information for Fire Force. The Selous Scouts were very effective, credited with directly or indirectly with sixty eight percent of insurgent kills throughout the Rhodesian campaign.[131]

Despite these impressive additions to their security forces, the Rhodesians were slow to provide a defensive or holding capacity to complement their increased offensive capabilities. The first real attempt to provide security in black rural population centers occurred with the establishment of Protected Villages. The Department of the Interior recruited and trained District Security Assistants and by 1975 were using them to secure protected villages. At the head of the District Security Assistants, was the vedette, a white official who was charged with overall village defense and was often the only white face in the immediate area. Many of the District Security Assistants were not up to their

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[131]Bruce Hoffman, *Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992), 33.

difficult assignments due to in part to their lack of training. The lack of paramilitary training cadre, an important requirement when facing a guerrilla insurgent threat, resident within the Department of Interior's training institution guaranteed that the assistants would complete training with little military skill. Due to the Department of Interior's lack of resources and focus on government administration, the security force was transferred to the Ministry of Defense in 1977 and renamed the Guard Force.[132]

The Rhodesian military establishment, not unlike many other counterinsurgent militaries, viewed the guerrilla threat primarily as external and assessed guerrilla capabilities in terms of observable and measureable manpower, weapons, and equipment. Thus, they did not explicitly prioritize their targeting effort on the subversive element of the insurgency within the rural population. As a result of viewing the problem through this lens, the Guard Force's role was quickly expanded to include more offensive operations and those members of the Guard Force that remained static were shifted from population protection to secure locations that made more conventional military sense such as bridges, road intersections, railway interchanges, and other infrastructure.[133] The transition to a more offensive role for the Guard Force is somewhat surprising considering the fact that at least ten percent of the Protected Villages in 1977 were burned to the ground by guerrillas. On the other hand, the relative small size of the Rhodesian Army, which during 1976 consisted of 3,500 soldiers, coupled with South African police unit withdrawal in 1975 signaled the need for the Rhodesians to increase

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[132]J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 94-95.

[133]Cilliers, 95, 243.

the size of their offensive force if they planned to continue disrupting larger formations of guerrillas. In recognition of their inadequate total force strength while still faced with the village security requirement, the Rhodesians raised Security Force Auxiliaries.[134]

The Rhodesians made a significant effort to raise Security Force Auxiliaries beginning in 1978, eventually raising nearly 20,000 members.[135] The first attempt to raise an auxiliary force was made as early as 1973, when bolt action weapons were provided to rural blacks. However, the rifles were subsequently confiscated by insurgent groups. Political concerns regarding the loyalty of armed rural blacks, racism or at least paternalism, and this mid campaign failure led to a long delay in any subsequent attempts at raising a militia type force in the tribal areas. In early 1978, a pilot program in the Mnasa Tribal Trust land proved effective. The small effort included recruiting local Africans and surrendered enemy personnel from the area and arming each original member with two rifles so that he could recruit another volunteer.[136]

As the Security Force Auxiliary program began to grow, the auxiliaries began to be recruited outside of the local area. Most problematic were the recruits originating from large towns who had no vested interest in the security of a rural area and were put through a hasty four week training program prior to assignment. Many abused their legitimate position to exploit and commit crimes against the population.[137]

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[134]Kriger, 108-111.

[135]Kriger, 112.

[136]Cilliers, 204-205. The primary push in 1978 to raise auxiliaries was to stabilize the situation in preparation for the April 1979 elections.

[137]Cilliers, 205-207. Also adding to the problem was the fact that many of the auxiliaries were loyal only to a specific tribe or to a specific political leader.

Further subtracting from the effectiveness of the auxiliaries, was the lack of advisory, command, or mentorship by the professional security forces. ―There was on average one white liaison officer, normally a junior NCO (non-commissioned officer), to every hundred and fifty SFA [Security Force Auxiliary]." This lack of oversight was surely a contributing factor to excesses against the population and limited the political linkage between the auxiliaries and the current government. Formal roles and responsibilities were not established for the Security Force Auxiliaries until 1979, when responsibility for the Security Force Auxiliary program was transferred from the Special Branch to the Army.[138]

The record of the local security forces is mixed with respect to the Rhodesian insurgency. The police intelligence network functioned well in urban areas allowing them to prevent insurgent activity in the cities.[139] However, neither the intelligence network nor physical presence penetrated the rural areas. In these locales, when a serious effort was made to levy Security Force Auxiliaries some limited local security success was achieved. Robert Mugabe, an important leader in ZANU and current president of Zimbabwe, admitted difficulties in motivating his forces to fight in areas controlled by Security Force Auxiliaries. However, the Security Force Auxiliaries proved unable to stand up against some of the more significant onslaughts by insurgent groups in 1979 and early 1980.[140] Devoid of competent military leadership or a close working relationship with the other Rhodesian security forces the auxiliaries could not be assured support if

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[138]Cilliers, 208-211.

[139]Wood, 195.

[140]Cilliers, 213.

decisively engaged. The lack of professional leadership also enabled criminal behavior by some of the force. Finally, the Security Force Auxiliaries were perhaps introduced too late into the campaign to protect the population and eliminate insurgent subversion before civil disobedience and nationalist feelings became ingrained throughout the rural population. When the Rhodesians finally tended to the rural local security requirement in the campaign, their time to achieve a favorable political settlement had elapsed.

Summary

In the campaigns examined, local security forces were used to control, protect, and prevent future insurgent influence on the population. They were designed as a force that could hold areas following clearing by a more numerous and capable conventional force. In this capacity, an important function of these forces was the defeat of insurgent attacks and hunting insurgents to kill or capture them in the security forces' assigned area. Through the examination of their performance in these campaigns, several considerations seemed to emerge.

First, local security forces must be able to survive. In many of the cases examined, the local security force was not modeled along that of a traditional Western police force. Rather, a paramilitary organizational model was chosen as a solution to allow the force to provide security while simultaneously being able to fight against an organized contingent of guerrillas. Thus, the paramilitary force raised or co-opted could organizationally survive initial contact with a guerrilla force. Paramilitary forces from the brief cases included the Philippine Constabulary, the Malayan Home Guard, the firqa, and Security Force Auxiliaries. Additionally, assurances of survival were provided to the locals by the next tier of the counterinsurgent's security force framework. They required

this next tier force to reinforce them if under large attack or potentially even enable daily survival in the midst of a deteriorating security situation. Even if a higher tier's support was not requested, the proximity and reliability of reinforcement bolstered or weakened local security force morale and motivation to fight the insurgents. For example, the Philippine Constabulary could rely on the Native Scouts for reinforcement while the firqa gained access to modern enablers such as fire support through their SAS advisors.

Second, local security forces must be properly trained, mentored, and equipped appropriate to the circumstances they face. A lack of training was routinely cited as the cause of some of the shortcomings of local security forces including the Philippine Municipal Police, the Malayan Police, and the Security Force Auxiliaries. Additionally, the units that were commanded, advised, or mentored by competent professional soldiers or police tended to perform better than the ones that were not. For example, both the Philippine Constabulary and the firqa were effective in their territorial security roles when commanded or led by some of the better officers and non-commissioned officers available while the Security Force Auxiliaries lacked such mentorship and were not as effective. Limiting initial effectiveness of the constabulary and the home guard was a lack of adequate armament. However, there was not consistency amongst the case studies as the cited reason for the mixed results of the Security Force Auxiliaries levied at the end of the Rhodesia campaign was a lack of leadership and tie in with other security forces rather than their deficit in armament. The firqa relied on the SAS to make up for a deficit in armament internal to their own formation although they were generally outfitted similar to the adoo as many were former insurgents.

Another point of consideration with respect to local security forces is that members must be vetted. Loyalty was often in question in many of these irregular formations. Additionally, several effective organizations incorporated some quantity of surrendered enemy personnel into their formations. Vetting took on different forms and levels of formality with some counterinsurgents doing a better job than others. For example, the informal vetting process in the initial establishment of the Philippine Constabulary while a ‒coincidence of aims" with a short formal vetting process with the firqa proved effective.

Fourth, local security forces should be recruited and employed locally. If his loyalties were properly aligned, then the geographic proximity of a security force member's home to his area of operation positively correlated to his individual contribution in terms of intelligence, terrain knowledge, and legitimacy. Correlation is not causation, however, this factor was found in the literature of every case examined in this chapter and in oral history interviews in the case of Oman. Outside forces in many of these campaigns were generally better able to survive but lacked local legitimacy, especially in the case of an interventionist power viewed as an occupier. Outside forces were generally more educated than locals in these campaigns providing them a better understanding of maps and navigation but they lacked the ability to effectively operate without them. If perceived as legitimate by the local population, locally recruited and employed security forces had advantages over outside host nation or interventionist forces due to their intimate knowledge of terrain and people.

A final important factor was the tendency of the counterinsurgent to move too quickly in expanding his forces which led to mixed security outcomes. Some units had to

be pulled out of their roles and retrained if they were expanded too quickly as in the case of the Malayan police. Others simply failed in their missions or delegitimized the government position due to criminal behavior as in the case of Security Force Auxiliaries recruited from urban areas as a hasty approach for rural security. Hasty attempts at security force generation generally contributed to less than favorable outcomes while methodical approaches tended to yield better results.

Since these considerations have been derived from a mere handful of cursory examinations of historical conflicts, it is logical to see if these tenuous considerations will weather a more in depth analysis of other counterinsurgency campaigns. The next chapter will examine the U.S. conflict in Vietnam and seek to isolate factors that contributed to the outcomes of various local security forces in the conflict.

CHAPTER 4

U.S. IN VIETNAM (1954-1972)

It was in essence, a war of attrition.
— General William Westmoreland, Commander,
United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam
June 1964 – July 1968

Toward U.S. Involvement

Vietnam's path toward independence and unification under a communist regime

would embroil the country in conflict from 1945-1975 with Vietnamese fighting the

French, the Americans, and each other over this thirty year period. The area known today

as Vietnam, was divided under French control in 1888 under two protectorates in the

north, Tonkin and Annam, and the colony of Cochinchina in the South.[141] France lost

control of its Indochina colonies, after less than 60 years in power, under a Japanese

occupation during World War II.[142] Following the defeat of Japan in World War II, the

Vietminh, led by Ho Chi Minh, filled the power vacuum in the Tonkin and Annam

protectorates while the French were able to regain control of Cochinchina with British

assistance.[143] Efforts by the French to regain control in Tonkin and Annam led to an eight

year war with the Vietminh.

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[141]Bernand Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams, A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 25-35.

[142]Fall, 43-45, 56-59.

[143]Fall, 63-65.

President Truman's interest in Vietnam was influenced by a communist threat that appeared to be on the rise following the cessation of hostilities in World War II. Mao Tse-Tung's communist victory in China in 1949, successful Russian nuclear device testing the same year, and North Korean aggression in the summer of 1950 provided the logical impetus to expand the geographic scope of the U.S. containment policy to Southeast Asia. Containment would remain the bedrock of U.S. national strategy for the greater part of the latter half of the twentieth century. The domino theory, extrapolated from containment policy, held that a communist take-over of a country would cause a rapid and continued collapse of the remainder of the region. Although the U.S. would not become directly involved in Vietnam for nearly a decade following World War II, it would support French war efforts financially and logistically in accordance with the strategy of containment and its corollary, the domino theory.[144]

The French garrison at Dien Bien Phu was defeated by Giap's forces on May 7, 1954.[145] The Geneva Accords, which shortly followed the French defeat and ended the French-Indochina war, stipulated a partition along the seventeenth parallel with Vietnam scheduled to be unified by elections in the summer of 1956.[146]

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[144]George Herring, *America's Longest War* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), 14-26. From 1950 to 1954 the U.S. would continue to support the French financially, eventually shouldering one third of the cost of the war. The U.S. would draw the line, however, at direct military intervention in the conflict as it tried to reconcile the moral dilemma between the American ideals of freedom and the support of colonialism. Of course during this time, the U.S. was fighting a war of its own in Korea.

[145]Bernard Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1967), 415.

[146]Herring, 43-45, 51. President Eisenhower and Secretary John Foster Dulles, although disgusted by the ceding of territory to the communists, were hopeful that two years would be enough time to gain a non-communist candidate enough support to win

U.S. Counterinsurgency in Vietnam

Advise and Assist: 1954-1964

The U.S. strategic goals for South Vietnam included internal stabilization and prevention of the spread of communism in the region. Its strategy was constrained by the desire to keep the footprint of U.S. government personnel small to avoid both the appearance of colonialism and direct military intervention by China. Toward achieving its strategic ends under these constraints, three successive U.S. presidents, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, would continue to escalate U.S. commitment, albeit in a limited fashion, under an advise and assist strategy from 1954 to 1964.[147]

Ngo Dinh Diem, a Catholic appointed to the premiership by Bao Dai and more importantly the American choice for South Vietnamese leadership, showed signs of promise. Diem was able to survive early political instability and coups attempts, prevail over other sects in initial power struggles, and prosecuted a relatively successful military campaign until 1958 against a North Vietnamese sponsored insurgency.[148] However, political instability coupled with an insurgency of increasing lethality ultimately led to his death in a 1963 coups. Political instability manifested in routine coups following Diem's

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the election and believed that a stand against communism had to be made in Southeast Asia. Although hopeful, Dulles conceded to Eisenhower that he believed that the chances of success in Vietnam were about one in ten.

[147]Herring, 83, 130-131.

[148]Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 79-82; Fall, *The Two Viet-nams*, 245-246; Herring 55-57. Part of this initial chaos was the influx of between 800,000 and 900,000 refugees, many of whom were Catholic, from North Vietnam who fled for fear of persecution. The sectarian based conflict was comprised of three sects, the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen, that violently challenged Diem for control. Bernard Fall would later refer to Diem's astute combination of force, political maneuvering, and bribery during the sect crisis as his finest hour.

death frustrated U.S. and South Vietnamese counterinsurgency efforts as General William Depuy later pointed out, ―These coups were very expensive in terms of talent because when you get rid of the province chiefs, you have to find 42 more; that is not easy to do.[149] Even when the government was relatively stable from 1965-1967, observers such as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs William Bundy, stated that the regime ―seemed to all of us…absolutely the bottom of the barrel.‖[150] By then, however, the North Vietnamese had organized not only a lethal insurgency but had entered conventional forces into South Vietnam threatening the survival of the fledgling state.

North Vietnam‗s basic grand strategy was derived from Mao‗s model for revolutionary war and adapted to the specific conditions in Vietnam. The strategy envisioned a three phased protracted conflict. Phase 1 entailed political mobilization, defensive guerrilla operations, logistical preparation, and securing insurgent bases. Phase 2 proscribed a shift to offensive guerrilla warfare, that could be waged successfully under Giap‗s concept of an equilibrium in the balance of forces, and achieve a stalemate. During Phase 3, guerrillas would form larger units and be augmented by conventional forces to conduct ―the final offensive.‖[151]

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[149]Richard M. Swain, comp., *Selected Papers of General William E. Depuy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1995), 45. General Depuy commanded the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam from March 1966 – March 1967.

[150]Herring, 151.

[151]Michael A. Hennessey, *Strategy in Vietnam: The Marines and Revolutionary Warfare in I Corps 1965-1972* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 50-51. Throughout this chapter Arabic numerals will be used for insurgent phases while Roman numerals will be used for U.S. phases to avoid confusion.

Although this strategy was adopted from Mao, it was adapted to the specifics of

Vietnam and the enemy that the North fought against. Although there were several

differences, the most significant adaptation was the infusion of a large and capable

outside conventional force that ultimately proved to be the decisive factor at the end of

the war. Rather than having to convert guerrillas into this conventional force internally as

Mao had done, this force came from North Vietnam. This adaptation was made possible

by two primary factors. First, North Vietnam enjoyed massive military support from both

the Soviet Union and China that enabled them to field these forces. Second, these forces

could train, equip, and build up strength using sanctuary areas in Cambodia, Laos, and

even North Vietnam. The consistent conventional capability also enabled the insurgency

to simultaneously conduct political subversion through regimental sized offensive

operations rather than having to methodically progress through phases.[152]

North Vietnam's strategy from 1954-1964 saw a few key developments. Initially,

Ho Chi Minh had been so certain of victory in the 1956 elections, which never occurred,

that he advocated —a policy of leniency" and sought —reunification of the country through

nation-wide elections."[153] Although peaceful sounding, in reality this merely meant that

small scale attacks, assassinations, and kidnappings would be the Viet Cong's modus

operandi in the south throughout much of the remainder of the decade.[154] In response to

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[152]Dale Andrade, —Westmoreland Was Right: Learning the Wrong Lessons from the Vietnam War," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (June 2008): 148.

[153]Ho Chi Minh, —Report to the Communist Central Committee 15 July 1954," in *A Vietnam War Reader*, ed. Michael Hunt (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 33.

[154]Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years 1941-1960*, U.S. Army in Vietnam (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1985), 310-312. This

Diem's successful rural campaign, the January 1959 resolution of the fifteenth Party

Congress authorized the overthrow of the Diem government using military means.[155] The

year 1960 saw the creation of the National Liberation Front (NLF) which was a

formalized effort by North Vietnam to establish a guerrilla organization under Hanoi's

control to wage a southern insurgency. North Vietnam would strengthen its control of the

NLF through the creation of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in 1962. In

1960, the Viet Cong began conducting their first battalion-sized attacks and the battle at

Ap Bac in January 1963 demonstrated both the growing lethality of the Viet Cong and

the ineptitude of the U.S. trained, advised, and equipped Army of the Republic of

Vietnam (ARVN).[156] In December 1963, the Ninth Plenum of the party's Central

Committee adopted a more aggressive military policy but stopped short of advocating the

use of People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) regulars to achieve military victory.[157]

However, due to South Vietnam's political instability, Viet Cong successes, and

indications that U.S. large scale intervention may be looming, Hanoi began infiltrating

action was facilitated by approximately 10,000 stay behind political activists to continue propaganda and indoctrination in the countryside after the Geneva Accords. The escalation of insurgent attacks in 1957 through 1958 was largely based on the policy of *tru gian*, or extermination of the traitors, rather than a strategic shift.

[155]Spector, 330. With this resolution, Le Duan, then head of the Viet Cong High Command in the South and eventual successor to Ho Chi Minh, directed a transition to full armed insurrection in areas under insurgent control and continued political subversion supported by small scale attacks for contested areas.

[156]John Nagl, ―Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: American Organizational Culture and Learning," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), 123.

[157]Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation 1962-1967*, *U.S. Army in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2006), 121.

PAVN units into South Vietnam in September 1964. At year's end the Viet Cong actively contested the majority of rural South Vietnam, particularly in the Mekong Delta and Highlands, with only major cities and their immediate surroundings largely free from communist violence.[158]

The U.S. and South Vietnamese counter to the growing insurgency began with a series of pacification operations from 1955 through 1958 that were effective in the short term.[159] For example, in the Tay Ninh province roughly half of all communist political cells were destroyed as early as the summer of 1955, with 90 percent destroyed by the following summer.[160] North Vietnamese official histories testify to the success of the operations noting in late 1958 that the South Vietnamese had ―truly and efficiently destroyed our Party.‖[161] However, military success was not followed by any meaningful social or political reforms and the operations were only loosely related as part of a campaign. Nor would clearing operations be reinforced by a capable local security force or locally supported governance structure. Thus, the security gains were only temporary.

As the insurgency continued to increase in lethality, the U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) developed a new campaign plan for the pacification of South Vietnam. Called the Geographically Phased National Level Operation Plan for

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[158]Bradley, 107-109.

[159]Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War 1954-1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 79-83.

[160]Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 37. Based off of his research, Race believes that the reduction of communist cadres during this time period was similar in many provinces throughout South Vietnam.

[161]Spector, 326.

Counterinsurgency it envisioned four phases beginning with reconnaissance and intelligence operations, followed by ARVN forces clearing organized Viet Cong resistance, followed by territorial security forces eliminating subversive elements and remaining guerrillas, and finally reinstituting civil administration, initiating economic development, and establishing permanent law and order. In other words, it prescribed a four phased strategy of shape, clear, hold, and build. The British advisory mission to South Vietnam, led by none other than Sir Robert Thompson, generally agreed with MAAG's plan but added resettlement of the population into fortified villages, or strategic hamlets as they were called, as a necessary population and resource control mechanism. Although the campaign was plagued by poor leadership, mismanagement, unreliable logistics, incompetent security forces, a capable insurgent foe, and an uncooperative population that did not want to be resettled, it did show some limited success until political instability in the summer and the October 1963 coups against Diem brought the campaign to a grinding halt.[162]

Prior to his death in 1962, Diem had aligned a territorial command structure against ARVN Corps commanders to better synchronize counterinsurgency operations.

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[162]Cosmas, 75-87. There was some disagreement between the British and MAAG (which became MACV in 1962) recommendation on the location on where to begin the counterinsurgency plan for pacification. MAAG's original plan called for a sequential focus on the six provinces immediately surrounding Saigon and wanted to initiate the operation with a large ARVN offensive in War Zone D as a prelude to pacification. Additionally, MAAG believed that the Binh Duong province, recommended by Sir Robert Thompson, was a poor choice to begin a pilot program as it estimated that Binh Duong was surrounded by high concentrations of Viet Cong that would require a large ARVN commitment to prevent massed Viet Cong formations from destroying the strategic hamlets. Secretary of Defense McNamara would approve Operation Sunrise, the first operation in the new campaign, to begin in Binh Duong. The problems cited with the strategic hamlets were similar to the ones cited in 1959 with the agroville program.

From north to south, I Corps consisted of the five northernmost provinces, II Corps

consisted of the central highlands and coastal lowlands with twelve total provinces, III

Corps consisted of the ten provinces geographically surrounding and including Saigon,

and IV Corps consisted the sixteen provinces that were located in the Mekong Delta

region. Subordinate division commanders were often in charge of several provinces in

their assigned Division Tactical Areas. Division commanders and their immediate

subordinates were not merely in charge of security in these areas but would also be

increasingly appointed as provincial governors due to the assassination of civilian leaders

and various political loyalties of the ARVN officer corps.[163]

As the situation seemed to spiral out of control in 1964, the U.S. Gulf of Tonkin

congressional resolution provided President Johnson with a wider range of military

options. Initially, however, the President continued gradual escalation of U.S.

commitment to avoid a wider war with China.[164] He also replaced the current Military

Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) commander with General Westmoreland in June

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[163]Ngo Quang Truong, *Territorial Forces*, Indochina Monographs (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1981), 17. This structure largely remained throughout the war although Corps areas would later be designated military regions and other organizational restructuring would occur.

[164]Herring, 130, 147. President Johnson authorized a U.S. advisory increase from 16,300 to 23,300, an increase in the economic assistance program by $50 million, and continued small unit commando operations into Laos and North Vietnam. He also believed that significant military escalation would weaken support for his Great Society domestic agenda. Johnson, an endless source for colorful analogies, referred to his Great Society legislation as ―the woman I really loved‖ while he referred to Vietnam as ―that bitch of a war.‖

1964 and directed planning for a series of gradually escalating air strikes on North Vietnam.[165]

Westmoreland assumed command intent on reviving the counterinsurgency effort. The pacification plan, now called Chien Thang, shifted the geographical focus to the most heavily populated provinces surrounding Saigon and the heavily populated provinces along the coast in I and II Corps. Synchronization of disparate U.S. government agencies, that tended to jealously guard their contributions at the expense of mission accomplishment, proved difficult. Although Ambassador Maxwell Taylor established a Mission Council, while the South Vietnamese established a similar council, to achieve unity of the counterinsurgency effort, problems persisted in staff coordination particularly between MACV, the CIA, and the U.S. Operations Mission.[166]

Counterinsurgency: 1965-1968

In the first half of 1965, the insurgency appeared to be making final preparations for a full transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3 as large attacks increased and PAVN regulars were identified in South Vietnam.[167] In light of these developments and the

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[165]Herring, 130-131.

[166]Cosmas, 141-143. A subset of the Chien Thang campaign plan was Operation Hop Tac, which is Vietnamese for ―cooperation.‖ Westmoreland served as the senior U.S. representative on the Hop Tac combined council with ARVN's III Corps Commander, General Tam, as the senior Vietnamese representative. Although the Americans were more unified under Westmoreland, the South Vietnamese military leadership lacked any decision making authority and were unable to direct the civilian side of operation. A recurring theme of political instability, South Vietnamese lethargy, and increased Viet Cong operations in the area added to the minimal results achieved by the operation

[167]Cosmas, 227-228. The Viet Cong continued to attack both ARVN and territorial forces and conducted a deliberate road cutting campaign that served to isolate

ineffectiveness of U.S. limited reprisal bombings to this point, the President authorized a

gradually escalating but large scale bombing campaign in Operation Rolling Thunder.[168]

Operation Rolling Thunder failed to achieve the political objective of forcing the North to

cease their support of the insurgency. With the situation near collapse in South Vietnam,

Johnson authorized U.S. combat troop deployments which began with elements of the III

Marine Amphibious Force that landed at Da Nang in March of 1965.[169]

Initially the Marines and additional U.S. forces which shortly followed were

deployed under a base defense strategy which was quickly changed to an enclave

strategy. The goals of both of these strategies was to prevent a potential imminent South

Vietnamese collapse while allowing ARVN to continue to build more forces.[170] When the

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South Vietnamese outposts. They also successfully mounted three regimental sized
attacks, two of which were north of Saigon with one at Ba Gia in I Corps. In all three of
the attacks, a portion of the Viet Cong force attacked isolated government outposts while
a remaining portion ambushed reinforcements. The worst defeat for the government was
at Dong Xoai where over 400 government troops were killed before the enemy withdrew.
By the end of 1965, the North had also completed the infiltration of the 325th PAVN
Division in the Central Highlands while another PAVN Division, the 304th, camped in
Laos nearby.

[168]Cosmas, 172; Herring, 138.

[169]John M. Carland, *Combat Operations: Stemming the Tide, May 1965 to
October 1966*, U.S. Army in Vietnam (Washington, DC: Center of Military History,
2000), 17-18. Westmoreland's initial proposal was to use U.S. forces to secure base
areas, enclaves, and provide a general reserve force to ARVN.

[170]Westmoreland, 57-58. The base defense strategy was designed to protect U.S.
aircraft, artillery, command and control, and logistics assets. The enclave strategy was
designed for U.S. forces to secure areas of strategic importance and conduct limited
offensive operations from these areas while the larger force continued to improve
logistics capacity.

South Vietnamese government notified Ambassador Taylor that they would be unable to fulfill the expansion of ARVN in 1965 Westmoreland embarked on a new strategy.[171]

Westmoreland called this new strategy "counterinsurgency" while his critics have referred to it as a ―strategy of tactics."[172] In the historical literature, it is commonly known as search and destroy. The type of war that both Westmoreland and the administration believed they were embarking upon was what they referred to as a war of attrition. In other words the destruction of the enemy's military forces in battle, while losing less of your own forces, demonstrated success toward achieving the political goal. An important underlying assumption in the war of attrition is that there exists some point at which enemy losses would occur at a greater number and rate than the enemy can reconstitute. This point was referred to as the crossover point. The administration and Westmoreland believed if the crossover point could be reached, then the North would be forced to quit supporting the insurgency and negotiate for a political settlement.[173]

At the beginning of September 1965, Westmoreland issued the U.S. campaign plan which he called ―Concept of Operations in the Republic of Vietnam." Under the concept of operations, Westmoreland identified three phases. In Phase I, all forces were to defend currently held areas, continue the pacification effort in the provinces surrounding Saigon, and conduct limited offensive operations to disrupt the enemy's ability to conduct a large scale attack on defended areas. Phase II, which was suspected to

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[171]Cosmas, 237.

[172]Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 164-193. Krepinevich critiques Westmoreland's strategy and calls it a ―strategy of tactics."

[173]Andrade, 162-163.

begin in the early part of 1966 and last approximately six months, proscribed large scale

offensive operations, destruction of enemy base areas, and pacification of strategically

significant provinces in various parts of South Vietnam. However, if Phase II failed to

force a favorable political settlement, then Phase III would begin sometime in the latter

half of 1966. Phase III saw a significant increase in security force personnel, both U.S.

and South Vietnamese, and increased efforts in operations similar to those called for

during Phase II. However, more emphasis would be placed on pacification during this

Phase as MACV planners predicted that most of the enemy's larger formations would

have been neutralized during Phase II.[174] Despite tactical successes, this operational

campaign failed to achieve a crossover point as overall enemy strength in South Vietnam

actually increased during 1966.[175]

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[174]Cosmas, 242-250, 405-406. In U.S. political circles the first two phases would be known as ―stem the tide" and "turn the tide" while Westmoreland's Phase III proposals, which included offensive operations in Laos and Cambodia, had not yet been seriously considered as the administration wished to avoid further escalation. Phase I Operations in 1965 included the 173rd Airborne Brigade's offensive operations into War Zone D in June, while the Marines conducted Operation Starlite south of Chu Lai in August. In the war zones north of Saigon, the 1st Infantry Division and 173rd engaged in a series of operations in the fall. In November, the 1st Cavalry Division conducted offensive operations in the central highlands. In 1966, the 1st Cavalry Division conducted operations in the Binh Dinh coastal province. The 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions continued to work in the adjacent provincial peripheries of Saigon to shield Saigon from a main force threat. The 4th Infantry Division fought against PAVN regulars in the central highlands while the Marines shifted emphasis from their enclave areas to the northern demilitarized zone area of I Corps to defeat North Vietnamese incursions. Many of these operations were successful in spoiling the enemy's ability to conduct large scale attacks on strategically important areas.

[175]Andrade, 163; Cosmas, 405-406; Herring, 171. In fact, if the crossover point existed it would never be achieved. During the 1960s, approximately 200,000 men reached military age in North Vietnam excluded from the recruiting potential of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. As Sir Robert Thompson noted, ―all the people of North Vietnam had to do between 1965 and 1968 was to exist and breed."

The commitment of U.S. ground forces in Southern Vietnam did little to cause deviation in the North's approach. As one of the senior COSVN commanders stated, ―we would not disperse . . . but would organize many additional divisions . . . There was absolutely no question of changing the strategic line."[176] Indeed the commitment of Americans actually seemed to cause a greater occurrence of large formation battles through 1966. Viet Cong and PAVN leaders were prepared to sustain incredible losses to inflict increasing casualties on U.S. forces as they believed that mounting U.S. casualties would weaken the will of the U.S. to continue to fight.[177] In 1966, enemy main forces increasingly conducted operations south of the demilitarized zone in I Corps causing the Marines to react to counter the enemy incursions. Although the enemy did impale himself on the sharp point of U.S. firepower the 1st Infantry Division Commander commented, ―I was surprised a little bit . . . at the difficulty we had in trying to find the VC. We hit more dry holes than I thought we were going to hit. They were more elusive. They controlled the battle better. They were the ones who decided whether there would be a fight."[178]

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[176]Cosmas, 408.

[177]Cosmas, 409.

[178]Carland, 357; Cosmas, 439-440, 467. Viet Cong and PAVN operations continued in 1967 with increased pressure against South Vietnam's border provinces. Northern I Corps saw action at Khe Sanh and Con Thien. The heaviest fighting centered around Dak To in the central highlands involving elements of the 4th Infantry Division and 173rd Airborne Brigade. Although not entirely part of a cohesive and comprehensive enemy strategy, many of the attacks in the latter half of 1967 were designed to draw U.S. forces away from the population centers as planning and preparations had begun for the 1968 Tet offensive. MACV adjusted some of their unit locations in response to increased pressure as Westmoreland reinforced I Corps significantly, particularly in the border regions. However, toward the end of 1967 MACV began to see some statistical indicators of success. Indeed the COSVN military commander admitted that by mid-1967 his forces had some difficulty in reconstituting personnel losses and increasing rural control.

Although large offensive operations under the banner of search and destroy are often highlighted during the period of 1965-1967, pacification was also an important part of the concept of operations although the South Vietnamese would lead the effort. Westmoreland and MACV believed that one of the lessons learned from the Chien Thang pacification plan of 1964 was that the forces doing the clear and hold tasks had to be shielded from enemy main force units. In other words, both pacification and offensive operations had to be executed simultaneously. As MACV's head intelligence officer commented, "you have got to do both, you have got to kill the main force and you have got to find the little guy. It has got to progress together." Thus, Westmoreland's initial concept also focused on pacification which called for gradual expansion of focused areas until all of South Vietnam was under the control of Saigon.[179]

After multiple years of the U.S. Mission's failures to synchronize the pacification effort, the President finally directed MACV to take over the effort under a new organization named Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support or CORDS.[180] CORDS successfully unified the pacification effort, owing in large part to direct Presidential influence, the abrasive personality and leadership style of Robert

[179]Cosmas, 398-402.

[180]Daniel Marston, "Counterinsurgency Seminar 9: Vietnam Part 1" (Lecture, Lewis and Clark Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 14 January 2011). The delay in solving the unity of effort problem was characterized by the consistent fear of civilian agencies of putting the military in charge of civilian functions. It was an argument based on the American principle of military subordination to the civilian, rather than one based off of what might work in the midst of an insurgency, in a foreign country, whose civilian leadership had assumed power via rigged elections or military coups and whose provincial governors were all ARVN senior officers. However, as Komer soon discovered, "CORDS was under the command of the military. Paradoxically, this resulted in greater civilian influence over pacification than had existed before."

Komer, who was the civilian in charge of CORDS and served as a deputy commander to Westmoreland, and both Westmoreland's and later Abrams' positive relationships with both Komer and the U.S. ambassador. Each subordinate unit to MACV was required to appoint a Deputy Commander for CORDS. Many of these men were civilians although they would direct military action to support the pacification effort through their commanders. Under the CORDS umbrella all U.S. agencies contributing to development or local security were able to better coordinate their previous disparate actions.[181] Although CORDS made some moderate pacification gains in 1967, the early 1968 Tet offensive would largely nullify most of those achievements.

Despite some difficulties in 1967, COSVN believed they were achieving slow but steady progress. Ironically, MACV shared an identical assessment as even invitations to the U.S. embassy's 1967 New Year's Eve party read, —Come see the light at the end of the tunnel."[182] The North's assessment of the situation in mid to late 1967 caused them to believe that the time had come to conduct the General Offensive-General Uprising which they believed would win the war. The Politburo directed the Military Affairs Committee to plan and —prepare a decisive victory in 1968." The date for the offensive was set to 30-31 January 1968 during the beginning of the Tet holiday. At the 14th Plenum of the Central Committee, Communist party delegates approved the resolution —to carry out

[181]Richard Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 82-85, 87-94.

[182]George L. MacGarrigle, *Combat Operations: Taking the Offensive, October 1966 to October 1967*, U.S. Army in Vietnam (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1998), 431.

revolutionary war to the highest level of development and use the general offensive and general uprising to secure a decisive victory in a relatively short time."[183]

The fallout from the 1968 Tet offensive included Westmoreland being replaced by General Creighton Abrams, President Johnson announcing that he would not run for reelection, and a continued decline for American support for the war.[184] Although strategically successful for the North, Tet was a disaster at the operational and tactical levels.[185] Due to the substantial enemy losses and inability for the Viet Cong to hold any gains, the post Tet environment would provide a strategic opportunity for the allies to attain significant progress in the pacification effort.[186]

There is some historical debate as to whether Abrams and Westmoreland had any different operational approach in Vietnam.[187] Although Abrams succinctly described his campaign as ―one war," this is only evidence that Abrams was capable of better rhetoric than Westmoreland. Also, the idea that there was a major shift in operations fails to

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[183]Cosmas, 468.

[184]Herring, 218-228.

[185]James Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 79-83.

[186]Robert Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 147, 151.

[187]Lewis Sorley in his book *A Better War* makes a case that Abrams fundamentally changed the way the war was being fought. Abrams is portrayed as an unfortunate victim of politicians and waning public support. Dale Andrade's more balanced examination (previously cited) points to the enemy situation as the primary input that developed both Westmoreland's and Abrams' decisions and directives. He faults both men in his analysis, but thoroughly debunks the historical myth that one man's approach was significantly different from the other.

examine Westmoreland's past record in support of pacification.[188] Finally, and most

importantly, cursory historical reviews ignore the enemy situation that both men faced

during their tenures.[189] Robert Komer, who was the CORDS director under both men,

stated, ―There was no change in strategy whatsoever . . . The myth of a change in strategy

is a figment of media imagination; it didn't really change until we started

withdrawing.‖[190]

By the late summer of 1968, it was abundantly clear that Tet had been a costly

campaign for the Viet Cong as the loss of fighters and political cadre hampered their

efforts to continue operations and reconstitute. In this weakened enemy environment,

Abrams initiated the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) in November 1968. In

concept, APC was little different than previous designs dating back to MAAG's 1961

―Geographically Phased National Level Operation Plan for Counterinsurgency.‖ What

did change in this latest pacification installment, however, was the amount of U.S.

resources and security forces levied toward the effort as the number of enemy main

forces and the North's capability to employ them had significantly declined. Based off

the reduced threat, a relatively sufficient protective shield could be provided while U.S.

units deployed as companies, platoons, or even squads with both ARVN and local

security forces in combined operations. Although security improved, the objective of

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[188]Andrade, 159-161.

[189]Andrade, 148. Westmoreland faced numerous enemy main forces up to division strength in South Vietnam from 1965-1967 while Abrams faced a significantly reduced enemy main force threat following the Tet offensive in 1968. This is one of the primary points in Andrade's assessment of Westmoreland's and Abrams' basic strategies.

[190]Krepinevich, 257.

extending government control to these areas had yet to be achieved as Lieutenant Colonel

Carl Bernard commented in December 1968 with respect to the situation in the Hau

Nghia province, ―In short, the province's most commendable actions . . . amount to an

occupation of what had been VC-dominated territory. It is not yet pacification."[191]

Vietnamization: 1969-1972

Richard Nixon won the 1968 Presidential election and was determined to end the

war in Vietnam on favorable terms and without the appearance of defeat. At the end of

each unsuccessful negotiation with North Vietnam, Nixon chose to escalate the conflict

in order to try to bring North Vietnam back to the negotiating table more willing to

concede so that America could achieve ―peace with honor." Nixon authorized a cross

border offensive into Cambodia in 1970, supported an ARVN operation into Laos in

1971, and mined the Haiphong harbor in 1972. Under his administration more tonnage of

ordinance was released from the air than both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations

combined.[192]

The Vietnamization strategy, in its simplest terms, called for the U.S. to withdraw

slowly and handover increasing responsibility of the war to the South Vietnamese. Rather

than adhere to a timeline, Abrams believed in a conditions based withdrawal that took

into account factors such as the enemy threat, pacification progress, and South

Vietnamese military capability. However, the political climate would render

developments on the ground largely irrelevant and ensure that reductions of U.S. troop

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[191]Eric Bergerud, *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in the Hau Nghia Province* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), 223-224, 235.

[192]Herring, 243-246, 259-261, 265, 273, 282.

strength would proceed on schedule. Thus, one of Abrams primary jobs as commander of
MACV would be to bring the Vietnamese up to a basic level of proficiency so that he
could selectively redeploy U.S. units. Although ARVN had displayed numerous
deficiencies in the past, it appeared Vietnamization had a chance to succeed under the
reduced enemy threat in the post 1968 Tet environment.[193]

The insurgency's loss of manpower would continue following their tactical
defeats during the 1968 Tet offensive as a NLF cadre member in the Long Khanh
province remarked, ―During those years [1969-1970] I had to reorganize my unit three
times. Twice, the entire unit was killed. Each time I reorganized, the numbers were
smaller. It was almost impossible to get new recruits . . .‖[194] COSVN's July 1969
circular, the product of the Ninth COSVN conference, spelled out some of the issues
facing them in the south. ―We have failed to promote a strong political high tide . . . our
military proselyting [sic] spearhead is still weak . . . guerrilla warfare has developed
slowly and unevenly . . . their [some main forces'] combat efficiency is still low; the
replenishment of forces . . . is still beset with prolonged difficulties.‖[195] Tactics seemed to
be improving for the allies as well as an NLF cadre member remarked, ―During the
period 1968-1970, I was ambushed eleven times and wounded twice. It seemed the

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[193]Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973*, U.S. Army
in Vietnam (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), 341, 346-350, 397.

[194]Trinh Duc, ―Recollections of His Rural Work, 1968-1971,‖ in *A Vietnam War
Reader*, ed. Michael Hunt (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010),
158.

[195]―Ninth COSVN Conference, Resolution on a Shift in Strategy, Early July
1969,‖ in *A Vietnam War Reader*, ed. Michael Hunt (Chapel Hill, NC: University of
North Carolina Press, 2010), 105-106.

enemy had learned a lot about how to fight in the jungle . . ."[196] In light of these difficulties, the Communists decided to revert from Phase 3 to Phase 2 although they still launched a general offensive in 1969 albeit on a much smaller scale than the previous year.[197] The North Vietnamese were sure that American public opinion would eventually force the withdrawal of U.S. forces and they were prepared to wait for that moment.[198]

As a corollary or supporting effort to Vietnamization, Nixon authorized the first and only large scale U.S. cross border action of the war into Cambodia which began on 29 April 1970. Abrams had made a strong plea to deal with the Cambodian sanctuary and Admiral John S. McCain, Commander in Chief of U.S. Pacific Forces, in support of his field commander told the President, —If you are going to withdraw another 150,000 troops from South Vietnam this year, you must protect Saigon's western flank by an invasion of the Cambodian sanctuaries." The limited invasion of Cambodia was a military success for the U.S. and South Vietnam. Although failing to capture senior COSVN leadership, they uncovered large stores of equipment and weapons. The results of ARVN during the

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[196]Trinh Duc, 157.

[197]Bergurud, 244-245, 254. The enemy's 1969 offensive, much smaller in scale than the 1968 Tet offensive, achieved a few successes and did bring pacification to a halt in some areas. By the early summer, as the enemy's offensive dwindled, the main effort of U.S. operations was again shifted back to pacification. Some of the population was resettled into New Villages which were able to survive, for the most part, with the decline in the enemy's ability to mass forces. Due to the success of small unit aggressive U.S. actions and the continued decline of the Viet Cong, 1969 was perhaps the best year of internal security progress for the allies in South Vietnam.

[198]Herring, 248.

operation ranged from very good to mixed, which prompted Nixon to proclaim success of Vietnamization.[199]

The following year saw a dramatically less successful operation into Laos, Lam Son 719, in February and March of 1971. Although the operation initially proceeded smoothly, ARVN units would cease their advance prematurely allowing PAVN to reinforce the area. Casualties on both sides were heavy. ARVN's failure was primarily one of leadership at all levels coupled with an enemy who chose to fight for his cross border sanctuary.[200]

Bolstered by their success in Laos against ARVN, both Le Duan and Giap pushed for a general offensive at the Party Central Committee meeting in May, 1971. They believed that the U.S. would not reinforce the small contingent of U.S. forces that remained in South Vietnam and that the North should strike soon as the South Vietnamese pacification efforts were increasingly successful. Finally with the North

[199]James Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam: How America Left and South Vietnam Lost Its War* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 70-84. One of the caches uncovered was the largest weapons cache discovered of the entire war which Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division nicknamed ―Rock Island East" after the U.S. Rock Island arsenal. Many U.S. advisors thought that ARVN had shown an increased will and improved leadership during the operation. However, a more significant factor to ARVN's success was the fact that the enemy simply chose to fight a delaying action rather than a determined defense. A supporting factor was the fact that significant U.S. firepower and elements of the 1st Cavalry Division and 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment that accompanied ARVN on the operation.

[200]Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 94-121. Aware that an operation in Laos was being planned PAVN regulars were deployed in increasing numbers, including a large number of anti-aircraft weaponry, along the Laotian border with South Vietnam. For ARVN's part, leadership issues were found from the Corps commander through platoon leader. The lack of U.S. advisers forced ARVN leaders to coordinate and plan for their own fire support which they generally did poorly. Following the operation, Abrams employed a combined approach of training, equipping, and leader development to address the continued problems with ARVN.

under increasing pressure from the Soviet Union and China to negotiate with the U.S., Le Duan argued that a large victory was needed to reassert North Vietnam's political autonomy and bargaining position. Although there was opposition to their views, their argument eventually carried the conference, with the invasion set for March 1972.[201]

In the defense, the similar leadership issues that had inhibited ARVN's ability to fight offensively in Laos the previous year resurfaced. Saved primarily by U.S. airpower, the South Vietnamese were able to reach a relative stalemate by the summer of 1972. A cease fire was agreed upon on 23 January, 1973. The last U.S. troops left Saigon on 29 March 1973, while PVAN divisions remained in South Vietnam to threaten the government's continued survival.[202]

In a few short years the North rebuilt their strength and conducted a final general offensive. Expected by their leaders to last two years, the invasion would take less than six months. By late March in 1975 the invasion was proceeding so smoothly that PVAN leaders were directed to attack and seize Saigon. On 30 April PAVN seized Saigon and gained the unconditional surrender of the Republic of Vietnam.[203]

<div align="center">Security Force Framework</div>

In 1954, the U.S. Joint Chiefs were against assuming any responsibility for training the South Vietnamese military on the grounds that a stable government did not

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[201]Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 124-126.

[202]Clarke, 483, 490-495.

[203]Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 276.

exist and that the French remained to disrupt any U.S. efforts.[204] The departure of the

French and the rise of Diem between 1954-1956 would erode the non involvement

position of the Joint Chiefs although they were pleased when they avoided direct U.S.

ground force commitment. Initially, Secretary of State Dulles wanted the South

Vietnamese armed forces organized primarily for internal defense as he believed the

South East Asian Treaty Organization sufficient to stop any potential invasion from the

north.[205]

President Eisenhower dispatched retired General Joseph Collins to Vietnam in

November 1954 to provide an analysis of the situation and provide recommendations on

the level of U.S. commitment to the region. One of Collins' recommendations was a

reduction in the South Vietnamese Army from 170,000 to 77,000. With this

recommendation, he outlined that the reorganized Army should contain six divisions with

three divisions organized to delay a conventional attack from North Vietnam and the

other three divisions organized for internal territorial security.[206]

The imminent departure of French soldiers by 1956 and the introduction of

Lieutenant General Samuel Williams as the head of the MAAG significantly changed the

U.S. organizational model for the South Vietnamese Army. Williams, who had served as

a division commander in Korea, believed that the threat of a conventional attack from

North Vietnam was the primary and most dangerous threat to the fledgling South

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[204]Spector, 224.

[205]Spector, 228. The South East Asian Treaty Organization or SEATO was a regional alliance formed to deter communist expansion in the region.

[206]Spector, 238.

Vietnamese state.[207] Additionally, he differed with his predecessor General John O'Daniel, in that Williams believed that the Army should not be used primarily as part of an internal security force. Thus, General Williams sought out to build a South Vietnamese Army in a conventional mold capable of effectively delaying a North Vietnamese attack. If the internal security situation deteriorated, Williams believed that the conventional forces could be easily leveraged to fight bands of guerrillas. Furthermore, Williams believed that enemy guerrilla activity was merely a distraction whose aim was to divert the military's attention to internal problems of minor significance. Once distracted and dispersed, the enemy would launch a conventional attack that would decide the outcome of the conflict.[208] Thus, the conventionally-focused ARVN would grow from approximately 100,000 members at the start of Williams' tenure to close to 150,000 in 1960.[209]

With ARVN training and equipping to face a conventional external threat, defining roles in the security force framework shifted to the internal threat to South Vietnam. A combination of police and paramilitary forces, the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps, performed this internal security function. In 1957, police forces numbered 7,000 municipal police and 3,500 investigators in the Vietnamese Bureau of Investigation.[210] In 1962, Diem directed that all police agencies integrate into a single

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[207]Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken*, 301.

[208]Spector, 272-274.

[209]Can Van Vien, Ngo Quang Truong, Dong Van Khuyen, Nguyen Duy Hinh, Tran Dinh Tho, Hoang Ngo Lung and Chu Xuan Vien, *The U.S. Advisor*, Indochina Monographs (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1980), 5.

[210]Spector, 320.

national police organization.[211] With this directive and previous expansion of the national police to 17,000 members, the police were not yet robust enough to conduct any law enforcement duties below the District level on anything other than an intermittent basis. Thus, law and order at the village and hamlet level remained the responsibility of the Self-Defense Corps. The Self-Defense Corps and Civil Guard will be explored in depth in the next section.

Although clearly delineated roles existed in the security framework vision, Diem would be forced by deteriorating conditions to commit ARVN to internal security and pacification duties throughout the pre-1965 advise and assist period. Additionally, Diem gained U.S. support for creating units such as Ranger companies in the conventional oriented ARVN force that were more appropriately trained and equipped for counter-guerrilla operations. This push to marginally transform some of the ARVN force into a force more capable of fighting a guerrilla insurgency was supported by Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr who replaced Williams as the head of MAAG in 1960.[212]

The U.S. advisory effort to MAAG and subsequently MACV, would grow from its initial small staff structure of 342 advisors and trainers in 1954 over 11,000 by 1962.[213] Initially U.S. advisors to operational ARVN units were not assigned below the division level and were forbidden to accompany their ARVN counterparts on operations. However, following several failed ARVN missions, Williams finally authorized advisors

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[211]Truong, 72.

[212]Spector, 365.

[213]Vien et al., 7. MACV was established in 1962 and would fully absorb MAAG responsibilities under a unified command in 1964.

to accompany their counterparts in the hope that ARVN performance would improve.[214] Despite the growth of the advisory mission and scope, U.S. military (other than special forces) advisors were not assigned to ARVN below the battalion level and were never assigned to the Civil Guard or Self-Defense Corps.

The combination of security forces consisting of ARVN, Civil Guard, Self-Defense Corps, and National Police would prove woefully inadequate to defeat the communist subversive threat or to halt the enemy's main force units from threatening major cities in the South by the end of 1964. Thus, the U.S. administration chose to begin planning for gradual escalation of the U.S. military effort eventually leading to the introduction of U.S. ground troops in 1965.

Under his September 1965 operational concept, Westmoreland saw distinct roles for the various available security forces. During Phase II, the U.S. Army and Marines were to conduct primarily offensive operations against the enemy main forces. These offensive operations had two primary purposes. First, they were designed to disrupt the enemy's ability to conduct large scale attacks on strategically important areas. In other words, they were to provide a protective shield for the other less capable security forces behind them. Second, they were designed to kill as many enemy forces as possible. The operations were an effort to achieve a single or series of tactical victories that would have decisive strategic consequences. With the introduction of a large amount of U.S. troops ARVN's primary effort shifted to pacification and defending key terrain, while their secondary role focused on engaging enemy main force units.[215]

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[214]Spector, 332.

[215]Cosmas, 400.

Westmoreland divided the effort between ARVN and U.S. forces in this manner for several reasons. First, ARVN had proved unable to handle the better armed, highly motivated, and better led enemy main force units in many cases prior to 1965. Also, both Westmoreland and Ambassador Taylor were concerned with being perceived as colonialists. They believed that if U.S. forces worked to provide local security even with host nation forces under pacification that they would interfere with host nation sovereignty. In fact the South Vietnamese government and military leaders rejected Westmoreland's ideas of a combined staff of U.S. and South Vietnamese officers for this very reason. A perception of neo-colonialism would also serve as a propaganda advantage for the enemy. Further Westmoreland doubted the ability of U.S. forces to be effective agents of pacification as they did not speak the language, did not understand the culture, and did not understand the nuances of Vietnamese politics. An additional concern is that operations amongst the population would potentially limit the U.S. ability to apply firepower; one of the U.S. military's greatest strengths and necessary to kill large numbers of enemy troops. Limits on fires would have to be imposed near population centers to limit collateral damage or the U.S. risked losing legitimacy while simultaneously bolstering the ranks of the insurgency.[216]

ARVN's role with respect to pacification was to serve as a secondary shield for pacification, to synchronize the pacification effort, to clear areas of enemy resistance to enable local security forces to hold them, and to respond to enemy main force attacks against the next tier of the security force framework, the territorials. The territorials, as the local security forces were referred to as, consisted mainly of the Regional Forces (RF)

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[216]Cosmas, 400-402.

and Popular Forces (PF), formerly the Civil Guard and Self-Defense-Corps. The RF role was primarily to conduct offensive operations against small local Viet Cong units and serve as a reaction force for the PF and police. Secondarily, the RF conducted local village and hamlet security as needed to support the PF and secured key infrastructure. Finally, the RF were responsible for training the People's Self Defense Forces (PSDF) which was a nationwide militia formed after the Tet offensive of 1968. The PF role was primarily to secure villages and hamlets against Viet Cong attacks and infiltration. Secondarily, they were used to secure lines of communication and for fixed site security. The PSDF were a militia force, authorized in 1968, that was supposed to provide intelligence to the PF and deter Viet Cong attack or infiltration into villages. The PSDF was primarily an attempt to politically organize the rural population to support the other security forces and provide for their own limited defense. The National Police were responsible for enforcing the rule of law, eliminating Viet Cong political cadre, and population control measures such as conducting census operations. However, they generally performed a less significant role in the campaign until after the 1968 Tet offensive as the enemy situation and their lack of manpower prevented routine operations in rural areas. The PF often assumed these roles in absence of the National Police. The Rural Development Cadre and Armed Propaganda teams supported the village security effort. Rural Development Cadre were tasked with identification of the Viet Cong political infrastructure, raising and organizing the PSDF, establishing elected local government, and assisting with small scale village development. Armed Propaganda

Teams conducted psychological operations to induce Viet Cong members to surrender, or rally under the Chieu Hoi program.[217]

Other security forces also played important roles. Special Forces of various designs conducted limited incursions into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. They conducted long range reconnaissance patrols to gain intelligence on enemy dispositions and strength and direct fires onto enemy formations. U.S. Special Forces were also involved in the pacification effort in the form of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), which by 1964 was evolving from a local security force into more of a border security and strike force to conduct incursions into enemy sanctuaries and ambush the enemy along infiltration routes.[218]

Westmoreland repeatedly requested additional forces to execute his concept through this security force framework. Many of these requests had been pre-planned based on his vision of how he expected the campaign to unfold. After the initial commitment and reassessment of the situation he requested and received an additional 44 U.S. maneuver battalions to begin Phase I of his concept which mostly arrived into South Vietnam throughout the summer of 1965. Phase I —add-ons" were also deployed by April 1966 that included additional air defense, artillery, engineer, and logistics units. In September 1965 he requested an additional 28 maneuver battalions for prosecution of operations under Phase II. As the enemy continued to achieve success in South Vietnam and with the introduction of PAVN into the conflict, Westmoreland nearly doubled his

[217]Headquarters, United States Military Command Vietnam, *Territorial Security in Vietnam*, 2 February 1971, 23-27.

[218]Francis John Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971*, Vietnam Studies (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 46.

request of 28 maneuver battalions to 53. He believed that he required these forces at the beginning of 1966 and that they needed to be deployed simultaneously to get ahead of any buildup of Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Although his force levels were approved with minor modifications, they would be deployed sporadically through 1966. Thus, the enemy seemed to add units on the same schedule as the Americans added units in South Vietnam during the year.[219]

Important in the operational concept was also the growth of ARVN and other South Vietnamese security forces. At the beginning of 1965 the south's military ground forces were comprised of 220,360 ARVN, 96,049 Regional Forces, 168,317 Popular Forces, 31,395 National Police, and a 21,454 strong CIDG. However, these numbers painted an inaccurate picture of the force as ARVN desertions in 1965 alone were estimated at close to 20 percent of its assigned personnel. Further restricting security force growth, enemy pressure increased casualties in the security forces to about 2,000 per month. Also, political considerations prevented the full employment of ARVN as evidenced by the 25th Division commander's instructions not to commit more than a battalion of each of his regiments to combat at any time leaving the remainder as an anti-coup reserve force.[220]

By the end of 1967, the total U.S. force in South Vietnam consisted of 480,356 troops including 314,470 soldiers and 78,013 marines. However, these numbers alone can easily overstate the actual —fighting position" strength as a generally accepted ratio of about 10 support troops for every one combat troop is cited. A total of 100 ground

[219]Cosmas, 251-259.

[220]Clarke, 20, 43, 47-48.

maneuver battalions comprised the nucleus of the U.S. force. Although a large force, Westmoreland's requests for U.S. troop increases to execute Phase III of his operational concept in 1967 largely went unfulfilled, as did his request for large operations in both Cambodia and Laos.[221] ARVN had built up to a force of 324,637 the majority of who were assigned to its 10 infantry divisions. The Vietnamese Marine Corps remained small, numbering 7,561 Marines, and was generally employed as a reserve. With respect to local security forces, the RF numbered 152,549 while the PF numbered 151,945.[222] The actual numbers of the RF/PF and ARVN were most likely 10 to 20 percent lower than official figures as the practice of ―ghosting‖ was widespread.[223]

The 1968 Tet offensive was the first operational level failure of the security force framework design. Viet Cong formations were able to infiltrate past the porous protective U.S. and ARVN shield or emerge from hiding in areas thought to have been controlled by the government. Some PAVN units tied down large groups of U.S. forces, particularly in I Corps, preventing responsiveness in some cases to local security forces under siege. Even the relatively secure capital came under attack and the U.S. embassy was threatened. However, with the threat weakened by the losses sustained during the offensive by the summer of 1968, U.S. forces were able to take a greater role in local

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[221]Herring, 193-196.

[222]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *Command History 1968*, 30 April 1969, 300, 341-342.

[223]Clarke, 159, 386. Ghosting was one of the many corrupt practices in South Vietnam. It was the practice of reporting fake names or not removing troops killed in action or deserters from rolls. Thus, South Vietnam's officer corps or various echelons of provincial leaders could keep the extra money for these non-existent soldiers on their rolls. Westmoreland estimated a 10 percent ghosting rate while John Paul Vann estimated a rate closer to 20 percent.

security tasks under pacification. Thus, rather than solely forming a protective shield, U.S. forces were integrated increasingly with both ARVN and territorial forces in area security operations. This concept proved largely sustainable due to the relative lack of enemy main forces compared to 1967, although a small enemy offensive in 1969 temporarily reversed security gains in some areas. There were still large battles to fight as evidenced by the 25th Infantry Division's battles in the Tay Ninh province, but most provinces did not see the a similar level of enemy main unit activity.[224] As Vietnamization increasingly demanded withdrawal of U.S. forces, Abrams sought to continue Westmoreland's proposals for expansion of South Vietnam's security forces.

The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) expanded from a total of 717,214 total members at the end of 1968 to approximately 1.1 million in 1973. ARVN grew by more than 120,000, the Vietnamese Navy and Marines by more than 27,000, and the Vietnamese Air Force more than tripled to 64,500. The RF and PF also grew from 185,000 and 167,000 to 324,000 and 206,000 respectively.[225] In terms of sheer numbers and capabilities of equipment less operators Vietnamization was a success. However, quantities would not overcome the lack of ability to command and control, synchronize, and logistically support such a large force. Indeed the majority of measures taken under Vietnamization included expansion of quantities of the Vietnamese armed forces, weaponry, and equipment. Even though the advisory effort had spanned over 15 years by this point in the campaign, Americans had still been unable to solve the basic problems which had rendered ARVN ineffective from the beginning including incompetent

[224]Bergerud, 223-224.

[225]Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 30.

leadership and the lack of motivation to fight. As Lieutenant General Arthur Collins, senior II Corps advisor, told Abrams in November 1970, ―it is only laziness and failure on the part of the chain of command to get out and do their job that prevents their forces from becoming more effective." Further, he added if the South Vietnamese had ―the desire or the will" they would be able to win the war in 90 days.[226] Even had leadership been improved, the planning assumption under which this force expansion was executed required continued U.S. financial, logistics, and even airpower if necessary. The U.S. Congress prevented the validation of any of these assumptions by voting to cut off direct and indirect military support in August 1973 and financial support in early March 1975.[227]

Events in 1970-1972 would serve as tests for the evolution of the security force framework under Vietnamization. The Cambodian incursion of 1970 proved that the security force framework of U.S. and ARVN conducting offensive operations while the RF and PF performed local security was workable under the still decreased enemy main force threat as compared to enemy pre-Tet force levels. Although some ARVN forces stayed in Cambodia, many redeployed to their geographically assigned areas despite little indication of their need to remain in static positions supporting the local security effort. The security force framework shifted again with Vietnamization and would be tested in ARVN's incursion into Laos in 1971. The operation completely stripped away U.S. ground inclusion in the offensive although U.S. forces did occupy and secure areas in South Vietnam that had been vacated by ARVN to conduct the offensive. The only U.S.

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[226]Clarke, 384.

[227]Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 195, 231.

role was providing close air support and lift/attack aviation. The result of the operation was clear: ARVN proved unable to conduct large offensive operations that would be necessary with the imminent full departure of the U.S. from South Vietnam.[228] Additionally, there was no indication that ARVN would ever be able to defend South Vietnam without supporting U.S. airpower. The Easter offensive of 1972 showcased even larger flaws in the framework that no longer included U.S. ground forces with the exception of advisors. Only U.S. airpower allowed the South Vietnam to successfully parry defeat.[229] Many local security and pacification losses were never regained in South Vietnam as ARVN proved incapable of reestablishing the territorial integrity of their country. As U.S. airpower was removed from the framework, ARVN proved unable to stop the North's 1975 invasion.

Local Security Forces: Regional Forces and Popular Forces

Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps: A Lost Decade

The Civil Guard, which later became the RF, was activated in April 1955 from various security elements that remained from the French security force structure. It was a paramilitary force that was directed to perform security operations within a province. Civil Guard units were formed and organized as independent companies that performed tasks such as serving as a reaction force, defending combat outposts, and conducting small unit security operations within the province. The majority of the Civil Guard members were residents of the province in which they were assigned. Although Civil

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[228]Clarke, 473.

[229]Clarke, 483, 490-495.

Guard units were a provincial asset, efforts were made to confine Civil Guard company operations to the same district from which they were recruited. As a result, the majority of Civil Guard companies worked directly for a district chief. South Vietnamese military leaders believed that the locally recruited Civil Guard's intimate familiarity with the terrain, population, and situation would make it more effective in maintaining security than a more diversely recruited ARVN. In addition, defending their own homes and families was believed to be a strong motivator in the Guard's desire to stand and fight against the Viet Cong. In 1957, the Civil Guard contained approximately 54,000 members.[230]

One tier down from the Civil Guard in the security force framework was the Self-Defense Corps, which later became the PF. Its highest echelon of organization was the platoon and, like the Civil Guard, its members were recruited locally. The primary mission of the Self-Defense Corps was to defend villages and hamlets against enemy guerrilla incursions and to assist the village chief with the maintenance of law and order within the village. Additionally, Self-Defense Corps members guarded fixed sites and conducted patrols within the boundaries of their villages. The Self-Defense Corps platoons reported to the village chiefs or in some cases district chiefs and received all direction for employment from them. In theory, the Self-Defense Corps was able to request support from the Civil Guard in cases of determined Viet Cong attacks but in reality lack of communications and ineffective reinforcement procedures often prevented

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[230]Truong, 24-27; Spector, 320.

the Self-Defense Corps from access to a reliable reinforcing force. In 1957, The Self-Defense Corps consisted of approximately 50,000 paramilitaries.[231]

The eventual hundreds of thousands of RF and PF were a product of rural Vietnamese society. Locally recruited and employed forces are cited throughout the literature as having distinct advantages over other types of forces when defending their home turf. They knew the details of the terrain and villagers. Knowledge of the terrain eased difficulties of movement and maneuver. Knowledge of the people eased difficulties in obtaining human intelligence. A MACV lessons learned report heralded their ability to —know which villagers to question" and observed that, —What would pass unnoticed by an American may immediately telegraph a message to the RF/PF; they may quickly take under fire an individual or group that would go unchallenged or at best questioned and released by a [U.S.] trooper."[232]

Despite some advantages, U.S. internal disputes over ownership of the paramilitaries was an ominous beginning to a decade of relative ineffectiveness. In one corner the U.S. Operations Mission, headed by the U.S. ambassador, viewed the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps as adjuncts to a police infrastructure. MAAG took an opposing view. Although viewing the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps as an internal security force, MAAG believed that the paramilitaries needed significantly improved military capabilities to fight against well organized and equipped guerrillas. Due to the U.S. Operations Mission's view and responsibility for providing support to the territorials

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[231]Spector, 320.

[232]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970), 5.

through the South Vietnamese government, the U.S. Operations Mission contracted a group of police and public administration specialists from Michigan State University in May of 1955 to assess the forces' capabilities and rectify deficiencies. Viewing the Civil Guard through a Western police lens, training and equipping efforts by the Michigan State cadre were focused on developing a rural police force to include civil police focused training with shotguns and revolvers. Edward Lansdale, a former OSS officer who advised General O'Daniel, was especially critical of the focus of the Michigan State cadre stating that, ―A squad of Civil Guard policemen, armed with whistles, nightsticks, and .38 caliber revolvers, could hardly be expected to arrest a squad of guerrillas armed with submachine guns, rifles, grenades, and mortars."[233] Nevertheless, by the middle of 1957, the Michigan State cadre had trained 14,000 Civil Guard personnel in a six week training course that focused primarily on law enforcement duties.[234]

Ambassador Elbridge Durbrow, U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam from 1957-1961, successfully staved off attempts by Williams to assume responsibility of training the Civil Guard throughout the late 1950s on the principle that any Army trained and led Civil Guard force would undermine civilian control and provide even more power to ARVN in internal matters. As the internal security situation deteriorated in the early 1960s, McGarr was able to gain U.S. Presidential approval for MAAG to assume responsibility for the Civil Guard in 1962 and later the Self-Defense Corps. Under the realignment, ARVN assumed command and control responsibilities during employment of these forces. Lieutenant General Victor Krulak, the Special Assistant to the Secretary

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[233]Herring, 65.

[234]Spector, 321.

of Defense for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, first encountered a Self-Defense Corps platoon in 1962: he wrote, ―Now two in the same uniform, armed with an assortment of battered rifles, carbines, and shotguns, they were monumentally unimpressive to look at."[235] MAAG and the South Vietnamese had a lot of work to do to turn the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps into a more effective fighting force.

At inception, both the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps were poorly equipped, trained, and disciplined.[236] While the Civil Guard at least possessed a mixture of obsolete weapons, many members of the Self-Defense Corps were only issued weapons from the village chief when assuming guard or patrol duty due to weapon shortages.[237] Shortages of ammunition for the limited weapons persisted and even the ammunition on hand was so old and poorly maintained that the reliability rate was estimated at about fifteen percent.[238] The virtual non-existence of radios in either organization forced the units to use drums, flag signals, and messengers to alert other forces of Viet Cong movement or actions.[239]

The lack of weaponry and equipment caused significant problems for both organizations when it came to fighting the Viet Cong, however, the shortages also incentivized some of the forces to adapt to survive. For example, some of the Self-

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[235]Victor Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 187.

[236]Spector, 320.

[237]Truong, 30.

[238]Spector, 320-321.

[239]Truong, 30.

Defense Corps units were known for their ability to produce spike and arrow traps.[240]

Unfortunately, other units decided that their method of adaptation to the arms and

equipment disparity between themselves and the Viet Cong would be to simply submit to

Viet Cong control. A U.S. assessment in 1957 determined that ―the capability of the SDC

[Self-Defense Corps] to withstand assaults by armed and organized Viet-Cong units is

virtually nil.‖[241]

Despite poor armament and equipment, a more significant factor contributing to

general ineffectiveness of the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps was a lack of

competent leadership. First, the district and village chiefs often had little to no military

experience. Also, the chiefs were often aloof from conditions in the hamlets as they rarely

visited them fearing Viet Cong assassination or intimidation. Second, the Civil Guard and

Self-Defense Corps officers were often selected by the chiefs based on loyalty and few, if

any, were graduates of any type of training or educational program. Third, the span of

control problem associated with numerous platoon or company sized paramilitary

formations coupled with the chiefs‗ dual military and civil responsibilities was difficult

for even the best chiefs to overcome. Finally, none of the leaders in these organizations

were assigned an advisor or had an assigned mentor that could assist them in organizing

defenses, developing military plans, or training their formations.[242]

Adding to the lack of leaders was the lack of difficulty in obtaining quality

recruits for the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps. South Vietnam‗s mass conscription

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[240]Truong, 30.

[241]Spector, 321.

[242]Truong, 22, 47, 80, 85-87, 135.

policy from 1954-1964 drafted many of South Vietnam's youth aged twenty to twenty

two. Service in ARVN took priority to service in the local security forces as those drafted

had to complete their two year ARVN service first, before volunteering for the Civil

Guard or Self-Defense Corps. The lower standard pay of the Civil Guard and system of

allowance compensation for the Self-Defense Corps also incentivized South Vietnam's

youth to enlist in ARVN rather than the local security forces. In 1964, the government

expanded the draft age from twenty to twenty five for ARVN further hampering

recruiting efforts. Officials charged with manning both the RF and PF often knowingly

accepted draft evaders who saw the territorials as less risky than ARVN. Officials also

began recruiting outside home provinces as recruiting sources in small villages and large

rural areas dried up. Despite the challenges, the desire to remain close to home was an

important incentive for a young South Vietnamese male to join the RF or PF. In the rural

parts of Vietnam, staying close to one's home, family, village, and ancestral tombs was

important. Overall, however, the young rural talent generally went first to the Viet Cong,

second to ARVN, and last to the local security forces.[243]

With the military assumption of Civil Guard responsibility, measures were taken

to improve its performance. To improve officer leadership a platoon leader course was

established at Thu Duc although a junior high school education and selection by the

province chief was all that was required to attend. Additionally, ARVN assigned a small

number of officers on temporary duty to serve in provincial level staffs. However, the

degree of removal from the small unit level had a minimal effect on solving leadership

deficiencies resident in the fighting units. Coupled with leader training deficiencies,

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[243]Truong, 48, 54.

individual recruit training, other than the inadequate Michigan State provided law enforcement training, failed to be fully addressed until early in 1965. To address firepower inadequacies, MAAG delivered World War II era small arms to the Civil Guard which upgraded their armament considerably. However, with the infusion of large numbers of communist bloc weapons to the Viet Cong by 1964, the Civil Guard and Self-Defense-Corps weaponry was again inferior to that of the enemy. Finally, the U.S. provided financial resources to enable salaried payment for Self-Defense Corps members.[244]

In summary, both the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps were relatively ineffective in their local security roles until 1964. Contributing factors to their ineffectiveness resided in inadequate armament, communications equipment, recruiting, training, leadership, command and control, logistics, and advisory support. These factors combined with environmental factors such as political instability in South Vietnam, an insurgency growing in lethality, and no meaningful efforts taken to address rural land reform grievances further limited effectiveness.

Reorganization

The Civil Guard and Self-Defense-Corps underwent a name change and command structure realignment from 1964-1966. The Civil Guard was re-designated the Regional Forces (RF) while the Self-Defense Corps was re-designated the Popular Forces (PF) and both forces were formally integrated into the RVNAF in 1964. The separate offices that oversaw the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps were integrated into the provincial

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[244]Truong, 32, 51, 54-55, 97.

ARVN headquarters while an administrative and logistical company was formed to improve support to the RFs and PFs. A separate RF and PF command was created in 1964 that was subsequently disbanded and absorbed into the Joint General Staff in 1966, theoretically creating a unified command structure. With this integration, each corps commander appointed a deputy for RF and PF oversight.[245] Name changes and reorganization alone would obviously not improve the capability or performance of the RF or PF.

Tactics and Effectiveness

The basic subsets of allied counterinsurgency operations in South Vietnam included large offensive operations and pacification. Pacification operations, the purview of the RF and PF, involved clearing an area by either ARVN or U.S. forces and subsequently holding the area by the RF and PF. Pacification was enabled throughout South Vietnam's provinces through a system of outposts. From these outposts small unit security patrols were deployed while the remainder of the force focused on defense of the outpost. Both the RF and PF also conducted cordon and searches and eventually combined patrols in support of pacification operations.

Both the RF and the PF faced serious challenges in the defense. Evidence of tactical defeat at the hands of better armed, equipped, led, organized and numerically superior Viet Cong abound. Official MACV history specifically cites five of the unknown number of total RF or PF outposts attacked as completely over run by the Viet Cong in 1966. Telling in the report is that even when local security force casualties were

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[245]Truong, 32-34.

not relatively severe, as in the case of the 12 October attack on a PF outpost in the Dinh Tuong province where a total of 10 casualties were sustained, a much larger amount of weapons were captured by the Viet Cong.[246] The Viet Cong continued to make determined efforts to eliminate RF and PF outposts as more territorials would be killed defending their outposts than conducting security patrols during the war.[247]

A MACV lessons learned report concerning attacks on RF/PF outposts outlined several general failures among the local security forces. Although the RF or PF had obtained general intelligence that an attack on their outpost was probable within a certain time period, night ambushes were recalled to within the perimeter and bedded down prior to midnight. The lack of night patrolling allowed the Viet Cong to achieve nearly complete surprise while the outpost was observing normal rather than heightened security measures. In the one successful defense cited by the report, a PF ambush was still in place at the time of the Viet Cong attack. However, it did not make contact with the enemy before the attack began. As a result, the unit commander was able to maneuver the ambush patrol to counterattack and destroy the attacking Viet Cong force. The successful Viet Cong attacks cited in the report all indicated that at the time of the attack that the security force was either asleep or completely non-alert. The sole successful defense cited an alert PF firing the first shots against Viet Cong personnel attempting to stealthily approach the perimeter. Finally, the timeliness and reliability of either a reinforcing nearby unit or fire support significantly influenced the outcome of the defense. In the

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[246]Headquarters, United States Military Command Vietnam, *Command History 1966* (13 July 1967), Annex K. In this particular event, 71 small arms weapons were seized.

[247]Truong, 83.

case of the successful defense supporting fires from attack aviation halted the attack allowing the PF force to counterattack. All of the above listed reasons in the report point to leadership as an important factor that determined whether or not the RF/PF unit conducted a successful defense when attacked. Although there are no guarantees in the outcome of a specific engagement, strong and competent leadership ensures that defenses are adequately prepared, patrols are conducted effectively, security personnel are disciplined and alert, and reinforcement has been planned and rehearsed.[248]

The destruction of RF or PF outposts illuminates leadership deficiencies but also highlights the deficiencies in the counterinsurgent security force framework design. The RF and PF were not designed to defeat battalion or regimental sized attacks as they were organized at the company and platoon level. Thus, the ability of the enemy to conduct main force attacks on an outpost was a failure of U.S. and ARVN forces to provide a protective shield to the local security forces. Also, the security force framework sometimes failed even when the RF or PF were attacked by company sized Viet Cong units. Many outposts failed to receive timely and sufficient support from a nearby RF company. For example, an outpost in IV Corps in September 1969 was overrun despite being located a short 300 meters from a RF company.[249] The high point of the security force framework's defensive failure occurred during the Tet offensive as 477 outposts were either abandoned or over run by the enemy.[250]

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[248]Headquarters, United States Military Command Vietnam, *MACV Lessons Learned 81: RF/PF Outposts* (9 July 1970).

[249]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970), 2-3.

[250]Truong, 97.

A key note in RF and PF performance from 1964-1967 is that similar determined attacks were defeated by outposts who had a small contingent of U.S. advisors living with them.[251] For example, an 11 August 1966 well-coordinated and surprise attack on an outpost in the town of Trung Luong ended in tactical defeat for the Viet Cong. Leadership under fire contributed to the unit's success as a U.S. advisor cited the RF commander with superb direct fire control which likely ―discouraged a direct attack on the district headquarters" while attributing the RF executive officer with ―calm and accurate control of communications and collation of information." The U.S. advisors played an important role by providing a link to U.S. assets including fire support and illumination. Additional lessons from this engagement were the importance of rehearsals, quick reaction, and discipline which was lacking in many of their contemporary units. Although relatively few members of the outpost were on security duty when the attack began, many slept in positions beside their crew served weapons, rather than in a barracks, that were maintained and readied for immediate action.[252]

Another example of a successful defense where a handful of U.S. advisors were assigned was a November 1969 attack on Long Khot in the Kien Tuong Province.[253] A two company sized force consisting of the 859th RF Company, four local PF platoons, and a small provincial reconnaissance unit successfully repelled an attack by the 504th Viet Cong Battalion and four companies of PAVN regulars. Five ambushes were set

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[251]U.S. advisors were not officially assigned to the RF or PF but were assigned to the district leadership and staff. The attack discussed occurred on a district headquarters.

[252]Homer L. Stapleton, ―Trung Luong–Setpiece Vietnam," *Military Review* (May 1967): 36-44.

[253]This outpost was located only 700m from the Cambodian border.

outside the outpost that destroyed some of the enemy's reconnaissance and provided early warning of the enemy attack. Once the outpost was under significant indirect preparatory fires, the RF commander coordinated for artillery support to disrupt the ground attack. The U.S. advisors requested and employed attack aviation and close air support. When the enemy breached the perimeter, the RF company commander employed his reserve to restore the integrity of the defense. As the enemy began to retrograde, reinforcements from other areas arrived to clear the area. Keys to success in this engagement for the RF and PF included defense planning, early warning, fire support, and reinforcement. However, a key note in this particular engagement was the fact that an English fluent RF officer was able to translate effectively between RF controlled ground actions and U.S. advisor controlled fire support. This language capability allowed the planned security force framework to function effectively.[254]

Not all RF and PF units were engaged in a system of outposting to achieve security. Mobile defense tactics were adopted in some provinces, such as Long An, as early as 1964. However, due to the duration of the war and constant patrolling requirements, a position to refit other than a temporary patrol base in the middle of the jungle was required for basic human needs such as sanitation, rest, food, and shelter. Thus, even where patrolling was conducted at a maximum tempo the local security force required an outpost.[255]

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[254]Headquarters, United States Military Command Vietnam, J.F. Harris, *Vietnam Lesson Learned No. 78: Action at Long Khot* (17 February 1970), 1-10.

[255]Truong, 83.

Although pacification required defensive operations, more important to the pacification effort was the requirement to achieve security through patrolling. Simple defensive operations alone could not secure the population. The requirement for extensive patrolling was primarily due to the local geographic living patterns of the population. Even though the PF were normally assigned to a single village, a village could consist upwards of 10 hamlets, or gatherings of dwellings. If the homes were clustered, similar to the idea of a strategic hamlet, then the PF had the potential to establish an outpost that protected the entire population.[256] Most of the time, however, the physical layout of the village prevented an outpost from serving as anything other than a base from which to patrol the area while providing a tempting target for the Viet Cong. As many of the hamlets were outside of the constant watch of the PF platoon, routine cordon and searches and ambushes were conducted to try to catch Viet Cong infiltrators.[257]

At the tactical level, pacification involved a clear and hold approach. The process of clearing a populated area was accomplished using a cordon and search. ARVN or RF were employed on the cordon while PF, usually working with National Police Field Forces and Revolutionary Development cadre, would search and screen the villagers. Once completed, the RF would secure the village until the PF could fully take over local security which sometimes required recruiting or relocating a PF platoon.[258]

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[256]Although even under this clustered condition, the strategic hamlet proved difficult to defend as many were over run between 1962 and 1963.

[257]Truong, 90.

[258]Truong, 90.

The coordination of all of these forces working toward a common objective in these limited duration operations is impressive. However, longer duration offensive operations and routine security patrols by both the RF and PF tended to be plagued by insufficient responsiveness of the tiered security force framework. Indeed of the 234 recorded RF/PF initiated attacks between October 1966 and March 1967 external support was provided a mere 40 times, of which 31 times were in the form of artillery, despite ground support being requested in nearly every instance.[259]

Some effective pacification operations occurred under combined conditions with U.S. forces. Combined operations, in theory, were not a new concept to Vietnam as the U.S. Special Forces had raised and advised tribal forces under CIDG beginning in 1961, Marines had a formalized the Combined Action Program in 1965, and U.S. Army conventional forces had partnered with ARVN in numerous instances. ARVN had been primarily responsible for the pacification effort from 1964-1968 and had conducted numerous combined operations with the RF and PF. However, many of ARVN's combined operations were of short duration and didn't provide a longer term coordinated effort. One of the more successful examples of a successful combined pacification operation over a six month period occurred in the Quang Dien District, northwest of Hue, from May 1968 to October 1968.

Following a four day cordon that destroyed organized enemy resistance in the district in April, the combined U.S. and RF/PF force began to conduct a pacification campaign. The U.S. battalion, the 1st Battalion 502nd Infantry (1/502), conducted continuous small unit independent and combined patrols that focused on the destruction

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[259]Truong, 99.

of both the remaining Viet Cong guerrillas and political infrastructure. The 1/502 co-located their headquarters with the South Vietnamese district headquarters which greatly assisted intelligence sharing and operational planning. Coordination during the execution of operations and combined force cohesiveness were also benefits from the arrangement. One of the issues that had plagued RF and PF effectiveness previously was the lack of a well coordinated and functioning security force framework even when the actual forces were available and physically close by. This combined tactical headquarters eliminated a lot of that friction. A testament to this close cooperation under this combined command and control apparatus is that 30-60 ambushes a night in the district were planned, resourced, de-conflicted, and executed.[260]

The approach to combined operations evolved over time. Following a morning link-up, U.S. forces would patrol with RFs or PFs depending on which unit had the majority of the personnel from the area that was planned for the patrol. Initially, the number of the RF or PF with U.S. patrols was small, although they did serve near the front of the patrol due to their knowledge of the terrain. All RF and PF returned to their outpost prior to dusk to defend them in case of attack. U.S. forces remained nearby some of the outposts that appeared to be more vulnerable based off intelligence or outpost characteristics. As operations continued, a concept developed where U.S. infantry would move to form a cordon or blocking positions around a suspected enemy area. RF or PF were then air assaulted into the area and attempt to push the enemy toward blocking U.S. forces. This approach worked especially well if some of the area cleared by the local

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[260]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970) 4-14.

security forces included populated areas as they could collect intelligence from the population during the operation. During these operations both the U.S. commander and district chief flew above the operation in a command and control helicopter. A key note is that communication between the allies was assisted greatly by the district chief's fluency in English. Eventually these operations evolved to the point where the RF and PF would rely on the U.S. battalion for aircraft support and conduct all other operations independently. Another innovation in the air concept was the two lift helicopter reserve provided to the district chief. This small complement of helicopters provided a quick reaction force capability and the ability to quickly act on intelligence.[261]

A captured Viet Cong letter, retrieved off of the letter author's body following a successful night ambush, points to the success of the operation:

> Since the enemy applied their tactics, the military proselyting [sic] program has come to a standstill. Our infrastructures have been detected or do not have confidence in us. Even our secret agents surrendered to the enemy. It is very difficult to build up new agents or infrastructures now. We could not go into the hamlet to get in touch with our men because the enemy has a very effective control and checking system. If we ask our men to go out of the hamlet to a certain location to meet us, they are afraid to come out; if they do come out, they are interrogated and bothered afterward and they never come out again. Most of the village military action cadres have been killed and no one is left to carry out the military action program. Even if there were some left, it would do no good now.[262]

By the end of October, U.S. forces were largely gone from the province keeping at most a platoon sized element at the district headquarters. The RF and PF remained in the area to provide local security. Due to the drastic change in the security environment,

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[261]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970), 4-14.

[262]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970), 17.

the focus of operations was shifted to improving infrastructure, governance, and the local economy.

Three primary reasons stand out in this particular example of combined operations that ultimately achieved success. First, the security force framework functioned effectively as the command and control centers of both U.S. and district commanders were co-located. Friction was reduced significantly by the ability of the Vietnamese commander to speak English. Previous failures abounded when, despite all tiers of the security force individually performing well, the security forces were not mutually supporting. Next, all forces were employed in a complementary manner on numerous operations. U.S. forces provided fire and maneuver capability while the RF and PF provided knowledge of the local terrain, enemy, and language. Finally, the operation was conducted over a six month time period. As the campaign evolved, U.S. forces slowly transitioned most responsibility for operations to the district chief. This slow transition was enabled by the initial and continued reduction of the Viet Cong in the district.

Another successful example of the benefit of routine combined operations between U.S. and the territorial forces is the 173rd Airborne Brigade's Operation Washington Green. Similar to the 1/502's approach, the 173rd took practical measures to achieve unity of effort such as co-locating command posts, combined cordon and searches that leveraged the strengths and weaknesses of each contributing force, and routine combined operations. However, the 173rd's approach to combined operations was full partnership down to the platoon and occasionally squad level. Thus, the same units in the same areas at the lowest levels conducted operations together during the majority of

Washington Green. Initially combined patrols would be conducted with an equal amount of U.S. and PF. Over time U.S. numbers in the combined patrols was reduced until the PF platoon or RF company could conduct independent operations. As the 173rd commander described the combined approach in a 1969 briefing to General Abrams, ―In effect, several thousand soldiers of this brigade have become advisors to the RF/PF . . .‖ In addition to the combined approach, significant improvements in formalized training and equipping of the RF and PF were also made during the operation. The brigade conducted a ten day RF/PF leadership school for junior officers and non-commissioned officers and also conducted a five day course to train new PSDF members. The operation also benefited from the larger MACV CORDS initiative that occurred during 1969 to arm the RF/PF with modern weaponry. In summary, due to the 173rd's partnership approach, the initial security outcome was clearly positive as a little over three months into the operation the area was assessed as progressing from 31 percent under government control to 72 percent.[263]

Despite the security gains made during the operation, the situation would decline nearly overnight in the Hoai An district after transition to South Vietnamese control and the departure of an American battalion in July 1969. Thus, although the operation succeeded in generating temporary security gains, the South Vietnamese forces were unable to hold these gains in spite of the extraordinary efforts and previous accomplishments by the 173rd. Two reasons for this decline are offered by historian Kevin Boylan in his examination of the operation. First, a sense of dependency was

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[263]Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade, *Operational Report Lessons Learned: 1 May 1969 – 31 July 1969* (15 August 1969), 1, 155-156, 170.

created by the 173rd as their fire support and logistics enabled the South Vietnamese to avoid taking measures to fix their own systems. Second, Boylan cites a lack of motivation stemming from poor leadership that the 173rd was incapable of fixing. A third possible reason for the security decline is simply the enemy's change in tactical focus in the area. The enemy decided to overtly challenge the South Vietnamese with the departure of U.S. forces in the Hoai An district and once they achieved initial success they continued to exploit opportunities leading to a significant reversal in the area. A final possible reason is that although security forces can be raised and trained in short duration, competent leadership generally takes years to develop except in unique situations. With the RF and PF generally getting the lower tier of the leadership talent pool to start with, a few months or even a year is perhaps insufficient to expect force wide leadership competence.[264]

Expansion and Efforts to Improve Effectiveness

Despite the mixed results of the RF and PF, both were continually expanded at a rapid pace. The RF grew from 888 companies in 1967 to 1,471 companies by 1969. Although sustaining increased casualties through 1965 to 1967, recruitment in the RF and PF was partially assisted by increased pay and benefits. The government's General Mobilization Law in mid-1968 made every male citizen between ages 18 and 38 eligible for mandatory service in the RVNAF. However, those males between 31 and 38 were exempted if they volunteered to serve in the RFs or PFs which assisted in local

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[264]Kevin M. Boylan, ―The Red Queen's Race: Operation Washington Green and Pacification in Binh Dinh Province, 1969-1970," *The Journal of Military History* 73 (October 2009): 1210-1213.

recruitment as this age group preferred to be close to their families. By the end of the war, the RF would consist of 1,810 companies, 24 boat companies, and 51 mechanized platoons. The PF would consist of over 7,968 platoons.[265]

The rapid expansion further highlighted leadership problems in both the RF and PF which both the South Vietnamese and Americans attempted to address. RF leaders were sent to officer and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) training courses at Thu Duc and the Quang Trung Training Center although district and provincial chiefs were reluctant to ensure all of their leaders attended, as the loss of these men for a period of time weakened their control over their areas. ARVN also encadred NCOs and officers in increasing numbers to the RF to overcome leadership problems. These leaders were often attached on a temporary basis and were rotated back to ARVN after a period of time. In 1965, 2,197 NCOs were attached to the RF and by 1969 ARVN NCOs comprised over 14,500 of the total of over 40,000 RF NCOs serving in RF companies. ARVN officers were also attached to the RF and by 1970 comprised about 56 percent of the RF officer corps. Although this program made an impact, the effect was limited due to the negative prevailing attitudes in ARVN toward assignment to a RF unit. This assignment also partially negated the advertised benefit of local familiarity of the RF. Finally, it is questionable that ARVN leaders were any more capable or competent than those of the RF. Although some benefited through interaction with advisors, U.S. advisors were never assigned below the battalion level so many of the NCOs and officers assigned to the RF had only brief interactions with them. A consistent complaint by many U.S. advisors levied against their ARVN counterparts was their generally poor leadership ability. If

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[265]Truong, 34, 45.

senior leaders were poor, it is reasonable to assume that junior leaders were not significantly more capable. In contrast, no formal program existed to provide experienced leaders to the PF. Leaders who did take charge of these platoon sized outfits in larger operations were often RF officers of questionable ability.[266]

Another deficiency amongst RF and PF leaders, and frankly the government as a whole, was the inability to fully motivate their personnel. The PF did have the inherent motivation to fight for their families and villages, provided they were not shifted to new areas. However, this motivation to fight was more of a motivation to survive as evidenced by some village chiefs and PF members choosing to coexist, when facing a superior Viet Cong force, rather than fight. The lack of motivation can be attributed to the government's lack of a unifying cause and was especially present in PF members for whom issues were local and the cause of the government was an abstraction that had little to do with his village's everyday plight. In recognition of this problem, the government began a program of ―moral armament" in June 1965. The twelve day indoctrination course, conducted by newly created provincial and district political indoctrination cadres, focused on creating a sense of nationalism and taught counterpropaganda techniques. Although the impact of this program is difficult to assess, the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff believed that it was highly successful in the PF and by the end of 1968 had mandated the course be taught to all new RF trainees as well.[267]

Not only was leadership competency a problem in many RF and PF units, but training of individual paramilitaries was virtually non-existent until late 1964. Efforts to

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[266]Truong, 52-53.

[267]Truong, 105.

train RFs and PFs at training centers did not fully solve the individual training problem as the centers did not have the capacity to fully train every member of the expanding local security force. Nor did provincial and district chiefs fill their quotas for training often citing ongoing operations as an excuse not to send their local security forces through training. Additionally, units rarely conducted any training at their outposts or in their areas of operation as the tempo of daily operations largely negated the opportunity.[268]

Command and control of the RF and PF was also difficult as they were dispersed into over 9,000 locations throughout South Vietnam. Some remote outposts went an entire year without being visited by the district chief. One tactical error cited of many district chiefs was that of overextension, in which the RF and PF units were often isolated in fixed positions that were incapable of mutual support. For example, some PF outposts in the Chuong Thien Province were so isolated that they were surrounded by visible enemy signs such as flags or propaganda posters. The PF in these locations rarely departed their fortifications. Another deficiency of the village chief directing the PF is that the village chief did not have adequate military ability to plan and coordinate a village defense, particularly given the requirement of having to integrate indirect fire into the village defense plan. His administrative duties also prevented him from dedicating his full attention to the matter. RF units were eventually combined into groups and battalions in 1970 in efforts to address the significant span of control problem of the provincial and district chiefs.[269]

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[268]Truong, 54, 59.

[269]Truong, 77, 79, 80-85.

Although U.S. leaders had always claimed that the RF and PF had the potential to defeat the insurgency, a wide and focused U.S. interest in the local security forces was largely absent until the formation of CORDS. A few key CORDS initiatives significantly improved the capability of the RF and PF. The first was an upgrade in armament and equipment. In 1969, the RF and PF were gradually fielded M-16 rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, and M-60 machine guns to increase their ability to fight against Viet Cong units who began receiving Soviet-bloc equivalents of these weapons in 1964. In addition to armament the fielding of 35 bulldozers to each military region made the RF and PF more effective. Bulldozers allowed the RF and PF to improve defenses quickly and provided the capability to eliminate small enemy base areas after they were cleared.[270] The second initiative was the mobile training team concept which began in 1968. A total of 353 mobile training teams circulated South Vietnam training both the RFs and PFs. The teams spent about a month training a RF company who were responsible for bringing in many of the surrounding PF platoons. Training was primarily focused on leadership, night operations, marksmanship, mines and booby traps, and fire support procedures. Not only did these teams conduct training but they conducted patrols with both units and offered their advice and provided a capability assessment to the leaders. A secondary benefit of this program was that the teams provided an assessment of the local security forces after spending a period of 30 days with them. Since no advisors were permanently embedded with the territorials, MACV had to rely on district advisor input to provide an

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[270]Truong, 97, 99-100. Prior to receipt of bulldozers small enemy bases in South Vietnam were cleared but remained active once security forces departed the area. Bulldozers allowed for the removal of concealment and the filling in of caches and tunnels. Bulldozers also decreased the likelihood that booby traps would injure a large number of personnel conducting enemy base reduction.

assessment of local security force effectiveness. The district advisors conducted inspections on many of the dispersed units but did not have the opportunity to observe them over a longer period and thus could provide only snapshots rather than rich descriptions.[271] However, snapshots by both the South Vietnamese and U.S. advisors were often not accurate. A district advisor in the Phu Yen province recalling his experiences with Hamlet Evaluation and Territorial Forces reports in 1969 remarked, ―we had quite a few problems later in my tour because I evaluated the hamlets as not being particular secure and he [the district chief] lost a lot of face . . . I did him a favor and re-evaluated all the hamlets because I figured that those computerized reports were bullshit anyway . . . Obviously the hamlets weren't secure."[272] U.S. CORDS advisors also faced incentives to rate the security situation and local forces lower at the beginning of their tours and steadily improve scores over their tenure. Improved scores over time could effectively demonstrate their contribution to the war effort and thus earn them a more positive evaluation. This does not mean that most or even some U.S. Army officers fudged their reports as the counter incentives to adjust reports provided by being a part of a values based profession were also strong. It only means that there is an additional unknown margin of error with these reports, added to the already present and unknown margin of error that existed due to the reports' attempts to quantify security using statistical metrics.

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[271]Truong, 111-116.

[272]Robert Barron, interview by Steve Maxner, transcript, The Vietnam Archive, Oral History Project, Texas Tech University, 21 April 2001, 35-36.

124

Although the ―ignificant increase in RF and PF operations beginning in 1968" or ―he remarkable performance that these forces frequently displayed during operations" during the same period can be partially attributed to the effect of the mobile training teams, the issue was more complex. However, the perceived success of the mobile training teams under CORDS gave the program continued life. As U.S. forces drew down in 1970, ARVN fielded their own mobile training teams along the same general concept.[273]

All of these training, equipping, and advising efforts improved the effectiveness of both the RF and PF under CORDS as evidenced by improved security outcomes. According to the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES), in March 1968 a little over 61 percent of hamlets were reported as secure with over 18 percent rated as under the control of the Viet Cong. By December of 1969, over 92 percent of hamlets were secure while only 3 percent remained under full Viet Cong control.[274] Another example of a positive outcome due to improved security effectiveness occurred in 1969 when the number of ralliers, or surrendered enemy personnel, under the Chieu Hoi program increased to 47,087, an all time single year high for the program.[275] Another positive outcome was that by 1971, over 95 percent of all villages in Vietnam had democratically elected village councils.[276] The improved security situation was directly attributable to gains made in other areas of pacification as the former J-3 of the South Vietnamese Joint

[273]Truong, 113-115.

[274]Truong, 94.

[275]Tran Dinh Tho, *Pacification*, Indochina Monographs (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1980), 135.

[276]Tho, 148.

General Staff wrote, ―The most discernable pattern in pacification was that progress depended entirely on security."[277]

Although local security improved throughout most of South Vietnam's provinces and districts from the latter half of 1968 to 1970, the degree at which any single program or even the cumulative effect of these programs improved both the RF and PF is difficult to measure. Additionally, the RF and PF, under CORDS, were part of a local security framework that included ARVN, the Phoenix Program, Revolutionary Development Cadres, People's Self Defense Forces, Provincial Reconnaissance Units, and the National Police which all had some impact on the local security situation. All of these units killed Viet Cong. Although each force had specific roles, with some clearly having a negligible impact, they all were a part of the local security equation. Additionally, the RF and PF often conducted joint operations with other forces in the form of patrols, outpost defense, and cordon and searches. An exact measure of an individual unit contribution on a joint operation is difficult to measure.

However, more important than any of these measures or forces assessed either individually or cumulatively in increasing RF and PF effectiveness was the decline in PAVN, Viet Cong main and local forces, and Viet Cong infrastructure in South Vietnam following the 1968 Tet offensive. The general operational defeat suffered by the insurgency resulted in a change of strategy from Phase 3 to Phase 2 under the modified Maoist insurgency model. Although pacification progress and increased local security would not have been possible without the RF and PF, the environment that they found themselves in after the enemy defeat in the Tet offensive was certainly more favorable

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[277]Tho, 164.

than the environment many of these units faced from 1965 to 1967. Another way of stating this is that due to the degradation of the enemy, the security force framework operated effectively following the 1968 Tet offensive, enabling the RF and PF to generally survive until 1972. Thus, local security effectiveness in South Vietnam was more attributable to a manageable level of enemy activity or a level of enemy activity in an area that could be defeated by small and lightly equipped local security forces.

A manageable level of enemy activity throughout the entirety of the campaign could be achieved in two ways. One, the enemy could chose to change their strategy or be rendered ineffective for a period of time by a failed offensive such as Tet. Or, the security force framework could provide an effective shield to prevent the enemy from massing in large formations. If the enemy was able to mass, the security force framework would have to quickly and effectively respond and negate the effect of enemy main force units. At the operational level the security force framework throughout the campaign failed, as evidenced by the ability of the enemy's 1968 Tet offensive to achieve numerous tactical gains across South Vietnam. Many of these enemy tactical gains took months to defeat after the enemy had already destroyed local security gains made under CORDS. At the tactical level, during Tet in 1968 and previously, there were several instances where the security force framework was strong enough to provide an effective shield, or was responsive enough when that shield was penetrated, to limit the damage caused by enemy main forces.

The Easter offensive provides further evidence of this phenomenon. The enemy offensive negated local security and larger pacification program gains in several areas of South Vietnam. These gains which took years to achieve were erased virtually overnight

in some areas. As the former J-3 of the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff wrote, ―The lesson of 1972 indicated that without the military protective shield, pacification setbacks could occur anytime the enemy chose to strike in force." The general observable trend associated with enemy activity is that local security plummeted during the first three to five months of 1968, stabilized and then rose steadily from the middle of 1968 until the end of 1969 where it again remained generally stable. The Easter offensive in 1972 caused local security to decrease in many areas, followed by a stabilization period. The Paris agreement in January 1973 held a tenuous ceasefire in which PVAN forces remained in South Vietnam and thus local security measured across the entirety of South Vietnam never improved to pre-1972 levels.[278]

The inability of ARVN to provide this protective shield was not only a function of enemy activity but also a function of the RF and PF failure to provide long duration security even during reduced periods of enemy activity. Thus, a vicious circular cycle was present that was difficult to break out of. A lack of local security would require ARVN to disperse their formations and remain tied down in an area security role. Thus, no force operated on the periphery of populated areas to protect against enemy main force attacks and ARVN was not able to effectively maneuver against enemy invasions, particularly in 1972 and 1975. Enemy main force attacks could result in RF or PF outpost destruction and thus a decline in local security. A decline in area security would increase ARVN's reluctance to disrupt enemy main forces further from populated areas.

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[278]Tho, 164. A J-3 is a joint staff officer overall in charge of operations, training, and planning for his commander.

Describing the 1970 period Lieutenant General Truong, the ARVN I Corps commander, wrote:

> the ARVN infantry divisions continued to be bound by territorial responsibilities. The primary reason why they could not be extricated from their territorial security mission was that the military region headquarters could not militarily control the territory for which it was responsible. Besides, the evolving security situation in certain areas did not allow the redeployment of divisional units if security was to be maintained.[279]

The Cambodian invasion experience that removed ARVN from local security duties seems to invalidate this statement. However, after the operation was completed many of the ARVN units returned back to the same areas that they had been drawn from and returned to support pacification operations. Obviously, South Vietnamese leaders felt the cost of leaving these areas solely to the RF and PF over a long period of time exceeded the benefit of ARVN mobility.

Summary

Overall the performance of the RF and PF was mixed. If shielded effectively by U.S. forces and ARVN, then the RF and PF tended to be much more effective.[280] Reinforcement and fire support of isolated RF or PF units required extremely well synchronized coordination procedures. In the cases where the RF and PF were effective, particularly when defending their outposts, they often had U.S. advisors present, potentially partnered with English speaking South Vietnamese officers, who could provide the necessary link to U.S. aviation and fire support. Even if reinforcement was never required, the presence and perceived reliability of nearby ARVN or U.S. forces

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[279]Truong, 21.

[280]Truong, 90.

allowed the RF or PF to take more risk, which improved their effectiveness. Combined and joint offensive operations proved effective due partially to the complementary effect of the integrated forces. The enemy threat in the area most influenced effectiveness, as main force attacks could quickly overwhelm the combat capabilities of the territorials. If the security force framework functioned properly it enabled the RF or PF unit to organizationally survive contact with the enemy and continue to fight to achieve security.

Another important aspect that limited the effectiveness of both forces was the lack of competent leadership. The U.S. mobile advisory effort and ARVN leader assignment to the RF sought to make up for poor leadership. Adding to the leadership issue was the large span of control for district and provincial chiefs. The number and dispersion of PF platoons and RF companies left some of these units completely unsupervised by their higher headquarters.

Another factor that led to mixed results was the lack of training of the RF and PF. Sending leaders and new recruits to training centers helped but training was rarely conducted at the unit level. Mobile advisory teams addressed this deficiency but did not provide consistent advisory support to the RF or PF.

Mixed local security outcomes can also be attributed to lack of armament. After 1964, the RF and PF were steadily outgunned by the better resourced and equipped Viet Cong. Issues of U.S. weapons and communication equipment beginning in 1969 closed the firepower gap significantly although in general the PF lacked heavier weapons that could have assisted in repulsing determined Viet Cong attacks.

Finally and impacting positively on RF and PF security outcomes was the fact that they were locally raised and recruited. The PF knowledge of a village and its

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inhabitants and the RF knowledge of similar district aspects proved invaluable to their

effectiveness. The ―RF/PF knw the area like the back of their hand, and, in this respect,

are equal of the VC."[281]

Although significant rapid expansion undoubtedly limited effectiveness to some

degree, this consideration was rarely cited as a primary factor that decreased

effectiveness. Perhaps the issue has yet to be examined thoroughly or there were simply

more important factors influencing effectiveness. Another possible explanation is that

advisors of the RF/PF in the form of mobile training teams saw individual units once and

at most for thirty days. Although occasional inspections were carried out by the district

CORDS advisory team, most of the data feeding the Territorial Forces Evaluation System

was generated by the South Vietnamese. Also, during the time of great expansion 1968-

1971, the enemy Viet Cong threat was significantly less than the 1965-1967 period which

may have hidden deficiencies associated with rapid expansion.

Vetting of RFs and PFs certainly influenced effectiveness but specific procedures

or emphasis on vetting was not widely documented as vetting occurred at the local level

under the purview of the South Vietnamese government. Although there are many cited

instances of Communist infiltration of ARVN and ARVN led coups, the RF and PF did

not have much power as a national level force even though their overall numbers equaled

or exceeded ARVN at some stages of the campaign. Their fragmented nature, with

individual small units reporting to a single district or provincial chief, led improper

vetting to only impact the immediate local fight, rather than have wide ranging impacts.

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[281]Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Combat Experiences 5-69* (5 January 1970), 5.

Although numerous U.S. soldiers have testified to their distrust of the Vietnamese, there doesn't appear to have been widespread Communist infiltration of the RF and PF with the exception of the Chuong Thien and Kien Hoa provinces in the Mekong Delta which resulted in the loss of many RF and PF outposts in the area.[282] Further, South Vietnamese senior leaders provided mixed assessments on the ability of the Viet Cong to infiltrate the RF and PF. Some senior South Vietnamese generals thought that perhaps proselytizing activities by the Viet Cong would actually influence ARVN more than the RF or PF while others thought that the RF and PF were much more vulnerable to enemy propaganda.[283] So although vetting and operations security were consistent problems in the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, there was no discernable program that formally vetted RF and PF members nationwide to evaluate.

Local Security Forces: Combined Action Platoons

Signs of Success: 1965-1967

With the Marines firmly established in three enclaves at Da Nang, Chu Lai, and Phu Bai, the tactical problem of how to prevent indirect fire on their airfields loomed. On

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[282]Tho, 175.

[283]Brigadier General Tran Dinh Tho believed that the RF and PF were more vulnerable to enemy infiltration and influence while Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong believed that ARVN was more vulnerable. A possible explanation for their differences of opinion is their final experiences in the war. Truong spent much of his time in I Corps commanding the 1st ARVN Division and eventually I Corps. This is also the area where the Marines conducted their combined action program where infiltration of those eventual 114 PF platoons was potentially low. Tho spent the end of the war as the J-3 in Saigon where the palace guard forces – the Airborne – were stationed. Although previous commanders of these units were involved in coup attempts in the past, the individual ARVN paratroopers were generally trusted. However, in the surrounding Saigon provinces RF and PF infiltration would be much more noticeable.

1 July 1965, the Viet Cong attacked the Da Nang airfield with 81mm and recoilless rifle fire. 81mm mortar casings were found a short 300 meters from the airfield, but this area was technically outside the Marine's Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR).[284] The Marines were shortly granted an extension of their TAOR, however with the increased size of their area and pressure to expand their influence outside their enclaves they found themselves short of manpower. Specifically 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, led by Lieutenant Colonel William Taylor was tasked with expansion into a populated ten square mile area north and east of the airfield at Phu Bai. When Taylor was not reinforced by additional Marines, his adjutant and civil affairs officer, Captain John J. Mullen, suggested leveraging the local Popular Forces to provide the additional manpower needed to secure this additional area. The security organizational concept, the Combined Action Program, was approved by Major General Lewis Walt, III Marine Amphibious Forces commander, and the South Vietnamese military and local government leaders.[285]

The combined action program partnered a marine squad with a PF platoon to provide local security at the village level. This combined unit was named the Combined Action Platoon (CAP). The marine squad comprised three fire teams that would each partner with a PF squad while the squad leader served as the senior advisor to the PF platoon leader. A Combined Action Company (COAC) oversaw the six original CAPs and was commanded by First Lieutenant Paul Ek, who was chosen at least in part because

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[284]Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, *U.S. Marine Corps Civic Action in Vietnam March 1965 – March 1966* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, 1968), 25.

[285]Jack Shulimson and Charles M. Johnson, *The Landing and the Buildup 1965*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1978), 133-134.

of his near fluency in the Vietnamese language. Ek personally interviewed and hand selected marines to participate in the program and subsequently taught them a week long course that covered Vietnamese culture and local government structure. He took special interest in the selection of the Marine squad leaders who would influence the potential success of the program. As Ek later stated, ―the sergeants we had were outstanding men and anything less than the caliber people they were and I don‘t think this operation would‘ve been successful. They were outstanding."[286] Not only would these squad leaders require a mastery of small unit tactics, they also required the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with the local government, the villagers, subordinate Marines, and the PF.[287]

The marriage of Marines and the PF bore fruit as each partner complemented the other partner‘s shortcomings. The PF were nearly all recruited from the hamlets of the village that they patrolled. Their knowledge of terrain and people provided distinct advantages in the local security fight. As General Walt stated, ―The Popular Force soldier knew every person in his community by face and name; he knew each paddy, field, bush, or bamboo clump, each family shelter, tunnel, and buried rice urn. He knew in most cases the local Viet Cong guerrilla band."[288] Additionally, the PF were often credited with the ability to spot mines and booby traps much more readily than their Marine counterparts

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[286]Paul Ek, interview by D. J. Hunter, transcript, The Vietnam Archive, Oral History Project, Texas Tech University, 24 January 1966, 9.

[287]Shulimson and Johnson, 134-135

[288]Shulimson and Johnson, 138.

due to their local familiarity.[289] Furthermore, with the rare exception of the Vietnamese

fluent Ek, the PF provided the ability to communicate effectively with the villagers

increasing cooperation and human intelligence gathering. The PF initially proved to be

better English speakers than the Marines were Vietnamese speakers enabling information

passing and coordination to occur amongst the combined action unit.

For their part, the Marines provided the ability for the PF to survive. The squad of

Marines were not only capable of fire and maneuver against Viet Cong forces they were

also integrated into a larger Marine force who readily provided quick reaction forces

when fellow Marines were in danger. The CAP Marines through their communication

equipment were direct links to artillery and aviation supporting fires in the case of enemy

contact. Additionally, the Marines instilled in the PF an offensive spirit. It was not

uncommon prior to the Marine integration that the PF would remain hunkered down in an

outpost and hope that they were not attacked by the Viet Cong. The Marines forced the

PF to actively patrol, especially at night when ambushes were laid to kill Viet Cong

attempting to infiltrate into the protected villages. Finally, perhaps the largest benefit the

Marines provided was competent leadership which was sorely lacking amongst the

disparate PF platoons. As Lieutenant General Krulak, the commander of Fleet Marine

Forces Pacific, summarized the benefits of the combined program, ―Here is a case where

the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The Marines learn from the PF and the PF,

mediocre soldiers to say the least – learn volumes from the Marines. They become

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[289]Gary L. Telfer, Lane Rogers, and V. Keith Fleming, *Fighting the North Vietnamese 1967*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1984), 189.

skillful and dedicated units."[290] The advertised command relationship between the Marine squad leader and the PF platoon leader was advisory in nature which worked well when not in direct fire contact with the enemy. When on patrol, the PF platoon leader often became the advisor to the Marine sergeant who led the operation.

The continuous presence of the Marines living with the PFs was also a factor in their success. Rather than interactions at briefings or on patrol, the constant presence of Marines provided opportunities for training and mentorship that simply would not have been present if the Marines just showed up for work and then clocked out back to a different location. As Colonel Theodore Metzger, the first commander of the Combined Action Force, remarked, ―they [the PF] learn by sort of a process of osmosis, and observation, and emulation, and I saw this happen time after time."[291] Cohabitation also increased the Marines vested interest in the villages and hamlets they protected. They often formed close bonds not only with the PFs but with the villagers themselves. Sergeant Flynn, whose CAP was responsible for the village of Loc An, provides evidence of such an attachment. When his request to extend his tour was denied, the people of Loc An wrote a letter to his commander requesting him to stay. He requested extensions for a total of three times and served in Loc An until he was killed in action on April 7, 1967. Following his death, the people of Loc An observed a year of mourning and forcefully

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[290]Jack Shulimson, *An Expanding War 1966*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1982), 243.

[291]Graham A. Cosmas and Terrence P. Murray, *Vietnamization and Redeployment 1970-1971*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1986), 145.

resisted any Viet Cong attempts to penetrate the village from that point on.[292] Other

Marines routinely volunteered to extend their tours that were part of CAP. Indeed of the

first 66 Marines in the program, 40 volunteered for a six month tour extension.[293]

This bond between Marine, PFs, and villagers provided credibility to the CAP

effort. Over time many South Vietnamese villagers believed that the Marines would stay

until the entirety of a Viet Cong network had been eradicated from a village and the PFs

could stand on their own. This critical perception likely caused many villagers to side

with the CAPs and provide information on the Viet Cong as the CAPs proved to be

winning and staying in the near future.[294]

The first major enemy engagement following the establishment of the first four

CAPs occurred on 29 November 1965 when a CAP successfully ambushed a small Viet

Cong unit near the village of Phu Bai killing the Viet Cong platoon leader of the area.[295]

As the CAP program expanded and the Viet Cong were denied access to the population

contact increased. In the Binh Nghia village, located four miles south of the Marine Chu

Lai airfield, the local CAP was involved in approximately 70 direct fire contacts with the

Viet Cong in the months of July and August 1966. However, the determination of the

Marines and PF gained control of the area by early August. The Viet Cong would return

on 14 September attacking the CAP with a combined PVAN and VC company sized

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[292]William R. Corson, *The Betrayal* (New York: Ace, 1968), 196-197.

[293]Shulimson and Johnson, 137-138.

[294]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), 3.

[295]Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, *U.S. Marine Corps Civic Action in Vietnam March 1965 – March 1966* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, 1968), 1.

force. The CAP outpost, Fort Page, was saved by Marine quick reaction forces although the CAP suffered nearly 50 percent casualties. Another Viet Cong attack two days later was disrupted by aggressive CAP patrolling in the area. In the resulting meeting engagement, the Viet Cong suffered 10 killed in action while the CAP sustained no casualties.[296]

Due to initial CAP successes, the program expanded. By the end of 1966, a total of 31 CAPs operated in the Da Nang area, 13 were active in the Phu Bai area, while another 13 operated in the vicinity of Chu Lai.[297] In 1967 the combined program grew to 79 CAPs formed into 14 companies and by the end of 1968 contained 100 CAPs.[298] The organization peaked at the end of 1969 and early 1970 with a total of 114 CAPs who operated in various locations in all five of the provinces in I Corps.[299] Although the numbers of Marine rifle squads, 114, involved in CAP at its height were impressive they and their higher coordinating headquarters comprised about 2.8 percent of the total Marine manpower effort in Vietnam. To oversee and grow the combined action program, the Combined Action Companies (CAOCs) were grouped by province into a Combined Action Group (CAG). The CAGs were subordinate to a Combined Action Force (CAF) headquarters.[300] Although CAPs were never employed together above company strength,

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[296]Shulimson, 241-243.

[297]Shulimson, 239.

[298]Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, 191; Charles R. Smith, *High Mobility and Standdown 1969*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1988), 288.

[299]Smith, 290.

[300]Cosmas and Murray, 139-142.

this organizational structure proved vital for resourcing training, coordinating logistics, selecting Marine CAP candidates, and synchronizing operations with Marines conducting operations in I Corps.

An increase in purpose of the CAPs came with physical expansion. From Ek's initial description of CAP objectives as ―security, counter-intelligence, [and] obtaining the good will of the people," six key objectives were formalized that aligned with PF objectives.[301] They included destroying the Viet Cong infrastructure, protecting the population, protecting friendly infrastructure, protecting bases and lines of communication, organizing intelligence networks, conducting civic action, and conducting propaganda.[302] The ultimate mission of the CAP was to isolate the Viet Cong guerrilla from the local population to enable local government to establish civil control. The CAPs ultimately proved effective in achieving this mission. As of 1967, over 80 percent of the hamlet chiefs with village CAPs lived in their homes while only 20 percent of hamlet chiefs without a CAP dared to do so. Local governance also took other important first steps; with the security provided by CAPs 93 percent of villages had formed village councils while only 29 percent of villages without CAPs had done so.[303] Further evidence of the success of CAP included a 2.95 score out of 5.0 for the security category under the Hamlet Evaluation System in villages secured by CAPs while the

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[301]Shulimson and Johnson, 135.

[302]Fraser Fowler, ―The USMC's Combined Action Platoons," *Canadian Army Journal* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 94.

[303]Corson, 186.

average security score for all villages in I Corps in the summer of 1967 was 1.6.[304] The

CAPs were credited with achieving a 14 to 1 kill ratio against the VC while PF platoons

operating without Marines were credited with a lower 3 to 1 kill ratio.[305] The Marines

impact on the PFs was also felt with zero PF desertions recorded from August to

December 1966 in CAPs despite a 25 percent desertion rate during the same time period

in PF units throughout South Vietnam.[306] Success continued. One CAP in Tuy Lon was

so successful that the Viet Cong placed a dead or alive bounty of 750,000 piasters on the

head of the Marine squad leader.[307] In the first quarter of 1970, 49 percent of enemy

weapons captured by PFs were captured by CAPs despite comprising on 13 percent of the

total PF force in I Corps.[308]

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[304]Krepinevich, 174.

[305]Shulimson, 240. Due caution should be exercised when referencing any type of kill ratio especially with respect to Vietnam. However, the disparity between the reported kill ratios, which in actuality was probably much less lopsided in favor of the South Vietnamese, does indicate some greater measure of success. A possible hypothesis to explain some of the large margin may be that the CAPs effectiveness probably invited more large scale VC attacks which may have been defeated by artillery and aviation fires which caused more enemy casualties. The potential passivity of non-CAP PF units may have invited many less total large attacks. When the enemy massed, U.S. forces or South Vietnamese forces with U.S. advisors tended to obtain high "body counts." There is no question that CAPs significantly performed better than standard PF platoons with respect to local security tasks, however, no numerical metric can define the degree.

[306]Shulimson, 240.

[307]Corson, 197.

[308]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), Enclosure 12. Caution should be exercised when examining weapons captured. The better equipped CAP PFs had incentives not to keep any weapons captured while PFs operating without U.S. presence faced incentives to keep some of their captured arms for survival. Additionally, PFs and district chiefs had incentives to potentially sell some of the captured weapons for additional sources of income while those under US observation would not have gotten away with criminal

Although many CAPs showed success, others were less effective. In 1967, a Marine battalion commander remarked that the CAP Marines in his area, —lacked skills in scouting and patrolling, mines and booby traps, map reading, observed fire procedures, basic infantry tactics, and VC tactics and techniques." Additionally he was critical of their performance in their mission stating, —There was no record of either CAP unit capturing a VC, let alone destroying the VC infrastructure in these villages. In fact, the VC operated with impunity around these villages."[309]

In efforts to address the problems noted by the battalion commander that were attributed to expansion, the CAG formalized a more comprehensive selection and training for Marine volunteers for the program. In order to be considered for CAP duty, a Marine volunteer had to have four months in country, no record of adverse disciplinary action, a written recommendation from his commander, and display no outward indications of racism.[310] Prospective Marine candidates were then interviewed to determine if they were suitable for the program. Once accepted, Marines underwent a two week training program that emphasized individual tasks such as marksmanship, land navigation, and employing fire support. The course also taught some basic Vietnamese phrases and

activity as readily. Additionally, caution should be exercised as the numbers from this single quarter may have been skewed by a single cache large cache find by one of the CAPs. Finally, at least 93 platoons by the time of this report had been transitioned to full South Vietnamese control from their previous CAP status. Those PFs probably yielded very few weapons as their areas were relatively secure. Despite these limitations, the significant statistical disparity is evidence that CAPs were more effective than independent PFs, but the degree is unable to be truly measured.

[309]Telfer, Rogers and Fleming, 190.

[310]Telfer, Rogers and Fleming, 187.

cultural norms. Marines who displayed aptitude for foreign language had the opportunity, after two to four months of CAP duty, to attend intensive language training.[311]

Even though efforts were made to train and improve CAPs, the Marines cited that no program could truly prepare a Marine for such duty and that a Marine's ―classroom is the bush where the VC provided the necessary training aids.‖[312] Also, by 1969 initial screening criteria was relaxed as Marines were assigned to CAP duty directly from the United States.[313] Attempts made at increasing language capability also proved ineffective for truly efficient operations although both the PFs and Marines adapted. Lack of language skills also created unfavorable impressions and friction both within the CAP and with the local population. Indeed of the PFs serving in CAPs who were surveyed in 1967, language ability was rated as the number one deficiency of the Marines. A few PF respondents indicated that a monthly meeting with a fluent interpreter between the PFs and the Marines would greatly resolve misunderstanding in the combined force.[314] Former CAP Marines responding to a 1990 research survey cited the lack of language ability as one of three primary factors that limited a CAP's success.[315] The problem was

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[311]Smith, 290.

[312]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), 2.

[313]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970) 2.

[314]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Report on Vietnamese and American Attitudes in Combined Action Units* (30 March 1967), 26.

[315]Charles W. Driest, ―Combined Action Platoons: A Possible Role in the Low-Intensity Conflict Environment‖ (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1990), 22.

succinctly stated by CAP Corpsman John Nichols' comment: ―We need more language training.‖[316]

The success of CAP's local security operations led to the ability to conduct meaningful civic action which in turn led to further civic action. Previous attempts at civic action, although well intentioned, produced no discernable results and potentially aided the enemy who could return and collect the U.S. assistance as the Marines did not remain in the area. Successful operations assisted by the presence of CAPs included medical team visits, agricultural assistance, and educational programs. However, in CAP villages many of these civic action programs were received more favorably than in other villages as the CAP villages tended to have local governing structures that could relate the desires of the people. Thus, assistance efforts came in the form of what the people wanted not what an outside party determined what they needed.[317]

More important than good deeds were the CAPs efforts in support of Operation Golden Fleece. A food denial program, Golden Fleece successfully protected many of the Vietnam farmers rice crop from the Viet Cong allowing the peasant to earn a return on their labor and improve their lives as the price of rice in South Vietnam had increased due to the war. Additionally, CAPs enforced local laws concerning the amount of rice that could be bought in local markets preventing large rice transfers to the enemy. Under the

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[316]Corson, 193.

[317]Corson, 188.

operation, they also supervised the storing of mass quantities of rice which could be drawn out by the depositors on a limited basis.[318]

MACV vs. USMC

Despite evidence of the combined action program's early success, MACV did not seem interested and in fact some senior Army officers accused the Marines of passivity. A British military observer confirmed the inability of the Marines to convince MACV on the viability of the program. Depuy commented that, ―the Marines came in and just sat down and didn't do anything," while General Harry Kinnard, 1st Cavalry Division commander and later 1st Field Forces Commander, stated with respect to the Marine approach, ―did everything I could to drag them out and get them to fight . . . They don't know how to fight on land, particularly against guerrillas." Westmoreland stated that, ―Yet the [Marine] practice left the enemy free to come and go as he pleased throughout the bulk of the region and, when and where he chose, to attack the periphery of the beachheads." [319]

There were several reasons for Westmoreland's and MACV's resistance on the ideas of the combined action concept. First, the idea was contrary to Westmoreland's security force framework that proscribed U.S. forces operating in the rural areas against infiltration routes and enemy main forces to provide a protective shield for ARVN and the South Vietnamese territorials. So although he believed pacification important, he had

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[318]Operation Golden Fleece is cited in every volume of the series U.S. Marines in Vietnam as it continued in every harvest season. Initially the operation had limited participation by CAPs, but as the CAP program expanded they were able to physically monitor the operation in conjunction with the PF and other Marines.

[319]Krepinevich, 174-175.

already defined that role to another force. Pacification efforts required a threat

environment that did not include enemy main forces to be successful and he thought that

U.S. forces would be the most effective to counter the enemy main force threat. Second,

Westmoreland and the South Vietnamese government were opposed to the idea of

encadrement, or having Americans command Vietnamese forces. Even though the CAP

Marine squad leader relationship was officially one of advisor, Westmoreland believed

the program could be perceived as too colonialist as the Marines were performing this

function at the grass roots level.[320] Third, MACV estimates and intelligence continued to

point to an increase in main force units, including PAVN, that threatened the survival of

the South Vietnamese state, particularly in I Corps. Engagements with PAVN and Viet

Cong battalion or higher echelons in 1966 in I Corps demonstrated the validity of these

estimates. Fourth, Westmoreland's attrition strategy stressed the necessity to achieve a

crossover point which meant that a high enemy body count and decisive battle was

required. Dispersed squad level actions were thought to be unable to achieve to achieve

this metric. There was clearly tension over the program with MACV, however

Westmoreland did nothing to shut the program down and simply urged, rather than

ordered, the Marines to fully support his operational concept.[321]

Although a large body of evidence supports claims that MACV did not fully

support the CAP program, most of the analysis on this point fits neatly with the larger

Westmoreland ―strategy of tactics" narrative discussed previously in this chapter. This

narrative also implies that local security forces in the form of CAPs were a silver bullet

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[320]Hennessey, 81.

[321]Krepinevich, 176.

solution that would have won the war if duplicated on a large scale. As mentioned in

chapter 1, there is no easy answer or single activity in counterinsurgency that will win the

campaign. The narrative is also blind to the fact that by early 1966 the Marines were

engaged in several battles with main force PAVN and Viet Cong battalions and

regiments. In other words, the enemy situation significantly influenced resource

allocation to tasks by both MACV and the Marines, rather than merely the result of an

adherence to a preconceived strategy.

In addition to MACV and the enemy situation, the Marines can also be counted as

a reason for not expanding the program. A telling example is the Marine battalion

commander cited earlier who was extremely critical of CAP efforts yet did nothing but

complain to his higher headquarters. He did not offer any of his own more capable

Marines to this formation. This was common across Marine formations after 1965.

Marine commanders would not voluntarily contribute their best men to the CAPs as the

loss of these men would potentially decrease the capabilities of their own formations.[322]

However, if the Marine commanders truly understood that the main effort of the strategy

was in the villages and hamlets, why would they not assume risk in other areas?

Additionally, the Marines could get away with a certain amount of non-compliance with

MACV.[323] Westmoreland generally did not want inter-service rivalry and avoided overt

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[322]Fowler, 93.

[323]Ironically, it was discovered in the course of oral history interviews of
commanders in Iraq that U.S. Army units operating under Marine command felt that they
were able to ―get away‖ with things that they would not have been able to do if they had
been a Marine unit under the same Marine command.

challenges to Marine approaches.[324] Thus, if the Marines wanted to, they probably could've expanded the program more. Finally, the Marines never grew the CAP to more than 2.8 percent of their total strength in Vietnam. COL Metzger cited a routine shortage of manpower to fill the CAPs he did have with Marines, ―Our T/O[for a CAP] was 15 to include a corpsman. Much of the time I was there we operated at about a 9.5 level, which meant that we were at least a third understrength . . . While I was there, no solution was found."[325] If this was truly the way to win the war from the Marine perspective, it seems reasonable to suspect, that at a minimum, existing CAPs would receive priority fill on positions and be close to 100 percent strength at the expense of larger units responsible for search and destroy missions. Even if the foolish Westmoreland forced the Marines to conduct search and destroy missions against their will and ruthlessly enforced a CAP limit, it is reasonable to expect that at least internally the Marines would resource their own effort. However, they clearly did not.

Another myth surrounding the combined action program is that it derived from a Marine Corps tradition in small wars. As previously demonstrated the CAP initiative was initially a solution to provide additional security to the Phu Bai airfield in the absence of additional Marines. Although it gained momentum due to endorsement from Marine Generals who had served or read extensively about the great small wars tradition of the Marine Corps, the idea that very junior officers who originated the idea were steeped in any more than an ―esprit de corps" deep understanding of the history of the Marine Corps has not been substantiated. Nearly every secondary source consulted attributes the

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[324]Krepenivich, 176.

[325]Cosmas and Murray, 143.

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generation of the idea to junior officers as a solution to secure the Phu Bai airfield, but then tries to connect the idea to a small war tradition in the Marine Corps. Once the connection is made it is then used as further evidence of the cognitive dissonance between Westmoreland's concept of the operations and the Marines more ―balanced approach." Rather than this black and white portrayal, the truth is that both the Marines and the Army responded to the enemy situation in the manner they deemed most effective at the time.

CAP: Tet and Vietnamization

The Viet Cong increased their attacks on CAPs as they prepared for their 1968 Tet offensive. Despite representing less than 3 percent of the Marine force in I Corps, the CAPs were the target of nearly 40 percent of the enemy attacks during the months of November and December of 1967. The large number of attacks indicated that the enemy viewed these units and their locations as problematic. Indeed prior to the beginning of the Tet offensive, CAPs were generating intelligence on the enemy's future plans. In late 1967, a CAP patrol discovered a Viet Cong terrain model that depicted the Marine base at Phu Bai, Route 1, and all the CAP locations in his assigned CAOC. A short time later a CAP ambush patrol killed up to 11 PVAN officers in a single ambush which was analyzed by Marine intelligence to have been a leader's reconnaissance party. CAP patrols began to identify motorcycle tracks in the areas nearby their villages indicating Viet Cong scouting and influencing of the local population. In the Da Nang area only a few days before Tet, a CAP patrol killed a single Viet Cong who possessed notes and sketches with information on allied military bases. Simply put by the commander of the 3rd CAG, ―t Phu Loc, the NVA [PVAN] was moving to the coast and CAPs, stretched

along Route #1, providing nightly ambushes, represented obstacles that had to be dealt with."[326]

On 31 January 1968, CAP Marines in Cam Lo were attacked as part of the enemy's Tet offensive. Intelligence reports indicated that attacks were imminent on a CAP outpost and the district headquarters in the Cam Lo district. The 9th Marines commander reinforced the CAP outpost with an infantry squad and the district headquarters with an infantry platoon. Early in the morning of 2 February, the Viet Cong initiated a large scale attack on the district headquarters. A U.S. Army district advisor ringed the perimeter with continuous artillery fire while the Marines fought in the finest traditions of the Marine Corps to halt the intense ground assault. III MAF credited the successful defense of Cam Lo ―ot the determination of the CAP unit." Colonel Richard Smith, the 9th Marines commander, thought differently as he continually piecemealed small units from strong defensive positions to ensure the isolated CAPs were not over run. In fact, he viewed the entire CAP effort in his area of operation, which was close to the DMZ, as ―a wast of time."[327]

Similar series of events were manifested throughout various locales in I Corps. CAP outposts were clearly targets as many were arranged in the vicinity of settlements along lines of communication, the most significant being Route 1. An outpost would come under attack and be reinforced. Many of the PVAN and Viet Cong attacks were sophisticated and relied on some enemy forces fixing nearby reinforcing forces to allow

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[326]Jack Shulimson, Leonard A. Blaisol, Charles R. Smith, and David Dawson, *The Defining Year 1968*, U.S. Marines in Vietnam (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 1997), 86, 101-103, 148.

[327]Shulimson, Blaisol, Smith, and Dawson, 139.

their main efforts to destroy CAP outposts. A few CAP outposts were over run. A few CAP outposts were evacuated. However, many would fight a successful defense despite facing large determined attacks.

At the end of 1968, many CAPs began experimenting and in some cases were directed to assume a more mobile posture. So rather than a fortified outpost serving as a base for patrols in the previous design, many CAPs were always on patrol. The purported benefits behind mobile CAP tactics were several. It allowed nearly the entirety of the CAP to be utilized at one time as there was no portion of the force tied to a fixed defense. Thus, the maximum amount of ambushes could be set nightly without a force tied to a fixed position. As part of the concept's theory the Viet Cong would never be able to ascertain where exactly CAP squads were located during any particular time making Viet Cong operations harder to conduct. The Viet Cong could not plan any large scale attacks to over run an outpost because there was no outpost to over run. Stealth and elusiveness were important to enable the CAP's survivability and night ambushes served to screen villages from Viet Cong infiltration.[328]

More importantly than all of these reasons for increased mobility was the belief that these operations would lower casualties among the CAP units as the U.S. shifted toward Vietnamization and sought to keep casualties low. As Colonel Metzger stated, ―I [the mobile CAP concept] was darned tough on the CAP Marines, but it saved many lives and greatly enhanced our security capability.‖[329] The idea that the PFs were virtually

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[328]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), 3, Enclosure 7.

[329]Cosmas and Murray, 144.

impervious to mines or booby traps because of their ability to detect the devices through their eyesight or due to the information provided to them on the location of the devices by villagers supported this conclusion.[330] In further support, as mentioned in the RF/PF discussion previously in this chapter, more RF and PF were killed in the war defending their outposts than in the conduct of patrols.

The greater level of success or failure of CAPs due to their mobility is difficult to measure statistically as the time of the shift in tactics coincided with the enemy's fielding of less main force units that could successfully mount attacks on outposts. Additionally, even higher numbers of enemy forces killed could be simply attributed to more ambushes set due to expansion. Seldom were the total numbers of CAP units the same in any given reporting period. Statistics could not measure a possible increased ability for Viet Cong to move around in broad daylight within the villages without the constant over watch of a CAP outpost. Many Marines did feel that the mobile CAP concept was more effective. Sergeant Tom Harvey, a former CAP leader stated, —Ithink nearly everyone interested in the matter now recognizes the advantages of the mobile CAP . . . I would certainly agree, and can only surmise that we would have been much more effective [in my CAP] . . . if we had been mobile." One statistical indicator that pointed to success of the mobile CAP concept was that over two-thirds of enemy contacts were initiated by the mobile CAPs as opposed to the Viet Cong.[331]

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[330]Statistics were not collected on the number of casualties sustained by booby traps in CAP units, although they were kept for all other Marine units. In the conduct of research for this paper, the conclusion drawn from the lack of statistics from multiple sources was very similar. No records were kept because the incidents involving casualties due to booby traps in CAPs was extraordinarily rare.

[331]Cosmas and Murray, 147.

As mentioned previously, Marine squad leaders exerted significant authority within the CAP. However, the Marines would not be in Vietnam forever and were charged with continuing their efforts ―to perpetually work themselves out of a job."[332] The process of transition to full South Vietnamese control began in late 1969. The Marines exercised caution to ensure that they did not leave the villages too soon as all of the work of the previous years could be destroyed if the PFs were unable to provide local security against the Viet Cong. By March 1970, 93 Marine Squads had relocated to other villages to start CAPs leaving the PFs and local government in full control. Out of these 93 villages a total of 0 villages had reverted back to Viet Cong control.[333] However, these security gains would erode over time once the Marines began complete withdrawal from the program and subsequent redeployment. The long term effect on the local population also appeared to be minimal. As one former CAP Marine stated, ―When the CAPs pulled out in May 1971 and left their villes, they [the locals] reverted back to what they had done prior to the CAP coming in."[334] Not every CAP reverted back to Viet Cong control, but many did. Thus, the Marines effort to build a capable local security force, somewhat similar to the 173rd's efforts under Operation Washington Green, partially evaporated upon their complete departure.

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[332]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), 2.

[333]Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Task Force, *Fact Sheet on the Combined Action Force* (31 March 1970), 2.

[334]Brooks Brewington, ―Combined Action Platoons: A Strategy for Peace Enforcement" (Master's thesis, Combined Services College, 1996), 18.

Summary

Combined Action Platoons turned in an overall mixed performance although their successes can be attributed to several factors. First, the Marines provided the PF with the means to survive. Not only were the initial Marines chosen for the program highly competent in small unit tactics, but the close proximity and reliability of larger Marine formations and fire support prevented them from organizational demise in nearly all cases. Second, the true combined nature of the program that included co-habitation provided the missing ingredient of leadership in the local PF. In cases where Marines selected were not highly competent, the CAP unit was not highly successful. Third, the PF were recruited from the local area which offset the disadvantage of the Marines as outsiders.

There were several problems with the CAP construct that limited their effectiveness. First, when facing a main force threat CAPs had to be reinforced with larger contingents of Marines. Marine units that parceled out their subordinate units to assist with the CAPs obviously had less ability to fight enemy main forces although the CAPs were able to survive. With a large number of main force units operating in I Corps during Tet, some of the CAP positions had to be abandoned and thus the program's pacification gains were set back in the local area. A shift to a mobile CAP concept prevented large attacks but an assessment of its effectiveness is difficult as the enemy no longer fielded significant numbers of enemy main forces in many areas following Tet. Second, Marine quality in CAPs eroded over the course of the war. Coupled with shrinking capability was the shrinking commitment to fully man the CAP effort. Also, even the highly competent Marine CAP members often had rudimentary or no initial

Vietnamese language capability. Although CAPs adapted to this deficiency, it clearly inhibited these units from reaching their maximum effectiveness. Third, expansion of the combined action program was either poorly managed or proceeded at a rate too quickly. The quality of Marine leadership and numbers of Marines to fill individual CAP units declined as the program expanded.

Although CAPs were rightly regarded during the first few years as tactically successful, the program was unlikely to be duplicated on a larger scale and was ineffective at the operational level. The enemy situation, MACV resistance, perceived or real lack of troops in I Corps, and Marine uneven support of the program would prevent the vision of linking all of the initial Marine enclaves with a comprehensive local security force. Also, many of the CAPs required the presence of the Marines for their long term success as some former CAP secured villages reverted back to Viet Cong control following the Marine redeployment. A former CAP marine stated, ―The truth, I suspect, is that where it [CAP] seemed to work, combined action wasn't really needed, and where it was combined action could never work.‖[335] CAPs could not win the war on their own and could do little against the enemy main force threat, but provided greater attention and resources, their contribution may have been more significant to the overall campaign.

Local Security Forces: Civilian Irregular Defense Group

Tribal Security

Newly formed Special Forces teams were deployed to South Vietnam beginning in 1961. Deployed Special Forces units reported and received direction from the CIA

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[335]Keith Korpets, ―The Combined Action Program, Vietnam,‖ *Military Review* (July-August 2002): 80.

under the auspices of the Operations Mission to South Vietnam, a subset of the U.S. embassy. Both the CIA and MAAG were concerned about the infiltration and potential North Vietnamese invasion routes from Laos into the Central Highlands and the lack of South Vietnamese government reach into these areas. Many of the border areas were inhabited by tribal groups of various ethnicities and were referred to as Montagnards.[336] U.S. planners saw an opportunity for the Special Forces to create operational security depth by levying the Montagnards to disrupt, delay, and report infiltration by the north into South Vietnam. In other words, the hill people would provide a defensive strategic buffer between Saigon and the threat. Furthermore, the initial focus would be on the creation of local security followed by civic action to deliver the Montagnard tribes from Viet Cong influence and develop a bond to the government. Both the CIA and MAAG assessed the Montagnards and other tribal groups in the area to be especially vulnerable to Viet Cong influence as they often suffered from indifference from the South Vietnamese government who viewed them as savages. The arrival of nearly 80,000 refugees in 1954 to Montagnard tribal areas further fueled the ethnic tensions between the Montagnards and the South Vietnamese government.[337] This security program was initially referred to as the Village Defense Program, or VDP, and beginning in 1962, the Civilian Irregular Defense Group, or CIDG.

CIDG traced its beginnings to the Rhade Montagnard tribe in the Darlac Province of South Vietnam's Central Highland Region. In November, 1961 a Special Forces medic, Sergeant First Class Paul F. Campbell, visited the Rhade tribe, to establish rapport

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[336]Montagnards is a French word meaning people from the mountains.

[337]Kelly, 19-20.

with the tribal elders and to test the idea of the local security concept. The Rhade were

chosen by the U.S. to begin the program due to their geographic location, their past

combat service with the French, and their relative tribal sophistication.[338] Campbell

quickly formed a relationship with the village elder of Buon Enao by treating his

daughter of a minor medical ailment using penicillin.[339] This medic's technique to

establish rapport with the tribal elders was repeated frequently throughout the CIDG

program. This particular encounter illustrated the preparation and professionalism

routinely exhibited by members of the Special Force community toward local cultural

understanding. Campbell insisted that the treatment of medicine would only work if

blessed by the village holy man, or shaman. Thus, the treatment was performed under

traditional tribal ritual. In other words, the Western medical solution of penicillin was

integrated into normal tribal practices without disrupting the local balance of power or

upsetting cultural norms. Campbell did not establish contact with the Rhade to remake

their local society, he established contact to strengthen their internal structures so that

allies capable of fighting the Viet Cong could be levied in the future. As a result of

continued positive and culturally astute interaction, the Rhade proved inclined to increase

their participation due to the fact that U.S. actions were perceived to please Rhade spirits

and improve their villages.[340]

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[338]Shelby Stanton, *Green Berets at War: U.S. Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1985), 41.

[339]Christopher K. Ives, ―Knowledge and Strategy: Operational Innovation and Institutional Failure, U.S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam 1961-1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2004), 83-86.

[340]Kelly, 24-28.

U.S. acceptance by the Rhade along these unwritten terms allowed them to successfully raise local security forces, but this local method became a larger political problem. Campbell and others like him were content on leaving the Rhade to their own designs and used the resources as his disposal to assist the traditional tribal government structure to procure basic services to their people. The provincial governor was initially supportive of these efforts. However, the central government in Saigon was not. The government, who had little legitimacy and control over the Rhade, wanted to pacify these areas to increase its political power and its ability to unify South Vietnam against the insurgency. Also, the government saw these tribes as a threat not necessarily to sovereignty but rather to stability. In order for this program to work long term, the government would either need to allow the Rhade and other tribes some form of autonomy or villages like Buon Enao would have to submit to Saigon directives.

As the relationship with the village grew, Buon Enao was turned into an area development center. An area development center in a village was the central operating and administrative base that provided the ability to continue the program's expansion throughout a tribal area. It also served as the coordination center for psychological and intelligence operations throughout the local area. Through 1965 over 80 area development centers were established throughout South Vietnam although primarily focused in the Central Highland region.[341]

The Special Forces teams began training and equipping the Montagnard population for its own defense. Over time training expanded to include four basic categories including village defense forces, strike forces, medical personnel, and civic

[341]Kelly, 15, 34-35.

action teams. The village defense forces constructed basic village defenses with the population, manned static positions, and prevented Viet Cong infiltration of the village. Upon completion of two weeks of training, village defense members would return to their home village. The strike forces patrolled the village peripheries and unsettled areas and were responsible for reinforcing other villages under Viet Cong attack. Following six weeks of training, strike forces generally resided in the Special Forces camp of the area development center which allowed for combined patrols and quick reaction force capability. Although the strike forces performed well in their reinforcement duties of villages under small unit attacks, they were woefully inadequate in terms of size and enabling fires to influence the outcomes of battalion sized Viet Cong attacks.[342] Medical personnel trained by U.S. Special Forces medics would not only provide treatment to the newly raised local security forces, but also to the village populations. Finally, the civic action teams were trained to serve as cadre for training other local security forces and for travelling to new villages to persuade other Montagnards to join the program. Additionally, they were provided training in improved agricultural methods as well as the manufacture and use of simple tools to employ in civic action operations. Training for all of the various forces centered around counter-guerrilla tactics as well as inculcating the need for quick responsiveness during Viet Cong attacks.[343]

Prior to accepting a Montagnard into any of the training programs, recruits were vetted by the village chief. Indeed before any village was incorporated into the program,

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[342]Kelly, 92. One of the primary weaknesses cited of CIDG from 1961-1964 was ―the lack of troops to reinforce a camp garrison under attack or to exploit a patrol contact with the enemy.‖

[343]Kelly, 25-27, 35.

the village chief would personally commit to the full participation of his village and agree to provide an agreed upon number of levies for village self defense and any other security forces required. Additionally, recruits were further vetted during registration where any member in line could expose a candidate as Viet Cong. A denounced candidate would be turned back over to a village chief for rehabilitation following questioning. Finally, a tribesman was required to denounce the Viet Cong and pledge future support to the South Vietnamese government, although both pledges would be broken by some of the oath takers in subsequent years. An important aspect that contributed to the relative ease of recruitment was that the Americans provided weapons to the tribes. In 1958, the Rhade's weapons, crossbows and some melee weapons, had been confiscated by Diem following a peaceful Rhade protest.[344] Arming the Rhade reinstated a sense of manhood in individual men in the tribe and empowered them to take charge of their own security.

The U.S. Special Forces teams were joined by the South Vietnamese Special Forces in their efforts. In fact the U.S. Special Forces were tasked to merely advise the South Vietnamese and Montagnards while the South Vietnamese served as commanders of these formations. In reality the U.S. advisers took command on numerous occasions and overwhelmingly so when involved in direct fire contact with the Viet Cong.[345] The lack of leadership in ARVN Special Forces units was typical in the majority of ARVN. Many received their appointments due to demonstrated loyalty to the regime or favoritism rather than having any qualifications for their assignments. As one Special Forces officer stated of his counterpart, ―[He is] The most crooked, inconsiderate,

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[344]Kelly, 20, 25-26.

[345]Kelly, 9, 17, 40.

incompetent, ineffective soldier in the Vietnamese army . . . His cowardice is only superseded by his corruption and graft . . . However, he does sit in a chair well."[346] As evidenced in the attack on Nam Dong in July 1964, some of these ARVN officers were Viet Cong collaborators who had every interest in seeing the program fail. Additionally, the government's perception of the Montagnards as *moi*, or savages, permeated throughout the South Vietnamese Special Forces creating distrust and ill will between the allies. To be clear, the CIDG program was a U.S. sponsored program at its inception with the Saigon government often a reluctant participant.[347]

Although U.S. Special Forces were technically advisors in the effort, their effectiveness in this capacity was strong. Much of this success can be attributed to the high caliber of men who formed a Special Forces A Team. They were all volunteers and selected from a larger Army population. Many had previous operational experience. They had not only been thoroughly trained on their own advanced military skills but had been cross trained on the skills of other team members. Although few were fluent, many had some language ability in either French or Vietnamese. Many had been educated on the history and culture of the tribes that they worked with. For example, Dr. Berry Hickey, an anthropologist, spent time with many of the Special Forces teams including Donlon's team.[348] Also, the NCOs on these teams were generally a few years older than many of their counterparts in conventional units. Although older age does not necessarily cause

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[346]Stanton, 61.

[347]Kelly, 14.

[348]BA030, Vietnam Veteran, interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 24 February 2011.

maturity, in general this age differential resulted in a force with more life and professional experience.[349] Finally, even though they were advisors the Special Forces controlled the pay and logistical resupply of CIDG. This relationship gave them leverage over the security forces and their tribes. However, this relationship also increased tensions with the Vietnamese Special Forces officers who were technically in command of the CIDG forces.[350]

CIDG flourished from its 1961 inception until the end of 1963. By December over 61,000 local security forces were trained including 18,000 strike force members and 43,000 hamlet militia.[351] Part of its initial success, particularly in the Darlac province, was due to the provincial chief's cooperation with American efforts.[352] His previous plans of connecting the Montagnards with the provincial government were not enacted due to his inability to control the level of insurgent activity in the area. However, outside of his province, at least some of the initial success in the program can be attributed to the relative low level of insurgency activity. In fact, the area around Nam Dong was referred to as ―the country club" amongst some Special Forces officers prior to an attack on the camp in July 1964.[353] Also important to the program's initial success, particularly among

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[349]Older does not necessarily mean better. There is obviously an optimal maturity, that older age helps provide, and an optimal physical condition, that older age limits.

[350]Simpson, 166-171.

[351]Kelly, 30.

[352]Ives, 88.

[353]BA030, Interview.

the Rhade, was the cooperation of the tribal elders in denying the Viet Cong access and support to their people.

The Rhade proved worthy of standing up to early Viet Cong attacks in 1962, particularly at the village of Buon Tong Sing and Buan Hra Ea Hning where the local defenders repulsed the Viet Cong. However other villages, such as Buon Cu Bong and Buon Tong Dok, fell to the Viet Cong without firing a shot. These villages suffered reprisals by the Rhade that included burning the villages and displacing the villagers to other friendly villages.[354] This internal tribal reprisal sent a powerful message. In the future, other Rhade villages would fully contest Viet Cong attacks. Those villagers that contested attacks but failed resettled nearby secure villages and maintained their tribal structures. Once these areas were wrested back from the Viet Cong, the villagers settled back into their original home area. As the program expanded to the nearby Kontum province, a report estimated that the number of Viet Cong in Kontum had decreased from 5,000 in 1961 to 500 by March of 1962.[355] By the end of 1962, the government declared the Darlac province secure.[356]

Operation Switchback

In 1962 CIDG was growing beyond the ad hoc support capabilities of the CIA. In addition, President Kennedy had directed that all non clandestine paramilitary activities fall under the purview of the Defense Department rather than the CIA in the aftermath of

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[354]Simpson, 104.

[355]Ives, 99.

[356]Kelly, 28.

the Bay of Pigs fiasco.[357] With the increased size and capability of MACV headquarters in 1962, MACV was designated to receive full control of the CIDG program under Operation Switchback. Switchback took a full year to execute but its impact was felt soon after the transition to MACV control began. Operation Switchback's goals were to first transition control from the CIA to MACV, followed by a transition of the local security and civic action programs under CIDG to the South Vietnamese, and finally shift emphasis from tribal area security to border security and offensive operations.[358]

The transfer of the local security and civic action portion of CIDG to the South Vietnamese did not proceed smoothly. Many of the South Vietnamese were simply reluctant to support ―the savages.‖ The previously supportive Darlac province chief even confiscated some of the weapons that had been issued to the Rhade after the Buon Enao camp was turned over to Vietnamese control.[359] As one Special Forces officer involved with CIDG noted, ―There was no love lost between the highlanders and the lowlanders.‖[360] Although the Montagnard revolt in September 1964 was not widespread it highlighted the divisions between the Rhade tribe and the government. The Montagnards killed over a dozen of their South Vietnamese advisors, some local Popular Forces, and detained a dozen of their American advisors while seizing control of five camps in the Darlac Province. The Montagnards outlined their grievances in a petition to the government in October that included desires for land ownership, representation in the

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[357]Cosmas, 78-79.

[358]Ives, 101-102.

[359]Kelly, 43; Stanton, 47.

[360]BA030, Interview.

national assembly, government positions, quotas for leadership positions in ARVN, and symbolic autonomy.[361] U.S. Special Forces advisors and MACV often played the role of impartial negotiators between the Montagnards and the government and ultimately prevented further violence and ended the crisis.[362] Indeed, one Special Forces officer played a significant part in negotiations as he had earned the trust of the Montagnards and participated in many of their tribal rituals. As a colleague remarked, ―He had gone native.‖[363]

The de-emphasis on local security was complemented by an emphasis on border security and offensive operations as CIDG evolved under MACV‗s control. As early as the summer of 1964, planners at MACV began designing small and limited cross border operations into Laos for CIDG personnel.[364] However, the Montagnard revolt delayed any such action from occurring until early in 1965. Further plans for closing camps and relocating camps closer to the Laotian border were also drawn up and were executed beginning in 1965. By 1965, CIDG operations were prescribed by the Headquarters, 5th Special Forces Group as ―border surveillance and control, operations against infiltration routes, or operations against VC warzones and bases.‖[365] CIDG was officially out of the local security business, although that transition had begun in 1962.

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[361]Kelly, 63-64.

[362]Cosmas, 146.

[363]BA030, Interview.

[364]Cosmas, 162.

[365]Kelly, 74.

Border camps began opening as early as 1963 in support of the changing CIDG mission and presented new challenges to Special Forces soldiers. Although the locations selected were of military value, many of the camps' remoteness meant that there was no population to mobilize for security operations. A solution to the manpower problem, relocating Montagnards, created more problems such as uprooting Montagnard families and a lack of motivation to fight among Montagnards. Resupply of these border camps was also difficult and generally could be accomplished only by air. Timely reinforcement of the camps was also difficult given their remote locations.[366]

The shift to border security and expansion to non Rhade Montagnard tribes allowed the Viet Cong to infiltrate numerous camps in the CIDG program. The first notable infiltration occurred at Plei Mrong in January, 1963. Here the Viet Cong conducted a battalion sized attack while the Special Forces team leader and part of his strike force were conducting a patrol outside of the camp. The attack resulted in over 130 allied casualties and the loss of over 104 weapons.[367]

As the CIDG program continued to expand, attempted infiltration combined with large main force attacks would threaten the program's existence. In 1964, then Captain Roger Donlon, who earned the Medal of Honor for his actions, and his team repulsed such an attack at Nam Dong. Donlon's actions and the loyalty of his CIDG strike forces comprised of Nungs, tribesmen of Chinese ethnicity, ultimately denied the Viet Cong

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[366]Ives, 176.

[367]Charles M. Simpson, *Inside the Green Berets* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1983), 106.

victory in the battle.[368] A key component of this attack was that the Special Forces team was not warned by the local Katu tribe, some of whom were CIDG members. It would have been virtually impossible for the Viet Cong to assemble or infiltrate such a large force of primarily ethnic Vietnamese through a Katu tribal area without their knowledge. The Katu tribe was known for their warrior ethos and thus some Special Forces' soldiers believed that the local Katu tribe had chosen to side with the Viet Cong.[369]

These two examples demonstrate that infiltration in CIDG increased with expansion, the shift in focus on border security, and the shift in geographic location of camps closer to the border. Infiltration occurred for several reasons. The increased pace of expansion did not permit vetting to the level of detail that was conducted under the initial experiment in Buon Enao. Also, many of these border camps located in areas of military advantage contained no local population to levy. In some cases, Vietnamese from the lowland regions were brought in to provide manpower to the program and the first time many of the U.S. Special Forces soldiers met them was within the confines of their perimeter. Some of the Vietnamese ―volunteers‖ were emptied out of prisons by Diem and sent to the border frontier.[370] The Vietnamese Special Forces were also guilty of seditious acts as they had little interest in working with people that they looked down upon or cooperating with U.S. advisors. Finally, the enemy began making a concerted effort to infiltrate the border camps throughout 1963 and 1964 as they escalated the North sponsored insurgency.

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[368]Simpson, 123.

[369]BA030, Interview.

[370]Stanton, 47.

The enemy's ability to over run camps drove the creation of larger tribal mobile Special Forces to reinforce camps under enemy pressure, conduct raids and reconnaissance operations in remote areas, and patrol areas outside the control of camp strike forces. The mobile forces eventually became known as MIKE FORCES. Colonel Francis Kelly, 5th Special Forces Group commander, remarked in 1966, ―While I am group commander, none of my camps will be taken by the enemy. If one of my camps appears threatened, be it day or night, the Nha Trang MIKE FORCE will be parachuted into that camp to prevent its defeat . . .‖[371] Special Forces would also conduct numerous successful reconnaissance operations into Laos and Cambodia using forces adapted from the CIDG program throughout the war.

Although the enemy situation served as the primary reason for a more offensive and border security shift, MACV's choice to transform CIDG to perform these needed missions proved unspectacular. Directives from MACV prescribing new villages to be secured or moved to the Laotian border, with no corresponding meaningful interdictions into Laos to disrupt or screen against enemy main forces, often ended in disaster.[372] MACV also began to task CIDG's strike forces for operations outside of their area of control taking away their home advantages and pitting them against much larger and better armed enemy main forces. A company sized formation of strike forces was simply not a one for one exchange with a U.S. rifle company.[373] MIKE FORCES helped give the

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[371]Simpson, 123-125.

[372]Kelly, 46-52.

[373]Kelly, 80, 85.

border security mission life until large offensive operations by the enemy in late 1967 and during Tet presented further problems.

The Special Forces camp at Khe Sanh is indicative of the transition of focus of CIDG and of the inappropriateness of this program to be used for border security. In 1964, Khe Sanh was another CIDG success story that levied the Bru tribe to conduct local security although its location was very close to the Laotian border. The security situation was so good at Khe Sanh at the time that only a mere squad of CIDG volunteers was required to secure the Khe Sanh airfield which was located five kilometers from the Special Forces camp. In 1965, the camp was moved to the airfield, an area of military importance, while leaving the Bru villages without much protection. As a result, the Viet Cong began to infiltrate the local CIDG. As the Marines moved into Khe Sanh, the camp was moved again, this time to Lang Vei even closer to the border, where it was accidently strafed and bombed by U.S. aircraft. In 1967, PAVN and Viet Cong main forces attacked both Lang Vei and Khe Sanh and continued their attacks in early 1968 as part of the Tet offensive. As Lang Vei was over run, the retreating Bru were denied entry into Khe Sanh by the Marines.[374]

The story of the Bru was not necessarily unique as it highlights a major problem associated with the transition of CIDG. Similar to the discussion of RFs and PFs, population security initiatives only have a chance of succeeding when the local security forces are insulated from large scale attack. The decision to establish camps on the Laotian border with a militia force was a disaster in northwestern I Corps as there was no force that could detect and disrupt enemy main forces sufficiently who were intent on the

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[374]Simpson, 110-112.

camps' destruction. The camps were designed to interdict small unit guerrilla movement into South Vietnam not to withstand the assault of a massed infantry attack. As the increasing amounts of enemy main forces were introduced in the early 1960s, there was little recognition, with respect to the border security mission, that the camps served only as targets for conventional assaults rather than providing for the territorial integrity of South Vietnam.[375]

Sir Robert Thompson noted that tribal forces were a critical component in his security framework and thought them most appropriate to conduct border security operations.[376] However, in the case of CIDG and Vietnam they largely failed in that role. As the border forts averaged 30 miles distance between them, there was often plenty of room for Viet Cong or PAVN units to bypass them if they so desired.[377] If the enemy wanted to attack them, they often had enough manpower to do so as the tribal forces brought in had no interest in defending an area outside of their home area, with the exception of the Nung mercenaries who were not present in large enough numbers to prevent significant allied losses.

It may have been better for the U.S. if they had never paid attention to the Malayan Experience as many observers did not seem to understand the differences in the operational environment between the Malayan campaign and the campaign in Vietnam. Two of the most ineffective programs of the campaign, strategic hamlets and CIDG border operations, seemed to have been direct lifts from the Malayan campaign and

[375]Stanton, 166.

[376]See chapter 2 for complete discussion.

[377]Stanton, 67.

169

transplanted into a very different Vietnam campaign. The most important difference with respect to tribal border security operations was that there was no significant threat of a cross border conventional invasion or a large enough insurgency to field battalion and eventually regimental sized guerrilla forces in Malaya. Such a threat existed, however, in Vietnam.

Summary

The CIDG program was initially successful in securing much of the rural Montagnard population for several reasons. First, many of the Montagnard tribes had fought with the French and were not totally unfamiliar to foreigners.[378] Second, the local security forces were raised and mentored by the best advisors that the U.S. had to offer. The extensive training, high selection criteria, and professionalism of the Special Forces was relatively unmatched by any other U.S. advisory effort in South Vietnam throughout the conflict. Third, the Special Forces mentors ensured an adequate and largely self reliable framework for local security by their creation of four different types of forces. The strike forces were largely able to effectively reinforce villages under attack up until 1963. Although the teams could not always count on artillery or close air support, their proficiency with mortars and relative abundance of mortar systems enabled them to provide adequate fires in support of their defensive and security operations.[379] Fourth, due to well conducted vetting, communist infiltration of the local security forces was minimized until early 1963. Fifth, local recruitment and employment of Montagnards,

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[378]Kelly, 20.

[379]BA030, Interview.

who were tied to their land through subsistence agricultural and exhibited strong familial and tribal bonds, leveraged their desire to fight for their homes and generated intelligence. Finally, success of the program from 1961 to 1963 can be partially attributed to the enemy's strategy and capabilities. The Viet Cong throughout much of this early period were primarily focused on subversion and company level or below attacks. Although they often possessed superior weaponry to the CIDG local security forces, they would become much more lethal during 1964 with large scale introduction of Soviet bloc weaponry. In addition, the Viet Cong would begin entering into battle more frequently in battalion sized formations which were much more capable of defeating a small outpost of hamlet militia.

Initial success would give way to mixed results with initiation of Operation Switchback. Although both MACV and U.S. Special Forces are guilty of misapplication of the program's original design, the most important factor for the mixed results was the increase and offensive shift in enemy activity. The attack on Captain Donlon's camp in July 1964 is illustrative of the means available to the Viet Cong and a testament to the enemy's will to fight to destroy the isolated outposts of irregulars. Some of the great processes that led to the initial success of CIDG suffered as MACV drove a rapid expansion of CIDG forces. For example, due to the increased pace and scope of expansion vetting of new recruits by village elders became rushed and incomplete resulting in increased Viet Cong infiltration that began to manifest itself as early as the 1963-1964 camp attacks.[380]

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[380]Kelly, 54-56.

In summary, although initially successful the record of CIDG is mixed. Often identified as the sole successful counterinsurgency program during the advise and assist years, it ultimately failed in its political objective to extend the government's control to the rural Montagnards. Essential to this political failure was the lack of political enthusiasm for the program from Saigon. As South Vietnam gained increased control of the program it deteriorated from poor administration and lack of inspiration. Gestures that included disarmament of some of the previously armed tribes added to the overall distrust between the Montagnards and the South Vietnamese which pushed former allies into the enemy camp. Additionally, it partially failed in its local and border security roles as CIDG proved incapable to stand up to Viet Cong main forces and PAVN in many cases. Although designed as a local security program, MACV's attempt to make CIDG into an offensive and border security force undermined many of the factors that made the program successful in the first place including the tribesman's local and familial ties, essential to his motivation to fight. Also without any operational offensive screening force in support of the CIDG, some of these small groups met annihilation in the face of much larger and better equipped enemy main forces massing a few kilometers across the Laotian and Cambodian border.

Summary

Local security forces were important in the Vietnam conflict. They primarily were tasked with defeating the guerrilla, terror, and subversion components of the insurgency in their geographically assigned areas. Internal disputes between U.S. governmental agencies and external disputes with the South Vietnamese agencies hampered their development and impact. However, the most limiting factor in the effectiveness of the

local security forces in Vietnam were the enemy main forces. Overall the performance of local security forces in Vietnam was mixed.

All of the local security forces examined in this chapter demonstrated the first and most essential characteristic that would allow them to succeed. They had to be able to organizationally survive contact so that they could continue to perform their roles another day. The security force framework devised by Westmoreland sought to shield the local security forces from having to fight against enemy main forces so that they could effectively perform their mission. When it failed, the local security forces were ineffective and often became casualty statistics. However, when successful it provided the local security forces an opportunity to achieve success, although it did not guarantee it.

The training, equipping, and mentoring of the territorials was essential. The Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps generally suffered from a decade of neglect before ARVN and later U.S. efforts under CORDS addressed some of the fundamental equipping and training issues. Even if properly trained and equipped, which many local security forces were not, they had to be properly led. In instances where better leaders were found such as the surrounding the Phu Bai airfield, in the village of Buon Enao, or in 1/502, the local security forces performed better. Even though both CAP and CIDG were stated as advisory missions, many of the initial participants commanded these units which made them more effective. Under RF and PF combined operations with 1/502 leading the operation this similar phenomenon occurred. Merely matching Americans with local security forces was no guarantee of effective leadership as evidenced in the erosion of some CAP units, however, effective selection prevented this from occurring on a wide

scale. One common theme that became repetitious throughout examination of local security forces that worked with U.S. forces was the lack of language capability of the Americans. In the most successful actions cited in this chapter, either a Vietnamese commander spoke English as in the combined operations discussion with 1/502 or an American commander spoke Vietnamese as with LT Ek in the creation of CAPs. Although units adapted to the language barrier, it greatly inhibited effectiveness. A second common theme that repeated itself was the ability of U.S. forces to effectively tap in to the security force framework due to their communications and U.S. command and control structure. Although this is related more to the ability of the local security force to survive, without the Americans even in an advisory capacity to coordinate for indirect fires, attack aviation, and close air support many of the local security forces that they worked with would have been largely ineffective.

Vetting was important in all of the forces but was really only facilitated by U.S. forces with respect to the CIDG program. However, vetting was and still is examined as a one time affair. As the experience in Vietnam with these forces demonstrates, vetting must be a continual process. The enemy's constant propaganda campaign against local security forces, required members advising them to be constantly alert for changes in individual behavior. All of these forces were infiltrated at some level by the enemy which contributed in part to many of their failures. Some merely chose a gentleman's agreement with the Viet Cong due to a lack of leadership, a perceived inability to contest the Viet Cong in the area, or due to infiltration in leadership ranks.

Forces recruited and employed locally tended to perform better in their security tasks. This was particularly evident concerning the PF and attested to by both U.S. Army

174

units conducting combined operations with them and the CAP Marines. One of the problems as the CIDG program evolved was relocating tribal fighters or bringing in Vietnamese lowlanders to border areas as they tended to have lower morale and were more easily infiltrated.

Expansion created problems but it would be too simple and lack evidence to state that the rapid pace of expansion caused problems in all cases. The RF and PF were rapidly expanded following the 1968 Tet Offensive, but did not see a significant decrease in performance as they were also equipped with modern weaponry and trained by mobile training teams during the same time period. CAPs were rapidly expanded but the Marines could have mitigated the deficiencies by providing more emphasis on the program. Rapid CIDG expansion was coupled with a change in mission to border security and an increase in enemy activity which limited effectiveness much more than merely fast paced growth. Where rapid expansion seemed to cause the most problems was with leadership as U.S. logistics enabled equipping efforts and advisors enabled training efforts. Leadership, however, was unable to be trained in a few short weeks and took significant time to try to grow within formations. Even in ARVN, a much more resourced or longer standing force than many of the local security forces that also underwent periods of rapid expansion, leadership issues remained a wide spread problem throughout the conflict.

The verdict thus far is that the initial factors that most influence the success of local security forces derived in chapter 3 were applicable to the Vietnam conflict. Although the precise methods of implementation of action with respect to these factors varied, the importance of these factors was demonstrated in the examination presented in

175

this chapter. The next chapter will seek to see if the factors continue to be important in the U.S. war in Iraq or if other factors emerge from the examination.

CHAPTER 5

U.S. IN IRAQ (2003-2011)

You usually have strategy informing tactics. We routinely find ourselves in Iraq where tactics are informing strategy.[381]

<u>Axis of Evil</u>

During the Clinton presidency, Saddam Hussein was primarily contained via no fly zones, U.N. sanction enforcement, and limited bombing missions. The Clinton administration viewed Saddam as a thug and regional menace but one that was containable. The subsequent Bush administration would assess the threat posed by Saddam much differently following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In the new U.S. Global War on Terror, Al Qaeda was not the only U.S. emerging target.[382]

The president laid out the U.S. target folder for the continuation of the Global War on Terror to the American people through his ―Axis of Evil‖ remarks during the 2002 State of the Union Address. Although North Korea and Iran also achieved the dubious distinction of Axis of Evil membership, Iraq seemed a better fit into the larger global war on terror campaign. Both U.S. and international intelligence agencies painted an increasingly threatening picture of Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) capabilities and intentions as fear ran rampant that Saddam may provide these capabilities to terrorist organizations.[383] Members of the administration also believed that a

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[381]A field grade officer who served two tours in Iraq. Comment made to author in 2006.

[382]Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 14.

[383]Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 52-55.

democratic Iraq in the heart of the Middle East would be easy to establish and serve the future dual role of U.S. ally and bulwark against radical Islamic ideology originating from Saudi Arabia on its southern border and Iran to the east.[384] Due to its weakened military and economic state due to the Gulf War and over a decade of sanctions, Iraq ceased to be viewed as a serious threat by the administration but became to be viewed as a strategic opportunity.[385] In summary, the U.S. strategic ends for Iraq were regime change, destruction of Iraq's WMD, and a democratic and stable Iraq that would serve as a regional ally to the U.S. The campaign prosecuted to achieve these ends was named Operation Iraqi Freedom and is now in its ninth year.

<div align="center">Operation Iraqi Freedom</div>

<div align="center">Major Combat Operations</div>

From the beginning of U.S. campaign planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the administration's desire for a small and flexible force influenced the military component of the coalition strategy. Thus, military planning for the invasion was focused primarily on the overall force level, with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stressing the minimum amount of troops that could achieve "Shock and Awe" to the Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander, General Tommy Franks. Planning was also influenced by the administration's aversion to employ the military in a peace keeping

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[384]In retrospect, the political objectives started out quite grandiose indeed. The idea that a stabilized Iraq that had some form of representative government capable of internal control would be relatively easy to achieve was also a flawed assumption. Dissenting views of the U.S. administration's pre invasion policy, discussed at a meeting at the American Enterprise Institute, are captured by Ricks in *Fiasco* (see pages 64-66).

[385]Gordon and Trainor, 64.

role. Indeed President Bush had campaigned on the premise that the military's purpose was to fight and win the nation's wars and was critical of President Clinton's use of the military to nation-build in the Balkans.[386]

Erroneous planning assumptions were made by both military and defense department planners that supported the administration's political views. First, an assumption was made that many Iraqi units would surrender en masse to the U.S. led coalition. This would leave a relatively intact Iraqi Army that could help secure the country following the invasion which in turn meant that a smaller invasion force was required.[387] Planners also assumed that many Shia Iraqis in the South would support and welcome the coalition as liberators.[388] As a result of both of these flawed assumptions, the U.S. led coalition projected a quick transition of responsibility to Iraqis and an equally rapid redeployment of Coalition forces.

One of the many criticisms levied at CENTCOM and subordinate echelons was the lack of detailed Phase IV, or post major combat operations, planning. CENTCOM planners had assumed that the State Department would largely take the lead on reconstruction preparation until informed by the Defense Department to begin planning

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[386]Gordon and Trainor, 142.

[387]Gordon and Trainor, 105, 142. Even if the Iraqi Army was relatively destroyed, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice thought that, ―the institutions would hold, everything from ministries to police forces. You would be able to bring in new leadership but we were going to keep the body in place."

[388]BH030, Iraq Veterans Panel, Interview by Mark Battjes, Robert Green, Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, Washington, DC, 22 March 2011.

for post war Iraq in the midsummer of 2002.[389] However, the Defense Department was only officially delegated that responsibility by the President on 20 January 2003 and had only recently contacted retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner, to lead some form of post government administration on 9 January 2003.[390] With Garner officially tapped the following January, he made some efforts toward developing a workable Phase IV plan, but he had arrived much too late and was far too under resourced to do so.[391]

Before any plan could be implemented efforts needed to be made on the diplomatic front. As Powell predicted at Camp David days after the 9/11 attacks, international support was not forthcoming.[392] Both Powell's presentation of evidence of Iraqi violations of U.N. resolutions and President Bush's speeches at the U.N. failed to deliver significant international partners for a coalition invasion with the exception of the

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[389]Gordon and Trainor, 142. Even with CENTCOM in the lead on planning, policy decisions were needed to effectively develop a Phase IV framework. CENTCOM planners routinely sent requests for post invasion information both to the State Department and the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Feith's office prior to the invasion. Planners often received little information from either location but only Feith's would gain the infamous —black hole" nickname by a senior officer of the Joint Staff.

[390]Ricks, 80-81.

[391]Gordon and Trainor, 152-155. One of these efforts was a rock drill held on 20 February 2003. A rock drill is the name for a type of rehearsal in the military that is conducted after a plan has been issued. The purpose is to ensure that participates come away with a common visualization of the plan and that small adjustments can be made. This particular session was far from a rehearsal and more like a brainstorming session where participants began identifying facts and assumptions and generating requests for information for the Defense Department. These actions are routinely taken very early on in a formal military planning process.

[392]Gordon and Trainor, 16.

U.K. which pledged a division.[393] Diplomacy and economic incentives failed to persuade Turkey to let coalition forces open up a large northern front, which was seen as an important aspect of the coalition invasion plan.[394]

For Saddam's part, Iraq's grand strategy leading up to the invasion was one of internal and regional survival, lacking any viable international component. The internal focus was natural given that transitions of power in Iraq tended to occur via military coups. Additionally, the semi autonomous Kurdish region in the north and the disgruntled Shia region in southern Iraq had already proved rebellious following Operation Desert Storm. Saddam's actions to hedge against the internal threat condemned the Iraqi military from even attempting to conduct a defense of the country. With respect to Saddam's regional survival strategy, his primary impetus to disrupt international teams of weapons inspectors was to maintain a façade of WMD capability to deter other regional actors, most notably Iran, from any aggressive action.[395]

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[393]Although many nations contributed what amounted to a token effort, U.S. leaders did obtain the necessary over flight and basing rights to support the invasion.

[394]Gregory Fontenot, E. J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom Through 1 May 2003* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2004), 47-48.

[395]Kevin M. Woods, *A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership*, Iraqi Perspectives Project, Joint Center for Operational Analysis, 14-15, 77, 80-83, 90-91. Saddam's politically appointed and loyal generals, who were prevented from communicating with each other for fear of collusion, proved incompetent. His defense plans also reflected his internal control concerns as the outskirts of Baghdad was to be defended by the regular Iraqi Army, followed closer to Baghdad by the Republican Guard, with Baghdad itself defended by the Special Republic Guard. Saddam was trying to ensure that the U.S. sustained significant casualties in an urban fight for Baghdad and that he would remain in power if U.S. forces halted their advance prematurely.

Operation Cobra II, the U.S. name for the invasion of Iraq, began on 21 March 2003. In pursuit of the political objective of regime change, the plan called for an unrelenting push toward Baghdad. A few key takeaways are important in understanding how the initial invasion affected the later counterinsurgency campaign. First, urban areas were largely bypassed unless they contained important bridges necessary for the coalition to continue their advance on Baghdad. As a result, when the regime's security forces melted away the occupation force was not present in many areas to ensure immediate control. Even had they been in position the invasion force was much too small to assume the duties required of an occupation. Next, Fedayeen Saddam and other irregular regime fighters were largely bypassed unless they became a nuisance to lines of communication, blocked bridges along the coalition's axis of advance, or directly engaged coalition forces. Thus, well armed and organized guerrillas remained after the capture of Baghdad throughout Iraq that could continue fighting as insurgents later in the campaign. Also, as a result of unforeseen enemy tactics and the lack of a northern front, some division-sized units found themselves occupying areas of Iraq for which they had not prepared. Finally, the coalition lost a lot of experience and campaign continuity early in the occupation as senior commanders and staffs who had prepared for the invasion moved on.[396]

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[396]Gordon and Trainor, 487. General McKiernan, the Coalition Land Force Component Commander, directed his HQ to move back to Kuwait rather than remain in Iraq. The V Corps headquarters was renamed Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) and Lieutenant General Sanchez, the former 1AD commander and most junior three star General in the Army at the time, replaced Lieutenant General Wallace as the commander. Command changes also occurred at CENTCOM with General Franks replaced by General Abizaid and at the Pentagon with the Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki replaced by General Keane.

Counterinsurgency

Once the coalition had defeated the Iraqi Army and occupied the country, an insurgency began to gain momentum. Although Saddam had created both the Al-Quds and Saddam Fedayeen militias to serve as guerrillas during the war, there is little evidence that supports a detailed plan for an insurgency by the former regime.[397] However, it is not difficult to understand why an insurgency began in occupied Iraq. First, a general breakdown of basic law and order occurred almost immediately once U.S. forces had liberated an area. With no police on the streets, looting was rampant in government buildings and local merchants' stores. Even copper wire used in power lines was stripped by looters who sought to turn a quick profit.[398] Second, religious extremism was also an important factor as the call for *jihad* lured many foreigners and Iraqis to rally to an insurgent cause. If religious extremism was not a primary motivational factor for an individual, foreign troops occupying Iraqi soil violated a cultural sense of Arab honor. Even Sunni politicians and their staffs would refer to an —honorable resistance" as late as 2007 as an excuse to condone or support violence against coalition forces or the Iraqi government. Most important, however, was the marginalization of the Sunni Arab population that had historically held the large share of political and economic power in Iraq. U.S. policy and actions compounded this marginalization.[399]

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[397]Woods, 149-150.

[398]Gordon and Trainor, 467-468. The price of scrap metal in the region fell to nearly half of its pre war value due to the significant increase in supply provided by the looters.

[399]Najim Abed Al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, —The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *Prism* 2, no.1 (2010): 3-18, 4-5.

Once the U.S. had occupied Iraq, Garner's team faced significant difficulties in making any progress toward reconstruction or stability. His office had difficulty even getting around the country and assessing the current state of affairs, let alone designing and implementing a comprehensive solution to the numerous problems facing a destabilized Iraq. In recognition of the many challenges facing Iraq, the President appointed Ambassador L. Paul Bremer on 6 May 2003 to head the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) which was designated to serve as an interim government until governance could be transitioned to Iraqis.[400]

Bremer issued decrees that were at odds with the desires of his U.S. government agency partners, lacked any examination of second or third order effects, and significantly contributed to the growing insurgency. The high point of his miscalculation included CPA Order 1 that excluded the top four levels of former Ba'ath party members from participation in the future government of Iraq. At a time when unemployment was already rampant, Bremer compounded the problem for Sunnis who had the most to lose in a new Iraq. Bremer failed to understand that in Baghdad and other important areas of Iraq, one had to be a member of the Ba'ath party to participate in society at any level and that effective governing ability and civil expertise resided in only the upper tiers of the Ba'ath party. Exacerbating the de-Ba'athification decree was Bremer's directive that the Army and Police would be reformed from the ground up, rather than using the remnants of Saddam's former security forces to stabilize the situation in the interim. Although the former regime security forces had largely disbanded themselves, this decree added to the negative Sunni perception of U.S. intentions in Iraq and only served to increase

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[400]Gordon and Trainor, 463-475.

unemployment problems for members of the security forces who were willing to return to duty.[401]

Despite General John Abizaid, the new CENTCOM commander, stating that the U.S. was involved in a guerrilla campaign on 16 July 2003, there was not one cohesive movement but a plethora of insurgent groups motivated by their own goals and the self interest of their leaders. Sunni Arab groups such as the 1920s Revolution Brigade and *Jaysh al Islami* were primarily interested in evicting U.S. occupiers and a return to Sunni dominance in the Iraqi government.[402] Sunni extremists were led by Abu Mussab al Zarqawi who transitioned his *Tawheed wa Jihad* terrorist group to an Al Qaeda umbrella organization, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).[403] Zarqawi sought to advance the cause of jihad, ignite a sectarian civil war, and establish a fundamentalist Islamic state.[404] Shia militias such as *Jaysh al Mahdi* (JAM) were primarily interested in evicting U.S. occupiers and protecting Shia populated areas.[405] An outspoken and radical Shia religious leader,

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[401]Ricks, 158-164.

[402]Carter Malkasian, ―Counterinsurgency in Iraq," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 287.

[403]Najim and Jensen, 5. Although Zarqawi was in Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion, he rose to prominence after he was filmed beheading American Nicholas Berg in May 2004.

[404]Letter captured by coalition forces sometime in January 2004. The U.S. military confirmed that Zarqawi was the author although differing accounts remain of exactly how the letter was obtained. http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/ iraq/2004/02/040212-al-zarqawi.htm (accessed 15 April 2011).

[405]Other Shia militias existed such as the Badr Corps which was the armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Badr and JAM were often at odds with one another particularly in the towns of Basra and Najaf primarily due to economic reasons. Both of Shia militias had ties to Iran and received financial,

Moqtada Al Sadr, led JAM.[406] Sadr called for JAM to fight the occupation and Sunni

Arabs who sought a return to power.[407] There were criminal gangs who ran black

marketing and extortion rings and others that kidnapped wealthy individuals for ransom.

Some insurgents were former Ba'athists who desired a return to the status quo. Individual

fighters could range from foreigners bent on *jihad* to unemployed men who could earn

money at a time of widespread unemployment in Iraq by conducting a single IED attack

against the coalition. Many of the cells or subcomponents of these insurgent groups were

affiliated by name only as some of their leaders were primarily interested in local areas or

their own limited self interest while others had designs on changing the entire Iraqi

political landscape. Regardless of their motivations, the majority of the groups shared one

training, and weapons support from there. However, JAM was a more important militia
due its larger size and source of support in Sadr City, the Shia slum area of northeastern
Baghdad.

[406]Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II Transition to the New
Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 2003 – January
2005)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Insititute, 2008), 109. Moqtada's father
was a senior Shia ayatollah who was executed by Saddam in 1999 for speaking out
against the Ba'ath party. The younger Sadr had designs of enforcement of Sharia law in
the new Iraq and called for the forming of JAM to fight the occupation and Sunni Arabs
who sought to return to power. Eventually Sadr entered into the political arena in the new
Iraqi Government, with his Office of the Martyr Sadr political party, but retained his
militant wing.

[407]Greg Bruno, ―Backgrounder: Moqtada Al-Sadr,‖ Council for Foreign
Relations, 16 May 2008, http://www.cfr.org/iraq/muqtada-al-sadr/p7637 (accessed 20
April 2011). Sadr would inspire a nationwide JAM uprising in April 2004, instigate a
battle in Najaf in August, inspire violence in October 2006 in Amarah, attempt an
uprising in 2008 to cause a collapse of the government of Iraq, and generally contest any
U.S. patrols or efforts to control Sadr City throughout the conflict. In August 2007, Sadr
agreed to a six month ceasefire with U.S. forces and Iraqi forces that, with the exception
of the March 2008 uprising, largely curbed organized JAM resistance in Iraq. By this
time, however, JAM had splintered with many elements beyond Sadr's control. The
Special Groups, as they were called, continued criminal activity and attacks on U.S.
forces.

thing in common in that they wanted an end to the U.S. occupation and many would cooperate toward that end when it suited their interests. For simplicity, the coalition referred to the numerous destabilizing groups first as Former Regime Elements (FRE), then as Anti-Coalition Forces (ACF), and finally as Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF).[408]

The overall coalition counterinsurgent strategy in Iraq from 2003-2006 was based on the concept of transition. The goal was to quickly handover whatever they were doing to the Iraqis so that the coalition could redeploy. The situation on the ground only partially informed the strategy as transition influenced nearly every operational and tactical action the coalition would take.[409] Transition was adopted as a strategy because it fit in with the underlying ideas of shock and awe and the administration's aversion to nation building. Additionally, the U.S. population seemed to tire of the war as early as May 2004 when a poll revealed that the majority of Americans surveyed did not believe the Iraqi War was worth fighting.[410] Transition also seemed to provide the best way to make the campaign as short and least costly as possible. Another important idea underlying the transition strategy was Abizaid's assessment that U.S. forces were antibodies in Iraqi society.[411] His views were widely respected and went largely unchallenged because he was seen as the expert on the problem.[412]

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[408]Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe* (New York: Random House, 2008), 9-10.

[409]BH030, Interview. Indeed, military planners and analysts often had their assessments changed by their superiors as they moved up the military hierarchy. Ideology seemed to trump fact based assessment early in the campaign.

[410]Ricks, 362.

[411]Ricardo Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 232. A grammatically incorrect analogy is routinely made here in the literature and amongst leaders interviewed in the course of oral history interviews. Although Abizaid is credited

One field grade officer who served three tours in Iraq summed up the transition strategy when he stated that, —At any time in Iraq we were always six months away from redeployment." A strategic level planner confirmed this notion by stating that, —It [strategic planning] was always about how do you get the one more brigade that they [the coalition] need to get them across the finish line to claim success in Iraq." Thus, strategic level planning was consumed by force generation under the constraint of transition and withdrawal rather than focused on developing a strategy. A different strategic planner stated that, —[the most senior military leaders] made the argument that it [was] inevitable that we will win as long as we stay the course." The planner was disgusted that at the highest military levels no serious options were being offered to the U.S. political leadership other than stay the course.[413]

Transition also implied that the war would be over quickly. As one field grade officer stated,

> There was this sense that the mission at that time was to gather up the deck of cards leaders. Eventually it [Iraq] would just fix itself with the political process. There wasn't really any discussion of reconstruction necessarily; the Iraqi's would take care of all that. You had a sense that we would go replace the

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with making the point that the U.S. military were natural antibodies in Iraq, he was either misquoted or what he meant to say was that he thought the U.S. military was an infection in Iraq to which Iraqi society responded with antibodies in the form of an insurgency. However, calling American soldiers an infection would have been a poor choice of words. Everyone understood what Abizaid meant by the analogy, he believed the foreign presence of U.S. soldiers in Iraq caused Iraqis to respond with violence, although when read without context it takes on the opposite meaning.

[412]BH030, Interview.

[413]BH030, Interview.

OIF I units and then we would wrap it up and be done, more along the lines of a Desert Storm model, it was just taking a little longer at that point.[414]

Innovation at the tactical level early in the campaign, including the often cited case of the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul under then-Major General David Petraeus, would largely fail initially to yield a comprehensive counterinsurgency approach at the operational and strategic levels.[415] As a field grade officer commented on the approach in 2004,

> [Our Division commander] understood that there were multiple lines of effort . . . but we didn't have a good appreciation of where the balance was [or] where the main effort was . . . We would use terms and words like we got to get some projects done but we didn't understand the linkage[s] . . . We would always get drawn back into . . . chasing the firefight down and that would derail us from what probably should have been a more thorough understanding and effort along those other [lines of operation].[416]

Tactical innovation was simply not a substitute for strategy as he stated, ―We were all asking the question to ourselves how do we beat this insurgency? No one really had any clarity on that, on the way ahead, but the patrols still went out every day."[417]

With the CPA transition to an interim Iraqi government approaching, a higher headquarters was required that could interface with both Iraqi and U.S. political leaders

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[414]BD010, Field Grade Officer, Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 14 March 2011.

[415]Michael R. Gordon, ―The Struggle for Iraq: Reconstruction; 101st Airborne Scores Success in Northern Iraq," *New York Times*, 4 September 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/04/world/struggle-for-iraq-reconstruction-101st-airborne-scores-success-northern-iraq.html?src=pm (accessed 15 April 11). Then-Major General Petraeus' 101st Airborne Division sought to include Iraqis as stakeholders in the future Iraq and undertook initiatives supportive of civil governance and economic development in Mosul.

[416]BD010, Interview.

[417]BD010, Interview.

to allow the Corps headquarters to focus more on prosecution of the military effort. Thus, Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) was officially established on 15 May 2004 with General George Casey assuming command in June. Although Casey took a lot of burden off of Sanchez's and later Lieutenant General Thomas Metz's HQ, now called Multi-National Corps – Iraq (MNC-I), he did not change the basic strategic approach. In fact, transition actually increased in scope and pace as a higher level headquarters could manage the effort without becoming fully engaged in day to day crisis management.[418]

Casey's campaign plan was focused along multiple lines of effort including security, governance, economic and infrastructure development, rule of law, information operations and essential services. Under the umbrella of the strategy of transition, the goal of the campaign plan was to partner with the Iraqi government and indigenous security forces to transition responsibility along these lines to Iraqis as rapidly as possible. Strategic and operational level planners, however, disagreed that there was a true campaign plan for Iraq. As one senior planner stated, ―A campaign plan would suggest that there were priorities; that you could shift boundaries and resources and forces to different areas based on your priorities." Other than departing, he felt that there were no priorities from 2004-2006 in the Iraq campaign plan.[419]

The transition strategy was confronted with the reality of a deteriorating security situation in 2004 that began on a wide scale in April. As a result, Casey chose to focus on clearing several key cities in Iraq, sometimes referred to as the ten cities plan, including Samarra, which was cleared under Operation Baton Rouge in October, and Fallujah,

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[418]West, 44-47.

[419]BH030, Interview.

which was cleared under Operation Al Fajr in November. These operations were designed to provide enough security to support national elections which would demonstrate progress toward transition along Casey's governance line of effort.[420]

Following national level elections in January 2005 and a small dip in insurgent initiated violence, MNF-I continued to adjust its operational approach under the strategy of transition. Towns such as Samarra that were garrisoned by U.S. Army units in late 2004 were transitioned to Iraqi security forces as U.S. units consolidated on larger Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Even in Baghdad, this movement was underway as U.S. forces consolidated on FOBs ringing the Baghdad International Airport and green zone. Not all U.S. forces were pulling out of the cities in 2005 as demonstrated by then-Colonel Herbert McMaster's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's operations in Tal Afar.[421] In addition then-Lieutenant Colonel Julian Alford's Marines cleared Al-Qaim in 2005 and dispersed into 14 different combat outposts where his Marines lived with their Iraqi Army counterparts.[422] However, the majority of U.S. forces were directed to move away from the cities, and the transition plan continued to be frustrated by the inability of the ISF to effectively hold areas that had been cleared by U.S. forces.

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[420]BD010, Interview; Ricks, 330-335, 341-346. The first battle of Fallujah occurred in April 2004 and was called Operation Vigilant Resolve. It was conducted in response to the killing and subsequent mutilation of American logistics contractors. The Marines involved in the battle were ordered to cease operations inside Fallujah four days after the first battle began despite being close to achieving their objectives.

[421]Jay B. Baker, —Tal Afar 2005: Laying the Counterinsurgency Groundwork," *Army* (June 2009), 61-68.

[422]AA907, Battalion Commander, Command and General Staff College (CGSC) Scholars Program 2010, Scholars Program Counterinsurgency Research Study 2010. Research Study, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Ike Skelton Chair in Counterinsurgency, 2010, interview by Jan K. Gleiman and Karsten Haake, 17 September 2010.

Transition would unravel as a strategy with the February 2006 bombing of the Al-Askari mosque in Samarra by Zarqawi's AQI insurgent group that ignited widespread sectarian conflict tantamount to civil war. Sunni and Shia insurgent groups battled each other throughout mixed areas of Iraq, sometimes facilitated by the Iraqi Security Forces, and especially in Baghdad.

General Peter Chiarelli, the commander of MNC-I at the time, recognized that Baghdad had to be stabilized as it was the seat of political power in Iraq. Part of the design to secure Baghdad in 2006, saw U.S. forces focusing their combat power on a few key neighborhoods, such as Ameriyah and Ghazaliyah in the northwest part of the city, in order to maintain the government's control of the capital. Other areas were secured by ISF alone. During the summer of 2006, it became increasingly clear that the ISF had failed and were continuing to fail in their internal security role. Operation Together Forward in Baghdad was the most visible example of the ISF's inability to protect their own population as car bombs routinely rocked the capital. U.S. forces were struggling as well as casualties mounted due to sniper and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks. Even attempts to isolate Baghdad, such as the Lion's Gate, failed.[423] Some commanders believed that operating from large FOBs prevented a permanent presence in their areas of operation while others believed that little progress would be made without a political settlement between Sunnis and Shias that would end sectarian violence.[424] However, the

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[423]Lion's Gate was a system of barriers and other obstacles on the outskirts of Baghdad that were intended to disrupt the insurgent's ability to enter the capital. It was ineffective and a waste of resources. There was no unit assigned to over watch the obstacle system on a constant basis.

[424]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

U.S. initially would not let significant upward trends in violence impede transition. As one CENTCOM planner stated, —Inthe summer of 2006, when things were at their worst . . . the CENTCOM commander was off ramping brigades and was planning to off ramp another one when suddenly reason entered the equation.‖[425]

As violence escalated and the war appeared to move toward a stalemate in 2006, the U.S. administration began to seriously consider a change of course in Iraq. A democratic Iraq had not proved very helpful toward prosecuting a counterinsurgency campaign as the Shia majority had elected Shia parties who selected Maliki as the Prime Minister. Although not overtly sectarian in public statements, his government was perceived by many Sunnis and U.S. leaders as sectarian.[426] Adding to the perception of bias, was the general culture of corruption in Iraqi governmental ministries. Signs were also emerging that Iraqi politics were becoming increasingly influenced by Iran. Obviously, U.S. policy was part of the problem as it tried to impose a Western style democracy which completely changed the historical Sunni Arab dominance in both the public and private spheres of Iraqi society. In summary, the new Iraqi government was far removed from the originally stated U.S. strategic ends and Iraq was a cauldron of violence.

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[425]BH030, Interview. Off ramping is military jargon that means that a unit that was scheduled to deploy was notified to cease pre deployment activity because its deployment had been cancelled or postponed indefinitely.

[426]Author‗s personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007. Sunni and non-sectarian Shia residents of Baghdad routinely asked U.S. forces to bring back Ayad Allawi as the Prime Minister during 2006 and 2007. During his short tenure as Prime Minister under the Interim Iraqi Government Allawi had granted approval for clearing operations in both Fallujah and Najaf and for that reason was seen as non-sectarian although he was Shia.

As Casey became the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Petraeus assumed command of MNF-I on 10 February 2007. Although the emerging historical narrative credits Petraeus and others with developing a completely new strategy for Iraq, nicknamed the Surge, upon closer examination the strategic change was more evolutionary.[427] Petraeus was able to slow down the pace of transition as he sought to buy space and time for the Government of Iraq to make progress toward reconciliation, power and resource sharing agreements, and increasing the capability of the ISF. He also changed the overall operational approach to one primarily focused on population protection from one primarily focused on building the ISF.[428] Then-Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, the MNC-I Commander, began linking subordinate activities, establishing priorities and sequencing operations under the banner of population

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[427]Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble* (New York: Penguin, 2009). Ricks' book is probably the most widely read concerning the Iraqi campaign between 2006-2008. However, his book contributes to the larger narrative that General Petraeus arrived in Iraq completely changed what had occurred throughout the rest of the campaign.

[428]It is interesting that Casey knew and understood that protecting the population was important while at the same time he was directing U.S. units to consolidate on Forward Operating Bases away from population centers. His own COIN academy in Iraq, established under his tenure, had taught protection of the population as an essential aspect of counterinsurgency as early as 2005. Westmoreland also knew that protecting the population was important but thought U.S. forces were better used fighting PVAN and Viet Cong main forces before those large enemy forces were able to get to the population centers. Casey faced no imminent large enemy threat so it is an even more interesting question in this case as to why this move of U.S. forces to the periphery of urban areas was so important. Even before Casey, however, there were plans to consolidate the number of Forward Operating Bases and move U.S. units outside population centers as early as February 2004. This suggests that political directives, manpower limitations, or Abizaid's antibody assessment were driving his operational approach more than a theory that somehow Casey, like Westmoreland, was another example of a General officer that just did not get it.

protection.[429] At the tactical level both generals directed U.S. formations to fully partner with the ISF and establish combat outposts within the urban population that the units were trying to protect. These tactical directives are often cited as a revolutionary change in strategy.[430]

Another part of the emerging historical narrative of the Surge is that recently published counterinsurgency doctrine fundamentally changed the manner in which U.S. forces executed the campaign. The narrative states that prior to the Surge the U.S. military's ham-fisted approaches had increased the ranks of the insurgency, but that the Surge force was enlightened by a new doctrine that they then applied toward victory in Iraq. ―That's not the case," a field grade officer commented. ―We all knew what the options were and we knew what really had to be done even at the platoon, company, and soldier level. We all knew what was required in order to stop the hemorrhaging of the situation but we finally got the ―let's do it" guidance . . . That's when as fast as the logistics would allow we started securing neighborhoods physically."[431] Indeed, as early as 2003 many units were dispersed in combat outposts in cities, establishing security, raising local security forces in the form of ICDC and police, and trying to prosecute the campaign along multiple lines of effort rather than simply trying to kill or capture insurgents. Ironically, the tactical approach, in theory, had come full circle with Petraeus' new tactical guidance. However, the difference this time was that the approach was now

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[429]BH030, Interview.

[430]Ricks, *The Gamble*, 106-122, 160-171.

[431]BD010, Interview.

being executed by a much more experienced, numerous, and resourced force.[432] Many

servicemen serving in Iraq at this point in the campaign were on their second tours with

some on their third.[433] Those serving had learned counterinsurgency lessons specific to

Iraq in previous tours and were more informed with respect to their use of force,

partnering with the ISF, and working through the Iraqis to solve problems.

For the administration's part, the President made a bold and politically

courageous move to commit additional U.S. combat troops and extend current Army

deployments to 15 months. This commitment of additional manpower by the President, at

a low of public approval ratings and after his party lost its political majority in Congress,

provided Petraeus with the forces required to better accomplish U.S. strategic ends.

Additionally, the commitment sent the appropriate political message to the insurgency,

the Iraqi population, and the Iraqi government that the U.S. remained a reliable partner

toward stabilization of Iraq. Also important toward achieving U.S. political objectives in

Iraq was Petraeus' ability to work effectively with Ambassador Ryan Crocker to ensure

that actions taken by the security forces complemented the overall desired political

effects.[434]

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[432]For his part, Petraeus also successfully protected his subordinate commander's initiatives. A leadership technique that he employed was to take Majors on a run around the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad so that he could ensure they understood his guidance, that he understood what the battalions were doing, and that he could determine where he needed to assist them.

[433]Tours in this context refer to the U.S. Army's conventional force standard 12 month tours. SOF unit tours were generally 4-6 months while Marine tours were generally 7 months in duration.

[434]Ricks, *The Gamble*, 122-124.

Although the Surge ushered in updated operational and tactical guidance, with an upgraded force level, no strategy or operational concept can guarantee a victory. Indeed the Surge would have potentially failed had it not been for the specific situation in Iraq at the time it was implemented. Much more important than additional U.S. boots on the ground or even their dispersal to combat outposts, was the political and security movement ruminating in Al Anbar in the form of the Awakening. Led by Sunni tribal sheiks, the rejection and elimination of Al Qaeda in Iraq and aligned movements by Sunnis, many of whom were former ―honorable resistance‖ insurgents, was a much more important factor in the success of the Surge.[435] The Awakening transformed Al Anbar into a province once declared lost to one of the safest for coalition forces by mid-2007. As the ideas behind the Awakening spread to Western Baghdad, neighborhoods that had been plagued by violence and had seen large numbers of U.S. casualties were transformed in weeks to areas largely devoid of AQI.

Other supporting factors that contributed to the success of the Surge were ceasefires brokered between JAM and the coalition, targeting efforts against sectarian ISF leaders, special forces‗ effective targeting of AQI, and the political statement of committing more U.S. forces in an effort to win. Without these other factors and the Awakening, a mere commitment of additional soldiers may have amounted to nothing

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[435]Najim and Jensen, 7-11. Sunni insurgent groups had cooperated with AQI initially during the U.S. occupation as they shared the goal of killing U.S. forces in Iraq and ending the occupation. AQI had external funding and terrorist expertise that made them effective partners in this role. Following the onset of large scale sectarian violence in 2006, Sunni insurgent groups continued to cooperate with AQI as they saw them as the only force capable of protecting them against both JAM and the largely Shia Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Eventually, however, their fundamental goals diverged to the point where ―honorable resistance‖ Sunni insurgents would openly contest AQI.

more than Sir Robert Thompson's —squaring the error" rather than a dramatic transformation in the security and political situation of Iraq.[436]

Despite promising indicators of success during the Surge, the campaign was far from finished. President Obama was elected in part on his campaign pledge to end the war in Iraq as some members of U.S. electorate had grown weary of what they considered to be an unjust war of choice. U.S. forces officially pulled out of the cities on 30 June 2009 this time requiring Iraqi permission or an ISF escort to enter them. The next year of the campaign saw the operational concept shift back toward building the ISF under the banner of advise and assist. Partnership was still the method to perform this mission but with a much reduced U.S. footprint. On 19 August 2010 the last —combat brigade" departed Iraq leaving behind 50,000 U.S. troops to continue work toward building ISF and providing them with enabling resources. U.S. forces are projected to leave Iraq by the end of this year, unless the Iraqi government formally requests and renegotiates their continued stay.[437]

Small elements of AQI affiliated and other terrorist groups remain in Iraq today conducting attacks against the Iraqi government. However, the incidents of violence are much rarer as the situation has largely stabilized. Even though violence is at the lowest level in Iraq since the invasion, many of the gains are reversible. Small cells of terrorists

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[436]David Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the US Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 126-130. Ucko believes that the Awakening and a U.S. change in strategy contributed most to the success of the surge although he also mentions ceasefires with JAM.

[437]Michael Schmidt, —Iraq Must Decide Within Weeks if U.S. Troops Will Stay Past 2011, Top Official Says," *New York Times*, 22 April 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/ 2011/04/23/world/middleeast/23iraq.html (accessed 1 May 2011).

who aim to destabilize Iraq and return to chaos remain undetected and hunted by the Iraqi Security Forces. Militias still retain authority in some areas and retain influence over some of the Iraqi Security Forces. Long term power and resource sharing agreements between the Sunni Arab, Shia Arab, and Kurdish population segments remain unresolved. Although the counterinsurgency campaign is being won at this point, an unfavorable outcome is still possible.

Security Force Framework

OPLAN 1003-98, CENTCOM's contingency plan for invasion in Iraq under General Anthony Zinni, called for an invasion force numbering roughly 400,000 ground troops that would ensure a decisive victory over the Iraqi Army and more importantly maintain law and order following the invasion. When Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld first became interested in serious Iraq invasion planning, General Franks, successor to Zinni as CENTCOM commander, presented the Secretary with an invasion force numbering 385,000 ground troops on 4 December 2001. Rumsfeld was shocked by the large number and as planning progressed he continued to press Franks to pare down the size of the invasion force and to avoid a lengthy buildup. As a result, CENTCOM planners were consumed with force levels, deployment schedules, and a lengthy approval process for forces rather than achieving campaign objectives. Eventually a force level plan known as the 5-11-16-125 plan or hybrid was adopted. U.S. troops began the ground invasion with approximately 140,000 soldiers and Marines as some of the eventual

occupation force was still debarking at the Kuwaiti port and airport or waiting to be

officially committed to the theater.[438]

It became quickly apparent to U.S. commanders that they did not have enough

ground forces to secure the country from the growing insurgency. Some officers

attributed the small invasion force, which quickly turned into an occupation force, as the

primary reason that the coalition quickly lost control in many parts of Iraq. As one senior

officer reflected, ―We probably would have saved ourselves a number of years and a

number of lives," if the U.S. had committed a large force early vice ―trying to do it on the

cheap."[439] Other perspectives supported the need for more troops as the insurgency grew

in 2004 but noted ―the combat power that was lacking wasn't American" and that many

more Iraqi Security Forces were needed.[440] More U.S. combat arms troops would not be

forthcoming in a significant scale until the 2007 Surge period. Thus, under the transition

strategy, the coalition would economize forces in numerous locations throughout Iraq

while trying to build new Iraqi Security Forces.

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[438]Gordon and Trainor, 26-28, 67-68. 385,000 troops was the minimum number that Zinni believed would be required to occupy Iraq. The plan had 5-11-16-125 nickname as CENTCOM would have 5 days to mobilize following a decision to begin the war, 11 days to deploy troops and equipment to Kuwait, 16 days to conduct an air campaign, and 125 days to conduct the ground campaign. The ground campaign would begin with approximately 20,000 total U.S. ground forces and potentially could grow to 250,000. As it was executed, the ground campaign began, after a shortened air campaign, with a much larger contingent of U.S. ground forces as the decision for war was postponed by diplomatic initiatives at the U.N. Additionally, the full contingent of 250,000 troops was never deployed as both the 1st Armored Division and 1st Cavalry Division did not deploy until the summer of 2003 and the winter of 2004 respectively.

[439]BB010, Battalion Commander, Interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, Fort Bliss, Texas, 2 March 2011.

[440]BD010, Interview. Comment made in reference to security forces in 2004.

Under Bremer and former Ambassador Walter Slocombe, the CPA Senior

Advisor for National Defense in 2003, the CPA was initially charged with the creation of

new Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The CPA's vision for the security force framework saw

the new Iraqi Army's role as primarily defending against external threats and conducting

security operations, patrols, and —ther duties for territorial defense and stability

operations in Iraq." [441] The coalition military was initially charged with defeating the

insurgency. With respect to police, the CPA viewed a Western style police force,

subordinate to civil authority, as the appropriate force to enforce the rule of law in the

democratic society that CPA and the U.S. government were trying to create in Iraq.

Although CPA's view of the police force's roles and required capabilities was Western, it

did recognize that paramilitary capabilities were becoming important in the increasingly

lethal environment although it took little action toward generating these capabilities. The

Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT), responsible for Iraq's military

forces, and the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT), responsible for

Iraq's police forces, served as the two subordinate commands to the CPA charged with

building the ISF. [442]

Major General Paul Eaton, the first commander of CMATT, was woefully under

resourced for the task at hand. [443] As Eaton described, —Nobody wearing a DOD sticker

gave [the ISF program] the importance it needed in the face of compelling evidence that

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[441] Wright and Reese, 434.

[442] Anthony Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success* (Westport, CT: Praegar Security International, 2006), 23, 58, 81; Wright and Reese, 430, 442-443.

[443] Cordesman, 57. As an example, Eaton's initial staff consisted of a mere five officers to completely rebuild a national military.

the only way out of Iraq was the ISF becoming viable." However, when resources began

to trickle in, he accelerated the creation of the first three Iraqi Army (IA) divisions by two

years pushing the delivery date forward to September 2004. His briefing slides reflected

the growing sense of urgency by stating, ―Iraqi army units brought on line quicker enable

coalition units to leave sooner." The first U.S. advisory teams arrived in Iraq in March of

2004 to assist in building capacity and capability in the ISF.[444]

By January 2004 the first three Iraqi Army battalions had formed and deployed.

Clearly inadequate to make a dent in the growing insurgency, U.S. military commanders

began to raise paramilitary units known collectively as the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

(ICDC). The program rapidly expanded and by late 2004 over 60 ICDC battalions, which

were renamed the Iraqi National Guard (ING), were serving in some capacity throughout

Iraq. The CPA was opposed to the ICDC program at first but eventually supported the

program transferring control of the ICDC to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD) on 22

April 2004.[445]

Although building the IA was a long term process and the force‗s effectiveness

suffered from numerous deficiencies, U.S. support would enable the IA to continue to

grow in capability. The Iraqi Police (IP) were another matter entirely and would remain

ineffective in many areas until as late as 2008. While under CPA‗s purview, CPATT was

authorized a budget roughly one sixth of the projected cost estimate and was directed by

Bremer to rebuild the IP in two years when the task was projected to take at least six. In

the police void some U.S. commanders began to undertake their own initiatives to raise

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[444]Wright and Reese, 441-442, 447.

[445]Wright and Reese, 435, 438.

police forces to which Bremer was opposed. However, CJTF-7 would assume responsibility for the IP in April 2004 and continued its efforts.[446]

A report in January 2004 chaired by then-Major General Karl Eikenberry, confirmed evidence from U.S. commanders that the U.S. was not building the ISF rapidly enough. As a result of this report, Eaton was appointed head of the Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq where he was charged with overseeing both IA and IP development. However, his new office faced significant distractions as his reporting chain included both CPA and CJTF-7.[447] With the transition to the Interim Iraqi Government and the establishment of MNF-I, the Multi National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) was created as a subordinate organization to MNF-I and led by then-Lieutenant General David Petraeus. In efforts to speed up the building of the IA, the original six ICDC battalions were designated to be built up to division sized organizations. Petraeus assessed the need for these six divisions and also recommended a shift in the various security forces counterinsurgency roles by recommending that the Iraqi Army focus on internal security threats. These six divisions were initially designated as ING and on 6 January 2005 were formally incorporated into the IA, losing their previous ING name with the merger.[448]

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[446]Wright and Reese, 435, 438, 443-445. CPATT also projected approximately 70,000 policemen would be required in Iraq as it used U.S. police ratios as the basis for its planning estimates. With respect to training, funding problems prevented IP from being sent to Jordanian police academies until November of 2003.

[447]Cordesman, 80-81.

[448]Wright and Reese, 450-453.

Although the growing ISF were credited with successfully securing nationwide elections in January 2005, MNSTC-I remained challenged in providing an overall assessment of individual unit capabilities. As a result the Transition Readiness Assessment System was implemented in 2005 that required advisors and U.S. commanders to provide information into the report. These assessments highlighted many problems that plagued development of the ISF in the midst of an insurgency that included high desertion rates, corruption, insurgent infiltration, inadequate logistics, and ethnic and religious differences that could potentially lead to problems later.[449] Although advertised as a diverse force, the IA was significantly under represented with respect to Sunni Arabs and over represented with Shia Arabs. Efforts to recruit Sunnis in large numbers up to this point in the campaign had failed due to a perception of illegitimacy with the new Iraqi government and of occupation by their American allies. Another problem facing the coalition was the perceived mixed quality or inadequate preparation of advisors assigned to Iraqi units. As the advisory mission grew over time, leaders were tasked from various quarters of the U.S. Army including the U.S. Army Reserve with the primary qualification for duty being that of a longer dwell time than their cohorts.[450] In an effort to better prepare advisors for duty, advisors attended a three month training course at Fort Riley followed by a ten day in country course at the Phoenix Academy in Taji, Iraq.[451] One senior commander who served in Iraq on multiple tours stated that any problems

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[449]Cordesman, 202-205; Wright and Reese, 453-454.

[450]Dwell time is U.S. Army speak for the amount of time a Soldier has accumulated at home following a deployment.

[451]Wright and Reese, 462.

with advisors had nothing to do with their abilities, but rather was related to a dysfunctional command and control structure. Although advisors worked with U.S. commanders they did not work for them. U.S. advisors reported through a separate advisory channel that did not fall under one senior commander until the MNF-I level. Additionally, U.S. commanders often never interacted with advisory teams in their areas until they assumed responsibility in theater. As a result of this command and control relationship the senior commander interviewed believed that U.S. commanders could not fully synchronize their campaigns nor did he believe that all U.S. commanders attempted to fully integrate the advisory teams into their operations.[452]

While the U.S. military advisory effort was working through issues, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) was raising, training, and equipping other security forces with U.S. assistance. These included the MOI Commandos, Public Order Battalions, Border Police, and eventually the National Police. The Commando battalions served as a large paramilitary police force under direct command of the MOI that was able to reinforce regular police units in areas heavily contested by the insurgency. The Public Order Battalions were designed as a civil disturbance force that had special training and equipment to deal with riot control. However, they often were employed as a local security force in areas that required additional security forces. The Border Police were raised, as their name implies, to secure Iraq's borders against insurgent infiltration and prevent smuggling. The National Police were created under similar designs as the MOI

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[452]BD040, Commander, interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 15 March 2011. The command and control relationship was not fixed until U.S. brigade commanders began receiving operational control of advisory teams in early 2007 and later in the campaign assigned with the mission of advise and assist or security force assistance themselves.

Commando force as a paramilitary police force to reinforce regular police units or serve in the absence of police forces in contested areas. In addition to these forces, both the MOI and MOD created small numbers of Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) that were trained and advised by U.S. Special Operations Forces. Finally, Facility Protection Services, a small force that secured key infrastructure, and Oil Police, a small force that secured Iraq's Oil Infrastructure were also added.[453]

The manning levels of these various forces changed during the prosecution of the campaign in a primarily reactive manner. As the number of attacks against the coalition spiked, the total number of ISF authorized was increased as more units were required to combat the threat. The most obvious example of this phenomenon was the increase of the ISF by 100,000 during the period from 2007-2008 referred to as the Surge.[454] As of 31 May 2010, approximately 665,500 total ISF were securing Iraq with the majority included as members of 196 IA combat battalions, 20 IA protection battalions, 6 ISOF battalions, provincial and local police forces (297,000), and federal police forces (115,000).[455]

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[453]Anthony Cordesman and Adam Mausner, *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 163-184. Some of these forces were consistently advised by the U.S. military while others were largely left to their own devices. For example ISOF has had U.S. Special Operations forces training and mentoring them since inception, while the Facility Protection Services rarely had any other security force train or even check on them in their static security role.

[454]Sean Naylor, ―Interview with General David Petraeus,‖ *Defense News*, 25 February 2008, http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3392481 (accessed 25 April 2011).

[455]Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2010*, Report to Congress (20 August 2010), 48-52.

The security force framework from 2004-2006 was simply envisioned by CJTF-7 and later MNF-I as the Iraqi Police securing urban areas, the Iraqi Army securing the periphery of urban areas, and U.S. forces occupying bases outside these two rings that could reinforce units under attack or conduct precise offensive operations to kill or capture insurgents. This basic vision of the security force framework would take years to achieve and largely failed over any period of time when attempted in multiple areas of Iraq prior to 2008. One reason for failure of this security force framework to succeed under the transition strategy was the ineffectiveness of the IP.

Casey named a period from 2005-2006 as the year of the police as many commanders assessed that clearing operations in parts of Iraq were achieving some short term success but largely failed to permanently restore security as they lacked a viable police force to hold gains and support the rule of law. Commenting on the situation in the middle of 2006 one field grade officer stated, ―We didn't have the requisite American forces on the ground or the Iraqi Security Forces weren't at proficient levels to be able to outweigh the threat's ability to influence things in the country in a destabilizing way.‖[456] Indeed the lack of viable hold forces hampered the coalition's efforts as U.S. forces would clear areas only to be forced by the insurgents to return later and clear them again. Some observers compared U.S. operations from 2004-2006 to the arcade game Whack-a-Mole® during which moles, or AIF in this case, are hit on the head with a hammer only to continue to pop their heads up out of other holes and eventually the hole they were first

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[456]BD010, Interview.

struck with a hammer.[457] Prior to the year of the police, most of the coalition security

force assistance effort had focused primarily on the raising, training, and creation of the

Iraqi Army.[458] As British Brigadier General Andrew Mackay, head of CPATT in 2004,

stated, ―We . . . made the big mistake of making the Police a second or even third priority

task in the same way that we had done in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. As had

happened there, a capability gap emerged between the military, who saw policing as

―mission creep,‖ and the indigenous forces, who were incapable of doing anything.‖[459]

Another reason that the U.S. was unable to achieve its security force framework

vision for the first five years of the campaign was the haphazard assignment of U.S. and

ISF units to areas that were designated to be held, particularly in Baghdad. As one field

grade officer commented on the situation in Baghdad in the summer of 2006, ―It was

bizarre the way Baghdad was organized . . . The Iraqi military boundaries did not match

the U.S. military boundaries and none of it matched the political boundaries, which made

absolutely no sense.‖[460] Confusion reigned amongst the counterinsurgents under this

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[457]William Safire, ―Whack a Mole,‖ *New York Times*, 29 October 2006,
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/29/magazine/29wwln_safire.html (accessed 25 April
2011).

[458]One reason for the focus of the coalition on the Iraqi Army was that it was
simply easier. Even under a chain of command structure that was dysfunctional for
growing the Iraqi military, it was nothing compared to the disunity of effort between the
coalition military and both the U.S. Departments of State and Justice that worked toward
building a viable police force. Like the U.S. conflict in Vietnam there was significant
disagreement between U.S. civilian and military partners on what capabilities the police
forces required with the military generally viewing paramilitary capabilities as primary
while civil policing capabilities were most important for the civilian agencies.

[459]Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces*, 115.

[460]BH030, Interview.

reckless battlefield geometry. With the interjection of five additional brigades under the Surge realignment would finally be realized, but the delay in drawing lines on a map is largely inexcusable.[461]

In addition to flawed battlefield geometry that sowed disorder amongst the coalition command structure without the enemy having to fire a single shot, the tendency to view all company and battalion sized formations as equals also contributed to dysfunction. Inappropriately manned and equipped U.S. and ISF formations were assigned areas that were clearly beyond their ability to control. As one commander stated, ―The mathematics applied to force generation in Baghdad is akin to alchemy." As forces were rushed into the fight in 2006, company symbols on power point slides were viewed as interchangeable parts, irrespective of whether the unit they represented was an infantry, armor, or artillery unit. Once the Surge forces arrived in total many areas that had been under resourced since the beginning of the campaign finally received appropriately manned and equipped U.S. formations capable of controlling their assigned areas with the Iraqi Security Forces. Other areas remained economy of force missions, however, those areas of significant operational and strategic importance, such as Baghdad, received a force structure capable of making progress in achieving campaign objectives rather than merely transitioning and hoping for the best.[462]

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[461]This phenomenon was magnified to an unacceptable degree in Baghdad. Other provinces were much better organized in terms of battlefield geometry.

[462]BH020, Field Grade Officer, interview by Mark Battjes, Ben Boardman, Robert Green, Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Dustin Mitchell, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, Washington, DC, 21 March 2011.

With the Surge, the transition strategy was finally able to be supported by an adequate security force framework. One field grade officer stated that the U.S. was performing about 90-95 percent of the security and governance roles in 2004, about 80 percent in the beginning of 2007, and about 50 percent by the end of the summer. The impact of the Surge was that ―it was working.‖[463]

Despite all of this development in the security forces under a simple security force framework vision, reality demonstrated that significant confusion remained in terms of roles and responsibilities. Confusion led to more disunity of effort and duplication of effort across the various security forces. For example, a commander who served in Northern Iraq described the murky situation as late as 2010. ―. . . that question [what were the roles and responsibilities of the ISF] implies that someone assigned roles and responsibilities. That is not the case. The roles and responsibilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and the roles and responsibilities of the Iraqi Intel Forces were ill-defined, overlapping, and often conflicting.‖ Adding to the confusion, the MOI and MOD security forces often reported and received direction through separate chains of command. Citing a specific order that his IA counterpart received from the MOD, ―the problem with the order is that it would require the Iraqi Police to join him in the effort . . . and the Iraqi Police [commander] would say I have no order to do this from the Ministry of Interior, I'm doing nothing.‖[464] Sorting through these issues wasted a lot of time and effort.

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[463]BD010, Interview.

[464]BB030, Brigade Commander, interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, Fort Bliss, Texas, 3 March 2011.

Adding to these issues with the ISF, was the more fundamental issue of sectarianism. As Sunnis did not join the ISF in large numbers, many ISF units were entirely Shia. Corrupt leadership in some of these formations, particularly in the National Police, led these units to cooperate with Shia militias to conduct crimes against or murder the Sunni population. Many of the policemen or soldiers in the ISF were members of a Shia militia themselves. Sectarianism was such a problem in the National Police that many units went through a —re-bluing" process with more than half of the officers fired from the units. Even if a predominantly Shia unit was properly led, many were not which caused the Sunni population to view all ISF as armies of occupation rather than a force that could or would protect them. Thus, one of the reasons for U.S. support for a new security force in 2007, the Sons of Iraq, was to empower Sunnis to protect themselves rather than relying on a force that in some cases may conduct abuses against them or in the best case that the population would not cooperate with.[465]

Adding to the numerous security forces were the Sons of Iraq (SOI) that arose primarily from the Awakening political movement in Al Anbar in 2006 and continued to spread throughout other primarily Sunni areas in Iraq. The SOI varied in effectiveness ranging from lethal AQI hunters in Al Anbar to little more than welfare recipients east of the Tigris River with the exception of some areas in the Diyala province. The SOI numbered approximately 94,000 total members at its peak.[466] The SOI were seen as a

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[465]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007; Cordesman, *Withdrawal from Iraq*, 172.

[466]Anthony Cordesman and Adam Mausner, *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 193.

force that could work with the ISF and U.S. forces to finally secure and hold their own neighborhoods through a series of checkpoints and local patrols. They were arguably the most effective force for their assigned role in the entire counterinsurgency campaign as evidenced by the rapid elimination of AQI in the areas they were raised. Their effectiveness stemmed from several factors. Notable, however, was the fact that they were locally recruited and employed which gave them the ability to generate intelligence and garnered them legitimacy from the population.[467]

Local Security Forces: Operation Baton Rouge (2004)

Shape-Clear-Hold-Build

Samarra had been a consistent problem for the U.S. liberators through mid 2004. Numbering around 200,000 residents, Samarra is seated along the Tigris river between Saddam's hometown of Tikrit and Baghdad and during 2004 served as a sanctuary for AIF. It was home to approximately 20 tribes and was predominantly Sunni although the Al-Askari mosque, a Shia Islamic holy site, was located in the northwest part of the city. In 2003, the 4th Infantry Division (4 ID) established a Forward Operating Base (FOB), called Brassfield-Mora, along the Samarra bypass, part of Main Supply Route (MSR) Tampa, to secure the Corps' MSR and kill or capture insurgents in Samarra. Additionally, the Division executed a series of operations, such as Ivy Blizzard, designed to clear the insurgency from Samarra but never had sufficient forces to establish a long term meaningful security presence in the town. They also controlled east west access into Samarra through a checkpoint established on a bridge over the Tigris River that

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[467]A Sons of Iraq group in the Ameriyah neighborhood of Baghdad is discussed as a case study in this chapter that will outline several more reasons for their success.

connected Samarra to Highway 1. The sole outpost in the town of Samarra, at the time of

the 1st Brigade, 4 ID's transition with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (2/1 ID) in

March of 2004 was a Special Forces team outpost in the northwest corner of the town

augmented with a small contingent of U.S. infantrymen.[468]

1st Battalion, 26th Infantry (1-26 IN) replaced 1st Battalion, 66th Armor in March

2004 at FOB Brassfield-Mora. After the first few months security patrols into Samarra

became so contested that entire mechanized company teams were required to enter the

town to any depth as insurgent contact was relatively guaranteed. An attack on Patrol

Base Razor, a combat outpost on the west side of the Tigris River, on 8 July 2004,

demonstrated the lethality of the growing problem in the area. During the attack a marked

Iraqi Police car driven by an insurgent wearing an Iraqi Police uniform was let into the

compound gate by an ISF member without stopping the vehicle to check identification.

The Police car drove directly to the headquarters building and detonated resulting in 5

U.S. soldiers killed and 20 U.S. soldiers wounded from 1-26 IN.[469] The attack also

demonstrated the incompetence of the Iraqi Police and 202nd Iraqi Army Battalion who

shared the location with 1-26 as well as the infiltration of the insurgency into their

ranks.[470] Indeed an officer charged with establishing security in Samarra stated that

during subsequent clearance operations the Iraqi Police in the area were generally viewed

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[468]John R. S. Batiste and Paul R. Daniels, ―The Fight for Samarra: Full-Spectrum Operations in Modern Warfare," *Military Review* (May-June 2005): 14-15.

[469]Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 2003 – January 2005)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2008), 339.

[470]Batiste and Daniels, 15. In June, the 202nd IA commander had quit and many of his soldiers simultaneously deserted.

as hostile, as they routinely fired at coalition patrols or openly assisted insurgents not in police uniforms.[471] Samarra was not ceded to the insurgency, but with the increasing level of violence directed at U.S. or Iraqi forces entering the city a larger operation would be required.

This larger operation was called Operation Baton Rouge and consisted of four phases. Phase I, Set the Conditions, consisted of a series of shaping operations under the operational name Cajun Mousetrap. Operation Cajun Mousetrap I, II, and III took place over the late summer and were designed to test the response of the insurgents to the limited coalition attacks, generate further intelligence on the array of insurgent defenses, and provide an assessment as to the overall situation in Samarra to assist planning for future phases of Operation Baton Rouge. Additionally, any successful Cajun Mousetrap Operation could lead directly into Phase IV, Transition Operations, of Operation Baton Rouge which was the long term plan for security, governance, communications and economic development of Samarra. During Phase II, Isolation of the City, 2/1 ID defined four conditions that would end the isolation of Samarra which were the selection of a new mayor and city council, selection of a new competent police chief, cessation of insurgent attacks, and safe access for coalition and ISF into Samarra. Although local leaders took positive steps toward meeting these conditions, the insurgents resumed attacks on coalition forces on 10 September. Thus, Phase III, Search and Attack, would be required to eliminate the insurgent threat to stability.[472]

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[471]BB010, Interview.

[472]Wright and Reese, 338-341.

The 2/1 ID staff intended to learn from previous tendencies by U.S. forces to overlook Phase IV, called Transition Operations in the context of Operation Baton Rouge, planning. Security was a prime concern following the attack into Samarra and 2/1 ID undertook several measures to address the concern. First, the plan's Phase IV security force framework envisioned three U.S. companies remaining permanently in Samarra to provide security against remaining and reconstituted AIF who had demonstrated lethal proficiency with guerrilla tactics in the past. The U.S. companies would be provided with priority of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to assist in their security tasks. Second, the plan proscribed Iraqi forces to establish security on important locations, disrupt insurgent movement through a series of checkpoints, and patrol various areas of the town. The ISF that would contribute to the operation included the newly formed 7th Iraqi Army Battalion (7IA), Iraqi Police (IP), and the 2nd Ministry of Interior Commando Battalion (2MOI). Later the 3rd Iraqi Public Order Battalion (3POB) would be added. Seven hundred IP were agreed to be provided by the provincial governor of the Salah Ad Din province for duty inside of Samarra until new police forces could be raised. The 7IA would be based near FOB Brassfield-Mora but would be primarily responsible for security inside areas of Samarra. The 2MOI was based in the governmental area of Samarra in the northwest portion of the town. The 3POB was housed nearby the 202nd Iraqi Army Battalion (202IA) on the northern portion of FOB Brassfield-Mora and would be employed on most occasions inside of Samarra.[473]

As all of the police stations in Samarra had been either destroyed or had become insurgent strong points in the town, the division fabricated police stations out of 20 foot

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[473]BB010, Interview.

shipping containers prior to the operation. Called Police Stations In A Box (PSIABs) this idea was an indication that Phase IV was being considered at least equally with the initial attack. These PSIABs would be placed at strategic locations throughout the town to establish an immediate police presence as well as along roads through that entered Samarra from the north, east, and southern sides of the city to deny insurgent movement in and out of Samarra. Also, important in establishing long term security was the creation of a new police force that fit into the larger security force framework vision of army operations in rural areas with the police controlling the city.[474]

Security was not the only planning emphasis as a return of local governance was also important. The new city governing council were waiting for a defeat of the insurgents to resume work. With respect to economic and infrastructure development, a series of projects were approved and waiting to begin following a successful attack. Major Barrett Bernard, the assistant operations officer for 2/1 ID, described the projects as, ―Everything from making a trash dump to sewer systems, water, bridge, hospital repair, rebuilding the doors to the Golden Mosque – there was a litany of them.‖[475] Plans were also made for incorporating the local governance body to plan for further development. Finally, the Division was already engaged in planning Operation Seeds of Liberty, a plan for supporting the January 2005 elections, to further include Samarra in the reestablishment of Iraqi governance.[476]

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[474]Batiste and Daniels, 18-19.

[475]Barrett Bernard, interview by John McCool , Combat Studies Institute, Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 26 January 2006, 14.

[476]Author‘s personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

Phase III of Operation Baton Rouge began on 1 October 2004 with a three pronged brigade attack by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division (2/1 ID) supported by attack aviation, close air support, and the Division's cavalry squadron who screened the eastern portion of Samarra. Within 24 hours the insurgents had largely been either killed or captured although the majority of the U.S. forces would remain engaged in small engagements for the next two days. Phase IV, Transition Operations, began on 3 October.[477]

As the security situation improved, battalions who had participated in the attack moved back to their previous areas leaving 1-26 IN and the ISF to hold the cleared town. Economic development projects were initiated and local governance appeared to be taking root. In fact Major Bernard, the assistant S-3 for 2BCT/1ID, stated that, ―The reason the op [Operation Baton Rouge] was so successful was not the kinetic piece . . . but the better part of it was the next day . . . we called them immediate impact projects. . . . We put people to work.‖[478] However after a relatively calm October, insurgent activity began to increase in the following months. There were many reasons for the decline of security in Samarra, but some responsibility for the deterioration is shared by the security forces.

Iraqi Police

The Iraqi Police were woefully ineffective in performance of their Phase IV local security tasks. As one U.S. field grade officer commented, ―They [the Iraqi Police] were

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[477]Wright and Reese, 341-343.

[478]Bernard, 13.

217

ineffective . . . essentially a non-player in Phase IV."[479] As the coalition security force framework envisioned the IP role they were supposed to provide law and order inside of urban areas and defeat small cells of insurgents. Although more of vision and not an achievable goal during this period in the campaign, the Iraqi Police failed to accomplish even the limited tasks set forth by the brigade and provincial government during Operation Baton Rouge. They were supposed to establish checkpoints and search vehicles both on the entry points into Samarra from the north, east, and south and internally in the town. The police were also tasked with patrolling in areas in the vicinity of their PSIABs to gain intelligence on the insurgency. They failed at both.

In retrospect, several factors led to their dismal performance. First, the Iraqi Police were not trained, mentored, nor equipped appropriately for the insurgent threat in Samarra in late 2004. Sergeant Major Cory McCarty, the 1 ID Command Sergeant Major, stated that under Saddam, ―the police weren‗t really crime prevention type people. They were more about looking pretty on the street corner with a whistle waving traffic around."[480] Many serving police in 2004 had served as policeman under Saddam‗s regime and most had not undergone any retraining program at this point in the campaign. However, even had significant numbers of this IP force attended training in Jordan, it would have been unlikely that the training would have translated into policemen capable of facing well armed and equipped insurgents. For example, the curriculum involved firearms training on automatic pistols only, despite the police being outfitted with

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[479]BB010, Interview.

[480]Cory McCarty, interview by John McCool, Combat Studies Institute, Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 24 May 2006, 11.

automatic rifles and facing insurgents armed with a much heavier arsenal. According to

an unnamed American expert, ―I stared to recommend back in February 2004 that JIPTC

[Jordan International Police Training Center] modify its curriculum to place more

emphasis on paramilitary training as opposed to women‗s rights, human rights, etc. That

type of training is not unimportant for democratic policing, but it is useless if the

policeman is dead.‖[481] Although the overall approach, civil or paramilitary, to training

police mattered in the campaign, many police had their training significantly curtailed as

they were rushed into the fight. Adding to the training problem in the larger campaign

was the fact that both the MOI and coalition kept poor training records and could never

be certain as to which individual policemen had attended training and which had not.[482]

Sergeant Major Ron Pruyt, the 1-26 IN Operations Sergeant Major, commented

that in Operation Baton Rouge ―They [the Iraqi Police] just weren‗t highly trained yet.

They‗d go in there and get complacent really easily if you‗re not right there with them.

One guy will be pulling what he thinks is security, sitting in a chair with his weapon

leaning against the wall, and his other eight partners are sleeping.‖[483] Due to a lack of

training fear permeated the ranks of the police who were not cooperating with insurgents.

McCarty depicted the police as cowardly when two Iraqi Police officers were picked up

to accompany a 1-26 IN unit on a cache search early in the Division‗s deployment. ―What

[481]Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces*, 82.

[482]Robert Perito, *Policing Iraq: Protecting Iraqis From Criminal Violence*
(Washington, DC: U.S. Institute for Peace, 2006), http://www.usip.org/publications/
policing-iraq-protecting-iraqis-criminal-violence (accessed 26 April 2011).

[483]Ron Pruyt, interview by John McCool, Combat Studies Institute, Operational
Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 25
August 2006, 20.

was interesting about it was that the Iraqi police guys had masks over their faces, and one guy was so scared he was actually throwing up in the back of the truck. I know about being scared, but at that point we knew they were worthless."[484]

With respect to mentoring, the entire police force had a single mentor team of contracted civilians who were well versed in Western law enforcement and potentially even understood the situation in Samarra but were too few to have much impact.[485] Thus, the provincial level advisory team could not be present to provide constant mentoring. Although 1-26 IN routinely checked and inspected the PSIABs, when 1-26 IN or the police advisors were absent the police did nothing. The lack of mentoring translated into continued poor leadership in the IP. Leadership even at the top levels of the police force was poor. 1-26 IN went through a series of police chiefs to try to find an effective leader but found the majority too corrupt to be effective.[486]

With respect to equipping, the police were equipped more appropriately to counter a much lower level of insurgent threat. Lacking armored vehicles, any time a police pickup truck moved it could become susceptible to IED or landmine strikes which would often result in squad sized casualties and a destroyed truck. The lack of logistical

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[484]McCarty, 11.

[485]Wright and Reese, 469. This team was a part of a larger attempt to rectify IP leadership deficiencies under the Provincial Partnership Program (P3P). The program's employees were a mix of U.S. Army Military Police Soldiers and hired civilian contractors, with law enforcement experience, that served as mentors to IP units. Although there are numerous reasons for the general ineffectiveness of the program, primary were the lack of resources and the small scale of the program despite the importance of the mission in the MNF-I campaign. The mentors often resided at the Provincial level and not at individual IP stations.

[486]BD010, Interview.

support from the province was also inadequate and U.S. forces routinely had to deliver fuel for light sets and air conditioners at their checkpoints and PSIABs. Compounding the problem was a theater wide problem of poor police equipment accountability as thousands of weapons, uniforms, and other items were unaccounted for throughout the campaign. Thus, even if the police had been issued appropriate equipment they may have not had it available for duty.[487]

Police ineffectiveness can also be traced to the fact that nearly all of the policemen were from areas outside of Samarra. Although some may have had contacts in the town, they were generally unfamiliar with the people and the area limiting their ability to gain intelligence. Local advantage can often partially offset some level of inadequate training or equipping but the police would cede the local advantage to the enemy. As outsiders, they also had no vested interest in seeing the security situation improve over the long term in Samarra. All they generally hoped for was to survive for the few days at a time that they were in the city and hope to be rotated shortly back to their home areas. As McCarty stated, ―When we did get them [Iraqi Police] in there [Samarra], we couldn't get them out of the police station to go on patrol.‖[488] The police also failed to gain the cooperation of any segment of the population primarily because ―they were seen as outsiders.‖ As police duty in Samarra became more hazardous, it became a routine problem to get the Iraqi Police from the outside to show up and man the eastern entrances to the town. Sometimes hours or an entire day would pass with the

[487]―ReportPentagon Lost Almost 200,000 Weapons in Iraq,‖ http://articles.cnn.com/2007-08-06/world/iraq.weapons_1_iraqi-soldiers-and-police-iraqi-units-body-armor?_s=PM:WORLD (accessed 25 April 11).

[488]McCarty, 15.

entrances into Samarra virtually open for insurgent movement and resupply, due to the lack of U.S. forces available to backfill the police at the checkpoints.[489]

Efforts to recruit police in Samarra bore little fruit. Although government council members, the mayor, and subsequent appointed police chiefs promised, they rarely delivered. The true power brokers in Samarra had simply decided not to cooperate with U.S. and Iraqi government security efforts in late 2004 nor could they be easily enticed to do so. Coercive attempts to influence local leaders to contribute positively toward a better security environment, such as closing the bridge across the Tigris River and establishment of curfews, achieved only temporary effects. Persuasive attempts such as infrastructure projects also failed. The local power brokers were either intimidated by insurgent thugs or were still committed to ―honorable resistance" in late 2004 and it would take a long term effort to fully eliminate insurgent intimidation or break their will to resist. Then-Major John Kolasheski, the 2/1 ID Operations Officer, commented that although Baton Rouge achieved some noteworthy successes in Samarra, ―we never really got to where the city was clicking on all cylinders. A lot of that was because we still had problems developing an Iraqi police force that was credible and a police chief who was in charge."[490]

Although efforts were made to recruit police inside the city, U.S. leaders primarily focused efforts on recruiting police from outside of Samarra. The decision to recruit from outside was based on the ongoing rebuilding of the 202nd IA. As a result of

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[489]BD010, Interview.

[490]John Kolasheski, interview by John McCool, Combat Studies Institute, Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 16 March 2006, 9.

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their outside recruitment, the families of the 202nd avoided insurgent intimidation. However, recruiting from the outside misses what makes a police force effective as opposed to an army in the first place. An outside police force has none of the advantages of an army unit in terms of fighting capability but has all of the disadvantages of an army unit that lacks familiarity with the terrain and people. If newly recruited police inside of Samarra had no expectation of survival if they exercised caution off duty, then potentially the area was not ready for an independent civil police force. Perhaps another type of police force, such as a paramilitary unit, or more army forces would be more appropriate as a civil police force could be slowly grown over time in some city areas that were protected and remained secure inside of the city.[491]

Despite all their problems, the Iraqi Police may have proven more effective if they had any capability to survive in the threat environment. In fact, the most promising police chief in Samarra resigned after a short period of time on the job due to insurgent intimidation.[492] A coordinated attack in early November by insurgents in Samarra demonstrated the police force's inability to coordinate action and to fight the insurgents. The enemy detonated a Vehicle Borne Explosive Device (VBIED), or car bomb, on a U.S. patrol followed by a U.S. checkpoint successfully engaging and destroying a second planned attack. A third VBIED was defeated by a 1-26 IN ambush team. While 1-26 IN reacted to the multiple VBIED threats in the city, the insurgents simultaneously attacked many of the PSIABs. Inspections of the attacks revealed that the police did not put up much of a fight as many had been killed via point blank execution rather than in a battle.

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[491]Batiste and Daniels, 19.

[492]BB010, Interview.

The police simply could not fight, as identified in the previous critique of their training status, and were not tied in adequately to the security force framework. Due to the attack one field grade officer stated, —We lost the entire police capacity in one morning."[493] Although a Joint Security Station (JSS) had been established by 1-26 IN, the police could not fight not long enough to be reinforced by U.S. forces. Many of the PSIAB's in this attack were undermanned by the police which can be attributed to their outsider status and the escalating insurgent activity. MNF-I's security force framework vision with the police in charge of security inside of cities was simply unrealistic in Samarra at the time. The threat was too capable and the IP too incapable to hope for survival on their own in the environment.

7th Iraqi Army Battalion

The 7IA was given a more mobile security task as opposed to the generally static nature of the IP. The 7IA was tasked to augment 1-26 IN security efforts in Samarra through patrols and operated as an independent unit. Thus, areas of Samarra were designated as temporary operational areas for the 7IA and de-conflicted with U.S. company commanders. The U.S. companies were the only security force that had a permanent assigned area to conduct local security. Since 7IA lived outside of the city, they would generally come into their assigned zone at some time during the day, conduct a long duration patrol and then return to their FOB by the evening. They did conduct

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[493]BD010, Interview.

some night patrols but the majority of their patrolling was done during daylight hours. Like the police, the 7IA contributed very little to the security effort.[494]

Their minimal contribution can be attributed first to their lack of training, mentorship, and equipment. Evidence of their lack of training can be found in negligent discharges from individual weapons that wounded their fellow soldiers or the favored —death blossom" tactic when engaged by the enemy. The death blossom, a common early tactic amongst the ISF, called for returning fire in all directions when receiving direct fire contact from the enemy. As the lead 7IA advisor from late 2004 - 2005 sarcastically stated, the two safest positions when in contact with the enemy were either in the center of the Iraqis or with the insurgents as neither location would be affected by the 7IA small arms fire. Further evidence can be found in the advisors' approach to operations with the unit. On several instances small operations were designed outside of the city to enable retraining on basic small unit tasks prior to resuming operations inside the city with a larger insurgent threat intermingled amongst the population. Many times the advisors considered a patrol a success if the 7IA was able to move to the planned dismounted location, establish a patrol base, and conduct a patrol regardless of the effects of that patrol or intelligence collected. Although the unit had been trained by a competent advisory team prior to insertion into Samarra, it simply took more than a few months to generate a completely new and competent battalion sized organization.[495]

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[494]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

[495]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005. Under even compressed scenarios, it generally takes a U.S. brigade at least three months to fully train a capable combat formation from the individual through the brigade collective level. A U.S. brigade has the advantage of having strong leadership, a highly

Mentorship was also a problem for the 7IA. The advisor group for the battalion consisted of a ten man team with three armored HMMWVs for an entire newly formed battalion operating in one of the more dangerous locations in Iraq at the time.[496] One of the Majors on the team often manned a .50 cal machinegun in a HMMWV during patrol movements into the city prior to dismounting due to a lack of personnel. The lack of leadership in the 7IA required the advisory team to accompany the battalion on every patrol into the city. Every patrol required the entire ten man team as the 7IA had proved less than completely reliable under fire. Indeed during one small arms contact with the enemy the U.S. senior advisor had to get in front of the 7IA and get them to follow him to close with and destroy the enemy while the rest of his team tried to push the Iraqis from behind toward the enemy. Internal leadership deficiencies in the IA battalion required either the IA battalion commander, his operations officer, or his executive officer to lead patrols in the city. Even though the patrols were never more than company sized, without one of these leaders the patrol would fail to accomplish even basic tasks assigned to them. Under these circumstances the advisory team could only do so much and as they encountered one close call after another they quickly could not sustain operations every single day of every week of every month.[497]

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trained and educated body of Soldiers produced by established institutions, and the best logistics and equipment in the world.

[496]Small advisory teams in new units were not very effective at this point in the campaign. When juxtaposed with the number of advisors in mentor teams at U.S. combat training centers, where a battalion would have 3-12 company level mentors per company depending on the center location, numerous staff mentors, and one mentor for the battalion commander, it seems that a ten man team for a new battalion sized unit in a combat situation is slightly under resourced.

[497]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

Another factor contributing to the 7IA's minimal local security contribution was the fact that they were not from the local area. Although they had language capability that U.S. forces did not have, many of the southern Shia that comprised the battalion saw no interest in providing security for a Sunni area. Compounding their lack of knowledge of the area was the fact that they basically commuted to work on a daily basis and had no permanent presence in the areas they were assigned to patrol.

The 7IA were able to organizationally survive contact but primarily because of the U.S. advisors that were embedded on every single patrol into the city. Despite this ability to survive, casualties sustained by the unit had an overwhelmingly negative effect on morale. Some of the casualties were due to IEDs as the battalion had scant armored vehicles to move their *jundi* to and from the city. The lower morale of being employed away from their families and mounting casualties caused some desertions although not as many as in earlier raised Iraqi Security Forces in the area.[498]

2nd Ministry of Interior Commando Battalion

The 2MOI Commandos were a paramilitary police force dispatched by the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad to kill or capture insurgents. As a result, the Commandos primary local security task was to generate intelligence through informant networks and conduct raids based off of this information. When no raids were planned, they were to conduct patrols to gain intelligence on insurgent locations. Pruyt stated that, ―I know that by far the best Iraqi force we had were the MOI commandos. They were relatively well trained and could turn on actionable intelligence quickly. They could really make things

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[498]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

happen."[499] Despite the commandos' ability to quickly conduct raids, their contribution to local security in Samarra was mixed.

1-26 IN created and assigned a mentorship team, similar to the one assigned to 7IA, to the Commando unit. This helped to increase the coordination between the U.S. forces in the area and many raids that the Commandos conducted were based on U.S. intelligence sources. The team also assisted in ensuring that rules regarding the handle and care of detainees were adhered to by the ISF unit. In terms of countable battle damage assessments, they were the most effective ISF unit in Samarra as they captured numerous insurgents and weapons caches. Indeed the commandos detained over 200 suspected insurgents and discovered more than 20 sizeable weapons caches from October to January 2005.[500] One cache discovered included numerous rockets outside of the U.S. outpost in the center of Samarra, Patrol Base Uvanni, that were in the final stages of being prepared for remote firing into the outpost.[501]

Although they achieved some success, the reasons for their limited effectiveness were similar to those of the 7IA. Like the 7IA the commandos could organizationally survive contact with the enemy. Also as with the 7IA they suffered numerous casualties due to IEDs as they moved to and from their raid targets in Toyota pickup trucks. They were also not locally recruited which decreased their chances of being infiltrated by Sammaran insurgent groups like the previous IP force but also decreased their motivation or interest in securing the local area. Unless an informant contacted them with

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[499]Pruyt, 17.

[500]Wright and Reese, 469.

[501]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

information or U.S. forces passed them targetable intelligence information, they would not patrol despite the U.S. advisors attempts to get them to do so. Unlike the other ISF forces, they had a small assigned area that they lived and operated out of in northwest Samarra but merely established some checkpoints to secure their patrol base rather than patrol the local area around it.[502]

With respect to both the 7IA and 2MOI it should be noted that at no time did either force have more than about a company sized force available for an operation on any given day. Not being from the local area, at least a company was on leave in their home areas on any day. Another company would provide security of either their FOB or patrol base, although the requirement could've been handled by a platoon sized formation if proper leadership and discipline existed internally in either force.[503]

3rd Public Order Battalion

The 3POB, another paramilitary force that eventually became part of the National Police, performed tasks similar to the 7IA. The 3POB was a late addition in December 2004 to the Phase IV security forces following the defeat of the Iraqi Police in mid November. As the name ―public order" implies, they were designed as a paramilitary anti-riot force and were trained and equipped with riot control gear. However, there were not any riots in Samarra in late 2004, but rather a steadily reconstituting insurgency

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[502]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

[503]BD010, Interview.

outfitted with landmines, mortars, RPGs, and machineguns. The 3POB contributed much less to the security effort than the 7IA.[504]

The 3POB could only survive contact with the presence of U.S. advisors, who like the 2MOI advisors, were formed from members of 1-26 IN. Although there is no evidence of this inability to survive in an actual enemy attack, they never patrolled without their U.S. advisory team. Part of this inability to survive was due to the lack of armor of their vehicles as they had to move in and out of Samarra by vehicle each time they conducted a patrol and were subject to even small IED attacks. Their lack of full training in small unit military tactics also inhibited their ability to fight when attacked. The 7IA had problems occasionally when attacked by a small determined insurgent force and they had extensive small unit military training that the 3POB did not have. Recruited entirely from outside the area they displayed the same issues as the other ISF during Phase IV. Additionally, many in the battalion deserted after they discovered that they would be operating in Samarra leaving the battalion undermanned before even beginning operations.[505]

Despite the numerous indigenous forces minimally contributing to the daily local security effort, they were able to successfully conduct the much larger elections security operation as they secured the polling sites in Samarra in late January 2005 with negligible difficulties. Although greatly assisted logistically by U.S. forces, the Iraqis alone were

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[504]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

[505]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

responsible for security at the polling stations and never required U.S. reinforcement during their occupation or during voting time windows.[506]

1st Battalion, 26th Infantry

In addition to the ISF units tasked with local security three U.S. companies also contributed. In fact they were in the lead, perhaps nearly solely responsible, as their higher commanders and ISF advisors attempted to prompt the Iraqis to take more responsibility. The U.S. performance was obviously mixed as insurgents were able to resume attacks shortly after the commencement of Phase IV. A primary factor that contributed to U.S. successes were that the companies were a permanent presence in the city. Most of the ISF units went back to a larger FOB outside the city everyday but the U.S. companies remained in their patrol bases as a permanent force. Another factor was that they had none of the training, leadership or equipping problems that the ISF had. In fact, both the 1-26 IN battalion level and company level leadership had some of the better officers available in the brigade and perhaps the division as evidenced by their future nominative assignment selections.[507] This high quality permeated throughout the NCO Corps in the battalion as well.[508]

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[506]BD010, Interview.

[507]One company grade officer was selected as an aide for the Commanding General, two officers were selected for higher level command (about a 10-15 percent selection rate amongst all officers in their cohort year groups). Even younger officers displayed unlimited potential as three junior officers from the battalion were selected for nominative company grade assignments within the brigade following the unit's redeployment.

[508]Like many of the officers, the Command Sergeant Major was selected for increased nominative assignments following his time as a battalion level Command Sergeant Major.

Although the enemy had a vote in the outcome, a factor that limited U.S. effectiveness was their lack of language capability. Between the two U.S. companies who operated out of Patrol Base Uvanni, they were resourced with a single Arabic interpreter. Although platoon patrols could generally work through language barriers when in contact or even gain some information on the AIF through English speaking residents or a combination of hand gestures and simple phrases, developing a complete understanding void of routine language capability would prove nearly impossible. This language barrier coupled with the physical separation between U.S. units living in the city and ISF living outside, largely prevented routine combined operations, although combined operations were not often attempted.[509]

More than the language barrier or geography prevented combined operations. There was an initiative in late 2004 to push the Iraqis into more of the lead to provide security for their own country as part of the transition strategy. The ISF units that arrived to participate in Phase IV of Operation Baton Rouge were newly formed units from central training areas. Thus, both the senior Iraqi and U.S. commanders were interested in getting them to take the lead and assessing their ability to do so. The U.S. forces would be nearby to prevent mission failure but the Iraqis would be expected on an increasing scale to do more. This was often a frustrating relationship for U.S. commanders as they turned to the advisors to get the Iraqis to produce.[510]

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[509]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005.

[510]Author's personal experience in the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq 2004-2005. Evidence of this disconnect between the transition strategy which pushed the ISF into the lead and reality which assessed that they were not ready is found in a senior leader's visit to Samarra in which he stated to an ISF commander that he could keep any weapons he found from caches that he discovered. The ISF commander interpreted this to include

Rather than relying primarily on advisors, full partnership and combined operations as a rule would've been a much more effective approach toward achieving local security despite language, geographical, and strategic limitations. Routine combined operations would never have happened, however, in Samarra in late 2004 for several reasons. First, U.S. commanders and their subordinates did not fully appreciate what the term partnership entailed. As one field grade officer reflected, ―We really did a terrible job at integrating with them [the ISF] in truly partnered activities. Partnership. We didn't know what it meant and did a terrible job at it back then.‖[511] A U.S. commander who served in Samarra agreed, ―I can remember back in 04 . . . we'd take five Iraqi's on a mission with us and it [considered] was a combined operation . . .‖ As he learned and adapted he shifted his unit's focus on a subsequent deployment in 2006 to routine combined operations. ―Some of it was making sure that my subordinates understood that just dragging an Iraqi element along with you doesn't make it a combined operation.‖[512] Second, 1-26 IN had suffered significant casualties in July when living in a combined outpost at Patrol Base Razor and obviously sought to prevent a similar incident occur in the future. The risks of co-habitation seemed to increase as the ISF units brought in for

kaytusha rockets and 120mm mortar systems and rounds which were not a part of his unit's authorized equipment nor did he have any Iraqis trained to employ these systems. The advisory team had previously ensured that correct procedures were taken to destroy these systems but the ISF commander viewed the senior leader as having more authority than the ISF team and thus was uncooperative initially in continuing to surrender those items found back to the advisory team. The U.S. military referred to incidents like these as SOI (Sphere of Influence) fratricide where a senior commander would promise something that was contrary to a previous agreement made by a local commander.

[511]BD010, Interview.

[512]BB010, Interview.

Operation Baton Rouge were unfamiliar to the U.S. battalion and therefore there was a lack of trust. As 1-26 IN were unable to recruit new police, they had no control over the vetting process of the police force from outside the area and therefore could not formally verify the loyalty of new members. There was simply no trust, and perhaps correctly so, that would make routine combined operations possible. Third, the amount of troops to tasks required in Samarra revealed that there were simply too many security related tasks for three U.S. companies to perform in the city. Thus, the ISF had to be able to operate independently from U.S. forces but as one field grade officer stated, ―We couldn‗t employ the Iraqi Security Forces in a one equals one tactical tasks versus what you‗re going to get out of it.‖[513] With U.S. forces carrying the load in security related tasks, 1-26 IN would have been reluctant to divide its forces in partnership roles as they may have actually gotten less accomplished. Finally, U.S. forces were under resourced with interpreters and had very little to no internal Arabic linguistic capability. Even if they would have had more interpreters, the quality of interpreters would likely have been very uneven during this stage of the campaign which would limit effectiveness. As one U.S. commander stated in the context of mentoring the Iraqi Army in 2006, ―t[[the mentoring outcome] was highly reliant on your interpreter‗s ability to clearly articulate what you were trying to get across to them.‖[514]

Had 1-26 IN had the capabilities and manpower to conduct routine combined operations under a banner of full partnership, they may have made a profound difference on the outcome of the security situation by the time 1-26 IN redeployed in February

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[513]BD010, Interview.

[514]BB010, Interview.

2005. On the other hand combined operations also may have done nothing to improve the security outcome, but they may have at least improved the professionalism, discipline, and capability of the ISF. Combined operations surely would've enabled the weakest of the security forces at the most constant risk, the Iraqi Police, to organizationally survive and provide mentors at the lowest levels where it was needed most. In the end, it mattered little. The unit who replaced 1-26 IN was directed to move a large contingent of U.S. forces back to the outside of the city as the transition strategy continued. This move to the outside of the city would turn out poorly as subsequent U.S. units would have to reoccupy terrain that had previously been seized and ceded, over the next few years of the campaign.

Local Security Forces: Ramadi (2006-2007)

A Rift in the Insurgency

Al Anbar was the seat of significant violence directed at coalition forces shortly after the occupation began. A province comprised of nearly 100 percent Sunni Arabs, Al Anbar's societal order was largely tribal based. Although tribes were an important aspect of social structure of varying degrees throughout all of Iraq, they were especially important in Al Anbar with tribal sheiks serving as the arbiters of conflict and generally able to issue decrees to which their tribes would adhere.

Up until the early fall of 2006, there were few successes in Al-Anbar for the coalition as even the security situation in Fallujah deteriorated after a hard fought clearance in late 2004. One previously mentioned success occurred with Alford's 3rd

Battalion, 6th Marines in Al Qaim in 2005.[515] However, the rest of Al Anbar remained a

very violent province. Ramadi, the provincial capital, had nearly three times the number

of per capita attacks than any other city in Iraq.[516] Tamʻeem, a district of Ramadi located

on the south side of the river consisting of about 40,000 inhabitants, was considered even

more deadly than the rest of the town. As one U.S. commander described, ―You couldnʻt

walk two blocks without being shot at."[517] U.S. forces in the area assessed that any

portion of a road not under constant observation was most likely seeded with IEDs.[518]As

a result for U.S. forces to even talk to the local population of Tamʻeem to try to

understand the situation in the late spring and early summer of 2006, entry points to

houses would have to be quickly secured and security established on the rooftops of both

sides of the streets. Once the patrol was done talking to the first family, one part of the

patrol would move onto the rooftop of the adjacent house and enter that house from the

top down while the rest of the patrol maintained vigilant security. This bounding

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[515]BH040, Afghanistan Veterans Panel, interview by Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, Washington, DC, 24 March 2011. The Albu Mahal tribe rejected AQI in a manner much like the tribes in and around Ramadi and the rest of Al Anbar would in 2006. This provided the population support Alford needed to first clear, then outpost the Al Qaim with the IA. Over time some of the members of the Albu Mahal tribe became the police force in the town. However, the success of Al Qaim was not transferred to other areas of Al-Anbar initially as other tribes who attempted to fight AQI in and around Ramadi did not reach out to U.S. forces for assistance nor was it part of a broader political movement that the Awakening would later provide.

[516]Neil Smith and Sean McFarland, ―Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (March-April 2008): 42.

[517]BA020, Battalion Commander, interview by Mark Battjes and Benjamin Boardman, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 23 February 2011.

[518]Anthony E. Deane, ―Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," *Military Review* (January-February 2010), 84.

overwatch technique of tactical movement continued until the patrol reached its limit of advance. It avoided walking down the streets it as it was more vulnerable to small arms fire and IEDs there.[519] The violent situation was assessed by a report filed by a senior Marine intelligence officer in August of 2006 concluding that the Al Anbar province had been lost by the coalition.[520]

U.S. tactics for securing Ramadi prior to the summer of 2006 consisted of primarily conducting patrols from larger FOBs on the outskirts of Ramadi. These patrols would often come under fire or be targeted with IEDs. Following enemy contact or the end of the operation, the patrol would return to the FOB outside of the city. This tactic, sometimes referred to as drive by counterinsurgency or commuting to combat, gave AQI an exploitable information advantage. As U.S. forces moved back to their bases, AQI could either claim that they had expelled the occupiers or blame them for any collateral damage caused by U.S. forces in response to AQI attacks.[521] In addition to patrols, a large number of coalition forces were tied down securing their lines of communication via checkpoints which prevented continuous patrolling in some parts of Ramadi and the surrounding areas.[522]

One reason for the high level of violence in Al Anbar up until the summer of 2006 was the relatively large AQI presence in the province. Indeed around May 2006 AQI had

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[519]BA020, Interview.

[520]Thomas E. Ricks, ―Situation Called Dire in Western Iraq,‖ *Washington Post*, 11 September 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/10/AR2006091001204.html (accessed 25 March 2011).

[521]Smith and McFarland, 45.

[522]Deane, 81.

determined that Ramadi would serve as its capital for a new Islamic caliphate.[523] AQI had gained a foothold in Ramadi due to the cooperation or intimidation of the traditional tribal leaders in the area. Tribal leaders' motivations to cooperate included a loss of honor due to the coalition occupation, a desire for revenge due to coalition attacks, and a loss of political power observed with the new Iraqi government that was perceived as Shia dominated. For those who would not readily cooperate, AQI applied brutal intimidation tactics. Intimidation caused many tribal sheiks to flee into nearby Jordan or Syria.[524]

One Sheik of minor political importance who refused to be intimidated was Sheik Sittar Abu Risha who resided in Western Ramadi. A Sheik who had seen his father and two of his brothers killed at the hands of AQI, Sittar had a motive for revenge and a panache that inspired the movement. His persona emanated from both his generous hospitality and from the barrel of his chrome plated .45 revolver. As one U.S. commander stated simply of Sittar, ―He was a bad ass.‖[525]

In late 2005, a tribal movement was attempted against AQI as some tribal leaders became disgruntled with the influence of AQI in the area. It failed primarily because the tribal leadership and fighters, many of whom were insurgents from groups such as the 1920s Revolutionary Brigade or mujahideen elements, as some U.S. commanders referred to them, did not seek U.S. assistance. In fact when violence began in December of 2005 for about a two week period, U.S. Marines and Army forces in the area did not

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[523]Deane, 80.

[524]Najim Abed Al-Jabouri and Jensen, 8; Smith and McFarland, 47.

[525]BA020, Interview.

intervene as they thought that violence between the insurgents was largely beneficial in eliminating their adversaries.[526]

However, with younger and more resolute Sheiks such as Sittar Abu Risha beginning to assert their leadership, cooperation with U.S. forces seemed more plausible. Additionally, resentment of the AQI continued to build amongst the tribes. Resentment was born from several factors. First, AQI had encroached on traditional tribal smuggling routes to move weapons and fighters into the area cutting many tribes out of the profit. Second, in xenophobic and tribal Al Anbar, a foreigner could be defined as someone from one or two tribes away and AQI's leadership was comprised primarily of foreign fighters from everywhere but Iraq. Third, AQI's tactics in their violent attacks toward the U.S. were at odds with the population's concerns for their own safety. AQI did not conduct much of a collateral damage assessment viewing civilian casualties resulting from their violence as martyrs in the cause of *jihad*. Fourth, when AQI did not gain cooperation they resorted to violent intimidation which instigated a basic tribal need to avenge the loss of members of the tribes. Fifth, AQI's religious interpretations of Islam were at odds with the majority of the people in Al Anbar who may engage in ―sinful infractions" such as smoking or look to their tribal Sheik to resolve a situation rather than their Imam. Finally, AQI's practice of marrying women in tribal areas without the consent of the families or Sheiks infuriated the men of the tribe.[527]

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[526]BA020, Interview.

[527]David Kilcullen, ―Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt," *Small Wars Journal*, 29 August 2007, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/08/anatomy-of-a-tribal-revolt/ (accessed 14 April 2011). David Kilcullen makes the case that the spark or final straw that inspired the Awakening was due to this disagreement over women which caused tit

Establishing Effective Police in Ramadi

In May 2006, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division's Headquarters was dispatched to Ramadi under guidance to ―take back Ramadi, but don't make it another Fallujah." At a time when the overall counterinsurgent strategy was to transition, operational reality forced U.S. forces into cities like Ramadi. Then-Colonel Sean McFarland, the Brigade commander, devised a clear-hold-build strategy to wrest control of the city of Ramadi from AQI. Important in this strategy was the force that could provide local security during the hold phase which the brigade envisioned as a competent and robust police force. McFarland intended to end the tactic of commuting to work and envisioned establishing combat outposts to secure the population from the insurgency. His plan involved a U.S. battalion securing the western and southern approaches into Ramadi, another battalion clearing the northern tribal areas outside Ramadi, while two battalions expanded out from the center of Ramadi. A final battalion would attack into Southern Ramadi establishing combat outposts.[528] However, the plan did not unfold exactly as designed as McFarland capitalized on AQI's perceived disorganization following the death of Zarqawi on 7 June 2006 and later the unexpected alliance with tribal sheiks.[529]

Important in the U.S. plan was the inclusion of the Iraqi Army. Even with numerous U.S. battalions under its control, the brigade still lacked enough manpower to conduct an operation on this scale, in such a large and heavily contested area, without a

for tat killings although U.S. officers interviewed cited the other reasons listed in this paragraph as more compelling.

[528]Deane, 81-82.

[529]BA010, Interview.

significant contribution from the Iraqi Army. The brigade also planned to establish Civil Military Operations Centers and empower local leadership through distribution of basic goods and services.[530] One commander thought that prior to McFarland's arrival in Ramadi that there had been no real strategy; there were units engaged in heavy fighting but to no real end.[531] McFarland enjoyed an advantage in being the Army commander subordinated to a Marine HQ. This allowed him to take more risks. One of these risks, partnering with Sheiks of unknown loyalties, proved decisive in generating a competent police force to effectively hold areas of Ramadi.[532]

The brigade's campaign in Ramadi was crafted under the realization that U.S. forces could not solve the security problem on their own. Although the transition strategy had been adopted from the very beginning of the coalition invasion of Iraq, this was a bigger mental leap than usually appreciated in hindsight. U.S. commanders began to truly believe in the Iraqi's ability to solve their own problems while recognizing that they played a vital, but supporting role. With respect to trying to understand the human terrain in Ramadi a commander stated, ―We did that [conducted census operations] but you know something, it didn't matter . . . What won it for us [was asking ourselves] why are

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[530]Smith and McFarland, 44.

[531]BA020, Interview.

[532]BA010, Interview. In the previous chapter on Vietnam it was noted that the Marine led I Corps often had much more freedom to execute innovative security approaches such as the CAP being under an Army headquarters. It is interesting that the Army unit under a Marine headquarters 40 years later had a similar amount of freedom to capitalize on unique opportunities like the Anbar Awakening and design innovative security approaches to leverage the opportunity. Although Alford, a Marine commander, had been successful with a similar strategy in the campaign previously, there was a general sense in mid-2006 that McFarland was able to ―get away with things‖ that his Marine counterparts could not.

we trying to figure this out? As a result the commander recognized the practicality of efforts to build the police force stating referring to them as ―his greatest weapon system.‖[533]

Ramadi had a police force operating in the vicinity of the Al Horea police station, but out of the roughly 300 policemen on the rolls a maximum of 80 showed up to work on any given day. They were completely ineffective and intimidation of the force was a primary problem. As one U.S. commander stated, ―I never saw any more than 20 in one place and there were only 2 police stations. They wouldn't and they couldn't do anything. When they drove home at night there were illegal checkpoints set up along the road and AQI was searching them trying to figure out if they were policemen or not and these guys [the IP] were getting killed at night going home.‖ One of the problems with the police, which in fact was never completely solved, was the lack of effective advisors. The U.S. police advisory team reported through its own chain of command, not through McFarland's Brigade. Additionally, the advisors were too scant, ill equipped, and small in number to do much more than interact with police leadership in meetings or ride along an occasional police patrol. Obviously, a significant effort was required of the coalition to build an effective police force.[534]

Through negotiations with the tribal Sheiks, U.S. commanders were able to gain the sheiks' commitment to provide the men of their tribe to form a Sunni police force for Ramadi. Sheik Ahmed, a sheik of rising prominence like Sittar, provided the first 100 recruits while U.S. forces built a police station. The Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MOI) was

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[533]BA020, Interview.

[534]BA020, Interview.

hesitant to allow the creation of any police stations in Al Anbar, so the U.S. commanders called the new site a police sub-station so that they could proceed with the building. With an eye on long term stability, the brigade also began literacy classes with new police recruits so that they would be able to pass police entrance exams.[535] The MOI was fearful of U.S. forces arming the tribes in Al Anbar, but as a U.S. commander pointed out, ―They [the police recruits] didn't answer to the tribal chief, they answered to the police force. We had people there to train them and we vetted the police chief."[536] U.S. forces were careful to protect their new allies and they allowed for the creation of police auxiliary units to protect sheiks and their tribal areas. Additionally, U.S. forces would eventually maintain an armored vehicle presence at some of the Sheiks' residences. Even under additional U.S. protection, AQI fought hard to disrupt police recruiting efforts. These attempts often backfired as a mortar attack on a sheik's home, which was being used as a recruiting station, and VBIED attacks on the new Iraqi Police sub-station at Tway only strengthened the resolve of the police and the sheiks that supported them. Police recruiting continued through the tribal sheiks while U.S. forces and some Iraqi Army forces established combat outposts and fought in the city. Indeed when the first combat outpost was built in late June, AQI conducted several attacks which in the end only served to weaken the terrorists' ranks. From June 2006 through December 2006 over 4,000 Iraqi Police were recruited.[537]

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[535]Smith and McFarland, 44-45. These literacy classes were also attended by locals as they sought to improve their education.

[536]BA020, Interview.

[537]Smith and McFarland, 43-44.

As the initial police recruiting efforts were underway, the political movement known as the Awakening was formalized. Following a meeting of approximately 50 tribal sheiks on 9 September 2006, Sittar announced that the Awakening had officially begun. The Sheiks, who elected Sittar as their leader, pledged to rid Ramadi of AQI and subsequently reestablish local governance, rule of law, and rebuild the war torn city. In response to this political and security initiative, AQI went into tribal areas to murder and intimidate tribesmen. These actions, much like the attacks on police and coalition forces, resulted in galvanizing the Awakening movement rather than suppressing it.[538] Indeed when the Awakening council began 9 of 21 tribes in the Ramadi area supported the coalition. However, within four months the number of tribes supporting the coalition increased significantly to 18 out of 21.[539]

The galvanized police, augmented by tribal auxiliaries who remained in auxiliary status until they could attend police training, teamed with both the Iraqi and U.S. Army units in Ramadi and the surrounding areas to eradicate AQI. Often, however, the police or police auxiliaries would be relatively on their own in day to day security of their areas as U.S. forces were not numerous enough to partner with them at every single checkpoint, station, or patrol. Constant communication, however, enabled U.S. forces to respond to large AQI initiated attacks. As the auxiliaries and police took the lead in security, they began to effectively hunt and eliminate AQI in the area. As one commander described some of the initial independent auxiliary operations required to eliminate AQI, ―They went out and did man hunting, it wasn't pretty . . . they would walk into a mosque

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[538]Smith and McFarland, 48, 49-51.

[539]Deane, 88.

and say ―who are the Al Qaeda people in this mosque?" and everyone would point out five or six guys and they would haul them out into the courtyard and shoot them . . . All of the sudden enemy activity in that area would drop to zero. They were obviously getting the right guys." He continued stating, ―That is the messy, dark side of working with indigenous guys . . . if you can live with that, and I can, then fine. If you are trying to change their culture and their way of war to our way of war, you're going to be there a hell of a long time."[540]

Ramadi Police Effectiveness

The number of reported contacts with insurgents declined by 70 percent from June 2006 to February 2007.[541] This statistic indicates that the police in Ramadi, supported by both the Iraqi Army and U.S. forces, were extremely effective in their local security role. The police were ultimately effective in Ramadi and generally Al Anbar at large for several reasons. First, they had partnered with the U.S. military in the area which enabled them to effectively survive against a better armed and trained AQI insurgent force. Their links with U.S. forces ensured timely response to insurgent attacks. Many of these newly formed police lived with U.S. forces or in the immediate vicinity of U.S. combat outposts enabling quick reinforcement.

Another contributing factor in the success of the police is that they were recruited and employed locally. Locality provided several important advantages. First, it gained them legitimacy in the eyes of the population. They were not representatives of an Iranian

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[540]BA010, Interview.

[541]Smith and McFarland, 51.

sponsored Shia government nor outsiders from Jordan or Syria. Rather, the police were members of the same tribe or neighboring tribe who could be trusted to look after the interests of the larger population. Second, it provided a vast source of intelligence that led to the timely demise of AQI in the area. Although U.S. forces often had the means to eradicate AQI quickly when they found them, the problem was finding them in the first place. The police simply knew who lived in the area, who was an outsider, and who among either group was involved in attacks on coalition forces.[542] As then-Lieutenant Colonel William Jurney stated, ―The new cops brought street smarts. This was their home turf. We didn't have to wait to get hit. We could deliver the first blow."[543] Another advantage of local employment was that the police carried their weapons back to their homes and were generally appraised by one U.S. commander as being on duty twenty four hours a day. Thus, even when off duty, the police would have the ability to defend their communities if under attack or if insurgents entered their areas. A final advantage of local employment was that the money paid to the police serving in their home areas, improved the economy of the area they were protecting. In the short term, the circulation of their money through local markets provided opportunities for small business growth in the improved security environment.[544]

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[542]Deane, 85.

[543]West, 209.

[544]BA020, Interview. Obviously, simply handing out money to government employees who spend it in an area is not a sustainable economic policy in the long term. However, in the short term, paying an effective security force in Ramadi stimulated economic growth at the local level.

Third, vetting prevented a large amount of infiltration into the newly formed police force. The U.S. assisted the effort through hand held biometric devices while Sheiks formally approved every new member of the police force.[545] Biometric documentation which included fingerprinting and retinal scans helped to maintain accountability over the force. Although many of the police were suspected and probably were former members of the mujahideen or ―honorable resistance‖ insurgency in Al-Anbar, the coalition only had specific information on less than one percent of the newly recruited force. Also, important in gaining legitimacy beyond the local level was that the new volunteers swore allegiance to the government of Iraq and were formerly tied in to the government through payment and later as policemen.[546]

Fourth, the police were properly equipped and trained to perform their duties. They already had access to a large amount of weapons readily available throughout Al-Anbar and were provided additional equipment through the formal inclusion into the police force. Where logistical shortcomings existed, U.S. forces often provided support designed to ensure that the police didn‗t fail in their execution of their duties. With respect to training, the police were sent primarily to a Jordanian police academy course to gain an appreciation for the civil aspects of policing. Important, however, is that the U.S. brigade also sent them through a week long urban combat course. As one U.S. commander stated, ―[The] police needed to be able to fight like infantry squads to survive.‖[547] A weak point in the U.S. approach to build the police force was mentoring

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[545]Smith and McFarland, 44.

[546]BA010, Interview.

[547]BA010, Interview.

provided by the U.S. military police training team. The advisory effort was simply not robust enough nor resourced adequately to make much of a difference. The brigade was able to overcome the lack of police advisors through routine combined operations with the police. Additionally, the local nature of the police coupled with an unwritten tribal accountability largely prevented significant abuse of authority to which a poorly led or mentored force would normally succumb.

Although the Ramadi police force grew relatively quickly in the context of the campaign, U.S. forces were deliberate in expansion of their footprint. They did not build many of the initial sub-stations in the most contested parts of the area, but rather where tribal leaders already had some influence and the situation was not completely unsecure. They also built combat outposts nearby the initial sub-stations to assist in securing and reacting to a fledgling police force. As then-Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Deane, a U.S. battalion commander in the Ramadi area at the time, later wrote ―Had we rushed the new recruits into the urban stations, the recruits and the reenergized police force would have melted away before they had time to become effective."[548]

Local Security Forces: Sons of Iraq in Northwest Baghdad (2007-2008)

A Campaign of Exhaustion

AQI gained a greater foothold in the Baghdad in the wake of the civil war that ensued following the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing. ―Honorable resistance" groups found reasons to support AQI's grisly efforts as AQI served as a well resourced protection group against Shia death squads. VBIEDs were the weapon of choice for AQI

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[548]Deane, 86.

as they detonated their car bombs on numerous congregations of innocent civilians. Murders by both sides were an everyday occurrence which resulted in the polarization of the capital along sectarian lines. Supported in part by the Iraqi government, the Shia extremists had committed to a ―campaign of exhaustion" against the Sunni population in Baghdad that sought to gain them more territory. To accomplish this expansion under the campaign of exhaustion, extremists used death squads to kill or evict Sunnis from mixed neighborhoods, often assisted by ―complicit Iraqi Security Force actors," or deprived the population of food, electricity, and other essential services through official government channels to try to force the Sunnis to quit.[549] One strategic planner described this encroachment into Sunni areas of Northwest Baghdad as ―a double pincer movement" that pressured areas like Mansour through a network of Shia IP stations and militias.[550]

The violent components of the civil war in Northwestern Baghdad had effectively stalemated by the early spring of 2007. Part of the stalemate can be attributed to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division's (2/1 ID) campaign for the area which included in its objectives both the defeat of AQI and the halt of Shia expansion. Under this design U.S. forces were directed to fully partner with the ISF and establish combat outposts along sectarian faultlines which included combat outposts in roughly the middle of Ghazaliyah, one in Adel, and one in Huriyah. As surge forces arrived in early to mid 2007 other combat outposts were established in Jamiyah, Khadra, Ameriyah, and Yarmouk primarily to defeat AQI.[551]

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[549]BH020, Interview.

[550]BH030, Interview.

[551]BH020, Interview.

As a result of the campaign of exhaustion, many Sunnis viewed Shia ISF in their neighborhoods as an army of occupation even though some were not complicit in the campaign. The fact that nearly all of these ISF members were from areas outside of the neighborhoods they secured, individual *jundi* or *shurta*, soldiers or policemen, had little incentive to accomplish their mission. They did, however, face incentives that drove them to either do nothing, which they believed would increase their chance of survival until their next leave period, or to line their pockets through theft or extortion of the local population. This was particularly a problem for Shia formations that had been recruited primarily from relatively poorer areas of southern Iraq who found themselves amongst a hostile population who were members of the Baghdad middle class. With the fear of violence and ISF abuses of power, many of the residents in the Sunni neighborhoods saw U.S. forces as more legitimate than the ISF although they generally disliked both. Eventually partnership and U.S. combat outposts helped to alleviate some of the population's fears of the ISF but a strong desire remained for a local security force more representative, in terms of religious sect, of neighborhood residents.[552]

Ameriyah Sons of Iraq

As the threat of physical extermination at the hands of death squads receded in the late spring of 2007, Sunni leaders and their supporters began to reject AQI's presence. The ideas behind the Awakening movement had already spread by early 2007 through the Al Anbar province and east into Abu Gharaib, which sits on the suburbs of western Baghdad. Two important neighborhoods in Baghdad that the ideas of the awakening

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[552]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

spread to were Ghazaliyah and Ameriyah as both the Sunni population and non-AQI affiliated insurgent groups were tiring of Al Qaeda practices. Although inspired by tribal leadership in Al Anbar, other prominent Sunni leaders would play a more significant role in the urban sprawl of Baghdad.[553]

Former Iraqi Army Generals and serving Sunni politicians, who had relationships with Sheik Sittar in Ramadi, contacted local U.S. commanders to establish a local security force in southern Ghazaliyah. They introduced a former Iraqi Army Major named Raad who was their choice to lead the force. Concerned about legitimacy, Raad did not want to carry weapons at first but rather wanted to partner with the ISF and U.S. units in Southern Ghazaliyah to defeat AQI and to keep southern Ghazaliyah safe from Shia militias. Raad's security force, which became known as the Ghazaliyah Guardians, contributed significantly to bringing down the level of violence in the volatile neighborhood.[554]

Another neighborhood that reached out to U.S. forces in Baghdad was Ameriyah. The Ameriyah neighborhood had historically received special attention by the coalition. During the first Gulf War, the coalition had bombed a known Iraqi Army command bunker in the neighborhood that had civilians inside. A statue commemorating the attack was built outside the bunker that depicted an Iraqi woman who was on fire.[555] More recently, during Operation Together Forward which began in the summer of 2006,

[553]BH020, Interview.

[554]BH020, Interview.

[555]Lacking complete historical knowledge of the areas that they secured, the road that ran past the statue was referred to by U.S. Soldiers as Screaming Lady as the statue was a visible landmark.

251

Ameriyah was designated as one of Baghdad's key neighborhoods with then-Lieutenant Colonel Gian Gentile's 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry assigned to the area. Gentile realized, much like U.S. commanders in Ramadi, that an effective police force would be essential to the long term stability of Ameriyah. He formed relationships with the local Imams, as Ameriyah's Neighborhood Advisory Council was virtually non-existent, to support his efforts. Gentile also saw the need for a larger political solution to the sectarian violence as Baghdad's larger violent context and AQI intimidation prevented support from the population. Although Gentile was never able to see his campaign plan to completion during his tour, his successor in the area, then-Lieutenant Colonel Dale Kuehl, commander of 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry (1-5 CAV), continued to nurture the relationships that Gentile had fostered which proved critical in securing Ameriyah.[556]

Shortly after the defeat of AQI in Ramadi, Fallujah, and other areas of Al Anbar, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which was AQI's attempt at establishing a shadow government, claimed Ameriyah as its new capital. May 2007 saw a spike in violent activity directed at U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces in Ameriyah and Kuehl's battalion increased operations there. As Kuehl later wrote, ―We faced numerous challenges in Ameriyah. In truth, AQI controlled the neighborhood."[557] On 29 May, 1-5 CAVs persistence, soldier conduct, and relationship building with the local Imams bore fruit as the prominent Imam in Ameriyah called Kuehl and informed him that the locals were going to attack Al Qaeda the following day. Although Kuehl attempted to get information

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[556]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[557]Dale Kuehl, ―Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The People Are the Key," *Military Review* (March-April 2009): 74.

so that U.S. forces could go after AQI, the Imam insisted that the Iraqis had to do it for themselves. Citizens of the neighborhood attacked and killed several AQI leaders the next day. When AQI counterattacked the following day, Kuehl dispatched two platoons under his command to halt the AQI attack. Kuehl was introduced to the leader of this new security force in Ameriyah, Abu Abed, to establish coordination procedures and begin to lay the groundwork for the force's future.[558]

With Abu Abed protected by U.S. forces from AQI reprisals he quickly partnered with 1-5 CAV to eliminate remaining AQI members in Ameriyah who had not already fled fearing their safety. In a few summer months, Ameriyah progressed from one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Baghdad to one in which contact with insurgents was extremely rare. From 7 August 2007 until 3 January 2008, 1-5 CAV suffered no significant attacks within the Ameriyah neighborhood. Security was delivered not only for coalition forces but also for the population as a neighborhood which averaged 30 murders per month through June, saw a total of only four murders from July to December 2007.[559]

Abu Abed's stated reasons for choosing to join with the Americans were based on AQI tactics that endangered his neighbors. Abu Abed stated that he observed members of AQI emplacing an IED nearby one of his friend's homes. When he confronted the men stating that the IED would harm innocent Iraqis, the AQI members rebuked him stating that Iraqi casualties were not important. What mattered, they stated, was eliminating the Americans. Although Abu Abed expressed no interest in not harming Americans to the

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[558]Kuehl, 74-77.

[559]Kuehl, 80.

IED emplacers, he was concerned about the damage AQI was doing to Ameriyah.[560]

Although this is Abu Abed's narrative, other observers suspected that he was a former leader of a local insurgent group that was engaged in a turf war with AQI over Ameriyah, although Abu Abed claimed he never fought Americans. In this turf war, one of Abu Abed's cousins was allegedly kidnapped by AQI operatives which spurred Abu Abed into action.[561] Regardless of the event that triggered Abu Abed's new willingness to cooperate with U.S. forces he was surely influenced by the phenomenon occurring out west and by the future political implications of a U.S. withdrawal leaving the Shia in power in Iraq.

Evidence of this influence is found with some of Abu Abed's associations. Abu Azzam, the Sons of Iraq leader from Abu Gharaib, came to Ameriyah shortly after AQI had largely been defeated and served as a mentor to him for a short period of time. Abu Azzam was primarily concerned with negotiating with U.S. forces and other administrative and logistical concerns concerning the Ameriyah version of the Sons of Iraq. Abu Abed also went to Al Anbar and stayed as a guest of Sheik Sittar during several days in the summer of 2007.[562]

1-5 CAV assigned a U.S. liaison team to Abu Abed to coordinate operations, biometrically register members, and ensure the group's adherence to the negotiated agreement for their existence. Kuehl negotiated the agreement with the prominent Sunni Imam in Ameriyah to ensure that there was local political supervision and support for his

[560]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[561]Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe* (New York: Random House, 2008), 297.

[562]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

group. The agreement offered the group a salary commensurate with Iraqi Police pay, required them to man checkpoints with other Iraqi Security Forces, allowed them to keep 7.62 ball ammunition found in caches to resupply their ammunition, and required any operations to be conducted with U.S. or Iraqi Security Forces. It also proscribed specific rules for apprehension of suspected insurgents. A primary challenge facing the liaison team was Abu Abed's desire to conduct independent operations. He did not desire to work independently because he didn't want the oversight or assistance, but rather because his informants would often provide information on an insurgent that became increasingly fleeting over time, as AQI feared for their lives upon entering Ameriyah. Also, the Ameriyah SOI were men of action, and not prone to sitting around on checkpoints or conducting any planning prior to initiating movement. 1-5 CAV established a combat outpost a few hundred meters from Abu Abed's to more closely coordinate efforts.[563]

Short term issues inside the Ameriyah SOI were related to internal and external power jockeying, which was a result of the long term uncertainty for the future of the group. Internal power jockeying occurred as the organization's structure progressed from a flat organization to a more hierarchical one as it prepared to transition to a police force. Some members of the SOI had difficulty adjusting to their new roles while others vied for special consideration. Challenges to Abed's authority also centered around members of the SOI who were politically connected with the Iraqi Islamic Party in the Iraqi government. In hindsight, it was probably a good thing that this influence, although represented by a cadre that appeared more professional than Abu Abed, did not take hold as a primary problem facing Iraq even to this day are militias, often in the form of

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[563]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

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―legitimate" ISF, that answer to the whims of sectarian politicians rather than the directives of a central government.[564]

The source of external power jockeying was the poor relationship that existed between Abu Abed and the corrupt (and Shia) Iraqi Army commander responsible for security in Ameriyah. The source of conflict was relatively silly and juvenile when viewed through a western lens, but it was of primary importance to the Iraqis. The disagreement centered on who received or was receiving credit for the improved security in Ameriyah. Abu Abed resented any attention or accolades that the IA commander received as he fairly accurately believed that his fighters, and not the IA, had secured Ameriyah. However, U.S. forces in the area understood that in the end the Iraqi Government could eventually shut down the SOI once U.S. forces began redeploying. In the short term, a bad relationship could instigate fighting between the two security forces which would destabilize Ameriyah. As a result, 2/1 ID and 1-5 CAV closely watched the relationship and continued to look for ways to bring the two leaders together. Not all attempts were successful as in one instance U.S. soldiers had to stand in between IA and SOI members engaged in a Mexican standoff until cooler heads prevailed. Personalities affected 1-5 CAV's attempts toward larger ISF cooperation as Abu Abed, although he had the political savvy to progress his organization into a legitimate police force, was a

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[564]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007. Although politically savvy, Abu Abed was apolitical when it came to any particular allegiance to a politician. He had a view, not atypical of foot soldiers who spend a long amount of time in the trenches, that the politicians had contributed nothing to the security of Ameriyah and that he had done all of the hard work. He generally disliked Sunni and Shia politicians equally.

hot head who tended to verbally lose control of his emotions.[565] Ultimately the situation resolved itself as Abu Abed was wounded in a suicide bombing of his headquarters and the ISF commander was moved to another posting.

Part of 1-5 CAV's campaign plan was to incorporate many of the SOI into an Ameriyah Police Force under the official MOI umbrella. However, for the Iraqi government this idea was barely palatable in Al Anbar let alone in an area only two neighborhoods removed from the Green Zone. The GOI created a reconciliation council whose role was partly to determine the long term role of the SOI. Unfortunately, the reconciliation council was interested in reconciliation in name only and U.S. military commanders and other U.S. representatives spent countless hours negotiating with the council. Many Iraqi Army Generals responsible for security were under enormous pressure from the council to suppress the SOI but showed great political skill and personal courage to move the program along. For their part, U.S. commanders supported their ISF partners allowing them to take greater risks to delay, impede, or less than fully comply with council directives.[566]

While political negotiations proceeded between commanders and their political and Iraqi Army counterparts, 1-5 CAV continued to push to set conditions to formalize the SOI into a future police force. First, 1-5 CAV ensured adherence to the security agreement through the U.S. liaison team. Adherence to the security agreement would demonstrate a track record of cooperation by the Sunni men of Ameriyah. Second, 1-5 CAV led combined operations that included both the Iraqi Army and the Sons of Iraq.

[565]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[566]BH020, Interview.

The concept of these operations was simple and leveraged the strength of each

contributing organization. For the U.S. part, they provided armored protection, firepower

when needed, and broke their supporting manpower into small elements that distributed

leaders and radios throughout the area of operation. The Iraqi Army provided the

manpower required to conduct searches of suspected areas. The SOI provided the

pinpointed areas to search and the local people of interest to tactically question due to

their knowledge of the local area. In this capacity, the SOI were already acting as local

police. Additionally, the SOI had local legitimacy in that they were from the local area,

knew the local residents, and were Sunni. The complementary effects of a handful of 2-4

SOI partnered with an Iraqi Army platoon and a U.S. squad led to the further erosion of

AQI's position in Ameriyah and any attempts to regain their once dominating

influence.[567] These operations also had the political effect of demonstrating to the Iraqi

Government that the SOI could work with other elements of the Iraqi Security Forces.

Third, the politically savvy Abu Abed coordinated media interviews with Iraqi media in

which he publicly stated his resolve to continue to fight Al Qaeda and urged former Shia

residents of Ameriyah to return to the neighborhood as it was now safe to do so. Fourth,

1-5 CAV coordinated for a civil policing course that trained a cadre of the SOI to serve as

future leaders in a professional police force. Although this course would not be accepted

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[567]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007. The difference between the competence of the SOI versus trained and uniformed police in other areas was striking. In but one example, part of the interaction between SOI and locals included distribution of their own propaganda in the form of a written leaflet. As SOI members talked to residents they did not merely hand them the piece of paper, but took time reviewing the points of the paper with the locals in the community and received a pledge from the residents to support their efforts. On a whole, they were very good at information operations.

as an alternative to attendance in a police academy, it further demonstrated the SOI's

desire for legitimacy. Finally, all of the SOI members were biometrically registered and

applied for membership into the Iraqi police.[568]

U.S. leaders effectively lobbied for membership of the majority of the SOI to gain

membership into the Iraqi Police. It was not easy at the outset. The problem mentioned

between Abu Abed and the local IA commander was more than simply confined to

Ameriyah. Iraqi security force leaders felt increasingly marginalized as U.S. commanders

paid increasing attention to the SOI. As one field grade officer stated, ―We had to tend to

the subjective slighting of the ISF.‖[569] Also, the Iraqi government's reconciliation council

continued to support a sectarian agenda as they blocked initial initiatives to transfer the

SOI into a police force.[570] With the prospect of security responsibility continuing to be

transferred to the Iraqi Security Forces in accordance with the transition strategy, the

government of Iraq may have been hoping to simply wait U.S. forces out in an improved

security environment. The first sign of potential problems in this transition was the shift

of SOI payment responsibility to Iraq in 2008. Many of the SOI were not paid, but the

government of Iraq eventually made good on their promises to pay the volunteers.

Routine payment became issues at other times in the campaign, but so far the government

of Iraq has continued to pay the volunteers. As the program continued, some SOI

members were accepted into local police units.

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[568]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[569]BD010, Interview.

[570]BH020, Interview.

In northwest Baghdad, many of the SOI members became police men. During the

SOI groups' early development the brigade recognized the problem: ―At the brigade level

the problem set wasn't having these guys, it was a great windfall for us . . . but how do

you take advantage of it in a way that's palatable to the Iraqi Security Forces and the

Government of Iraq so that you're not creating a new problem for yourself?‖[571] First, the

brigade turned the lack of policemen serving in northwestern Baghdad into an

opportunity. Logic dictated that residents who had proven able to fight AQI and secure

their own neighborhoods were acceptable raw material for a future professional police

force that had significant vacancies. Second, the brigade ensured cooperation and control

through contracts and assigning liaison teams or partnering with the SOI to ensure their

adherence to the contracts. As one field grade officer stated, ―The best way to control

something is to pay for it; make them [the SOI] beholden to you to pay.‖[572] 2/1 ID also

realized that the SOI's full capability would not be maximized if all they did was man

specific checkpoints. Only manning checkpoints would unnecessarily expose the near

entirety of Ameriyah's intelligence network in visible checkpoints which could be

targeted by AQI. Part of the strength of the SOI in Ameriyah during the initial stage when

Ameriyah remained contested, is that AQI could not be sure who was or who was not a

member of the SOI. Thus, the brigade made a deliberate decision to expand the SOI's

responsibility for security to areas in Ameriyah outside of checkpoints which allowed

them to monitor their *mulhallas*, or sub neighborhoods, for infiltration attempts by

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[571]BD010, Interview.

[572]BD010, Interview.

AQI.[573] Finally, 2/1 ID's leadership found ways to balance a perceived slighting of the ISF in favor of the SOI such as joint ISF and SOI checkpoints, joint and combined operations, and key leader meetings. Also they continued to provide opportunities to increase the SOI legitimacy and work with ISF leaders to transform the SOI into official members of the Iraqi Security Forces. One field grade officer, who served with the unit that replaced 2/1 ID in northwest Baghdad, credited 2/1 ID's deliberate approach for the successful transition of the SOI into the ISF. He stated, ―The previous brigade commander . . . had only hired enough Sons of Iraq to account for a 1:133 ratio of police officers [to the population] who were authorized by the Iraq government. Most other brigades hired entire tribes." He continued stating, ―It [the brigade] set up a more regimented system of pay and control for those organizations . . . He [the brigade commander] took some risk by hiring less folks because obviously we could've immediately put down most of the uprising in places like Ameriyah and Ghazaliyah that were Sunni held . . . but in the long run, it made the latter part of 2008 transition from Sons of Iraq to either military or police significantly easier."[574]

The SOI as a security organization was largely successful at the tactical level in through the examination of the security outcomes in Northwest Baghdad. However, security outcomes are obviously not solely a function of the security organizations. Three other aspects of the SOI program also contributed to their undeniably positive security outcome. First was the simple fact that they were paid a routine salary. Economic

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[573]BD010, Interview.

[574]BD060, Field Grade Officer, interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 16 March 2011.

incentives for individuals to commit violence on behalf of or cooperate with the insurgency to make ends meet evaporated with routine payment. Additionally, since the SOI were nearly all from Ameriyah their salaries were generally spent in the local area contributing to small positive changes in the local economic environment. Second, as some of the SOI were former insurgents, simple math dictated that for every SOI, there was not only an additional member to the security force but there was a loss of one member of the insurgency. The third factor, the most important but the least accomplished in hindsight, was the effect of tying disenfranchised Sunnis back into the government. The transition was not smooth, but with the assumption of the government paying the SOI there began to be some direct linkage to the host nation government rather than the previous indirect linkage through the interventionist security forces. Many SOI in Northwest Baghdad were officially brought into the Iraqi Police or other security forces that strengthened their ties to the government.

Ameriyah Sons of Iraq Summary

The SOI were an extremely effective local security force in Ameriyah. Despite the presence of an entire Iraqi Army battalion and two U.S. companies assigned to secure Ameriyah previously, the neighborhood was far from secure prior to the SOI decision to fight AQI. Their success is easily attributed to several factors. First, they requested and gained U.S. support following their initial fight with AQI which allowed them to organizationally survive. Assigning a resourced and capable U.S. liaison team to the SOI and the positioning of a U.S. company sized combat outpost a few hundred meters from the SOI headquarters would ensure that a well coordinated attack against them would be impossible.

Another reason for SOI success was their local knowledge of terrain and people. They were renowned for their ability to discover IEDs to which Abu Abed once commented that he had no need to use robots like the Americans to find IEDs as he had Ali Al-Jabouri, one of his SOI members.[575] The SOI's local knowledge also greatly improved the intelligence picture in Ameriyah. When an IED exploded in Ameriyah, in mid-summer 2007, the SOI's intelligence network led to the apprehension of the attacker within 24 hours. Many of Ameriyah's SOI knew members of AQI, which also added clarity to the personality targeting process. In fact one of the SOI's own family members included a member of AQI, operating in a nearby area of Baghdad, who fled the country when the Ameriyah SOI rose up against them. The SOI's intelligence net was not impenetrable, as evidenced by a suicide bomber's attack on Abu Abed, but it was extremely effective.[576]

Finally, the Ameriyah SOI required no training in paramilitary tactics as many were former members of some of the better units of the Iraqi Army and some were likely former insurgents. In one engagement with Al Qaeda that U.S. forces reacted to in an effort to provide support to their allies, the SOI demonstrated a textbook crossing of a linear danger area under fire. The training they would require to be an effective long term force was more appropriate to the civil service side of their job rather than the ability to fight terrorists. With respect to arming and equipping, they were already outfitted with their own weapons and resupplied ammunition with the ammunition caches that they

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[575]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[576]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

discovered. They used their own cars for transportation to checkpoints as detailed local knowledge ensured they would not be struck by IEDs in a soft skinned vehicle.[577]

The Sons of Iraq were largely effective in the areas previously mentioned but they were not as effective in other areas. As U.S. forces saw principles behind the movement successfully applied to areas outside Al Anbar, the idea of a silver bullet solution to instability rapidly caught on. Areas that were already generally secure didn't necessarily need another security force, but SOI were often created anyway. In Shia areas where the ISF and JAM combination largely had internal control the SOI merely added additional men to the government payroll. Leadership was a problem in some of the SOI units which caused them to sit around and do nothing rather than actively contribute to a larger security effort. Corruption was a problem in some SOI organizations, like other Iraqi Security Forces, preventing them from being seen as legitimate in the eyes of the population. Also missing from some of the other areas was a galvanizing AQI atrocity, such as the killing of a Sheik in Al Anbar, to rally the SOI into taking action, or courageous leadership such as that of Abu Abed. So, although SOI could be replicated, it was not the answer to the entirety of Iraq's security and political problems.[578]

Sons of Iraq Now

It still remains to be seen whether or not the SOI will continue as an organization. The Government of Iraq has pledged to integrate 20 percent of the remaining SOI into the

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[577]Author's personal experience in Baghdad 2006-2007.

[578]BA040, Commander, interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 23 February 2011; BD020, Commander, interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, Fort Knox, Kentucky, 14 March 2011.

ISF with the remaining 80 percent into various civil service ministries. The IA remains the pay agent for the SOI in all of the provinces with the exception of Anbar where the IP serve in that role. Current transitioning efforts are on hold due primarily to instability in the government and revenue shortfalls. The SOI have seen lapses in routine payment from the government in a few instances although these missed payments have not led to widespread violence.[579] If the government can fulfill its promises to the SOI, then it appears that fears of another armed militia with an agenda separate from the central government will remain unrealized. If not, then it is doubtful that the SOI would unite to the point where they could seriously challenge the central government although many of the groups would be capable of sustaining an insurgency for an indefinite amount of time.

Summary

Local security forces in Iraq took on many forms as militias, police auxiliaries, police, and both coalition and host nation armies. Successes in the case of Ramadi and Northwest Baghdad and the mixed results in Samarra provide additional evidence for the five key factors that are central to influencing the contribution of a local security force.

Survival was a primary requisite for success. The IP in Samarra were annihilated in the span of a few hours in November 2004 as 1-26 IN responded to multiple VBIED attacks in the city. Contrarily, the Ameriyah Sons of Iraq were reinforced quickly by two uncommitted U.S. platoons to prevent their destruction at the hands of a determined AQI attack in the early summer of 2007. A functioning security force framework was essential in ensuring survival. Also critical both to the function of the framework and initial

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[579]Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2010*, Report to Congress (20 August 2010), 29.

survival were the U.S. advisors in ISF units during Operation Baton Rouge. Nearly all of the ISF units were unable to conduct any operation without them. The ability to survive did not equal a guarantee of success as the numerous flavors of ISF in Operation Baton Rouge proved ineffective or produced mixed results for other reasons.

One of these reasons was that all of the ISF in Operation Baton Rouge were from outside of the area. This led to greater difficulties obtaining intelligence, a foreigner perception by the population, and a lack of interest by individual ISF members to solve the security problem. Compounding the problem was the fact that they were from a different religious sect. Although sectarian conflict was not widespread during 2004, as one field grade officer reflected he believed that the 2MOI Commandos were showing signs of sectarian bias in the execution of their security related tasks.[580] In both Ramadi and Northwest Baghdad, the security forces were nearly all from the area and were representative of the population they secured in terms of both tribe and sect in Ramadi or sect in Baghdad. This increased their legitimacy in the eyes of the population, produced a larger quantity and quality of intelligence, and provided motivation for the force to remain actively engaged in performance of their duties.

Training, equipping, and mentoring issues were also cited with respect to the forces in Operation Baton Rouge but particularly with the IP. Many had not been trained and those that had were not trained as paramilitaries. Training problems were also an issue with the Ramadi Police and the Sons of Iraq but many already had the ability to fight which led to their initial effectiveness in eliminating AQI. What was needed for the long term in their case was a training emphasis on civil policing and consistent

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[580]BD010, Interview.

reinforcement on that point. The IP in Samarra received little to no logistical support

from the provincial level with U.S. forces routinely having to resupply them with basic

items. With respect to mentoring, advisory efforts were too small for many of the forces

operating in Samarra as they were all newly trained units rushed into a difficult

environment. A road not taken to try to rectify the mentorship deficiency was routine

combined operations. However, there were numerous reasons this approach was not tried

including too many security tasks to accomplish to further divide forces, U.S. leaders not

fully understanding partnership at the time, the transition strategy which pushed the Iraqis

out front, and a lack of trust between the force that need constant mentorship the most,

the IP, and 1-26 IN. Mentoring was assisted in the cases of Ramadi and Ameriyah with

nearby U.S. combat outposts, the assignment of liason teams, and commanders constantly

engaged with the leaders of these organizations.

Vetting was important especially in ensuring the future loyalty of Ramadi

policemen and the Sons of Iraq. Although U.S. forces assisted in the process with

biometric registration, the majority of the process was done by the Iraqis. The Iraqis

either maintained poor security or did a poor job of vetting as time went on as both Sittar

and Abu Abed were attacked by suicide bombers. One advantage of outside forces in

Samarra, was that they were unlikely to be infiltrated by AIF as the previous police force

were either AIF or cooperated with them. However, this advantage did not make up for

the lack of benefits derived from operating in one's home area. One problem in Samarra

was that efforts to recruit police from the city produced nearly zero new policemen.

Finally, nearly all of these forces were newly trained or newly formed and placed

in some of the more dangerous areas of Iraq at the time. With respect to Operation Baton

Rouge, ISF commanders generally displayed poor leadership ability. Developing leaders takes more than a few months and many were not up to the challenge. In Ameriyah tensions emerged between prominent personalities in the Sons of Iraq as their initial lack of formalization caused infighting and external strife with the IA battalion. These tensions were eventually overcome by the persistent efforts of both 1-5 CAV and 2/1 ID and the coincidental removal of the primary protagonists.

Areas such as Ameriyah and Ramadi remained contested for a long duration of the campaign despite both U.S. forces and ISF working to bring the areas under full government control. Missing throughout the first 3-4 years of the previous efforts was a capable security force from the areas. The Awakening political movement that arose from rejection of both AQI and Shia ISF finally provided the impetus for communities to become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. The Ramadi police and Sons of Iraq wouldn't have been able to defeat AQI without protection by U.S. forces while the U.S. could not secure areas without men of the community participating in their own defense.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Local security forces were important parts of the counterinsurgency efforts of the

U.S. campaigns in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Iraq, of the British campaigns in Malaya

and Oman, and of the Rhodesian campaign during the 1970s Bush War. The forces

examined throughout these conflicts ranged from police and constabularies to militias

and conventional armies but were all responsible for security in a geographically

confined area. The security outcomes they helped to achieve were all different but

generally mixed. Even the better performing forces such as the firqa in Oman could not

win the campaign without the contributions of the other formations of the security force

and the larger civil and political efforts. Although many other factors influenced the

security outcome, there were five basic factors that recurred frequently in the

examination of local security forces in the case studies. The factors are closely linked

with the force's leadership and organizational design permeating throughout several of

them. These factors are presented here as a set of ideas for practitioners to consider

toward their efforts to maximize the contribution of local security forces in the

prosecution of a counterinsurgency campaign.

Idea 1: Survive First

A local security force must be able to survive as an organization while attempting

to eradicate the threat from its area of responsibility. Important to enhancing their

survival chances is the overall security framework design. A tiered system that provided

adequate responsiveness to units under significant attack greatly increased survival odds.

Adequate responsiveness will vary dependent on the threat with some situations requiring

consistent combined patrolling with military forces with others requiring a time based

reinforcement capability. Also, important is the design of the organization. More

effective local forces were generally designed organizationally as hybrids or

paramilitaries. Finally, a command and control system that allowed for the framework to

function both routinely and under crisis situations was important. How this system was

designed varied, but the more effective systems usually involved co-located command

posts between various forces and routine meetings between the commanders and civil

authorities. Better systems were resourced with a large enough total force,

communications equipment, and translators to function efficiently.[581]

Idea 2: Recruit and Employ Close to Home

There was a positive correlation between the place a security member was

recruited and the effectiveness of that member at place of his employment. In every case

study this factor was routinely cited as a primary contributor toward security force

effectiveness. Some of the home advantages cited in the literature and by practitioners in

the course of oral history interviews included intelligence generation, legitimacy, and

intimate knowledge of terrain and people. For example, the Sons of Iraq in North

Western Baghdad were able to generate intelligence effectively and eliminate AQI in the

area where U.S. and other ISF had been previously unsuccessful. In Ramadi, the police

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[581]See chapter 4 pages 100 - 133 for a discussion of the RF and PF in the Vietnam
conflict as the territorial forces are a good example of a force set in both a functional and
dysfunctional security force framework depending on the specific time and place in the
campaign. See chapter 5 pages 217 - 224 for a discussion of Iraqi Police in Samarra for
an example of a security force framework that did not respond effectively in November
2004.

were viewed as legitimate as they were from the same tribes as the local population and were Sunni Arabs. The PFs intimate knowledge of terrain and people assisted their CAP units in eradication of the Viet Cong from villages such as Phu Bai.

Some accounts even described a near super human ability of the locals to sense danger, detect mines with the naked eye, and see through insurgent attempts to hide amongst the population. For example, the SAS in Oman kept one eye on the ground and the other eye on the firqa to know when to expect enemy contact. The Sons of Iraq in Baghdad recovered IEDs that escaped more technologically sophisticated U.S. detection methods. A MACV lessons learned report commented on the PF ability to know who to question and where to search homes often leading to arrests or cache finds that U.S. forces alone would have missed. Simply, a close familiarity with all of the various aspects of their environment provided locals with a significant advantage over outside forces and even the insurgents.[582]

Idea 3: Train, Equip, and Mentor Relative to the Threat

Tied closely to organizational survival, local security forces must have the training, equipment, and leadership to defeat the enemy. In the U.S. counterinsurgencies examined, the civilian and military efforts often fought an internal war amongst themselves on how the police should be trained, equipped, and mentored. Whether Taft vs. MacArthur, Dubrow vs. Williams, or Bremer vs. Sanchez, all of these petty disagreements wasted time toward prosecuting an effective counterinsurgency campaign.

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[582]See chapter 4 pages 133 - 154 for a discussion of the combined action program. See chapter 5 pages 235 - 248 for discussion of the Ramadi Police from 2006 – 2007 and pages 248 – 264 for information on the Sons of Iraq in Baghdad during the summer of 2007. The firqa are discussed in chapter 2.

The civilian view was generally a long term view toward Western style civil policing while the military approach was generally one focused on immediacy and paramilitary capabilities. In sum, one may be considered idealistic while the other was practical. However, both extremes missed how the military and civil government agencies could support each other toward a viable force and how an initial paramilitary force could transition over time to a more civil oriented force as the threat level was reduced.

With emphasis on training and equipping, the U.S. military eventually performed these tasks fairly well in both Vietnam and Iraq. However, mentorship efforts were mixed. Better efforts included combined patrols, partnership, and embedding. They also included professional education for leaders. However, even these better methods used did not always lead to long term success. As U.S. forces departed the mentored units, their leaders were sometimes no better than when they had first arrived. The better methods, however, did make the units more effective while U.S. forces remained in the area.

Part of the problem in growing leaders for these forces was initial selection. At the higher levels, leaders were generally selected for political loyalty rather than competence particularly in Vietnam. Although this point gets into the debate of whether leaders are trained or born, there is room within that debate to concede that there is some basic combination of attributes that a leader candidate should possess prior to being trained and mentored into a leadership role. Incentives for attracting talent evolved over time in many of the campaigns with monetary compensation or the opportunity to stay close to one's home being the most routinely used.[583]

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[583]See chapter 4 pages 100 – 107 for a discussion of the debate over the role of the RF and PF. See chapter 5 pages 218 – 219 for a discussion of a similar debate concerning

<u>Idea 4: Vetting is an Important and Continual Process</u>

Loyalty of a local security force was often in question during the review of cases. As a result, the counterinsurgents generally adopted some process for vetting new members. Some attempts failed while others succeeded. There is no discernable best practice that was used as in some situations a simple word of mouth or quick debrief worked well while even assurances of loyalty by tribal elders in the CIDG program in Vietnam did not turn out as effective in many cases. However, vetting was often seen as a one-time affair which caused problems particularly in Vietnam as part of the enemy's strategy was to turn members of the territorial security forces. Further, when U.S. forces did not control vetting of police during Operation Baton Rouge in Iraq there was a large lack of trust between both forces.

Although short term vetting was important to weed out internal security threats, long term vetting was equally important as it served to connect the local security forces to the central government. For example, in Ramadi vetting through tribal chiefs assisted in the short term while biometric registration, oaths of loyalty to Iraq, and formalization of the security component of the Awakening through new police helped to ensure, to this point in the campaign, a longer term loyalty. The British experience in Oman is interesting in this regard as it seems some relative autonomy and continued salary, rather than formalization other than a pledge to support the Sultan, is still providing a ―coincidence of aims‖ forty years after the raising of the first firqa. Out of all of the

the Iraqi Police. For more about combined operations or partnership see chapter 4 pages 133 – 172 for a discussion of combined action and CIDG.

factors derived, vetting seemed to be the most environmentally dependent in which any process had potential for success or failure depending on the context.[584]

Idea 5: Quantity Usually Sacrifices Quality

Getting large quantities of security forces in short periods of time was achievable in nearly all of the campaigns examined. However the haste of rapid expansion made obtaining the right recruits problematic. In Iraq, the ISF were over represented by Shia Arabs and underrepresented by Sunni Arabs who decided not to join the security forces early in the campaign. This caused the Sunni Arab population to view their own countryman as an Army of occupation regardless of the color of their uniform. Ironically, U.S. units became trusted agents and arbiters between the Sunni population and Shia ISF in some areas.

Large influxes of security forces tended to outstrip training capacity very quickly. Political appointments combined with curtailed training led to less effective leaders in nearly all host nation forces. Although training and equipping tended to be sorted out by the counterinsurgents in a relatively short period of time, leadership deficiencies in security organizations seemed to take much longer to improve with some units never demonstrating a widespread ability to improve their leaders. Developing leaders on a large scale simply takes time as demonstrated by the U.S. approach to the Philippine constabulary where U.S. officers initially commanded constabulary units for years before Filipino officers began emerging on a wide scale. Even some of these highly capable U.S.

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[584]See chapter 2 for a discussion of the firqa in Oman. See chapter 4 pages 154 – 172 for a discussion of CIDG and chapter 5 pages 235 – 248 for a discussion of Iraqi Police in Ramadi.

officers had to be replaced, but these officers were much more competent than the

Filipino candidates available at the time. This approach comes with the modern day risk

of fueling the insurgent narrative of foreign occupation, however, an advisory approach

may add to the foreigner perception equally.

Some counterinsurgents successfully mitigated the effects of poor leadership and

lack of training due to rapid expansion. For example, in Malaya and Iraq, police units

underwent a retraining process that resulted in a better force in Malaya while the

effectiveness of re-bluing efforts in Iraq have yet to be determined. However, both of

these efforts were made possible by the numbers and abilities of other security forces to

assume additional responsibility in the absence of police forces. In Vietnam, the rapid

expansion of the RF and PF that began in 1968 was combined with a vast equipping

effort that upgraded their armament and communications equipment. Additionally mobile

training teams were dispersed throughout South Vietnam to train and mentor the RF and

PF for a short period of time before moving on to another unit. The number of CAP units

in I Corps also grew to its height around this time. However, the true mitigating effects of

these actions are difficult to ascertain as these efforts took place under a reduced Post-Tet

enemy threat and under a change in insurgent strategy.[585]

Summary

Just as local security forces are not the single solution to winning a

counterinsurgency, there is no guarantee that consideration of some or all of these ideas

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[585]For a discussion of the Philippine constabulary see chapter 2. See chapter 4
pages 100 – 133 for a discussion of the RF and PF in Vietnam. See chapter 5 pages 204 –
208 for a brief discussion of the police in the larger security force framework and each
local security force section for a discussion of their contribution to specific areas in Iraq.

will field an invincible and mistake free unit. However, by viewing the factors as a general set of ideas that can be adapted to the nuances of specific internal conflicts, the factors presented in this thesis become much more useful. Thus, rather than lifting lessons from one campaign and applying them to another without understanding the context, which can lead to mixed results at best, an appreciation and continual assessment of the environment is highly recommended as a necessary first step.

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BB020, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, 2 March 2011.

BB030, Brigade Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, 3 March 2011.

Fort Bragg, North Carolina

BC010, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 1 March 2011.

BC020, Brigade Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 2 March 2011.

BC030, Battalion Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 1 March 2011.

BC040, Battalion Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 2 March 2011.

BC050, Battalion Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 2 March 2011.

BC060, Battalion Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 3 March 2011.

Fort Irwin, California

BE010, Transition Team Leader. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 7 March 2011.

BE020, Transition Team Member. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 7 March 2011.

BE030, Company Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 8 March 2011.

BE040, Transition Team Leader. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 9 March 2011.

BE050, Battery Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 8 March 2011.

BE060, Brigade Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 9 March 2011.

BE070, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 9 March 2011.

BE080, Battalion Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 7 March 2011.

BE090, Battalion Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Aaron Kaufman, 7 March 2011.

Fort Knox, Kentucky

BD010, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 14 March 2011.

BD020, Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 14 March 2011.

BD030, Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 14 March 2011.

BD040, Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 15 March 2011.

BD050, Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 15 March 2011.

BD060, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 16 March 2011.

BD070, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 16 March 2011.

BD080, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 17 March 2011.

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

BA010, Brigade Commander. Interview by Richard Johnson and Thomas Walton, 22 February 2011.

BA020, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Benjamin Boardman, 23 February 2011.

BA030, Vietnam Veteran. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 24 February 2011.

BA040, Brigade Commander. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 23 February 2011.

BA050, Battalion Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Nathan Springer, 23 February 2011.

BA060, Battalion Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Nathan Springer, 23 February 2011.

BA070, Battery Commander. Interview by Richard Johnson and Thomas Walton, 24 February 2011.

BA080, Counterinsurgency Advisor. Interview by Richard Johnson and Nathan Springer, 9 March 2011.

BA090, Brigade Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Benjamin Boardman, 24 February 2011.

Fort Stewart, Georgia:

BG010, Battalion Commander. Interview by Nathan Springer, 14 March 2011.

BG020, Brigade Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 14 March 2011.

BG030, Troop Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, 14 March 2011.

BG040, Brigade Commander. Interview by Nathan Springer and Thomas Walton, 15 March 2011.

BG050, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes, 15 March 2011.

BG060, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes, 15 March 2011.

BG070, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Nathan Springer and Thomas Walton, 15 March 2011.

BG080, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 16 March 2011.

BG090, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, 16 March 2011.

BG100, Brigade Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes and Nathan Springer, 16 March 2011.

United Kingdom

BI010, Senior British Officer. Interview by Mark Battjes, Benjamin Boardman, Robert Green, Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Dustin Mitchell, and Nathan Springer, 29 March 2011.

BI020, Battle Group Commander. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Thomas Walton, 31 March 2011.

BI030, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Robert Green and Thomas Walton, 29 March 2011.

BI040, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Mark Battjes and Dustin Mitchell, 1 April 2011.

BI050, Dhofar Veterans Panel. Interview by Mark Battjes, Benjamin Boardman, Robert Green, Richard Johnson, Aaron Kaufman, Dustin Mitchell, Nathan Springer, and Thomas Walton, 28 March 2011.

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BI110, Battalion Commander. Interview by Mark Battjes, Richard Johnson, and Dustin Mitchell, 8 April 2011.

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BI130, Platoon Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 5 April 2011.

BI140, Afghan Army Advisor. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 5 April 2011.

BI150, Company Sergeant Major. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 5 April 2011.

BI160, Company 2nd In Command. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 5 April 2011.

BI170, Afghan Army Advisor. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 5 April 2011.

BI190, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 5 April 2011.

BI200, Platoon Commander. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 7 April 2011.

BI210, Company 2nd In Command. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 7 April 2011.

BI220, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Aaron Kaufman and Dustin Mitchell, 7 April 2011.

BI230, Company Commander. Interview by Robert Green and Nathan Springer, 7 April 2011.

BI240, Company Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 7 April 2011.

BI250, Battalion Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Richard Johnson, 7 April 2011.

BI260, Non-Commissioned Officer. Interview by Robert Green and Nathan Springer, 7 April 2011.

BI270, Company Grade Officer. Interview by Mark Battjes and Thomas Walton, 7 April 2011.

BI280, Commander's Panel. Interview by Richard Johnson, 1 April 2011.

BI290, Battery Commander. Interview by Richard Johnson, 1 April 2011.

BI300, Company Commander. Interview by Richard Johnson, 2 April 2011.

BI310, Company Commander. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Nathan Springer, 31 March 2011.

BI320, Field Grade Officer. Interview by Benjamin Boardman and Dustin Mitchell, 29 March 2011.

BI330, Dhofar Veteran. Interview by Robert Green, 28 March 2011.

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