

AD-A241 060



2



AIR WAR COLLEGE

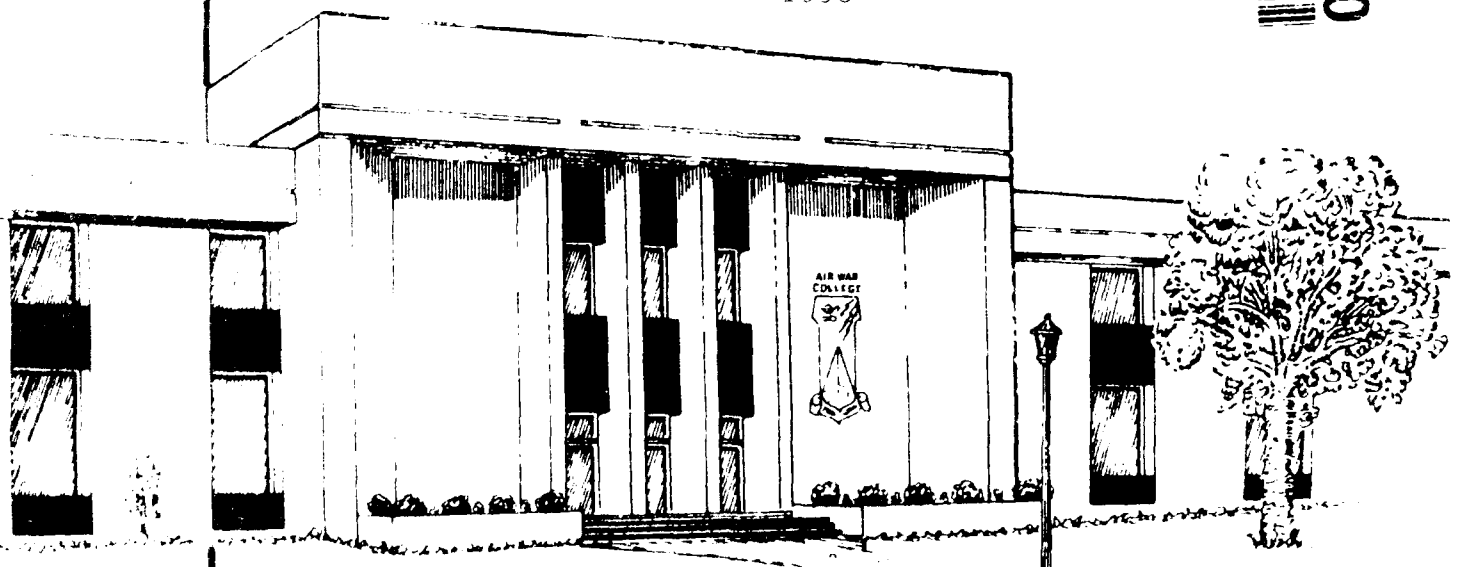
RESEARCH REPORT

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALAN J. TINDER

1990

91-12340



AIR UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC
RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION
UNLIMITED

91 10 3 110

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

by

ALAN J. TINDER
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: DOCTOR JAMES E. WINKATES

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

APRIL 1990

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Accession For | |
| NTIS GRA&I | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| DIC SAB | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unannounced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Justification | |
| By | |
| Distribution | |
| Availability Codes | |
| Avail. and/or | |
| Dist | Special |
| A-1 | |

DISCLAIMER

This study represents the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Air War College or the Department of the Air Force. In accordance with Air Force Regulation 110-8, it is not copyrighted but is the property of the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| | Disclaimer | ii |
| | Executive Summary | iv |
| I. | <u>INTRODUCTION</u> | 1 |
| II | <u>LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT</u> | 2 |
| | A. Revolution | 5 |
| | B. Counterrevolution | 6 |
| III. | <u>THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT</u> | 8 |
| IV. | <u>THE THREAT</u> | 11 |
| V. | <u>POLICY AND STRATEGY</u> | 13 |
| VI. | <u>CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS</u> | 16 |
| VII. | <u>USAF ROLES IN LIC</u> | 20 |
| | A. Summary | 24 |
| VIII. | <u>IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE</u> | 25 |
| IX. | <u>LIC SCENARIOS</u> | 28 |
| | <u>LIST OF REFERENCES</u> | 32 |
| | <u>ANNEXES</u> | |
| | 1. LIC Point Paper | |
| | 2. National Strategy for Low-Intensity Conflict | |
| | 3. Recommended Readings | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following World War II and the emergence of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. as the world's superpowers, U.S. political-military policies and strategies have been directed primarily toward containment of Soviet influence and preparation for another European war. However, the birth of numerous Third World nations in an increasingly complex and unstable international setting has led many experts to conclude that future global unrest will more likely be centered in the Third World. Most post World War II conflicts have in fact occurred in these regions. U.S. political-military capabilities for conducting something less than a conventional, unlimited war are increasingly criticized as inadequate and inappropriate. In addressing the need to refocus U.S. attention on other than the conventional European battlefield, this paper discusses the nature of Third World or low-intensity conflict (LIC), U.S. Third World policies, U.S. capabilities to respond to LIC, possible USAF roles in support of national objectives in the Third World, and implications for developing a credible response to LIC.

INTRODUCTION

Analysts count between 500 and 1000 Third World conflicts since World War II. The consensus is that Third World conflict will continue to be the most frequently occurring threat to U.S. national interests for the foreseeable future. What is the nature of this threat and is the U.S. prepared to deal with it?

Dr. Sam Sarkesian (Professor of Political Science, Loyola University, Chicago) describes the Third World as the "contemporary battlefield," a battlefield very dissimilar to the conventional arena of most prior American combat experience. It is one characterized by heavy emphasis on political, social, economic, and psychological factors. It is a place where military operations are subordinated to political struggle.

U.S. capability to engage in Third World conflict generally has been criticized as inappropriate because of being too dependent on Clausewitzian principles, i.e., conventional war. A brief look at the nature of "small wars," or low-intensity conflict (LIC) provides insight into the political-military problems of fighting wars at the lower end of the combat spectrum. This study of LIC provides the basis upon which U.S. LIC policy and roles can be examined.

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT (LIC)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) definition of LIC is:

A limited political-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, and psychological pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low-intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and levels of violence. (13:93)

Figure 1 (pg 3) depicts Dr Sarkesian's concept of the conflict spectrum while Figure 2 (pg 4) represents Dr Richard Shultz's definition of the range of LIC. Dr Sarkesian points out that while some definitions of LIC are based on the number of forces and level of intensity, it is more appropriate to understand LIC in terms of its underlying character. More importantly, "although low-intensity conflict is perceived by some to include limited conventional wars and acts of terrorism, the substantive dimensions of such conflicts evolve primarily from revolutionary and counterrevolutionary strategy and causes." (15:12) Understanding revolution and counterrevolution is vital to understanding LIC. Dr Sarkesian's study of revolution and counterrevolution reveals key characteristics of these variations of LIC. (Note: In this paper, the terms revolution and insurgency are used interchangeably.)



LOW

HIGH

INTENSITY

GUERRILLA I: WEAPONS ASSISTANCE TEAMS - POLICE TRAINING - ADVISORY TEAMS

GUERRILLA II: SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS - CADRE FOR INDIGENOUS FORCES
(CONTINUATION OF GUERRILLA I)

GUERRILLA III: INTEGRATION OF US COMBAT UNITS WITH INDIGENOUS FORCES
(CONTINUATION OF GUERRILLA I AND II)

FIGURE 1
SARKESIAN'S CONFLICT SPECTRUM

Source: Dr Sam C. Sarkesian and William L. Scully, eds., *US Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: Potentials for Military Struggles in the 1980s*
(New York: National Defense Information Center, Inc., 1981), 6.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| NORMAL DIPLOMACY | POLITICAL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS & PEACEKEEPING | SABOTAGE TERRORISM & COUPS | INSURGENCY | LOW-INTENSITY CONVENTIONAL WARFARE | MID-INTENSITY CONVENTIONAL WARFARE & UN- CONVENTIONAL WARFARE | HIGH-INTENSITY CONVENTIONAL WARFARE & UN- CONVENTIONAL WARFARE | THEATER NUCLEAR WAR & UN- CONVENTIONAL WARFARE | STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WAR & UN- CONVENTIONAL WARFARE |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------|--|---|--|--|--|

RANGE OF LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICTS

FIGURE 2
SCHULTZ'S SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT

Source: Dr Richard H. Schultz, Jr., "Low-Intensity Conflict and U.S. Policy: Regional Threats, Soviet Involvement, and the American Response" In Low-Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology, ed. L*Col David J. Dean (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1986), 77

REVOLUTION

Revolutions are undertaken to confront governing powers and to overthrow existing political systems. Although important, armed conflict is not the key component of revolutionary success. Revolution is geographically limited. Its center of gravity is the political-social system and its psychological makeup. Revolutions are led by small leadership groups, armed with an ideology, whose tactics and strategy combine politics and unconventional warfare to undermine legitimacy and effectiveness of the governing authorities.

Earlier revolutions often were fought against colonial powers, while recent revolutions generally have been directed at indigenous regimes. Revolutionary efforts can be broken down into three separate, yet overlapping and sometimes interchangeable elements: guerrilla warfare (a tactical operation), revolution (a political-social conflict), and insurgency (somewhere between guerrilla war and revolution). Revolutions are most likely to occur in underdeveloped areas seeking political change and economic modernization.
(16:41-67)

Revolutions have numerous causes, including historical animosities, grievances against existing regimes, socio-economic disparity, reaction to elitism, and dissatisfaction with power distribution. Generally, revolutions are not led by an uprising of the masses, but by mobilization of a minority. Revolutions have succeeded when capable leaders

were able to organize a support and intelligence infrastructure and to recruit followers by identifying with popular grievances. Often it is not until later revolutionary stages that the underlying ideology surfaces. (16:41-67)

Although not always reflective of the root ideology, revolutionary strategies and doctrines are often founded on one of the following models: Marxism-Leninism, a class struggle against aristocratic and bourgeoisie elements, focused in urban areas; Maoism, a revolution beginning with peasants in the countryside and isolating the government; Castroism, a small group of revolutionaries starting a revolution by penetrating the existing political system; or a mix of all three. (16:41-67) Revolutionaries, able to justify the means to their objectives, create their own morals and ethics. Success is not measured in traditional terms. Political and psychological effects are more important than combat results. Revolutionaries are patient and conflicts are protracted. Unconventional tactics are the norm. (15:15) The complex nature of revolutions poses serious challenges for the counterrevolutionary effort.

COUNTERREVOLUTION

Counterrevolution is a reaction by the existing regime to a revolution, a revolution that often is a symptom of the ineffectiveness of the ruling party. The object of the counterrevolutionary effort is to identify the causes of the revolution, its leadership, and their strategy. There

is no historical counterrevolution model. To retain control, the existing regime must be able to resolve the peculiar political, social, economic, and psychological causes of the revolution. The success of counterrevolution depends on the quality of leadership, its credibility and its ability to wage an effective psychological campaign to erode revolutionary influences. This effort requires an effective integration of political, economic, information, security, and military components of the government. The key is better government. (16:92-96) The ruling power is starting from the defensive, making it difficult to slow revolutionary momentum. Often, third party support is required for the ruling regime to stay in power. (15:17) The challenge is one of countering revolutionary demands while maintaining control of and carrying on routine government.

THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Many Third World countries control geostrategically important areas and possess resources critical to the world economy. These geopolitical considerations, when coupled with political and economic struggles for modernization, make the Third World especially vulnerable to various forms of low-intensity conflict (LIC). The growing interdependence of international players makes Third World volatility extremely important to world affairs.

The over 160 United Nations members differ in culture, ideology, natural resources, demographics, ethnic structure, and economic development. Numerous non-governmental entities have strong influences on world affairs. On a regional basis, the complexity of world affairs and its implications for dealing with LIC are evident. For example, experts on the Middle East agree that the rise of fundamentalist Islam has created a cover of ambiguity. "The farther afield one moves from the charismatic model of Iranian Shiite religious organization and into the Sunni Arab world, the more pronounced this ambiguity becomes with respect to the issues of secularism, anti-Westernism, the colonial struggle, and one-state nationalism." (19:32) In Muslim Central Asia, LIC has been occurring in "backward areas of intense religious loyalty" that are "increasingly under pressure from modernizing forces, pronounced ethnic fragmentation, and intense socio-political fragmentation." (1:37)

LIC activity in Latin America remains intense. In 1988 there were 27 ongoing insurgencies involving nine countries (25% of the Latin American republics). Experts conclude that LIC is more likely to increase than decrease in the area. Latin American insurgencies tend to be against the economic exploitation and social injustice of repressive authoritarian regimes (right and left ideologically) and have been complicated by the intervention of Soviet surrogates, i.e., Cubans. The region suffers from food shortages, overpopulation, maldistribution of wealth, foreign trade imbalance, drug cartels, and excessive foreign debt. (20:98-101)

In southern Africa, the existence of more than 1000 ethnic groups has endowed a region with incredible cultural diversity and social fragmentation. Following the independence of many African nations, ethnic tensions combined with economic adversity have resulted in ideal conditions for LIC.

For the United States, the southern African dilemma has been particularly frustrating. Its foreign policy -- expressed through concepts such as black majority rule, linkage diplomacy, support of anti-Marxist guerrillas, and an abhorrence of apartheid -- has been unable to end any of the region's low-intensity conflicts. (14:123)

In Southeast Asia, LIC is generally founded on political struggles. The causes of conflict in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Kampuchea are deeply rooted and defy efforts at quick solutions. The conflicts "reflect political, social, and

economic ruptures and breakdowns in these societies. They express demands for fundamental changes in the power distribution." (5:157)

While LIC can occur in developed countries, LIC more often occurs in newly emerging, politically unstable Third World states. The forces of modernization combined with ineffective or authoritarian government provide fertile grounds for the growth of revolutions and terrorism which are often supported by anti-U.S. factions. The potential for LIC poses threats which U.S. policy makers must consider when formulating policy to deal with LIC.

THE THREAT

As varied as it is, and as difficult it is to define, the LIC environment has been the primary area of U.S. military involvement since World War II, and it will continue to be the major threat to U.S. security for the foreseeable future. According to Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh Jr.,

The threat may be attenuated, but it exists and we must learn to see it for what it is and respond to it. The dangers are varied. A review of many of the areas of LIC reflects threats to essential sources of U.S. and Western raw materials and their supply routes. In many cases, the Soviets or their allies, such as Cuba, support local revolutionary causes as part of their larger, international conflict with the United States.... The activities of such actors threaten to isolate us from our friends and allies and from the sources of supply that keep our industries working and our people employed.... More than this, however, the threat to our long term interest does not lie in material resources or transportation routes. It lies in ideas, in the support for and survival of the concepts upon which our heritage as a people are based. (10:4)

Trends indicate that the threat of LIC will not diminish. The socio-political, economic, and psychological causes of LIC continue to pervade Third World nations. Media coverage has ensured international attention for terrorists and revolutionaries. Technology has increased the capabilities of armed forces. Death squads and vigilante groups have been on the rise as has been urban guerrilla warfare. Professional terrorists and revolutionaries have emerged to carry out armed activities. More significantly, the external support of third parties and the use of surrogate forces increase the stakes and affects the intensity and outcome of conflicts.

The 1986 Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Study Project concluded that

The threat posed to United States interests by low-intensity conflict is far more complex than the more precisely defined confrontation between East and West. The danger of escalation inherent in general war has encouraged greater reliance on indirect forms of conflict. The increasing complexity of international relations due to the emergence of numerous new states, and the opposition's willingness to use indirect force make it difficult to respond effectively to the threat. (3:2.5)

What then is the U.S. policy and capability to respond to the threats inherent in LIC?

POLICY AND STRATEGY

LIC threatens U.S. interests, yet the U.S. policy for dealing with LIC has been severely criticized as being inadequate to meet that threat. Dr Sarkesian believes the fundamental problem is the failure of U.S. policy makers to understand the LIC environment. Prior to the 1960s, with exceptions, U.S. participation in Third World affairs was minor, with relations being conducted primarily through colonial powers. Policy makers' attentions were centered almost exclusively on Soviet containment and the nuclear threat.

For years the Monroe Doctrine was the basis for U.S. policy with Latin America. With the post World War II birth of numerous Third World nations, there was an increased awareness of the need for policy which was applicable to conditions peculiar to the Third World. President Kennedy attempted to bring attention to the area by calling for a buildup of U.S. counterinsurgency capabilities. In 1969, the Guam Doctrine, which grew out of the Vietnam experience, stated a broad U.S. Third World policy which was based on self-help efforts bolstered by U.S. advice and assistance.

After Vietnam, several trends surfaced. First, there arose an aversion to becoming involved in "another Vietnam." Second, counterinsurgency planning was completely overshadowed by planning for a Soviet confrontation in Europe. Third, media and public reaction to Vietnam caused policy makers and politicians to shy away from Third World interests. Fourth,

Third World conditions appeared more favorable to the spread of Soviet influence. (16:24-25) However, events in Afghanistan led to the realization of a need for more realistic U.S. Third World policies and strategies for dealing with LIC.

In the January 1987 National Security Strategy of the United States, a national policy for LIC was first articulated (see Annex 2); however, the move to institutionalize LIC strategy and doctrine has encountered many impediments. As of this writing, there is no DOD LIC doctrine. The multi-service LIC doctrine (signed 5 Dec 1989) is lacking specific guidance on the conduct of LIC operations. Progress in the LIC arena has been so slow that congressional members highlighted their concerns in a 1989 letter to the National Security Advisor to the President. Criticizing the executive and legislative branches for moving slowly, the members pointed to "the lack of interest in low-intensity conflict which is most pronounced in non-defense activities, major conceptual shortcomings, and the lack of inter-agency coordination." (17:66)

The ambiguity of most Third World conflicts poses many problems for U.S. policy makers. With an eye toward the Soviet threat,

Clausewitzian logic fits more easily into the general notions of war held by Americans.... Anything less than crisis creates problems of national will and political resolve and ultimately affects staying power.... The military of open systems are not positioned or mentally disposed to engage in unconventional conflicts. (16:173)

In sum, there has been disagreement over what U.S. Third World policy should be, often resulting in inappropriate and inconsistent strategy application to Third World events. In a Rand study, Stephen Hosmer identified major constraints on U.S. military strategy which resulted from past experiences in Third World conflicts:

The constraints and self-imposed limitations that have restricted U.S. strategies and combat behavior since World War II have been motivated in large part by U.S. concern to control the risks of direct military conflict with the USSR; avoid friendly and enemy civilian casualties; limit U.S. military casualties and thereby preserve U.S. domestic support for a war; seek negotiated solutions to Third World conflicts; and accommodate the attitudes and policies of other countries, particularly U.S. allies. (6:v)

The next section examines U.S. LIC capabilities as they have evolved in the absence of a comprehensive LIC strategy.

CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

The failed Iranian rescue attempt of 1980 drew national attention to the U.S. inability to conduct unconventional operations. Following Vietnam, special operations funding had fallen to one-tenth of one percent of the DOD budget, a cut of 95% from the Vietnam era. Modernization had stopped and special operations units were disbanded as the need for special operations was questioned. Within the Air Force, the USAF Special Operations Force was eliminated and forces were drawn down to one wing and only 37 special operations aircraft.

With renewed attention following the Iranian mission, the DOD special operations budget increased from \$440 million to \$1.1 billion (from 1981 to 1986). However, despite the apparent revitalization of special operations forces, Congress in 1986 was concerned that special operations improvements were moving too slowly. Legislation passed in 1986 focused on correcting perceived organizational and procedural deficiencies. The 1986 law established the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), created the Low-Intensity Conflict Board under the National Security Council, provided for flag/general officer leadership for two of the five theater Special Operations Commands, created a separate special operations budget (Program II), and established the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)).

A number of experts believe that the revitalized special operations forces face severe limitations in being able to cope effectively with LIC. Mr Steven Metz (Strategy Study Committee, Department of Joint and Combined Operations, Ft Leavenworth) best summarizes the concerns with U.S. LIC capabilities:

There are a number of identifiable deficiencies within the area of military capabilities for low-intensity conflict. Some of these, including the paucity of air and sea-lift assets for special forces and declining security assistance, could be remedied fairly easily. Other problems are more difficult. They include: ongoing indecision over the autonomy of special forces; shortcomings in specialized low-intensity conflict training; and underdeveloped doctrine for joint low-intensity operations and for the interface between the military and civilian agencies such as the State Department, Agency for International Development, and Central Intelligence Agency. While the enhancement of military capabilities is at least under way, political, psychological, and economic capabilities remain deficient. (11:268)

Aside from perceived operational and organizational shortcomings, U.S. involvement in LIC is further influenced by media and public reaction. In the wake of Vietnam, public opinion will hereafter be a factor in U.S. decisions to commit U.S. personnel and resources to battles with ambiguous objectives and for which it is difficult to ascertain the attainment of success. For example, in a 1989 analysis of public opinion polls concerning Central America, Mr Richard Sobel (Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Connecticut) found that, despite the threat of communism, U.S. intervention in Central America is opposed by most Americans

(Panama, arguably is a special case). Although conditions in El Salvador and Nicaragua are seen to threaten the U.S., the majority opposes the use of U.S. force in the area. Both direct and indirect military aid are opposed. Not only is there strong opposition to direct U.S. intervention to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, the deployment of U.S. troops in country is not supported. In sum, the poll results indicated Americans believe U.S. intervention in Central America is a greater danger than the presence of communism. (18:114-128)

Former SECDEF Weinberger's six conditions for committing U.S. forces was an effort to build public confidence in future U.S. decisions to intervene in the Third World. Briefly, the conditions stated that U.S. intervention must be in the national interest; the attainment of victory would be a clear objective; appropriate military strategies would be used to attain stated political objectives; situations would be continually reassessed to confirm the need for U.S. forces; that the Congress and American people support the use of force; and the use of the military would be a last resort action.

Unfortunately, the Weinberger conditions leave many unanswered questions for policy makers. Beginning with "what is the national interest," what criteria will be used to determine which countries are vital to the U.S.? If U.S. security is at risk, is an ideological assessment of leftist or rightist tendencies or human rights records relevant? To what extent should U.S. support be given to regimes or insurgents who do not conform to democratic norms? How will the extent of U.S.

intervention be determined? What outcome constitutes victory? Under what conditions should withdrawal be considered? Until these issues are resolved, it will be difficult for the U.S. to develop a coherent, consistent LIC response. In the interim, what are some possible LIC roles for the USAF?

USAF ROLES IN LIC

Responding to LIC requires enormous flexibility because of the variety of forms conflict can take. The U.S. response to Third World LIC might range from no action to armed intervention. Dr Mark Katz (Professor of Political Science, George Mason University) argues that each conflict should be considered on an individual basis and an appropriate policy be determined for each case. He favors reliance on subtle diplomatic measures to seek peaceful solutions. (7:103) Dr Neil Livingston (a Washington based consultant on terrorism), however, advocates the more aggressive approach of providing open, direct assistance to any country where U.S. interests can be served, especially with respect to containing Soviet influence. (9:11)

Assuming that the outcome of LIC is important to U.S. national interests and security, and assuming that policy makers have recognized that the military aspects of LIC are secondary to the socio-political nature of LIC, and assuming that a decision to become involved in the Third World has passed a test similar to Mr Weinberger's intervention criteria, what role, if any, can USAF air power have in LIC?

In 1985, Mr Neil Koch, then Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, asked the question "is there a role for air power in low-intensity conflict?" Aside from his view that senior USAF leadership was not interested in retaining or developing its special operations capabilities, Mr Koch argued that the question of air power's

utility in LIC can best be determined by examining prior conflicts. He pointed out that in numerous conflicts the possession of air superiority did not lead to victory. Mr Koch contends there are lessons to be learned and validated about the correct, decisive employment of air power in LIC. Moreover,

If there is a role for air power in low-intensity conflict, and if the other services want to perform that role, I see no compelling reason why the possibilities should not be carefully considered. But I do believe that the future of warfare is in low-intensity conflict, and I cannot imagine anyone, least of all the United States Air Force, not wanting to be there. (8:42)

Lt Col David Dean (a former faculty member at the USAF Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education) has proposed a three tiered approach for USAF responses to LIC, i.e., assistance, integration, and intervention. Assistance consists of noncombat training and help with developing support functions such as logistics, intelligence, and planning. Integration is the limited use of USAF personnel and assets to augment indigenous forces. If necessary, USAF personnel would participate in combat missions. The final phase, intervention, applies if the first two steps fail, and it were determined that USAF forces were required to prevent defeat of the host force. (2:46) To ensure the development of the necessary equipment, doctrine, training, and personnel selection, Lt Col Dean suggests the creation of an organization similar to the USAF Special Air Warfare Center (SAWC) of the 1960s.

The SAWC's mission was to train aircrews in all phases of unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency air

operations. Through the use of mobile training teams and civic actions, SAWC units made significant contributions to counterinsurgency efforts. Despite SAWC's counterinsurgency successes, the SAWC mission was changed to one of training USAF aircrews for conventional warfare in Vietnam. In 1968, SAWC became the USAF Special Operations Force, only to be fully deactivated in 1974. Lt Col Dean argues that by creating another SAWC founded on the principles of counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, and psychological operations, the USAF LIC roles and missions can be clearly defined and supported. (2:45-47)

A solution similar to Lt Col Dean's has been proposed by Maj Richard Newton (USAF). Maj Newton's proposal, also reminiscent of SAWC, is based on the creation of a fifth special operations wing within Twenty-Third Air Force, the air component of the U.S. Special Operations Command. The wing would be tasked to develop counterinsurgency doctrine, tactics, and techniques and would also train Third World air forces in counterinsurgency. Emphasis would be placed on the use of mobile training teams and employment of resources in the low technology LIC environment. (12:62-72)

Support of indigenous forces in most LIC situations is best carried out by the use of low technology assets, i.e., equipment that is cheap, easy to operate, and easy to maintain. A possible role for the USAF is to serve as an advocate for the development of equipment designed for use in

the LIC environment. Mr Jerome Klingaman (Senior Research Fellow, USAF Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education) has proposed USAF sponsorship of the development of a low-tech, mass-produced, light-armed surveillance aircraft (LASA) for LIC application. He argues that "there is probably nothing in the light aircraft category more important to the small war tactician and battlefield commander than an inexpensive, uncomplicated, and rugged armed surveillance platform designed specifically for sustained counter guerrilla operations from remote, forward locations." (4:123)

Mr Klingaman points out that today's technological advances have made equipment too sophisticated and costly for LIC application. Earlier efforts to redesign off-the-shelf equipment for LIC often failed. Providing "bone yard" assets to the Third World is generally cost prohibitive; and the use of USAF's front line aircraft is a high visibility option to be avoided in most LIC scenarios. Mr Klingaman believes the USAF has an important role to play in the advocacy, acquisition, and employment of equipment appropriate for the LIC environment. (4:123-138)

Mr Stephen Hosmer sees a future in which the USAF will be called upon to act as a force multiplier for indigenous forces through rapid air strikes, air superiority, and integration with indigenous ground forces. (6:128)

SUMMARY

Depending on the level of escalation of a LIC scenario, and depending on the degree of U.S. commitment to resolve the conflict, some options for the application of USAF air power to LIC can be summarized as follows:

- The use of security assistance and the foreign military sales (FMS) system to strengthen host nation capabilities.
- The use of international military education and training (IMET) to enhance combat support disciplines.
- The deployment of mobile training teams (MTT) to teach combat doctrine, strategy, and operations.
- The deployment of civic action teams to bolster the host regime's position through public works and medical projects.
- The development of teams which can be tailored and deployed to meet the requirements of individual LIC situations. Teams would be composed of experts in areas such as linguistics, intelligence, logistics, communications, and counterinsurgency operations.
- Perform a constabulary role which frees up indigenous forces for counterinsurgency.
- Intervene directly through the full-fledged application of U.S. units trained in counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, and psychological warfare.
- Take on an air power advocacy role for the development of LIC equipment, doctrine, strategy, and tactics.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Low-intensity conflict will remain the primary threat to U.S. national security and interests for the foreseeable future. The U.S. has no consistent track record of special operations or counterinsurgency successes. While current special operations forces may possess the assets to fight Third World conflicts, there are fundamental shortcomings in U.S. preparedness to deal with the socio-political and psychological characteristics of LIC that distinguish it from conventional warfare. The following issues address some of the problems which affect the U.S. ability to develop a credible response to LIC:

- Do U.S. security assistance laws provide maximum flexibility in dealing with LIC? For example, the linking of assistance to human rights or the restriction of assistance to police forces can impede U.S. strategies in support of U.S. interests.

- Is an appropriate joint, coordinated service doctrine for LIC operations in place to provide the basis for development of LIC strategy, tactics, and equipment acquisition?

- Are senior military leaders adequately committed to the development of special operations and unconventional warfare capabilities to ensure the necessary personnel and resources are available to develop and perform the mission?

- Can public education programs be undertaken to inform the public and the media of the importance of the Third World to

U.S. national interests? For example, should the public be told that sometimes support must be given to nations which do not conform to democratic norms?. Can the public will for committing U.S. resources to distant lands be strengthened to ensure the staying power required to bring LICs to a successful conclusion?

- How can civilian leadership, the services, and the public be educated on the nature of the LIC environment? The political, social, economic, and psychological underpinnings of LIC require more than conventional warfare tactics for simple, quick solutions. Involvement in LIC will be protracted and unconventional. The recent revitalization of special operations forces, which emphasizes conducting short term raids and rescues, is not sufficient for LIC scenarios.

- The complex underlying causes of LIC require resolution at the grass roots level. A military response alone will not suffice; hence, it is necessary to determine the appropriate role of the military in LIC. Should that role be defined within the overall framework of a strategy that includes political, economic, social, and psychological elements? Should the role be developed in accordance with a set of principles of war which is applicable to LIC?

- Should USAF leadership consider identifying and training personnel in a career field dedicated to special operations and LIC? A program similar to the Army's foreign area officer program would produce experts in such areas as linguistics, analysis, intelligence, doctrine, and security assistance.

Should commanders be able to draw upon in-house expertise for analytical and operational support when planning LIC operations?

- The special operations portion of the defense budget is relatively miniscule. Will senior leadership be strong advocates for special operations in the budget process? The force multiplier effects of special operations in both conventional and unconventional warfare should not be lost to the inevitable trade-offs of the budget process.

- The unpredictable occurrence and character of LIC will most likely continue to be dealt with on an ad hoc basis. Nevertheless, a system is needed for responding to LIC, a system which clearly provides for expeditious command and control of U.S. responses to LIC. What provisions are needed to be in place for tailoring existing capabilities to respond to the peculiar conditions of each conflict?

- Finally, since World War II there have been by some accounts as many as 1000 low-intensity conflicts. A concerted effort to study previous conflicts would provide valuable lessons pertaining to the nature of LIC, the employment of military forces, and possible LIC roles for air power.

LIC SCENARIOS

The following fictitious scenarios are posed as points of departure to stimulate discussion about the types of questions which might be raised when assessing the necessity for and the degree of U.S. intervention in Third World LIC. Scenarios have been selected for three countries for which the political stability of their respective governments are of potentially low, medium, and high concern to U.S. national interests.

MOZAMBIQUE

The ruling party of Mozambique, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), has transformed the country into a one-party Marxist state allied to the Soviet Union. In 1976, dissidents, known as the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) and supported by South Africa, began hit-and-run raids against rail, road, power, and communications lines as well as isolated villages, state farms, and police posts. The MNR has been criticized by other African states as an illegitimate national movement without a coherent program or an adequate political base among the Mozambican people. The recent increase in the frequency and intensity of MNR activity threatens FRELIMO'S capability to control the country. What action, if any, should the U.S. government take?

- Should the U.S. become involved at all, and if so, on the basis of what national or vital interest?

- Will U.S. intervention adversely affect relations with other African nations?

- Should the unrest in Mozambique be seen as an opportunity to wean the country away from Soviet influence?

- Would U.S. interests be served by propping up a leftist government?

- Should economic assistance be discontinued to Mozambique?

- Should the U.S. support the MNR with economic or military assistance?

Possible implications: Mozambique is of little consequence to U.S. national interests and U.S. intervention might alienate other African nations.

PERU

Only since 1980 have Peruvians been given the opportunity to choose their president through popular elections. The military is a major force in the governmental structure and society. The Shining Path, a radical Maoist guerrilla organization, presents a grave threat to the Peruvian government. The basic problem faced by the government is how to defeat the insurgents without eroding the fragile democratic process. The government's efforts toward curtailing the Shining Path's activities have not succeeded, and there are no prospects for success in the near term. International debt is overwhelming economic development. Should the U.S. intervene?

- Does the U.S. have an interest in Peruvian stability?

- Should the U.S. approach be purely economic, i.e., working within the international banking community to relieve Peruvian international debt pressures?

- Should military assistance and advisers be provided to combat the guerrillas?

- Is there a point in time when U.S. troops should be placed in country to support the ruling regime?

Possible implications: Failure to support the current regime could lead to the fall of the largest of the Andean governments. Ecuador and Bolivia, and possibly Chile and Brazil, could follow Peru's lead of not paying its international debts. Peru could become a communist stronghold and a sanctuary for drug cartels, both situations being unfavorable to U.S. interests.

MEXICO

The centrist Party of Revolutionary Institutions (PRI) has governed Mexico since the 1920s. Amid charges of fraud, PRI candidate deGortari narrowly won the 1988 elections. The recent death of the rightist candidate has greatly strengthened the position of the leftist deCardenas for the 1994 elections. Faced with massive economic problems, deGortari is also faced with the increasing threat of a leftist insurgency to topple the government and to elect the radical deCardenas. What action should the U.S. government take?

- What threat would a leftist Mexican government pose to U.S. interests?

- What economic assistance can be taken to relieve Mexico's debt burden?

- Can the U.S. assist Mexico with longer range counterinsurgency actions such as psychological operations, civic activities, and economic development projects?

- To what extent should military assistance be provided?

- Is there a role for U.S. military advisers in Mexico?

- In light of Mexico's economic plight, should arrangements be made to provide Mexico military equipment on a no cost basis?

- How far should the political situation be allowed to deteriorate before the U.S. considers direct intervention?

- What would be the U.S. reaction to a relatively orderly leftist takeover of the government?

Possible implications: A radical leftist government on the U.S. southern border could be a threat to U.S. security. A leftist takeover could lead to a major migration of Mexicans into U.S. territory, causing major social and economic problems for the U.S. A weakened Mexican government could provide opportunities for drug cartels to operate more unconstrained near U.S. borders.

REFERENCES

1. Blank, Stephen. "Soviet Russia and Low-Intensity Conflict in Central Asia: Three Case Studies." Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World. pp. 38-80. Edited by Lewis B. Ware. Air University Press, August 1988.
2. Dean, David J. "The USAF in Low-Intensity Conflict: The Special Air Warfare Center." Air University Review Vol 26, No. 2 (January-February 1985): 45-57.
3. Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project. Analytical Review of Low-Intensity Conflict, Vol I. United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia, August 1986.
4. Klingaman, Jerome W. "Light Aircraft Technology for Small Wars." Low-Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology. pp. 123-137. Edited by David J. Dean. Air University Press, June 1986.
5. Grinter, Lawrence E. "Low-Intensity Conflict in Southeast Asia: Challenges, Responses, and Implications for the United States." Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World. pp. 131-160. Edited by Lewis B. Ware. Air University Press, August 1988.
6. Hosmer, Stephen T. Constraints on U.S. Strategy in Third World Conflict. Rand Report (R-3208-AF), September 1985.
7. Katz, Mark N. The Third World in Soviet Military Thought. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982.
8. Koch, Noel C. "Is There a Role for Air Power in Low-Intensity Conflict?" Armed Forces Journal International (May 1985): 32-42.
9. Livingston, Neil C. "Fighting Terrorism and 'Dirty Little Wars'." Air University Review Vol 35, No. 3 (March-April 1984): 4-16.
10. Marsh, John O., Jr. "Comments on Low-Intensity Conflict". Military Review No. 2 (February 1989): 2-5.
11. Metz, Steven. "Foundation for a Low-Intensity Conflict Strategy." Comparative Strategy, Vol 8, No. 2, (1989): 265-273.

12. Newton, Richard D. "A US Air Force Role in Counterinsurgency Support." Air Power Journal Vol 3, No. 3 (Fall 1989): 62-72.
13. Nutting, Wallace. "Organizing for Low-Intensity Warfare." Global Affairs (Summer 1987): 92-105.
14. Ofcansky, Thomas P. "Low-Intensity Conflict in Southern Africa." Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World. pp. 105-130. Edited by Lewis B. Ware. Air University Press, August 1988.
15. Sarkesian, Sam C. "Low-Intensity Conflict: Concepts, Principles, and Policy Guidelines." Low-Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology. Edited by LtCol David J. Dean. Air University Press, July 1986.
16. -----. The New Battlefield. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
17. Schemmer, Benjamin F. "Senate Leaders Ask Scowcroft for New White House Focus on Low-Intensity Conflict." Armed Forces Journal International (March 1989): 66-67.
18. Sobel, Richard. "Public Opinion about United States Intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua." Public Opinion Quarterly Vol 53, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 114-128.
19. Ware, Lewis B. "Low-Intensity Conflict in the Middle East." Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World. pp.. 1-36. Edited by Lewis B. ware. Air University Press, August 1988.
20. Weathers, Bynum E. "Factors Affecting the Emergence of Low-Intensity Conflict in Latin America." Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World. pp. 81-104. Edited by Lewis B. Ware. Air University Press, August 1988.

ANNEX 1

POINT PAPER ON LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

POINT PAPER
ON
LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT (LIC)

- The consensus is that Third World LIC is and will continue to be the most likely arena for US intervention.
- An understanding of the underlying nature of revolutionary movements helps in the development of a credible response to LIC.
 - Revolutions are generally caused by socio, political, economic, and psychological factors. The outcome of armed conflict is not a key factor. Revolutions are protracted and fought by unconventional means.
 - There are no historic models for counterrevolution. Counterrevolutions, starting from the defensive, face difficulty in overcoming the momentum of revolutionary forces.
- The complexity and variety of the global environment make it extremely difficult to develop strategies for dealing with LIC.
- The increasing likelihood of Third World LIC threatens U.S. national interests; however, the U.S. ability to respond to LIC has been criticized as being inadequate and inappropriate.
 - Since World War II the U.S. has focused too heavily on preparations for another conventional war on a European battlefield.

- Since the Vietnam War, there has been a reluctance to develop a comprehensive national strategy for Third World involvement.
- Only recently has a national strategy for LIC been published, thereby leading to questions concerning potential USAF roles in LIC.
- Possible USAF roles include security assistance, the use of mobile training teams, civic action, constabulary duties and direct intervention.
- The development of LIC capabilities will depend on how the U.S. addresses issues such as the following: the adequacy of security assistance laws; the effectiveness of LIC strategy; senior leadership commitment; the need for public education; the training of area specialists; and the study of lessons learned from previous conflicts.
- The future of U.S. responses to LIC will depend on the degree to which the uniqueness of the revolutionary environment is understood and the strength of commitment to resolve protracted, ambiguous conflicts.

ANNEX 2

1988 VERSION OF U.S. LIC STRATEGY

Source: "Strategy for Low-Intensity Conflict." National Security Strategy of the United States. (The White House, January 1988), 34-35.

STRATEGY FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

While high intensity conflict has been successfully deterred in most regions of primary strategic interest to the United States, low intensity conflicts continue to pose a variety of threats to the achievement of important U.S. objectives. As described in last year's report, low intensity conflict typically manifests itself as political-military confrontation below the level of conventional war, frequently involving protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies, and ranging from subversion to the direct use of military force. These conflicts, generally in the Third World, can have both regional and global implications for our national security interests. For example:

- Military basing, access and transit rights in the Philippines, key to U.S. power projection capabilities in the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans, are presently threatened by the communist insurgency being waged against the Philippine Government.
- In mineral-rich southern Africa, insurgencies, economic instability and apartheid, as well as ethnic tribal conflicts, pose potential threats to the extraction of essential raw materials and their export to industries in the West and Japan. The conflicts endemic to the region are exacerbated by the activity of the Soviet Union and its surrogates.
- Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan support for insurgencies in El Salvador and elsewhere in Latin America threaten nascent democracies in the region which are already struggling with chronic poverty, economic underdevelopment, and the growing influence of narcotics cartels.
- Libya has used the threat of restricting or denying oil shipments to blunt West European response to state-sponsored terrorism, while simultaneously training terrorists on Libyan soil. Freedom of action for some U.S. allies can be limited by economic ties.

Our strategies for dealing with low intensity conflict recognize that U.S. responses in such situations must be realistic, often discreet, and founded on a clear relationship between the conflict's outcome and

important U.S. national security interests. Many low intensity conflicts have no direct relevance to those interests, while others may affect them in the most fundamental ways. When a U.S. response is called for, we take care to ensure that it is developed in accordance with the principles of international and domestic law, which affirm the inherent right of states to use force in individual or collective self-defense against armed attack; and to assist one another in maintaining internal order against insurgency, terrorism, illicit narcotics traffic, and other characteristic forms of low intensity conflict.

Consistent with our strategies for dealing with low intensity conflict, when it is in U.S. interest to do so, the United States will:

- Work to ameliorate the underlying causes of conflict in the Third World by promoting economic development and the growth of democratic political institutions.
- Support selected resistance movements opposing oppressive regimes working against U.S. interests. Such support will be coordinated with friends and allies.
- Take measures to strengthen friendly nations facing internal or external threats to their independence and stability by employing appropriate instruments of U.S. power. Where possible, action will be taken early—before instability leads to widespread violence; and emphasis will be placed on those measures which strengthen the threatened regime's long-term capability to deal with threats to its freedom and stability.
- Take steps to discourage Soviet and other state-sponsored adventurism, and increase the costs to those who use proxies or terrorist and subversive forces to exploit instability.
- Assist other countries in the interdiction and eradication of illicit narcotics production and traffic. Measures which have proven particularly effective include aid to expand and improve the affected country's law enforcement capabilities, to preserve the independence and integrity of its judicial system, and to provide for the sharing of intelligence and investigative capabilities.

Our own military forces have demonstrated capabilities to engage in low intensity conflict, and these capabilities have improved substantially in the last several years. But the most appropriate application of U.S. military power is usually indirect through security assistance—training, advisory help, logistics support, and the supply of essential military equipment. Recipients of such assistance bear the primary responsibility for promoting their own security interests with the U.S. aid provided. Our program of assistance to El Salvador illustrates a successful indirect application of U.S. military power.

The balanced application of the various elements of national power is necessary to protect U.S. interests in

low intensity conflicts. But in the final analysis, the tools we have at our disposal are of little use without the support of the American people, and their willingness to stay the course in what can be protracted struggles. We cannot prevail if there is a sharp asymmetry of wills—if our adversaries' determination is greater than our own. At the same time we do hold important advantages. We represent a model of political and economic development that promises freedom from political oppression and economic privation. If we can protect our own security, and maintain an environment of reasonable stability and open trade and communication throughout the Third World, political, economic, and social forces should eventually work to our advantage.

ANNEX 3

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- A. Source: Benjamin F. Schemmer, "Senate Leaders Ask Snowcroft for New White House Focus on Low-Intensity Conflict" in Armed Forces Journal International (March 1989), 66-67.
- B. Source: Jerome W. Klingaman, "U.S. Policy and Strategic Planning for Low-Intensity Conflict" in Low-Intensity Conflict in the Third World (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, August 1988), 161-178.

by Benjamin F. Schemmer



Cohen

reform and reorganization of special operations and low intensity conflict policies, programs, and capabilities. Unfortunately, opposition within the Executive Branch has blocked meaningful implementation of these important reforms. This legislation contained four key provisions pertaining to low intensity conflict, which are summarized below together with a brief description of Executive Branch implementation. The legislation:

1. required the President to create within the National Security Council a Board for Low Intensity Conflict. The board has never met during the 2 years since its creation, and subordinate groups have been ineffective.
2. recommended that the President designate a Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs for Low Intensity Conflict—President Reagan did not act on this recommendation.
3. required the President to submit to the Congress a report on principal low intensity conflict threats to US interests, deficiencies in US capabilities, and corrective actions being taken—The report, submitted in December 1987, discussed these issues in vague and abstract terms.

Special Operations Command Finally Gets Own Budget Authority

The US Special Operations Command has finally won a long struggle to develop its own budget. Acting Defense Secretary William Howard Taft IV signed the following letter on 24 January, making happen something Congress has been urging for years but which Pentagon budgeteers and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have strongly resisted. (MFP-11 indicates Major Force Program. PPB&E indicates Program, Planning, Budget, and Execution.)



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Honorable William S. Cohen
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-1901

Dear Senator Cohen:

Thank you for your letter of January 9, 1989, concerning the implementation of Section 712 of the Fiscal Year 1989 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 100-526). I have today directed that CINCSOC be assigned full program/budget development responsibilities for MFP-11 effective with the upcoming FY92-97 PPB&E cycle. Further, CINCSOC is to be given budget execution responsibilities for selected MFP-11 programs in October 1990, and for all of MFP-11 in October 1991. All major DoD entities have been directed to assist CINCSOC in his transition to new PPB&E status.

I believe that these actions are in full accord with the intent of the Congress as to the way in which the Secretary of Defense should go about preparing the Administration's budget request for special operations forces and how that budget should be executed.

Sincerely,

William H. Taft IV

4. established the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict—Opposition within the Department of Defense resulted in substantial delays in filling this position and has greatly limited the ability of the Assistant Secretary to carry out assigned responsibilities.

We are obviously disappointed that only a small fraction of the potential of the 1986 legislation has been realized. Clearly, the United States cannot ignore developments in such countries as the Philippines, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru, and Colombia; at the same time, it is neither feasible nor desirable for US forces to become combatants in the conflicts in these countries. Consequently, we believe that the United States must develop more effective means of indirect involvement to protect US interests and promote democracy in the Third World. This will require careful analysis, a coordinated strategy, and attention to a number of issues and programs, including: security assistance; debt relief; intelligence and communications support for Third World allies and friends; international military education and training programs; military personnel management (the Services do not reward officers who undertake difficult Third World assignments); and research, development, and acquisition for low intensity conflicts.

It is evident that serious progress will not occur without active involvement by the National Security Council staff. We encourage you to make these issues a high priority and recommend that:

- the NSC Board for Low Intensity Conflict play an active role in strategy formulation and interagency coordination for low intensity conflict and in identifying and implementing organizational initiatives to strengthen the focus of relevant agencies;
- you seriously consider the designation of a Deputy Assistant to the President for Low Intensity Conflict to provide continuous, high-level attention to these issues; and
- a legislative proposal to reform the US security assistance program be submitted at the earliest practicable date by the new Administration with particular attention to improving the program's relevance to low intensity conflict needs.

These suggestions are made in a spirit of partnership. We recognize that alternative approaches may have merit. We are convinced, however, of the urgent need to improve US capabilities for dealing with the unconventional threats that predominate in the Third World.

In 1983, Vice President George Bush visited El Salvador and made clear the abhorrence of the American people and their government for death squad activities. And he made clear that unless specific steps were taken to correct the situation, US assistance would likely be reduced or terminated. Subsequently, civilian fatalities dropped over 95%, from an estimated level of over 5,000 per year in 1983 (mostly attributed to government forces) to fewer than 200 in 1987 (a large percentage of which were attributed to the guerrillas). As a result of the Vice President's involvement, both the domestic and international credibility of the Salvadoran government improved, and progress was made toward peace and democracy. This is a striking example of the benefits that can result from high-level attention in Washington to troubled regions of the Third World. We hope that under your leadership such attention within the NSC will be systematic and sustained.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.
With warmest regards,

Sincerely,

Sam Nunn
Chairman

John W. Warner
Ranking Minority Member

Edward H. Kennedy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Sanitation
Forces and Regional Defense

William S. Cohen
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Projection
Forces and Regional Defense

US Policy and Strategic Planning For Low-Intensity Conflict

Jerome W. Klingaman

The authors of the preceding studies have examined their areas of specialty for important policy and strategy implications that lie within the vast realm of low-intensity conflict. The results of those examinations are relevant at two levels of policy and strategy development. Individually, the narratives provide basic points of departure for developing policies and strategic guidance in specific countries and conflict situations. Collectively, they provide a larger body of evidence contributing to the development, refinement, and interpretation of general, long-term strategies for low-intensity conflict situations. This final narrative concludes the authors' works by briefly assessing this larger body of evidence for its implications at the second level of strategic planning. The assessment focuses on specific implications relevant to our understanding of low-intensity conflict, and it draws from these implications a critical perspective on the broad policy guidelines contained in present and future low-intensity conflict strategies. Low-intensity conflict has only recently entered the strategy development process at the national level, but it is likely to remain in the forefront of official concern for the remainder of this century and beyond.

Formulating Strategy for Low-Intensity Conflict

The US government is presently searching for appropriate ways and means to respond purposefully and with national unity against a variety of threats currently classified under the term *low-intensity conflict* (LIC). As stated in the current *National Security Strategy of the United States*, these threats "take place at levels below conventional war but above the routine peaceful competition among states."¹ To ensure that national strategy properly accounts for future threats impinging on America's security, the secretary of defense's Bipartisan Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy is currently charting the broad guidelines for defense technology and strategy for the next 20 years.² Significant threats identified by the commission will provide the background for an in-depth analysis of our present national defense strategy. A Regional Conflicts Working Group

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

supporting the commission is examining "the strategic implications of future political violence in the form of sabotage, terrorism, paramilitary criminality, insurgency, and interstate wars which do not pit the armed forces of the United States against the Soviet Union."³ Their findings and recommendations will be included in the commission's Long-Term Strategy Report, which may, in turn, support the president's Annual National Security Strategy Report to the US Congress. According to Senator John Warner, ranking Republican Armed Services Committee member. "These two reports will assist the members of Congress as we measure the value and relevance of individual programs from Pentagon spending to foreign assistance." The two documents will also provide a clear statement to the American people of the way in which we intend to turn our national and defense goals into reality. As Senator Warner states, "Informed public debate on these goals, strategies, and available options must reflect an awareness of the dangerous complexities facing the United States."⁴ Beyond these two reports, the evidence presented by the Regional Conflicts Working Group may lead to the development of an updated strategy for low-intensity conflict and ultimately to specific defense capabilities for dealing with this threat.

The goal of strategy analysis, review, and development is a credible defense posture that combines various economic, political, informational, and military instruments of national power. A national security strategy provides basic licensing authority and guidance for general implementing strategies and for country-specific programs developed by the US Defense Department and by other agencies, departments, and independent establishments of the US government. It also furnishes a bridge between broad policy objectives and specific defense initiatives for developing force structures, doctrines, and training programs. Combined with the implementing strategies, a national strategy for low-intensity conflict underwrites all civilian and military defense capabilities that will ultimately be brought to bear on the LIC problem.

The Problem of Definition

At this level of defense planning, we are dealing with general strategies in which concepts, objectives, and capabilities are addressed in a very basic formulation of policy guidance. Developing a broad conceptual framework for such guidance necessarily relies on a certain amount of generalization; and generalizations can be misleading, especially in a field where it is difficult to define the scope and nature of the threat. Low-intensity conflict is just such a field. While the need for a LIC strategy is clear to most people in the government, the definitional boundaries of LIC are not as apparent. Since the term *low-intensity conflict* possesses no referential framework of

US POLICY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

its own, aside from a stipulated content made up of conflict elements such as insurgency, terrorism, subversion, and so forth, there is no consensus on the upper and lower limits of the realm. As a result, the strategy development process almost invariably finds itself impaled on the thorn of semantic relativism and subject to endless debate over the number and types of conflict elements that should be included. Also, there is considerable disagreement over fundamental causes and critical centers of gravity within each of the conflict elements. Because of the term's highly relative meaning and many possible connotations, it lacks utility in precisely those instances where an unequivocal understanding is crucial to national security—in pinning down the types of low-intensity conflict that must be addressed through policy, strategy, doctrine, and force structure initiatives. Because the conflict elements are often complex in nature, and because they vary from situation to situation, generalizing on causes, centers of gravity, and appropriate response mechanisms, produce results that are forever open to interpretation.

A generalization is often seized upon as a total account of the causes underlying a particular conflict or as a complete, definitive answer to the problem. Some people will argue, for instance, that the Soviet objective of controlling global basing, critical maritime chokepoints, and strategic resources is the primary cause of third world instability and armed conflict. Such an argument has little to offer in the way of practical solutions, since going to the source is a very risky business; but it suggests that stability can be restored by simply removing Soviet influence from the affected countries. Others argue that such instability and conflict are the direct result of high population densities, poverty, or a lack of political self-determination, and that the answers are social development, economic aid, and a democratic process.

The present strategy development process has attempted to properly circumscribe the LIC realm and cut through all such simplistic notions. Still, it is impossible to account for every variant of low-intensity conflict in a way that avoids either a possible misapplication of the general guidance or a misinterpretation of the threat itself. In some cases, there may be no ready solution to the problem, or at least no solution that can be carried out through American involvement without sacrificing the highest ideals of our society. This is not to say that where there are no immediate answers we must fall back on the counsel of despair. Sometimes even the questions themselves are useful in sharpening the wisdom of a foreign policy that might otherwise lead to political embarrassment or failure. In other cases, strategic guidance derived from generalizations may have to be altered significantly when constructing strategies for specific countries and situations. In all cases, the generalizations must be carefully assessed for their application to specific threats and conflict situations.

The lack of conceptual clarity inherent in such a highly relative term as

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

low-intensity conflict continually frustrates the best attempts at definition, and it complicates the strategy development process. We might wonder, then, why we do not relieve ourselves of this semantic burden and turn to more explicit language that accurately identifies specific threats having special significance to US security interests at levels below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. The answer itself holds significant implications for US foreign policy and strategy development. It also provides a starting point for assessing strategy implications contained in the previous chapters.

Explicit Language: The Fall from Grace

The term *low-intensity conflict* is a euphemism that arose during the early post-Vietnam era. It was used to replace the traditional terminology of revolutionary war, a terminology that symbolized to some extent America's failure to prevail during a bitter and disastrous experience in Southeast Asia. In such terms as *insurgency*, *counterinsurgency*, and *guerrilla warfare*, many people believed they could read the graveyard inscriptions of ill-fated adventurism in US foreign policy, and no one read those inscriptions more clearly than the US defense establishment, even though there were others who argued that insurgent warfare was alive and well and would return to threaten our security interests in other parts of the world. The military entered the war with counterinsurgency advisers to assist the Republic of South Vietnam in defeating Vietcong guerrillas. As the war progressed, however, the value of a low-order counterinsurgency strategy was lost in the face of mounting military initiatives by North Vietnam to reunify the country under Hanoi's leadership—initiatives that did not necessarily coincide with the political and revolutionary ambitions of the Vietcong.

With backing from the administration, US military planners seized upon the widening commitment of North Vietnamese regulars in the South as an opportunity to abandon the counterinsurgency effort and concentrate on what they considered to be the primary perpetrator of the war—North Vietnam. At the same time, the United States was looking for a way to shorten the war and bring about a negotiated settlement that satisfied the need for measurable, near-term results. A settlement required pressure, and pressure required a substantial increase in firepower and logistics support. With a land invasion of North Vietnam out of the question, Washington attempted to signal Hanoi that it could not win without facing the risk of substantial escalation. That signal included an intense bombing campaign in the North and a massive buildup of US troop strength in the South. Counterinsurgency thus gave way to a policy of graduated response and escalation.

Washington's signal failed to offset Hanoi, and American political resolve

US POLICY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

finally gave out in 1973. In the end, America's strategic aims in Vietnam were defeated not by military force but through a campaign of intense political and psychological warfare waged by North Vietnam and its allies. In the aftermath of the struggle, the principles of low-order counterrevolutionary warfare were swept away in a flood of criticism against indecisive military actions and self-imposed constraints that many believed had led to an excessively long engagement, the withholding of decisive combat measures, and the wearing down of our political and moral resolve.

Given North Vietnam's incredible perseverance and motivation to win at any cost—all of which were impossible to anticipate in 1960—one might argue that the initial counterinsurgency effort in South Vietnam did not fail for its own lack of merit and should not be held singularly responsible for what happened in the end. Such an argument, however, fails to alter the perception that US support of counterinsurgency operations during the early phases of the conflict was a tentative and ill-advised response that drew the United States into an ever-deepening morass of political blind alleys and fatal commitments.

The United States returned from Vietnam with an aversion to the perils of extended military intervention in foreign internal conflicts deeply imbedded in its political and moral conscience, an aversion that led to a complete reassessment of our foreign policy initiatives in the third world. Our failure to prevail in Vietnam manifested itself during the postwar years in an almost total rejection of warfighting strategies and capabilities for all revolutionary conflicts and insurgencies, including those impinging on US security interests in our own hemisphere. Insurgency, counterinsurgency, and guerrilla warfare were too closely identified with unpopular, protracted struggles of psychological attrition; and during the post-Vietnam era, even the terms themselves were eliminated from official use. Today, the terminology of revolutionary war is subsumed under the broad generic classification *low-intensity conflict*, where it presently resides with other definitional elements in a confusing array of terms, meanings, and relationships. Low-intensity conflict now denotes an ever-expanding realm of threats and response measures that fall short of engagement between conventional military forces. Because the term carries almost no semantic value of its own, the size and content of that realm vary according to the operational interests of planners and staff agencies within the US government and Defense Department.

The Significance of Low-Intensity Conflict

Low-intensity conflict is more than a euphemism, however. Despite lack of agreement over the definitional elements, the persistence of this term suggests growing recognition that US security interests are threatened, and

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

will continue to be threatened, by a distinct class of closely related unconventional conflicts lying outside the reach of conventional strategies and response mechanisms. That we are moving away from the paralyzing effects of Vietnam is suggested by recent efforts to develop strategies, doctrines, and specialized response capabilities for LIC. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, published in January 1987, contains the first substantial policy guidance on low-intensity conflict.⁵ Counterterrorism, support for democratic resistance movements, and military assistance to developing nations are specific components of this document. A companion National Security Decision Directive expands the guidance and provides a licensing foundation for the development of implementing civilian and military strategies. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act assigns responsibility for strategy development and implementation to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commanders in chief of the unified and specified combatant commands.

An annual National Strategy Report, now required under the same act, reflects a shift in congressional interest from the minutiae of Defense Department acquisition programs to the level of strategy analysis and review.⁶ Much of that interest is generated by concern over the relevance of our present defense strategies and programs—geared predominantly for deterrence and high-intensity, conventional warfare—to low-intensity threats that cannot be deterred in the conventional sense and that do not yield to conventional solutions. The Defense Reorganization Act also mandated a new assistant secretary of defense for low-intensity conflict and special operations, and it reorganized all active and reserve special operations forces under a newly created United States Special Operations Command located at MacDill AFB, Florida. Elsewhere within the Department of Defense, there is renewed interest in joint and service doctrines for low-intensity conflict, and specialized military capabilities are being enlarged for certain contingencies that fall within the LIC envelope.

In keeping with general agreement that LIC involves the use of force up to, but not including, sustained engagement between conventional forces, the LIC realm also includes such low-order, peacetime "crises" as attempted coups, kidnappings, civil disorders, assassinations, and armed expropriations. By drawing in civilian components of the government such as the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the US Information Agency, and the Commerce Department, the list expands even more. We now find other specific threats to national security: coercive diplomacy, disinformation, subversion, illegal drug traffic, extortion, blackmail, and the precipitous curtailment of strategic resources.

Included in the LIC realm are potential US response measures that range all the way from diplomatic and economic sanctions to the use of military force. Defense doctrine proposes a variety of military responses to deal

US POLICY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

with the threats listed above. The response to insurgency is *counterinsurgency* (the original term replaced by LIC). The response to terrorism is counterterrorism, either in the reactive, retaliatory mode or the proactive, preemptive mode. Certain crises and conflict situations may be dealt with through peacetime contingency operations such as raids, rescues, surgical attacks, and special intelligence missions. If military operations are required to restore or maintain peace between belligerent groups or states, US military units may act as a peacekeeping force. Also, it is conceivable that US forces may be called on to support an internal resistance movement against a regime hostile to US security.

Strategy Implications

Although it is possible to detect the existence or potential of all these LIC elements in the conflict situations described earlier in this book, the central theme dominating the narratives is revolutionary conflict and insurgency. It is a theme that overshadows all other aspects of the LIC realm. This observation coincides with Sam Sarkesian's statement that "the substantive dimensions of [LIC] evolve primarily from revolutionary and counterrevolutionary strategy and causes." In most cases, the other definitional elements of LIC are either manifestations of revolt or responses to it. Even in Doctor Ware's study on the Middle East, where one might expect to find a lengthy treatment of terrorism, the central issues are revolution and insurgency. Terrorism surfaces as a manifestation of some form of revolution, either as a tactic of guerrilla warfare or as an extension of the revolutionary ambitions of a state or group. The question is: How much can we draw from this observation as a basis for developing general strategy?

A General Statement of the Problem

If the substantive dimensions of LIC are revolution and counterrevolution, a long-term LIC strategy should be grounded in a similar context, at least theoretically. In actual practice, however, the great differences among the conflict situations alluded to in the previous studies suggest the extreme difficulty of constructing a general LIC strategy that applies in specific instances. Even if we accept the proposition that the major conflict elements of LIC are grounded in revolution, our very notion of revolution changes considerably from one region to another. In some cases, Central America and most of Southeast Asia, for example, revolution may often be a means of seeking to eliminate economic and political disparities in social orders that have been governed for decades, even centuries, by out-

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

moded class systems and oppressive, self-serving governments. In the process of change and modernization, old, conservative regimes are brought down and replaced by new ones that seek new forms of national identity and independence among the community of nations—forms that do not always coincide with American ideals and interests.

In the Middle East, our notion of revolution enlarges considerably. In Iran and Afghanistan, revolution may be a conservative reaction to forces of change and modernization that threaten cultural identity and traditional belief systems. In contrast to Nicaragua, where a pro-Soviet political base was established through a revolution that replaced the existing Somoza regime and brought the Sandinistas to power, the leaders of the government in Iran are, themselves, agents of revolution—insurgents, if you will, bent on purifying the world of Islam. As a policy-strategy model for the United States, the familiar principles of insurgency and counterinsurgency in Central America are almost impossible to apply in the Middle East.

In moving from the Middle East to countries on the USSR's southern borders, the history of low-intensity conflict again alters our concept of the origins and manifestations of revolution, presenting an entirely different set of problems for strategy development. During the central Asian campaigns of the 1920s, pro-Soviet political cadres were implanted through coup d'état, and coup d'état was turned into revolution for Sovietizing society. Conventional Soviet forces were then used to counter the ensuing insurgency waged by anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary forces while the cadre expanded and solidified its political base. This process is going on today in Afghanistan.

In every one of these conflict situations, one can undoubtedly identify common seeds of revolt in social, economic, and political grievances that must be addressed in long-term planning for assisting friends and allies. With respect to support of developing nations and democratic resistance movements, our current LIC strategy recognizes that "long-term political and economic development will reduce the underlying causes of instability [in] the third world, help undermine the attractiveness of totalitarian regimes, and eventually lead to conditions favorable to US and Western interests."⁸ Free trade, private enterprise, economic expansion, and economic independence must be facilitated through US developmental assistance and economic aid programs. The strategy also recognizes that indirect applications of US military force, primarily through security assistance, are the most appropriate means to help foreign military institutions protect their citizens and governments.⁹ This strategy reflects a hard-won sensitivity to the multidimensional characteristics of revolutionary conflict. It properly seeks internal solutions within the affected nations through a nationally coordinated effort that balances political objectives with military means. Such balance is essential in a strategy that seeks to avoid the risk of active military involvement at levels that are both politically unacceptable and

tactically inappropriate. This strategy is based on the premise that lack of political and economic development in the third world is the major cause of low-intensity conflict; and it may, indeed, be a major cause—but let us be sure we understand what we mean by “cause.” Perhaps the correct term is *condition*.

Complicating Factors

Poverty, class oppression, and political disenfranchisement may be necessary conditions of revolution, but they are not sufficient to generate revolutionary conflict.¹⁰ Given the necessary conditions of economic or political grievances, another condition must be met to ignite the fires of revolution; and it is this condition that complicates the development of a general strategy for LIC. It is also the condition that establishes significant differences among revolutionary conflicts, confuses the legitimacy of the revolution, and is often the main obstacle in overcoming the conflicts. The complicating factor is the *ideological content* of the revolutionary movement. That content—itsself a necessary though not sufficient condition—furnishes the catalyst to focus grievances on the perceived failure of a state to act in the best interests of the people. Together, the grievances and the catalysts function as necessary and sufficient conditions that will set a revolution in motion and sustain its momentum during the course of an entire generation or longer. What makes the conflict situations so different and so difficult to deal with is not simply the grievances themselves, but rather the way in which the expression of those grievances is inspired, organized, and focused. This is not to say that eliminating economic and political instability is simple, for it is not. But the catalysts that bind together the various elements of modern revolution are highly resistant to reform measures aimed at eliminating the political and economic tensions that “caused” the revolution in the first place. The most resistant are those found in revolutions hostile to US interests, and the most familiar are those where Marxist-Leninist programs of Soviet origin furnish the political-ideological models for revolutionary discipline, organization, and direction. Models such as these transform insurgency—armed tactical operations with possibly limited political goals—into a programmatic enterprise possessing what Bernard Fall calls “a political rationale” for overthrowing the existing government.

Doctor Weathers presents Mario Vargas Llosa's explanation of the rationale for guerrilla warfare in Central America. The “settling of accounts between privileged sectors of society” referred to by Llosa alters somewhat the common view of disaffected peasants rising in revolt against the government. At the peasant level, there are, indeed, genuine grievances—preexisting conditions of revolt, conditions that have existed for generations in

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

many countries around the world. The revolution does not start here, however. On one side of the "privileged sector" is a deeply entrenched, oppressive military bureaucracy. On the other side is a collection of intellectuals and militant middle class who have been pushed out of the power system, exploited by the government, and subjected to outside influences that create a sense of political awareness and an awakening of conscience. The genuine, well-meaning objective of the middle class and intellectuals is the leveling out of social, economic, and political disparities on behalf of the peasants—a "settling of accounts." Lacking a democratic process and a voice to effect change, and wanting action now in the face of seemingly immovable opposition, force is seen as the only viable alternative. As "Walkman" Lawson once remarked in a somewhat different context, "Most people who can communicate, communicate. Those who can't, carry guns."¹¹ And so, the poor, the voiceless, and the dispossessed draw themselves to the edge of insurrection.

Moving beyond that edge, an armed insurgency might be able to extract limited concessions from the government. But if the primary objective is the overthrow of the government, the insurgency must be equipped with a solid political foundation and a theory of revolution that incorporates the necessary administrative, organizational, and operational instruments; in other words, an infrastructure. A revolutionist does not at this point seek an appropriate theory or infrastructure; it was already in place during the early days when a hard-core leadership of Marxist-Leninists established the catalytic effect by focusing the people's attention on ancient grievances. It will remain firmly entrenched during the recruiting, organizing, training, and equipping of guerrillas and political cadres. During the protracted phase of the guerrilla war, it will manipulate world opinion and provide tactical direction in the conduct of military operations. In the end, it will carry the revolutionary leadership to power on the backs of those who wanted to accelerate the processes of change and modernization—but who only traded one form of totalitarianism for another.

The complication posed by this catalyst is evident in Doctor Grinter's account of Southeast Asia where US security interests are caught up in a violent expression of legitimate needs and aspirations that have been co-opted by nondemocratic programs that subordinate personal freedom to the survival of the revolutionary state. In the Philippines and Indonesia, it is difficult for the nonspecialist to determine how much of the revolutionary momentum is based on a broad, popular mandate to change the existing order and how much is based purely on the political initiatives of those who would transform a nation or the entire world into a monolithic society for the sake of a Marxist or Maoist ideology.

Ware identifies an important variant of the catalyst when he states that Khomeini used religion to mobilize a politically uninformed mass against secularism in Iran and against the forces of Western imperialism. The

ideological content here is not Marxist-Leninism or Maoism, but an old vision of the cosmic order reborn in a new mandate for ordering man's relationship to man and man's relationship to God and the universe. In Doctor Blank's work on Afghanistan, religion surfaces again as the catalyst that binds together, if only temporarily, the various mujahidin factions in their holy war against the Soviet invaders and the Afghan government. Another variant—tribalism—is emphasized in Doctor Ofcansky's account of ethnic rivalry in Africa.

US strategy for countering insurgent violence against friends and allies is also complicated by a conflict between legitimate revolutionary aims and Soviet initiatives in the third world. As this author has stated elsewhere, the revolutionary aspirations of many lesser developed nations will probably be carried forward and realized, with or without Soviet support, under the influence of expanding communications, education, and technology. As a social phenomenon, the process is probably inevitable.¹² One of the most difficult problems for US strategic planners is that by providing the material resources and the political-ideological rationale for revolution in the third world, the Soviets and their allies in Cuba and the Eastern bloc have already aligned themselves with forces of change that might eventually prevail. This alignment plays a crucial role in Soviet global strategy. Unable to achieve economic parity with other major industrial societies on the basis of free trade and international competition, the Soviets seek to redress the economic balance of power through indirect means that avoid a direct confrontation between themselves and the United States. Through revolutionary warfare waged by surrogates and proxies, they can exercise a relatively cheap, low-risk option for denying international markets, natural resources, and strategic positions to the United States and its allies. Specific Soviet objectives will be to force a gradual drawdown of US political leverage, prestige, and physical presence overseas, and to erode US economic viability in the world trade centers. As many other authors have noted, the Soviets can pursue their limited war objectives with little likelihood of a stiff US response due to the unacceptable risks of direct superpower confrontation.

Counterrevolution

A leading question for defense planners is: How do we promulgate national strategy to eliminate or reduce the threat that revolutionary warfare poses to US and allied security interests without denying the processes of social and political evolution in the underdeveloped nations? A convincing answer to this question begins with the recognition that the unwillingness of a nation to deal fairly with its own people is, itself, a threat to national security—theirs as well as ours. If we ever hope to separate the Soviets and

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

their agents from the revolutionary processes, we must begin by encouraging friends and allies to initiate political-economic reform measures that offer, at a bare minimum, demonstrable evidence that the leaders are acting in the best interests of the people. This does not mean that the United States can in all cases implant democracy as an alternative political system or that US economic assistance can eliminate poverty in the third world; it cannot. It does not even suggest that eliminating poverty is a necessary condition for countering revolution; it is not. It does, however, suggest that US diplomatic initiatives must, wherever possible, be brought to bear in promoting some form of representative government that engenders among the people a sense of national identity and participation in the affairs of state. If a nation is threatened by insurgent violence, it is at least the people's own nation that is being threatened. Most certainly, the strategic initiative must be preserved through economic means, but the issues affecting regional security are primarily political, not economic.

On Reform

Some might argue that reform initiatives are sufficient to remove what is widely termed the *root causes* underlying the revolutionary movement. In eliminating social, economic, and political injustices that fuel the revolution, the catalytic agent has nothing to work on. In time, the agent simply loses strength and dissipates. This sounds correct. The object, after all, is to capture the political initiative from the revolutionary movement—a goal that requires political mobilization in favor of the defending regime. In actual practice, however, the elimination of insurgent violence against a government is not likely to occur through reform alone. In Central and South America, and in certain parts of Southeast Asia, the catalyst contains an imported element of revolutionary leadership whose ambitions extend considerably beyond the legitimate aims of the revolutionary rank and file. The point that is often missed by the advocates of diplomacy and reform is that the leaders of these revolutionary movements do not want reform—they want total control of the state. No amount of reform or political compromise will satisfy the revolutionary aspirations of a hard-core Maoist or Marxist-Leninist leadership. In fact, reform is a threat to the leadership of any revolutionary movement bent on acquiring power at any cost. In the Philippines, for instance, the continuation of repressive policies under the Marcos regime actually served the political interests of the Communist party of the Philippines (CPP). The longer the Marcos regime stayed in power, the more time the CPP had to consolidate a political-economic infrastructure throughout the island complex, particularly on Luzon.

In some cases, reforms initiated by the state are capable of actually producing conditions that lead to insurgent violence. Muhammed Reza Pah-

lavi's modernizing reforms in Iran, for instance, were too much, too soon. In Afghanistan, a revolution of radical social reform initiated in 1978 by pro-Soviet Afghan leaders produced a counterrevolution that has survived nine years of Soviet air attacks, ground offensives, and forced migration.

On Diplomacy and Political Compromise

There is, of course, more to revolt than ideological theories or the will to power. We must always anticipate the possibility of a revolutionary mandate at the grass-roots level of any insurgency. But there is more at foot here than a revolution of the people. Proponents of counterinsurgency strategies based purely on economic and political reform must come to terms with the fact that the objectives of the sponsoring parties are rarely negotiable. Compromise solutions play an active role in achieving revolutionary ends in the Marxist-Leninist system, but only as a tactic for implanting, legitimizing, and enlarging a political infrastructure that eventually chokes out all competing elements. A revolutionary movement aimed at establishing a totalitarian state cannot achieve its goal, or even survive, on compromise solutions that entail an actual sharing of power. As with economic reforms that take the steam out of the peasant support base, diplomacy and political compromise hold little attraction for a revolution that must arrive at power with all its political, economic, informational, and military control instruments intact. Insurgent leaders will not negotiate away what they can win militarily. Drawing hard-core revolutionaries into the electoral process is no more likely than their allowing it to continue once they have come to power. If they were to come to power through the vote alone, they would not be able to bring with them a monopoly on military force to protect and sustain their programs against hostile elements of the previous military structure if that structure were capable of wielding considerable force and was firmly entrenched as a national institution. The Sandinistas did not, of course, meet with such opposition when they took control of Nicaragua in 1979. The previous military structure had not been a broad-based national institution with an extensive fighting capability. The *Guardia Nacional* was a relatively small presidential enforcement and protection instrument that owed its allegiance to Somoza. When Somoza's power base was destroyed in the political arena, the *Guardia Nacional* found itself without a sponsor and with no political or economic viability of its own. The political and economic sectors had been almost totally under state control. The Sandinistas possess a much larger fighting force today—a force that owes its allegiance and source of power to the Sandinista leadership, not to a body of legislation that stands over and above the authority of one party or regime—an interesting point for students of contra strategy.

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

The Use of Force

The uncompromising nature of the revolutionary catalyst manifests itself in the insurgent's willingness and, indeed, need to use force as a substitute for denied or otherwise unobtainable political leverage against the government. The insurgent can and must be engaged politically through social, economic, and institutional government reform; but reform takes time. The host government must be protected for whatever time is required for those initiatives to take effect, and that requires counterforce. The principal targets of reform is the revolutionary support base—the people. The principal targets of counterforce should be those who espouse violence while denying the logic and meaning of reform. This requires penetrating the insurgent's infrastructure and eliminating the catalyst. The principal instruments for dealing with an infrastructure are intelligence agencies and police or paramilitary forces. Beyond the infrastructure, military forces may be required to offset the main thrust of guerrilla offensives. Force thus becomes one of several instruments that must be incorporated into the host nation's internal defense strategy. US military training and supply assistance to a third world ally will be appropriate in many instances as an adjunct to a much larger foreign assistance program, but such training and assistance will be difficult to apply efficiently if the host government is incapable of dealing with the revolutionary infrastructure. As with all other major aspects of host nation's internal defense program, dealing with a hostile infrastructure requires an internal solution. US participation and influence in this area will probably be minimal due to the necessary heavy reliance on political, judicial, informational, and law enforcement instruments.

Integration

Pulling together all the capabilities needed to implement reform, to eliminate the insurgent infrastructure, and to provide physical protection of the host government establishes an imperative for combining all instruments of national power into a single, integrated internal defense and development program made up of both civilian and military elements. The most important implication for US defense planning is that our own civilian and military instruments must be similarly integrated for supporting friends and allies. The objective of such a move is a nationally coordinated effort that addresses the multidimensional aspects of revolutionary war—but the key term here is *integration*, not merely coordination. Applying foreign assistance programs that are not mutually supporting, or that shore up a missing or deficient capability in only one area when the host nation is equally lacking in other areas, can waste valuable resources and may only contribute to the insurgents' strategy of extending the conflict.

Revolution

The implications that can be derived from the internal dynamics of revolutionary war suggest that we reexamine our strategy for assisting resistance movements. So far, our assistance has been directed almost exclusively to military aid for armed tactical operations for insurgency; and we have often provided that assistance without a clear indication of objectives, rationale, or correct methodology. The problems of organization, administration, direction, and legitimacy in a resistance movement hold not only for insurgency against non-Communist states but also for insurgencies (the Marxist term is *counterrevolution*) that rebound on Communist states after they have taken power. An infrastructure with political, economic, social, and informational components is no less important to an anti-Communist resistance movement than it is to a resistance of Communist origin. If the aims of the resistance are revolutionary, there must be a revolutionary vision and a means of translating that vision into a popular revolutionary mandate.

It can be argued that popular support is not a necessary condition for overthrowing a government and capturing power through guerrilla operations. The murderous assault of the Khmer Rouge against the Republic of Cambodia supports such an argument. A successful revolution, however, is one that survives after it has come to power and that requires more than a purely military solution. The insurgent may succeed in capturing power without the support of the people, but he will eventually need that support to govern the nation. Moreover, for the purpose of establishing US policy and strategy for assisting resistance movements, the *most* successful revolution should be defined as one that shows promise of surviving, without resort to the draconian methods of a totalitarian police state, over a long period of time on the basis of broad, popular support and democratic rule. Long-term survival on this basis requires a long-range strategy that reaches considerably beyond immediate military objectives. Because the struggle is primarily political, the strategy must focus on political objectives, even when the means of achieving those objectives are economic. For instance, the development of an extensive, independent, property-owning middle class is one of the most important initiatives that can be taken toward securing the survival of a democratic institution once it is in place. A broad-based middle class—with the freedom to develop an independent local economy, private enterprise, and international trade—provides a mechanism for preventing state domination of the economic scene. A middle class also provides a source of constant pressure for expanding that freedom toward greater equality in the social and political sectors. By extending economic freedom, civil and political liberties, and the rule of law to the people, the government receives the continuing support it needs to survive. Such an initiative is an ambitious undertaking that may not be possible in

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

every case. Where the initiative does show promise as part of the revolutionary vision, however, it must be planned for in advance; and it may require US assistance.

In the same fashion as successful counterinsurgency, a successful revolution involves programs in the social, economic, and political sectors. These programs should be an integral part of the revolutionary planning process from the very beginning. They should be expanded during the guerrilla conflict phase and carried over into the posthostilities era. Military actions must be carefully integrated into the nation-building and reform initiatives. The infrastructure required to administer and direct these initiatives must also provide public information devices for mobilizing political support within the nation, gaining outside support for the revolutionary movement, and reducing support of the enemy regime. The same infrastructure provides a means for dealing with such issues as human rights and social welfare, government propaganda, and the internal control of insurgent forces. All such actions must be underwritten by a political rationale and managed through an administrative apparatus that functions through a broad communications and intelligence network. Where the theoretical and practical foundations of such a coordinated enterprise are lacking, US strategic aims in supporting resistance movements will be very difficult to achieve. In Nicaragua, for example, the contras initiated tactical operations before they established an infrastructure to coordinate military means with political and social objectives. As a result, the legitimacy and future of the contra movement are still in doubt among skeptics of contra aid.

There is also considerable doubt as to the utility and moral significance of supporting resistance movements that are incapable of achieving anything more than limited tactical operations. A resistance movement that lacks the means of mobilizing and sustaining significant political support within the nation is likely to have difficulty obtaining political and materiel assistance from outside sources. In Chile, Allende's socialist program collapsed for lack of both internal and external support. Since Allende's fall, the leftist guerrilla movement has not made significant progress because it too lacks sufficient domestic and foreign backing.

Lacking the support needed to mount a sustained and serious military offensive, the revolutionary movement is in a poor position to negotiate lasting concessions from the incumbent regime. If the resistance proves incapable of carrying the insurgency across the threshold into revolutionary takeover through either political or military means, it may not even be able to negotiate its own survival when outside support comes to an end. The remaining alternatives are endless fighting with dwindling resources, escape into exile, or unconditional surrender.

There may be instances where our support of resistance movements should include developmental initiatives in the social, economic, and po-

litical sectors. To provide a means of launching and sustaining these initiatives, commensurate with US interests and where not prohibited by law, our assistance may also be required in developing a revolutionary infrastructure with all its organizational and administrative devices. Adjusting to this larger dimension of revolutionary conflict will be difficult for the United States because we lack a modern theory of revolution. Our own democracy had its origins in a revolution, but American democratic institutions and values are neither based on, nor dependent on, an ideological rationale of promoting and expanding the revolutionary process throughout the world. Unlike the Soviet model for Marxist-Leninist government, democracy is not structured for such an enterprise. Nor should it be. But the survival of our free institutions may depend on a competitive strategy for containment that includes not only military aid but also assistance in organizing, coordinating, and focusing the efforts of those who seek alternatives to totalitarian forms of government.

Counterterrorism

International terrorism originating in the Middle East is a manifestation of revolution directed both internally and externally. Where it takes place externally, the United States and other industrialized nations are often the targets of violence. Treating terrorism within the political-social context of revolution in those regions where this type of conflict originates, however, may be impossible. For we are left with the question of what strategy or strategies do these political-social factors inform? The Islamist revolutionary process assumes a form and content that differs considerably from the types of local, internal conflicts we generally associate with revolutions founded on Marxist-Leninist models. We are dealing here with a form of revolution that renders inoperative our standard counterrevolutionary strategy of military assistance combined with social, economic, and political reform. In Iran, for instance, the government has already focused attention on the failure of secular rule to satisfy social, economic, and political needs. The regime itself has taken up reform as the means of restoring "a just and perfect society," both within and without. Moreover, the clerical leaders of this regime have provided an alternative—a return to Islamism and a holy crusade against internal corruption and the forces of Western imperialism. What we are faced with is not an internal revolution directed against the state, but rather the state directing revolution against much of the Western world with reform being its principal objective. The terrorist movements that carry on this crusade, whether they are state sponsored or not, live within systems of ideological principles that are completely impervious to social, economic, and political reform from the outside.

It seems reasonable to look for solutions to terrorism by eliminating its

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

causes; but in some cases, there may be no "causes" amenable to solution. How, for instance, do we construct a foreign policy or strategy to neutralize a terrorist movement that is opposed to and totally isolated from all rationally founded formal institutions of government and society, their own as well as ours? In time, we may discover political and economic paths that lead to accommodation and the elimination of terrorism. Given the uncompromising, radical motivations behind international terrorism, however, that path will be very difficult to find. And where we are unable to achieve diplomatic closure and penetrate the arid, philosophically closed doctrines that justify terrorist violence, there will be few options short of forceful deterrence for protecting the rights and safety of our citizens and free institutions.

NOTES

1. *National Security Strategy of the United States* (The White House, January 1987), 32.
2. Quoted in Arnold F. Klick, "Formulation of Strategy," *National Defense* LXXI, no. 428 (May-June, 1987): 74.
3. "A U.S. Strategy For Low-Intensity Conflict" (Proposal for the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy by the Regional Conflicts Working Group, 15 June 1987 draft), 1.
4. Klick, 75.
5. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 32.
6. Klick, 75.
7. Sam C. Sarkesian, "Low-Intensity Conflict: Concepts, Principles, and Policy Guidelines," *Air University Review* XXXVI, no. 2 (January-February 1985): 5.
8. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 33.
9. *Ibid.*, 33.
10. The argument that poverty does not "cause" revolution is advanced in Col Rod Paschall's article "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," *Parameters* XVI, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 3. The "causes" of revolt are related to necessary and sufficient conditions in the essay, "Terror and Peace: 'The Root Cause' Fallacy," *Time*, 22 September 1986, 97.
11. Quoted in Gregory Jaynes's article "This Is Against My Rights," *Time*, 6 July 1987, 42.
12. Jerome W. Klingaman, "Policy and Strategy Foundations for Low-Intensity Warfare," keynote speech to an international forum on low-intensity warfare, Paris, France. Contained in *CADRE Papers*, Report No. AU-ARI-CP-86-2, Air University Press, Maxwell AFB, Ala., September 1986, 6.