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ANDREW J. OGAN
LT COL, USAF

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MAO, AIR POWER, AND VICTORIAN WARFARE

A STRATEGY FOR FUTURE CONFLICTS

by

Andrew J. Ogan
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Mao, Air Power, and Victorian Warfare: A Strategy for Future Conflicts

AUTHOR: Andrew J. Ogan, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Future conflicts will pose threats to US interests as US policy makers attempt to stabilize world situations. The resulting conflicts will likely be of the small war variety, e.g., conflicts that must be resolved but are not directly threatening to vital or core US interests. Factions within these conflict areas will probably launch guerrilla operations as a counter to any conventional military involvement. Since the military instrument will probably be the option of choice to resolve these wars, a model within which to apply military force is essential to assure effective use of military force without weakening political resolve or conventional force capability. A historic model, the Victorian approach to warfare, effectively dealt with many small wars over a 100 year period. The author proposes the use of the Victorian model for the US military establishment. Through the aggressive application of Victorian techniques, US conventional forces can be effectively applied to world situations without endangering political support or warfighting capabilities. Historical examples in the Egypt/Sudan region and the northern India/Afghanistan region are developed to establish the Victorian process. Key aspects of Victorian warfare cited in this paper are the linkage of political and military objectives, the development of indigenous units to fight the prolonged Phase II of the guerrilla campaign, and the development of an officer corps skilled in warfighting. Air power is included in this discussion as a mechanism to manage the phases of a guerrilla war and to effectively intervene at critical junctures.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew J. Ogan (M.S. in Logistics Management, Air Force Institute of Technology) is a career logistician. He has served in a variety of posts including assignments on the Air Staff, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Air Force Logistics Management Center. He has published articles in the Defense Management Journal, the Air Power Journal, the Logistics Spectrum, and the Air Force Journal of Logistics. He is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College, class of 1988, and the Air War College, class of 1994.

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INTRODUCTION

In a new world order, the US must cope on a daily basis with an increasingly unstable and unsafe world. Since the demise of the Soviet Empire, forces long controlled by the superpower stand-off have been freed. With the probability of world war almost eliminated, the two main superpower camps have largely fragmented. What these circumstances have produced is a world where nations, factions, and ethnic groups are attempting to determine their rightful place in the global community. (7:3-5) Where solutions are not readily available to the primary actors leading these groupings, violence may be the preferred method to resolve differences. (15:42-43)

The resulting "small wars" will pose unique problems to the world community. The wars promise to be both extremely violent and probably long-term affairs. The weaponry and tactics will likely be unsophisticated -- with many adopting guerrilla-style tactics. Vietnam, a conflict lasting 25 years, illustrates the longevity and violence of such conflicts. And, some analysts predict that such future wars can and will continue indefinitely.

To the US military, the problems posed by what may seem a global upheaval are profound. Organized, trained, and equipped for a large conventional conflict, it may be unable to effectively deal with this new kind of warfare--the small war. (7:37-38) The US experience in such wars, such as that which occurred in Vietnam, was not very encouraging. However, recent literature indicates that US policy makers will increasingly call upon the US military to fight -- and win -- such wars.

At issue then is how the US military should fight such conflicts, given that it may be called upon to do so. How can it fight small wars and retain an effective conventional combat capability? Equally important, how can the US fight such wars and preserve any political support at home? In recent history, there is a robust example of effective response to small or guerrilla wars -- the Victorian approach to small wars.

In Victorian England, the Regular British Army, over a 100 year period, successfully fought a number of small wars -- including guerrilla or irregular wars -- across several continents. Colonel

Charles Callwell, a veteran of many of these small wars, clearly documented the kinds of wars faced in Victorian times. The Victorians fought a number of wars where the opponents did not necessarily field regular forces. Civil wars, rebellions, and guerrilla wars were well known to, and fought by, these Victorian officers using a consistent methodology. (6)

Within the framework of this article, the author will closely examine the Victorian model by developing four major themes. First, the article will summarize the likelihood of future conflicts and establish that small wars, including guerrilla warfare, will likely be the dominant form of future wars. Second, it will review the model most used in small conflict evaluation, the Mao Tse-Tung model describing guerrilla warfare. Third, the article will overlay the Victorian approach upon the Mao model, demonstrating its usefulness. Finally, it will extend the lessons of Victorian warfare to air power. Through this examination, this research will provide a model that has applicability to US involvement in all phases of small wars -- and a defined role for air power.

FUTURE CONFLICTS

The US is the remaining superpower in the new world order. Whether and how the US intends to lead is, at present, subject to speculation. The application of superpower resources to achieve US ends is under intense review. At issue is how to apply military force to achieve political objectives, given the limits on resources and the kinds of conflicts likely to be faced.

While the governing consensus is reducing the military budgets, the potential for military conflict is actually growing. (32:166-168) In a conventional military context, there are at least 10 areas where armed conflict on a large scale is possible, if not probable. (10) More vexing, however, is the possibility of numerous small wars throughout the world. These small conflicts do not constitute direct threats to US vital interests. They will more than likely be waged in a limited fashion within a nation or region, using conventional weaponry with some combination of regular and irregular forces. Guerrilla warfare will probably form a large percentage of small war occurrences. Currently, there are some 18 active guerrilla conflicts. (7:289-290) And, the instances of conflict between ethnic groups, also a growing phenomena, is likely to be settled with

guerrilla-type tactics. (9:78) More radical analysts predict that guerrilla and small wars will become the only form of future warfare. (34:206-208) Analysts predict that these "small war" type confrontations will continue over the next 50 years. (31:26)

Looking from region to region, the potential for conflict appears limitless. Within Europe, the unrest in the Balkans and in the Black Sea regions contains the potential to erupt into conflict. While the peace initiatives in the Middle East are ongoing, conflict is still possible between a number of states within the region. Sub-Saharan regions in Africa have had perpetual civil/guerrilla wars. South and Central American governments continue to be subject to guerrilla conflicts, and long-standing animosities between nations can erupt into violence. Even in Asia, the potential for conflict spans areas from China to Afghanistan to Burma. In short, there is no great shortage of possibilities for violent conflict. (15:45-46)

For the military planner, the possible locations for US military involvement and the probability of such involvements are of paramount concern. Although the US has espoused a reluctance to become militarily involved in small wars, that view is changing. In fact, the probability of US involvement in small wars, including guerrilla warfare, appears to be increasing. Many of the top foreign policy concerns, e.g., terrorism, Third World conflicts, and nuclear proliferation, all involve unstable regions of the world. (29:3) Each instance of concern could lead to US military intervention into another nation. Furthermore, a recent Public Agenda Foundation poll of US citizens found that over half of those polled believed a nuclear war would start primarily as a result of the escalation of some Third World conflict. (25:57)

The view of many is that the world is a more dangerous and less stable place. To minimize the instability and to attack our primary foreign policy concerns, US policy makers must seek ways to stabilize regions and to prevent conflicts from ranging out of control. More importantly for the military, these policy makers appear to believe that small wars (that includes guerrilla-type and civil wars) are significant threats to world stability. To resolve these conflicts, these leaders believe that US military intervention may -- and probably will -- be necessary. (29:3)

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MAO TSE-TUNG MODEL OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

Small wars, best defined, are "wars of second or third magnitude", that is, those which are of interest to a major power but do not strike at its vital interests or core values. Many such wars are guerrilla-type wars, but at any time they could escalate to conventional engagements between nation-states. (25:342-343) However, if and once the introduction of the US military is made, the US must then address these small wars within a US context. That is, the US (or at least for the foreseeable future) because of its universal might, will always be engaging a much inferior power.

When the US intervenes into an area, there are three military options open to any adversary: accept, fight conventionally, or fight unconventionally. To accept US forces -- voluntarily or under duress -- may lead to civil or guerrilla war. The government may become discredited if it is viewed as a "puppet" of the US. Given the instabilities of many Third World governments, acceptance of foreign forces in large numbers often triggers a civil disturbance or guerrilla war. The events in Somalia provide some evidence as to the effect of outside interventions on local government. On the other hand, a conventional war may ultimately end in unconventional or guerrilla war as the defeated conventional forces refuse to surrender. However, an unconventional war, the weakest of all kinds of conflict, is the most difficult to win. Our future adversaries, then, may begin war in a conventional sense, slide into guerrilla warfare or a form thereof, and then return to conventional military actions. (7:47-57) That paradigm is, in essence, the Mao Tse-Tung model of guerrilla warfare.

Mao Tse-Tung thought and wrote extensively about guerrilla warfare. His writings form the basis for modern beliefs concerning that style of warfare. Even today, Mao's writings are believed to capture the essence of this form of warfare. (7:257-258,5:126) To Mao, guerrilla warfare was never an end unto itself. Rather, it was the guerrilla movement that established the necessary conditions for a final climactic conventional battle between friendly and enemy conventional forces. Mao's writings describe the guerrilla war from the standpoint of the guerrilla. However, his discussions illustrate what happens after an initial influx of conventional enemy forces is made, and how it is against this force that the guerrillas must fight. The basic, underlying tenet of

guerrilla warfare is that such wars are protracted affairs. In essence, the longer the ultimate decision can be delayed, the greater the likelihood of a guerrilla victory. (5:126) The descriptive model that he develops of guerrilla warfare divides the conflict into three main phases. Let us examine those phases from the viewpoint of the antagonist.

The first phase can also be called the strategic defensive. (17) The guerrilla forces defensively respond to the introduction of opposing conventional forces which are on the offensive. Throughout this phase of the conflict, the guerrilla force attempts to organize localized resistance, consolidate areas where support is strong, and finally, assure preservation of the movement. A key objective is to slow down and, ultimately, stop the successes of the opponent. Once the initiative slips away from the opponent, the second phase begins. (16:20-22)

Progressive expansion marks the second phase of guerrilla warfare. While this may be referred to as a stalemate for the offensive conventional forces, this is an active time for guerrilla forces. (15) Essentially, the guerrillas seek to build an effective foundation to support the fielding of conventional forces while also weakening the opponents forces. The foundation is established through the creation of training bases and supply depots to facilitate development of conventional force capabilities. The opponent is weakened through successive raiding strategies which eventually deprive him of victories, supplies, and morale. (16:20-22)

Once sufficiently weakened, the opponent is ready for destruction by guerrilla-supported conventional forces -- the third phase. The guerrilla forces have developed a conventional force, using their training bases and depots. The opponent is exhausted or disillusioned and basically unprepared for the subsequent initiation of conventional warfare. At this point, it is the guerrilla movement, with conventional forces, that seeks a decisive set of conventional battles with the opponent. It is through these battles that the guerrilla forces will ultimately overthrow the opponent. (16:21-22)

There is no point at which the guerrilla forces are inactive. Throughout all stages, the guerrilla forces are involved in some war-related activity to achieve ultimate victory. The primary functions of the guerrilla forces are to disrupt the enemy's support bases, to establish guerrilla

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bases from which conventional armies may be fielded, and to disperse the enemy's forces through wide-ranging activities. Even during the final phase of war, the guerrilla force works in concert with the guerrilla-developed conventional forces. (16:46-47,70) Now, let us examine a model in which the Mao-type strategy is counterfoiled.

VICTORIAN APPROACH TO THE MAO MODEL

From 1837-1901, the Victorian military successfully fought a number of small wars. Many of these wars were guerrilla-type conflicts with the adversaries employing raiding strategies. (20:418-419) To the Victorians, most if not all of these wars were essential and were fought in defense of the Empire and its strategic centers. These wars were pursued to preserve existing boundaries, to rescue endangered countrymen, or to prevent inroads upon the Empire from other European powers. Often, lands gained from previously successful campaigns served later as buffer states to protect even more important regions. (13:1-3)

The Victorian political and military establishment consistently approached this warfare with a specific process that proved effective. Basically, the Regular British military normally fought very short conventionally-structured conflicts, and the indigenous population, with British support, fought the much longer guerrilla-type operations. The actions of the British military and the indigenous forces, taken together, formed an effective model for attacking and containing small wars.

Within this section, we will expand upon the Mao model by overlaying upon it the Victorian approach to small wars. To illustrate this approach, we will review the activities in two major -- and quite different -- military regions, northern India/Afghanistan and Egypt/Sudan. Once this exercise is completed, we will discuss the intrinsic qualities of the Victorian technique that appeared to make this military activity work so well. To begin, however, we will briefly review Victorian environment.

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Victorian Environment

Victorian England was both a dynamic time and place. Many political, economic, and social initiatives and programs were invented, developed, and pursued. The overall conditions within Victorian England, however, have certain striking similarities to those found in the current US political and military climate. And, to be sure, the military in Victorian times were as much prisoners of economic-political-social policies as the US military practitioner is today. The local conditions against which the British politicians reacted dictated the military options open to commanders. A brief review of Victorian conditions and political responses, then, will provide some insight into later discussions on their military operations.

British governmental policies focused primarily on maintaining worldwide stability and open markets. The Victorians actively pursued a "free trade" policy which encouraged exports and conscious purchases of British goods. High level concern centered on opposing foreign trading blocks and challenging protective tariffs that might exclude and endanger the market for British goods. Diplomatic and military actions were frequently used to guarantee access to markets and to prevent minor conflicts from adversely affecting world trade and British interests. (24:327-329)

However, there was little money available for many of these governmental ventures because both Liberal and Tory ministers had expensive social agendas. Government spending was under constant review. Although budget cuts were often publicly demanded, overall government spending rose. While military expenditures actually fell, social programs consistently absorbed an ever-increasing share of the budget. Health, welfare, and crime prevention programs all demanded more funds. The resulting deficits triggered large tax increases in 1879 and 1880. Public confidence in governmental efficiency fell, and complaints about fraud, waste, and abuse abounded. (24:292)

The military was actively involved throughout this financially constrained period. In fact, the British military was engaged in small wars every year throughout Queen Victoria's long reign. (13:1) However, because this was, officially, a time of peace, the military in budget reviews

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always faced even further reductions. (24:253) The argument went as follows: the military was not involved in a major war; therefore, there was no need for a large, modern military.

Ultimately, to respond to the defense demands of the Empire and to meet the financial strictures of the government, the military developed a sophisticated method of warfare involving three main elements. First, the regions of the Empire would develop home defense units that would be led by British military officers. This shifted the financial burden from the British government to the local populations. (24:300-301) Additionally, the size and training of the units would be based on local needs. Second, the Regular British military would be concentrated, primarily at home, so as to be available for massed responses to serious wars that threatened the Empire. Third, all forces -- Regular, Home Defense, and Colonial -- would constitute the total fighting forces for the Empire. Put another way, local colonial forces -- primarily the Indian Army -- became part of a general list and could then be moved to other "hot" regions to fight for the Empire. (22:78-85)

Within the overall conditions of the Victorian political-economic-social scenario, the military sought to establish a structure that would meet the defense needs of the Empire. The primary reliance, therefore, on Empire defense would fall upon the local defense forces. If these units were endangered, Regular forces or other local forces would be rapidly sent in to fight the enemy units. (22:254-257) How this system worked in practice can best be seen by now using the Mao model of guerrilla warfare.

Phase I: Organization, Consolidation, Preservation

Once the decision had been made by policy makers to consider a military intervention, the military would be brought into the decision-making process. The Victorian military and political leadership would collectively decide a number of key issues prior to the decision to commit forces. The level of forces, the amount of money available for force projection and campaign, and the objectives of the military action would be decided upon collectively before any forces were

committed. The objectives in particular were tangible -- such as rescuing hostages, destroying/dispersing hostile forces, seizing locations, etc.

Normally, a single military commander would have singular responsibility for development of the military plan and the accomplishment of objectives within (or close to) the figures contained in the government-determined budget. Once the military commander and the political leadership agreed on objectives and resources (including budget, men, materiel, etc.), it fell to the military commander to successfully carry out the mission. The failure to achieve objectives belonged to the commander alone. Once the objectives were achieved, the military forces were redeployed to their home garrisons. The events in the northern India/Afghanistan and the Egypt/Sudan regions follow this general theme.

The northern India/Afghanistan area in 1841 was an unstable and violent region. The British decided to move against the center of unrest, Kabul because of their national interest -- there was a real possibility of Persian or Russian influence that might endanger India. (13:4-5) After initial British moves, a popular uprising within Afghanistan killed many foreigners (including English) and isolated others in small pockets of resistance, most notably in Jellalabad. A hastily formed British force, commanded by Major General Pollock, moved north from India with two established objectives: relieve the trapped British units and leave "some lasting mark of the just retribution of an outraged nation". Within 30 days, Pollock forced the Khyber Pass and relieved the trapped units. For the lasting mark, Pollock captured Kabul and burned down the Great Bazaar of Kabul. His mission accomplished, Pollock marched his forces back into India, having established favorable conditions for a British/Afghan negotiated political settlement. (13:9-11)

In Egypt and in the Sudan region, war erupted in 1881-1882. A nationalist, Colonel Ahmed Arabi, effectively took control of Egypt and proceeded to incite the population. A number of foreigners were killed in rioting in Alexandria and around the Suez Canal. In July, General Wolseley planned a campaign against the Egyptians. His objectives were three-fold: gain control of the Suez Canal, seize Cairo, and defeat or destroy the Egyptian Army. To accomplish this, Wolseley deceived the Egyptians, through false signals, into defending against an Aboukir Bay

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landing, which in a way recreated the Nelsonian tactics used against Napoleon. In fact, he landed at Port Said and seized the Suez Canal. Executing a rare night march (with each column led by a Royal Navy navigator), Wolseley attacked and defeated the surprised Egyptian Army -- and occupied Cairo by 15 September. British forces were withdrawn within months to make way for a civilian administration of the region. (21:299-338)

Phase II: Progressive Expansion

At this point in the conquest, the British civil servants took over administration of the subject region, acted with firmness, and began to resolve the remaining issues. The British Regulars were withdrawn to home garrisons. However, the area had been taken but not pacified. Small enemy units might still be operating in the region. To assure stability within the region after the departure of the Regulars, the Victorians had an effective remedy. An indigenous force, a home defense unit, was formed and outfitted by the British -- and officered by the British officers. This force, in conjunction with British development of local government, maintained the pressure on residual guerrilla operations throughout this phase. (13:xviii)

The officering of the indigenous force proved to be a key ingredient in this formula that presented some inherent advantages. First, an army to defend the region could be fielded and trained to fight professionally in a minimum amount of time. Kitchener in Egypt and Roberts in India corroborated these concepts. (2:52-53) Second, with the officership in foreign hands, the possibility of any military-backed, native government interference was negligible. A newly-established government then had an opportunity to develop without threat of displacement by disgruntled military officers. (11:44-45) Third, professional indigenous officers could be developed over time on the basis of their own merit system while external threats were still being met. This action in turn also reduced the drain of qualified people necessary to run the governmental apparatus. (19:23-25) Finally, the indigenous army was in a better position to perform in concert with British Regulars should a further need arise. In Egypt, for example, the

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force was modeled directly after the British Army. This model lessened the absolute numbers of British forces required to deploy into a region. (2:50-51)

After the initial Afghan battles in 1842, the British government decided to withdraw to northern India and continue diplomatic initiatives. The Afghans continued raids across the border. The Afghan Army on the surface seemed extremely weak, but almost half of its 50,000 man army were irregular mounted troops. These forces engaged in "petty warfare" in the hilly terrain of northern India. (26:23-26) Rather than use Regular Army personnel, Sikhs and other exotic peoples were enlisted by the British to fight the many border skirmishes. There were two objectives met here. The first objective was to maintain a low level of violence and o any enemy activities that could affect India. Second, British influence, through periodi   tary action, was necessary to keep the Afghans from getting too close to Russia. (14:186-187) Although the Emir refused to halt guerrilla operations on the Indian frontier, the British tolerated his actions because the Russians were ultimately refused access to Afghanistan. (28:132) As a result, there were many skirmishes, but the combatants were primarily indigenous peoples of which the winners were consistently those officered by the British. (11:192)

After Wolseley's campaign, Egypt and Sudan remained for a time under solid British influence. Egypt and Sudan were initially considered one and of the same territorial region. The civil administration in Egypt proper created economic prosperity for the entire colonial region. However, in the Sudan, guerrilla warfare continued as the Sudanese did not like either the British or the Egyptians. Religious fundamentalists in the Sudan, under the Mahdi, sought to convert their world by force of arms. Unable to muster adequate conventional force, the Mahdi contented himself with guerrilla attacks. Wolseley warned London that commensurate and aggressive military actions would be necessary to contain the frontier violence and harassing attacks of the Sudanese. (1:22) The formation of an indigenous army under individuals such as (future Lord) Kitchener helped to contain the problem to the Sudan. (2:42-46) However, the Sudan continued to be an economic burden with no recognized political value. In 1884, General Gordon's mission to the Sudan to evacuate foreigners and friendly nationals signaled once and for all the London

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government's belabored decision to abandon the Sudan. The political decision was motivated by economic and strategic considerations. (4:311-313) However, the Mahdi and his Dervish followers continued to fight. The increasingly northward drift of Sudanese guerrilla activities was met by Egyptian forces, officered by Englishmen. The raids took the form of hit-and-run attacks against people in bazaars and on main streets. (30:5) The skirmishes were becoming more intense, eventually reaching a high point when 3,500 Sudanese attacked the local forces. (1:32-33) At this point, the Sudanese Dervish forces were taking on conventional characteristics, and the British sought a conventional action to eliminate the threat.

Phase III: Decision/Destruction of the Enemy

When and if Phase III was reached, the British military were in an excellent situation to deal with it. The political resources -- both political will and financial strength -- necessary to sustain Phase II operations had not been expended because local forces had fought that drawn-out Phase II. There were surplus funds therefore available, and because within a given region, conventional British forces might fight a war only every 10 to 20 years, a reserve could be built. Additionally, because of this time lapse, a Phase III conflict development was, to the Victorians, a more intense version of Phase I and was answered in a similar manner. As a result, there was the First Afghan War (Phase I) and the Second Afghan War (Phase III), the First Sikh War (Phase I) and the Second Sikh War (Phase III), etc. (13)

Again, the objectives, forces, and finances were decided by the appointed military commander as in Phase I. However, in this phase, the British forces were in a much better position. The area of hostilities was known, there were established friendly forces in the region, logistics issues had, normally, been resolved, and difficulties concerning terrain, enemy leadership, and fighting capabilities were known as a result of Phase I operations. In India, for example, General Roberts had made several valuable trips to the north. (19:14-17) In Egypt and the Sudan, Kitchener had been working with the native forces to maintain the peace and was familiar with the territory. (2:50)

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In 1878, the Second Afghan War began. The hostilities along the frontier were increasing, and the Russians had offered to supply weapons to the Afghan government. To strike then at what was a transitional point in guerrilla activity seemed appropriate. The government and the military agreed that the primary objective for the British forces was the seizure of the Khost valley, an area essential for future supply of any Afghan conventional forces. The defeat of Afghan forces themselves was a secondary objective. Advancing with a collection of Regular Army and indigenous units, Roberts badly mauled and scattered eight Afghan regiments while seizing the primary objective. (19:88-92) With Kabul once again occupied by the British, the Afghans, under a new leader, raised an army that then surprised Roberts' forces in Kabul and laid siege to the British forces at Kandahar. Roberts regained the initiative, relieved Kandahar, and defeated the rebel forces. Having achieved the objectives, Roberts and the British withdrew from the country as a new -- British leaning -- Emir mounted the Afghan throne. The military victories had helped create a condition for a British forward-looking policy of friendship with Afghanistan, a policy which assured relative peace in the area for the next 20 years. (19:230-231)

In 1898, religious fanaticism again gripped the Sudan. In the 12 years since the Sudan had been free of Egyptian and British influence, the population had been halved through starvation and harsh rule. The Dervish threat had now achieved a level of intensity that required conventional retaliation. Dervish raids in force had reached an intolerable level, and the Kahalifa, the religious and political leader, had built a force of 50,000 followers ready for an attack on Egypt. However, it was impossible for the British to stage a conventional quick thrusting attack on the main Dervish base at Omdurman because of the great distances across the desert. The British could not move a sizable conventional force across nearly 1,000 miles of desert. It appeared that Dervish raids could continue indefinitely from that sanctuary. Kitchener then organized and took over a combined army of 13,000 British and Egyptians and decided on an objective of ending the Dervish threat to Egypt by first eliminating the Omdurman sanctuary and then defeating or annihilating the enemy forces. The London government concurred with the objectives and allocated three Million Pounds for the effort. To accomplish his objective, Kitchener constructed

a rail line to bring his forces into position and to logistically sustain operations against the Dervish sanctuary. Once in position, Kitchener successfully engaged the Dervish force and annihilated it. The Kahalifa escaped, later to die in a subsequent minor engagement, thus ending serious guerrilla activities for over 20 years. (2:65-78)

WHY THE VICTORIAN MODEL WORKED

The Victorian model succeeded in meeting the needs of the government over a prolonged period of time. Despite falling military budgets and continuous military actions, the system worked, and the Empire was maintained. The Germans later demonstrated the exportability of the British system. The German East African military of 1900 was patterned largely after the Victorian example. This indigenous East African army, officered by Germans later proved a formidable defensive force against British operations in the region throughout World War I. (12)

The effectiveness of the Victorian model and its exportability to other militaries indicates that there were identifiable characteristics or forces prevalent and useful for examination. Why did the Victorian system work so well? The Victorians, because they employed the model repeatedly, relied on three major components to make this system work: a political-military objective match, an indigenous force development, and professional officer development. Each component will be analyzed separately in the remainder of this paper.

Political-Military Objective Match

The political and military leadership assured the success of military operations by matching the political objectives to military capabilities prior to the commitment of forces. The political leadership determined whether a military option was necessary, and in Victorian England, although diplomacy was sought as a first recourse, government action was always backed by an effective military. Once military operations became a consideration, the military leadership was included in government consultations. (21:226-228)

Discussions between military and government leaders would lead to a consensus over what the political objectives were -- and what specific military actions were necessary to support the

political objectives. The political leadership gauged military success by the attainment of the specific military actions agreed upon. The political objectives remained under political control and responsibility. Disraeli or Gladstone (the politicos), for example, were responsible for overall Afghan policy. Roberts and Polluck (the generals) were charged with achieving military successes that permitted exploitation of diplomatic initiatives. (13:216-217)

Once the military option was considered appropriate, the military commander approached the problem along three lines. First, the determination was made as to the strength of the threat. The nature of the political objectives dictated the urgency and thrust of the threat. Rescuing hostages, for instance, ranked higher on the crisis list and got a more urgent response than exacting revenge. Second, the size of the forces to be used was determined. In some cases a primarily indigenous force, augmented by Regular officers and staff, were sufficient to achieve the specific actions. Finally, the financial requirements were identified. Money was a continuing concern and one that limited many military operations. (18:278-279)

The examples of the northern Indian campaign and those in the Egypt/Sudan regions illustrated the linkage between government and military. However, the Victorian experience is replete with examples that extend beyond what has been discussed within this paper. Wolseley, in his Ashanti campaign, had to draft an entirely different campaign plan when his initial effort exceeded the moneys and manpower the government was prepared to spend. (21:164) Napier, in his Abyssinian campaign, had to reconcile force and financial limits within the government objectives. (13:175)

Effective Development/Employment of Local Forces

Since money for a large and grand standing military, as those in Imperial France or Germany, was never available, the Victorian system relied on well-led local forces. In each area under British rule, local defenses were organized to be self-sustaining and capable of responding to local requirements. Because the financing for these units rested with the local population, the

sophistication of the units was directly related to the wealth and political will of the region. (22:254)

Although each of the home defense organizations differed in capabilities, there were consistencies that were relevant. These units were designed to address low-level conflicts and, for the most part, small unit activities. They were formed to conform to the capabilities of the local population and organized to assure stability within the region. The units were lightly armed and reflected the dress and customs of the area. (22:84-85)

To the Victorian military, however, these units formed a valuable cadre to assist in military operations. Tactically, the home defense units were organized to operate in concert with Regular Army units. The drill and order training conducted with the indigenous units provided a basis for Regular and local units operating on campaign together. Additionally, because of the tactical integration capability, the home defense units provided a ready pool of qualified men should a crisis require that pooling. Basic training was completed, and only the need for modernization of equipment and an increase in sophistication of tactical techniques remained. This policy was to serve the British well when World War I demanded large numbers of men. (22:254,19:232)

The examples in India and Egypt illustrated the cohesiveness of Regular and indigenous forces operating in a coordinated campaign. Indigenous South Africa forces in World War I seized a German colony, South West Africa, without the need for Regular forces. Indian forces augmented British Regulars on the Western Front, and India remained a stable colony throughout the war period. (11:268,22:259-260)

Broad-Based Officer Experience

The Victorian officer corps was perhaps the most unusual component of this military model. Throughout the Victorian period, many officer positions were available for sale. Promotions could be earned or purchased. (21:159) Given the existence of this mechanism, the Victorians still managed to acquire many gifted officers and to use them at the right time and in a good place. The reason behind this appears to rest on two quite different aspects of the Victorian model.

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The Victorian political leadership was very pragmatic in the selection of campaign commanders. Essentially, a general was selected based on the perception of the governing group that he could get the job done. Competence, therefore, appears to have been the central issue in the selection of generals. Once selected, the general assembled his staff picking those officers he was confident could assure him success. While some high ranking officers were included on military campaign staffs over the commander's objections, essentially, the staff was a command prerogative. Individual officers, from all over the Empire, would be pulled into London to begin campaign planning. Often, the movement of forces into the theater would provide the staff time to jell. (19:84,21:229)

Officers were allowed -- even encouraged -- to move into leadership positions with indigenous units for overseas tours. There was no stigma attached to this, and officers were free to move back and forth within the British Isles and the Empire postings. (13:359,25:346) This benefited the officer and the military in a couple of ways. First, the officer received more responsibility in lower-threat areas. The officer's mistakes were less significant, and an officer could develop his warfighting skills. In addition, effective junior officers were moved onto campaign staffs to get the feel of campaigning. Again, these officers were brought on by more senior officers to learn the trade of war. (13:192) It was a productive, near-mentoring, system of officer cultivation.

AIR POWER APPLICATIONS IN SMALL WARS

Air power has the potential to add yet another dimension to the Victorian model. As this paper argues, the Victorian Regular Army fought conventionally; indigenous forces, officered by the British, fought in the later progressive expansion phase of guerrilla activities. The Victorians consistently used this broadly based but single approach to warfare. In this way, the Victorians maintained conventional capability without expending great political will or financial strength in any long, drawn-out guerrilla wars. While both land and sea warfare were integrated into this process, air power was obviously unused except for a balloon or two in Africa during this period.

Although air power has demonstrated its worth in modern conventional warfare, especially in the example offered by the Gulf War, aerospace capabilities can indeed improve upon the demonstrated effective Victorian model for fighting small wars. Air power allows for a broadening of the Victorian model into the Mao framework in several key areas: special management of all the phases and, in particular, exploitation of Phase II (progressive expansion). A successful application of the Victorian model to the US circumstance of 1994 must include an examination of any proposed contributions of air power. To develop an air power paradigm within this construct, this paper will begin with a brief definition of air power followed by its application in Mao's model.

Air Power Defined

Air power, in its simplest form, is an ability to project military power through the aerospace medium. To distinguish air power from simple ballistic weapons such as cannon and rifles, a second defining point is needed. That point is the ability to exercise intelligence or judgment while in the aerospace medium. The early theorists referred to this as maneuverability or flexibility. (23:1-3)

Within this broad definition, Air Force doctrine describes four major roles for the application of air power. Aerospace control establishes favorable conditions for the prosecution of the aerospace war. Force application is the destructive attack of air power. Force enhancement is the supporting of aerospace functions necessary to sustain operations. Finally, force support is the internal combined aerospace infrastructure functions (maintenance, supply, combat support, etc.) essential for the existence and projection of air power. (33:6-7) The major roles of air power have been extensively used and successfully sustained in post-Vietnam military interventions. (3:450)

Air Power in the Mao Model

Air power has been applied by a number of nations in the prosecution of small wars. In the conventional sense, air power as the third dimension of warfare has been extensively discussed in

other forums. For conventional force usage in conventional force conditions, existing air power doctrine adequately addresses the various attributes and capabilities of air power. However, in the Mao model, air power has two additional important, but rarely discussed, roles. First, within the context of the Victorian model, air power could provide the key to managing the transition points demarking the phases of guerrilla war. Second, air power could be a powerful tool for the exploitation of Phase II (Progressive Expansion). In conjunction with those roles and within the remainder of this section, this paper will discuss the application of air power as an integral part of the Victorian model.

Management of Transition Points

The Victorians sought to conserve resources while maintaining the Empire. Money was not available for the basing of armies in foreign lands or for prolonged wars. To meet the fiscally constrained needs of the government required the effective application of two concepts. First, oversight over events in key regions was essential. Second, strategic access and influence was necessary to assure economy of force. Both concepts were difficult to master during Victorian times. However, the advent of air power provides the means to fully develop these two concepts.

Oversight over regions was essential to determine what, in fact was going on. (6:143-145) In the two examples used of northern India and Egypt/Sudan regions, the London government repeatedly sought to determine the true condition and size of combatant forces. The numbers of forces -- friendly and enemy, their locations, and their activities were necessary to determine the next appropriate steps. Estimates from the regional governments provided the best available information. However, reliance on such information often meant that the Victorians delayed military actions until indigenous friendly forces had almost been overwhelmed. Oversight of current conditions would have allowed for a more timely introduction of forces at a more appropriate time in each phase of the conflict.

Air power ably fills the requirement for timely oversight over current conditions. Satellite imagery and photographs provide ample information concerning force dispositions and

movements. Air breathing aircraft can augment this capability by providing more detailed, timely information that identifies movement and real time locations. Air power, then, provides a method to improve upon the Victorian model by enabling the policy makers to better determine the actual capabilities of enemy forces. Armed with this information, policy makers can more accurately understand what phase the conflict has entered and when US conventional force intervention is desired or necessary. (8:76)

Once the determination has been made to introduce forces, strategic access and influence is necessary to assure the timely application of force at a suitable time and place. The Victorians were by necessity tied to linear movements of forces. In both the northern India and Egypt/Sudan regions, British forces required seaports for "best" entry into a region. Movement from the seaport to the theater of operations was time consuming and laborious. In northern India, for example, columns moved as slow as two miles per hour, which seemed fast to troops involved but slow to the planners. (11:37) Further, several key passes through mountains had to be taken by force. The goal of influencing regional players rested with the reality of visible army occupation. In the Afghan case, Pollock's decision to burn the bazaar could occur only after an invasion. In order to accomplish even the most basic of Victorian policy objectives necessitated invasion and occupation of enemy countryside.

Air power can broaden access to and influence in the region, an action which frees forces from a linear route and reduces time frames to give more attention to attainment of the objective. Mobility has long been considered a key asset toward countering adverse military actions in conventional or guerrilla modes. (27:238,246) British writings on small wars emphasize the use of "flying columns" to assure such mobility. Wolseley, it can be argued, succeeded in large part due to the rapidity of his force movement. He maintained, throughout his campaigns, a continuous high combat tempo. Air power supports such activities in force movement, supply delivery, and power projection. And, to continue using the northern India case, air power provides a capability that would have simplified Pollock's tasks. Relief supplies and forces could have been airlifted to embattled locations. No forcing of key passes would have been necessary.

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And, air strikes could have left that lasting impression demanded by Queen Victoria. The necessary support for that kind of effort could effectively be supplied. (8:77,81)

Exploitation of Phase II: Progressive Expansion

During the progressive expansion phase of the guerrilla war, indigenous forces in the Victorian model attempted to check any guerrilla activities. The chief concerns to the Victorians were in taking actions necessary to keep the hostilities at an acceptably low level. Air power offers some effective tools to facilitate the activities of loyal forces and ensure low level activity. Chief among the activities of air power are visibility and accessibility. (8:76-77) And, as this paper demonstrates, after World War I, the British effectively used the new military arm of air power in this capacity.

Using satellite and reconnaissance assets, the US could identify the establishment of major guerrilla bases and movements of forces. This visibility would afford US policy makers two discrete options. Using sophisticated aerospace technology, the US could inform local government forces as to the locations of camps and troop/logistical movements. The responsibility for attacking and disabling guerrilla forces can be left then to indigenous forces. (8:76)

Accessibility to the conflict lies in the ability of the US to project military force anywhere in the region. This power projection can take the form of strategic bombing attacks, periodic gunship attacks, or the placement of troops into remote regions of the guerrilla forces. Periodic attacks on key guerrilla supply bases or large unit formations could maintain a favorable force balance for the friendly forces. Speed and timing of such operations is often considered critical but is attainable through air power. The regular and assured access of air power to a region assures a level of control over the intensity of the conflict and the proper timing and coordination of attacks. (8:81-82)

Following World War I, the British extensively used air power to control regions of its Empire. In Iraq, guerrilla raiders from Turkey often were dissuaded and neutralized by

indigenous forces before a full division of Imperial forces was needed to confront the raiders. At this critical juncture, British Regulars were committed. With the advent of air power, the British government used the mobility and firepower of this new dimension of warfare to maintain a low level of hostilities in the region. The effectiveness of the system was shown in the number of British Pounds saved. The Army estimated a cost of 20 Million Pounds annually. The actual Royal Air Force (RAF) costs to accomplish the same tasks were less than 650 Thousand Pounds annually. The coupling of air power with local force policing actions effectively checked the development and evolutionary strength of guerrilla units. Similar RAF successes were observed in Somaliland with the convenient death of the Mad Mullah which was accomplished without the commitment of large conventional forces. (18:63-66)

CONCLUSION

Over the next 50 years, conflicts will be plentiful and will pose threats to world and regional stability. While large wars are possible, the bulk of future conflicts will be small. The nature of these conflicts will range in character from civil wars to guerrilla conflicts. The wars will likely be both violent and protracted. As these conflicts expand and pose threats to regional and world stability, the possibility of US military involvement will grow.

The US military leadership must effectively respond to the demands for military action. There will not necessarily be an option as to whether or not forces will be committed. However, the leadership must make sure that the employment of military forces is effective and successful. In doing so, it is incumbent on our leaders to preserve both the conventional military capability and the political support base for committed forces. To do so over a prolonged period of time requires some guiding principles or model.

The Victorian military structure was effective against the whole range of warfare described as the "small war". Through a consistent application of force, the British Empire survived and thrived, and British access to markets and commerce was assured. The financial and human sacrifices necessary to combat small wars and maintain a world power position were well-

balanced with this model. Protracted conflicts were successfully fought, and a favorable balance of power was maintained. Essentially, the process worked and worked well.

To support the Victorian model, air power appears particularly well-suited. While keeping the commitment of ground forces minimal, air power can provide a ready mechanism to monitor progress within friendly nations, to rapidly augment local forces with additional resources through airlift, and to discretely attack large enemy bases. In effect, air power can become the mechanism to maintain visibility and control over the crucial phases of guerrilla warfare. This thesis has only scratched the surface of air power application, but local indigenous forces with training and doctrinal acuity, aided by superpower air support, could indeed achieve great combat effectiveness and overall synergy.

The Victorian model has particular application to the US military establishment. The problems and issues facing the US military are similar to those faced by the Victorians. Their innovative solutions formed a model that was applied consistently for 100 years. The key characteristics of that model -- the political-military objective match, the effective development/ employment of local forces, and the broad-based officer experience -- all have relevance to the US military. In short, the model is adaptable to the US way of warfare and should be incorporated into overall US military planning schemes.

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