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Indicators and Warning: Case Studies in Genocide

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Introduction

No matter what system is employed to measure and gauge the “atmospherics” of a group of people (ethnic, religious, tribal etc) the most accurate is the one that can articulate their motives via deeds and words. If for instance a specific group has decided to move literally enmasse from one location to another, there are existing tools to provide a good mechanism for assessing in a specific area what is occurring and how that *may* lead to future events in the near term. The purpose of his paper is not to create another system for categorizing and tracking indicators but rather what can be done once it is apparent that there is a problem that on going and it is about to get far worse. There is a non-doctrinal term we can ascribe to such a unique mass migration of people: GETHOOD (GETting-The-Hell-Out-Of-Dodge).

Reality

Few things in life ever just occur spontaneously even though it may seem that way. The job of MI soldiers is not to be soothsayers, regardless how much commanders may want this, but rather to ensure that commander’s and the soldiers on the ground are not *surprised* by what the enemy might do (i.e. identifying the operation an enemy is likely to take at a given time and place as opposed to the exact tactics he will use as that time and place). The goal is not just preventing the enemy from doing something, but assisting the commander in preparing and planning for all likely eventualities.

As an institution the trend is to think that humanitarian operations are a completely separate mission set that a unit could deploy in support of, when it actually should be addressed at the battalion level should such a mission suddenly appear in the middle of another ongoing operation (combat and peacekeeping). The scope being addressed here is not the opening of a bazaar, building a well or clinic but rather how to help a battalion staff start the initial planning of what to do if suddenly caught in the middle of a true humanitarian crisis –such as genocide or ethnic gerrymandering.

Warning Signs

Prior to full scale ethnic civil war, or pogrom, there is generally an escalation of events that occur – often in close succession. It can be as seemingly benign as rhetoric, to race-baiting attacks, settling of old scores (vendettas), to ethnic realignment/gerrymandering (or ethnic

cleansing light) of districts by forcing people to move through the intimidation, threats of violence and limited acts of violence to ethnic realign neighborhoods/districts. Generally, once the population has been mobilized and complicit in the increasing violence than it is not long before the full fledged terror begins.

This is not to say that all countries will follow a cookie-cutter approach, but there is enough evidence to support the theory that a series of events do in fact have to transpire to set the stage for genocide¹. While each nation that has suffered such horrors had their own unique history of past grievances (real or imagined) that led to the carnage, there was warning signs exhibited that either went unnoticed, were willfully ignored or simply wished away.

A Short List of Key Components (Possible Indicators & Warnings)

History shows that in the cases of genocide it was always a minority group (religious, ethnic, or tribal) that fell victim to the larger segment of society. The options available to the victimized group are 1) flee to a neighboring country where they believe safety exists; 2) belief that their co-religionists or fellow ethnic group will come to their rescue from a neighboring nation(s); 3) fight an insurgency against their tormentors; 4) expect the international community to rescue them.

From the well-documented histories of genocide/ethnic cleansing operations that have taken place since the Ottoman Empire's genocide of the Armenians all the way to the Sudan there are some basic steps, which are always evident in order to be successful. Some may be done in minute detail and over a protracted period of time (Stalin's liquidation of the kulaks; the Nazi's Holocaust) or in an incredibly compressed timeline like Rwanda.

1. **Trigger:** Either a single event or a series of events happen in quick succession are often used by one group to justify the "action" (pogrom, genocide forced relocation) that is to be carried out on another. These trigger events do not need to be complete fabrication of

¹ Genocide is defined by the declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law when any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group.
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The following acts are punishable:

- a) Genocide;
- b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- e) Complicity in genocide.

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

past or current incidents, but what is needed is the ability to embellish facts and to properly bait the population. Outright lies are often used to spark a particular one-time incident that may develop into a larger series of events. Both sides are often “aware” of the justifications for such attacks as it is essential for the aggressor to establish themselves as an aggrieved people who have been forced to undertake such operations; the targeted population and the outside world are thus meant to understand the legitimate rationale for a pogrom, genocide or forced relocation. All available means of mass media are harnessed to get this message out.

2. Isolation: The targeted area (such as a village) is surrounded and made increasingly isolated by blockades of routes of supply. The aggressor may attempt to warn those not specifically targeted to either leave the area or have a means of identifying themselves (or property) so not to become a victim. Media blackout around the subject area – if at all possible is imposed, to include the deliberate murder and intimidation of journalists and NGOs etc. who “get in the way.”
3. Decapitation: Working from lists, and assisted by collaborators or others familiar with the targeted group, the current leadership (and potential future leadership cadres) are detained, identities verified and then removed. Execution of all official leaders (politicians, judges, lawyers, police and military officers) and un-official leaders (journalists, religious, tribal, artistic, and educators) who have the capacity to organize and lead their people is undertaken as quickly as is tactically feasible.
4. Dismember: The targeted population is generally divided up by gender. Those perceived to pose the greatest threat and who are conversely the main target of the “cleansing operation”, military aged males (between the ages of 16-60) are detained. After sufficient consolidation and control has been established mass executions are begun. This action can be an orderly operation with transport of the victims to isolated killing centers (for example Nazi occupied Poland) or can be on the spot executions (Rwanda). Women, the elderly and children *may* be spared from mass execution, but they are still abused and often forcibly expelled from the disputed region and into a neighboring area/nation and prevented from returning. During the expulsion a reign of terror is instituted either as a policy of commission or omission. Acts conducted during this time are usually mass looting, rape, assault and murder to subdue and cow the population into submission on their march out.
5. Disposal and Denial: As the killing proceeds as much forensic evidence of the operation is obscured as possible with bodies being buried in mass graves; cremated in mass fires (to include smelters and blast furnaces); dumped at sea. Further more, official records are purged that could reveal the true scope of the carnage such as census data, passports, deeds and titles etc. The actual numbers of the targeted population prior to the “cleansing” and after are claimed to be smaller. Total numbers of victims are never truly known because no accurate records were kept prior, during or after the operation. This aides in the ability for the aggressor to try and downplay the entire scope of the killing in the made less n the media.

There are numerous systems and groups such as GOs and NGOs at work in conflict-prone regions around the world who are supposed to monitor such indicators and warnings (I&W). The general indicators (population migration, economic, and overall policy) are generally monitored, but those I&W that are more difficult to track like public sentiment of a nation may be deliberately obstructed or covered up which could cause embarrassment or expose an intended plan.

Examples of Typical Factors and Indicators

Factors	Indicators
Population Location/Movement	Sudden or unexpected shift in a segment of the population, unrelated to seasons or annual migration/pilgrimages. Increase in violence, exclusionary activity or denial of resources (water, humanitarian aid, access to markets etc) directed at a particular group.
Economic Reasons	Change in the economy in which one group has become suddenly “wealthier” or suddenly “poorer”. Poor performance of the economy is blamed on a specific group. Rise in unemployment within the targeted group (denied access to job market or positions in the government).
Official Policy	Government warning of, or justifying violent pogroms against a particular group. Enactment of laws in which a particular group is disenfranchised; outlawing of opposition political parties; registration and realignment by ethnicity or religion; restriction to a particular area. Creation of civilian militias to assist security forces in policing.
Public Sentiment	Increase in acts of violence against a particular group by the society at large; security forces refusing to intervene. Media campaign that singles out a particular group for vilification.
Incentives	Promises made by GOs / NGOs to reward those who take “action” against a particular group. Examples of incentives: Crimes go unpunished if directed against the targeted group; right to keep “plunder” (unofficial compensation); passing grades given to students who partake in violent acts; preferential hiring into the security forces (or paramilitary forces).
Other	Marked increase in immigration into neighboring countries (legal/illegal). Increase in “brain drain” of a particular group; those who have the ability to leave do so.

Other (continued)	<p>Intervention/support by external actor(s).</p> <p>Stockpiling / movement of foodstuffs; weapons; earthmoving equipment.</p> <p>Communications to the outside world are hampered or cut off completely, to include border crossing points, ports, telephones, television etc.</p>
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Along with these basic indicators others can and should be developed which speak directly to the uniqueness of the local society/culture in question. Examples of non-traditional indicators: Increase in purchasing and stockpiling of foodstuffs. Increase in gasoline purchases (either for those wishing to get *out* of or *into* a particular area, or even potentially for arson.

- Stock piling of weapons.
- Massing of security forces.
- Communication blackouts (no radio broadcasts, telephones and Internet service no longer available).
- Increase in the sales of paper, ink and paint, which can be used for graffiti, propaganda or for marking territory.
- Increase in activity at printing shops/newspapers (creating broadsheets, papers, pamphlets and fliers).
- Are the bulk purchases of supplies being done by a particular group of the population (ethnic / religious); and if so, within that segment are these purchases being done primarily by young men (bulk fuel, weapon stockpiling, forming of “neighborhood committees” etc.)?

A key indicator is the hostile propaganda or art that extols violence and hatred to a particular group designed for or by children. If the children in a particular area are being exposed to violent imagery and messages and are participating in the production of said propaganda then it is because it is an extension of the policy to desensitize to violence the entire population and prepare them mentally for what is about to happen.

It is important to keep in mind that the relocation of entire groups to make “pure” areas can be done either kinetically or non-kinetically. The use of intimidation and mass media can greatly encourage the flight of a particular group and as that group’s presence diminishes it encourages more flight until which point the few hold outs that remain can be physically removed with a minimum of effort.

How to Prepare for Intervention

1. **Reinforcement of the Code of Conduct:** This cannot be stressed enough. The nature of COIN operations leave the uniformed soldier facing an enemy that uses the civil population to mask his movements and to launch attacks from is fertile ground for a moment of passion in a remote village or alley to quickly escalate into an event that can

have strategic implications. The actions of a few soldiers at Abu Ghrab prison in Iraq, and the failure of the chain of command to enforce discipline handed the enemy a wealth of IO imagery and press coverage which the U.S. has still yet to fully recover from.

2. **Willingness to Act De-Centralized:** Reinforce to subordinate leaders that their decisions on the ground will be supported and not “second-guessed.” Higher headquarters must give the soldier on the ground a solid basis to operate from by constantly revising the Commanders Intent so there is no doubt in anyone’s mind what is to expected and what will and will not be tolerated. Clear guidance, and not micro-managing will give local commanders the ability to develop solutions to COAs that the on scene commander might encounter. Reliance and emphasis on subordinate commanders to make decision in line with the Commanders Intent is not designed so as to free the actual commander of his responsibility to give clear guidance or to execute command and control over his forces, but rather to ensure that subordinate commanders (to include junior NCOs in some cases) are not paralyzed because they are still “waiting on higher” to make a decision.
3. **COA Development: What can be done at the BN Level:** The staff needs to focus on those areas they can actually influence while at the same time acknowledging areas that “spill over” or affect them.
 - a. Staff Triage: The staff prepares a list that prioritizes terrain, infrastructure, and people of the host nation (HN) that they will be able to save without jeopardizing the entire battalion. The battalion staff must accept the fact that they cannot save everyone and everything and have COAs prepared. Having a prepared listing, or “play-book” of what is to be the battalion’s priorities will enable the staff to maintain a level of control of the situation, focus the staff’s time and prevent the battalion from wasting valuable time deciding what to do as events unfold. Overall, it prevents the unit from being indecisive as it waits for guidance from higher or being overtaken by events.
 - b. Posture: Deciding if the unit is to maintain static positions; actively assist (protecting, transporting, sustaining etc.) refugees/evacuees; or actively engaging those terrorizing the local populace. [Case Study Dutch peacekeepers Srebrenica; Belgium peacekeepers in Rwanda].
 - c. Cost: Deciding in advance how much combat power and logistical support the unit can afford and is willing to dedicate on this “new” mission before becoming incapable of performing their primary combat mission; or in the event that the crisis becomes *the* primary mission the unit is able to still protect themselves (BDOC, QRF, convoys and TCPs). Minimum triggers are established which advises the commander that he cannot go below a certain level of supplies/people/equipment without becoming combat ineffective.
 - d. Why: Having prepared formatted IO messages that explain what steps the unit is going to take or not take; and to release it to the media prior to the enemy’s message or that of “hostile” news organizations. Consequence Management (IO) is vital at

this stage. PAO should have “fill-in-the-blank” press release ready for dissemination which explains the decisions made and be ready to release immediately to the local and international media. Our ability to get there “first with the most” will determine the subsequent COAs available to us. The enemy and their apologists in the media are already posed to blame the U.S. for everything that has gone on and will be busy flooding the market with press releases, communiqués and “stringer” reports to the main wire services.

4. **Forcing Higher to give guidance early:** Battalion staffs need to press Group/CJSOTF on what their plan is in case a “crisis” develops; do not accept the verbal “yes, we have a plan.” Request an actual copy of this document, even if it is a draft version and review it to see if it passes the common sense test; it is in line with the unit’s capacity – i.e. one AOB is not tasked with “containing” Sadr City., and that it addresses:
 - a. What is the Commander’s Intent? Get straight guidance and clarify any “fuzzy platitudes” such as “a safe and secure environment.” Ask the hard questions before it is an emergency, such as. “Are we allowed to engage the death squads we encounter? Can we target leaders of the crisis (genocide), such as politicians, police, military, civic and religious? Are we to sit and observe or are we permitted to actually stop hostile actions directed against civilians?”

Know what the command really intends for the subordinate commanders to do, and what the level of support is expected to be provided.

Here is an example of the Commander’s Intent that allows subordinate leaders to act quickly and decisively while not overstepping established ROE:

...if it becomes essential to protect the lives of civilians the on-scene commander is authorized in taking whatever means are deemed necessary within the unit’s capabilities, established ROE and the Laws of Land Warfare...

Such a “magic bullet” statement establishes the following:

- **What** is to be protected? Human life.
- **Who** has the authority to undertake protective measures? The on-scene commander.
- **How** to conduct operations? Within the unit’s capability.
- **How** the actions are to be governed? ROE and the Laws of Land Warfare.

Overall the Commander’s Intent is to allow the on-scene commander the maximum amount of latitude to begin initial planning, array and posturing of combat forces while communicating to belligerent forces that the unit has the ability and more importantly the will to act, while simultaneously preventing the on-scene commander from straying from overall objective.

- b. How does Group / CJSOTF plan on Target listing & priority during a “crisis” and is it broken down by scenario or by faction(s)? Request listing and ROE for EW/DA on government controlled, or clandestine transmitters, which are used to C2 the actions causing the “crisis.” The Case Study on Rwanda clearly highlights how the Rwandan government used the national radio network to command and control the genocide by inciting mob action and passing actionable Intel, feed by telephone calls, of where Hutus were suspected of hiding and announcing it to the listening audience; as well as reading off the names of key Hutus leaders from prepared death lists.
- c. What are the contingencies in the event HN government forces are the ones conducting the “ethnic cleansing”? Current Army doctrine treats that the HN government we are working alongside *would not* undertake such actions, but the truth is in much of the world the governments of emerging democracies often are very weak and have only the most tenuous control of their militaries. This problem is often exasperated by pre-existing tension within the ethnic groups that comprise the security forces, which possibly could result in a HN force conducting its own reprisals without authorization. So, what would such an event do to the current ROE? Are the subordinate units properly equipped to deal with a rogue HN army unit, say one equipped with tanks and APCs or attack aviation?
- d. Is there a “hot-pursuit” provision for cross border incursions to target hostile transmitters, encampments, or infiltration routes? Can pursuit mean observed fires and not a physical chase?
- e. What is the priority of fires? Are limitations to firing into urban areas lessened or tightened? Does the battalion staff know which individual in the Group Fire Support Cell (FSC) or Air Support Operations Cell (ASOC) they need to contact to get a decision made?

5. Planning for Potential ROE / IO Issues

- a. Address the common terrorist TTP of using non-combatants to:
 - 1) Mask movement of the enemy combatants to or from the engagement
 - 2) area by using willing, and unwilling, “human shields” knowing that any civilian casualties can and will be blamed on the U.S. and allied forces for “deliberately” targeting “non-combatants.”
 - 3) Conducting re-supply operations and passing messages by using women and children, and in extreme cases transporting the fighters and their equipment in ambulances or disguised as women.
 - 4) Create ready-made IO themes/news reports to shift the focus from the actual fighters to that of the “innocent” non-combatants targeted by U.S. forces while never mentioning the involvement of these “innocents” in assisting the terrorist

fighter; or are simply published to question the “legality” of the U.S. actions and sow doubt in the legitimacy of the U.S. mission.

b. Have the PAO prepare examples of press release shells for all the missions that the unit is expected to undertake, planned and contingency. This saves precious time in getting the “word out” when events do occur and can head off potential enemy propaganda. Essentially the first one to the presses and airwaves win – and there is no reason why U.S. forces should ever be last. Priority of the PAO effort needs to be the local population since that is the population whose influence will have the most immediate effect on our operations. Domestic news services may, or may not, run with stories that are already in play in the local market.

c. Instill in the soldiers the ROE, to include the harshly pragmatic rules of war, and the understanding that our enemies (Islamists and Communist) feel nothing but contempt for the West’s morality and fully understand the psychologically vulnerable points - unease at images of women and children as casualties – and will leverage their actions and IO themes to capitalize on this revulsion. The enemy will tailor his IO themes to stress the wanton death and destruction that U.S. forces have done and will ensure that operations are conducted in such a manner (using human shields or operating within dense urban areas) as to guarantee that any reaction by U.S. forces, no matter how disciplined, will result in unintended civilian casualties which can then be immediately exploited to their advantage. Innocent victims are justified by the enemy as either being “collaborators and enemy agents” or “martyrs” who died for the “cause” - whatever that may be.

Case Studies

In each of the case studies provided a brief synopsis and background, a pseudo social-political IPB, are given of the events leading up to the “crisis.” In some cases, Srebrenica, the crisis (civil war) had been ongoing for a considerable time but it was this one incident that exposed to the world that genocide was being conducted. The cases are broken down into subsets to highlight the stages of each of these incidents and indicate the indicators and warnings prior to each. The fact that more and more of operations are now being conducted in coalitions among parties whose shared interests are often more symbolic than substantive it becomes vital, as these cases highlight, the need for the on scene commander to have the ability to act decisively at the earliest possible moment.

Bosnia (Srebrenica)



In July 1995 the Bosnian town of Srebrenica was the scene of one of the most widely publicized acts of genocide since the end of World War II. What made this act even more chilling was the fact that it was conducted while a contingent of UN peacekeepers looked on after they had surrendered their weapons to the Serb forces (made up of both VSR and paramilitary forces). The Bosniaks (Muslim Bosnians) were separated by gender, with the bulk of the men were gunned down in mass graves, while smaller groups were killed in the surrounding area.

Background

The wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina was full of “ethnic cleansing” and counter reprisals, but generally on a much smaller scale that seemed to be manageable or at least “tolerable” by the international community. Prior to Srebrenica the largest mass killing of Bosniaks had taken place during the very early stages of the war, when in April 1992 the village of Bratunac (located near to Srebrenica) an estimated 360 civilians were murdered by Serb paramilitaries. Many Serbs saw the actions at Bratunac as “pay-back” for the Bosniak massacre of Serbs in the nearby villages by the Bosnian commander Nasser Oric who used the village as a base for raiding Serb villages resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians.

In 1993 Serb forces took control of the entire area sparking a mass exodus of Bosniaks civilians. The ensuing refugee crisis prompted the UN to declare Srebrenica one of five “safe areas” in Bosnia (the others were Zepa, Gorazde, Tuzla, Bihac and Sarajevo). The term “safe area” was never clearly defined by the UN and forces were never allocated in sufficient numbers to ensure that the areas could *actually* be protected.

Trigger

In this case there was no single trigger event – but rather it had been an extension of an already agreed upon COA of “ethnic cleansing”. The presence of Commander Oric may have provided a thinly disguised excuse, but was never considered justification for the following systematic massacre by the Serbs.

Like all genocides the events at Srebrenica was a coldly calculated move. By the spring of 1995 the Serbs decided that the time was right to “correct” the existence of these Bosniak enclaves and began operations to seal off and isolate the “safe areas.” The reaction to these Serb actions was panic. Bosniaks began to flee towards the UN compound in Potocari in the hopes that the Dutch peacekeepers could protect them. Most of the “military-aged males” took to the hills in an attempt to escape the tightening Serbian cordon.

Mechanics

The Serbs were aided by the instinctive nature of their victims to congregate around the area that they had been told would protect them (an example of non-traditional Key Terrain, but a location that became decisive in the outcome of future operations). The Serbs allowed the civilians to move towards the UN encampment, as this would make their job of rounding up and identifying far easier.

Once the Serbs had emplaced an outer cordon, established TCPs on the major roads, and begun the initial pursuit into the hills of those who had fled overland they then made an unchallenged move towards Potocari, the main refugee camp. At this point it is important to point out that the structure of the United Nations Protective Force (UNPROFOR) mission made it virtually impossible for the on-scene commander to prevent the massacre:

- The very nature of the C2 relationship and the ROE in effect of the UNPROFOR mission contributed materially to the massacre. The 400 Dutch soldiers of the 13th Air Mobile Infantry Battalion were given orders *not* to protect the safe areas but to *deter* attacks and as the Serbs became more belligerent the Dutch commander, LTC Ton Karremans, was instructed by higher *not* to destabilize the existing situation.
- The Dutch peacekeepers were equipped with TOW missiles that could easily defeat the Serb T-55 tanks, but most of these missiles had become inoperable since replacement parts and batteries had been confiscated by the Serbs from UN resupply vehicles because the existing ROE of the UN allowed the Serbs to inspect the vehicles and to confiscate weapon parts.
- On June 3rd the Serbs launched a brief attack on a Dutch observation post (OP) and when the UN instructed the Dutch to deal with the incident “passively” the Serbs learned to the fullest extent just how restrictive the ROE imposed by the UN really was.
- On July 8th the Serbs began seizing the Dutch OPs one at a time by targeting them with tank and artillery fire that was close enough to threaten the lives of the peacekeepers, but not close enough to justify retaliation via CAS since the OPs were not under *direct* attack and the Dutch could only respond if directly attacked. The end result was that the Dutch withdrew from the OPs and began to lose both situational awareness and credibility as deterrence.
- In response the Dutch commander established blocking positions to the south of the village and waited for the Serbs. On July 10th the Dutch repulsed an attack by the Serbs but the UN would not allow a follow on CAS mission, which might have convinced the Serbs that further action would result in the loss of their highly prized artillery and armor.
- In response the Serbian commander, General Ratko Mladic, realized that the Dutch had no freedom of maneuver and an overly restrictive ROE gave an ultimatum – if air attacks were used (one mission had been flown which two Serb T-55s were destroyed) than the

Serbs would use their massed artillery to wipe out the village, the UN compound and execute all the Dutch hostages.

- When it became apparent that the UNPROFOR was unable to respond quickly and decisively to emerging threats and that the Dutch Minister of Defense requested the UN leadership *not* to risk the lives of the Dutch contingent the Serbs knew they had the upper hand. Another reason for the reluctance of the UN and the Dutch government to pursue actions against the Serbs was that the Bosnian army was mounting such little resistance and it was felt that it was not the UN's responsibility to do anything other than to observe.

Once there the Serbs felt confident enough that they would suffer no serious reprisals they made the final move by occupying the rest of the OPs and demanding that the Dutch 1) surrender their weapons to the Serbs; 2) grant the Serbs access to the refugee camps; 3) provide a listing of who the Dutch had registered. All of these demands were agreed to in short order, since they were under orders by the UN to comply with these requests and not to “destabilize” the situation further. It is possible that the Dutch might have agreed out of a forlorn hope that since the Serbs were conducting this operation so openly and with video cameras present that a full scale massacre *could* not occur.

The men (16-600 and women were separated immediately. Women and children were transported for the most part to Tuzla, while the men were transported to what would be the killing fields. Many of those who would be killed would be done so at the same location in Bratunac (school gymnasium) that had been used in the earlier 1992 massacre. Others were killed at what has become the modern day ersatz death camp, the local football stadium, in this case the one located near Nova Kasaba.

The Serbs, working from prepared lists and from personal knowledge of their victims, removed certain individuals for interrogation and others to begin digging large open pits and trenches. The victims were forced into the pits and executed, and covered up by those that had originally dug the pits. They in turn were forced to dig yet another pit, one for themselves, and were executed and this time the Serbs filled the pit in. Of those who had chosen to escape overland, via the hills were soon isolated, rounded up and executed. Those not rounded up eventually surrendered due to hunger, thirst or wounds when enticed by the sight of captured UN vehicles and assurance of the Serbs of safe passage.

Why Clear and Unambiguous Guidance is Important

The Dutch commander was routinely refused when he requested air support thus allowing the Serbs to plan with a relative degree of certainty that they could continue to occupy OPs with little fear of reprisals from air attack. By July 8th the Dutch OPs began to fall and the Serbs captured thirty Dutch soldiers as they tried to evacuate. The C2 structure of UNPROFOR was cumbersome and unresponsive and left the decision as to how to proceed *completely out* of the hands of the on-scene commanders and left to those who were far from the action and wished for the situation to develop more before deciding on what to do because it was deemed too early to make a concrete decision and not worth any additional risks. The end result was that the Dutch

commander had no ability to shape the battle and could only be *reactive* and increasingly *passive* in his options. This lack of action emboldened the Serbs and facilitated the environment in which to conduct the massacre.

Recruitment

No additional recruitment was needed to conduct this operation. Those who carried out the massacre were already members of either the VSR or one of the paramilitary forces employed – in this case Arkan’s “Tigers” and the “White Eagles”. The orders for conducting the operation reportedly were issued by General Ratko Mladic and supplemented by Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the "Republika Srpska" which was the Serb-controlled territories in Bosnia.

Furthermore, this operation could not have been carried out unless the parties involved were assured of three things:

- The mission to kill would succeed.
- The “international community” would do nothing materially to stop them.
- Those conducting the operation had at a minimum the tacit approval of the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

The perpetrators were right on all three counts.

Response

Very little was done initially in response to the Serb actions. However, in Holland the actions, or rather in actions by the Minister of Defense caused the eventually ouster of the government due to public outrage at the massacre and the humiliation of the Dutch nation to stand aside while this occurred. The UN released in November 1999 a report that was highly critical of their handling of the situation, but none of those in leadership positions at the time were either punished or sanctioned.

President Clinton vowed to punish the Serbs via air strikes but nothing came of it. With the information available of the impending disaster and the earlier incidents at Gorazde and Bihac, in which the U.S. had drawn battle plans and had issued threats of air power to check the VSR, the larger question is why didn’t NATO, and namely the U.S., take the lead and prevent the massacre by approving LTC Karremans’ request for air strikes?

Aftermath

After a decade forensic investigations of the Srebrenica massacre the sites have turned up approximately 3,000 bodies, of which only a few hundred have been identified. What is worse is that Srebrenica taught some Bosniaks to hate, not just the Serbs but also the West for allowing the massacre to happen. The mismanagement of the peacekeeping operations in Bosnia helped lead to the increased radicalization of the Bosnian Muslims by those they felt were saviors, the Mujahadeen from Saudi Arabia.

Rwanda



The genocide in this small Central African country is probably the most intensive killing campaign in human history, as well as being the most cost prohibitive to the state executing it and gender specific in killing (Tutsi males and moderate Hutu males were targeted; a pattern used in the reprisals by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front [RPF] rebels).

Background

The country was first colonized by the Germans (1894-1916) but was taken over by Belgium (1916-1962) who used a “divide-to-rule” strategy to keep control. The minority Tutsi (14%) were given preferential treatment even though the Hutus (85%) are not considered an actual distinct ethnic group.

The hatred was not, as many assumed, something that had stretched back hundreds of years, in fact conflict between the two groups was rare, which only makes the genocide even more savage in that the hate become so pervasive so quickly.

The discord could be related to the policy in which the Belgians classified the two groups – the Tutsi were generally taller, thinner, and more “European” in their appearance than the shorter and stockier Hutu’s thus the Belgians decided they were *two* separate races and the Tutsi, due to their looks and dominance in the small Rwandan aristocracy of the past, were the natural “leaders.”

This led to the Tutsi being used almost exclusively as auxiliaries for the Belgian security forces. The Belgians ensured that the concept of racial divide was formalized and enforced with the issuing of identity cards (which lasted until the 1990s) and listed the bearer as a Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa (a group that made up 1% of the population) and assisted greatly later on in the process of identifying the victims to the killers. As Rwanda moved towards independence the better educated Tutsi began clamoring for freedom and it was at this time that the Belgians decided that the Hutus were now favored. The Hutus launched pogroms in which thousands were killed and forced an estimated 100,000+ Tutsis into Burundi and Uganda.

After independence Tutsis were stripped of much of their wealth and rights causing another wave of migration of approximately one million and led to the formation of the RPF insurgent force. In 1990 the RPF occupied parts of northeast Rwanda and by 1993 the leader of Rwanda, Habyarimana, accepted an internationally mediated peace treaty that shared power with the RPF. This treaty was “enforced” by the presence of only 5,000 UNAMIR peacekeepers (United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda). While the UN was able to report that on the surface all appeared calm behind the scenes, even as early as 1992, some high-level government officials and military personnel, had begun devising their own solution to the “Tutsi problem” – at this time moderate Hutus who supported the UN mandated ceasefire were also slated to be dealt with.

Trigger

President Habyarimana was killed when the plane carrying him was shot down by a suspected MANPAD while on approach to Kigali airport. Though no one has ever claimed responsibility for the assassination the speed and effectiveness for which the genocide was carried out strongly suggests that the assassination of the president was part of the Hutu extremists plan for genocide – *a cause that would give justification for the “people’s anger.”*

Within 24 hours of the President’s murder roadblocks were set up and manned (mostly by members of the *Interahamwe* [those who kill together] militia) all around the capital of Kigali. Tutsis were identified (while taller Hutus were also misidentified) and hacked to death with machetes. The killing was organized in shifts due to the physical nature of the killing. Those fortunate enough to pay often chose to die from a gunshot to the head. At the same time death-squads working from prepared lists went literally door-to-door killing known Hutus and Tutsi sympathizers.

Mechanics

Proof of concept actions had been undertaken from 1990 through 1994 via numerous smaller-scale massacres of Tutsis’ in which males were targeted almost exclusively as "potential" members of the insurgent RPF provided good COAs to model off of.

The genocide quickly spread out from the capital faster than the UN or any other observers could have imagined. Rwandan government controlled radio, the primary means of mass communication, television and print media openly encouraged Tutsis to congregate at churches, schools, and stadiums, stating that these would serve as places of refuge. All the while the same media outlets were given encouragement, direction and even lists of names to the death squads and mobs that were hunting for the very same Tutsis.

With the Tutsis clustered the job of killing was made that much easier. In fact the killing in Rwanda is seen as perhaps the most efficient killing mass killing operation *ever* utilized. The killing in Rwanda occurred nearly three times faster than that of the Holocaust, and with virtually no infrastructure or cost utilized to undertake it. This truly was mass slaughter on the cheap.

The genocide began with adult males being targeted almost exclusively before the number of women and children were increased in the later phases. A key component to the success of the genocide was the highly centralized nature of the Rwandan state (unparalleled anywhere except in other totalitarian state). The genocide happened *not* because the state was weak and unable to control its people but rather because the state *had* the capacity to make its people obey any order instantaneously.

Here is seen a break from the historical precedence of identification, transportation, housing, killing and finally disposal that takes time to set up before it can be implemented. In Rwanda the identification had already been done years prior under the Belgium administration and carried

over after independence. The transportation of the victims was done by the victims themselves (walking) to the areas that would house/hold them until they were to be killed.

The killing was done not only by members of the Rwandan Army but by the general public who were encouraged by their government with not only words but incentives such as rape, plunder, uniforms, money, food and alcohol etc. In fact the most efficient killers of the genocide had no government affiliation *prior* to the killing. The rank and file of the killer were drawn from the many of the young unemployed men (60% of the population being under the age of 20) that responded to the incentives offered by the government to kill and of the possibility of even more enrichment as the killing proceeded.

The whole operation was low tech – machetes, axes, hoes, clubs and knives required the involvement of a large proportion of the Hutu population, again a break in tradition in which the killings were public as opposed to the methods employed by Nazi Germany or the USSR in which the concentration camps were deliberately located away from the public. Videotapes of the killings show that it generally took three or more killers to hack to death a single victim. The government organizers who wanted to implicate as many people in the killing as possible did this deliberately.

The operation required virtually no logistical trail to support the killing operations (fuel, food, ammunition, weapons, etc.) or hazardous material to contend with such as Sarin gas (Iraqi Kurds) or Zyklon B (Holocaust). Bodies were simply left where they were slaughtered, burned in open pits or thrown into open pits and rivers.

Indicators and Warnings were numerous leading up to the genocide, and in fact the UNAMIR ground commander, Canadian MG Roméo Dallaire sent an urgent message to the UN headquarters in which he detailed the Hutu plans and proposed to raid these weapons caches to be used by the militia. All of his messages that warned of the impending doom were politely received and only assurances of support and requests to insure that the situation did not escalate.

The response given by the UN was eerily similar to the one given to LTC Karremans that the action proposed went well beyond the mandate entrusted to UNAMIR. Once again an on-scene commander was told in essence to sit tight and wait for the “situation to develop” even though the threat to not only civilians but to the UN peacekeepers themselves was very real and very imminent. All the intelligence that MG Dallaire had become a reality within three months; he had the will, the UN did not, and hundreds of thousands died because of that.

Why a Code of Conduct is Important

What happened to the small detachment of Belgian soldiers assigned to protect the moderate Hutu Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana and his Canadian wife highlight the essential importance of soldiers obeying a Code of Conduct (which sets a minimum of standard of what is expected of a U.S. soldier regardless of the mission he is serving) and the insistence that junior leaders have the ability to make sound tactical decisions based on their assessment of the current situation. The Belgium detachment was surrounded and asked what they were to do – the answer given was to surrender. It is widely assessed that if given freedom of action that would

not have been the desired Endstate). Once the detachment surrendered they were arrested, disarmed, tortured, and murdered via machete. This act caused an immediate uproar in Belgium to have their troops withdrawn immediately – an act that the Hutus had hoped for and had expected. Had the Belgium commander had something like the Code of Conduct to fall back on as a testament of national will (regardless of the mission), and have a baseline of behavior (conduct) for a quasi-form of a commander's intent in which to base his decisions. This is not to say that had the detachment not surrendered they would have survived, but as incidents bore out, *had* they resisted the Hutus would have gone after easier targets. It would have made the Hutus earn the blood they spilt. Incidentally, there were cases in which Tutsis that were able to hold off large mobs of Hutus by simply fighting back with similar weapons – even stick and stones – and were only driven back (and many killed) only when the Rwandan the army arrived with rifles and machineguns.

Both the Hutu and the Tutsi thought of the UNAMIR with little more than contempt. Soon after the signing of the Arusha Accords Rwandan's, and the world watched UN peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Somalia being humiliated by their inability to act either on behalf of those it was charged to protect or even themselves. With the memory of the Somalia debacle still fresh the Hutus were aware of how the UN could respond, and knowing that the UNAMIR mission had a far more restrictive mandate, and an even far more restrictive ROE than Somalia, the Hutus knew that the UN peacekeepers were allowed to use force only when directly threatened - and even in this capacity the force was woefully ill equipped.

Recruitment

In Kigali the *Interahamwe* tended to recruit mostly among the poor and as soon as they killings began the militia was soon aided by a group of even poorer people – street children, the homeless and criminals – all of which saw the genocide as a financial windfall to be taken advantage of. The genocide in Rwanda also had an element of social/class warfare involved in which the poorest of the poor were encouraged to take revenge on socially powerful people as long as they were on the “wrong” side. Here one could steal, murder, rape, eat and drink for free while doing these vile acts. The political aims were unimportant to their overriding pursuit of financial gain. But it was not only young men who participated in the killings, though they did provide the bulk of the “muscle” needed.

A study by African Rights in 1995 highlighted the unusual high number of females involved in the genocide. The organization reported

“A substantial number of women, and even girls, were involved in the slaughter in countless ways, inflicting extraordinary cruelty on other women, as well as children and men. Women of every social category took part in the killings. ... The extent to which women were involved in the killings is unprecedented anywhere in the world. The architects of the holocaust sought to implicate as much of the population as possible, including women and even children. ... Women and girls in their teens joined the crowds that surrounded churches, hospitals and other places of refuge. Wielding machetes and nail-studded clubs, they excelled as "cheerleaders" of the genocide. They entered churches, schools, football stadiums and hospitals to finish off the wounded,

hacking women, children and even men to death. Some women have been accused of killing or betraying their own husbands and children. Above all, women and girls stripped the dead - and the barely living - stealing their jewelry, money and clothes. Other women told the killers where people were hiding. Some women, including a nun currently hiding in Belgium, provided the petrol with which people were burnt alive. There is no evidence that women were more willing to give refuge to the hunted than men. Some mothers and grandmothers even refused to hide their own Tutsi children and grandchildren. Some women forced out people taken in by their husbands. Many nurses at the CHK Hospital in Kigali and at Butare's University Hospital gave the militia and soldiers lists of patients, colleagues and refugees to be killed.”

Response

As soon as the genocide started the RPF made an organized effort to take Kigali and halt the killing while their forces inside the capital protected some neighborhoods. On July 4, 1994, Kigali fell to the RPF and by July 18th the genocide ended. What followed was a massive exodus of Hutus into neighboring countries, mainly Zaire.

Because of the purely chaotic nature of the actual genocide the total number of people killed is believed to be around 800,000 people. This includes about 750,000 Tutsis and approximately 50,000 politically moderate Hutus who did not support the genocide.

At the onset international leaders and policymakers in Belgium, U.S., France and the UN refused to use the word genocide when speaking of Rwanda either out of perverse belief that by not mentioning it the horror would go away, or more likely – by calling it what it was they would then be obligated to have to deal with it.

Reports from UNAMIR within the first 24-hours (and in the days prior to) indicated they knew that an organized plan of genocide was at work. What is even sadder is that UNAMIR, though under strength, was more than up to the task (equipment and training) to confront the killers and save lives simply by disrupting the killing campaign at its central and most essential point, Kigali – as well as shutting down the national radio and television transmitters. However, what UNAMIR, and those contingents lacked from their national governments, was the *will* to act decisively and protect the lives of innocent civilians.

The one thing the UN soldiers were just barely able to do was to perform missions of immediate concern to their national governments (without providing additional forces to help bolster their forces to carry out these missions) and stopping genocide in its opening stages.

- Belgium – removing its peacekeepers after the debacle with the Prime Minister.
- U.S. - avoiding committing resources to a crisis remote from U.S. concerns.
- France - protecting its client, the Hutu government, and its influence in the Francophone area of Africa.
- U.N. – ironically by doing nothing the leadership was *hoping* to prevent another disaster and yet created not only a horrible public relations disaster and a failed peacekeeping mission but led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands.

Aftermath

The effects of the genocide and reprisals will remain with Rwandans for generations, and likely fuel future massacres. Extremists on both sides believe that the only solution is the complete annihilation of the other.

East Timor



East Timor may have the dubious distinction of having one of the longest prolonged policies of pogroms than any other nation and the *least* amount of concern from the international community until just recently. East Timor is a small half-island that was annexed by Indonesia in 1975 and the ongoing policy of suppressing the pro-independence movement has cost approximately 200,000 lives according to Amnesty International, while the Indonesian government places the number of killed between 1975-1999 at 100,000.

Background

East Timor had been a colony of Portugal for 400 years but in 1974 a clique of leftist military officers lead a coup that overthrew the Portuguese dictator Marcelo Caetano in Lisbon. One of the first announcements by the new Portuguese government was that the remaining colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bassau, and East Timor would be granted independence.

In the run up to independence two rival political parties formed on East Timor, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) and the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT). By early 1975 these two parties had formed a coalition government. However, independence was never realized because Indonesia was able to get the UDK to back out of their earlier agreement, and the UDT was convinced that any government led by the FRETILIN would be perceived as a threat by Indonesia attempted to take control and failed. The FRETILIN, supported by the majority of the people ousted the UDT over the border into Indonesian controlled West Timor.

Using this action as a pretext to “stabilize” the situation Indonesia invaded East Timor in December 1975. During the invasion the bulk of East Timor's population fled into the mountains until months of starvation and aerial bombardment forced most to return and settle in towns controlled by the Indonesian army (ABRI). Since that time regular military offenses have been launched often displacing large numbers of civilians but have met with little to no resistance from the international community, to include the U.S.

In 1989 Indonesia finally allowed outsiders such as tourists, journalists, and businesses and even Pope John Paul II to visit the island, who did nothing to encourage the East Timorese to continue their quest for independence, but his mere presence in, made the media focus some attention to East Timor.

This public relations move turned out to be a disaster for the Indonesians as pro-independence groups used every opportunity to get their message out to the world. Western journalists sensing that there was a good story here began traveling to East Timor to further investigate and report on conditions there. By this time the Indonesian government aware that opening up East Timor now looked for a way to close it up once again.

Trigger

It is impossible to say with complete certainty what single event led to the large-scale slaughter in East Timor in the beginning of September 1999. What is known is that the stage was being set as far back as 1997 when the Indonesian economy devastated by the collapse of its currency and riots and looting began breaking out across the country by early 1998. The International Monetary Fund offered to shore up the economy but only if given assurances that the corrupt practices that had made the Indonesian economy so susceptible to collapse would be fixed.

In August 1998, a plan was presented to grant East Timor greater autonomy. A UN envoy visited in December, and reports began to surface that the government of Indonesia was finally negotiating in earnest to find a permanent solution for East Timor. This announcement of impending independence inspired bands of pro-integration militias, those who wished for East Timor to remain Indonesian and their supporters in the Indonesian National Army (TNI), to launch raids from West Timor into East Timor to terrorize the populace and kill the leaders of the independence movement.

To ensure a safe and secure environment for the upcoming elections the UN provided unarmed election observers who quickly reported that the situation could descend into mass slaughter and lawlessness if the militias were not confronted and those seeking independence won. In response the UN asked that the number of Indonesian security personnel be *increased* even with the clear indicators that the Indonesian military and militias would respond with violence to independence.

Incredibly the UN asked the same organizations that were arming and providing sanctuary for the militias to provide assistance in the registration of voters and to ensure that violence would *not* happen. In effect, what the UN did was guarantee that violence would occur and unwittingly assisted those elements within the Indonesian government to draw up evacuation plans for their officials on the east side of the island and also identify others for future killings. All the while the number of arms caches for the militias steadily increased.

Mechanics

On August 31, 1999, East Timorese went to the polls to vote for autonomy within Indonesia or fully independence; when the votes were counted 79% had elected for full independence. On September 2nd widespread violence erupted throughout East Timor, the U.N. and the international community were utterly ill equipped, and initially unwilling, to confront decisively the actions of the militias and their supporters.

When these results were made public, the Indonesian Army implemented its pre-planned operation to wipe out the pro-independence movement titled “Operation Global Clean-Sweep”. The plan focused on maintaining Indonesian control over the entire island.

The initial focus of the pogroms was the political elite who opposed the Indonesian government, such as members of the FETILIN, Roman Catholic clergy, journalists, teachers and all those who *actively* supported the independence movement (though this classification would widen to include anyone *suspected* of supporting pro-independence). The killing looked similar to what had occurred in both Rwanda and Bosnia in which neighbor turned on neighbor, and the response by the UN was even weaker.

The Indonesian authorities had prepared lists to work from that indicated an accurate census, demographics and addresses of all those of voting age (17 and older), an age grouping that happened to correspond closely to that of “military-aged-males” (16-65) prepared by the UN to support the election. Since the Indonesians were providing the bulk of the actual security in East Timor this facilitated the planting and stockpiling of caches to be used by the militias and afford the Indonesians to conveniently turn a blind eye to the violence around them.

As in all previous genocides, the Indonesians did separate their victims by gender, with the vast majority being male. But to say that the actions by the Indonesians were gender specific would be grossly inaccurate because the militias made it a policy of killing the entire families of suspected FETILIN members. Sometimes if the Indonesians were unable to verify an identity they would simply kill the individual in order to ensure success.

A TTP reportedly used by the Indonesians seems to have been borrowed from the Serbs who had used with such devastating effect in and around Srebrenica and that was luring civilians out of hiding by masquerading as UN observers. Other times the Indonesian authorities were quite open about their intentions and would arrive at a village and detain individuals for “registration” and transport them away, never to be seen again. *The Sydney Morning Herald* provided a glimpse into such an operation in a report:

“..the victims were mostly men taken on September 8 from villages near Passabe, identified by Indonesian authorities as pro-independence strongholds. According to accounts from independence supporters, between 52 and 56 men were marched across the nearby border into West Timor for registration. Their hands were then bound with palm twine and they were marched a short distance back into East Timor where they were executed...”

The Indonesians also established detention centers or what were labeled refugee camps inside West Timor, to which much of the East Timorese population who had been detained were soon deposited. However, these refugee camps lacked any sizable presence of men, a fact that was commented on by Canada’s ambassador. However, the Indonesians maintained an effective news blackout on the western side of the island, so much of the reporting had to be released via diplomatic channels, a process that is not always guaranteed.

The news blackout on the eastern side of the island was not in effect and it wasn't long before the reports began circulating of the militias implementing a policy of forcing a village population into the marketplace to make forced evacuations into West Timor and the refugee camps, while using gang rape and abduction of women to be sex-slaves as a means to "break" the population.

With the presence of the UN and the international media the Indonesians were unable to perform the mass area bombardment that had been able to employ in the past, and the unreliable nature of the militias meant that the well designed plan did not move as quickly or as efficiently as had been planned. One aspect of the plan that did work well was the disposal of the victims. Unlike massacres in Bosnia and in other places many of the victims in East Timor were not consigned to mass graves on shore but rather dumped in large numbers out at sea.

The Indonesians had taken careful and systematic attempts to destroy as much evidence as possible so to deny the sheer size of the slaughter and to obstruct the level of government culpability when the inevitable UN investigations into the atrocities began.

Give Those on the Ground the Proper Tools

The initial contingent of UN observers was inappropriate for the task given. It was widely known that violence was going to occur despite the voting results and the UN's refusal to acknowledge this fact and to place ones personnel in a position in which they have no means to defend themselves.

Recruitment

What is known of the militias employed by the Indonesian government is mostly from secondhand accounts by journalists, activists, and aid workers who were in East Timor in late 1998 and early 1999. Over 20 militia groups were established and active inside East Timor during this time, some of which had been established as far back as the 1970s by the Indonesian military and police forces (ABRI), and were still partially funded and equipped by Indonesia.

The Indonesian government stated that it recruited and trained members of these groups as unarmed "village guards" meant to keep the peace. However, many of the militia leaders bragged to their victims that they were an extension of the TNI. The militias are mostly East Timorese who, for want of power or economic favor, have enlisted to kill their neighbors. While in West Timor, militia groups recruited among the criminal gangs in places like Kupang, Atambua and as far away as Jakarta (Indonesia's capital). There are reports of people and entire villages being coerced into joining militia groups on the pain of death. What has been reported in open-sources the vast majority of the militia members seem to be very willing accomplices in the violence.

The mission of these militias is very straightforward - to disrupt any progress towards achieving a *peaceful* political solution in East Timor. And it is possible that another reason for the militias creation, and if true is than one of the worst managed IO campaigns, is to give the international community the impression that the East Timorese are equally divided on the issue of independence.

Response

The difficulty arises in part from the unwillingness of the international community, particularly the UN, to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into the atrocities. The UN's initial efforts were woefully inadequate for what was being undertaken. Finally, in September 1999 the Australian-led International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) arrived and soon after the overt presence of the Indonesian forces began to quickly diminish.

The Indonesians and their militias now confronted by a professional and competent military force found that the Australians soldiers, though serving under the auspices of the UN, would engage if threatened.

Aftermath

The events that took place in East Timor between September and October 1999 have never been claimed by the UN to be "genocide" in nature, even though it fits within that organizations own definition. Such a refusal to name what occurred in East Timor, as genocide may simply be part of the UN to avoid any criticism for what did occur and prevent them from having to take a stand and use violence in order to save lives in the future.

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Army Special Operations Command, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

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