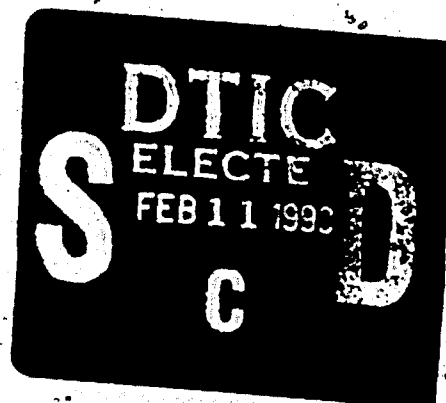


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DOCTRINES OF DEFEAT, LA GUERRE REVOLUTIONNAIRE AND  
COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE

FREDERICK J. SCHWARZ

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LA GUERRE REVOLUTIONNAIRE  
AND COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE

Frederick J. Schwarz

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree  
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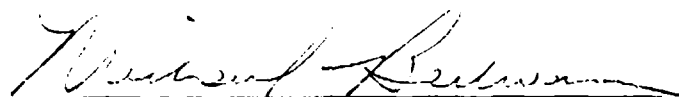
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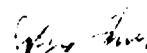
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William Cohen, Ph.D., Chairman



Michael Berkvam, Ph.D.



John Lovell, Ph.D.

Dedicated to those soldiers, sailors, airmen and  
marines still Missing in Action.

Our hope is eternal.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

An apparently new era in warfare appeared during the nuclear stalemate of the cold war. While the superpowers remained locked in an ideological conflict, small wars erupted that would become part of the cold war game. The wars of this new era became known by various names: for example, wars of insurgency, wars of national liberation, guerrilla warfare and anti-colonial warfare. At first, this new form seemed to remain a quiet type of warfare that would be fought on the periphery of major world political theaters. However, two nations became deeply involved in this type of warfare only to have it consume their wealth, resources, and even their leaders and governments. France entered into this arena of war at the end of World War II as she tried to regain her colonial grandeur in Indochina and later in Algeria; the United States of America entered during the Cold War as she attempted to enforce her intense anti-communist ideology. Although each army learned from the other's programs and experiences in the field, and their doctrines developed at about the same time, each army produced distinct operational doctrines in order to deal

with this new form of warfare.

The French learned anti-revolutionary warfare the hard way--in combat against the Vietminh in the rice paddies and jungles of Indochina. The officers of the French expeditionary corps who were defeated in Indochina studied their defeat and the methods of the victorious enemy. From this study they developed a doctrine called *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*. A portion of the French officer corps became intensely involved in the study and application of this new doctrine. Shortly after, these officers had to put the doctrine into action in Algeria, where in the sands and mountains, *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* would find its only use and then be discarded in the wake of another French military defeat. Meanwhile, as the French began their fight in Indochina the Americans began their schooling in guerrilla warfare in the Greek Civil War. The Americans then began to counter insurgencies in Asia during the Korean War where they countered partisan activity in South Korea. From these experiences and a growing need for a doctrine to fight the Viet Cong in South East Asia, the Americans developed a doctrine that became known as Counterinsurgency Warfare. The Counterinsurgency doctrine followed the French into Indochina where it failed after more than a decade of frustrating fighting.

Despite great efforts, both the French and American armies suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of the seemingly backwards peoples and ill-equipped peasant forces of Algeria and Vietnam. Neither army found the victory that studies, war games, tests, think tanks and well planned combat operations had promised. Why did victory elude the French and Americans? Were the doctrines flawed? Did adherence to the two military doctrines cause the defeats? Or, were the doctrines misapplied or not used properly by the forces doing the fighting? Were these forces capable of carrying out the doctrines?

These questions have plagued the military minds of both countries since the Algerian and Vietnam wars ended. Many soldiers and historians have tried to find the cause of the defeats. Some officers blame the press and government for selling out their armies. They feel that the press' defeatist reporting so pervaded the governments' attitudes that they pulled out of the conflict when victory was just about to be realized. Others claim that the doctrines were worthless and only a classic military invasion of North Vietnam, Morocco or even Egypt could have won the war. Some say the wars should never have been fought, because France and the United States were morally wrong in their attempt to

arrest the national aspirations of the Algerians and Vietnamese.

This thesis proposes that the reason that France and the United States failed lies in the strategy the two nations chose to carry out their military operations. Each nation employed an operational doctrine that was not similar to their traditional form of warfare. This thesis sets out to determine whether the strategies caused the failures or if the doctrines had flaws that did not allow achievement of the strategic goals. The answer may be found in a combination of the two notions: the strategies and the doctrines, both may have been flawed. In order to arrive at a conclusive determination, this study examines many aspects of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counterinsurgency, the two doctrines used by France and the United States respectively.

In order to arrive at a conclusion, this essay first establishes a base to evaluate from, therefore, Chapter 2 describes a theory of war based on the structure of strategy, operations and tactics. Chapter 2 defines terms that will clarify the levels of warfare and the responsibilities of decision making and command.

Also Chapter 2 attempts to define guerrilla warfare. This is not a detailed look at guerrilla war as a theory. Rather it is an attempt to cut through the various terms

and definitions of this type of warfare in order to establish a generic definition. With this definition one can examine the two doctrines to see if they properly evaluated the threat and developed appropriate operational concepts to counter it. Also this section shows that guerrilla warfare is a possible war strategy, amongst others that nations may employ.

Chapters 3 and 4 take a look at the two doctrines and their developmental history. In these two chapters show what influenced the evolution of the doctrines and give a sense of the doctrines' methods. This study maintains that some motivations other than military ones influenced the doctrines in both the French and American armies. These motivations may have caused weaknesses in the doctrines that allowed failure during their application.

Chapter 5 considers what may have caused the doctrines' failure. The answer is in the realm of strategy and how military forces conduct operations within the parameters of military strategy to meet the objectives laid out by the national strategy. This chapter examines France and the United States' strategies in Algeria and Vietnam. It then determines if the nations had sound strategies and if these strategies allowed proper use of the doctrines. The main question

to answer is: Did each nation have a sound national strategy that could have brought victory in each conflict? It is possible that neither nation properly determined the proper direction that national strategy needed to take. The solution to the conflicts may not have been military ones but political and diplomatic.

The last chapter, 6, is the conclusion. It discusses the doctrines' flaws and looks at present day counter-guerrilla doctrines used by France and the United States. This study concludes with an examination at how nations can avoid a defeat such as the defeats of France in Algeria and the United States in Vietnam. Certainly, by examining how nations fought in guerrilla wars of the past we can identify and avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

## Chapter 2

### War Theory and Guerrilla War

As stated in the introduction, the reason for France's defeat in Algeria and the United States' defeat in Vietnam lies in their strategies. Two interrelated aspects exist in the problem of analyzing the defeats. First, this study must determine if the national strategies were improper or had flaws and second, see if the operational doctrines blurred the roles of strategy and operational art. In order to prove this point this chapter begins by discussing the theoretical aspects of warfare. First, it frames the structure of warfare and the different levels of war fighting and decision making. Later, this framework will be used to evaluate the *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counterinsurgency Warfare doctrines. Second, this chapter establish a definition of guerrilla warfare in order to clarify what the French and Americans were trying to counter.

Although the first part of this chapter may seem to be a primer on warfare, its intent is to clarify the structure and to set up a foundation by which to evaluate the two doctrines. The aim is to give the reader an understanding of the three levels of warfare -- the

strategic, operational and tactical -- and to define what they are, how they interact, and what levels of command and military organization they relate to. This is crucial because later chapters refer to this framework to see if the doctrines fit the structure or if they were misused at any of the three levels. Knowing the framework will also facilitate the analysis of where the failure occurred.

In the second portion of the chapter, where it defines guerrilla war, attempts to separate it from ideology. This is done because ideology may itself be a goal or just a means to a goal. A group may wish to impose an ideology on a society or they may use an ideology to help them achieve nationhood. There are various ideologies underpinning guerrilla warfare. Therefore, a group seeking national independence can use any ideology, since it is to a means to achieve an end. No matter what ideology they adhere to, generally guerrilla groups use the same strategies and tactics in the conduct of their campaign. That can be confusing for an analyst. If an analyst is biased toward a particular form of ideology (for example, communism), he may set himself up with false assumptions that could lead him to the wrong conclusion. This is particularly dangerous if he is analyzing a guerrilla enemy, because the wrong



analysis about why the guerrilla is fighting will more than likely lead to an erroneous counter guerrilla strategy. In fact, such mistaken assessments may be one of the major reasons the French and Americans failed.

### A Framework of Warfare

Why do nations fight wars? And for what should a nation use its military force? Simply, they fight wars to achieve political goals. But military action is just one of many tools that the leaders of a state can use to achieve their political goals. As Carl von Clausewitz states:

War is merely the continuation of (political) policy by other means. We see, therefore that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. War in general, and the commander in any specific instance, is entitled to require that the trends and designs of policy shall not be inconsistent with these means. That, of course, is no small demand; but however much it may affect political aims in a given case, it will never do more than modify them. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Military means do affect political goals; but they only modify, not change, political goals. Often, what determines success for a nation is having a political aim before setting out on a military venture. However, the

undertaking of war does not guarantee the achievement of goals. Von Clausewitz emphasizes this problematic nature:

Only one more element is needed to make war a gamble - chance: the very last thing that war lacks. No other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance. And through the element of chance, guesswork and luck come to play a great part in war.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, what Sun Tzu said many centuries ago rings true today: "War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, a state's leadership cannot enter into war lightly. It must weigh the gains against the risk of losing. That is when determining the function of a nation's military force becomes crucial. On a simple level it is easy to say that a military force exists to fight the nation's wars. It is easy to say that an army, air force or navy is purely a tool that a nation's leadership uses to solve political problems or to achieve goals. However, this is not true on a deeper level. Military forces have been and are used for many non-violent purposes. Recently military units have been used as "peace keepers." These forces are usually interposed between warring forces to prevent violent conflict. Military units have also been used for various humanitarian needs: for example, in disaster relief, evacuation

of the populace from dangerous situations, and feeding the starving. Soldiers have taken over police functions in riot-torn and disaster areas. They have reestablished and maintained law and order. Some countries employ military units to accomplish what is known as "nation building." Logically, military units are well suited to perform these non-violent or violence containment roles because of their manpower, equipment, deployability, readiness, discipline and logistic apparatus.

And so, the function of a nation's force is a complex issue, because military forces can (and do) have many roles besides the application of violent force. Yet, I affirm that the primary mission of military forces is war fighting. Often, employment for other than war fighting reasons degrades a military's war fighting capabilities. This is because non-military employment takes away valuable training time and resources. The performance of non-military tasks causes military skills to erode while establishing a mind set in the soldier different from the harsh discipline required for combat. This is an important fact in terms of evaluating the two doctrines the French and Americans used in Algeria and Vietnam, because, as we will see, the governments assigned non-military and political missions to their

forces. That too could be one of the reasons they failed.

### The Levels of Warfare

War has a certain structure<sup>4</sup> to it, and armies are organized to meet the demands of the structure in order to ease command and control the fighting forces. There are three levels in this structure: strategy, operations and tactics. Almost two hundred years ago Clausewitz established the basis for this structure when he delineated strategy and tactics. Clausewitz defines strategy as the planning of the war's engagements, and tactics as the coordination of those engagements. He says that "tactics teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; [and] strategy, the use of engagements for the object of the war."<sup>5</sup> Although Clausewitz does not classify it as such, another level of warfare is Operations. He explains that the "Theater of Operations" is a sector of the entire war area where the commander of such a sector has relative independence to conduct the maneuver of his forces.<sup>6</sup> The "campaign" is the conduct of forces in a theater of war over a protracted amount of time.<sup>7</sup> The conduct of a campaign is now known as "operations" or "operational art."

Strategy can be divided into two subgroups: National Strategy and Military Strategy. National Strategy is

the political goal of the nation. Military Strategy is one or more military objectives that must be achieved to win the war and meet the goal of the national strategy. National strategy does not always imply there is a military strategy. National goals can be met by other means such as diplomatic strategy or industrial strategy.

Operational commanders plan and conduct campaigns for missions dictated by the national and military strategy. These campaigns involve the maneuver of large units over a substantial area of terrain and amount of time. Campaign objectives may be the seizure of regions or key cities or the destruction of large portions of the enemy's combat assets. Within the campaign the forces fight a series of battles to obtain the operational objectives. As they achieve the goals, the nation's military strategy is accomplished and victory follows.

Tactics involve the smaller unit engagements and battles on the battlefield. Specific types of military units (armor, infantry, attack aircraft, etc.) conduct tactics determined by their equipment, training and mission. Their tactics are the ways they maneuver and apply their firepower. A Colonel ordering the battalions of his regiment to attack uses tactics as well as a Sergeant emplacing a machine gun to protect his squad's flank. Tactics are the techniques of battle.

These techniques, properly used, bring success on the battlefield. The combination of many tactical units accomplishing their missions brings the realization of the campaign's objectives.

The structure of war works as follows: Nation A decides that it wishes to stop the border incursions of nation B into nation C, a relatively weak friendly neighbor of A. The leadership of A decides the best way to stop the incursions is to conquer nation B; this is now the national strategy of nation A. A's senior military leadership decides that the best military strategy is to conduct a swift invasion of B to seize B's capital. They plan a campaign to send an army of three corps and a supporting air force towards the capital. This army conducts operations to reach the goal. Within that theater of operations, smaller units (units of the air force and the three corps) fight engagements and battles by using proper tactics to defeat the enemy. The tactical units win the battles, and the campaign is successful with the capture of the capital. Nation B appeals for peace, negotiates its survival and pledges never to bother nation C again. A achieves its national political goals through a proper postulation at the outset of a strategy that allows military commanders to plan to win.

What is important in this example is that the national strategy sets up a clear military goal (conquer Nation C) that can be translated into a military strategy (seize the capital). With this strategy the operational commanders have direction and guidance from which to plan and conduct operations in order to meet the objectives of the strategy. A military goal must be one that can be achieved by military means. It must explain what is to be done and by when. The "how to" and "by whom" is left up to the operational and tactical commanders.

As mentioned earlier, military forces have organized command structures to handle the various duties imposed by the structure of warfare. National and military strategy is handled by national agencies -- the executive and high levels staffs such as the American Joint Chiefs of Staff. Military Strategy is carried out at the operational level by theater armies, such as Patton's Third Army in Europe during WW II. Corps, divisions, and battalions down to ten man squads carry out tactics to win the battles of the campaign. At present, the U. S. Military feels that the execution of each unit's level of combat is best handled by the commander of that level.<sup>8</sup> In other words, a theater army commander tells the corps commander what he wants done but not how to do it. This keeps commanders focused on their level of warfare and

prevents them from being overburdened with the details of the fight. This procedure allows operational commanders to plan for future operations while tactical commanders handle current engagements.

How does this structure of warfare relate to the doctrines of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counter-insurgency? First, these two doctrines, designed to counter guerrilla warfare, lost the distinction between strategy and operational and blurred tactical results with strategic results. Their failure may also lie in the designers' inability to develop the proper strategy for the doctrines. Evidently, political consideration may have sunk from national strategy into the military strategy. The national strategy may have been wrong or non-existent. That would cause the military strategy and subsequent operations to be applied towards the wrong end. Second, as the two doctrines attempted convoluted methods to counter guerrilla warfare, guerrilla warfare stayed within the bounds of the structure. Guerrilla warfare is just one form of several strategies that a nation may use. It only differs from "classic" conventional war in its tactics and techniques.

### Guerrilla Warfare

Guerrilla Warfare, Revolutionary Warfare, Partisan



War, Insurgencies, Rebellion: the terminology for this form of warfare is diverse and quite confusing. Although they are actually talking about the same ideas, different authors often disagree, simply because they use the same terms in different ways. Other authors claim that the terminology does signal differences. For example, some maintain that revolutionary war is different from guerrilla war--that the tactics are the same but the strategy is different. This study contends that there is only one form of war: a violent means to achieve a political goal. However, there are different methods for fighting wars. One of them is Guerrilla Warfare.

In contemporary warfare there are, at best, three general categories of methods of war: Conventional War, Nuclear War and Guerrilla War. Conventional warfare is the "classic" form of war. It is characterized by two nations with professionally organized armies fighting against each other. They have political goals to meet and have chosen the military path to achieve them. These nations conduct military operations against each other within the bounds of some sort of rules (for example, chivalry, law of land warfare, the Geneva Accords). The soldiers wear distinct uniforms and fight in recognizable units. Generally, the armies intend not to use violence against civilians, although the war's destructiveness

usually causes high civilian casualties. The American Civil War, The Napoleonic Wars, and World Wars I & II are examples of conventional war.

Nuclear War is a war where one or both sides attempts to meet its political goals by use of decisive and destructive nuclear weapons. This type of warfare has little to no maneuver of traditional armies and is fought by air forces alone. This type of warfare brings a decision swiftly, but there is also terrible destruction and human loss. Toward the end, in the Pacific, World War II was transformed into nuclear war.

In comparison to Conventional War, Guerrilla Warfare is a method of war characterized by fighting on a small scale. One side is not an established nation state but a group of people trying to establish or reestablish nationhood. The adversary may be an outside occupying or colonial power or an established nation that is being overthrown. Generally, this method of warfare involves small unit tactics, terrorism and intense political and psychological actions. The soldiers in guerrilla war may not wear uniforms nor be recognizable as soldiers. Civilians are many times the target of the guerrillas. The wars in Algeria, Vietnam and Nicaragua and the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines provide examples of the guerrilla method of warfare.

A national leadership can use any or a combination of the three methods defined above as a strategy to accomplish its political goals. For example, Nation A wants to see the complete collapse of Nation B, which A sees as a completely despicable type of society. A could invade B with its army and cause a conventional war. Or A could just let fly its nuclear arsenal and end matters quickly. Or because A does not want to be seen by the world as a nasty aggressor, it could nibble away at B by causing a rebellion within B. In this last case A would quietly launch and support a protracted guerrilla war against B. On the other hand, a nation or group of people aspiring to become a nation may be limited in their choice of strategy. They may not have nuclear weapons nor be able afford a fully equipped army. Their only choice in such cases is to turn to guerrilla warfare. Or a nation may be involved in a conventional war against another nation and use guerrilla war to support other strategies. A nation also could use guerrilla war as a sub-strategy or operational form in a theater where it could not afford or be able to place regular troops. A good example of this is the Peninsular War fought between France and Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. Great Britain could not afford to maintain a large standing force on the Iberian Peninsula

to counter the French. So the British supported a Portuguese and Spanish guerrilla war against the French that sapped French strength away from the conventional fight on the rest of the continent. In fact, it was during this war that the term "Guerrilla" was coined.

Guerrilla warfare has two forms: insurgency and partisan war. These forms are distinguished by the type of organization that uses it and the "national" strategy that calls for its use. In a recent work Larry E. Cable defines these two types:

...there are indeed only two basic types of guerrilla war: partisan and insurgent. In the first type, the guerrillas operate as an auxiliary to the regular military forces. Partisans do not exist without external support, sponsorship and control. Insurgents operate as armed political dissidents within a society seeking revolutionary social and political changes. The insurgent force has the potential and ability to operate without any external material support or sponsorship.<sup>9</sup>

Partisan forces do not necessarily have to be part of a nation's armed forces, but they can be allied to another nation's army. For example, during World War II Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia were allied by cause to the Allied Powers. Insurgents are not just a group of angry citizens taking up arms against local authority in a spasm of violence. Insurgents have highly organized political and military structures; they already constructed the foundation of the nation they seek to

make. Their aim is to change the ruling power in the country in order to have a government that follows their political ideology. Usually, insurgents are more ideologically driven than partisans.

What are the national and military strategies, operations and tactics of insurgent and partisan warfare? Partisans have a national strategy to oust an occupying foreign power in order to bring about the return of the nation's legitimate government. Their military strategy is defensive in nature. Usually, the strategy is a holding action until their own national army can reorganize in order to expel the invader or until a friendly foreign army invades to defeat the occupying army. An aggressor may insert partisans in a nation before hostilities to help disrupt the enemy before the aggressor invades. Operationally the partisans adapt harassment as their means of achieving their strategic goals. The tactics employed by partisans include interdiction of lines of communications (ambushes, raids), assassination of key political and military leaders, POW recovery and possibly terrorism on the civilians of the occupying force and collaborators.

Although insurgents have no nation, they do have a national political organization in place with a subordinate military organization. The national strategy

of the insurgents is to conduct an overthrow of the existing governmental structure -- whether it is native, colonial or imposed by occupation. A part of their national strategy may be to conduct a complete sociological change through the imposition of an ideology, for example, communism, maoism or democracy. The supporting military strategy is offensive in nature. Military actions are conducted to destabilize the current regime. The military goal is to conduct operations that weaken the regime and strengthen the guerrilla force to a point where the guerrilla can transform the military strategy to one of conventional offense to win. The political organization capitalizes on operational and tactical successes to reinforce political goals with non-involved nations and organizations. It also uses tactics to reduce the legitimacy and protective nature of the established government in the eyes of the populace. The guerrilla military organization is not involved in the politics of the guerrilla campaign; however, the military operations have significant political impact. Tactically, the insurgent is the same as the partisan. Insurgents conduct ambushes, raids, terror campaigns and assassinations.

An important point in the discussion of guerrilla warfare is that in order to finish successfully the war

usually transforms into a conventional assault. To bring about a military solution, the insurgents must launch a full out offensive operation, using conventional tactics, to defeat the government. A guerrilla force is too small to take on a large standing army in open battle. The goal of the insurgency is to weaken the conventional fighting strength and will of the government. In the meantime, the insurgents build their conventional strength. When the time is right they launch a conventional campaign against the government's weakened and demoralized army. The 1975 conventional combined arms campaign by the North Vietnamese through South Vietnam serves as a good example. However, a political solution may be offered instead of (and possibly with the threat of) a final conventional assault. If they feel that the government is very weak and that the population is in their favor, the insurgents may offer a negotiated settlement that is usually tied to elections. This is what recently happened in Nicaragua. The advantage of this solution is that it avoids destruction and allows for a more productive rebuilding of the society. Although brought about by the results of the military guerrilla campaign, this option is a political solution, not a military one.

In many respects a guerrilla strategy is a

preparatory strategy that allows the user to gain military strength or achieve political superiority while weakening the adversary. It usually leads to a conventional strategy or favorable conditions for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Guerrilla warfare properly fits into the structure of warfare. Political goals remain the primary focus throughout the conflict while military strategy and operations support the accomplishment of those goals. The difference between guerrilla and conventional war is in technique: what the operational goals set out to achieve and the tactics used.

#### Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provides a theory of the structure of warfare and a definition of guerrilla war. These notions are important to this essay as they provide the tools with which to evaluate the doctrines. Looking at *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and counterinsurgency warfare within the structure of warfare can show if the doctrines confused the relations of the three levels. If this occurred then the French and Americans may have made improper strategic and operational decisions. Failure, possibly resulted from a confusion of what to do and how to do it.

The definition of guerrilla war serves two purposes.



It gives us a precise use of the terms while being general enough to apply without making false assumptions about the enemy's motivation. This ties in with the second purpose of comparing the definition to how the doctrines saw the enemy. The French and Americans may have made incorrect strategic assumptions about their enemy.

The study now turns to the doctrines of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and counterinsurgency warfare. As it examines the doctrines and their developmental history in the next two chapters keep in mind the two ideas put forth in this chapter. How the doctrines fit into the structure of war and perceive the enemy will help lead to the analysis presented in the latter portions of this essay.

## End Notes for Chapter 2

(1) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 87.

(2) *Ibid.*, 85.

(3) Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 63.

(4) I based this structure of war from current U.S. Army doctrine. See: Headquarters, Department of the Army *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington D.C.: USGPO, 1986), Chapter 2.

(5) Clausewitz, 128.

(6) *Ibid.*, 280.

(7) *Ibid.*, 281.

(8) *FM 100-5*, 1986, 15.

(9) Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 5.

## Chapter 3

### La Guerre Révolutionnaire

#### Development of the Doctrine

In theory, a nation promulgates a military doctrine because of a specific military need. This need may be one to counter a threat against the nation or to develop the operational methods to carry out a particular strategy. This means that the nation should analyze the need first then make the doctrine. However, in reality, the political environment is complicated and constantly changing. In such a case, a nation may not recognize the need for a specific doctrine until it is already involved in a conflict that calls for a particular strategic thought and operational conduct. In this situation, the nation at best can adopt and improve its military methods during the course of the conflict from the lessons it learns on the battlefield.

Other factors may come into play in the development of a doctrine besides pure military considerations. Amongst others, the internal politics of the nation, civil-military relations, the society's ideology and ideological conflicts, are factors that may influence the development of the doctrine.

Many different non-military influences affected France's post World War II military doctrine development. *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* evolved during a tough period of France's history. In the period just following World War II, a politically divided and economically weak France had to deal with the many problems of recovery. The task of bringing together the different factions of French military forces was in itself daunting. The military in France was divided into groups that spanned the political spectrum from the communist inspired resistance fighters to right wing Vichy sympathizers. The military division was a reflection of the divisiveness in the society as a whole. Before the Army could complete its reorganization, as France attempted to regain her colonies, a new war broke out in Indochina.

At first, France responded to problems in Indochina in traditional fashion by sending in colonial troops to "pacify" the region. The French simply felt a superior force of arms would regain control. As France began to see defeat at the hands of the peasant Vietminh forces, her officers realized that there was more at work in the Vietminh than just rebellious anti-colonial anger. Although elements within the army began to understand why they were losing they were too late to change the inevitable. France suffered a humiliating defeat in Indochina

after one last effort to destroy the Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu.

Officers returning from the defeat began an arduous study of the reasons why France lost. From this study came the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*. Just as they began their studies another overseas territory, Algeria, erupted in anti-colonial violence. The doctrine had not reached maturity as the Algerian war grew; the army was not even in agreement on whether it was worthwhile. Yet, out of necessity, parts of the doctrine were put into action in Algeria. The proponents of the doctrine refined it as they learned lessons from the war. By the end of the conflict they felt they had a solid anti-guerrilla method. But France would disregard this doctrines as she turned away from colonialism and became a nuclear power

Although the French needed to counter anti-colonial forces, other influencing factors lingered behind the development of the doctrine. Many influences had deep roots in the problems and traditional sentiments of the French Army. Some were the result of the changed nature of war after the end of World War II and the developing Cold War between East and West.

There are some important notions that influenced the development of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*. The post World

War II French Army was not in a good position. The Army felt that it was isolated from its own society and it had to deal with factionalism. It also had to deal with a profound loss of honor stemming from the defeat of 1940 and subsequent loyalty to the Vichy regime. These three factors, isolation, factionalism and defeat influenced the development of the doctrine.

The French Army's isolation from its own society was the result of many reasons. At the end of World War II, France was war weary; it had suffered through the long, harsh occupation of the Nazis and was a battlefield for the final defeat of Germany. The Army was in many ways responsible for the occupation because of its quick defeat by the Germans in 1940. After the war, the bulk of the Army was tainted with collaboration because it had obediently followed the Vichy regime. Although the Vichy Army Officers claim it was their military duty to obey the government, this claim would not stand in face of the glory Charles de Gaulle's Free French Forces gained.

The collapse of Nazi Germany in 1945 brought an end to a long period in French military history. The Allies destroyed the dreaded Hun. The French population did not see much use for its Army in the late 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Their concern was the reconstruction of France as a nation. Prestige of the Army dropped. This was apparent in the

declining number of admissions to St. Cyr and in the pay military officers received in relation to other civil servants. In 1939, 2452 candidates attempted admission to St. Cyr; in 1951 only 587; and in 1954 it fell to 360.<sup>2</sup> During the 1950s, the pay of an Army Major fell below that of a beginning principle collector of customs duties.<sup>3</sup> Once a symbol of the nation's grandeur, the officers of France's military fell to the position of a mere functionary.

The army's reaction to the isolation became manifested in two ways. First, it had to find an enemy and win a victory. Second, many officers turned to a nostalgic way of forgetting their problems and leaving behind the bourgeois *métropole* by turning to colonial duty. These two notions, combined with the events as they unfolded and a deep seated historical hatred of communism in the army, prompted the need for an enemy and the need for victory in the colonies.

The army's hatred for communism goes back to World War I. Many French officers blamed the mutinies of 1917 and overall slump of morale on Bolshevik movements in French units. One historian states:

Mutiny soon took on the appearance of revolution, and revolution meant the collapse of military strength, and the door was open to the enemy. Revolution was Communism, and Communism was treason.<sup>4</sup>

The French Army began to make the link between communism and nationalism in the colonies prior to World War II. In the 1920s they began to confront Communism in many places. It sent staffs, military missions and even expeditionary forces to aid those groups fighting communism in Russia, Siberia and Poland.<sup>5</sup> Soon the French military detected communist involvement in nationalist movements within France's own colonies.<sup>6</sup> This link between communism and nationalism had a major impact on the development of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*. The colonies always held importance for the French military. In these far off places soldiers and especially officers could regularly practice their martial skills, soldierly manliness and display honor. The same officers who loved the colonies hated communism. Therefore, when the colonies became threatened, it was easy for them to blame communism.

The French colonial troops always had a romantic appeal within the French Army. They envisioned images of *La Belle Epoch* arise when colonial duty was mentioned. In the colonies French officers could feel they were doing good by helping the "ignorant" natives into the modern world in the grand tradition of France's *mission à civiliser*. Here, far from the government in Paris, the officers could make decisions that could change the fate



of nations. This certainly had more appeal than garrison duty in Alsace where the daily excitement would be supervising the replacement of a tank's tread. Hence, many French army officers had strong emotional attachment to the colonies and the peoples living there. To some, the need for victory in the preservation of the colonies would outweigh the overall needs and desires of the nation. Also, victory in the colonies would serve to restore their lost honor.

The outbreak of the war in Indochina presented a way to regain the army's lost honor. They reasoned that France had an enemy; the enemy was communism; communists threatened the colonies, which technically were part of France. Thus the army had to fight and win. The developing cold War reinforced this notion. As communist uprisings occurred in Malaya and the Philippines along with Mao's take over of China and the Moscow backed Korean War, proof was evident that there was a world communist conspiracy against the democratic West. Many officers believed France had a new mission: defeat communism in her territories as part of the western defense against the encroachment of communism. In fact, many officers felt the signing of the Brussels Pact in 1948 officially gave the Army its mission to fight communism.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the East-West conflict of the Cold War, another more military reason influenced the thinking that developed the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*. When the B-29 *Enola Gay* dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, warfare seemed to be changed for ever. It appeared that armies suddenly became obsolete. Many military theorists of the period felt that conventional war could never be fought again, because it would result in nuclear war and mass destruction. Some said that traditional armies were outmoded as a few nuclear bombs could quickly destroy conventional forces on the battlefield. The maneuver of large land armies seemed to be as obsolete as the horse cavalry was in 1914. Both the French and American armies felt this impact. They faced budget battles and doctrinal questions regarding the validity of armies in nuclear war. The French faced the dilemma of not being able to afford nuclear weapons and having a useless land army in the face of tactical nuclear weapons. The French military found a solution in the unlikely chance of East-West nuclear war and the growing concern of guerrilla war. This solution divided the French army.

Within the French military establishment there was disagreement as to how to solve the problem of France's existence in the new nuclear military age. One group,

mainly the colonial officers, subscribed to the *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* theory. The other group felt that France should modernize with an independent nuclear force and develop an army that could fight on the nuclear battlefield. This group felt that the only way France could play an important role in the East-West conflict was by having nuclear muscle to bring her on par with the British, Americans and Russians.

In the early 1950s the proponents of a "nuclear" army set out to develop the organization, equipment and doctrine for the army to fight in a nuclear environment. The army developed a doctrine that revolved around small, nimble mechanized divisions. The concept was for these divisions not to present a large target for a nuclear strike while being agile and strong enough to bring sufficient conventional firepower to bear. These divisions would be backed by an impressive array of tactical nuclear weapons. In the period of 1952 to 1954, the Second Corps in Germany established the "Javelot Brigade" to test the concept. Unfortunately for this brigade, the unit had to leave behind its new mechanized equipment and fight as infantry against the Algerian rebels. By default, caused by the events in Algeria, the proponents of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* won out. In their minds, *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* kept the French army from becoming

subordinate to nuclear technology.

The colonialist officers felt that France was wasting time and money on modern nuclear toys. They felt the real battle was to be fought against the poor insurgents, who under Moscow's control were bringing the real battle against the capitalist west. Upon this idea they built the foundation of the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*.

### The Foundation of the Doctrine

The foundation of the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* was built upon two significant assumptions made by the theorists to give purpose to their doctrine and to explain the "new" type of warfare facing them in France's colonies. The two assumptions were that warfare had changed, and that there was a world communist conspiracy threatening the world. The notion that warfare changed had two parts to it. The first was the change in war brought about by nuclear weapons as previously discussed. The second part has to do with the political nature of revolutionary war.

In the traditional assumption of war; military commanders leave the political decisions up to politicians and do not allow political effects to influence their operational planning. In the *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* assumption traditional warfare was

considered to be apolitical: that is, that once the government made the political decision to go to war, military conduct took over and politics were suspended until the conflict was over. Commanders made operational decisions by taking into only account military goals and objectives, they were not concerned with any political ramifications. In their point of view, the nation's political leaders should consider political effects when they formulate the national strategy.

The theorists of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* turn the traditional notion of war completely around. They felt that in revolutionary war every military decision and action has a direct political result. More importantly, they felt that military commanders should be concerned with the political nature of their decisions even to the point of deciding the political direction and outcome of the conflict. The politician's role was never mentioned.

Since the political ramifications of military action is the important and decisive part of the battle, the theorists felt that traditional military objective no longer had any meaning. In their form of fighting, commanders would no longer be concerned with capturing territory or with destroying the enemy. Rather the objective was to control the population through attempts

to gain and preserve their political trust, confidence and loyalty.

The second significant assumption that underpins *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* concerned the driving force, the motivation, of the enemy forces. This assumption was the world communist conspiracy to rule the world. This notion had deep roots in the French army's traditional hatred of communism. They saw the world locked in a permanent struggle of totalitarian Marxists-Leninists on one side and freedom loving capitalists on the other. Many of the theorists of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* were prisoners of war of the Vietminh. While captured, these officers were able to observe how the communist Vietminh worked. They admired the Vietminh's discipline while at the same time loathed the complete subordination of the individual to the communist cause. Their experiences in the POW camps, the "re-education" they received, and the "self examinations" they were forced to make deeply affected them. As a result these men believe that communism had to stop. They believed it would attempt to take over the west by revolutionary warfare and that their firm grasp of the enemy's methods would enable them to develop means to defeat the revolutionary guerrilla.

These officers studied the writings on warfare by Mao Tse Tung, Karl Marx and Lenin. They became convinced

that the Marxist-Leninist notion of the dialectic in war was in fact presently occurring. They reasoned that since nuclear weapons would not be used and conventional war would only result in nuclear war, the communists were going to break down the west by a series of revolutionary wars. The proponents of the doctrine then discerned that the best place for the communists to strike was by infiltrating and using the nationalist movements within France's colonies. So, according to this theory, each national uprising then occurring in the colonies was manipulated by Moscow, and that "nationalism" was just an excuse for the independence movements. The proponents of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* believed nationalists were being used by the communists in their quest for world domination. In their minds there would have been no revolutionary wars without the appeal of the world communist movement.<sup>8</sup>

These assumptions set the tone for the development of the operational aspects of the doctrine. The determination that war had changed caused the doctrine to seemingly discard traditional methods of warfare. The theorists proposed new ways to fight based on the techniques and organization of the guerrillas. The focus on the enemy's motivation influenced greatly the strategic outlook of the conflict, basically skewing the

operations to meet one type of ideological enemy: communists. Therefore, as it developed the doctrine proposed several approaches for the "forces of order" to fight the revolutionary enemy.

### Operations

Military doctrines have tenets that guide commanders in their operational planning and conduct. *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* had its guiding principles. Professor George A. Kelly in a study of the French army in Indochina and Vietnam cites these ten rules, written by Commandant Jacques Hogard in 1958, as the "do's and don't's" of the doctrine:

1. Negotiations on equal terms with revolutionary a revolutionary enterprise could not be more dangerous; this will facilitate its success.
2. All rebel territory should, as quickly as possible, be isolated fro the exterior, materially and morally.
3. Revolutionary war must be checked in its early stages.
4. Both strategy and tactics of counter-revolutionary war depend on the close linkage of all civil, military, social, cultural, and economic resources, with the view of holding or recapturing popular support and attacking the enemy from all angles.
5. Final victory over revolutionary forces can be achieved only through the destruction of the apparatus.



6. The conquest of popular support must be the main objective of legitimate authority. This depends on the promotion of a vigorous action *psychologique* among the people that will stress the universal values of the "forces of order" and reveal the duplicity and contradictions of the enemy. At the same time, the hopes of the people must be fulfilled by continuous progress toward a better social order. The population itself must be trained in self-defense.

7. The destruction of the forces of the revolution should be regarded not as an end but as a means of securing popular support.

8. The irregular forces of the revolution need not be defeated in battle but can be suffocated if deprived of material and moral support in the previously friendly zones.

9. The single way of reducing the guerrilla is to wear them down morally and physically by tracking them with units suited to the purpose, operating always in familiar zones.

10. The safety of arteries and vital points depends, not on static defense, but on the stability to create conditions of constant insecurity for the guerrilla forces operating in these areas.

These ten rules exemplify that the theorists aimed to combine non-military methods (police, civil, psychological action etc.) with military methods. The military commander takes up roles beyond his normal functions. He becomes a mayor, police chief and politician, all while pursuing military action against the enemy. There are also traditional military tactics: the isolation of territory and the "suffocating" of irregular forces which is the same as interdiction of an enemy's line of communication.

Most of Hogard's rules are operational and tactical but one rule stands out as strictly strategic - the "no negotiation" rule. This rule makes the conflict an all or nothing contest while stripping the government of a primary means of national strategy. This rule usurps the government's role in national strategy in two ways. First, by making war a zero-sum contest, the strategy is established prior to any analysis of the conflict. With this rule the military forces the government to adopt a strategy in which the military is allowed to do whatever it wants. Secondly, the government is prevented from negotiating a settlement. This is contradictory because the proponents of the doctrine emphasize the political nature of the war, and yet they refuse to allow negotiations. Again, this stance reflects the military's anti-communist attitudes because it implies that communism is too evil to merit negotiations. These rules spelled out what commanders had to do to defeat the guerrilla enemy, but they do not state how. The "how," the essence of any doctrine, is the methods that commanders can apply in operations and translate to tactics for forces to fight with.

One of the most in-depth assessments of these ten rules and the *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* doctrine can be found in *Modern Warfare*, a book published by Colonel

Roger Trinquier in 1964. Colonel Trinquier was well qualified to write on this subject since he commanded all the behind-the-lines operations in Indochina where he learned guerrilla tactics first hand. In Algeria he served in General Massu's 10th Parachute Division. He attended U.S. Army counter guerrilla schools in Korea in the early 1950s and he studied the theories of Mao Tse Tung. Clearly, Colonel Trinquier has both the theoretical preparation and practical experience to be considered an expert on this doctrine. And his book provides a solid description of the doctrine. Logically, *Modern Warfare* cannot be treated as a manual used by the French in Algeria, since the war had ended by the time of its publication. But, it can be viewed as a review of the lessons learned in Indochina and Algeria. The doctrine evolved as the wars continued, therefore the French Army never had the chance to and apply it fully.

In *Modern Warfare* Colonel Trinquier delineates a comprehensive example of a theory of revolution and counter-revolutionary war. There is a specific operational method for government forces to follow: what needs to be done, how the military should be organized and what actions they must take. He describes how the enemy is organized and what phases the conflict will take. His plan of operations is based on the goal of the

forces of order to maintain control over the population. This is the key to the entire operational theory of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* (Hogard's rule # 6): the forces of order need to understand and stop the revolutionary forces' attempt to gain the loyalty and support of the population through acts of intimidation, terrorism and discrediting the government. If the forces of order lose control of the population on a large scale then the war is lost.

The doctrine states that this struggle for control of the population occurs in two phases.<sup>10</sup> The first phase is entails the mostly defensive phase where the forces of order recognize and prepare for hostilities. The second phase, involves the government's development of an offensive and military stance in order to rid the territory of guerrillas. The first phase emphasizes constant vigil and the political counteraction of the forces of order. First, the forces of order study the theoretical aspects of revolutionary war, because in order to fight they must have a thorough understanding of the guerrillas' motivation and of the methods they will use. Colonel Trinquier goes on to propose actual measures that the governing forces must take to either prepare for or head off the fight against the guerrillas.

One of his proposals is that an intense intelligence

apparatus be established in the territory as a means to continually check on the political organization of the population and to detect the formation of subversive organizations.<sup>11</sup> One part of the system he proposes to keep tabs on the population is to use an elaborate census system that maintains information cards on all members of the population.<sup>12</sup> The cards include information on the number of times the individuals are checked and what their political orientation is at the time of the check. This census information can help to determine which persons are loyal to the forces of order. The forces of order then recruit agents from the loyal members of the population. Native agents are then to be used to gauge the population and to inform on any subversive groups. As subversive groups forms, the agents can then infiltrate the groups and provide direct intelligence. It is important that this intelligence system be established in the territory prior to any notion of hostilities. Therefore, this part of the first phase has to be permanent.

Once the revolutionaries initiate hostile actions more military portion of the first phase. Colonel Trinquier states that the forces of order must first conduct defensive operations since the initiative and elements of surprise are with the guerrillas.<sup>13</sup> That is because the government will not know there is any notion

of hostilities until the first acts of terrorism occur. The forces of order conduct area defenses by sectioning off the large areas into manageable parts. Within these parts the government forces remain on alert for acts of terrorism, protect vital functions (electricity, water) and keep open roads. The goal is to keep normal administrative functions going and to keep up the civilian confidence in the government leadership and police.

However since the forces of order are on the defense, the advantage of surprise and the initiative is with the guerrillas. With the initiative, the guerrilla forces gain control of much of the territory. However, now the guerrilla commander reaches his culminating point; the point of an offensive operation where the attacker's strength and advantages no longer exceed those of the defender.<sup>14</sup> At this stage the guerrilla has the burden of maintaining control in the region. Now the elements of surprise and initiative can pass to government forces. The war enters the second phase where the forces of conduct offensive action to destroy the guerrilla organization. The objective is to oust the guerrillas, to destroy them and end their grip on the population. In the meantime, civil action programs are implemented to correct social ills in the region. This

helps to increase popular support for the government. The overall goal of the offensive operation is to show the population that it is capable of maintaining order and of providing good government.

In order to conduct these offensive and defensive operations, Colonel Trinquier organizes the theater of operations along normal military lines. He notes that it is important for the operational and tactical levels of command to parallel the civilian government structure in order to facilitate the coordination of police, civil and military actions. The military and corresponding civil levels of government are organized as follows: The Theater of Operations is the highest level, commanded by an army level general officer. It parallels the territorial government. Next is a Corps or Division level command called the Zone. It parallels the civilian *département*. The lower level is the sector, a regimental or division command. It parallels the *arrondissement*.<sup>15</sup>

The sector level is where the tactical operations are conducted to defeat the enemy. They include non-military methods as well as military tactics. With this combination, the government forces destroy the guerrilla force through a comprehensive and methodical use of all means. Within the sector, the forces of order establish and protect strategic villages and sequester as much of

the population as possible. Trinquier points out that the population must not be allowed freedom of movement during the operations. Non-movement and the effects of the pre-established intelligence network, cause the guerrillas to lose their best means of freedom of action and their flow of supplies. Military operations, raids, ambushes and direct assaults are conducted to eliminate the guerrilla's military forces, while police operations, arrests, raids, investigations and interrogations, are conducted to eliminate the guerrilla political organization in the sector. In this way the guerrillas are kept off balance from all sides. Meanwhile civil and psychological actions continue in order to gain the confidence of the population.

The zone level of command allows the destruction of the guerrilla organization over a broader area by coordinating all the sectors within the zone. The commander of the zone needs a large number of mobile reserves in order to quickly reinforce those sectors of vital importance. Importantly, the zone commander insures that all actions within his sectors are continuously followed up while allowing much initiative to his subordinates. Once the enemy organization is destroyed the commander must ensure the proper vigilance and swift action in the case of renewed of enemy activity.<sup>16</sup>



The theater level commander plans and coordinates the entire war operation. He ensure proper allocation of general resources and makes sure that all operations have proper political impact on the population. He maintains a general reserve that allows the reinforcement of critical areas or that meets crisis needs. One important area of concern to the theater commander is the interdiction of enemy supplies from outside the territory. In many cases, guerrillas rely on supply bases and sanctuaries in countries that are along the territory's frontier. Since these nations are not at war with the government the guerrilla is opposing, that government's task of interdiction is difficult. Trinquier proposes that the war be carried to the enemy in order to stop the flow of supplies and to disrupt the safe havens. Trinquier states that the zone and theater commanders must be allowed to enter and conduct operations in refuge areas.<sup>17</sup> He explains that entering the territory of a neighboring nation will have adverse political impact and possibly widen the scope of the conflict. He discuss three distinct types of operations, air strikes, conventional ground strikes and friendly guerrilla operations.

He considers air strikes to be the least desirable. Although air strikes can hit targets quickly they usually

result in large civilian casualties since guerrilla sanctuaries are generally placed in villages. Air strikes launched into another nation's territory may cause war to break out between the two nations. Also, there is the possibility that the international community will go against the government for striking a neighbor and killing innocent people.<sup>18</sup> Since air strikes are not always too accurate, the negative aspects far outweigh the potential gain.

Colonel Trinquier considers conventional ground raids across the frontier more feasible. However, the possibility of starting a general war is high. The raid must be sufficient to destroy the sanctuary and its supplies and then must withdraw. He proposes conventional forces conduct cross-border raids only if absolutely necessary and if success is ensured. He proposes that the best way to interdict the supplies across the frontier is to covertly conduct guerrilla operations.<sup>19</sup> In that manner the interdiction of supplies can appear to be an internal problem in the neighboring nation, and that nation becomes saddled with all the problems of an insurgency. Covert operations can have two effects. First the "friendly" guerrilla forces can interdict the original guerrillas' supplies and disrupt their sanctuaries. Second, the neighboring nation may pull

support from the original guerrillas in order to stop the insurgency now building in his nation. In this guerrilla-counter guerrilla method the forces of order turn the guerrilla's own methods against him.

In *Modern Warfare*, Colonel Trinquier gives a good, comprehensive presentation of the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* in its final form. Although, the book was written in retrospect it gives us one of the best summations of what the doctrine evolved to be. He tells how the forces of order prepare, organize and fight the guerrilla and provides specific tactics for them to use. The French Army used many of these methods in Algeria including the division of the territory into zones and sectors. They established an elaborate intelligence network in Algiers and systematically regained control of that city during the during the "Battle of Algiers." Many of the French attempts to stop or slow the insurgents were successful and they were able to halt much of the insurgent supplies from neighboring countries. Yet, in the end, the French lost the war and Algeria gained her independence. It was a classic example of winning the battle but losing the war.

#### Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided the important influences on

the development of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and gave a description of how it operates. The doctrine did establish strategic, operational and tactical methods in order to fight against the guerrilla. It also attempted to analyze the enemy and then establish ways to defeat them. It provided a method for a military force to organize and conduct operations, and it proposed offensive action to defeat the enemy. However, the doctrine had some important flaws in its assumptions, many of the proposed organizations and methods are beyond the capabilities and proper missions of military units. Some of the flaws come from deeper problems within the French Army, mainly the need to regain honor and hatred of communism. These problems rest in the strategic level of war, and poor strategy was the cause of the defeat of the French in Algeria. The problems of strategy and the doctrine will be clarified in Chapter 5 after the American doctrine of counter-insurgency, and its development is explained.

### Chapter 3 End Notes

(1) John S. Ambler, *Soldiers Against the State* (New York: Anchor Press, 1968), 99.

(2) Paul-Marie de la Gorce, *The French Army, A Military-Political History*, translated by Kenneth Douglas (New York: George Braziller, 1963), 355.

(3) Ambler, 101.

(4) De la Gorce, 119.

(5) Ibid., 198.

(6) Ibid.

(7) Ibid., 360.

(8) George A. Kelly, *Lost Soldiers* (Cambridge, The M.I.T. Press, 1965), 113.

(9) Kelly, 120, citing Jacques Hozard, "Stratégie et tactique dans la Guerre révolutionnaire," *Revue militaire d'Information*, June 1958.

(10) See Kelly pp. 119-123.

(11) Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, translated by Daniel Lee (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964) 35.

(12) Ibid., 32.

(13) Ibid., 72-73.

(14) See FM 100-5, 1986, pp. 109 and 181.

(15) Trinquier, 72. Note: Colonel Trinquier does not specify the actual military levels but they can be inferred from his book.

(16) Ibid., 80-86.

(17) Ibid., 85 & 89.

(18) Trinquier cites the Sakiet Raid of February 1958 that severely hurt the French Government's international image and brought much criticism in the French press.

(19) Ibid., 100-103.

## Chapter 4

### Counterinsurgency Warfare

This chapter traces the development of American counterinsurgency doctrine since the end of World War II. It shows how the changing nature of U. S. national strategy, due to the changes in presidential administrations, brought counterinsurgency to the forefront of policy. This chapter also looks at how the Army adopted counterinsurgency in order to regain prominence among the military services. Finally, it considers the debate within the military and national strategists regarding the definition of what constitutes a military victory. This confusion about what victory is was compounded and influenced by the development of the counterinsurgency doctrine.

This study does not investigate the motivations behind the decisions to change national strategy and enact the counterinsurgency policy. It assumes that all the administrations discussed in this chapter were anti-communist and dedicated to seeing its downfall in one way or another. anti-communism was an important issue in domestic politics as evidenced by the many candidates of both parties who used it in their platforms to get

elected. The question of whether the nation was right or wrong in its anti-communism is not part of this investigation. The fact is that the United States was largely anti-communist and that the sentiment drove our foreign policy for 40 plus years. It is also evident that American anti-communism affected the development of counterinsurgency in two ways: first, in that anti-communism was the driving force behind post-World War II U. S. foreign policy - this caused the administrations of the Cold War to prioritize a national strategy to counter the perceived communist aggression; and second this anticommunist motivation skewed American doctrine into a particular form which caused the loss of flexibility in strategy as it did in France.

The Americans had a good deal of experience with guerrilla war before it became a popular form of warfare in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The U.S. Army had the first seasoning in guerrilla war fighting the Moros in the jungles of the Philippines at the beginning of this century. Soon after the Marine Corps conducted extensive counter guerrilla operations in the "Banana Wars" of the 1920s and 1930s in Central America. In World War II Americans operated as guerrillas against the Japanese and aided various partisan forces in Europe. However, after World War II the United States became involved in



guerrilla wars of a different nature; these wars, to America, were part of the larger ideological Cold War struggle between communism and capitalism.

Irrespective of their previous experience with guerrilla and counter guerrilla operations, the United States did not develop a comprehensive doctrine for this sort of warfare until the early 1960s. Although the Marine Corps published a doctrinal manual in 1940 called *The Small Wars Manual*, the Corps' experiences along with those of the Army in the Philippines were mostly ignored in the development of counterinsurgency.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine grew from the ground level as a means to contain, and later confront communist expansion in America's post World War II strategic doctrine. The growing doctrine remained just a low key tool for the Truman and Eisenhower administrations; but later under the Kennedy administration it became a complete doctrine encompassing national strategy and operational methods.

The Kennedy administration embarked on the development of counterinsurgency at two levels. At the national strategic level the doctrine became the primary means to confront communism. His administration developed a doctrine that encompassed the resources of many agencies of the government: the State Department, the CIA, the National Security Council as well as the

military had roles in counterinsurgency. At the operational level, all the military services rushed to get on the counterinsurgency wagon by organizing and training special units to fight in guerrilla conflicts. The Army created the Special Forces, the Navy, the SEALs and the Air Force, the First Air Commando Group.<sup>2</sup> A large portion of the government and the entire military became involved in this major policy shift in national strategy and the way America's forces would fight.

#### A Presidential Tour of Counterinsurgency

The Cold War began under President Harry Truman's administration and with the policy of containment and American involvement in the Greek Civil War. His administration set the U. S. on the counterinsurgency road. In 1946 Truman's administration began to support the Greek government in its civil war against a communist insurgency. Soon after material aid, American Army advisors followed and the military was involved in its first anti-communist guerrilla war. Since Truman's use of military forces in Greece and later in the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines, guerrilla warfare became part of the national strategy in the United States' strategic plan to contain communism. The Truman Doctrine called for the United States to contain the Soviets, to keep them

from expanding by placing a ring of alliances around them. It was a strategic defensive plan in that it did not call for the United States to roll back communism through offensive means.

Truman chose to meet communist aggression with the same way as the aggressor used. This fit well into a defensive strategy of just holding the communists in place. If the Soviets engaged in a conflict indirectly, such as in Greece, so did the United States. If direct aggression such as the full conventional assault launched against South Korea, then the U.S. responded by sending in regular combat forces. The difficult task for the U. S. was in determining the adequate means to respond with and assessing if the means were worth the risk of escalation.

The important part of the Greek Civil War and the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines (1946-1954) along with other American aid programs to those fighting guerrillas (possibly including the French in Indochina) is that the Truman administration resisted efforts to involve the United States directly by sending regular combat forces. In both cases, the American military's involvement remained limited to advisors and technical personnel. Although these specialists in unconventional warfare tactics and operations did command troops and became

involved in combat, the domestic political impact of their involvement was low. The success of their operations came through the use of local indigenous forces; importantly, the combat forces in the Greek Civil War were Greek and in the Huk Rebellion, Filipino.

The Eisenhower administration chose an even more limiting method of countering communism. Under the doctrine of massive retaliation, Eisenhower chose to counter only direct Soviet aggression through nuclear deterrence. Overt emphasis was placed on strategic bombers and missiles: the rationale was that if the U. S. had enough nuclear force to scare the Soviets from attacking, the U. S. would not have to spend much money on large conventional forces. This would have a great affect on the Army's perception of its role in the strategy of the United States. In this new strategy of "massive retaliation," the Army became a second rate strategic service in comparison to the Air Force and Navy.

Yet Eisenhower did not give up destabilizing undesirable governments and attempting to check insurgencies through covert means. The Republicans wanted to take a more aggressive stance against communism but Eisenhower knew the electorate chose him to bring peace in Korea and

in general. Covert means solved this problem. Richard Barnett explains:

The answer to the dilemma was covert action. The Central Intelligence Agency could fight and win only the battles that could be won, small operations of political significance in strategic places of America's choosing. And it could be done without the extent and character of American involvement getting into the newspapers. Forging the pleasure of announcing victories was a small price to pay for hiding the inevitable defeats in the "back alley war" that Eisenhower thought would last at least a generation. The capability for covert action was already in place under Truman. Now it would become the principle weapon for carrying on the Cold War.<sup>3</sup>

Truman and Eisenhower's guerrilla war policies were relatively covert and in the background, when compared with the Kennedy administration. For Truman and Eisenhower guerrilla war methods supplemented the primary means of deterrence -- nuclear weapons and strong conventional forces. Covert and guerrilla means were action policies of the Truman and especially Eisenhower administration, but not their declaratory policies. John F. Kennedy changed this by making counterinsurgency a declaratory policy, thus stating to the American public and the world that the U. S. would take action to counter the spread of communism. For Kennedy, counterinsurgency became the primary action policy to meet and in some ways turn back communist aggression.

### The New Counterinsurgency

The Kennedy administration made a major change in America's strategy to counter communism. The Truman administration conducted containment on a reactive basis. They met communism where communism made the first move. The Eisenhower administration relied on nuclear destruction as deterrence against direct Soviet threat on the security of the United States. In covert operations, Eisenhower conducted unconventional operations against undesirable governments to destabilize them.<sup>4</sup> Kennedy changed to a more dynamic and openly aggressive action against communism. His strategy involved more overt and continuing covert operations to counter the internal communist threat of friendly nations.<sup>5</sup> He called it "Flexible Response" because America would use various means to counter communism. The U. S. declaratory policy was not just limited to nuclear deterrence; it included conventional and unconventional means as well. Aiding and assisting governments facing insurgencies was especially important. Kennedy's program included a vast study and development of a counterinsurgency doctrine at the national strategic level and at the operational levels of all military services. All agencies of the government that handled matters of foreign affairs and

national defense became involved. From this great network of agencies, special groups and committees, a doctrine and supporting infrastructure of counterinsurgency came to be. Counterinsurgency became the president's priority in national defense.

Why did the president make such a major shift in the United States' strategy? World events influenced his decision greatly as communist insurgencies increased. Premier Khrushchev's rhetoric on communist wars of liberation reinforced the reality of world events. President Kennedy personal interest also influenced his drive for counterinsurgency warfare. For Kennedy there was a sense of romanticism regarding the guerrilla methods of war and the small unit tactics of unconventional forces,<sup>6</sup> so much that he became personally involved with the organization and training of new units.

In his first meeting with the National Security council, President Kennedy read excerpts from Khrushchev's January 6, 1961 speech where he declared that communists supported wars of national liberation.<sup>7</sup> Although some could dismiss Khrushchev's speech as just rhetoric to arouse the west, there were events in the world that showed that communist backed or inspired subversive wars existed. Insurgencies were happening in Laos, Vietnam, Colombia, Venezuela and in Algeria. Cuba

had fallen to Castro who used Ché Guevara's methods. There were insurgencies out there and Kennedy believed they had to be stopped.

John Kennedy studied guerrilla war throughout the 1950s. He understood the Guerrillas's methods and organization. He also knew that America's nuclear might could not and should not be used to counter insurgencies because it might have lead to outright nuclear war with the Soviets. Instead, covert means were to be used. However, the failure of the Bay of Pigs showed that covert actions, which relied on indigenous forces, was not good enough.<sup>8</sup> Kennedy felt that it was America's duty to go beyond containment and to meet the threat in kind.<sup>9</sup> He felt that America should contribute "highly mobile forces trained in this type of warfare," as an obligation to the world.<sup>10</sup> Thus, something else was needed to strengthen America's ways of countering communism and his Flexible Response strategy. The new means became special groups and military units, trained to be experts on counterinsurgency warfare.

The operational doctrine the military built from the administration's counterinsurgency policy involved two specific types of guerrilla war. The first was guerrilla operations or counterguerrilla operation conducted by friendly forces in support of conventional operation in



limited or general war. (This doctrine's definitions of limited and general war are discussed later.) The second, a more important type to the Kennedy administration, was termed Internal Defense and Development.<sup>11</sup> The difference between the two, according to counterinsurgency doctrine, is the nature of the war. In the former there is a stated existence of belligerency between two nations. In the latter, no recognizable state of belligerency exists; the nation experiences an internal conflict brought on by subversive element from within usually in the form of an insurgent guerrilla operation.

The key in the strategic doctrine of Internal Defense and Development is that the nation experiencing the insurgency asks for the aid of the United States to overcome the insurgents. U. S. forces are then sent to conduct Stability Operations<sup>12</sup> to bring the government back on its feet, regain control of the population and eliminate the insurgents. Stability Operations included assisting, training and advising the indigenous forces in counterinsurgency warfare. It included direct combat support and combat by regular U.S. forces to reinforce the government forces if necessary. The priority in these operations was to use civil-military methods such as establishing medical, agricultural and educational aid

programs, and building the infrastructure and security in order to stabilize the nation.

One of the premier forces developed to conduct stability operations was (and still is) the Special Forces known as the Green Berets. The Special Forces have missions in both types of guerrilla war. They are suited for initial deployment because they are highly independent and self-supporting. Their specialized training and organization are particularly appropriate for to Stability Operations. Their mission is to go into a nation and train indigenous force in combat skills and tactics, and to make them proficient in methods to counter the insurgent or to conduct guerrilla operations against the insurgent. To support conventional operations they go behind the lines and train partisans to interdict and harass enemy conventional forces.

Kennedy's romantic fascination with the guerrilla and unconventional warfare is evident because of his intense involvement with the development of the U. S. Army's Special Forces. Kennedy had read Mao and Guevara's methods of guerrilla forces and wanted the U. S. military to have a force that could match the best of Mao's or Guevara's fighters. This force would be trained to be the best to counter the guerrilla by using guerrilla tactics against him.<sup>13</sup> The president became

personally involved with the organization and training of the Special Forces, even to the point of helping to develop the "Jungle Boot" used by soldiers and forcing the army to let these special soldiers wear the coveted green beret.<sup>14</sup> Soon the green beret became the symbol of the counterinsurgency effort. The Special Forces became an elite organization within the U. S. Army. The project became so popular that a John Wayne movie and a ballad about the Green Berets became selling points to the public. Even children-sized green berets were sold in Five & Dimes.<sup>15</sup>

The Green Berets were the first unit to go to Vietnam, but there they were under the control of the CIA, something the Army was content with.<sup>16</sup> The Army liked having a prominent position in the nation's counterinsurgency effort but it was not convinced they should command the operations. The Army's high leaders accepted losing command of the Special Forces because at the same time they saw the Special Force's role as not strictly military and felt that not all solutions to insurgencies could be met through military means.<sup>17</sup> What the Green Berets provided for the Army was a means to come to prominence after a decade of playing second to the Air Force's Strategic Air Command and the Navy's nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers.

### The New Look and Nukes: The Army Needs a Job

When World War II ended the United States Army was at the pinnacle of its existence. Global war transformed a small professional and somewhat still frontier army to world strategic force. In 1945 the Army was compromised of mechanized and armored forces, a tactical and strategic air force, and a regular infantry force. It was a complete combined arms service and capable of fighting any where in the world. By 1950 the army lost its air force, had seen its strength demobilized and was relegated to constabulary missions in Japan and Germany. The Korean War shocked the army back into realizing its role as an operational and tactical fighting force. Yet, the Korean War ended in a stalemate and the Eisenhower administration realized that the United States could not afford large standing forces, nor could it continue its involvement in minor wars and their quest to counter communism. President Eisenhower wanted to have an adequate deterrence against the Soviet Union while not having the nation succumb to a "garrison state" economy.<sup>18</sup> Although he did not like the potential doom that nuclear weapons had, he did feel that America should not spend its domestic wealth on a large standing army required to match the Red Army. Much to the disdain of his former service, the Army, Eisenhower placed the

nation's defense priority into nuclear weapons and the United States Air Force. Hence, the Army lost its role as a strategic force in America's national strategy.

Despite Eisenhower's decisions the Army attempted to fit into his "new look." Like the French Army of the early 1950s, the American Army reorganized to fight on the nuclear battlefield with "Pentomic" divisions. These divisions were designed to survive nuclear fires with its subordinate semi-autonomous battlegroups. If one battlegroup was destroyed by nuclear fire, the rest of the division would survive to continue the fight. The Army also developed tactical nuclear battlefield weaponry, including missiles, artillery shells and even atomic demolitions. To keep a part in the technical war of the missile age and to counter the Soviet nuclear bomber threat, the Army took on the nation's antiaircraft missile defense mission. The Air Defense Artillery became a premier part of the U. S. Army of this period.

This new technical weaponry had a cost: namely that emphasis was no longer placed on the traditional forms of land warfare, infantry and armor. The traditional arms became second in importance in the "Pentomic" army. As a highly decorated infantry officer of the Korean War who rejoined the Army in 1955 and came back to be one of the new missile men observed:

It was a different Army I returned to in December 1955. Manpower was out, missile power in. The darling of the armed forces was the Air Force, with the Eisenhower Administration determined to hinge the nation's defense on strategic intermediate and long-range nuclear weapons, such as USAF's developing five-thousand-mile-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). . . .

Although the McCarthy era had ended ignominiously, the Red Scare was alive and kicking; the Russians were coming, said military experts, with their own A-bombs and H-bombs, to blow our cities off the map. As such Air Defense (AD) was the password of the decade, with the 35 percent increased military budget mostly dedicated to the improvement of our continental air defense, and to radar facilities in the Arctic. The Army's share of the new funding was devoted in great measure, to the development and deployment of a twenty-to-thirty-mile range AD antiaircraft missile system known as the Nike-Ajax.<sup>19</sup>

When Colonel Hackworth, the author of the above passage, returned to the Army, he wanted to join the 82d Airborne Division so he could continue his infantry career. In order to be able to return to the Army he soon found himself learning about electronics and missile interception rates as he trained to be an air defender.<sup>20</sup> He, along with other disgruntled infantrymen, found out that their part of the profession of arms appeared obsolete and second to the sleek new aircraft and technical missiles. It appeared that infantry and tanks were no longer needed because a few nuclear bombs would just blow the enemy away. In this environment, where the classic ground warriors were second to the pilots, the Army

looked for role to play that was uniquely its own. When Kennedy put forth the strategic doctrine of counterinsurgency and its need for specialized small infantry units, the traditional part of the Army was hungry and more than willing to fill the role. While the Army searched for its strategic role, another serious problem developed: the question of victory.

Underlying all the budget battles, inter- and intra-service rivalry and strategic and operational development, a confusion over just what constitutes victory became a subtle and crucial problem. Since the day President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill decided on the unconditional surrender of Japan and Germany, the American foreign policy and military establishments lost and confused the definition of what constitutes a military victory. This problem would complicate and be complicated by the doctrine of counterinsurgency.

#### The Confusion Regarding Victory

Confusion about what constitutes victory began in the U.S. military when American troops in 1950 crossed the 38th parallel in pursuit of the remnants of the North Korean Army. The debate still exists today as is evident in the argument over whether Coalition forces should have continued to Baghdad to oust Saddam Hussein and indeed

this confusion affected the strategic decision making process of U. S. national leadership during the Vietnam War and the application of counterinsurgency warfare.

The Korean War was the beginning of this debate because the United States tried to defeat North Korea totally while limiting the scope of the conflict. Actually, President Truman's original goal in Korea was to oust the North Korean aggressors and to reinstate the status quo. When the Inchon landing resulted in a virtual destruction of the North Korean People's Army, the opportunity to eliminate the communist regime of North Korea was too tempting not to take. When the Chinese "volunteers" rolled back the UN forces, the debate in America began. Many questioned: do we expand the war, and defeat the Chinese? Or do we negotiate and accept our original position of reinstating the status quo on the peninsula? General MacArthur lost his job because of this very dilemma, since he vocally supported a total victory in opposition to President Truman.

The victory debate is as follows: there are the total victory proponents who believe war is not won unless the enemy is completely defeated. The enemy's army and war making capability must be destroyed, his nation conquered and his government deposed if there is to be a victory. On the other hand, there are the



limited victory proponents who believe there is victory when the military strategy accomplishes the minimum necessary actions in order to force the enemy to do the imposed political will. In limited victory a nation destroys only what is necessary to force the enemy to succumb. The enemy then is allowed to negotiate a settlement or to pursue forced peace. Believers in limited victory accept total victory, the total destruction of the enemy, as a possibility in cases when it is necessary. Conversely, believers in total victory do not accept limited victory in any fashion. To many of the total victory proponents, limited victory is no victory at all; it is treason.

Prior to World War II, U. S. Army doctrine accepted the notion of limited victory in the 1939 version of FM 100-5:

The conduct of war is the art of employing the Armed Forces of a nation in combination with measures of economic and political constraint for the purpose of effecting a satisfactory peace... The ultimate objective of all military operation is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle. Decisive defeat in battle breaks the enemy's will to war and forces him to sue for peace which is the national aim...<sup>21</sup>

Then came World War II, which embodied the notion of total victory. Japan and Germany were completely destroyed and forced to succumb to the stated allied goal of unconditional surrender. The experience of the war

abandoned any of the above notion of limited war, because total war worked; limited war seemed liked the same appeasement that brought on World War II. Some Generals, like MacArthur, fully accepted the total war idea.

After the World War II the military accepted only the unconditional surrender theory of victory. The goal was no longer to force the enemy to sue for peace; the goal was to force his unconditional surrender.<sup>22</sup> This approach gained support and strength because America had the atom bomb and thus the means to force unconditional surrender on any nation. However, since the Soviets also had the bomb during the Korean War the United States had to choose between total victory and the risk of nuclear war to achieve it. The administration then realized that limited aims and negotiated settlement is acceptable. Still the issue was debated: Truman favored limited war, most generals; total war. MacArthur, who engineered the defeat of Japan, confused negotiated settlement and limited goals with appeasement. He felt that the only victory was the complete defeat of the Chinese and North Koreans. MacArthur became the nation's symbol for total victory after Truman relieved him from command. Subsequently, confusion over what constitutes victory began to seep into the official doctrine. From the "lessons learned" in Korea, the U. S. Army discarded the notion

of victory, because it seemed that nuclear weapons placed limitations on conflict and thus eliminated the possibility for total victory. Therefore, victory was not possible, and didn't matter. The Army then officially mixed the ideology on limited war with the ideology of wars of limited objectives. Colonel Harry G. Summers, an analyst of American military doctrine, explains:

... the 1954 *Field Service Regulations*, while introducing the concept of "wars of limited objective," removed "victory" as an aim in war. As the manual said, "Victory alone as an aim of war cannot be justified, since in itself victory does not always assure the realization of national objectives." Defining victory only in terms of total victory, rather than more accurately as the attainment of the objectives for which the war is waged, was a strategic mistake. It not only obscured the fact that we had won a victory in Korea, it also went a long way toward guaranteeing a lack of victory in Vietnam.<sup>23</sup>

With the notion of limited objectives, obtaining the military objective became the yardstick to measure victory in wars. This removed military objectives as a means to achieve national strategic goals. The danger became that the military could then set goals that they felt they could achieve without regarding if they could meet national objectives. On the other hand, national strategic goals became so confining as not to cause escalation that military goals could not be set to achieve them. Thus, the result was that in the mid to late 1950s

strategy and operations in the American military ceased to work together and became separate things.

During the Eisenhower administration, the doctrinal manuals did not change the concept of victory. However, the Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation through nuclear weapons and the subsequent Kennedy policy of flexible response resulted in one more change in the definition of victory and limited war. The 1962 version of FM 100-5 eliminated the concept of wars of limited objectives.<sup>24</sup> It stated that the "essential objective of United States military forces will be to terminate the conflict rapidly and decisively in a manner best calculated to prevent its spread to general (nuclear) war."<sup>25</sup> Although this statement emphasized that military forces should achieve decisive results, it also posits that the main objective of the conflict is to avoid nuclear war. The official strategic doctrine limited any conflict to only those actions that would not risk escalation. With flexible response, the best means to take action against communism was counterinsurgency. Although the military was training and organizing for guerrilla war, the bulk of all services were trained for conventional warfare, which Counterinsurgency placed in a supporting role. The strategic portion of the doctrine shied away from the use of conventional means because of the escalation risk

involved. In effect, the doctrine hamstrung the American military from using its real and almost unrecognized strength: conventional forces.

### Chapter Conclusion

From the above discussion on the development of counterinsurgency we can see that the United States placed too much emphasis on Counterinsurgency. What was established and was working as low key almost covert method of containing communist expansion became the crusade to save under-developed peoples from the evils of communism. When this crusade was applied in Vietnam the United States was suffering from a strategic conundrum. It was incapable of defining victory while attempting to take up the "noble cause" of keeping the Vietnamese from communist subjugation. By the time counterinsurgency was going full steam in the U. S. Military, the military had no sure sense of what a military victory was. Since 1962 and the United States' direct involvement in the Vietnam war, a clear definition of the strategic goal ceased to exist. Therefore, the translation of national strategy to a military strategic objective for Vietnam was impossible. Coupling this with the anti-communist sentiment in the United States in the early 1960s, the war became hindered by a total victory mentality (us or

them, better dead than red etc.) and the pronounced fear of escalation which could lead to a general war with China or a Nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Because of this dilemma President Johnson could not declare the "conflict" a war or prosecute it to its fullest. He didn't want to risk a general war. Nor could he negotiate a settlement with Ho Chi Minh and risk being the first President to lose a war and appear to appease a communist.

#### Chapter 4 End Notes.

- (1) Cable, 97.
- (2) Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 183.
- (3) Richard J. Barnet, *Rocket's Red Glare* ( New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990) ,, 325.
- (4) McClintock, 161.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), 52-53.
- (7) Ibid., 52.
- (8) Ibid., 53.
- (9) McClintock, 164.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Department of the Army Field Manual FM 31-16, *Counter-guerrilla Operations*, (Washington D C.: USGPO, March 1967), 7.
- (12) FM 100-5, 1968, 13-1.
- (13) McClintock, 179.
- (14) Ibid., 180.
- (15) In 1965 my father proudly bought for me a green beret and a copy of Sergeant Barry Sadler's record.
- (16) McClintock, 181.
- (17) Ibid.
- (18) Barnet, 324.
- (19) Colonel David H. Hackworth, USA (ret.) and Julie Sherman, *About Face* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 291.
- (20) Ibid., 291 & 293.

(21) War Department Field Manual FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington D.C.: USGPO, October 1, 1939.) 27, quoted by Colonel Harry G. Summers, USA (ret.), *On Strategy* (New York: Dell, 1984), 97.

(22) Summers, 98.

(23) Ibid., 102-3.

(24) Ibid., 104.

(25) Summers (104) quoting Headquarters, Department of the Army FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations*, (Washington D.C., USGPO, February 19, 1962.), 4-5.



## Chapter 5

### The Strategic Failure of the Two Doctrines

This study set out to determine if the doctrines of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counterinsurgency Warfare were failures. The true test of any doctrine is in its application. Considered in this respect they failed because France lost the Algerian War and the United States lost in Vietnam. Yet, both armies did well during the wars operationally and tactically; hence, one hears often "they won the battles but lost the war." In this statement lies the answer to the central question of this thesis: The doctrines were not flawed in operational methods and battlefield tactics but were flawed or erroneously misapplied strategically. The failure of France and the United States lies in the strategic errors that caused a disconnection between the national-military strategy and operations. For the French the strategic goals they established were unattainable. In the American case, counterinsurgency became inadequate for the task when the war changed in dimension from a guerrilla war in South Vietnam to a war of the U. S. versus North Vietnam. The following discussion attempts to pinpoint the strategic errors of both nations that

caused the inability of operations on the battlefield to meet the goals of strategy.

### Strategic Errors

Both nations made critical strategic errors at the outset of their conflicts. For the French this happened in 1954 when the armed rebellion broke out; for the Americans it is in 1964-65 when the U. S. committed air power and regular ground forces to Vietnam. The French erred in their national strategy while the Americans erred in the military strategy chosen to gain the national strategic goals. When looking at the national goals, this study examines the action policies of the nations, which were not necessarily the same as the declaratory policies.

France's goal in Algeria was, simply, to keep Algeria as a part of France. The three departments of Algeria were of the same status as any department in metropolitan France. They were legally and technically part of France, not colonies. The difference was that most of the people living in these three departments, the Arabs, were not full fledged French citizens. They were in effect colonial subjects living in a "non-colony" colony. Because of this, the real strategic goal of the French in Algeria was to keep their colonial grip on

Algeria through a military pacification of the angered native population.

The French strategic error was that they saw Algeria as a military problem not a political or social one. Because they had a military doctrine designed to eliminate communist insurgencies and because they assumed that the Algerian insurgency was communist, the problem became one for the military to solve. The actual solution for Algeria should have been political and should have started with the government granting full rights to Arabs as French citizens. This probably would have lead to final independence. This is not to say that military operations were unnecessary. It would have been necessary to conduct minimal military operations to stop the insurgents from disrupting the reforms in process. Here the military plays a supporting role to the civilian run reform effort. Unfortunately for France, the Fourth Republic governments succumbed to political pressure from colonial businessmen, European settlers in Algeria and the Army seeking a victory. The inherent lack of leadership in the Fourth Republic government did not realistically allow proper reforms to happen.

The doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* reinforced the decisions that lead to the national strategic error. First, the doctrine called for reform measures to be

under the control of the military, thus reforms supported the military effort whereas it should have been the reverse. Second, the army's intense intelligence apparatus, its taking over of police function and their harsh tactics of interrogation, including torture, did nothing to endear the Arabs to the French, this undermined France's cause. Third, by calling for a high level military involvement, the French looked like oppressors to undecided Arabs and to the world. This high level involvement also awoke the consciousness of the nation when France sent her conscripts to the war. Finally, the doctrine gave the army the false confidence that it could win -- a win that it felt it needed desperately to regain lost honor. Thus, the army's honor depended on victory, which to them was the complete defeat of the rebellion and return to the status quo. When negotiations became the only solution, the army felt that this was treasonous and became an enemy of its own government. No army or nation can win a war in this situation.

The American strategic failure is not as simple as France's in Algeria. U. S. strategy in Vietnam is not easy to determine because of the slow escalation of involvement since the early 1950s. The strategies of the various presidential administrations varied from just supplying monetary and material aid to advising, and then

finally to commitment of regular troops. Throughout the United States' experience in Vietnam the basic national strategic goal was to contain communism, to keep one more nation from falling to communist aggression. The military strategy for Vietnam gradually changed from giving aid to the French and later the Vietnamese to carrying out covert operations, and finally to engaging in direct combat. Despite these changes in strategic action, there is a clear direction in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Kennedy took more aggressive measures to counter communism, and in the early 1960s sent the Green Berets to Vietnam and Laos to do counterinsurgency work. However, as it became apparent that the Green Berets and the South Vietnamese Army could not defeat the insurgents, the Johnson administration made two crucial assessments: that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) could not defeat the insurgency with just U. S. advice and aid, and that the North Vietnamese support of the insurgency had to be stopped. The military strategy enacted was greatly influenced by the doctrinal statement that American force involved in limited wars must not escalate the conflict to general war.<sup>1</sup> So, in order not to escalate the Americans enacted a cautious effort of gradual force to counter the insurgency. To fight the southern

insurgency, U. S. troops were slowly committed in just enough numbers to hopefully tip the balance in the ARVN's favor. Instead of attacking North Vietnam and thus escalating the war, the administration chose to persuade the North by strategic aerial bombing. The idea was to commit just enough force to convince the North that they would be destroyed if they did not cease support of the southern insurgency. While the North was being convinced to cease support, the U.S. counterinsurgency operations in the South would destroy the Vietcong. This strategy did not work because the North did not become convinced to cease support of the southern insurgency. The bombing did nothing to convince North Vietnam to cease nor did it interdict the flow of men and supplies to the south.<sup>2</sup>

North Vietnam was prepared to fight a long guerrilla war of attrition, which the United States could not afford to do as the popularity of the war decreased at home. Any success of the American counterinsurgency effort in the South could not lead to victory because the North was able to continue support and willing to accept large losses. Thus: the United States was at a disadvantage in fighting a strategic war of attrition in Vietnam.

The United States actually became involved in a conventional war in Vietnam by the large number and type of forces committed. By 1967 a large portion of

conventional American military forces, including air, naval and land forces, were committed and the U. S. Army was no longer assisting the South Vietnamese but running the war. A problem in the American strategy and its use of conventional forces was that it did not follow proper military principles in which these forces are designed to fight. Gradual Response and the policy of non-escalation violated the principles of the offense, mass and initiative in the American nine principles of war that the army has used since the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> In order to win, an army must take the offense against the enemy and press the fight continuously until the enemy is exhausted and accepts defeat. This requires a sufficient amount of military force to overwhelm the enemy and have the initiative over the enemy in order to choose the time and place for attacks. In Vietnam, the American policy of persuasive bombing left the initiative with North Vietnam because when the bombing occurred the U. S. waited for a positive diplomatic response from the North Vietnamese government; no American military steps followed the bombings. Gradual Response did not allow the offensive mass to be achieved early in the conflict. The counterinsurgency effort in the South also violated the principle of the offense because it was strategically defensive. Fundamentally, American military strategy in

Vietnam did not allow for victory. This was acceptable in the mid-1960s because the doctrine did not properly define military victory as a result of the confusion over the victory discussed in Chapter 4.

The result of French and American strategic errors was that a disconnection existed between static goals and operational conduct. In both conflicts the French and American Armies were successful on the battlefield but these successes did not lead to strategic victory. For example, the French successfully eliminated the insurgent operations in Algiers in 1957 and from that point on the ALN appeared to be headed for defeat. The French command felt that they were near a positive conclusion of the war after The Battle of Algiers<sup>4</sup>. The American search and destroy operations of 1966 and 1967 effectively reduced the Vietcong and during the 1968 Vietcong Tet offensive American force virtually destroyed the Vietcong in South Vietnam. Although Tet was an operational victory for the United States military it was a strategic defeat for the nation in that America did not exploit the victory. The problem in both wars was the operational and strategic disconnection.

#### Strategic and Operational Disconnection

France and the United States fought their wars with an inappropriate military strategy. France, in Algeria,



did not actually fight a war; it attempted to oppress a population through harsh "police state" tactics. The United States actually fought a conventional war against North Vietnam but used counterinsurgency and "persuasive" strategic bombing as military strategies. Therefore, French and American military operations were futile because they had no corresponding military strategic goals to achieve. Success on the battlefield did nothing to bring victory.

In Algeria, France did not fight against a communist inspired insurgency but instead attempted to put down a rebellion of colonial subjects through military "pacification." The operations that the military used were based on the doctrine of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*, which was geared against fighting communist insurgents. Although many times the French were tactically successful, such as in the Battle of Algiers and the interdiction of rebel supplies by the "Morange Line" in 1958,<sup>5</sup> the tactical victories did nothing to bring "control of the population" that is so necessary in guerrilla warfare (as stated in the French doctrine). French Army operations hurt the French cause by further embittering the population, because the army displayed extreme suspiciousness and harshness on the population.<sup>6</sup> Bombing villages, shooting at the slightest suspicion or

provocation and torturing did nothing to "win the hearts and minds" of the Arabs. Therefore, operationally, the Army strengthened the enemy's will to fight for independence. At the strategic level France's problem was in trying to "pacify" a population that was too culturally and religiously different to assimilate into French society, especially by force and the perpetuation of second class citizenship. Large scale military operations, with air raids and artillery strikes just worsened the attitude of the Arabs.

In order to succeed France should have conducted Military operations in Algeria on a small scale, under civilian control and aimed at destroying only the military arm of the National Liberation Front. However, civilian control of France's military slipped from the government's grasp as evidenced by the Coup d'état of 1958. The realities of French politics and government possibly did not solve the Algerian problem correctly; *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* failed because France used it for the wrong purpose in a situation convoluted by complex self-interest politics. The French Army designed the doctrine to fight against a communist insurgency, but used it to subjugate a religiously and ethnically different population in a colonial war.

America's failure with counterinsurgency is similar

to the French experience in that the doctrine could not achieve the strategic goals because of the situation. The United States committed themselves beyond what counterinsurgency intended to do, but were not willing to take the offensive steps required by the further commitment. The United States recognized early on that the key to victory in Vietnam was in eliminating North Vietnam's support of the insurgency in the South. Proof of this lies in the motivation behind the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign, which aimed to persuade North Vietnam to cease support of the insurgency. By bombing North Vietnam the United States was no longer just fighting a counterinsurgency in South Vietnam but was now using conventional force in a war against North Vietnam. However, strategic bombing alone did not force North Vietnam into capitulation. Air power alone cannot win wars because although it causes considerable damage, it does not destroy the military potential of a nation nor break its will.<sup>7</sup> Air campaigns must be linked to ground offensives in order to put full strain on the enemy's war fighting and logistical potential. Offensive ground and air forces must work towards a common goal. By having air strikes against North Vietnam separate from the ground force limited to a counterinsurgency role in the South, the United States remained on the strategic

defensive throughout the war.<sup>8</sup> None of the operational or tactical victories in ground war or in the air war contributed anything toward winning the war because they were not linked to a common operational goal.

Whether the United States should have conducted a ground campaign against North Vietnam is an issue in this study. If an offensive ground war was not in the best interests of the United States then President Johnson should not have committed regular air and land combat troops in Vietnam. If the nation's leadership determined that the survival of South Vietnam was critical to U.S. world strategy, then the administration should have taken the appropriate steps to achieve that goal. This would have involved the U.S. articulating an ultimatum to North Vietnam; if it went unheeded it should have been followed by a declaration of war, deployment of a large field army and air force, and then the launching of an offensive campaign. Meanwhile, the army supports its offense by an intense counterinsurgency in the South similar to what occurred in Korea. However, by maintaining a defensive strategy through counterinsurgency and a disconnected air campaign, the U. S. became bogged down in a war of attrition and lost the greatest strength of her military force -- the capability to fight and win in offensive conventional operations. When it was

apparent that there would be no victory, the Johnson administration could not face the shame of pulling out of the war. Instead, the Johnson Administration attempted to save American honor by simply taking over the counterinsurgency war from South Vietnam.

The American doctrine of counterinsurgency failed in Vietnam because the American national strategy actually required a military strategy that could defeat North Vietnam. The Johnson administration refused to enact this offensive strategy out of fear of escalation to general war. They stayed with counterinsurgency but it did not meet the strategic demand because its intent was to save a friendly nation from a communist insurgency, not to defeat an enemy nation. The attempt to bomb North Vietnam into accepting U. S. conditions was an incomplete attempt to fill in the deficiency of the counterinsurgency doctrine as applied in Vietnam. The Johnson Administration walked the middle road in Vietnam: because of this incomplete strategy it did not have the courage to do enough to win, nor to pull out before too it became too deeply committed. Successful counterinsurgency operations conducted in the field became wasted efforts because there was no strategy to win.

## Chapter 5 End Notes

(1) See Summers, pp. 104-105 and FM 100-5, 1968, page 1-4.

(2) See Mike Gravel, *The Pentagon Papers, The Senator Gravel Edition*, vol. 4, pp. 53, 68 and 136.

(3) See FM 100-5, 1986, 173-174. The nine principles of war are the objective, the offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise and simplicity.

(4) Kelly, 194-195.

(5) Kelly, 172.

(6) See Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, translated by Ronald Matthews (New York, Alfred A. Knopf. 1957) 19-20.

(7) Conventional air power alone has not yet forced an enemy to surrender. Germany did not force Great Britain into capitulation in the Battle of Britain; nor did the Allies force the surrender of Germany with strategic air bombing. North Vietnam did not cease support of the Southern Insurgency because of Rolling Thunder nor did Saddam Hussein quit Kuwait after his army and air force were wrecked by coalition air power.

(8) See Chapters 13 and 14 in Dave Plamer's *Summons of the Trumpet U. S.-Vietnam in Perspective* (San Rafael, Presidio Press, 1978).

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Though *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counter-insurgency Warfare failed because of strategic errors within the doctrines and because of poor national decision making, they did have operational and tactical success in Algeria and Vietnam. The doctrines should not have been concerned with strategy, they should have only set forth operational methods and tactics for military forces to use when fighting in guerrilla wars. The doctrines needed to be concerned only with the military aspects of countering insurgents and not involved with the political nature of guerrilla wars such as negotiations, social reforms and other aspects of "nation building." These aspects should have remained under the control and direction of civilian authority. Particularly because military units, such as engineer, transport and medical units can support such "nation building" operations; the key is that they support such tasks under the direction of civilian officials. These lessons from the failure of the two doctrines are important because insurgencies continue to occur in international conflict. Many nations, including the United States and France may

have reason to support other friendly nations in countering an insurgency.

Today, many nations experience the threat of an insurgency. The Philippines, Guatemala and Thailand<sup>1</sup> are fighting against insurgencies and recently insurgent wars ended in Afghanistan and El Salvador. Also important to world powers are the ethnic wars in the Balkans, the former Soviet Republics and in the Middle East, that take on similar characteristics of guerrilla warfare. The United States and nations of the European Community have interests in these areas that may require their military to support regimes facing guerrillas. The motivation to offer such support may range from attempting to curb human rights abuses, like preventing "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to prevention of an undesirable organization from obtaining nuclear weapons from republics of the former Soviet Union. Thus, the need exists for Western democracies to have military doctrines that train and prepare their armies to fight in guerrilla wars. Because of this need, the two nations in this study do have such doctrines, although they are significantly different from the former ones.

#### French and American Counter-Guerrilla Doctrine Today

After the Algerian War France based her military



doctrine on nuclear protection called *La Frappe Nucléaire*. This doctrine is strategically defensive by threatening nuclear destruction of an enemy's force attempting to invade France or her allies. In theory, all French forces throughout the world are protected by their independent nuclear force. The role of conventional forces is through maneuver and firepower to force enemy forces into a posture where tactical nuclear weapons can destroy them. The use of tactical nuclear weapons sends a warning to the aggressor that France may escalate by using strategic nuclear weapons. France offers a choice to the aggressor: cease the attack or face a strategic nuclear strike against your homeland. This reliance on nuclear weapons is similar in many respects to President Eisenhower's "massive retaliation" of the late 1950s. Although *La Frappe Nucléaire* is the primary doctrine of French national defense, France has not abandoned the idea of sending forces to aid smaller friendly foreign nations.

In French military doctrine plans exist for deployment of forces outside of France for assistance operations; the French Army calls these operations *L'action Extérieur*. The French maintain a highly trained and well equipped professional force to carry out the doctrine: *La Force D'action Rapide*. This doctrine and

force have the mission to deploy quickly to aid friendly foreign nations to regain stability or stop aggression. The doctrine is not nearly as elaborate as the former *La Guerre Révolutionnaire*, because it mostly plans for the deployment of forces and their logistical support outside of France. However, its lack of elaboration on the political nature of the force's mission is key to the doctrine. The mission is determined by the French government; this keeps the doctrine flexible and strategic decision making at the proper political level. The doctrine leaves political decisions at the proper level and dictates a supporting role to the military. In contrast, and the largest failing of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* is that it provided for too much military involvement in the political decision making of a conflict. In the former doctrine the French military lost its focus on the military mission and in effect ceased to be a military command. The current French doctrine properly places the military in its role of supporting national decisions.<sup>2</sup>

The United States also restructured military doctrine after the defeat in Vietnam like the French did after Algeria. However, the U. S. military did not return to rely on nuclear weapons. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the U. S. Army and Air Force developed

the doctrine known as Airland Battle. This doctrine returns to the basics of war fighting. It establishes the structure of modern warfare comprising of strategy, operations and tactics; importantly, it recognizes the links between the three levels require clear, concise and attainable military objectives.<sup>3</sup> The doctrine maintains a spectrum of war but with a significant difference than the former spectrum of the 1960s. The new spectrum recognizes three levels of conflict by the amount of violence: Low Intensity, Mid Intensity and High Intensity Conflict. Low Intensity Conflict is guerrilla warfare, including insurgencies, subversion against a government and terrorism that contain relatively low numbers of forces and amount of violence. Mid intensity conflict is conventional war with much violence from the large amount of deployed forces and the firepower of modern high technical weapons. High Intensity Conflict is when the belligerents use their full resources to wage war using extreme levels of violence including the use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.<sup>4</sup> The important difference from the former doctrine is the removal of the objective of preventing escalation. The doctrine simply states that the Army must be prepared to fight and win in all types of conflict.<sup>5</sup> This implies that escalation policy rests with the national decision making authority.

The Low Intensity Conflict portion of current U. S. doctrine contains much of the same tactics and operations as the old Counter guerrilla Doctrine<sup>6</sup>. This is because operations and tactics used in the counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam were successful. The notion of providing assistance to friendly nations remains in the current doctrine as its base reason for its existence. The difference in the new doctrine is that the assistance aspect is paramount. The doctrine states:

The host country's capability to plan for and manage its total defense resources is the advisor's primary concern. The military of developing nations may not develop capability to fully manage their defense establishments and resources if they continue to request U.S. advisory assistance in areas where they have achieved efficiency. Overreliance on U.S. advisors tends to delay the self-sufficiency process...

The above statement sets the tone throughout the doctrine that U. S. forces deploy to assist and do not take over direction of the conflict. It is important to mention that the doctrine does allow for the commitment of U.S. regular combat troops if American national interests dictate such action. However, the doctrine does not provide any formula for committing regular troops because this decision is for the national political leadership to make. The possibility of another slow escalation does exist. The danger lies in the cautionary tone of the doctrine not to allow U. S. forces to take

over control of the conflict from the host nation. This may result in the commitment of small packets of force that could result in a gradual escalation. The national leadership can avoid gradual escalation if they heed certain cautions and lessons learned from the Algerian and Vietnam Wars.

### Avoiding Strategic Failure

This study concludes that strategic failure contributed to the French defeat in Algeria and the American defeat in Vietnam. These breakdowns in strategy did not allow for operations to work towards the strategic goals crucial to victory. However, although France and the United States have revamped their counter guerrilla doctrines the potential for strategic error still exists. From the wars of Algeria and Vietnam, this study draws some lessons that can help leadership avoid strategic failure. These lessons are: there is a need to define clear national strategic goals, a need to maintain of civilian control of the military<sup>8</sup>, to keep the war as low key as possible, to constrain the air war,<sup>9</sup> and to resist the temptation to escalate for other than strategic reasons.

National leadership must define clear national strategic goals and the reason for intervention. Clear

goals allow for proper translation to strategic military objectives that in turn allow proper operational application of force. The reasons that a nation wants to become involved in a low intensity conflict of a foreign nation are important because they help determine the highest level of escalation risk the nation is willing to accept. The United States and France did not make this determination when they gradually escalated the Vietnam and Algerian Wars. For example, if Western nations determine that it is necessary to enter into an ethnic war in a former Soviet Republic in order to stop an unfriendly capture of nuclear weapons the escalation risk compared to the high stakes (results of unfriendly use of nuclear weapons) may warrant the possibility of committing regular combat troops. The risk accepted is the possibility of escalating the war to a mid intensity conflict in order to achieve the goals. On the other hand, suppression of an insurgency in a nation that holds little to no vital interest may warrant the highest level of risk only to the commitment of advisors and special forces in a training role. Once the nation reaches the level of accepted escalation risk the leadership should not go beyond this level in troop commitment, as the cost of involvement will go beyond the possible gains.

Part of the determination of goals is a clear deter-

mination of just who is the enemy. This is especially important in dealing with ethnic conflicts. The supported group may be just as abhorrent as the original enemy. France's democratic government supported an oppressive colonial regime within itself during the war in Algeria; in effect it had the enemy within. During the Cold War, American leadership supported some rather unsavory regimes. This may have brought short term success but gave to Third World nations a poor image of U. S. imperialism. The determination of the enemy (or the reality of the inability to determine him) may result in the nation adopting a hands off policy and thus avoiding the conflict.

Next, the assisting nation must insure that the host nation maintains civilian control over the military and direction of the conflict. Not only does this promote democracy but it prevents both the military of the host and supporting nations from losing military mission focus. The military must remain in a supporting role and the objectives of military operations must always support the strategic political objectives. This is because the larger issue at stake in low intensity conflict is solving the social and political problems that cause dissent in the country. Military forces cannot and should not solve these problems. Once the military takes over

control of the social and political war, the government and the military begin to look like oppressors and play into the hands of the insurgents. The application of military force is applied only against insurgent military units and with as low levels of violence as necessary.

By using low levels of military force, the conflict remains as low key as possible. This is especially important for the supporting nation; higher levels of involvement risk the war becoming unpopular and thus puts the supporting national leadership in a political precarious position. The supporting nation must keep public awareness of the war low; it should even keep the assistance as covert as possible. Most importantly it must resist the temptation to send regular ground and air units into the conflict as employment raises public awareness to high levels. However, the national legislature must take part in the decision to intervene, even if this requires closed door sessions. Legitimation of the conflict by the people's representatives is imperative.

Constraining the air war is very important to the above notion of keeping the war at a low level of popular awareness. First, air power is highly visible to the world and very destructive to civilian population while it does little to affect the light infantry units of the guerrilla forces well hidden in rugged terrain. Addi-



tionally, calls for the use of "surgical strikes" to persuade supporters of insurgents (or ethnic forces) must be avoided. There is no historical proof that non-nuclear air strikes have ever persuaded a nation to meet another nation's demands. Once these strikes are underway the nation that commits them escalates the war to mid intensity, probably before it wants to.

Lastly, the national leadership must resist temptations to escalate the conflict for reasons of honor, nobility or political convenience. The leadership must stand by the realistic strategic reasons to be in the conflict. These reasons should be tangible such as: for instance the protection of vital resources, the protection of human life from atrocities or the prevention of enemies gaining weapons of mass destruction. Nobel ideas and notions of honor are easily manipulated to mean whatever proponents of escalation want them to mean. They also may lead to situations like the French Army experienced in participating in the 1958 *coup d'état* or the dilemma that President Johnson faced of either having general war if he escalated or losing honor if he pulled out without victory.

Many centuries ago Sun Tzu stated: "War is of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be

thoroughly studied."<sup>10</sup> This applies to any nation considering entering into the internal conflict of another nation. These conflicts are not as clear as direct forms of aggression such as an invasion, because the guerrilla usually has legitimate complaints of social ills that are beyond the realm of military conflict. A nation considering intervention into such a conflict must thoroughly understand it before entering it. The nation must see beyond the elements of ideology and political rhetoric and seek the real causes of dissent that prompt a group of people to take up arms against their own government. The national leadership must make a complete risk analysis before entering into a war that has the potential to grow beyond the gains and become unpopular at home. Also, the nation cannot vacillate in making its decision, for the longer the conflict continues, the harder it becomes to solve the conflict's root problems. Entering too late causes the interventionist to have a high risk of defeat.

The doctrines of *La Guerre Révolutionnaire* and Counterinsurgency Warfare failed because of flaws at the strategic level. They discarded proper military principles and involved the military command in the political strategic decision making process. The doctrines called for the military to become involved in primarily civilian

political and sociological problems which aided in confusing strategy and operations. And they called on France and the United States to commit military force for reasons of "honor and nobility" that were skewed excuses used to find a reason to fight. Honor and nobility have no place in strategic decision making. Worse of all, the doctrines had worthy operational and tactical techniques that were wasted on the battlefield, sadly, along with many fine soldiers.

## Chapter 6 End Notes

- (1) Douglas S. Blaufarb and George K. Tanham, *Who Will Win?* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989), 1.
- (2) The doctrinal information in the above two paragraphs comes from course documents and my attendance at *L'école D'état-major* (French Army General Staff School) at Compiègne, France, Fall 1990.
- (3) See chapter 2 of *FM 100-5 Operations*, 1986 for a discussion on the fundamentals of Airland Battle Doctrine.
- (4) *FM 100-5 Operations*, 1986, 1-7, and Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington D.C., USGPO, 1981), 14.
- (5) *FM 100-5 Operations*, 1986, 2.
- (6) See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 31-16 Counterguerrilla Operations* (Washington D.C.: USGPO, 1967).
- (7) Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington D.C.: USGPO), 122.
- (8) Blaufarb and Tanham, 29.
- (9) *Ibid.*, 28.
- (10) Sun Tzu, 63.

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Expert Infantryman Badge,  
Meritorious Service Medal,  
Army Commendation Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters,  
Army Achievement Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster,  
National Defense Service Medal,  
Army Service Ribbon,  
Overseas Service Ribbon with 3 device.