

Defeating an Insurgency: Balancing the Battlefield for a Counterinsurgency

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### Defeating an Insurgency: Balancing the Battlefield for a Counterinsurgency

Counterinsurgency operations have been conducted all over the world throughout history and in many ways. Insurgencies can be very difficult to defeat if not planned in the appropriate and professional manner. A great plan of action, an iron fist, along with a mix of patience is required to defeat an insurgency.

Conducting an effective Counterinsurgency Campaign is one of the most difficult military missions that any military force can endure as a force and as a nation. The ability to balance and conduct Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement properly and effectively are essential to accomplish the strategic goal and mission.

The effects of Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement play a major role in any successful counterinsurgency operation. There must be a fine balance between the two tactics although one will need to be more prominent in most cases. Depending on the situation and environment, one will or can be used more effectively than the other. The ability to have a tactical balance of the two will enhance and speed the ability to defeat an effective insurgency. In order to win a counterinsurgency, you must crush the enemy with the required force but at the same time you have to win over the hearts and minds of the people. If you can't win over their hearts and minds, then the force could be in for a long and brutal war.

Comparing the counterinsurgencies in Vera Cruz, Mexico of 1914 and during the Philippine War in the early 1900's, you will see various similarities but many differences in the tactics used to defeat the insurgency. It is tactically sound to balance the importance of Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement versus primarily using only one or the other policy.

The importance of Policies of Attraction during a counterinsurgency, play a critical role in the overall success of the military campaign. Gathering the needed support from the local populace will assist in defeating the insurgency in a timely manner. The primary goal of the Policies of Attraction is to win the hearts and minds of the people, establishing rapport, while maintaining overall security and control.

There are missions that must be carried out to gain support from the local populace and win over their hearts and minds. The successes that were made in the Philippines during the early 1900's were due to much of the hard work to establish rapport with some of the local populace. There will be certain groups or pockets of the populace that you will never win over regardless of what efforts are conducted. The actions taken and the techniques used to build roads, improve drinking water and to improve the overall health of the populace gained the local support the military needed. For example, the US forces were willing to pay the Moro's in the Philippines to help build their own road. While this assisted the movement of US troops, it also helped the populace and the economy. This tactic does three things for the counterinsurgency. It puts money back into the populace, improves the relationship with the locals and it deters them from being a part of the insurgency. At first, the Moro's sat back and only watched as the US built this long road over a period of months and had no interest in assisting. Over time, these actions started to win over the local Moro's and eventually they were lined up to help build their roads while earning money at the same time. There were other programs in progress to help the local populace such as improvement of water purification and improved medical care. During the interventions of Vera Cruz, Mexico, the Policies of Attraction were not planned nor performed as well which had a negative effect on the local populace. The aggressive actions and maximum force used turned many of the locals against the US which in turned influenced them to take up

arms and assist the insurgency. This negative effect and response only fuels the insurgency and gives the insurgents the much needed support to survive during a counterinsurgency.

The long term goals of the Policies of Attraction for the counterinsurgency must be understood at all levels of the military to carry out the guidance and strategic goals of the overall military commander. At all levels, military commanders and senior NCO's must know, understand and communicate the overall objectives and long term goal of the counterinsurgency. These objectives and goals will need to be carried out at all levels. The Philippine counterinsurgency had a long term plan and conducted civil affair operations that had a long term effect. The roads improved travel, the water purification improved health and medical treatment given was recognized by all. During the Intervention of Vera Cruz, a long term plan was not given nor thought out. There was no long term plan to gain popular support. The US forces destroyed buildings, train stations, homes and business which all have a very negative effect on the populace. When assaults are conducted in such a careless and forceful manner, it is difficult to gain that much needed populace support to assist in defeating the insurgency.

The Policies of Chastisement play a major role in any military operation. Depending on how these missions and objectives are conducted, this will directly affect the success of the counterinsurgency. Every situation and confrontation will determine the level of force needed to crush the insurgency but keep collateral damage to a minimum.

Policies of Chastisement can be a very delicate but very explosive operation if not conducted properly. The local populace can be influenced or deterred from being a part of the insurgency depending on the techniques and tactics used. The US counterinsurgency in the Philippines adjusted the necessary force to complete the mission in a successful manner. The US

forces attacked the cottas with the minimum force necessary to get the desired effect. On several occasions, it was required to use excessive force to overtake the cottas or to deny usability of the cottas as a staging base for the insurgents. During the intervention of Vera Cruz, excessive force was used at times which fueled some locals to join the insurgency. The insurgents will use this propaganda to assist their cause and gain support of the locals to help fight the US presence. Using excessive force that destroys homes, schools, local businesses and killing noncombatants unnecessarily only helps the insurgency and negates all of the forward progress that has been gained. Operations need to be conducted using the proper force necessary to reduce collateral damage while preserving the safety of the force and mitigating unnecessary risk. Many of the locals supported the US efforts in certain Philippine pockets of Moro's, due to the controlled attacks. Over time, the US gathered and won support through the proper Policies of Chastisement for the situation at hand which assisted in the insurgency deterrence and defeat.

The actions to be taken to defeat insurgents while conducting Policies of Chastisement can have positive and negative effects. The most important thing is to be flexible and use an iron fist when needed but have the ability to shift gears and use minimal force when required to deter or destroy their activities and cells. The proper amount of force must be applied to defeat an insurgency. A major issue in fighting an insurgency is to know who exactly you are fighting. Usually, insurgents blend in with other locals making it very difficult to target the enemy. Striking or targeting the wrong objective or individuals will only have a negative effect on the overall mission and strategic goal. During the Vera Cruz intervention, the locals that resisted were struck with heavy weapons and a bombardment of ordinance. This quickly disperses the enemy and gives the military force the ability to overrun the enemy. In this situation, an iron fist was used but may have not been needed if a well thought out plan of action was conducted. This

type of attack can have a negative effect on the local populace. This type of force can and will usually result in noncombatant deaths which only fuel the insurgency on a long term basis.

The most important and critical aspect is balancing Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement during a counterinsurgency operation to defeat the insurgency and to win over the populace simultaneously. Every aspect of the counterinsurgency must be laid out and thoroughly planned by all leaders to be effective and productive. Many of these aspects will be decided by the populace but it is up to commanders and NCO's to make sure these are conducted properly in their respective areas. Some areas may accept the presents of the US military force and others will not. Applying the proper balance of the two will always improve the chances for success.

There will be situations and confrontations where it will not make tactical sense to balance the Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement. The enemy and the situation usually drives the amount of each needed to defeat the insurgency. The situation at hand will dictate the amount of pressure needed for each aspect of the counterinsurgency.

The effects that the insurgents can have on the population to counter any Policies of Attraction, regardless of military efforts, can be very devastating to the mission of the force. Many of the insurgents live within the local populace and many are deeply embedded into the community. This makes it very difficult to root them out of the populace and makes it easy for them to influence the locals. Regardless of the efforts put forth by US soldiers, they will always have an underlying loyalty with each other.

The tactics that insurgents use at times will be very brutal and violent to cause death to US soldiers. This will always have to be the priority consideration when developing a plan to

defeat the insurgency. Insurgents must be fought and destroyed in a manner that they understand and a manner that will defeat the enemy and free the populace of insurgent influence and control.

Counterinsurgency operations have been conducted all over the world throughout history and in many ways. Insurgencies are very difficult to defeat if not planned in the appropriate manner. A great plan of action, an iron fist, along with a mix of patience is required to defeat an insurgency. As we progress through current times and while we conduct operations to assist Global War on Terrorism, the thought out plans of our commanders and senior NCO's will defeat any insurgency. Without the proper balance in Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement, the enemy will rise to the top and win over the hearts and minds of the people. Having the proper balance of Policies of Attraction and Policies of Chastisement while having the strategic goal in mind we will always defeat an effective insurgency.

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