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**APPLYING OPERATIONAL MANOEUVRE THEORY
TO CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONS**

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Abstract

The complex nature of the modern insurgency brings into question the relevance of traditional manoeuvre warfare at the operational level. Western militaries are clearly structured, equipped and trained to fight conventional force-on-force engagements against traditional militaries of other nation states. However, in the fourth-generation warfare (4GW) environment, the insurgents are characterized by a complex networking of independent entities, each with potentially different root causes, and who understand the West's conventional military might. They, therefore, seek to avoid this military dominance through asymmetric strategies. They do not present traditional physical sources of power that can be targeted with conventional military kinetic means. This paper contends however, that operational manoeuvre remains relevant as a modern counterinsurgency strategy and is the essence of operational art. However, just as the insurgent has evolved, so too must the application of manoeuvre at the operational level. The paper demonstrates that manoeuvre is more a philosophical approach to campaign design and execution than an arrangement of tactical engagements to obtain a position of advantage in order to defeat the enemy. The research provides a synthesis of the enduring principles of manoeuvre, building upon the fundamental concept of Sun Tzu's ordinary and extraordinary force. The paper defines the modern operating environment, in particular the nature of the practitioners of 4GW and the vulnerabilities of Western societies. The research also emphasizes the enduring nature of insurgencies, in particular the requirement to have the support, or at least the control, of the population. The paper concludes by demonstrating how a manoeuvrist approach in campaign design and execution remains relevant and effective as a counter-insurgency strategy at the operational level in contemporary operations.

APPLYING OPERATIONAL MANOEUVRE THEORY TO CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONS

“Supreme intelligence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting”

Sun Tzu¹

INTRODUCTION

The New World Order and ‘peace dividend’ that many forecasted as a result of the collapse of the former Soviet Union was short lived. It was replaced by a global insurgency of unprecedented scale. A succession of failed-state conflicts, Bosnia, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan, to name but a few, and the rise of trans-national entities fuelled by radical interpretations of Islam, have created what Col (ret) Thomas Hammes classifies as an “evolved form of insurgency”.² He uses the concept of Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW) to better understand this evolving conflict paradigm, which “uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy’s political decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit.”³

Into this evolving international insecurity is thrust the US, the sole remaining superpower. Bolstered by allies and ‘coalitions of the willing’, the US and the West apply their conventional military capability, shaped and structured by the Cold War paradigm of conventional force against force, nation state versus nation state, against this new evolved 4GW insurgency. The modern insurgent is not conventional, however, but rather is characterized as a network of independent entities, each spurred by different causes, that operate together in the same operational space. In the face of Western military dominance, these insurgent elements seek to avoid conventional force-on-force warfare by adopting guerrilla tactics and strategies.

Within this context, the relevance of manoeuvre warfare bears examination as a counter-insurgency strategy in a small war. William Lind defines manoeuvre warfare as

¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ed. James Clavell (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc, 1983), 2.

² Thomas X Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St Paul, Minnesota: Zenith Press, 2004), 2.

³ Thomas X Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century...* 2. The use of 4GW is to illustrate the modern insurgency. The question of whether it is truly an evolved and distinct generation of warfare is not addressed and beyond the scope of this paper.

“military judo”⁴ whereby one out-thinks an opponent that cannot be beaten with brute strength. Manoeuvre warfare emphasizes disrupting or dislocating an enemy force by smashing its centre of gravity vice destroying an opponent’s military forces, thereby avoiding the more horrendous casualties and stalemates of attrition warfare. While manoeuvre warfare is doctrinally relevant in the context of conventional force on force engagements, in the evolved global insurgency, 4GW, the relevance of manoeuvre warfare is questioned; specifically, “how do you use tactical engagements or operational manoeuvre to strike at targets such as family or clan honour, gang loyalties, ideological convictions or a belief in a particular God?”⁵

AIM

This paper argues that operational manoeuvre is more than tactical manoeuvring of combat forces on a battlefield to strike at an enemy’s centre of gravity through his weaknesses. Rather, at the operational level, being manoeuvrist is a philosophical approach to campaign design and execution that makes it relevant and effective in defeating insurgent opponents in the contemporary operating environment. To prove this thesis, the paper will demonstrate the symbiotic relationship of manoeuvre to operational art, including an analysis of the concept of centres of gravity. Manoeuvre warfare will then be defined in the traditional context within a force-on-force paradigm, building on the fundamental concept of Sun Tzu’s ordinary and extraordinary forces and drawing out the key enduring principles of manoeuvre warfare. The complexity of the modern operating environment in which campaigns are conducted will be then be examined, through the three pillars, or filters, of the complex operating environment and the practitioners of 4GW, the enduring nature of insurgency, and the West’s own societal strengths and vulnerabilities. The paper will then demonstrate that a manoeuvrist philosophy at the operational level, distinct from manoeuvre warfare in a conventional force on force context, is relevant and effective in a modern counterinsurgency campaign. Historical case studies, specifically Malaya, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, will be used to illustrate the key themes developed in this paper.

OPERATIONAL ART

In order to understand how a manoeuvrist approach can influence campaign design, it is important to secure the ‘line of departure’; specifically, start from a common understanding of the operational level of conflict. The operational level of conflict is “the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to

⁴ William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 2.

⁵ William S. Lind. “Operational IEDs,” found at <http://www.lewrockwell.com/lind/lind81.html>; Internet; accessed 10 October 2005.

accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or areas of operation.”⁶ This level of conflict links the strategic and tactical levels by ensuring that tactical friction is directly related to the achievement of a strategic end. The operational-level commander does this through the application of operational art, defined as “the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration and conduct of theatre strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles”.⁷ It becomes then, the design and conduct of campaigns that integrates tactical battles and engagements to the achievement of strategic ends. Robert Leonhard, in *The Art of Manoeuvre*, states “operational art is successful, then, only to the degree that its outcomes advance the strategic plan.”⁸ William Lind further expands the concept of operational art as “the art of using tactical events – battles or refusals to give battles – to strike...at the enemy’s centre of gravity.”⁹ This additional distinction is critical to understanding the symbiotic relationship between a manoeuvrist approach and the operational art. Specifically, a Commander has the option to use tactical friction *where* it *contributes* to the operational objectives or strategic ends, or to refuse to engage in tactical friction where its result *does not contribute* to an operational objective or strategic end. The strategic ends are what gives legitimacy to tactical activity.

In the study of operational art, the concept of centre of gravity emerges as a central and fundamental element of campaign design. Canadian doctrine uses the centre of gravity as the basis upon which campaign plans are built. The Canadian definition of centre of gravity is “the characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight.”¹⁰ Centres of gravity are identified for both enemy and friendly forces. The premise is that one attacks the enemy’s centre of gravity while protecting one’s own. The neutralization or destruction of the enemy’s centre of gravity leads to the destruction of his cohesion and will to fight. Therefore, the destruction of an enemy’s military force is not necessarily required to defeat him. This is the essence of a manoeuvrist approach. Given its importance in operational art, and by extension manoeuvre theory, it is necessary to further refine our understanding of centres of gravity to better enable application of direct or indirect action.¹¹

⁶ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-300/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004), 1-5.

⁷ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *CF Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-1.

⁸ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver* (Novato Ca: Presidio, 1991), 8.

⁹ William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*...24.

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-300/FP-000 *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004), 3-1.

¹¹ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *CF Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-4. CF doctrine identifies two approaches towards an enemy’s centre of gravity. The Direct approach is a linear approach by the quickest and most direct route. Indirect implies attacking vulnerabilities, and avoiding strength against strength, to strike at centre of gravity. The indirect approach is the basis of manoeuvre theory.

The model developed by Dr Strange provides an effective construct to better understand centres of gravity. He defines centres of gravity as “primary sources of moral or physical strength, power and resistance.”¹² He further expands the understanding of a centre of gravity by integrating three additional terms: critical capability (CC), critical requirement (CR) and critical vulnerability (CV).¹³ Returning to the 4GW insurgency, the centre of gravity typically revolves around the insurgent’s will to fight. This is reinforced by Major General Julian Paget who stated that destroying the insurgent’s will to win is “one of the easiest and cheapest methods of winning the war.”¹⁴ The challenge becomes how to attack this intangible centre of gravity of a complex 4GW insurgency. This is where Dr Strange’s model becomes useful. By identifying the CCs, CRs and CVs, and understanding their connectivity, the commander can develop lines of operations that target CVs to deny the enemy the CCs and CRs he needs to fight and which support or defend his centre of gravity. Thus by defining the centre of gravity in this manner, as illustrated in figure 1, the commander can adopt an indirect, or manoeuvrist, approach to attacking the centre of gravity, making it particularly useful when a centre of gravity is difficult to directly target with kinetic means. This forms the basis of the campaign design and operational art, as it deliberately shapes the development of tactical engagements.

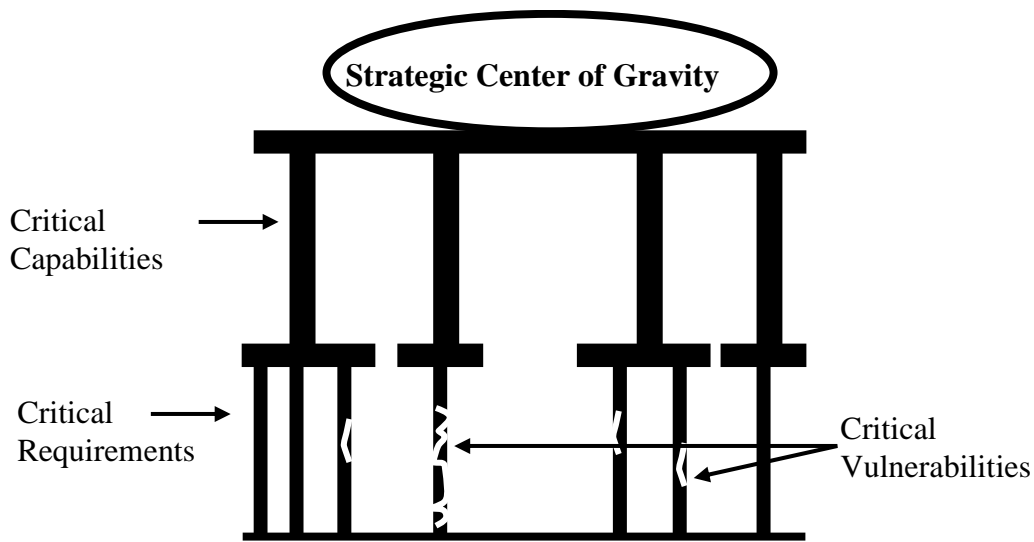


Figure 1: The Dr Strange Model

¹² Dr Joe Strange, *Perspectives on Warfighting: Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 1996), 3. Dr Strange’s monograph on centre of gravity and critical vulnerabilities have been incorporated into the US Marine doctrine.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 113. Critical Capabilities are primary abilities which enable a centre of gravity to be identified as such. Critical Requirements are essential conditions, resources and means for a CC to be effective. Critical Vulnerabilities are CRs or CCs which are deficient or vulnerable to attack that, when struck, achieve decisive results.

¹⁴ Major General Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1967), 177.

CONVENTIONAL MANEUVER WARFARE

Manoeuvre warfare, in the traditional sense of conventional force-on-force engagements in a relatively linear battlefield, has focused on defeating the enemy instead of destroying his military capabilities. The latter approach, termed attritionist, “focuses first upon bringing the enemy to battle and then seeks to defeat him in that battle or in follow-on battles.”¹⁵ The key to winning the attrition battle becomes the movement of sufficient military capability to a battle to ensure superior force ratios. Success is then measured in large part by winning the tactical battle and the corresponding comparison of loss ratios between the opposing forces. An operational-level attritionist approach therefore uses the movement of forces, or tactical manoeuvre, as the means to get to the fight. In contrast, manoeuvre warfare at the operational level is not concerned with set battles where forces are pitted against each other in strength-on-strength encounters. Manoeuvre warfare, rather, seeks to defeat an enemy by attacking its weaknesses while avoiding its strength. John Antal reinforces this concept by building on Liddell Hart’s “surfaces and gaps”¹⁶ analogy, defining manoeuvre warfare as seeking “to exploit the enemy’s weak spots (gaps) and avoid his heavily defended areas (surfaces)”¹⁷ to defeat him. Manoeuvre warfare at the operational level therefore becomes, “above all else, a philosophy concerning the means of defeat of an enemy”¹⁸ rather than destruction of its military capabilities. In its simplest terms, it is the “movement towards an objective”¹⁹ where the objective is linked to a strategic end. The purpose of the movement is the key: “to gain an advantage over the enemy in some way – positional or psychological.”²⁰ The objective becomes the defining line between tactical manoeuvre in an operational-level attritionist strategy and true operational manoeuvre. The objective must be linked to a strategic end, and not simply be a tactical advantage in an isolated battle. All battles, whether won or lost, cost resources.²¹ Therefore, the practitioner of operational art will not expend his resources and military capability needlessly unless it furthers the achievement of an operational objective or strategic end. The simple accumulation of tactical victories does not guarantee victory.²² Manoeuvre at the operational level, therefore, seeks tactical encounters only where they further the achievement of a strategic end and not for the sake of the battle itself, which characterizes the attritionist approach.

¹⁵ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*...19.

¹⁶ William S Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*...73-75. Lind refers to Captain BH Liddell Hart’s expanding water torrent analogy where water will bang against surfaces until it finds a gap, then continue its torrent through the gap, eroding the sides to ever widen it, thus maintaining the speed, breadth and continuity of the attack.

¹⁷ John F. Antal, “Thoughts About Maneuver Warfare,” In *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*. Ed. Richard D. Hooker, 57-73 (Novato: Presidio Press, 1993), 63.

¹⁸ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*...61.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11

²² William S Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*...24

In order to better understand the principle elements of manoeuvre warfare, it is advantageous to look at its historical evolution.

Sun Tzu, in his treatise *The Art of War*, provides the genesis of manoeuvre theory. He contends that “to subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence.”²³ This assertion acknowledges that the defeat of an enemy is primarily a “psychological phenomenon, rather than a quantifiable body count.”²⁴ Knowing the enemy, and in particular the enemy commander, provides an avenue of attack outside of the typical destruction of military forces; specifically, the morale plane, which introduces options for both kinetic and non-kinetic means to defeat an enemy. Sun Tzu’s concept of the “ordinary and extraordinary force”²⁵, where the ordinary force fixes the enemy military component while the extraordinary force is used to strike the rear or flanks of the enemy to disrupt him, has been an enduring theme throughout history: avoiding the enemy’s strength and striking where he is vulnerable, using the advance (ordinary) force to hold the enemy while conducting a grand manoeuvre with the extraordinary force to attain a quick decision. The objective of the extraordinary force is not so much to destroy the enemy’s military strength, but to either disrupt or dislocate him thereby destroying his cohesion and will to fight.

Disruption and dislocation are the desired effects of manoeuvre warfare, as opposed to simple destruction. Leonhard defines disruption as “defeating the enemy by attacking his centre of gravity.”²⁶ Rather than attacking the enemy strength, one strives, through operational manoeuvre, to strike instead at his centre of gravity, thereby neutralizing or paralyzing his military force. Dislocation is “rendering the enemy’s strength irrelevant.”²⁷ Leonhard further defines dislocation as either positional²⁸ (striking at the enemy where he is not strong, such as in his depth or against his ‘gaps’) or functional²⁹ (rendering the enemy’s strength irrelevant through combination of tactics and technology). The focus then is towards defeating the enemy by striking his centre of gravity, either directly where possible or indirectly through CVs, but not through his strength.

Napoleon applied Sun Tzu’s ordinary and extraordinary force concept with his *manoeuvre sur les derrières*. He used a small (ordinary) force to fix the enemy while

²³ Mark McNeilly, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare* (Oxford NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18. In McNeilly’s book, he also provides the Samuel Griffith original translation of Sun Tzu’s treatise, and this quote is also found at page 226.

²⁴ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver...*30.

²⁵ Mark McNeilly, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare...*139. The original quote is also found in Samuel Griffith’s original translation at page 239 of this reference. The concept is derived from Sun Tzu’s concept of *Cheng* (the normal or ordinary force that confronts the enemy) and *Ch’I* (the extraordinary force that flanks the enemy).

²⁶ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver...*73.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 68-73.

outflanking him with a larger (extraordinary) force, to strike deep into the enemy's rear and dislocate him.³⁰ Napoleon enhanced the effects of these forces by ensuring their combined arms composition which enabled more dispersed and independent operations³¹ achieving a high degree of simultaneity.³² This application of self-supporting independent forces across the width and depth of the battlefield enabled Napoleon to dictate the tempo of his attack, thereby allowing him to retain the initiative and determine where and when tactical engagements would occur.

In World War II, the Germans incorporated the air dimension into manoeuvre with their Blitzkrieg tactics, particularly effective in the initial campaign against France in 1940. Synchronizing the effects of the tank, infantry, artillery and air support, the Germans focused their efforts (ordinary force) into a specific point³³ to create a 'gap'. Once a breakthrough was achieved, the (extraordinary) force would exploit deep into the enemy's rear, bypassing points of strengths. Unified by a common understanding of the operational objectives, the German forces were able to defeat their enemy by operating in his rear against CVs, thus avoiding his main strengths. The Soviet application of manoeuvre warfare emphasized depth and formalized the concept of the deep battle.³⁴ They fought close battles to penetrate the enemy's main defences and then exploited deep into his rear with the 'extraordinary force' to strike at his critical vulnerabilities. A US application of the concept of extraordinary force at the operational level to strike deep in the enemy's rear is illustrated by the amphibious flanking manoeuvre conducted at Inchon, Korea in September 1950.³⁵ This manoeuvre positionally dislocated the North Korean forces, resulting in their subsequent collapse and the relief of the besieged allied forces at Pusan. In all cases, from Napoleon to the Germans and Soviets in WWII and the US in Korea, the packaging and manoeuvring of the ordinary force to fix the enemy or create gaps, and the extraordinary force to avoid the enemy's military strengths to strike deep into his rear at critical vulnerabilities leading to the centre of gravity have been key to the evolution of manoeuvre warfare. It was not until the Korean conflict, and Col John

³⁰ Ibid., 41. *Manoeuvre sur les derrières* was a classic Napoleon tactic, and demonstrated the application of depth in manoeuvre theory.

³¹ Ibid., 41. These two concepts facilitated the effectiveness of independent action and manoeuvring between battles.

³² Howard Coombs, *Perspectives on Operational Thought*, (Toronto: Canadian Forces College, 4 June 2004): 39,40. Reference is a required reading from AMSP course syllabus, A/DS 552/PLN/LD-1 "Joint Operations Concepts and Operational Art". Simultaneity refers to the simultaneous application of capability against the full array of enemy capabilities. This creates a paralyzing effect against which the enemy is unable to respond and becomes demoralized, and he therefore cedes the initiative.

³³ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver...* 50-51. Termed *blitzkrieg* (*lightning war*), it reinforced combined arms tactics and the exploitation of the enemy's vulnerabilities (weaknesses) in his depth, avoiding a strength on strength clash except to create a gap.

³⁴ Ibid., 53. Again, reinforcing the concept of creating a penetration with the ordinary force and then exploiting with manoeuvre into the enemy's depth with an extraordinary force continues as a common theme.

³⁵ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Battle of Inchon," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Inchon; Internet: accessed 21 October 2006.

Boyd's subsequent analysis, that the fourth dimension, time, was formally incorporated into manoeuvre.

In studying aerial dogfights between US and Korean fighters, Boyd determined that the speed of a decision cycle gave the US aviators a distinct advantage in defeating Korean fighters. He developed what is now known as the OODA Loop – Observe, Orient, Decide and Act.³⁶ The OODA loop construct redefined manoeuvre in terms of tempo. He who is able to make a relevant decision faster than his opponent is able to seize and retain the initiative. Lind states that “conflict can be seen as time-competitive OODA cycles”³⁷ and defines manoeuvre in this context as “Boyd-cycling the enemy, being consistently faster through however many OODA loops it takes until the enemy loses his cohesion – until he can no longer fight as an effective, organized force.”³⁸ The use of “time as an ally”³⁹ is a defining characteristic of the manoeuvrist approach. Specifically, the use of time as manoeuvre space creates a tempo, defined as the “rate or rhythm of activity relative to the enemy.”⁴⁰ Tempo is related directly to the OODA loop relative to the enemy. If one can “develop and sustain a tempo advantage over the enemy, then the enemy's intentions become less and less relevant.”⁴¹ This increased tempo, and the resultant initiative, creates a degree of chaos, or fog, that disrupts or functionally dislocates the enemy and fulfils Sun Tzu's dictum that “speed is the essence of war.”⁴²

The key to manoeuvre is the application of Sun Tzu's ordinary and extraordinary force concept, combined with the fundamental elements of tempo, simultaneity, synchronization, sequencing, intelligence and dispersion. Through the application of manoeuvre at the operational level, the practitioner of operational art seeks to defeat an enemy by subduing his will and not through the destruction of his military forces. This has become the basis for the campaign design at the operational level to defeat a conventional military force on a linear battlefield. However, the contemporary operating environment is characterized by non-linearity and comprises a complex network of non-state insurgent elements that adopt asymmetric warfare tactics. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the 4GW context in which an operational-level manoeuvrist philosophy can be applied, specifically, the three pillars of the operating environment and the adversary, the nature of insurgency and the West's own societal constraints and vulnerabilities.

³⁶ The OODA Loop is a commonly used framework to describe a decision action cycle. It was invented by Col John Boyd, USAF.

³⁷ William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*...5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6

³⁹ Maj Jeffrey L. Cowan, “warfighting brought to you by John Boyd,” available from http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/cowan_proceedings.htm; Internet; accessed 29 September 2006. The quote comes from General Charles C. Krulak in his eulogy for Col Boyd on 11 Mar 97.

⁴⁰ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000 *CF Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-6.

⁴¹ Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver*...16.

⁴² Mark McNeilly, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare*...96. The original quote is also found in Samuel Griffith's original translation at page 280 of this reference.

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The battle-space of the evolved insurgency is increasingly complex and lethal. It is characterized by failed or fragile states with weak, corrupt or non-existent government structures that must be re-established for stability. Poverty and corruption are main impediments to the establishment of the rule of law and economic growth. The population tends to gravitate towards cities, resulting in urban sprawl. The peoples of these regions tend to be a mix of different ethnicities, religions and cultures, and in many cases bounded by arbitrarily determined political boundaries. Spanning this environment is a pervasive media, ensuring that “all future conflicts will be acted out before an international audience.”⁴³ It is in this environment that the practitioner of 4GW operates.

The modern insurgents can be viewed as a loose network of independent cells of self-generating action groups. This network comprises local, national as well as a trans-national element.⁴⁴ The local elements are represented by criminal gangs, drug lords, paramilitary and tribal militias whose primary motivation is money or local power or some combination thereof. The national element represents the more traditional insurgents of Mao’s ‘People’s War’, specifically those who seek the overthrow of perceived ineffective and compromised regimes for justice. The trans-national insurgent is a new element that elevates the complexity of the modern insurgency. They represent non-state opponents with no political borders constraining their actions or organizational design and are motivated by radical interpretations of Islam or international criminal activity. These different entities are loosely bound by both a common resentment of the West’s perceived dominance of their economic and political affairs and an opposition, unique to their individual agendas and ideologies, to an effective central government.⁴⁵ They will not have the traditional physical sources of power, such as a government, command and control facilities nor modern, formed military forces. They will instead be indistinguishable from the local populace, employing them as cover to mask their movements and making it difficult to detect them. As such, they each, to varying degrees, require the support, or at the least control, of the local people for their success. They will operate in a decentralized fashion to avoid centralizing their powers, or capabilities, into defined masses that could be the subject of targeting by conventional kinetic weapons.

Insurgencies are not a new phenomenon. The application of guerrilla warfare, in insurgencies, has existed throughout history. Recent historical examples include: Mao Tse-Tung in China, Chin Peng in Malaya, and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. What is new is both the presence of the trans-national entity and that the different insurgent elements have integrated into a loose network of independent entities operating in the same operational space, making them a more complex and dangerous opponent. Further, the

⁴³ General Charles C Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three-Block War,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 83, no. 1 (Jan 1999): 16.

⁴⁴ Thomas X Hammes, “Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation,” *Strategic Forum*, no 214 (January 2005), available from <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF214/SF214.pdf>; Internet accessed 20 October 2006.

⁴⁵ Thomas X Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone...*168

insurgents use commonly available low-cost technologies and exploit what John Mackinlay has described as the virtual domain⁴⁶ to reach deeper into the West's depth to attack the minds of the international populations and their decision makers to destroy their will to sustain a prolonged conflict.⁴⁷ In this context, the modern insurgents are not focused on tactical successes but, using the 'media as terrain', they aim for strategic effects from those tactical engagements. This is the essence of the modern insurgency and the practitioner of 4GW. It now becomes necessary, to better understand the enemy and the environment in which he operates, to look at the nature of insurgency and how the population and the insurgents interact.

From a conventional military perspective, insurgents are clearly at a disadvantage in that they typically lack the firepower and sensor-to-shooter technologies to enable a conventional force-on-force engagement. Instead, insurgents adopt guerrilla tactics that mitigate the conventional military strengths of their opponents. They "offset technological inferiority with advantages such as mass, will, proximity and an intimate knowledge of the battle area."⁴⁸ These offsetting effects are achieved through the influencing of the population, which becomes, as Mao Tse-Tung describes in his 'fish' theory of the people's war, the sea in which the insurgents operate.⁴⁹ In an insurgency, therefore, the battleground becomes the population. The conflict is fought with ideas as much as it is contested with weapons⁵⁰ Insurgents focus on controlling the population, through violence and other tactics, rather than to capture territory.⁵¹ Control of the population provides the necessary ingredients to sustain the insurgency: food, shelter, supply, intelligence and recruits.⁵² This 'sea' enables the insurgents to avoid decisive combat against superior conventional forces by using the population as a mask for movement and a base for sustainment, and to "fight only at times and places of their choosing."⁵³ Control is exercised by the different insurgent entities through a campaign

⁴⁶ John Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan* (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2005): 37. Mackinlay defines the virtual domain as the populations of the failing state, the nation members of the coalition, the global Muslim communities, and the supporting population of any other player in a conflict. The struggle is to alter the mind of specific populations to gain their support. This domain is linked by the media and communications technology.

⁴⁷ Thomas X Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*...31.

⁴⁸ Robert H Scales, *Yellow Smoke* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2002): 42. In this context, the use of 'mass' refers to the ability of insurgents, or guerrillas, to gather at a time and place to fight a specific engagement and then disperse back into the population. It does not refer to the mass traditionally associated with a conventional standing military force that could be subsequently targeted.

⁴⁹ John A Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002): 28. The theory sees insurgent forces as a fish, with a head and a body representing the leadership and armed capability. The population becomes the sea for the fish. To catch the fish, one may use a rod or net (force on force) or one may indirectly neutralize or destroy the fish by affecting the water, or population.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵¹ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 50.

⁵² John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*...28-29.

⁵³ Douglas S. Blaufarb and George K. Tanham, *Who Will Win* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989), 10.

of winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the population or, where necessary, adopting a strategy of ‘fear and hatred’.⁵⁴ The insurgents are therefore able to mass when and where required to battle thus creating a tighter decision-action-cycle, or OODA loop, allowing them to sustain the initiative. In this manner, conventional military forces become dislocated as their dominance is marginalized. This asymmetric approach to warfare thus avoids the military strength of an opponent and seeks instead to attack its weakness, enabled by the control of the population, or the ‘sea’.

When conventional military kinetic force is used in an insurgency, it often has negative consequences that jeopardizes success. Firepower destroys, so although an engagement may be won, it may alienate the people, thus strengthening the insurgent support base and hence capacity to sustain the struggle.⁵⁵ This was aptly illustrated in Vietnam, where US forces used firepower and technological superiority to win tactical engagements, but the resultant death and destruction created a rift between them and the people.⁵⁶ This strengthened the North Vietnamese forces, who ultimately won at the operational and strategic levels. The key in counter-insurgency therefore becomes to attack the “support of the people for the insurgents.”⁵⁷ Winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the population is essential in the conduct of warfare in an insurgent or guerrilla type conflict. By severing the bonds between the insurgents and the population, one cuts off their sources of food, shelter, supply, recruitment, and intelligence. Therefore, winning that support becomes, as John Nagl contends, “the critical battle in a counterinsurgency campaign.”⁵⁸

The environment and the enemy are but two of the three pillars that shape operational design. The third is Western democratic society and its values. Typically regarded as a strength, the very values and freedoms that define the West also create vulnerabilities for Western militaries engaged in 4GW. The West is often described as “a microwave society of instant results.”⁵⁹ Its values and belief systems, coupled with its superiority in technology and conventional military power, have created a culture of precision or surgical warfare, where enemy forces are eradicated while collateral damage is minimized. “Public opinion has been seduced by the misinformation that a form of sanitized warfare can be conducted through the use of precision guided munitions.”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*...7. ‘Fear and Hatred’ is a strategy of controlling a population by intimidating or killing those of a different identity or opinion. This creates an effect where people will avoid assisting legitimate government forces or coalition members from fear of reprisals.

⁵⁵ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*...97. Kaldor contends that conventional forces, in urban environments, destroy the environment in which they fight the insurgents, thus ‘poisoning the sea for the fish’.

⁵⁶ Douglas S. Blaufarb and George K. Tanham, *Who Will Win*...18.

⁵⁷ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*...28. Nagl calls this the indirect approach to counterinsurgency, contrasting it with the direct, or attritionist based approach of fighting the insurgency at the expense of the population.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁵⁹ David W. Barno, “Challenges in Fighting a Global Insurgency,” *Parameters* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 23.

⁶⁰ Anthony Stone, “Future Imperfect,” *RUSI Journal* 144, iss 3 (Jun 1999), 59.

Combined with its values and beliefs, the West has a culture that finds it “extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory.”⁶¹ Western democracies are also “hamstrung by a well publicized aversion to casualties.”⁶² Stemming from US experiences in Vietnam, where the horrors of war were beamed into the living rooms of society, mounting casualty rates, especially in small wars, have a direct influence on public opinion and public support and by extension, national policy decisions. “Public opinion, formed very often by media pressure, frequently drives politicians down particular avenues”⁶³ and impact operations. In a democratic society, then, there exists a direct link between what occurs on a battlefield and the strategic policy decisions of democratic leaders. This link is sustained by the effect of the media on public opinion, which influences democratic leaders. Given the media’s tendency to report the ‘sensational’, often the very message being broadcast is that which attacks the West’s own centre of gravity: national will. Therefore, the media becomes a Western CV in conflict.

This link is not lost on the modern insurgents. They will therefore attempt to dominate the virtual domain by using the media to their advantage, adding “their spin to the course of events within democracies, seeking thereby to overcome their own battlefield inferiority.”⁶⁴ In this context, from an insurgent perspective, the media becomes “a weapon system of mass effect...to achieve his strategic and political grand strategy objectives.”⁶⁵ By focusing on tactical attrition to drive the body count higher, using the media (non-kinetic means) with their own spin, the insurgent affects strategic targets outside the battlefield; specifically, the “political base...which constitutes the vital link between the warriors and the population.”⁶⁶

It is useful to now link the enduring nature of insurgencies back to the modern enemy we face in terms of campaigning. The modern insurgents apply operational art equally, if not more effectively in some cases, than professional military forces. Perhaps not founded in doctrine, they nonetheless clearly approach conflict with a manoeuvrist philosophy. They achieve strategic effects, through carefully orchestrated tactical events that influences the media, to directly attack a nation’s will, and by extension its capacity, to sustain a conflict. In looking at ongoing conflicts today, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, small scale Taliban attacks and use of suicide bombers are designed to create casualties and incite a reaction from coalition forces. They are often ‘orchestrated’ by the insurgents to maximize collateral damage wherever possible. The results of these incidents are subsequently broadcasted by the media to the world. Generally, collateral

⁶¹ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

⁶² Vincent J. Goulding Jr, “From Chancellorsville to Kosovo, Forgetting the Art of War,” *Parameters* 30, no.2 (Summer 2000), 11.

⁶³ Anthony Stone, “Future Imperfect”...56.

⁶⁴ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*...23.

⁶⁵ David W. Barno, “Challenges in Fighting a Global Insurgency,”...20.

⁶⁶ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*...38. Although Merom defines this as a COIN strategy, its applicability is equally effective and relevant when used by evolved insurgents at a strategic level against the conventional forces of democratic societies.

damage and mounting casualties are not well received in the West and continued exposure to this messaging directly affects the popular will necessary to sustain the conflict. In this manner, the media becomes an unwitting accomplice of the insurgent in getting their message out. These same messages are also targeted to the local population through the insurgent's own cultural and religious bonds with the indigenous population, creating difficulties for coalitions in garnering that critical support. Some might argue that insurgent tactics, such as suicide bombers or small scale fire fights, are not manoeuvrist but rather attritionist. However, one must look beyond these definitional constraints and analyze the actions for what they are: tactical events (certainly using attrition) that create strategic effects. Whereas the West invests billions of dollars into tactical level sensors and shooters and maintain large conventional forces, the practitioners of 4GW do the opposite. They emphasize strategic effects, and achieve these by leveraging commonly available technology, such as cell phones and the internet, and low-cost weapon capabilities, such as small arms and explosive material. Therefore, from an operational perspective, they are manoeuvrist. They achieve effects at the strategic political level through tactical actions, by dominating the virtual domain.

In order to be manoeuvrist, commanders must first understand the environment in which they will operate and the nature of insurgencies. Commanders must also understand the enemy they face. This is essential to discern the centres of gravity and supporting CCs, CRs and CVs. In parallel, commanders must know and protect their own centre of gravity. Thus, tactical friction must not be used to win body counts, but only where it furthers strategic aims. Otherwise, resources are lost and public opinion, capably influenced by the strategic machinations of the media often leveraged by the insurgents, is affected. By understanding the enemy (centre of gravity, CVs, CCs and CRs) and how he will fight, and the context of the operating environment, a commander is able to develop his campaign plan to achieve his assigned strategic objectives. The manoeuvrist approach then becomes the framework to the campaign design and execution.

MANEUVRIST PHILOSOPHY AND CAMPAIGN DESIGN

The application of operational art in today's evolved insurgency must blend the elements of manoeuvre in the context of the contemporary operating environment, that is, the counter-insurgency. This necessitates looking at manoeuvre beyond traditional definitions, much as our opponents do, and adapting it into a deliberate way of thinking in the design of a campaign.

In counterinsurgency strategies, the military no longer becomes the dominant instrument of power. Rather, its primary purpose is to set the security conditions to enable other instruments of power, specifically diplomatic, economic and development efforts, to build the capacity and legitimacy of indigenous governments. Mary Kaldor notes that “the key to the control of violence is the reconstruction of legitimacy.”⁶⁷ Richard Stubbs, using lessons from the Malaya Emergency, reinforces this by stating that “counter-guerrilla campaigns must be fought on all fronts and include all the normal

⁶⁷ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*...114.

activities of any government.”⁶⁸ The design of the military campaign must therefore be developed within this context. This fundamentally alters the dynamic of the conventional warfare paradigm. The military is not the lead agency but rather, its actions must now be subordinated and support the other non-military lines of operation of the ‘comprehensive campaign plan.’ This is a UK approach which integrates all instruments of national power into one synthesized campaign plan and is similar to the Canadian ‘3D’⁶⁹ approach . Equally as important, military tactical actions must not undermine the diplomatic, economic and humanitarian efforts. This inverted relationship was recognized by Field Marshall Templer during the Malayan Emergency, when he stated “the shooting side of the business is only 25% of the trouble and the other 75% lies in getting the people of this country behind us.”⁷⁰

The focus of the other components will be to build a legitimate government and to address pressing humanitarian and development needs. As this focus is people-centric, the main effort will predominantly be in the major population centres. In a military context, this becomes the battle-space for the military forces. However, although in a supporting role, the security aspect, or Templer’s 25% part, remains key to the success of the ‘comprehensive campaign’. The enemy must still be neutralized and this becomes the focus of the military campaign.

As previously discussed, the key to winning an insurgency is not necessarily the physical control of territory but rather the support of the population, or at least the preservation of its neutrality. The side that wins the population will inevitably win the war for this is the ‘sea through which insurgents operate.’ Western militaries certainly have the military capacity to manoeuvre and dominate the regions in and around urban centres. However, this does not win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local peoples and so although manoeuvre in the traditional sense can be applied in these areas, it is not manoeuvrist. The focus of the manoeuvrist approach must be against the enemy in the urban centres where the population, and by extension the source of the insurgent’s strength, resides. The bond between the insurgents and the people must be severed.

There have been some successes in recent counterinsurgency operations, such as the British in Malaya. Even in Vietnam, where the US lost the war, there were local tactical successes. Although each insurgency has its own unique context, a common thread for success has been the ability of the counter-insurgent forces to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local population. This was achieved by dominating the major urban centres, or what Brigadier General Schmidle and Lieutenant Colonel Hoffman term, the “contested zones.”⁷¹ Richard Stubbs emphasizes that the “military ought to be able to

⁶⁸ Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960* (Oxford NY: Oxford University Press, 1989): 259.

⁶⁹ 3D is a Canadian term reflecting Defence-Diplomacy-Development. It is the current strategy in Afghanistan, and is designed to better enable achievement of a Canadian strategic effect in that mission.

⁷⁰ Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960...* 259.

⁷¹ Brig Gen Robert E. Schmidle and Lt Col Frank G Hoffman, “Commanding the Contested Zones,” *The Naval Institute: Proceedings* (September 2004): 49. They differentiate between the contested zones (high urban areas) and the commons (more rural or less inhabited zones), noting the US and Western militaries enjoy command of the commons with their dominance in sensor-shooter technology.

make sure that control is maintained over a minimum portion of the country, including the major urban centres.”⁷² The British successfully used small unit tactics integrated with local regional forces in Malaya,⁷³ to both win the support of the local population and to gain actionable intelligence. The US also adopted a similar approach in Vietnam with their Combined Action Patrols⁷⁴. This approach proved very successful, although in the US case, it was used only sparingly at the tactical level and not as an operational approach.

In today’s parlance, it is termed ‘distributed operations’ and is defined as the “physical dispersion of small units operating over an extended battle-space.”⁷⁵ A more recent application occurred with BGen Gagnon, Commander of UNTMIH in Haiti in 1997. He designed and implemented a successful campaign plan that emphasized operational manoeuvre through a form of distributed operations to provide security and freedom of action.⁷⁶ Further, a derivation of this strategy can be seen in Afghanistan within ISAF as the ‘ink blot’ strategy, where military efforts are focused in major urban centres, or ‘contested zones’ and, as security is achieved, expanded outwards. This dispersion of small unit combined-arms teams into contested zones, integrated with local indigenous forces to conduct joint patrols, provides immediate security to support the efforts of the non-military lines of operation. These dispersed forces are supported by mobile reserves to enable rapid response to insurgent massed attacks. This approach competes directly for the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local people, helping to build bonds of trust. This enables military operations by creating actionable human intelligence to augment the West’s overwhelming sensor capabilities, providing more complete and accurate situational awareness, while denying the same to the insurgents. When combined with a “Three-Block War (3BW)”⁷⁷ approach, where the same soldiers both provide security and also engage in humanitarian and reconstruction efforts, the value in winning hearts and minds of the local people is magnified. The overall effect is to tighten

⁷² Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malaya Emergency*...255.

⁷³ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Fork*...191.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 156-157. The US Marines used the strategy combining small squads integrated with regional forces and conducting both patrolling and humanitarian activities. There was a notable decline in the number of villages under Communist control in the CAP areas. Unfortunately, it was not adopted as an operational strategy, rather, attritionist based search and destroy strategies remained dominant across the theatre.

⁷⁵ Brig Gen Robert E. Schmidle and Lt Col Frank G. Hoffman, “Commanding the Contested Zones”...2.

⁷⁶ UNTMIH Military Campaign Plan 97/01, un-fc/camp-plan / (FC) dated 13 August 1997. BGen Gagnon, Commander UNTMIH, used force dispersion to maintain a consistent presence in contested zones. This provided the framework to achieve his mandate for providing freedom of movement. Traditional approaches had been convoy escorts, but the military presence only existed in the context of the convoy, and therefore was fleeting. This would have precluded building a bond with the population and creating actionable intelligence.

⁷⁷ Gen Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 83, no.1 (Jan 1999): 16. Krulak defines 3BW as a construct to highlight that a soldier, in a COIN operation, may be faced with the full spectrum of tactical challenges: warfighting, stability operations and humanitarian assistance within the span of a few blocks within a few hours. Used as a construct to look at military operations in a theatre, it drives the home the point of the rapidity of transition from one type of operation to the other, and the mutually supporting aspects of the three tactical challenges.

the Coalition OODA Loop and increase the tempo of operations. The enhanced tempo creates complexity for the insurgents and forces them to react to the coalition terms. As a result, initiative is wrested from the insurgents and their needs for survival are threatened as the population, their 'sea', is slowly constrained. It thus becomes a manoeuvrist approach in that by securing the population centres and winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population, the enemy is both disrupted and functionally dislocated.

Certainly, insurgent forces will continue to try regain the initiative and their hold on the population. They will use selected tactical activities, typically based on terror, to try and weaken the coalition's, and by extension, the legitimate government's, bond with the local population. They will also try to achieve strategic effects on the international population by increasing the body count. However, over time, as their support base within the local population is restricted, with a corresponding growth of the recruit base for legitimate government forces and increased actionable intelligence, the tempo will outstrip the insurgent's capacity to adapt. Further, as initiative is lost, the enemy may become desperate and mass his forces to strike a convincing blow, such as was the case in the Vietnam 'Tet' offensive or more recently in Afghanistan with Operation Medusa. It is at this point that the insurgent becomes vulnerable to the superiority of the West's conventional military capability.

Unfortunately, modern counter-insurgency strategies typically rely on conventional military tactics. Military forces operate from protected camps and patrol in protected, armoured vehicles. As they base their operations from these fortified camps and patrol along major routes, they become predictable, and risk losing the initiative to insurgent elements. This emphasis on force protection, and preference for attriting insurgents in larger scale battles, does not facilitate the interaction with the local peoples nor build the trust that is essential to winning the 'hearts and minds.' In fact, the destruction and death that conventional battles typically cause tends to overshadow the benefits of other reconstruction and humanitarian efforts. This distance from the local population risks ceding the contested zones to the insurgents where they will continue to influence the people (with their 'spin' of events) and to use the population as their 'sea', to move, strike, recruit and resupply. If coalition forces become isolated from the very people they are trying to protect, they lose a major source of intelligence and slowly become viewed as an occupying force. Certainly, the West will continue to dominate the 'commons' and win tactical engagements, but similar to the US experience in Vietnam, they may not succeed at the operational level.

By concentrating efforts in population centres through distributed operations in an expanding 'ink blot' approach, and not being overly concerned with the 'commons', at least initially, an economy of force is achieved. Military actions are taken in support of the local people directly supporting strategic ends, the essence of operational art. In this context, the forces engaged in distributed operations become the ordinary force. The manoeuvrist approach will also simultaneously employ and leverage the extraordinary force to strike across the enemy's depth.

It becomes important to define depth relative to an insurgency. Majors' Grubbs and Forsyth, of the US Army, contend that an insurgent force has both a physical and

cognitive depth.⁷⁸ The physical depth is how we understand it in the traditional sense. These are areas that the insurgents use to recruit, train, conduct logistics and areas that provide safe havens. Typically, for insurgents in a non-linear and non-contiguous battle-space, these are population centres. Within an operational theatre, the distributed operations approach by the ordinary force, attacks the physical depth directly, as the battle-space is non-linear. The other ‘deep area’ of the insurgents is their cognitive depth. This can be understood as “how insurgents adapt in time.”⁷⁹ This depth targets the insurgency thought process by anticipating how insurgents adapt to coalition actions. It attacks the leadership and the bonds that bind the insurgent force, namely their cohesion, and makes them susceptible to non-kinetic attacks. By analyzing and targeting the enemy’s cognitive depth, the manoeuvrist can orchestrate his tactical actions to attack the enemy’s CVs. This understanding of the enemy’s depth, both physical and cognitive, is essential to the operational art of manoeuvre.

As previously stated, the key to modern counter-insurgency remains the support of the local population. This is achieved by winning their ‘hearts and minds’. Therefore, the use of conventional military kinetic force, in particular in urban areas, is ill-suited. The use of non-kinetic means becomes the dominant form of warfare for the extraordinary force. The key is to strike the enemy across his cognitive depth, employing simultaneity, to increase the tempo beyond the enemy’s capacity to absorb thereby rendering his intents irrelevant, or at least marginalize them.

As an illustrative example, in the current campaign in Afghanistan, drug lords are one element of the insurgency. They thwart legitimate economic growth by paying more money for poppy crops than the government can pay farmers to grow a legitimate crop. Rather than fighting this battle when the overall theatre security line of operation is still ongoing and tenuous, and risk alienating the poppy farmers by destroying their crops, (hearts and minds), the principle of sequencing could be applied in a manoeuvrist sense. A lesson learned from the Malaya Emergency is that “dollars are bullets.”⁸⁰ In the US counterinsurgency in Iraq, the same lesson has been learned: ‘money is ammunition’ and ‘green bullets’ are common terms used in describing successes in gaining the support of the people with money. Using the ‘green bullet’ as part of the extraordinary force, a commander, acknowledging the start-up difficulties in changing crops, might opt, instead of forcing change with little prospect of perceived success by the poppy farmer, to pay poppy farmers to grow their poppy crops but sell to the legitimate Afghan government. The coalition would subsequently destroy the purchased crops to prevent their sale on the international market, with the effect of having marginalized the drug lords, in particular the trans-national element. This would allow the coalition forces to focus on other, more malignant threats, such as the Taliban in the case of Afghanistan. As security and stability are secured, then the issue of the poppy crops can be better addressed through focused development efforts. This manoeuvrist approach would still be linking tactical actions to

⁷⁸ Maj Lee K. Grubbs and Major Michael J Forsyth, “Is there a Deep Fight in a Counterinsurgency?” *Military Review* (July – August 2005): 28.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁰ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*...xiii.

strategic ends but in a manner that better enables success through sequencing activities over a longer, more planned period of time.

As part of the extraordinary force, information operations must become more pronounced and offensive in campaign design. The intent of this paper is not to explain information operations but to illustrate how, by taking a manoeuvrist approach to campaign design, information operations become extremely effective in defeating the enemy. Information operations are clearly part of the extraordinary force. Therefore, the focus should be against the enemy CVs throughout his cognitive depth to affect his centre of gravity. The target becomes the enemy's legitimacy, and is applied to each of the independent networks operating in a Theatre. The objective becomes to dominate the virtual domain.

For illustrative purposes, we will look at the trans-national religious extremists. They have set each individual conflict in the broader context of a global jihad. However, Islamic doctrine can be interpreted in any number of ways. An offensive use of information operations by a coalition would be to use the moderate, and majority, religious leaders of Islam to discredit the extremist views. Manoeuvre in this sense turns the table on "ideologues who...twist religion...to secure their political goals."⁸¹ Although this may not influence the fanatics, it would affect the recruit supply amongst the more moderate elements. The resultant two effects, drying up the recruit base for the insurgency, and putting the coalition efforts towards legitimacy in a religious context that is acceptable to the indigenous population, are clearly manoeuvrist in nature: weakening the enemy's cohesion by striking at his CRs to attack his centre of gravity.

In this manner, information operations become an offensive weapon that targets the legitimacy of the insurgent networks. Just as the insurgents use the 'media as terrain', so too must counter-insurgency forces. The emphasis must target the elements that sustain the insurgent cohesion, rather than continually defending one's own actions in the face of insurgent propaganda. In other words, a manoeuvrist would create gaps in the insurgent's cognitive realm and exploit. This, once again, wrests the initiative from the insurgents and forces them to react, through increased temporal tempo, and to adapt to coalition initiatives. This is attacking the cognitive depth of the insurgent, in much the same way the Soviets and Germans did it in World War II by creating and exploiting gaps deep into the enemy deep area with armoured formations. The only difference is that the means are non-kinetic and the enemy's depth is non-physical, but the effect is the same. This is the essence of operational manoeuvre in contemporary operations.

The extraordinary force can also be used to protect one's own centre of gravity. If one accepts that public opinion is a CV in a Western democracy, then deliberate efforts must be taken to protect it from non-kinetic attacks by insurgent forces. The application of a manoeuvrist approach provides the framework for this protection. Specifically, if tactical actions are only undertaken when they further a strategic end or support an operational objective, the opportunities for casualties will be reduced and greater emphasis can be placed on other, non-military lines of operation. Further, the use of information operations as part of the extraordinary force targeted towards international

⁸¹ Fawaz A. Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist* (Orlando: Harcourt Inc, 2006): 11.

audiences, in particular one's own public, is essential to sustaining the counter-insurgency campaign. Insurgent messages of casualties and propaganda must be balanced with the counter-insurgency messages through the media. Coalitions must be proactive in presenting their successes in the reconstruction efforts, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the development of legitimate governance. Failure to do so cedes the virtual domain to the insurgent who becomes able to dictate the tempo, and ultimately defeat the coalition by attacking the will of the individual nations to sustain the campaign by making the cost too high for the perceived benefits.

Kinetic force can also be applied by the extraordinary force. The objective of the manoeuvrist is to defeat the enemy through disruption or dislocation to achieve strategic ends. Just as asymmetry disrupts or dislocates Western militaries, it should not be considered as the sole purview of insurgents. Western conventional military capability, and technology dominance, although often a vulnerability in counter-insurgency, can also be a strength. In particular, sensors and communications technologies become invaluable in supporting distributed operations. More kinetic-centric capabilities, such as precision guided munitions (PGMs), and air/aviation superiority and Special Operations Forces (SOF) are also effective in a counterinsurgency as part of the extraordinary force. Although these are considered conventional military capabilities, when used selectively in a supporting role against an evolved insurgent, they become in essence a Western asymmetrical response to the insurgency throughout his physical and cognitive depth. As examples, they can be used as the predominant means to seal specific geographical regions, monitor insurgent movement or to counter insurgents when they do mass: 'sensor to shooter networking to dominate the commons'. When one considers conventional military means in this manner, instead of as the principal means of tactical friction, then it truly becomes asymmetric from an insurgent perspective. Its use then applies pressure on insurgents, creating the Clausewitzian friction across the theatre, again increasing the tempo by providing simultaneity in creating effects on the insurgents. This reserves the majority of 'boots on the ground', or soldiers, to interacting with the population in the 'ink blots' as part of the ordinary force. Further, the controlled, vice predominant, use of kinetic force also reinforces the non-military efforts of the counter-insurgency, which provides a degree of protection to the identified CV of public opinion.

As a final comment, it becomes necessary to address the issue of close combat in a manoeuvrist philosophy, lest the theory get relegated to irrelevant drivel by predicting bloodless affairs. Clearly, there will be the requirement, and more often in the early stages, to close with and kill the enemy. These will be tough and bloody battles conducted by the ordinary force for control of the 'contested' zones and support of the population. The key is that in a manoeuvrist approach, battle is not given for the sake of battle. The essence of operational art, and manoeuvrist theory, is to give battle only where it contributes to a strategic end. Tactical engagement costs lives and resources. Even if a battle is won and the 'body count' goes in the coalition's favour, to fight purely for a tactical victory is characteristic of an attritionist approach. The manoeuvrist approach is not a panacea. Rather it is a philosophical approach to campaign design and execution that focuses on achievement of operational objectives in support of assigned strategic ends. In an evolved insurgency, it remains relevant: the simultaneous application

of the ordinary and extraordinary force to create a tempo that disrupts or dislocates the enemy is an effective means to defeating him and setting the conditions for winning the peace.

CONCLUSION

The evolving security environment is complex and lethal. The evolved insurgents, a complex network of different entities each fuelled by different causes but loosely united in the face of Western domination, are prepared for war with the US and its allies. By adopting guerrilla and asymmetric tactics and using violence to control and leverage the populations of failed states, they seek to mitigate conventional military might in conflict. The West's well publicized aversion to casualties, and the clear causal link between a casualty and the resultant political effects at the strategic level, make an attritionist approach to warfare problematic.

In this complex contemporary environment, a manoeuvrist approach remains relevant. At the operational level, manoeuvre is more a philosophical approach to campaign design and execution than the actual movement of forces on the battlefield. It seeks to defeat the enemy by destroying his cohesion and subsequently his will to fight. As manoeuvre is the essence of operational art, it seeks engagements only where they further a strategic end, thus avoiding unnecessary loss of life and resources. The principle elements of manoeuvre warfare remain extant and are integrated into the campaign design to defeat the enemy by attacking his centre of gravity, via CVs. However, just as the modern battlefield has evolved into a complex insurgency, so too must the application of the fundamental principles of manoeuvre be adjusted. The military line of operation becomes a supporting one to a more comprehensive military-political-economic campaign whose objective is to establish legitimate governance. The key to legitimacy is the support of the people and therefore the contested zones become main effort. The use of the ordinary force, working in a distributed manner in conjunction with locally trained government forces, to secure urban centres and win the 'hearts and mind' campaign, is critical. This enables the non-military lines of the campaign, specifically the provision of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts, to have the necessary effect on the local people. Simultaneously, the application of the predominantly, albeit not exclusively, non-kinetic extraordinary force to strike across the insurgent's depth, both the physical and cognitive, while defending one's own centre of gravity through dominating the virtual domain, is key to creating the necessary tempo that will dislocate the insurgent elements and enable the coalition to retain the initiative. The application of a manoeuvrist philosophy in campaign design and execution in a modern counter-insurgency, as opposed to an attritionist approach, is a relative and effective strategy.

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