LET THE WORD GO FORTH--THE DOCTRINE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY AND ITS IMPACT ON SOME ASPECTS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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WARD

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(Essay)

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ABSTRACT

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A conceptual analysis of those internal conflicts, essentially political, resulting from the doctrine of Counterinsurgency as it has impacted and will probably continue to impact the United States Army, its Counterinsurgency concepts, organization, its psychology and its personnel policy. Data was gathered from a literature search, selected interviews and supplemented by the author's experience as U. S. Army Correspondent in Southeast Asia. The conclusions indicate that the very doctrine of Counterinsurgency runs counter to America's self-image fostered by its romantic view of the American Revolution. While America's objective self-interest should encompass a viable Counterinsurgency doctrine and posture; the forces of mass communication, inherent structural conflicts between the U. S. military and U. S. society, the military's traditional absence from areas of political involvement and a propensity of U. S. political life to over-articulate idealistic concepts makes a truly effective Counterinsurgency structure problematical.

LET THE WORD GO FORTH

To counter Insurgency, even in a good cause, runs counter to America's hallowed self-image. The issue is not new. The conflict has been viewed thusly, "Tension between the demands of military security and the values of American liberalism can, in the long run, be relieved only by the weakening of the security threat or the weakening of liberalism."[1]

THE IDEAL

Little more than a decade ago, John F. Kennedy proclaimed to a still proud people, in a nation devoid of significant dissent, "Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty."[2]

The intervening years have produced events, which today make this rhetoric, then stirring, seem oddly quixotic; as the United States looks inward, is less adventuresome, more isolationist and more fervently anti-military. Somehow, we are befuddled by an environment eons away from the elan of the New Frontier. To help

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[1]Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (1967), p. 456.

[2]John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961, Washington, D.C.

explain this, I submit that America, and specifically the academic community, has romanticized the American Revolution as the fountainhead of revolution.

In a debate I had with Saul K. Padaver at the New York Ethical Culture Society in 1966, Padaver expounded the thesis that the United States started Insurgency and was now "trying to snuff it out." He has stated:

> We can now say it is clear the victorious American Revolution inspired not only the French Revolution of 1789 but also republican movements in many parts of the world--it started a worldwide chain of reaction, the end of which has not yet been reached. We also know that the American Revolution, which Washington did so much to create, showed itself to be so endearing and successful that it became an example to many other nations.[3]

It is rarely noticed that neither Washington, a Virginia aristocrat, nor Samuel Adams, the firebrand from New England, would epitomize barefoot peasants plodding behind the North American equivalent of the water buffalo. In truth, our five year revolution (while bloody) was of rhetoric and political deeds and not a coldly calculated instrument of terror. Essentially, it was a revolutionary coup of the upper and middleclasses. At the time Samuel Adams was squeezing every ounce of propoganda out of the "Boston Massacre," rural taxpayers were essentially indifferent. Adams needed this provocative issue.[4]

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[3]Saul K. Padaver, The Washington Papers (1955), p. 13.

[4]Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (1965), pp. 200-202

The American Revolution does not fit the terror and Insurgency expounded and practiced by Mao, Che, Giap, Debray, etc. However, the romantic connection between the American Revolution and the Dang Lao-dong is, nevertheless, real to many Americans who assume that the NLF is either a mirror image of the Continental Congress or a spontaneous uprising by impoverished peasants. It is neither.[5]

THE REALITY

Freud's view that a dream is a"wish fulfillment"[6] has more than a passing applicability to the romanticism given the origins of Southeast Asian Insurgency.[7]

A new phenomenon, TV-based combat fatigue, has "brought to every livingroom a close-up horror war, and to a public which appears not to comprehend the purpose of the war, the violence is revolting."[8]

Thus, when idealistic fervor meets the frustration of a political war of terror (which defies our concepts of fair play but still runs counter to erroneous romantic conceptions), there

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[5]The comprehensive evaluation of the NLF and the DRVN political structure, see Bernard Fall, The Two Vietnams (1963), Chapt. VIII and Douglas Pike, War, Peace and the Viet Cong (1969).

[6]Wilhelm Stekel, The Interpretation of Dreams (1943), pp. 3-7.

[7]Frank N. Traeger, Why Vietnam? (1966), pp. 81-104, 163-186, 206-217.

[8]Richard V. Allen, "Wars of National Liberation and the United States Public Opinion," proceedings of National Strategy Information Center Conference (NSICC), March 1971, p. 14.

is no doubt the level of philosophical disorientation will be pronounced; so much so that even our domestic crusades seem faddish.

Ecology and consumerism, while significant issues, currently attract a limited, nonsystems commitment in an atmosphere of being simply noncontroversial; that is, pro-motherhood and anti-sin. As one recognizes the complex, but essentially moral and idealistic underpinning of U. S. fulfilling of its various interventionous commitments, the question is raised whether we had a choice between intervention and non-intervention. In 1961, John P. Roche suggested:

> The choice between intervention and non-intervention is a moral and political fiction. No matter what we do, we intervene in someone's behalf. To refuse to recognize this fact is itself a form of intervention. Therefore, we turn to the real world--by what methods and to what ends should the United States power be utilized?[9]

There is no situation in which choice is without cost. Hopefully, the best definition of a good Counterinsurgency operation is, to use Australian Brigadier F. P. Serong's oft repeated maxim, "The good one is one that never has to start." Thus, to understand the reality of Counterinsurgency is to comprehend that in Insurgency itself, there are numerous assymmetries. Foremost is the recognition that "Military success for the Counterinsurgency is

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[9]John P. Roche, "Further Thoughts on Intervention," The New Leader, 19 June 1969, p. 22. Also see his essays: "Confessions of an Interventionist," The New Leader, 15 May 1961; "Uses of American Power," The New Leader, 2 March 1964; "Can a Free Society Fight a Limited War," The New Leader, 21 October 1968.

necessary but not sufficient to prevail. On the other hand, military failure is sufficient to lose. The distinction then is between necessity and sufficiency."[10]

The reality, in essence, deals with a war which either for convenience or for conscience can be viewed as immoral; an intervention legally justified but perhaps without a favorable cost/benefit balance; resulting in a domestic frustration--frustration which in some cases has been fostered by "Hanoi Hawks," and this has led to much domestic cynicism and often defeatism.

A definitive analysis of the vectors shoving our ideals and self-perceptions in our 1961-1971 Counterinsurgency venture is beyond the scope of this work, but it is insufficient to explain U. S. attitudes with the ancient bromide that success knows a thousand fathers, but failure is an orphan. None of the explanations--TV battle fatigue, bumbling Vietnamese efforts toward our vision of democracy, casualties of approximately 50,000 KIA, and an estimated expenditure of about $120 billion--fully explain, in an objective fashion (although they provide a significant subjective rationale), the current spate of anti-militarism and neo-isolationism. The current spate of anti-militarism tends to abandon the option of legal intervention even when the cost/benefit equation is attractive.

[10]Amron H. Katz, "The Short Run and Long Walk," prepared for the Wingspread Symposium on Southeast Asia, 17 September 1965; Part I published in the Air Force Space Digest, June 1967, pp. 27-33; Part II published in the War/Peace Report, December 1965.

Another manifestation has been the change in the perceptions of the so-called "Eastern Liberal Establishment" in the legitimacy of our assistance to the RVN. From the 10 March 1956 New York Times editorial calling for full support of South Vietnam with the words "we can do no less" to the patent rejection of the interventionist view today, a major discontinuity challenges military implementers of policy. Even supporters of the Counterinsurgency in the RVN show dissatisfaction, frustration, bewilderment. As an example:

> The military, a major participant in Vietnam, showed little buoyancy of spirit, and a matching confidence in the future. On the defensive, suspicious of non-understanding by civilians, it is frustrated by events and hoist--in Southeast Asia--by explicit promises and implicit expectations.[11]

The military must avoid the revisionist option, that is, rewriting history to blame civilians. A large number of high civilian officials have "exercised that option and have, by their

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[11]Amron H. Katz, "After Vietnam: An Approach to Future Wars on National Liberation," American Friends of Vietnam, Inc., South East Asia Perspectives, December 1971, pp. 2-3. (Author's Note: An interesting tangential hypothesis mentioned by Katz in explaining indifference to intervention involves racial animosity towards the S. E. Asians, lacking, as they do, a domestic constituency or lobby. While this view has merit as a pure hypothesis (in the sense that there is no evidence to prove it invalid in any prima facia way), there is no substantial evidence that, as a generalized view, racial matters are a major factor in public attitudes. This is not to say that racial bias or, stated less stridently, lack of constituency, is an approach without merit; simply there is insufficient evidence placing it in the matrix of U. S. frustration.)

own admission, achieved wisdom, judgment and truth only upon leaving office, a commodity which, being in short supply, should be useful in encouraging those civilians to keep a non-official status."[12]

Thus, we face reality--ideals broken; romantic conceptions bent; history re-written and distorted in the process; little public understanding or even interest in determining "why"; and a military reeling enough to prompt this expression of a career officer:

> The volunteer professional military has once again been sacrificed to expediency. In this instance, the expediency is the diversion of emotional and very vocal criticism from the establishment to the institute that must execute its policies.[13]

In another view of Colonel David Hackworth (retired), "The Army seems thunderstruck by it all and is openly looking outside the institution to fix the blame."[14] Hackworth blames the

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[12]Ibid., p. 3.

[13]Michael D. Mahler, Major, "Volunteer Army," ARMY Magazine, July 1971, p. 21.

[14]David H. Hackworth, Col., "Army Leadership is Ineffective," The Washington Post, 29 June 1971, p. A-18.

frustration, not on the war, not on Insurgency itself, but "misplaced values within the Army itself" and "never understanding about this war."[15] A close reading of the Hackworth pronouncements shows a high degree of arguing both sides of the question; that is, he states the military's frustration both preceeds Counterinsurgency and is a result of not understanding it. While further explanation of this dichotomy is both unnecessary and irrelevant, nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that the military's responsibility is to win and its self-image is founded on the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur reflecting that there is no substitute for victory.

According to C. L. Sulzberger:

> We lost the war (Vietnam War) in the Mississippi Valley, not the Mekong Valley. Successive American governments were never able to muster the necessary support at home. The American people increasingly showed more sympathy and admiration for their enemies than for their allies. The press sometimes emphasized events unfavorable to their cause. Huge elements of public opinion demonstrated behind the banners of our adversaries.[16]

And while it might seem that the military is being punished for a governmental inability to articulate and stimulate support for its goals, it is almost inevitable that in conflict the human needs and aspirations of a nation's people may disagree with its

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[15]David H. Hackworth, Col., "Let's Get Out---The War in Indo China," Newsweek (5 July 1971) p. 34.

[16]C. L. Sulzberger, "Sack Cloth and Ashes," The New York Times (6 July 1971) p. 47. (Parenthetically, I might observe that the Vietnam War was not lost at all, but in Sulzberger's frame of reference, we can look to the Hotel Caravelle Bar rather than Black Virgin Mountain.)

foreign policy. So, it is "not surprising the results of the general differences which can give rise to sharp divisions."[17]

Assuming the inevitability of conflict, does this mean a large number of Americans say "never again?" Does it mean this country will never again fulfill commitments, even when there is a cost/benefit advantage to so doing? Or, will it fail to act when there will be great damage to both U. S. credibility and power balance by failing to assist in Counterinsurgency.

> For those of us who see a world in which the United States is still too weak and divided to replace military alliances.....the drift toward disengagement will produce a slight feeling of chill. The American era, for all its faults and blunders, has been one of unpresidented generosity, and the world will regret its end more as time passes.

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[17]Eliot Richardson, Commencement Address, Lowell Technical Institute (6 June 1970).

[18]"End of the American Era?" Manchester Guardian Comment (21 August 1971) p. 21.

THE DOCTRINE AND THE CONFLICT

Many in the nation and the military seek new doctrine, "a tool of tender minds in pursuit of a policy that can be embraced without using one's intellect."[19] Granted, this definition overstates the dilemma--but it underscores the need for policy to lead to meaningful doctrine. It is axiomatic that traditional military professionalism is based on values which, to some extent, are contrary to those held by the liberal civilian community.[20]

Accordingly, effective Counterinsurgency is almost certain to conflict with many views of the "Eastern Liberal Establishment" or what often passes for its eyes, ears and conscience; i.e., "the press." Unless a truly wise overview of Insurgency is developed, it is likely that Counterinsurgency can be viewed in the future as the unjustifiable demands upon the body politic of an ally. Reflecting on Edmond Burke's caveat against "the delusive plausibilities of moral politicians," we must guard against both the idealism of bearing any price to the speculative delusion--that the war in S. E. Asia will be the "very last in the American experience."[21]

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[19]Gordon C. Clapp, The TVA: An Approach to the Development of a Region (1955) p. 159.

[20]Robert G. Guard, Col., "The Military and American Society," Foreign Affairs (July 1971) pp. 666 & 699.

[21]Interview with President Richard M. Nixon, The New York Times (9 March 1971) p. 1.

The vision of perpetual peace is not novel. Hence, it is unlikely that this "nice warm feeling" of politics, embodied in current thinking about security threats, will automatically abate. To understand the issue of peace, one should recall the option of war invariably resides with the defender, for the aggressive party invariably prefers to prevail without conflict. Accordingly, the underlying assumption backing the premise that neither the Soviet Union nor Communist China have given up their plans to make life difficult for the United States whenever the opportunity prevails, is that this nation can expect to be faced with additional challenges both in the thermo-nuclear environment and in further wars of Insurgency and terror. Therefore, doctrine must continue to encompass the rationale that threats to U. S. security can come from conflicts ranging from threatened general war, through possible conventional war, to a reasonably high level of confidence that insurgent war or unconventional war exists. Accordingly, if one fails to recognize the flexible response to the above stated range of threats, the alternative is an "Armageddon or nothing" concept.

It is frequently heard by students that they would consider it appropriate to fight for the U. S. "if the chips were down," or if it were "Armageddon," or is it were obviously an issue of life and death for the country. They scorn marginal war in which strategic stakes are of an important but secondary nature. This

"all or nothing," "big blast or total neglect," trade-off becomes totally unacceptable when one views that "an accountable government would, if this were followed, be totally incapacitated from conducting a prudently conceived defense, since every trade-off would then encompass either surrender or carrying the conflict to the level of total holocaust."[22]

Thus, the doctrine of flexible response to Insurgency is eliminated only at grave risk to the United States interests. As a correlary, a viable, articulatable, comprehensive doctrine for countering insurgency is vital.

The word Counterinsurgency itself congers up a bad image, since it recognizes that something has to be done to counter a situation already existing. In order to avoid "losing the war in the Mississippi Valley," U. S. political policy, on which military doctrine must reside, demands an effective information, education or even a propoganda effort. There is a strong feeling in the American psyche that U. S. military operations always defend a country, a geographical unit, or a regime; irrespective of, or almost hostile to, acceptable ideological content. The proclivity of the military for remaining apart from domestic politics makes this immensely complicated when the military themselves operate at the tactical political level.

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[22]Charles Burton Marshall, "Morality and National Liberation Wars," Southeast Asian Perspectives, American Friends of Vietnam, Inc., (December 1971) pp. 41-50.

Witnessing the influence of the Kennedy Inaugural Address, U. S. Counterinsurgency doctrine should embody a strong connotation of ideological articulation. Considering the comparison of the NLF to our Founding Fathers, the ideals of the American Revolution and its implied support of Insurgency are strongly fixed in our own psyche when, as a people, U. S. society imputes these ideals to the terroristic insurgent. The struggle for the hearts and minds must not be between "good guys" and "bad guys," capitalism and socialism, and not between two absolutes--"absolute dictatorship and absolute free open societies. The struggle is in reality between relative freedom and absolute or almost absolute dictatorship."[23] Both national policy and military doctrine must adapt to this non-absolute mass of greyness.

Much of U. S. doctrine for Counterinsurgency deals with aspects in the economic or materialistic area. Che Guevara, in 1967, noted that the United States policy is essentially based on "economic games" the "use of brute force to prevent liberation movements regardless of their nature." Tactics for Many Vietnams suggests a combination of psychological and cultural attack avoiding the economic strength of the United States head on. Che would "draw the enemy out of his surroundings, forcing him to fight in places where his living habits clash with the actual situation. What the enemy essentially lacks is the ideological motivation."[24]

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[23]Irving Brown, "Alternatives to Wars of Attrition--The Role of Democratic Forces in a Political Solution," NSICC (March 1971) p. 20.
[24]Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Many Vietnams (1967).

Military doctrine should have an ideological overtone, but at the same time, as much as possible, the emotional reliance upon the "candy for kids" which characterizes much of our thinking. Such reliance has supported, and to some extent still does underpin, our civil affairs and civic action doctrine.

Doctrine vis-a-vis insurgency must, therefore, relate to what is truly important. First, a basic ideology; next, a simple concept, both in Insurgency and Counterinsurgency, simply stated as "people are more important than things."[25] G. K. Tanham holds that the Communists have their priorities correct in a tactical sense, having learned those priorities at the altar of necessity. Recruiting, training, developing cadres and forming effective organizations precede the advent of material items such as weapons, ammunition, track vehicles, etc. Hardware is not unimportant, yet the impression is often created that we have been squashing a mosquito with an elephant. While an excess of material goods may have an adverse reaction upon a "have not" people, even more serious is the lack of developing initiative in the indigenous leadership, but worst of all is the frequent fueling of the fire of insurgency by the presence of vast amounts of war-making potential which can be stolen, diverted or purchased outright in ostensible legitimate transactions to fuel the efforts of insurgents. The VC effort to purchase millions of feet of 35 mm tri-X film for both the silver that could

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[25]George K. Tanham, "Some Lessons Learned by Some," NSICC (March 1971) p. 3.

be extracted and the ammonium nitrate which could be produced is but one example. Another infamous purchase (directed by the VC through channels which appeared to be legitimate) involved shipping a polymer useful as a stabilizer in artificial rubber, but also which, with simple technology, became the base for a very effective "plastique" explosive. This example ranks high on the list of counter-productive economic aid.

Thus, while things can help win a war, they can also help lose it unless they are carefully orchestrated into the Counter-insurgency structure. Another drawback of the things approach is that sophisticated weapons and gimmicks tend to absorb the attention of the leaders of the threatened nation to their neglect of the basic political problems. A correlary is a dependence on the donor and the fact that the sophisticated weapons consume too much of the indigenous country's resources.[26]

Another doctrinal conclusion involves the understanding that Insurgency and Counterinsurgency are both forms of "full systems" conflict, both as to goals and means. We know of Mao's dictum that "political power flows from the barrel of a gun,"[27] yet few in the U. S. have visualized the admixture of political. economic and military requirements which dictate that Counterinsurgency must be a truly integrated effort, as each program or plan is orchestrated to the whole.[28]

[26] Ibid. pp. 6 and 7

[27] Mao Tse Tung, The Thoughts of Chairman Mao Tse Tung (1967) p.33.

[28] Tanham, p. 9.

U. S. military doctrine with respect to Counterinsurgency must also reflect a proper time frame to meet the evolutionary ebbs and flows, if you will, which makes the current one-year tours either irrelevant or counter-productive. The negative aspects of the one-year tour are legion. While the morale-lifting aspects of short tours are well known, the U. S. Counterinsurgency infastructure is at a great disadvantage due to the inevitable turbulence and low operational expertise caused by rotation. Thus, a doctrinal requirement is continuity which goes counter to so-called "ticket-punching" and other alleged and often necessary personnel practices of the U. S. Army.

Counterinsurgency requires that timeliness, that is before the Insurgency becomes full blown, and flexibility are all required for the basic successful conduct of an assigned Counterinsurgency operation. Many other basic requirements such as effective intelligence, security, understanding the history, mores, and cultural pecularities of the host country, backed up by the essentials of the principles of war are, of course, underpinnings of Counterinsurgency doctrine.

The pressing challenge to U. S. military forces, however, lies in the psychological preparedness related to Insurgency. Many challenges are little different than those existing in the social-political-economic sector. The avoidance of absolutes in a drawn out, inconclusive war, with limitations on the human resources

of our allies as well as limitations of the patience of the American people and limitations on the place of economic inputs and things, invite recognition that what is in the long run interests of the United States may not be in the short run interests of either the Counterinsurgency personnel or their counterparts. An example is recited by Tanham when he asked a Thai counterpart why the Thais were still using U. S. advisors even though their own people were perfectly capable of doing the job of the advisors. The reply is cause for thoughtful evaluation--(the advisors) "are free and a lot of aid comes with them."[29]

A final doctrinal lesson deals with measuring what is frequently the unmeasurable. Insurgency is essentially nonquantifiable--Counterinsurgency, likewise. It is easy to measure the number of hours flown, casualties incurred or gas expended. It is difficult to measure the impact of these on the overall mission even in conventional war. In Insurgency, it is self-defeating to have faith that you are measuring meaningful criteria. Efficiency reports tend to quantify performance, and inevitably result in the "body count" syndrome which manifestly, had some contribution to My Lai. The long run psychological impact on the U. S. Army because of My Lai is difficult to assess and is beyond the scope of this paper.

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[29]Ibid. p. 18.

Counterinsurgency is not cost accounting;[30] it is, on the contrary, an exercise in political generalship. That leads us to the last aspect--the Future.

THE FUTURE

It is unlikely that any President, sensing the mood of the country, will in the near future engage in the rhetoric of John F. Kennedy. It is equally unlikely that any President facing the challenges, both domestic and abroad, both nuclear and Insurgent, genuinely accepts the bland assumption of 'peace in our time.'

Accordingly, U. S. policy-makers are likely to continue to be faced with a range of threats to be dealt with using a broad spectrum of skills and policies. It is very unlikely that either ourselves or our enemies will allow us to forget our ten-year long RVN venture in Counterinsurgency. Since the United States never felt sufficiently motivated to attempt partial mobilization, and hardly any mobilization of our political-psychological fervor, we are now covered with the "sackcloth and ashes" of our own manufacture.

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[30]Interview with Unit CO, Vic Quangtri, RVN, September 1970. (Just prior to returning from covering the war in S. E. Asia in 1970, one helicopter unit commander was candid enough to admit to me that he was pleased to fly correspondents (such as myself) to any location, but was even happier to ferry junketing VIP's to sanitized areas because they all reflected helicopter hours flown; and whether these hours contributed to the overall mission might have been a dangerous statistic to compile.)

Stated differently:

> Mixed masochism and piety have entered our fancy boast of invulnerability. The price would prove immense. Abroad our enemies have less faith in us and our adversaries, less respect for our revolution. Like Japan, we'll discover the price of defeat. But this is defeat without destruction, brought about not by a distant little Asiatic Sparta, but by an intimately approximate super power--our faltering selves.[31]

For the American military at the turn of the century was "contemptuous of the values of U. S. society and surer of the superiority of their own creed."[32]

As for today, the military service and society seem equally contemptible of their divergent values. Even more important and more disturbing (and unlike the turn of the century) today's military society is not sure of the superiority of its own creed. There has developed a blurring; not only at the policy level, also at the tactical level, and at the organization level, while in the real world, "The blurring of military political lines and policy requires an equal erasing of military civilian lines and organizational structure and use of personnel."[33]

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[31]Sulzberger, p. 47.

[32]Huntington, p. 268.

[33]Barry Zorthian, "The Use of Psychological Operations in Combatting Wars of National Liberation," NSICC (March 1971) p. 60.

If a key to effective Counterinsurgency organization is true integration of the khaki and mufti, and both American society and the American military reflect open and subliminal alienation, what of the military profession in the future? How is the "good guy, bad guy" Counterinsurgency equation restructured? As a nation, are we condemned to "See Insurgency and juvenile delinquency in the same light.....no bad boys, only bad parents."[34] Must our "moralistic approach make us deeply uneasy about being any way identified with governments striving to suppress rebellion."[35]

In my opinion, the profession is in deep trouble. Adjustments to profound changes prove exceedingly difficult, particularly to the military.[36] While the American military has and must continue to avoid the role of revisionist, it is nevertheless true that the 'stab-in-the-back' myth, while being generally rejected by the professional, nevertheless lurks below the conscious surface of much professional writings.[37] The Corson book, while attributing the stab-in-the-back myth to the "hawks" is a dazzling study in "double think"--both applauding and vilifying the Vietnamese "people and government;" decorating and deprecating his superiors in the chain of command; and generally flying off in many direc-

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[34]Lucien Pye, "The Roots of Insurgency and Commencement of Rebellions," Paper at Center of International Study, MIT (June 1962) p. 2.

[35]Ibid., p. 3.

[36]Gard, p. 700.

[37]William R. Corson, Ltc., The Betrayal (1968) p. 286.

tions at once. The Corson book does much to enunciate American frustration; it does little to explain it; and does nothing to prescribe a solution.

It is impossible to rewrite history, and therefore change reality. Yet, the military can contribute to future Counterinsurgency understanding by prodding its civilian superiors to more adequately define "victory," within the context of relevant political objectives.

The military must understand the limitations of force in Counterinsurgency. In sharing missions with civilian counterparts, it will be necessary occasionally to function with a "civilian" directorate. Military participation in the policy process involves "a degree of political activity inconsistent with the nonpartisan tenants of traditional professionalism."[38] Yet, there is little evidence that the "damned if you do, damned if you don't" dichotomy will end.

As the U. S. Army does those things necessary within its own control to improve its ability in Counterinsurgency, it will be evident that some areas of expertise are beyond the capability of the professional military.

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[38]Gard, p. 706.

It is alleged that to use military units to engage in civil action projects in American cities would thrust the armed services into sensitive activities for which they aren't qualified.[39] Even so, it is unlikely that the United States Army can long evade some kind of civic action in its own country. The first timid steps by the reserve components in this direction should be further developed with a greater attention to the "lessons learned by some." Effective use of active forces in domestic civic action is probably not feasible even if it were desirable. There is a domestic requirement for reserve forces to understand Counterinsurgency in their home community. There is an equally stronger requirement for U. S. Active Army to cease acting as if Vietnam were a bad dream and to direct their keen attention toward understanding the lessons, developing new doctrine, and getting about the defense of the country's interests. We are living through "the first time in American experience since the Civil War, (when) intensive anti-war and anti-military sentiment developed in the United States before the war was over."[40] Extending that perspective, "A just moral cause--the defense of a people against terrorism and force--was transformed in the hearts and minds of many into an unjust one."[41] This is the heart of our disorientation--the object of the needed intellectual challenge.

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[39]Ibid., p. 707-708.

[40]Hansen Baldwin, Strategy for Tomorrow, p. 21.

[41]Ibid., p. 24.

Counterinsurgency (inherently a bad word), clashing with a basic U. S. self-vision, has seriously bent political leanings in the United States and has, in the process, for a variety of complex reasons, left the U. S. Army listening to an uncertain trumpet.

Flexible response will stay. Insurgency will not disappear; Counterinsurgency effectiveness must be demonstrated. The world will go on. Many of the doctrinal changes will work hardship on the military professional. The changes will tend to disadvantage the generalist, i.e., the manager who aims at wearing stars. While "The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of U. S. military power in revolution and counter revolution now appears to be severely limited,"[42] it is almost an educational imperative to "let the word go forth" that "inasmuch as a New York Times 1965 editorial approved of the U. S. determination to insure the independence of Vietnam, the military cannot be blamed for fostering and encouraging the conflict in Vietnam."[43]

In summary, idealistic rhetoric is suspect, and instead of a "we can do no wrong" attitude, there exists a "we can do no right" attitude. It is incumbent upon the U. S. military profession to take a long view of history, recognizing the fallability of man, the inevitability of evil and the constant struggle for survival.

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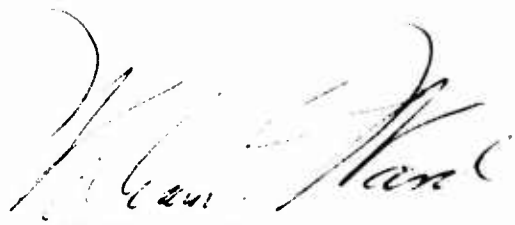
[42]Adam Yarmolinsky, The Military Establishment (1970) p. 150.

[43]Robert L. Bartley, "The Pentagon Papers is a Rorschach Test," The Wall Street Journal (9 July 1971) p. 6.

Perhaps:

> The greatest service they can render is to remain true to themselves, to service silence and courage in the military way; if they abjure the military spirit they destroy themselves first, and the nation ultimately. If the civilians permit the soldiers to adhere to the military standard, the nations themselves may eventually find redemption and security in making that standard their own.[44]



William F. Ward
Colonel Armor

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[44]Huntington, p. 466

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