

Land Warfare Studies Centre

Working Paper No. 131

REVISITING COUNTERINSURGENCY:

**A MANOEUVRIST RESPONSE TO THE
'WAR ON TERROR' FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN ARMY**

by

Lieutenant Colonel John Blaxland

July 2006

© Commonwealth of Australia 2006

This work is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of study, research, criticism or review (as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*), and with standard source credit included, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Inquiries should be directed to the Director, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Ian Campbell Road, Duntroon ACT 2600.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-In-Publication Entry

Blaxland, J. C. (John Charles), 1963- .
Revisiting counterinsurgency : a manoeuvrist response to
the War on Terror for the Australian Army.

ISBN 978 0 64229 642 9.

ISBN 0 642 29642 1.

1. Counterinsurgency - Australia. 2. War on Terror, 2001- . 3. Operational readiness (Military science). 4. Australia - Military policy. I. Land Warfare Studies Centre (Australia). II. Title. (Series : Working paper (Land Warfare Studies Centre (Australia)) ; no. 131).

355.0218

Land Warfare Studies Centre Working Papers

ISSN 1441-0389

Working papers produced by the Land Warfare Studies Centre are vehicles for initiating, encouraging or nurturing professional discussion and debate concerning the application of land warfare concepts and capabilities to the security of Australia and its interests. Working papers, by their nature, are not intended to be definitive.

Series Editor: *Scott Hopkins*

About the Author

John Blaxland is a serving officer in the Australian Army. Born in Chile, he is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, the Royal Thai Army Command and Staff College, the University of New South Wales (BA Honours), Australian National University (MA in History) and the Royal Military College of Canada (PhD in War Studies). He has served in staff, instructional and intelligence postings with the Australian Army, including as 3rd Brigade Intelligence Officer for the deployment to East Timor in 1999 and exchange officer at the US Defense Intelligence Agency, where he was awarded a US Meritorious Service Medal. His publications include: *Organising an Army: The Australian Experience, 1957–1965* (1989); *Signals, Swift and Sure: A History of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals, 1947–1972* (1999); *Information Era Manoeuvre: The Australian Led Mission to East Timor* (2002); and *Strategic Cousins: Canadian and Australian Expeditionary Forces and the British and American Empires* (2006).

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the comments and assistance received from David Kilcullen, Anthony Bubalo, Peter Clay, David Schmidtchen, David Bolton, Mark O'Neill, Malcolm McGregor, Steven Noble, Frank Milne, Marcus Fielding, Don Carpenter, Scott Hopkins and David Goyne.

Disclaimer

The views expressed are the author's and not necessarily those of the Australian Army or the Department of Defence. The Commonwealth of Australia will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in this publication.

Land Warfare Studies Centre

The Australian Army established the LWSC in July 1997 through the amalgamation of several existing staffs and research elements.

The charter of the LWSC is to promote the wider understanding and appreciation of land warfare; provide an institutional focus for applied research into the use of land power by the Australian Army; and raise the level of professional and intellectual debate within the Army. The LWSC fulfils these roles through a range of internal reports and external publications; a program of conferences, seminars and debates; and contributions to a variety of professional, academic and community forums. Additional information on the centre may be found on the Internet at <http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/>.

Comment on this working paper is welcome and should be forwarded in writing to:

The Director
Land Warfare Studies Centre
Ian Campbell Road
DUNTROON ACT 2600
Australia

Telephone: (02) 6265 9890
Facsimile: (02) 6265 9888
Email: <lwsc.publications@defence.gov.au>

ABSTRACT

The paper addresses an emerging awareness of counterinsurgency in the Australian context. This work also is cautionary; arguing that the Army and the wider Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs more careful thought on doctrine, appropriate training and associated operational ability. Reflecting on the Australian Army's heritage in the realm of counterinsurgency, it looks at emerging trends in the public discourse on the 'war on terror' and examines how Australia's traditional allies are developing doctrine in reaction to those trends. With this understanding, recommendations are made for a response by the Australian Army.

The proposed response involves a concept of manoeuvre to address an information-era insurgency that is complex and global, with common threads, but distinctive local determinants. The argument made here is that the Australian Army is presented with a unique challenge best managed in a whole-of-government context and in a way that is culturally attuned, responsive to local nuances that motivate insurgents and terrorists, and designed to generate lasting effects. That response also presents considerable challenges for Australia's combat-arms focused land force, but capitalises on the Army's manoeuvrist disposition.

INTRODUCTION

Time to Reconsider the ‘War on Terror’

The term ‘war on terror’ has been criticised as being an inappropriate description—of a war against a method, rather than against a specific adversary.¹ The term ‘war on terror’ is ambiguous. For analysts, this obscures the nature of the task and obscures what needs to be done.² Furthermore, as the eminent British military strategist, Sir Lawrence Freedman, observed, ‘a general “war on terror” lacks political context. Terrorism may be a state of mind, but it is not a state, nor even a political movement.’³

Even the word ‘terrorist’ is value-laden. Richard Jackson has argued that it has helped to ‘normalise’ abusive behaviour and torture.⁴ Terrorism was initially used after the 11 September 2001 attacks, to give some definition to an uncertain enemy. But since these attacks a considerable body of work has emerged that addresses the nature of the threat being confronted and effectively redefines the nature of the ‘war on terror’ in terms of an insurgency.

¹ See for instance, Peter R. Neumann and M.L.R. Smith, ‘Strategic Terrorism: The Framework and its Fallacies’ in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, August 2005, p. 572.

² M.L.R. Smith, ‘Guerillas in the mist: reassessing strategy and low intensity warfare’ in *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, January 2003, pp. 22–24.

³ Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper, London, 2006, p. 45.

⁴ See Richard Jackson, ‘Explaining Torture in the War on Terrorism’, <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/politics/research/research_groups/cip/documents/Jacksonworkingpaper.pdf>, accessed 3 April 2006.

Structure

This paper embraces the Australian Army's heritage in the realm of counterinsurgency. In doing so, the paper describes a concept of manoeuvre for the Australian Army as it faces an information-era insurgency that is complex and global. This work also is cautionary; arguing that the Army and the wider ADF needs more careful thought on doctrine, appropriate training and associated operational ability. The paper addresses this matter in six parts.

Part One addresses the definitions of terrorism, Islamism and insurgency, and considers the blurring of boundaries between terrorism and insurgency from the tactical domain up to the national. Part Two addresses an emerging awareness of counterinsurgency in the Australian context, particularly as reflected in recent doctrine and conceptual development. Part Three examines some historical lessons on counterinsurgency, with emphasis on the Malayan and Vietnam experience. Part Four looks at emerging trends in the public discourse on counterinsurgency, highlighting the global and complex nature of today's environment. Part Five examines how Australia's traditional allies are developing doctrine on counterinsurgency. The final section, Part Six, recommends an Australian Army response that is manoeuvrist in a way suitable for the information age for what is emerging as a complex global counterinsurgency.

PART ONE

Definitions

This paper argues that it is important to re-define the ‘war on terror’ as a campaign against multiple linked insurgencies that are wide-reaching and complex. Numerous scholars have written about ‘small wars’, ‘guerrilla wars’ and ‘small wars of peace’ often as being synonymous with insurgency. In fact, the term ‘guerilla’ is a Spanish term for ‘little war’, drawn from the anti-French insurgency by the Spanish, where hit-and-run tactics were employed by lightly armed groups during the Napoleonic wars.⁵ What follows in this section is a consideration of current and relevant definitions of terrorism, Islamism (in its various forms), insurgency and counterinsurgency. Part One concludes with a consideration of the blurring of domains that make difficult the separate management of counterinsurgency in terms of tactical versus national or strategic aspects, as well as the domestic police and security aspects versus the military aspects.

Terrorism

Australian and allied military doctrine describes terrorism as ‘the use or threatened use of violence for political ends, or any use or threatened use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or

⁵ Significant works in the field of such small wars include: Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy*, republished by Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2004 (1961); Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2nd edn, Potomac Books, Washington DC, 2005; Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice*, reprint, Brassey, London, 2002 (1965); Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: state, society, and the failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003; David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 2005 (1964); and Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, Basic Books, NY, 2002.

any section of the public in fear.’⁶ Another definition describes terrorism as ‘violence that primarily targets non-combatants.’ Such definitions rightly point to the primacy of the police as the domestic response force of choice.

A risk inherent in favouring the term ‘terrorism’—and in grouping all related activity as part of the ‘war on terror’—is that it leads to what Australian military scholar, David Kilcullen, describes as ‘aggregation’. That is, ‘lumping together all terrorism, rogue or failed states and all strategic competitors’.⁷ The danger with this approach, he argues, is in creating a bigger problem than can be handled. Even a superpower working in coalition may struggle to muster the resources necessary to cope with the breadth of prospective strategic competitors, thus ‘creating the potential for overstretch, exhaustion of popular will and, and ultimate failure.’⁸ Clearly, to avoid such an outcome, a sound appreciation of what is at stake must be made.

As one writer observed, ‘we should think carefully about the way we use descriptions like “low intensity conflict”, “terrorism” and “guerilla warfare”, and ask ourselves whether these terms really assist us in aiding our comprehension of the source and direction of many of these important conflicts?’⁹ Yet ‘the elemental truth is that ... in the end, there is only really one meaningful category of war and that is *war* itself.’ Real war is not simply about the crude employment of military might but is a more calculating environment.¹⁰ In the age of instant global communications, war is subject to unprecedented scrutiny. In response, this scrutiny demands far more considered and carefully

⁶ Department of Defence, Chief Information Officer Group, *The Australian Defence Glossary*, <<http://dlms.dcb.defence.gov.au/>>, accessed 6 April 2006.

⁷ David Kilcullen, ‘Countering Global Insurgency’, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, August 2005, p. 608.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Smith, ‘Guerillas in the mist’, p. 20.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 34.

crafted multifaceted military strategies. This is especially true for liberal democracies, which are constrained by the world's system of conventions, treaties and protocols concerning the use of force—although authoritarian or rogue states appear not to be as 'vulnerable' to such concerns. To be successful, such military strategies must be well informed about the intricate nature of today's Islamism.

Islamism

Islamic scholar Cheryl Bernard's book, *Five Pillars of Democracy*, outlines what she sees as the rival versions of Islam (summarised in Annex A) that should be viewed as segments on a continuum, rather than divergent categories.¹¹ Bernard's categories form the basis for suggested points of action (discussed below). But her views also contrast with those outlined in the International Crisis Group (ICG) report *Understanding Islamism*. According to the ICG report, the 'terrorists' usually referred to when discussing this pre-eminent challenge have tended to be lumped together as Islamists, branding them as radical and treating them as hostile. 'That approach', the report argues, 'is fundamentally misconceived.'¹²

According to the ICG, Islamism—or Islamic activism [treated by the ICG as synonymous]—has a number of very different streams. Only 'a few of them violent and only a small minority justifying a confrontational response.' The ICG's main streams are outlined in Annex B (Shiite, Sunni, political, missionary and jihadi). But that which justifies such a confrontational response, they argue, is the Islamic armed struggle (*al-jihad*), which exists in three main

¹¹ Cheryl Bernard, *Five Pillars of Democracy: How the West Can Promote an Islamic Reformation*, RAND, Spring 2004 downloaded from <<http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/spring2004/pillars.html>>.

¹² International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism*, Middle East/North Africa Report No. 37, 2 March 2005 downloaded from <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3300&l=1>> on 18 April 2006, p. i.

variants: internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious); irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and global (combating the West). The characteristic jihadist actor is, of course, the fighter (*al-mujahid*).¹³ Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy offer another, complimentary perspective.¹⁴ They argue that the group of most concern is an ‘ultra-violent element of the ‘salafist neo-fundamentalists’, which emerges from the teachings of the activist Sunni sect dominant in Saudi Arabia colloquially referred to as the Wahhabi.¹⁵

Many such writers recognise what is being termed ‘Wahhabi-Salafism’ as the ideological underpinning of much of today’s international terrorism.¹⁶ Such religious hard-liners, Mary Habeck observes, see the Qur’an supporting the view that true *jihad* is warfare. Habeck further contends that ‘these extremists explicitly appeal to the holy texts (the Qur’an and the *sunna*¹⁷ as laid down in the *haddith*¹⁸) to show that their actions are justified.¹⁹ Yet, as Arabic

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See Anthony Bubalo & Greg Fealy, *Joining the caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*, Lowy Institute Paper 05, Sydney, 2005.

¹⁵ Wahabbism is named after the Arabian Islamic preacher Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1787) who made a pact with Muhammad Ibn Sa‘ud, the founder of the Saudi dynasty. Wahhabism is an Islamic creed having its origins in Saudi Arabia. The term ‘Wahhabi’ is one of derision and no Wahhabi calls themselves as such, preferring instead the term salafist (a reference to salaf as-salih, the pious forefathers—the first three generation after the prophet whose approach to Islam salafists seek to emulate). Author’s correspondence with Anthony Bubalo, 18 April 2006.

¹⁶ For a discussion on the resourcing and export of Wahhabi extremism see, for instance, Bubalo & Fealy, *Joining the caravan?*; Gerald Posner, *Secrets of the Kingdom: The Inside Story of the Saudi-U.S. Connection*, Random House, New York, 2005. See also Vincenzo Olivetti, *Terror’s Source: the Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and its Consequences*, Amadeus Books, Birmingham, 2002.

¹⁷ That is, what is recorded of the Prophet’s actions.

¹⁸ That is, the sayings of the Prophet.

scholar, Vincenzo Olivetti, explains, the Wahhabi-Salafist ideology ‘is a completely and radically different culture, mentality and religion than that of traditional Islam’: it is ‘aggressive and repressive’, and the Wahhabi-Salafists exercise a disproportionate and growing influence worldwide.²⁰ That influence, according to Posner, stretches to funding mosques, including, for instance, several hundred in Malaysia and Indonesia.²¹ The Wahhabi-Salafist view is that the Qur’an mandates ‘peace with the infidel is ultimately not possible’, although temporary truces are allowable.²²

Scholars such as Robert M. Cassidy contend that al-Qaeda’s ‘overarching aim is to supplant the Westphalian secular state system with a medieval caliphate system based on an extreme interpretation of Islam.’²³ The foci in this struggle, argues Cassidy, are generally the indigenous populations in the belt running from North Africa across the ‘arc of instability’ to the ‘Islamic frontiers’ of Indonesia and the Philippines. There the well-funded Wahhabi-Salafist version of Islam is being preached, with its refutation of the liberal notion of ‘greater *jihad*’ as merely a personal struggle.²⁴

Others, such as Bubalo, are more downbeat about the intrinsic level of international orchestration.²⁵ Bubalo and Fealy compellingly argue instead that ‘Wahhabism is not monolithic’²⁶ and ‘most of the

¹⁹ See Mary Habeck, *Knowing the enemy: ideology and the war on terror*, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 2006, p. 3.

²⁰ Olivetti, *Terror’s Source*, p. 43.

²¹ Posner, *Secrets of the Kingdom*, p. 172; and Olivetti, *Terror’s Source*, p. 61.

²² Record, ‘Why the Strong Lose’, p. 340.

²³ Cassidy, ‘Feeding Bread to the Luddites’, p. 339.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See Bubalo & Fealy, *Joining the caravan?*

²⁶ Bubalo argues that with Saudi forms of salafism there are many currents—some of the quietist focused exclusively on issues of religiosity, while others have used it as a justification for a focus on

people who began al-Qaeda were veterans of failed insurgencies against local government and then decided to launch a campaign against the West or as it was termed ‘the far enemy’.²⁷ Indeed most of the local jihadist groups in North Africa rejected and have continued to reject affiliation with al-Qaeda's global aims.’ Bubablo further contends:

claims that al-Qaeda has an overarching aim need to be treated with great suspicion. If you read statements attributed to bin Laden over the years the ‘causes’ of his actions have evolved from the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia and sanctions on Iraq to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and more recently the war in the Iraq. If there is a theme it is that what al-Qaeda is doing and encouraging other Muslims to do is to strike back at the West.²⁸

The fact that the definitions vary from one authority to another is symptomatic of how an understanding of the nature of the insurgency depends on how the matter is viewed. Nonetheless, the core elements involved in global terrorism and insurgency include what Bernard describes as ‘radical fundamentalists’, Bubalo and Fealy refer to as ‘ultra-violent salafist neo-fundamentalists’ and the ICG describes as ‘jihadis’. An understanding of these varying definitions is important to help define the threat and contextualise extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and its fellow-traveller organisations. After all, the strategy to address internal or irredentist jihadism will vary from that best suited for dealing with global jihadism.

This brief review of Islamism shows that despite the commonalities between the various insurgent groups loosely associated with the notion of a caliphate, there are significant local variants, working to different local agendas. These local distinctive characteristics mean that sweeping generalisations about the nature of today’s insurgency

violent jihad. Author’s correspondence with Anthony Bubalo, 18 April 2006.

²⁷ Author’s correspondence with Anthony Bubalo, 18 April 2006.

²⁸ Ibid.

as being a simple uni-dimensional threat from Wahhabi proselytisers are hard to justify. In reality, the threat is multifaceted and widespread, pointing to an unprecedented degree of complexity for respondents, or counterinsurgents, and suggesting that extant definitions need further consideration.

Insurgency

Many of today's so-called terrorists have articulated a rationale that is more accurately described by the term insurgency. Insurgency is defined in the Australian Defence Glossary as 'an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through subversion and armed conflict.'²⁹ Most recently, NATO³⁰ and ABCA³¹ study groups have proposed slightly different definitions to recognise the transnational nature of insurgencies and their often varying and limited objectives. Accordingly: 'Insurgency is a competition involving at least one non-state movement using means that include violence against an established authority to achieve political change.'³²

Eminent American scholar on insurgencies, Bard O'Neill, defines insurgency most broadly. He sees insurgency, 'as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities' in which the insurgent consciously uses *political resources* (including organisational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.³³ Insurgency, he argues, manifests itself in forms of warfare including

²⁹ Department of Defence, Chief Information Officer Group, *The Australian Defence Glossary*, <<http://dlms.dcb.defence.gov.au/>>, accessed 6 April 2006.

³⁰ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

³¹ That is, the American, British, Canadian, Australian Armies' Standardisation Program.

³² Definition as developed by a counterinsurgency study group during USMC Joint Urban Warrior 2005, as cited in draft Canadian counterinsurgency doctrine.

³³ O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 15.

guerilla warfare, terrorism, rebellions, revolutions, uprisings and the like. Using this broad definition, he argues that insurgency has probably been the most prevalent type of armed conflict since the creation of organised political communities. It remains a central feature of the international landscape and the pre-eminent national security challenge for the first decade of this century.³⁴

The definition of insurgency clearly points to the role of the ADF, and in particular the Army, as the response force of choice. Recently, the Australian Army has addressed this form of warfare through its ‘future’ concepts known as ‘Complex Warfighting’ and ‘Control Operations’ (discussed below), but it has not devoted much effort to address this kind of insurgency specifically.

Conversely, counterinsurgency is defined as ‘those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civil actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.’³⁵ Such an inclusive notion presents considerable challenges to Army in terms of inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation and coordination. Eliot Cohen observed that ‘democracies handle the ambiguity of such conflicts very poorly.’³⁶ Indeed, in a multicultural country like Australia, with some postmodernist influences (that tend to deprecate the need for armed forces and warfighting skills), grappling with the implications of this kind of insurgency is not done easily. But counterinsurgency is one of the inherent tasks of the Australian Army that must be fully understood and prepared for.

In addition, counterinsurgency today is predominantly referred to in the context of supporting another foreign government—usually a

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 1, 33 & 199.

³⁵ Department of Defence, Chief Information Officer Group, *The Australian Defence Glossary*, < <http://dlms.dcb.defence.gov.au/> >, accessed 6 April 2006.

³⁶ Eliot Cohen, ‘Looks Like War’, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 16 October 2000, cited in Smith, ‘Guerillas in the mist’, p. 36.

weak one that has to be strengthened in the process—prior to the exit of foreign assistance forces. This is a different context to counterinsurgency during the colonial era and the Cold War—arguably a lot more difficult to carry out successfully.³⁷ David Kilcullen offers a useful alternative definition of counterinsurgency handy for the military practitioner: ‘in a nutshell this is a competition with the insurgent for the right and ability to win the hearts, minds and acquiescence of the population.’³⁸

This definition points to a key observation about the nature of counterinsurgency: popular perception is more important than firepower. For an Army that considers itself able to ‘punch above its weight’, infused with a firepower-focused combined-arms approach to military operations, this is a sobering rejoinder that merits close scrutiny. Indeed, it is supported by the findings of General Sir Rupert Smith, who recently argued that in today’s wars ‘information is the currency and firepower is the supporting activity.’³⁹ The implications of this for the structuring and conceptual posture of the Australian Army are far-reaching.

The Australian Army’s experience on operations abroad since the Second World War supports the contention that, given the relative lack of interstate war and the proliferation of violent sub-state actors, insurgency and civil wars constitute the dominant pattern of warfare over the past fifty years. This, it can be argued, represents the norm, in effect making unconventional warfare the convention.⁴⁰ This is not to say, as Martin van Creveld once argued in *The Transformation of War*, that conventional war as we have known it

³⁷ Author’s discussions with Marcus Fielding, 6 April 2006.

³⁸ D.J. Kilcullen, ‘Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency’, 29 March 2006. See www.companycommander.com.

³⁹ Presentation by General Sir Rupert Smith (British Army, Retd), at the Australian Defence Force Academy on 5 April 2005.

⁴⁰ Smith, ‘Guerillas in the mist’, p. 30.

is at an end.⁴¹ The Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America provide a number of examples of inter-state warfare since the Second World War. Moreover, as Colin S. Gray observes, the option for inter-state war in South Asia, Central Asia, South-East Asia and North Asia ‘remains by no means negligible, although war in Europe probably is.’⁴² But as the *Defence Update 2005* observes, ‘Terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the consequences of state fragility and failure remain the most immediate strategic challenges for Australia.’⁴³

Notwithstanding recent events in the Middle East, this issue over what constitutes conventional warfare points to the need for counterinsurgency to be prominent in the Australian Army’s doctrinal development and conceptual thinking. The point is worth making because, like US military establishments since Vietnam, the Australian Army has also given the impression of being uncomfortable with the notion of counterinsurgency, favouring progressively: ‘defence of Australia’, ‘littoral environment’, ‘control operations’, and ‘complex warfighting’ concepts. Indeed, Australia’s success on relatively benign ‘peace-support’ operations in its immediate region in recent years may have bred a degree of overconfidence about its ability to address similar modern day stability operations such as counterinsurgency or conflict in general. Concern over this prospect suggests that a detailed reconsideration of the Australian Army’s ability to respond to counterinsurgency is overdue.

⁴¹ Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, The Free Press, NY, 1991.

⁴² Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, Orion, London, 2005.

⁴³ Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: a Defence Update 2005*, p. 2, <<http://www.defence.gov.au/publications.cfm>>, accessed on 15 March 2006.

Blurring Boundaries

Sceptics may react to the claim that a detailed reconsideration of the Army's capacity to conduct counterinsurgency is needed by pointing out that Australia does not face such a major existential threat as the term 'insurgency' suggests. After all, as Sir Lawrence Freedman observed, 'Jihadism is unlikely to prosper in functioning liberal democracies and efficient market economies.'⁴⁴ The sceptics might, therefore, argue that the threat faced internally is better defined simply as 'terrorism', carried out by a fringe element in society and that such a threat is best handled by police forces and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Without question, the internal challenges remain best managed by extant police and security organisations. But terrorism is no longer easily categorised as either internal or external, and as the definition of counterinsurgency suggests, there is a growing need for significant and close coordination. After all, in this multicultural information age, where the borders between 'terrorism' and 'war' are indistinct and where 'terrorists' cross physical and virtual boundaries, the confines of departmental and agency mandates are becoming increasingly hazy. This comes despite the establishment of the National Security Committee of Cabinet and the pre-eminent role given to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's National Security Division, at the expense of the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Australian Federal Police, for instance, is becoming more actively involved in managing external security concerns (particularly in partnership with South-East Asian security organisations), and the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO), including the Australian Army, is becoming increasingly involved in domestic counter-terrorism. This involvement includes Special Forces and 'incident response' teams, among others. This conflation of tasks is complicating traditional lines of authority, accountability and responsibility between these agencies. The vagueness of 'the war on terror' to describe the current state of conflict does not contribute to regaining clarity. Certainly, the

⁴⁴ Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, p. 48.

term ‘terrorism’ remains useful for describing individual actions, particularly in a domestic setting. But the complexity of the challenge being faced points to the need for a more holistic and expansive conception of the present international security circumstances.

In addition to the apparent blurring of responsibilities between agencies and departments, a new phenomenon has emerged that is associated with the instant and global access to media reports associated with the modern information era. This phenomenon is known in military circles as national-to-tactical integration (NTI). With NTI, the functions and capabilities that once were considered available only to the national or strategic level of command are now widely accessible to the most tactical and remote military sub-elements deployed on operations. This access is available because of the expansion of communications networks that make up what has been termed by the US armed forces as the ‘global information grid’. In fact, the concept of ‘network centric warfare’ is being implemented faster than many may realise, allowing so-called ‘reachback’ from the tactical domain as commanders (and even their subordinates) in the field can access national technical means of timely support. Conversely, the actions of not only corporals, but also privates in the field, operating at the lowest tactical level, can have strategic ramifications. Such actions complicate the conduct of operations for the field commanders and their political masters in Australia, thanks in particular to a ratings-obsessed and bad news-oriented media. These dynamics alter the traditional approach to combined-arms military operations for which most commanders train.

This heightened level of complexity has provided the Army with the impetus to develop its *Complex Warfighting* concept. This concept recognises that there is no such thing as ‘straight’ counterinsurgency, peace operations, stability operations, warfighting or any other single type of operation. Instead, every operation can be expected to include all of these elements. This is worth noting since *Complex*

Warfighting has had such an impact on the Army's current posture even though it is technically a future concept.⁴⁵ But recent developments make serious reconsideration of the Australian Army's posture concerning complex warfighting scenarios such as counterinsurgency a high priority task.

With these concerns over blurred domains and revisited definitions in mind, what follows is a review of developments in the field of insurgency studies. This includes military doctrinal developments in Australia and amongst its traditional allies, particularly the United States, Britain and Canada, where recent attempts at re-drafting counterinsurgency doctrine are featuring prominently. At first glance, it would appear that such efforts are being made on the run, capturing 'lessons' that appear to have short shelf lives. The complexity of the challenge being faced means there are no easy answers or uniform solutions to insurgencies.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, there is an obligation to strive for greater understanding to formulate the best response.

In reviewing these developments, it appears Australia, and particularly the Australian Army, needs to revisit its own counterinsurgency doctrine. Such a review is necessary particularly because, as the paper makes clear below, the challenges of today are far more complex and global than earlier Cold War insurgencies associated with decolonisation and communism. Indeed, Australian and allied policy documents are beginning to reflect an emerging awareness of these challenging new circumstances. What is more, the merging of the national and the tactical domains makes it difficult to segregate the 'lessons' on counterinsurgency that have tactical application from those that have strategic or national ramifications. What follows then is a review of emerging awareness in Australia on counterinsurgency.

⁴⁵ Author's discussions with David Kilcullen, 9 April 2006.

⁴⁶ See Ralph Peters, 'No Silver Bullets: Fighting the insurgency in Iraq', *Armed Forces Journal*, January 2006, pp. 36–9.

PART TWO

EMERGING AUSTRALIAN AWARENESS ON COUNTERINSURGENCY

Emerging Awareness

In its *Defence Update 2005*, the Australian Government made clear that ‘for the foreseeable future, it remains unlikely that Australia will face conventional military threats, but there is a continuing need to address current international security issues such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan.’⁴⁷ Therefore, counterinsurgency operations are widely recognised as presenting coalition forces with considerable challenges.

Shortly afterwards, and in contrast to previous reviews, the US *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* makes explicit that the current ‘long war’ is ‘irregular in its nature’ and involving ‘counterinsurgency’.⁴⁸ Similarly, the United States’ *National Security Strategy* (March 2006) highlights the need for better capabilities to respond in four categories, including ‘irregular challenges from state and non-state actors employing methods such as terrorism and insurgency.’⁴⁹ Such wording reflects trends emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan, with a number of military strategists and thinkers now writing about what is coming to be described as a ‘global’ or ‘complex counterinsurgency’. While officials still avoid the term, there is a growing body of work supporting the notion that the war on

⁴⁷ Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: a Defence Update 2005*, p. 2, <<http://www.defence.gov.au/publications.cfm>>, accessed on 15 March 2006.

⁴⁸ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR)*, Washington, 6 February 2006, p. 4.

⁴⁹ United States, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, March 2006, p. 44.

terror should be repositioned in terms of a global insurgency.⁵⁰ These developments are prompting much of the reconsideration of how armed forces should be postured in response. Indeed, with Australian forces deployed in both Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a clear imperative for the Army to remain up-to-date on developments in this domain.

In part because the culture of the Australian Army already is adaptive, it has been able to handle complex peace-support missions since the end of the Cold War. In fact, the Army's culture remains predisposed to adapt well to complex challenges symptomatic of a 'modern system' army. American military scholar, Stephen Biddle, has described 'the modern system' of military power as:

[a] tightly interrelated complex of cover, concealment, dispersion, suppression, small-unit independent maneuver, and combined arms at the tactical level, and depth, reserves, and differential concentration at the operational level of war. Taken together, these techniques sharply reduce vulnerability to even twenty-first century weapons and sensors ... Not everyone can master it, however. The modern system is extremely complex and poses painful political and social tradeoffs.⁵¹

The Australian Army is one of the few armies in the world that has mastered this system and that mastery has given it confidence in its ability. In reality, Ian McPhedran's use of the title *The Amazing SAS* for his recent book about this Australian Army Special Forces unit points to something he overlooked—that is, the SAS is amazing because its wellspring *is itself an amazing Army*.⁵² In turn, the mastery of the military profession (with its incumbent technology

⁵⁰ Sharon Behn, 'Terrorist growth Overtakes U.S. Efforts: Pentagon deputy warns of decades-long war', *The Washington Times*, 2 March 2006, p. 13. Behn cites Brig. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, the Pentagon's Deputy Director for the War on Terrorism, as saying 'it is not a global insurgency'.

⁵¹ Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004, p. 3.

⁵² Ian McPhedran, *The Amazing SAS*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 2005.

and precision firepower) in armies such as Australia's has generated the asymmetric response inherent in insurgencies. Indeed as an Australian Army officer, Mark O'Neill, has observed, 'insurgency is a natural human response to asymmetry.'⁵³ Arguably, the nimble-minded approach required for counterinsurgency operations is already a part of Australian military culture, particularly at the tactical level, because of Cold War experiences in places such as Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam. Yet little has been done recently to validate such an assertion, in part because of Australia's relative successes on (admittedly, mostly quite benign) operations in recent years.

Counterinsurgency Similarities with Australian Peace Support Operations

Following the resurgence of peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era, Australian forces responded admirably, gaining excellent reputations for their contributions in Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda. Closer to home, in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands, Australia's restrained, respectful and inclusive approach to the tasks at hand saw armed forces and other government and non-government agencies working together harmoniously. A prominent example of this was the Army's collaboration, particularly under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel John Frewen, with other government agencies in raising and deploying the 2003 Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The success of the more recent and geographically closer missions in particular can be attributed at least in part to the effective and attuned leadership provided by Australians.

Australia's deployment to East Timor in September 1999 was the most prominent reflection of this nimble 'manoeuvrist' approach. This was illustrated, for instance, in Major General Peter Cosgrove's application of the 'oil spot' strategy. This strategy involved extending controlled areas and asserting influence outwards from secure bases sited to

⁵³ Mark O'Neill, discussions with author, 6 April 2006.

dislocate and marginalise militia groups.⁵⁴ As applied in East Timor in September and October 1999, the strategy was in part a response to resource limitations, but it also was drawn from traditional counterinsurgency doctrine. Further, it reflects the implicit nexus between peace-support operations and counterinsurgency operations in the Australian military mindset. Today, however, there is debate over the relevance of ‘oil spot’ strategies for today’s insurgencies—a fact that points to the need for detailed re-consideration of counterinsurgency precepts.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, success in operations such as in East Timor flowed at least in part from the fact that, after having been strongly influenced by counterinsurgency experiences of a generation ago, the Army’s military culture is still predisposed to manage related ‘peacekeeping’ or ‘peace support’ tasks with a manoeuvrist mindset. This is the essence of the argument made in an earlier Working Paper on *Information Era Manoeuvre* in East Timor.⁵⁶ That manoeuvrist mindset has come to be encapsulated in what is called a ‘national effects-based approach’, drawing on American writings on ‘effects-based operations’.⁵⁷ That is just as well, for in the meantime little thought seems to have been given in Australian strategic thinking specifically to the relevance of counterinsurgency. Indeed, the 1999

⁵⁴ For instance, the force elements deployed in early October 1999 to Balibo on the north coast of East Timor and Suai on the south coast were intentionally sited astride key transport corridors used by militia groups.

⁵⁵ See for instance, Ralph Peters, ‘No Silver Bullets: Fighting the insurgency in Iraq’, *Armed Forces Journal*, January 2006, pp. 36–9; and Frederick W. Kagan, ‘Iraq is not Vietnam’, *Policy Review*, December 2005/January 2006, No. 134, p. 13.

⁵⁶ See John Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre: the Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 118, Canberra, June 2002.

⁵⁷ For a detailed consideration and exploration of the meaning and relevance of an effects-based strategy, see *Security Challenges*, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 2006, (Special edition, Effects-Based Strategy), Kokoda Foundation.

Australian-led operation in East Timor lacked complexity when compared to the scope of the challenge being faced in today's global 'long war' against implacable jihadists bent on an insurgency that transcends borders. The 'long war' is about a series of parallel and interrelated insurgencies that are unprecedented in history, challenging the US military and its coalition partners to relearn old lessons and adapt to new circumstances on the run.

Australian Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Australia's earlier experiences on operations in South-East Asia remain pertinent, particularly if the spread of insurgencies in Australia's 'near north' should result in invitations for a collaborative Australian military response. However, the lack of Australian conceptual and doctrinal development in the field of counterinsurgency, despite its resurgence in recent years, is of concern. This concern is particularly significant if, as one American military scholar observed, 'doctrine is an efficient way to track the development of learning in military organizations; changes in doctrine are *prima facie* evidence of military learning.'⁵⁸ It is worth considering, therefore, the state of Australian Army counterinsurgency doctrine.

The Australian Army's latest pamphlet issued on counterinsurgency was the Land Warfare Doctrine publication, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (LWD 3-8-4), published in October 1999 as 'developing doctrine'.⁵⁹ LWD 3-8-4 was informed by Australia's experiences in Vietnam, Malaya and Borneo, and by more recent peace-support operations in Somalia and Rwanda, as well as by the related British doctrine published in 1995 (discussed below). In effect, LWD 3-8-4 is largely an amalgam of extracts from Britain's 1995 pamphlet and

⁵⁸ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 2nd edn, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD 3-8-4) Counterinsurgency Operations (Developing Doctrine)*, Combined Arms Training and Development Centre, Puckapunyal, 1 October 1999.

the previous Australian one, published in 1980.⁶⁰ The 1980 pamphlet represented the synthesis of post-Vietnam era reflections on counterinsurgency operations doctrine in an anti-communist context, and yet it contains merely 102 pages of text with only 43 pages of annexes. Indeed, the 1980 pamphlet did little more than repeat much of the material from the preceding pamphlet entitled *The Division in Battle Pamphlet No. 11: Counter Revolutionary Warfare* (1965).⁶¹ That pamphlet, in turn, was strongly influenced by British and Australian experience in Malaya and Borneo and, more particularly, by the ubiquitous British handbook of the Malayan Emergency known as the ‘ATOM’ pamphlet (from its title *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*).⁶²

The lack of detail in the Australian pamphlets is surprising given the prominence of counterinsurgency operations in Australia’s military experience. Then again, such lack of detail is understandable, as Australia has not had to take a lead role in counterinsurgency operations and has had the benefit of being able to draw on the experience and resources of its allies. Alternatively, much of what has to be written into US counterinsurgency handbooks is taken for granted in the Australian Army because it is inherent in the way it conducts business. For example, the US Army has special units for low-intensity operations; the Australian Army has special units for high-intensity operations—low-intensity conflict is normality for Australia. Even under the ‘Defence of Australia’ strategic rubric the Army planned to fight an irregular enemy in a low-intensity

⁶⁰ Department of Defence, Army Office, Manual of Land Warfare, Part One, Volume 3, Pamphlet No. 1 (MLW 1-3-1), *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, 1980 (Restricted)

⁶¹ Army Headquarters, Military Board, *The Division in Battle, Pamphlet No. 11, Counter Revolutionary Warfare*, Canberra, 1 March 1966.

⁶² *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* was published in 1952, 1954 and again in 1958 and contained the accumulated knowledge of those involved in the Malayan Emergency.

environment. This would suggest that in fact counterinsurgency is inherent in the Australian Army's overall approach to warfare.⁶³

Nonetheless, the most recent publication, LWD 3-8-4, provides a useful framework for the application of Australian counterinsurgency doctrine today, even though it would benefit from some rigorous debate and further fleshing out. Indeed, largely mirroring British doctrine, it identifies six principles for counterinsurgency:

- political primacy (actions backed with sound economic, cultural & social policy);
- coordination (at the highest level);
- intelligence (local knowledge and a sound intelligence organisation);
- separating the insurgent from his support (to deny information, logistics, recruits, safe bases and popular support);
- neutralising the insurgent (selective destruction or discrediting of insurgents); and
- longer-term planning (to remove the causes of social, cultural or economic disunity).⁶⁴

This overview highlights that the doctrine handed down to the Australian Army of today has been validated and re-validated over the years. It would be foolish therefore, to conclude that everything has now changed and doctrine must be developed anew. Such an approach would likely result in a nugatory 'reinvention of the wheel'. After all, the Australian Army's track record of radical departures has been less than stellar—if the 'Pentropic' and 'Army 21' experiences (in the early 1960s and mid-1990s respectively) of frenetic conceptual and doctrinal oscillation are anything to go by. Nonetheless, the scale of complexity and scope of the current insurgency points to the need for considered and wide-reaching reflection and consultation.

⁶³ Author's discussions with David Kilcullen, 9 April 2006.

⁶⁴ The wording of the principles in the Australian pamphlet varies slightly from that in UK FM Vol. 1, Part 10, Part B, chapter 3, but follows the UK version's sequence and basic intent.

Apart from LWD 3-8-4, there has been little emphasis placed on counterinsurgency in Army's conceptual writings. In *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare* (1993), for instance, the Australian Army's capstone doctrinal paper, counterinsurgency features as a five-line word-picture in only one sub-paragraph outlining 'additional descriptions of conflict.'⁶⁵ In *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare* (1998) the situation deteriorates, as there is no mention of counterinsurgency—not even in a table listing subcategories of security or peacekeeping operations.⁶⁶ The situation only improves marginally in the 2002 edition, which mentions insurgencies in passing in a historical review of Australian military strategy.⁶⁷ Similarly, the ADF's peak concept doctrine, *Force 2020*, doesn't mention insurgency in its 'spectrum of operations' flow chart.⁶⁸ The recently released Land Warfare Procedures publication on urban operations tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) also omits any discussion of counterinsurgency.⁶⁹ This overview points to counterinsurgency's lack of prominence in recent conceptual thinking in Defence and in the Australian Army. That is not to say that conceptual

⁶⁵ Department of Defence (Army Office), *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Southwood Press, Sydney, 29 March 1993. The citation reads as follows: 'The term counterinsurgency is used to describe operations against a dissident faction that has the support or acquiescence of a substantial part of the population. This faction may have instigated the commission of widespread acts of civil disobedience, sabotage and terrorism, together with guerilla warfare to overthrow the government. The distinction between counterinsurgency and aid to the civil power is frequently blurred.'

⁶⁶ Department of Defence, Australian Army, Doctrine Wing, Combined Arms Training and Doctrine Centre (CATDC), *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Puckapunyal, 1998, p. B-3.

⁶⁷ Department of Defence, Australian Army, Doctrine Group, Land Warfare Development Centre (LWDC), *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Puckapunyal, 2002, p. 110.

⁶⁸ Department of Defence, *Force 2020*, Canberra, 2002, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Australian Army, *Urban Operations Tactics, Techniques and Procedures*, Land Warfare Procedures – General (LWP-G 3-9-6), Developing Doctrine, Land Warfare Development Centre, 1 April 2005.

work is not taking place, but the focus has yet to gravitate towards counterinsurgency. So far, the topic has remained only a small component of the Army's doctrinal and conceptual focus. What follows is a consideration of how counterinsurgency fits in with Army's conceptual work undertaken recently.

Army's 'Complex Warfighting' Concept and Counterinsurgency

More recently, Australia's Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, has made clear that the Hardened and Networked Army (HNA) initiative endorsed by Government in late 2005 'will permit Army to deploy small, agile combined arms teams. They will be mounted behind armour and have access to an enormous array of joint direct and indirect fires ... Ultimately, each soldier will be a node in a seamless network of sensors and shooters.'⁷⁰ This initiative reflects developments in the nature of warfare, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but with application to potential developments closer to Australian shores. In particular, General Leahy sees that:

Our conventional forces are likely to be confronted by vaguely defined militia or terrorists, which will hug population centres, and culturally sensitive infrastructure. They will attempt to provoke us into the indiscriminate use of our superior killing power to mistakenly harm civilians, or damage religious or cultural sites. This is calculated to undermine our centre of gravity—namely the respect and trust of the population that we are trying to persuade or protect. This is the classical application of asymmetry to warfare.⁷¹

The kind of asymmetric warfare being described also closely resembles many characteristics of counterinsurgency. After all, in defining the conflict environment outlined by the Chief of Army, the Army's *Complex Warfighting* concept paper describes an environment of complexity, including insurgents, among others.⁷²

Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, speech to ADI Thales dinner on 22 March 2006.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Department of Defence, Australian Army, *Complex Warfighting*, Canberra, May 2005.

But the concept paper does not deal in any detail with insurgency *per se*. Instead, *Complex Warfighting* describes the Army's operating concepts as Military Operations in the Littoral Environment (MOLE), Protective Security Operations on Australia Territory (PSAT) and Contributions to Coalition Operations Worldwide (CCOW).⁷³ It further describes Army's functional concepts as 'control operations', 'special operations', 'network-centric warfare', 'logistics' and 'effects-based operations'. Again, the point made is that there is no such thing as a single form of operations. In fact, the latest US military analysis of Iraq sees an overlapping of counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency and peace enforcement tasks rather than straight counterinsurgency.

Nonetheless, counterinsurgency does not directly feature in the prominent Australian functional and operating concepts (control operations also are a sub-set of counterinsurgency operations in LWD 3-8-4). Yet there is an emerging consensus that points to the need for counterinsurgency to regain a place of prominence in Australian conceptual thinking and doctrinal development. Clearly, with LWD 3-8-4, counterinsurgency still features on the hierarchy of Land Warfare Doctrine, although this 'developing doctrine' is now seven years old.

The Chief of Army, recognising the emergence of a new trend, has called for further analysis on the lessons of counterinsurgency, particularly from a historical perspective.⁷⁴ His call points to the need to re-visit and re-work the earlier proven Australian Army doctrine that today appears to have been taken for granted. Indeed, given the multi-spectral capabilities required for effective counterinsurgency operations, a wider audience than just Army may find such a review

⁷³ Ibid, paras 82 & 87.

⁷⁴ See Centre for Army Lessons (CAL) Report to CA on counterinsurgency Lessons – an Historical Analysis, 11 November 2005.

beneficial. That audience could include the wider Defence organisation, as well as other government departments and agencies.

In revisiting counterinsurgency doctrine Australia can benefit from taking into account recent American, British and Canadian developments, as well as by selectively considering from among the plethora of writings from both scholars and soldiers. These works suggest that insurgency today has several enduring features from earlier experience with insurgencies but also several new information-age characteristics associated with the so-called 'war on terror'. Some describe the new phenomenon as complex counterinsurgency, others as global counterinsurgency. These works also suggest that the principles of counterinsurgency must be appropriately modified and applied for the new exigencies. That modification, however, calls for a considerable paradigm shift as security policy and doctrine writers work to more accurately capture the nature of the challenge being faced. But before the Australian Army sets out to undertake similar modifications, it is important to remain fully aware of the enduring lessons from past experience of counterinsurgency.

PART THREE

HISTORICAL LESSONS ON COUNTERINSURGENCY

Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam

While there is much to be learned from other insurgencies, for the British and American militaries, as for the Australian Army, the experiences of Malaya and Vietnam respectively have been the source of many lessons on counterinsurgency. What emerges from the writings on these insurgencies is that many lessons had to be learned ‘on the go’. Indeed, even in the successfully concluded Malayan Emergency, initial efforts to defeat insurgents were inept; only with a sound plan, the resources to implement it and an outstanding leader was the victorious outcome ensured.⁷⁵

For the US Army, the searing experience of the Vietnam War reversed the once-enthusiastic interest in counterinsurgency and counter-revolutionary warfare. This interest was subsumed in favour of planning for ‘normal’ or ‘conventional’ war on the Central European front of the Cold War and its post-Cold War successor, Iraq. Thus, for the US military at least, in the post-Vietnam years, the study of insurgency, one scholar observed, ‘became the orphaned child of strategy.’⁷⁶

Recently, however, with the ‘war on terror’ becoming increasingly complicated, the American and British militaries have had cause to reflect more closely on their experiences in dealing with insurgencies. In *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, for instance,

⁷⁵ This is the key argument in John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1954*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1992.

⁷⁶ Smith, ‘Guerillas in the mist’, p. 29.

American soldier-scholar John Nagl revisited the counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam prior to the events of 11 September 2001. Reflecting the relevance of his insights, his work subsequently has been commended with a foreword by the US Army's Chief of Staff, General Peter Schoomaker.⁷⁷ Nagl argued that the better performance of the British Army in learning and implementing a successful counterinsurgency doctrine in Malaya is best explained by the differing organisational cultures of the two armies; in short, the British Army was a learning institution and the US Army was not. The US Army, Nagl argued, resisted any true attempt to learn how to fight an insurgency during the course of the Vietnam War, preferring to treat the war as a conventional conflict.⁷⁸

From the Australian perspective it is a pity that Nagl ignored the experience of the only Army that fought in both theatres—the Australian Army. Such a comparison would have made for a useful contrast. This oversight is all the more surprising since his supervisor at Oxford, where he wrote the book for his PhD, was the Australian, Professor Robert O'Neill. Notwithstanding this oversight, Nagl's work still has much to commend it for the Australian Army.⁷⁹

Reflecting further on the British and American parallel experiences, the argument posits annihilation versus turning the loyalty of the people as the foundations of the two approaches to counterinsurgency to which armies have turned throughout history: the direct or indirect approach.⁸⁰ The US Army is associated with the direct approach based, Nagl argues, on a 'Jominian' interpretation of wars whereby, in order to defeat the

⁷⁷ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 2nd edn, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005.

⁷⁸ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, pp. xxii & 11.

⁷⁹ Author's discussions with David Kilcullen, 9 April 2006.

⁸⁰ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, pp. 26–7.

enemy, it is only necessary to defeat his armed forces.⁸¹ Conversely, the indirect approach, otherwise known as ‘war in the minor key’ involves military action taking a supporting or secondary role.⁸²

Writing for today on the significance of the contrasting experiences, Nagl makes the observation that there is a growing realisation that ‘the most likely conflicts of the next fifty years will be irregular warfare in an “Arc of Instability”’. A key observation made in his study is that such irregular warfare ‘requires the integration of all elements of national power—diplomacy, information operations, intelligence, financial and military—to achieve the predominantly political objectives.’⁸³ These observations are instructive not only for the US Army of today, but for the Australian Army as well, in a number of ways.

First, a neat summary of the lessons from the British and American experience in counterinsurgency operations in Malaya and Vietnam is useful as those lessons have remarkable resonance today and are largely captured in extant counterinsurgency doctrine. To some extent at least, the Australian Army was as affected as the US Army by a similar post-Vietnam War malaise concerning counterinsurgency, although both Malaya and Vietnam have had strong residual influences on the Australian Army’s culture and approach to warfighting.

Second, this exposition implicitly points to a weakness in Australia’s own approach to counterinsurgency. While the Australian Army has reason to be proud of its record of service in Vietnam, Australia’s experience indicates that it could have benefited from a more robust, independent and well-understood counterinsurgency doctrine. Such doctrine, if more closely followed, may have helped Australia limit its

⁸¹ Nagl points out that ‘Jomini is important because of his prescription of the annihilation of the opponent’s force as the best route to victory, a sentiment often and mistakenly attributed to Clausewitz.’ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, p. 18.

⁸² Author’s discussions with Mark O’Neill, who cited Baufre, 6 April 2006.

⁸³ Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, xvi.

involvement in the relatively costly search-and-destroy missions called for by General Westmoreland and instead focus on more static security-focused operations in Australia's assigned province, Phuoc Tuy.⁸⁴

Undeniably, Australians were awestruck by the demonstration of American military power in Vietnam. For instance, the Australian Army's top general at the time, Sir John Wilton, 'almost worshipped' the US Army commander in Vietnam, General Westmoreland.⁸⁵ Arguably, this awe had the effect of drawing Australians from the more methodical and light-foot-printed tactics derived from their experiences in Malaya and Borneo. That movement was not towards the like-minded Marine 'small wars' methodology, but towards the American Army's more heavy-handed 'search and destroy' approach. This observation is made notwithstanding the excellent work undertaken by the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, which conducted its work across South Vietnam but not focused on Phuoc Tuy province, where the Australian Army's main effort was concentrated.

The more methodical approach additionally would have been consistent with the British-influenced experience of the Australian Army in Malaya and Borneo. It also would have been more consistent with the approach advocated by the US Marines in the early-to-mid 1960s, the Combined Assistance Platoon (CAP) program. This program was marginalised under Westmoreland's command in Vietnam. Through the CAP, Marines achieved a degree of success because they focused on providing security to villagers, living in the villages being protected.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ One of the first writers to make this point was Frank Frost in *Australia's War in Vietnam*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987.

⁸⁵ David Horner, *Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia's Asian Wars*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005.

⁸⁶ See Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, pp. 156–8; Wade Markel, 'Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy of Population Control', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Spring 2006, p. 35; and Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, pp. 304–7.

The weaknesses in the Australian approach to counterinsurgency were also evident in the way it conducted operations in Vietnam. For instance, a CAP-like approach may have resulted in taking greater responsibility for the civil affairs in Phuoc Tuy province, where the Australian Army's 1st Task Force was based, rather than relying on US officers to perform the functions of administrative liaison and local influence. But as Jeffrey Record observes, counterinsurgency operations 'are inherently manpower intensive and rely heavily on special skills—for example, human intelligence, civil affairs, police, public health foreign language, foreign force training, psychological warfare'.⁸⁷ It is not surprising therefore, that Australia avoided committing to some of these, considering the additional manpower requirements that a CAP-like commitment would have required.

In practice, Australia has rarely been responsible for managing a campaign holistically, often leaving allies to perform many of the specialist support roles. The end result in Vietnam was that, despite the sound counterinsurgency doctrine adopted by the Australian Army, its practice didn't quite follow the doctrinal model, leaving several of the special skills that Record mentions to be performed by the Americans. Consequently, the collective Australian counterinsurgency experience left an unbalanced legacy in terms of force structure and philosophical outlook, with insufficient emphasis on such functions as civil affairs and human intelligence.

The Australian Army, small as it is, has a limited number of specialists in all such fields and thus has seen itself as well justified in being circumspect about committing to deployments involving counterinsurgency. Conversely, Australia's unwillingness to field comprehensive counterinsurgency forces has left the Army with a cultural legacy that stresses the role of the combat arms, and infantry in particular, at the expense of some of the other components of a

⁸⁷ Jeffrey Record, 'Why the Strong Lose', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, Winter 2005–06, p. 26.

balanced counterinsurgency force. For instance, the fields of civil affairs, psychological operations and human intelligence have tended to be considered peripheral activities within Army, receiving few resources and little conceptual focus by its combat-arms minded leaders. Australia has usually looked for such other components from its coalition partners to provide—usually Britain or the United States.

Thus, while Australian military doctrine closely parallels that developed by major allies, there has not been a commensurate impact on the Australian Army's sense of its own capabilities and limitations derived from having to field a complete suite of counterinsurgency capabilities. Australia's experience with playing the lead role in East Timor during 1999 certainly made the Australian Army come close to deploying the full spectrum of force capabilities required for security and stability operations like counterinsurgency. But the relatively benign circumstances, and short duration of the mission while Australia had the lead role, meant that there was little scope for such lessons to be fully institutionalised in the tightly resourced Army.

Notwithstanding the limited experience with holistic management of complex military operations, the Australian Army also has faced a significant challenge in applying doctrinal lessons from the different counterinsurgency experiences of Britain and the United States. This difficulty is, in part, a result of the enduring distinction between the British and American approaches to consent and the use of force. As the review of Malaya and Vietnam has shown, the British have exhibited a preference for the indirect and pragmatic approach to strategy, whereas the American military has exhibited a predilection for big conventional wars to leverage its advantage in numbers and technology.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Robert M. Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss: British and American Peacekeeping Doctrine and Practice After the Cold War*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 2004, p. 231–44.

As a ‘New World’ country of continental proportions with a small population, Australia does not fit squarely in either the British or the American doctrinal ‘camp’. After all, Australia has a significantly smaller force—one that does not, for instance, distinguish between Marines and Army for its land forces. What is more, the Australian Army has a closer cultural affinity with the ‘small wars’-oriented British Army and US Marines (and for that matter, the Canadian and New Zealand armies as well). As Alan Ryan observed, ‘effective army-to-army cooperation is essential to achieving adequate conditions of peace and stability in the new global-security environment.’ But the Australian Army ‘will have to think beyond merely establishing tactical interoperability with its major partners. It will have to position itself to take advantage of the combat multiplier effect of multinational forces in an ever-expanding range of contingencies.’⁸⁹ Such contingencies increasingly look likely to feature counterinsurgencies.

Complicating matters further is the fact that, as several commentators have observed, there are limitations to some of the lessons about tactics and techniques applicable today from the anti-communist counterinsurgencies of the Cold War.⁹⁰ For instance, the technological improvements since the Vietnam War—such as precision munitions and night-fighting equipment—have revolutionised the way armies can conduct counterinsurgency operations almost as much as they’ve revolutionised so-called ‘conventional’ warfare.⁹¹ The changes brought about by such

⁸⁹ Alan Ryan, *Australian Army Cooperation with the Land Forces of the United States: Problems of the Junior Partner*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 121, Canberra, January 2003, pp. v–vi.

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Frederick W. Kagan, ‘Iraq is not Vietnam’, *Policy Review*, No. 134, December 2005/January 2006, pp. 3–14; Wade Markel, ‘Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy of Population Control’, *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 35–48; and Stephen Biddle, ‘Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 2, March/April 2006, pp. 2–14.

⁹¹ Kagan, ‘Iraq is not Vietnam’, p. 11.

technological improvements, let alone the differences inherent between an anti-communist and anti-jihadist counterinsurgency, reinforce the need to reconsider and re-validate extant counterinsurgency doctrine.

PART FOUR

COUNTERINSURGENCY: EMERGING TRENDS

Transformed Strategic Affairs

The historical lessons described above have become so pertinent for consideration today in large part because of what Sir Lawrence Freedman describes as the ‘transformation of strategic affairs’.⁹² In 1998, Freedman had challenged the view that a technology-driven revolution in military affairs (RMA) was underway because much of what was discussed paid insufficient attention to the wars that might actually have to be fought. Such wars, he argued, were more likely to be asymmetrical and irregular ones that negated much of the purported benefits of the emergent military technology.⁹³

Freedman’s observations have proven accurate, particularly in the war in Iraq. American scholars such as Andrew Krepinevich have observed that:

Because they lack a coherent strategy, U.S. forces in Iraq have failed to defeat the insurgency or improve security. Winning will require a new approach to counterinsurgency, one that focuses on providing security to Iraqis rather than hunting down insurgents. And it will take at least a decade.⁹⁴

⁹² Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper, London, 2006.

⁹³ See Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper, London, 1998. Reflecting the validity of Freedman’s critique, the term ‘RMA’ has been superseded in US military circles by the term ‘transformation’. See Colin S. Gray, *Recognizing and Understanding Revolutionary Change in Warfare: the Sovereignty of Context*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army, Carlisle, PA, February 2006.

⁹⁴ Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., ‘How to Win in Iraq’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, Issue 5, September/October 2005, pp. 87–104.

Particularly in light of the long time frame envisaged, Krepinevich's insight points to the significance of a reconsideration of insurgency for the Australian Army as well.

The observations on Iraq by such writers also have spurred Freedman to describe the transformation of strategic affairs as being predicated on four themes. First, in light of experience, particularly in Iraq since 2003, the US armed forces face a difficulty in shifting their focus from preparing for regular wars to irregular wars. Second, the political context of contemporary irregular wars requires that the purpose and practice of Western forces be governed by liberal values. Third, this challenge becomes easier to meet when the military operations are understood to contribute to the development of a compelling narrative about the likely course and consequence of a conflict, in which these values are shown to be respected. Fourth, notwithstanding the narrative, a key test of success will always be the defeat of the opposing forces.⁹⁵ In essence, these four themes indicate that military operations should no longer be geared to eliminating the assets of the enemy. Instead 'they might need to be focused on undermining those narratives on which the enemy bases its appeal and which animates and guides its activists.'⁹⁶ This transformation of strategy, therefore, refers to the changing conditions in which choices must be made about the use of military power.

Global Counterinsurgency

The transformed environment described by Freedman and addressed by the ICG refers to 'irregular' war. The emerging trend, however, is to re-classify the war signposted by 11 September 2001 as a 'global insurgency'. What follows is an exploration of the nature of this form of warfare, as recently articulated by some of the leading writers on counterinsurgency. David Kilcullen has proposed a new approach to the so-called Global War on Terror. He argues that the

⁹⁵ Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 26.

War is best understood as a global insurgency, initiated by a diffuse grouping of Islamist movements that seek to re-make Islam's role in the world order. Such movements use terrorism as their primary—but not their sole—tactic. Therefore, he argues, 'counter-insurgency rather than traditional counterterrorism offers a better approach to defeating global *jihad*.' Kilcullen notes, however, that classical counterinsurgency, as developed in the 1960s, is designed to defeat insurgency in a single country. It demands measures—a coordinated political-military response, an integrated regional and interagency approach, and a protracted commitment to a course of action—that cannot be achieved at the global level in today's international system. Consequently, he argues, a traditional counterinsurgency paradigm will not work for the present War. Instead, a fundamental re-appraisal of counterinsurgency is needed, to develop methods effective against a globalised counterinsurgency.⁹⁷

Kilcullen identifies a model that generates a new strategy for the War on Terror—disaggregation. Disaggregation focuses on:

- interdicting links between Islamist theatres of operation within the global insurgency;
- denying the ability of regional and global actors to link and exploit local actors;
- interdicting flows of information, personnel, finance and technology between and within *jihad* theatres;
- denying sanctuary areas (including failing states, and states that support terrorism);
- isolating Islamists from local populations, through theatre-specific measures to win hearts and minds, counter-Islamist propaganda, create alternative institutions and remove drivers for popular support to insurgents;

⁹⁷ David Kilcullen, 'Countering Global Insurgency', <www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf>, 30 November 2004.

- disrupting inputs (personnel, money and information) from the sources of Islamism in the greater Middle East to dispersed *jihad* theatres worldwide; and
- preventing or ameliorating local communal and sectarian conflicts which create the grievances on which jihadists systems can prey.⁹⁸

Such a model, he argues, requires civilian aid and development supported by targeted military operations and intelligence activity. The Army faces an obligation to think through its approach to the potential for involvement in such targeted military operations.

Consistent with this strategy of disaggregation, Robert M. Cassidy has argued that the current challenges present implications for doctrine, interagency coordination, and military cultural change—particularly in light of attendant military-cultural impediments to adapting to an enemy who embraces a very different approach to war.⁹⁹ Cassidy claims that the insurgent’s approach is the Eastern way of war, stemming from the military philosophies of Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung, and distinguishable from the Western way of war by its reliance on ‘indirectness, perfidy, attrition and protraction.’ In other words, the Eastern way of war is inherently more irregular, unorthodox and asymmetric, and al-Qaeda and its radical Islamic affiliates operate consistently with this approach.¹⁰⁰ Critics may contend that this is not so much the ‘Eastern’ way as it is the way of those with less power regardless of cultural predisposition or familiarity with the writings of Mao or Sun Tzu.¹⁰¹

US Marine Colonel, Thomas X Hammes, describes this phenomenon as the ‘sling and the stone’. This phenomenon builds on the concept

⁹⁸ Kilcullen, ‘Countering Global Insurgency.’

⁹⁹ Robert M. Cassidy, ‘Feeding Bread to the Luddites: The Radical Fundamentalist Islamic Revolution in Guerilla Warfare’, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, December 2005, p. 334.

¹⁰⁰ Cassidy, ‘Feeding Bread to the Luddites’, p. 334.

¹⁰¹ Author’s discussion with Mark O’Neill, 6 April 2006.

that American military thinker, William Lind, and colleagues first described as fourth-generation warfare (the first three generations, they contend, are line and column, massed firepower, and blitzkrieg).¹⁰² Using this biblical ‘sling and stone’ rubric, Hammes describes ‘fourth-generation’ warfare as a Mao-inspired evolved form of insurgency whose practitioners, particularly in Iraq, enable ‘David’s sling and stone’ to defeat The US-led ‘Goliath’ coalition.¹⁰³ To Hammes,

fourth generation warfare is insurgency rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power. It uses all available networks—political, economic, social, and military—to convince the enemy’s political decisions makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly.¹⁰⁴

Critics argue over the distinction between the so-called ‘generations’ of warfare, pointing to the fact that no two wars are the same and many have seen the application of tactics and techniques derived from earlier forms of war. Nonetheless, the basic point about the approach of the weak against the strong is convincing.

Taking a parallel approach, Robert Taber calls this ‘the war of the flea’, whereby the world’s ‘have-not nations and people’ are arrayed against the traditional custodians of wealth and power. In this world, the ‘flea’ succeeds, argues Taber, ‘because he survives; he survives because he is of the people among whom he fights; and cannot be exterminated unless they too, are destroyed.’¹⁰⁵ Like Taber, Gil Merom argues that modern democracies fail in wars of insurgency. They fail, he argues, because ‘they are unable to find a winning balance between expedient and moral tolerance of the costs of war.’

¹⁰² See William S. Lind, ‘Understanding Fourth Generation War’, *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 5, September–October 2004, pp. 12–16.

¹⁰³ Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, Zenith Press, St Paul, MN, 2004, introduction.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Taber, ‘*War of the Flea*’, introduction.

Such ‘small wars’ are ‘lost at home’ he argues, ‘when a critical minority shifts the centre of gravity from the battlefield to the marketplace of ideas.’¹⁰⁶ In today’s information age, that marketplace appears to have grown exponentially. Nonetheless, the downbeat prognosis of Taber and Merom overlooks the occasional counterinsurgency success, such as in the Malayan Emergency.

This so-called ‘Eastern way of war’ or ‘war of the flea’ is something the Australian Army is familiar with, having been exposed to it on numerous instances during the last century. Indeed, it was closely examined during the years when Australia was directly involved in counterinsurgency in South East Asia. Yet apart from this period, because of Australia’s intrinsic Western orientation and predisposition to being influenced by conceptual developments in America and Britain, this ‘Eastern way of war’ has featured little in the development of Australia’s military doctrine and broader security conceptualisation.

Echoing the sentiments about the ‘Eastern’ way, Jeffrey Record argues that ‘the principal elements of irregular warfare are protraction, attrition and camouflage.’ Camouflage, or the capacity to dissolve into the local population and terrain (natural and man-made), shields irregular forces from the potentially catastrophic consequences of the enemy’s firepower superiority and compels the enemy to inflict politically self-defeating collateral damage on the civilian population.¹⁰⁷ These elements, in effect, tend to negate many of the advantages of the ‘modern system’ of military power described by Biddle. Hence the preference for asymmetric techniques used by insurgents to circumvent the strengths of modern Western armed forces.

¹⁰⁶ Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, introduction.

¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey Record, ‘Why the Strong Lose’, *Parameters*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, Winter 2005–06, p. 20.

In a similar vein to Kilcullen and Cassidy, Bruce Hoffman has argued that, rather than viewing the fundamental organising principle of American defence strategy in this unconventional realm as a global war on terrorism, it may be more useful to re-conceptualise it in terms of a global counterinsurgency. Such an approach, he argues, ‘would *a priori* knit together the equally critical political, economic, diplomatic and developmental sides inherent to the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency to the existing dominant military side of the equation.’¹⁰⁸

Approaching the subject of warfare in a parallel manner, Britain’s General Sir Rupert Smith has articulated a concept he calls ‘war amongst the people’ as a synthesis of industrial war (which, he argues ended with the advent of the atomic bomb) and guerilla war. Guerilla war, he contends, has three components. The first is ‘a strategy of provocation’ to generate an over-reaction to portray the adversary as a bully and, in turn, generate more support for the guerillas. The second is ‘propaganda of the deed’—to capture attention and to be treated as an equal in response, thus generating a sense of legitimacy. The third is ‘erosion of will’. The synthesis, the ‘war amongst the people’, generates the need for us to recognise the changed paradigm. ‘Force still has utility, as terrorists have demonstrated’ he argues, but ‘we must understand the complexity’ and ‘think about how we change using the same materials as before but with very different outcomes.’¹⁰⁹

For General Smith three further changes are inherent. First, ‘big is no longer beautiful’—small forces can be of greater value than a large quantity of forces mis-applied, provided their own actions are coherent with other measures of power, contributing to the military,

¹⁰⁸ Bruce Hoffman, *Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat*, RAND, February 2006, p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ Presentation by General Sir Rupert Smith (British Army, Retd), at the Australian Defence Force Academy on 5 April 2005.

political and economic factors. This point is particularly poignant for forces such as the Australian Army. Second, General Smith argues, in the legal realm, current processes and interpretations are founded on the old industrial war paradigm, affecting decisions about when and what type of force to use and the position of the people and governance of combatants and non-combatants. Third, information and intelligence are now dominant determinants. In ‘war amongst the people’, he argues, ‘information is the currency, firepower is the supporting activity. In industrial warfare the reverse was the case.’¹¹⁰ Thomas Hammes concurs, arguing that ‘servicing targets’ with firepower is not the answer.¹¹¹ What General Smith describes as ‘war amongst the people’ is, in effect, manifested in the kind of insurgency addressed by Australian and allied troops today.

The asymmetric challenge inherent in this insurgency is further complicated by the development of the so-called ‘cybercaliphate’, whereby Islamists exemplify a network-based social order without a real society through a ‘global network of mosques, sympathetic non-government organisations, failed states and Internet sites’. Yet they are able to operate in a bewildering diversity of settings, making the ‘home front’ not immune from danger.¹¹² Indeed, the open world order associated with globalisation is good for the Islamists cause.¹¹³ The cybercaliphate is adept at what John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt have termed ‘netwar’: small groups conducting and coordinating their campaigns on the Internet without a precise

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, introduction.

¹¹² David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, ‘Greetings from the cybercaliphate: some notes on homeland insecurity’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 5, 2005, p. 941; and David Martin Jones, ‘Political Islam and the New Global Insecurity’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, Summer 2005–06, p. 180.

¹¹³ See Kishore Mahbubani, ‘The Impending Demise of the Postwar System’, *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter 2005–06, p. 11.

central command.¹¹⁴ In this sense, as David Lazarus observed, the term *global jihad* succinctly describes the current militant Islamist campaign.¹¹⁵ In reality, the cybercaliphate is a direct product of the information era, presenting an unprecedented challenge for Western strategists and military planners. Conversely, cyberspace is a ‘two way street’ open to exploitation by counterinsurgents as well.¹¹⁶

According to Bruce Hoffman, the matter is compounded by the experience in Iraq, where ‘the new generation of jihadis will have acquired ... invaluable first-hand experience in urban warfare.’ The application of these newly learned capabilities to urban centres elsewhere, he argues, ‘could result in precipitous escalation of bloodshed and destruction, reaching into countries and regions that hitherto have experienced little, if any, organized jihadi violence.’¹¹⁷ This challenge is compounded by what Olivier Roy observes in his monograph entitled *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah*. Roy argues that:

the spread of Islam around the world has blurred the connection between a religion, a specific society and a territory. One third of Muslims now live as members of a minority ... Neofundamentalism has been gaining ground among rootless Muslim youth—particularly among the second and third generation—and this phenomenon is feeding new forms of radicalism.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michelle Zanini, ‘Networks, Netwar, And Information-Age Terrorism,’ in Ian O. Lesser, *et. al.*, (eds), *Countering the New Terrorism*, RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 1999, p. 47.

¹¹⁵ David Lazarus, ‘From a War on Terror to a War on Ideas’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, Summer 2005–06, p. 167.

¹¹⁶ Author’s discussions with Mark O’Neill, 6 April 2006.

¹¹⁷ Bruce Hoffman, *Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat*, RAND, February 2006, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004, introduction.

Certainly, recent events in Western Europe (particularly in London, Paris and the Netherlands) and the emerging literature analysing developments there support this contention. Yet Roy's point overlooks the fact that the 'camouflage' that works in the insurgents favour in the Middle East may work against the same culprits in, say, downtown Melbourne.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, potentially at least, that violence presents considerable challenges because 'our new enemies are not simply bent on our destruction: they are pleased to compass their own destruction as a collateral benefit.' This zeal stands in marked contrast to societies of the West, like Australia. People in our society 'love life', Kimball observes, and 'now see fewer and fewer causes for which they would die.'¹²⁰

The views expressed here are consistent with the conclusions reached by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in their illuminating report *Understanding Islamism*. The ICG argues:

The West needs a discriminating strategy that takes account of the diversity of outlooks within political Islamism; that accepts that even the most modernist of Islamists are deeply opposed to current U.S. policies and committed to renegotiating their relations with the West; and that understands that the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war occupation of Iraq, and the way in which the 'war against terrorism' is being waged all significantly strengthen the appeal of the most virulent and dangerous jihadi tendencies.¹²¹

Such recommendations, once again, are beyond the scope or remit of the Australian Army, but the Army's actions should, nonetheless, be thus informed. As the ICG report makes clear, countries like Australia:

ought to be modest about their ability to shape the debate among Islamists, they also should be aware of how their policies affect it ... Policy-makers risk provoking one of two equally undesirable

¹¹⁹ Author's discussions with Lieutenant Colonel Mark O'Neill, 6 April 2006.

¹²⁰ Roger Kimball, 'After the suicide of the west', *The New Criterion*, January 2006, pp. 8–9.

¹²¹ International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism*, p. i.

outcomes: either inducing the different strands of Islamic activism to band together in reaction, attenuating differences that might otherwise be fruitfully developed, or causing the non-violent and modernist tendencies to be eclipsed by the jihadis.¹²²

To avoid such an eclipse, a multifaceted campaign plan is required. Clearly this is a complex matter beyond the domain of just the Army, let alone the ADF. A response to these challenges requires a considered society-spanning rejoinder. As David Martin Jones observed, ‘a new cognitive approach is needed to understand the character of radical Islam, its relationship with the fast world of markets and an increasingly interconnected world, and its capacity to explore the dark side of this growing interconnectedness to destabilise both developed and developing states.’¹²³

RAND scholar Cheryl Bernard has attempted to develop such an approach. Bernard contends that ‘by understanding the ongoing ideological struggle within Islam and by distinguishing among the competing strains of Islamic thought, Western leaders can identify appropriate Islamic partners and work with them to discourage extremism and violence as well as to encourage democratization and development.’¹²⁴ She recommends a five-point plan to develop civil, democratic Islam while giving the West the versatility to deal appropriately with different settings:

1. *Support the modernists first*, promoting their version of Islam by equipping them with a broad platform to articulate and to disseminate their views.
2. *Support the traditionalists enough to keep them viable against the fundamentalists* (if and wherever those are the only choices)—particularly the *reformist* traditionalists.
3. *Oppose the fundamentalists energetically* by striking at the vulnerabilities in their Islamic and ideological credentials.

¹²² Ibid, p. ii.

¹²³ David Martin Jones, ‘Political Islam and the New Global Insecurity’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, Summer 2005–06, p. 181.

¹²⁴ Bernard, *Five Pillars of Democracy*.

Expose their corruption, brutality, ignorance, bias and manifest errors in the application of Islam, inability to lead and to govern, and turning of young people into suicidal cannon fodder.

4. *Support the secularists on a case-by-case basis.* The West should encourage secularists to recognize fundamentalism as a common enemy and discourage secularist alliances with anti-US forces. The West should also support the idea that religion and state can be separate in Islam, too.
5. *Develop secular civic and cultural institutions and programs.* Western organizations can help to develop independent civic organizations that can provide a space in the Islamic world for ordinary citizens to educate themselves about the political process and to articulate their views.¹²⁵

Such recommendations, as with many made in this working paper, are beyond the exclusive remit of the Australian Army. Nonetheless, they are instructive for counterinsurgency where people's will is key terrain, if not the centre of gravity. They also need to be understood by those involved in the development and practice of counterinsurgency concepts and doctrine.

Another RAND scholar, Nora Bensahel, argues that a successful strategy 'must account for the interactions of the various coalitions, understanding how actions taken in one area may cause trade-offs and unintended consequences in others' such as military, financial, law enforcement, intelligence and reconstruction.¹²⁶ The Australian Defence Organisation, including the Army, has an important role to play, conceptually at least, in thinking through how to defend the nation in this context.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Nora Bensahel, 'A Coalition of Coalitions: International Cooperation Against Terrorism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29, No. 1, January–February 2006, p. 35.

Critics considering the suggested strategies of Bernard and Bensahel could argue that they offer views that are too US centric. Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy have developed an alternative approach, designed more specifically for the Australian region. In their recent monograph, *Joining the Caravan?*, they offer a six-point plan:

- (1) In focusing on the global, don't lose sight of the local.
- (2) Adopt a more nuanced categorisation of Islamists and 'neo-fundamentalists' (avoid the terms 'radical' or 'moderate').
- (3) Take a less timorous approach to engagement with Islamists (including being exposed to the 'radical mainstream').
- (4) Think about education and the 'war of ideas' in broad terms (to combat the ideas that underpin terrorism).
- (5) Encourage transparency (particularly from Saudi Arabian proselytisers).
- (6) Be conscious of double standards and the democracy dilemma (democratic credential shouldn't be assumed or ignored).¹²⁷

These proposals highlight an area of weakness in the Australian Army's suite of skills in cultural and linguistic awareness. The study of Islam and related Middle Eastern languages has not been an area of strength. The Army could be forgiven for paying lip service to these concerns if this was simply a by-product of recent commitments to the Middle East. But the Middle East has featured in Australian security concerns since as early as the opening of Australia's trading lifeline, the Suez Canal, and the Sudan crisis of 1885. Arguably, the Middle East is a particularly enduring feature in Australia's geostrategic disposition, warranting greater attention than it has tended to receive in defence and foreign policy circles.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Bubalo & Fealy, *Joining the caravan?* pp. x–xii.

¹²⁸ Australians have deployed there in 1885, 1915, 1940 and continually since 1948 to such places as Israel, Palestine, Syria, the Sinai, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and various Gulf states. The Suez Canal has long been considered a trade lifeline for Australia. Australia actively supported Britain during the Suez crisis in 1956 at least in part because of the significance of the canal to

Perhaps one reason for the blind spot on such matters is that they have only sporadically featured on Australia's strategic 'radar scope'. Another plausible reason for the blind spot is that, like the US Army—which rejected counterinsurgency as a knee-jerk cultural reaction to defeat in Vietnam—the Australian Army abandoned expeditionary operations. Vietnam was an expeditionary counterinsurgency loss. But the Australian and US reactions varied. The US Army in effect said 'no more counterinsurgency'. They remained predisposed towards expeditionary operations as long as they were conventional. In contrast, Australia, in effect said 'no more expeditions', although it remained predisposed to a Low-Intensity Conflict posture, as long as it was in an Australian setting.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, the domestic manifestation of these challenges in terms of domestic threats is not Army's primary responsibility. After all, domestically, Army only has a supporting role to play alongside other government agencies—primarily the police. Indeed in many Western countries armies have no such domestic role. But the latent requirement for similar collaboration with regional armed forces (such as forces from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines), where radical Islamist groups are known to operate, points to the relevance of such a focus for the Australian Army of today. That relevance remains, notwithstanding the immediate requirements arising from current operational priorities in the Middle East.

Two areas spring to mind into which further thought is required. First, the Army needs to reconsider how it trains its soldiers to be linguistically and culturally adept at enhancing regional security and

Australia's trade. Today, Australia is more dependent than ever on Middle Eastern oil. For a discussion on the significance of the trading lifeline see Andrew Forbes (ed.), *The Strategic Importance of Seaborne Trade and Shipping*, Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs, Working Paper No. 10, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, 2003.

¹²⁹ Author's discussions with David Kilcullen, 9 April 2006.

stability and undermining the insurgency. As Bruce Hoffman argues, in addition to ‘hard’ military skills of ‘kill or capture’ and destruction and attrition; ‘soft’ skills are required. These include negotiations, psychology, social and cultural anthropology, foreign area studies, complexity theory and systems management. These, he argues, will become increasingly important in the ambiguous and dynamic environment in which irregular adversaries circulate.¹³⁰

Second, the Army needs to engage with other elements of the Defence organisation to reconsider how Australia uses its Defence Cooperation Program (DCP). As Olivetti makes clear, radical Islamism ‘can be contained by an indirect attack on its causes, resources and ideas, in conjunction with a policy to support traditional Islam’s opposition to it.’¹³¹ The DCP should focus on building foreign capacities to deal with insurgent/terrorist threats. Other military activities, such as exchanges and exercises, should be focused on achieving this objective as well.

Consistent with these views, Cassidy observes that ‘the military dimension is only one part[,] and not the principal one, of a broader strategy of implementing political and socio-economic and political reforms ... Any global counterinsurgency strategy must harness all elements of national and international power rather than imposing the burden almost exclusively on the military instrument.’¹³² Conversely, however, the military has a particularly important and prominent role to play, at the very least in articulating a clear vision of its role in this complex domain. It is therefore incumbent on the Australian Army in particular, and the wider Australian Defence Organisation generally, to clearly understand and articulate its role in this context.

¹³⁰ Bruce Hoffman, *Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat*, RAND, February 2006, p. 15.

¹³¹ Olivetti, *Terror’s Source*, p. 79.

¹³² Cassidy, ‘Feeding Bread to the Luddites’, p. 353.

Hoffman's views closely align with the recommendations by David Kilcullen as well as the extant British-derived Australian Army principles of counterinsurgency. To Hoffman, the key factors are:

- separating the enemy from the populace (to deny sanctuary, resources and support; and eliminate their freedom of movement);
- identification and neutralisation of the enemy;
- creation of a secure environment (progressing from local to regional to global);
- ongoing and effective neutralisation of enemy propaganda (with integrated information operations and a holistic civil affairs campaign); and
- interagency efforts to build effective and responsible civil governance measures.¹³³

These models point to a daunting requirement far beyond the scope of any one arm of government, such as the Australian Army. Indeed, there are indications that a range of government agencies and partner organisations are already addressing many of these strands separately. So far, however, this is being done apparently without any clearly articulated overarching conceptual framework for the whole of government to follow—and in a manner consistent with the broad strategy of Australia's major allies. Clearly, to adequately respond to this proposed strategy would require significant levels of inter-departmental, interagency and international collaboration. As the government instrumentality most concerned with counterinsurgency operations, however, the Army needs to give this model serious consideration.

In considering this model, there are considerable ramifications for the Army as it prepares for future operations and for engaging with other government and non-government agencies and allies. Indeed,

¹³³ Bruce Hoffman, *Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat*, RAND, February 2006, p. 16.

the arguments presented thus far point to the centrality of cultural awareness, cultural understanding and cultural leverage for effective counterinsurgency. As Kilcullen observes, ‘many links in the *jihad*—and virtually all the grievances and energies that circulate within it—are culturally determined.’¹³⁴

Responding to this cultural imperative is not a simple task; nor is it one that the Australian Army is particularly comfortable with, given its strong Anglophile traditions and predilection for being awed by the ‘American way’ that emphasises technology and kinetic effects as the primary panacea. Yet the experience in Iraq and Afghanistan of both conventional and special forces, let alone the prospect of further instability in Australia’s ‘near north’, suggest that the cultural imperative is a key area on which the Australian Army needs to work to improve its ability to respond.

The Australian Army prides itself on having a ‘manoeuvrist’ disposition, whereby the ‘indirect approach’ is preferred for counterinsurgency. In this era of global access to information, where local cultural and linguistic nuances are overlaid with linguistic and social mores ubiquitous across the so-called cybercaliphate, that indirect approach is predicated on an unprecedented level of cultural awareness. The Australian Army has certainly made considerable advances in seeking to address this issue—by adding resources to its human intelligence, civil affairs and language capabilities—but much more is yet to be done.

Complex Counterinsurgency

In a similar vein to Kilcullen, and predating Hoffman and Cassidy, John Mackinlay’s Whitehall Paper entitled *Defeating Complex Insurgency* observes that the Cold War–era strategic and operational levels of war remain more or less as previously defined. But ‘a virtual dimension now surrounds, pervades and directly influences both, and

¹³⁴ Kilcullen, ‘Countering Global Insurgency’, p. 613.

the virtual dimension grows in significance with the proliferation of communications.’ Mackinlay correctly argues that ‘in the counter-strategy against global jihad, the population is the vital ground; winning their support is a key objective for the military, the insurgents and the humanitarian actors.’¹³⁵ Thus, Mackinlay asserts, the US Administration’s apparent tacit encouragement of abuse of prisoners and ‘extraordinary rendition’ sends a strong and contradictory message. After all, as Christopher Coker observes, ‘unless war is mediated ethically, there is no hope of closure.’¹³⁶

For Mackinlay, this insurgency is complex because ‘the pattern of linkages between cells is more significant than the cells themselves. Global insurgents appeared to have no centre of gravity, no globally effective leader, no hard-wired organizational structures and no single manifesto.’ His contention of no single manifesto is open to challenge. After all, the Qur’anic injunctions to violent jihad and justifications for targeted suicide are found across the ‘cybercaliphate’, albeit with sectarian variants. But his basic premise about complexity is compelling. Mackinlay further argues that ‘the spiritual dimension of global insurgency confronts the secular culture of Western analysts. To enter the mind of the subverted bomber requires understanding of faith of overwhelming intensity’.¹³⁷

Retired US Army Major General and noted military scholar, Robert Scales, captures a sense of this challenge in what he describes as ‘culture-centric warfare’. Scales cogently argues that ‘intimate knowledge of the enemy’s motivation, intent, will, tactical method and cultural environment has proved to be far more important for

¹³⁵ John Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency: beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*, Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall Paper 64, London, 2005, p. v–vi.

¹³⁶ Christopher Coker, ‘Cultural Ruthlessness and the War against Terror’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, Summer 2005-06, pp. 156–7, 159.

¹³⁷ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*. p. vi.

success than the deployment of smart bombs, unmanned aircraft, and expansive bandwidth. Success in this phase [of the Iraq war] rests with the ability of leaders to think and adapt faster than the enemy and of soldiers to thrive in an environment of uncertainty, ambiguity, and unfamiliar cultural circumstances.¹³⁸

In reality, the spiritual and cultural dimensions that Mackinlay and Scales refer to may be the most complex parts of the problem for a Western person. The complexity arises in part because much of what Islamists believe is in fact foreign to the Western mind. In contrast, the Western mind is influenced by trends in Western thought, ranging from the Enlightenment to post-modernism, and is brought up, in many cases, with a healthy scepticism of religious matters and invocations of the supernatural. What is more, even for practitioners of, and even those familiar with, Christian precepts, such as ‘turning the other cheek’ and ‘loving thine enemy’, the apparently intractable hard-line of the Islamist bent on violent jihad is difficult to comprehend.

Mackinlay, like others, recognises that an international response requires the coordination of efforts by military coalitions, bilateral donors, the United Nations system, international organisations, non-government organisations, private security companies and contractors. Meanwhile, the ‘media in every form will also be present at all levels, creating images and narratives for local and global audiences.’ He further notes that the recruitment process follows a linear process of: (1) disillusionment, (2) isolation, (3) subversion, and (4) becoming a terrorist actor. The US-led coalition emphasis is on reacting to the last phase, whereas a manoeuvrist would interrupt the first one. ‘But the weight of our national forces

¹³⁸ Robert H. Scales, Jr., ‘Culture-Centric Warfare’, *Proceedings*, Vol. 130, October 2004.

is poised to react after the act of subversion has taken place, not to forestall the act itself.’¹³⁹ Mackinlay’s solution is fivefold:

- revitalise or reforge a more cohesive alliance;
- secure the strategic populations against subversion;
- simplify the operational space;
- develop a universally accepted concept of operations for international counterinsurgency operations; and
- encourage the coalition to be more globally minded and less individually state-centred.

Mackinlay’s recommendations have much to commend them for Australia’s ‘great and powerful friends’ but are not easily applied directly in the Australian context. Still, his ideas warrant consideration to help ensure that efforts undertaken by the Australian Army and the wider ADF are consistent with cogent strategies that appreciate the global and complex nature of the insurgency. Such ideas about complex and global counterinsurgency are not only consistent with the trends identified in the Australian Army’s *Complex Warfighting* concept paper, but they are also becoming evident in emergent allied doctrine, thanks to the hard-earned experience of military practitioners on operations such as Australian Major General Jim Molan.

Reflecting on his recent experience working with the US Army in Iraq in 2004–2005, Molan observed that war in Iraq is approaching ‘a new form of warfare’. Molan makes the point that the campaign involves a military response with ‘an understanding of how each line of operation (diplomatic, information, military and economic)’ is linked. In Molan’s view, Australia ‘must now take the step to institutionalise our ability to learn from the most experienced in the Western world, the US, and we now have a unique opportunity to do

¹³⁹ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, p. vii.

so.¹⁴⁰ His views point to the need for the Australian Army to study the emerging lessons from the American experience closely and dispassionately, while keeping an eye on Australia's established strategies and doctrine.

Similarly, US Army Lieutenant General David Petraeus has argued that the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan 'are the wars we are fighting and are the kind of wars we must master.' The distillation of Petraeus' experiences resulted in 14 observations on soldiering in Iraq (included in annex C) that also address the broader challenge of counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture. In light of Petraeus' experience, his conclusion is not surprising, arguing that conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture is exceedingly complex. Fortunately, his views have influenced emergent US Army doctrine as well (as discussed below).¹⁴¹ As former Pentagon analyst, retired Marine and current Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual* author, Frank Hoffman, observes, 'patience, tightly integrated civil-military programs, unity of effort, acute cultural intelligence and the discriminate use of force remain key principles.'¹⁴²

In addressing the need for acute intelligence, one particularly prominent area where the US Army has sought to rectify a prominent deficiency is in the area of human intelligence (HUMINT). Long considered masters of technical intelligence collection systems, including signals and imagery intelligence, the

¹⁴⁰ Major General Jim Molan, 'Feature', *Defence: the official magazine*, February 2006, < <http://www.defence.gov.au/defencemagazine/-editions/200602/features/feature03.htm> >.

¹⁴¹ Lt.Gen. David H. Petraeus (US Army), 'Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq', *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 1, January–February 2006.

¹⁴² Frank G. Hoffman, 'Small Wars Revisited: The United States and Nontraditional Wars', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 6, December 2005, p. 930.

US armed forces, and the US Army in particular, have recognised that, because of the nature of the ‘camouflage’ in counterinsurgency operations, HUMINT ‘is absolutely critical in the contemporary operating environment.’ As Major General Walter Wojdakowski, the US Army’s infantry commandant, explains, ‘our enemy has chosen to immerse himself in the civil population.’ Yet because of successes so far ‘[the enemy] has lost much of the support of those he had sought to intimidate, and citizens are providing even more invaluable HUMINT to our forces.’¹⁴³

Such observations suggest that, in insurgencies, there is considerable difficulty in defining the nature of the opponent and in assessing his strategy, structure and means. As Frank Hoffman argues, ‘an order of battle mentality is clearly not appropriate’ as ‘future opponents will not be easily characterized by an organizational chart.’¹⁴⁴ Recent Australian experience in southern Iraq supports this contention. Lieutenant Colonel Roger Noble’s Al Muthanna Task Group, for instance, found that, once given the opportunity to get established, HUMINT, complementing the other sources of technical intelligence, proved to be of disproportionate value in providing situational awareness for the safety and security of the force.¹⁴⁵

Others with experience in Iraq have also made important contributions to ‘strategic counterinsurgency modelling’, providing useful methodologies for counterinsurgency planners and executors to capture, in simplified form, some of the complexities of modern

¹⁴³ Major General Walter Wojdakowski, ‘Commandant’s Note—Urban Operations: Meeting the Challenge’, *Infantry*, Vol. 94, No. 6, November–December 2005, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Frank G. Hoffman, ‘Small Wars Revisited: The United States and Nontraditional Wars’, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 6, December 2005, p. 931.

¹⁴⁵ Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Noble, Army Headquarters, Russell, February 2006.

counterinsurgency.¹⁴⁶ One particularly useful construct is the Diamond Insurgent model by Dr Gordon H. McCormick.¹⁴⁷ This model includes four ‘corners’ (government, people, counter-government, international actors) and five ‘legs’:

- (1) government build legitimacy with the people;
- (2) people identify insurgent infrastructure members;
- (3) government builds legitimacy with international actors;
- (4) government reduces support and sanctuary to insurgents from international actors; and
- (5) direct action.

The interaction between the five ‘legs’ needs to be prioritised, argues Eric Wendt, so that instead of direct action being the step of first resort, it becomes relegated to last.¹⁴⁸ Such innovative thinking is symptomatic of the work being done as a consequence of having to improvise, adapt and overcome ‘on the run’.

Complexity and Post-Modernism

This section on complexity, with its considerations of various proposed solutions, may suggest to the reader that, in reality, the counterinsurgency challenge, while appropriately seen as being global, is not necessarily all that complex. But there is another dimension to the complexity that is perhaps of fundamental significance for how the Australian Army and like-minded organisations and agencies respond. That dimension concerns the West’s apparently schizophrenic response to the challenge so far.

¹⁴⁶ See for instance, Lieutenant Colonel (P) Eric P. Wendt, ‘Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling’, *Special Warfare*, Volume 18, No. 2, September 2005, pp. 2–12.

¹⁴⁷ This model was presented in a lecture to the Naval Postgraduate School in 2005, quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

As a consequence of the complex and global nature of the insurgency being faced, and the multicultural and post-modernist propensities in Australian and other societies of the West, developing a robust and workable strategy presents difficulties. This is particularly problematic because this war, at least in part, is about what controversial right-wing figure, Mark Steyn, calls ‘our lack of civilizational confidence.’¹⁴⁹ His argument builds on the views of Roger Kimball, who astutely observes that ‘the U.S. and British armed forces act in one way. Our intellectual leaders, by and large, act in quite another.’¹⁵⁰ These views ring true for Australia as well, presenting the Army and the ADF with a considerable existential challenge. The Army and the wider Australian Defence Organisation are required to understand and respond to a threat that poses difficult questions about how Australians see themselves and how far they are prepared for their defence force to go in pursuing national security interests on their behalf. This challenging ‘nettle’ is not readily ‘grasped’.

To date, efforts have been made by allied armies involved in this counterinsurgency to grapple with the problem through doctrine. The following section, Part Five, addresses recent developments in this arena.

¹⁴⁹ Mark Steyn, ‘It’s the demography, stupid’, *The New Criterion*, Vol. 24, No. 5, January 2006, p. 11.

¹⁵⁰ Roger Kimball, ‘After the suicide of the west’, *The New Criterion*, Vol. 24, No. 5, January 2006, p. 7.

PART FIVE

ALLIED COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

British Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Experience in the Middle East is, no doubt, influencing thinking on the future of British counterinsurgency doctrine. Indeed, the British Army has become searingly aware recently that, as one critic observed, ‘what worked in Belfast didn’t work in Basra.’¹⁵¹ But the British Army has been a leader in this process of modelling for many years, having produced several iterations of their counterinsurgency operations (or counter revolutionary warfare) doctrine in 1969, 1977, 1995, and, reprinted with only minor amendments, in July 2001.¹⁵² The last two iterations also draw on the British Army’s experience with related post–Cold War peace-support operations.¹⁵³ The British have undertaken subsequent work as well and this has influenced thinking amongst Britain’s allies.

Its breadth of experience has enabled the British Army to provide considerable insight on the details of the doctrine (the tactics, techniques and procedures), as well as the fundamentals. British counterinsurgency doctrine identifies three broad fundamentals of doctrine developed and adapted for counterinsurgency as also being relevant for so called peace-support operations: minimum force,

¹⁵¹ Ralph Peters, ‘No Silver Bullets: Fighting the insurgency in Iraq’, *Armed Forces Journal*, January 2006, p. 39.

¹⁵² See British Army, Land Operations AC 70516 Volume III, *Counter Revolutionary Warfare* Parts 1 and 2 (1969 and 1977); British Army, DGD&D Army Field Manual, Volume V, *Operations Other Than War, Section B, Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995; and British Army, Army Field Manual, Volume 1, Combined Arms Operations, Part 10, (UK FM Vol. 1, Part 10) Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines), July 2001.

¹⁵³ Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss*, p. 4.

civil/military cooperation and tactical flexibility.¹⁵⁴ Their depth of writing reflects considerable experience in counterinsurgency operations, not only far afield but close to home in Northern Ireland. But, like Australia, Britain has to reconsider its doctrine in light of the changed circumstances faced today. Surprisingly enough for some Australians, who have tended to view Canadians as focused on ‘peacekeeping’, one country which has been proactive in such reconsideration is Canada.

Emergent Canadian Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Canada, Australia’s ‘strategic cousin’, most closely approximates Australia’s predicament as it reconsiders its own approach to counterinsurgency.¹⁵⁵ Since the onset of the ‘war on terror’, the Canadian Forces (CF) have played a prominent role in counterinsurgency operations, particularly in Afghanistan, having deployed substantially more ground troops to the Middle East since 2001 and over a longer time frame than Australia. The challenges faced there by the Canadians have spurred a transformation within the CF, including the recent establishment of four new operational level headquarters. As part of this program, the Canadians have made a substantial effort during 2005 and 2006 to update their counterinsurgency doctrine. In doing so, they have borrowed heavily from their allies, particularly the United Kingdom and from recent academic work and operational experiences. Their draft doctrine is

¹⁵⁴ UK FM Vol. 1, Part 10, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ For a compelling argument on the close parallels between the Australian and Canadian armies and the merits of closer collaboration see John Blaxland, *Strategic Cousins: Australian and Canadian Expeditionary Forces and the British and American Empires*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2006; and ‘Strategic Cousins’ Reconverging Trajectories: Canada’s and Australia’s expeditionary Forces Since the End of the Cold War’, in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds.), *Battle Near and Far: A Century of Overseas Deployment*, Chief of Army Military History Conference 2004, Army History Unit, 2005.

aimed at the operational level but touches in good measure upon the tactical level.¹⁵⁶

For the Canadians, there are three components of the model for the continuum of operations—the spectrum of conflict, predominant campaign themes, and types of operations. Counterinsurgency is considered one of four ‘predominant campaign themes’ (the others being peacetime military engagement, peace support and major combat). But campaign themes should not be confused with tactical operations, they argue, which include offensive, defensive and stability operations. These types of operations, the Canadians explain, must be combined with simultaneity—that is, the three types of tactical operations occurring simultaneously.¹⁵⁷ Interestingly, the notion of simultaneity reflects similar thinking to that behind the Australian *Complex Warfighting* concept.

Canada’s extensive experience on operations in Afghanistan since 2001 has arguably given them a head start over Australia in terms of up-to-date counterinsurgency doctrine development. This makes their work particularly noteworthy for Australia as it reconsiders its own understanding of counterinsurgency. Nonetheless, the weight of recent experience and the volume of considered research and writing on the matter in the United States means that a reconsideration of Australian counterinsurgency doctrine would be incomplete without a review of developments within the US Army and Marines.

Emergent US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Doctrine

The US Marine Corps has been called ‘the incubator for innovative thinking’ in the United States, thanks to their focus on

¹⁵⁶ Author’s correspondence with Steven Noble, 18 April 2006.

¹⁵⁷ Canadian Forces, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, (draft, September 2005) B-GL-323-004/FP-003, Chapter One, pp. 5–7.

counterinsurgency and urban operations.¹⁵⁸ The Marines have been long acquainted with the concept of insurgencies and retain a close attachment to their *Small Wars Manual*, first published in 1940.¹⁵⁹ Since then, Marines have played leading roles in thinking and writing about counterinsurgency, arguing, for instance, that the US armed forces develop standing, multifunctional, capabilities-based joint interagency task forces primarily focused on counterinsurgency operations.¹⁶⁰ Building on Marine General Charles Krulak's 'Three Block War' concept (warfighting, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping), General James Mattis has described the rise of what he called 'hybrid wars', whereby challengers 'employ irregular methods—terrorism, insurgency, unrestricted warfare, guerilla war or coercion by narco-criminals.' In response, Mattis writes, 'We're adding a fourth block—which makes it the Fourth Block War.'

The additional block deals with the psychological or information aspects. This fourth block is the area where you may not be physically located but in which we are communicating or broadcasting our message.'¹⁶¹ Krulak's construct is now widely accepted and reflects a mindset adept at responding to counterinsurgencies. But Mattis' conceptualisation of the 'fourth block' remains contentious, although his point about giving increased profile to the place of the informational domain is instructive and becoming widely accepted. In fact his emphasis on information points also to the centrality of seeing such conflict as encompassing all of society. After all, it is increasingly obvious that

¹⁵⁸ Cassidy, *Peacekeeping in the Abyss*, p. 247.

¹⁵⁹ United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, Washington DC, 1940.

¹⁶⁰ See for instance, Eric M. McFadden, Marine Corp University, Quantico, VA, USA, 'Contemporary Counterinsurgency Operations: History as a Guide to Assist in the Development of the Joint Interagency Task Force', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 24, No. 4, October–November 2005, pp. 361–77.

¹⁶¹ Lieutenant Generals James N. Mattis and Lieutenant Colonel Frank G. Hoffman, USMC, 'Future Warfare: the Rise of Hybrid Wars', *Proceedings*, November 2005, pp. 18–19.

it is possible to win a battle but lose a war based on perceptions of the people in the theatre and popular support at home.¹⁶²

The US Army's traditional approach to counterinsurgency (apart from the approach adopted by the Special Forces) stands in contrast to its British Army and US Marine Corps partners. One of the strongest institutional factors that has constrained the US Army from being more prepared to consider counterinsurgency as part of the mainstream of warfighting doctrine and concepts is the fact that its warfighting ethos is strongly informed by the Civil War and industrial-scale battles of annihilation and attrition. The two world wars, the Cold War commitments to NATO, and the Gulf War in 1990–1991 all fitted into this paradigm of the purpose of the US Army.¹⁶³ As a consequence of this mindset, the conventional arms of the US Army were happy for the US Special Forces and the US Marines to pursue a 'small wars' approach.

Yet there is another major American organisation that has played an important role in the development of American counterinsurgency concepts—the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In the Vietnam War, for instance, the CIA was more open to experimentation in counterinsurgency techniques than was the US Army. Indeed, its mandate gave it greater inherent flexibility to be involved in deniable, cross-border activity throughout Indochina. Citing William Colby, Nagl points out that 'Unique in the American bureaucracy, the CIA understood the necessity to combine political, psychological, and paramilitary tools to carry out a strategic concept of pressure on an enemy or to strengthen an insurgent.' Similarly, the US Special Forces 'were the only soldiers who had the knowledge and experience to point out the answer [to the

¹⁶² Author's discussions with Peter Clay, 11 April 2006.

¹⁶³ See Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, paperback ed., 1977.

counterinsurgency challenge], but the regular army absolutely wouldn't listen to them. They'd have listened to the French before they listened to our own Special Forces.' Nagl points out that the organisational culture of the US Army 'was too formidable a barrier to permit learning from the CIA's success'.¹⁶⁴

The CIA went on to play the pivotal (albeit double-edged)¹⁶⁵ role for the United States in Afghanistan as well, particularly following the Soviet Union's invasion.¹⁶⁶ With no organisation really comparable to the CIA, Australia must bear in mind the significant role the CIA plays in the suite of capabilities wielded by the American government in its pursuit of the global counterinsurgency. Nonetheless, there remains much of benefit to derive from the lessons being learned by the US Army, particularly as it is now influenced by developments emerging from the CIA's Office of Insurgency Analysis. That office produces doctrine and strategic assessments for the whole of the US Government.¹⁶⁷

In reality, the heightened tempo of operations in the post-Cold War years meant that the US Army, while doctrinally uncomfortable with non-conventional wars, learnt many lessons along the way, despite being reluctant to 'do windows': that is, being reluctant to perform apparently peripheral tasks other than conventional warfighting. The culmination of over a decade of increasingly complex post-Cold War peacekeeping and peace-support missions led the US Army to publish Field Manual 3-07 *Stability Operations and Support*

¹⁶⁴ Cited in Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, pp. 127–9.

¹⁶⁵ The training and arming of Mujahideen contributed directly to the formation of the Taliban.

¹⁶⁶ See Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin, New York, 2004.

¹⁶⁷ Author's discussions with undisclosed correspondent.

Operations.¹⁶⁸ This doctrine recognised that peacekeeping and related tasks at times seem to blur into more warlike ‘stability and support operations’. The US Army Manual assigned one chapter to ‘Foreign Internal Defense’, described as ‘participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and *insurgency*.’¹⁶⁹ [italics added].

FM 3-07 drew on many of the lessons of past insurgencies, but the chapter covering counterinsurgency spans only eight pages, and while accurate as far as it goes, offered too little and too late for what was about to unfold. Coincidentally, the manual was published in February 2003—one month prior to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and prior to the greatest insurgency faced since the Vietnam War.

Since then, however, considerable work has been done in US Army doctrinal circles to catch up on the shortfall. The large number of articles on the topic in US military journals (such as *Parameters*, *Proceedings* and *Military Review*) in the last two years is evidence of the level of attention the subject has garnered since the end of the so-called ‘conventional’ phase of the war in Iraq. Indeed, the US Army has had a change of heart, following soul-searching reflection on its ‘way of war’ since 2003. As Jeffrey Record observed, the policy question has become ‘not whether the United States should continue to maintain conventional primacy but whether given the evolving strategic environment, it should create ground (and supporting air) forces dedicated to performing stability and security operations including counterinsurgency.’¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-07 (FM 100-20), *Stability Operations and Support Operations*, Washington DC, 20 February 2003, p. 1-1

¹⁶⁹ FM 3-07, p. 3-0 citing JP 1-02.

¹⁷⁰ Jeffrey Record, ‘Why the Strong Lose’, p. 29.

In light of such reflection, in October 2004, Headquarters Department of the Army issued Field Manual Interim (FMI) 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*.¹⁷¹ In what appears to be a significant break from the traditional ‘American Way of War’ construct described by Russell Weigley, the interim doctrine stated that in conducting counterinsurgency operations, ‘leaders must consider the roles of military, intelligence, diplomatic, law enforcement, information, finance, and economic elements (MIDLIFE)’.¹⁷² Indeed, reflecting the changed priorities of the US Army, the civil affairs and psychological operations functions, previously the preserve of Special Operations Command, are being integrated into the conventional army forces.¹⁷³

One British critique, however, suggests that the American warfighting pre-disposition is so deeply ingrained that it will take many years to effect the necessary transformation for effective counterinsurgency. Symptomatic of the issue is the Army’s ‘Warrior Ethos’, which enjoins the soldier to have just the one type of interaction with his enemy—‘to engage and *destroy* him’: not *defeat*, which could permit a number of other politically attuned options, but *destroy*. Yet on many occasions in unconventional situations they have to be soldiers, not warriors.¹⁷⁴ Such criticisms appear to have been taken to heart, at least by the doctrine writers of the latest manual on counterinsurgency.

¹⁷¹ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field manual interim (FMI) 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, Washington DC, October 2004 (expires October 2006).

¹⁷² FMI 3-07.22, p. vi.

¹⁷³ Joshua Kucera, ‘Civil affairs, psyops shift away from SOCOM’, *Janes Defence Weekly*, 22 March 2006, p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, ‘Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations: U.S. Army Transformation needs to focus less on warfighting and more on developing a truly adaptive force’, *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXV, November–December 2005, pp. 2–15.

In addition to the criticisms, the pace of developments in operations resulted in the US Army preparing a new collaborative draft counterinsurgency manual (for Army, FM 3-24; for Marines, MCRP 3-33.5) in January 2006.¹⁷⁵ It includes a foreword co-signed by the Commander US Army Combined Arms Center, Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, and the Commanding General of the US Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Lieutenant General James N. Mattis.

Petraeus and Mattis have both acquired considerable experience in the field of counterinsurgency, and their combined imprimatur points to the new prominence given to this manual and the lessons of counterinsurgency for both the US Army and Marine Corps. Mattis and Petraeus observe that principles and guidelines for counterinsurgency must be grounded in historical studies but informed by contemporary experiences. To them, a counterinsurgency campaign ‘involves a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability and reconstruction operations conducted along multiple lines of operation.’ Conducting such operations, they maintain, ‘requires a flexible, adaptive force led by agile, well-informed, culturally astute leaders.’¹⁷⁶

This version provides considerably more detail than the 2004 interim manual, placing greater emphasis on unity of effort, intelligence (stressing HUMINT and cultural awareness, particularly as ‘people are always the “key terrain” in counterinsurgency’), training of indigenous security forces, as well as leadership and ethics for counterinsurgency. The manual also includes additional and more detailed appendices, examples and illustrations, reflecting the extensive and hard-won experience of the last few years. In essence, the new draft manual represents what appears to be a significant

¹⁷⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24), *Counterinsurgency*, January 2006 (Initial Draft).

¹⁷⁶ FM 3-24, p. ii.

cultural breakthrough for the US Army, placing it conceptually closer to Australian (and for that matter other Commonwealth) doctrine than ever before.

Interestingly, the new US manual avoids adhering just to a set of principles. Instead, it argues that ‘counterinsurgency is a strange and complicated beast, and even following the principles and imperatives does not guarantee success.’ It therefore posits instead a series of ‘principles, imperatives and paradoxes’ of counterinsurgency (listed in annex D).¹⁷⁷ This is a profound and telling list that captures much of what has been learnt and re-learnt in recent operations. Ironically, the list also points to the Churchillian refrain: ‘you can always count on Americans to do the right thing—after they've tried everything else.’

Critics have argued, however, that the manual still is too strategic and theoretical and that company commanders need something more practically oriented at their level. Following a recent deployment to Iraq with another US government agency, David Kilcullen prepared a pamphlet for the use of tactical field commanders. His pamphlet, sponsored jointly by Petraeus and Mattis, is entitled ‘Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency’ and is published on such websites as companycommand.com and platoonleader.net. It is receiving wide acclaim in US military circles as a valuable adjunct to the new counterinsurgency manual.¹⁷⁸ In early April 2006, Petraeus and Mattis distributed the pamphlet to all US Army and Marine Generals with instructions that it be read by all company-grade officers and NCOs serving in, or about to deploy to, Iraq and Afghanistan. The pamphlet has been adopted on the

¹⁷⁷ This list has also been explained by Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath and John Nagl, ‘Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency’, *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXVI, March–April 2006.

¹⁷⁸ D.J. Kilcullen, ‘Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-level Counterinsurgency’, 29 March 2006. See www.companycommand.com.

curriculum of the new US counterinsurgency school in Iraq. Kilcullen's twenty-eight articles, written as 'commandments', but, as he admits, 'really more like folklore', follow the same structure as T.E. Lawrence's famous 1917 pamphlet, "Twenty-Seven Articles", and offer a distillation of observations from collective experience. A synopsis is offered at annex E.

This distillation of tactically applicable 'articles' is equally of relevance for the Australian Army and its sub-unit commanders and junior leaders faced with complex challenges on operations today. The list captures many of the lessons from counterinsurgencies of the past, while adapting for the new dynamics of the information era and the peculiarities of the extant threats. How the Australian Army should respond is the subject of the final segment of this paper, Part Six.

PART SIX

CONCLUSION:

AN AUSTRALIAN ARMY RESPONSE TO COMPLEX GLOBAL COUNTERINSURGENCY

An Insurgency

A broad consensus is emerging that points to the inadequacy of simply describing the current state of affairs as a ‘war on terror’. So far, authors have described this phenomenon in terms of ‘small wars’, ‘wars of the flea’, ‘war in the minor key’, ‘savage wars of peace’, ‘operations other-than war’ and ‘wars among the people’. Others see these wars as ‘hybrid’, ‘Eastern’, ‘low-intensity’, ‘guerilla’, ‘unconventional’, ‘culture-centric’, ‘of terror’, ‘transformational’, ‘complex’, ‘fourth-generation’, ‘three-block’, ‘four-block’ or ‘asymmetric’. Yet these various descriptions seem to confirm that the so-called ‘Global War on Terror’ is about an insurgency. The traits of insurgency are evident in the writings and the actions of the adversaries that have otherwise been known as terrorists or guerillas. The survey undertaken in this paper demonstrates the breadth of consensus amongst scholars and practitioners on the nature of the threat being faced. Indeed, insurgency itself, as is well known, is not a new concept.

Global in Scope

Today, however, the insurgency faced is global. Immigration and globalisation have spread the reach of the ‘cybercaliphate’ beyond the borders of traditional Muslim states to the fringes of Islam in South East Asia and beyond, into virtually all the countries of the West—as recent arrests in Melbourne, Australia indicate. The potency of that reach has been intensified by a millennialist and virtually anarchistically militant Islamism that advocates violent jihad against the West. It is clear, therefore, that the reach is global,

albeit with varying degrees of potency shaped by varied motives in different locations.

And Complex

The insurgency is also complex because of a number of factors. The information age and the technology associated with it has provided unprecedented reach and camouflage for insurgents. It has also enabled them to readily acquire potent weapons that previously were the exclusive domain of the armed forces of nation states. For the insurgents, the adage ‘think global, act local’ has been turned on its head as they ‘think local’ and, thanks to the media, ‘act global’ with devastating consequences. Conversely, the blurring of inter-agency responsibilities and ‘turf’, and the integration of national and tactical decisions and responses, point to a complex challenge in maintaining a clear understanding of the distinctive nuances of the insurgency.

Local insurgents’ distinctive features—including their motivations, political, economic and cultural orientations, as well as their *modus operandi*—heighten the level of complexity for effective counterinsurgency. After all, hardly any insurgents are members of al-Qaeda. In addition, there are several categories of Islamism, many of which are not bent on violent jihad. Understanding which groups are and which ones are not set on a violent path is a challenge. And figuring out how to respond, separating the irredeemable adversary from the uncommitted one and then taking action to further draw the uncommitted away from the path of those determined to inflict violence is a complex problem for a Western country such as Australia, and particularly its armed forces.

These distinctive features indicate that the challenge of insurgency today, while global and complex, still remains best understood and responded to in a disaggregated manner, as Kilcullen suggests. Indeed, notwithstanding the need to understand the general nature of radical Islamists bent on violent jihad, caution should be exercised

before applying a templated approach that might work in, say, the Middle East, to an issue in Australia's region, where different local imperatives are at play. Even on operations in the Middle East, Australian forces must acquire an unprecedented level of local knowledge to be effective.

Still no 'silver bullets'?

Former US Army intelligence officer and iconoclast, Ralph Peters, has argued that 'insurgencies are so different that one of the worst things that can happen to a force is to have achieved a recent success that is then carried along as a template for operations in a profoundly different culture.' Peters' critique suggests there is little of merit in considering counterinsurgency doctrine beyond recognising the 'one historical truth' that 'defeating insurgencies takes time—about a decade on average'. To Peters, 'the twin lessons of past insurgencies are that 'while insurgencies generally fail, there is no easy formula for suppressing them—other than ruthlessness at a level we cannot presently permit ourselves.'¹⁷⁹

Peters, concludes from this that 'doctrine must avoid the temptation to impose a uniform, limited set of rules on a complex form of conflict in which every insurgency has unique qualities.'¹⁸⁰ Peters' comments certainly have a ring of truth to them, but it would be dangerous to deduce that all that has gone before as counterinsurgency doctrine is no longer applicable. This goes back to the adage that good doctrine should not tell us what to think but guide us in how to think.¹⁸¹ Indeed, as has already been shown, there are several enduring features of Australian counterinsurgency doctrine that appear to have borne the test of time, and more still that have emerged recently that are particularly pertinent as well.

¹⁷⁹ Ralph Peters, 'No Silver Bullets: Fighting the insurgency in Iraq', *Armed Forces Journal*, January 2006, pp. 36–9.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Author's discussions with Mark O'Neill, 6 April 2006.

A Manoeuvrist Response

Notwithstanding Peters' reservations, this paper advocates the holistic development of an Australian strategy to address the 'war on terror' as a complex global insurgency. The paper has shown that a number of potential solutions exist for the current campaign. Yet few of them are particularly simple to implement or fall neatly into any one particular agency's domain. Some of the solutions have application particularly in domains beyond Army's exclusive remit, while others are of enduring relevance for the conduct of land-based military operations. To be sure, as Kilcullen has observed, there are a number that have direct tactical application for the Army on operations, but even these must be explained and understood in a wider context. The danger faced is that, in not recognising the responsibility as an armed force to think through the implications of the new circumstances, the Army, the ADF, and indeed the Australian nation stand to face an even greater and more complex challenge in future.

There are indeed some discontinuities between the counterinsurgency doctrines of old and the responses required for the complex global counterinsurgency of the information era. Yet there emerges from this range of doctrinal and conceptual work a number of continuities that are worth reflecting on as the Army considers what else needs to be done in preparing its response to the new version of insurgency at hand today.

First, the centre of gravity of the insurgents remains the will of the people to support their continued existence. Conversely, the centre of gravity of counterinsurgent forces is the will, or the patience, of the people supporting the counterinsurgency to tolerate what is now widely recognised as a 'long war'. While it is hard to capture the strength of the will of the people in words, particularly when they tend to fluctuate considerably over time.

There is little to be gained and much to be lost from delay and obfuscation. Action is required and the Australian Army, in concert with the wider Defence organisation and other agencies and departments, faces an obligation, consistent with its mandate to protect the nation, to adequately prepare for the kind of war being faced today as described in this paper.

The Australian Army has sought to adopt a ‘manoeuvrist’ mindset for military operations, conscious of the impact of the media and the Internet on the adversary’s and its own centres of gravity. That approach remains relevant today, but needs to be expanded and more widely agreed to by Army’s key partners in the counterinsurgency. Indeed, more than ever, an information-era savvy manoeuvrist approach is crucial for the Australian Army, as it has to be very careful in how its finite resources are applied. Such an approach needs to minimise the Australian Army as a target profile while maximising its effectiveness in winning the battle for ‘hearts and minds’.

For counterinsurgency operations, as Mackinlay observes, the manoeuvrist approach involves helping first to address the disillusion and isolation that precedes subversion and results in terrorism. Yet such a task, while involving the Army, requires a whole-of-government response. The considered views of numerous scholars and military practitioners point to a series of action steps that can be taken and for which the Australian Army can be actively involved in shaping, if not directly leading. Indeed, on its own, the Army can take little of the ‘manoeuvrist’ action required. But there are steps the Army can take to position itself favourably as it seeks to work in a complementary way with the diplomatic, informational and economic instruments of national power and with those of coalition partners.

That positioning needs to be conducted with a clear understanding of the important role that civilians have to play in counterinsurgency. This is something that even the United States is still struggling to grasp despite efforts to reform its counterinsurgency practices. Australia is actually ahead of the curve on this, particularly because of the experiences with RAMSI in Solomon Islands, the truce and peace monitoring group in Bougainville and, to a lesser extent, East Timor.¹⁸² For Australia, these experiences have helped make them competent in working with aid agencies, the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other governmental and non-governmental bodies.

Experience on such operations has demonstrated that rational behaviour is not to be presumed. In the context of radical Islamists, such rational behaviour, as it is understood in the West, can be expected to play a small part in the complex global insurgency. This is confronting to conventional military models of applying force and starts to raise questions about why military structures are the way they are.¹⁸³ Such questions point to the need for a reconsideration of the importance of non-kinetic 'human' or 'cultural' skills for the Army.

The US *National Security Strategy* of March 2006 articulates what amounts to a global counterinsurgency campaign. As a close ally, Australia undoubtedly is affected by such developments in US strategy. Therefore, the Army, the wider ADF and, for that matter, the nation of Australia need to be clear about what role they are going to play and how it is to be performed, having a clear understanding of their own counterinsurgency doctrine in this new context.

¹⁸² Author's discussions with David Kilcullen, 9 April 2006.

¹⁸³ Author's discussions with Peter Clay, 11 April 2006.

The new circumstances point to the need for the Australian Army to complement the already robust concept of Complex Warfighting currently being implemented through the Hardening and Networking the Army program. The complementary work required includes:

- A greater recognition within Army and Defence of the potential requirement for counterinsurgency support to foreign governments.
- The reinvigoration of Australian military counterinsurgency doctrine in a whole-of-government context, whereby other departments and agencies are engaged.
- A close study of developments in allied military doctrine.
- A greater emphasis on cultural and linguistic awareness to better understand and respond to the current insurgency, particularly with respect to Australia's 'near north'.
- Closer engagement, through the Defence Cooperation Program, with regional countries where terrorists and insurgents are or may be spawned.
- Coordination of our concepts and plans with our most likely major partners in the West—the United States, Britain, Canada, Japan and other like-minded NATO countries—as well as Australia's immediate neighbours in ASEAN and the Southwest Pacific.
- A clear explanation to the public about how and why a manoeuvrist approach to complex global insurgency is being developed by Australia and what it entails.

In the past, Australia has sought to make contributions that make a difference. In Vietnam, for instance, Australia took primary responsibility for security in the province of Phuoc Tuy. Admittedly, the contribution there lacked certain elements considered necessary for successful counterinsurgency. Those elements were left to allies to perform. Today, however, with Australian troops deployed in numerous provinces across several countries in the Middle East, it is worthwhile reflecting on the experience in Phuoc Tuy. That reflection may show that, in the new insurgency, Australia may be

able to muster a contribution that, without significantly adding to the quantity of troops deployed, goes beyond the current disparate arrangements to make a contribution that has enduring worth.

Notwithstanding the challenge of the task, Australia is well placed to deal with the complex global counterinsurgency campaign. It is particularly well placed given its expertise with the ‘modern system’ of combined arms military operations employing joint effects in a coalition and inter-agency setting—a system that is, in the main, well suited for the kind of complex global insurgency being faced today. This expertise must be fostered and developed to maintain currency in the latest tactics, techniques and procedures being developed in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, Australia has an important supportive role to play in this difficult and wide-reaching campaign, particularly in so far as it can influence developments in its own region and can prepare itself to be as effective and attuned to the current realities as possible. Indeed, the heritage of successful counterinsurgency experience merits being revisited and updated for the Army’s challenges today and for those it may be required to face in future. Those challenges involve the Army going beyond its comfort zone to engage closely with others within and beyond the Department of Defence and the Australian Government to address capabilities that were once left largely for allies to maintain. In doing so, the Army’s adherence to the manoeuvrist approach remains exceptionally relevant for the challenges of the information era, particularly in the face of a complex global insurgency known as the ‘war on terror’.

ANNEX A

Cheryl Bernard's Muslim Ideological Spectrum¹⁸⁴

There are no clear boundaries, maintains Bernard, between the four categories outlined below. For instance, some traditionalists overlap with fundamentalists. The most modernists of the traditionalists are almost modernists. The most extreme modernists are similar to secularists. Nonetheless, Bernard contends, the categories provide a handy conceptual framework for understanding the various Islamic perspectives.

1. *Fundamentalists* reject democratic values and contemporary Western culture. They do not shy away from violence. They can be divided into two groups:

(1) *scriptural fundamentalists*. This group includes most of the Iranian revolutionaries, the Saudi-based Wahhabis, and the Kaplan congregation of Turks.

(2) *radical fundamentalists*, in contrast, are much less concerned with the literal substance of Islam, with which they take considerable liberties either deliberately or because of ignorance of orthodox Islamic doctrine. Al-Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and a large number of other Islamic radical movements and diffuse groups worldwide belong to this category.

2. *Traditionalists* want a conservative society. They are suspicious of modernity, innovation, and change. They are also divided into two groups. The distinction is significant:

¹⁸⁴ Cheryl Bernard, *Five Pillars of Democracy: How the West Can Promote an Islamic reformation*, RAND, Spring 2004, downloaded from <www.rand.org/publications>.

(1) The *conservative traditionalists* believe that Islamic law and tradition ought to be rigorously and literally followed. They see a role for the state and for the political authorities in encouraging or at least facilitating this. However, they do not generally favour violence and terrorism.

(2) The *reformist traditionalists* believe that Islam, to remain viable and attractive throughout the ages, must be prepared to make some concessions in the application of orthodoxy. They are prepared to discuss reforms and reinterpretations.

3. *Modernists* want the Islamic world to become part of global modernity. They want to reform Islam to bring it into line with the modern age. They actively seek far-reaching changes to the current orthodox understanding and practice of Islam. They want to jettison the burdensome ballast of local and regional tradition that, over the centuries, has intertwined itself with Islam.

4. *Secularists* want the Islamic world to accept a division of mosque and state in the manner of Western industrial democracies, with religion relegated to the private sphere. They further believe that religious customs must be in conformity with the law of the land and human rights. The Turkish Kemalists, who placed religion under the firm control of the state, represent the secularist model in Islam.

ANNEX B

International Crisis Group's Islamist Categories¹⁸⁵

The ICG argues that, in understanding the different streams of Islamic activism, the starting point is to distinguish between Shiite and Sunni Islamism. The concept of 'political Islam', they contend, first appeared in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, with Shiite activism then viewed as the most worrying threat. However, because Shiism is the minority variant of Islam (Sunnis constitute over 80 per cent of Muslims) and because Shiites typically are minorities in the states in which they find themselves, the most widespread and natural form of Shiite activism has been communal. This approach involves defending the interests of the Shiite community in relation to other populations and to the state itself. Thus, Shiite Islamism has remained unified to a remarkable degree and has not fragmented into conflicting forms of activism as has Sunni Islamism.

Sunni Islamism—about which most fears are held today—is widely viewed as uniformly fundamentalist, radical, and threatening to Western interests. Yet it is not at all monolithic. On the contrary, they argue, it has crystallised into three distinctive types, each with its own worldview, *modus operandi* and characteristic actors. The three types are attempts to reconcile tradition and modernity, to preserve those aspects of tradition considered to be essential by adapting in various ways to modern conditions. All three select from tradition, borrow selectively from the West and adopt aspects of modernity. Where they differ, they argue, is in how they conceive

¹⁸⁵ This is an extract from International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism*, Middle East/North Africa Report N°37
2 March 2005, downloaded from
<<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3300&l=1>> on 18
April 2006

the principal problem facing the Muslim world, and what they believe is necessary, possible and advisable to do about it.

Political Islamists

- These movements are exemplified by the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt (and its offshoots in Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Sudan and Syria) and by local movements whose purpose is to attain political power at the national level. These include the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, and the Party for Justice and Development in Morocco.
- They make an issue of Muslim misgovernment and social injustice and give priority to political reform to be achieved by political action (advocating new policies, contesting elections, etc.).
- They now generally accept the nation-state, operate within its constitutional framework, eschew violence (except under conditions of foreign occupation), articulate a reformist rather than revolutionary vision and invoke universal democratic norms. The characteristic actor is the party-political militant.

Missionary

- The Islamic missions of conversion (*al-da'wa*), which exists in two main variants exemplified by the highly structured Tablighi movement on the one hand and the highly diffuse Salafiyya on the other. In both cases political power is not an objective; the overriding purpose is the preservation of the Muslim identity and the Islamic faith and moral order against the forces of unbelief, and the characteristic actors are missionaries (*du'ah*), and the *'ulama*.
- Missionary Islamists make an issue of the corruption of Islamic values (*al-qiyam al-islamiyya*) and the weakening of faith (*al-iman*) and give priority to a form of moral and spiritual rearmament that champions individual virtue as the condition of good government as well as of collective salvation.

Jihadi

- *Jihadi*: the Islamic armed struggle (*al-jihad*), which exists in three main variants:
 - internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious);
 - irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and
 - global (combating the West). The characteristic actor is, of course, the fighter (*al-mujahid*).

- Jihadi Islamists make an issue of the oppressive weight of non-Muslim political and military power in the Islamic world and give priority to armed resistance.

ANNEX C

Petraeus' 14 Points

His observations are:

1. 'do not try to do too much with your own hands' (T.E. Lawrence citation);
2. act quickly, because every Army of liberation has a half-life beyond which it turns into an army of occupation;
3. money is ammunition;
4. increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success;
5. analyse 'costs and benefits' before each operation;
6. intelligence is the key to success;
7. everyone must do nation building;
8. help build institutions, not just units;
9. cultural awareness is a force multiplier;
10. success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations;
11. ultimate success depends on local leaders;
12. remember the strategic corporals and lieutenants;
13. there is no substitute for flexible, adaptable leaders; and
14. a leader's most important task is to set the right tone.

ANNEX D

US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes¹⁸⁶

The principles are:

- legitimacy as the main objective;
- unity of effort;
- political primacy;
- understanding the environment (particularly the population);
- intelligence as the driver for operations (gathered and analysed at the lowest levels);
- isolation of insurgents from their cause and support; and
- security under the rule of law.

The imperatives include:

- manage information and expectations (limit discontent, build support);
- use measured force (use the minimum possible force, where possible);
- learn and adapt (at least as fast as the insurgent);
- empower the lowest levels (encouraging initiative and decentralised operations); and
- support the host nation.

The paradoxes include:

- the more you protect the force, the less secure you are;
- the more force you use, the less effective you are;

¹⁸⁶ See Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath and John Nagl, 'Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, Vol. LXXXVI, March–April 2006; and FM 3-24, pp. 1-11 to 1-15.

- sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction;
- the best weapons for counterinsurgency do not shoot;
- the indigenous forces doing something poorly is sometimes better than us doing it well;
- if a tactics works well this week, it won't work next week; If it works in this province, it won't work in the next; and
- tactical success guarantees nothing.

ANNEX E

Twenty-Eight Articles of Counterinsurgency by David Kilcullen

On preparation, he argues:

1. know your turf (people, topography, economy, history, religion and culture);
2. diagnose the problem (how and why insurgents are supported);
3. organise for intelligence (most of it will come from your own operations);
4. organise for inter-agency operations (stabilisation by civil agencies will ultimately win the war);
5. travel light and harden your CSS (otherwise the insurgent will out-run and out-manoeuvre you);
6. find a political/cultural adviser (with people skills and a ‘feel’ for the environment);
7. train the squad leaders—then trust them (counterinsurgency is often a junior leader’s and often a private soldier’s war);
8. rank is nothing: talent is everything (talent spot, because not everyone is good at counterinsurgency); and
9. have a game plan (that is simple, flexible and known to everyone).

On the ‘golden hour’ of entering a sector and commencing a tour of duty, he posits:

10. be there (establish presence, live in your sector and move on foot to improve situational awareness and reduce risk);
11. avoid knee-jerk responses to first impressions (don’t act rashly: get the facts first as first impressions are often misleading);
12. prepare for handover from Day One (you will not resolve the insurgency on your watch);
13. build trusted networks (the true meaning of ‘hearts and minds’);

14. start easy (go with, not against the grain of local society);
15. seek early victories (to stamp your dominance in your sector);
16. practise deterrent patrolling (to unbalance the enemy and reassure the population);
17. be prepared for setbacks (these are normal as in any form of war);
18. remember the global audience (Internet bloggers and reporters monitor our every move);
19. engage the women, beware the children (win the women and you own the family unit, but keep children at arm's length); and
20. take stock regularly (keep metrics on social, informational, military and economic issues).

On 'Groundhog Day' and the steady state, he suggests:

21. exploit a 'single narrative' (to undercut their influence: this is art, not science);
22. local forces should mirror the enemy, not ourselves (to supplant the insurgent's role);
23. practise armed civil affairs (counterinsurgency is armed social work);
24. small is beautiful (programs that are small, cheap, sustainable and recoverable if they fail);
25. fight the enemy's strategy, not his forces (the enemy will go on the offensive if you threaten to displace them); and
26. build your own solution—only attack the enemy when he gets in the way.

On 'Getting Short', as the tour is drawing to a close, he asserts;

27. keep your extraction plan secret (or the enemy will use it to score a high-profile hit).

Finally, he states:

28. whatever else you do, keep the initiative (in counterinsurgency, the initiative is everything).

LAND WARFARE STUDIES CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Working Papers

- 101 Evans, Michael, *The Role of the Australian Army in a Maritime Concept of Strategy*, September 1998.
- 102 Dunn, Martin, *Redefining Strategic Strike: The Strike Role and the Australian Army into the 21st Century*, April 1999.
- 103 Evans, Michael, *Conventional Deterrence in the Australian Strategic Context*, May 1999.
- 104 de Somer, Greg, *The Implications of the United States Army's Army-After-Next Concepts for the Australian Army*, June 1999.
- 105 Ryan, Alan, *The Way Ahead? Alternative Approaches to Integrating the Reserves in 'Total Force' Planning*, July 1999.
- 106 de Somer, Greg, *The Capacity of the Australian Army to Conduct and Sustain Land Force Operations*, August 1999, reprinted October 1999.
- 107 de Somer, Greg, and Schmidtchen, David, *Professional Mastery: The Human Dimension of Warfighting Capability for the Army-After-Next*, October 1999.
- 108 Zhou, Bo, *South Asia: The Prospect of Nuclear Disarmament After the 1998 Nuclear Tests in India and Pakistan*, November 1999.
- 109 Ryan, Michael and Frater, Michael, *A Tactical Communications System for Future Land Warfare*, March 2000.
- 110 Evans, Michael, *From Legend to Learning: Gallipoli and the Military Revolution of World War I*, April 2000.
- 111 Wing, Ian, *Refocusing Concepts of Security: The Convergence of Military and Non-military Tasks*, November 2000.
- 112 Ryan, Michael and Frater, Michael, *The Utility of a Tactical Airborne Communications Subsystem in Support of Future Land Warfare*, April 2001.
- 113 Evans, Michael, *From Deakin to Dibb: The Army and the Making of Australian Strategy in the 20th Century*, June 2001.
- 114 Ryan, Alan, *Thinking Across Time: Concurrent Historical Analysis on Military Operations*, July 2001.
- 115 Evans, Michael, *Australia and the Revolution in Military Affairs*, August 2001.
- 116 Frater, Michael and Ryan, Michael, *Communications Electronic Warfare and the Digitised Battlefield*, October 2001.
- 117 Parkin, Russell, *A Capability of First Resort: Amphibious Operations and the Australian Defence Policy, 1901–2001*, May 2002.
- 118 Blaxland, John, *Information-era Manoeuvre: The Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, June 2002.

- 119 Connery, David, *GBAeD 2030: A Concept for Ground-based Aerospace Defence in the Army-After-Next*, July 2002.
- 120 Beasley, Kent, *Information Operations during Operation Stabilise in East Timor*, August 2002.
- 121 Ryan, Alan, *Australian Army Cooperation with the Land Forces of the United States: Problems of the Junior Partner*, January 2003.
- 122 Evans, Michael, Ryan, Alan (eds), *From Breitenfeld to Baghdad: Perspectives on Combined Arms Warfare*, January 2003.
- 123 Hoare, Mark, *The Prospects for Australian and Japanese Security Cooperation in a More Uncertain Asia-Pacific*, July 2003.
- 124 Ryan, Alan, 'Putting Your Young Men in the Mud': *Change, Continuity and the Australian Infantry Battalion*, September 2003.
- 125 Schmidtchen, David, *Network-Centric Warfare: the Problem of Social Order*, July 2005.
- 126 Watson, James, *A Model Pacific Solution? A Study of the Development of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands*, October 2005.
- 127 Brailey, Malcolm, *The Transformation of Special Operations Forces in Contemporary Conflict: Strategy, Missions, Organisation and Tactics*, November 2005.
- 128 Stevenson, Robert C., *Not-so friendly fire: an Australian taxonomy for fratricide*, April 2006.
- 129 Schmidtchen, David, *Eyes wide open: stability, change and network-enabling technology*, May 2006.
- 130 Stevenson, Robert C., *The Human Dimension of the Hardened and Networked Army: The Lessons of Friendly Fire*, June 2006.

Study Papers

- 301 Evans, Michael, *Forward from the Past: The Development of Australian Army Doctrine, 1972–Present*, August 1999.
- 302 Ryan, Alan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the 'New Age' Coalition Operations*, January 2000.
- 303 Evans, Michael, *Developing Australia's Maritime Concept of Strategy: Lessons from the Ambon Disaster of 1942*, April 2000.
- 304 Ryan, Alan, 'Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks': *Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor*, November 2000.
- 305 Evans, Michael, *The Continental School of Strategy: The Past, Present and Future of Land Power*, June 2004.
- 306 Evans, Michael, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War, 1901–2005*, February 2005.
- 307 Morrison, James C., *Mechanising an Army: mechanisation and the conversion of the Light Horse, 1920–1943*, June 2006.

Books

- Wahlert, G. (ed.), *Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific: 1942–45*, Army Doctrine Centre, Department of Defence, Puckapunyal, VIC, 1995.
- Dennis, Peter and Grey, Jeffrey (eds), *From Past to Future: The Australian Experience of Land/Air Operations*, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, ACT, 1995.
- Horner, David (ed.), *Armies and Nation Building: Past Experience—Future Prospects*, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 1995.
- Dennis, Peter and Grey, Jeffrey (eds), *Serving Vital Interests: Australia's Strategic Planning in Peace and War*, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, ACT, 1996.
- Malik, Mohan (ed.), *The Future Battlefield*, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, 1997.
- Smith, Hugh (ed.), *Preparing Future Leaders: Officer Education and Training for the Twenty-first Century*, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, ACT, 1998.
- Evans, Michael (ed.), *Changing the Army: The Roles of Doctrine, Development and Training*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, ACT, 2000.
- Evans, Michael and Ryan, Alan (eds), *The Human Face of Warfare: Killing, Fear and Chaos in Battle*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000.
- Evans, Michael, Parkin, Russell, and Ryan, Alan (eds), *Future Armies, Future Challenges: Land Warfare in the Information Age*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004.
- Parkin, Russell (ed.), *Warfighting and Ethics: Selected papers from the 2003 and 2004 Rowell Seminars*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, ACT, July 2005.