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About This Issue

This month's issue features one article previously published in November and debuts three articles. As is our emerging *m.o.*, you can view an index of all the material from the last month; please move online to view all the articles, comment on any of them, or strike up new topics on the discussion board. Thanks for your participation with Small Wars Journal, it's what makes it all work. And, of course: authors and volunteers – thanks for making it all possible. While you're online, be sure to take a look at the series of interviews by Octavian Manea. It asks tough questions to some serious thinkers in the defense analysis field to generate a conversation on the utility of modern counterinsurgency theory. The responses to date have been extraordinary.

-- SWJ

Children, the War on Terror and Decision-making

by Robert Tynes

 Published online 11 December, 2010.

President Obama appears to be caught in a dilemma, poised between the hard rock moral choice of human rights and the cold-cocked fist of global terrorism. At least that's what his most recent decision to continue military funding to Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Yemen seems to indicate. President Obama has waived the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 for these four countries. The law, which he supported when he was serving in the US Senate, states that the US government shall not provide military funding to governments that use or support the use of child soldiers. That is, of course, unless the President deems it in the national interest to

supply military aid to the countries.¹ In other words: national interest trumps protecting children. Yet in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, President Obama declared that "the promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone." What gives?

According to a memorandum signed by the President and addressed to the Secretary of State, Chad and Yemen are key partners in the fight against terrorism in the region.² Denying military aid to these

¹ Josh Rogin at Foreign Policy broke this story. For more details go to his articles at:

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/10/26/why_is_obama_easing_restrictions_on_child_soldiers_and

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/10/28/cable_exclusive_the_secret_obama_administration_memo_on_child_soldiers

² The brief U.S. Presidential memorandum can be found at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press->

countries would harm the relationship and thereby hurt counterterrorism objectives. The US has given, and will continue to give, the DRC military aid to help “influence the negative behavior patterns” of its state army, the FARDC. The FARDC has recruited child soldiers in the past, but the State Department is working with the DRC government to change this practice. The hope is that the FARDC will become a professional military force that can bring stability to the country. The DRC has been embroiled in armed conflict since the 1990s. With Sudan, the goal is to bring security and eventually democracy to the country via military assistance. For both the DRC and Sudan, the underlying principle is that instability leads to weak states which can then lead to terrorist breeding grounds.

Human rights groups are confused and dismayed by the President’s decision. It’s as if he said: human rights for children are necessary, but not always.¹ Unfortunately, this pitfall was embedded in the law all along. The act clearly states that a waiver is permitted, if the country in question is working towards demobilizing their child troops, or if the point of the military aid is to make the military more professional.

The first point sounds reasonable. We’ll give you aid because you’re trying to clean up your act. The second exemption, however, is a bit shady. After all, what qualifies as “professionalism”? And how does that serve national interest? It’s a very vague

[office/2010/10/25/presidential-memorandum-child-soldiers-prevention-act](http://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/10/25/presidential-memorandum-child-soldiers-prevention-act). A more detailed explanation from the President to the Secretary of State can be found via Foreign Policy at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/fp_uploaded_documents/01028_2010%20Child%20Soldiers%20Prevention%20Act-PD%20%20MOJ0001.pdf

¹ See the letter from numerous NGOs, including the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers and Human Rights Watch, to President Obama:

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/11/05/ngo-letter-president-obama-regarding-waivers-child-soldiers-prevention-act>

concept. And it was probably intended to be so.

When it comes to child soldiers, professionalism does not necessarily have anything to do with recruiting very young fighters. After all, both Iraq and Iran have had professional armies, and yet both countries used underage fighters in their war against each other. And neither country was leading the cause to democracy.

Research that I am conducting with Professor Bryan Early of SUNY/Albany also points to the potential problems of professionalization. We find that increased levels of militarization, might increase the probability that a state and/or insurgents in that state might utilize children in armed conflict. It’s not the only factor involved in the process, but it appears that it could have an effect. So, if you build up the military, make it strong and more effective, you open the opportunity for other unintended consequences.

Also note that all four countries, Chad, the DRC, Sudan, and Yemen, score quite poorly with regards to how they treat their own populations. When political scientists measure how a state responds to political dissent—whether the government allows you to voice your opinion or whether they execute you for disagreeing with them—Chad, the DRC, Sudan and Yemen are among the worst offenders. Given the approach that these governments take towards political dissent, it’s hard to see how giving them military aid will push them towards democracy. (Remember what happened when the DRC’s former President Mobutu Sese Seko received significant military aid from the U.S. in the 70s and 80s? That move certainly didn’t seem to make him more benevolent, or democratic for that matter.²

² For more background on US/DRC relations read, “US Arms to Africa and the Congo War”, by William D. Hartung and Bridget

Admittedly, some of the funding that these states will be receiving is supposed to go towards teaching the militaries good human rights practices, such as not using children in combat. That is an admirable aim and worthy of a waiver. However, the other type of funding involved, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), is about giving grants to countries so that they can buy U.S. made weapons, services and training. According to the State Department, Chad will get FMF grants for about \$500,000 in 2010, the DRC will get \$1,450,000, and Yemen will get \$12,500,000. For 2011, Yemen's grant might almost triple to \$35,000,000.¹ This money will go to bolstering militaries, which may be necessary for security in the region and potentially deterring terrorism. But it does nothing for decreasing child soldiering.

Faced with the prospect of more terrorism versus less terrorism, Americans will certainly prefer less. Faced with the prospect of more child soldiers or less child soldiers, Americans would also most likely prefer less. However, in the cases of Chad, the DRC, Sudan and Yemen, you don't get to have less of both, so which would you pick? Protect the children of these countries or protect Americans from the terrorist threats these countries may produce? This is President Obama's dilemma. It's a hard decision. Nevertheless, in the end it's the world's children that will almost certainly lose.

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Moix, published by the World Policy Institute, January 2000.
Available at:

[http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/congo.htm
#usrole](http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/congo.htm#usrole)

¹ U. S. State Department (2010). "Foreign Military Financing Account Summary." Available at:
<http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14560.htm>



Watch for Robert Haddick's weekly editorial, This Week ar. Friday evenings at Foreign

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His research focuses on child soldiers, political violence, and African politics.

Insurgencies in South Sudan: A Mandatory Path to Build a Nation?

by Marc-Andre Lagrange

 Published online 11 December, 2010.

The 2010 elections in Sudan were more than just a formal exercise for the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLM/A). It was for both of them the ultimate test of the capacity of SPLM to turn from an armed insurgent/liberation movement into a government supported by a national army and set the base for separation from Khartoum regime. Immediately after its first elections, the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) had to face two small scale insurgencies in Jonglei State. Led by General George Athor and David Yaw Yaw, those two insurgencies, despite their apparent limited scale, had a serious destabilizing potential for the first elected government of South Sudan.

South Sudan may seem as united to some, but for observers, South Sudan is all but united. The federal system in place does not grant to the central government a full approbation and support from the various ethnic groups and post Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) political parties issued from the armed groups. In fact, federation seems to be the only possible solution to build a modern State and government in this constellation of armed ethnic groups and semi political armed groups which constitute the population and political scene of South Sudan. Part from fighting against Khartoum, most of them have limited, if not opposite, common objectives and visions of independent South Sudan.

Less than four years after the CPA was signed and war with North ended, semi-autonomous South Sudan was already on

the verge to fall into civil war. According to the United Nations, in 2009, inter and intra ethnic conflicts claimed more lives than Darfur fighting. Elections were then not just a mile stone to prove the capability of both North and South to organize large scale electoral process. It was a necessity to build minimal cohesion among South and set the foundations of the post referendum Southern institutions.

In that perspective, even small scales insurgencies conducted by a handful of renegade soldiers are major challenges. Any mistake would discredit GoSS among the Southern population.

Part of the challenge resided into the fact that the Sudan People Liberation Army is not a homogenous army but rather a conglomerate of former armed militias with combating Khartoum as unique common point. While the differentiation between various political parties was clear, the real test laid in the SPLA capacity to manage the various political allegiances of the armed groups it is composed of.

As the political process of independence in South Sudan is not yet complete, there is no real distinction between the SPLA, the SPLM and the Government of South Sudan. First of all, GoSS had to handle a political hiccup that could destabilize the newly elected government and revive the internal political tensions in a not so united South Sudan population. Secondly: respond to an internal threat with a divided under construction National Army. The faced problematic was then much bigger than just crushing several insurgent

groups and avoiding falling in the endless Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo turmoil. It was also a “grandeur nature” test of the coming post referendum challenges that GoSS will face to avoid the premature collapse of this country to be.

The Roots of Discontentment

If Athor and Yaw Yaw turned against GoSS and took the arms in the name of the people to protest against the SPLM “frauds” during 2010 elections, those two insurrections have little in common.

Athor’s movement takes its roots in both ethnical and popular support. SPLA combatant of the first hours, after CPA signature George Athor became Upper Nile then Jonglei division commander and finally Deputy Chief of Staff for the SPLA Political and Moral Orientation. He is quite representative of the post CPA SPLA top officers military and political evolution. Numerous rumors are accusing him to be involved into weapons smuggling, traffic of influence and misappropriation of funds both in Jonglei and Upper Nile. He was also deeply involved in the White Army bloody disarmament in 2006¹.

Originally from the Dinka ethnic group, his fief is located in Khorfulus County, one of the territories ravaged by the Nuer during the SPLA-Nasir raise up against John Garang SPLA in the 90. The area is also a contested grazing area between Nuer and Dinka. Therefore it becomes difficult to separate the political from the ethnical in George Athor popular support. During the electoral campaign, Athor played wildly those blurt carts, putting accent on insecurity to rally both youth and elders². Unsurprisingly, the first military action of its

supporters, in March 2010, has been to attack the SPLA camp on Dolied Hill. Dolied Hill is at the same time the most contested land between Nuer and Dinka of Upper Nile and Jonglei and the symbol of the defeat of the Nuer White Army by Athor troops³. It is very difficult to evaluate the reality of Athor’s military power, depending sources his forces are evaluated between several hundred to several thousand combatants.

It’s almost at the same period that David Yaw Yaw rebellion started in Pibor County in Southern part of Jonglei State. On May 21, Yaw Yaw and his partisans launched an attack on Pibor city before being quickly chased out from their positions into Boma National Park by the SPLA troops. Unlike George Athor, Yaw Yaw is a civilian from the Murule ethnic group. Before taking arms, Yaw Yaw was working as civil servant with the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. As Athor, he was an unsuccessful independent candidate during the elections. Unlike Athor, his group is evaluated, at the most, up to 50 combatants and his popular support is limited to a sub ethnical division inside the Murule ethnic group. Just like for the Athor popular support, Yaw Yaw popular support is rooted in the SPLA exactions during the 2009-2010 civilian forced disarmament. In that perspective, the two insurgencies are the product of the GoSS incapacity to make peace attractive, in the incapacity of SPLA to no more act as a predatory insurgent group. But more than the produce of the defiance between the populations and a government issue from a rebel group who fought in their name, those insurgencies are the produce of the structural unequal transfer

¹ Small Arms Survey; HSBA armed groups George Athor, August 2010.

² Jonglei’s independent governor candidate pledges a U-turn to SPLM; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article34291>, accessed 2 May 2010.

³ In May 2006, the SPLA troops commanded by George Athor confronted the Nuer youth White Army in Dolieb Hill. That forced civilian disarmament lead to over 1000 death among the White Army and 500 in the SPLA ranks. SPLA troops are also accused to have been looting the civilian properties and livestock at will with a total impunity from the GoSS.

of peace benefits inside a war torn society inherent to post conflict transitional context.

But while Athor political claims and ambitions are national, Yaw Yaw's ones are limited to Pibor County¹. And that is most probably the main difference between those two insurgencies. With its limited local economical and intra Murule ethnical problematic, Yaw Yaw insurgency is a disturbance for the GoSS while Athor political disagreement find its roots in a deep disagreement between the John Garang's New Sudan and Reich Machir's separatist supporters. Athor insurgency real stake is the 2011 referendum results and the fragile power sharing NCP and SPLM arrived previous the election. The premature redrew from the presidential race from SPLM has paved the road for the separation by clearly dividing the power between the two military powers present in Sudan.

Crushing the Insurgents:

GoSS first reaction was to negotiate with Athor in order to bring him back into the SPLM and the new government. It is difficult to establish who from Athor or Kiir did break negotiations first. Apparently Athor low popular support in Jonglei as a whole did influence GoSS decision to go for the hard line². GoSS did not look for negociation with Yaw Yaw but targeted his political supports in the Juba Murule community. In order to isolate him, SPLA conducted several arrest among the military and political Pibor's Murule community in Juba³.

After isolating the two insurgent movements from their political support, SPLA launched a containment operation to physically isolate the insurgents groups. Athor found refuge in one of the most remote and less accessible parts of Jonglei, his fief of Khorfulus County, while Yaw Yaw found refuge in Boma National Park.

Insurgent counterstrikes were there again really different and revealing of their real dimensions. Yaw Yaw's partisans conducted operation on the road linking Bor and Pibor, the two main Jonglei cities, reducing the perception of his insurgency to banditry and taking off almost its entire political dimension. But still those actions had strong consequences on the NGOs capacity to provide basic services to the populations⁴.

Athor choose to shift the battle to the propaganda level and announced that he was in contact with another dissident SPLA colonel from Upper Nile. In order to create terror inside the civilian population, Athor also announced that he would attack Bor and gave an interview to Miraya Radio⁵.

In order to regain political weight, Yaw Yaw announced he was coordinating with Athor. If Athor publicly claim to have contacts with the insurgent group in Upper Nile, he allusively mentioned Yaw Yaw. Even, since SPLA conducted arrests in the Murule community in Juba, Yaw Yaw almost disappeared from the media. In that extend, SPLA was very much successful in completely isolating Yaw Yaw.

Being incapable to turn his threats into reality, Athor finally accused SPLM to have spoiled the elections with fraudulent

¹ Small Arms Survey; HSBA armed groups David Yau Yau, August 2010.

² On the 11 counties of Jonglei, Athor won only in 1 for the Governor position.

³ Leaders from Murle community arrested in Juba; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35272>; accédé le 2 juin 2010.

⁴ Attacks on staff force MSF to evacuate parts of Jonglei state; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35820>; July 31, 2010

⁵ Renegade general warns civilians to evacuate Bor town before attack; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35092>; Sunday 16 May 2010

maneuvers and would spoil the referendum¹. As insurgent group in Unity State was almost annihilated² and Yaw Yaw fully isolated, SPLA decided to militarily address Athor's insurgency³. But this offensive turned into several skirmish confrontations which did not turn into SPLA favor⁴. Incapable to defeat Athor militarily, the SPLA started then a propaganda campaign to discredit him in accusing him to support the SPLM-DC and to receive support from Khartoum. The main proof of that support was revealed to the public through the arrest of a helicopter operated by a Russian crew coming from North⁵. Unlike the military offensive, that political and propaganda offensive prove to be very effective. Athor then lost a lot of his media support and finally coverage, giving space for GoSS and SPLM to impose the separatist agenda to a population already favorable to it. If populations and ethnic groups in South Sudan are not united, they are fully dedicated to the SPLA/M and the separation cause. But reducing Athor and Yaw Yaw to media silence did not resolve any of the problematic those two insurrections raised, it only gave to GoSS a larger

maneuver space to address the upcoming discontent in Northern Bar El Ghazal⁶.

And Then Came the Referendum...

End of August 2011, at least for the public, insurgencies in Jonglei were fully under control. Athor was stuck in a corner, cut from his logistical and political support and his surrender was a question of time. Yaw Yaw was reduced to a bunch of bandits harassing the wild-life guards in Boma National Park and the stock piles of ammunitions brought by SPLA in Boma city were there to prove that it was seriously addressed⁷. SPLA/M had demonstrated their ability to address efficiently post-election security threat. The political gain was tremendous for GoSS who had managed to impose the responsibility of all elections disorders and frauds responsibility to North and Khartoum regime; while SPLA had gain its barrettes of National Army defending governmental interest⁸.

But in September, over and sudden, armed groups crossing the border of Jonglei to enter Easter Equatoria State started to be reported. After a complete chaotic two weeks of SPLA and UNMIS tracking a group of armed men between and handful and 3000 organized military troops, it was finally admitted it was most probably Yaw Yaw group. SPLA started to arrest any individual perceived as suspicious in Kapoeta town, the last main city on the road from Kenya to Boma.

Then, on October 6, Salva Kiir, the president of GoSS, offered his pardon to

¹ Athor says SPLM "ruling clique" can rig referendum against people's choice;
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35260>; accessed le 2 June 2010.

² South Sudan army kills eight rebels in Unity State, pledges to crush them;
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35280>; accessed le 3 June 2010; Southern Army clears post election rebellion in Unity state;
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35332>; accessed 9 June 2010

³ South Sudan army and renegade general clash in Jonglei State;
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35414>; accessed 16 June 2010

⁴ General Athor says none of his soldiers were captured by SPLA; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35430>; accessed 20 June 2010

⁵ GOSS Captures Militias Allied To Renegade General George Athor; <http://www.sudanradio.org/goss-captures-militias-allied-renegade-general-george-athor>; 11 August 2010; South Sudan captures Khartoum destined helicopter with rebels on board; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35912>; Wednesday 11 August 2010

⁶ SPLA chief calls on General Nyuol to bury election differences; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35447>; accessed 18 June 2010

⁷ interviews with humanitarian workers and United Nations staff.

⁸ The security situation in South Sudan is under control, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) has said.; accessed 27 August 2010.

all renegade SPLM generals¹. At the same time, GoSS opened peace talks with Yaw Yaw². It quickly appeared that SPLA had in fact no control on the situation. The containment operation was a default response to SPLA internal turmoil. Insurgents had managed to impose themselves as major political actors and become a credible threat for the referendum. Stuck between an inefficient attrition military campaign and its incapacity to conduct in time the technical requirements to organize the 2011 referendum, the GoSS, despite winning the propaganda battle, had in fine lost the political war. In no time, GoSS lost at the same time his apparent political dominant position and credibility in his capacity to secure South Sudan. In the end, it is SPLA/M that defeated SPLA/M. Lost in their grand objective of achieving their liberation, SPLM and SPLA were not capable to unify around the need to build a solid State apparatus, offering their flanks to both Khartoum regime's wait and see delaying strategy against the referendum and internal fights.

Desperate to achieve a victory that will not be gained on a battle ground, the amnesty for all renegades appears as a last stand preemptive maneuver to sap Khartoum capacities to support internal armed opposition in South Sudan. By just surviving long enough, the insurgents have been able to take advantage of the SPLA/M imperious necessity to end the war and its absolute inexperience of political and diplomatic "passe d'arme" that is 2011 referendum. This allowed the insurgents to gain a political weight which is apparently

in no ad equation with their military power³.

A Political Success?

While GoSS had primary managed to build the image of an established government by responding in a convincing manner to emerging insurgency, it apparently ended up in bringing it back to a dysfunctional group of bush rebels with little experience of governing a country. But this would be a very much on the surface understanding of the politic dynamics in South Sudan.

GoSS is not a strongly structured government with well establish up and running institutions. GoSS is a façade government established after a peace agreement which aim to settle a conflict. The political party in charge, the SPLM, is not either a unified political party with a unique political line. SPLM is the produce of two decades of civil war between North and South but also between southerners. What emerge from the 1994 Chukudum SPLM conference was a consensus between several political forces, including the North opposition Umma party. In 1991, Reik Machir, the actual vice president, with Lam Akol, the actual president of the SPLM-DC, launched an anti-John Garang and anti-Dinka offensive. That war was a South against South conflict that takes its roots in the ethnical enmities between Nuer and Dinka. In fact, many in South took arms against Garang's SPLA during the 90th. Not because of a political disagreement on the cause but because of the internal Dinka based leadership. Garang's SPLA, as many other armed groups in Africa, was primary an ethnic based movement fighting for an ethnic cause before being national. Even after the 1994

¹ South Sudan president pardons rebel army officers; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article36507>; accessed 7 October 2010

² Peace talks in Jonglei's Pibor county stall after ambush kills 3 people; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article36505>; accessed 7 October 2010

³ South Sudan's renegade General Athor sets conditions for his return; <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article36654>; accessed 20 October 2010

Chukudum and the establishment of SPLA-United, SPLA remained a Dinka lead movement. The Nuer contribution in Nuba Mountain but also the SPLA-Nasir offensive, allowed Nuer to conquer power inside SPLA/M and then GoSS.

In fact, power inside SPLA/M and GoSS is shared between ethnic groups according their capacity to destabilize central government. In Eastern Equatoria State, the Toposa took over on the Acholy and Latuko, not because their representatives were the most popular and therefore the better placed to ensure SPLM a victory in the elections; but because they had the military capacity to threaten GoSS¹. In such perspective, by allowing GoSS to crush an insurgency, South Sudan ethnic powers would implicitly surrender to a central power; an unacceptable position for them.

In 2009, violence in Jonglei was the fact of the Nuers². At that time, the Governor was a Dinka and the vice Governor a Nuer. Elections were internally organized by SPLM in order to “alternate” power between Dinka and Nuers. In the internal competition for domination inside SPLM between Nuer and Dinka, crushing Athon movement would have diminished the Dinka positions inside GoSS. In such perspective, it's not the referendum that was threatened but the core historical leadership of SPLA/M which was at stake in that insurgency. The amnesty given to Athon then has to be understood in maneuver from Kiir to preserve Dinka influence inside GoSS.

COIN is all about reestablishing state monopoly of violence. Failing to establish a practice of nonviolent political dialogue even inside SPLM will only open the path to a “Congolisation” of politics in South Sudan where political disagreement are solved with an AK and a bunch of cattle raiders. Politically, the Jonglei insurgencies management is a short term success for GoSS. It also proves how it is difficult for a former insurgent group to pass over ethnical dissents and establish itself as a national political party. Ruling a State has a political cost that SPLM will have to pay one way or another if it wants to be able to avoid the collapse of South Sudan and build a sustainable administration. Marc-Andre Lagrange is humanitarian and relief aid expert specializing in the conflict zones of Africa. He worked on the ground throughout the last decade mainly in Central Africa. He received a Masters Degree in International Development in 1998 from the ISTOM, Cergy Pontoise and a second Masters in Crisis Management in 2009 from La Sorbonne in Paris. Previously, he published “When Relief Aid Becomes Counterproductive: A study of Intervention in the Congo (2007-2008).”

¹ In 2009, after an incident with the Kenyan security forces at the border point of Nadapal, Toposa leaders explained to Salva Kiir envoy that he abandoned them and they would turn back to Khartoum if GoSS would not put them in power. According to ICRC, at that time, the Toposa had a superior military capacity than SPLA in the area.

² Who is behind Jonglei attack?; Tuesday 22 September 2009; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article32541>; Lou Nuer vision and Jonglei's chaos; Friday 2 October 2009; <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article32648>



The U.S. in Afghanistan: Follow Sun Tzu Rather Than Clausewitz to Victory

by Major Ben Zweibelson, United State Army

 Published online 11 December, 2010.

Over the past nine years United States counterinsurgency strategy reflected a reliance on Clausewitzian industrial-era tenets with a faulty emphasis on superior western technology, doctrine fixated on lethal operations, and a western skewed perspective on *jus ad bellum* (just cause for war). American military culture is largely responsible for the first two contextual biases, while western society is liable for the third in response to September 11, 2001. To turn this operational failure around, the U.S. military instrument of power should replace the teachings of 19th century German military strategist Carl Von Clausewitz with Ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu and abandon the aforementioned contextual factors in favor of more appropriate counterinsurgency alternatives. These include an increased emphasis on civil-military relations, *jus in bello* (just conduct during war) through non-lethal operations, and quantifiable conflict resolution that includes negotiating with *moderate* Taliban militia groups, as unpalatable as that sounds to military purists. This paper stresses that *moderates* do not in-

clude radical Islamic terrorists or non-native fighters.

Sun Tzu's ancient military philosophy of indirectness and gradualism runs counter-culture with much of mainstream western military strategy. Western reliance on superior technology and fire-power shaped American counterinsurgency doctrine to be largely lethal in nature and enemy focused. Clausewitz instructed generations of military officers that the destruction of the enemy's army is the primary goal in all combat¹; therefore, all political-military conflict results in offensive action where attrition of the enemy force becomes a universal requirement. Clausewitzian war theory 'worked' in both world wars in that the Allies did accomplish their desired goals; however critics such as Israeli strategist Shimon Naveh raise valid questions on whether Clausewitz's fixation on offensive action and attrition warfare helped or hindered the Al-

¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (translated with an introduction by Anatol Rapoport; Penguin Books, 1968) 302-305.

lied causes¹. Despite Clausewitzian strategy's seemingly illogical structure, application of his theories in the major 20th century conflicts created an enduring military school of war strategy with 'On War' taking a sacred position.

Afghanistan experienced offensive violence and attrition theory well before American Special Forces entered the country after 9-11. Two decades earlier, Soviet concentration on enemy insurgents in their 1979-1988 Afghan War resulted in similar conditions that U.S. Forces currently face in our ninth year of Afghan conflict; we face a patient and adaptive enemy that continues to circumvent our superior military technology and lethal applications. To use an analogy, western military forces focus on the enemy as if playing chess; all chess games are offensive based and the players focus on destroying the enemy's pieces (offensive action) to render the king vulnerable (decisive victory) and win. Our enemies today refuse to adhere to any of these rules, or even use chess pieces. They are playing an entirely different game with incompatible objectives, moves, and pieces. *Takfiri*² and Al Qaeda factions exploited western military institutional strengths over the past nine years and are now poised to outlast a second military superpower in conflict. Our enemy rejects Clausewitz, and turns the notion of 'attrition' on its head by accepting subsequent tactical defeats to wear down national resolve. In essence, they

¹ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: the Evolution of Operational Theory* (Frank Cass Publishers, 1997) 41-44, 48-51.

² *Takfiri* is an Arabic word that comes from the root 'takfir' which translates into an important Islamic ideological concept. A Muslim is forbidden from killing other Muslims according to the teachings of the Koran. However, a Muslim that violates or deviates from the Koran and Islamic teachings could be labeled a 'takfiri' which correlates in the Christian faith as 'blasphemy.' Other Muslims are authorized by conservative interpretations of Islamic ideology to kill any Muslim that is a *takfiri*. The Islamofascist groups such as *Al Qaeda* and radical Taliban elements use *takfiri* to convince the rest of the Islamic society that Muslims are valid targets for terror attacks provided they fall under the *takfir* category.

sacrifice all of their chess pieces to drive away the player from the board; they will win by outlasting despite western offensive tactical success. Yet the American military forces can change the tide if fundamentally asymmetrical changes in current counterinsurgency strategy occur immediately.

Western culture holds a self-interested perspective that American forces 'have the right to retribution' through offensive military action against the Taliban and Al Qaeda due to the tragedy of 9-11. This modern *jus ad bellum* adaptation works well within the political and social echo chambers in western society, but it translates poorly in the Islamic World and specifically Afghanistan. With a largely illiterate tribal-based society located in a geographically remote and inhospitable section of the world, the Afghan people have generally two things that bind them: Islamic ideology and a shared history of war and occupation by various imperialistic powers. Where western society sees brave American liberators in our deployed forces in Afghanistan, the general Islamic population sees the same soldiers as infidel occupiers forcing tribal groups into an unnatural national entity that conforms to western societal values. Al Qaeda and *Takfiri* factions have capitalized on the cultural divide concerning *jus ad bellum* and used faulty western perceptions in highly effective information campaigns. Military forces in Afghanistan must acknowledge that regardless of how supportive western society remains, as long as foreign soldiers are on the ground deep in Islamic territory the enemy will play a home-court advantage concerning the war of ideas and *jus ad bellum* perception of the greater Islamic population.

Sun Tzu understood that "an indispensable preliminary to battle was to attack the

mind of the enemy.”¹ In order to accomplish this with our enemy, the American military must cede *jus ad bellum* and instead focus on *jus in bello* to target the true objective of an insurgency, the population. By doing this, they will embrace the core strategy of Sun Tzu: “Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy.”² By conceding the *jus ad bellum* to ideological and cultural differences between western and Islamic societies, the American and Coalition military in tandem with the Afghanistan government can deflect a powerful enemy advantage and target the enemy strategy of influencing the Afghanistan population. *Jus in bello* should become how the coalition approaches every operation from the tactical to the strategic level. Whether lethal or non-lethal in nature, Coalition and host nation security forces (HNSF) must adhere to a rigid *jus in bello* doctrine that emphasizes security and stability of the population over secondary enemy-centric objectives. *Jus in bello* should become the vehicle through which the military demonstrates that “we and GIRQA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] have the capability and commitment to protect and support the people...we must turn perceptions from fear and uncertainty to trust and confidence.”³ In order to accomplish this *jus in bello* transformation, the military must next abandon the western military over-reliance on technology and Clausewitzian offensive destructive strategy and instead embrace Sun Tzu’s ‘bloodless victory’ methods through the alternate contextual factors of civil-military relations and human-based intelligence emphasis.

¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (translated with an introduction by Samuel B. Griffith; Oxford University Press, 1971) 41.

² Sun Tzu, 77.

³ Stanley McChrystal, *ISAF Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance* (Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2009) 4.

Griffith wrote that Sun Tzu “did not conceive the object of military action to be the annihilation of the enemy’s army, the destruction of his cities, and the wastage of his countryside.”⁴ However, from 2001 through 2009 the overall Coalition counterinsurgency strategy fixated on lethal offensive operations against the enemy. They continue today with recent musings on simplifying current *rules of engagement* (ROE) under the new General Petraeus initiatives.⁵ Aggressive force protection distanced our forces from the Afghan population both physically and philosophically. While many enemy Al Qaeda and Taliban operatives were killed or captured over the past nine years, Afghanistan is arguably in far worse shape in 2010 than it was in 2003. “He who struggles for victory with naked blades is not a good general.”⁶

Sun Tzu’s stance on lethal operations contrasts sharply with traditional American strategic culture that infuses Clausewitz with American eagerness; “to seek out and destroy the enemy’s military force, to achieve a crushing victory over enemy armies, was still the avowed purpose and the central aim of American strategy in both world wars...”⁷ Conventional offensive operations of shock and awe capitalize on the contextual factors that favor American strengths: technology, superior firepower, and conventional wars of attrition against industrialized nations. American forces expended blood and treasure in OEF over the past nine years primarily due to codified institutional pressure that resists change. According to military historian Builder, “Part of the Army is...hanging on to an image of the Army at its finest year,

⁴ Sun Tzu, 40.

⁵ <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0629/Afghanistan-war-General-Petraeus-rethinking-rules-of-engagement>. Accessed on internet on 12 July 2010.

⁶ Sun Tzu, 78.

⁷ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War; A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. New York, 1973) 475.

the last year of World War II.”¹ Builder goes on to say “significant, rapid change is almost certain to be imposed from the outside and vigorously resisted from the inside”² when dealing with changing how the military employs strategy in a conflict.

The U.S. military should acknowledge the errors of the past nine years of over-reliance on failed counterinsurgency strategy and break from it with General Petraeus taking charge of the helm. Sun Tzu’s alternate strategy of seeking a ‘bloodless victory’ by not putting a premium on killing and is a dynamically different strategy of warfare than what American military culture is accustomed with. Civil-military operations traditionally have taken a subordinate position to lethal operations in the military strategic toolbox. U.S. military must empower commanders, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and HNSF leadership to place CMO into an ‘alpha male’ position in counterinsurgency practice. Non-lethal targeting must supersede lethal targeting from the tactical to the strategic level. As discussed earlier, *Jus in bello* should become the moral compass from which the military and Afghan government implements all operations. These operations must emphasize CMO as the favored action with the core objectives revolving around the population and their security and protection. “We will not win simply by killing insurgents.”³ The final recommendation of this paper deals with the final contextual factor thus far overlooked by official U.S. military and foreign policy. It also runs counter-culture to the aforementioned affliction towards killing insurgents. This last factor for conflict resolution deals with moderate Tali-

ban militia leaders and their proposed reintegration into a post-conflict Afghanistan with political influence.

Sun Tzu placed the policies of attacking an enemy army and population centers at the bottom of his list of offensive strategy principles of ‘supreme importance.’⁴ Instead, he valued subduing the enemy “without fighting...”⁵ by attacking the enemy’s strategy and then *disrupting* his alliances. The final critical contextual factor necessary for implementation is a conflict resolution policy that echoes previous counterinsurgency success in OIF under the ‘Sons of Iraq’ awakening movement. Conflict resolution in OIF centered largely on integrating former enemy Sunni insurgent militias into tribal-centric grassroots security forces. This was unpalatable for most American leadership initially because like Sun Tzu, the concept of embracing former enemy combatants contradicted institutional tenets held by American military forces shaped by past conventional successes. Clausewitz dictates the offensive destruction of enemy fielded forces; the enemy chess pieces are removed from play. Yet in this conflict, captured pawns serve national objectives when returned to the chessboard in a reintegration process that contradicts Clausewitzian attrition methodology. Afghan and American military forces must contemplate *prima facie* the difference between a temporary social movement such as German Facism (Nazi Party) and the pervasive ideological and cultural trappings of conservative Islamic movements like the Taliban. The Taliban (طالبان) literally means ‘student’ (from the Arabic root to study; *taleb* طالب) and are essentially indigenous citizens with strong local and tribal ties to the isolated Afghan communities. “In this respect, trying to rid Afghanistan

¹ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War* (RAND Corporation Research Study; The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1989) 38.

² Carl H. Builder, 39.

³ Stanley McChrystal, *ISAF Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance* (Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2009) 1.

⁴ Sun Tzu, 77-78 paraphrased.

⁵ Sun Tzu, 77.

of the Taliban by military means would be like a foreign country trying to rid the U.S. of Ku Klux Klan supporters by military means.”¹

Over the past nine years, Coalition forces employed superior technology and firepower to perform lethal operations on Al Qaeda and Taliban forces as the primary COIN strategy. In General McChrystal’s words, “looking at the war in simplistic Manichaean terms—save as many good guys as possible while taking out as many bad guys as possible—was a mistake.”² Outside the core Taliban minority, the majority of Taliban militia forces are “simply peripheral Taliban militants. They joined the Taliban as a pragmatic opportunity for advancement in a country where most power comes from conservative Islam or guns.”³ Conflict resolution in Afghanistan will never promise a functional Afghan government with full tribal integration across the scattered remote mountain villages without Coalition and Afghan Forces adapting a hybrid *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration* (DDR) model as successfully executed in Iraq. Instead of disgruntled Sunni minority groups in Iraq, the *moderate* Taliban militias and leadership should be courted with a hybrid DDR construct where Taliban forces establish local security zones around their tribal affiliated locations. CMO coordination with operational funds and GIOA support at all levels would facilitate this radical shift of Coalition strategy and create the conditions so “people are more attracted to building and protecting their communities than destroying them.”⁴ This strategy embraces Sun Tzu’s philosophy of a ‘blood-

less victory’ by ‘disrupting enemy alliances.’ It also follows western strategist Liddell Hart’s theories on strategy; “[t]he perfection of strategy would be, therefore, to produce a decision without any serious fighting...the aim is fulfilled if...the enemy is led to abandon his purpose.”⁵

The *moderate* Taliban, once integrated into a hybrid DDR model akin to the Iraqi ‘Awakening Movement’ model, would stabilize their provinces, and provide significant intelligence on core Taliban and Al Qaeda targets. With true cooperation, they would lend strong evidence to the Afghan people and Islamic World at large that western interests were focused on restoring the security and stability of Afghan society while combating the legitimate *jus ad bellum* enemy target, Al Qaeda. The past nine years has not provided much evidence to the Afghan people that superior military technology and superpower militaries can solve insurgency problems other than prolong the suffering of a war-torn society. The time to adjust course from Clausewitz to Sun Tzu is upon us.

In conclusion, Coalition forces in Afghanistan must make a radical departure from the previous nine years of flawed counterinsurgency strategy. Our previous emphasis on Clausewitzian attritional offensive coupled with an over-reliance upon technological superiority and ‘shock and awe’ doctrine have not produced the results necessary for accomplishing national strategic ends or those of the Afghan population. Our self-motivated western perception that 9-11 provided a valid *jus ad bellum* for extensive occupation of multiple Middle Eastern countries continues to codify resistance against deployed military operations in the Middle East. Select Sun Tzu principles and strategy applied immediately would run counter-culture to

¹ Azeem Ibrahim, *Afghanistan’s Way forward Must Include the Taliban* (Los Angeles Times Opinion Online; 09 December 2009; latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-ibrahim9-2009dec09,0,588847.story)

² Azeem Ibrahim, *Afghanistan’s Way forward Must Include the Taliban*

³ Azeem Ibrahim, *Afghanistan’s Way forward Must Include the Taliban*

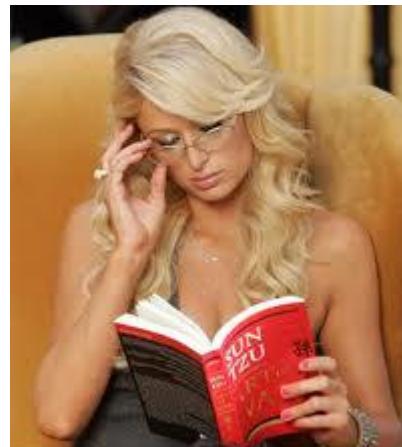
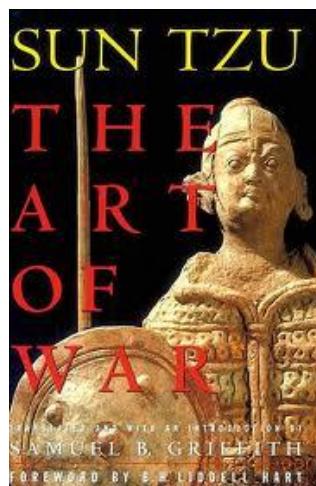
⁴ Stanley McChrystal, 4.

⁵ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (ACSC Warfare Studies Coursebook, Maxwell AFB AY10) 251.

institutional knowledge and past conventional successes. However, unique ideological, cultural, and geo-political factors that comprise the Afghanistan counterinsurgency are better suited for indirect military action. Sun Tzu's tenet of 'bloodless victory' through 'attacking enemy strategy and alliances' through indirect methods are a proscribed solution to break out of the groupthink of the past nine years of military stalemate in Afghanistan. Contextual factors such as superior technology and offensive enemy-centric doctrine must take a back seat to a new emphasis on civil-military relations, an over-emphasis on *jus in bello* to repair public perceptions, and a hybrid-DDR adaptation for conflict resolution with moderate Taliban forces. By separating indigenous moderate Taliban from 'core Taliban' and foreign fighter Al Qaeda forces, Coalition Forces could utilize Sun Tzu principles through non-lethal means. "In attacking a great state, if you can divide your enemy's forces your strength will be more than sufficient."¹ Until now, core Taliban and Al Qaeda have used this Sun Tzu maxim against Coalition Forces. By applying the contextual factor

recommendations of this paper along with a cognitive framework based upon select tenets of Sun Tzu, Coalition Forces can turn the counterinsurgency upside-down and convert existing weaknesses into strengths.

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¹ Sun Tzu, 138.

The Road to Al Amarah:

Operation Yarborough and U.S. Army Special Forces in Southern Iraq (January – June 2008)

by Duane L. Mosier

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Stability in Iraq and the overall outcome of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM were in question during the spring and summer of 2007 as the “Surge,” the offensive campaign implemented by Gen. David Petraeus, was taking root. Coalition casualties peaked in 2007 with 961 fatalities in Iraq (up from 872 the previous year) as the coalition focused on the Sunni insurgency in Baghdad, the north, and west of Iraq.¹ As a result of the coalition focus, the majority of Surge related brigades were centered on or near the dense population center of Baghdad leaving few available forces to monitor southern Iraq.

One battalion headquarters along with one and a half companies from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) were used as the economy of force effort in the south during the fall of 2007 through the summer of 2008. These elements were to



Figure 1: Members of An Nasiriyah ISWAT prepare to conduct a raid with their partnered trainers and advisors, ODA 5331

fill the void created by the limited conventional coalition presence. Multiple decentralized twelve man elements of Green Berets known as Special Forces Operational Detachments – Alpha (ODAs) or “A-teams” were positioned throughout the south to enable a core of Iraqi security force partners. ODA 5331 was one of these elements. The detachment was partnered with the city of An Nasiriyah and the Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics Unit which was the 600 man backbone of regional security for the greater Dhi Qar provincial area. It was with these men and others like them, that American Green Berets worked to overcome violent events that would grip southern Iraq in early 2008. Ultimately, the violent conditions across southern Iraq led Special Forces Soldiers to create and execute a large scale campaign to address the militant safe haven city of Al Amarah. This is the story of that operation and how a small number of Special Forces Soldiers and their Iraqi partners helped to change the operational landscape of southern Iraq between January and June 2008.

In early 2008, Jaysh Al-Mahdi-Special Groups (JAM-SG) worked hard to undermine the stability of southern Iraq through a clandestine campaign of subversion, intimidation, and assassination against citizens and key Iraqi leaders. The militia members, supplied and trained by Iran, operated freely throughout the south de-

¹ See www.icasualties.org for full statistics.

spite the quasi-cease fire ordered by the Mahdi Army leader, Muqtada Al-Sadr.¹

During this period, the four most southern Iraqi provinces of Maysan, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, and Basra were under Iraqi control with one British brigade located at Basra Air Station as the overwatch authority in the region. The British element was augmented by one Australian battalion located at Tallil Air Base 15 kilometers southwest of An Nasiriyah in Dhi Qar Province. The Australian battalion, known as Overwatch Battle Group-West, possessed overwatch responsibility for Muthanna and Dhi Qar provinces, while the British brigade retained overwatch responsibility for Basra Province.² Tallil Air Base was also home to the headquarters and support battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. The brigade was assigned the mission of theater security for all convoys running from Kuwait throughout Iraq and possessed no operational authority in southern Iraq

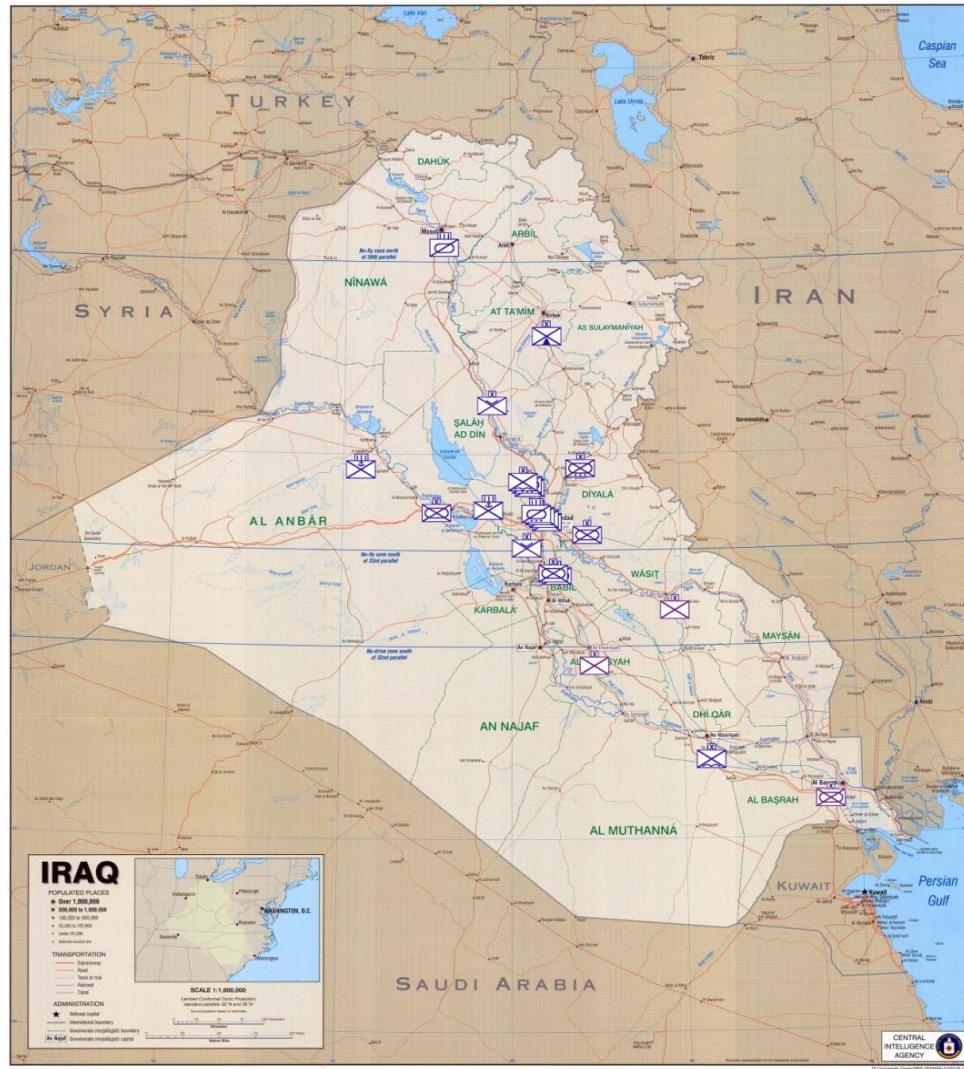


Figure 2. January 2008 locations of coalition brigade headquarters in Iraq

beyond the main highway that transited the region.³

British forces turned Maysan Province over to Iraqi control and withdrew all coalition presence from that region in April, 2007.⁴ Since that time, JAM-SG personnel had dominated the capital city of Al Amarah and maintained tight fisted control of Maysan Province. Iranian lethal aid freely flowed across the Iran-Iraq border into Al Amarah and moved deeper into Iraq from

¹ LTC Mark Grdovic, SOF Advisor to MNF-I during OIF V, CJCSOTF-AP, comments to ODA 5331 15 November 2009.

² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-103, 03 February 2008.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-103, 03 February 2008.

⁴ Multi-National Corps-Iraq, Public Affairs Office, *Maysan Security Now In Iraqi Hands*, (Camp Sparrowhawk, Iraq, 27 April 2007).

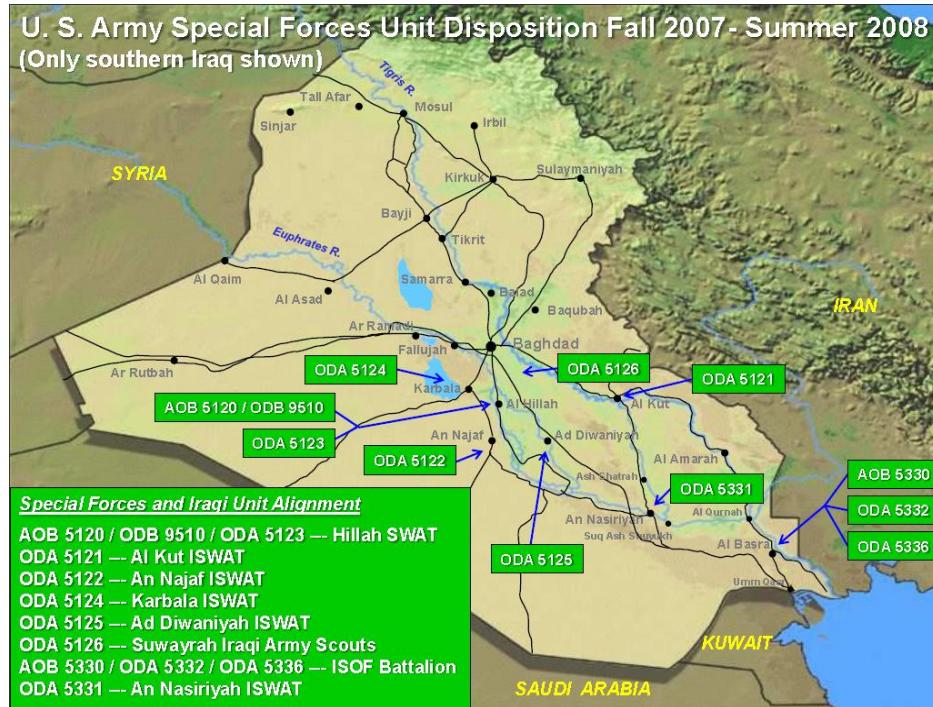


Figure 3. Special Forces Disposition Fall 2007 - Summer 2008

that city.¹ Multi-National Forces-Iraq all but conceded Maysan as the coalition focus remained fixed on Baghdad and Sunni areas of Iraq.

The early 2008 political environments in Great Britain and Australia were not supportive of military operations in Iraq. The British Prime Minister was meeting with much anti-war debate in Parliament, and the Australian Prime Minister was newly elected on an anti-war platform focused on withdrawing Australian troops from Iraq.² Zero tolerance for casualties existed within the governments of Great Britain and Australia which required their forces to operate cautiously and avoid involvement in activities that could lead to casualties.

The political environments in each of these allied countries created the need in Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Basra provinces for coalition assets that could facilitate Iraqi success on a strategic scale while maintaining a small footprint that would not overshadow Iraqi personnel numbers.

Special Forces Elements in Southern Iraq

The highest level of United States Army Special Forces command in Iraq during 2007/2008 was Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Arabian Peninsula (CJSOTF-AP) headquartered in Balad. Subordinate to that headquarters was the Special Forces battalion known as Special Operations Task Force – Central (SOTF-C) headquartered in Baghdad. SOTF-C commanded all Special Forces personnel in southern Iraq. The commanders and staff members of these two commands accurately assessed the needs of southern Iraq and placed their elements in strategic lo-

¹ Farook Ahmed and Marisa Cochrane, *Recent Operations Against Special Groups and JAM in Central and Southern Iraq*, Backgrounder #27, (Institute for the Study of War, 2008).

² Nu'man Abd Wahid, *The Poppycock of the British Anti-war Movement*, (Arab Media Watch, 05 March 2008); Tony Iltis, *Rudd Vindicates Anti-war Movement – Bring All The Troops Home*, (Green Leaf Weekly, 07 June 2008).

cations throughout the south.¹ The placement of these elements would prove invaluable throughout the turbulent events about to unfold in early 2008.

The twelve man Special Forces “A-teams” were put in place to act in the event crisis erupted and the environment required a low signature element capable of acting as the nucleus of Iraqi command and control while executing precision operations with and through Iraqi partners. The well thought-out positioning of Special Forces elements in cities within southern Iraq guaranteed that these assets were in place to act when the British and Australian overwatch units could not as a result of their political constraints. Further, the positioning of elements in southern Iraq provided CJSOTF-AP and SOTF-C the required assets to execute Operation YARBOROUGH when the time and need arrived.²

Opportunity Amid Chaos

The coalition desperately needed a connection or relationship with Iraqi elements in Maysan Province to counter the erosion of stability in the south as facilitated by Iranian trained JAM-SG militants basing out of Al Amarah. The

¹ Special Operations Task Force-Central, *D-60 Brief*, 04 September 2007.

² Note: A deployed Special Forces battalion headquarters is known as a SOTF, a company is an Advanced Operations Base (AOB) which usually commands six “A-teams” each known as an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA). Special Forces elements are designed to operate under decentralized command and control deep within denied territory. They are semi-self sufficient entities capable of developing nascent guerrilla forces within a local population and lead or advise those forces in the execution of an insurgency. Special Forces elements are well suited to conduct counterinsurgency because they understand how insurgent forces, cellular networks, and supporting infrastructure operate. Special Forces Soldiers can live among the population, develop local security forces to defend citizens, and create elite strike forces capable of conducting offensive operations that target insurgent vulnerabilities. Generally, Special Forces “A-teams” are not tied to a specific piece of terrain allowing them to travel across conventional unit boundaries to engage enemy networks wherever the enemy travels, operates, or resides.

break sought by coalition leaders would come as a result of a crisis that erupted in An Nasiriyah 18-19 January 2008.

At approximately 2:00 p.m. on January 18, 2008, 200 members of the Soldiers of Heaven religious cult launched a series of widespread attacks within An Nasiriyah that included sniper support. These snipers killed four primary Iraqi Police commanders and wounded a fifth, with head shots all delivered in the first 15 minutes of the fight. Attacks were also launched in the city of Al Basra at approximately 2:15 p.m. by members of the same cult.³

SFOD-A 5331 entered the city of An Nasiriyah in the late afternoon of 18 January after receiving word that its partner Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics (ISWAT) unit commander was killed. The Deputy

ISWAT commander informed the ODA of the unfolding tragedy and requested immediate ODA support to rally his remaining policemen. The



Figure 4. Col. Naji Rostum Sahra (aka Abu Liqa) An Nasiriyah ISWAT Commander, KIA January 18, 2008. ODA 5331 reported that he was a strong and effective commander. He was firm but universally kind and highly respected by the citizens of Dhi Qar Province.

³ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard/Vignette, *An Nasiriyah Security Crisis*, 19 January 2008; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-092, 23 January 2008; Multi-National Corps – Iraq, Public Affairs Office, Press Release No. 20080122-09, *Iraqi Emergency Response Unit Reinforces Iraqi Security Forces in An Nasiriyah*, (Baghdad, Iraq, 22 January 2008); Al Arabiya News, *Iraqi Forces Crush Doomsday Cult*, (19 January 2008); Rose Kamau, *Police Raid Shiite Doomsday Cultists' Hideout In Iraq*, (Kenya Broadcasting Corp., 19 January 2008); Voice of America News, *Shi'ite Sect, Iraqi Forces Clash in Basra; At least 5 Killed*, (VOA News, 18 January 2008); Campbell Robertson, *Iraq Hands Death Penalty to 28 Cultists for Attacks*, (New York Times, Baghdad, Iraq, 27 February 2009).

Australian OBG-W commander and 1st BCT, 82nd ABN commander offered Quick Reaction Force support to the ODA (rescue patrols to be used if things went badly for the ODA, requiring extraction) and moved to stage their available elements just south of the city fringe of An Nasiriyah. They would remain in this role for the duration of the 21 hours ODA 5331 spent in the city supporting Iraqi efforts to defeat the militant cult.¹

Upon arriving in the city and linking up with the ODA-partnered Nasiriyah ISWAT, ODA leaders assessed that all Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) were in disarray. The primary leadership of all Iraqi police organizations had been killed or wounded in the opening minutes of the battle, and absenteeism within the ranks of ISF units was rampant. Without leaders to guide



Figure 5. Abu Liqa's body is recovered and returned to the ISWAT compound in a make-shift coffin the night of 18/19 January 2008

them, ISF personnel had no means to coordinate a consolidation and reorganization of remaining forces in the city. The ODA had to temporarily fill the void left by the elimination of so many Iraqi leaders. The presence of ODA 5331 as the only on ground coalition unit within the city of 535,000 Iraqi citizens, supported by coalition aircraft overhead, would serve to turn the tide of the battle into Iraqi favor.²

The ISF Deputy commanders described the situation to ODA leaders as being des-

perate. The Dhi Qar provincial governor personally contacted ODA 5331 to state that coalition action was the only hope for saving lives within An Nasiriyah. The governor permitted the ODA to take any action necessary to regain control. He specifically requested that Close Air Support be immediately employed to destroy enemy concentrations and regain control of the security situation in the city. The ODA 5331 Detachment Commander told the governor that Close Air Support munitions were in short supply and that Iraqi forces would have to serve as the backbone of efforts to retake the city. It was explained that the ODA would serve as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for decisively engaged ISF elements in order to turn the tide in ISF favor in areas where the fight was in question.³

The ODA initially focused efforts on rallying remaining ISF personnel, triaging casualties, and rebuilding the ISF command structure so that a defense could be organized. ODA 5331 then concentrated on gathering Iraqi personnel to make a strike element capable of launching with the detachment during QRF missions deeper into the city.⁴

Throughout the night of January 18, the ODA launched multiple missions into the heart of An Nasiriyah to identify and organize fragmented Iraqi personnel and turn the tide of engagements into ISF favor. Once efforts to organize a defense were successful, the ODA transitioned focus to directing Iraqi offensive operations to regain control within the city. Each hour, the ranks of the ODA organized force grew as isolated pockets of Iraqi soldiers and police were found within the city. Urgent requests from the Dhi Qar

¹ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

⁴ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

provincial governor continued to pressure the ODA through the turbulent night. The governor requested, and at times directed, that the ODA immediately unleash the full fury of coalition air power. The detachment defused each request and used caution in the application of air delivered munitions to prevent unnecessary loss of life.¹

At approximately 0235 on 19 January 2008, ODA leaders met with all remaining high level Iraqi security leaders in An Nasiriyah. The scene was complete chaos when the ODA Detachment Commander, Operations Sergeant, and Senior Weapons Sergeant arrived. Each ISF representative present emphatically stated he did not possess the forces necessary to retake the city.²

The ranking Iraqi commander in the meeting was Maj. Gen. Habib, the 10th Iraqi Army Division commander. Maj. Gen. Habib repeatedly asked the ODA members if the coalition was willing to take over the city in the event the Iraqi security forces “crumbled.” The ODA message, delivered calmly and consistently, was that the coalition did not possess the combat power that the Iraqi leaders possessed and that no coalition elements elsewhere in the country could arrive quickly enough to make a difference in this fight. The ODA stated that the battle must be won by Iraqi forces with the ODA and air power in support. The ODA Detachment Commander stated that the detachment had successfully rallied a sizeable force of Nasiriyah ISWAT and other ISF personnel and that this force could be used to turn the tide where needed.³

Maj. Gen. Habib finally realized the task at hand would require the consolidated efforts of all Iraqi Army and police remaining in the city. The ISF leaders then began to plan while ODA members provided operational guidance and advice. The ISF leaders put together a comprehensive plan to seize the city one neighborhood at a time with the ODA and a four-vehicle contingent of the rallied Nasiriyah ISWAT acting as a Quick Reaction Force. The ODA with their rallied ISWAT members would launch into the heaviest fighting to support decisively engaged Iraqi forces and to guide air delivered munitions as required to win.⁴



Figure 6: Maj. Gen. Habib, Commander, 10th Iraqi Army Division

For the first time in the recorded history of An Nasiriyah, the Army and police planned and acted together to secure the beleaguered city in time of crisis. By 6:00 a.m. on January 19, 2008, the plan was being executed with precision and the decisive leadership of Maj. Gen. Habib. All fighting in the city of Nasiriyah had ceased by that afternoon and the ODA redeployed to Tallil Air Base with the knowledge that a new friendship had been created amid the chaos.⁵ The duration of the ODA deployment would involve the close friendship created in time of crisis between the detachment and Maj. Gen. Habib.

After the 18-19 January fight, it became obvious that Maj. Gen. Habib had gained

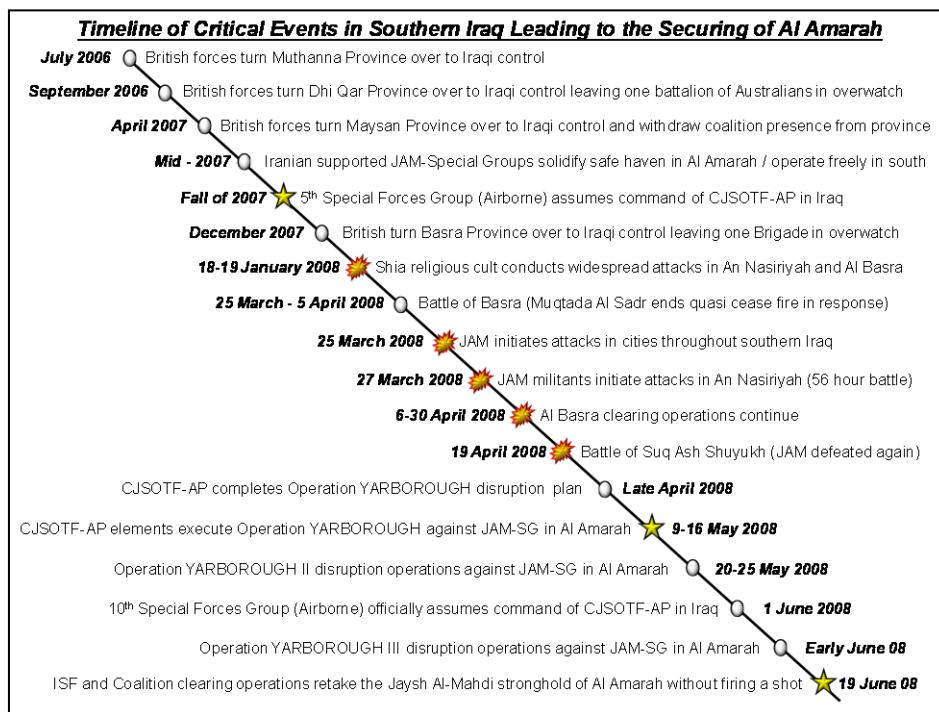
¹ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

² ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard/Vignette, *An Nasiriyah Security Crisis*, 19 January 2008.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

⁴ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard/Vignette, *An Nasiriyah Security Crisis*, 19 January 2008; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.

⁵ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard/Vignette, *An Nasiriyah Security Crisis*, 19 January 2008; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-088, 19 January 2008.



great notoriety as a result of his actions and the friendship he now depended on with ODA 5331. In the coming weeks, the ODA learned that Maj. Gen. Habib had three brigades under his command. One brigade was in An Nasiriyah based at Camp Mittica adjacent to Tallil Air Base. One brigade was based in the capital city of Muthanna Province (Samawah). The most important command relationship however, resided with the brigade that Maj. Gen. Habib had based in Maysan Province at Camp Sparrowhawk, just four kilometers southwest of Al Amarah.¹ The coalition now had the conduit through which operations could be conducted in Al Amarah.

The Road to Yarborough

The leaders of ODA 5331 met with Maj. Gen. Habib 2 February 2008. During the meeting, it was established that Maj. Gen. Habib was now the Prime Minister appointed Chief of Operations for all of Dhi Qar Province following his dedicated ser-

vice during the January battle. His new role meant that he was the approving authority for all ODA advised ISWAT operations in the province. It was in this meeting that discussion began regarding the need to address JAM control of Al Amarah. Maj. Gen. Habib wanted to “clean that city out” and he believed the goal was finally possible now that he and his division had a relationship

with U.S. Special Forces advisors.²

Planning took place through February and into March 2008, between ODA 5331 and Maj. Gen. Habib for operations in Al Amarah. During this period, interest gained momentum within CJSOTF-AP, Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), and Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) for operations that could retake Al Amarah and Maysan Province.

The building interest in conducting Al Amarah related operations was interrupted in late March 2008, when the Government of Iraq surprised coalition leaders by suddenly shifting Iraq’s national security focus to the port city of Al Basra. The Government of Iraq concluded that the rule of law had ceased to exist in the city. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri Al-Maliki, flew to Al Basra on 24 March to personally assess the situation. Sensing that a strategic event was about to erupt,

¹ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-102, 02 February 2008.

² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-102, 02 February 2008; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-109, 09 February 2008.

Gen. Petraeus directed CJSOTF-AP to send a small contingent to Al Basra to serve as his conduit of communication with Prime Minister Maliki. The contingent of Special Forces Soldiers was also tasked to report ground truth as events unfolded and provide the Prime Minister operational advice if a battle was to develop.¹

Once Prime Minister Maliki witnessed the absence of security within Al Basra, he ordered an immediate assault by ISF to expel JAM and other militias controlling the port city. The Battle of Basra began in the early morning hours of 25 March 2008 and despite the sudden nature of the Iraqi assault, operations were initially well coordinated and successful.

Unfortunately, success was short lived as the lack of solid logistics planning began to take its toll over the first 72 hours of the fight. Iraqi units started to run low on all classes of supply and they possessed no medical evacuation or treatment capability. Cell phones served as the primary means for command and control and no back up plans were developed in case communications by cell phone went down. The offensive stalled by the close of the third day as Iraqi casualties mounted and reports of ISF desertion soared.² Iraqi units needed help and the only available coalition ground support would primarily come from U.S. Special Forces units.

Soon after the start of the Battle of Basra and into early April 2008, ODA 5332 and their partner force, the 6th Regional Iraqi Special Operations Force (ISOF), were sent into Basra City. Their presence bought time for other Iraqi Army units in the area to recover and refit following their failed attempt to take the city. The

effort also enabled MNC-I to deploy one company of 1st BCT, 82nd ABN paratroopers to link-up with a conventional Iraqi Army unit in Al Basra several days into the battle.³

The Baghdad based Iraqi Emergency Response Unit and its partnered Special Forces personnel from ODA 9515 and members of ODB 9510 with Hillah SWAT moved into patrol bases within Al Basra in late March and remained in the region for the duration of operations to secure the city. AOB 5330 became the support element for all Special Forces operations in Al Basra and the command location of the forward deployed SOTF-C commander and staff. ODA 5332, with its partnered 6th ISOF Battalion, and ODA 9514, with a company from an ISOF battalion out of Baghdad, conducted Direct Action operations from Basra Air Station through the duration of April 2008.⁴

Every Special Forces element and each of the partnered Iraqi units engaged in heavy fighting during the Basra operations; however the turbulent fighting and tenuous nature of the situation left many battlefield casualty totals unrecorded. The operations credited to the members of ODA 5332 and their partnered Iraqi ISOF units were among the few to accurately capture casualty totals. Their operations resulted in 75 confirmed Enemy Killed in Action. Additionally, they captured 23 enemy combatants, three of whom were personalities named on the Prime Minister's Top Ten target list. ODA 5332 and the 6th ISOF were also credited with rescuing four captured Iraqi Army soldiers and two Iraqi Police officers before the close of operations to secure Basra.⁵

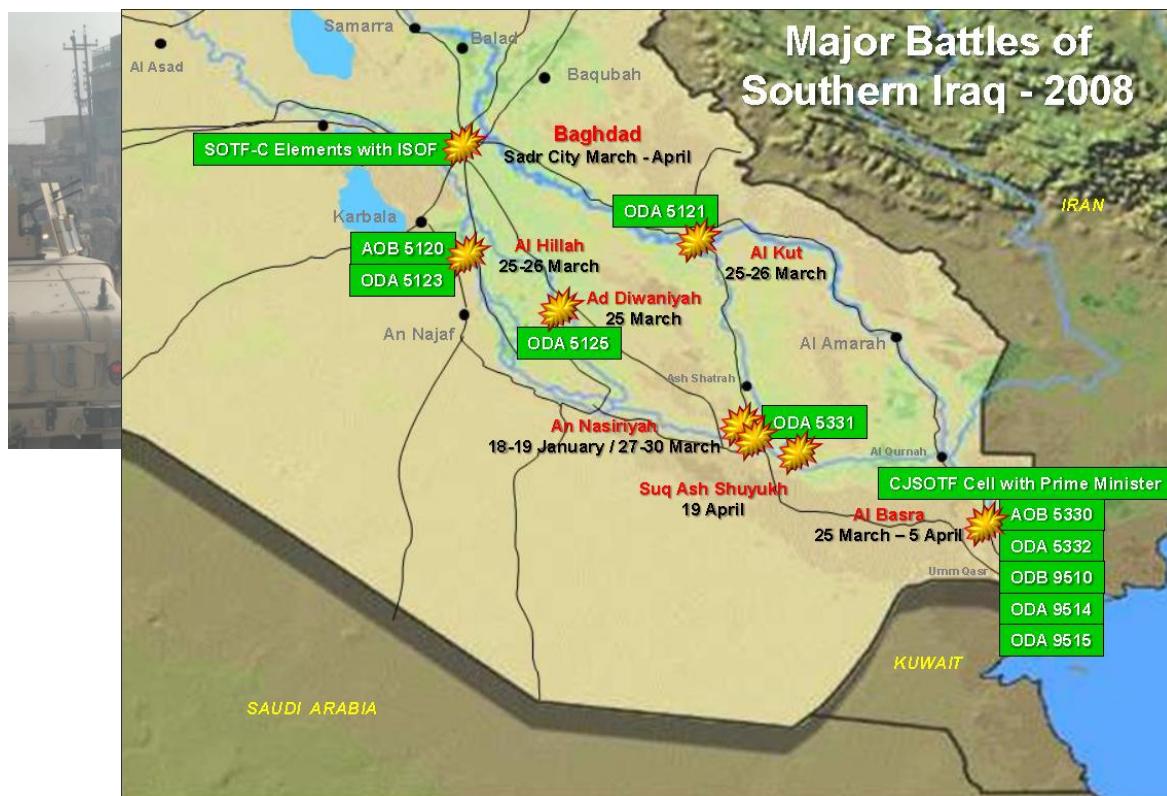
¹ LTC Mark Grdovic, SOF Advisor to MNF-I during OIF V, CJSOTF-AP, interview, 22 October 2010.

² LTC Mark Grdovic, SOF Advisor to MNF-I during OIF V, CJSOTF-AP, interview, 22 October 2010.

³ CW3 Chad Klopfenstein, Assistant Detachment Commander, ODA 5332, interview, 16 February 2010.

⁴ CW3 Chad Klopfenstein, Assistant Detachment Commander, ODA 5332, interview, 16 February 2010.

⁵ CW3 Chad Klopfenstein, Assistant Detachment Commander, ODA 5332, interview, 16 February 2010.



Operations associated to the Battle of Basra took place 25 March to 5 April 2008. Clearing operations to secure the port city following the battle took place under the name Operation Charge of the Knights between 6-30 April 2008.¹

In the days following the launch of Al Basra operations, Muqtada Al Sadr's quasi cease fire shattered, propelling JAM to launch large scale attacks within multiple southern cities in retaliation for the Government of Iraq offensive.² Elements of JAM initiated violent attacks on 25 March 2008 within the cities of Al Hillah, Al Kut, and Ad Diwaniyah. On 27 March, JAM launched city wide attacks in An Nasiriyah.³ In each of these cities, Special

Forces personnel and their partnered Iraqi units fought to regain control and successfully repelled the violent militants. Special Forces members of AOB 5120 and ODA 5123 along with their partnered ISF personnel fought JAM to a standstill in two days of fighting in Al Hillah. In Al Kut, ODA 5121 and its Iraqi partners were also victorious after two days of fighting.⁴ ODA 5125 and its partnered unit, Diwaniyah ISWAT, prevailed against JAM in one day of fighting.⁵ In An Nasiriyah, ODA 5331

¹ CW3 Chad Klopfenstein, Assistant Detachment Commander, ODA 5332, interview, 16 February 2010.

² Farook Ahmed and Marisa Cochrane, *Recent Operations Against Special Groups and JAM in Central and Southern Iraq*, Backgrounder #27, (Institute for the Study of War, 2008).

³ MAJ Thomas Freiling, Detachment Commander during OIF V, ODA 5123, interview, 30 March 2010; 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010; Farook Ahmed and Marisa Cochrane, *Timeline of the Recent Violence in Central and Southern*

Iraq, (Institute for the Study of War, 2008); Farook Ahmed and Marisa Cochrane, *Recent Operations Against Special Groups and JAM in Central and Southern Iraq*, Backgrounder #27, (Institute for the Study of War, 2008); ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *JAM-SG Fight, 5331-TST (27-31 March 2008 An Nasiriyah Security Crisis)*, 31 March 2008.

⁴ MAJ Thomas Freiling, Detachment Commander during OIF V, ODA 5123, interview, 30 March 2010; SSG Mark Griffith, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5121, interview, 30 March 2010; Multi-National Corps-Iraq, Public Affairs Office, Press Release No. 20080328-4, *Iraqi Security Forces, U.S. Special Forces Engage Criminal Elements In Hillah, Al-Kut*, (Balad, Iraq, 28 March 2008).

⁵ Farook Ahmed and Marisa Cochrane, *Timeline of the Recent Violence in Central and Southern Iraq*, (Institute for the Study of War, 2008).

and its partnered ISWAT unit defeated JAM militants in a 56-hour battle.¹

As operations continued to clear and secure Al Basra, on 19 April 2008, ODA 5331 again faced JAM militants in a village near An Nasiriyah known as Suq Ash Shuyukh. After JAM militants initiated attacks against three police stations in the village, the detachment supported ISF efforts to defend Suq Ash Shuyukh. The hour and a half battle culminated when the detachment used RG-33 up-armored assault vehicles to shield the ISF advance on a JAM strong point defensive position. The ISF personnel were able to breach and clear the compound and discovered a large weapons cache of Iranian munitions. The weapons cache contained 4 x 35kg explosively formed projectiles, 11 improvised explosive devices, six Katusha Rockets, PKM medium machine guns, AK-47s, and several hundred rocket propelled grenades.² The cache was important not only because of its size, but also because it was the first time Iranian munitions had been discovered within an Office of the Martyr Sadr (Muqtada Al Sadr's Shia political organization).³ These munitions were invariably smuggled across the Iranian border into Al Amarah, Iraq and then distributed to the cache location in Suq Ash Shuyukh. The discovery of the Iranian weapons cache again placed the spot light firmly on Maysan Province.

Combatant casualty totals from the battle in Suq Ash Shuyukh were

Figure 9: Iraqi security forces seen minutes after the defeat of a JAM strong point defensive position in Suq Ash

¹ 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, STREP 5331-160, 31 March 2008; ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *JAM-SG Fight, 5331-TST (27-31 March 2008 An Nasiriyah Security Crisis)*, 31 March 2008.

² 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010; ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *Suq Ash Shuyukh ISF/JAM Fight, 5331-TST*, 19 April 2008.

³ SPC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010.

reported as 40 Enemy Killed in Action (EKIA), unknown Enemy Wounded in Action (EWIA), zero Dhi Qar Emergency Police Brigade KIA, 12 Emergency Brigade WIA (Iraqi Army totals were not reported to the 10th Iraqi Army Division Chain of Command at the time Special Forces after action reports were created). Additionally, ten detainees were confirmed in ISWAT custody and other ISF elements reported in excess of 30 detainees.⁴

Momentum against the criminal militia elements was firmly in the grasp of the Iraqi government in April 2008 within the greater Dhi Qar provincial area and throughout southern Iraq. Logically, operational focus for the coalition and the Government of Iraq turned to Maysan Province and the final remaining JAM-SG stronghold in southern Iraq.

Figure 10: One of four Iranian made 35kg explosively formed projectiles discovered inside the Office of the Martyr Sadr in Suq Ash Shuyukh.

Operation Yarborough

Al Amarah was a real problem and there was a need to create a plan that would head off an enthusiastic charge by the Iraqi government into Maysan Province, similar to that seen in Al Basra. Gen. Petraeus asked representatives from MNC-I, Task Force 17, and CJSOTF-AP to present their best operational ideas for addressing the JAM-SG stronghold in Al Amarah. CJSOTF-AP was identified as having the best conduit through which to address Al Amarah, via ODA 5331 and its relationship with Maj. Gen. Habib.⁵ ODA 5331 was tasked to develop a Concept of Operations (CONOP) for Al Amarah. The detachment created and submitted CON-

⁴ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *Suq Ash Shuyukh ISF/JAM Fight, 5331-TST*, 19 April 2008.

⁵ LTC Mark Grdovic, SOF Advisor to MNF-I during OIF V, CJSOTF-AP, comments to ODA 5331 15 November 2009.

OP GETTYSBURG in early April, 2008, which was a low signature plan to establish a foothold at Camp Sparrowhawk near Al Amarah for future operations in the region.¹

The SOTF-C planners created a larger scale plan to address Al Amarah using GETTYSBURG as a starting point. SOTF-C developed Operation ABILIENE and published it 12 April 2008. It was a similar plan to GETTYSBURG but employed a larger support package for greater combat power based out of Camp Sparrowhawk.²

The CJSOTF-AP planners believed a more robust plan could be executed that would impact the JAM-SG stronghold on a long term strategic basis. Ultimately, CJSOTF-AP planners created a multi-component military deception campaign they named Operation YARBOROUGH, after Lt. Gen. William Yarborough of Special Forces fame in the 1960's and beyond. The plan was designed to prepare the Operational Environment within Maysan Province in case another sudden Government of Iraq surge launched operations into Al Amarah without notice to the coalition. The plan was a disruption campaign that included various raids by Iraqi soldiers with U.S. Special Forces advisors, day and night Tactical Checkpoint operations in the province, zero collateral damage Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) bomb drops in vacant areas surrounding Al Amarah, Psychological Operation leaflet drops, Predator Hellfire missile strikes against lethal threats, whisper campaign messaging designed to intimidate militant JAM members, and other classified operations. These activities were to be executed in a synchronized manner to force JAM

militants into a state of constant paranoia and hopelessness based on a growing belief that an invasion of Al Amarah was imminent.³

The disruption campaign was designed to apply pressure to JAM-SG elements in Maysan Province in the wake of Al Basra and Sadr City (Baghdad) operations launched in late March 2008. The concept was to apply pressure on JAM-SG personalities from May through the CJSOTF-AP Transition of Authority, slated for 01 June 2008, and continue the pressure up to a time when offensive operations could be conducted in June to retake Al Amarah



from JAM-SG control. The CJSOTF-AP Transition of Authority date marked the time when 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) took command of Special Forces operations in Iraq from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). It was critical that the initiative enjoyed by the coalition and Government of Iraq not be lost as a result of transitioning forces in and out of theater.⁴

Soon after the creation of the final plan in late April 2008, CJSOTF-AP rapidly re-positioned forces in preparation for the execution of Operation YARBOROUGH.

¹ SFC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010.

² Special Operations Task Force-Central, *Operation ABILIENE Brief*, 12 April 2008.

³ Multiple CJSOTF-AP and SOTF-C briefings in support of OPN YARBOROUGH, *Figure 11: MH-60 helicopters of 160th SOAR arrive at Camp Morehead April 2008 in preparation for operations against JAM militants in Al Amarah and Maysan Province*

⁴ Multiple CJSOTF-AP and SOTF-C briefings in support of OPN YARBOROUGH, *Figure 11: MH-60 helicopters of 160th SOAR arrive at Camp Morehead April 2008 in preparation for operations against JAM militants in Al Amarah and Maysan Province*

ODA 5134 was prepositioned with one company of Iraqi Special Operations Force personnel at Camp Morehead on Tallil Air Base where ODA 5331 was stationed. ODA 5134 was sent from Baghdad to take over the ODA 5331 Nasiriyah mission in the event YARBOROUGH developed into a full blown operation to retake Al Amarah.¹ It was later determined that ODA 5134 and its partnered ISOF commandos would participate in the execution of YARBOROUGH. Additionally, the entire Combined Joint Special Operations Aviation Command (CJSOAC) was prepositioned at Tallil Air Base in support of the disruption campaign. The CJSOAC package consisted of Army aviators and helicopters from 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Naval Special Operations aviators and helicopters, one AC-130, and one MC-130 refueling aircraft. The CJSOAC also stationed a complete support element and staff at Tallil to sustain operations.² The ODA 5331 compound at Camp Morehead was a very crowded and busy place by early May 2008.

On 06 May 2008, ODA 5331 hosted Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin, Commander, MNC-I, and Col. Christopher Conner, Commander, CJSOTF-AP, at Camp Morehead. The meeting was an opportunity for the commanders to hear first hand from Maj. Gen. Habib with regard to operations and threats in Maysan Province. Lt. Gen. Austin approved the execution of the Special Forces led disruption campaign following the meeting.³ The ball was now completely

¹ SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-175, 15 April 2008.

² SFC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010; SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-196, 06 May 2008.

in the hands of Special Forces to execute the plan.

Operation YARBOROUGH opened in the early morning hours of May 9, 2008 with the launch of a Hellfire missile from a Predator unmanned aircraft. The Predator was orbiting Al Amarah to provide a view of the area in which ground operations would begin in the next 24 hours. The aircraft captured a real-time video feed of a group of personnel emplacing an improvised explosive device at a location just outside of Al Amarah. The location was particularly important because it was pre-selected as a tactical checkpoint position to be used later in Operation YARBOROUGH. The elimination of this threat was the first message associated to the disruption campaign sent to JAM-SG members in Maysan Province. The Iraqi government and coalition partners would no longer tolerate criminal activities in the region.⁴

In the early hours of 10 May, ODA 5331 and their Iraqi partners boarded MH-60 helicopters flown by 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) aviators and launched to execute the first manned mission in support of Operation YARBOROUGH. After approximately one hour of flight, the aircraft refueled in air and then delivered the assault force to the doorstep of the targeted facility. The mission was a Direct Action raid on the southern outskirts of Al Amarah, 2000 meters from the city center, and was named Operation KICK OFF. It was designed to introduce in no uncertain terms that JAM-SG criminals were well within reach of the Government of Iraq and that JAM-SG control of Al Amarah would no longer go unabated.⁵

⁴ SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; SFC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010.

⁵ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *OPN KICK OFF-Amara (OPN YARBOROUGH Campaign)*, 10 May 2008.

The mission was a Direct Action raid designed to achieve psychological effects. During the mission, ODA members and Iraqi partner personnel (soldiers hand selected by ODA 5331 from the 10th Iraqi Army Division Reserve Company) delivered specific verbal statements to those on the objective. The soldiers stated that the Government of Iraq would no longer tolerate JAM criminal activities in Maysan Province.¹ The sheer presence of Iraqi and coalition assaulters within the city boundaries of a JAM-SG stronghold was a statement of Iraqi national will and power.

The psychological impact of the Direct



Action mission had a far greater importance than the individuals captured. Intelligence obtained shortly after the raid indicated that the mission sent shock waves through the JAM-SG establishment within Al Amarah and instilled fear in the minds of JAM-SG leaders throughout Maysan Province. For the first time in more than a year, JAM criminals were within the reach of law.²

¹ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *OPN KICK OFF-Amarah (OPN YARBOROUGH Campaign)*, 10 May 2008.

² SFC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010.

ODA 5134 and personnel from the Iraqi Special Operations Force (ISOF) were the next forces to execute a mission in support of Operation YARBOROUGH. They conducted an air assault, inserting a Tactical Checkpoint slightly southwest of Al Amarah the night and early morning of 10/11 May 2008. Their unexpected presence also delivered the message that Government of Iraq and coalition attention had shifted to Maysan Province. The Iraqi citizens that were stopped at the checkpoint were shocked beyond words. Most were surprised that such a large security force could simply appear with no warning.³

In the afternoon of 11 May 2008, ODA 5331 rode in RG-33 vehicles, along with Iraqi M1114 vehicles, into Maysan to conduct daylight Tactical Checkpoint operations just south of Al Amarah. The population appeared happy to see Iraqi and coalition forces, and many stated that they wanted JAM criminals removed from their region. Just before the ODA and Iraqi soldiers departed the location, four Iraqi policemen arrived from the north near Amarah. They came to investigate the rumors of coalition forces in Maysan. They were most likely a reconnaissance element for the JAM infiltrated Iraqi Police in and around Amarah. They saw firsthand that coalition and Iraqi forces were on ground conducting business. The message was again sent loud and clear that the Government of Iraq would no longer allow criminal militants to freely operate in Maysan Province.⁴

³ SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-202, 12 May 2008.

⁴ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, *OPN YARBOROUGH Daylight TCP in Maysan Province*, 11 May 2008.

SMALL WARS VOL.

Figure 16: ODA 5331 and 10th IA Division members conduct TCP operations near Al Amarah in Maysan Province May 11, 2008

Between ground operations, psychological leaflet drops were employed to further degrade the mental state of JAM-SG elements in Al Amarah. The leaflets declared the legitimacy of the Iraqi government. They also provided the population the means to report JAM-SG criminal activity and locations of specific criminal personalities. Additionally, unmanned aircraft armed with Hellfire missiles were present to apply kinetic and psychological pressure on the enemy by engaging militants as they emplaced improvised explosive devices within Maysan Province. Fighter aircraft displayed shows of force by crossing over Al Amarah at low altitude on a nightly basis. Zero collateral damage bomb drops were repeatedly conducted by fixed wing aircraft in the open desert surrounding Al Amarah.¹ These facets of Operation YARBOROUGH combined with the Direct Action raids and Tactical Checkpoint operations to further the now common belief among the Al Amarah population that the liberation of Maysan Province was imminent.²

The night of 11/12 May 2008, ODA 5134 conducted an air assault into a preplanned location west of Al Amarah. The detachment and their partnered ISOF commandos moved a short distance from their landing zones and conducted Tactical Checkpoint operations on a main road leading into the city. Once again, the citizens that the ODA encountered were stunned that a coalition and Iraqi security element could suddenly appear in the area.³ The psychological impact of this

mission and the previous disruption operations were believed to be having a potent effect on the militant members of JAM residing in the region.

Time would soon reveal the exact level of effect Operation YARBOROUGH was achieving.

ODA 5331 and ODA 5134 operationally paused briefly until 14 May to refit and prepare for the second wave of operations in support of YARBOROUGH.⁴ Intelligence personnel within SOTF-C, CJSOTF-AP, and MNC-I evaluated the impact the disruption campaign was having on the mental state of JAM-SG personnel in Al Amarah during the pause in operations. The unanimous conclusion was that JAM members were on high alert, and their morale was wearing thin. The constant alert and uncertain outcome of what lay in their future reportedly dominated topics of discussion for most JAM militants in Maysan Province.⁵



¹ SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; Multiple CJSOTF-AP and SOTF-C briefings in support of OPN YARBOROUGH, April-May 2008.

² 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010.

³ SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; De-

ment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-202, 12 May 2008.

⁴ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-202, 12 May 2008.

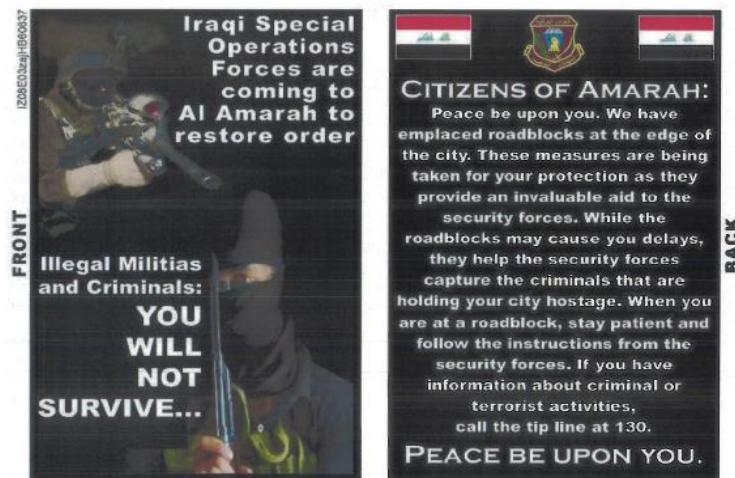
⁵ SFC Burke Chasteen, Detachment Intelligence Sergeant, ODA 5331, interview, 23 February 2010; SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting

Figure 14: A translated version of one of the 10,000 Arabic leaflets air dropped over Al Amarah the night of May 13, 2008. The CJSOTF-AP learned that JAM-SG leaders and Maysan provincial officials were collecting and destroying the leaflets. In response, the night of May⁹ 15 CJSOTF-AP dropped 10,000 more ‘wanted poster’ style leaflets bearing the pictures of these implicated JAM and provincial officials.

On 13 May 2008, Iraqi Security Forces successfully conducted clearing operations within the town of Al Qurnah that lay between Al Amarah and Al Basra. The operation met with no resistance. Iraqi Army leaders associated to the operation reported that JAM-SG leaders operating in that area had fled to Al Amarah. Iraqi intelligence indicated that JAM leaders were running out of options for safe havens and were considering fleeing to Iran.¹

In the early morning hours of 14 May, ODA 5134 and the ISOF commandos executed Operation VEGAS which was an air assault inserted Direct Action raid into a village south of Al Amarah. The evening of 14 May, ODA 5134 and their ISOF partners were again sent into Maysan Province to conduct air inserted Tactical Checkpoint operations north of Al Amarah. The raid removed key JAM-SG leaders from the region and the checkpoint operations applied continued pressure to JAM-SG networks operating in the area.²

Maj. Gen. Habib stated in a meeting with ODA 5331 on 14 May 2008 that he and the commander of all Iraqi military forces, the Iraqi Ground Force Commander (IGFC), believed that criminal personalities were fleeing areas of recent ISF operations. He also stated that Operation YARBOROUGH related operations in Maysan Province forced JAM-SG elements into a “disrupted state.” Maj. Gen. Habib assessed that momentum was building for



the Government of Iraq, with U.S. support, to retake Al Amarah.³

In an effort to capitalize on the developing situation in Al Amarah and to stay ahead of Government of Iraq actions, SOTF-C released a draft plan for Operation INCHON 15 May 2008. The plan was to take control of Al Amarah by establishing a foothold in the city followed by clearing operations to secure the city. The plan stated that ODA 5331 and partnered 10th Iraqi Army Division personnel would move to Camp Sparrowhawk four kilometers southwest of Al Amarah. ODA 5134, along with personnel from ISOF, one Civil



Figure 15: A member of ODA 5331 supervises activities within the Operation PETERSBURG objective building following the raid May 16, 2008

¹ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-204, 14 May 2008.

² SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010; ODA 5134 After Action Storyboard, *OPN VEGAS (OPN YARBOROUGH Campaign)*, 14 May 2008.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-204, 14 May 2008.

Affairs team, one Tactical Psychological Operations Team (TPT), one Special Operations Team-Alpha (SOT-A), one field artillery element, and one Infantry platoon, would collocate at Camp Sparrowhawk with ODA 5331. Simultaneously, ODA 5332 and one ISOF company would move to Tallil Air Base to assume the role of An Nasiriyah overwatch.¹

The night of 15 May 2008, ODA 5331 reported via its Situation Report (SITREP) that two Arabic news websites posted reports regarding enemy preparation in Al Amarah. Al Mahrain and Buratha internet news sites both stated that JAM militants placed many IEDs around the city of Al Amarah in anticipation of ISF and coalition clearing operations. The IEDs were reportedly placed under all area bridges. Furthermore, JAM-SG reportedly infiltrated Iraqi Police checkpoints surrounding the city to report the entry of all non-Al Amarah residents into the city. The websites stated that no one within Al Amarah was permitted to take photographs, and outsiders were forbidden to use cell phones. Weapons and IEDs were reportedly moved to Al Amarah from a village to the south known as Al Majarr Al Kabir. It was stated that JAM militants were not openly carrying weapons in the city, but they were suspected of having them hidden nearby. The websites also reported that many people were flowing into Al Amarah from Diwaniyah and Basra. The websites claimed that these people were JAM militants fleeing from areas of ISF operations.²

By all accounts, Operation YARBOROUGH was having a large effect on the morale and mental state of JAM-SG in the region. The introduction of these opera-

tions soon after and during the execution of other ISF and coalition operations in the country created a synergy of effort that amplified the effects of the Special Forces and Iraqi operations. The timing and thorough execution of the YARBOROUGH plan exploited the environmental situation to the fullest. The consistent use of psychological leaflet drops, zero collateral damage bomb drops, and fighter aircraft shows of force between ground operations served to sustain the pressure on the minds of JAM militants in Al Amarah. The combination of these operational components, along with Direct Action raids and Tactical Checkpoints, exploited every possible opportunity to break the enemy's will to fight.

¹ Special Operations Task Force-Central, *Operation INCHON Brief*, 15 May 2008.

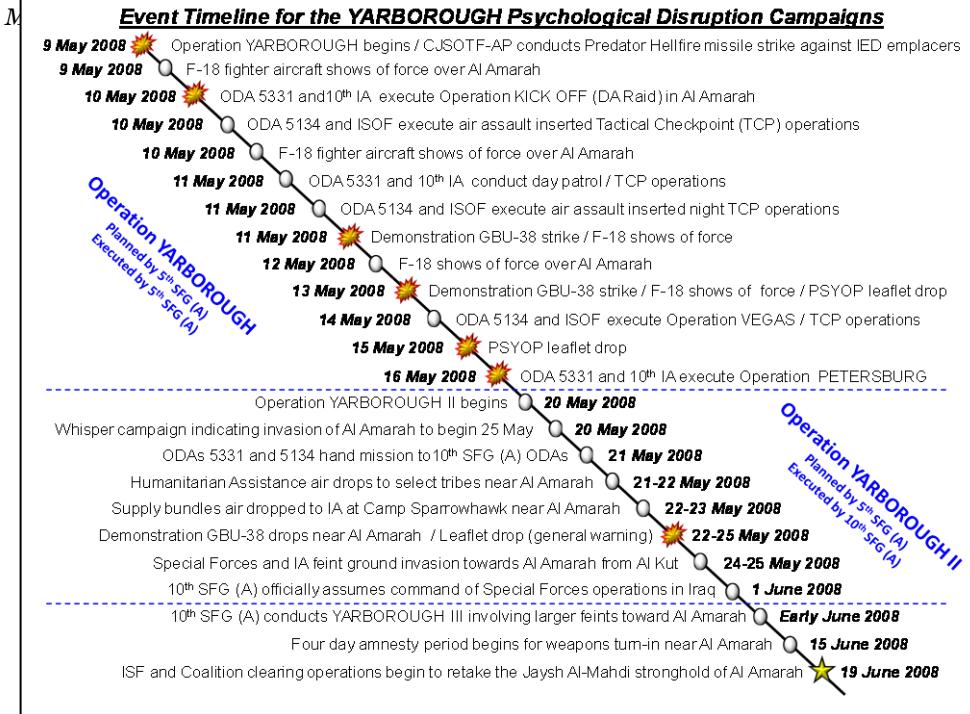
² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-205, 15 May 2008.

ODA 5331 and its partnered Iraqi personnel executed Operation PETERSBURG in the early morning hours of 16 May 2008. The Direct Action raid was conducted by air assault against a target 1000 meters east of the city center in Al Amarah. It was the most aggressive mission so far in support of Operation YARBOROUGH, placing assaulters in the middle of the city. The raid met with mild

resistance and sporadic gunfire as JAM-SG personnel scrambled to recover from the surprise appearance of assaulters so near the city center. Again, ODA and Iraqi personnel delivered the verbal message that the days of JAM criminal control of an Iraqi city was soon coming to an end. The psychological impact of the raid was evident when coalition intelligence personnel obtained word that JAM-SG leaders were fleeing the city for Iran and that the population believed Americans and ISF personnel were everywhere within the city.¹

On 17 May 2008, 10th Iraqi Army Division leadership stated that JAM-SG personnel were completely frustrated by their inability to stem the flow of raids and the unimpeded access by security forces into the Maysan region. ODA 5331 reported that the civilians within the targeted facility for Operation PETERSBURG were assessed to be innocent. After realizing they

Figure 17: ODA 5331 and 10th IA Division members conduct TCP operations near Al Amarah in



would not be detained, the civilians offered valuable insight into JAM-SG activities up to the time of the raid. Approximately seven women and children were on the objective along with one older male in his late fifties. The male stated that JAM-SG personnel were attempting to intimidate the citizens of Al Amarah into supporting a JAM defense of the city.²

The man stated that JAM militants informed city residents that U.S. forces would “rape their women and kill their children.” The man added that the majority of the population wanted ISF and coalition members to enter the city and remove the criminal militia members once and for all as seen in An Nasiriyah, Al Basra, and elsewhere in the region. He warned that many militia fighters were located just north of the objective and across the Tigris River to the west (in the center of Al Amarah). The man continued to identify the fact that JAM-SG personnel were shaken as a result of recent ISF and coalition op-

¹ ODA 5331 After Action Storyboard, OPN PETERSBURG (DA Raid-Amarah, OPN YARBOROUGH Campaign), 16 May 2008.

² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-207, 17 May 2008.

erations and that morale was low within their ranks. Reportedly, JAM supporters were arriving in Al Amarah after fleeing from Al Basra, Al Qurnah, An Nasiriyah, Ash Shatrah, and Sadr City. Each additional person that arrived in Al Amarah carried with them a story of ISF and coalition operational successes further demoralizing Al Amarah based JAM-SG personnel.¹

The perception within JAM members, according to the male local national on the PETERSBURG objective, was that their time was limited before overwhelming force again arrived at a city containing militant leaders and fighters. A sense of panic was evident through the ranks of JAM militants in the city. According to the man, all citizens within the city of Al Amarah knew what happened elsewhere in Iraq regarding security operations against militant JAM elements and that JAM had failed to retain any of their former strongholds. Al Amarah citizens believed it was only a matter of time until they were free of the intimidation tactics of JAM personnel.²

Based on the information obtained from 10th Iraqi Army Division leaders and from personnel on the objectives for Operations KICK OFF, VEGAS, and PETERSBURG, the members of ODA 5331 reported their assessment that a fight to take Al Amarah would meet with less resistance than previously believed. It was assessed that JAM-SG leaders and members within Al Amarah would flee to Iran prior to clearing operations, leaving JAM militants leaderless in their greatest time of need. The execution of IED attacks and destruction of bridges would be expected as some hard-line fighters remained in Al Amarah,

but a sustained defense of the city would not be an end state achievable by JAM-SG elements. If sufficient air and ground power were available to support ISF and coalition operations, the city would most likely fall under Government of Iraq control within seven days with follow on arrest operations continuing for another seven days. The minimal resistance seen by ODA 5331 during Operation PETERSBURG supported the detachment's ground assessment. Throughout the execution of Operation PETERSBURG, only two militant personnel fired in the general direction of the assault force from neighborhoods to the north and northwest further supporting the ODA ground assessment of eroding resistance within Al Amarah.³

Operation YARBOROUGH II (nicknamed MIRAGE) was published by CJSOTF-AP on 16 May 2008. The extension of the disruption campaign was planned to run from 20-25 May 2008. It incorporated a whisper campaign that would spread word of a coming invasion, humanitarian aid air drops to tribes near Al Amarah, and bundle drops to Iraqi Army personnel at Camp Sparrowhawk. Additionally, the plan called for a feint invasion convoy launching out of Al Kut and continued Direct Action raids in or near the city of Al Amarah as well.⁴

¹ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-207, 17 May 2008.

² Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-207, 17 May 2008.

³ Detachment Commander Comments, ODA 5331, SITREP 5331-207, 17 May 2008.

⁴ Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Central, *Operation YARBOROUGH II (MIRAGE) Brief*, 16 May 2008.

CJSOTF-AP considered extending 5331 and 5134 to maintain the initiative and continue applying psychological pressure on JAM-SG personnel in Al Amarah. Ultimately, ODA 5331 and ODA 5134 were not extended and they conducted Relief in Place / Transition of Authority activities with two teams (0312 and 0315) of 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne). ODA 5331 and ODA 5134 departed Tallil Air Base 21 May 2008 to begin their return movement to the United States.¹

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division assumed the overwatch mission for Dhi Qar and Maysan Provinces 01 June 2008. The Australian battalion stationed at Tallil Air Base departed Iraq soon after handing their overwatch mission to the 82nd Airborne paratroopers.² CJSOTF-AP command seamlessly transitioned from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on the same day as the Australian transition, 01 June 2008.³

The CJSOTF-AP, under 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) command, conducted a third iteration of Operation YARBOROUGH that capitalized on successes achieved in the first two versions. The execution of YARBOROUGH III employed large scale feints toward Al Amarah by ground convoys of much larger size than previously employed. Associated disruption operations were also included as seen in the previous two versions. Operation YARBOROUGH III was executed in early June 2008 and continued to apply psychological pressure on militants within

Maysan Province until the beginning of operations to retake Al Amarah.⁴

Clearing operations to secure control of Al Amarah began 19 June following a four-day amnesty period for the turn-in of weapons. The clearing operations conducted by Iraqi security forces, Special Forces personnel, and members of the 1st Brigade Combat Team met with little resistance. Iraqi and coalition members captured an alarming quantity of munitions from



Figure 17: Children of Maysan Province gather for a picture following ODA and ISF checkpoint operations near Al Amarah in May 2008

caches within Al Amarah in June 2008. Between 19-22 June, a total of 117 weapons caches were captured and more than 63 criminal personalities were arrested. During this period ISF and coalition personnel confiscated over 1,700 mortar rounds, 873 mines, 445 artillery rounds, 347 rocket propelled grenades, 267 rockets, 227 missile launchers, 109 improvised explosive devices, 74 grenades, 27 explosively formed projectiles, and 14 missiles. Al Amarah was successfully retaken by the legitimate Government of Iraq, without firing a shot.⁵

¹ 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010; SFC Ryan Valdez, Acting Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5134, interview, 30 March 2010.

² Department of Defense News Briefing with COL Charles Flynn, Commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, 26 June 2008.

³ 1SG (Ret) Leo Kryszewski, Detachment Operations Sergeant during OIF V, ODA 5331, interview, 24 February 2010.

⁴ MAJ Seth Krumrich, J35 during OIF V, CJSOTF-AP, interview, 8 October 2010.

⁵ 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Public Affairs Office, *Iraqi Security Forces Continue to Clear Amarah of Munitions*, (COB Adder, Iraq, 27 June 2008); SSG Michel Sauert, Public Affairs Office, Multi-National Division-Central, *New Signs of Peace Continue in Amarah*, (Baghdad, Iraq, 22 July 2008).

Conclusion

It was the actions taken by coalition Soldiers in 2007 and 2008 that brought global recognition to the “Surge” as a successful gamble. The operations to pacify Mosul and disassemble the threat of Al Qaida affiliates in the north and west, along with population focused counterinsurgency operations in Baghdad represent important milestones of the 2007–2008 effort. However, if not for the remarkable turn of trends in southern Iraq, the country would have continued to produce elevated numbers of coalition casualties in 2008 and beyond. The operations that defeated JAM militants in Baghdad’s Sadr City, Al Basra, Al Amarah, An Nasiriyah, and most other major cities in southern Iraq disrupted the strategy that Iran employed through surrogates known as JAM Special Groups. Iran and Muqtada Al Sadr’s Mahdi Army were forced to reevaluate their entire approach to southern Iraq by the summer of 2008. Decisions to fight through clandestine or overt methods gave way to a new political focus as southern Shia militants moved away from violence and towards productive political debate.

Muqtada Al Sadr’s decision to end the quasi cease fire with the coalition and Government of Iraq was a fool’s bet for which he paid dearly. The very public and humiliating defeat of his Mahdi Army and their Iranian trained special cadre marginalized Muqtada politically and within the Shia population. His marginalization enabled the Dawa Party to take the front seat as the lead Shia political faction. The new political reality was confirmed in the 2009 provincial elections when the Dawa Party reigned victorious across the southern provinces.¹

¹ Alissa J. Rubin, *Prime Minister’s Party Win but Will Need to Form Coalitions*, (New York Times, 05 February 2009).

By January 2009, violence in central and southern Iraq was down almost 90% from the previous year. The operational environment had changed dynamically. Many JAM fighters were still present in the region and many large caches of explosively formed projectiles and other munitions were being found on a regular basis in the south. The Shia militants possessed the fighters and the weaponry, but consciously chose to avoid fighting as they had in 2008 and before.² Coalition fatality totals in Iraq for 2008 fell to 322 (67% less than the previous year) as a direct result of the combat successes achieved at the beginning and through the middle of that year. In 2009 the total fell to 150 showing the continued movement of Iraqi citizens toward politics and away from violence.³

Between January and June 2008, a small number of Green Berets empowered what the world media generally reported as Iraqi solutions to security challenges. The actions of these Special Forces Soldiers and their partnered Iraqi brothers stemmed the tide of violent upheaval initiated by Shia militants in multiple cities throughout southern Iraq. Their actions stabilized key points throughout the region while maintaining a low, and sometimes transparent, coalition signature. Ultimately, Special Forces Soldiers set the stage for, and then executed what would be one of the most effective disruption campaigns conducted in the Iraq Theater of Operations.

Operation YARBOROUGH was a multi-faceted Special Forces generated plan designed to apply psychological pressure on JAM-SG criminals controlling Maysan Province and the provincial capital, Al Amarah. It established the foundation upon which operations to retake Al Ama-

² MAJ Seth Krumrich, S3 during OIF VI, SOTF-C, interview, 8 October 2010.

³ See www.icasualties.org for full statistics.

rah and Maysan Province from militant JAM members took place in June 2008 with minimal resistance. Operation YARBOROUGH serves as a concrete testament to what creative and unconventional minds can accomplish. It also stands as the method by which the coalition traveled the last miles of ‘The Road to Al Amarah.’

Major Duane L. Mosier served as the SFOD-A 5331 Detachment Commander during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM V and participated with fellow members of the detachment in Operation YARBOROUGH as well as several of the associated events discussed in this article. In an effort to present a chronologically correct and factual article, multiple sources of information were accessed and cited to verify details beyond the eye witness account of the author. Major Mosier is currently assigned to Special Operations Command Central.

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Article Intro / Excerpts (Chronological Order)**Civil Society and Counterinsurgency***by A. Lawrence Chickering*

In their recent SWJ article, “Stabilization and Reconstruction of Nations”, Carol E. H. Choksy and Jamsheed K. Choksy implicitly highlight why a strong civil society strategy is important not only in current theaters of conflict, Iraq and Afghanistan, but in many other countries threatened by potential insurgencies. In reminding us that we cannot intervene everywhere, they highlight the unpleasant reality that we may face insurgency threats in more countries than we can possibly handle. This makes it important that we need to be clear about the subtitle of their article: where, when, and why should the U.S. intervene.

They leave out “how”—a critical omission. The authors assume that current COIN strategy will continue unaltered. They assume, as most people do, that there are no underutilized resources that could be brought into play, expanding our capacity to intervene.

This paper will argue that expanding our capacity is an important reason for developing a powerful civil society strategy—empowering citizens, who are a greatly underutilized resource, to become active participants in COIN. A common statement of this objective would be to say this will greatly increase “our capacity” to resist insurgencies, but the real point is to increase “the societies’ capacity” to resist.

The idea is to empower the people of a country to take much greater, active responsibility for security, empowering them to play an active role in COIN much more quickly than is happening now in response to current programs aimed at recruiting them. We have, right now, the knowledge and resources to activate them to play this role. Although research and experimentation are needed to refine the strategy, there are good reasons for believing we could recruit armies of citizens to play this active role—and we could do it at very, very low costs. (The strategy for activation has been developed for purposes other than security; it will need to be refined to add security as an objective.)

[Download the Full Article: Civil Society and Counterinsurgency](#)

COIN, Complexity, and Full-Spectrum Warfare*by Grant M. Martin*

The United States Army uses a concept called the Center of Gravity (CoG) to help determine where the focus of efforts should be during warfare. For instance, during recent U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) practical exercises, students many times identified an enemy’s most powerful corps or armored division as the Operational CoG that must be defeated in order for U.S. forces to be successful in a conventional fight. In counterinsurgency exercises the CoG was usually identified as “the will of the people”, in fact many instructors stifled debate by insinuating there was no alternative. Students took hours to debate CoGs and usually arrived at a consensual conclusion that was widely regarded as wrong by the students. This follows statements made by senior-ranking field grade guest instructors such as, “CoG analysis has never helped me understand a problem” and “getting the CoG right isn’t important, doing the thinking is.” The possibility that CoG analysis may offer no greater understanding of the true nature of a conflict should cause military professionals concern.

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Negotiating with the Taliban: Lessons from Vietnam*by Franz-Stephan Gady*

Despite many critical voices of the overuse of the Vietnam War metaphor when talking about the war in Afghanistan there are many striking similarities between the last years of the Vietnam War and the Obama administration’s attempt to extract US combat forces from Afghanistan. I therefore think it is important, given the upcoming NATO Summit in Lisbon in November and the looming withdrawal of NATO forces from the region, to examine the Nixon administration’s effort to win the Vietnam War on the negotiation table and to have in Nixon’s words “Peace with Honor”.

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The Road to Al Amarah*by Duane L. Mosier*

Stability in Iraq and the overall outcome of Operation Iraqi Freedom were in question during the spring and summer of 2007 as the “Surge,” the offensive campaign implemented by General David Petraeus, was taking root. Coalition casualties peaked in 2007 with 961 fatalities in Iraq (up from 872 the previous year) as the coalition focused on the Sunni insurgency in Baghdad, the north, and west of Iraq. As a result of the coalition focus, the majority of Surge related brigades were centered on or near the dense population center of Baghdad leaving few available forces to monitor southern Iraq.

One battalion headquarters along with one and a half companies from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) were used as the economy of force effort in the south during the fall of 2007 through the summer of 2008. These elements were to fill the void created by the limited conventional coalition presence. Multiple decentralized twelve man elements of Green Berets known as Special Forces Operational Detachments – Alpha (ODAs) or “A-teams” were positioned throughout the south to enable a core of Iraqi security force partners. ODA 5331 was one of these elements. The detachment was partnered with the city of An Nasiriyah and the Iraqi Special

Weapons and Tactics Unit which was the 600 man backbone of regional security for the greater Dhi Qar provincial area. It was with these men and others like them, that American Green Berets worked to overcome violent events that would grip southern Iraq in early 2008. Ultimately, the violent conditions across southern Iraq led Special Forces Soldiers to create and execute a large scale campaign to address the militant safe haven city of Al Amarah.

This is the story of that operation and how a small number of Special Forces Soldiers and their Iraqi partners helped to change the operational landscape of southern Iraq between January and June 2008.

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Cholera in Haiti? Send in the Marines

by Colonel Gary Anderson

The Cholera outbreak in Haiti is an utterly avoidable disaster; and it is likely to be exacerbated by the approach of Hurricane Thomas, but it is one that can still be contained if we act quickly. Cholera is one of the world's most preventable diseases. It is primarily caused by drinking contaminated water although poor sanitation practices exacerbate it. The reason that this outbreak is so inexcusable is that billions have been poured into the country since the January earthquake and some of the most experienced disaster relief organizations in world are on the scene. These include OXFAM; which is probably the most experienced non-governmental organization in the world in dealing with clean water issues, and the United Nations Development Program which has a long history with such emergencies. One can only presume that the Haitian government, which has retaken the lead in recovery, got so consumed with rubble removal and rebuilding that it took its eye off the public health ball. This isn't the time to find fault; the disaster requires immediate help before this epidemic becomes a debacle.

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Afghanistan: The De-evolution of Insurgency

by Kevin Meredith, Sergio Villarreal, and Mitchel Wilkinson

In this article we will examine contemporary definitions of insurgencies as presented in The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24), compare the insurgency in Afghanistan to other insurgencies and present an argument that the present situation in Afghanistan is in-fact, not an insurgency. In our conclusion, we will present a theory that the situation in Afghanistan more closely resembles a synergy of criminal elements that have coalesced into a loosely organized front to form an anti-government, anti-coalition movement that has insurgent elements involved. Our theory also suggests that there is a cyclical nature of conflict in Afghanistan that includes the growth of insurgency and the de-evolution of insurgency as a part of a constantly changing Chaotic Cannibalistic State; a state of being that consists of groups of people in perpetual conflict, feeding on each other until a foreign body is introduced, at which point they frenzy on the foreign body, sapping strength and resources until the foreign body must limp away.

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Contextual Truth-Telling to Counter Extremist-Supportive Messaging Online: The WikiLeaks “Collateral Murder” Case Study

by Larisa Breton and Adam Pearson

On April 5th 2010 the website WikiLeaks, historically known for publicizing sensitive and sometimes classified documents online, released classified cockpit footage of an American helicopter strike on armed insurgents in New Baghdad, Iraq that took place on July 12th 2007. WikiLeaks posted 39 minutes of “research” video along with 17 minutes of “edited” content purported to show American troops killing Iraqi civilians and two Reuters journalists in cold blood. The posting received more than 5,000,000 views; commentary from the public was transnational in scope and condemnatory of perceived American action. This type of online messaging is picked up by, and used as an influence tool, by groups seeking a) to discredit Western nations; b) to drive negative perception of the West; and c) to recruit newcomers for physical, material and emotional support for causes espousing violence and terrorist action.

In response, an individual posing as a British national re-edited and posted a contextualized version of the video intended to rebut and debunk WikiLeaks. We provide a case study of that intervention with concomitant exposition and examination of: ways in which American content is de-contextualized and reformatted, event timeline of the counter-WikiLeaks intervention, resultant hit traffic, pickup into international media, exploration of WikiLeaks’ identity as a provider of public information and its use of media tactics; explanation for paucity of individual interventions, and qualitative analysis on the influence of the lone, informed dissenter in creating, and promulgating, contextual truth online to counter violent extremism.

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A Timely Lesson from the Korean War*by Lee Lacy*

The recent removal of General Stanley McChrystal by President Barack Obama as NATO Commander in Afghanistan sheds some light on the complex relationship of the civilian government with the military in U.S. society. The issue reminds us of a similar disagreement during the Korean War between President Harry S. Truman and General Douglas MacArthur. The essay explores the background of this complex relationship, makes comparisons between the two incidents and puts forth lessons learned. An analysis of the two incidents affirms the Constitutional provision of the primacy of civilian elected leaders over military authority. Drawing on archived material from the Truman Presidential Library, historical accounts of the Truman-MacArthur affair and current events, the essay continues the important dialogue of how civil authority and the military establishment interact. Although, first-hand accounts of the Obama-McChrystal affair will not likely be written until the President leaves office, this project serves a reference to study the doctrine of civilian control of the military, for future generations.

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Interview with Dr. David Kilcullen*by Octavian Manea*

What would success and victory look like in a counterinsurgency (COIN) operation? What specific role should the Western expeditionary forces should have in this fight?

What would victory look like? It doesn't look like victory in a conventional military campaign. Insurgency is much like a disease. It has very negative symptoms that affect the whole of society. Victory in COIN is a lot less like military victory and a lot more like recovering from a disease. If you think about the last time you were sick, you may not able to get out of bed, you had to take medicine, you couldn't do the things you wanted to do, but gradually you got stronger and you were able to do more. You might have continued to take antibiotics for a few weeks until you were completely better, but basically, sooner or later, you forgot that you were sick.

When we see societies that have recovered from an insurgency, we typically don't see a single big military victory. What we see is a *slow gradual improvement* to the point where a society comes back to full functioning. Now in the case of Afghanistan the problem is that the country hasn't functioned properly for at least one generation. Afghanistan in particular is not a counterinsurgency in a classical sense. It is actually a stability operation. We really care about the Taliban because they make the country unstable. But there are other things that make the country unstable as well, including the Afghan government, the destabilization by Pakistan, the corruption and criminal activity, the drugs. There are a lot of things that must be dealt with. If we were to defeat the insurgents, in a military sense tomorrow, and not fix all those others problems, a new Taliban would arise next year. We must think more broadly than counterinsurgency in the context of Afghanistan.

What is the role of foreign forces? I think that *the role of foreign forces is to create an environment that is conducive to stability and societal recovery*. If you think that victory is when the society recovers, then what we have to do is to create an environment that fosters this recovery. But *there are limits* to what we can do: we can set the conditions for the Afghans to come together or Iraqis to come together and solve their problems. But the long history of counterinsurgency emphasizes that *foreigners can't fix all these issues. It has to be the locals*.

[Download the Full Article: Interview with Dr. David Kilcullen](#)

Design and the Prospects for Decision*by Christopher A. Paparone*

The proposed view of decision presented in this essay reflects quite a departure from US "PPBE" procedures, "JOPP" doctrine and Service-equivalent procedures, such as the US Army's Field Manual 5-0, The Operations Process. US Joint Forces Command recently released a pamphlet that equally subordinates design as process methodology subservient to a rational-analytic model of decision-making. These depictions unfortunately portray design as just another staff method to reach sufficient commander's understanding in order to eventually reach a rational or programmatic decision.

This essay attempts to challenge that view. The artful military designer is concerned about the design of deciding based on appreciatively judging the situation at hand – sometimes having to act before deciding; realizing that deciding may be an elongated process, not a point in time. The messier the situation the more unstructured deciding must become. Although US Army doctrine and pre-doctrinal joint publications may see design as a step toward the more desirable programmatic and rational-analytic forms, participative and emergent modes do not have to lead to analytic and programmatic modes. Situations may demand a blending of all four types, with emphases on one or more. With the proposed typology presented in this essay, the art of deciding is facilitated with the prospects of blending more than one "color" on the military designer's palette.

Much of the curricula in both US Service and joint staff colleges emphasize programmatic and rational analytic models. For the most part, US military staff and senior service colleges stress rational-analytic models to teach military strategy. Can we imagine a staff or war college changing the educational emphases toward consensus-based decision-making (with the backdrop of social construction theory) and require more exploration of complexity science and chaos theory?

[Download the Full Article: Design and the Prospects for Decision](#)

Interview with Colonel Peter Mansoor

by Octavian Manea

"Local relationships are really the key in winning a counterinsurgency."

It is usually said that insurgencies and counterinsurgencies are always competitions for legitimacy. Could you explain this?

Insurgency and counterinsurgency are essentially struggles for legitimacy and for competing visions of governance and the future. The goal of the insurgents is political power and in order to gain political power they need to show the people that either they have better programs for the future or that the government is incapable of protecting them. Counterinsurgency is a struggle for winning the trust of the population. To win, a COIN effort needs to show the people that continuing existence under the government is preferable to a not-so-certain future. The struggle for legitimacy and for competing political programs is really at the heart of COIN and insurgencies.

Why is the "population" the center of gravity in a COIN campaign?

The issue is that guerrillas don't wear uniforms, but rather civilian clothes and fight among the people. It is very hard to come to grips with who is the enemy and therefore killing or capturing them is difficult at best. The Western approach to COIN is to protect the population and by doing so make it very difficult for insurgents to live among them. By isolating the insurgents from the people, their strength decreases. Living among the people and protecting them normally leads to better intelligence which leads to identifying and targeting insurgents. Moreover, by decreasing the insurgent's support among the people you can reach out to the reconcilable elements.

[**Download the Full Article: Interview with Colonel Peter Mansoor**](#)

Interview with Dr. John Nagl

by Octavian Manea

"Counterinsurgencies are after all learning competitions."

What is the legacy of David Galula for US Counterinsurgency doctrine? Is he an intellectual father?

The most important thinker in the field is probably Mao whose doctrine of insurgency understood that insurgency is not a component or a precursor of conventional war but could by itself accomplish military objectives. The greatest thinker in my eyes in COIN remains David Galula who has the enormous advantage of having studied and seen the evolution of insurgency in France during WW2, then spending a great deal of time in Asia, and really having thought through the problem for more than a decade before he practiced COIN himself for a number of years. His book is probably the single biggest influence on FM 3-24, the COIN Field Manual. David Galula is the best COIN theoretician as Kennan was for containment.

What are the lessons of Lawrence of Arabia for COIN doctrine?

Lawrence is more important for insurgency than counterinsurgency. Lawrence was an insurgent himself. The lesson I drew from him is the extraordinary difficulty of conducting COIN, drawing upon his own thinking about how hard it was for the Turkish army to confront him. Any good strategist is going to look at the battlefield from the enemy perspective and Lawrence did this. He understood the advantages the insurgents have and the disadvantages, and that is probably the greatest insight he provided to the study of COIN. The other significant understanding is when you are working with a host nation population, either leading them in an insurgency or counterinsurgency campaign; it is possible to do too much as the intervening power. Ultimately the host nation has to carry the majority of the weight.

How important is the developing of the local troops for winning a COIN campaign?

Ultimately foreign countries cannot defeat an insurgency. Only the host nation forces can do that. But the intervening powers bring enormous advantages to the fight and if you can properly integrate the host nation forces and the intervening forces you can multiply the effects of both and the natural advantages of both. That is the objective, but we have struggled to do that as effectively as we could, both in Iraq and Afghanistan.

[**Download the Full Article: Interview with Dr. John Nagl**](#)

Interview with Dr. David Ucko

by Octavian Manea

"The conceptual and institutional advances within the US military since Iraq are the product of a whole COIN community."

What was the role of David Galula in shaping the mind of the US Army or the Army Concept? Could we see him as an intellectual founding father? And what specific beliefs do you have in mind when you assess his role in shaping the organizational culture of the US military?

As certain individuals and groups within the US military again became interested in counterinsurgency, this time as a result of the persistent violence in 'post-war' Iraq, one of the more immediate reference points for how to understand this type of political violence were the scholars and theorists who had marked the US military's previous 'counterinsurgency eras', during the 1960s primarily, but also during the 1980s. In the former camp, the thinkers of the 1960s, David Galula stands as an intellectual forefather to much that was finally included in the US Army and Marine Corps' FM 3-24 counterinsurgency field manual; indeed I believe his

book is one of the three works cited in the manual's acknowledgements. I think it is fair to say far fewer people have read than heard of Galula, and it would be an interesting study to go through his writings more carefully and see to what degree they apply to our understanding of counterinsurgency today. Nonetheless, even at a cursory level, Galula has been extremely helpful in conceptualizing some of the typical conundrums, dilemmas and complexities of these types of campaigns: the civilian capability gaps in theater; the political nature of counterinsurgency; the importance of popular support, etc. These were issues that US soldiers and Marines were confronting in Iraq and struggling to find answers to; Galula's seminal texts were in that context helpful.

In terms of influencing US counterinsurgency doctrine, perhaps one of Galula's main contributions is the emphasis on the political nature of these types of campaigns, and - importantly - his concomitant warning that although the fight is primarily more political than military, the military will be the most represented agency, resulting in a capability gap. Galula's answer to this conundrum is explicitly not to restrict military forces to military duties, a notion picked up on in US doctrine, which also asks the US military to go far beyond its traditional remit where and when necessary. In a sense, this line of thinking is one of the greatest distinctions between the Army's first interim COIN manual in 2004 and the final version in 2006: in doctrine (if not necessarily in other areas, such as force structure), Galula's view of military forces filling civilian capability gaps had been accepted. Of course, it should be added that all of this is much easier said than done, and perhaps some of the implications of involving military forces in civilian tasks (agriculture, sewage, project management) have not been thoroughly thought through - do the armed forces have the required skills, the training, and how much civilian capability can one realistically expect them to fill? Also, the danger with following Galula on this point is that by doing what's necessary in the field, the armed forces may also be deterring the development of the very civilian capabilities they reluctantly usurp.

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From the TBA to the USA: Barbarians at the Gate

by Marilyn Stern

On October 10, 2010, an illegal Mexican immigrant was found beheaded in Phoenix, Arizona as a result of the Mexican drug wars. On October 27, 2010, drug gangs attacked the headquarters of the Los Ramones, Mexico, police department with grenades and the police force quit en masse the next day. The following research provides pertinent background to the increasing chaos at the U.S. southwest border that the federal government continues to ignore.

In *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, Zbigniew Brzezinski, advisor to U.S. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, and Bush, Sr., wrote in 2004,

"For America, the linkage between state sovereignty and national security was traditionally even more symbiotic than for most other states. . . . The linkage was reinforced by the awareness that geography made America a sanctuary. With two huge oceans providing extraordinary security buffers and with much weaker neighbors to the north and south, Americans considered their nation's sovereignty to be both a natural right as well as a natural consequence of peerless national security. Even when America was drawn into two world wars, it was the Americans who crossed the oceans to combat others in distant lands. Americans went to war, but war did not come to America."

Today, America's geographical boundaries no longer provide that sense of security. In fact, there is a war being waged just beyond America's southwestern border. Mexican drug cartels, ruthless in their lawlessness, are in a bloody competition for superiority. Since January 2007, the narcocartels have killed 6,836 people. The potential strategic threat has markedly increased due to an inadequate U.S. policy to address the escalating levels of violence unleashed by the cartels in Mexico. The instability in Mexico is one symptom of the looming crisis beyond the U.S. border. The research will show that the nexus between criminal activity, drug trafficking and Islamist terror is one that poses an increasing security challenge to the U.S.

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Counterinsurgency Insights by Tom Ricks

by Octavian Manea

The US Army Organizational Culture before Emphasis on COIN:

What I saw in Iraq in 2003-06 was a US Army that was focused on destroying the enemy by killing or capturing him. The population was seen as the playing field, not the prize.

The Surge:

The surge achieved its military or tactical goal of improving security. But its stated goal was the larger, strategic one of creating a breathing space in which a political breakthrough could occur. The strategic rationale was to create a breathing space for Iraqi political leaders in which they could move forward. I think it is too early to tell if that really happened. But my gut feeling is that it didn't.

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Mission Command – A Multifaceted Construct

by Richard N. Pedersen

Mission Command is emerging as a multifaceted construct that integrates the functions and techniques of the art and science employed during the exercise of command authority over missions applying military and other instruments of national power.

The Army Operating Concept (AOC) defines mission command as the exercise of authority and direction by commanders and their staffs to integrate the warfighting functions using the operations process and mission orders to accomplish successful full-spectrum operations. This is a dramatic expansion of how Army doctrine previously defined mission command—the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders. This new definition is expected to be incorporated into the forthcoming FM 3-0 update.

The central idea expressed in the Mission Command Army Functional Concept (MC AFC), a derivative of the AOC, is that mission command fosters mutual trust, encourages initiative, and empowers lower echelons with the combined arms capabilities and authority to fight for information, create opportunities, and exploit advantage consistent with the commander's intent and concept for accomplishing the mission. Although this describes the benefits of the new mission command, its net effect is to renew emphasis on existing ideas.

The outlook is that mission command is fundamentally the exercise of power to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues revolving around the warfighting functions during the conduct of the operations process. Currently, the Army's warfighting functions line up directly with the six joint functions described in JP 3-0. The Army sees the newly defined mission command as an evolved concept encompassing both the Army's philosophy of command and the integrating function that effectively combines all warfighting functional capabilities.

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Gambling on the Districts: All-In on the GIROA Casino

by Dr. David C. Ellis and LCDR James Sisco

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan is gambling in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) Casino at a table with a crooked dealer. ISAF is preparing to go all-in at the National GIROA table, betting that National GIROA reform initiatives and the recent troop surge will extend accountable, responsive government to the population. At the same time, National GIROA's dealer is dealing from the bottom of the deck to former Mujahedeen powerbrokers (and possibly the Taliban) to distribute the table's winnings (international funding and key districts) for his own benefit. ISAF needs to diversify its gamble by moving some of its chips from the National GIROA table to the Local GIROA table, which has a more legitimate dealer and better odds of winning. But if the counterinsurgency model is flawed in its overly optimistic assessment of the non-military tools available, the alternative approach focused on a rapid transition to a smaller footprint in Afghanistan is also flawed. A smaller footprint approach would have made sense back in 2009, and it may be the best long-term approach. But for the next 12-24 months at least the United States is going to have in the neighborhood of 100,000 troops in Afghanistan. The key is to use this deployment to best effect.

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A New NATO Social Contract

by Octavian Manea

The previous Strategic Concepts of the Alliance were forged in some very different security environments. In that sense some of their elements are outdated. Does the Alliance need a new social contract, a new consensus? On what elements?

A new consensus is indeed required in two regards: Firstly, while in the Cold War era NATO would have fought an existential “war of necessity”, with a monolithic threat unifying Allies, in the new and ever-evolving security environment it engages in “wars of choice”, “discretionary operations”. There consensus is much more difficult to muster, because different threat assessments, historic experiences and national interests come to the fore. Honesty is required about the fact that there are ever more marked regional groupings within the Alliance such as those advocating a global orientation (US, UK, partly Canada); others emphasizing NATO’s regional character and advocating cooperative security (“old Europe”, but far from being united); several new members who, particularly after the Georgia war, insist on the priority of Article 5 and collective defense; and the Southern members emphasizing the dangers in the Mediterranean region. This makes the need for re-establishing strategic consensus very obvious. Secondly, there is great disunity within the Alliance about several central themes, such as NATO’s reach (regional or global), its main emphasis (Article 5 or out-of-area), the approach to Russia, nuclear policy and strategy, and the evaluation of some “novel” security challenges (including terrorism, proliferation, cyber threats, interference with energy security, and obstruction of the freedom of the seas).

My view about how the preparation of NATO’s new Strategic Concept has been handled in NATO (with the Group of Experts established by the Secretary General under former Secretary of State Albright’s leadership) is the following: Public debate, transparency, inclusiveness are desirable, and the “participatory process” can “loosen the ground” as it were, prepare consensus, fuel public debate and interest in NATO, get the strategic community involved, provide transparency and induce member states to clarify their positions and “show the colour of their cards”. But this will not replace the political work governments must do to create or re-establish the consensus on the central contentious issues. That cannot be achieved by informal groups and seminars, and it should not be left to the drafting and negotiation process. Work on a draft cannot create political unity on highly controversial matters, it cannot replace tough decisions. Ideally, the Strategic Concept, to be agreed on at NATO’s Lisbon summit, would reflect the consensus established among governments.

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Partnering: A Counterinsurgency Imperative

by Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assist Team (CAAT)

As statements from the U.S. Secretary of Defense and Commander, International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF) make clear, partnering is an essential skill for Coalition Forces (CF). The ISAF Partnering Directive, dated 29 August 2009, provides clear guidance for the practice:

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) faces two daunting tasks: protecting the Afghan population and defeating the insurgency that challenges its sovereignty. ISAF's mission is to assist GIRoA in accomplishing these tasks. ISAF will use embedded partnering—a trust-based, habitual and enduring relationship with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) - as the method to assist GIRoA in overcoming these challenges.

However, while this directive defines what partnering is—and tells us what we must do—it does not tell us how to accomplish it. And make no mistake: effective partnering is hard, complex work. Units in the field continue to struggle to figure out just how to make partnering work on the ground. Fortunately, many effective practices have emerged from the laboratories of small unit improvisation and innovation. The best of these have been incorporated into the recently COIN Collective Tasks for company and platoon level operations, and are also summarized below. But before delving into the critical “how’s” of partnering, it is useful to consider more fully the factors that combine to make effective partnering such a powerful COIN tool.

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Civil Society and Counterinsurgency—II

by A. Lawrence Chickering

In their recent SWJ article, “Stabilization and Reconstruction of Nations”, Carol E. H. Choksy and Jamsheed K. Choksy implicitly highlight why a strong civil society strategy is important not only in current theaters of conflict, Iraq and Afghanistan, but in many other countries threatened by potential insurgencies. In reminding us that we cannot intervene everywhere, they highlight the unpleasant reality that we may face insurgency threats in more countries than we can possibly handle. This makes it important that we need to be clear about the subtitle of their article: where, when, and why should the U.S. intervene.

They leave out “how”—a critical omission. The authors assume that current COIN strategy will continue unaltered. They assume, as most people do, that there are no underutilized resources that could be brought into play, expanding our capacity to intervene.

This paper will argue that expanding our capacity is an important reason for developing a powerful civil society strategy—empowering citizens, who are a greatly underutilized resource, to become active participants in COIN. A common statement of this objective would be to say this will greatly increase “our capacity” to resist insurgencies, but the real point is to increase “the societies’ capacity” to resist.

The idea is to empower the people of a country to take much greater, active responsibility for security, empowering them to play an active role in COIN much more quickly than is happening now in response to current programs aimed at recruiting them. We have, right now, the knowledge and resources to activate them to play this role. Although research and experimentation are needed to refine the strategy, there are good reasons for believing we could recruit armies of citizens to play this active role—and we could do it at very, very low costs. (The strategy for activation has been developed for purposes other than security; it will need to be refined to add security as an objective.)

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Is Armor Antithetical to Good COIN?

by Frank G. Hoffman

Undoubtedly everyone has seen the recent report in the [Washington Post](#) on the introduction of a company of Marine M1A1 tanks into unruly Helmand province in Afghanistan.

Given the rugged terrain and complex nature of the ongoing operation there, the Marines will certainly get a moral boost out of having some armor protected firepower. Surely the Taliban is not happy about this new development unless someone's really trying for the proverbial 72 virgin martyrdom. Taliban elements will not be trying to sneak up on any isolated outposts that have a pair of tanks at the gate either. Ambushes will be more circumspect anytime a tank is escorting a unit. While many a SOF operator will tell you that the drone of an AC-130 overhead is sweet to his ears, the grunts will tell you that there is nothing like the crack and reach of a 120mm gun to keep the wolves at bay.

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A Precis on the Logic of the Afghan War

by Colonel Robert M. Cassidy

This Thanksgiving weekend marks when the duration of our current war in Afghanistan surpasses the duration of the Soviet-Afghan War. About nine years ago, on 13 November 2001, the U.S. backed and advised Northern Alliance forces marched into Kabul. Approximately three weeks later, on 7 December 2001, the Taliban quit Kandahar. However, chasing the Taliban and al Qaeda out of Afghanistan required considerably less strategic thinking, resolve, and leadership than it does to design a long-term solution which

undermines and precludes al Qaeda sanctuary here and in Pakistan. Pundits, policymakers, and the public are losing patience, wondering, why nine years on, the U.S. and its partners have not been able to yet create durable stability in Afghanistan. The reasons why it took so long to give Afghanistan the strategy and emphasis it required are manifold, and some are explained in this précis. Afghanistan is governable but it requires a government suited to its complex character. It is not the graveyard of the U.S. and NATO. Nor do the Afghans perceive our current effort as an imperial conquest.

The Afghans would welcome peace and normalcy. They have suffered predation and conflict for well over three decades, dating back to the bloodless usurpation of Zahir Shah in 1973. More importantly, collusion between al Qaeda, the Haqqanis, the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, and others in the Pashtun areas, in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, represents the gravest threat to the homelands of the U.S. and its partners. This précis addresses the efforts to help build durable stability in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to eliminate sanctuary for al Qaeda and its nefarious hosts. This perspective derives from research which informed a brief the author delivered at the U.S. Army War College April 2010 Strategy Conference and an essay written for requirements at the U.S. Naval War College in May 2010 . The first part, below, framed that presentation and amplified a list of near truisms about the region. Part one also briefly identifies imperatives for success in the theater. The second part lays out the context and the rationale for the comprehensive counterinsurgency argument and the counterterrorism-light counterargument, followed by a rebuttal and a conclusion.

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Interview with Dr. John Arquilla

by Major Michael Few

To complement the recent interviews conducted by Octavian Manea, we asked the faculty of the Department of Defense Analysis (DA) at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA to weigh in on the on-going conversation over the need and/or utility of rethinking modern counterinsurgency theory. This department provides mid-career, postgraduate instruction to the Special Operations Community. The Department of Defense Analysis is an interdisciplinary association of faculty, representing a wide range of academic and operational specialties. The Special Operations curriculum provides a focused course of instruction in irregular warfare, sub-state conflict, terrorism and counterterrorism, information operations, and other "high leverage" operations in U.S. defense and foreign policy. This interview with Dr. John Arquilla begins our series with the department.

How can French Encounters with Irregular Warfare in the 19th Century Inform COIN in our time?

Three of the most important concepts in counterinsurgency today have to do with the use of information operations, the role of swarm tactics in battle, and the need to understand how networks fight – and how to build networks of one's own. There is precious little discussion of any of these points in our own and others' doctrinal manuals and theoretical works on counterinsurgency. So, to build some theory and provide a basis for action, some data mining of earlier history is called for.

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