

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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THE VALIDITY OF BRITISH ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE
AFTER THE WAR IN IRAQ 2003-2009

DEFENCE ACADEMY COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This thesis analyses whether the British Army's doctrinal approach for countering insurgency is still valid in the light of the war in Iraq. Why is this important? Insurgency remains a prevalent form of instability. In the absence of a major conventional threat to British security, it is one which is likely to confront the Army for the foreseeable future. If British doctrine for counterinsurgency has been invalidated by the campaign in Iraq, this will have profound implications for the way the Army approaches, and is organized, equipped and trained for counterinsurgency in the future. If the doctrine is found to be valid, another explanation has to be found to account for the conduct and outcome of British operations in Southern Iraq between 2003 and 2009.

Using historiographical techniques, the thesis examines the principal influences on extant British doctrine, developed in 1995. It analyzes the principal British manuals, the influence on doctrine of the campaigns in Malaya and Northern Ireland and the theories of Sir Robert Thompson and Gen. Sir Frank Kitson in order to distil a 'British Approach,' against which both doctrine and the campaign in Iraq are judged. It examines the course of operations in Southern Iraq to determine the validity of *Counter Insurgency Operations*, and uses the U.S. Army's experience in developing and applying new doctrine in Iraq in 2007 and 2008 as a comparator. The thesis concludes that there was a dichotomy between theory and practice: British doctrine provided a valid theory for counterinsurgency, yet British commanders followed it only in part to achieve, at best, mixed results. Conversely, U.S. commanders applied their new doctrine, based on British theory, to great effect. While British doctrine may be valid, the issue was the extent to which it had been assimilated.

Acknowledgements

The idea for this thesis stemmed from a presentation I gave to Headquarters Multi-National Force-Iraq in March 2004 as it prepared to move to Baghdad from Camp Doha in Kuwait. I was a member of the directing staff at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, and the presentation was about British counterinsurgency doctrine. To prepare for it, I spent a weekend at home reading Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 *Counterinsurgency Operations* and writing the script. What struck me from the whole experience was not that the Commanding General in Kuwait challenged the idea that his forces in Iraq faced an insurgency – “Damn it, we’re warfighting!” – but how well constructed and well-written the Field Manual was. The main outcome of this exercise was, as events transpired, that I actually read the Army’s counterinsurgency doctrine. As I have discovered, I was, and remain in a minority.

First, I wish to acknowledge the wonderful encouragement and support provided by Richard Holmes, my supervisor. This has been a very difficult task to complete. Not only was the war in Iraq unpopular from the start, but the setbacks and difficulties the campaign experienced has challenged many assumptions and perceptions within and of the Army. Richard’s advice and guidance has helped me strike the right balance between assessing the doctrinal approach, which should have underpinned the campaign, and the conduct of the campaign itself. Many of my friends and colleagues had six years of their lives consumed by the campaign; one hundred and seventy-nine British servicemen and women died in Iraq. All their sacrifice, I humbly acknowledge.

From the start of my research, Brig. (Retired) Gavin Bulloch, the author of *Counter Insurgency Operations*, has been both a tremendous source of information and a great supporter. He was instrumental in writing the Army’s doctrine in the 1990s, and it owes him greatly for his careful research and his skilful writing. Gavin provided the definitive view of how the Army developed its doctrine following the Bagnall Reforms, and our many talks and discussions about counterinsurgency field manual were crucial to this thesis. I greatly appreciate our work together and acknowledge that without his help, my research would be incomplete.

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at court. He took me to Baghdad when the pressure in Basrah was at its height and the U.S. Surge was underway in Baghdad, he opened doors for me with our U.S. allies, and provided priceless insights into the campaign at its pivotal moment. If that was not enough, after Baghdad, he cleared the way for me to complete a Defence Fellowship at Oxford to finish this research, where I studied with Professor Hew Strachan and the Changing Character of War programme. Hew was the sounding board for many ideas, particularly those concerning the development of doctrine, and he helped me to keep the thesis set in a broader historical context.

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Many friends and colleagues at the University of Oxford, in particular Professors Neville Brown, Sir Adam Roberts, and David Robertson, listened to my developing ideas with remarkable patience, and Mansfield College's Senior Common Room was both welcoming and inquisitive about their soldier in their midst. I also gratefully acknowledge the support and friendship of Col. Kevin Benson, Howard Body, John Cooper, Russ Glenn, Marcus Good, Brig. (Retired) Iain Johnstone, John Mackinlay, Brig. Gen. HR McMaster, Steve Metz, John Nagl, Mark O'Neill, Col. Dan Roper, and Chris Schnaubelt. Closer to home, Rhys Jones, at the Joint Services Command and Staff College Library, Shrivenham, provided superb help, steering me through the archives to track down material and doctrine, and running to ground many dusty, long-lost references.

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Glossary

ACDS RP	Assistant Chief of Defence Staff Resources and Planning
ACR	Armoured Cavalry Regiment
ACSC	Advanced Command and Staff Course
ADC	Army Doctrine Committee
ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
AFM	Army Field Manual
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AQI	al-Qa'ida in Iraq
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ATDH	Army Tactical Doctrine Handbook
<i>ATOM</i>	<i>The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations</i>
BaOC	Basra Operational Command
<i>BMD</i>	<i>British Military Doctrine</i>
BRIAM	British Advisory Mission
CAC	Combined Arms Center (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas)
CADD	Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas)
CCCI	Central Criminal Court of Iraq
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CFE	Centre for Excellence
CG	Commanding General
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
C-IED	Counter-Improvised Explosive Device
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CinC	Commander-in-Chief
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
COB	Contingency Operating Base
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CONCO	Continuity Non-Commissioned Officer
CORDS	Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development
CPA	Coalition Provincial Authority
CS	The common name for 2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile, or tear gas
DfID	Department for International Development
DG	Director General
DGD&D	Directorate General for Development and Doctrine
DIF	Divisional Internment Facility
DIRC	Divisional Internment Review Committee
DLW	Director of Land Warfare
DSD	Director of Staff Duties
ECAB	Executive Committee of the Army Board
EFP	Explosively Formed Projectile

FARELF	Far East Land Forces
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FF	Foreign Fighters
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRL	Former Regime Loyalist
<i>FSR</i>	<i>Field Service Regulations</i>
GAO	General Accounting Office
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of Iraq
HCSC	Higher Command and Staff Course
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HQNI	Headquarters Northern Ireland
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IA	Iraqi Army
IAF	Iraqi Armed Forces
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defence Corps
IDF	Indirect Fire
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFOR	NATO Implementation Force
IGDT	Inspectorate General of Doctrine and Training
IMOD	Iraqi Ministry of Defence
IPS	Iraqi Police Service
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Iran)
IRPS	Iraqi Riverine Police Service
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
JAM	Jaish al-Mahdi
JCP	Joint Campaign Plan
JFHQ	Joint Force Headquarters
JHF-I	Joint Helicopter Force—Iraq
JSAT	Joint Strategic Assessment Team
JSCSC	Joint Services Command and Staff College
JSS	Joint Security Station
JWS	Jungle Warfare School
LLO	Logical Line of Operation
LO	Liaison Officer
LOO	Line of Operation
M2T	Mentoring, Monitoring and Training
MACA	Military Aid to the Civil Authority
MACP	Military Aid to the Civil Power
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multinational Corps-Iraq
MND(SE)	Multi-National Division (South East)
MNF-I	Multi-National Force—Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq

MoD	Ministry of Defence
MRLA	Malayan Races' Liberation Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NI	Northern Ireland
NISOPS	Northern Ireland Standing Operating Procedures
NITAT	Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team
NITW	Northern Ireland Training Wing
OGD	Other Government Departments
OMS	Office of the Martyr Sadr
OPTAG	Operational Training and Advisory Group
PIC	Provincial Iraqi Control
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PJCC	Provincial Joint Co-ordination Centre (Basrah Palace)
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PROVN	Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of Vietnam
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PVCP	Permanent Vehicle Check Point
RCDS	Royal College of Defence Studies
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RMAS	Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
SCIAD	Scientific Advisor
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SDR	Strategic Defence Review
SFOR	Stabilization Force – NATO Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina
SMBA	Senior British Military Advisor
SMBR-I	Senior British Military Representative-Iraq
SO2	Staff Officer Grade 2
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOTAT	Security Operations Training and Advisory Team
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TDRC	Tactical Doctrine Retrieval Cell
TELIC	The codename for British military operations in Iraq
TOC	Tactical Operations Centre
TRADOC	United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
TTPs	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UKLF	United Kingdom Land Forces
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UOR	Urgent Operational Requirement
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VBIED	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device
VCP	Vehicle Check Point

1 Introduction

1.1 Defining the Problem

This thesis analyses whether the British Army's doctrinal approach for countering insurgency is still valid in the light of its experience in Iraq. Why is the British approach to counterinsurgency important? Insurgency remains a prevalent form of instability, and, in the absence of a major conventional threat to British national interests, one which is very likely to confront the Army for the foreseeable future. If British doctrine for counterinsurgency is found to have been invalidated by the campaign in Iraq, such an outcome will have profound implications for the way the Army approaches, and is organized, equipped and trained for counterinsurgency in the future. If the doctrine is found to be valid, another explanation has to be found to account for the conduct and outcome of British operations in Southern Iraq between 2003 and 2009.

The British Army has a long history of countering insurgents, so it would be reasonable to assume that its doctrinal approach was well-founded and generally applicable. At the start of Operation TELIC, the name for the British campaign in Iraq, the Army was well-trained for warfighting and well-versed in operations other than war. It was generally assumed that it would be able to take Iraq in its stride. For the first year or so of the campaign that appeared to be the case. The U.S. Army turned to its British counterpart for guidance and yet, as the U.S. started to adapt to the challenges it faced in Iraq, British operations in Southern Iraq struggled to the extent that efficacy of the British approach was questioned openly. Now that the campaign is over, it is appropriate to ask whether, in the light of Iraq, the Army's doctrine for counterinsurgency remains valid. There are five principal questions to answer:

1. What was the British doctrinal approach to countering insurgency?
2. Was the approach published in the British Army's appropriate doctrinal document, *Counter Insurgency Operations* sound theory and relevant?
3. Did the doctrine work and, if not, why?
4. What was it about the campaign in Iraq which made theory difficult to apply in practice?
5. Where does Iraq leave the British approach to countering insurgency?

The first step in answering these questions is to establish what the doctrine is. The Army's doctrine is published in a two-volume Field Manual. Volume 1 provides guidance on combined arms operations at divisional, brigade and battlegroup level in conventional warfighting, counterinsurgency and stability operations. Volume 2 provides guidance on specific operational environments, including urban, jungle and mountainous terrain. Counterinsurgency doctrine is published in Volume 1 Part 10.¹ *Counter Insurgency Operations* was first published in 1995 and revised in early 2001. To avoid confusion editions will be identified by year of publication. It is unusual in that it covers the strategic and operational aspects of a counterinsurgency campaign,

defined as “a set of military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective within a given time and geographical area, which normally involve maritime, land and air forces.”² The rest of the series covers tactical doctrine and the conduct of battles and engagements. The 2001 edition was the final step in a process of review and revision which started in 1993. Brig. (Retired) Gavin Bulloch was the principal author, and his contribution to modern British military doctrine is considerable. *Counter Insurgency Operations* (2001) was the last in a line of Army publications published since 1949 which wrestled with the increasingly difficult challenges of applying military force to deal with revolutionary wars, threats to internal security, and insurgencies. These publications were:

1949 – *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*.³

1957 and 1963 – *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*.⁴

1969 and 1977 – *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*.⁵

1995 – *Counter Insurgency Operations*.

To avoid any confusion between editions of doctrine with the same title, publications will be identified by name and year of publication, thus *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) and *Counter Insurgency Operations* (2001).

At this stage, it is necessary to explain that while *Counter Insurgency Operations* was published in 1995 and 2001, the only principal difference was that the 2001 edition did not contain the tactics, techniques and procedures included in 1995. This was because in 1998 Bulloch reviewed both counterinsurgency and peacekeeping doctrine and realized there was a considerable overlap in the tactics used in both. He therefore decided it best to merge Parts 3 (Tactics) and 4 (Techniques and Procedures) with the procedures contained in *Peacekeeping Operations* and to publish them in one book, the *Tactical Handbook for Operations Other Than War*.⁶

Counter Insurgency Operations was the British Army’s approach. It emphasised the minimum use of force, the need to uphold the rule of law, the importance of intelligence-led operations, the need for close civil-military cooperation, and the requirement for tactical adaptability and agility. That said, there was formal recognition that this was not “a general antidote to the problem of insurgency,”⁷ neither was countering insurgency a case of applying one form of military force against another. As such, this was very much in line with the views articulated by Gen. Sir Frank Kitson. He was the most important twentieth century British military thinker in the field, having published the widely acclaimed *Low Intensity Operations* in 1972 and *Bunch of Five* in 1977.⁸ Both books drew on his experiences in Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland. Kitson’s influence on Army thinking was considerable, introducing novel approaches as a brigade commander in Northern Ireland, commandant of the Staff College, a divisional commander and, finally, as Commander-in-Chief United Kingdom Land Forces. Kitson was adamant that,

there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity. At the same time there is no such thing as a wholly political solution either, short of surrender, because the very fact that a state of insurgency exists implies that violence is involved which will have to be countered to some extent at least by the use of legal force. Political measures alone might have prevented the insurgency from occurring in the first place, ...

[but] once it has taken hold, politics and force, backed up by economic measures will have to be harnessed together for the purpose of restoring peaceful conditions.⁹

Although *Counter Insurgency Operations* describes the Army's approach, it does not describe how British counterinsurgency developed, so simply analyzing the published doctrine is not enough to determine its validity and relevance. At this point three assertions require to be made about doctrine in general. First, effective doctrine depends on blending practical experience with analysis and theory. Second, doctrine has met its principal purpose – that of providing practical guidance for the conduct of operations – when the approach it describes is assimilated fully into the organization, and its decisions and actions reflect the principles and approach its doctrine describes. Third, assimilation depends on training and education. To test these assertions, something needs to be understood of how and why doctrine developed, not just the central themes but also the context in which it was expected to be applied.

Examining the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine will allow the thesis to draw out how the Army's understanding of counterinsurgency, shaped and informed by doctrine, is altered by the reality of enduring operations. The study therefore needs to answer three second order questions which provide support to the main analysis: what were the Army's imperatives at the time *Counter Insurgency Operations* was published? How was the doctrine developed? What were the doctrine's key themes? Answering these questions is important because, as will be shown, the Army's focus was not on counterinsurgency when its doctrine was last published. In 2001, the focus of Defence as a whole was conventional, expeditionary warfighting, and had been since the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review*.¹⁰ This was despite the evidence from operations in the Balkans that a change in the character of war was underway, and that a regular-irregular asymmetry between regular armed forces and sub-state factions and entities was apparent.

1.2 What is Doctrine?

The second step to take is to answer the question 'What is doctrine?' The answer will establish the role and function doctrine plays and the significance it has. The 1996 edition of *British Military Doctrine* describes doctrine as "a formal expression of military knowledge that the Army accepts as being relevant at a given time."¹¹ The link with the 1926 definition offered by Maj. Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, the British military theorist, is evident. Fuller's influence on the conceptual development of the British Army Doctrine is examined in Chapter 2, however doctrine, Fuller posited, was,

the central idea of an army... which to be sound must be principles of war, and which to be effective must be elastic enough to admit mutation in accordance with change in circumstance. In its ultimate relationship to the human understanding this central idea or doctrine is nothing else than common sense—that is, action adapted to circumstance.¹²

Little has emerged since to challenge Fuller's view and, by 2001, the Ministry of Defence had developed its definition to explain that doctrine provided "the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative, but requires judgement in application."¹³ The assumption is clear: doctrine is the distillation of the history and experience; it codifies best practice; and it

enunciates enduring principles which then are applied sensibly according to the circumstances. In other words, ‘the law is in the circumstances,’¹⁴ not the doctrine.

Effective doctrine does not, however, develop in a vacuum. Those writing it should take due account of historical and more recent experience, contemporary pressures, and identifiable trends, so that at the point doctrine is published, it should represent relevant military knowledge. This is what Marcus Mäder refers to as the “collective perception of historical experience and current interests.”¹⁵ Although it might be overtaken by rapid change in the field, published doctrine is the Army’s accepted view. Doctrine is an important influence on organisational culture, which may well add a bias into the development of doctrine, as doctrine may reflect how the organisation as a whole views itself. This makes it necessary to identify what, if at all any bias was present at the time the doctrine was written, and the effect any such bias had subsequently in terms of application of doctrine in the field.¹⁶ For this reason, it is necessary to identify what those biases were and then examine the extent to which they affected the development of counterinsurgency doctrine.

1.3 Defining Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

The next step is to define insurgency. Insurgency is an age-old problem which continues to take many forms. It stems from a wide range of causes, both real and perceived. Steven Metz notes the principal causes when he described insurgency as “a *strategy* sometimes adopted by the weaker party in an internal war. The war itself can be based on ideology, class, religion, ethnicity, sectionalism, or, most commonly, some combination of these factors.”¹⁷ In every case, insurgency develops when those in power ignore the particular demands of a group which feels that it has no alternative but to resort to violence to pursue its objectives. In many cases the problem has been compounded where there has been a political failure to respond or, worse, there has been a political vacuum. Whatever the circumstances, it is generally understood that insurgency is a highly complex form of political conflict with many contributory and complicating factors. For the government attempting to defeat insurgency, a wide range of problems have to be addressed, compounded by the fact that it has to react to the insurgents’ actions. This means that, by extension, the government tends to cede the initial advantage to those challenging it, those who have had time to plan, organise and initiate their insurgency.

It is generally accepted that insurgency and the business of countering it are long, drawn out affairs with no easy strategies to follow for either side. This form of conflict accentuates the asymmetry between the insurgent and the counterinsurgent. The insurgent needs time to build up support and strength before initiating the campaign when the circumstances are right. Insurgents tend to see time as an ally, and require patience to build organisational capacity. However, the less permissive the security environment, the longer this takes. In the early stages at least, the insurgent has to avoid government strengths and tends to act cautiously to avoid being killed or captured. The insurgent has the advantage of being able to advance the campaign, or disengage and recuperate, depending on how effective the government is. Although the government starts the campaign with all the instruments of national power at its disposal, compared to the insurgent who has little more than an idea or grievance, it will generally not have the intelligence needed to counter its opposition. This takes time to develop but, if the insurgent has got his strategy right, during the time it takes the government to build its

intelligence and to start to counter the problem, the insurgent will grow in strength. The insurgent and the counterinsurgent struggle, therefore, to disrupt and undermine the other's organisation and activities. Between the two stands the population, the support of which is the key to success for both sides. The side which gains and holds popular support will ultimately win. Winning over the population to generate that support is a lengthy process, mainly because it takes time to change mindsets and to convince the majority that one side or the other is worth supporting.

Kitson observed that, "events in real life don't lend themselves to ... clear cut definitions."¹⁸ Nevertheless, several definitions of insurgency exist, and a brief examination of them will help to establish a broad framework against which the Army's definition of insurgency can be examined. Bard O'Neill's book *Insurgency and Terrorism* was an important influence on *Counter Insurgency Operations*, in particular the categories he offered: anarchist, egalitarian, traditionalist, apocalyptic-utopian, pluralist, secessionist, reformist, preservationist and commercialist.¹⁹ O'Neill defined insurgency as,

a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses *political resources* (e.g., organisational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.²⁰

Thomas Mockaitis, in his seminal study of British counterinsurgency, *British Counterinsurgency 1919-1960*, defines insurgency as "a hybrid form of conflict that combines subversion, guerrilla warfare and terrorism ... [in] an internal struggle in which a disaffected group seeks to gain control of a nation."²¹ David Galula, the French soldier-theorist of the early-1960s and whose work was based on personal experience in French Indo-China and Algeria, defined insurgency as "a *protracted struggle* conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order."²² Galula became an important influence on U.S. Army thinking during its revision of counterinsurgency doctrine in 2005-06. He alone among counterinsurgency theorists links Clausewitz to this form of conflict:

Paraphrasing Clausewitz, we might say that 'Insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means.' It is not like an ordinary war – a 'continuation of the policy by other means' – because an insurgency can start long before the insurgent resorts to the use of force.²³

Kitson, in *Low Intensity Operations*, defines insurgency as "the use of armed force by a section of the population against the government,"²⁴ with the purpose of overthrowing it or forcing it to do something which it did not wish to do. Later, in *Bunch of Five*, and after some reflection, he narrows his terms to "a rising in active revolt against the constitutional authority of the country,"²⁵ and he makes the point that considerable squalor, fear and suffering for the population are associated with it. Crucially, Kitson introduces the psychological dimension, recognizing that insurgency is "primarily concerned with the struggle for men's minds."²⁶ The U.S. Army defines it as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict,"²⁷ Robert Cassidy reflects this view in his definition; "protracted political military conflict aimed at undermining government legitimacy and ... increasing insurgent control."²⁸ Thomas Marks introduces the

importance of popular support; “a popular movement that seeks to overthrow the *status quo* through subversion, political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism.”²⁹

No one definition stands out as being more relevant than the next. Taken as a whole, however, they bound a problem which is protracted, grievance driven, challenges legitimate political authority and uses influence, coercion and violence in pursuit of its objectives. Metz characterizes it as,

protracted, asymmetric violence; political, legal, and ethical ambiguity; and the use of complex terrain, psychological warfare, and political mobilization. It arises when a group decides that the gap between their political expectations and the opportunities afforded them is unacceptable and can only be remedied by force.³⁰

Having established insurgency’s principal themes, through these definitions, this thesis will now focus on its subject, the British Army’s approach to countering insurgency, and use the Army’s definition to provide the study’s baseline. After all, it is the definition in use when the insurgencies in Iraq started to emerge in the summer of 2003. The Army defines insurgents as “those taking part in any activity designed to undermine or to overthrow the established authorities”³¹ and insurgency as the “actions of a minority group within a state who are [sic] intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion propaganda and military pressure aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such a change.”³² As such, the definition picks up on the broad themes identified by the principal theorists.

It is necessary at this point to note that British doctrine deliberately avoids confusing or overly complicating the definition by not drawing any marked distinction between terms often associated with insurgency, “guerrilla, revolutionary, terrorist, dissident, rebel, partisan, native and enemy.”³³ Neither does it stray into the debate over the difference between insurgency and civil war. This decision has a particular relevance when it comes to putting the Army’s approach in context. In Iraq the insurgencies had a visceral sectarian dimension, which brought the Coalition campaign to the point of defeat, but it did not produce large scale warfare between Iraqi belligerents. Instead, those “intent on forcing political change” resorted to terrorist or guerrilla tactics against the population and Iraqi and Coalition forces. This study therefore adopts the doctrinal approach, avoiding civil war *per se* for the same reasons as *Counter Insurgency Operations*, but it is noted that each sub-division identified its own nuances and challenges, and that they have all been the subject of much study and research in their own right.

Insurgencies vary greatly and so too do the ways to counter them. Some approaches have been successful, some have failed along with, as tends to be the case, the government attempting to defeat the insurgent threat. Countering insurgency is, principally, a political effort to address the political root cause of the problem. It has a military dimension to deal with in terms of the insurgent’s use of or ability to use force. Successful counterinsurgencies place the military operation in support of the government’s overall strategy to treat, picking up on Rupert Smith’s point, the causes as well as the symptoms.³⁴ Counterinsurgency is not, and should not be confused with the military operation alone. Kitson made this point very clear and it is spelled out in the Army’s definition: “Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civil actions *taken by the Government* to defeat insurgency.”³⁵ The U.S. Army

definition is very similar: “Counterinsurgency is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”³⁶ The importance of following through on this broad approach to solving insurgency will become clear as the study unfolds. The British experience in Iraq will show, to paraphrase Kitson, real life is more complicated than clear cut definitions.

1.4 The British Approach to Countering Insurgency

Having established what insurgency and counterinsurgency are, it is necessary to examine whether there is a recognizable British approach. The Army has a long history of countering insurgency. In contrast to the vast literature of historical analysis which covers the subject, the Army has produced surprisingly little doctrine over the last one hundred years. The preface to *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) notes that experience “*evolved* into a doctrine,”³⁷ with the implication that this was something that the Army did almost subconsciously rather than through a formalised process of development and acceptance. The 1995 edition was part of the AFM dedicated to what was termed at the time Operations Other Than War. There is an implication in this title that countering insurgency was somehow a lesser form of warfare; that countering insurgency was a distraction from the main business of warfighting; something that did not require the attention and formal direction that preparing for major combat demanded. Perception and reality were different and the history book tells a very different story, one which shows time and again that countering insurgency requires a very clear understanding of the nature of the problem, and very specific training and techniques.

Col. Charles Callwell (1906) defined *Small Wars* as “all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops,”³⁸ and the Army has spent more time engaged in small wars than it has fighting major wars.³⁹ Some, Rod Thornton for example, argue that the British Army is first and foremost a counterinsurgency army, designed to intervene overseas in small wars, and that its involvement in major conventional warfare and its warfighting aspirations are abnormal.⁴⁰ Reflecting Thomas Mockaitis, *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) explains that the British approach is based on “three broad fundamentals of doctrine developed and adapted by the British for counter insurgency”⁴¹ which are minimum force, civil-military cooperation and tactical adaptability. The three are recurring themes in doctrine since *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* was published in 1923,⁴² and some formal recognition was made that small wars, or internal security operations needed their own doctrinal principles. Until 1923, Hew Strachan suggests, the Army believed that the principles of war could be adapted to match the circumstances of each campaign.⁴³ Since 1923, British principles have evolved as experience and understanding has grown of what constitutes effective counterinsurgency. The evolution of British counterinsurgency doctrine is covered in detail in Chapter 4.

While *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) is clear about the fundamentals of counterinsurgency and its principles, it makes the point that “The British have not developed a general antidote to the problem of insurgency... Not only is the threat changing, but so too is the environment in which an insurgent must be confronted.”⁴⁴ It goes on to say:

Theories, strategies and tactics come and go depending upon circumstances or merely intellectual fashion (the five main British COIN manuals published since

1949 have included several different lists of principles). What remains a constant is the fact that insurgency and counter insurgency are essentially about the battle to win and hold popular support, both at home and in the theatre of operations.⁴⁵

1.5 What is the Problem?

This thesis addresses two principal issues. The first is the development of *Counter Insurgency Operations*. This means understanding how doctrine is developed, determining whether it presented a complete picture of counterinsurgency and whether it reflected the Army's understanding of counterinsurgency. The second issue is its application in Iraq, which means gaining an understanding of how, once published, doctrine was assimilated, applied, and, if necessary, adjusted. It is in this area that two further issues emerge: will doctrine be ignored if it is not relevant and up-to-date, and what happens when doctrine is relevant but it is not understood? Callwell observed that "theory cannot be accepted as conclusive when practice points the other way,"⁴⁶ and the 1994 Army Staff College Counterinsurgency reader made clear that "whilst it should draw on lessons from the past, doctrine must evolve if it is to remain relevant."⁴⁷ What is the result if doctrine meets these conditions and yet is not assimilated? This question is at the heart of this thesis.

1.5.1 Did the Army have relevant doctrine and did it understand it?

The need for an organization such as the Army to have a common philosophy has been long understood, and in doctrinal terms started with the publication of *Field Service Regulations* in 1909. Doctrine provides the intellectual framework of understanding which allows the structures, equipment and training to be adapted from one form of operation to another. Kitson wrote *Low Intensity Operations* "to show why it is necessary for the army to be ready to suppress subversion and insurgency."⁴⁸ He also highlighted specifically the importance of education and training for counterinsurgency, and attending to "the genuinely educational function of attuning men's minds to cope with the environment of this sort of war."⁴⁹ This is a crucial point for this thesis. Doctrine has traditionally been viewed as 'that which is taught.' If doctrine is not taught, does the Army have a doctrine? Without the philosophy contained in doctrine being assimilated, where is the central idea?

Kitson argued against the view then held centrally in defence, that so-called outpost operations were less important than the Army's role on NATO's Central Front. He believed that the military implications of insurgency were so different from conventional operations that soldiers could not make the transition simply from one to the other. He had the early years in Malaya to support his argument. Later, Richard Simpkin, a highly regarded military theorist writing in the 1990s, made the point that an army had to have a broader capability and utility than warfighting alone:

By the same token, established armed forces need to do more than just master high-intensity manoeuvre warfare between large forces with baroque equipment. They have to go one step further and structure, equip and train themselves to employ the techniques of revolutionary warfare – to beat the opposition at their own game on their own ground.⁵⁰

The conclusion to be drawn from Kitson and Simpkin is that having published doctrine is not enough. The doctrine has to be understood, and this is achieved through

education, training and practice. Kitson placed considerable emphasis on this theme and devoted a whole chapter to them in *Low Intensity Operations* in which he established four principal themes necessary to address education and training for counterinsurgency:

- Provide the educational framework to attune “men’s minds to cope with the environment of this sort of war.”
- Teach officers “how to put a campaign together using a combination of civil and military measures to achieve a single government aim... It involves teaching them the value of non-military ways of harming the enemy.”
- Teach “officers how to direct the activities of their own soldiers... policemen... or locally raised forces.”
- Identify the training methods needed to teach counterinsurgency techniques.⁵¹

During the late 1980s and through the 1990s, the Army developed and then assimilated doctrine for Manoeuvre Warfare (later the Manoeuvrist Approach) and Mission Command. Encouraged by the expansive manoeuvrist strike in the first Gulf War, it went to great efforts during the 1990s to institutionalise the two as core tenets of the British approach. At that time, particularly among Infantry regiments, the Army still had deeply ingrained experience from Northern Ireland. From 1993, experience was added to from peace support operations in the Balkans, albeit to a much lesser degree because fewer troops took part. Knowledge and understanding were passed on through training and practice rather than through extensive handbooks and pamphlets. While the Army had been busy on operations other than war, its view was that there was little pressure to update approaches to counterinsurgency because there was no real evidence of a need to change. This, in many ways, suited its focus which was to establish what it really meant to be an army with an expeditionary warfighting capability.

1.5.2 Iraq: Did Theory Translate into Practice?

The second part of the problem is to examine how successfully theory translated into practice? This is the essence of the research question, for which the focus is Operation TELIC, the British operation in Iraq between March 2003 and June 2009. The fundamental problem the Army had to deal with was how to answer Clausewitz’s question of definition:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.⁵²

That which started off in Iraq as a campaign of liberation through regime change, developed into an occupation by legal definition. By the summer of 2003 it was nation-building, carrying out stability operations and reconstruction. Less than a year later, the campaign had, as one commander described it, “lurched into insurgency,”⁵³ but not insurgency as the Army knew it, and there remained considerable debate about the character of the security problem the British faced in the south. The UK maintained the line for a long time that its forces were not facing an insurgency in the south at all until

Moqtada al Sadr and Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) rose against Coalition Forces in March 2004. The insurgency faced by British-led forces in Multinational Division South East (MND(SE)) proved to be very different from the Sunni insurgency in Baghdad and central Iraq, one fuelled by al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). MND(SE) faced Shi'a factions using insurgent tactics to gain political and economic power. They did not want to replace the Government of Iraq (GOI). Put simply, they wanted British forces to leave, and to allow militant Shi'a and associated criminal activists to assert, maintain and exploit power and access to resources. Galula recognized that "an insurgency can start long before the insurgent resorts to the use of force."⁵⁴ With hindsight, it is now possible to see that the period of so-called stability and reconstruction in 2003 and early 2004 was only such in Coalition eyes, a perception reflected in the title of the Army's internal campaign analysis of Iraq between May 2003 and January 2005: *Stability Operations in Iraq*.⁵⁵

The issue at stake is how doctrine is transformed from an approach into action. As Mockaitis and Ian Beckett have shown in their analyses of British counterinsurgency, it is where practice and doctrine diverge that difficulties emerge. To what extent in Iraq did practice differ from theory? To what extent was the doctrine for counterinsurgency relevant for the circumstances in which the Army found itself? To what extent did the doctrine work and why, and how and why did it fail or could not be applied? Strategic staying power is important in a form of conflict which is recognised to be protracted and therefore expensive in terms of commitment and resources. Rod Thornton observes that,

one of the great tools used by counter-insurgency forces in the past is the message that 'we are more powerful than you and we will outlast you'. Such a message brings indigenous people to your side and away from that of the rebel because they can see which way the wind is blowing and where the future lies.⁵⁶

Harlan Ullman and James Wade make the same point. In *Shock and Awe* – notable because it captured the imagination of American policy makers in the late 1990s who believed Shock and Awe offered an economical yet decisive way of winning modern war – they explained that,

Another enduring truth is the need for staying power and ensuring that this capacity is perceived by a potential adversary. 'Staying power' means the ability to press the initial advantage gained until the strategic objective is achieved.⁵⁷

At its peak, during and just after the invasion, the British force was 43,000 strong. By September 2003 it was 15,000 and from mid-2004 it was at 8000, with considerable pressure from London to further reduce the force. James Quinlivan has offered a ratio of twenty members of the security forces (regular and auxiliary military and police) for every thousand head of population.⁵⁸ Basrah, the British focal point for the campaign, had a population of over 1.5 million. The British force was so very small in numbers that its physical presence and the effect it could therefore have on the Iraqi population was limited. What effect did this have on the Army's ability to exercise influence and control in the way its doctrine envisaged?

1.6 Methodology

The focus of the study is the British Army's counterinsurgency doctrine, the context is Iraq and the issue is its validity. The methodology this thesis follows is to establish and examine the philosophical and practical origins of the Army's doctrine in order to explain why the approach it laid out was chosen. The second part is to examine how the doctrine was applied in Iraq and the extent to which the campaign in Iraq validated or invalidated British doctrine. Although this is not a historical narrative or an analysis of the Iraq campaign *per se*, it is necessary to explain how the campaign unfolded so that the practical application of the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine can be tested. This approach will then be used to examine the U.S. Army's experience in Iraq which will be the comparator. The U.S. Army started the campaign with a virtually unknown but, as will be demonstrated, valid doctrine, it had to learn from bitter, hard fought and costly experience, and to adapt its approach. It finished the campaign with a much-acclaimed counterinsurgency doctrine, and the approach it followed in Iraq from early 2007 tested and ultimately validated the principles and the approach its doctrine laid out.

1.6.1 Knowledge

The thesis uses an epistemological methodology, with a strong bias towards the Platonic interpretation of knowledge. It has been accepted that there are key truths. These are, first, the Army had a doctrine and what it contains can be analyzed and evaluated. Second, there is a reasonably clear picture of what happened in Iraq and, certainly for British and U.S. forces, for what purpose. Third, there is a clearly established set of beliefs which the principal protagonists have recorded albeit that many have been subject to subsequent re-examination and possibly reinterpretation. In this thesis, knowledge therefore takes the form of how the truths and the beliefs, expressed as doctrine and intent, overlap in terms of military operations in the context of a complex counterinsurgency campaign.

The thesis' philosophical starting point is a positivist approach. Its premise is that the truth exists amongst those who produced the doctrine and those who put it into practice. However, the thesis does not exclude the constructivist paradigm that the truth is, in fact, in the minds of those who took part and is a product of their constant re-evaluation of the concepts in the context of what took place. In this case, the author judges that there is no significant conflict between the positivist view and the constructivist because doctrine, which attempts to codify a wide range of inputs, and the written and oral body of knowledge which exists as a result of the campaign in Iraq, complement each other. The knowledge of the campaign is both physical and conceptual. Physical knowledge is found, for example, in how many people took part, where they were located, who gave what instruction, where and when an action took place, what was its outcome and why. Conceptual knowledge includes the ideas and objectives behind what the Army was required to do, how it had been trained and educated, and what its doctrine was for the range of actions it carried out. The potential conflict between the physical and the conceptual was borne in mind both during the data capture process and its subsequent analysis. The thesis therefore takes a *qualitative* rather than *quantitative* approach. It is interested more in *why* and *how* the Army's approach worked, not necessarily in the factors which help to construct context – the *what*, *where* and *when* – rather than explaining directly the validity of the Army's approach.

1.6.2 Historiography

A principal task is to establish the context in which *Counter Insurgency Operations* was written. To do this, the thesis adopts an approach that examines doctrine using historiographical techniques. It develops the idea proposed by Oliver Daddow in 2004 who noted that the philosophy of history, in particular historiography, had a direct relevance to the writing of military doctrine.⁵⁹ Daddow's proposal centred on the proposition that "if something is written, it is pertinent to ask how, why and in what context it was written."⁶⁰ His central contention was that "recent trends in philosophy can help us in our quest to write the history of British military doctrine in the 1980s and 1990s, especially if one deploys the toolkit of historiography, which means the study of the art of history-writing."⁶¹ He identified that doctrine's intellectual and practical implications "open it up for analysis not simply in military terms but as a record of the spirit of its age and an insight into the prevailing wisdom."⁶² He drew this approach from three sources: Peter Burke's view that historiography is "the history of history-writing"; Robin Wink's view that it is "an examination of why a body has taken the shape it has"; and William Roger Louis' conclusion that historiography is "the art of explaining why historians wrote as they did."⁶³

Daddow suggested that by replacing the term *historian* with *doctrine-writer*, a better understanding of doctrine's evolution could be gained by using historiographical methods. These included examining "the time [period] in which it was written, the structures within which doctrine writers operated and which helped bring doctrine manuals to fruition and the key personalities involved."⁶⁴ He makes a striking point, because the similarities between historiography and the study of doctrine-writing are marked. E. H. Carr said "history is a process, and you cannot isolate a bit of process and study it on its own... everything is completely interconnected."⁶⁵ The same can be said of doctrine writing. Just as Richard Evans recognizes that historians "are people of their time, with views and assumptions about the world which they cannot eliminate from their writing and their research",⁶⁶ so too are doctrine writers.

There is, however, an important difference between the two. Doctrine writers have a sense of the utility of what they write. Their work should have a clear practical application as the ideas it contains will be used to shape and direct military operations. The historian's work may not have any practical value at all. While some historians may be informed or prompted by theories, for example political or economic, which then shape policy or legislation, this is not true for all. Historical analysis does not have to have a practical utility in the way that doctrine must.

When Carr attempted to answer the question 'What is History?' he observed that the answer "consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time."⁶⁷ Daddow develops this to take account of the doctrine writer's position in time, and he identifies four key components to assist in understanding how doctrine evolves: the doctrine writer, the networks within which doctrine writers work, the domestic political environment, and the international context. Noting that all four are strongly inter-dependent, Daddow concluded that a development in one may well affect the others, and that interactions are "neither predetermined nor predictable." By following Daddow's approach, it should be possible to seek, as Michael Bentley suggests, a "freshness of viewpoint by offering a synthetic account which searches for connection and comparison"?⁶⁸ Does this explain how doctrine is written, and to identify what

prompts the doctrine writer? To pick up on Theo Farrell's phrase, will it allow some sense to be made of doctrine?⁶⁹

1.6.3 Organizational Culture

In addition to doctrine's historical context, another influence must also be considered. That is the organization itself – in this case the Army – and how it identifies and instigates the need for doctrinal change. Since doctrine is generally written to meet an organizational requirement, how doctrine develops is likely to depend greatly on the culture of the organization involved. Richard Downie made this a central theme when he examined the relationship between experience, learning, doctrinal change and organizational culture.⁷⁰ In *Learning from Conflict*, he looked at how the U.S. military responded to its campaigns in Vietnam, El Salvador and Colombia. Just as Daddow suggested that doctrine reflects the relationship between the writer, and the domestic and international contexts of the day, Downie identified a very close link between organizational culture and how doctrine develops. He saw this relationship as a key determining influence on how an organization's conventional wisdom develops and, in turn, how its institutional memory influences further responses to change. If the organizational culture is ambivalent to change, doctrinal change does not take place. If the culture supports change, a major transformation can be achieved.

Based on his findings, Downie proposed a cycle of institutional learning, the underpinning concept for which is that doctrinal change depends on one of three conditions being met: actors emerge with sufficient organizational power or persuasive ability to generate consensus within the institution; or an idea itself is so powerful; or there is an existing and overwhelming recognition within an organization that a change to doctrine is necessary. He cites the example of General George Joulwan, commander of U.S. Southern Command, who wanted to introduce a new approach to the drug war in Colombia in the 1990s. The new approach would require active support from the U.S. armed services, joint staff and the Department of Defense. Joulwan achieved the sustained organizational consensus necessary to get the doctrinal change needed to allow military support to law enforcement authorities because he was the commander fighting the 'war on drugs,' he knew how to work the system, and there was no viable, competing alternative solution backed by equally influential actors. By contrast, using Vietnam and El Salvador, Downie shows how attempts to change counterinsurgency doctrine failed because those seeking change could not achieve the sustained consensus required to push through reform.⁷¹ Instead, after Vietnam, as will be examined in Chapter 7, the U.S. Army turned its back on counterinsurgency and focussed on the doctrinal, technical and operational challenge posed by the Warsaw Pact. Defeat in Vietnam prompted considerable internal military soul-searching and debate. The reforms which followed – which included new, coherent operational doctrine published in Field Manual 100-5 *Operations* – show what can be achieved once sustained organizational consensus is achieved. The U.S. Army's refusal to respond directly to the lessons of Vietnam show what happens when the organization rejects it.⁷²

Downie identified that an open-minded, adaptable institutional memory is a "prerequisite for learning and occurs when an organization captures and institutionalizes lessons learned by its members."⁷³ While individuals have the ability to learn, an organization does not start to learn unless it can "first act to interpret, evaluate, and accept the lessons learned by individual organizational members and then make the

decision to adapt organizational behavior to this new knowledge and transmit it throughout the organization.”⁷⁴ Downie concluded that effective adaption could only take place within an organization if its decision-makers were both able and willing to capture lessons from individual experience, to accept the need to change, and then to agree to change existing doctrine and practices quickly or to develop new ideas that reflected the experience learnt.⁷⁵

Achieving consensus is therefore a crucial point in the process. Downie describes a six-step process: individual actions, or attention to events, identify an organizational performance gap; a search for alternative responses from the organization; the process to achieve a sustained consensus to accept or reject the solution; publication of the new doctrine; and an organizational response to the change in doctrine, at which point the cycle starts again. In *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, a comparative study of organizational learning in the British and the U.S. Armies which greatly influenced American thinking in 2005-06, John Nagl further developed Downie’s Institutional Learning Cycle.⁷⁶ This is illustrated in Figure 1 (below) and will be used throughout the thesis to identify the stages of doctrinal development, and determine the validity or not of decisions associated with this process.

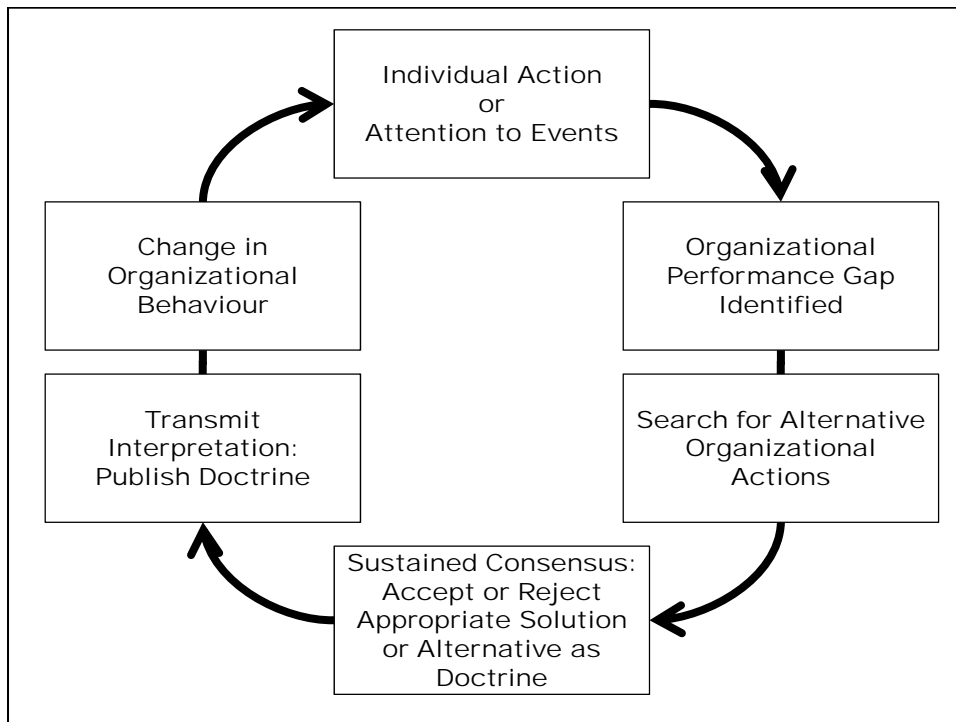


Figure 1 - The Institutional Learning Cycle: The Process of Doctrinal Change

(After John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005, p. 8)

1.6.4 Sources

Primary sources for the study are published doctrine and policy papers. *Counter Insurgency Operations* is clearly the central text but every British manual relating to other key Army and Joint Doctrine publications also provide context.⁷⁷ The principal policy papers are the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review* and the 2002 *New Chapter*, which stated the UK response to the attacks of 11 September 2001 and their consequences.⁷⁸ The House of Commons Select Committee on Defence provides further primary source

evidence from its analysis of the initial campaign and subsequent post-conflict and counterinsurgency reports.⁷⁹ Secondary sources have been used to analyse the debate about the development of doctrine and then its application. These sources include:

- Conference papers and lectures.⁸⁰
- Professionally recognised journals and *fora*: the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the Army's Strategic and Conflict Studies Institute (SCSI), Small Wars and Insurgencies Journal (SWIJ), Adelphi Papers and Survival. The U.S. Army's War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) has published many monographs covering asymmetric warfare, insurgency and counterinsurgency and analyses of the campaign in Iraq.⁸¹
- Classified material.

Although published doctrine is freely available, much of the debate and staff effort to develop the doctrine is not because it has not yet been released. This makes examining the process of developing doctrine somewhat difficult. Little is available publicly about that which influenced the development of doctrine, where and with whom ideas originated, and the process by which they were then adapted, adjusted, presented and finally approved. The process therefore remains, for the most part, closed. Those responsible for and involved with doctrine's development have occasionally, however, offered some insights into the origins of, influences on and decisions about doctrine. In the main, these were provided by those working at Army's Development and Doctrine directorate (DGD&D), through the SCSI, and in speeches at and papers published by RUSI. During its short existence between 2001 and 2003, the British Military Doctrine Group (BMDG) also provided an important forum, organizing a series of research seminars designed to share academic and military thinking on the role, use and character of doctrine, and to discuss the intellectual development of British doctrine on a joint and single service basis. Together, the proceedings and publications that these sources provide shed valuable light on the formal and informal development processes that resulted in published doctrine. It is by examining such sources that many of the principal waypoints in its development can be established.⁸²

1.6.5 Participant Observation

In contrast to the U.S., in the UK there is little published work on doctrinal development, and little authoritative material on the British campaign in Iraq. This created the requirement to augment and in many cases expand the material available by determining *Participant Observations*. This took three forms. The first was subject interviews. Those involved with either or both doctrine and the campaign in Iraq were identified and interviewed. The second aspect involved direct personal observation of military operations in Iraq. The author served as Chief of Campaign Plans in Headquarters Multinational Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) in 2007-08, which provided the opportunity to observe the application of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine at first hand, and to compare relative progress between U.S. and British forces. Noting that this provided a snapshot of the campaign, nevertheless, it provided unparalleled access to the principal protagonists at the pivotal stage in the campaign. The third form was the analysis of personal documents, made available to the author by interviewees.

Oral history was established through interviews with the principal British and American participants, both those who developed and published respective counterinsurgency doctrine, and those who put doctrine into practice in Iraq. Selection criteria for doctrine-related interviews centred on Daddow's historiographical approach. This required the doctrine writer to be identified. In the British case it was Gavin Bulloch; in the U.S. case, Conrad Crane, John Nagl, Lt. Col. Jan Horvath, and Gen. Petraeus provided the principal insights. Interviews with Bulloch identified the main editorial influences on his work, and those with whom he worked at DGD&D during the 1990s. The final group of interviewees centred on those responsible for shaping, approving or teaching counterinsurgency doctrine. Those interviewed included members of the Army Board, other senior appointees, members of the Army Doctrine Committee (ADC), and those involved with officer education, particularly at the Staff College and the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC). The same approach was followed in examining U.S. doctrine, but the number of interviews conducted was limited to the key personalities.

The campaign analysis started by reviewing all British post operational reports. This allowed the key events and key campaign themes to be identified. One of the problems this thesis identifies is that very few commanders answered Clausewitz's 'first of all strategic questions' in the same way. It was important, therefore to determine why that may be. A cross-section of British divisional and brigade commanders were selected to provide a view at every stage of the campaign. Interviewees were also chosen from senior staff officers who served in Iraq. Those who served with the Coalition in Baghdad offered a view that took account of prevailing U.S. interpretations of the British operation in Southern Iraq, and were able to compare British progress with that of American forces elsewhere in Iraq. The master question list is presented at Table 1 to be found at the end of this chapter.

The thesis makes much use of official Post-Operational Reports from divisions, brigades and units on their return from Iraq, and from Post-Operational Interviews conducted by Brig. (Retired) Iain Johnstone at the Land Warfare Centre, Warminster. Johnstone's interviews were conducted as part of the Army's Lessons process in order to capture lessons, observations or other information relevant to Operation TELIC. Where individuals have given permission to be identified, material cited is attributed. Where permission has not been given, material is cited using Johnstone's file reference system of date of interview and appointment, for example '050215-GOC MND(SE)'. Full identification of interviewees is available in the cited archival material at appropriate levels of classification.

1.7 Literature

The historical dimension of doctrine development is provided by Brian Holden Reid, John Gooch, Colin McInnes, Oliver Daddow, and Marcus Mäder.⁸³ Holden Reid, while concentrating on the Army's warfighting experience in the twentieth century, and highlighting the particular influence of Fuller in the development of doctrine, suggests that the Army showed a largely haphazard interest in developing its intellectual foundation. He identifies the essence of the problem being a reluctance "to build on the lessons of the past and formulate a... doctrine as the focus and framework for a commonly agreed approach to the conduct of operations."⁸⁴

McInnes highlights the danger the Army's approach to developing its doctrine brought to its full spectrum of capabilities. Its concentration on interventionist warfighting, and the institutional belief that an army trained and equipped for high intensity operations would be able to step down to operations other than war, carries an inherent risk that the concentrating on one would neglect the very real challenges of the other. He contends that conservative evolution, rather than development that keeps pace with or ahead of real world change, would put the Army at disadvantage if prediction and reality proved to be too far apart. Mäder's analysis of the development of British doctrine during the 1990s highlights the institutional difficulties in switching from a threat-based approach to one which was more broadly based and capability driven. He offers a valuable analysis of an important period of doctrinal development, the emergence and impact of joint doctrine and the challenges of overcoming organisational culture.

Ian Beckett has written prolifically not just on British counterinsurgency campaigns and the efficacy of the British approach but on the prevalence of insurgency around the world. The strength of his observations is that they are set in a broader temporal and spatial context than is possible by examining one campaign or one national approach. His central argument is that insurgency was the most prevalent form of conflict in the twentieth century and that the continuing proliferation of insurgency is evidence of its continued effectiveness. He draws a distinction between guerrilla warfare, which he sees as a purely military form of conflict, and insurgency which is a political act arising from some sense of grievance. He argues that weaknesses which are inherent in both the state which suffers insurgency and the insurgent movement which pursues violent anti-state action, the risk of fracture, and the difficulty in being able to focus on one aspect in particular, will continue to make countering insurgency a "testing challenge."⁸⁵ He uses British counterinsurgency principles as a framework for analysis, an approach relevant to this study.

The British classical counterinsurgency approach is provided by four writers; Callwell, General Sir Charles Gwynn, Sir Robert Thompson and Kitson.⁸⁶ Their principal themes provide the central tenets of British counterinsurgency doctrine. Callwell and Gwynn's works were officially endorsed but did not become official doctrine. Callwell, who Colin Gray describes as a "superior theorist,"⁸⁷ writes of the savage, asymmetric war between the regular soldier and his irregular opponent. This form of conflict is so different from what was then regarded as normal warfare that the "method [is] totally different from the stereotyped [regular] system... The conduct of small wars is in fact in certain aspects an art by itself, diverging widely from what is adapted to the conditions of regular warfare."⁸⁸ He asserts that the differences between conventional and guerrilla warfare are so marked that if they can be avoided they should but if they are unavoidable, then the soldier must be trained and prepared for them. This conclusion is repeated by Kitson and Simpkin.

Gwynn follows Callwell's concept of the small war, this time in the specific context of military support to the civil police. Gwynn examines eleven imperial campaigns between 1919 and 1937, notably omitting Ireland 1919-1921. Gwynn emphasises the intrinsic difficulties the soldier faces when dealing with a deepening insurgency and when the civil policy is more conciliatory than confrontational. He identifies four principles that apply across the range of military tasks that the army may be required to perform in support of the police: questions of policy remain vested in the civil Government; the amount of military force employed must be the minimum the situation

demands; firm and timely action is needed to discourage further disorder. Implicit in this is the need for the military response to be firmer in the short term than might have been considered in order to maintain control. Gwynn's fourth principle is co-operation which recognises that the task of restoring order does not rest on the Army alone: unity of control, close co-operation and mutual understanding are all important between the civil authority and the military. Gwynn's principles are echoed again by Kitson and Thompson and are a clear influence in British counterinsurgency principles.

Thompson is important because the basis of his work is the administrative requirements: the military aspects of the campaign are secondary to a government's political and administrative response. He describes the general problems a government faces when an insurgency emerges. He describes the emergence of a new development in insurgency, that of sanctuary, external support. Thompson examines lessons learned from Malaya and Vietnam, noting that neither campaign was complete at the time he wrote. He asserts that insurgency requires a cause and that an insurgent movement is a war for the people. Thompson makes clear that without reasonably efficient government administration, no counterinsurgency programmes will deliver the results required. Thompson identifies five principles of counterinsurgency, examined in detail in Chapter 4: the government must have a clear political aim; it must function in accordance with the law; the government must have an overall plan; it must give priority to defeating the political subversion not just the guerrillas; and in the early stages of the campaign, secure base areas first.⁸⁹ All have been woven into the British Army's doctrinal approach and all are underpinned by the need for the campaign to be founded on sound intelligence, to which he devotes considerable attention. Of note in the contemporary discussion, Thompson's section on operational concepts resonates with those that David Galula puts forward. Assuming that the government has a plan, at the tactical level, Thompson describes an approach of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won where intelligence-led operations act to clear insurgents from an area, control is imposed over the cleared area to protect the population and isolate the insurgent, good government in all its aspects introduced to win and the area won at the point when control measures can be lifted.

Kitson's work is central to this thesis and, other than highlighting his considerable importance in developing the Army's understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency, the detailed examination of what he says will be undertaken in Chapter 4, when British counterinsurgency doctrine and its influences are examined. Kitson's clear grasp of the essentials, as articulated in his two main publications, often repeated in many presentations through his career, and his conclusions remain valid in supporting an army to organise, equip, train, educate and prepare it for future counterinsurgency operations.

David Galula is the final classical counterinsurgency theorist to inform this thesis. While he has had virtually no impact on the development of the British approach, his work with RAND in the 1960s was central to the revision of U.S. Army doctrine and his work holds a position in the U.S. Army akin to Kitson's in Britain. Galula offers a bitter, realistic view of counterinsurgency based principally on his experience in Algeria. He covers this in *Pacification in Algeria*⁹⁰ and develops the ideas further in *Counterinsurgency Warfare*. Galula is clear from the start that countering insurgency is a political conflict, which is undoubtedly protracted and unconventional to the end. His central theme is securing and protecting the population, gaining its support, and then

acquiring information to identify and locate insurgents in order to defeat the insurgency. Galula's laws and principles, distilled from his analysis, are focussed on the population's central, fundamental position. He adds value to the discussion through his analysis of the asymmetry between the insurgent and counterinsurgent. It captures the inherent unfairness of insurgency and concludes that most aspects of this form of conflict favour the insurgent. Kitson and Thompson include observations and guidance on the role of information operations. Galula is more direct. He refers to propaganda, not information, and places considerable emphasis on it: it must deal with the substance of local issues, be addressed to specific groups, it cannot be "pre-cooked" at the highest level. Finally, he makes the point that while not ideal in any way, as a necessity born of circumstances, particularly early on in a campaign, the military must be prepared to undertake non-military tasks.

The historical dimension is developed from Beckett through Mockaitis, John Nagl and Rod Thornton.⁹¹ Mockaitis analyses British counterinsurgency campaigns, examines principles and approaches and the importance of 'Hearts and Minds.' His work is important because he sets British campaigns in the context of wider defence policy and he uses the three fundamentals of minimum force, civil-military cooperation and tactical adaptability as his framework for analysis. He concludes that British success and failure provide a baseline and widely accepted understanding of the development of the British approach. Rod Thornton argues that the British Army is first and foremost a counterinsurgency army that prefers to use minimum force and can attribute its successes to good civil-military relations. He identifies those campaigns where poor political direction has resulted in ineffective civil-military coordination and this has had an adverse effect on military effectiveness.

Nagl's work of comparative analysis of approaches to countering insurgency - the British in Malaya and the U.S. in Vietnam - centres on how institutions learn and adapt from experience. Those who learn and adapt succeed; those who persist in techniques and approaches that the adversary has mastered tend to fail. It is incumbent on the counterinsurgent, therefore, to assess continually the nature of the challenge faced, or Clausewitz's "first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement." He concludes that armies which learn counterinsurgency effectively generally develop local doctrine which meets local requirements, they establish local training centres, they regularly challenge their assumptions, both formally and informally, they promote suggestions from the field (bottom up review not top down), establish rapid avenues to ensure dissemination of lessons learned and they coordinate closely with governmental and non-governmental partners at all levels of command.

Revisionist approaches have been argued by Cassidy, Thomas Hammes, David Kilcullen and John Mackinlay.⁹² Cassidy argues that organisational culture predisposes an army to success or failure in counterinsurgency and that understanding the nature of the society in which the insurgency takes place, making full use of indigenous forces and building capacity in them where necessary, is the means by which cultural gaps between the counterinsurgent and his host population can be closed. Hammes offers a view of contemporary conflict which argues against the approach espoused by the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs and the U.S. dependency on technology. His thesis is that technology is an inappropriate response to a form of conflict instigated by adversaries exploiting contemporary regular-irregular asymmetries.

Kilcullen's observations on contemporary counterinsurgency and the relevance or not of its doctrine has changed from being dismissive of what he refers to as Classical Counterinsurgency (the theory of counterinsurgency war developed in response to the so-called wars of national liberation between 1944 and about 1982⁹³) to a position which recognises that classical principles remain relevant today. His start point is the same as the *Counter Insurgency Operations*; to understand modern counterinsurgency one must first understand insurgency, and to understand insurgency it is necessary to understand the nature of the state which they are attacking. He argues that the role of insurgents today reverses the traditionally held view that insurgents are a source of revolutionary change. Today's reality, Kilcullen argues, is that they fight to preserve the status quo against the revolutionary change that the counterinsurgent presence creates. Further changes that affect the situation include globalisation, proliferation of media which serves to amplify the insurgent's message to audiences worldwide, co-operation and cross-pollination of ideas between groups, the disappearance of borders as barriers to the transfer of ideas and the phenomenon of insurgent groups winning by surviving not, as was the case in revolutionary war, winning by replacing the existing government. In the light of his analysis, he proposes seven new paradigms for counterinsurgency that draw in the themes of increased politicisation of the problem, the greater requirement for unity of effort, the need to balance intelligence and information in order to get things done and the requirement to isolate the problem while recognising it might be global in scope.⁹⁴

John Mackinlay argues that the British doctrine and approach, shaped by experience of peace support operations in the 1990s, has failed to keep pace with changes in the strategic environment. He cites the impact of globalisation, proliferation of media and the insurgent's ideology and understanding of the impact of and use of the Propaganda of the Deed as changes which have not been addressed adequately, if at all, in the Army's doctrine. Although there was a danger that in revising counterinsurgency doctrine in the light of a global insurgency, the experience of previous campaigns might have been forgotten, the arguments Mackinlay presents informed doctrine development and indicated areas that warranted further analysis: the importance of coherent alliances, securing of the strategic population and a more rigorous, realistic doctrine development process.

Bernard Fall's contribution is through his exceptional analysis of French defeat in Indochina and his subsequent work on the American involvement in Vietnam.⁹⁵ His work remains relevant because of the emphasis he places on identifying that an insurgency exists and the problems any delay or inappropriate assumptions create for the counterinsurgent. He sees the two wars, correctly, as revolutionary warfare; a combination of guerrilla warfare and political action where the military aspect remains the secondary to the pre-eminent to the political, administrative and ideological dimensions. Fall concludes that the only effort worth making is to improve the administrative and governmental structure based on his observation that when a country is being subverted, it is being out administered.⁹⁶

The broader issues surrounding the application of force in contemporary operations were provided by Colin Gray, Edward Luttwak, Michael Howard and Rupert Smith.⁹⁷ They draw in issues of the impact of the Revolution in Military Affairs and technology, the paradoxes of modern strategy, the interrelationship of states of peace and states of war and the recognition that conflict takes place for the people, amongst the people and

observed by the people. Luttwak takes exception to the revised U.S. Counterinsurgency doctrine, offering a view that contemporary insurgencies are irreconcilable and therefore warrant far firmer measures than the doctrine puts forward.⁹⁸

Sources that are of particular importance to the U.S. Army's review of its doctrine and the search for a winning strategy in Baghdad, beyond Galula, include Steven Metz, Russell Weigley and Antulio Echevarria and Raymond Millen.⁹⁹ Colin Gray and Thomas Ricks provide critical insight into the American experience in Iraq.¹⁰⁰ Gray identifies thirteen characteristics of the American Way of War (apolitical, astrategic, ahistorical, problem-solving and optimistic, culturally challenged, technology dependent, focused on firepower, large-scale, aggressive and offensive, profoundly regular, impatient, logistically excellent, highly sensitive to casualties¹⁰¹) which culturally and structurally limit American military effectiveness when confronted with an irregular opponent. These issues are addressed in the U.S. Army's revised counterinsurgency doctrine.¹⁰²

Ricks provides a well-informed, provocative and largely factually correct analysis. Where he is less strong is in the area of tactical adaptation which was much better and more effective than portrayed. Constraints on force levels prevented those troops who were deployed from engaging with the population on the scale required to build confidence. The result was a greater dependence on raids to disrupt and gain intelligence rather than through intelligence networks. It became a battle of perceptions.

Metz has written on insurgency for over fifteen years and concentrates on how it changes.¹⁰³ His analysis informs a view of future developments which provides utility to the doctrine writer beyond historical value. He has long held the view that insurgency, almost irrespective of ideology or its strategy, mutates and with it the concept of sanctuary, support, connectivity, propaganda and transparency. His counterinsurgency strategy requires rapid stabilisation of the state or area, rapid development of local intelligence, encouraged sustained local reform and a shifting of perception from the view of the insurgent to the national and the local problem cauterized by strengthening the states surrounding the insurgency. The psychological dimension is a constant thread in all of Metz's insurgency work and it links effectively with the views expressed by Kitson, Thompson and Galula.

Harry Summers' analysis of the Vietnam War using Clausewitz,¹⁰⁴ in particular the theory of war and critical analysis, offers a means of conducting campaign analysis against an accepted framework. He uses Clausewitz's arguments adeptly to argue that American strategic failure, despite its tactical successes, was due to a misunderstanding of the nature of the problem, confusion over doctrine which manifested itself in dogma, an inability to define success criteria and victory in terms that could be met and, ultimately, a failure to implement its counterinsurgency doctrine. Summers seeks to answer why the US did so well in its tactics but failed in its strategy. He concludes that to understand the true nature of the war requires a strict definition of the enemy, an understanding of the nature of the war and critical analysis. Summers' criticism of the U.S. administration's failure to mobilise national support and its failure to commit fully to winning the Vietnam War, and his criticism of the U.S. military for having lost the art of war are made at the cost of what Jeffery Record refers to as the "rewriting history to confirm the Army's rejection of counterinsurgency."¹⁰⁵ His approach and his analysis have relevance in terms of examining the American experience in Iraq: there was

confusion over the nature of the war, difficulty in determining the strategy required and greater difficulty in rationalising the political, development and security requirements of Iraq in an achievable way.

1.8 Structure

The thesis first explores the development of the British counterinsurgency doctrine and the approach it describes, it then analyses the British campaign in Iraq and, having examined the U.S. Army's experience, it draws conclusions on the validity of British doctrine. Chapter 2 establishes what doctrine is and sets the development of British doctrine in historical context, in particular it highlights the importance of Gen. Sir Nigel Bagnall in developing manoeuvrist doctrine for the Army and in focussing its attention on doctrine. It then uses Daddow's framework for doctrinal analysis, supported by Downie's cycle of organizational change, to establish how the Army developed doctrine in the 1990s, the international and domestic context in which it was developed and the influence of the 1997 *Strategic Defence Review*. Finally, it establishes a general framework for the analysis to determine doctrine's effectiveness.

Chapter 3 focuses more closely on *Counter Insurgency Operations*. It examines the principles, approach, and the key tenets the manual describes. It looks at how the manual was developed, how the doctrine writing process was adapted to fit circumstance, and how it drew from *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977). The development of a new set of principles is analyzed closely. Finally, *Counter Insurgency Operations* (2001) is assessed against the criteria for effective doctrine identified in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 examines the evolution of British counterinsurgency doctrine. It follows an episodic approach, concentrating on each of the seven British manuals up to the publication of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* in 1977. It looks at the specific influence that Malaya and Northern Ireland had on doctrine, both directly and through the analysis of Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson. It concludes by suggesting it is possible to distil a 'British Approach' against which both *Counter Insurgency Operations* and the campaign in Iraq can be judged.

Chapter 5 examines the course of British operations in Southern Iraq in order that the validity of *Counter Insurgency Operations* can be determined. It follows a chronological approach, starting off with what was characterized by post-invasion stabilization operations, and charting the gradual increase in violence and decline of British military capability. It identifies early tensions between the U.S. and the UK, looks at the impact of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on military operations, and the effect of continued drawdown of forces. The chapter examines three operations: one which attempted to re-impose classic British counterinsurgency methods, a case study of the withdrawal of British forces from Basrah, undertaken at the same time as the U.S. surged into Baghdad, and the Iraqi-led operation to re-establish control of Basrah, the start of which marked the nadir of the British campaign in Iraq. Chapter 6 analyzes Operation TELIC against the principles of counterinsurgency and the themes which emerged from interview: continuity in intelligence and approach, command and control, the value of the Ink Spot method, and the importance of education and training. It also examines the approach the Army took to revise its doctrine as the campaign progressed.

Chapter 7 examines the U.S. Army's experience. It establishes the role of doctrine in the U.S. Army, the effect of Vietnam, how the Army turned away from

counterinsurgency in the 1970s and concentrated on mastering major combat operations, and how, despite this, it developed valid doctrine for counterinsurgency. The chapter examines how the U.S. Army responded to the intense insurgent pressure it faced in Baghdad and the Sunni Triangle; how it returned to classical first principles to develop doctrine on which it could base an approach to deal with Iraq's security crisis. Chapter 7 then analyzes how the new doctrine was put into practice in Iraq in 2007 and 2008 through what became known as the Surge and through the leadership of Gen. David Petraeus. Finally, it assesses FM 3-24 against the criteria for effective doctrine.

1.9 Contribution

The campaign in Iraq is one of the most controversial in modern times. Somewhat strangely for a military operation which lasted six years, and which cost one hundred and seventy-nine British and 4,183 U.S. military lives,¹⁰⁶ little has been published from a British perspective. This thesis addresses this shortfall. Whether or not the Government and the British people saw what transpired as a so-called Bad War, British servicemen and women went to Iraq, in the face of the most determined and widespread insurgent threat the Army has faced since Aden. British forces were in Iraq to conduct military operations to achieve national objectives. The Army had a doctrine, written specifically for counterinsurgency, the form of warfare which quickly emerged across Iraq in the post-invasion political vacuum. Did the doctrine work and if not, why? Was it because of a failure in doctrine, or was it a failure in its application, or was it a combination of both? This thesis addresses these questions because the answers are important to the soldier and to the historian.

This thesis is the first formal assessment of British counterinsurgency doctrine and operations written in the twenty-first century. It is the first assessment of doctrine against today's form of insurgency. Its significance is that the author, by happenstance and profession, had access to the principal participants involved in writing British and U.S. doctrine and fighting their respective campaigns. The views offered from senior officers such as Generals Petraeus, Lamb, Rollo, Riley and Cooper, add a dimension to the research that are the modern-day equivalent of interviewing Briggs or Templer in Malaya as they fought the campaign. The strengths and weaknesses of the British approach were readily apparent to those who took part and capturing their thoughts and analysis early adds vividness and a sense of immediacy. The doctrine-related research, in particular the interviews with Gavin Bulloch, John Nagl, Jan Horvath and Con Crane, establishes exactly and fully the motives behind each major theme of recent British and American doctrine. As such, the interviewees' comments and insights are of considerable historical value, removing any doubt about why a particular approach was taken, or why a view was discarded. Together, they allow some sense to be made of doctrine.

This research therefore addresses both academic and military needs. Although doctrine *per se* has a well-established literature, the emphasis is more on how doctrine has been applied rather than how it developed. This thesis redresses the balance. On the one hand, it is one of the first pieces of research that has followed a historiographical approach to examine the development of doctrine. On the other, it is the first study to focus on British counterinsurgency doctrine rather than counterinsurgency. It is certainly the first to test the validity of contemporary doctrine against campaign experience. Work by, among others, Kitson, Beckett, Mockaitis and Paget, has been

informed by doctrine rather than it being the subject of study.

Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to attract considerable interest and criticism but criticism alone does not help understanding. Everything about these campaigns of choice is complex and Clausewitz's dictum certainly holds true that "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."¹⁰⁷ He goes on to say that,

difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction... This tremendous friction... is everywhere in contact with chance, and brings about effects that cannot be measured, just because they are largely due to chance... Moreover, every war is rich in unique episodes.¹⁰⁸

Looking at the British involvement in Iraq, sadly for the strategist and the soldier, this remains all too true. Frictions, the role of chance and the richness of unique episodes were present throughout the campaign, and much has been written by strategic analysts, particularly in the U.S.

The justification for this study should be unnecessary given today's strategic situation; the British Army has been engaged in two major campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan where insurgency, whether identified in British policy or not, has been and remains the dominant theme. The Army has been here before. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was heavily committed on two fronts – Germany and Northern Ireland – and decisions had to be taken to address the specifics of one, in the face of the considerable threat posed by the other. Kitson achieved some success in refocusing the British Army's attention on the principal requirements of planning and conducting a counterinsurgency campaign in the 1970s. In so doing he helped to shape what is internationally recognised as the classical British approach to counterinsurgency. Together, introspection and the need for the Army to understand, learn and adapt from its experience in Iraq serve a valuable purpose. It is this study's intention to follow Kitson's lead and to help recalibrate the Army's approach to counterinsurgency to meet the challenges of the next five years or so which will take it into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Table 1 - The Master Question List

Section 1. What is doctrine?	1. What is doctrine?
	2. What criteria does doctrine need to meet to be effective?
	3. What factors affect the development of doctrine?
	4. What are the difficulties in developing it?
	5. What are the organizational difficulties involved in developing doctrine?
	6. What are the problems posed by building an approach for the future on experience from the past? How might they be ameliorated
	7. What were the principal influences on doctrine development 1996-2001?
	8. How important were Northern Ireland and the Balkans in shaping doctrine?
	9. What did they tell us about the character of contemporary military operations?
Section 2. Managing Doctrine	10. What are the difficulties in keeping doctrine relevant?
	11. How was the development of doctrine managed?
	12. How effective is the Army at managing its doctrine?
	13. How might the process be improved?
Section 3. Developing Doctrine: Strategic Defence Review 98	14. How did <i>SDR</i> shape doctrine?
	15. What were the principal <i>SDR</i> influences?
	16. Why did the View 1 (symmetric, high intensity operations) dominate?
	17. Why was View 2 (asymmetric warfare) ignored? What effect did this have?
Section 4. COIN Doctrine	18. To what extent is there a conflict between a warfighting approach and the requirements of operations other than war?
	19. To what extent did this manifest itself in the production of COIN doctrine?
Section 5. Doctrine and Education	20. What emphasis has COIN received in education? Is there any room for improvement?
	21. Does COIN warrant, as Kitson asserts, specific education and training?
Section 6. Learning from experience	22. How does the Army learn?
	23. What are the benefits and dangers of responding to contemporary pressures?
	24. To what extent do differences between theory (doctrine) and practice create problems?
	25. What are the risks associated with relying on inherent adaptability to overcome the unforeseen?
Section 7. Theory and practice	26. How would you characterise the British approach to COIN?
	27. Was British COIN doctrine relevant to your experience?
	28. To what extent are the 6 principles of COIN still valid?
	29. To what extent is the Ink Spot method still valid?
	30. To what extent do you consider the following characteristics important

	to COIN: minimum force, civil-military co-operation, integrated intelligence, information operations, and learning and adaptation?
Section 8. Iraq and Operation TELIC	31. How would you characterise the campaign in Iraq?
	32. What were the principal influences on the Iraq campaign?
	33. How and why did the Iraq campaign differ from doctrine? Topics to consider: command and control, the multinational dimension, Information Operations and force levels.
	34. What was uniquely British about Operation TELIC?
	35. What was new? Topics to consider: PJHQ, force levels, the Iraqi government, the presence of a trans-national insurgency, competing military activities (SSR and COIN), Private Military Companies, and militias.
	36. What worked? Topics to consider: Command and Control, Legal, Culture, People, Intelligence, Info Ops, Education and Training.
	37. What did not work and why?
	38. What could not work and why?
Section 9. Assessment	39. Is the British doctrinal approach still valid? If so why? If not why?
	40. Has the Army placed the right emphasis on COIN operations? Have you detected any complacency or false assumptions in its approach?
Section 10. Gap Analysis	41. What still needs to be addressed?
Section 10. Is there anything else the interviewee would like to add or discuss?	

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- ⁸ Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-keeping*, London: Faber and Faber, 1971; *Bunch of Five*, London: Faber and Faber, 1977.
- ⁹ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, p. 283.
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- ¹⁴ Remark attributed to U.S. industrialist, Mary Parker Follett, quoted in John Kiszely, “The British Army and Approaches to Warfare since 1945”, in Brian Holden Reid, (ed.), *Military Power: Land Warfare in Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge, May 1997, p. 202.
- ¹⁵ Markus Mäder, *In Pursuit of Conceptual Excellence: The Evolution of British Military-Strategic Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era, 1989-2002*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004, pp. 27-28.
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- ¹⁸ Lt. Gen. Sir Frank Kitson, *Practical Aspects of Counter Insurgency*, Kermit Roosevelt Lecture delivered May 1981: Annex A to DCinC 8109 dated 11 Jun 81, TDRC, p. 2.
- ¹⁹ *Counter Insurgency Operations* used all but apocalyptic-utopian and commercialist, and it recast secessionist as *separatist*. *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. iii.
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- ²² David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1964, reprinted 2006, p. 2. Emphasis in original.

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- ²⁴ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 3.
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- ²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 282.
- ²⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, December 2006, p. 1-1. Henceforth referred to as FM 3-24.
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- ³³ *Ibid*, p. iii.
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- ⁴² War Office Code 1093. *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*. London: The War Office, 1923.
- ⁴³ Hew Strachan, discussion with author, All Souls' College, Oxford, 9 June 2009.
- ⁴⁴ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-2-1.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. B-3-1.
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- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. xli.
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- ⁷⁷ *British Military Doctrine; ADP Land Operations*.

⁷⁸ Ministry Of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review – Modern Forces for the Modern World*, London: The Stationery Office, 1987 and *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Presented to Parliament by The Secretary of State for Defence, London: The Stationery Office, July 2002.

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⁸⁵ Ian F.W. Beckett, (ed.), *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerrilla Warfare 1900-1945*, London: Blandford, 1988; *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*, Oxford: Routledge, 2001; *Insurgency In Iraq: An Historical Perspective*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005; “The Future of Insurgency,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 2005, pp. 22-36.

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- ⁹³ Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux," p. 111.
- ⁹⁴ The seven are: The side may win which best mobilizes and energizes its global, regional and local support base – and prevents its adversaries doing likewise. The security force "area of influence" may need to include all neighbouring countries, and its "area of interest" may need to be global. The security force must control a complex "conflict ecosystem" — rather than defeating a single specific insurgent adversary. A common diagnosis of the problem may matter more than formal unity of effort across multiple agencies. Modern counterinsurgency may be 100% political — comprehensive media coverage making even the most straightforward combat action a "political warfare" engagement. "Victory" may not be final — "permanent containment" may be needed to prevent defeated insurgents transforming into terrorist groups. Secret intelligence may matter less than situational awareness based on unclassified but difficult-to-access information.
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¹⁰⁴ Harry Summers, *On Strategy: a Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, New York, NY: Random House, 1982, reprinted 1995.

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey Record, *The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency*, Paper 577, 1 September 2006, p. 12

¹⁰⁶ www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/OperationsFactsheets/OperationsInIraqBritishFatalities.htm; Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) U.S. Casualty Status Fatalities as of: August 14, 2009, 10 a.m. EDT, www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Clausewitz, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸ Clausewitz, pp. 119-120.

2 Doctrine

Military doctrine provides a well-established, if somewhat discrete field of study. Although historians have concentrated more on doctrine's application than its development, there are some exceptions. Much critical attention continues to focus, for example, on the theories and the enduring influence on British military thinking of Maj. Gen. J. F. C. Fuller and Capt. Sir Basil Liddell Hart. Their ideas shaped the development of formal doctrine, particularly through the concepts of manoeuvre and the indirect approach. The literature is extensive.¹ Counterinsurgency doctrine, however, has not been examined to the same extent. The theories of Thompson and Kitson, and to a lesser degree Gwynn and Callwell still prompt discussion, however relatively little attention has been paid to the application of British counterinsurgency doctrine, still less to its development. Ian Beckett and Thomas Mockaitis were the principal contributors in the field² until Britain's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted renewed academic interest in counterinsurgency doctrine.³ How and why the British Army's counterinsurgency doctrine has developed in the way it has is neither well-covered in the literature nor a well-understood subject.

The interest shown in doctrine in the academic field is reflected in the Army's in-house journal, the *British Army Review*. Since 1989, the year *British Military Doctrine (BMD)*⁴ was published, the articles published in *British Army Review* on the doctrine of manoeuvre warfare and mission command are legion.⁵ By contrast and somewhat surprisingly given the Army's history in it, between 1989 and 2001 – the year *Counter Insurgency Operations* was published – *British Army Review* only published two articles on counterinsurgency. One was written by the author of *Counter Insurgency Operations*, and the other considered the application of manoeuvre warfare to low intensity operations.⁶ If *British Army Review* is a barometer of professional interest, this small snapshot indicates interest in counterinsurgency among officers was low.

This chapter builds on the approach outlined by Daddow. It draws on papers published by the principal think tanks, and material provided in interview by those involved to establish the general doctrinal context at the time *Counter Insurgency Operations* was published, its purpose and its significance. This will establish the context against which the doctrine and what it contains can be examined. This chapter identifies the role individuals played, and the importance of their networks of contacts which prompted ideas and regulated their development. It will set the development of doctrine against Downie's Institutional Learning Cycle, particularly when examining how the Army responded to changing circumstances in the operational environment. The chapter examines the development of the Army's doctrine following the publication of *BMD* in 1989, the hierarchy of doctrine established by *BMD*, of which *Counter Insurgency Operations* was a part, and the institutional interest in doctrine *BMD* then prompted. It will show that, although it is a product of the Army's processes to produce doctrine, its origins, and the way it was developed, make *Counter Insurgency Operations* a unique publication in terms of how it was written, what it contained, and how it was published. Finally, it examines the issue of what constitutes effective doctrine and develops a general analytical framework against which doctrine can be assessed.

2.1 What is Doctrine?

The first edition of *BMD* defined doctrine as “what is taught,” and explained that it provided “the fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives.”⁷ Gen. Sir John Chapple, the Chief of the General Staff, explained that doctrine “is not in itself a prescription for success as a set of rules...What it does provide is the basis for thought, further selective study and reading which is the personal responsibility of all of us.”⁸ The notion of doctrine being ‘what is taught’ became the received understanding of doctrine, particularly among graduates of the Army Staff College, Camberley, a view reinforced by all those interviewed for this thesis. The link between doctrine and education is a crucial aspect of this thesis, and stems from the Army’s own view of the relationship between the two.

As work on doctrine progressed during the early 1990s, three functions became clear. Maj. Gen. Willcocks, DGD&D’s first Director of Land Warfare, presented these at RUSI in 1994 shortly before the publication of *ADP Operations*. He explained that doctrine had an enduring element which captured the essence of best practice as fundamental principles; it had a practical function which provided the Army’s tactics and procedures; and it had a predictive function which informed ideas about the character of future conflict.⁹ As things transpired in the late 1990s, the predictive function proved much harder to address than the other two. Here E. H. Carr’s view of history has relevance. Transposing ‘doctrine writer’ for ‘historian’, writing doctrine is more an art than a science, and whereas science has laws, or statements of tendency, the doctrine writer has to generalise, and cannot account for future accidents.¹⁰ Months after Willcock’s lecture, *ADP Operations* was published. It defined doctrine as,

the formal expression of military knowledge and thought, that the Army accepts as being relevant at a given time, which covers the nature of current and future conflicts, the preparation of the Army for such conflicts and the methods of engaging in them to achieve success.¹¹

In 2001, the authors of *British Defence Doctrine*, *BMD*’s joint service replacement, further underlined the organizational importance of fundamental principles when it included principles as one of the essential elements of British Doctrine. The other essentials were the warfighting ethos, the manoeuvrist approach, the application of mission command, the joint, integrated and multinational nature of operations, and the inherent flexibility and pragmatism of British doctrine.¹² *Defence Doctrine* emphasised that the principles of war,

are not rigid laws but provide guidance on which military action will be based. Their relevance, applicability and relative importance change with the circumstance: their application with judgement and common sense will lead to success; blatant disregard of them involves risk and could lead to failure.¹³

This message has been a constant refrain since the first army doctrine was published in 1909.

BMD defined doctrine and explained its importance to an army then unfamiliar with the idea of an army-wide doctrine. It does so by linking the army’s physical and mental preparations in peacetime with the need for it to be “clear how the complex situations, difficulties and hardships that will inevitably arise in war are to be tackled.”¹⁴ Doctrine’s importance should therefore be seen in terms of the framework of

understanding it establishes for the Army's approach to war. Echoing the 1920 Provisional edition of *Field Service Regulations* which said "War is an art and not an exact science,"¹⁵ Liddell Hart asserted that "War is a science which depends upon art for its application."¹⁶ *BMD* makes reference to this when it explains that doctrine is to "attend to both aspects [that is art and science], but its Military Doctrine must primarily seek to influence the way in which its officers and non-commissioned officers think." *BMD* explains that doctrine informs both what to think and how to think, and uses Fuller to support the point, quoting:

'What to think' of itself is not sufficient; it may be said to supply the raw material historical facts, etc. in which 'How to think' operates. 'What to think' supplies us with bricks and mortar, 'How to think' with craftsmanship. Both are all important and complimentary.¹⁷

This formal articulation of both doctrine's importance and its primary function is significant: it unequivocally affirms doctrine's central role in defining the Army's approach, and that in this respect doctrine is important. How receptive the Army has been to that message, and the broader issue of doctrine's assimilation, are issues which have taken some years to determine.

2.2 Doctrine in Historical Context

Until the publication of *British Military Doctrine* in 1989, as Ian Beckett observes, doctrine was "not a strong point"¹⁸ in the British Army. Indeed there is a commonly held misconception, noted by Gary Sheffield, Colin McInnes and John Stone, that, until *BMD* was published, the Army had no doctrine at all.¹⁹ It is certainly true that before *BMD* the Army lacked operational level doctrine, a view General Sir Charles Guthrie reinforces when he said of *BMD* that it "broke new ground, articulating doctrine *above* the tactical level."²⁰ But the Army had doctrine well before *BMD*, but part of its problem was that it did not recognize the operational level of war, where policy and tactics meet and where an understanding of operational art was necessary. The lavishly illustrated 1985 *The Application of Force*, written by Col. John Sellers, then the principal doctrine writer at the Staff College (the Staff College at Camberley was the doctrine hot-house until DGD&D was given the responsibility in the 1990s), uses the principles of war and many historical examples to explain all arms tactics from the division to the battle group, in all types of operations and in all environments.²¹ *The Application of Force* caught the attention of Gen. Sir Nigel Bagnall, then Chief of the General Staff, who was so impressed with it that he immediately upgraded Sellers' post and set him to work revising the Army's tactical doctrine.²² This was contained in the *Land Operations* series which, since the late 1960s, provided the Army's doctrine for tactics at the battalion, brigade and divisional level, across a wide range of military tasks and in a wide range of environmental conditions.

2.2.1 *Field Service Regulations*

The Army's first doctrine was published one hundred years ago. *Field Service Regulations (FSR)* published by the General Staff in 1909,²³ were the authoritative statement of how the Army was to operate in the field as the preface makes clear:

This manual is issued by command of the Army Council. It deals with the general principles which govern the leading in war of the Army. The training manuals of the various arms are based on these regulations, which, in case of

any doubt arising, are the ruling authority.²⁴

FSR established the hierarchy of what it contained – the 1920 edition refers specifically to *FSR* as being “doctrine”²⁵ – placing it above the Army’s existing and familiar training manuals such as *Cavalry Training*, *Infantry Training* and *Field Artillery Training*.²⁶ Taken as a whole, the training manuals described the Army’s tactics and provided links to what *BMD* would later describe as higher level doctrine. These manuals remained the principal repository of tactical doctrine for decades to come. Indeed, Lt. Gen. Sir Alistair Irwin recalls that the Army of the 1980s referred to and relied on its training manuals, even though at the time the “notion of ‘doctrine’ may have been alien.”²⁷

FSR enshrined the position of principles in doctrine for the first time. It lists five: unity of effort directed to a definite object; developing an organization “capable of application by men of average powers” and “sufficiently elastic to meet all the varying conditions which may arise, and which it is impossible to foresee”; application of the principles and adjusting them in detail according to conditions; decentralization of responsibility among subordinates but central control and co-ordination of subordinate elements to achieve the common objective; and defeat of the enemy’s mobile forces, for which the “efforts of all parts of an army must be combined.”²⁸ These principles were “to be regarded by all ranks as authoritative, for their violation, in the past, has often been followed by mishap, if not disaster.”²⁹ In a way that was to be repeated by Fuller and subsequent doctrine writers, *FSR* emphasises the need for the principles to be learnt, understood and then applied judiciously according to the circumstances faced:

They should be so thoroughly impressed on the mind of every commander, that whenever he has to come to a decision in the field, he instinctively gives them their full weight.

... The fundamental principles of war are neither very numerous nor in themselves very abstruse, but the application of them is different and cannot be made subject to rules. The correct application of principles to circumstances is the outcome of sound military knowledge, built up by study and practice until it has become instinct.³⁰

That these principles were “evolved by experience,”³¹ is further indication that the Army had a healthy, if still informal process of assessment and analysis from which it developed its approach. It would be wrong, therefore, to think that *FSR* arose in an intellectual vacuum. Students at the Staff College used E. B. Hamley’s *Operations of War*³² as their standard text for many years. Hamley’s book, in a rather Jominian way, deduced principles from the study of specific operations.³³ Similarly, and in the absence of formal doctrine, Callwell’s *Small Wars* became the Staff College’s principal reference for irregular warfare during the 1900s. These books and the various training manuals formed the intellectual foundation for professional study and their impact on the conduct of operations should not be underestimated. While senior officers may not necessarily have been masters of doctrine, the principles of operations they learnt at Camberley were put to use in the field. Richard Holmes, for example, cites Gen. Sir John French, Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, who in August 1914 decided not to withdraw on Maubeuge after the battle of Mons because (he had a photographic memory) he remembered a line from Hamley which said that a

general who retreated into a fortress was like a sailor who, in a storm, grabbed hold of the anchor.³⁴

FSR described the Army's approach to the conduct of operations, they codified military 'best practice',³⁵ and they were developed with flexibility and pragmatism in mind. These, and the institutional resistance their production generated in some quarters, remain the enduring characteristics of doctrine. An examination of why the Army published *FSR*, what they contain, and the process by which they were subsequently developed, highlights three points of relevance to *Counter Insurgency Doctrine*. First, *FSR* provide clear evidence that the General Staff considered that doctrine was important to the Army. Second, *FSR* are the startpoint of a continuum of doctrinal thinking, from what *FSR* termed 'savage warfare' to what is now termed counterinsurgency. Third, *FSR* provided a co-ordinated, systematic approach to the conduct of large wars, based on common principles, which would be modified for small wars but not supplanted.

Just as *BMD* formed part of Bagnall's reforms, *FSR* were a product of the sweeping changes introduced in response to the Army's failings in the Boer War. Richard Haldane, Secretary of State for War oversaw the creation of the General Staff (a recommendation of the Esher Committee in 1904), reorganized and re-equipped the Army, overhauled its training, and established a large standing expeditionary force. To support such widespread change, two volumes – *Operations* and *Organisation and Administration* – were drawn up by the General Staff under the direction of Douglas Haig, the then Director of Staff Duties, to explain how the Army was to operate in the field. The second point is that they were authoritative. Published by the Army Council, *Regulations* were the Army's approach to "the leading in war of the Army."³⁶ Third, it was recognized that they would be developed and amended in the light of experience. Edward Spiers notes that Haig took the sensible decision that the regulations "would be experimental in the first instance, and could be modified as experience dictated".³⁷

Modifications followed as Haig led staff rides to test the relations between the three principal staff branches. Fourth, they were contentious. Creating *Regulations* required considerable zeal and enthusiasm on Haig's part to get them published. The idea of Army-wide regulations and the process to develop them created considerable resistance from the Adjutant-General's and Quartermaster-General's branches. Spiers records that Nicholson, the newly appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had to give direction that manoeuvres had to follow the Army's new system,³⁸ and Paul Harris notes that Haig had to seek and secure the personal support of the Secretary of State to allow *Regulations* to be tested in the field.³⁹

Arguments over *Regulations* continued after Haig had moved on to be Chief of the General Staff in India. However, he understood that doctrine had to be flexible, not prescriptive, and a sensible pragmatism was required in its application. Strachan observes that "Haig was clear that the *Field Service Regulations* were geared for the eventuality of major war, and when the First World War broke out he continued to see them as his benchmark."⁴⁰ Haig was also intent that *Regulations* should provide what Fuller later described as the 'how to think', and was aware of the dangers that being too prescriptive would bring:

Certain critics of the British General Staff and of our regulations have recently argued that a doctrine is lacking...the British General Staff hesitates to teach and

to publish a clear line of action... The critics seem to lose sight of the true nature of war, and of the varied conditions under which the British army may have to take the field. It is neither necessary nor desirable that we should go further than what is clearly laid down in our regulations. If we go further, we run the risk of tying ourselves by a doctrine that may not always be applicable and we gain nothing in return.⁴¹

FSR's starting point for principles was that they were universally applicable, which meant that the approach to the organization of the Army and the conduct of operations were equally so. Nevertheless, it identified one area where some careful adaptation was necessary. In so doing, it provided the first formal doctrine for what were then referred to as small wars, and would now include counterinsurgency. This was provided in Chapter X in the 1909 edition titled 'Warfare in Uncivilized Countries', a title amended in the 1912 to 'Warfare Against an Uncivilized Enemy,' and further amended in 1929 to 'Warfare in Undeveloped and Semi Civilized Countries'.⁴² *FSR* laid out general principles for 'campaigns against savages,' and highlights the need for self-reliance, vigilance, judgement, discipline, organization and training as pre-requisites for "overcoming the difficulties inherent in savage warfare." The reason for them is made clear: "unless officers and men are ... capable of adapting their action to unexpected conditions, and of beating the enemy at his own tactics *the campaign will be needlessly long and costly.*"⁴³

In keeping with its own view that principles should be adjusted in detail according to conditions, *FSR* is clear that in savage wars "the armament, tactics, and characteristics of the enemy, and the nature of the theatre of operations demand that the principles of regular warfare be somewhat modified; the modifications [the chapter describes] are such as experience has shown necessary."⁴⁴ This is a strong echo of Callwell who concludes that,

the conditions of small wars are so diversified, the enemy's mode of fighting is often so peculiar, and the theatres of operations present such singular features, that irregular warfare must generally be carried out on a method totally different from the stereotyped system. The art of war, as generally understood, must be modified to suit the circumstances of each particular case. The conduct of small wars is in fact in certain aspects an art in itself, diverging widely from what is adapted to the conditions of regular warfare, but not so widely that there are not in all its branches points which permit comparisons to be established.⁴⁵

Given the status *Small Wars* had in the Army this is unsurprising, and the general tone *FSR* adopts is redolent of Callwell's approach. Callwell talks of the army's responsibility to "hunt [the enemy] from their homes and ... [if necessary to] destroy or carry off their belongings",⁴⁶ even though these are means that "the laws of regular warfare do not sanction",⁴⁷ and that "sometimes ... their villages must be demolished and granaries destroyed."⁴⁸ *FSR* talks of "the seizure of his flocks and supplies, and the destruction of his villages and crops may be necessary to obtain his submission."⁴⁹ The similarity with *FSR* is striking.

FSR provided thin but practical guidance on mountain, bush and desert warfare against comparatively poorly-armed opponents. It was the terrain, and the impact it had on standard tactics and principles, which was the important factor, not the potential enemy. As such, *FSR* was the doctrine for conquest not pacification and the re-establishment of

order. It assumed that standard principles would be adjusted to the conditions, and that standard tactics remained largely useful. It therefore provided little enough detail, as Tim Moreman notes, to be of direct use to those training for overseas campaigns.⁵⁰ However, as Beckett highlights, *FSR* were not the sole source of information in these specialist areas. Francis Younghusband's *Indian Frontier Warfare* (1898), C. Miller Maguire's *Strategy and Tactics in Mountain Ranges* (1904), the Indian Army's *Frontier Warfare* (1900, later expanded in 1906 to include bush fighting), W. C. G. Heneker's *Bush Warfare* (1904) and W. D. Bird's *Some Principles of Frontier Mountain Warfare* (1909) contained the collected lessons from the campaigns at the end of the nineteenth century and provided an extensive informal doctrine for operations against irregular enemies. It was to these publications that officers turned for detailed guidance.⁵¹

2.2.2 Revising Doctrine and Refining Principles

McInnes and Stone refer to the “supposedly ‘unofficial’ principles which underpinned the Army’s pre-[First World War] operational philosophy”.⁵² The difficulty, as Hew Strachan observes, is not that the doctrine “asserted that primacy of the principles of war” but that the principles it laid out were too general.⁵³ While the principles of 1909 were perfectly logical, there was a large gap between the philosophy they framed of universal and almost mandatory applicability and the practical business of soldiering. The post-war revision of *FSR* provided the opportunity to resolve this, to capture and build on wartime experience, and to revise and refine the principles of war.

The approach the General Staff adopted to revising doctrine was central to maintaining the importance of doctrine to the Army. By capturing the lessons from the war and by using broad-based committees to develop and revise *FSR* and their supporting training manuals, the General Staff ensured doctrine remained relevant, and its authoritative position maintained. David French describes that revisions were “prepared under the auspices of the Director of Staff Duties at the War Office,”⁵⁴ (the executive branch of the General Staff responsible for the organization of the army, officer education, staff training, and staff work⁵⁵):

The first draft of each manual was circulated widely. Each relevant branch of the war office, the general officers commanding ... of all of the home commands, the commandant and staff of the staff college and, if it was an arm-of-service manual, the relevant army school, were invited to comment and suggest amendments.⁵⁶

The inference from this is that the published edition had to reflect the views of all relevant, interested parties. This clearly meant that the editorial committee would have to work to achieve consensus, what Downie describes as the Sustained Consensus stage in his Institutional Learning Cycle.

Only experienced officers were trusted to draft the revisions,⁵⁷ and the then Col. J. F. C. Fuller was one invited to write the 1920 draft of *FSR*. He took the opportunity to introduce his own carefully considered ideas into doctrine.⁵⁸ Important for this discussion, this included specific principles of war: maintenance of the objective, offensive action, surprise, concentration, economy of force, security, mobility and co-operation.⁵⁹ In the 1920 Provisional Edition, Fuller further develops the idea of judgement and application, first raised in 1909, highlighting that “no two situations are identical, and, therefore, the application of principles cannot be made subject to rules.”⁶⁰ This simple statement overcame the difficulty presented in *FSR*'s first edition.

Fuller made clear in *FSR*, in a way *BDD* was to reiterate seventy years later, that the principles had to be “interpreted according to circumstance; while these are principles of war, these are not laws, but guidelines for action, based upon past experience.” The list of principles evolved with succeeding editions, the debate being influenced strongly by Fuller. However, bearing in mind the central position principles assumed, articulating them was a far from straightforward matter. In 1930, Liddell Hart observed that:

[W]hat seems to be far more important than abstract principles are practical guides.... Yet the modern tendency has been to search for a ‘principle’ which can be expressed in a single word and then needs several thousand words to explain it. Even so, these ‘principles’ are so abstract that they mean different things to different men, and, for any value, depend on the individual’s own understanding of war.... In contrast, certain axioms seem to emerge from a close and extensive study of war. These cannot be expressed in a single word, but they can be put in the fewest words necessary to be practical.⁶¹

The challenge Liddell Hart posed the doctrine writer – to strike the right balance between the abstract and the practical – continues to trouble the authors of counterinsurgency doctrine today.

In the guidance on ‘savage warfare,’ Fuller’s revision introduces discussion of the value of aerial warfare in obtaining the enemy’s submission. No doubt this was prompted by the pivotal role a small detachment of aircraft played in defeating a Dervish revolt in British Somaliland in 1919.⁶² *FSR* highlights the “moral [sic] and material effect of a vigorous aerial offensive” in dealing with the tribesmen, where “the moral [sic] of the enemy will inevitably suffer from the knowledge that no difficulties of terrain can shelter him from aerial attack.” The author also notes the detrimental environmental impact of operating in tropical climates, the need for a “comparatively large number of aircraft” to compensate, and requirement for good roads to ensure that transport can keep the air component supplied.⁶³

It is fair to say that although committees worked hard to achieve consensus, it was not always achieved. The revision of *Infantry Training* provides a useful example. Liddell Hart did much work on the 1921 edition, itself much amended by the War Office and subsequently by Lt. Col., later Field Marshal, Lord Gort. French describes how Gort’s edition “was vetted by the director of military training at the war office, the senior officers school, the staff college and all of the home commands, and he was made to change at least one section at the insistence of the CIGS and the DSD.”⁶⁴ In October 1930, Lt. Col. Bernard Montgomery was appointed as the secretary of the War Office committee to revise the pamphlet.⁶⁵ Montgomery decided to make the book “a comprehensive treatise on war for the Infantry Officer.”⁶⁶ This put him at odds with his committee because, as Nigel Hamilton describes, if the manual “was to be ‘official’, it must reflect War Office rather than personal views”.⁶⁷ In his memoirs, Montgomery describes the heated arguments that took place as the Committee vetted his work and how he circumvented staff process and then ignored the Committee’s comments to achieve his own vision of the pamphlet:

I could not accept many of their amendments to my doctrine of infantry war. We went through the manual chapter by chapter. I then recommended that the committee should disband and that I should complete the book in my own time; this was agreed. I produced the final draft, *omitting all the amendments* the

committee had put forward. The book when published was considered excellent, especially by its author.⁶⁸

In overall terms, however, the revisions to *FSR* proved to be what David French describes as “important fruits of the general staff’s collective labours.... [and a] comparison between the 1909 manual and its post-war successors demonstrates just how far British doctrine shifted in the decade after 1918.”⁶⁹ In fact confidence in their contents, allowed the 1924 edition to contain “an explicit declaration to the effect it constitutes the Army’s doctrine for land warfare.”⁷⁰ The *FSR* were, as Fuller asserts, the Army’s ‘central idea’, and their amendment showed an organizational desire that its doctrine had to change to reflect changed and changing circumstances – the lessons of the First World War, and mechanization respectively. The main steps of the process of doctrinal change are clearly identifiable: organizational performance gaps were identified, alternative responses found, sustained consensus achieved for an accepted solution, and, over the following ten years or so, the new doctrine was published to become the basis for the Army’s training.

2.2.3 Inconsistencies in Assimilation, Application and Development

Fuller believed that *FSR* were important but that they were not as widely understood as they should be, concluding that they were read only “for purposes of examination” and that they were “consistently neglected in the field, especially if action were in any way hurried.” He attributed this problem to an institutionally damning “lack of professional interest, but also in part to the extreme dullness of the book, especially when read by a lukewarm soldier.”⁷¹ To overcome these shortcomings, and noting “how unimaginative the normal British officer is,” he wrote a series of lectures, later published in 1931, “to overcome this disadvantage, which is a real one,” and to present *FSR* in a “historical context as well as an explanatory one.”⁷² Fuller’s actions address a fundamental issue which was not that the Army had any doctrine; rather it was how its doctrine was learnt, assimilated and then applied.

Fuller’s concerns have become a recurring theme in the literature. Brian Holden Reid has highlighted this and singles out the Army’s reluctance to rely on its doctrine as a major concern.⁷³ Similarly, McInnes and Stone recognize that the issue is not one of doctrine’s “*existence*, but of its *status* and *use*.”⁷⁴ This comes, they suggest, from “a traditional aversion in the British Army to theorising about war, and an organisational culture which emphasised ‘common sense’ and *praxis*.”⁷⁵ Echoing Fuller, Markus Mäder notes generally that “British officers did not care about intellectual debate and felt deep reluctance towards any formal writings. At best some sort of doctrine existed as tactical instruction manuals. However, they were considered to be something for the classroom but irrelevant in the field.”⁷⁶ Michael Howard goes further, referring to an identifiable “complacent anti-intellectualism which has long been a predominant tendency of a British army which takes a perverse delight in learning its lessons the hard way.”⁷⁷

Although McInnes and Stone conclude that the central themes and principles of, for example *FSR*, are recognizable in the way certain commanders such as Slim and Montgomery fought their battles, they note that the general application of doctrine appears to have been inconsistent: “generals such as Plumer...achieved their most convincing victories only by departing from the Regulation’s neo-Clausewitzian orthodoxy.”⁷⁸ Sheffield agrees; “The problem was that [*FSR*] were more honoured in

the breach than the observance.”⁷⁹ This is an issue to which this thesis will return when it examines the application of *Counter Insurgency Operations* in Iraq.

In parallel with inconsistency in application, Holden Reid notes an inconsistency in how doctrine was developed and amended in the light of experience and changes, particularly technological. He notes developments in British doctrine as being “haphazard and [largely] the product of hasty improvisation rather than doctrinal debate and the exchange of ideas in the calm of peace.”⁸⁰ This statement, written in the relative calm of the late 1990s, was to have an ironic resonance ten years later when the Army started to revise *Counter Insurgency Operations* while it was engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan.

2.3 The Bagnall Reforms: Re-Developing the Army’s Doctrine

FSR were published to support the comprehensive reforms proposed by the Esher Committee and undertaken by Haldane. The Army of the 1980s was not in the same position as it was in the 1900s; however its approach to fight on NATO’s Central Front had, in the view of Gen., later Field Marshal Sir Nigel Bagnall, become stilted and constrained. Bagnall’s name is now synonymous with re-establishing the Army’s conceptual component,⁸¹ and *BMD* was a product of reforms he instigated. The result was what McInnes describes as a “quiet revolution ... in 1(BR) Corps (the main British fighting unit in Germany)”.⁸² Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely records how, first as a divisional, then corps, and finally Army Group commander, Bagnall critically reassessed and then revised the Army’s philosophy. He changed it from one of “over-literal interpretation forward defence”⁸³ (NATO’s policy) to one based on manoeuvre and decentralized command.⁸⁴ Over the years, the British Army’s approach on the Central Front had become terrain-restricted where “Corps are allocated their areas of responsibility and told to fight a corps battle. This in turn leads to a tendency to perpetuate an allocation of territory throughout the chain of command, with divisions, brigades and even BGs being given their areas to defend without any direction as to the overall design for battle.”⁸⁵ To overcome this problem, he revised tactics which had become a series of compartmentalized divisional engagements into a co-ordinated corps battle, a process he later repeated at Army Group level.

Mäder notes that Bagnall opposed “the Army’s over-pragmatism and mindset of improvisation, an attitude particularly strong in the ‘small wars’ culture of the Army’s more traditional circles.”⁸⁶ To overcome this, Bagnall required the Army to adopt a new mindset, and to develop an understanding of operational art, not just tactics. Melvin notes that Bagnall did not have a German-style higher General Staff to develop and implement the necessary changes.⁸⁷ Instead, he used an indirect approach to shape his ideas and, to help spread their influence, formed a small, unofficial group, the so-called ‘Ginger Group’. In its early years, the group focussed on the tactical problems the Army faced in Germany.⁸⁸ The wider developments Bagnall introduced were the first steps in what were to become the philosophies of Manoeuvre Warfare – later the Manoeuvrist Approach – and Mission Command.⁸⁹

As Chief of the General Staff between 1985 and 1988, Bagnall strove to improve and to institutionalize professional understanding within the Army as a whole.⁹⁰ One of his primary concerns was to make the Army more coherent in its approach to doctrine and training.⁹¹ He instigated an Army-wide doctrine,⁹² and established the Higher Command and Staff Course (HCSC) at the Staff College to teach the operational level

of war and the manoeuvrist approach, which stressed agility, tempo and shock directed against an enemy's vulnerabilities. The ideas developed by the Ginger Group became that which was taught on HCSC, and the course took on a significant role in terms of the further development of ideas. Melvin considers that it became "the principal debating ground of the Army and catalyst for further developments in military doctrine and operational level thought."⁹³

Other changes followed. In summer 1993 the Inspectorate General of Doctrine and Training (IGDT) was created at Upavon. Echoing the relationship between the original Directorates for Staff Duties and Military Training, established when the General Staff was created in 1904, the Army now had a dedicated authority responsible for how it thought and how it trained. Previously, the Staff College had the responsibility for writing doctrine. It benefitted from the inevitable discussions and debates between those teaching, those writing and those being taught as ideas developed. Within a year, the Inspectorate was re-organized to separate training from doctrine. The Directorate General for Development and Doctrine (DGD&D) became the arm of the General Staff responsible for the development and dissemination of doctrine.⁹⁴ Major General Mike Willcocks, the first Director General, described DGD&D as being responsible for "producing an authoritative, coherent military doctrine for all levels of the Army for every type of conflict."⁹⁵ It is Brig. Charles Grant's view that "DGD&D gave the Army the intellectual backbone to allow it to fight its battles for funding and the structures it needed. DGD&D provided the robust arguments to support what the Army required."⁹⁶

It took three more years for DGD&D to consolidate its position as the principal focus for doctrinal development and debate. Maj. Gen., later Gen. Sir Mike Jackson, was appointed Director General in 1996. He secured DGD&D's position as the sole authority for Army doctrine from the Staff College ahead of the creation of the Joint Services Command and Staff College in 1997.⁹⁷ Despite these final changes, it is clear that by 1994 the Army had created an effective means to develop its doctrine. As Mäder concludes, "the Army had transformed initial impetus, triggered by the manoeuvre warfare debate and the subsequent publication of *BMD*... into a sustained doctrinal process".⁹⁸ The Army's efforts made between 1989 and 1994 demonstrate "that doctrine came to be understood as a process of institutional importance."⁹⁹

2.3.1 The Doctrine Hierarchy

The publication of *BMD*, and the shift in responsibility for writing doctrine from the Staff College into what became DGD&D, enabled work to start on developing an Army-wide doctrine to complete the hierarchy of doctrine *BMD* described. It had three layers, and each layer was written with a particular purpose in mind. The author of *BMD* intended that, by degrees, the broad principles and general approach described at the highest level would be translated into tactics and procedures which were in keeping with the general manoeuvrist approach. *BMD* provided the pinnacle of the hierarchy, being the highest level of doctrine. Issued by the Chief of the General Staff, on his personal authority, it was "concerned with conveying *understanding* not instruction."¹⁰⁰ Its function was to "establish the framework of understanding of the approach to warfare in order to provide the foundation for its practical application."¹⁰¹ Higher level doctrine was written to help develop understanding; the lower level would be the basis for instruction and training.

Beneath military doctrine sat Higher Level Doctrine, published in the ADPs. Higher Level Doctrine was to deal with the principles that governed the conduct of operations at all levels, and with the operational level of conflict and the conduct of campaigns. Under the guidance of the Director of Land Warfare at DGD&D, the Army Doctrine Publications (ADP) series followed: *Operations* in 1994, and then, among others, *Command, Training, Soldiering and Logistics*.¹⁰² At the same time, work started on revising the existing *Land Operations* series for it to be republished as the extensive Army Field Manual (AFM). This was the third level of doctrine, Tactical Doctrine. The AFMs provided the main body of doctrinal instruction within the Army, and they were written “to ensure that all commanders, whatever their specialization, have a common foundation on which to base their plans.”¹⁰³

As the doctrine was published, it quickly had an impact on education. Kiszely notes that “the doctrine and [HCSC] recognised the operational level of war, and acknowledged the centrality of a manoeuvre-oriented approach to warfare, although the latter concept was... translated into lower-level doctrine [ADP *Operations*] and was fully embraced into the exercises of the Army Command and Staff Course in 1994.”¹⁰⁴ Although the Army Staff College remained an important think tank, supporting, and certainly testing ideas developed in Upavon, the introduction of ADP *Operations* was not without its problems. Charles Grant, then a member of the Directing Staff at Camberley, recalls that the DS had to

deal with concepts that were virtually alien to them and they had to teach concepts for which the Army had no real understanding and little directly relevant experience. The DS were teaching from pre-publication editions of ADP *Operations* and while some understood doctrine’s role as a framework for understanding, others did not. There was considerable anxiety among the DS and the students that doctrinal frameworks were being applied too slavishly – always a risk with doctrine – at the expense of encouraging genuine understanding.¹⁰⁵

By the late 1990s, once the doctrine had been assimilated, this problem had largely disappeared. Lt. Gen., now Gen. Sir Peter Wall recalls that doctrine’s utility during this period increased as “people at unit level thought about and used the handrails that doctrine provided and that they had been taught.”¹⁰⁶

2.3.2 Theatre Instructions

BMD included a fourth type of doctrine in the form of Theatre or Operation Instructions, which it described as “a vital supplement to doctrine.”¹⁰⁷ These were to be sponsored by the relevant operational commander, and were intended to “impart both understanding and instruction concerning probable or existing operations and will define the levels of command.... within the theatre.”¹⁰⁸ Theatre and Operation Instructions were to be based closely on Military, Higher Level and Tactical Doctrine, and adapted to fit the particular conditions of the theatre for which they were written. Unlike the other strands of doctrine, some or all of these instructions were likely to be highly classified.

The use of Theatre Instructions, and specialist training centres to teach theatre-specific skills was already well-established. The Malayan campaign set the standard with the formation of the Jungle Warfare School and the publication of *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya (ATOM)*¹⁰⁹ in 1952. *ATOM* was the Army’s first really

comprehensive counterinsurgency theatre handbook. Written at the personal direction of Gen. Sir Gerald Templer, the High Commissioner and Director of Operations, *ATOM* was the authoritative pamphlet for the campaign and the repository of experience and best practice from jungle operations. It explained the background to the campaign, the emergency legal powers available to the security forces, operational design, intelligence, psychological warfare, and the tactics to be used, and was used as the basis for all training that units arriving in Malaya had to undertake. The framework of operations it described, very much echoed that suggested by Charles Callwell in *Small Wars*: framework operations to provide routine day-to-day activities such as patrols, cordons and searches, and ambushes; mopping up operations to “complete the destruction and prevent revival” of communist terrorists; conducting deep jungle operations to deny terrorists the opportunity to rest and retrain; and State Priority Operations and Federal Priority Operations “to exploit opportunities in specific areas.”¹¹⁰

Well written, relevant, and with full endorsement from Gen. Templer, *ATOM* became highly regarded, and later formed the basis for *Keeping the Peace*,¹¹¹ the doctrine used during the Aden campaign. *ATOM* proved to be so useful that Gen. Erskine, Director of Operations in Kenya, had his own version produced the following year. *A Handbook on Anti-Mau Mau Operations*¹¹² was written to assist in the training and operations of troops involved in the Mau Mau rebellion. *Anti-Mau Mau Operations* covered similar material to that provided in *ATOM*, and it too formed the basis of in-theatre training at the East Africa Battle School, where “fieldcraft, jungle tactics and the correct use of native trackers and war dogs are taught.”¹¹³ This format is clearly recognizable in subsequent doctrine publications.¹¹⁴ In the same vein, standardized operating procedures were developed in Northern Ireland (NISOPs). Like *ATOM*, NISOPs formed the basis for both training and the conduct of operations, and they were adapted as terrorist tactics changed, or as new equipment was brought into service.¹¹⁵ No such theatre instruction was issued for Iraq.

2.3.3 Reviewing and Revising Doctrine

BMD raises the paradox of doctrine’s nature being both “enduring yet dynamic”. On the one hand its enduring basis stems from “the hard won and often bitter experience gained in war”. On the other, it has to be dynamic enough not just to respond to debate within and outside the Army, where “constructive criticism and assessment [was] to be encouraged”, but to external influences. Kiszely notes the difficulties such a position might create between doctrine as an authoritative statement of the Army’s thinking and the requirement for it to be kept relevant and up-to-date:

[The] official sanction required to implement doctrine can transform it into dogma and ossify it; but without that official sanction it is liable to become ignored and irrelevant. Moreover, if too much criticism of it is encouraged, the doctrine may lack credibility; but if some criticism is not made, it will not remain dynamic.¹¹⁶

BMD identified several specific areas that may prompt change: defence commitments and resources, technology, the threat, research, development and experiment, and experience on active service and trial on exercise.¹¹⁷ The inference from this discussion is clear: while the General Staff, specifically DGD&D had responsibility for the development and dissemination of doctrine, and that it was to be “reviewed every five

years and if necessary reissued”, the Army in general had to be attuned to the possibility of change. Changes to doctrine were to be expected, dynamism was part of its nature, and doctrine writers had to be prepared accordingly. Although not expressed in these terms, this identified and codified Step 1 of the Institutional Learning Cycle – Attention to Events. Given that *BMD* is specific in identifying factors for change, it is interesting to compare the factors Richard Overy subsequently identified as drivers: experience of combat, introduction of new technology, political influences, personality, inter-service rivalry, nature of potential enemies, state of public opinion.¹¹⁸ He highlights the human side of doctrine-writing and policy-making, and the inevitable tensions that come with them, which an official publication could not.

2.3.4 Re-Establishing the Army’s Philosophy

BMD established doctrine as the source of the Army’s philosophy and the principles by which it should conduct operations. The ADPs provided the link between philosophy and practices and procedure, the last contained in the AFM. The idea of a military philosophy was introduced through the concept of Fighting Power, with its physical and moral components – the means to fight, and the ability to get people to fight – and the conceptual component which provided “the thought process behind the ability to fight”.¹¹⁹ *BMD* used Clausewitz to explain its relevance:

Theory exists so that one does not have to start afresh every time sorting out the raw material and ploughing through it, but will find it ready to hand and in good order. It is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education; not accompany him to the battlefield.¹²⁰

The similarity between this statement and Gen. Sir John Chapple’s view that “there are some who say battlefield is not a place to where we could hope to succeed by muddling through”¹²¹ is evident (Chapple, as Bagnall’s successor as CGS, actually published *BMD*).

Haig established the importance of principles of war in *Field Service Regulations*, developed subsequently by Fuller, and *BMD* affirmed that the conceptual component comprised the principles of war, military doctrine and development. Development required “an innovative approach to all aspects of Fighting Power”¹²² and the views of commanders at all levels were recognized as a major influence on the development of the ability to fight. The author of *BMD* therefore recognized the role for experience in shaping doctrinal developments which, in turn, would affect the way in which the Army was to fight. *BMD* includes a diagram that shows the link between doctrine, command, the basis for success in fighting a war, organizations and systems development and training. Unfortunately, no textual explanation is provided, so the reader is left to deduce the significance of what the diagram shows, namely the inseparable bond relationship between philosophy (doctrine) and practice (experience). The diagram is reproduced in Figure 2 below as the ideas it illustrates represents a valuable analytical framework against which doctrine in general can be judged.

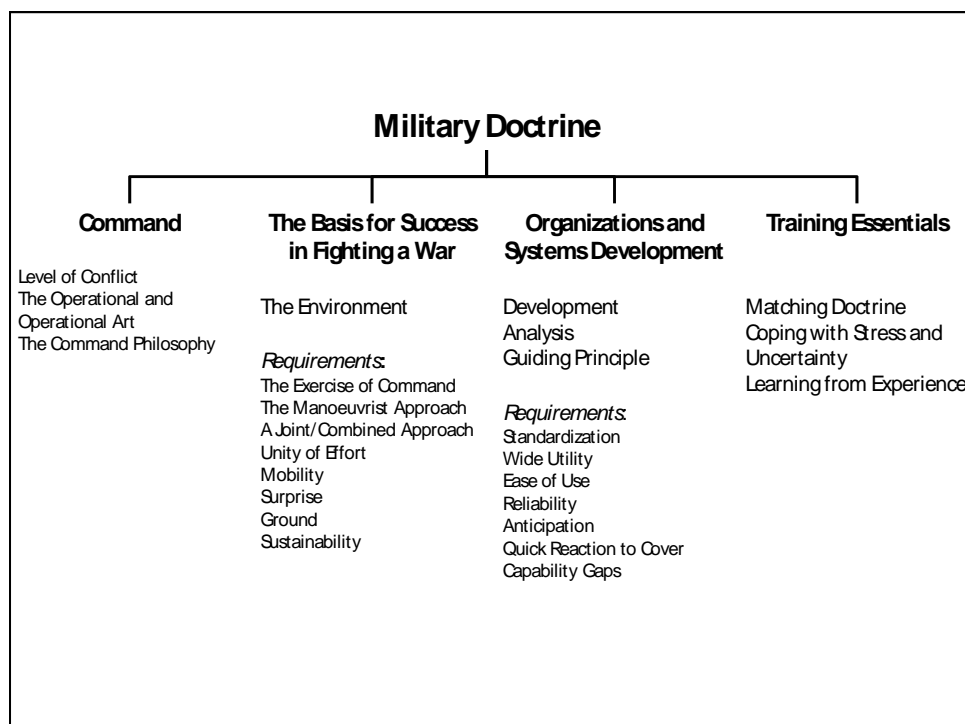


Figure 2 - Military Doctrine: Philosophy Informing Practice

Source: *British Military Doctrine*, p. 32.

Notwithstanding the incomplete explanation of the relationship between doctrine and practice, the manoeuvrist philosophy which *BMD* introduced had an important bearing on the way in which Bulloch subsequently developed the principal ideas in *Counter Insurgency Operations*. Writing of *BMD*, the author of *ADP Operations* says “This approach to warfighting is not new. It... is rooted in the writings of von Clausewitz and Fuller.”¹²³ Less evident is the influence of Brig. Richard Simpkin, widely regarded in the Army at the time as a genuine military theorist. In *Race to the Swift*,¹²⁴ Simpkin articulated ideas on operational manoeuvre in which he had successfully incorporated Soviet concepts into his theory to update the Jominian-style battlefield geometry then espoused by the U.S. military.¹²⁵ Simpkin’s analysis of the attrition-manoeuvre dichotomy and his development of manoeuvre theory were central to *BMD*’s philosophical underpinning. His concepts of deep operations and operational manoeuvre are clearly recognizable in the forms of manoeuvre described in *BMD*.¹²⁶ *BMD* is significant because it re-established an Army-wide doctrine, it established the general philosophy behind it, it introduced the philosophy of the manoeuvrist approach and mission command, it started the process of translating philosophy into practice, and it established how the Army would use and revise its doctrine.

2.3.5 *ADP Operations*: Bridging Philosophy and Practice

Although *BMD* described forms of manoeuvre and the approach to general war, as Military Doctrine it was not written to be used in a practical sense. This was the purpose of *ADP Operations*, published in 1994. It set out the Army’s approach to fighting in future conflicts, reflecting the post-Cold War environment and the doctrinal developments that the Gulf War prompted in the U.S. and at home. *Operations* provided “the bridge between the essentially timeless content of the British Military Doctrine... and the tactical level Field Manual series which describes how the doctrine

should be put into practice.”¹²⁷ Echoing Fuller’s concerns about an institutional reluctance to assimilate *Field Service Regulations*, Lt. Gen. Peter Duffell urged that *ADP Operations* “must, however, be read and understood by all and not allowed to gather dust on coffee tables, bookshelves or in pamphlet libraries.”¹²⁸ This was important advice because *ADP Operations* established a fundamentally new approach to the conduct of operations. As such, it contained some important changes.

First, it described operational design of integrated joint and multinational capabilities in new terms, albeit that they had strong Clausewitzian overtones. Objectives, end-states, centres of gravity, decisive points and lines of operation defined the new geometry along with discussions about the nature of the political-military interface at the operational level.¹²⁹ The doctrine stressed the enduring imperatives of intelligence, public information, effective security measures and psychological operations and it introduced the Functions in Combat – Command, Information and Intelligence, Firepower, Manoeuvre, Protection and Combat Service Support. These were to become the established checklist for commanders when considering tactical problems and identifying possible solutions, reflected in the AFM.

Second, it further developed the concept of the manoeuvrist approach, describing campaign success not in terms of victory or defeat, “which is not an absolute condition but a matter of degree”,¹³⁰ but in terms of the achievement of end-states and degrees of success. Although it acknowledged that some physical destruction of the enemy would be necessary and possibly unavoidable, the doctrine concentrated on ways to “damage the enemy’s belief in his ability to win”.¹³¹ This would be achieved through pre-emption, dislocation, and disruption,¹³² making the point that “disruption requires sound intelligence”.¹³³ Interestingly, in a publication which drew on classic British, German and American examples of manoeuvre and decisive action, it used Northern Ireland to illustrate the difficulties of identifying a suitable target: “at one critical vulnerability of the Provisional IRA is the support it enjoys within the Republican Community but it is another thing to get at it, by military means alone.”¹³⁴ This is the essence of the counterinsurgency problem, and one which was to test far more commanders in Iraq than *ADP Operations* could anticipate.

Third, the Core Functions of Find, Fix and Strike were identified as the fundamental elements of operations. These could be “carried out consecutively as they were in the Gulf War, or concurrently as they are in Northern Ireland.”¹³⁵ Fixing operations denied the enemy his goals, distracted him and thus deprived him of freedom of action. Strike operations used the freedom of action gained by fixing the enemy to manoeuvre (“that is to get into a position of advantage in respect of the enemy from which force can be threatened or applied”¹³⁶) or hit the enemy “unexpectedly, or in superior force, at the point selected in order to defeat him.”¹³⁷

The fourth change came in the way the core functions were integrated simultaneously at the tactical and operational levels across the battlefield. This was through the Operational Framework of Deep, Close and Rear operations, a concept that described how operations related to each other by function (that which was to be achieved) and geography (where they were to achieve it). Deep Operations were characterized as long-range, often protracted activities that sought to find, interdict or deceive the enemy, to prevent him from achieving his objectives, and to create favourable conditions for our own operations. *ADP Operations* emphasises the need to “focus

selectively on key vulnerabilities. They may well also have a psychological or moral flavour seeking, for example, to influence the enemy's will to fight through his media, public support and undermining his confidence by a series of carefully targeted blows; this is especially so in operations other than war."¹³⁸ It cites the example from Northern Ireland of deterrence patrolling and vehicle check points which "influence where terrorists choose to operate but are not themselves likely to lead to planned contacts."¹³⁹ Close Operations were characterized as quick, simultaneous and violent, non-contiguous actions within a distributed area of operations, with a primary purpose of striking "the enemy in order to eliminate a discrete part of his combat power: the means range from destruction to arrest." Deep and Rear Operations were intended to create the conditions for favourable close combat. Close Operations were about winning current battles and engagements, "fought by forces in immediate contact with the enemy."¹⁴⁰ Rear Operations receive comparatively little coverage. Their significance for counterinsurgency operations, with its strong psychological component, is clear now but not emphasised in the text: "ensure freedom of action by protecting the force, sustaining combat operations and retaining freedom of manoeuvre of uncommitted forces."¹⁴¹

The publication of *ADP Operations* was a significant event for the Field Army. It made the link between the philosophy of *BMD* and the tactics required to conduct manoeuvrist operations. It established the framework of Deep, Close and Rear Operations, and the core functions of find, fix and strike. The challenge for Gavin Bulloch would be to fit the conventional counterinsurgency approach into the new framework introduced by *ADP Operations*.

2.4 Doctrine Writers and Writing Doctrine

Doctrine, like history, is not written in a vacuum.¹⁴² Doctrine writers have to decide how contemporary influences and historical precedents are best blended to provide doctrine's timeless, practical and predictive elements. This requires two often quite difficult judgements to be made: one about the most likely future trends in conflict, and another concerning what, from the body of experience, remains relevant to those future trends. The writer's intention should be to produce relevant, practical doctrine but, against the two main decisions, the question is to what extent the doctrine writer's interpretations of fact (the enduring lessons and principles) and influence (future trends) are valid. Here Carr's observation about the process of writing history has some bearing. He notes that the two processes of acquiring material and writing are not discrete steps but one process where the two go on simultaneously: "the more I write, the more I know what I am looking for, the better I understand the significance and relevance of what I find."¹⁴³ The same can be said of the doctrine writer, who can draw on operational reports, personal accounts and historical and scientific analysis. The doctrine writer's task, however, is not just to create a cogent analysis of past actions and future trends, but to create something which can then be converted into tactics and procedures.

In general terms, the process of circulating doctrine for comment and approval – in the Downie model, the stage which seeks to achieve sustained consensus – provides the checks and balances on the writer's interpretations. Bulloch felt that "it is best for the doctrine writer to develop a central idea and then to get the experts to advise and correct it. In reality this means starting at about the 60% level, and then using experts to get it

to about 90% before widening the debate to get it formally accepted and finally published.”¹⁴⁴ He recognized the main difficulties faced when writing doctrine were maintaining up-to-date knowledge of the broad range of subjects, recognizing that doctrine does not change as quickly as tactics, knowing where to look for information, and having the contacts and the connections to develop ideas, test them and then have them validated by a broader audience. He also stressed the issue of the doctrine writer’s reputation and authority: “Views are fiercely held. The writer has to be reasonably senior and well-versed in the Army and its ways. Developing doctrine is as much about selling an idea as it is writing it.”

Grant also identified the pitfalls of this approach. First, writing remains a laborious process which takes time. Second, it can become a victim of ‘word-smithing’ as successive contributors to the review process make minor adjustments, and finesse the language to reflect their own style. This can add significant delay and when added to the time it takes to write and review doctrine, risks devaluing doctrine’s practical value to those who have to use it. Fourth, expert advice is necessary but “they can derail production if the doctrine falls into the hands of a zealot.” Finally, writers should have very recent operational experience if the doctrine is to provide the bridge between the writer and the practitioner.¹⁴⁵

Grant’s observations reflect their position in time, both when they were made (2007) and the time to which he referred (the late-1990s). Then, experiences from the Gulf War and Bosnia were still fresh, and although few of the doctrine writers at DGD&D had served in Northern Ireland in the early years the corporate memory was strong. No one, however, had any experience of counterinsurgency in the expeditionary context in which doctrine in general was to be re-written. SDR had made clear that the threat was “no longer all-out war in Europe but a major regional crisis involving our national interest, perhaps on NATO’s periphery or in the Gulf.”¹⁴⁶ Future operations would be conducted abroad, outside the political and military infrastructure of NATO, yet the doctrine for counterinsurgency continued to draw on colonial, post-colonial and domestic experience. This did not appear to fit the expeditionary context DGD&D’s development themes had identified. Nor, in the context of a renewed organisational interest in manoeuvrist approach and conventional warfighting, prompted by ADP *Operations*, could counterinsurgency generate the interest necessary to warrant further work. Both Grant and Bulloch recall that DGD&D’s efforts in the mid-1990s concentrated on completing the ADP series, in particular those parts of the AFM concerned with conventional, manoeuvrist operations; formation and battlegroup tactics, and command and staff procedures.

As a doctrine writer, Bulloch’s position in DGD&D was unique. Although initially there was a large team of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels to develop ideas and concepts, Bulloch was the only doctrine author. As such, he considers that he was given an unusually free hand to do what he felt necessary, which with hindsight he felt was not ideal.¹⁴⁷ He was not in the same position as Montgomery with *Infantry Training*, nor did he have the same editorial direction and authority as the author of *BMD*. In that case, direction came direct from CGS to the author, the then Colonel Tim Granville-Chapman, a student on the first HCSC, who was told to produce a first draft very quickly. He wrote it in three months, took the draft back to Bagnall, between them it was reviewed twice more, and then published without any general discussion and attempt at ‘achieving sustained consensus.’ As Bulloch describes it, “It was all done

and dusted.”¹⁴⁸ The only minor problem was that the publisher did not follow approved staff duties for page and paragraph numbering so it was not a good example to be held up at the Staff College of service writing conventions. Nonetheless, in Bulloch’s view the example of *BMD* is by far the best way to publish doctrine: start the process at the top, and get the highest level of support possible.¹⁴⁹ In the case of *BMD* no one was going to gainsay CGS. General David Petraeus took a similar approach when it came to revising the U.S. Army’s counterinsurgency doctrine.

2.5 Doctrine Networks

Daddow sets the doctrine writer’s work in the context of broader military and political structures which are “integral to any thorough account of the doctrinal process.”¹⁵⁰

Although he makes reference to the sharing of ideas between those responsible for single service doctrine and those responsible for doctrine on a joint-service basis, no such tri-service organisation existed. DGD&D’s links were more international, with its link to TRADOC being particularly important. Melvin gives an indication of this relationship, referring to the “privileged insight” TRADOC gave DGD&D “into how the U.S. Army intends to fight and win wars in the 21st Century” when its representatives attended the U.S. Army’s first *Army After Next* wargame in 1997.¹⁵¹

The principal think tanks have been mentioned already. Much was gained from the personal involvement of academics, both British and American, during the 1990s. Brian Holden Reid, John Gooch, Williamson Murray, and Edward Luttwak were regular contributors to DGD&D debate and its development work.¹⁵² Responsibility for the ideas the doctrine presented rested, however, with the doctrine writer who, in turn was responsible to DLW and his director general for its content.

The committee remains the Army’s preferred method of reviewing and agreeing doctrine. The Army Doctrine Committee, chaired initially by DLW, then DG DGD&D, was formed from the Army’s major generals and brigadiers whose appointments had a vested interest in doctrine. They included commanders of the Army’s deployable division, those responsible for training, and policy, the equipment programme and personnel. It met twice yearly to ratify doctrine pamphlets for publication and to discuss emerging concepts. Reaching agreement on doctrine publications required DGD&D to circulate around the Army draft documents, developed as Bulloch described, for comment and agreement. Grant, Bulloch and Lt. Gen. Bill Rollo, an ADC member and the first chairman of the Army Doctrine and Concepts Committee (ADC’s successor since April 2006), consider ADC an essential part of the doctrine process: “ADC worked.”¹⁵³ Bulloch found it useful to alert ADC of developing ideas, and to test any developing framework, gain its advice and, most importantly, its support. ADC’s working assumption was that the Army could write doctrine.¹⁵⁴ Grant considers that achieving consensus and enlisting two-star support was a key step in getting the Army to accept and to use the doctrine DGD&D. As the ADP and AFMs were completed during the 1990s, Grant and Bulloch recall how ADC’s business gradually moved away from doctrine. Future concepts work took on an increasing importance, primarily because of their resource implications for the Army in terms of people, equipment and training, as it defined the nature of future conflict and then explained how it would fight future wars. ADC’s business was not all hypothetical discussion; for example, the *Future Army Concepts* paper resulted in organizational changes to rebalance the Army.¹⁵⁵ Bulloch and Grant both note that ADC’s discussions

increasingly centred on current issues, not just doctrine. Nevertheless, it was Army policy that ADC's principal function was to endorse its doctrine. The general view is that it was an effective reviewing body. Just as importantly, it kept a very influential group of senior officers informed of, and allowed it to shape developments in the doctrine and future concepts area to a degree not previously enjoyed.

2.6 The International and Domestic Context

It is evident that the main international and domestic influences on the development of doctrine in the 1990s were closely intertwined. Outcomes in one area were dependent on another. Force structures, for example, depended on policy, and, in turn, policy was influenced by doctrine's future concepts. This meant that the process of writing doctrine remained more evolutionary than revolutionary, despite the rapidly changing context of the strategic environment, particularly the United Nations and subsequent NATO operations in Bosnia. Many within the Army believed that peace support operations in the Balkans framed a new paradigm of military interventions short of general war based on the notion of consent.¹⁵⁶ New doctrine was quickly produced. First *Wider Peacekeeping* was published in 1994 and then *Peace Support Operations* in 1998.¹⁵⁷ Both reflected recent experiences and much operational analysis.

It was, however, the Labour Government's *Strategic Defence Review* (SDR) process started in 1997, which was to have the most profound influence on the Army's view of its future role and the posture it should therefore adopt.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, the potential technical and warfighting advantages offered by what was then referred to as the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) was another important influence on doctrine development. The former reinforced the Army's requirement for a warfighting capability, the latter forced fundamental questions to be raised about how to improve the conduct of operations by the introduction of information technology. Strangely, despite the increasing attention future concepts attracted as a result of the SDR and information technology, Colin McInnes considers that doctrine "rather surprisingly perhaps, remained relatively constant despite the radical change in the nature of probable future Army operations."¹⁵⁹

Nevertheless, during the 1990s, it is clear that the Army made a substantial effort to change its mindset away from that of the Cold War to a more manoeuvrist approach, seen to be better suited to the strategically uncertain strategic environment. Despite the apparent reluctance to write, read, understand or apply its doctrine, the changes which followed the publication of *BMD* were significant. Writing in 1998, Mungo Melvin observes that while "the few remaining sceptics may still associate doctrine wrongly with 'dogma', the developments of the last ten years (manifest in the publication of [*British Defence Doctrine*] and the formation of the [Joint Services Command and Staff College]) are now taking root."¹⁶⁰

However, while the development of manoeuvrist tactical doctrine proved reasonably straightforward, striking the right balance between doctrine's enduring and predictive functions proved much more challenging. Melvin makes clear that, at the time, "[o]pinions still differ over what form doctrine should take, and in particular whether it should be retrospective (best practice to date) or more progressive (most likely future practice)."¹⁶¹ Grant recalls the debate never really ended. It posed the biggest problem during the discussions leading up to, and during the Strategic Defence Review, which centred on identifying the 'most likely' and the 'most dangerous' threat the armed

forces would face. Debate split between a conventional armed threat, along the lines of the Gulf War, which was seen to be the most dangerous, and a more asymmetric threat, similar to that seen in the Balkans or the U.S. intervention in Somalia, which was seen to be the most likely. The former relied more on the retrospective view of doctrine, where the historical importance of manoeuvre and the indirect approach would be central. The latter required a more progressive, predictive approach, drawing on the visions of future warfare emerging from the RMA.¹⁶²

2.6.1 The RMA

In 1995 Metz and James Kievit¹⁶³ characterised an emerging idea of a revolution in military affairs in terms of extremely precise, stand-off strikes, dramatically improved command, control, and intelligence, and Information Warfare. They also noted some likely risks: that an information-centred RMA could not generate or guarantee increased combat effectiveness against the most likely or most dangerous future opponents; that an American pursuit of the RMA would encourage opponents or potential opponents to seek countermeasures; that it might lead the U.S. towards over reliance on military power; and that, in broader terms, vigorous pursuit of the RMA might increase problems with friends and allies. Discussion over a possible revolution continued for several years. Much of it was fuelled by a desire in the U.S. to divest the Armed Forces of their Cold War legacy structures, equipment and approaches and transform them into highly mobile, agile and potent organizations. This would depend on the RMA's promises being delivered.¹⁶⁴

The 1997 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review formally acknowledged the intention to harness the as yet unproven hypothesis of an information-led RMA.¹⁶⁵ By 1999, in the final months of the Clinton Administration, Secretary of Defense William Cohen was more definite in what he had in mind, the transformation of the U.S. armed forces, a process he described as being “when a nation’s military seizes an opportunity to transform its strategy, military doctrine, training, education, organisation, equipment, operations or tactics to achieve decisive results in fundamentally new ways.”¹⁶⁶ The U.S. vision was of unmatched armed forces that would deal decisively with any peer or near-peer competitor who were described in clear if somewhat distant terms. Cohen had no guarantee the process that he was starting would produce a military that could meet the demands of the 21st Century’s strategic environment. He certainly could not have known that within four years, the U.S. would be fighting highly unconventional, irregular enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq. The prospects of an RMA and Transformation, however, captured the imagination of policy makers and defence planners and the then Presidential Candidate George W Bush promised in 1999 to implement transformation through a “comprehensive review of our military – the structure of its forces, the state of its strategy, the priorities of its procurement ... to challenge the *status quo*.”¹⁶⁷

For a while, Transformation introduced a new grammar of war into doctrine and policy. New concepts were introduced: Full Spectrum Dominance, *Network Centric Warfare*, *Shock and Awe*,¹⁶⁸ and a vision depicted of U.S. military operations of the future where new capabilities enabled the “interdependent application of dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection”.¹⁶⁹ Proponents for Transformation promised it would be the catalyst to deliver a revolutionary step change in the way wars could be fought. Changes would be so

fundamental and so dramatic that the U.S. re-cast its National Security Policy, National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy on the expectations the RMA created. Policy statements talked about a new form of decisive war such that “[if] deterrence fails, decisively defeat an adversary. Such a decisive defeat could involve changing the regime.”¹⁷⁰ Strategic pre-emption against state and non-state actors using “full spectrum dominance – the ability to control any situation or defeat any adversary across the range of military operations”¹⁷¹ would be the New American Way of War.¹⁷²

2.6.2 The *Future Army* and its Effect on Doctrine

In the UK, although the 1991 Defence Review *Options for Change* continued to distract discussion away from the Army’s future roles and structures to arguments about imperfections in its present organization, the need to examine the implications of the future battlefield more closely had been recognized. Willcocks describes the first steps in re-casting conflict and war in more contemporary terms in 1994.¹⁷³ Charles Grant, then the Colonel in DGD&D responsible for concepts, recalls that the second half of the 1990s saw a noticeable shift away from Cold War ideas towards developing some more concrete views of the nature of future operations and their implications.

The first step was an internal discussion paper called *British Army 2000*, written in 1994 and agreed by the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) in 1995. The paper’s aim was “to describe the capabilities likely to be required of the British Army of the next century and the structural and doctrinal implications that result.”¹⁷⁴ It reappraised the Army in the light of the changing strategic environment, technological change and its adoption of the manoeuvrist approach and mission command doctrine. Although the first edition was not surprisingly rooted in the Cold War, Grant notes that by the late 1990s, “considerable effort had been invested in establishing a new baseline on which the Army’s approach to future war could be built.”¹⁷⁵ *British Army 2000* was further revised in 1996 and re-titled *The Future Army*. It became the principal focus for future development work and the major themes it examined are shown in Figure 3, (over) where the effort to create a doctrinally coherent force structure and supporting functions is clear.

Future Army offered two speculative views of conflict which were intended to crystallize thought, to prompt further study and to generate debate. Written by then Col. Robert Baxter (later to return to DGD&D as its last Director General), they drew on U.S. Army work through the by now well-established links with Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).¹⁷⁶ View 1 extrapolated contemporary views of so-called symmetric, regional conflict to describe a situation in which the UK was an alliance or coalition partner, involved in an expeditionary campaign. The fighting would be short, high tempo, and brutal, and deep manoeuvre was essential for success. It also assumed that the conflict phase would be followed by a period of post-conflict stabilization. View 2 was so-called asymmetric conflict. The similarity between what it describes, and those which the Army subsequently faced in Iraq are astonishingly similar:

In this model a modern, professional army, or coalition, will be opposed by armed forces directed by social entities which are not necessarily states, conducted by organisations that are not necessarily armies and fought by people who are not necessarily soldiers in the conventional sense of the term. Such irregular forces may be associated with criminal enterprises, drug cartels, religious sects and pressure groups, while their aims may often have an anarchic

Development Agenda	Subject	Lead
1995	Two speculative views of future warfare	DGD&D
	Doctrinally coherent equipment programme	ACDS(OR) Land
	Leading, recruiting, retaining and developing soldiers	HQ AG
	Ethos, culture and traditions	HQ AG
	Measurement of fighting power	DMO
1996	Force structures	DGD&D
	Doctrinally coherent establishment mechanism	DGD&D
	Use of Reserves	HQ LAND
	Bett Report and stability	HQ AG
	Equipment support	HQ QMG
	Sustainability strategy	D Army Plans HQ QMG
1997	Regeneration and reconstitution	DASD
	Air manoeuvre	DGD&D
	Corporate image	HQ AG

Figure 3 - The Army's Development Agenda 1995-96

Source: Boyd, "Whatever Happened to British Army 2000?" *British Army Review*, Issue 119, August 1998, p. 60.

and unpredictable flavour. They can be expected to operate with few moral or political constraints; indeed it will be the very lack of constraint that gives them strength and credibility. Primary targets will be the people and civil infrastructure, as well as the military. The distinction between civilian and soldier will be blurred, often as a deliberate tactic. Opponents will have an ability to attack [computer networks] ... with technology widely and cheaply available on the open market. Irregular forces will be prepared to wage a protracted war of skirmishes, raids, ambushes, bombings and massacres, striking suddenly, briefly and unpredictably, compounding the difficulties of distinguishing friend from foe. In this model, our forces are likely to be operating in an environment in which they are surrounded by the host population that will both constrain the use of force and also make the gaining of information much more complex. We believe that we as a nation and as an army have an experience and a record of success in such asymmetric forms of warfare that is rare amongst our principal allies.¹⁷⁷

The questions this raises are to what extent was note taken of the risks inherent in a View 2 form of conflict, and to what extent were they reflected in doctrine?

It is important to take note of the view expressed by then Col. Dick Applegate, responsible for Force Development at DGD&D, that the Army in 1997 was still "in a state of transition from a largely continentally based force designed to deter a Soviet threat, to an expeditionary power-projection force better suited to the more complex international security environment."¹⁷⁸ While implications for force development were being identified, their real impact could not yet be fully determined nor ideas tested in

the field. Nevertheless, the Army continued to address the uncertainties raised by View 2, and the implications of General Charles Krulak's view of 3-Block War, proposed in 1999, where armed forces are "confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of three adjacent city blocks."¹⁷⁹ U.S. operations in the Balkans and Somalia had proven to be complex, volatile and highly unpredictable, and outcomes hinged "on decisions made by small unit leaders and by actions taken at the *lowest* level."¹⁸⁰ It was Krulak's view that a Cold War focus on major regional warfare did not take enough account of what U.S. Marines were actually facing and that it did not help prepare them for future stresses and dangers they would face.

British experience in Bosnia backed this up and Bulloch considers that the lessons from the close, high intensity, highly irregular fighting among the factions in Sarajevo provided ample evidence to point the Army in the right direction.¹⁸¹ DGD&D examined View 2 and 3-Block War more closely to identify their implications on force structures, equipment and the moral component, including using CGS's *Future Army* Study Periods to air findings more widely. However, discussions never properly settled on what adjustments were necessary. It was implicit in View 2 that the Army would have to readjust to match the operational challenges it posed, but Grant recalls that "there was understandable hesitancy to go too far because *Options* had been such a focus of attention and disquiet."¹⁸² Kiszely, at the time Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Resources and Programmes) highlights use made of doctrine in the MoD to justify expenditure:

During my time as ACDS RP, there was a great deal of debate. View 1 was still driving the main part of the Equipment Programme because it was perceived that whilst there was a requirement for View 2, in the longer term we would still need to retain the means to fight on the battlefield. It was a matter of foresight and balance of risk against the likelihood of involvement. This is a debate which continues.¹⁸³

Thus attention continued to focus on the View 1 work and the RMA.¹⁸⁴

By the late-1990s, policy confirmed that expeditionary warfare was the principal option. Although *British Army 2000* paid little regard to it in its first edition, by the 1999 edition and following SDR, it was the driving force. It is clear that View 1 and View 2 provided very useful, readily identifiable models, and effective settings for DGD&D's work in the late-1990s. Grant thought that experience from the Balkans added to the Army's understanding but, of note, "it did nothing to invalidate [Views 1 and 2]. Instead, there was a general and increasing acceptance that what we would face was more likely to be a mix of the two. It was not View 1 or View 2, but something of both."¹⁸⁵ However, when it came to informing decisions on the Army's force structures and the equipment programme View 1 had the greatest relevance. Symmetric, high intensity conventional warfare would be the most dangerous form, it was for that threat which the Army would be structured, equipped and trained, and doctrine would provide the approach to follow. Gen. Sir Peter Inge, then CGS, articulated the Army's position and its concern about posture and capabilities:

At the top end of the spectrum, it is fundamentally important that we retain the capability to fight at the highest intensity levels of conflict. In other words we must retain the military capability to go and fight a war. I think there was a danger for a time

that the importance of retaining this warfighting capability was not fully recognised. There was a feeling that peace support operations were the way ahead for the future and that high intensity combat was a thing of the past. I am convinced that once you lose a warfighting capability, it takes years and years to get it back, both in terms of expertise and in terms of equipment.... Forces trained for high intensity combat can adapt to peace support operations but the reverse is not the case.¹⁸⁶

The Army's fear that it would lose the ability to fight a war is evident; having a warfighting doctrine was one way of supporting the case for retaining the ability. Here, an interesting comparison can be made between the assumptions that underpinned the ADPs and the supporting Field Manuals and the much earlier *Field Service Regulations*. David French notes that *Regulations* "paid lip-service to the fact that the army might be engaged in imperial policing or wars against a second-class enemy such as the Afghans. But the whole tenor of the doctrine it promulgated was designed for a war against a first-class enemy. In the post-war era, when there was no one single obvious enemy to confront, it made sense to plan on a 'worst-case assumption', for if the army was prepared to fight a 'big' war, it could surely win a 'small' one."¹⁸⁷ The similarity between the position adopted in the inter-war years and the 1990s is plain. Warfighting was the Army's focus and it provided its *raison d'être*, as Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie confirmed:

Let us be clear what armies are for. They exist to be able to fight – which is why in the British Army we define our doctrine in terms of fighting power. This must, and indeed does, bear on everything we do. It defines our character and how we think (what we call the conceptual component) and therefore dictates our structure; it tells us how we get our people to do things (the moral component) and ... it tells us about the means to fight (the physical component) and about our size, our equipment, our sustainability and how we train and set our readiness.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, some account still required to be taken of View 2. The threats it described were more closely aligned with counterinsurgency than with conventional high intensity warfighting, as it was then currently understood. While the Army's doctrine continued to be refined in the spirit of being a warfighting army, and its organizations, equipment and training developed to be able to fight; little attention was paid to the issue of counterinsurgency.

By the late-1990s, DGD&D had been subjected to a process of almost continual review, and placed under pressure to reduce in size. It lost several posts as a result. This forced hard decisions to be taken on which doctrine was to be developed and where the focus of attention should be. In 1997, the ADC changed its priorities from doctrine to future concepts, and Bulloch recalled that whole sections of staff at DGD&D switched to developing concepts.¹⁸⁹ Narrower priorities coupled with a general feeling that not much had changed in the operational environment to warrant reviewing the 1995 edition – focus in Northern Ireland changed quite rapidly once the peace process started, and operations in the Balkans were viewed as Peace Support operations – meant that counterinsurgency doctrine had to take its place in the process of routine updating.¹⁹⁰ As a result, as Grant recalls, "COIN had to be put on the back burner because it was a lower priority to the work needed to develop, for example, Air Manoeuvre doctrine or the Future Army Concepts. It was a simple question of resources."¹⁹¹

2.7 Antithesis: The Difficulties of Writing Retrospective Doctrine

This chapter's examination of the Army's doctrine would indicate that during the 1990s it re-learned the importance of having a clearly stated conceptual component in the form of doctrine. Through the process of doctrinal reform, it came to understand that a coherent, consistently written hierarchy of doctrine not only provided the philosophy, principles and procedures which were useful in practice and but also provided the intellectual backbone to underpin the design of the future army. However, this is not a completely accurate picture. Grant observed that, "Provided doctrine is recognised as being elastic, implicit in this is the need for a constant refreshing of what it says. This will take into account new equipments being brought into service although doctrine and concepts should be the start point for procuring equipment, not the other way round."¹⁹² The Army introduced the Warrior Infantry fighting vehicle into service in the late 1980s. No doctrine was written to support its entry into service. This caused initial difficulties as successive battalions to receive the equipment found different tactical methods to exploit the improved firepower, protection and mobility Warrior offered. Iain Johnstone summarized the Army's difficulties:

Warrior might have taken a long time to produce and it might have seemed reasonable had it developed from a doctrinal requirement rather than just appearing in a vacuum but it definitely offers a quantum leap in combat power to the Infantry. But do we really know how to use it? The introduction of the Army Tactical Doctrine Handbook (ATDH) has helped. More specifically the draft TD Note 16, which deals with the tactical handling of Warrior and gives a first stab at trying to understand how we could best employ this new weapons system. However, the British Army has never properly understood the necessity of tactical doctrine in the first place and, despite ATDH, uses tactical terms without regard for their actual meaning. To date the vocabulary of ATDH is being used but procedures remain unchanged.¹⁹³

The Attack Helicopter is a second case in point. Its doctrine had to be written retrospectively, not to justify its procurement but to explain to the Army how it was to be used. Bulloch recalls that ADC discussed issues such as how many Attack Helicopters a squadron should have, and how the regiment should be used, and the agreed position was very much on the lines of the Cold War U.S. Army Corps as a highly potent strike force of last resort. Bulloch was subsequently asked to write the doctrine for the Attack Helicopter despite the fact that the Army had already bought them, "presumably with some idea in mind about how they were to be used. And here was the nub of the problem: if the corps commander or the divisional commander was going to use them, he should write the doctrine, but no one in 24 Airmobile Brigade or 16 Air Assault Brigade could be tied down to write it."¹⁹⁴ The doctrine process was clearly not followed fully and the case of the Attack Helicopter -- a significant purchase and a complex weapon system -- shows hesitancy in addressing practical doctrine not seen in the development of future concepts.

2.8 Effective Doctrine: A General Framework for Analysis

So far, this chapter has examined what doctrine is, what functions it performs and what influences shape its development. During this discussion, some implicit assumptions

have been made. The first is every piece of doctrine has a clear purpose, with philosophical and practical value in terms of education and training, and the conduct of operations. In other words, it is not simply a moribund treatise capturing ideas that have no real value to the soldier. Is it safe to assume, however, that doctrine will be effective even if those assumptions are met, and safeguards are present within the doctrine process to ensure that they are? Is the existence of doctrine proof enough that its ideas are valid and relevant? Generally the accepted view is that doctrine is the product of a rational process designed to develop a sound approach which has a practical application in mind. There are examples which support this assumption: *ATOM*, which proved to be invaluable in standardizing military training and the conduct of counter-terrorist operations in Malaya after 1950, and *A Handbook on Anti-Mau Mau Operations*, which provided a similar function in Kenya.

What is it that makes doctrine effective and what criteria does doctrine have to satisfy to establish its authority? Is a formal statement in a preface, like that in *FSR*, enough? The literature concentrates on the effectiveness of doctrine's application, rather than on the development of doctrine itself. Nevertheless, some form of comparative methodology is required if *Counter Insurgency Operations*, its predecessors, and their U.S. counterparts are to be evaluated systematically.

As part of the research, doctrine writers and practitioners – both commanders and principal staff officers – were asked to identify what in their view constituted effective doctrine. All those interviewed were graduates of the Army Staff College at Camberley; some had instructed there, or at JSCSC; many were graduates of HCSC; some had worked at DGD&D, or on the General Staff where doctrine had played an important role. Their responses linked directly into the issue of how doctrine was now being developed following the disbandment of DGD&D in April 2006 and the creation of the Defence Concepts and Development Centre (DCDC) at Shrivenham that month. The general view of those interviewed is summed up by the following observation, which infers of a gap between the doctrine writer and those who use doctrine. There is a strong implication that sustained consensus continues to be difficult to achieve:

Rather than codify practice, the doctrine writers are now trying to predict what doctrine will be, using far too speculative a view. They have moved from what we know about conflict today, and from enduring principles, and from what its practitioners need, to a form of doctrine that the doctrine writers alone seem to think might be useful.¹⁹⁵

The criteria interviewees identified fell into five broad categories:

- Acceptability with the target audience
- Endurability
- Contemporary relevancy
- Suitability as educational material
- Accessibility and manageability

2.8.1 Acceptability with the Target Audience

Bulloch believes that doctrine is written for the guidance of those who have to carry it out: "It provides them with markers, signposts across some blasted heath, without

which they would be lost. It provides a sense of direction.”¹⁹⁶ Those who have to put doctrine into practice should be able to recognise, therefore, the value of the ideas it contains, their origin, and their applicability, and through education and training practitioners should be able to understand and assimilate the guidance it provides. Doctrine is, to repeat the definition in *ADP Operations*, the formal expression of military knowledge and thought that the Army “accepts as being relevant at a given time.”¹⁹⁷ This notion of *acceptance* refers rather more to the view arrived at by those who approve doctrine for publication, principally the ADC, rather than a general acceptance the Army as a whole may come to. Barry Posen, referring to military doctrine, concluded that “changing doctrine takes time: it disorients a military organisation.”¹⁹⁸ The doctrine writer can reduce the period of disorientation by recognizing both the importance of securing the acceptance of the target audience, and where possible maintaining congruity with the general organizational approach.

Those who have to approve doctrine and those who have to apply it should share a very similar view of doctrine. The practitioner’s ready acceptance of what is approved and published is by no means guaranteed. *ADP Land Operations*, the successor to *ADP Operations*, published in May 2005,¹⁹⁹ is a case in point. It shows that ready acceptance of a new idea cannot be guaranteed, and that the rejection of the idea by a general body of opinion can itself shape doctrine. Grant set work in train at Upavon to thoroughly revise the ADP series with a view to producing one volume that contained the essence of *Operations, Command and Training*. He handed the project over to his successor, Mungo Melvin.²⁰⁰ The invasion of Iraq provided ample evidence to validate the British philosophy of the manoeuvrist approach and mission command, and the American advance on Baghdad validated several U.S. operational concepts. The authors of the new ADP reflected this in *Land Operations*. It had been their intention to publish the new book in 2004, in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq war. They were somewhat surprised to discover that their views of large-scale warfighting differed considerably from both those who took part in the invasion of Iraq, and the subsequent campaign, and staff and students at the JSCSC. The Commandant of JSCSC raised formal objections about the general tone adopted in *Land Operations* and asked ADC to address his concerns because it was JSCSC’s view that the Army’s capstone doctrine risked being at odds with general views of the way operations should be conducted.²⁰¹ ADC in turn insisted that any inconsistencies in *Land Operations* had to be ironed out. This required two further drafts to be developed and circulated for comment. Finally DLW invited Gen. Sir Mike Jackson, the then CGS, to approve it before publication.²⁰² Col. Richard Iron concludes that the problem was “not so much the idea which was the problem, but more the way the idea was sold.”²⁰³ Doctrine writers have a responsibility, therefore, to take account of how their readerships may accept what they write, a point that links very closely to Charles Grant’s belief that “doctrine must first and foremost meet the needs of the practitioner.”²⁰⁴

Military practitioners form doctrine’s principal, but not sole audience. Other government departments may also have an interest, and the volume of academic research provides clear evidence that doctrine generates interest that extends far beyond the military reader. For example, academic notice of, and involvement with doctrine’s development was important during the 1990s. More recently the role of doctrine in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the debate surrounding the development and use of the U.S. Army’s counterinsurgency doctrine since 2006 have prompted much analysis.²⁰⁵

Doctrine writers should, therefore, take account of the wider interest their work will generate, and be aware of the arguments it will inform, or of which it will form a part.

Doctrine's effectiveness therefore appears to be closely linked to how readily readers can place their experience and understanding in the context of what doctrine describes. They should be able to recognise the principles and ideas the doctrine contains, set them both against their own experience, and to then combine experience and theory to form a framework relevant to dealing with contemporary problems and tasks. If they cannot, they will struggle to accept new doctrine. This issue boils down to one of confidence about what is written. As Brig., now Maj. Gen, James Everard observes:

No one today [speaking of the Field Army] has any real confidence that our doctrine has been updated by someone who has been there and done it, and this problem is exacerbated by the volume of new doctrine that has been produced, and the basis on which change or the need for change has been determined.²⁰⁶

2.8.2 Endurability

From the first edition of *FSR* to *ADP Land Operations*, enduring principles have been important in British doctrine, along with the requirement for a process of continual reassessment and validation. Doctrine, as Willcocks observed in 1995, has three functions: it provides enduring principles, it offers practical tactics and procedures, and looks to the foreseeable future. Doctrine has to work, therefore, on a number of levels, as Bagnall's doctrine hierarchy demonstrates. Philosophically, principles provide the starting point from which tactics can be developed and subsequently adjusted as circumstances change. In this sense, doctrine provides both 'How to think' through principles and approach, and 'What to think' in terms of tactics and procedures. The challenge for the doctrine writer is to ensure that enduring principles are just that; that they reflect received understanding of the problem; and that they continue to provide the intellectual underpinning for approach, tactics and procedures.

Doctrine's endurability is linked very closely, therefore, to the need for it to be acceptable to its main audience. The notion of doctrine's principles being enduring places an onus on the doctrine writer to ensure that ideas that it contains are tried, tested, and can stand readership scrutiny. This is not a straightforward task, nor one that can be solved by a simple authoritative preface. As Gen. Sir Peter Wall notes,

It takes time to develop the experience and understanding from which principles can be identified. It is a process of evolution. The important thing is that new doctrine must be tested and adjusted before it is enshrined and – and this is the critical thing – taught, used and embraced by the practitioner. All this takes time and this aspect [referring to the proliferation of Joint Doctrine] has been forgotten.²⁰⁷

Everard goes further: “our doctrine is much more than a handrail; it is the foundations of the approach we use. For high intensity operations, it is still what is taught, a template. In counterinsurgency, it is much more of a handrail than a template, providing both a common understanding and a common purpose.”²⁰⁸

2.8.3 Contemporary Relevancy

Callwell raised the issue of keeping doctrine relevant in 1906 when he said theory “cannot be accepted as conclusive when practice points the other way.”²⁰⁹ Relevancy

remains a continuing theme because if doctrine is not seen to be relevant and up-to-date it will be ignored. As Lt. Gen. John Cooper notes, “doctrine has to be recognizably relevant to operations today if it is to be embraced by those who should be using it.”²¹⁰ Effective doctrine would thus provide a framework of understanding relevant to the contemporary situation, not one which describes out-dated organisations and structures, weapons and equipment, terminology or practice. The U.S. Army’s *AirLand Battle* is an excellent example of what can be achieved when close historical analysis and clear understanding of the contemporary environment are combined to provide doctrine relevant to current and likely tasks.²¹¹ This is the subject of Chapter 7.

2.8.4 Suitability as Educational Material

If doctrine is ‘what is taught,’ it follows, therefore, that it must be teachable and readily turned into teaching material. This allows written doctrine to inform and shape discussion and debate. Effective doctrine provides the framework which the student can use to examine and analyse a problem and then develop a practical solution. The Army Staff College and JSCSC depend on doctrine to support teaching and, for the most part, the Army’s doctrine has been clear and unambiguous. There have been cases, however, where some concepts and procedures have been badly expressed that this has hindered teaching. The Estimate, or appreciation, central to the Army’s decision-making process, is an example. The poorly expressed, overly complicated ideas it introduced in 1994 proved difficult to teach and difficult for students to master, first at Camberley and then at JSCSC.²¹² Speaking of doctrine generally, Everard highlights why doctrine has to be teachable:

Being able to understand doctrine and then being able to use it helps in its wider assimilation and prompts further development. If it is not understood, or worse, misunderstood, all that happens is that doctrine becomes an obstacle. Whilst the practitioner will find a way around the problem in any case, it nevertheless results in a fractured approach to understanding and the application of our doctrine.²¹³

2.8.5 Accessibility and Manageability

The final criterion for effective doctrine is that it must be accessible and manageable. Doctrine must be readily available to those who need it. The means by which it is made available now includes electronic media as well as the traditional printed form. The proliferation of media can create problems for those who are required to use it. Everard is forthright on this issue:

The volume of concepts and doctrine we have to read is staggering and the volume problem is exacerbated by technology which allows us to burn CDs and hang enormous amounts of work on websites, often with little guidance or direction on what is important, what is essential or what, quite frankly, can wait to be overtaken by the next turn of the wheel. The rate at which doctrine is being produced brings with it the real risk of it not being understood. Promulgation is *the issue. It is too easy for the doctrine writer to produce something, send it out and then to assume that having published, the doctrine is accepted.*²¹⁴

The reality is that overly prescriptive doctrine tends to be out of date the moment it is published. From this point the interaction between the doctrine writer and the practitioner has to work to keep that what is published up to date. It should be clear

from this that the practitioner has to be able to both understand and assimilate the material that doctrine contains. Ideas have to be expressed clearly, unambiguously and unequivocally, and a balance is required between providing too much theory or detail and not enough. The doctrine writer has a careful balance to strike, therefore, between brevity and verbosity. Too little explanation will raise more questions than it answers. Too much information risks overwhelming or confusing the reader, and moving doctrine from 'How to think' and into 'What to think' and the realm of dogma. As Fuller so colourfully observed:

[The] danger of a doctrine is that it is apt to ossify into a dogma, and to be seized upon by mental emasculates who lack virility of judgment, and who are only too grateful to rest assured that their actions, however inept, find justification in a book, which, if they think at all, is in their opinion, written in order to exonerate them from doing so. In the past many armies have been destroyed by internal discord, and some have been destroyed by the weapons of their antagonists, but the majority have perished through adhering to dogmas springing from their past successes – that is, self-destruction or suicide through inertia of mind.²¹⁵

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter identified and examined the principal influences when *Counter Insurgency Operations* was written. By understanding the context in which it was written, it is possible to see why it contained what it did, and the purpose it was intended to serve. The chapter used the premise that if something is written it is relevant to ask how, why and in what context it was written. Historiography, as postulated by E. H. Carr, has proved a valuable means of examining four key influences on doctrine writing: the doctrine writers, the networks within which they operate, the domestic political environment within which they work, and the international context. Downie's Institutional Learning Cycle provided the framework against which the Army's doctrinal responses to changing circumstances could be judged.

Although ninety years elapsed between the publication of *Field Service Regulations* and *BMD*, they both display very similar qualities. They provide the authoritative approach to the conduct of operations; they codify military 'best practice'; they were developed with flexibility and pragmatism in mind. Although the *FSR* generated some institutional resistance, the Army of the 1990s quickly adjusted to its new doctrine and soon overcame any initial criticisms of and institutional resistance that doctrine was little more than dogma. The main steps of the process of doctrinal change are clearly identifiable in both the development of *FSR* and the *BMD*-inspired doctrine revision of the 1990s: organizational performance gaps were identified, alternative responses were found, sustained consensus for the doctrine of the day, and the new doctrine became the basis for the Army's training.

Counter Insurgency Operations was written as part of the Army's overall revision of its doctrine. This process, initiated by the Bagnall Reforms of the 1980s, was crystallized in the publication of *BMD* in 1989, and reinforced by establishing DGD&D as the Army's authority and focus for doctrine. *BMD* explained to the Army what doctrine was and why it was important: doctrine was to provide the intellectual foundation to guide military actions. Its publication provided the startpoint for the first complete revision of Army doctrine since 1909. A fresh, doctrine-based review of the Army's approach to warfighting followed. *BMD*'s publication set the scene for a full review of

the Army's existing tactical doctrine and the creation of a full doctrine hierarchy from philosophy to practical tactics and procedures, coherent in theme and approach. The doctrine written during the mid-1990s provided the Army with the intellectual backbone for its battles to fund the structures, equipment and training it needed for future conflict, and the foundation for what was taught in training and education. An inevitable and desirable outcome of this process was that doctrine received far greater attention than it had for very many years.

Doctrine thus became an important organizational theme as the Army adopted a sustained process of production and review. The manoeuvrist approach and the framework of operations introduced in ADP *Operations* provided the hierarchy of doctrine with a coherent theme and approach. Deep, Close and Rear operations, couched in a new campaigning taxonomy, shaped subsequent tactical and operational thinking and ADP *Operations* introduced the concept of core functions (Find, Fix and Strike) and functions in combat. Both became the main themes of tactical doctrine. Closer examination of the doctrine hierarchy reveals the role that Theatre or Operation Instructions were intended to play and their importance. They were to set general doctrine in the particular circumstances, and against the specific demands of an operational theatre. This approach had been proven in Malaya, Kenya and, eventually, Northern Ireland, and it raises the question of why no such doctrine was written for Iraq.

During the 1990s, operational experiences from Bosnia, the *SDR*, and the discussion centred on a Revolution in Military Affairs influenced doctrine. British operations as part of UNPROFOR and then the NATO Implementation and Stabilization Forces (IFOR and SFOR) changed the traditional view of peace-keeping. The result was doctrine for what was termed initially *Wider Peacekeeping*, and then *Peace Support Operations* was produced relatively quickly. The *SDR* examined the nature of Britain's future defence requirements. This required much more emphasis to be placed on future concepts. It proved difficult to rationalize doctrine's predictive function, and to integrate enduring principles with the discussions over visions of future warfare offered in View 1 (high intensity conventional warfare) and View 2 (asymmetric warfare). The RMA and developments in U.S. military concepts influenced the predictive function to provide a vision of symmetric major combat operations. While some account was taken of View 2, policy and doctrine focussed on the greater perceived military challenges of View 1. View 2, it transpires, offered a prescient insight of the now contemporary operating environment. The Army's struggle, however, was to attend to the logic underpinning View 1. Its doctrine was therefore developed and refined to reflect the MoD's policy vision of expeditionary major combat operations, and the Army developed organizations, equipment and training focused accordingly. The vision of View 1 and future conflict dominated and counterinsurgency from an organizational point of view received little more than cursory attention.

The chapter examined the staff process required to write and publish doctrine, balancing the initiative and personal insights of the writer with the requirement for doctrine to be accepted and authoritative. It is clear that the Army's doctrine writing process depended greatly on the interests and judgement of its doctrine writers. In general terms, the staff process and the final endorsement required from the Army Doctrine Committee safeguarded against an overzealous writer or an irrelevant or unfeasible piece of doctrine. Taken as a whole, the approach produced the sustained consensus necessary to allow the wider Army to make use of the ideas doctrine contained.

Nevertheless, the full process was painstaking, time-consuming, and vulnerable to the pressures from one quarter or the view of an individual. In practice, it is evident from the insights provided by those working at DGD&D that they had to make often quite complex judgements to strike the right balance between doctrine's enduring and predictive roles.

The most contentious decisions concerned identifying the most likely future trends in conflict, and what, therefore, would be relevant to those future trends from the main body of military experience and doctrinal principles. It is clear that doctrine's enduring and predictive functions are not easily reconcilable, an issue first identified when the Army developed *FSR* in 1909. Nevertheless, both functions make a crucial contribution to doctrine's overall value. Without reference to the past, future concepts would be simply assertions, and without taking some account of identified future trends, doctrine would simply be a specialist form of historical writing. In reality, reconciling the tensions between the two provide doctrine with its dynamism. They force writers to review constantly what the doctrine says against prevailing or emerging conditions. It is the process of review which keeps doctrine relevant, and doctrine writers must remain attuned to the possibility of further change. As part of the AFM, *Counter Insurgency Operations* is clearly a piece of formal doctrine and as such a product of the Army's doctrine processes. The issue now is to determine the extent to which its author balanced the enduring and predictive functions of doctrine, and whether the staffing process worked effectively.

¹ See Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of his Military Thought*, London: Cassell, 1977; Alex Danchev, *Alchemist of War: The Life of Basil Liddell Hart*, London: Nicolson, 1998; Brian Holden Reid, *J. F. C. Fuller: Military Thinker*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987, 1990 paperback, Holden Reid, "Colonel J. F. C. Fuller and the Revival of Classical Military Thinking in Britain, 1918-1926", *Military Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 4, October 1985, pp. 192-197, and "'Young Turks, or Not So Young?': The Frustrated Quest of Major General J. F. C. Fuller and Captain B. H. Liddell Hart", *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 73, No. 1, January 2009, pp. 147-175.

² Ian F. W. Beckett (ed.), *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerrilla Warfare 1900-1945*, London: Blandford, 1988; *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*, Oxford: Routledge, 2001; *Insurgency In Iraq: An Historical Perspective*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005; and with John Pimlott, *Armed Forces & Modern Counter-insurgency*, London: Taylor & Francis, 1985. Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-1960*, London: Macmillan, 1990; *British Counter-Insurgency in the Post-Imperial Era*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995; *The Iraq War: Learning from the Past, Adapting to the Present and Planning for the Future*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February 2007.

³ See Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan", *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 1, February–March 2009, pp. 29–60; John Mackinlay, "Is UK Doctrine Relevant to Global Insurgency?" *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, No. 2, April 2007, pp. 34–38; Warren Chin, "Why did it All Go Wrong: Reassessing British Counterinsurgency in Iraq", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2008, pp. 119-135.

⁴ Army Code No 71451, *Design for Military Operations - The British Military Doctrine*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, 1989. Subsequently revised 1996.

⁵ For example, see Maj. J. D. Shaw, "Examining the Mechanism of Change: How we can create Manoeuvre Warfare", *British Army Review*, Issue 97, April 1991, pp. 20-25; Col. C. T. Rogers, "Intuition - The Imperative of Command in Manoeuvre Warfare", *British Army Review*, Issue 107, August 1994, pp. 31-38; Maj. I. N. A. Thomas, "Manoeuvre Warfare - Its Place in British Military Doctrine", *British Army Review*, Issue 110, August 1995, pp. 75-82.

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- ⁶ Brig. (Retired) G. Bulloch, “The Development of Doctrine for Counter Insurgency – The British Experience”, *British Army Review*, Number 111, pp. 21-24, and Maj. M. MacMahon, “The Tenets of Manoeuvre Warfare and their Application to Low Intensity Conflict”, *British Army Review*, Issue 105, December 1993, pp. 25-31.
- ⁷ *BMD*, p.1-1.
- ⁸ *Ibid*, p. vii.
- ⁹ Maj. Gen. M. A. Willcocks, “Future Conflict and Military Doctrine”, *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 139, No. 3, 1994, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁰ Carr, pp. 62-63.
- ¹¹ Army Code No 71565, Army Doctrine Publication, Volume 1, *Operations*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, June 1994, p. 1-7, an amendment subsequently in *British Military Doctrine*, 1996 edition.
- ¹² Joint Warfare Publication 0-01, *British Defence Doctrine* (Second Edition), Prepared under the direction of the Chiefs of Staff, October 2001, p. 3-1.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 3-1.
- ¹⁴ *BMD*, 1989, p. 1-3.
- ¹⁵ General Staff, War Office, Field Service Regulations Part I: *Operations*, London: HMSO, 1920, p. 13. Hereafter *FSR*.
- ¹⁶ B. H. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War*, London: Faber and Faber, 1944, p. 123.
- ¹⁷ Maj. Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, *Lectures on F.S.R. II.*, London: Sifton Praed & Co, 1931, p. vi. Quoted in *BMD*, p. 1-4.
- ¹⁸ Ian F. W. Beckett, Review Article, Hew Strachan, (ed.), *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the 20th Century*, London: Routledge, 2006, *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 70, No. 4, 2006, p. 1180.
- ¹⁹ Gary Sheffield, “Themes in Army Doctrine”, Paper presented to the British Military Doctrine Group, 1 February 2002; Colin McInnes and John Stone, “The British Army and Military Doctrine”, in Duffy, , Farrell and Sloan, *Doctrine and Military Effectiveness*, p. 15.
- ²⁰ *BMD*, 1996, Foreword. Emphasis added.
- ²¹ Army Code No. 71344, Army Field Manual, Volume 1: The Fundamentals; Part 1, *The Application of Force*, London: Ministry of Defence, 1985.
- ²² Brig. (Retired) Gavin Bulloch, interview with author, Enford, 3 November 2008. Sellers was a Grade 3 Retired Officer working at the Staff College: the upgrading of his post to Grade 1 was an unprecedented move.
- ²³ General Staff, War Office, Field Service Regulations Part I: *Operations* and Part II: *Organization and Administration*, London: HMSO, 1909.
- ²⁴ *FSR* Part I, Preface.
- ²⁵ *FSR* Vol. II, 1920, p. 13.
- ²⁶ General Staff, War Office, *Cavalry Training*, London: HMSO, 1912; General Staff, War Office, *Infantry Training*, London: HMSO, 30th December, 1907; General Staff, War Office, *Field Artillery Training*, London: HMSO, 1912.
- ²⁷ Lt. Gen. Sir Alistair Irwin, interview with author, London, 12 March 2009. Irwin was a student on HCSC No. 3, Colonel HCSC, commanded 39 Brigade in Belfast 2002-2004, and was the second Director Land Warfare at DGD&D.
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- ²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 11.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 11.

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- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. 11.
- ³² E. B. Hamley, *The Operations of War*, London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1866.
- ³³ Brian Bond, *The Victorian Army and The Staff College*, London: Eyre Methuen, 1972, p. 87.
- ³⁴ Richard Holmes, *The Little Field Marshal: A Life of Sir John French*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004, p. 26 and p. 220.
- ³⁵ Gary Sheffield and John Bourne, *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914-1918*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005, p. 16.
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- ³⁷ E. M. Spiers, *Haldane: an Army Reformer*, Edinburgh: University Press, 1980, pp. 151-4, p. 152.
- ³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 153.
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- ⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 133.
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- ⁵⁴ David French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, Oxford: University Press, June 2000, p. 13.
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- ⁶⁷ Hamilton, p. 213.
- ⁶⁸ Montgomery, p. 41. Emphasis added.
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- ⁷³ Brian Holden Reid, "Is There a British Military Philosophy?" in Major General J. J. G. Mackenzie and Brian Holden Reid (eds.), *Central Region or Out-of-Area: Future Commitments*, London: Tri-Service Press, 1990, p.5.
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- ⁸³ Nigel Bagnall and Maurice Johnston, "Concepts of land/air operations in the central region: I", *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 129, No. 3, 1984, pp. 59-62, p. 60.
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- ⁸⁵ Bagnall and Johnston, p. 60.
- ⁸⁶ Mäder, p. 88.
- ⁸⁷ Mungo Melvin, Introduction to Brian Holden Reid, *A Doctrinal Perspective 1988-1998*, *The Occasional*, Number 33, Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1998, p. 4.
- ⁸⁸ Holden Reid, *Bagnall and the Ginger Group in Retrospect*, and Dorman, *Playing the Whitehall Game: The Bagnall Reforms in Retrospect*.
- ⁸⁹ See also McInnes, "BAOR in the 1980s: changes in doctrine and organisation."

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- ⁹⁰ Dorman, *Playing the Whitehall Game: The Bagnall Reforms in Retrospect*.
- ⁹¹ Melvin, *The Occasional*, Number 33, p. 4.
- ⁹² Kiszely, p. 199. Kiszely is not entirely accurate to describe this development as being “for the first time in the British Army”.
- ⁹³ Melvin, *The Occasional*, Number 33, p. 6.
- ⁹⁴ Brig. (Retired) Gavin Bulloch, interview with author, London, 4 June 2007.
- ⁹⁵ Maj. Gen. M. A. Willcocks, “Future Conflict and Military Doctrine”, *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 139, No. 3, 1994, pp. 6-10, p. 6.
- ⁹⁶ Brig. (Retired) Charles Grant, interview with author, Dundee, 8 February 2007.
- ⁹⁷ Bulloch, interview, Enford.
- ⁹⁸ Mäder, p. 98.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 95.
- ¹⁰⁰ *BMD*, p. 1-1.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 1-2.
- ¹⁰² Army Code 71564 Army Doctrine Publication Volume 2 *Command*, Army Code 71566 Army Doctrine Publication Volume 3 *Logistics*, Army Code 71700 Army Doctrine Publication Volume 3 *Logistics – Medical Supplement*, Army Code 71621 Army Doctrine Publication Volume 4 *Training*, Army Code 71642 Army Doctrine Publication Volume 5 *Soldiering*.
- ¹⁰³ *BMD*, p. 1-2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Kiszely, p. 199. Kiszely was Director of Studies at the Army Staff College, Camberley, at the time.
- ¹⁰⁵ Grant, interview.
- ¹⁰⁶ Lt. Gen. Peter Wall, interview with author, New York, 4 May 2007. Wall was referring to the concepts of Mission Command, the Functions in Combat and the operational framework of Deep, Close and Rear operations, examined further in *ADP Operations: Bridging Philosophy and Practice* below.
- ¹⁰⁷ *BMD*, p. 1-3.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 1.
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- ¹¹¹ War Office Code 9455, *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, London: The War Office, 1957.
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- ¹¹⁴ See *Keeping the Peace*, 1957 and 1963, and *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969 and 1977.
- ¹¹⁵ Col. Bryan Watters, interview with author, Warminster, 30 January 2009.
- ¹¹⁶ Kiszely, p. 202.
- ¹¹⁷ *BMD*, pp. 1-4-5.
- ¹¹⁸ Richard Overy, “What is Doctrine and How Does it Evolve?” Paper presented to the British Military Doctrine Group, Shrivenham, February 2002.
- ¹¹⁹ *BMD*, p. 4-3.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4-4.
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- ¹²³ This is confirmed in *ADP Operations*, p. iv.
- ¹²⁴ Richard E. Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-first Century Warfare*, London: Brassey's, October 1985, republished 1994.
- ¹²⁵ Albeit it revised in the context of AirLand Battle. See Brig. Gen. (Retired) Huba Wass de Czege, *Lessons from the Past: Making the Army's Doctrine "Right Enough" Today*, Washington DC: Association of the United States Army Landpower Essay, No. 06-2, September 2006.
- ¹²⁶ Compare Chapters 2, 3 and 6 (Blitzkrieg, Deep operation theory and The Bursting Dam respectively) in Simpkin, *Race to the Swift*, with *BMD*, Annex C Forms of Manoeuvre.
- ¹²⁷ Lt. Gen. Peter Duffell, Foreword, *ADP Operations*, p. iv.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. v.
- ¹²⁹ Although these concepts had been the subject of much discussion on HCSC and selected papers were published. See Maj. Gen. J. J. G. Mackenzie and Brian Holden Reid (eds.), *The British Army and the Operational Level of War*, London: Tri-Service Press, 1990 and *Central Region Versus Out-of-area: Future Commitments*, London: Tri-Service Press, 1990; Reid, Brian Holden (ed.), *The Science of War: Back to First Principles*, London: Routledge, 1993.
- ¹³⁰ *ADP Operations*, p. 2-1.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 2-3.
- ¹³² *ADP Operations* defines the terms as follows: Pre-emption: To pre-empt the enemy is to seize an opportunity, often fleeting, before he does, in order to deny him an advantageous course of action; Dislocation: To dislocate the enemy is to deny him the ability to bring his strengths to bear; Disruption: To disrupt is to attack the enemy selectively to break apart and throw into confusion the assets which are critical to the employment and coherence of his fighting power. pp. 2-4-2-5.
- ¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 2-4.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2-5.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2-11.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2-12.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2-12.
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5-13.
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5-13.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 5-14.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 5-16.
- ¹⁴² Carr, p. 29; Daddow, "British Military Doctrine in the 1980s and 1990s", p. 107.
- ¹⁴³ Carr, p. 23.
- ¹⁴⁴ Bulloch, interview, London.
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- ¹⁴⁷ Bulloch, interview, Enford.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Idem*.
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- ¹⁵⁶ Col. Allan Mallinson, “Wider Peacekeeping: An Option of Difficulties”, *British Army Review*, Issue 112, April 1996, p. 5; Lt. Col. Philip Wilkinson, “Sharpening the Weapons of Peace: The Development of a Common Military Doctrine for Peace Support Operations”, *British Army Review*, Issue 118, April 1998, pp. 3-5; Rod Thornton, “The role of peace support operations doctrine in the British Army”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April 2000, pp. pp. 41-62.
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- ¹⁵⁸ See Rod Thornton, “A Welcome ‘Revolution’? The British Army and the Changes of the Strategic Defence Review”, *Defence Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Autumn 2003, pp. 38-42
- ¹⁵⁹ Colin McInnes, “The British Army: Adapting to Change in the 1990s and Beyond” in Bond and Melvin, *The Occasional*, Number 36, p. 74.
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- ¹⁶⁶ William S. Cohen, (Secretary of Defense), *Annual Report to the President and Congress*, Washington DC, 1999, p.122.
- ¹⁶⁷ Presidential Candidate George W Bush, “A Period of Consequences,” Speech at the Citadel, Charleston, SC, 23September 1999.
- ¹⁶⁸ Full Spectrum Dominance: “the ability of US forces, operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations”, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020: America’s Military Preparing for Tomorrow*, Washington: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2000, p. 6; David S Alberts, John J. Garstka and Frederick P. Stein, *Network Centric Warfare: Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority*, Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Concepts and Technology, 1999; Harlan Ullman, et al., *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996. *Shock and Awe* describes approaches and techniques to combine control of what the adversary perceives and understands of the situation by *information dominance* with the ability to exploit information rapidly to create, in the most extreme case, a “level of national shock akin to the effect that dropping nuclear weapons ... had on the Japanese”, p.13.
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- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷⁷ Dick Applegate, “Towards the Future Army”, in Bond and Melvin, *The Occasional*, Number 36, pp. 80-81. Applegate was the Colonel at DGD&D responsible for Force Development.
- ¹⁷⁸ Applegate, p. 78.
- ¹⁷⁹ Gen. Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War”, *Marines Magazine*, January 1999, p. 32.
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- ¹⁸² Grant, interview.
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- ¹⁸⁵ Grant, interview, Enford.
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- ¹⁹⁴ Bulloch, interview, Enford.
- ¹⁹⁵ Wall, interview, New York, 4 May 2007.
- ¹⁹⁶ Bulloch, interview, London
- ¹⁹⁷ *ADP Operations*, p. 1-7. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁹⁸ Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984, p. 30.
- ¹⁹⁹ Army Code No 71819, Army Doctrine Publication *Land Operations*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, May 2005.
- ²⁰⁰ Grant, interview.
- ²⁰¹ Col. Richard Iron, interview with author, Oxford, 18 November 2008.
- ²⁰² Maj. Gen. Lamont Kirkland, interview with author, Upavon, 29 October 2008.
- ²⁰³ Iron, interview.
- ²⁰⁴ Grant, interview.

²⁰⁵ For example, see Duffy, Farrell and Sloan, *Doctrine and Military Effectiveness*; Mäder, *In Pursuit of Conceptual Excellence*; Daddow, “British Military Doctrine in the 1980s and 1990s”; Roberts, “Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan”; Frank Hoffman, “Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?” *Parameters*, Summer 2007, pp.71-87; James S. Corum, “Rethinking U.S. Army Counter-Insurgency Doctrine”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 28, No.1 (April 2007), pp. 127-142; Ralph Peters, “Progress and Peril, New Counterinsurgency Manual Cheats on the History Exam”, *Armed Forces Journal*, 144, February 2007; and Edward Luttwak, “Dead End”, *Harper’s Magazine*, February 2007 pp. 33-42 (the latter is a critique of a draft version).

²⁰⁶ Brig. James Everard, interview with author, Paderborn, 23 May 2007.

²⁰⁷ Wall, interview, Blagdon, 15 May 2007.

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²⁰⁹ Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 270, referring to the successful use of the square as a tactic in small wars even though modern firepower had rendered it useless in conventional warfare.

²¹⁰ Maj. Gen. John Cooper, interview with author, Warminster, 20 June 2007.

²¹¹ Wass de Czege, *Making the Army’s Doctrine “Right Enough” Today*.

²¹² JSCSC archive.

²¹³ Everard, interview.

²¹⁴ *Idem*. Emphasis added.

²¹⁵ J.F.C. Fuller, *Reformation of War*, London: Hutchinson 1926, p. 254.

3 *Counter Insurgency Operations*

Chapter 2 established the context in which *Counter Insurgency Operations* was written during the Army's doctrinal reforms of the 1990s. It examined how doctrine writers, the networks in which they worked, their review mechanisms, and domestic and international influences shaped the Army's doctrine. It showed the Army's move to manoeuvre theory initiated a full review of its doctrine and its approach to the conduct of military operations. It demonstrated that the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR) gave the Armed Forces an interventionist, expeditionary focus, and the prospects offered by information technology, influenced the decisions the Army made about its equipment and structures to meet it. Doctrine writers focussed their attention on conventional, high-intensity warfighting, a focus that successive Chiefs of the General Staff affirmed as the Army's *raison d'être*. Yet in spite of the focus on major combat operations, the issue of counterinsurgency doctrine was not ignored entirely, and *Counter Insurgency Operations* was published in 1995 and republished again with minor amendments in 2001.

This chapter concentrates on *Counter Insurgency Operations*, examining its key tenets, principles and method. It looks closely at Gavin Bulloch's approach, the sources he used and the principal influences on his work. It will examine how well the Army's standard practices suited the publication's needs, identify what, if any, adaptation was necessary, and determine what impact its publication had. Finally, it will use the criteria for effective doctrine established in Chapter 2 to provide an assessment of *Counter Insurgency Operations* as a piece of doctrine.

3.1 **Doctrine for Counterinsurgency: *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995)**

Since *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* was published in 1952, British doctrine for counterinsurgency has generally covered the themes of insurgency, counterinsurgency, principles, tactics, techniques and procedures. *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) was published in four parts. Part 1 described insurgency, its historical development, characteristics, aims, conduct of and likely tactics. Part 2 encapsulated the British approach to counterinsurgency. Its central themes were the general approach, principles, the legal aspects of counterinsurgency, a concept of operations, a method to co-ordinate a campaign at the strategic level, campaign design, the conduct of military operations, the psychological dimension, and civil affairs. Part 3 covered counterinsurgency tactics, and Part 4 provided guidance on detailed techniques and procedures, including search techniques, road blocks and crowd control. Taken as a whole, the span of material and guidance covered by *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) was considerable: from the theory of insurgency, to the practices of counterinsurgency; from strategic-level governmental factors and concerns, to the detailed tactics and procedures for the use of riot-control weapons. As such, it was in keeping with the approach adopted for *ATOM* and later followed in most subsequent publications.

From the outset, it was Bulloch's intention that the new counterinsurgency doctrine should be based on the Army's new manoeuvrist doctrine published in ADP

Operations.¹ *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) therefore followed the same “thrust, direction and sequence.”² *ADP Operations* described insurgency and counterinsurgency concisely in the context of the spectrum of military operations and the Army’s manoeuvrist approach to warfare, and it laid out broad guidelines for a campaign. It posited that future counterinsurgency operations “may be conducted unilaterally to protect a United Kingdom Dependent Territory, or multinationally at the invitation of the threatened state.”³ It gave no indication about just how complex the latter would be if the classic counter-revolutionary warfare and counter-terrorist techniques – in particular unified command - developed by the British were followed. *ADP Operations* followed accepted counterinsurgency thinking by recognizing that it required political, psychological, socio-economic and military means, and that “the legitimacy of the state authority and its control of the infrastructure will dictate the direction of the campaign, not purely military requirements.”⁴

In early 1994, Bulloch called on the Staff College to assist. Maj. Gen. Paul Newton, then a Lt. Col. and a member of the Directing Staff recalls,

I was on the Operations Other Than War Team at Staff College when John Kiszely was the Director of Studies. He was determined to put everything we were teaching into a manoeuvrist framework. I was given one term to ‘sort out’ the COIN material, which was badly dated. The result was a thin 20-30 page reader and a long presentation that I gave at the start of the phase. I bounced my ideas off Patrick Mercer and I also drew on a paper by Jon Riley.⁵

Newton used the themes of *ADP Operations* including the design for operations of Deep, Close and Rear Operations,⁶ and the core functions of Find, Fix and Strike, to provide a contemporary framework for counterinsurgency. This brought counterinsurgency doctrine in line with mainstream thinking and tactics. More importantly, it moved doctrinal thinking beyond what had previously been a somewhat linear approach to counterinsurgency. Newton neatly summarized the balance commanders required to strike between framework operations and the core functions, and he blended them with well-established counterinsurgency precepts, such as intelligence and psychological operations:

The overriding factor will be the need to gain maximum intelligence about the insurgents (finding them), without which no focused operations can be mounted. The design of military operations will then aim to separate the insurgents physically from both their internal and external support; appropriate tactics will frustrate their plans and restrict their freedom of movement by means of deep operations (fixing them), while selectively destroying them in close operations through physical and psychological attack, and legal action (striking them). At the outset of an insurgency, the population will tend to hesitate before deciding whether to support the government or the insurgents. Hence, although the commander will be keen to secure his base areas (rear operations) as a priority, he will also need to initiate action throughout the framework of operations, at the earliest opportunity, to seize the initiative in the ‘hearts and minds’ battle.⁷

The manoeuvrist approach placed emphasis “on the intellectual and psychological aspects of operations, not simply the material,” and focussed on people and ideas, not just on the traditional view of taking and holding ground.⁸ Newton recognized that this was highly relevant to counterinsurgency, as was his conclusion that manoeuvre theory

and successful insurgencies had a great deal in common.⁹ “The military planner steeped in this,” he observed, “is more likely to cope with the inherent complexities of COIN.”¹⁰ Herein lay a potential problem. Much depended on military planners and commanders being ‘steeped’ in counterinsurgency, presumably through education and training, and operational experience. At the time Bulloch prepared his first draft of *Counter Insurgency Operations*, and Newton rewrote the Course COIN reader, the Staff College taught a very comprehensive package, and the Army institutionally had a great deal of experience almost entirely from Northern Ireland. This raises the question of what would the effect be if education and training did not cover counterinsurgency to the level highlighted in previous editions of doctrine, and on which Kitson had placed such emphasis in *Low Intensity Operations*?

ADP *Operations* established that conflict was “either resolved or terminated... Defeat is not an absolute but a matter of degree...winning is definable, given an understanding of the approach to operations.”¹¹ *Counter Insurgency Operations* picked up this theme in its discussion of what constituted success. Here Newton was provocative because he moved the discussion away from the notion in ADP *Operations* of a military victory *per se* to the long-held view of counterinsurgency theorists that military operations had to be set in the context of the overall politically-led campaign with explicit political objectives. This, the doctrine notes, “may equate to handing over an internal security problem to the civil police, or *simply not losing*.”¹² In other words political progress may be made without necessarily defeating an insurgency militarily. This view is very different from that of fighting to win a military campaign where armed forces would seek to so “diminish the effectiveness of the enemy... that he is ... unable to participate in combat.”¹³ Using the logic presented in *Counter Insurgency Operations*, military operations would take place to enable political progress, not simply to deal with the direct effects of an insurgent threat. This means that political progress, reconciliation and accommodation may remove the cause of the violence without the military campaign attaining all of its objectives. The *raison d’être* for military operations may be removed whether or not they have defeated an insurgent group. The doctrine makes this point clear, however counter-intuitive it may be to conventional military thinking.

Linking to this, the Manoeuvrist Approach in ADP *Operations* asserts that success is achieved by attacking the enemy’s will and cohesion, through destruction, suppression or neutralization using firepower, tempo (the rate of activity compared to the enemy), simultaneity (overloading the enemy commander), and surprise.¹⁴ Newton recognized that these were just as relevant in counterinsurgency, but widened the context from application of force alone to what he referred to as ‘soft’ methods such as evidence gathering, arrest and legal action, and physical separation through the imposition of control measures.¹⁵ He also noted that “minimum force is a well proven COIN lesson... sound judgement and close control will need to be exercised over the degree of [force to be used],” again, a message included in doctrine since 1909.¹⁶ The example he used is also of note. While he had Northern Ireland in mind, the problem of legitimacy of action, not simply the legality of the action, but how that action is interpreted by those involved and observing, would prove to be very difficult for British forces to reconcile in Iraq:

The killing of a teenage gunman could be justifiable in military terms but its possible impact on his community could jeopardise a potentially far more significant though less spectacular Hearts and Minds operation.¹⁷

Newton developed the ideas of ‘soft’ power and the indirect approach in the guidance provided on attacking the insurgents’ will and cohesion, where he explained that psychological operations, the effective use of the media, and civil action should be incorporated into a deliberate ‘Hearts and Minds’ campaign. Simultaneity could be achieved through the close co-ordination of a wide range of government agencies, a concept which he then developed much further in the principle of Co-ordinated Government Machinery. Table 2 illustrates the conceptual link between the operational framework, the purpose of each type of operation and the tasks which could be undertaken to achieve the overall effect desired.

Operation	Purpose	Possible Tasks
Deep	To find and fix the enemy To delay, divert, disrupt and deter To keep the enemy from his objectives To constrain enemy freedom of action	Long-term surveillance Deterrence patrolling Control of movement Criminal investigations aimed at insurgent financing Public information and psychological operations
Close	To strike the enemy in order to eliminate a discrete part of his combat power	Arrest operations Ambushes
Rear	To ensure freedom of action by protecting the force, sustaining combat operations and retaining freedom of manoeuvre of uncommitted forces	Securing political and popular support; public information; protecting key installations; training, mentoring and supporting indigenous forces

Table 2 - The Integration of Operations

Source: ADP *Operations*.

With a clear reference to the three tenets of Army policy in Northern Ireland – deterrence, reassurance and attrition – *Counter Insurgency Operations* explained that “over and above the integration of deep, close and rear operations, there is a discrete and undefined balance between the application of deterrence, reassurance and attrition.”¹⁸ The Army’s own analysis of operations in Northern Ireland helps to provide some substance to what doctrine described in somewhat opaque terms:

Most of the attrition took place through arrest and conviction. Overt operations probably killed at most a dozen terrorists during the 1980s. The number killed in covert operations was in absolute terms not much greater. In any case attrition of individual terrorists of itself had little effect on the outcome of the campaign. However, PIRA seem to have been brought to believe that there was no answer to Army covert operations, and that they would not win through violence. That was probably a key factor.¹⁹

This example makes clear the role of military operations enabling political progress. In this case, British military operations – in particular its covert operations – became so effective and took on an air of semi-permanence that PIRA was eventually limited to ostensibly political options. In Iraq, almost at the point of defeat in late 2006, Coalition

operations in Iraq adopted and followed this approach.

It is important to note just how little emphasis *Counter Insurgency Operations* places on multinational operations, even though they had been the framework under which British military operations had taken place in the Balkans. They were a key tenet of the 1998 SDR, which made clear that “with the exception of national commitments such as Northern Ireland and the security of our Overseas Territories, future operations will almost always be multinational.”²⁰ It would be reasonable to expect doctrine written subsequently to reflect this key aspect of defence policy, yet the approach adopted in *Counter Insurgency Operations* gives the impression that future operations would be predominantly British-led. This was in spite of SDR and ADP *Operations*’ point about multinationality, and the very multinational character of operations in the mid-1990s. Some guidance further was certainly warranted. It was not provided. Bulloch explains this omission in the context of the day:

At that time there was no talk of coalition operations. Our operations in Bosnia had been conducted first under the UN banner and then NATO. We had doctrine for peacekeeping and the general mood of the moment was for what was referred to as wider peacekeeping and Operations Other Than War. The peacekeeping doctrine included points about working with UN partners but the guiding principle up to then was that Army doctrine was written primarily for an Army audience and British doctrine was written on the assumption that British Forces had the lead. Whether that was realistic is now questionable, but that was how we had approached writing our doctrine.²¹

The relatively slow tempo of operations in Bosnia after 1996 may have masked the inherent political and military tensions in alliance operations, even alliances as well established as NATO. In the face of multiple forms of insurgency, high tempo coalition operations in Iraq were to expose such tensions, which clear doctrinal thinking and training might have ameliorated.

3.2 Principles

The opening statement of *Counter Insurgency Operations* is important: “there has never been a purely military solution to revolution: political, social, economic and military measures all have a part to play in restoring the authority of a legitimate government.”²² This one statement places military operations – however intense, difficult and sometimes unfamiliar they may be – fairly and squarely alongside the range of other government tasks necessary to counter an armed insurgency, those “military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civil actions taken by the Government to defeat insurgency.”²³ *Counter Insurgency Operations* was therefore congruent with all previous mainstream counterinsurgency theorists and all British doctrine since the 1930s.

Its next point, identifying the link between the insurgent, the population and the psychological dimension of insurgency and counterinsurgency, is also fundamental:

Theories, strategies and tactics come and go depending on circumstances or merely intellectual fashion... What remains constant is the fact that *insurgency and counterinsurgency are essentially about the battle to win and hold popular support, both at home and in the theatre of operations...* If the strategic focal point is public opinion, both domestic and international, most initial military

tactical efforts will be focused on breaking the link between the insurgent and the people. If the insurgent can be isolated, it is then theoretically a relatively simple matter to eliminate him and his cause.²⁴

The ‘relative simplicity’ has proved harder to realize than the doctrine implies. Nevertheless, *Counter-Insurgency Operations* encapsulated the essence of the counterinsurgency problem, and set it in the broad, politically-dominated context, the correct understanding of which was so important to developing a successful campaign. Having identified the constituent parts of the problem, the doctrine sensibly urged caution: there was not, it made clear, a British template for counterinsurgency, and there was no “general antidote to the problem of insurgency.”²⁵ The inference is clear. Each response had to be different because each insurgency would be different. Each would have to be put in the correct context through careful analysis of the problem and the sensible application of counterinsurgency principles.²⁶ As Kitson had observed, “if you had eighty different insurgencies, there were eighty different ways to defeat them.”²⁷

Counter Insurgency Operations introduced the idea that principles were of value to all those involved in the campaign, not just military commanders. Importantly, in terms of doctrine’s evolution, it established a clear link between the work of Kitson and Thompson and the new principles it presented. Unlike previous manuals where principles were listed, Bulloch arranged them into a logical sequence to provide “a government with a general pattern on which to base and review its COIN strategy.”²⁸ The new principles were:

- **Political Primacy and Political Aim**, which established the government’s responsibility to identify the causes and consequences of the insurgency and to produce the plan which harnessed the political, legislative, economic, security and long-term measures necessary to deal with it.
- **Coordinated Government Machinery**, based on the prerequisite of unity of effort, sought to overcome the different philosophies and approaches of government departments and agencies, and harness their efforts. In terms redolent of doctrine from the 1950s and 1960s, it proposed the ideal of a campaign director, a unified command system, a committee system at every level of government, similar to that used in Malaya, and a “coordinated national plan [to]... cover the entire national, economic, administrative, operational and intelligence fields.”²⁹ Through such a plan priorities would be allocated between the main fields of activity, and roles and responsibilities between government departments identified. The principle called for “careful planning and coordination ... to ensure that when areas are brought under military control they can be administered and supported economically in order to avoid them falling back into insurgent control again.”³⁰ This was central to the method the doctrine described for bringing an area back under government control, although it noted that “distant areas may have to be abandoned for the time being in order to secure a base and expand control into... more important areas.”³¹
- **Intelligence and Information**. “Good intelligence,” the doctrine made clear “is perhaps the greatest asset for a government combating an insurgency. Without it the security forces work in the dark and random offensive operations on this basis produce nothing positive and much negative reaction amongst the

population involved in the theatre from within the international forum as a whole.”³² Random, untargeted, speculative operations carried considerable risks in terms of alienating local and international support. Knowledge of the situation, the country, the political situation, and the society takes time to develop and was essential “because intelligence relies on an ability to discern patterns of change in behaviour.”³³ This highlighted the importance of language skills and that the police, not the Army should be the prime agency for providing intelligence and information.

- **Separating the Insurgent from his Support** would deny him information, logistics, recruits, safe bases and popular support. This would be achieved through physical separation and by developing government control by expanding it from a firm base into a series of increasingly more secure areas. A co-ordinated effort to win the psychological campaign for hearts and minds would be integral to this process, linked directly “to the need for the government side to retain legitimacy.”³⁴
- **Neutralising the Insurgent.** Isolated from support, the insurgent could be neutralized directly, through arrest or as a result of military strike operations to kill, capture, demoralize and deter insurgents, and promote desertions, or indirectly, by deterrence operations such as an increased security force presence; and psychologically, through information and counter-propaganda. The aim would be “to defeat the insurgent on his ground using enough but no more force than is absolutely necessary.”³⁵
- **Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning.** Governments would have to make long-term plans to improve the economic and social life of its population to reduce or eliminate the political causes of the insurgency. The announcement of such government initiatives was seen to play a key role in winning the hearts and minds of the local population during a campaign and this principle was seen as “probably hold[ing] the key to the effective application of the other five.”³⁶

Of particular note is the remarkably understated *Counter Insurgency Operations* affirmation that “British doctrine adheres strictly to the additional mandatory guidelines of minimum necessary force and legitimacy.”³⁷ These two points are critical to the British approach to counterinsurgency and have underpinned it since *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* was published in 1923. For *Counter Insurgency Operations* to downplay their significance to such an extent assumed that the reader was ‘steeped’ in the British approach, their practical application in Northern Ireland, and therefore knew something of their value.³⁸ To the general reader, not so well versed in effective counterinsurgency theory, and who simply gave the doctrine a cursory glance, the message would be missed. Similarly, legitimacy *per se* is not explained at all, neither is the need for British forces to safeguard their own legitimacy through their conduct, nor the evident problems of maintaining, if not re-building legitimacy faced by a government dealing with an insurgency. Minimum force is at least explained, albeit rather briefly:

No more force may be used than is necessary to achieve a legal aim. The amount used must be reasonable and it must not be punitive. Directly the aim is achieved no more force may be used.³⁹

It also made clear that minimum force should not “be confused with deploying the minimum number of troops.”⁴⁰ It referred to the deterrent value of a strong presence of troops when the situation warranted it. The assumption underpinning this statement was that there would be adequate troop levels generally, and that force levels would be increased to deal with more localized problems. The implications of what might happen if adequate force levels were not available were not explored. The assumption was based, again, on the experience of Northern Ireland, where troop levels were adjusted as the situation demanded. For example and most notably, reinforcements from Germany were used to bring the force level up to 28,000 in July 1972 in preparation for Operation Motorman, which cleared no-go areas in Catholic areas of Belfast and Londonderry.⁴¹ Here, again, the author’s assumption was that the Army would maintain its familiarity with counterinsurgency. Of course there would be adequate force levels, of course soldiers would understand the principle of minimum force, of course they would seek to maintain legitimacy. All three, after all, were by 1995 implicit in the way the campaign in Northern Ireland was being conducted, so would this level of understanding not be maintained, and why was it necessary to spell it out to the Army of the day?

3.3 A Concept of Military Operations

The aim of military operations, *Counter Insurgency Operations* explained, was to “help the government to re-establish control throughout the country so that the civil administration can exercise its proper function.”⁴² It considered two possible situations, one where military operations provided support to “an existing government structure in areas which are nominally under its control.” In the second, they would “restore areas under hostile control to the government’s authority.”⁴³ The doctrine emphasized the importance of the government recovering insurgent held areas, if not, it risked a collapse in its authority and being unable to achieve its objectives on its terms. *Counter Insurgency Operations* provided a simple concept in keeping with previous doctrine, sometimes referred to as the *Tache d’huile* or ‘Oil Spot’ method.

Tache d’huile was developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by two French officers, Galliéni and Lyautey, and used in Algeria, Morocco, and French Indo-China.⁴⁴ The British in Malaya referred to it as the ‘ink spot’ method. Both forms were based on the assumption that a dual military-political strategy – in the British case administered through a joint committee system – would extend government control more effectively through an insurgent-held area. Whether ink or oil, the key element would be having enough troops to establish a significant presence in the first place, and a reasonably tolerant population through which government influence could spread. While *Counter Insurgency Operations* described a conventional method for re-establishing government control of an insurgent area, it broadened the context in which future operations would take place, making clear, for the first time in British counterinsurgency doctrine, this would be on an expeditionary basis in unfamiliar circumstances.

The British sequence of approach was first described in embryonic terms in 1959⁴⁵ and was for many years central to teaching at the Staff College. It would be this model, later informed by Thompson’s work, and the method put forward by David Galula which would influence U.S. doctrinal thinking. The assumptions which underpinned it were intelligence, which was needed to focus security force operations when establishing an operating base and securing a controlled area; the forces and resources

to establish control quickly and to re-introduce good governance effectively; and a transition plan to return each area to the full control of the civil administration as conditions allowed. Briefly, the sequence is:

- **Secure a Base Area**, from which the operation could be mounted and the government could demonstrate its ability to govern effectively.
- **Establish a Firm Forward Operational Base**, typically in an area where government control could be re-established quickly, consolidated, and from which further operations could be mounted. The important task would be to ensure that the population was “secure from an insurgent offensive and serious terrorist attack;”⁴⁶ which implied a strong security force presence and having the non-military resources lined up to help consolidate the area promptly.
- **Secure a Controlled Area**. Once a firm base was established, military operations would concentrate on “just one or a selected few areas in turn,”⁴⁷ to “seize the initiative ... by separating the insurgent from his support and then neutralizing him and his cause.”⁴⁸ In securing a government-controlled area, framework operations would be undertaken “to clear, secure and pacify” it. The aim was to separate the insurgents from their supporters, resources and information and intelligence. The doctrine highlights that such operations were “essentially offensive in nature as they aim to wrest ... the people ... from insurgent control,” and it anticipated that the enemy would react and fight back. Emphasis was placed on intelligence preparation, sound planning, and the use of Special Forces to strike valuable targets.⁴⁹
- **Consolidate the Controlled Areas**. Consolidation required the civil administration to be re-established, and the process of transition to start from military- to police-led operations. Local auxiliary forces would be trained so that they could provide the police with further support, freeing up police to conduct normal police tasks.
- **Continue to Extend Controlled Areas**, using consolidated controlled areas as the base from which operations could extend “gradually across the entire country” to restore government control.

The doctrine emphasized that “all subordinate headquarters throughout the theatre [were] to ensure that detailed tactical plans are appropriate at local level and accord with the overall purpose.”⁵⁰ Again, the assumption was that this would be a British-controlled operation, so there was no discussion of the implications of a multinational operation. Previously, Thompson, Kitson and British doctrine in general had emphasized the importance of co-ordination, but only Kitson had offered any suggestion on how this might be achieved in a multinational setting. He asserted that the underlying principle in such cases was that the ally’s needs should “always take second place to the host country.” In other words the sovereignty of the host nation had to be respected and reinforced. He also provided five guidelines for the relationship between ally and the host government.

Kitson’s first guideline was that “no arrangement will work unless that host country itself has a properly ordered system for prosecuting the war.” Kitson suggested a supreme council or committee, along the lines followed in Malaya, and subsequently laid out in British doctrine. Next, the ally should be able to coordinate its aid through

one individual who could represent it on the host country's supreme council to help formulate overall policy. Third, the ally needed to be represented at every level of government, "but always subordinate to the host country and in an advisory capacity." Fourth, the key was full co-operation between the host country and the ally and full integration of the full range of civil and military efforts. Finally, and specifically with coalition operations in mind, Kitson identified that allied efforts must mirror all four guidelines and that "the various contingents must have a common understanding of the problem."⁵¹ The complex co-ordination, communication and consultation necessary to achieve Kitson's guidelines are only hinted at. No doctrine writer subsequently developed them.

3.4 The Tenets of *Counter Insurgency Operations*

The British approach, developed from experience and reflected in doctrine, recognizes that counterinsurgency operations take time, years rather than months; that tactical actions can have strategic consequences, both positive and negative; that for the soldier countering insurgency is a rather unsatisfactory, unglamorous task which must deal with unseen threats and undermining propaganda. The soldier may have to act as policeman, administrator, aid worker, development planner, and diplomat. Although for the most part military effort focuses more on defensive rather than offensive military tasks, isolating and neutralizing insurgent groups requires flair and initiative and the use of 'soft' methods and the indirect, manoeuvrist approach as well as military skills such as patrols, searches, and ambushes.

Counterinsurgency is also a matter of balance. As the doctrine asserts, there has never been a purely military solution to revolution or insurgency. Political, social, economic and military measures all have a part to play in restoring the authority of a legitimate government. The security forces' role is to act to support the civil authority in an environment in which there is less certainty than in conventional war. The weaker the instruments of state in a country beset by insurgency, the greater its vulnerabilities, and destabilisation is likely to be manifest in many dimensions, all requiring cross-government effort if the root causes are to be addressed and the situation stabilised. Difficulties are further magnified by cultural and social differences, which place a premium on understanding underlying cultural dynamics and recognising the lesson from history that post-conflict reconstruction is most effective if rebuilt institutions reflect the culture and society which they will serve. Military actions have to strike a difficult balance between imposing will and maintaining support.

3.5 Developing *Counter Insurgency Operations*

The creation of DGD&D in 1993 was an important step in re-orientating the Army from being Warsaw Pact-focussed to being manoeuvrist in approach and more expeditionary in outlook. After forty years in Germany, the tactical doctrine of the late 1980s reflected NATO's positional, ordered approach and all it had developed in terms of approach. It had a very particular sense of order which could be traced back to Montgomery, where "formations and units found themselves planning positional battles and a slogging match — how best to absorb the shock of the enemy attack rather than avoid it, and requiring defence of ground to the last man."⁵² As the result of Bagnall's reforms, all this had to be changed which included revising existing tactical doctrine to make it coherent with the ideas introduced by *BMD*, in particular the manoeuvrist approach.

For the doctrine writers at DGD&D, the first task was complete the higher level doctrine series, its ADPs. Bulloch rationalized the existing nine-volume AFM series into a more manageable two-volume publication that covered combined arms doctrine in one and environmental doctrine – jungle, desert, mountain, and arctic warfare – in the other.⁵³ Both volumes would have to reflect the manoeuvrist approach and mission command.⁵⁴ His plan was further prioritized to first revise the Army's conventional tactical doctrine, and then to revise the environmental pamphlets.

By 1993, the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine was fifteen years old and in need of review. Land Operations Vol. III *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*⁵⁵ was last published in 1977, a revision of the 1969 edition. *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977) described those operations "British forces may have to undertake when maintaining and restoring law and order in an internal security or revolutionary war setting."⁵⁶ Like *ATOM* it was published in two parts; Part 1 which explained general principles, and Part 2 which described detailed tactics, procedures and training.

The influence of previous campaigns was evident. Even in the 1977 edition, strong impressions of Malaya and Aden came through in descriptions of the legal framework for operations overseas, the context in which patrol and ambush tactics were set (mentioning jungle training and tactics⁵⁷), and the general guidance issues such as crowd control. Not surprisingly, Bulloch commented that the manual "still contained the heavy scent of the jungle and rural operations in far away Colonial territories."⁵⁸ While the 1977 edition made no specific mention of operations in Northern Ireland, it was influenced by them. It included new sections on subjects which had evolved considerably in Northern Ireland since 1969, including urban and covert surveillance operations, non-lethal riot control measures, and improvised explosive devices.⁵⁹

A comparison of the two versions of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* reveals a change in tone. Previous doctrine, particularly the 1969 manual, conveyed a tangible sense of purpose and gave the impression that the tactics they described would be used. The 1977 doctrine lacked that sense of purpose, despite reflecting tactical developments in Northern Ireland. Editing may account for this, but the 1975 Defence Review greatly influenced the mood. It focussed the UK's defence effort on NATO and reinforced the Army's commitment to Northern Ireland "for as long and in such strength as is necessary."⁶⁰ The Defence Review revealed plans to withdraw forces from Malta and the few still stationed in the Far East, and made no mention that the Army might have to intervene outside NATO's area of operations. The Royal Navy had the responsibility of being prepared to "deploy worldwide as allied or national interests require,"⁶¹ but no such task was laid on the Army. Defence policy did not require the Armed Forces to foster either an internal security or wider counterinsurgency capability.

With no readily identified prospects for counterinsurgency and with no policy requirement to consider it to any extent, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977) lacked its predecessor's focus. While it covered all the essentials of theory, the tangible sense of purpose conveyed in 1969 was absent. Kitson's fears that the Army would lose sight of the particular skills required for effective counterinsurgency, expressed so clearly in *Low Intensity Operations*,⁶² had been realized through a Defence Policy which no longer emphasized an interventionist counterinsurgency capability for the Army.

3.6 Adapting the Doctrine Writing Process

In general terms, Bulloch notes that when he started at DGD&D the AFM Series was incomplete. John Sellers, his predecessor, enjoyed the freedom to choose where to focus his attention. Although it had always been Sellers' intention to write a new counterinsurgency pamphlet, he was unable to start the task before he retired.⁶³ The need for a new manual was evident to Bulloch because so much had changed since 1977. Operations in Northern Ireland had continued to evolve as PIRA's campaign intensified, particularly in West Belfast and South Armagh. In the Balkans, links were starting to be made as well between operations in Bosnia in the early 1990s and counterinsurgency. Meanwhile, the Army now had a manoeuvrist doctrine which needed to be reflected in all its publications. Grant confirms that it was Bulloch's decision to update *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*.⁶⁴

Before starting work on counterinsurgency doctrine, Bulloch tested the process of writing and publishing doctrine by revising the Jungle Operations manual. Jungle operations had long been closely linked with the tactics and procedures in previous counterinsurgency campaigns so Bulloch's decision to rewrite environmental doctrine was of considerable relevance. Although Bulloch found the experience of writing a pamphlet important practice, the key lesson he drew from it was that the Army's process of circulating drafts for comment did not work. His response to this procedural problem was to have an important bearing on how counterinsurgency doctrine was subsequently developed and published.

DGD&D's standard practice was to circulate draft publications for comment to a set list of thirty-six addressees who had organizational responsibility for, rather than personal interest in what doctrine should contain. This method was intended to achieve consensus over what doctrine said and the way its ideas were presented. Through discussion, debate, development and eventual agreement, successive drafts ought to have incorporated suggestions and ideas so that the final version would be a true reflection of the Army's position on the subject. This was what Downie describes in his Institutional Learning Cycle as achieving sustained organizational consensus.

Jungle Operations prompted only three replies, of which one pointed out minor typographical errors, and another expressed curt disinterest. Bulloch recognized that this approach would not work, particularly with as complex a subject as counterinsurgency. He needed to get greater involvement from those who had either a clear interest in the subject, or a clear responsibility for jungle operations, so he worked out who those people were and invited them to contribute. This was an improvement. He got the information he needed, and he published *Jungle Operations* without further consultation and without taking it to the ADC. It was well-received by the Army, particularly at the JWS where it was the core instructional text – doctrine was what was taught.⁶⁵ As a direct result of writing *Jungle Operations*, Bulloch followed the same approach with counterinsurgency doctrine. He would consult only with those who had something to contribute and publish it when he was happy with the doctrine.⁶⁶

The challenges Bulloch encountered with *Jungle Operations* and a clearly moribund staff process were not new. Montgomery faced similar problems when developing *Infantry Training* in 1929, and Haig had had similar difficulties when gaining consensus for *Field Service Regulations*. Both cases were examined in Chapter 2. They are not alone, as Downie illustrates in his examination of the U.S. Army's response to doctrine

for low intensity conflict following the Vietnam War and U.S. operations in El Salvador and Colombia.

3.7 Revising *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977)

By April 1994, Bulloch had developed a plan for the new counterinsurgency doctrine and he discussed it with the new DLW, Brig. (later Lt. Gen. Sir) Alistair Irwin. Irwin came to Upavon from Belfast having commanded 39 Brigade where he had been instrumental in introducing contemporary doctrine into Northern Ireland. Both Bulloch and Irwin recognized the need to capture the general experience from Northern Ireland but neither wished to compromise specific tactics or techniques. Neither did Bulloch want to leave the door open inadvertently for someone to be prosecuted, or for a claim to be brought because of either what the doctrine said or because someone had not followed it to the letter.⁶⁷ He reflected this concern in *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995):

It is therefore necessary ... to state unambiguously that this publication deals only with military operational and tactical principles and procedures. It is not, and should not be perceived as a legal work, and all words, terms and phrases are used in their military sense and within a military context rather than in their legal sense if this is different.⁶⁸

Bulloch started with *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977), and with Sellers' considerable collection of notes and articles and produced a contents list for the new manual, to which he gave the working title of *Counter-Revolutionary Warfare – Concepts, Constraints and Countermeasures*. He identified those areas he thought required to be outdated, for example the relationship between public relations, and information and psychological operations had become blurred and needed to be redefined.⁶⁹ He then expanded sections on the concepts of insurgency to provide a sound theoretical base for the analysis of insurgencies. In this he drew heavily on Bard O'Neil's work on insurgency and terrorism.⁷⁰ In Part 2, which covered counterinsurgency, Bulloch drew in the Army's new doctrine of Manoeuvre Warfare, the operational concept of Deep, Close and Rear operations, and the core functions of Find, Fix and Strike in a revised approach to counterinsurgency.

Bulloch's personal initiative to rewrite *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* was clearly at odds with the general mood of the period. By 1994, as Grant confirms, DGD&D's principal focus was the development of the ADP series, and "there was a conscious effort at Upavon to concentrate on the operational and strategic levels of command."⁷¹ The programme of doctrine writing focussed on developing manoeuvrist warfighting doctrine for future large-scale, high-intensity, conventional warfare, not a protracted counterinsurgency campaign where troops might be committed "to buy time in which to address particular grievances," where "dramatic tactical military success may in fact be counter-productive," and where "it may not be possible to predict how long involvement may last, so the campaign may not be planned in the decisive, coherent fashion to which military commanders aspire."⁷² The idea of developing counterinsurgency doctrine ran against the general thrust of the doctrine-writing programme, and the general view was that it was by then anomalous to on-going peace support operations in Bosnia. Furthermore, Bulloch followed the unorthodox approach he used to publish *Jungle Operations*. He ignored the stilted prescribed method so that he could gain advice from those he felt best informed to help him, and he avoided the

formalities to get it published. Without Bulloch's personal intervention, it is clear that British counterinsurgency doctrine would not have been developed at all.

3.8 Revising the Principles of Counterinsurgency

Chapter 2 established that principles are a long-standing essential part of doctrine.⁷³ Since the first distinct doctrine for "operations for the maintenance or restoration of internal peace" were published as *Notes on Imperial Policing* (1934), one of the main objectives of doctrine has been to "define the principles governing operations of this nature, and to indicate the methods of applying them."⁷⁴ Every successive publication has done that and every time the doctrine has been revised, so too have the principles. Close examination of the published doctrine reveals a remarkable consistency in each set of principles identified by successive writers. This is despite each publication being the product of its time and each reflecting recent campaign experiences and lessons learnt. Recurring principles centre on civilian primacy and civil-military co-operation; on developing a sound intelligence system; on using the minimum level of force; on operating in accordance with the law; on maintaining popular support; and on securing and safeguarding the population. Table 5 shows the development of principles with each edition of British doctrine, and the consistency within them is evident.

The principles described in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977) were police and military co-operation, the Law, minimum necessary force, political awareness and popular support.⁷⁵ As such, they were entirely in keeping with the progression of principles since *Notes on Imperial Policing* (1934). *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977) did make clear for the first time in British doctrine the requirement for a multi-disciplinary approach to counterinsurgency when it established that,

There has never been a purely military solution to revolution: political, social, economic and military measures all have a part to play in restoring the position of the civil authorities. Furthermore, the military contribution although important is only one element in the government's reaction to the crisis.⁷⁶

Counter-Revolutionary Operations' author quite clearly reflected Frank Kitson's belief that there is no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity. Thompson's influence is also apparent in terms of his five principles, the third of which states that the government must have an overall plan. Such a plan, Thompson explained, "must cover not just the security measures and military operations. It must include all political, social, economic, administrative, police and other measures which have an influence on the insurgency."⁷⁷ In this one statement, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* captured the essence of the central argument presented by the two most influential British theorists: that military action may be necessary to restore order in a dangerous situation, but military action can only deal with a symptom of a more deep seated problem.

3.8.1 Co-operation

Police and military co-operation was a theme *en passant* in *Notes on Imperial Policing* (1934), but was covered more fully in *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* (1949). Under the heading of General Principles, it established that "mutual confidence between the civil, the police and the military authorities at all levels is of the first importance."⁷⁸ It went on to elaborate:

The more congenial the relations between civil and military authorities the better. If these are, for reasons which need not be discussed here, soured, they must be made sweet even if this involves the changing of individuals. Personal knowledge of individual government and police officers on all levels breeds mutual confidence, ensures mutual understanding and will go far towards ensuring that the military commander is well in the picture, and consequently prepared, before he is called upon actively to intervene.⁷⁹

Its guidance sought to ameliorate the inherent tensions in the civil authority's recognition that it had failed to contain the situation, and that it had to resort to the armed forces to help restore order. Gwynn had identified this in his book *Imperial Policing*:

When unity of control, which is perhaps the most important result of proclaiming martial law, is not provided, the necessity of close co-operation and of mutual understanding is all the more important. Anything in the nature of jealousy or competition to secure credit is certain to lead to lack of co-ordination in courses of action.⁸⁰

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1977) introduced a sense of pragmatism, noting that the decision to ask for military assistance would "seldom come as a bolt from the blue,"⁸¹ but it may be surrounded by uncertainty over the gravity of the situation, the capability of the police to contain it, and general unfamiliarity over "the unpalatable decision to call for [military] assistance."⁸² Maj. Gen. Anthony Farrar-Hockley provided some context which supports this when he observed that,

In the majority of internal security campaigns in which the United Kingdom has been engaged since 1945, political subversion and terrorism have reduced the credibility of government to a critical point and the police to near exhaustion before troops have been called in. It is bound to be so in a democratic society threatened by insurgency because ... government must first employ all civil means at their disposal before taking the extraordinary step – itself an admission that its authority is threatened – of using armed force to coerce members of the populace.⁸³

By way of an example, Farrar-Hockley cited the opening narrative of the Staff College examination Tactics 'C' Paper which began with,

You are commanding 1 LOAMSHIRES and have just arrived in the NW District of BONGOLAND. Immediately, you are called into a conference with the district commissioner and the Superintendent of Police. The former says. "I am delighted to see you. Confidence in the government is waning fast and it is essential that we restore it without delay. Please round up all the local terrorists in the forest/mountains/desert as quickly as you can and meantime put guards on all government and commercial centres, residential areas and the girls' school." "The police superintendent adds, "And please relieve my men from all external duties for the next week. Particularly riot dispersal and prevention as we are exhausted."⁸⁴

Both Kitson and Farrar-Hockley were intimately familiar with such a problem, and Kitson highlighted the often considerable challenges that the soldier faced when called upon to intervene. He recognized the critical importance of close civil and military co-

operation, stressing in *Low Intensity Operations* that “only by a close combination of civil and military measures that insurgency can be fought.”⁸⁵ This, he explained, placed an onus on the Army to ensure that its soldiers were well-prepared for their military tasks in this complex form of operation and to inform and educate their civilian counterparts:

It is logical to expect soldiers whose business it is to know how to fight, to know also how to use civil measures in this way. Not only should the army officers know about the subject, they must also be prepared to pass on their knowledge to politicians, civil servants, economists, members of the local government and policemen where necessary. The educational function of the army at these critical moments is most important. Amongst senior officers in particular, ignorance or excessive diffidence in passing along such knowledge can be disastrous.⁸⁶

3.8.2 The Law

Kitson advocated a ‘legal system adequate to the needs of the moment,’ and Thompson’s second principle was that the government must function in accordance with the law.⁸⁷ He was not the first to highlight the paramount requirement for the government and its agents to uphold the law, or “forfeit the right to be called a government.”⁸⁸ *Notes on Imperial Policing* (1934) provided considerable guidance on the legal framework, in particular the imposition of Martial Law, the justification for it, the machinery for its administration and its withdrawal.⁸⁹ The 1949 manual went further, explaining the legal authority for soldiers to act in aid of the civil authorities, the issue of acting in self-defence, suppression of riotous and unlawful assemblies, the use of firearms, and powers of arrest.

3.8.3 Minimum Necessary Force

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1977) described minimum necessary force as a “useful catchphrase,”⁹⁰ which was something of an understatement since Minimum Force had been a cornerstone of the British approach since *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* (1923). In line with previous manuals, the 1977 doctrine provided guidance on the “necessary and reasonable” use of force. It emphasized that force must not be used at all unless it is necessary, that no more force may be used than is both necessary and reasonable in the circumstances, and that force must not be used for a punitive purpose or to act as a deterrent.⁹¹ Its author recognized the difficulty of laying down hard and fast rules about the degree of force which was reasonable. However, the guidance it provided was less than helpful and failed to capture the inherent difficulty soldiers have consistently found in striking the right balance.

3.8.4 Political Awareness

Duties in Aid of the Civil Power (1949) introduced the idea of politically motivated insurgency, and *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) recognized that counterinsurgency required military, para-military, political, economic, psychological and sociological measures to defeat insurgency. Implicit in both these ideas was a need for the soldier to be aware of the situation as a whole; indeed one of the principles introduced in 1949 was ‘Knowledge of the background to unrest.’ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977) went much further than before, formalizing the need for all servicemen to be aware of the government’s political aims and its measures to be

implemented so that operations could be planned “in accord with government intentions.”⁹² Soldiers also had to be aware of revolutionary propaganda. It offered a word of caution in that “political neutrality and complete impartiality in upholding the law continue to be ... fundamental to military conduct.”⁹³ This had become an important aspect of military operations in Northern Ireland, and was one of the conclusions in the Army’s campaign analysis: while the political context would dictate what the military could achieve and what limitations were imposed, “the requirement for strategic and operational commanders to guide and inform political decision-making is clear.”⁹⁴ This principle was one which carried over readily from the specific into the more general *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*.

3.8.5 Popular Support

The principle of gaining popular support was developed in the 1959 and 1963 editions of *Keeping the Peace* and *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969). The 1977 manual concentrated on the effects of insurgent threats and propaganda on a population’s willingness to support its government actively. It identified the requirement to establish effective security for the population as a key condition: “Until the people can be protected from [insurgent propaganda, coercion and terror], fear and self interest will dominate their actions and the security forces will encounter a barrier of both active and passive resistance.”⁹⁵ This explicit statement of requirement, that military operations had to protect the population, was to become the cornerstone of the U.S. Army’s doctrine and its tactical approach in Iraq from 2007.

To help counter insurgent propaganda, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* echoed Kitson’s call for the Army to be better prepared for counterinsurgency operations and established the need for effective ‘information and counter-propaganda’ policies to be prepared ahead of an intervention. The practical difficulties this would create – identifying the right audiences, taking due account of cultural and social differences – clearly had not been fully considered, but the difficulty soldiers faced when having to act unprepared was well made in the doctrine:

The local police may well need a respite to reorganize and rest, and their duties will then have to be taken up at short notice by British forces. The sudden exposure of military units to close contact with the local population, possibly without adequate preparation of popular opinion ... may lead to situations which can be distorted, misrepresented and exploited by revolutionary propaganda.⁹⁶

3.9 Developing New Principles for *Counter Insurgency Operations*

Bulloch’s revision of counterinsurgency principles was one of the important changes he made to British doctrine. In this work he took advice from Dr John Pimlott, then a senior lecturer at RMA Sandhurst with a recognized interest in counterinsurgency.⁹⁷ They used Thompson’s five principles (the government must have a clear political aim; function in accordance with law; the government must have an overall plan; give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas; in the guerrilla phase, secure base areas first⁹⁸) to review the principles described in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977). They also used Kitson’s operating framework of “coordinating machinery at every level for the direction of the campaign, arrangements for ensuring that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people, an intelligence

organisation suited to the circumstances, and a legal system adequate to the needs of the moment.”⁹⁹

Given the general level of awareness of legal considerations resulting from service in Northern Ireland, Bulloch thought it was safe to assume that the Army generally knew its legal responsibilities and would operate in accordance with the law. Thus while the legal dimension would be covered in detail in the new publication, it did not warrant being a principle in its own right. Pimlott and Bulloch decided to develop a balance of political, military and intelligence principles, and introduced a sixth, that of long-term planning.¹⁰⁰

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1977) included a short chapter entitled Information and Counter-Propaganda which recognized the role that communications technology had to play in shaping opinion in a wide range of audiences:

Advances in technology, education and the economy have resulted in large captive audiences for the media... Improvements in communications... have had the effect of minimizing time and space, giving greater immediacy to events...[which] increases the influence of the media and with it the opportunity for presentation of government policy, facts and events. The opportunity for misrepresentation is also present.¹⁰¹

In general terms, however, Bulloch thought that existing doctrine did not place enough emphasis on the role of public information or psychological operations. This was an important omission, certainly if Kitson’s view was accepted that “wars of subversion and counter-subversion are fought, in the last resort, in the minds of the people.”¹⁰² Since Kitson also emphasized the importance of public information to ensure that “the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people,”¹⁰³ Bulloch concluded that the psychological dimension could not be ignored and therefore incorporated it into the principle of separating the insurgent from the people.¹⁰⁴

Counter-Revolutionary Warfare (1977) described the military tasks as *offensive* tasks to eliminate the threat, and *defensive* tasks to contain the situation. Offensive tasks included patrols, ambushes, cordon and search operations, and defensive tasks included guards, police protection, road blocks, crowd dispersal and community protection. Although the doctrine went on to describe tactics for protecting key points, population control measures and crowd dispersal – the whole of Part 4 is devoted to the basic procedures and techniques – no further mention is made of community protection.¹⁰⁵ This is an indication of the extent to which military thinking had been shaped by Northern Ireland. The population security tasks outlined in the 1963 edition of *Keeping the Peace*, and so clearly influenced by operations in Malaya – area and collective measures of control, curfews, restrictions on movement, and control of supplies¹⁰⁶ – appeared to be no longer relevant in the context of Northern Ireland. As a result, *Counter-Revolutionary Warfare* (1977) made no reference to them at all. Yet establishing security had been a central tenet of all previous post-war doctrine, and although the tactics described in *Counter-Revolutionary Warfare* were intended to contain or eliminate insurgents, they did not address the problem of insurgency as a whole. This was an important omission, and was based on an assumption which by 2003 was no longer valid: Northern Ireland was not the campaign it once was, and education for staff officers and commanders did not emphasize small wars at all.

It was evident to Bulloch that action had to be taken against the insurgent, both physically and psychologically, and the root causes of the insurgency required to be addressed in the short- and longer-term. As a result, he developed two new principles which were Separating the Insurgent from the People, and Neutralising the Insurgent. As such, there was nothing new in what he described but he made both issues much more explicit, and he returned to ideas that had been first identified but not fully articulated in *Notes on Imperial Policing* in 1934:

- (i) To prevent interference with the normal life of the affected district, *i.e.* to maintain communications in operation and to protect life and property.
- (ii) To get to grips with the hostile elements and bring them into subjection.¹⁰⁷

Bulloch decided that the principles would be of more utility to commanders and planners if they were arranged in a logical sequence. Pimlott thought that the sequence was left rather open-ended and suggested that planners ought to look beyond the immediacy of the security situation to the conditions a government should seek to establish and maintain into the longer term to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. This discussion resulted in the development of the principle of Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning.¹⁰⁸ The six principles published in *Counter Insurgency Operations*, and which were the cornerstone of the British approach were:

- Political primacy and political aim
- Coordinated government machinery
- Intelligence and information
- Separating the insurgent from his support
- Neutralising the insurgent
- Longer term post-insurgency planning

The final version was ready for publication in 1995. Irwin double-checked the final draft to make sure it captured the experience of Northern Ireland but not the specifics. In terms of the Downie model of Institutional Learning, it is important to note that although Bulloch had kept the Army Doctrine Committee informed of his work on counterinsurgency he did not take it to the Committee for final approval or circulate it for comment. He simply published the manual without any further discussion, debate or disagreement. In the context of the mid-1990s, where doctrine for major combat operations and peace support were the focus, counterinsurgency doctrine may not have been a pressing or a contentious issue. In spite of this emphasis, Bulloch revised and updated the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine and circumvented having to achieve organizational consensus to have it published. Ten years later, what Bulloch published in *Counter Insurgency Operations* would be one of the Army's central debates while it was embroiled in Iraq.

3.10 Counter Insurgency Operations: Effective Doctrine?

The criteria for effective doctrine identified in Chapter 2 were: acceptability with the target audience; endurability; contemporary relevancy; suitability as educational material; and accessibility and manageability. Is *Counter Insurgency Operations* effective doctrine? Answering this question will allow any notable strengths or areas of

potential weakness to be identified which might subsequently explain its usefulness there.

For *Counter Insurgency Operations*, the criteria for effective doctrine are inextricably linked. This has much to do with the way it was developed, and the target audience Bulloch had in mind, which was principally the student at Camberley.¹⁰⁹ For the Army of the 1990s, Malaya, The Oman, and Northern Ireland were the staple campaigns at Sandhurst and the Staff College, and the campaign in Northern Ireland had continuing operational relevancy. *Counter Insurgency Operations* therefore struck no discordant notes. This is because Bulloch built on the enduring themes of British counterinsurgency and integrated the main themes of the new manoeuvrist doctrine. While it is now reasonable to judge that the attempts to set it in a more contemporary context were incomplete, nevertheless it offered the right pointers towards future operations. The new manual was well-suited as educational material, having been written and developed with Staff College students in mind, and the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) used the draft edition as the course text in 1994.¹¹⁰ For the Staff College student and the wider Army, Bulloch's introduction of material from *ADP Operations* provided it with a distinctly contemporary doctrinal feel, even if the operational setting seemed to be more of the 1960s than the last years of the twentieth century.

While the Staff College continued to use *Counter Insurgency Operations* to teach counterinsurgency, rather unusually, for some time, the Staff College was one of the few places in the Army which had copies. This was entirely due to when the decision to publish was taken. Bulloch had expected that the manual would be distributed widely throughout the Army as was usually the case with Field Manuals. However, the scale of distribution was changed following an intervention by Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose. Rose had been Commandant at the Staff College between 1991 and 1993 when Camberley had been responsible for Army doctrine under the old system, and later commanded UNPROFOR in Bosnia.¹¹¹ He suggested that no one would be interested in counterinsurgency because peace support operations were now the focus. As a result, Bulloch decided to publish *Counter Insurgency Operations* on a very limited distribution, "with enough copies being printed to provide the Staff College with teaching material and some copies for senior officers who might have had an interest."¹¹²

Bulloch's decision effectively limited accessibility to *Counter Insurgency Operations* to students at Camberley. They alone were taught its precepts in any detail, and while the main themes of the Army's manoeuvrist doctrine had migrated to Northern Ireland, it used its own theatre-specific doctrine. This problem of limited distribution persisted until the Army published an Electronic Battlebox in 1999, in which DGD&D included all the Army, joint service and allied doctrine on CD-ROMs on a very wide distribution. This gave every unit access to all the current doctrine and, for *Counter Insurgency Operations*, it overcame the Staff College-only problem, but it did not overcome the problem of much reduced teaching of counterinsurgency doctrine.

While *Counter Insurgency Operations* had been written to be taught, how it was taught became the issue. In Kitson's view, "Military commanders in counter-insurgency operations cannot do without a real understanding of this sort of war in the widest sense... Unfortunately the level of understanding and training in the sphere of counter-

insurgency has not always been good enough for the system to operate effectively.”¹¹³ He saw education in counterinsurgency as a crucial prerequisite for success, and certainly the Staff College met his imperative until 1997, when the three service staff colleges merged to form the Joint Services Command and Staff College. Up to then, students on ACSC at Camberley spent Term 4 (of five) studying counterinsurgency “in order to gain a detailed understanding of joint operations, peace support operations and counter insurgency.”¹¹⁴ The key themes the course examined included the higher level planning and command, the complex mix of international, British and host nation laws with which forces would have to comply, the challenges of mass media interest, and the psychological dimension of such operations. It was all intended to develop officers who “are resourceful and capable of improvisation... [solving problems] by applying principles, rather than attempting to impose previously learnt practice.”¹¹⁵

The Camberley counterinsurgency module was three weeks long, and included counterparts from the Police Staff College at Bramshill. The syllabus was comprehensive, reflected doctrine, and covered insurgency and its causes, the use of force, counterinsurgency, the role of the police, terrorism and counter-terrorism, and counterinsurgency in the geo-political context. Students examined case studies of the development of British counterinsurgency theory, and studied the wars in Algeria, Vietnam, and Dhofar to draw out the main campaign lessons. The module ended with a four-day Northern Ireland study period, during which the Chief Constable, GOC, politicians from the major parties except Sinn Fein, a brigade commander, and the media presented. Students also had to research and give a presentation on either the Huk insurgency in the Philippines or the Shining Path in Peru, and a presentation on a Northern Ireland-related topic. All discussions were based on the draft doctrine, and all the teaching materials and course notes referred consistently to the new British principles, the minimum use of force, the legal position, the importance of intelligence, and the psychological dimension of counterinsurgency.¹¹⁶ Of note, and somewhat counter to the popular view of the Army’s obsession with it, very little mention was made of the campaign in Malaya, instead attention focussed on the British campaign in the Oman, principally because Gen. Akehurst, who commanded there, had been the commandant at Camberley and lodged his papers with the library.

The depth of study undertaken at Camberley, and the heightened level of understanding in counterinsurgency it provided, ended in 1997 when the Single Service Staff Colleges closed and JSCSC opened at Bracknell before moving to Shrivenham. The Joint course had three terms, the second of which was undertaken on a single service and land, maritime or air basis. Soldiers on the JSCSC studied land warfare *in toto* for twelve weeks, compared to the forty weeks their predecessors had spent at Camberley. On the new course, counterinsurgency was one of three topics covered in the three days allocated to the ‘Other Operations’ stage. It warranted just one of the three central lectures which introduced ‘Other Operations,’ and five periods where teams of three students gave presentations on a counterinsurgency case study they had researched in their study time. Until 2004, when the setting changed to a post-conflict insurgency, they also took part in a day-long map-table exercise set in Brunei, on the same basis that Farrar-Hockley recalled of the Army having been called in to support an exhausted police force deal with a revolutionary insurgency. The low priority and little time allocated to study such a complex subject as counterinsurgency meant that the educational value of what was taught fell far below Kitson’s demands, and was far

removed from the approach followed at Camberley. It meant that the intention behind the stage was hopelessly ambitious:

To develop understanding of expeditionary intervention operations with an emphasis on contemporary PSO and historical COIN operations at the Land Component level. In particular it focuses on the principles and characteristics of a complex intervention operation, the operational framework and core functions as they relate to these types of operation.¹¹⁷

While the ACSC counterinsurgency study has been overhauled, updated and expanded since 2008, it is important to note that for a decade, the only officers to get any instruction on counterinsurgency were Army students at JSCSC. When compared to the teaching provided at Camberley, for ten years coverage on the flagship ACSC was perfunctory and, even in the most basic educational terms, fell woefully short of its stated intention. Graduates from JSCSC got nothing more than an introduction to the theory and history of counterinsurgency, the very issue that Frank Kitson had stressed and laid out so carefully in *Low Intensity Operations*, and fostered throughout his career. *Counter Insurgency Operations* may have been sound doctrine but the issue was it was not taught. Instead attention focussed on preparing staff officers of all three services for UK-led intervention operations, and the UK-led campaign planning process needed to undertake them. For what followed in Iraq, until UK military operations ended in May 2009, the principal doctrine, which reflected the essential themes of British counterinsurgency experience and thinking, had been a reference on a staff college reading list and for which no teaching had been provided.

¹ Bulloch interview, London, 2007.

² *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995), Part 1, p. ii.

³ *ADP Operations*, p. 7-8.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 7-8.

⁵ Maj. Gen. Paul Newton, email to author, 29 June 2009.

⁶ *ADP Operations*, p. 2-15-2-16.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7-8.

⁸ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, pp. B-2-2-B-2-3.

⁹ Bulloch interview, London, 2007.

¹⁰ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-2-3.

¹¹ *ADP Operations*, p. 2-1.

¹² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-2-3. Emphasis added

¹³ *ADP Operations*, p. 2-1.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Chapter 2.

¹⁵ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-2-6.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. B-2-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. B-2-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. B-2-11.

¹⁹ Army Code No 71842, *Operation Banner: An Analysis of Military Operations in Northern Ireland*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, July 2006, p. 2-15.

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- ²⁰ Supporting Essay Six, “Future Military Capabilities”, *Strategic Defence Review*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty, July 1998, Paragraph 13.
- ²¹ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2008.
- ²² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-3-1.
- ²³ *Ibid*, p. A-2.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, p. B-3-1. Emphasis added.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, p. B-2-1.
- ²⁶ “the approach will differ from country to country [and should take] account of local circumstances and the analysis of the type of insurgency faced.” *Ibid*, p. B-3-3.
- ²⁷ Gen. Sir Frank Kitson, interview with Paul Melshen, 8 January 1986, quoted in Melshen “Mapping out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan: Critical Considerations in Counterinsurgency Campaigning”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 2007, p. 667.
- ²⁸ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-3-2.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, p. B-3-5.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, p. B-3-5.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. B-3-6.
- ³² *Ibid*, p. B-3-7.
- ³³ *Ibid*, p. B-3-7.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*, p. B-3-8.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, p. B-3-10.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, p. B-3-11.
- ³⁷ *Ibid*, p. B-3-2.
- ³⁸ Bulloch, interview, Enford 2008.
- ³⁹ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-3-14.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. B-3-14.
- ⁴¹ Bulloch, interview, Enford 2008.
- ⁴² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-8-1.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, p. B-8-1.
- ⁴⁴ Douglas Porch, “Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare”, in Gordon Alexander Craig, Felix Gilbert, (eds.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986, Ch.14, pp. 376–407.
- ⁴⁵ *Keeping the Peace*, 1957, p. 54.
- ⁴⁶ *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-8-3.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. B-8-3.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. B-8-1.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. B-8-3.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. B-8-2.
- ⁵¹ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 61.
- ⁵² See John Kiszely, “The British army and approaches to warfare since 1945”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1996, pp. 184-5.
- ⁵³ Bulloch, interview, Enford 2008.

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- ⁵⁴ *Idem.* Bulloch also wrote a new Tactical Aide Memoire which précised the main principles and tactics contained in the AFM. He took the pre-publication draft to the Post Office to weigh it to make sure it was light enough to be carried in a combat jacket pocket.
- ⁵⁵ Army Code No 70516 (Parts 1 and 2), Land Operations Vol. III, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations - Part 1 General Principles*, and Part 2 – *Procedures and Techniques*, London: by Command of the Defence Council, 1977. Henceforth *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*.
- ⁵⁶ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 1, p. iii.
- ⁵⁷ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, Part 2, pp. 132-134.
- ⁵⁸ Bulloch, “The Development of Doctrine for Counter Insurgency – The British Experience”, p. 23.
- ⁵⁹ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, Part 1, p. 108, p. 115, and p. 141 respectively.
- ⁶⁰ National Archive, C(75) 21, *Statement on the Defence Estimates*, 25 February 1975, p. II-16
- ⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. III-2.
- ⁶² Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 2.
- ⁶³ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2008. Sellers accumulated a large number of articles over the years and made many notes but he did not start work on such a pamphlet before he retired. According to Bulloch, Sellers used the large pile of counterinsurgency-related notes as his door stop for some time.
- ⁶⁴ Grant, interview.
- ⁶⁵ Bulloch, interview, Enford 2008.
- ⁶⁶ *Idem.*
- ⁶⁷ Bulloch, interview, London 2007.
- ⁶⁸ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, Part 2, 1995, p. i.
- ⁶⁹ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2008.
- ⁷⁰ Bard E. O’Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, Washington DC: Potomac Books, 1990.
- ⁷¹ Grant, interview.
- ⁷² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, pp. B-2-3 – B-2-4.
- ⁷³ *British Defence Doctrine*. 2001, p. 3-1.
- ⁷⁴ War Office Manual 1307, *Notes on Imperial Policing*, London: HMSO, 1934, pp. 5-6.
- ⁷⁵ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, pp. 37-39.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 37.
- ⁷⁷ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p. 55.
- ⁷⁸ *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, 1949, p. 4.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 6.
- ⁸⁰ Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, p. 15.
- ⁸¹ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, p. 37.
- ⁸² *Ibid*, p. 37.
- ⁸³ Maj. Gen. A. H. Farrar-Hockley, “*Low Intensity Operations: A Review*”, *British Army Review*, April 1974, p. 65.
- ⁸⁴ Farrar-Hockley, p. 65.
- ⁸⁵ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 300.
- ⁸⁶ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, p. 300.
- ⁸⁷ Thompson, p. 52.

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- ⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52.
- ⁸⁹ *Notes on Imperial Policing*, Chapter V – Martial Law, pp. 28-42.
- ⁹⁰ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, p. 38.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.
- ⁹² *Ibid*, p. 38.
- ⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 38.
- ⁹⁴ *Operation Banner*, p. 8-2.
- ⁹⁵ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, p. 39.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 39.
- ⁹⁷ See Beckett and Pimlott, *Armed Forces & Modern Counter-insurgency*.
- ⁹⁸ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, pp. 111-114.
- ⁹⁹ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, pp. 290-1.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bulloch, interview, London 2007.
- ¹⁰¹ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1977, p. 59
- ¹⁰² Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 78.
- ¹⁰³ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, pp. 290-1.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2008.
- ¹⁰⁵ See *Counter Revolutionary Warfare*, 1997, Part 2, Chapters 6-12.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Keeping the Peace*, Part 1 – *Doctrine*, 1963, pp. 32-37.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Notes on Imperial Policing*, 1934, p. 7.
- ¹⁰⁸ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2008.
- ¹⁰⁹ Bulloch interview, London, 2007.
- ¹¹⁰ Army Staff College Operations Team, *Staff College Notes on Counter Insurgency*, Camberley: Army Staff College, wpc4/ds dated 4 July 1994.
- ¹¹¹ See Michael Rose, “New horizons at the Staff College Camberley”, *The RUSI Journal*, December 1993, pp. 75-78, and *Fighting for Peace, Bosnia 1994*, London: Harvill Press, 1998.
- ¹¹² Bulloch, interview, London, 4 June 2007.
- ¹¹³ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, p. 301.
- ¹¹⁴ JSCSC Archive, *DS Guide to Term 4 1994*, 28 ACSC, 1994, Camberley: Staff College, p. 1.
- ¹¹⁵ *DS Guide to Term 4 1994*, p. 2.
- ¹¹⁶ JSCSC Archive, ACSC 1994 Syllabus. The author’s contemporaneous notes from ACSC 28 confirm the lectures and discussions made constant reference to doctrine and British historical experience.
- ¹¹⁷ JSCSC Archive, JSCSC Single Component Phase (Land), ACSC No. 7, September 2003-July 2004.

4 The Evolution of British Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Chapter 3 established the essential tenets of the Army's doctrine for counterinsurgency. It was the most recent of a series of manuals which can be traced back to 1909, and which has addressed first 'small wars,' then successively imperial policing, aid to the civil power, counter-revolutionary warfare and finally counterinsurgency. With every new publication, as Bulloch observes, British thinking evolved and developed into the next form.¹ If Bulloch's view is accepted that *Counter Insurgency Operations* is the product of an evolutionary process, one which is prompted by changing threats and operational and tactical developments, such a process must then be examined to identify the key developments and influences in the process and to determine how doctrine evolved. This will allow what *Counter Insurgency Operations* contains, in particular the principles and methods which characterize the British approach, to be set in context against the general themes of British counterinsurgency doctrine.

This chapter examines how British counterinsurgency doctrine evolved. It examines the influences on it as it evolved, the role of the main British theorists, and the principal military campaigns. It examines how doctrine developed in Northern Ireland to show the interaction between mainstream doctrinal reform and bespoke theatre doctrine, and their link to *Counter Insurgency Operations*. The intention is to establish the enduring themes of doctrine.

Field Service Regulations provided the Army's first formal doctrine, and its first, albeit brief, guidance on what it referred to as 'Warfare in Uncivilized Countries.' At the time *FSR* were published, the general term in use was 'small wars,' what Charles Callwell defined as "operations of regular armies against irregular, or comparatively speaking irregular, forces."² Other than official doctrine, Callwell was one of a number of writers whose books provided detailed practical, tactical guidance for those training for small wars,³ in particular "campaigns for the suppression of insurrections or lawlessness."⁴ *FSR* were the start point for formal small wars doctrine. It made the important point that the markedly different conditions in which small wars took place required that "the principles of regular warfare be somewhat modified."⁵ In this regard, *FSR* echoed Callwell's conclusion that,

the conditions of small wars are so diversified, the enemy's mode of fighting is often so peculiar, and the theatres of operations present such singular features, that irregular warfare must generally be carried out on a method totally different from the stereotyped system. The art of war, as generally understood, must be modified to suit the circumstances of each particular case. The conduct of small wars is in fact in certain aspects an art in itself, diverging widely from what is adapted to the conditions of regular warfare, but not so widely that there are not in all its branches points which permit comparisons to be established.⁶

This was a point which Frank Kitson would further emphasize in the 1970s.

After the First War, when Britain's imperial responsibilities increased, the Army's doctrine to deal with insurrection and lawlessness followed two paths. The first covered possible military actions in the United Kingdom in the event it was called upon in response to widespread civilian unrest. This was published as *Duties in Aid of the Civil*

Power in 1923. The second followed the theme of small wars and ‘Wars in Uncivilized Countries,’ and dealt with the more complex issue of imperial policing, with which so much of the Army would be involved in the years following the end of the First War.

4.1 1923: *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* and the Principle of Minimum Force

Duties in Aid of the Civil Power explained the Army’s lawful responsibilities to “aid in suppressing disturbances with which the civil power itself was unable to cope.”⁷ A short 50-page pamphlet, it provided some general principles and guidance on how Common Law and Military Law related to the Army’s duty to act in support of the civil power in the face of widespread civil disorder as the result of trades union and employment-related unrest. It did not link this type of disorder to other forms of political subversion, or to wider attempts to seize political power, despite the Bolshevik Revolution and general political unrest in the immediate post-war years.

Duties in Aid of the Civil Power (1923) marks an important step in the development of doctrine because it was the first pamphlet to examine the factors affecting the decision to use force to restore law and order. It codified the principle of minimum force to offer guidance on the use of lethal force. This is now judged by many as one of the defining principles of the British approach to counterinsurgency. Thomas Mockaitis, for example, considers minimum force to be central in what he describes as “the most effective approach to counter-insurgency yet devised.”⁸ Rod Thornton goes further when he suggests that it informed “virtually all of the actions carried out by the British in COIN operations... The principle is ... deeply rooted and therefore quintessentially a guiding philosophy for British COIN techniques.”⁹

All doctrine published since 1923 echoes its guidance on minimum force. *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* made clear that a range of options existed, from the act of putting the soldiers onto the streets to, if the situation so warranted, the use of lethal force. It examined the two difficult decisions which a military commander faced: was force justified, and just how much force should be used? Both decisions required judgement and care:

The degree of force to be used is to be just so much and no more than is essential to deal with the immediate situation. In certain cases the mere display of force may suffice; in others it may be necessary to use lethal weapons for protecting person or property from violent crowds, or for dispersing a riotous crowd which is dangerous unless dispersed. An officer must exercise all care and skills with regard to what he does, and the use of extreme force must be conducted without recklessness or negligence, care being taken to produce no further injury that is absolutely unavoidable for the purpose of protecting person and property.¹⁰

There is little difference between the 1923 definition and that published in *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) which said, “No more force may be used than is necessary to achieve a legal aim.”¹¹

The principle of minimum force predates *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*. It can be traced back to the 1912 edition of the *Manual of Military Law* which described the armed forces’ legal position and their relationship with the civil authorities when called on to support the civil power. It established that force could be used legally to restore

law and order, but the crucial issue was whether the situation was a riot, or whether it was an insurrection, where the authority of the Crown was challenged directly. Military Law distinguished between the two. If it was a riot, only that force necessary to restore law and order could be used, if it was insurrection, “the law permitted ‘any degree of force necessary.’”¹² In theory the distinction was clear; in practice it proved to be far less so.

The emphasis *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* placed on minimum force has much to do with when it was published. In 1923 the Army was still in the shadow of the infamous Amritsar Massacre, in the Punjab on 13 April 1919. How Brig. Gen. Dyer interpreted his powers to use lethal force was to have a profound effect on the Army, and on the way the armed forces would be used in future to support the civilian authorities. The critical issue was the distinction made in Military Law between a riot and an insurrection, and the level of force that each situation permitted. Dyer believed he faced an insurrection, and was thus justified in using lethal force. Simply firing to disperse the crowd was not enough: he needed to show firmness to discourage insurgents more widely. He therefore ordered soldiers to open fire on some 10,000 unarmed protestors, killing 379 and wounding over a thousand. Widespread outrage followed, martial law had to be imposed, Dyer was relieved of command, and Indian nationalist politics passed an irreversible turning point.

Lord Hunter’s enquiry into events at Amritsar concentrated on the legal distinction between rioting and insurrection and concluded that both Dyer’s decision to order his troops to fire on the crowd without warning, and for those troops to continue to fire as the crowd dispersed were unjustified.¹³ The British Government confirmed Hunter’s findings, and the direction it issued established minimum force as a cornerstone of the British approach in small, internal wars:

The principles which have consistently governed the policy of His Majesty’s Government in directing the nature, and the methods employed in the course, of military operations against a foreign enemy, may be broadly stated as the employment of no more force and destruction of life than is necessary for the purpose of forcing the enemy to subdue himself to the Military Commander’s will. This principle has governed their policy still more rigidly when military action against enemy non-combatants is concerned; *a fortiori* it is, and His Majesty’s Government are determined that it shall remain, the primary factor of policy whenever circumstances unfortunately necessitate the suppression of civil disorder by military force within the British Empire.¹⁴

The Army found the whole business of adapting to change because of Amritsar institutionally bruising. It was divided over the way in which Dyer was dealt, and the minimum force policy did nothing to remove the inevitable tensions which resulted between the Army and the civil authorities, who were now to monitor more closely the military when operating under their control. Hew Strachan notes that one consequence of Dyer’s actions, and the imposition of the principle of minimum necessary force, was that “the inter-war army came to argue that military force was a weapon of discrimination and restraint,”¹⁵ qualities that added authority to the Army’s position, and provided a benchmark against which its actions could be judged. Minimum force became, as Rod Thornton suggests, “a pragmatic response to dealing with insurgents

and terrorists.... the vital ingredient in separating both of these from their support base".¹⁶

While minimum force was codified in doctrine, it would not be right to assume that it was always followed in practice. Hew Strachan suggests that the 'Hearts and Minds' approach of the 1950s and 1960s were accompanied by "coercion, collective punishment and compulsory resettlement."¹⁷ The forced resettlement of the Chinese population in Malaya,¹⁸ and incidents such as the Batang Kali massacre on 12 December 1948 – in which it was claimed that fourteen members of the Scots Guards fired on and killed twenty-four unarmed Malaysians¹⁹ – would support this. Hew Bennett has critically re-evaluated the Army's conduct in the Mau Mau rebellion, arguing that the British government's deliberate exclusion of international law from colonial counterinsurgencies allowed the army to suppress opponents with little restraint.²⁰ Minimum force may have been policy, and it may have been published in doctrine, but its day-to-day application depended greatly on leadership, training and judgement from often quite junior commanders. More significantly for legitimacy and gaining popular support, it could not account for any government policy which might enable or condone military operations, as appeared to be the case in Kenya, that stepped outside its ideals.

4.2 Gwynn and *Imperial Policing*

A link between *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, the issue of minimum force and imperial policing is provided by Maj. Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, Commandant at the Staff College 1926-30. He published *Imperial Policing* in 1934, the same year that the War Office published *Notes on Imperial Policing*.²¹ Although Gwynn's book was not doctrine *per se*, it identified four principles for imperial policing and discussed the training necessary to prepare soldiers for the inherent problems they would face in dealing with an insurrection. It was doctrine in all but name. Gwynn's principles were intended to be applied across the range of military tasks which the Army could be required to perform in support of the police. His principles were: questions of policy remain vested in the civil Government; the amount of military force employed must be the minimum the situation demands; firm and timely action is needed to discourage further disorder; and co-operation.²² In his last principle, Gwynn emphasized that the task of restoring order did not rest on the Army alone. Unity of control, close co-operation and mutual understanding between the civil authority and the military were all important but the civil authority retained overall responsibility.

Gwynn focussed on the principle of minimum force throughout *Imperial Policing*, weaving it into the supporting narrative for each of his four principles, and drawing out lessons on the use of force in each of the nine (later expanded to eleven) British campaigns with which he illustrated his theory. He returned repeatedly to the paradoxes created by the use of force in support of ostensibly peaceful, stable government, in particular how to balance the effect of using force against its longer term consequences. Using too much force, he recognized, risked alienating the population and delaying the re-establishment of normal conditions, using too little could be seen as weak:

...the power and resolution of the Government forces must be displayed. Anything which can be interpreted as weakness encourages those who are sitting on the fence to keep on good terms with the rebels. In less serious cases, where armed rebellion is not encountered but disorder is of the nature of riots,

communal or anti-Government, which have passed out of civil control, there is the same necessity for firmness *but an even greater necessity for estimating correctly the degree of force required.*

... Mistakes of judgment may have far-reaching results. Military failure can be retrieved, but where a population is antagonized or the authority of Government seriously upset, a long period may elapse before confidence is restored and normal stable conditions are re-established.²³

4.3 1934: Notes on Imperial Policing

Ian Beckett suggests that Gwynn may have been the author of *Notes on Imperial Policing*.²⁴ If this was the case, it lacks the nuanced tone of Gwynn's discussion of minimum force in *Imperial Policing*. Nevertheless *Notes on Imperial Policing* marks a second important step in doctrinal thinking. It broadened the perspective on civil disturbances provided by *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, introducing a clear sense of the complexity of the problem which widespread insurrection posed, and recognizing that it may be prompted by agitation or conspiracy, "or it may arise out of local discontent or religious or industrial unrest."²⁵ The inference was clear: civil disorder was a symptom of a wider political problem that military action alone could not solve. *Notes on Imperial Policing* recognized that military action therefore had to be part of an overall, co-ordinated, civilian-led plan, the conduct of which would be protracted and difficult. Widespread unrest could "no longer be dealt with by a series of isolated [military] actions in aid of the civil power, and the suppression consequently demands a concerted military plan of operations, the execution of which may extend over a considerable period."²⁶

Notes on Imperial Policing also made the important step of acknowledging that complex, politically-motivated unrest presented a twofold problem. On the one hand, normal life had to be protected; on the other, insurgents had to be dealt with. This is the first discussion that went beyond protecting people in the face of rioting to include a sense of a more permanent presence to protect civil life in general. The role of the military, the doctrine explained was:

- (i) To prevent interference with the normal life of the affected district, *i.e.* to maintain communications in operation and to protect life and property.
- (ii) To get to grips with the hostile elements and bring them into subjection.²⁷

While the twofold nature of the military role would be highlighted in subsequent doctrine, it was not always explained so clearly. Doctrine had to wait until *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995) when they both formed the core of two principles of counterinsurgency; separating the insurgent from his support, and neutralizing the insurgent.

4.4 1949: Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power

In 1949, *Imperial Policing* and *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* were merged into one pamphlet that dealt with the "maintenance or restoration of internal peace in British Colonial dependencies or in an occupied country... [or] during a state of emergency in the United Kingdom."²⁸ It introduced the idea of *fundamentals*, which if not recognized would "lead to muddled thinking, ineffectual action and delay, and possibly complete

failure to achieve the object.”²⁹ The fundamentals it identified were the relationship with the civil government, knowledge of the background to unrest, identifying the dissident elements, a sound intelligence system and good topographical knowledge, and a deeply rooted sense of the importance of security. The section provided on the background to the unrest shows how the character of the problem had widened and now reflected the post-war realities of British Colonial responsibilities, and the rapidly changing strategic situation:

The background may be economic or political; it may be racial or religious; or it may have its roots in a wave of misguided but excessive national feeling either by a majority or by an ardent dissident minority. The movement may be supported by the mass of public opinion or it may run strongly counter to public opinion. It may appeal to youth only, or be confined to labour, student, intellectual or other classes. It may be strongly but secretly supported from outside and its consequences may produce serious international repercussions.³⁰

Given the Army’s bloody and difficult campaign in Palestine had ended a year before publication, and the campaign in Malaya was already underway, somewhat surprisingly, the 1949 manual is lacking in any contemporary context. Later publications would be criticised for being too redolent of the last campaign, but the 1949 edition is noticeably sterile. There is one exception and that is in its analysis of patterns of unrest, disorder and crime in which it introduces external influences, principally Communist, racial and religious motivation, and “relics of underground organizations left over from a great war.”³¹ This last category was an obvious reference to the Malayan Races’ Liberation Army (MRLA), which grew from anti-Japanese insurgents during World War II.

The most significant development in this manual, however, was its recognition of ‘The New Pattern’ of resistance to law and order. This, it explained, included practical, political and propaganda support from external influences which were likely to result in a “more vigorous, more prolonged” challenge. The new pattern of *politically*-motivated, Communist-inspired unrest had four distinct phases: terrorism, the development of limited areas under insurgent control, the complete control of large areas, and finally the ejection of Government forces and control from the country. The government response would therefore have to place emphasis on police-led intelligence operations in the early stages, increased emphasis on psychological warfare and counter-propaganda which would require very close co-ordination between the civil authorities and security forces.³²

Although the 1949 publication acknowledged that co-ordination was necessary between the civil administration and the security forces, the manual failed to develop the point made in *Notes on Imperial Policing* that civil disorder was a symptom of a wider political problem which required more than simply a security response. The section on operations to re-establish control of an affected area briefly examined the legal implications of collective control measures, such as curfews. It also recognized the need for a civil affairs organization to maintain essential services. However, it did not explain that the military campaign should be set within a more general plan. Despite the emphasis it had received in preceding doctrine and in Gwynn’s work, political aims did not appear to have primacy. Events that were to unfold in Malaya would change this.

4.5 The Malayan Emergency: Crystallizing Counterinsurgency and Formalising Campaign Doctrine

The eight years that followed the publication of *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* (1949) saw an important, arguably the most significant change in British understanding of counterinsurgency. The catalyst was the campaign in Malaya, a brief description of which is necessary to explain how this affected doctrine. Malaya demonstrated the importance of recognizing the political not just security aspects of restoring law and order, the importance of developing and implementing a comprehensive government-led plan, the importance of addressing political, security, social and economic factors, and the value of developing bespoke military doctrine and training for the theatre of operations.

The Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960 is one of the most closely analysed and oft cited of Britain's small wars. Despite a poor start, Malaya was a success. The co-ordinated, politically-led campaign enacted from 1950 contained and ultimately defeated the Communist insurgency, and the country achieved independence in line with Her Majesty's Government's plan. For the Army, Malaya left a lasting impression on its tactics, approach, training, and doctrine for counterinsurgency. Given the extent to which the Army assimilated all these changes, it is not surprising that Beckett highlights "an obsession with Malaya continued to determine the Army's institutional memory well into the 1980s."³³

The Federation of Malaya was poorly placed to deal with the Communist insurgency which broke in 1948. For the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), the British Military Administration established at the end of the war blocked any possibility it may have had of taking over as the post-war, post-colonial government as it had hoped. The MCP was firmly rooted in Malaya's Chinese population and it provided resistance fighters during the Japanese occupation, forming the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army. After the war, and with little likelihood of achieving any mainstream political success, the MCP attempted to infiltrate government departments, and to take control of trades unions. Malaya's economic and political recovery further limited the MCP's options. In late 1947 it decided to initiate a violent anti-government campaign and during the months that followed, it incited strikes, civil unrest, and murdered British plantation and mine owners, and Chinese, Malay and Indian employees. The Government of the Federation declared a state of emergency on 18 June 1948 and enacted Emergency Powers to deal with the violence.³⁴

The civil administration, in particular the police, had suffered badly at the hands of the Japanese and the police intelligence service was unable to cope with the sudden upsurge in violence. It found it difficult to obtain information from the essentially closed Chinese community. The Police Commissioner had overall command of the Government's response, and the Armed Forces were placed in a supporting role. Initial results for the Government were disappointing, largely due to poor intelligence, poor co-ordination, and inappropriate military tactics and poor jungle skills. Daniel Marston showed that, in the few years following the end of the Second World War, the Army forgot its hard-learned lessons of jungle fighting. He cites Lt. Gen. Walter Walker who recalled in 1976 that,

the fundamental trouble was that within two years of defeating the Japanese in

Burma, all our military training and thinking had become focussed on nuclear and conventional tactics for the European theatre... so when the Malayan Emergency broke out, we had forgotten most of the jungle warfare techniques and expertise, learned the hard way at such cost in the Burma Campaign.³⁵

The result was that when the Army deployed into the jungle to deal with Communist Terrorists, it struggled. As Riley Sutherland observed in 1964, “troops [were initially] completely dependent on the police for information on and identification of guerrillas; lack of information [was] the greatest handicap; and the guerrillas [were] expert at ambush and minor tactics.”³⁶

The Army’s initial response was to resort to large-scale, largely unsuitable tactics, known colloquially as ‘Jungle Bashing,’³⁷ and although they had some early successes, once the Communist Terrorists regrouped in the jungle, the number of incidents per month increased from 200 in 1948 to 400 in early 1950.³⁸ Very early in the campaign, Gen. Sir Neil Ritchie, Commander-in-Chief of Far East Land Forces, ordered the then Lt. Col. Walter Walker (later, as a major general, Walker commanded military operations in Borneo) to set up what eventually became known as the Jungle Warfare School (JWS) to train expected reinforcements from the UK.³⁹ Walker was an expert in jungle tactics, having fought the Japanese for three years. Every battalion that deployed to Malaya had to pass through JWS to complete a demanding six-week course of instruction and practical exercises in jungle navigation, marksmanship, patrolling, jungle tactics, ambushes, tracking, and living in the jungle. The final exercise took place in areas where guerrillas were known to be operating. Scott McMichael notes that the “improvement in tactical operations by battalions trained at the JWS forced the MRLA to call off its large-scale operations and form into smaller, hit-and-run units known as Independent Platoons.”⁴⁰ The Army’s better training and tactics started to get results. As Richard Stubbs observes, by the end of 1952,

with rapidly moving intelligence, the security forces were able to frame localities where insurgents were known to be operating, flood the area with patrols, and set ambushes of their own rather than be ambushed. The [insurgents were] steadily pushed back onto the defensive and its numbers reduced.⁴¹

While focussed training improved the Army’s tactical efficiency, several other important steps were necessary to put the campaign as a whole on track. The first was to unify civil and military efforts. Doctrine had previously talked of police-military co-operation but the situation in Malaya warranted much more than co-operation. The Government’s efforts had to be unified, and this was achieved in April 1950, when, at the request of the High Commissioner, the new post of Director of Operations was created with “full powers of co-ordination of the Police, Naval, Military and Air Forces.”⁴² Sir Harold Briggs, a retired Lt. Gen., was the first Director. He quickly assessed the situation and concluded that military operations alone would not solve the problem. Long term success could only be achieved if the insurgents were separated from the Chinese community from where they drew their support and intelligence. The Chinese would have to be brought under Government administration, which then, in turn, had to gain their support:

Successes against bandit gangs, though essential to security and morale, were in effect only a ‘rap on the knuckles’. It is at this “heart” that we must aim, to eliminate the Communist cells among the Chinese population to whom we must

give security and whom we must win over. By doing so and by removing the bandits' sources of supply and information the task of the Security Forces would be simplified and the enemy forced to fight for these in areas under our control. Thus only can the initiative be wrested from the bandits.⁴³

Briggs' brief summary of the problem provided the underpinning logic for what was to become known as the Briggs Plan. The key tenets of the Plan required full civil-military co-operation under a unified command structure through a system of joint committees from national to district level, the police to secure the population and gain information, and the Army to operate in the jungle to locate and destroy insurgent gangs. The Administration's role was to extend good governance to the whole population. This was the central task of the campaign:

The Administration will strengthen to the utmost extent possible their effective control of the populated areas ... to ensure that all populated areas are effectively administered ... by stepping up to the maximum extent possible ... the provision of the normal social services that go with effective administration, e.g., schools, medical and other services.⁴⁴

This was and remains the essence of effective counterinsurgency. Although later characterized as 'Hearts and Minds', the ideas contained in Briggs' plan have not been contradicted by any theorist since: secure the population and gain its support, extend good governance across the country, and neutralize the insurgent and his cause psychologically and physically.

Briggs put his plan into action in June 1950 and it had an immediate but not dramatic effect. A marked increase in tempo followed with the second important step in the campaign, the selection of General Sir Gerald Templer as Briggs' successor. Templer, appointed as both High Commissioner and Director of Operations, energized the campaign. His forceful leadership and insistence that the civil, military, and police agencies cooperated fully quickly galvanized the whole campaign. His presence was felt across the country, politically, administratively and militarily. Marston notes how Templer continued to encourage the Army's tactical initiatives, including the introduction of a proper assessment process to measure the effectiveness of jungle operations.

In 1952, at Templer's direction, Walker, who was then commanding a Gurkha battalion on operations, produced a handbook of best practice and tactics. Walker wrote *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations (ATOM)* in a matter of weeks and it was very well received.⁴⁵ Templer strongly endorsed *ATOM* and stressed its value and importance in his foreword:

I have been impressed by the wealth of jungle fighting experience available in Malaya... At the same time, I have been disturbed by the fact that this great mass of detailed knowledge has not been properly collated or presented to those whose knowledge and experience is not so great. This vast store of knowledge must be pooled. Hence this book.

... The job of the British Army out here is to kill or capture Communist terrorists in Malaya. This book shows in a clear and easily readable form the proven principles by which this can be done.⁴⁶

Crucially *ATOM* addressed the principal areas of concern felt early in the campaign and provided clear guidance on intelligence, co-ordination between the civilian, police and military, and jungle tactics adjusted for counterinsurgency, all of which had been lacking at the start. What was taught at JWS thus became doctrine, and what Walker produced was to have a major impact on the British doctrine which followed. Gregorian considers that the “publication of such a timely and useful manual was a harbinger of a new, more formal approach to tactical doctrine,”⁴⁷ referring to the *Handbook on Anti-Mau Mau Operations*, produced for the revolt in Kenya and which clearly acknowledges its link to *ATOM*.

ATOM's impact on Army doctrine proved to be long-lasting. It established the tremendous value of campaign-specific doctrine, written by and for the theatre of operations. Its symbiotic relationship with training at JWS, and its use of best practice from operations, established the need for theatre-specific training. Its comprehensive coverage of the threat, counterinsurgency strategy, the integration of civil, police and military measures, legal considerations, intelligence, psychological warfare and tactics provided the template for future doctrine.

4.6 1957: *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)* and the Malayan Influence

ATOM marked a significant step forward in doctrinal terms because it linked the campaign in general to the tactics developed specifically for the theatre of operation. The 1957 publication *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, like the 1949 manual, covered military intervention to restore law and order both at home and in overseas dependencies. Experience from the Malayan campaign is evident. In keeping with previous doctrine, it provided guidance on legal aspects of military support to the civil power, the issue of suppressing unlawful assemblies and riots and the role of troops in maintaining essential services. The six marked differences between it and its predecessor are evidence of a considerable development in understanding and practice in counterinsurgency.

First, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) developed the idea, first introduced in 1949, of widespread politically-motivated, externally supported revolution, which unless contained would result in the “complete overthrow of the established government.”⁴⁸ Very much reflecting the central theme of the Briggs Plan, doctrine emphasized that such a threat “created a problem of maintaining law and order [which] to overcome ... requires full scale counter-measures and the closest co-operation between the security forces and the civil authorities.”⁴⁹ Second, *Keeping the Peace*, formalized the need for flexibility, recognizing that troops would generally be outnumbered, “the ability to counterbalance this disadvantage depend[ing] on good leadership, training, discipline and, in the last resort, skill in using weapons in such conditions as to produce exactly the effect which is needed.”⁵⁰ This was then codified in the principle of Adaptability, with its echoes of *FSR*, when it explained that “there is no place for a rigid mind... Although the principles of war generally remain the same, the ability to adapt and improvise is essential.”⁵¹ Its observations about learning and adaptation is the doctrinal startpoint of what Mockaitis was to describe as one of the defining principles of British counterinsurgency, Downie puts at the heart of the Institutional Learning Cycle, and Nagl identifies as central to British success in Malaya:

Flexibility is also essential since terrorists very quickly learn the tactical methods which troops are using against them and take action accordingly. Therefore constant changes in method are essential if success is to be achieved. This calls for originality and imagination.⁵²

Third, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) formalized the requirement for a training centre in the theatre of operations. Its responsibilities “to teach the applicable tactical methods and to undertake trials and research and evolve new techniques” mirrored JWS exactly, as did other possible tasks:

- (a) To run courses to introduce advance parties and newly arrived officers and NCOs to the theatre.
- (b) To run periodical discussion groups for military and police officers of equivalent rank to build up a pool of expertise and to keep up to date.⁵³

Fourth, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) offered much clearer guidance on what it described as ‘Keeping the Peace in Overseas Dependencies.’ Here it explained a generic form of governance and administration in British dependencies, the functions of government, and the organization and role of colonial police forces. Its detailed examination of patterns of unrest placed much greater emphasis on the political dimension of civil disturbances, insurrection or general rebellion, any one of which might be due to “political, labour, religious and racial disputes... attempts to hasten independence and self-government... or rebellion against British sovereignty or even westernization.”⁵⁴

Whatever the cause and the intention of the unrest, the direction *Keeping the Peace* (1957) then offered is plainly drawn from the Malayan experience:

The overall responsibility for restoring law and order rests fairly and squarely with the civil government, as long as one exists, but the necessary action needs to be initiated and conducted by the civil, police and military commanders together at all the appropriate levels. This can be done at the top level either by the appointment of a **director of operations** or by a form of **war council**.⁵⁵

The codification of the need for a director of operations was a major departure from all previous doctrine and is clearly taken from the Briggs/Templer model; a conclusion reinforced how *Keeping the Peace* describes the appointment:

The responsibility for dealing with the emergency may be assumed by a director of operations, who is appointed by the governor. If the governor himself is a soldier, he may decide to act in a dual capacity as head of the civil administration and director operations.⁵⁶

Fifth, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) presented a method to restore “law and order in a disturbed area,”⁵⁷ that contained the essential elements of the tactical approach used in Malaya, and which Thompson would later present in his tactical method of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won.⁵⁸ This is the method more generally referred to as the Ink Spot or Oil Slick method. *ATOM* had laid out the basic pattern of framework operations to provide routine day-to-day activities such as patrolling, cordons and searches, and ambushes; mopping up operations to “complete the destruction and prevent revival” of communist terrorists; deep jungle operations to deny terrorists the opportunity to rest and retrain; and State Priority Operations and Federal Priority Operations “to exploit opportunities.”⁵⁹ It differs little in principle from Callwell’s approach which was to drive an insurrection to failure by taking control of an unstable, insecure area in such a

forceful way that it deprived both the enemy and the local population of the means to survive, establishing a network of strong points and operating bases, and using highly mobile columns to patrol the area and close with the enemy.⁶⁰

Although *Keeping the Peace* (1957) provided expanded guidance on patrols, searches, road blocks, curfews and riot control, it somewhat surprisingly failed to capture the overall framework of operations so concisely described in *ATOM*. In particular it made little mention of any overall plan or the sequencing of activities in relation to campaign progress. What it did introduce, however, was the concept of separating the insurgent from the population. This was another crucial step forward in the development doctrine. Having listed the principal reasons why it was necessary to bring an area back under government control – a task it acknowledged would require a “high level of agreement between civil and military authorities [and]... must be pre-planned in detail and in secret”⁶¹ – it developed the idea of separating the insurgent from his support:

- (a) Placing an inner cordon round a locality known to contain terrorists, with the aim of isolating them in a restricted area in which they can then be engaged.
- (b) Raids and searches on villages, etc., suspected of harbouring terrorists.
- (c) The introduction of measures to prevent terrorists obtaining food, clothing, medical supplies and money from the local population.⁶²

Finally, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) gave some substance to previous doctrinal discussion of the psychological dimension of counterinsurgency. It made the explicit link between sustaining British policy with “an efficient information service pursuing a sound, constructive and positive programme through the medium of newspapers, broadcasts, loudspeaker vans,” and the need to counter “subversive propaganda and agitation.”⁶³ Crucially, it recognized the insurgents’ need for popular support, from which they had to be isolated:

No subversive or terrorist movement can exist without support from the people. The support may be popular and voluntary or it may be involuntary through fear. Psychological warfare seeks to deny the movement the support which it requires, as well as to undermine terrorist support,⁶⁴

Keeping the Peace (1957) drew all the recognizable threads of counterinsurgency together: a co-ordinated cross-government, unified plan; sound, integrated intelligence; tactical adaptability; recognition of the psychological dimension; and the need to secure the population and isolate the insurgent. Each element had been tried, tested and developed in Malaya. By drawing the lessons from Malaya into general military doctrine, and by making clear the procedural and operational benefits of unified command, *Keeping the Peace* (1957) recorded and institutionalized validated best practice. Its use in future operations, however, would depend on the civilian authorities to adopt it again. It was not, given British democratic sub-ordination of the military to its government, a model upon which the military could insist. Here was its weakness: the strengths of the approach and the method of command and control may have been proven and self-evident but they could only be realized if the civil administration both recognized them and considered the doctrinal model was appropriate to its particular circumstances. Successive generations of officers would be taught the value of the Briggs/Templer model but there was no apparent requirement for politicians or civil

servants to either know about, or still less resort to a military-fostered idea. Frank Kitson would raise the same theme – educating all those required to plan and conduct a counterinsurgency campaign – over twenty years later:

In this case the problem is more difficult because so many of the people who will be most influential in determining success or failure are not in the armed forces at all. They are the politicians, civil servant, local government officials and police, in the area where the insurgency is taking place, and, as I said earlier, that may be in someone else's country. It is difficult to see how they can be prepared in advance to exercise the responsibilities that will be thrust upon them.⁶⁵

His solution depended on military doctrine and officers trained in its precepts to keep the idea alive. It did not overcome the problem, however strident officers may be about its value, that it depended on civil servants to accept an approach recognized by the Army as best practice:

Service officers must be taught how to fit together a campaign of civil and operational measures: they must know what is needed in terms of intelligence, and the law, and of moulding public opinion. Finally, they must be prepared to pass their knowledge on when the need arises and go on agitating for suitable action until all concerned are aware of what is required of them – or more probably until they are sacked for being a nuisance.⁶⁶

4.7 1963: *Keeping the Peace* – Separating Insurgents from Their Support

The second edition of *Keeping the Peace* was published in 1963.⁶⁷ In a two-part publication, it developed the main themes of the 1957 edition to present doctrine, tactics and training for military tasks which ranged from suppressing an unlawful assembly to operations against a Communist insurgency. It acknowledged publicly, for the first time in such doctrine, the value of experience from campaigns in Cyprus, Malaya, Kenya and elsewhere in developing the “legal, command and intelligence aspects as well as ... current tactical doctrine.”⁶⁸ Also for the first time, it introduced the term ‘insurgent’. In many ways, the 1963 edition was much closer to *ATOM* in its coverage of tactics and training methods, and in the types of operations it described of framework, mopping-up, priority and special operations, all of which formed the operational framework in Malaya.⁶⁹

In general terms, the new edition provided more detail than it did revised thinking. But there was a notable exception. It showed that thinking continued to develop beyond simply dealing with insurgency in purely military terms alone. Countering insurgency was not simply a question of defeating the enemy militarily. First of all, the population had to be brought back under government control and given effective security. Once measures were in place to protect the population, insurgents could be physically separated from their supporters, and practical and psychological support, and security forces' efforts could then focus on dealing with the terrorists and dismantling their support system. These steps were made clear in the list of military tasks the doctrine now included:

- (b) To bring areas under military control, thereby providing security for the law abiding public and re-establishing its confidence in the administration.

- (c) To isolate the enemy from the rest of the community by disrupting all his contacts.
- (d) To maintain a continual attack on the periphery of the enemy organization to eliminate the rank and file and to open up opportunities for deeper penetration.⁷⁰

The doctrine then developed the concept of separating the enemy psychologically from the population. This would be through the use of strategic and tactical psychological operations and military operations intended to consolidate the government's position "to gain the co-operation of the people and to counter enemy propaganda activities, thus helping military operations." In all cases the aims included:

- (iii) To drive a wedge between enemy elements and the people and to develop resistance to the political ideologies of the former.
- (iv) To increase the people's confidence in the government.
- (v) To encourage active participation in the fight against terrorism.⁷¹

Taken together, the three tasks (a) to (c) and the three aims (iii) to (v) above, describe the essence of the military role in counterinsurgency. Government authority has to be re-established in an insurgent controlled area so that the security forces can protect the population; the insurgent has to be physically separated from his support, at the same time and government action and public information are used to isolate the insurgent psychologically from the population. These ideas would be translated by Bulloch into the principles published in *Counter Insurgency Operations* of 'Separating the insurgent from his support' and 'Neutralising the insurgent.'⁷²

4.8 1969: Counter-Revolutionary Operations – Doctrine's Expanding Torrent

British doctrine had one more important step to take. It resulted in the 1969 edition of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*.⁷³ If the 1957 edition of *Keeping the Peace* represented a crack in the doctrinal dam, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) was the equivalent of what Liddell Hart described as the 'expanding torrent.'⁷⁴ It was the most comprehensive doctrine the Army had thus far produced and represents the doctrinal high water mark of counterinsurgency thinking. Although set against a Communist threat, its author recognized that the Communist revolutionary model which relied "mainly on popular support for its success... proved successful when it [was] correctly used ... [would be] understandably attractive to nationalist leaders who aspire to promote revolution ... [but] may not follow communist doctrine exactly."⁷⁵ It established the "inter-relationship between internal security and counter insurgency operations," and it emphasized the need to understand the threat and the insurgent, the value of intelligence, civil affairs, psychological operations, training, air support and public relations in every phase of the campaign.⁷⁶

Previous doctrine had mentioned 'insurgency' but without defining the term. *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) provided a definition which brought together disorder and violence with armed force and terrorism, and merged the ideas which doctrine had previously kept separate:

A form of rebellion in which a dissident faction that has the support or acquiescence of a substantial part of the population instigates the commission of widespread acts of civil disobedience, sabotage and terrorism, and wages guerrilla warfare in order to overthrow a government.⁷⁷

It then explained insurgency's potential causes: nationalism, communism, racial or tribal rivalry, religious differences, maladministration and corruption of government, famine and poverty, lack of agricultural, educational and social planning, and eviction of foreign troops and bases.⁷⁸ In recognizing the broad range of possible causes, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) identified the need for an equally broad response. A government would therefore have to apply "those military, para-military, political, economic, psychological and sociological activities undertaken ... to prevent or defeat subversive insurgency, and *restore the authority of the central government*."⁷⁹ The conclusion to be drawn from this statement is clear: where government authority had waned or been replaced by insurgent control, government authority had to be restored. This would require a political response, within which the military contribution was but one, albeit essential part. In this respect, the definitions of insurgency and counterinsurgency show how far British military thinking had matured from the early, military-centric doctrine of the inter- and immediate post-war period. It now clearly recognized both the problem and the solution. The doctrine went further. In its description of the basis for counter insurgency action, it said:

The aim of our forces is therefore to re-establish stable civil government, which at the local level means the normal civil/police system... The major task is the re-establishment of a cohesive system of local government *rather than the defeat of an enemy*.

Individual operations must not only be directed to clearing away insurgents to allow the normal civil machinery to operate, but carefully co-ordinated to ensure that the results of military action are fully exploited. In this respect the armed forces must be prepared to give positive help on the civil front to fill any vacuum that may have been created [by the absence of effective government while an area was under insurgent control].⁸⁰

Counter-Revolutionary Operations' much more developed understanding of the whole political-socio-economic challenge posed by revolutionary warfare was further reflected in a new set of principles. Its preamble to 'General Principles of Government Action' clarified that counter-revolutionary operations was "not purely a matter of soldiers killing insurgents." Although it did not hint at just how difficult that might be, it asserted that counter-revolutionary operations must first contain and then eradicate the insurgent movement and its subversive support organization, after which they had to "rectify any political and social wrongs."⁸¹ The inference is clear and fundamental to the notion of a political rather than a military solution: successful counterinsurgency now no longer meant returning to the *status quo ante*. Political change was a prerequisite for successful resolution of the problem, and some form of accommodation would have to be reached between the protagonists. Whether the doctrine writer meant this inference to be drawn is not clear. It does not matter. The acknowledgement that part of the counter-revolutionary campaign involved a government rectifying political and social wrongs was a considerable step forward in the development of thinking on the subject. Inter-war doctrine, by comparison, made no direct reference to the political

dimension of disorder and armed insurrection or any broad-based approach to it. Instead it gave the impression that rebellion would be crushed, its leaders and supporters punished, and order restored through military action. *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) fundamentally changed the Army's doctrinal position.

Having established a much more sophisticated approach to military operations, the new doctrine introduced principles for government action. The first principle was the requirement for a national plan. The logic was based on experience: "The outstanding lesson from past revolutionary was that no single programme – political, military, psychological, social or economic – is sufficient by itself to counter a determined revolutionary movement."⁸² This would require passing emergency legislation to support the campaign; implementing political, social, and economic measures to "gain popular support and counter or surpass anything offered by the insurgents;" setting up an effective organization to co-ordinate civil, police and military action at all levels; establishing an integrated, national intelligence service, building up the police and armed forces; and imposing whatever control measures were necessary "to isolate the insurgents from popular support."⁸³

The second principle was that good government was required. This recognized that any "permanent solution must be based on the provision of good government by an administration that is aware of, and in sympathy with, the aspirations of the mass of the people. The importance of this is highlighted by the fact that all measures taken to provide good government will be viciously and continuously attacked by the revolutionaries."⁸⁴ Good government required government action to be co-ordinated:

The legal government must be firmly established and be seen to govern. This is not always the case, and weak central government is frequently a contributing factor to the uprising... It is the government's duty to formulate its political aims and make them known to everyone. Without a clearly stated policy, effective co-ordinated action is unlikely.⁸⁵

It then suggested a wide range of problems that co-ordinated government action might have to address. Once again, when compared with the correct but politically sterile pre-war doctrine, it is interesting to note how far doctrinal thinking had advanced. The potential problems it identified included the removal of whatever social, political or economic grievances rebels used to justify cause, particularly in an inequitable system of land tenure; political reform to franchise the population, giving freedom of political expression; respect and support for local religions and minorities; an education system which was open to all; moulding of public opinion in support of the national programme; an amnesty plan for the rehabilitation of surrendered insurgents; and ensuring impartial, humane and honest administration of justice. This was so much more than military operations to kill or capture terrorists.⁸⁶

The third principle was popular support: "unless popular support is regained, however, purely military actions will fail to have any permanent effect. *The whole national plan must therefore be directed to winning this support.*"⁸⁷ There were several aspects to this. The first was the need for the government to communicate effectively with the population and for it to "keep its finger on the pulse of public opinion" so that it knew of and could address the population's grievances. This was coupled to the requirement for an effective intelligence service. Justice was the third factor, with its maladministration being cited as a frequent cause for discontent, and the onus was

placed on the government to deal with cases quickly, fairly and publicly. Finally, the doctrine raised the need for the security forces to maintain popular support through their efficiency, “their behaviour in the discharge of their duties and in their day-to-day contact with the people, and their ability to protect them.” It would be in these areas “that success or failure will rest.”⁸⁸ These conditions were to form one of the fundamentals – the principle of legitimacy – in the U.S. Army’s revised approach to counterinsurgency, which its forces put into practice in Iraq through 2007, and proved crucial in turning around Iraq’s security situation.

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1969) is also significant in that it provided detailed guidance on the ink spot method of re-establishing control, first mentioned in 1949. In so doing, it laid the foundations for an approach which would be developed and refined in all subsequent doctrine, up to and including *Counter Insurgency Operations* (2001). The method was designed so that operations would systematically regain government control of insurgent areas. The first step was to establish a base and forward operating bases, from which the second stage would be undertaken to establish controlled areas. Insurgents would then be cleared out, a framework of protective measures would be put in place, and “orderly government” re-established.⁸⁹ This, the doctrine acknowledged, would take time and resources, and considerable co-ordination. However, the method had “the great merit of ensuring that a progressively greater part of the nation is freed from insurgent influence and, once freed, remained so.”⁹⁰ The ‘ingredients of success’ for this approach were laid out in Part 3-*Counter Insurgency*. They included joint civil-military control, intelligence, seizing and holding the initiative, and the military standards of surprise, speed, mobility and flexibility. The most notable ingredient was ‘Hearts and Minds’, which were defined for the first and only time in doctrine in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969). Although the term was famously coined by Templer in Malaya when he argued that “the answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people,”⁹¹ and after which it entered the language of counterinsurgency, no-one actually defined it. The author of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, however, provided an important link between the expression and the twofold aspect of successful counterinsurgency; separating the insurgent from his support and neutralizing him, and securing the population and its support:

Unless the trust and confidence and respect of the people are won by the government and the security forces the chance of success is greatly reduced. If the people support the government and the security forces, the insurgents become isolated and cut off from their shelter, supplies and intelligence.⁹²

This is the one thread which links a widely used term with British practice. ‘Hearts and Minds’ would become discredited as a result of U.S. policy in Vietnam,⁹³ and did not receive any further explanation, if explanation was necessary, in British doctrine. Nevertheless, it became synonymous with the British approach to counterinsurgency.

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1969) also provided detailed guidance on tactics for internal security and counter insurgency. The former dealt with civil disobedience, unlawful assemblies, riots, and armed terrorist activities in urban areas. Counter insurgency doctrine provided guidance on tactics for the wider challenge of revolutionary warfare in a rural setting: countering subversive elements, terrorism and guerrilla warfare. Internal security doctrine concentrated on the issues of law and order, and the use of force in relation to military operations among the population. Both rural

and urban tactics were underpinned by the principles for the use of force, drawn largely from *Keeping the Peace* (1963): justification, prevention, minimum force, compliance with the law, safeguarding loyal citizens, maintenance of public confidence, and recording accurate evidence.

Tactics for rural and urban operations were covered in considerable detail. As with the thinking behind the approach in general, the doctrine demonstrates that the Army understood the nature of the problem it was facing and knew what to do about it. The issue for those having to use the 1969 doctrine would be the context in which future operations would be set. There is nothing new in this problem, stemming as it does from doctrine's largely backward looking component and its requirement to establish enduring principles based on best practice. The principles presented in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* were sound, were based on careful analysis of successful practice, and they remain valid. The tactics may also have been best practice but they were best practice for the campaigns in Aden, Cyprus, Borneo and Malaya. What the doctrine writer could not predict was the context in which such tactics would have to be applied in future campaigns. This may have been acknowledged fleetingly in the introduction, which made clear that the doctrine gave general guidance on "the methods most likely to be used by the instigators of disorders, revolts and insurgency,"⁹⁴ but the writer could not predict that the next campaign would be within the United Kingdom.

Critical attention has focussed on the context in which *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969) was set and how incongruous its tactics proved to be in the domestic setting of Northern Ireland.⁹⁵ The photographs and diagrams used to illustrate the publication were of Aden, and featured open-topped land rovers, and soldiers in shirt sleeves facing hostile crowds. The section on the legal position of the armed forces explained the principles of English law in order to "help... understand local law in overseas territories,"⁹⁶ which, it would appear safe to assume, was based on English law. Annex N provided the sequence of events and words of command for crowd dispersal. It is here that the gap between doctrine – best practice up to that point – and the reality of a new environment is most evident. The sequence followed the principles laid out since 1923 of gradual escalation of measures from non-violent methods to opening fire. The non-violent measures described in 1969 included "using loud hailers, bugles, banners and powerful public address equipment," photographing ringleaders, and the use of riot control agents. They also included the "steady advance of a line of soldiers with fixed bayonets," and, reminiscent of Amritsar, the "ostentatious display of an armoured vehicle with a machine gun mounted ready for action."⁹⁷ If these measures failed, the orders for opening appeared to be straightforward:

- (1) Warn the crowd by all available means that effective fire will be opened unless the crowd disperses at once. This can be done by a call on the bugle followed by the display of banners showing the necessary warning in the vernacular, and an announcement over a loud speaker, megaphone or public address equipment.
- (2) The commander of the force personally orders the fire unit commander concerned ... to open fire, indicating the target and the number of rounds to be fired, which must be the minimum to achieve the immediate aim.⁹⁸

4.9 Robert Thompson, Malaya, Defeating Communist Insurgency and Counter-Revolutionary Operations

After *Keeping the Peace* was revised in 1963, the next significant development for British doctrine was the publication in 1966 of Sir Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency*. It became, as Ian Beckett observes, "undeniably influential in the British Army's belated recognition of the need to codify its counter-insurgency practice given the increasing prevalence of the global insurgent challenge since 1945."⁹⁹ Thompson was a senior civil servant in the Malayan Government during the Emergency, serving first as Briggs's Staff Officer (Civil) and then as the Permanent Secretary of Defence. As such he was very closely involved with the development, and then the conduct of the campaign. Thompson wrote *Defeating Communist Insurgency* soon after returning from leading the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, and he based his conclusions on his observations of both campaigns, although he acknowledged his book was incomplete, since neither had ended.¹⁰⁰

Thompson recognized that the sooner an insurgency was defeated, ideally in its subversive stage, the better. This depended on an effective intelligence system.¹⁰¹ His book was "heavily weighted on the administrative and other aspects of an insurgency rather than the military," and so he emphasized the importance of effective governance, pointing out that government weakness and poor administration aided the insurgents and contributed to the conflict:

The correction of these weaknesses is as much a part of counterinsurgency as any military operation. In fact, it is far more important because unless the cracks in the government structure are mended, military operations and emergency measures, apart from being ineffectual, may themselves widen the cracks and be turned to the enemy's advantage.¹⁰²

Thompson's greatest and most enduring influence, however, was through his five principles which "became the centrepiece for British Army thinking."¹⁰³ The first four were political, in keeping with the bias of the book:¹⁰⁴ the government must have a clear political aim; it must function in accordance with law; it must have an overall plan; priority should be given to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas; and in the guerrilla phase, secure base areas first.¹⁰⁵ The theme Thompson followed, like Callwell and Gwynn before him, was that a counterinsurgency campaign had to address the political character of the problem.

Counter-Revolutionary Operations (1969) reflected Thompson's thinking in both its principles for government action and its observations on effective administration of justice.¹⁰⁶ In explaining the principle that the government must function in accordance with the law, Thompson observed how the Malayan government had modified, adapted and developed existing legislation which then enabled it to follow a broad approach to deal with the insurgency. Thompson was adamant that the law "must be effective and be fairly applied,"¹⁰⁷ that people must be brought to trial quickly to demonstrate justice in action, and that detention while a difficult issue was necessary to prevent the insurgent from acting. On the government's side, Thompson was equally clear that officials had to be held accountable for their actions. Through this the government's position could be maintained, its authority upheld, its reputation safeguarded, and the gap between it and the insurgent maintained if not widened. Without such an equitable

and accountable legal system, he argued, the population would find it difficult to differentiate between either side and the insurgent will benefit.¹⁰⁸

Thompson also placed considerable emphasis on intelligence, which he believed was central in countering insurgency effectively. While this had been long recognized in doctrine, he made clear how difficult it was to develop good intelligence. It took a great deal of effort in Malaya to both get the organization right and for the police who had the lead for intelligence work to gain the confidence of the population and to get information which they could then use. *Keeping the Peace* noted that counterinsurgency was “not purely a matter of soldiers killing insurgents.” Thompson went further:

‘Let’s go out and kill some Viet Cong, then we can worry about intelligence.’ This remark by a newly arrived general lends weight to the old gag that there are only two types of general in counter-insurgency - those who haven’t learnt it and those who never will!¹⁰⁹

Thompson recognized that good intelligence increased the tempo of operations and, when managed correctly, it would produce a spiral of a increasing number of contacts with the population. These would then provide more information, which in turn would allow yet more operations. The more successful they were, the greater the population’s confidence, which would prompt more contacts and more successful operations.¹¹⁰

The ink spot method had been introduced, albeit briefly, in doctrine. Thompson’s operational concept was based on the method he had helped design and seen used in Malaya. The intention was for the government and its security forces to take control of an insurgent-held area, re-establish security and control, and to extend good governance to the population. He described this in a four-stage sequence of Clear, Hold, Winning, Won. Starting on the premise that the government had a plan, it was dealing with subversion, and it was operating from secure bases, Thompson’s method started with intelligence-led military operations to take control of an area in order to clear insurgents from it. Note the similarity between Thompson’s sequence and that described in *Keeping the Peace*. *Keeping the Peace*’s sequence was isolation of a terrorist area, raids and searches to force them out, introduction of security measures to protect the population, and the gradual removal of restrictions as the population starts to co-operate with the government.¹¹¹ The terms ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ were to be central to the U.S. Army’s revised doctrine of 2006:

For clear operations...the first essential is to saturate it with joint military and police forces... ‘Clear’ operations will, however, be a waste of time unless the government is ready to follow them up immediately with ‘hold’ operations... The objects of a ‘hold’ operation are to restore government authority in the area and to re-establish a firm security framework...This ‘hold’ period of operations inevitably takes a considerable time and requires a methodical approach and a great attention to detail. It never really ends and overlaps into the stage of winning the population over to the positive support of the government. ‘Winning the population’ can be summed up as good government in all its aspects...When normal conditions have been restored, and the people have demonstrated by their positive action that they are on the side of the government, then, as the government advance has been extended well beyond the area...[it] can be called ‘white’ [or won].¹¹²

Thompson's purpose of writing was "to set out a basic theory of counter-insurgency as it should be applied to defeat the threat [of communist insurgency]." ¹¹³ The assumption he made was that such operations would take place abroad. His principles and his method of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won provided a clear, logical framework for a government to apply.

4.10 General Sir Frank Kitson and *Low Intensity Operations*

Gen. Sir Frank Kitson was the last major influence on British doctrinal thinking for counterinsurgency. Although best known for his published work – *Low Intensity Operations*, published in 1972, and *Bunch of Five*, published in 1977 – his innovative, often controversial approach was influential from a relatively junior point in his career. As might be expected, *Low Intensity Operations* reflects the key themes of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969), which was the principal doctrine of the day. The doctrine which followed, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977), included, as Beckett observes, much "more of Kitson's approach, especially his flexibility, [and] which freed the army from its fixation on Malaya." ¹¹⁴ An experienced practitioner, Kitson's principal concerns were with intelligence, psychological operations and the need to train and educate soldiers for the complexities inherent in counterinsurgency. Bulloch recognized Kitson's significant contribution to counterinsurgency in *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995):

We should acknowledge the work of General Sir Frank Kitson who, during his career and in his writings, influenced many with his grasp of the essentials of counter insurgency in several varied campaigns during a long period when official doctrine lagged behind. ¹¹⁵

What Bulloch meant by his last comment is not clear because it is evident from analysis of both editions of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* that doctrine kept up with both new British theories and operational practice. Nevertheless, Kitson's influence on counterinsurgency doctrine is indisputable.

As a young captain, Kitson was attached to Special Branch in Kenya in the summer of 1953, nine months after a State of Emergency had been declared following the Mau Mau rebellion. By his own admission, he had no previous experience of intelligence operations, no knowledge of the local language, and no notable aptitude for such work. ¹¹⁶ Kitson was assigned to what was thought to be a quiet district. In fact it was the Mau Mau heartland, and Kitson soon realized that the conventional military approach to intelligence was entirely inappropriate for fighting an insurgency:

The typical British battalion or company commander's complaint that he did not have any information was based...on his misconception of the nature of obtainable intelligence in a guerrilla situation. He counted on the intelligence staff to hand him precise advance knowledge of enemy movements and strikes – an impossible feat in this type of war. He should, instead, have used whatever data the intelligence organization could furnish him as only a beginning, and then gone on to develop his own, more valuable intelligence from the mass of data known or accessible to him. For example, by reviewing past movements and actions of the gangs he was fighting, learning some of their tribal customs, etc., he could have established certain patterns of behaviour and operations and, after checking his theories against simple tangible evidence (such as tracks in the

forest), could have put his patrols out selectively, rather than send them out at random or have them scour huge forest areas.¹¹⁷

Kitson noted that his approach of building the intelligence picture from the mass of low level information was “regarded as heresy in some quarters,”¹¹⁸ but it was pragmatic and it proved effective. Later, using an idea similar to Orde Wingate’s ‘Night Squads’ in Palestine, he achieved considerable success by forming ‘pseudo-gangs’ of former Mau Mau fighters to infiltrate, disrupt and spread distrust and fear among active rebel gangs.¹¹⁹ Kitson went on to develop his approach to intelligence while serving as a company commander in Malaya, working very closely with Special Branch to nurture surrendered Communist Terrorists who then led him to locate and then eliminate “two communist party branches in a difficult area.”¹²⁰

Kitson’s work was recognized in the U.S. following the publication of *Gangs and Counter-gangs*. In 1963, he took part in a seminal symposium run by RAND as part of the Kennedy Administration’s efforts to refocus the U.S. military on counterinsurgency. All the participants were experts in the field with proven records of success, one of whom was Lt. Col. David Galula, the French officer to whose work the U.S. Army would return when it rewrote its counterinsurgency doctrine in 2006. Kitson’s views on the broader approach required in counterinsurgency had quite clearly crystallized by then, as he made clear at the symposium “with an emphatic acknowledgement of the importance of the political and economic factors, and their inseparability from military considerations.”¹²¹

It is important to note the prevailing conditions when Kitson wrote *Low Intensity Operations*. At the start of the 1970s, the Army’s focus was defending NATO’s Central Front against the Warsaw Pact, despite its large, growing commitment to Northern Ireland, for which there appeared to be no short term outcome. In broader strategic terms, there remained the fear of revolutionary war in Africa and South-East Asia, pursued by the superpowers’ proxies. Against this backdrop, the then Brig. Kitson undertook a Defence Fellowship at Oxford, the results of which he subsequently published as *Low Intensity Operations*. He was concerned that the skills required for effective counterinsurgency were so specific that it was unreasonable to expect soldiers to pick them up without specific training. He was right, as the Army’s early performance in Malaya demonstrated and later in Northern Ireland would reinforce. He wanted to ensure that the Army’s extensive small wars experience was not lost as it concentrated on developing its conventional military skills.

Kitson’s objective in *Low Intensity Operations* was to “draw attention to the steps which should be taken now in order to make the army ready to deal with subversion, insurrection and peace-keeping operations during the second half of the 1970’s.”¹²² Kitson proposed radical changes to the Army’s structure, capabilities, training, and education to give it the capability necessary to react quickly to an insurgency anywhere in the world. His considered approach brought together his operational experience and the intellectual rigour of the Oxford Senior Common Room. The result was arguably the most significant *military* contribution to British understanding of counterinsurgency in the twentieth century, with *Low Intensity Operations* remaining the principal text of the Army’s counterinsurgency education and staff training for the next twenty years.

In laying out his case, Kitson concentrated on four principal themes: intelligence; organisation for, and the conduct of operations; the propaganda battle; and the special

problems of peacekeeping by a neutral force. Kitson emphasized the psychological aspect of the problem highlighting that “wars of subversion and counter-subversion are fought, in the last resort, in the minds of the people.”¹²³ He stressed the importance of propaganda in this respect. While he acknowledged the importance of civilian primacy and strong leadership in campaigns when dealing with internal unrest, his approach to intelligence was carefully argued but highly controversial. The received view, stemming from Gwynn’s work, was that the police should retain responsibility for intelligence operations because they knew the local area and they ought to have an intelligence system already in *situ*. Kitson argued that the police would be targeted by insurgents early in the campaign, thus when the Army had to respond, it would have no effective intelligence on which to act. His proposal was that the Army should train a reserve of specialist intelligence officers which would then take charge of all intelligence operations in an emergency.¹²⁴ This was a pragmatic response to what had certainly caused considerable problems in Aden, where “the terrorists shrewdly and deliberately set out from the start to neutralise the existing (Arab) Special Branch; and in this they were successful.”¹²⁵ As a result, Brig. R. C. P. Jefferies, the last brigade commander there, concluded that “no [Internal Security] operations have ever before been carried out with so little operational information.”¹²⁶

Kitson expanded his theories in *Low Intensity Operations* when he published *Bunch of Five*. In it, he offered a framework for the planning and conduct of counterinsurgency operations, which was intended to allow a government to use military force in support of its objectives without damaging its position. The framework had four closely interdependent and intertwined elements:

...coordinating machinery at every level for the direction of the campaign, arrangements for ensuring that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people, an intelligence organisation suited to the circumstances, and a legal system adequate to the needs of the moment.¹²⁷

Without such a framework, he recognized, “it is highly probable that the use of force will do more harm than good.”¹²⁸ He also emphasized that all four elements of the framework would have to be adapted as circumstances changed.

Co-ordinated government machinery was needed to create the political conditions to enable the government to make best use of its strengths, and to prevent one government measure cutting across and disrupting other efforts. This built on and broadened all previous doctrinal discussion of civil-military co-operation, and required vertical and horizontal co-ordination and for separate ministries not to cascade information in isolation. Kitson returned to the psychological dimension by emphasizing the importance of moulding public opinion. This required the government to consider public opinion constantly and to have the means to monitor and counter enemy propaganda.¹²⁹ Kitson considered the issue to be so important that he suggested that a government might have to consider influencing the media either directly or indirectly. Such an option, he suggested, would come at a political price because of the impact it would have on basic rights and freedoms, and in the long term it could prove politically dangerous. The government had, therefore, to work within the law. This meant it having to decide how to use the law effectively, and how to use such emergency powers as were necessary to protect the way the law was upheld and enforced.¹³⁰

Kitson's final area of influence was education and training, what he highlights as the "genuinely educational function of attuning men's minds to cope with the environment of this sort of war."¹³¹ His reasoning was based on experience and personal observation:

Military commanders in counter-insurgency operations cannot do without a real understanding of this sort of war in the widest sense. Traditionally the British army has assumed that its officers are adequately trained in all current types of warfare, so that successful performance in an operational field has been regarded as an adequate reason for appointing a man to command in a different operational field. Unfortunately the level of understanding and training in the sphere of counter-insurgency has not always been good enough for the system to operate effectively.¹³²

To deal with this, Kitson concluded it was important that education and training taught officers "how to put a campaign together using a combination of civil and military measures to achieve a single government aim." This included the use of "non-military ways of harming the enemy."¹³³ He went on to explain how officers ought to direct the training of soldiers, policemen and locally raised forces and the need for "explaining the right sort of tactical framework in which to use the techniques [covered in military pamphlets] to best advantage."¹³⁴ Finally, he emphasized the training system used to teach tactics, which had to select the right lessons to stress, and set the training in such a way "that it makes sense in the context of proper handling of information... within a realistic and instructive framework."¹³⁵ Although his conclusions were based largely on his experiences before Northern Ireland, he was not to know that for the first half of the 1970s at least, officers would be required to rebuild the intelligence apparatus there, and adapt from the conventional mindset required on the North German Plain to the adaptive, well-trained approach which *Low Intensity Operations* sought to create.

4.11 The Influence of Northern Ireland

The Army's experience of public disorder and terrorism in Aden strongly influenced the tactics published in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969). It was those tactics which it quickly realized were inappropriate on the streets of Northern Ireland in 1969. The drawbacks of mass arrests, tear gas, and armoured cars to deal with widespread rioting quickly became apparent. On 5 December 1969, Lt. Gen. Sir Ian Freeland, GOC Northern Ireland, held a study period to examine and discuss the very considerable problems forces faced in Northern Ireland in terms of crowd control, escalation of force, the gap between CS gas and opening fire and public relations. Interestingly, in terms of understanding doctrine and the application of best practice, the study period agreed that "winning 'Hearts and Minds' [was] as vital as winning the tactical battle."¹³⁶ In terms of doctrine, the study period's first conclusion amplified the challenge that doctrine writers continue to face in reconciling enduring themes with likely future options. If the interpretation of the most likely is wrong, those who have to put doctrine into practice will find the gap between theory and reality difficult to close:

...in Northern Ireland the Army is faced with a situation unlike that previously met elsewhere. There are significant differences in the opposition, the circumstances, and the methods and tactics required. The Army's previous experience, training, and the techniques given in the pamphlets, do not fully cover this situation.¹³⁷

For what was to become the 1977 edition of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, Northern Ireland became the most important operational influence.¹³⁸ Given Northern Ireland's profound effect on the Army's approach to operations, it would have been strange had it been ignored. The campaign's longevity meant that very many soldiers saw service there, and the general tenor of the campaign permeated the whole army. The approach followed in Northern Ireland and the tactics and techniques, all of which evolved over the years, became institutionally ingrained in a way not seen since Malaya. Northern Ireland shaped attitudes among its commanders, and fostered what John Kiszely views as a 'hearts and minds' approach.¹³⁹ Although the notion of 'hearts and minds' was familiar to the Army, drilled as it was into officer cadets at Sandhurst as they learnt about Malaya, the approach in Northern Ireland was never labelled as such. Indeed if there had been any recognition that 'hearts and minds' were important, the measures to win them in the early years were at best fitful. As Kiszely notes,

It is easy in the light of the later success of this campaign to forget the early mistakes that were made, and the time it took to rectify them. Among such mistakes were the seemingly unqualified initial support for a highly partisan police force, internment without trial, and large (up to brigade-size) cordon-and-search operations on very limited intelligence, often at the expense of the hearts-and-minds campaign.¹⁴⁰

Thornton goes further. He argues that the Army's early errors contributed to what became a fully fledged insurgency.¹⁴¹ Kiszely suggests that it was not until the Army had brigadiers who had been brought up as platoon, company and then battalion commanders on the key tenets of Army policy – reassurance, deterrence and attrition¹⁴² – that the value of hearts and minds was fully appreciated and had been assimilated.¹⁴³ By that point, 'Hearts and Minds' was no longer referred to as such in doctrine.

While practical experience in Northern Ireland shaped both individuals and the Army as a whole, the campaign's impact on doctrine was surprisingly limited. For reasons of operational security, HQNI made every effort to protect and safeguard its tactics and its specialist capabilities. As a result, very few unclassified records or reports were available to the Army as a whole. By the time DGD&D was established, it could only draw on unit-level post-operational reports held by the Tactical Doctrine Retrieval Cell (TDRC) at the Staff College, although these were augmented by visits to the Province and by the writers' personal experience.¹⁴⁴

Somewhat surprisingly, Bulloch's start point, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1977), made no reference at all to Northern Ireland. In part, this can be accounted for by the British Government's policy to describe the Army's task in Northern Ireland as Military Assistance to the Civil Power (MACP),¹⁴⁵ what *BMD* defined as the provision of military assistance,

in the United Kingdom and Dependent Territories for the direct maintenance or restoration of law and order in situations beyond the capacity of the civil power to resolve in any other way. The military role is to respond to a request for assistance, resolve the immediate problem and then return control to the civil power.¹⁴⁶

Northern Ireland was not, therefore, viewed officially as an insurgency and, officially, there was no call to link a discrete, domestic MACP task with wider, revolutionary warfare. Instead, as Richard Iron observes, the British Government classified the

Provisional IRA as terrorists and followed a strategy of criminalizing the organization to undermine its standing. Whilst that was the Government's official position, Iron more accurately concludes that "PIRA is best characterized as an insurgent group that used terrorist tactics."¹⁴⁷ For this reason Bulloch was correct in drawing on the experience from Northern Ireland when he drew up *Counter Insurgency Operations*. Indeed he reflects this in the doctrine, noting that the campaign provided many lessons to be learnt "because of the similarities between the MACA campaign in Northern Ireland and those COIN campaigns which may be conducted elsewhere."¹⁴⁸ Importantly, however, he also urges caution:

There are also significant differences [between Northern Ireland and other COIN campaigns]. Tactics, which from the perspective of Northern Ireland seem to be relics of a colonial past,... may be very relevant in a different operational setting.¹⁴⁹

The reverse was also true. From the perspective of a different operational setting, tactics used in Northern Ireland may otherwise have become relics of the past. While this is clearly implicit in the caution Bulloch offers, the tendency the Army showed to rely on Northern Ireland was to become contentious with the U.S. military in Iraq from 2005. As Thomas Mockaitis observes,

Although the British ... enjoyed considerable success in countering insurgencies from Malaya to Northern Ireland, their approach has become quite controversial in recent years. American officers have been barraged with ungenerous, over-simplified, and often glib comparisons between their supposedly ineffectual methods in Vietnam and the allegedly superior British approach employed in Malaya.¹⁵⁰

4.11.1 Developing Doctrine in Northern Ireland

Doctrine did not feature at all for the first twenty years of the campaign. It first appeared in 1988 as the reforms instigated by Gen. Bagnall started to take effect. Until then, the GOC and his brigade commanders issued directives and operation orders which provided the rationale, gave guidance and laid out the general framework of understanding for the campaign. In the autumn of 1988, however, Lt. Gen. Sir John Waters, the then GOC, invited each of his three deputy brigade commanders to complete a study. Col. Bruce Willing, Deputy Commander of 8 Brigade in Londonderry, was tasked to look at doctrine.

Willing produced a very comprehensive report that reviewed every aspect of how the Green Army (overt military presence) and the Black Army (covert Special Forces and intelligence agencies) should be trained for duty in Northern Ireland, where the training should take place, and how the training should be co-ordinated.¹⁵¹ Willing also looked at the question of where ownership of doctrine, defined in the study as 'that which is taught,' should rest. Willing highlighted that the existing situation was far from satisfactory. Far too many people could claim some form of responsibility. In theory, Northern Ireland doctrine was owned by Headquarters United Kingdom Land Forces (UKLF) at Wilton, near Salisbury, but practically all responsibility for it lay with the Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team (NITAT) in Lydd in Kent and its sister organisation, the Security Operations Training and Advisory Team (SOTAT) in Germany. The central recommendation was that it all had to be drawn together under

one staff officer (SO2 Pre-Operational Tour Training) in Headquarters Northern Ireland who would manage the doctrine on behalf of the GOC.¹⁵²

This was a major change. Up to that point, Bryan Watters recalls, whoever commanded NITAT, and the instructors there, had the freedom to ‘pop up’ wherever they wished across the Province and, particularly after there had been a terrorist-related incident, go back and change procedures and tactics. The reality was that no one actually owned the doctrine so ideas ebbed and flowed between the brigades and the training teams on the mainland and in Germany, often with little co-ordination between any of the parties involved.¹⁵³ Willing recommended that all the doctrine should be collected from the brigades – each of the three brigades developed tactics and procedures that best suited its area of responsibility, so that there was a clear urban-rural and Londonderry-Belfast divide – along with the training notes produced by NITAT and SOTAT, and placed under the central control of HQNI.

Watters accepted many of Willing’s recommendations and decided that he, as GOC, would take ownership of the doctrine. SO2 Pre-Operational Tour Training would be responsible for its management. The resulting Northern Ireland Standing Operating Procedures (NISOPs) were the first theatre-level doctrine in the campaign. Signed off by the GOC, they covered the full range of staff responsibilities and procedures,¹⁵⁴ and it included a classified NISOP that covered covert operations. The NISOPs were not written from scratch but drew together the existing tactics taught by NITAT and SOTAT, which were published in NISOP Vol. 3. This volume became the basis of what NITAT and SOTAT taught, in exactly the same way that in Malaya the Jungle Warfare School taught *ATOM*.

The policy was now clear. Doctrine, in the form of NISOPs, was that which was taught, and instructors, however well-intentioned, could no longer simply make things up. Where a need to change was identified, either by the resident brigades, or at NITAT, or as a result of terrorist actions, a recommendation would be made to HQNI where the proposal was examined in the context of the problem and the range of responses available. What in the past might have resulted only in a change to tactics or procedures could now result, with HQNI’s oversight and ownership, in a much broader range of responses. These included changes to organizations, training, tactics, equipment, weapons or the intelligence collection plan. This new approach also allowed a greater exchange of information between overt and covert forces to ensure that a change in PIRA’s tactics or weapons, identified by either party, was not missed or dealt with in isolation.¹⁵⁵ The development of NISOPs is another very good example of how effective establishing clear theatre-level responsibility can be for the development of doctrine, the standardization of training and the collection, validation and dissemination of lessons and best practice.

While Northern Ireland’s influence on the Army became increasingly evident, particularly in terms of its counterinsurgency tactics, its approach to decentralized command, its emphasis on junior leadership, and its effective low-level training,¹⁵⁶ surprisingly little from Northern Ireland carried across into conventional campaign planning and management. This could well be due to the surprising fact that the campaign had little to offer in formal planning terms, since “at no stage in the campaign was there an explicit operational level plan as would be recognised today.”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, “below the level of Westminster White Papers there was no clearly-articulated strategy,

or view of the future and how to achieve it which involved all the relevant agencies.”¹⁵⁸ As the Army gained confidence with its new doctrine, so its central tenets started to carry across into the campaign in Northern Ireland.

4.11.2 Introducing the Army’s Doctrine to Northern Ireland

A further important step was taken in 1992 when the then Brig. Alistair Irwin (later Lt. Gen. Sir Alistair Irwin, and GOC Northern Ireland) took command of 39 Brigade in Belfast. Having been a student on HCSC No. 3 and then Colonel HCSC (a post which had responsibility for developing higher level doctrine) he was well versed in Bagnall’s doctrine and the operational level of war.¹⁵⁹ On arrival in Belfast Irwin discovered that the system for directing the campaign was somewhat different from the doctrine for campaigning and mission command laid out in doctrine and then taught at the Staff College:

I had no sooner sat down behind my desk than I asked the chief of staff to produce my orders from the GOC. He looked rather startled and departed at speed. Much later he shamefacedly returned literally blowing dust off a document called the Northern Ireland Operations Order. It was definitely a pre-HCSC document for it instructed me and the other brigade commanders to do specific tasks, down to providing four men and an NCO to guard the entrance to the BT exchange building in the heart of Belfast. There was no hint of the context or of the effects that we were supposed to be achieving. In the written document there was no way of knowing whether for example we should be conciliatory or uncompromising in our activities, much less what was the ultimate aim. In the same vein I inherited a set of brigade orders for the units under my command that were themselves a mere list of tasks, despite my predecessor in command having been a graduate of HCSC No 2!¹⁶⁰

Irwin rewrote his brigade directive, making explicit reference in it to the Army’s extant Tactical Doctrine Note on Mission Command, and using ‘underlying principles’ to set military operations in the right context. His principles emphasized the joint nature of operations; the complementary campaign goals of attrition and deterrence of the terrorists and reassurance of the public; that all operations are intelligence-based; the need for the rapid passage of information on an all-informed basis; the supreme importance of good community relations; the essential need to operate within the law; and the careful consideration of aspects of public information. Finally, Irwin underlined the importance of conducting all operations as taught and practiced during pre-deployment training.¹⁶¹ Irwin summarized the effect of introducing a doctrine-based approach:

The appearance of these directives was an important element in the process of lifting the eyes from the day to day tactical issues and taking a longer view more consistent with the concept, if not the reality, of a campaign plan. It was a move in the right direction but did little to remove the curious fact that the British Army’s longest ever continuous campaign has been conducted without a plan.¹⁶²

In due course HQNI produced its own operational directive which reflected the Army’s doctrine and subsequently shaped doctrine for operations within the Province. From 1994 until the end of the campaign each successive GOC produced a directive, in one form or another, that actually and genuinely influenced the way that everyone down to individual members of foot patrols carried out their duties.¹⁶³

4.11.3 Applying Doctrine on Operations

Throughout 1995, the arrival in Northern Ireland of staff officers or commanders trained at the Staff College helped to build on the doctrinal reforms prompted by Irwin. They were imbued with the manoeuvrist approach, the philosophy of mission command, and the framework of Deep, Close and Rear operations. They soon found that planning techniques intended for general operations were equally applicable to operations in the Province. For example, an analysis method called Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, and a range of associated decision-making tools, quickly helped to improve already well-established mechanisms to co-ordinate and synchronize intelligence and surveillance assets, and ground and airmobile forces in the event of an incident or in a deliberate intelligence-led operation.

Just as the campaign's extensive influence on the Army affected Bulloch's counterinsurgency doctrine, so the Army's new doctrine started to influence the whole approach to the Northern Ireland campaign. Far from being a series of abstract concepts, *ADP Operations* showed itself to be of genuine value when applied in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995)'s re-interpretation of the operational framework of Deep, Close and Rear operations in the context of counterinsurgency had practical relevance.¹⁶⁴

4.12 Distilling the British Approach to Counterinsurgency

This analysis of British counterinsurgency doctrine supports Bulloch's view that at every stage, it was the product of an evolutionary process. As such, for the most part, the themes of each successive publication have been logical when held up against the principal, often varied threats the Army faced, sensible in terms of the size of Britain's armed forces at the time, relevant to its capabilities, and sensible in terms of the defence policy of the day. The generally accepted approach to writing doctrine, examined in Chapter 2, and followed more recently by DGD&D, was to take enduring principles and the current best practice, to set them against the threats faced, and to write doctrine which dealt with what was known and what could be predicted. Every doctrine writer might reasonably claim that this is what they achieved. In this sense, the evolutionary approach to doctrine has served the Army well. It is generally agreed that the British Army developed a sound philosophy for counterinsurgency. But how could its approach be characterized, given that each manual was a product of its time, and each reflected contemporary influences and thinking of the day? Is it possible to distil a 'British Approach'?

The analysis presented in the chapter of the doctrine publications has identified the step changes made as doctrine evolved. The first was the codification of the principle of minimum force in 1923. The second important step was the acknowledgement in 1949 that insurgency and revolution were *politically*-motivated. The third major step was for doctrine to crystallize the principle of separating insurgents from their support in 1963, and the fourth step was to take account of the whole political-socio-economic problem posed by revolutionary warfare in 1969. With each step came a change in the principles for counterinsurgency. Table 3 (over) lays out those principles as they have developed since 1909 and is drawn from analysis of each publication which was undertaken as part of this thesis. While each set of principles differs from manual to manual, when taken as a whole, a remarkable homogeneity in the themes that run through British Doctrine can be recognized.

<i>Field Service Regulations</i>	<i>Notes on Imperial Policing</i>	<i>Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power</i>	<i>Keeping The Peace</i>		<i>Thompson Defeating Communist Insurgency</i>	<i>Land Operations Vol. III Counter-Revolutionary Operations</i>		<i>Kitsson Bunch of Five</i>	<i>AFMV Vol. I Pt. 10 Counter-Insurgency Operations</i>
1909	1934	1949	1957	1963	1966	1969	1977	1977	1995/2001
General Principles	Provision of Adequate Forces	Principles Applicable to Lassarrection	Provision of Adequate Forces	Safeguarding of Civilians	The government must have a clear political aim	General Principles of Government Action	Conflict of Security Force Operations	Establish co-ordinated machinery at every level for the direction of the campaign	Political Primacy and Political Aim
Unity of Effort	Necessity for Offensive Action	Relationship with Civil Government	Location of Forces	Maintenance of Public Confidence	Function in accordance with law	National Plan	Police and Military Co-operation	Coordinated Government Machinery	
Organization	The intelligence system	Knowledges of the background to unrest	Adaptability	Use of Publicity and Propaganda	The government must have an overall plan	Co-ordinated Government Action	The Law	Insure that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people	Intelligence and Information
Application of the Principles	Intercommunication	What are the dissident elements?	Training	Integration of Intelligence	Give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas	Public Opinion and Popular Support	Minimum Necessary Force	Separating the Insurgent from his Support	
Decentralization of Responsibility among Subordinates but Central Control	Mobility	A sound intelligence system and good topographical knowledge		Selection and Maintenance of the Aim	In the guerrilla phase, secure base areas first	Security Intelligence	Political Awareness	Neutralising the Insurgent	
Defeat of the Enemy's Mobile Forces	Security measures	A deeply rooted sense of the importance of security		Co-operation	Intelligence (Chapter 7)	Strong and Popular Security Forces	Popular Support	Set up an intelligence organisation suited to the circumstances	Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning
Warfare in Uncivilized Countries		Information		Security		Operating Principles	Planning Principles		
Self-reliance		Security		Maintenance of Morale		Civil Authority	Intelligence and Security	Maintain a legal system adequate to the needs of the moment	
Vigilance		Location of military forces		Offensive Action		Co-operation	Co-operation between Civil and Military authorities	Education and Training (Chapter 9)	
Judgement		Discipline		Surprise		Minimum Force	Administration and Logistics		
Discipline		Relations with the Police		Concentration of Force			Training		
Organization		Relations with Civilians		Economy of Effort			Research and Development		
Training		Relations with the Press		Flexibility					
				Administration					

Table 3 - The Evolution of Principles for Counterinsurgency

Source: Author.

Several principles, such as intelligence, co-ordination, and political primacy, appear more than once, underlining their continuing importance. Others, particularly those of the more general military application, make a fleeting appearance before being subsumed into the general text. Nevertheless, together, they represent the essential elements of the British approach to counterinsurgency. If duplicate references are removed, and closely-related principles are grouped together, the real value of the Kitson framework and Thompson's principles becomes clear. Where some of the early manuals listed what may be more accurately termed imperatives, Kitson and Thompson provide the central themes for a campaign, under which more general imperatives sit. Table 4 (below) shows how the reorganized principles fall into place.

Political Primacy and Political Aim	The government must have a clear political aim Civil authority must retain primacy There must be a clear national plan Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning Give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas Forces must be aware of the political situation
Co-ordinated Government Action	Establish co-ordinated machinery at every level for the direction of the campaign Ensure close co-operation between Civil and Military authorities Maintain effective intercommunication between departments and agencies
The Law	Maintain a legal system adequate to the needs of the moment Function in accordance with law
Intelligence	Set up an intelligence organisation suited to the circumstances Integrate Intelligence Understand the background to the unrest Identify the dissident elements Have good topographical knowledge of the area of operations Maintain a deeply rooted sense of the importance of security Employ effective security measures
Separate the Insurgent from his Support	In the guerrilla phase, secure base areas first
Maintain Public Confidence	Ensure that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people Foster strong and popular Security Forces Safeguard civilians Security forces must maintain discipline Use the minimum force necessary Use publicity and counter-propaganda to influence public opinion Maintain relations with the Press
Neutralize the Insurgent	Ensure there is adequate provision of forces Forces must remain adaptable Location of Forces Maintain Offensive Action Ensure forces have mobility Maintain surprise
Education and Training	Ensure forces are trained for the theatre of operations

Table 4 - The Essence of the British Approach

Source: Author.

From Table 4 it is possible to conclude that the British approach recognizes the political and psychological dimensions to the problem; the fact that there is no purely military solution to it; and that security operations require excellent intelligence, judicious use of force, and effective communications with those in the theatre of operations, regional and international audiences, and those at home. The eight principal themes are as follows:

Political Primacy and Political Aim. The government must have a clear political aim, the civil authorities must retain primacy, priority must be given to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas, there must be a clear national plan which should take account of longer term post-Insurgency conditions, and security forces must be aware of the political situation.

Co-ordinated Government Action. Co-ordinated government machinery must be established at every level for the direction of the campaign, close co-operation is required between Civil and Military authorities, and effective intercommunication must be maintained between departments and agencies.

The Law. Maintain a legal system adequate to the needs of the moment, and the government and its agents must function in accordance with the law.

Intelligence. An intelligence organisation must be set up suited to the circumstances to integrate intelligence into the co-ordinated government response. Counterinsurgents must understand the background to the unrest, identify the dissident elements, have good topographical knowledge of the area of operations, maintain a deeply rooted sense of the importance of security and employ effective security measures.

Separate the Insurgent from his Support. In the guerrilla phase, secure base areas first. This theme is closely linked to the next.

Maintain Public Confidence. Ensure that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people, foster strong and popular Security Forces, and safeguard civilians. Security forces must maintain discipline, and use the minimum force necessary to achieve their objectives. Effective publicity and counter-propaganda are necessary to influence public opinion, and security forces must maintain relations with the Press.

Neutralize the Insurgent. The government must provide adequate forces. They must remain adaptable, maintain offensive action and surprise, and be mobile.

Education and Training. Ensure forces are trained for the theatre of operations.

These eight themes encapsulate the British doctrinal approach to counterinsurgency and provide the framework against which *Counter Insurgency Operations* and the British campaign in Iraq can be analyzed. In the light of events in Iraq, was the guidance provided in *Counter Insurgency Operations* therefore valid?

¹ Bulloch, "The Development of Doctrine for Counter Insurgency – The British Experience", p. 21.

² Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 21.

³ Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies*, p. 35.

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- ⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 25.
- ⁵ *FSR*, 1909, p. 171.
- ⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 23.
- ⁷ *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, 1923, p. 3.
- ⁸ Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counter-Insurgency in the Post-Imperial Era*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 2. His other principles were civil-military co-operation and tactical flexibility.
- ⁹ Thornton, "Historical Origins of the British Army's Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorist Techniques".
- ¹⁰ *Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, 1923, p. 7.
- ¹¹ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-14.
- ¹² Srinath Raghavan, "Protecting the Raj: The Army in India and Internal Security, c. 1919-39", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, December 2005, p. 257.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 258.
- ¹⁴ National Archive, CAB/24/105, *Indian Disturbances. Conclusions of the Indian Disorders Committee*, 6 May 1920, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 169.
- ¹⁶ Thornton, "Historical Origins of the British Army's Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorist Techniques", p. 43.
- ¹⁷ Hew Strachan, (ed.), *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the 20th Century*, London: Routledge, April 2006, p. 9.
- ¹⁸ Caroline Elkins, "Royal Screwup", *The New Republic*, 19 December 2005. See also Caroline Elkins, "The Wrong Lesson," *The Atlantic Monthly*, July/August 2005, pp. 34-36.
- ¹⁹ Christopher A. Bayly and Timothy N. Harper, *Forgotten wars: freedom and revolution in Southeast Asia*, Harvard, CT: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 449-450.
- ²⁰ Huw Bennett, "The Other Side of the COIN: Minimum and Exemplary Force in British Army Counterinsurgency in Kenya", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 2007, pp. 638-664.
- ²¹ War Office Manual 1307, *Notes on Imperial Policing*, London: HMSO, 1934.
- ²² Gwynn, pp. 13-14.
- ²³ *Ibid*, p. 5. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴ Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies*, p. 44.
- ²⁵ *Notes on Imperial Policing*, 1934, p. 5.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 1934, p. 5.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, 1934, p. 7.
- ²⁸ War Office Code 8439, *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power*, London: The War Office, 1949, p. 4.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 6.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.
- ³² *Ibid*, 1949, pp. 7-9.
- ³³ Ian F. W. Beckett, "Robert Thompson and the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, 1961-1965", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.8, No.3, Winter 1997, p. 44.

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- ³⁴ *ATOM*, Chapter II. See also Federation of Malaya, *Report on the Emergency in Malaya from April, 1950 to November, 1951* by Lt. Gen. Sir Harold Briggs, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1951; Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960*, New York: Crane, Russak, 1975.
- ³⁵ Daniel Marston, "Lost and Found in the Jungle: The Indian Army and British Army Tactical Doctrines for Burma, 1943-45 and Malaya, 1948-1960," in Strachan, *Big Wars and Small Wars*, p. 97
- ³⁶ Riley Sutherland, *Army Operations in Malaya, 1947-1960*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, Prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense/International Security Affairs, September 1964, p. 27.
- ³⁷ See Raffi Gregorian, "'Jungle Bashing' in Malaya: Towards a formal Tactical Doctrine", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Winter 1994, pp. 338-359.
- ³⁸ Sutherland, *Army Operations in Malaya*, p. 56.
- ³⁹ Gregorian, p. 346.
- ⁴⁰ Maj. Scott R. McMichael, *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command Staff and General College, Combat Studies Research Paper No. 6. September 1987, p. 97.
- ⁴¹ Richard Stubbs, "From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-1960", in Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, (eds.), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, April 2008, p. 125.
- ⁴² *Report on the Emergency in Malaya*, p. 3. See also Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya*, p. 234.
- ⁴³ *Report on the Emergency in Malaya*, p. 5.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid* , p. 7.
- ⁴⁵ Marston, "Lost and Found in the Jungle", p. 103.
- ⁴⁶ HQ Malaya Command, *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, Malaya Federation: Kuala Lumpur, Federal Director of Emergency Operations, 1952, Third Edition, 1958, Foreword.
- ⁴⁷ Gregorian, p. 350.
- ⁴⁸ War Office Code 9455, *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, London: The War Office, 10 April 1957, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 2.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 3.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 38.
- ⁵² *Ibid*, p. 38
- ⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 39
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 30.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid*. Emphasis in original.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 31.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 54.
- ⁵⁸ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, pp. 111-114.
- ⁵⁹ *ATOM*, p. 7.
- ⁶⁰ Callwell, *Small Wars*, pp. 131-4.
- ⁶¹ *Keeping the Peace*, 1957, p. 54.
- ⁶² *Ibid*, p. 55.
- ⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 50.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 52.

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- ⁶⁵ Kitson, *Practical Aspects of Counter Insurgency*, p. 14.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ War Office Code 9800, *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, Part 1-Doctrine, and War Office Code 9801, *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, Part 2-Tactics and Training. London: The War Office, 1963.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. viii.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 27.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 31. Original paragraph numbering.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 66. Original paragraph numbering.
- ⁷² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. B-3-2.
- ⁷³ Army Code No 70516, Land Operations Volume III, *Counter-Revolutionary Operations - Part 1-General Principles*, Part 2-Internal Security, and Part 3-Counter Insurgency, London: by Command of the Defence Council, 1969.
- ⁷⁴ “If we watch a torrent bearing down on each successive bank or earthen dam in its path, we see that it first beats against the obstacle, feeling and testing it at all points. Eventually it finds a small crack at some point. Through this crack pour the first dribblets of water and rush straight on. The pent-up water ... pours straight through the breach [and] expands to widen once more the onrush of the torrent. Thus as the water pours through in ever-increasing volume the onrush of the torrent swells to its original proportions, leaving in turn each crumbling obstacle behind it.” Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, *The ‘Man-in-the-Dark’ Theory of Infantry Tactics and the ‘Expanding Torrent’ System of Attack*, Presented on Wednesday, November 3rd, 1920, published in *The RUSI Journal*, February, 1921, p. 13.
- ⁷⁵ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 1, p. 1.
- ⁷⁶ *Keeping the Peace*, 1963, Part 1, p. 2.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 4.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 17.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 3. Emphasis added.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid*, Part 3, pp. 2-3. Emphasis added.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41.
- ⁸² *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41.
- ⁸³ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 42.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 41. Emphasis added.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 44.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 87.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Part 1, p. 87.
- ⁹¹ Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and minds in guerrilla warfare: the Malayan emergency, 1948-1960*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989, p. 2.
- ⁹² *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 3, p. 4.
- ⁹³ See Stephen Biddle, “Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006, p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 1, p. 13.
- ⁹⁵ Strachan, *Big Wars, Small Wars*, p. 10.

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- ⁹⁶ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 2, p. 73.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 103.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 103.
- ⁹⁹ Beckett, “Robert Thompson and the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, 1961-1965”, p. 43.
- ¹⁰⁰ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p. 10.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 50.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 52.
- ¹⁰³ Bulloch, “The Development of Doctrine for Counter Insurgency – The British Experience”, p. 23.
- ¹⁰⁴ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p. 10.
- ¹⁰⁵ He acknowledged that his suggestion of the clear political aim – “to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable” – might be too broad. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p. 51.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, p. 41.
- ¹⁰⁷ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p. 53.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 53
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 83.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 89.
- ¹¹¹ *Keeping the Peace*, 1957, pp. 54-55.
- ¹¹² Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, pp. 111-112.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid*, Preface.
- ¹¹⁴ Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies*, p. 225.
- ¹¹⁵ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, p. iii.
- ¹¹⁶ Lt. Col. Frank Kitson, quoted in Stephen T. Hosmer and Sibylle O. Crane, *Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16-20, 1962*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006, p. 136.
- ¹¹⁷ Kitson, in Hosmer and Crane, p. 127.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.
- ¹¹⁹ See Kitson, *Gangs and Countergangs*. See also Lawrence E. Cline, *Pseudo operations and counterinsurgency: Lessons from other countries*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005. Cline raises the risks of clandestine operations acting too much like guerrillas and acting outside the law, particularly with regard to human rights.
- ¹²⁰ Supplement to *The London Gazette*, 23 May 1958, p. 3238.
- ¹²¹ Hosmer, p. 123.
- ¹²² Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 2.
- ¹²³ *Ibid*, p. 78.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 189-191.
- ¹²⁵ Julian Paget, *Last Post: Aden 1964-67*, London: Faber & Faber, 1969, p. 150.
- ¹²⁶ Brig. R. C. P. Jeffries, “Operations in Aden – Some Infantry Lessons”, *The Infantryman*, No. 84, November 1968, p. 19.
- ¹²⁷ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, pp. 290-1.
- ¹²⁸ Lt. Gen. Sir Frank Kitson, *Operational Aspects of Counter Insurgency*, Kermit Roosevelt Lecture delivered May 1981, Upavon: Tactical Doctrine Retrieval Cell: Annex B to DCinC 8109 dated 11 Jun 81, p. 5.

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- ¹²⁹ The term propaganda, which today has unpalatable associations with state control, is no longer used but the requirement to inform key audiences quickly, accurately and effectively does.
- ¹³⁰ Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, pp.284-289.
- ¹³¹ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 165.
- ¹³² Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, p. 301.
- ¹³³ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 166.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 167.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 167.
- ¹³⁶ Minutes of a Study Period held by Lt. Gen. Sir Ian Freeland, KCB, DSO, GOC Northern Ireland, 5 Dec 69, Upavon: TDRC, 00456, p. 33.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.
- ¹³⁸ Grant and Bulloch, interviews.
- ¹³⁹ Kiszely, interview.
- ¹⁴⁰ Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely, "Learning About Counterinsurgency", *The RUSI Journal*, December 2006, p. 18.
- ¹⁴¹ Rod Thornton, "Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Months of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland - August 1969 to March 1972", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 73-107.
- ¹⁴² *Operation Banner*, p. 2-15.
- ¹⁴³ Kiszely, interview.
- ¹⁴⁴ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 2009.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Operation Banner*, p. 4-12.
- ¹⁴⁶ *BMD*, 1996, p. 2-5.
- ¹⁴⁷ Richard Iron, "Britain's Longest War", in Marston and Malkasian, p. 276, Note 3.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-2-1.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵⁰ Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, p. 11
- ¹⁵¹ At that time all Northern Ireland training was co-ordinated by a retired officer working in HQ UKLF in Wilton.
- ¹⁵² Col. Bryan Watters, interview with author, Warminster, 30 January 2009. Watters served in Headquarters Northern Ireland as SO2 Pre-Operational Tour Training between December 1988 and January 1990 and wrote the first operational standing operating procedures for Northern Ireland.
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵⁴ The staff divisions of the time covered responsibilities as follows: G1 Personnel and Administration, G2 Intelligence, G3 Operations and Training, G4 Logistics and G5 Civil-Military Relations and Public Information.
- ¹⁵⁵ Watters, interview.
- ¹⁵⁶ Grant, interview. *Operation Banner*, p. 4-7.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Operation Banner*, p. 4-4.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8-3.
- ¹⁵⁹ Irwin's lectures to HCSC on operational art and campaign planning were subsequently published. See A. S. H. Irwin, *The Levels of War, Operational Art and Campaign Planning, The Occasional*, Number 14, Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Irwin, interview.

¹⁶¹ *Idem.*

¹⁶² Lt. Gen. Sir Alistair Irwin, *The Campaign in Northern Ireland: The Challenges of Command*, paper presented to the Oxford Leverhulme Changing Character of War Programme, All Souls College, Oxford, 1 November 2006.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* The significance of this change in the philosophy of command was confirmed by Gen. Sir Roger Wheeler, who was GOC Northern Ireland in 1995. Interview with author, Warminster, 29 June 2009.

¹⁶⁴ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 1995, pp. B-2-10-11.

5 British Operations in Iraq 2003-2009

The aim of this chapter is to examine the course of British operations in Southern Iraq so that the validity of counterinsurgency doctrine can be determined. It has to be made clear from the outset that Iraq poses a difficult theory/practice divide: the level of understanding and application of warfighting doctrine seen during the invasion was not mirrored in subsequent post-conflict operations. In this sense, the chapter judges a much less clearly defined application of a coherent doctrine than might be generally expected. For the sake of clarity, a chronological approach will be followed. The overview of the campaign the chapter provides will highlight how the dynamic strategic and security situation influenced the British approach.

Each TELIC deployment provided a divisional headquarters which formed Headquarters Multinational Division (South East) (HQ MND(SE)) and a manoeuvre brigade. The sequence became desynchronized as the campaign progressed. For TELICs 3-5 and 8, the divisional headquarters were *ad hoc*. Unusually for an enduring campaign of this sort, each deployment brought with it a new interpretation of the threat, the military problem faced and the response required. One senior officer remarked in 2007, "HQ MND(SE) is pretty well bedded-in by now but, each time a new commander comes in, it has to change direction."¹ Past campaigns had been characterized almost from the start, and each characterization has experienced little reinterpretation. In Malaya the campaign was countering Communist Terrorism, Kenya was countering a tribal rebellion, and Northern Ireland was MACP. The same was not true with Operation TELIC. The reasons for this are complex and relate to command and control arrangements between the home base and the theatre of operations, and – perhaps surprisingly given the emphasis the Army placed on it – mission command. These will be examined in the thematic analysis in Chapter 6 which will use the principles of British counterinsurgency and the doctrinal approach which were identified and examined in Chapter 3.

The issue of characterization is important, particularly if Clausewitz's dictum is accepted that,

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.²

Whether the British operation in Iraq was viewed as nation-building, stability operations or counterinsurgency, the fact remains that almost from the start, and to the end of British operations, clearly identifiable organizations emerged which posed a threat and which fell clearly into the category of insurgency. These were minority groups "within a state ... intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such a change."³ Of course, this definition is drawn from that first coined in *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* (1969), which focussed on a form of guerrilla warfare intent on overthrowing a government.⁴ While it assumed a single insurgency, this was not the case in Iraq. In the absence of an Iraqi government capable

of implementing a national development and security plan, and with limited security forces to contain and control the security situation, by 2005 a number of powerful insurgent groups had emerged. Each had its own objectives, but not all were intent on overthrowing the nascent GOI, indeed some were linked directly with Iraqi ministries or with provincial councils. Whether insurgents fought from within the GOI or against it and against the Coalition forces, they all sought first and foremost to secure and maintain their position, the power they held, and their influence. These were entirely predictable Iraqi responses to changing political conditions. As Charles Tripp suggests, the history of Iraq,

is in part a history of the strategies of cooperation, subversion and resistance adapted by various Iraqis trying to come to terms with the force the state represented. It has also been a history of the ways the state transformed those who tried to use it.⁵

By introducing violence into the political arena, the presence of insurgent groups defined the character of the problem British forces faced. The “Peacekeeping Trinity, [of] consent coupled with the linked principle of impartiality and limits on the use of force,”⁶ may have been relevant the early months of the British presence in Iraq, but the threat posed by insurgents, and the actions required to deal with it ultimately required classic counterinsurgency more than a revisionist view of peace support which was based on the peculiarities of the Balkans model.

As the campaign unfolded, at some point all the insurgent groups took up arms against the Coalition presence, for the most part with ever-increasing levels of violence and sophistication. The turning point in the campaign came with the bombing of al-Askari Mosque in Samarra on 22 February 2006 by AQI, after which insurgents turned on rival religious and ethnic sects within the Iraqi population. The result was a bloody civil war and the level of violence increased dramatically. Sectarian intimidation and killings spiralled out of control and the worsening situation took the U.S.-led strategy of transition (handing over to Iraqi control at the earliest opportunity and withdrawal; referred to as ‘standing down as they stand up’) to the point of defeat. In December 2006, realization that defeat loomed prompted a complete reversal of policy by President Bush. In a matter of weeks, the U.S. approach flipped from transition to one of securing the Iraqi population in order to create the political space for the GOI to establish its political legitimacy and efficacy with the Iraqi people. A further 30,000 U.S. troops were sent to Iraq over the summer of 2007 and, under the leadership of Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Gen. David Petraeus, the implementation of a comprehensive, cross-government counterinsurgency campaign plan based on the U.S. military’s new counterinsurgency doctrine, combined with the effects of a widespread Sunni rejection of AQI and a surge of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), brought violence under control, and set the scene for first local and then national political progress.

As Coalition military operations in Iraq developed from 2003, the view gradually changed within the Army of what the British force in Iraq was there to do. Initially it was Nation-Building. By January 2005 the Army’s official view, reflected in DGD&D’s analysis of Operation TELICs 2-5,⁷ was that it was conducting Stability Operations, seeking to “impose security and control over an area while employing military capabilities to restore services and support civilian agencies.”⁸ The authors of *Stability Operations in Iraq* could not ignore, however, insurgency as a growing

problem, and in 2006, as U.S. policy and practice turned towards counterinsurgency, so too did the British view. Maj. Gen., later Lt. Gen. John Cooper was the first GOC in Basrah to define the campaign as one of counterinsurgency.⁹ His successor, Maj. Gen. Richard Shirreff agreed, but by early 2007 the problem had been redefined more as criminality than insurgency. Nevertheless, for the last two years of the campaign those taking part saw it as a counterinsurgency, even though it was missing the key ingredients of a co-ordinated political, military, economic and information campaign, and the efforts made to develop the Iraqi Army proved to be disappointing.

5.1 Warfighting and Nation-Building

On Monday 11 May 2009 British forces conducted their final combat mission in southern Iraq, escorting the last convoy of 20 Armoured Brigade's heavy military equipment in a move south from the Contingency Operating Base (COB) in Basrah, across the border into Kuwait. It brought to an end the British part of a campaign which started on 20 March 2003, when the U.S.-led coalition launched its offensive from Kuwait to remove Saddam Hussein from power and to secure weapons of mass destruction.¹⁰ The campaign finished in 2009 in a manner which could not have been predicted even as late as March 2007, with British forces operating confidently alongside the Iraqi Army to secure the population, with local support, and the streets of a Basrah firmly under the control of the GOI. This outcome was certainly very different from that which seemed likely by 2005. Early Iraqi support for the Coalition presence evaporated once the political landscape solidified, and ethnic and sectarian groups resorted to violence to secure their survival and to advance their various interests. As the campaign developed, British forces faced increasingly more violent opposition from Shi'a militants at the same time as expectations in Whitehall grew for a quick handover to ISF and a withdrawal from Iraq. British force reductions were not matched by increasing ISF capacity and capability, and the spiralling violence and increasing militia control over the population in Southern Iraq eroded Iraqi support for the British presence.

In March 2003, in a *blitzkrieg* advance up the Euphrates river valley, which embodied Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's vision of military transformation, Rapid Decisive Operations and 'Shock and Awe',¹¹ U.S. ground forces quickly overwhelmed those elements of the Iraqi Army which stood and fought. Those which did not, melted into the population to undertake initially sporadic but increasingly more violent guerrilla attacks on the occupying forces. By 4 April, U.S. forces had seized the outskirts of Baghdad and the International Airport, and on 6 April British forces entered Basrah, their principal objective. Within a week, the first UK-Iraqi joint police patrols took place in the city.

This part of the operation was an impressive demonstration of U.S. military prowess, and the U.K. contribution was notable for how quickly it deployed to Kuwait and the way it carried out its task of securing Basrah. The Secretary of State for Defence announced as late as 18 December 2002 that the UK would contribute a divisional-sized land force to any operation in Iraq. Deployment of land forces was authorized on 20 January 2003 and by the time British ground operations started on 20 March, some 46,000 personnel from the three services and a huge range of equipment and materiel had been deployed to the theatre of operations.¹² After securing the al-Faw peninsula, and Umm Qasr, Iraq's only deep water port, 1 (UK) Division first isolated then took

control of the city of Basrah through raids to eliminate enemy strong points and strong fighting patrols. Organized resistance quickly collapsed, and although looting and rioting followed, “order was slowly imposed, with assistance from the majority of the population.”¹³

The decision for British forces to take responsibility for the Basrah sector in the south east emerged late in 2002 from planning at CENTCOM, where British officers had been embedded since 2002, and from discussions between the Pentagon and MoD.¹⁴ Maj. Gen., later Lt. Gen. Robin Brims,¹⁵ commanding 1 (UK) Division, used a textbook manoeuvrist approach to isolate Basrah. From the start, he and his brigade commanders recognized that the active support of the Iraqi population would be crucial to the success of the post-war phase of operations. They adopted an unconventional approach,¹⁶ first isolating Basrah, and did not enter the city until the regime in Baghdad collapsed. Brims’ aim was to “destroy the regime and drive a wedge between the regime and the ordinary people... these were people who wanted us to come in, they wanted to be freed but they could not do it themselves, they needed our support.”¹⁷

On 1 May, President Bush announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq, acknowledging that “We have difficult work to do in Iraq. We are bringing order to parts of that country that remain dangerous.”¹⁸ Post-conflict operations were planned to first stabilize, then develop a secure and stable country, and finally to complete the transition from coalition control to a peaceful, self-governing Iraq. Pre-war assumptions about the state of Iraq’s civil administration and the efficacy of the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) were flawed,¹⁹ and early decisions by the Coalition Provincial Authority (CPA), in particular Paul Bremer’s decision on 23 May 2003²⁰ to disband the Iraqi Army, exacerbated security problems across the country. The Coalition force, designed for and successful in the combat phase of the campaign, proved to be too small and incorrectly postured for the complex challenges of post-conflict stabilization.²¹ In the political and security vacuum of the weeks and months which followed the end of major combat operations, armed groups emerged to oppose the Coalition and to secure their own position and interests: Former Regime Loyalists (FRLs), seeking to return the Sunni Ba’ath Party to power, and militant Shi’a groups, of which Moqtada al Sadr’s Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM) and the Iranian-backed Badr Corps. Within weeks Foreign Fighters (FF) started to move into Iraq to join al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the largely Sunni FRLs.

On 10 July 2003, 1 (UK) Division handed over to 3 (UK) Division in Basrah, with the latter forming the new HQ MND(SE). As such it was part of the U.S.-led Coalition campaign which, from 15 June had been under the command of Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez and U.S. Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7), based in Baghdad. MND(SE) had its own area of operation (AO) made up of al Basrah, Maysan, Dhi Qar and al Muthanna provinces. Mission command had to be used extensively, supported by written directives, because many of the unit areas of operation were so large that there was no other way of running the operation. Commanders had to use their initiative. One commanding officer noted that, “I had such a large AO – the size of Northern Ireland – that I could not have controlled it directly even had I so wished.”²² Another noted that,

I was effectively the Military Governor and my focus thereafter was to try to shape the operation by dealing with the influential people in the local area,

reforming local security organisations and institutions and using my forces to support my intent. With a battle group of 1200 people and with a local population of 800,000 *the only way I could operate was with the consent of the people*. You had to use an indirect approach and kinetic effects were not always the best or indeed only method. Unlike during warfighting operations, I knew that we had to achieve effect in a different way and there was a need to engage with the local people.²³

MND(SE) worked alongside Coalition Provisional Authority (South) (CPA(S)) to deliver CJTF-7's four lines of operation: Security, Economy, Essential Services and Governance. Andrew Garfield considers that the British commitment in these areas was limited, "necessitated as much by a lack of resources and waning public support for the war as ... by greater realism based on experience and a better military appreciation of challenge."²⁴ Herein lay a major problem: CPA(S) did not have enough suitably qualified people, and HQ MND(SE) was drawn inexorably into all the major aspect of the campaign to make up for CPA(S)'s shortfalls.²⁵ The absence of an effective civilian organisation and civilian leadership, expertise or financial assistance, forced additional responsibilities onto the shoulders of military officers who found themselves involved with projects and tasks that crossed all four lines of operation. Colonels, for example, were put into the field as *de facto* provincial governors, units started projects to re-establish local businesses, and the principal military engineer first created and then ran the Emergency Implementation Plan.

Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb, then a major general and commanding MND(SE), recalls that "there was no one else in theatre but the military and so I worked on first principles. My priorities were to deliver operational success, allocated from within the resources I had been provided, disassemble the problem, reassemble the solution and crack on."²⁶ Lamb identified two important aspects that should underpin the operation. The first was "to give the Iraqi people a better life," and the second was that to leave in a timely fashion. In all matters, therefore, 'adequate' was good enough.²⁷ Within a few days of arriving, FRLs had started to make their presence felt. More disquietingly, early Iraqi expectations about what the British operation would do for them were still unfulfilled. Lt. Gen. Brims later recalls that a good deal of effort had been spent before the invasion in trying to convince the people of Basrah that the British operation was intended to free them from the Ba'athist regime, and therefore was not targeted at them. The Iraqis were told that they would be helped if they co-operated with British forces. In Brims' view, Britain's inability to deliver on promises made undermined the credibility of further British promises.²⁸

5.2 The Honeymoon Ends

20 Armoured Brigade replaced 19 Mechanized Brigade in November 2003, for TELIC 3, and a composite staff replaced HQ 3 Div as HQ MND(SE). The signing of UNSCR 1511 in November, some fifteen days into the tour, authorized the transfer to an Iraqi Transitional National Assembly on 30 June 2004. This significantly changed the emphasis for operations, providing a date on which effort could be focused, and a tantalizingly short planning horizon for the end of the campaign. Over the autumn of 2003 the threat from FRLs was largely contained, and this provided the opportunity to concentrate effort elsewhere. 20 Brigade's mission was adapted to reflect the new

emphasis, with it conducting security and stabilization operations to create the conditions for the transfer of civil authority and control to the Iraqis.²⁹

Operations in Iraq during TELIC 3 proved to be varied and challenging. The first two months of the campaign were dominated by counterterrorist operations against the FRLs and Foreign Fighters. The middle two months concentrated on building capacity in the Iraqi Security Forces and wider Iraqi institutions in a period where consolidation was possible because of the success of what were termed Counter Terrorist operations. The final two months were dominated by the rise in short term high intensity operations against the Shi'a militias. Such rapid changes in role and focus demanded a great deal of flexibility from those involved, because tasks switched from supporting local political leaders, to working with the Customs Authorities, to training the police. At the same time the security situation remained highly volatile, and the use of force was necessary, ranging from firing baton rounds to dealing with public disorder to full scale company-level combined arms operations to defeat an insurgent threat.

HQ 20 Armoured brigade developed a plan using four lines of operation. These were designed to defeat the threat from terrorism, build the capacity of Iraqi security institutions (also known as Security Sector Reform (SSR)), improve the security situation to a level the Iraqis could manage, and build a sustainable environment. These tasks were underpinned by the enduring requirement to secure the consent, support and trust of the population. The overall intention was to create competent Iraqi institutions, which in due course would be able to operate in support of a 'tolerant and pluralist society.'³⁰

Commanders recognized very early in the campaign that building the capacity of Iraqi security institutions through SSR would be the key part of the overall exit strategy. Although the longer term structure of Iraq's security forces had yet to be determined, there was sufficient information to enable some safe working assumptions to be made. The principal assumption was that as the ISF stood up, so Coalition Forces could stand down. No real consideration seems to have been made about what would happen if the ISF proved incapable of handling the security situation without multinational support.

In the Basrah and Maysan provinces four principal organizations emerged: the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF); the Iraqi Police Service (IPS); Border Enforcement Forces (including customs, immigration, the Iraqi Riverine Police Service (IRPS) and border guards); and the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC). 20 Brigade established three principles which were later to be incorporated into new tactical doctrine for SSR:

The starting point was not to impose our own solution, but rather to examine what was there before, and if it was adequate and acceptable, build on it as appropriate. It is pointless to put something in place that is culturally or economically unsustainable in the longer term.

It was necessary to make the space for the Iraqis to take responsibility for themselves. This meant taking risks, putting an Iraqi face up front wherever possible, and gradually allowing control to pass.

We needed to encourage them to decentralize and share control – for this was probably the most effective means of persuading their institutions to be accountable to the population.³¹

The plan recognized that defeating the threat from terrorism was the main way to free up military support for the other lines of operation. Using deterrence, disruption and demonstrations of capability, and by trying to be as unpredictable as possible – all proven techniques from Northern Ireland – British operations achieved enough freedom of action to allow other operations to continue. Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, then the Brigade commander, recalls that the threat started to change:

The FRL were always present and their presence manifested itself in roadside bombs. My Chief of Staff ran operations against them in a classical Northern Ireland interpretation, using intelligence-led operations to target FRL. The result was they were effectively suppressed and clever control measures, for example, of ingress into and egress out of Basrah, closed them down.³²

It was during 20 Armoured Brigade's tour that the insurgency really took hold, albeit that the first major attack, that of five vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) used to attack five separate police facilities in and around Basrah, was believed to be the work of AQI. Carter suggests that previous experience and perceptions, rather than a genuine understanding of the character of the problem, served to limit not enable thinking about its true character and the general approach it would require:

The trouble was that our approach had been muddled by experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo. They shaped our understanding of what we thought was meant by Peace Enforcement. The result was that we entered Iraq on reconstruction terms, with reconstruction and SSR in mind, and techniques and style more applicable to peacekeeping. *We therefore lurched into counter insurgency*, having thought that the odd IED was nothing more than a blip in what was to be a longer term reconstruction campaign.³³

An important development in the security situation occurred in late March 2004. Since April 2003, Ahmad Hassim observes, the Shi'a were prepared to challenge the authority and legitimacy of the Coalition and the Sadrist movement, led by Moqtada al-Sadr, had been its most vociferous critics.³⁴ The Sadrists had a political wing, the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), and a militia (JAM). First it declared Sadr City, the huge Shi'a slum in Baghdad, a no-go area for the Coalition, then it started to establish alternative councils across the south of the country, and at al-Rafi in Dhi Qar, Sadrists forced the district council to resign at gunpoint.³⁵ On 28 March, U.S. forces closed down the OMS newspaper and arrested a senior Sadr aide. Sadr's response was to instigate an uprising across Southern Iraq, with violence breaking out in Kufa, Karbala, Najaf and al-Kut.³⁶ The uprising had little effect when it broke in Basrah on 3 April 2004, where JAM was in a minority, its leadership fragmented, so the situation was quickly brought back under control by the Coalition. Importantly, local leaders still held sway, and this was something Carter was able to exploit:

We spent a great deal of time working up a local solution whilst combating disruptive armed action by the militia with force. Remember that we were still in the early stages of the campaign and force protection was not a constraint, so we used local leaders to exert influence. This was important and we had an effective dual track approach that was definitely British in character.³⁷

The situation was not restored so easily in Maysan, 200 kilometres north of Basrah. With a population of over one million almost entirely poor, rural Shi'a, Maysan had a

history of militancy, and it had long seen itself as what Michael Knights and Ed Williams describe as “an unruly bastion of local power brokers.”³⁸

Operations in Maysan were acknowledged by successive commanding officers to be an economy of force mission in order to allow the political and economic development of Basrah and the eventual UK withdrawal.³⁹ This stretched battlegroups, whose commanding officers found themselves having to work with the CPA headquarters in dealing with provincial-level matters, and company commanders having to train the IPS, run civil-military co-operation tasks, and conduct security operations. It left battlegroups with little immediate capacity to respond to sudden changes in the situation, and the by now institutionalized reluctance to recognize the problem for what it was, and the insistence on seeing the Iraqi problem in terms of Northern Ireland or the Balkans exacerbated the problem. An outgoing Commanding Officer remarked that the replacement battlegroup kept saying, ‘It’s just like Kosovo.’ He was clear that it was not: “You are misappreciating the situation if you try to import a model from somewhere else. You have to take each situation as you find it and adjust your procedures and your mindset to make it work.”⁴⁰ The author of *Field Service Regulations* in 1909 made the very same point: the universality of principles required them to be adapted to circumstances, not necessarily the development of a wholly new approach.

Carter summarizes the British approach over the first year in the south as one based on “the appropriate use of force, the desire to find political outcomes wherever possible, engagement with the population and local opinion formers, the desire to pull it all together holistically.” These tenets were very much in keeping with the traditional British approach, reflected in doctrine since 1963. Unfortunately, unlike Malaya or Northern Ireland, they were undermined, he concluded by a “complete incapacity to have or support non-kinetic effects [so-called ‘soft’ effects], and a complete failure to provide continuity.”⁴¹

5.3 Peace Support Operations and the Sadrist Uprising

In April 2004, 1 Mechanized Brigade replaced 20 Armoured Brigade. The summer period saw both the Transition of Authority to the Iraqi Interim Government, and two upsurges in violence, largely as result of American actions against AQI in Fallujah and JAM in Najaf. In addition the nominally undeployable Land Warfare Centre Battlegroup, 1st Battalion The Black Watch (1 BW), deployed to Iraq in October as the Divisional Reserve and was subsequently sent north into the U.S. AO to support operations to clear Fallujah of AQI and Sunni insurgents.

From May 2004, the JAM uprising in Maysan intensified. Later, the Army would generally agree that during the summer in Iraq the 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales’ Royal Regiment (1 PWRR) Battlegroup, stationed in Maysan, faced the most constant period of combat of any British Army unit since the Korean War. Richard Holmes records 1 PWRR’s hard fought experiences in Iraq in *Dusty Warriors*.⁴² 1 Mechanised Brigade fired more small arms ammunition than 7 Armoured Brigade did during the invasion of Iraq, and more in six months than the British Army as a whole did in thirty years in Northern Ireland. The 1 PWRR Battlegroup in Maysan Province was involved in over one hundred contacts (armed incidents) in one day alone, and close to nine hundred over the tour, including gun battles which lasted hours and over seven hundred mortar or rocket rounds fired at it.⁴³

The defence of CIMIC House by Y Company during August was most notable. Attacks were “daily, intensive and unrelenting... The Company’s patrols were attacked 87 times between April and July... CIMIC House... received over 165 mortar rounds, either in the compound or within 300 metres, during 79 separate indirect attacks.”⁴⁴ Another company in Basrah faced what was described subsequently as the most violent single contact of the period, with one soldier killed in action, the Company Commander and Company Sergeant Major being severely wounded and several others wounded. In al Amarah, C Company took twenty-five per cent casualties in the first seventeen days of the tour and every single man who deployed with 1 PWRR was in some form of contact.⁴⁵

For most of 1 Mechanised Brigade’s tour, military operations focussed on SSR and this was the main effort throughout. This was despite the Army having no formal doctrine or conducting any training for it. Indeed, debates continued in the UK, in Whitehall among government departments, and within the Army, about what constituted SSR. Units were still required to conduct operations across all four lines of operation – security, governance, economy and essential services – as part of the overall brigade plan. Tasks included the re-supply of vulnerable outstations and operations to re-establish freedom of movement and the rule of law. The range of activities required soldiers to conduct traditional security operations as well as acting as diplomats, local administration advisors, infrastructure consultants and economic development advisors, all through an interpreter. The intensity of violence met in some engagements, and which followed deliberately planned actions was more characteristic of warfighting than the generally low tempo, low intensity character of operations in Northern Ireland or the Balkans. Nevertheless, the need to maintain and build the consent of the local population remained a central underpinning theme, as it had been throughout the campaign.⁴⁶

Despite the intensity of much of the fighting, and in contrast with Carter’s considered post-tour view that the campaign had already become one of counterinsurgency, the general view was that operations “were fundamentally Peace Support in nature. Superimposed on this was a counter insurgency campaign, which ran throughout the tour, conducted for the most part with the co-operation of ISF.”⁴⁷ This point made by 1 Mechanized Brigade at the end of its tour goes some way to reinforce that made by Carter that the Balkans experience had pre-conditioned attitudes which then did not match the circumstances individuals found in Iraq. Counterinsurgency, in the context that 1 Mechanized Brigade used the term, was the direct action taken against insurgents; disruption, deterrence and dislocation. It was not the broad-based, cross-government response British counterinsurgency doctrine explained. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong in what the following Commanding Officer says, the context in which his comments were set was one of insurgency and counterinsurgency. What is missing is mention of the insurgent threat and the underlying political, economic and social problems that had spawned it:

There is a difference in approach between warfighting and Peace Support Operations (PSO). In warfighting... success is measured in the number of objectives seized and the number of enemy destroyed. In PSO success is measured in the amount you have reduced your profile and the extent to which you have handed over your tasks to civilian agencies. In PSO you are intuitively

seeking to use less force and seeking an alternative approach (other than kinetic) as the operation matures; this is in line with your exit strategy.⁴⁸

5.4 Elections and SSR

4 Armoured Brigade took over from 1 Mechanized Brigade on TELIC 5 in November 2004. It was a very different phase of the operation, with two distinct stages: the run up to and the staging of Iraqi legislative elections in January 2005, and the subsequent post-election period where SSR, which took second place to security during the election period, once again became the priority. The level of violence against Coalition Forces was markedly less than experienced by the previous brigade:

When my predecessor arrived, there had been a clash of strength, and de-escalation was just not an option. His taking on the Muqtada al Sadr Militia created the operational pause I needed to begin to develop SSR. The handover between us also served to provide an opportunity for the militia to change tack, without losing face.⁴⁹

This pause in insurgent activity, and the stringent approach to training taken by the Brigade Commander on safe driving and weapon handling, meant that 4 Brigade returned without suffering a single fatality during the tour.

Despite SSR being the declared Main Effort, SSR training had still not been codified in doctrine so units resorted to first principles. Building the IPS capability proved troublesome, with the lead having been given to the FCO. Central direction for the training, equipping, organising and mentoring of the IPS was minimal and this raised questions about the appropriateness of the model for Iraqi governance and administration UK policy was pursuing:

The way in which the FCO and the Civil Police were given the lead for Police Reform was nonsensical. The Iraqi Police Service was not anything like a European Police Force; it was a Middle Eastern paramilitary organisation, unworried by political correctness and facing Middle Eastern problems in a harsh operational environment. Our Police advisors, whose support in the UK has often been outsourced to contractors for some time, have no experience of building up something from scratch and running it themselves, across the spectrum of infrastructure, communications, equipment maintenance and personnel and career development. Their relevant operational expertise is also questionable.⁵⁰

Concerns also started to emerge about the state of intelligence training, organisation, targeting and equipment. Targeting training still focussed on the business of dropping bombs, rather than arresting terrorists, and the absence of an intelligence database to optimise collation, along the lines developed over the years in Northern Ireland, was a concern. There seemed to be little actionable intelligence available and much of what did arrive came from single sources, and therefore was often difficult to corroborate:

Generally, I don't think that we actually knew much about what was happening in Iraq, or indeed just outside the gate for that matter; from the day-to-day pattern of life, to the darker side of the insurgency. We tended to be launched on single-source intelligence, which sometimes proved to be accurate, and sometimes not.⁵¹

It was not just in the area of intelligence that shortcomings in manning and selection became apparent. The system of augmentation for HQ MND(SE), which it will be recalled was an *ad hoc* organization after HQ 3 (UK) Division left in November 2003, was seen by senior officers to be flawed, particularly for often very important staff appointments: “We had no British staff-trained SO2s [majors] in the Headquarters when I arrived, and it was more like a *Volkssturm* Headquarters, manned by people with the weakest penalty statements.”⁵² This was in stark contrast to the U.S. which used fully formed and trained corps and divisional headquarters to provide HQ MNC-I and its subordinate divisional HQs, moved to twelve-month, later eighteen, tours in 2004, and ended mid-tour handovers for those in key appointments.

Maj. Gen., later Lt. Gen. Jonathon Riley, retitled his appointment from GOC MND(SE) to the U.S. term of Commanding General so that it could be better understood by the American chain of command. He also reorganised his command to interface better with the Iraqi civilian structures:

We needed to align ourselves with the provincial level of government; that is where everything comes together; the governors, councils, security committees, IECI (Independent Electoral Committee for Iraq), police chiefs, Iraqi brigade commanders and the emergency services. I aligned one of my manoeuvre formations to each province, and then resourced them proportionately. There was no civilian equivalent of Divisional Headquarters, and that would mean that there were to be few decisions for me to take.⁵³

He also created a Divisional Support Command to deal with the non-linear nature of the battlefield and to provide logistics units with the firepower and manoeuvre elements to conduct effective combined arms logistic operations. Up to that point, logistics units had struggled because they did not have the training or weapons to carry out anything more than self-defence. Riley’s Support Command organization allowed his logistics commander to provide complete sustainment across the division:

There are really only two ways of addressing the want of self-defence training of CSS troops: one is to train them harder, the other is to mix them with combat troops. We did the latter, by the creation of the Divisional Support Command, consisting of Combat, Combat Support and Combat Service Support troops, which provided a good model for the future; it is very efficient and empowering for a logistic lieutenant colonel or Brigade Commander to be given what is effectively an all-arms command.⁵⁴

As a result of the financial rules imposed by Whitehall, relatively inexpensive yet important CIMIC tasks were not fully funded properly, a major drawback given the value placed on ‘buying consent’:

I needed really big levers in the Reconstruction domain in order to buy the necessary influence to achieve SSR and attack the terrorists. MND(SE) staff were sometimes slow to secure sufficient resources for me and were reluctant to cede control when they did; I was not authorised to spend more than \$10,000, which doesn’t buy you lunch in Basra. We have abrogated responsibility for Reconstruction to DfID, who are constitutionally really only interested in developmental projects, rather than in buying influence.⁵⁵

The preparation and planning for the elections were initially carried out by the ISF, with Coalition support, which involved, and then handed over the process to the Iraqi civilian authorities. The fact that the elections actually took place, and were successful, did not seem to surprise MND(SE). The ISF performed well making the elections work, and ISF competence and enthusiasm surprised many commanders and mentors:

We were guilty of underestimating what the Iraqis were capable of doing. They made their plans, delivered the ballot papers, set up the polling booths, collected all of the papers in, counted them, in the dark (power failure) and ran the whole thing. That was quite an eye-opener.⁵⁶

It was during this stage in the campaign that MND(SE) developed the concept of Transition, to codify the transfer of security responsibility from the Coalition to the ISF. It was born out of Riley's experience of SSR with the U.S. in Baghdad and Afghanistan. Until a formal plan was put together that explained how SSR and the withdrawal of forces were linked, he considered that the British approach was open to criticism and misinterpretation. Commanders in Basrah had identified almost from the start of the campaign that SSR was the principal way to affect the withdrawal from Iraq and this meant building security sector capacity so that the Iraqis could provide their own security. Riley asked MNC-I and PJHQ what was to happen after the elections and, crucially for the UK, how could PJHQ repudiate any accusations that the British force was one of occupation. To assist them, he proposed the concept of Transition, one which mapped out the transfer of responsibility from the Coalition to the ISF, and managed the attendant risks. These included what would happen if the ISF could not cope in the short term, how much Coalition support might be available, how long would it take the Coalition to respond? Riley's plan recognized the complexity of the problem:

SSR leads to transition, it is not just train and equip, rather it is the creation of institutions that can train and equip their own people, administer and support them. So there will be inevitable tensions as the emerging institutions battle to establish themselves and impose their authority and there are considerable but necessary risks to be taken to achieve a functioning, self-sustaining government.⁵⁷

These tensions between an emerging ISF responding to increasing sovereign responsibilities and ambitions, and the Coalition were to continue to influence decisions in Basrah and Baghdad until the end of the campaign. They proved inherently difficult to manage.

5.5 Early U.S.-UK Tensions

In the wider context of the campaign, the relatively benign security state in the south allowed development and governance to advance at faster rates than elsewhere in Iraq. British officers working in Baghdad in 2004 and 2005 noted an increasing U.S. irritation that MND(SE) did not seem to fully appreciate the scale of the American commitment, and the scale of effort and intensity of operations being conducted in the centre, in the so-called Sunni Triangle and the north. The biggest area of irritation came from an apparent British arrogance over the American approach to operations; the 'we know better and we can do it better.'⁵⁸ Some misunderstandings and tensions inevitably

followed as attempts were made to highlight the strengths of the so-called British way to American allies. Thomas Mockaitis notes that,

American officers [were] barraged with ungenerous, over-simplified, and often glib comparisons between their supposedly ineffectual methods in Vietnam and the allegedly superior British approach employed in Malaya. Similar comparisons between the British army's handling of Basra and the U.S. military's alleged mishandling of the far more challenging Sunni triangle [made] American officers understandably resistant to what they [saw] as 'more British tripe.'⁵⁹

The issue came to a head in February 2006 when the U.S. Army's *Military Review* published a paper by Brig. Nigel Aylwin-Foster in which he critically assessed U.S. military culture.⁶⁰ The paper, written when Aylwin-Foster was at RCDS, was published at the direction of its editor to prompt internal discussion. Some believe it was published on Gen. Casey's direction.⁶¹ Aylwin-Foster, who had served on the headquarters staff in Baghdad, commented on the difficulties the U.S. Army appeared to experience in non-combat operations, such as counterinsurgency. Its publication prompted an immediate outcry in the U.S. military.⁶² Ironically, the controversy over one view that the U.S. Army had failed to respond effectively to the challenges of Iraq captured prime news slots on the day that Gen. Petraeus co-chaired a workshop of human rights groups, government officials, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations, anthropologists and military officers gathered to examine the U.S. Army's thoroughly revised and overhauled counterinsurgency doctrine.

In Iraq, misunderstandings and tensions extended to SSR and generated some friction. However this needed to be balanced against MND(SE)'s determination to advance SSR activity as the conditions allowed and its perception of U.S. priorities: "Looking up, our inability to convince Corps to allow us to continue to accelerate ahead of the rest of the country acted as a brake. The American perspective was that they had first to resolve military problems like Fallujah, before progressing with SSR."⁶³ MND(SE)'s dissatisfaction with the amount it was receiving eventually became an issue within the MNSTC-I staff. The then Lt. Gen. Petraeus, commanding MNSTC-I, ordered a comprehensive review be conducted by his staff of the police, army and Iraqi National Guard equipment and resource provision. The review concluded that MND(SE) had actually been given more – proportionally – than anywhere else.⁶⁴ Similarly, and whilst the U.S. was grateful for the UK commitment during Operation BRACKEN outside Fallujah, there was some evidence of U.S. misunderstanding of the significance of the deployment of 1 BW up to the highest levels:

In theatre, they [the U.S.] understood the challenges faced by the British Government to mount that operation but, in Washington, this was considered small beer; one battalion was insignificant to them. The British expected the American Joint Chiefs to have been much more closely engaged on the issue, but it was only after the British media hype that surrounded the whole thing that Washington seemed to grasp its significance.⁶⁵

5.6 The Counter-IED Campaign

The Iraqi National Referendum took place on the 15 October 2005 and it passed off without incident. A jointly run Iraqi-Coalition security operation was seen to be a

success in all four provinces in MND(SE) despite having been hindered in Basrah during the planning phases by its Provincial Council's policy of non co-operation and disengagement which started in mid-September. On 19 September 2005 the IPS arrested two undercover SAS soldiers engaged in a surveillance operation and handed them over to a militia. This prompted an intense search for the two men, high level negotiations between Coalition Forces and the Baswari governate, and a high tempo, forceful and ultimately successful operation to release them. The final stage involved raiding the Jameat Police Station in Basrah, where the two had been held, using Challenger tanks and Warrior armoured fighting vehicles.

For the British, the incident raised serious doubts over the integrity of the IPS and concerns about militia infiltration. On the Iraqi side, the Basrah Provincial Governor broke off relations with MND(SE) and disengaged from any involvement with military commanders: "Basra broke off relations with us and any effort we put into the IPS there was wasted; we just weren't even getting through the door."⁶⁶ The Coalition response was to concentrate effort on the Transition plan, so MND(SE) increased its SSR effort in Al Muthana and Maysan provinces to get the ISF ready for Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC).

TELIC 6 marked the insurgents' introduction of increasingly technically advanced and lethal insurgent methods of attack, in particular IEDs. In overall terms, the previous TELIC had been a relative stable period; nascent democratic institutions had taken the opportunity to establish themselves, the level of violence was viewed as broadly acceptable, and the militia appetite for continued violence appeared to have been dulled by the bitter, and for them costly engagements of summer 2004. While there was clear evidence of a continuing JAM threat in Maysan, it gave no indications of a widespread return to violence. Insurgents no longer appeared willing to engage Coalition Forces directly. Sadly, although the number of attacks against British forces decreased during the tour, the number of fatalities rose. This was due to the increasing sophistication of the insurgents and their use of technologically sophisticated IEDs.⁶⁷

The development of Explosively Formed Projectiles (EFPs) posed a serious threat and, for a period, they hindered the British forces' ability to conduct SSR. The balance between SSR, which was the Main Effort, and counterinsurgency had to be reviewed. The threat between September and November 2005 deteriorated so much in Basrah province that conducting SSR with Iraqi forces became unsustainable. Units had to be able to get out to train the ISF and this required greater general security and increased freedom of movement. Significant effort was therefore focussed on neutralizing the threat so that SSR could be carried out effectively. In the absence of an immediate technological answer, units fell back on old TTPs based on Northern Ireland:

Initially, the IEDs being used were relatively low tech (although they still had the potential to kill). As the technology developed and the threat significantly increased, we worked very hard to develop the [counter IED] plan and new TTPs to counter the threat, which was itself constantly developing. You need to rely on long-accepted Counter Insurgency drills, which will offer the best protection until technological defences are developed.⁶⁸

In order to formally capture existing TTPs, Land Warfare Centre's Mission Support Group, in conjunction with the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG; NITAT's successor), produced the *Stability Operations Handbook* in December 2005.

It updated all the TTPs published originally by Bulloch as the *Tactical Handbook for Operations Other Than War*,⁶⁹ validated each TTP against best practice in MND(SE) and tested them in training at OPTAG. Changes in tactics and Force Protection measures in turn affected how SSR could be conducted and this required considerable thought to be given to the balance to be struck between logistic output and force protection. For a time this placed increasing demands on support helicopters in order to move troops around until new equipment could be fielded.⁷⁰

A series of intelligence-led detention operations in September and October 2005 forced JAM onto the back foot. The tempo of British operations and their successes had a debilitating effect on the insurgents. The intelligence which was available was, as always seemed to be the case, far from complete and luck often played its part in successful operations.⁷¹ However, to the insurgent this was an unnerving time and indications were that JAM did not believe it had the freedom to operate. In the game of cat-and-mouse, the incomplete picture British forces had of the insurgency was more than compensated for by the insurgents' belief that their freedom of action had been significantly constrained.

The view from MND(SE) was that the situation in Southern Iraq remained in a state of flux: the civil administration and people were enjoying freedoms and democracy but nothing was sufficiently well-developed or established to make any significant political progress. Nevertheless, confidence within the IA continued to grow and with it a belief that they no longer relied on Coalition Forces.⁷² This left the British position in the balance, with consent, and its ability to achieve leverage gradually waning.⁷³ While the ISF continued to make progress, notably the IA, they were not yet able to operate independently of Coalition Forces, even though they seemed to believe that they could. The principal issues were sectarianism and debilitating corruption among officials, a problem compounded by problems in gaining any real intelligence from the population. As a result, internal power struggles and malign criminal and political influences were largely hidden from Coalition sight.⁷⁴

With the arrival in December 2005 of HQ 1 (UK) Division in MND(SE) at the start of TELIC 7, the emphasis on setting the conditions for transition to Iraqi control increased. It was in the first few months of 2006 that the term 'Provincial Iraqi Control' (PIC) emerged to better reflect what the Iraqis were achieving, not what Coalition Forces had done.⁷⁵ At the campaign level, Transition and PIC were the Main Effort; these translated into SSR at the tactical level, and it was with SSR that British forces remained focussed in their efforts. Politically, the delay in forming an Iraqi national government set the campaign back. As one senior officer recalls:

I arrived five days after the National Elections, and everyone hoped for a National Government to be formed quickly; this actually took five months, and we lost a lot of ground during that time; without the writ of central government there was a rise in the militias and infiltration by them of various parts of the Iraqi establishment, including the IPS.⁷⁶

In the interim, problems with the Basrah Provincial Council continued.

Maj. Gen. John Cooper took steps to recast the campaign as one of counterinsurgency not peace support: "I encouraged my subordinate commanders to think things through against the COIN principles, and so we always used them."⁷⁷ Cooper also noted the importance of a broad approach to counterinsurgency:

We need to foster a wider approach to COIN. If you consider [1 (UK) Division] on warfighting operations, it consists of Infantry, armour, guns, aviation, artillery, engineers and logistics. Which is the most important element? The answer is none of them. It is the sum of the parts that is important; the synergy they create. It is the same with COIN; everyone is part of it; it is the sum of military ops offensive and defensive, Iraqi leadership engagement and development, the training of the ISF in SSR, reconstruction ops and, just as with conventional operations, it is the synergy that comes from the sum of the all of the component parts that will make the difference.⁷⁸

The synergy to which Cooper refers would not be achieved in the campaign as a whole until Ambassador Crocker and Gen. Petraeus produced their first Joint Campaign Plan in April 2007, and the surge of U.S. forces ordered by President Bush helped to take control of the security situation in Baghdad.

Cooper's analysis of the problem was accurate, and his call to use extant doctrine, in particular the principles, had much utility. However, it raises the issue of the efficacy of counterinsurgency education. Daniel Marston recalls that "men walked around with the principles and could list them, but they did not understand them."⁷⁹ This should not be surprising. It was identified in Chapter 3 that counterinsurgency had not been taught fully since 1997. Even junior officers who had served in Northern Ireland would only be familiar with one particular type of the problem. To ameliorate the problem, British battlegroups went to the unusual step of organizing and running their own COIN seminars in Basrah over the summer of 2006. Dan Marston was called out to Basrah to instruct units in counterinsurgency history and theory, using the counterinsurgency module he taught to captains at Sandhurst.

5.7 Drawdown, Surge and Operation SINBAD

Basrah Provincial Council's disengagement with British forces stalled the momentum gained through earlier efforts. When 20 Armoured Brigade arrived in April 2006, the situation was difficult, not just because of the deteriorating security situation. Local government officials had started to show increasing independence, and less interest in working with the Coalition. It was clear from intelligence reports that corruption was a widespread problem.⁸⁰ Just as worrying, the Sunni minority had started to leave the South in response to a campaign of sectarian intimidation and murder, and the threat to Coalition Forces from an increasingly confident enemy was rising.⁸¹ Over the summer months, through careful work from military commanders and FCO officials, Basrah's Provincial Council started to re-engage with MND(SE) and a workable command and control system was established through the creation of the Permanent Joint Coordination Centre (PJCC).

Although HQ 1 (UK) Division had focussed on achieving PIC in the more stable and less populous provinces, it had not been possible to achieve it during its tenure in command. Further progress was needed in security and governance and steady improvements during May, June and July through a 20 Brigade re-engagement and re-intervention model enabled PIC to take place in Al Muthanna and Dhi Qar Provinces on 13 July and 21 September 2006 respectively. In Maysan, Camp Abu Najj, the main Battlegroup base in al Amarah, was handed back to the IA on 24 August 2006. The camp was immediately looted by the local population and subsequent withdrawals from British-held bases were planned to avoid further 'Abu Najjis.'⁸² In overall terms, these

developments allowed 20 Brigade's effort to be refocused on to the border, where it deployed a light battlegroup into the desert to interdict weapons smuggling, and in Basrah, where the Armoured Infantry battalion, withdrawn from Maysan, would be later used alongside the only British battlegroup in the city in what became Operation SINBAD.⁸³

HQ 3 (UK) Division took over from HQ 1 (UK) Division in July 2006. In Baghdad, Operation TOGETHER FORWARD had been underway for just over a month. At Prime Minister Maliki's insistence, an Iraqi-led operation was planned and quickly put into action to try to re-establish security in Baghdad following the dramatic rise in sectarian violence across Iraq initiated by the bomb attack on the al-Askari Mosque in February. Unfortunately, neither the ISF plan nor an additional 3,700 U.S. troops from Mosul could contain the violence, and sectarian killings continued to rise. Nevertheless, the general mood in Baghdad was that something had to be done to get the security situation back under control.

Against this backdrop, Maj. Gen. Richard Shirreff quickly re-assessed Basrah's continuing state of insecurity and the impact it was having on progress towards PIC and development in general. One problem he identified was that the campaign was still not being characterized correctly and this was a constraint on bringing the right resources to bear and on ensuring that efforts were properly prioritized and co-ordinated. Cooper had been clear that Basrah was a counterinsurgency campaign and had used the principles from *Counter Insurgency Operations* in planning⁸⁴ but this was still not the generally accepted view. Shirreff noted,

There continues to be a disturbing belief that we are carrying out some form of Peace Support Operation and that the remedies that applied to Bosnia, apply equally to Iraq. This is not the case, and the way in which hard and soft effects are balanced in a theatre like Iraq needs to be vested in one person. In Iraq, there were several uncoordinated agencies involved in the process, including the FCO, DfID and the [Provincial Reconstruction Team];⁸⁵ there was no *supremo*; and the consequent effect was dissipated.⁸⁶

The security situation limited freedom of movement for both Coalition Forces and British officials and administrators with the result that no momentum could be generated on any of the four lines of operation: "someone couldn't go and repair the water system because he would get shot if he did."⁸⁷ The principal task was, therefore, to restore security and Shirreff assessed that this would require forces to be concentrated on Basrah, and for economic effort to be similarly concentrated so that consent could be bought in the short term. The brigade commander noted the change of emphasis Shirreff brought:

The end-state remained the same [PIC for Basrah], but in terms of sequencing, the approach changed. The first GOC had considered SSR to be the Main Effort, whereas the second changed that to Security. This meant that MND(SE) initially concentrated on the northern three provinces to be delivered to Iraqi Control, leaving me to focus on Basra. On changeover, the Divisional focus shifted to Basra, embarking on a huge Comprehensive Approach operation for Basra City, which involved \$87 million of American money.⁸⁸

Shirreff realized that he needed more forces, in spite of the on-going troop withdrawals. He also required support of the OGDs, but they would not support the concept of

buying in short-term economic effect because it was believed “it would foster a dependency culture...indeed they believed it to be counter-productive.”⁸⁹ Any idea that the Comprehensive Approach was being followed was patently ill-founded, so Shirreff resolved to do it with whatever resources he could get.

By now, PJHQ’s six-monthly force level review was underway and a steady drawdown of troops had started. One view offered was that these “were mathematically rather than tactically-based.”⁹⁰ MND(SE)’s intention was to put British operations onto a more offensive footing and to use co-ordinated inter-agency efforts to address the areas of governance, essential services and economy, as well as security. The result was Operation SINBAD. It had three objectives: the re-establishment of security in Basrah by isolating the militants from the mainstream population, rooting out corrupt police, and offering assistance to the Baswaris through rebuilding and micro-economic regeneration. Just as importantly in terms of relationships with the U.S. in Baghdad and Washington, it provided the opportunity to disprove some critics’ views that the British were not prepared to fight.⁹¹

The idea for Operation SINBAD came from a study of U.S. experiences in Mosul and Baghdad undertaken by Brig. James Everard and his brigade staff. It looked at why U.S. progress had stalled in the north, and why seemingly impressive achievements had been reversed. The study identified several contributory factors. U.S. projects were overwhelmed by the scale of the problem; they attempted too much too quickly; they were unable to consolidate when successful; too many projects were underfunded; external co-ordination and internal synchronisation were poor; the wrong projects were targeted; and projects were poorly supported by Influence and Information Operations.⁹² As a result, 20 Brigade developed a model designed to avoid the pitfalls of the U.S. approach and so protect progress. It involved carefully selecting target areas, empowering local government organizations where possible, enhancing the effectiveness of the IPS, and giving the IA a prominent role.⁹³

The plan started life as a much more kinetic operation than that which eventually took place. Troops were to go into each police station and identify and then remove those policemen and officials implicated in corruption and militia activity but in practice, powerful intimidation by the Shi’a death squads prevented that from working. MNC-I initially refused the first plan, so it was amended to satisfy what Shirreff termed “the militia-intimidated Iraqis,” while still achieving the results required. It was repackaged as a reconstruction operation, enabled by Iraqi and Coalition Forces. The first plan had not fully taken into account that the IPS was not a British-style constabulary, but a heavily armed paramilitary force which needed firm military control and strong leadership. Shirreff’s original intent was to mount a mini surge, similar to that of Operation MOTORMAN in Northern Ireland between 31 July and 1 December 1972,⁹⁴

but the force levels did not permit that; so we had to bite off bits in chunks, by districts; going in by pulses; surging in troops with intelligence-led ‘seize’ operations, whilst simultaneously producing short-term projects (like repairing schools and clearing rubbish) and setting up medium and long term reconstruction projects as well.

...When I briefed them on my plan for Op SINBAD, which needed a surge of troops to achieve, it did not go down well at all: there was a lot of push-back from the staff. Even in August, when we moved out of Camp Abu Naji to free

up troops for SINBAD, we still had to persuade people that what we were doing was right; and there were heated meetings about it. That said, once eventually signed up to SINBAD, PJHQ did try to do whatever they could for us...such as getting Light Guns for the Counter Indirect Fire role. Admittedly, in the short term, we were running against the grain of drawdown, but we were doing so for long-term benefits.⁹⁵

Crucially, Operation SINBAD captured the Iraqi imagination: it provided the means by which the Iraqis could demonstrate that they had the capacity to secure their own population and to improve conditions locally. Prime Minister Maliki eventually agreed to the plan provided that military operations were divorced in both time and space from redevelopment efforts.⁹⁶ Inevitably, the delay between the two undermined the original intention to tackle the death squads and militants directly. Their continued presence was to create increasingly more complex political problems for the GOI until Prime Minister Maliki launched Operation Charge of The Knights in March 2008, and used the IA to confront the militias and to re-establish government control of Basrah.

Iraqi and MNC-I views were folded into the concept. In essence, a 48-hour security 'pulse' would take control of an area and establish a secure environment, during which Coalition Forces were to deliver immediate impact improvements. During a 28-day 'pause,' a high level of IA military presence would then be maintained in the area, during which effort would be focussed on improving the IPS through the International Police Advisers' Police Action Plan.⁹⁷ Longer-term projects were to be delivered by Iraqi contractors, who would employ local people to lay electrical distribution cables, improve water pipelines, or repair roads. At the end of the 'pause,' the IA would leave and the IPS would take over responsibility for the area. As Thompson had emphasized in his tactical concept of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won, it would be essential to ensure that resources were lined up and ready to be used:

The immediate soft effects such as clearing rubbish from the streets were done quickly, often without consultation, using Iraqi contractors. We had Schools' Packs ready with things like desks, chairs, blackboards and so on, which were delivered whilst Iraqi and British Army Engineers repaired the buildings. The medium-term improvements used our (Coalition) money and, although they were often based on our ideas, these had been sold to and endorsed by the Iraqi-led Provincial Reconstruction and Development Committees; this served to empower the Iraqi authorities. You have to work through an empowered Iraqi structure and you have to remember that, at the top of everyone's list of priorities was 'Essential Services.'⁹⁸

Operation SINBAD started on 27 September 2006. An estimated 2,300 Iraqi army troops and 1,000 British soldiers took part in the operations with another 2,000 in reserve. During its remaining time in Basrah, 20 Armoured Brigade launched fifty-six deliberate strike operations, made 139 arrests and detained seventy-five key militant JAM members.⁹⁹ Strike operations proved to be vital in taking the fight to the enemy. Everard noted,

Of 68 strike operations, only one hit the wrong house. I was hugely impressed by the ability of a large, reinforced brigade HQ to co-ordinate a very complex operation where our traditional enablers were disabled by circumstance. The

difficulty in building the intelligence picture and then sharing it [because of national restrictions] is a case in point.¹⁰⁰

In November 2006, 19 Light Brigade took over from 20 Armoured Brigade on what was now Op TELIC 9. It fitted straight into Operation SINBAD, picking up the high tempo of the operation and arriving in time for the fifth ‘pulse.’ It completed a further thirteen pulses in Basrah city and four more outside it before the operation ended. Such a high level of activity was reflected in the number of Significant Acts (defined by MNF-I as “all incidents reported to MNF-I through daily Significant Activity Reports. It includes known attacks on Coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces, the civilian population, and infrastructure”¹⁰¹) that took place, being the highest since the invasion, with over 2100 incidents recorded in the seven-month period. 19 Brigade conducted seven brigade-level strike operations and over one hundred and twenty at battlegroup level. All were focused on disrupting the militia to keep them on the back foot while the Iraqis moved towards PIC in Basrah.¹⁰² In keeping with Operation SINBAD, the pressure created by strike operations on JAM provided the opportunity for economic and political development to be started. This, in turn, started to shape the public information campaign. All this came at a cost, however: twenty-seven were killed in action and over one hundred and fifty wounded.

19 Brigade fought hard to maintain the momentum established by 20 Armoured Brigade, so that it could retain the initiative and stay on the front foot against a professional and well motivated enemy, determined to inflict casualties through indirect fire and IEDs: “There was a conscious decision to strike early, disrupt the enemy, exploit any intelligence leads and create opportunities in order to ensure that the militia could not gain the upper hand.”¹⁰³ Improvements in intelligence fusion and the additional ISR resources made available by MNC-I, allowed several very successful intelligence-led strike operations to be completed which seriously damaged militia leadership in Basrah.¹⁰⁴

Shirreff’s conclusions about SINBAD are particularly relevant to the issue of counterinsurgency doctrine. They resonate strongly with ideas which Kitson had highlighted from his experience in the very different environment of Kenya’s forests, and Thompson emphasized in his concept of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won, that security operations need a strong security force presence and this means numbers:

We are not particularly good at making plans happen; to make plans happen you must first understand the problem. We didn’t know much about Basra but, through SINBAD and the reces and planning we conducted we began to understand more. As we began to understand more, we began to understand the dynamics of the City itself, and then we began to be able to find solutions to its problems. If you compare Basrah to Belfast (where we had things like religious maps and a thorough knowledge of relationships built up through framework operations), and compare that to Basrah (where we had very little indeed), you may remark that, whereas when I went out on my main recce I found a situation where we had only thirteen multiples [a half platoon] available for operating amongst the 1.5 million people in Basrah, there were actually 10,000 troops operating amongst the 300,000 population of Belfast.¹⁰⁵

5.8 Transition and Repositioning

HQ 3 (UK) Division left Iraq in January 2007. It was replaced as HQ MND(SE) by a bespoke team, commanded by Maj. Gen. Jonathon Shaw. Following on from Operation SINBAD, and to compliment what was now referred to generally as the Baghdad Security Plan, British operations continued to centre on developing ISF capability to conduct joint and centrally co-ordinated operations. Efforts focussed principally on developing a 'Ring of Steel' around the city with fully manned vehicle check points (VCPs) and supporting patrols into neighbouring districts. Operations were centrally co-ordinated at the PJCC and monitored by Coalition Forces, both at the PJCC and at jointly-run VCPs, and through mentoring visits from British forces to the Iraqi Army. Constant monitoring of security proved to be essential, with permanent VCPs in troublesome areas being a concern because of militia intimidation of the ISF.¹⁰⁶

Transition remained the continuing overall theme, however Operation SINBAD's emphasis on increasing ISF independence moved things in the right direction. In overall terms, SINBAD had started to set the conditions for the handover of greater security responsibility to the ISF which would be necessary for the province to achieve PIC. As part of the wider transition plan, over a six-week period in April 2007, British forces handed back their bases in the Old State Building and the Shat Al Arab Hotel in Basrah, the Shaiba Logistic Base at the old airfield south of Basrah – which remained the IA Divisional Training Centre (DTC) where British forces trained the IA – and at Al Faw. There were no more 'Abu Najis' and Maysan Province was handed over to its governor on 18 April.

19 Light Brigade handed to 1 Mechanized Brigade in April 2007. The situation had changed greatly since 1 Brigade's last tour of duty in the summer of 2004. It deployed with five battlegroups, three of which were based in the COB at Basra Air Station: one was in the Monitoring, Mentoring and Training role (M2T) training the IA, one was responsible for an area of operations south of Basrah, and the third was the Manoeuvre Battlegroup. The two remaining battlegroups were initially deployed with one in Maysan and the other at Basrah Palace. Over the summer which followed, the Maysan battlegroup withdrew back to the UK, and the Basrah Palace Battlegroup withdrew to the COB. This operation is examined as a case study later in this chapter. The reduced responsibility to hold ground was seen to be to the Brigade's advantage.¹⁰⁷ 1 Brigade continued to seek to improve security by conducting strike operations against JAM leadership targets, and to transition to PIC by improving the Iraqi Army's capabilities. The latter task was, as with previous brigades, the Main Effort, but it was somewhat overshadowed during 1 Brigade's first three months in Basrah by the continuing high levels of violence, in particular IDF against the COB, and IED attacks against military operations in the city.

As other brigades had found before, 1 Brigade's tour proved to be one of two distinct phases. The first was intense, violent, and focussed on maintaining security. The second focussed on Transition and the period was much more benign. The end state to which operations were focussed remained the handover of responsibility for the security of Basrah to the ISF, concomitant with British forces consolidating on the COB. This was all part of Operation ZENITH, the name given to the British force reduction process in Iraq. When the operation had been devised during 2006, it was very much in line with the overall concept of Transition for Coalition Forces. V Corps, which was

the MNC-I until December 2006, had written a concept of operations to draw down forces and to handover to the Iraqis in a process of accelerated Transition. A senior staff officer in MND(SE) recalls that,

By the time that we actually deployed, [the previous policy] had been stood on its head and the Americans had chosen ‘victory and the surge’ over immediate Transition. Transition was therefore postponed, and that put our Operation ZENITH out of kilter with the Corps. The UK and U.S. were on different political trajectories and electoral timelines.¹⁰⁸

This divergence was further complicated when the British Government announced in February 2007 further troop reductions, from 7,100 to just over 5,000. Prime Minister Blair explained, “We are able to announce this reduction in Force levels because of the growing capacity of the Iraqi security forces.”¹⁰⁹ This decision was made just as interest in the U.S. focussed on President Bush’s decision to surge forces into Iraq, and Gen. Petraeus’ taking command in Baghdad.¹¹⁰ Officially the British interpretation of security in Basrah was accepted by MNF-I: “We really see Basra as something that we want to do in the rest of the country. They’re a bit further ahead, obviously, in terms of security and in terms of violence than other parts of Iraq.”¹¹¹ However, some commentators openly questioned the British view, the validity of the British approach to Basrah and the south, and to its understanding and interpretation of counterinsurgency:

The British announcement of force cuts reflected a set of realities on the ground that had dominated south eastern Iraq for more than two years. South eastern Iraq had long been under the *de facto* control of SCIRI and Sadr factions. The British effectively lost any opportunity to shape a secular and nationalist Basra in the summer of 2003, and the US defeat of the Sadr militia in March and April 2004 never extended to the southeast and Basra area.

The British won some tactical clashes in Maysan and Basra in May-November 2004, but Operation TELIC’s tactical victories over the Sadrists did not stop Islamists from taking steadily more local political power and controlling security at the neighborhood level when British troops were not present.¹¹²

These tensions would not be resolved for nearly another year and would require the direct intervention of Prime Minister Maliki to provide the catalyst for change.

ZENITH was intended to set the conditions for PIC through the repositioning of British forces into operational overwatch which, in turn, would allow the further withdrawal of forces to the UK.¹¹³ There were, however, a number of conditions on which this depended. They included the capability of the Iraqi Army to conduct effective independent operations, the credibility and capability of the IPS, the tactical and logistical challenge of getting British forces out of Basrah, and the even greater challenge of remaining in step with the overall U.S. campaign plan. It is now clear that none of these conditions had been met.

Whatever the view was in Basrah, PJHQ and Whitehall, it was the complete reverse of that held by U.S. commanders in Baghdad. By April 2007, Gen. Petraeus and Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, his corps commander at MNC-I, had started to implement an aggressive operation to secure the population in Baghdad. U.S. forces were taking a very active role in supporting the ISF, living, working and fighting alongside them in Baghdad. The differences between Baghdad and Basrah were now evident, not just in the

Surge/Transition dichotomy, but in the approach to supporting the ISF. The Americans embedded nearly a dozen officers and NCOs into each IA battalion in what they called a Military Transition Team, or a MiTT. MiTTs provided training, mentoring and direct support in terms of communications, intelligence and fire support to their respective battalions. Importantly, they helped with the planning of an operation, and they fought alongside their Iraqi counterparts when the plan was put into action. The British approach was to provide M2T teams at brigade level and the fifteen-man MiTT with 10th IA Division, commanded by a British colonel. Unlike the Americans, British teams did not go out on operations with the IA. One officer noted that,

Whenever the Americans visited us, they always looked uncomfortable with what we were doing. They genuinely believed that we were under-powering our operation... To the Americans, our fifteen man team in the Divisional Headquarters meant that we were merely involved, not committed like them.¹¹⁴

Against this backdrop, in February 2007, 10 Division was ordered to send two battalions to Baghdad to take part in the Baghdad Security Plan. MNDS(E) focussed efforts on preparing the two battalions, inspecting their weapons, training, and logistics. Significantly, and unnoticed by PJHQ, two British four-man teams were embedded alongside eleven-man American MiTTs to go to fight in Baghdad. A senior British officer noted that the “deployment worked a treat. It was a very British affair; *ad hoc* and completed by worthy volunteers. The validation from our point of view was that they performed at least as well as any of the other Iraqi battalions during that deployment.”¹¹⁵ Given this outcome, if SSR was so important, the question has to be asked why did MND(SE) not embed MiTTs throughout 10 Division?

Nevertheless, the situation in MND(SE) was that it was “under remit from PJHQ to continue with ZENITH regardless: in order to support the increasing deployment to Afghanistan, we had to continue to drawdown force levels in Iraq.”¹¹⁶ As a result,

This inevitably caused problems of perception, management and to an extent trust between the Corps and ourselves. We had in fact already had our surge; during Op SINBAD, and there was no appetite for further investment of resources. Moreover, the UK view was that transition was the right thing to do to progress the campaign... Despite [this], we were not acting in isolation; we very deliberately staffed the plan through Corps HQ and would not have achieved Op ZENITH without Corps buy-in in the first place, and they supported us throughout: it was a Corps-owned and Corps-resourced plan.¹¹⁷

This insight is important. The U.S. leadership in Baghdad appeared to accept the view put forward by MND(SE), and it supported the British approach. The underpinning logic was that the British presence had lost legitimacy with Baswaris, and that it was the principal reason for violence: if the British left Basrah, the reason for the attacks, which so disrupted life in the city, would be removed. Basrah’s security created a politically painful and potentially costly dilemma: if Basrah was not secure, PIC could not be justified, but if PIC did not take place, London’s endstate could not be met. If British forces remained, casualties would continue, but British forces could not start to leave until Basrah was secure. The difficulty was that 10 IA Division was not in a position to secure it:

Our challenge was to get 10 Division operating against the militia on the streets of Basra because, in the South, it was the militia who presented the greatest

threat to the Coalition. 10 Division recruited almost exclusively from the MND(SE) area and there was therefore a reluctance by them to take on people who were essentially their own.¹¹⁸

5.9 Case Study 1: Summer 2007, 4 RIFLES and Basrah Palace

One of the many fraught problems of summer 2007 was how to withdraw British forces from Basrah Palace, the last British base in the city, and hand it over to the Iraqi army. This step was important in the plan to transition security responsibility to the Iraqis, but was at odds with the plan being implemented in Baghdad. Since February 2007, U.S. forces had been moving out of their big Forward Operating Bases and setting up small Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts in all of Baghdad's neighbourhoods. Together with the ISF, they were putting MNC-I's tactics of Clear-Control-Retain into action. This concept was a development of Clear-Hold-Build, laid out in the U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine of December 2006, and very similar to Thompson's Clear-Hold-Winning-Won. While U.S. and Iraqi forces were fighting to regain control of Baghdad, the British plan was to withdraw back on to the COB. Lt. Col. Patrick Sanders, commanding the 4 RIFLES Battlegroup in Basrah Palace noted the strategic dissonance:

the Americans had taken the bold, and we now know far-sighted and successful decision to surge. We found ourselves out of step in Iraq, disengaging and drawing down in Iraq at precisely at the point the U.S. was reinforcing.¹¹⁹

By June 2007, Basrah Palace was the most attacked base in Iraq, taking 1750 rounds of IDF between June and August. In the city, Sanders notes that Baswaris were "fearful of increasing Iranian influence, frustrated with the lack of British progress and venality, but above all they were neutral."¹²⁰ If British doctrine had been followed, Baswari neutrality should have been exploited to further separate the insurgents from their support and to set them up for political and military neutralization. Instead and inevitably given the paucity of British forces, limited intelligence on the situation in Basrah, and the overall policy of Transition, the brigade plan had to focus on separating the majority of JAM from the so-called Special Groups, which were trained and equipped by Iranian Special Forces, and to weaken if not remove Iranian influence in Basrah. JAM leadership at all levels had already been weakened by strike operations undertaken by previous brigades but this had not reduced levels of violence, in fact they increased. The role of British forces in Basrah was to provide a credible threat to JAM and to demonstrate resolve. The rationale behind the British approach was to convince mainstream JAM leadership to co-operate, and not to oppose British military operations in the city. This would then allow operations to be focussed on the purely nationalist, Iranian-backed Special Groups who it appeared had little local support.

In the months leading up to the withdrawal from the Palace, the Rifles showed the importance of learning and adapting. IEDs and snipers posed the principal threats. The Rifles encountered 150 IEDs, eighty-five functioning against them, mostly EFPs, which were technically advanced and not made locally. They realized that IEDs were best countered by operating during the day, but JAM responded with the use of snipers. The Rifles then recognized that snipers posed the most threat dangerous so they switched to working during the hours of darkness to counter the sniper threat and they adapted their counter-IED tactics accordingly for night operations.

The operation which defined the Rifles' tour was the handover of Basrah Palace and their move to the COB. Sanders notes that "for the purposes of 'strategic messaging' this was described as 'repositioning'; for the military for whom withdrawal is a perfectly acceptable term, the operation was a relief in place followed by a withdrawal in contact."¹²¹ The essential requirement was to ensure that the operation was conducted on British terms:

In reality, we ended up having to fight the most demanding and intensive part of the campaign: a 'Withdrawal in Contact.' We were under resourced for the campaign we had to fight, and we had to produce massive kinetic surge with diminishing troop numbers. In order to set the conditions for PIC in Basra, we had to take on the JAM so that we could be seen to be moving out of Basra on our terms, not theirs. It was the classic strike that made the Break Clean possible. It was a high risk operation and we were left in no doubt that British military prestige was at stake – we could not afford an Info Ops 'defeat.'¹²²

Sanders therefore had to plan for a withdrawal in contact and before that had to set the conditions for the operation to succeed by "mounting a series of raids [the purpose of which ADP *Operations* defined as "to destroy or capture a vital enemy asset. Its wider purpose is to disrupt the enemy."¹²³] into JAM strongholds along our likely withdrawal routes to erode JAM's capability and to seize the initiative."¹²⁴ The move to raiding reflected the constraints imposed by the highly canalized urban environment and the lack of numbers. Sanders' view of the impact this had on his ability to conduct operations is important:

Doctrinally, we recognized we were engaged in a counterinsurgency, in COIN the focus is on securing the population, not on defeating the enemy. This requires sufficient boots on the ground, Coalition and local forces as they became available, and the lesson of Operation Motorman and the U.S. Surge is clear: surges work. But in 2007 and 2008 we lacked sufficient forces in Basrah to secure the population. This forces us to adopt a raiding approach to counterinsurgency and the trouble with it is it can reinforce the perception of Coalition Forces as aggressors, and it can cause us to conflate tactical success – the number of JAM detainees – with actual measures of strategic success such as the rejection of militia violence and the acceptance of the legitimacy of the Iraqi Government by the population.¹²⁵

The operation was successful. The withdrawal, completed on 3 September, was orderly and without incident, and the Iraqi Palace protection force has remained in possession ever since. This was not how the British media or U.S. commanders and senior staff in Baghdad saw Sanders' carefully planned and skilfully executed withdrawal. "The British have basically been defeated in the south," was one U.S. view, which highlighted the dysfunctional nature of Iraqi politics and concerns about "a) the lawless situation in Basra and b) the political and military impact of the British pullback."¹²⁶

5.10 Provincial Iraqi Control in Basrah and Operation Charge of The Knights

Throughout 2007, IDF attacks on the COB increased. MND(SE) took measures to reduce the effect of sporadic, random attacks, and employed vigorous countermeasures to disrupt and interdict militia rocket teams. In August 2007, 1 (UK) Division took over

MND(SE). Very soon afterwards, the opportunity arose for what became referred to as an ‘accommodation’ between British forces and the militia in Basrah.¹²⁷ In return for keeping out of Basrah, JAM stopped its attacks on the COB. A senior officer concluded as the operation in Basrah transitioned from one of Security Assistance to one of Military Assistance,

We enabled a situation where the Iraqi Security Forces became responsible for security operations in Basra, and where we could now step back and concentrate on M2T. It was in many ways the perfect tour for us; with intensive military operations at the beginning, thereby setting the preconditions to allow the Political and Economic Lines to develop.¹²⁸

The ‘accommodation’ brought an end to attacks on the COB but the price was MND(SE) lost its by now limited control of Basrah and ceded control of the city to JAM. As Richard Iron notes,

[the] accommodation with militias permitted *de facto* militia control of various areas of the City in exchange for a no violence agreement. It was a pragmatic response to the situation on the ground: the ISF was initially weak and JAM was numerically strong, well supported and equipped from Iran, and could count on popular support in its urban heartlands. The reality of the accommodation, though, was that the Government of Iraq could not impose its law across Basra. Instead, the militias imposed their law – however unattractive their law was to us, such as rapes and murders of women inappropriately dressed.¹²⁹

Over the following months, first 1 Mechanized Brigade, then, in December, 4 Brigade, its successor, concentrated on training the Iraqi Army with the overall intention of achieving PIC in Basrah as conditions allowed. The British view now characterized security in Basrah as ‘Palermo rather than Beirut,’¹³⁰ criminality rather than insurgency, “large scale gangsterism rather than all out war.”¹³¹ This differed considerably from the views held in Baghdad and in Washington DC that Iraq required a classic counterinsurgency campaign, and that the population had first to be secured to allow the political progress necessary to improve the overall situation. MND(SE) and U.S. commanders and analysts differed in how they understood the complex diplomatic, political and security environment. Irrespective of interpretation, the situation in Basrah was widely reported:

Commanders claim that security has improved enough in Basra for Iraqi forces to take charge. Attacks against British forces have declined, but that is largely because of a shortage of targets after British troops withdrew from the city centre to the airport in September. A six-month ceasefire declared by Muqtada al-Sadr, the powerful radical cleric, has helped to reduce violence.

For Iraqis, though, Basra remains a violent place, with scores of people killed every month. Major-General Jalil Khalaf, the police chief, complained of being left in a sea of troubles. Rival Shi’a militias with murky links to Iran compete violently for control and terrorise the population—particularly women deemed immodest, barbers and those selling alcohol.¹³²

On 16 December 2007, in a ceremony held at Basrah airport, Basrah PIC was completed. In line with all previous decisions concerning PIC, the transfer followed a rigorous assessment by the GOI and MNF-I to demonstrate that conditions were right

and that the ISF were ready to take the lead. The ceremony formalized the reality of the situation in Basrah since the ‘accommodation’ was reached in early September: the ISF were now responsible for security in the city, and British operations outside the COB were restricted as much by Iraqi sovereign responsibilities as policy from Whitehall. In a statement made during the PIC ceremony, Maj. Gen. Graham Binns, GOC MND(SE), said:

The Iraqi Authorities have shown they can maintain stability in their own right and that is why it is now time to hand over control. We will continue to offer support, training and mentoring to the Iraqi Security Forces, as we support the Government in their efforts on economic regeneration and reconstruction.¹³³

Military operations for the now much-reduced British force – the brigade only had two battlegroups – continued to focus on training the IA. Despite PIC in Basrah, between December 2007 and March 2008 IDF attacks on the COB increased steadily, often being fired from areas that British forces could no longer operate in because of the ‘accommodation’ or into which they could not conduct counter-battery fires.¹³⁴ IDF was a symptom of wider instability within Basrah and one which increasingly troubled Iraqi leaders. While the instability was characterized in some British circles as criminal activity, Col. Richard Iron, mentor to Gen. Mohan, commanding Iraqi forces in Basrah, is clear it was JAM “imposing its own form of discipline, and reinforcing its position and authority on a weakened population.”¹³⁵

Gen. Mohan recognized that the complex security threats which JAM posed, needed what he described as a counterinsurgency operation to take control of the situation “from militias who do not accept the political path.”¹³⁶ Guided and advised by Iron, Gen. Mohan developed a plan to build an effective counter-insurgent security infrastructure in Basrah made up of strong points, rooftop observation posts, and physical border security measures. Once this framework was in place, he believed that the ISF would be able to take control of the city and to “demonstrate absolute military superiority relative to the militias.”¹³⁷ Gen. Mohan listed the prerequisites for success in the operation:

- Basrah City’s security infrastructure completed: PVCs to control all routes into the city; and company strong points constructed in difficult areas of the city.
- All brigades of 14 Division mobilised, trained and equipped to win an urban battle against a heavily armed adversary.
- The movement of people and munitions from Iran, both across the border and from Maysan, interdicted.
- Moderate JAM are at worst neutral in the fight; preferably they support ISF and provide intelligence about radical elements.
- The vast majority of the population of Basrah supports the ISF.
- The Iraqi Police Service is largely free from malign militia influence.¹³⁸

Gen. Mohan and Iron went to Baghdad to brief the Basrah plan to Gen. Petraeus and Prime Minister Maliki and to secure the extra resources it needed: forces, money, and equipment. The intention was to build the security framework in April and May, and to re-equip and then train 14 (IA) Division concurrently for urban operations. The next

stage would start in early June when Prime Minister Maliki was to announce a weapons amnesty, after which a major disarmament programme would be run for all the militias in Basrah. When the disarmament programme ended, ISF would then initiate strike and search operations against known militia arms caches.¹³⁹

On Friday 21 March, Mohan briefed the plan to Gen. Petraeus and Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the National Security Advisor. During the early negotiations, senior Coalition officers made it clear that they did not want to open a second front in the South and that they would rather use forces, which were then dealing with AQI in the north, as they became available. Many U.S. commanders understood the fight against AQI and were uneasy with the prospect of Shi'a extremism, and still more the risk to campaign progress that a major operation in the south might pose. On Saturday 22 March, Petraeus briefed the plan to Prime Minister Maliki, at the end of which he told Gen. Petraeus of his immediate intention to take on criminals and gangs in an Iraqi-led operation. Gen. Petraeus tried to persuade the Prime Minister to wait until the major Coalition operation against the last remnants of AQI around Mosul had been completed, after which Coalition resources could be focussed on Basrah and JAM.¹⁴⁰

Maliki would not be persuaded. The next day, he ordered two additional Iraqi battalions to move down to Basrah, Maliki flew to the city and personally took command of preparations. Operation Charge of the Knights started on 24 March; routes into the city were closed and a curfew imposed. On 25 March, the clearance operation commenced. The sixteen IA battalions involved moved into the outskirts of Basrah but they soon met with fierce JAM opposition from well-defended positions in the militia-controlled districts. The initial assault faltered and played directly into JAM's propaganda that the Badr Brigades [a reference to sectarianism within the IA] and the 'traitor' Maliki had come to murder Baswaris in their homes and that only JAM could protect them.¹⁴¹

The Iraqi operation was not well-planned or well-coordinated and met with little initial success. Nevertheless, it was, as President Bush declared, a "defining moment in the history of a free Iraq."¹⁴² The original plan to take control of Basrah depended on the border being secured, the city sealed off, and known JAM strongholds isolated before the suburbs were cleared systematically using the Clear-Hold-Build method. None of this had been achieved when the operation started and open flanks gave JAM much more room to manoeuvre than should have been the case. Iron commented that "the Basrah Security Plan was at least a plan, whereas Charge of the Knights was not much more than a statement of intent: 'remove criminals, liberate Basrah and shoot anyone armed.'"¹⁴³

Very quickly after the operation started, Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin, commanding MNC-I, flew down to Basrah to assess the situation. He called forward his Tactical Operations Centre commanded by his Deputy Commanding General (DCG), Maj. Gen. George Flynn USMC, to work alongside Mohan at the Basrah Operations Centre. Austin also co-located Rear Admiral Winters with the Prime Minister, and the Minister of the Defence, in Basrah Palace. The Coalition intent was "this must not fail."¹⁴⁴ Flynn explained to MND(SE) that,

the Corps TOC had been deployed to ensure operational overwatch was properly conducted and *did not fail again*. Furthermore, he considered it had not worked because we did not have the necessary Situational Awareness to prevent a crisis from occurring, and that that was what operational overwatch was all about.¹⁴⁵

The conclusion is stark: British operations in Basrah had not kept abreast of the situation and British forces were not in a position to manage the risks attendant with being in overwatch. The first few days of Operation Charge of the Knights exposed MND(SE)'s poor situational awareness and its lack of resources with which it could take the fight to the extremists. The Iraqis and Americans started to doubt British commitment and ability. One senior officer considers it tarnished the British reputation.¹⁴⁶ Some calls for fire proved to be beyond UK Rules of Engagement, and this produced further accusations that British forces were not supporting Iraqi forces in the fight for Basrah. MNC-I very quickly filled capability gaps by re-allocating air, aviation and UAVs to Basrah, and they provided the means to locate, identify and engage militia teams. U.S. MiTTs also arrived to accompany IA and National Police units in action.

The difference between the British and U.S. approach to MiTT-ing has already been highlighted. MNC-I responded very quickly to the Iraqi Army's needs, providing Special Operations Forces (SOF), and MiTTs from 82nd Airborne Division and the USMC in Multinational Force-West in less than twelve hours. They were soon in action in Basrah with their new Iraqi counterparts, bringing in close air support and artillery fires, providing intelligence and command and control, and bolstering and encouraging where needed. By contrast, it took 48-hours for authority to be received from Whitehall for British forces to move back into Basrah, re-organized from M2T to MiTTs, along U.S. lines. One account refers to a "political mandate... being sought through PJHQ and Whitehall for British units to re-enter [Basrah] for the first time since September 2007."¹⁴⁷

For the record, it should be noted that some discussion of what MiTT-ing would entail took place in early March, as plans for the original Basrah Security Plan took shape. At Iron's instigation, Daniel Marston, then an instructor at the U.S. COIN CFE at Taji, provided battlegroups in MND(SE) with advice on MiTT-ing based on his experience with U.S. forces elsewhere in Iraq.¹⁴⁸ This was put into practice on 28 March, when the 1 SCOTS Battlegroup "re-aligned its effort from [Mentoring, Monitoring and Training] to direct MiTT support to those elements of 14 (IA) Division still in contact in Basra." The approach adopted was based on "the sound model developed by US MiTTs in Baghdad."¹⁴⁹ Each MiTT was based on an infantry platoon and included additional snipers, anti-tank weapons, and a fire controller. The MiTT mission was threefold: to thoroughly and quickly embed with the Iraqi Army, to establish what was going on in the city, and to provide as much mentoring assistance, intelligence and fire support as possible. British officers very quickly established strong working relations with their Iraqi counterparts, providing advice, guidance and support:

This had to be done with an enormous level of sensitivity and care not to patronize... For example, a distraction cordon and search operation during [Charge of the Knights 3] within the al Jazarer district, utilising a 'swarming effect' from all directions, was subtly changed to a controlled linear advance with sensibly placed cut-offs... without the loss of any credibility.¹⁵⁰

Between 21 March and 1 April, the ISF's operation prompted a considerable backlash from JAM in Basrah. In Baghdad, it launched on average twenty rocket attacks per day on the International Zone from its sanctuary in Sadr City, although the U.S and Iraqi

response accounted for an estimated nine-hundred militiamen in the operations to clear the JAM stronghold by the end of May.

Bolstered by Coalition Force support, Mohan launched a counterattack into Basrah on 2 April. Maliki urged Gen. Mohan to launch an all-out assault into the Hiyyaniyah district but Iron dissuaded him and, instead, focussed Mohan's attention on securing access routes into the city and dealing with each pocket of resistance in a carefully co-ordinated way. Each successful engagement added to Iraqi confidence, both among Baswaris and ISF. Civil action programmes followed up immediately behind combat operations, clearing rubbish from the streets and opening up market areas. By the time a major operation started to clear the Hiyyaniyah, Baswaris pointed out weapons caches, IED locations, and the hard-line insurgents. The operation marked the turning point in Basrah. For the first time almost since the invasion, Iraqi forces conducted successful operations among their people, with the consent of their people, and with British forces in support. After the operation, commanders concluded that local support was the key contributory factor to the low level of violence encountered.

On 3 April, Maliki ordered a ceasefire to allow negotiations with JAM to take place. This was very much against Coalition advice because the counterattack had been very successful, and MNF-I commanders believed that a ceasefire would give JAM time to reorganize.¹⁵¹ From 16 April, slow, deliberate clearance operations continued as the ISF worked through Basrah, district by district. The operation continued for several weeks, in particular the programmes to clear rubbish from the streets and to repair Basrah's damaged civil infrastructure. The important aspect of the operation, as Iron and Mohan identified from the start, was that it was led by the GOI and carried out by the ISF. Iraqis, supported by the Coalition, had secured their own people and the immediate political future.

By mid-April, JAM in Basrah was defeated; its leadership had slipped away and left what Iron describes as the 'corporals' to fight on. Maliki's gamble paid off: his forces re-established the Iraqi rule of law in Basrah, the operation broke JAM's power, and, crucially, both Maliki and the Iraqi Army had grown in confidence and standing. British forces, once committed to the operation gained greatly from their involvement. Iron, who had been in Basrah from autumn 2007, and witnessed declining British influence following PIC, concluded, "the British in Basrah were incredibly popular, appreciated for what they were now doing, and they had gained consent."¹⁵²

British forces in Basrah remained embedded with the IA until the end of Operation TELIC, and their position with the Iraqi Army was greatly enhanced as a result. The overall outcome of both Operation Charge of the Knights and TELIC was not one that could have been predicted by extrapolating the downward trend of British troop levels in Basrah and the upward trend in violence in southern Iraq. Ironically, Maliki's ill-prepared and strategically risky operation to take control of Basrah created the conditions where British forces could once again play a positive role in securing the Iraqi population. As one commanding officer noted, "The success of Op Charge of the Knights changed Basra beyond all recognition, with the city moving from a non-permissive environment to a broadly permissive one in the space of two months."¹⁵³ The tactical successes gained by the MiTTs were as notable as those gained by the SAS and loan service officers working with the *firqat* and the Sultan's Armed Forces during the war in Dhofar in the 1970s.¹⁵⁴ The question of defining campaign success,

discussed in *Counter Insurgency Operations*, evident in Kenya, Malaya, Borneo, and Northern Ireland, and acclaimed in the Oman, was unclear in Iraq, and the validity of the doctrine which was available to support Operation TELIC has to be ascertained.

5.11 Conclusions

Military operations started in Iraq in March 2003 with no clear vision of how the campaign would unfold. That the Iraqi regime would collapse under U.S. military pressure was hardly in doubt, nor was the ability of the Coalition to overwhelm the Iraqi armed forces. The immediate post-conflict period proved much more uncertain and it was in the weeks and months that followed the collapse of Saddam's regime that the military and political costs of the invasion started to add up. Neither the U.S. nor the much smaller British contingent were strong enough militarily or configured politically, militarily or organizationally for post-conflict nation-building. As luck would have it, for there is no evidence that any pre-invasion planning accurately predicted how the post-war security situation would unfold, the British were given responsibility for the four pre-dominantly Shi'a provinces of southern Iraq. The British were spared the vicious backlash that American forces faced almost immediately in Baghdad and in the Sunni province of al Anbar. Instead British forces found a generally compliant Shi'a population, glad to be free from the Ba'athist regime, and quick to secure power and the resources that came with it. Herein lay the root cause of the problem: Iraqi politics are a struggle for power and resources. Those with them will fight to retain them from those without. The inter-factional struggles started to grow as, and until Iraqis re-established a new political hierarchy, both formal and, in keeping with Arab tradition, informal.

The early months in Basrah proved to be chaotic but, apart from FRL terrorist attacks, the threat to political development and what would become attendant threats to security were less clear. Charles Tripp is pointed in his criticism of this early period:

The British had only a weak grasp of the personal histories, relationships, rivalries and status differences behind provincial networks. This was knowledge that came gradually, and by that stage people had already inserted themselves into positions of influence in local government. They used these posts to build up local fiefdoms, pursue feuds with rivals and initiate complex relationships with the emerging parties and leaders in Basra and Baghdad. In short, a distinctly Iraqi politics was developing which escaped the supervision, let alone control, of the allied forces in occupation of the country.¹⁵⁵

Bryan Watters suggests after working with ISF in MNSTC-I in 2005 that early Iraqi compliance or, at worst, ambivalence, can be accounted for by Iraqi uncertainty about who would prevail in the political process. Once Shi'a domination had been secured, albeit fragmented by internal division which was then to factionalize the GOI and its ministries, the factions had no need of Coalition support. Coalition forces became an obstacle to cementing further power and therefore became a justifiable target.¹⁵⁶ Coalition forces thus became the problem not the solution, as GOCs in MND(SE) increasingly characterized the situation in Basrah in 2007 and early 2008.

Almost from the point that President Bush declared 'Mission accomplished,' pressure from London was placed on British forces in Iraq to scale down operations. This pressure continued throughout the campaign. For a long time the underpinning logic

held up: the south was different from the rest of Iraq; it was stable, progressive and it was spared the sectarian tensions and ultimately the violence of Baghdad and the central provinces. On this basis, force reductions could be justified and were, after all entirely in line with the U.S. policy of transition and withdrawal. The decisive point for all campaigns, both insurgent and counterinsurgent, came not with any political developments or military milestones but with the carefully calculated attack by AQI on the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra on 22 February 2006. The civil war which erupted changed the demographics of Baghdad, mixed areas became Shi'a or Sunni depending on the militia powerbase, and the levels of violence that followed proved that the U.S., its coalition partners, nor the still developing ISF were strong enough to contain the sectarian violence. Worse still, it showed that the GOI was incapable of acting effectively and that some of its ministers and its ministries were complicit in the bloodshed.

Attacks by Shi'a militia on British forces increased during 2006 yet, despite this, force reductions continued in line with the policy of transition. In a minor reversal of policy, British forces resorted to classic counterinsurgency tactics of combined military, political and economic development activity in a sustained effort to demonstrate resolve and the capability of the ISF. Operation SINBAD, which had demonstrated British resolve to its U.S. ally and had captured the imagination in Whitehall,¹⁵⁷ stopped in early 2007, when the effort switched from countering the insurgent threat posed by JAM to dealing with the criminality associated with JAM. The U.S. campaign had not only changed direction from withdrawal to a troop surge, but it changed its approach from SSR and transition to population security and an updated version of the same classic counterinsurgency theory reflected in Operation SINBAD.

What conclusions can be drawn from this examination of the British campaign? First, change was one of the few constants throughout. Each TELIC deployment was and can be characterized in a different way. Successive commanders developed a different theme or approach. In the early tours, this was as much driven by British commanders and their interpretation as it was by either Iraqi political or insurgent pressure. Towards the end of the campaign, although the U.S. adopted a classical counterinsurgency approach, the British interpretation that the problem in Basrah was more criminal than insurgent, and its policy of continued transition, put it at odds with the now dominant and successful U.S. strategy of securing the population. Second, SSR and developing the ISF were identified from the start as the way to bring the military campaign to a close. The ISF had to be able to provide security for its population and once it could, British forces could leave. The logic is sound and in keeping with both past practice and doctrine. The difficulty was that the approach was not consistent, successive battlegroups were put off by militia infiltration of the IA and its inconsistent performance on operations. Yet when British training teams had to take firm control of the battalions they were training, and when they embedded teams for high intensity counterinsurgency operations in Baghdad, the IA responded, as they were to respond again and decisively in March 2008 during Operation Charge of the Knights. Third, the process of continual force level reductions and transition ran counter to classic counterinsurgency theory: British forces were unable to secure the population, and, once the IED threat manifested itself so violently, they were unable to operate among the population with the level of confidence they intuitively knew was required from their general experience of Northern Ireland. Fourth, with reduced interaction with the

population, intelligence sources were increasingly limited and specific. Operations became similarly focussed and for all the right reasons – reducing collateral damage, avoiding where possible from alienating the population – but they were unable to provide a sustained effect on the population.

While strike operations reduced JAM's capability, it did not neutralize it, nor did it help separate JAM from its support. Again, reduced force levels and limited ISF capability prevented military operations from achieving anything more than what Gen. Wall describes as 'tactical acupuncture.'¹⁵⁸ All this was far removed from the doctrine published in July 2001 and, from December 2006, the U.S. Army's doctrine and the tactics it put into practice in Baghdad and later across Iraq. The questions to be examined in Chapter 6 is, in the light of the Army's experience in Basrah, is its doctrine still valid, or were circumstances so different that it was simply not applicable to post-conflict Iraq?

¹ (Senior Officer, discussion with author, February 2007)

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 88-89.

³ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, 2001, p. A-3.

⁴ *Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, 1969, Part 1, p. 4.

⁵ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Third Edition, 2007, p. 1.

⁶ Joint Warfare Publication 3-50, *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations*, promulgated as directed by the Chiefs of Staff (Second Edition), June 2004, p. 1-5.

⁷ Army Code No 71844, *Stability Operations in Iraq (Op TELIC 2-5): An Analysis from a Land Perspective*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, July 2006.

⁸ ADP *Land Operations*, Glossary.

⁹ Maj. Gen. John Cooper, interview with author, Warminster, 20 June 2007.

¹⁰ President George W. Bush, *President Discusses Beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom*, President's Radio Address, The White House: Office of the Press Secretary, March 22, 2003.

¹¹ Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO) White Paper, U.S. Joint Forces Command, J9 Joint Futures Lab, Coordinating Draft (Version 2.0), dated August 9, 2001; and Harlan K. Ullman, and James P. Wade, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996. For a critical examination of the logic behind RDO see Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Rapid Decisive Operations: an Assumptions-Based Critique*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2001.

¹² Ministry of Defence, *Operations in Iraq—First Reflections*, London: The Stationery Office, July 2003, p. 7, pp 41–42.

¹³ Army Code No 71816, *Operations in Iraq: an Analysis from the Land Perspective*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, 2004, p. 1-13.

¹⁴ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Lessons of Iraq*, Third Report of Session 2003-04, Vol. 1 Report, together with formal minutes, London: The Stationery Office, 3 March 2004, p. 47.

¹⁵ Brims was later promoted to Lt. Gen. and appointed Commander of the UK Field Army.

¹⁶ Select Committee on Defence, Minutes of Evidence, Volume II (HC 57-II), Examination of Witnesses, 25 June 2003, Q635.

¹⁷ *Lessons of Iraq*, p. 98.

¹⁸ Text of Bush Speech, President Declares End To Major Combat In Iraq, 1 May 2003, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/05/01/iraq/main551946.shtml>

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- ¹⁹ Edward Chaplin, Director Middle East and North Africa, FCO, *Lessons of Iraq*, p. 151.
- ²⁰ Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2, *Dissolution of Entities*, 23 May 2003.
- ²¹ *Lessons of Iraq*, Paragraph 387, p. 156.
- ²² 040724-CO 1 LI.
- ²³ 040713-CO 1 KOSB. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴ Andrew Garfield, *Succeeding in Phase IV: British Perspectives on the U.S. Effort to Stabilize and Reconstruct Iraq*, Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2006, p. 38.
- ²⁵ 040517-COS 3 DIV.
- ²⁶ Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb, interview with author, Baghdad, 12 June 2007. This was the first of a number of interviews and discussions held with Sir Graeme in Baghdad and in the UK.
- ²⁷ Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb, discussion with author, Wilton, 11 March 2009.
- ²⁸ Lt. Gen. Robin Brims, interview with author, Wilton, 9 August 2007.
- ²⁹ (POR, 20 Armoured Brigade).
- ³⁰ *Idem*.
- ³¹ *Idem*.
- ³² Brig. Nick Carter, interview with author, London, 26 January 2007.
- ³³ Carter, interview. Emphasis added.
- ³⁴ Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006, p. 252.
- ³⁵ Rory Stewart, *Occupational Hazards: My Time Governing in Iraq*, London: Picador, 2006, pp. 324-325.
- ³⁶ *Stability Operations in Iraq*, p. B-4.
- ³⁷ Carter, interview.
- ³⁸ Michael Knights and Ed Williams, *The Calm before the Storm: The British Experience in Southern Iraq*, Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 66, February 2007, p. 19.
- ³⁹ 040724-CO 1 LI; 040713-CO 1 KOSB.
- ⁴⁰ 040724-CO 1 LI.
- ⁴¹ Carter, interview.
- ⁴² Richard Holmes, *Dusty Warriors: Modern Soldiers at War*, London: HarperCollins, 2006.
- ⁴³ Figures taken from “Op TELIC 4 with 1 PWRR Battlegroup”, *The Infantryman*, 2004, p. 80.
- ⁴⁴ Maj. J. B. Featherstone, “CIMIC House — a Unique Challenge”, *The Infantryman*, 2004, p. 84.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 84.
- ⁴⁶ (POR-1 Mechanized Brigade).
- ⁴⁷ (POR-1 Mechanized Brigade).
- ⁴⁸ 041117-CO 1 CHESHIRE.
- ⁴⁹ 050720-CO 1 WG.
- ⁵⁰ 050526-COS MND(SE).
- ⁵¹ 050705-CO 1 SG.
- ⁵² 050526-COS MND(SE).
- ⁵³ Lt. Gen. Jonathon Riley, interview, Cardiff, 21 March 2007.
- ⁵⁴ 050808-CG MND(SE).

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- ⁵⁵ 050712-COMD 4 ARMD BDE.
- ⁵⁶ 050706-CO 1 DWR.
- ⁵⁷ Riley, interview.
- ⁵⁸ 050502-DEPUTY (C5) SPA MNF-I.
- ⁵⁹ Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, p. 11.
- ⁶⁰ See Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November-December 2005, pp. 2-16.
- ⁶¹ Brig. Andrew Sharpe, discussion with author, July 2009. Sharpe worked with Aylwin-Foster for Casey in HQ MNF-I.
- ⁶² Col. Kevin C. M. Benson, U.S. Army, "Turning the Other Cheek: A Rebuttal to Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster," *The British Army Review*, Number 140, Autumn 2006, pp. 17-23; Thomas E. Ricks, "Army's Iraq Work Assailed by Briton: Senior Officer Points to Cultural Ignorance in an Essay Published by the US Military," *Washington Post*, Wednesday, January 11, 2006.
- ⁶³ 050512-D CH SSR.
- ⁶⁴ 050517-CG CPATT MNF-I.
- ⁶⁵ 050502-DEPUTY (C5) SPA MNF-I.
- ⁶⁶ 060719-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁶⁷ (POR-12 Mechanized Brigade).
- ⁶⁸ 060127-COS 12 MECH BDE.
- ⁶⁹ Army Code 71658, AFM Vol. 1 Part 9, *Tactical Handbook for Operations Other Than War*, London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, 1998.
- ⁷⁰ (POR-12 Mechanized Brigade).
- ⁷¹ *Idem*.
- ⁷² 060215-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁷³ (POR-12 Mechanized Brigade).
- ⁷⁴ *Idem*.
- ⁷⁵ 060719-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁷⁶ *Idem*.
- ⁷⁷ Cooper, interview.
- ⁷⁸ *Idem*.
- ⁷⁹ Daniel Marston, correspondence with author, 14 June 2009.
- ⁸⁰ Everard, interview.
- ⁸¹ (POR-20 Armoured Brigade).
- ⁸² Lamb, interview, Baghdad, 2007.
- ⁸³ Everard, interview.
- ⁸⁴ Cooper, interview.
- ⁸⁵ The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Iraq was civilian-led, FCO-sponsored, and included some military members from the G9 (CIMIC) Branch in HQ MND(SE).
- ⁸⁶ 070221-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁸⁷ 070309-COS MND(SE).
- ⁸⁸ 061213-COMD 20 BDE.
- ⁸⁹ 070309-COS MND(SE).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, “We had Liberated Amara from the British. Basra Next”, *The Guardian*, 21 October 2006.

⁹² Everard, interview.

⁹³ (POR-20 Armoured Brigade).

⁹⁴ Operation MOTORMAN was conducted in 1972 by the British Army to clear the Catholic no-go areas that had been established. Over 21,000 troops were involved.

⁹⁵ 070221-GOC MND(SE).

⁹⁶ (POR-20 Armoured Brigade).

⁹⁷ International Police Advisers were provided by ArmorGroup, a private security company, and were to provide the specialist advice and mentoring to the Iraqi Police Service.

⁹⁸ (POR-20 Armoured Brigade).

⁹⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰⁰ Everard, interview.

¹⁰¹ HQ MNF-I Strategy, Plans and Assessments Sigacts Database III.

¹⁰² (POR-19 Light Brigade).

¹⁰³ 070709-COMD 19 LT BDE.

¹⁰⁴ (POR-19 Light Brigade).

¹⁰⁵ 070221-GOC MND(SE).

¹⁰⁶ (POR-19 Light Brigade).

¹⁰⁷ 080122-COMD 1 MECH BDE.

¹⁰⁸ 080128-COS MND(SE).

¹⁰⁹ Alan Cowell, “Britain to Cut 1,600 Troops in Iraq, Blair Says”, *New York Times*, 21 February 2007. The author was in Washington DC at a U.S. Army study day on the day the troop reductions were announced. The author’s contemporaneous note records “the general mood was of mild scepticism that it really was, as the White House billed the announcement, good news. The issue raised questions about the value of coalitions and burden sharing and, whether it was a reasonable so to do or not, many present, both serving and retired, drew pointed comparisons between the U.S. reinforcing in Baghdad at the same time as the UK had decided to withdraw. Scepticism was heightened when the issue of UK reinforcements to Afghanistan was raised.”

¹¹⁰ Simon Tisdall, “Military chiefs give US six months to win Iraq war”, *The Guardian*, 28 February 2007.

¹¹¹ Rowan Scarborough, “No. 2 General Downplays British Withdrawal”, *Washington Examiner*, 26 February 2007.

¹¹² Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq’s Sectarian and Ethnic Violence and Its Evolving Insurgency Developments through Spring 2007*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2 April 2007, p. 78.

¹¹³ 080128-COS MND(SE).

¹¹⁴ 071108-CH MITT.

¹¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹¹⁶ 080128-COS MND(SE).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ 071108-CH MITT.

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- ¹¹⁹ Lt. Col. Patrick Sanders, *RIFLES Battle Group Operations in Basra, Summer 2007 - Defence, Delay, Raiding and Withdrawal in a Contemporary Urban Environment*, Paper presented at RUSI, 9 March 2009.
- ¹²⁰ *Idem.*
- ¹²¹ *Idem.*
- ¹²² 080128-COS MND(SE).
- ¹²³ ADP *Operations*, Paragraph 0560d.
- ¹²⁴ Sanders, *Operations in Basra, Summer 2007*.
- ¹²⁵ *Idem.*
- ¹²⁶ Damien McElroy, "British forces failed in Basra, says US official", *Daily Telegraph*, 8 August 2007.
- ¹²⁷ James Hider, "British Accused of Appeasing Shia Militia in Basra", *The Times*, 12 April 2008; "Secret deal kept British Army out of battle for Basra", *The Times*, 5 August 2008.
- ¹²⁸ 080122-COMD 1 MECH BDE.
- ¹²⁹ Col. Richard Iron, email to author, 11 April 2008.
- ¹³⁰ GOC Multi-National Division (South East), Address to Multi-National Force-Iraq Commanders' Conference, 17 February 2007.
- ¹³¹ GOC Multi-National Division (South East), Address to Multi-National Force-Iraq Commanders' Conference, 4 August 2007.
- ¹³² "Beating the Retreat", *The Economist*, 19 December 2007.
- ¹³³ MoD Statement, *Iraq takes responsibility for Basra Province*, 16 December 2007.
- ¹³⁴ 080605-COMD 4 BDE.
- ¹³⁵ Col. Richard Iron, interview with author, Oxford, 18 November 2008.
- ¹³⁶ Col. Richard Iron, *Notes on General Mohan's Strategy for Basrah Security*, email to author, 14 February 2008.
- ¹³⁷ Col. Richard Iron, email to author, 28 March 2008.
- ¹³⁸ Iron, *Notes on General Mohan's Strategy for Basrah Security*.
- ¹³⁹ Iron, interview, Oxford 2008.
- ¹⁴⁰ Iron, discussion with author, Baghdad, 26 April 2008.
- ¹⁴¹ *Idem.*
- ¹⁴² Con Coughlin, "New Iraq receiving baptism of fire in Basra", *Daily Telegraph*, 30 March 2008.
- ¹⁴³ Iron, discussion with author, Baghdad, 26 April 2008.
- ¹⁴⁴ (Discussion with senior U.S. officer, Baghdad, 10 April 2007).
- ¹⁴⁵ 080605-COMD 4 BDE. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁴⁶ (Senior British officer, comment to author, July 2008).
- ¹⁴⁷ Major T. G. S. Perkins, "MiTTing in Basra during Op TELIC – an OC's Perspective", *The Royal Regiment of Scotland Journal*, March 2009, p. 36.
- ¹⁴⁸ Daniel Marston, discussion with author, Warminster, 27 November 2008.
- ¹⁴⁹ Perkins, "MiTTing in Basra during Op TELIC", p. 36.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 37.
- ¹⁵¹ Iron, discussion, Baghdad, 26 April 2008.
- ¹⁵² Iron, interview, Oxford 2008.

¹⁵³ Lt. Col. C. L. G. Herbert, “Operation Charge of The Knights and the Development of the UK MiTT Concept”, *The Infantryman*, 2008, p. 146.

¹⁵⁴ See John Akehurst, *We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965–1975*, Wilton: M. Russell, 1982; Major General Tony Jeapes, *SAS Secret War*, London: William Kimber, 1980, republished HarperCollins, 2000.

¹⁵⁵ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 281.

¹⁵⁶ Watters, interview.

¹⁵⁷ Wall, interview.

¹⁵⁸ *Idem*.

6 British Counterinsurgency Doctrine: Practice against Theory

The previous chapter examined the course of the British military campaign in Iraq. It identified that many participants viewed and characterized the campaign differently. This affected the way the campaign developed. Chapter 5 showed that the process of British force reductions continued, despite increasing levels of violence in Basrah, which the ISF were unable to contain, despite British efforts to train and develop them. It highlighted differences between the U.S. and the British approaches. At first, the U.S. military struggled to adjust to the broader challenge of counterinsurgency, believing that, for the first year or so clinical counter terrorism would solve the rising problem of insurgency. By contrast, conditions at first in the south allowed British operations to make relatively quick, but, as things transpired, somewhat short-lived progress. The gradual consolidation of political power at provincial and national level was coincident with increasingly violent insurgencies in many parts of Iraq against which, until the U.S. policy, approach and force levels were adjusted in January 2007, the Coalition policy of transition and withdrawal proved hopelessly ineffective.

British forces started Operation TELIC organized, trained and equipped for warfighting. They quickly and instinctively transitioned to what was first seen as peace support operations, validating the premise on which the Army had been built since the mid-1990s; “Forces trained for high intensity combat can adapt to peace support operations.”¹ Although the characterization of the British campaign changed, the majority of the soldiers faced an insurgent threat, and they had to learn and adapt to it in the most challenging of circumstances of unfamiliar language and culture, diminishing intelligence as the campaign unfolded, and with no formal education in counterinsurgency. Regardless of how it was characterized, the problem required classic counterinsurgency methods to establish security: building the host nation’s security forces to the point when they could maintain effective local security; neutralizing the insurgent through intelligence-led precision-strike operations; supporting and sustaining local political initiatives and development projects. There were, inevitably, some differences between the campaign in Iraq and previous campaigns. Some might have been anticipated, others would be harder to predict. In overall terms, however, as one senior officer noted,

The term counterinsurgency is applicable [in Iraq] but in a context unlike any previous campaign. There was no civil-military structure, no political process, and no institutions that worked. The reality was that we were building capacity to deal with the insurgency at the same time as we were running a counterinsurgency campaign.²

With this in mind and after taking a broad view of British operations in Iraq, the aim of this chapter is to examine the validity of *Counter Insurgency Doctrine*, the six principles of British counterinsurgency and the Ink Spot method, which were identified and examined in Chapter 3, and evaluated in Chapter 4 against the broad development of British counterinsurgency theory. Its primary sources are the interviews conducted by the author to support the thesis. Those interviewed included brigade and divisional commanders, senior staff officers in British and Coalition headquarters, and those

involved with the development of doctrine in general and policy for Iraq in particular. The author's interviews inform much of the analysis in this chapter and they are supported by observations drawn from the body of official Post-Operational Reports and Interviews and media reports. The interviews sought to examine how practitioners, planners, staff officers and commanders characterized the British approach to counterinsurgency, to examine whether they viewed the British doctrinal approach as still valid, to identify the extent to which and reasons why the Iraq campaign differed from doctrine, and to re-examine the impact of education in establishing an understanding of the principles and basic approach.

6.1 The First of all Strategic Questions: Peace Support or Counterinsurgency?

Since the campaign started in Iraq, interest in counterinsurgency doctrine has almost inevitably increased. It certainly captured media interest in the U.S. and for the first time, the U.S. Army's doctrine, FM 3-24, was published by the University of Chicago Press both in response to interest and to widen its accessibility.³ Despite the general interest in counterinsurgency which followed the invasion of Iraq, somewhat surprisingly, very few post-operational interviews make any reference to doctrine. While all of those interviewed mention training for and the tactics used in Iraq, the vast majority did not make the link between best practices and the development or validation of doctrine, or to more general professional education and training. There are several possible explanations for what is a surprising omission.

First, those interviewed may not have known what the doctrine contained. Everard identifies the practical problem faced at unit level. It highlights the problem of accessibility, identified in Chapter 2 as a criterion of effective doctrine:

The volume of concepts and doctrine we have to read is staggering and the volume problem is exacerbated by technology which allows us to burn CDs and hang enormous amounts of work on websites, often with little guidance or direction on what is important, what is essential or what, quite frankly, can wait to be overtaken by the next turn of the wheel. The rate at which doctrine is being produced brings with it the real risk of it not being understood.⁴

Everard's view reflects the problem faced at unit level. ACSC graduates had at least been given an introduction to counterinsurgency, although, as Chapter 3 identified, there was a marked drop in the depth to which counterinsurgency was studied between 1997 and 2007. Captains also were taught the theory and the history of the British counterinsurgency when they attended the short residential course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as part of their promotion studies. A second possible explanation is that those familiar with the doctrine may have considered that it contained nothing contentious and that it was broadly relevant and useful. A third option is that the differing ways the early deployments to Iraq were characterized meant that many failed to consider that counterinsurgency was necessary or relevant. This point was raised in Chapter 5, where, in the view of some commanders, the terms peace support and counterinsurgency appeared to be mutually exclusive, while for others they were synonymous. Those who reached for peace support doctrine would not have necessarily reached for counterinsurgency doctrine as well. Maj. Gen. Nick Carter considered that experience of peace support operations in the Balkans confused thinking about what

sort of problem Iraq posed. His point captures the essence of the problem and it ties in to Kitson's view that a specific response is needed for each insurgency. In Carter's view the result was "We therefore lurched into counter insurgency, having thought that the odd IED was nothing more than a blip in what was to be a longer term reconstruction campaign."⁵ The interesting point to note is that Carter was referring to 2004, when the general view was that Operation TELIC was a peace support operation.

Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb goes further, identifying the risk which emerges when people seek to characterize a complex problem without properly understanding what the problem is, and then force their interpretation to fit what would be an inevitably simple doctrinal model:

There always has been a danger of chasing labels and we try to think of things in nice neat terms. The reality is that what we face in Iraq is multidimensional and it cannot be simplified; it does not fit easily into anything we have already described. The search for a neat and tidy solution by those who don't really understand the problem, even at the most basic level, will get us into a dangerous situation through lazy thinking and lazy talking about what the campaign is and what we need to do about it.⁶

Lamb's observation is closely related to a general point Iron makes about doctrine and experience. Iron suggests that commanders make decisions based on what they recognize. What they then recognize is, in turn, based on their experience and understanding:

From the miasma of information available, staff officers manipulate information until it fits a pattern that the commander can identify. Commanders then drag a solution that fits from their filing cabinet full of potential solutions. The only way to build up the filing cabinet, other than through operational experience, is through reading and study.⁷

It was only really from 2006 that the idea that Iraq was a counterinsurgency campaign started to be accepted within MND(SE). This was largely as the result of the efforts of Maj. Gens. Cooper and Shirreff, despite the fact that the approach in MND(SE) was to transition security sector responsibility to the ISF with concomitant UK force reductions. During 2006, as the intensity of operations increased, the general view changed to one that accepted counterinsurgency was a more appropriate response to conditions in Iraq than peace support. It was clear, after all, that there was no peace to support. The realization that insurgency was the principal security challenge in Iraq coincided with a greater general awareness of counterinsurgency doctrine prompted in the British Army by the publication of *Stability Operations in Iraq*, which commented on British doctrine, and the publicity surrounding Gen. Petraeus' project to develop U.S. doctrine. Although both heightened interest in counterinsurgency, neither brought about a change in policy or increased resources.

The MNF-I policy of Transition, developed by Gen. Casey, did acknowledge initially that Iraq required a counterinsurgency campaign in the generally accepted, fully coordinated classical method. However, by summer 2006, for those involved in operations in MND(SE), Daniel Marston observed that all the British battlegroups deployed recognized that that was what it was; "All battalions knew they were fighting an insurgency."⁸ He noted that junior commanders generally understood the basic requirements of counterinsurgency. Marston also noted, and took part in considerable

discussion between commanding officers and company commanders about how the general approach might be adjusted to better reflect the basic tenets of counterinsurgency doctrine which they understood. Measures they discussed included embedding company training teams with the IA, running operations to interdict smuggling of arms and ammunition from Iran, and developing and focussing the Army's lessons learned process. Of particular note, given that these discussions predated the Petraeus-led revival of population-centric counterinsurgency, Marston observed a general desire to re-establish company bases in Basrah to take control of the city and to "get out amongst the people, because the Iraqi people want to talk." It was also clear to those involved at battalion and company level that there were not enough troops to carry out this task.⁹

In a follow-up visit between February and March 2007, Marston drew the same conclusion: the new battlegroups understood counterinsurgency but, due to force levels, they were limited in the extent to which security could be established. Nevertheless, battlegroups were working with tribal leaders, and were training the IA and in two cases were embedded with Iraqi battalions and in action with them in Baghdad.¹⁰ As he found in his previous visit, he noted a general view that the soldiers saw the need for and wanted to be in forward bases among the population than on the COB. The need for strike operations was understood, but their detrimental effect could not be ameliorated because there was no British presence on the ground to reassure the population and to deter and neutralize the insurgents.¹¹

6.2 Characterizing the British Approach and the Campaign in Iraq

Sir Alistair Irwin remarked that arguments over definitions are often more semantic and academic than practical.¹² The characterization of the campaign is not a prosaic academic discussion point. As Clausewitz makes clear in the 'first of all strategic questions' – that of establishing what type of war it is – characterizing the campaign correctly has significant implications for the strategy a nation adopts and the way it plans and co-ordinates its efforts. There are implications for doctrine when it is linked by strategy, which links ends, ways and means, to policy. While this creates the potential risk of doctrine changing with every change of government, doctrine should provide the framework of common understanding against which discussion of policy and strategy can take place. In this sense, doctrine is not just what is taught, it has much wider applicability. Language therefore is important. Carter explained that,

If it is not precise, there is a risk that political direction can get in a muddle. Talk of Peace Enforcement, with the word Peace included, can allow the wrong conclusions to be drawn. Therefore we have to use terms that capture the entirety of what is involved. We have to be careful how the campaign is described. Characteristics and the implications of terms such as *enduring* and *intensity* need to be made clear because they have implications for the extent to which the Comprehensive Approach can be implemented. These in turn have implications for what [the country] can sustain, and the resilience of our plans. What we do, what we describe, affect the outcomes for Defence. In these terms, underpinning language is critical.¹³

Mockaitis concluded that adaptability is a central characteristic of the British approach

to counterinsurgency. Lt. Gen. Riley concurs; “The British model is very adaptable.” However, he stresses that “it is important to note that whilst there are lots of crossovers between Belfast and Basra, they were not the same.”¹⁴ As U.S. industrialist Mary Parker Follett asserted, “the law is in the circumstances.”¹⁵ The commanding officer in Maysan in 2004 was well aware that this was the case, and several commanders and principal staff officers interviewed expressed their concern over those who were too ready with a solution from Northern Ireland or the Balkans without, as *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* (1949) emphasized, a proper knowledge of the background to the unrest or having identified the dissident elements.

Gen. Wall characterizes the British approach in terms of pragmatism: striking the right balance between short term actions and developing longer term legitimacy, recognizing the full implications and requirement for consent (what he describes as the modern ‘Hearts and Minds’), being quick to understand the complexity and its nuances which was “due in part to our Northern Ireland experience, partly it is genetic, part of it is our military culture, and partly it is our doctrine.”¹⁶ Pragmatism, Wall argues, can be seen in the Army’s recognition that insurgency is not a military phenomenon for which there is only a military solution, while military force is a hedge against instability and discontent, where military force is used to contain the opposition’s military impact, political primacy and effective indigenous political machinery are the crucial elements of success; “The early days in Iraq were the exact opposite.”¹⁷ Wall also highlights the Army’s recognition that reconciliation and accommodation are an important step in achieving a political solution to insurgency; the agility demonstrated in developing TTPs and new equipment; and in its recognition of what he describes as the ‘Boomerang Effect’ – where short term tactical success may be gained but at the cost of radicalising opponents; “We certainly fell foul of it in Northern Ireland and now in the Long War [against terrorism].”¹⁸

Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely suggests that the British have followed two approaches: ‘hearts and minds’ and the punitive. “Totalitarian regimes can apply the latter. We used it in the past. Our approach is now firmly rooted in the ‘hearts and minds,’ mainly because our experience is from the softer end of COIN.”¹⁹ Experience is undoubtedly important in shaping both the development of doctrine and its practical application. Certainly the received view is that in the early years in Basrah, the Army’s recent operational experience gave it an advantage, as Maj. Gen., now Lt. Gen. Bill Rollo notes,

The net effect of [the Balkans] was that we were very comfortable with the idea of arriving at a place, dividing it up by population centres, distributing ourselves, establishing framework operations and making things work. It all fitted very comfortably with our understanding of Mission Command and drew on all our Northern Ireland experience.²⁰

The authors of *Stability Operations in Iraq* concurred, concluding that experience from Northern Ireland and the Balkans helped the Army to make a positive start in Iraq,

The approach to people, the ability of commanders to think on their feet, to brief the media, to draw on proven tactics, techniques and procedures, and specialist skills and equipment, all proved invaluable.²¹

While it is possible to characterize the British approach, the issue of whether the actions and efforts in Iraq amounted to a ‘campaign,’ – what doctrine defines as “a set of

military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective within a given time and geographical area”²² – in the early years is more contentious. Riley is clear: “Using the term ‘campaign’ implies that there was a plan *which there never was*. The result has been that we have stumbled from stage to stage, distracted as we have gone on by problems of the moment.”²³ This places practice in direct conflict with doctrine, which describes six principles “arranged into a logical sequence which provides a government with a general pattern on which to base and review its COIN strategy,”²⁴ and which adapted general campaign planning methodology for counterinsurgency. Practise did not follow doctrine.

At the campaign level in Iraq, the coalition did not have a plan until April 2004 when MNF-I formed in Baghdad under Gen. George Casey. Kiszely notes that “that lack of planning [until MNF-I formed] had a detrimental impact of the security environment on political development.”²⁵ Casey’s campaign plan was written by a British colonel, Andrew Sharpe, brought out to Baghdad specifically to write it by Lt. Gen. John McColl, Casey’s first British deputy. While a plan was eventually developed by MNF-I, in national terms, a difficulty emerged over how the UK handled the campaign in the south. The complexity of Coalition operations was one factor; but so was the problem of variable progress across the country. Early achievements in the south were not matched elsewhere, due largely to the ferocity of the Sunni insurgency around Baghdad, the unsuitability of the U.S. approach to deal with it, and Iraq’s initial political vacuum.²⁶

6.3 Principles

After confronting an insurgency for six years in Iraq, and given the significance of principles in doctrine and operational planning, the question has to be asked, ‘Are the principles of counterinsurgency still valid?’ By 2006, when work in the U.S. was underway to update counterinsurgency doctrine and the U.S Army was seeking advice from its British counterparts, Lt. Gen. Lamb, then responsible for the Army’s tactical doctrine and combined arms training, could find no evidence that the British principles had failed. Indeed, he noted an emerging view in the U.S. which considered that, in the light of U.S. experience in Iraq, British principles still held true. By 2007, Lamb’s view was that “the COIN principles are fine but we don’t find them applied in Iraq.”²⁷ Everard was equally clear: “The COIN principles are still valid and they are very good but they have been difficult to apply in Iraq.”²⁸ Riley took a similar stand: “The principles are good. Nothing has changed that invalidates them or that requires us to change. The issue is that we have singularly failed to live up to them, in particular political aim, coordinated government machinery and separating the insurgent from his support.”²⁹ Maj. Gen. Gerry Berragan, then Deputy CG MNC-I, also considered that the principles remained valid. His concern was that he was not sure that they could be applied:

Inter-agency activity [referring to the U.S. term for cross-government co-operation] does not work effectively for us. The difficulty is that we do not have someone in charge. Petraeus and Crocker share responsibilities because a *supremo* is a rare beast. This means that there will always be a tension between the military and the politicians reporting on separate channels.³⁰

Gen. Wall also believed that the principles were valid, although he thought “It is quite difficult to apply some of these principles when you are the occupying power and we

completely disregarded them in the post-war stage in Iraq.”³¹ However, in his view, the issue of informing the target audiences at home and in the theatre of operation, as *Counter Insurgency Operations* identified, required a great deal more attention:

We are fighting a battle at the strategic and operational level where the old style framework operations, developing information from patrolling and making contact with the population, now takes place on the internet. Our strategic communications has to take account of narratives and they need to be emphasised.³²

Another GOC in Basrah concluded that,

We were doing COIN with a difference; we used a B1 Bomber to effect a break-clean in Basra, and were firing artillery into built up areas, which is not normal in COIN. You need to adapt COIN doctrine to the parameters of violence that exist within the operation and within the society that exists. The almost universal Iraqi reaction to our strike operations was, ‘excellent; do more of those.’ These are not the lessons we learned from Northern Ireland. However, if the doctrine is right, (and I think it is) then it can be adapted to the operation, and it is the drills employed on the ground that are different.³³

The conclusions recorded here were made by commanders and principal staff officers who had served in Iraq, in Basrah and in Baghdad, and their combined experience covered the entire campaign. It is important to note that they, and all those other officers interviewed expressed strong support for British principles laid out in *Counter Insurgency Operations*, and for their rationale.

Holden Reid suggests that doctrine should be developed through “debate and the exchange of ideas in the calm of peace.”³⁴ By 2006, the Army was embroiled in Iraq, it faced an increasingly violent insurgency while at the same time having to implement force level reductions, and it was increasing its efforts in Afghanistan. The opportunity for calm, considered doctrine development had long since passed. As writers at DGD&D prepared ADP *Land Operations* during 2005, and they reconsidered the range of military operations in the context of the invasion of Iraq, Maj. Gen. Lamont Kirkland – the last DLW before DGD&D became part of the Defence Concepts and Development Centre in April 2006 – took the opportunity to re-examine counterinsurgency doctrine and its principles. His conclusion is important because it was based on a wide range of views, not just personal experience from an operational tour at a specific time and place:

Our operational experience suggested that the Army’s COIN doctrine was fit for purpose. Although it is important to remain very critical, and we need to watch for circumstances where our doctrine does not fit, there was no evidence that either the COIN doctrine had failed or that the situation had changed enough to warrant its revision.³⁵

Kirkland’s view was reflected on 16 June 2006 when, after over three years of British military operations in Iraq, the newly formed Army Doctrine and Concepts Committee, the successor to ADC, agreed that the principles for counterinsurgency were indeed still valid.³⁶

6.3.1 Political Primacy and Political Aim

Doctrine has long asserted that political will is essential for effective counterinsurgency

and it underpins the principle of Political Primacy and Political Aim which states that the overall plan of campaign should be the responsibility of government. British doctrine has been clear since 1963 that there is no such thing as a purely military solution to insurgency, a point which Kitson reinforced in *Bunch of Five*, and in doctrine publications since: successful counterinsurgency requires political, military and economic measures to be brought to bear to re-establish good governance. As Riley made clear,

It has to be clear that military activity is a sub-set of the overall campaign. Military force should not be applied if it is going to make a bad situation worse. Intelligence, coordinating with the civil authorities, civil affairs, and the use of minimum *necessary* force are the proven, enduring themes of how we approach counterinsurgency, but they have to be applied correctly and in the right context. Apply them incorrectly, get the balance wrong and they will not make things better.³⁷

Counter Insurgency Operations assumed that there would be a functioning government in the country of operation. In the case of Iraq, its government and the administration collapsed after the Coalition invaded, and it took a great deal of effort to re-establish a nascent but far from effective form of governance. In Iraq, the issue quickly became which government and whose aim? In the absence of a functioning Iraqi government, until 2005, when the first Iraqi government was elected, the U.S.-led coalition was the *de facto* governing authority. From 2004, when MNF-I was formed, the U.S. policy of Transition defined the campaign, even though Iraqi, U.S. and Coalition interests and objectives were not clearly defined. In this situation, Rollo observed that, “all this added up to making the application of our doctrinal principles very difficult because we were attempting to support something [the Iraqi administration] which was dysfunctional and, at times, malevolent.”³⁸

Lamb suggested that “We should have been more realistic, and recognised from the start that Iraqi leadership would take time to adjust to their new responsibilities and that they would need mentoring.”³⁹ He also considered that the principle of political primacy and a clear political aim remains valid, but, in the context of ‘whose primacy, whose aim?’ he identifies the critical problem was the Coalition put the Iraqi political structure in place, “but then we walked away.”⁴⁰ Capacity building, he argued,

is not just ‘telling’ and it is more than just ‘showing.’ It is being there every step of the way. We should have been more realistic and recognised from the start that Iraqi leadership would take time to adjust to their new responsibilities and that they would need mentoring. There are some realities that we do not seem to have done anything about. The FCO, after all, will have a relationship with Iraq long after we have gone so it would have been in our interests to have invested in this in a really meaningful way. Instead, we have been tied into short term political horizons. This challenges the very concept of the Comprehensive Approach: we cannot do everything ourselves, and what we have to do, has to be done on more realistic timelines.⁴¹

As Lamb recognized in 2007, the pressure to handover to the ISF and to leave did not take sufficient account of the time it would take for the Iraqis to adjust to their new form of government, and for factions and parties to find a political equilibrium. Counterinsurgency operations take time, and this is made clear in *Counter Insurgency*

Operations. What could not have been anticipated when it was written – and it would be unreasonable to think that it could since there was no experience to suggest it was an option – was the parlous state that Iraq would be in politically, and the intensity of the sectarian and inter-factional violence which stemmed from political uncertainty and instability. It was only when Ambassador Crocker and Gen. Petraeus revised the campaign plan in April 2007 and they started to address Iraq’s political and governmental problems by addressing the resulting security situation, were time and the need for effective governance properly dealt with in planning and approach.

6.3.2 Co-ordinated Government Action

Counter Insurgency Operations presents a logical but somewhat simple doctrinal model for co-ordinated government action. It assumes that the host nation, however hard pressed by the insurgency, would have the vestiges of a functioning government for which British military operations could act in support. The doctrine strongly supports the appointment of a Director of Operations, along the lines of Briggs and Templer in Malaya. *Counter Insurgency Operations* did not take any account of the broad aspects of multi-nationality, such as national caveats on what contingents could and could not do, the role of national command and control arrangements in shaping the British approach, and the division of responsibility, and inevitable differences of opinion between government departments and among the Coalition partners.

Multi-nationality affected the British operation in a number of ways. First, MND(SE), although based around a core of British officers, was, as its name suggests, multi-national. The mix of staff officers added their own national approach and while, as Riley notes, familiarity with NATO procedures helped, there was an almost inevitable friction created by an *ad hoc* organization which had not trained together and which was operating in a U.S.-led, U.S.-dominated coalition. Very early in the campaign, a senior officer observed,

It came as no surprise to most that Multi-nationality degraded the performance of headquarters (by about a third). It was also suggested that as we were likely to be the nation of choice to lead multinational headquarters within a US-led coalition force in the future we should take it more seriously and formalise our doctrine and procedures.⁴²

This comment might not have been necessary had British doctrine already formalized multi-national operations more comprehensively, and account been taken in training headquarters and staff officers for operations in Iraq.

Second, British commanders were acutely aware that being able to get the most out of all the sub-ordinate national contingents required a clear understanding of what freedoms and constraints each contingent faced, and to make arrangements, however complicated, for them to work. Riley’s directive to his sub-ordinates makes this clear:

You must read this in conjunction with the orders you have been given by your national contingent commander or your government. Nothing that I say is meant to run contrary to those instructions and I have been careful to match my instructions to you with those orders. It is one of my tasks to see that there is no conflict between those national orders, and instructions issued to you by me, or to the division by our higher headquarters in theatre, Multinational Corps Iraq.⁴³

Third, the campaign highlighted the problems a British force faced as part of a U.S.

operation, in particular, its roles and responsibilities as a junior partner in a U.S.-led operation. There were a number of recurring issues which, far from being resolved as the campaign developed, were exacerbated as national strategies bifurcated in January 2007 with the start of the Surge. While MNF-I was generous in U.S. money and capabilities it made available to MND(SE), from ISR systems to the \$87 million made available for Operation SINBAD,⁴⁴ its generosity did not extend to British interpretations of the situation once the Surge had been announced. On the one hand the view was expressed that “we have not been able to handle the campaign in the south in a national, UK way, because of the complexity of Coalition operations.”⁴⁵ On the other, at the operational level, the U.S. was forced to concentrate on the Sunni-Shi’a civil war so that it could secure Baghdad. The UK’s focus was less clearly defined. Differences between the two positions were manifest in vitriolic public criticisms which highlighted the difficulties in interpretation and intent between British and U.S. positions:

A senior US officer familiar with Gen Petraeus’s thinking said: “The short version is that the Brits have lost Basra, if indeed they ever had it. Britain is in a difficult spot because of the lack of political support at home, but for a long time - more than a year - they have not been engaged in Basra and have tried to avoid casualties.

They did not have enough troops there even before they started cutting back. The situation is beyond their control.

Quite frankly what they’re doing right now is not any value-added. They’re just sitting there. They’re not involved. The situation there gets worse by the day. Americans are disappointed because, in their minds, this thing is still winnable. They don’t intend to cut and run.”⁴⁶

Within UK national structures, the doctrinal model called for “a coordinated national plan [to]... cover the entire national, economic, administrative, operational and intelligence fields.”⁴⁷ Many of those interviewed believed that no such British plan existed, and Kitson’s call for national efforts to be co-ordinated through one individual who could represent it on the host country’s supreme council to help formulate overall policy was not addressed fully at any point in the campaign.⁴⁸ At the tactical level, this created inevitable tensions between military and non-military activities:

We felt the lack of a holistic approach across the four lines of operation [Security, Governance, Communications and the Economy]; the only coherent one seemed to be Security and this was used by the other agencies [FCO and DfID] in particular to beat us with, as their excuse for their not doing anything. One of my company commanders commented ‘Basra is a very lonely place for the military.’⁴⁹

A senior staff officer recognized the strength of the Director of Operations model, and highlighted the practical shortcomings of not having either a plan or the means to co-ordinate UK national initiatives and efforts within MND(SE) and as part of the Coalition:

Were we to start with a clean piece of paper, then I think we would have come up with the decision that we needed to appoint some form of Pro-Consul; a general or an empowered civilian like Lord Ashdown, it matters not. We

should then have provided the necessary resources along each of the Lines of Operation; sufficient troops for the Security Line for example – compare our two battalions in a city of two million, compared to the fifteen battalions in a city like Belfast of 300,000 – money for the Economic Line – the only money we got was American and we needed big money; millions of pounds; a Marshall Plan big enough to restore Basrah – and we would have staffed Information Operations with young dynamic and imaginative Alistair Campbell-type people. But we didn't.⁵⁰

Of course, these were problems experienced at the tactical level by a British-led division operating within a U.S.-led corps. One senior officer highlighted how the difficulties between PJHQ and MoD affected strategy and decision-making:

The problem we have created is a national level disconnect between what we did in the bunker at PJHQ and policy makers in MoD. The focus in MoD was far too short term, certainly during TELIC 1. This might have been a transitory thing but it might have been a problem if the war had gone on much longer. With a short term view and no obvious thinking beyond the horizon and to Phase 4, this calls into question MoD's role. It has to be able to run things and think about the next stage but it cannot because it is pegged by the need to deal with the day-to-day issues that are as much political as they are military. This is a lesson we need to learn and it means we should really examine the delivery of military-strategic command.⁵¹

The conclusion is clear: not only must the national effort be co-ordinated within the theatre of operation but it must be co-ordinated effectively at home. PJHQ provided the principal gateway for information and decisions to and from Iraq but it did not have the means or the support from other government departments to provide the degree of co-ordination necessary. Lt. Gen. Rollo develops this in the context of in-theatre co-ordinated government machinery, described by the MoD as the Comprehensive Approach:⁵²

Today's Comprehensive Approach is, in broad terms, correct in theory because it seeks to draw together all levers of national power to support political aims and objectives. However, its application has been less successful in practice. Why? Because there is no common mechanism across government to define what is required from across government to achieve success. In Iraq, we found ourselves caught between two stools. It was an issue of strategy and we faced two options: do we support the main campaign and take our place in it accordingly, or do we take a chunk of the campaign and focus all our effort there. In fact we found ourselves trying to do both.⁵³

Although the FCO and DfiD were present in the south, they were based in Basrah Palace. However, HQ MND(SE) was based at Basrah air station, and as the IED threat increased, so did the difficulties of senior representatives meeting to plan and co-ordinate:

One of the basic principles of this sort of operation is to collocate the political and military effort, and ensure that they operate from the same plan. We were separated from the Consul General and, although we tried as hard as we could to keep in touch and my POLAD (Policy Advisor) visited him regularly, the threat reduced movement between the two locations significantly. Not being

collocated was a considerable disadvantage.⁵⁴

A senior officer concluded this “was a glaring weakness which broke the most fundamental of COIN principles... When the Brigade Headquarters had been moved out of Basra Palace we had broken that key principle, and that had been a mistake.”⁵⁵

Another identified that the absence of co-ordinated UK government machinery in the south allowed UK effort to be dissipated; “This would have been avoided if we had decided in the planning phase to make South East Iraq an exemplar and DfiD directed to take the lead.”⁵⁶ Such an approach would, however, have been problematic since Iraq was organized on a provincial, not regional level so there was no natural regional interlocutor with whom a regional UK-led approach could have co-ordinated. More importantly, as Rollo notes, there was “certainly no political desire, Iraqi, American or British, appetite to create any regional body. The fear of a federated Iraq had to be ameliorated.”⁵⁷

Both doctrine’s view of co-ordinated government machinery, and the guidelines to shape the ally-host nation relationship are logical and sensible, but neither was applied in the early years of the campaign. By the time Petraeus and Crocker unified U.S. efforts at the campaign level in 2007, Operation ZENITH was underway in the south and the pressure from London continued to be on scaling down the British presence and transitioning to Iraqi control. As the authors of *Stability Operations in Iraq* concluded,

The British doctrinal model (usually applied to counter insurgency) of a single authority e.g. a Director of Operations, co-ordinating political, economic, social, legal, security and cultural strands of a campaign is still valid but was not followed in the UK Area of Responsibility in Iraq. This created confusion...⁵⁸

6.3.3 Intelligence and Information

“Good intelligence,” *Counter Insurgency Operations* makes clear “is perhaps the greatest asset for a government combating an insurgency. Without it the security forces work in the dark and random offensive operations on this basis produce nothing positive and much negative reaction amongst the population involved in the theatre from within the international forum as a whole.”⁵⁹ The campaigns in Malaya, Kenya, and Northern Ireland saw a great deal of emphasis placed on building and sustaining effective intelligence operations. In Northern Ireland, covert surveillance by undercover soldiers, agent handling, and technical intelligence operations became part of the campaign culture, and they developed a mystique and a mythology which carries on.⁶⁰

Without exception, all those interviewed noted the paucity of intelligence available and the surprisingly low level of cultural and situational understanding those involved had of the campaign and their area of operations. The fundamentals identified in *Imperial Policing and Duties in Aid of the Civil Power* (1949) were certainly not evident in Iraq: knowledge of the background to unrest, identifying the dissident elements, a sound intelligence system and good topographical knowledge. None of those interviewed could explain why, certainly in the light of Northern Ireland, this was the case. The effect that these shortcomings had was surprising:

I have never been in a theatre where so little intelligence came off the ground. There are a number of reasons for this, ranging from language to culture, as well as the Iraqi habit of keeping all information to themselves. It meant that we had to rely on higher-level intelligence to conduct operations, which was mostly

responsive and often single-source. However, if there isn't much coming up, then there needs to be a change to the rules concerning what can be shelved down. Much was too classified for that.⁶¹

The similarity between the situation in Iraq and that during the final year of the withdrawal from Aden has already been made. The implications of little or poor intelligence were significant, as Riley notes:

Information requests generated by the Commander, collection plan, and the organisation of assets, and via a targeting board, lead ultimately to actions. It can and does produce actionable intelligence at the right levels... This has real importance, because in an environment where consent has to be built and maintained, operations have to be correctly and carefully targeted.⁶²

While efforts were made to fuse intelligence and to improve coverage, actionable intelligence was often limited to that produced by very specific, often limited capabilities. As Rollo observes, "It was therefore hard to take the war to the opposition without turning the support of the population away."⁶³

6.3.4 Separate the Insurgent from his Support

In *Counter Insurgency Operations*, the principle of 'Separate the Insurgent from his Support' seeks to deny him information, logistics, recruits, safe bases and popular support. It suggests that this can be achieved through physical separation and by developing government control from a firm base through a series of expanding secured areas. It also makes clear that a co-ordinated effort to win the psychological campaign for hearts and minds is necessary, linked "to the need for the government side to retain legitimacy."⁶⁴ Much of this requires a clear understanding of the operational environment, the intelligence picture, and the cultural background. Everard's concern about failures to address these areas effectively enough is one highlighted by a number of interviewees:

Human terrain is something we seemed to understand so much better in Northern Ireland and the Balkans where we had a sound understanding of the importance of the breakdown of religious groups, demographics and ethnicity. In Iraq, we simply don't get it. Iranian influence, money, finance, rumour, will: they are all covered by the local media and they all play to the Arab psyche which is so different to ours. Where people believe the first thing they are told, it makes it difficult for our slower approach to counter propaganda.⁶⁵

To Everard, the area still to be addressed was how to separate the insurgents from their support, "because the population changes its mind so quickly." Basic human interest is, he suggests, an important and difficult dynamic which affects both the intelligence picture and Information Operations:

We have to focus on what people think and then get on the front foot with a product. This is a simple enough ideal but *our response is woeful*. Master themes, central control, ministerial clearance all miss the point and put us behind the enemy before we even start. The focus for our information campaign has to be built on the here and now and authority has to be delegated to conduct counter command activity.⁶⁶

Lamb is clear that an understanding of cultural differences is not just important, but it

potentially changes the approach to be adopted:

If we have to cross a cultural divide, we are not dealing with hearts and minds; it is a question of tolerance. The old model of an enduring relationship between us and the host nation not only does not work, it does not exist. This means that we need a whole range of measures to cross the divide that inevitably exists. Each measure depends on the specific circumstances, political, military and economic.⁶⁷

The message put out by information operations is crucial to separating the insurgent psychologically from his support. However, in the case of the militias, support was strong. They were seen as their community's protectors, more so than the ISF, and for the Shi'a, JAM was the last line of defence against Sunni death squads and AQI. The continued presence of militias directly challenged Iraqi and Coalition authority as nascent Iraqi governmental institutions developed. They undermined the GOI's attempts to establish its own legitimacy and authority over the Iraqi population by fostering violent sectarianism even within government ministries, until Prime Minister Maliki eventually challenged JAM in March 2008. Kiszely notes that,

Denying that it was an insurgency was a great mistake as was not taking on the militias until it was too late. Ironically, there was an appointment in the new Iraqi government to counter militias but it did nothing. With hindsight, we should have been more hard-line with the Shi'a extremists early on as we might have been more successful in separating the insurgent from the population.⁶⁸

Lamb agreed that something had to be done about militias; "Their authority has to be challenged, but we do have to realize that the population has some confidence in terms of what they are there for."⁶⁹ As Knights and Williams, among others have highlighted, JAM provided security in those areas under its control, and rudimentary education, healthcare, and what it considered to be governance. Militias sustained a great deal of support from their own community, albeit that, as eventually became clear, this was due to intimidation and duress.⁷⁰

Here was the crux of the problem the Coalition faced. JAM provided security and services for its community, yet its existence was a grave cause of insecurity and unrest. JAM had to be confronted and neutralized while at the same time good governance and security had to be extended to JAM areas. This inevitably led to direct confrontation with the GOI and the Coalition, and there was a concern that dealing with JAM in 2007 threatened opening the civil war further, as Lamb highlighted when the civil war was at its height:

If we were to [neutralize] them or detain them, when the next VBIED goes off in Sadr City, we will be the enemy because we will have removed the militias who had protected their people up to the point we intervened. The key thing is to turn this on its head and to accept what they can do for security. This, however, has to be part of the wider plan for Iraq, and some form of guarantee is needed from the militias, such as a tribal blood oath.⁷¹

Lamb refers to the process of reconciliation, with which he was personally involved, in particular with the Sunni tribes. Much depended, therefore, on building and maintaining public confidence. As Carter notes, "the geographic scale of the area and our force ratios made things difficult. If, at the beginning, the force had been built to a

coherent plan and had been resourced accordingly, then we might have got away with it. But there was no plan, it was not resourced and the result was a sub-optimal solution.”⁷² Initially, British forces were not large enough to establish control of their area of responsibility, nor were the ISF strong enough or large enough to fill the gap between the Coalition effort and that which the political and security situation required. Military operations might have been effective in neutralizing a target or disrupting an insurgent group’s activities, but such an approach did not add up on its own to campaign progress. Rollo recognized the strength of the view made clear in *Counter Insurgency Operations* that “there is no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity”:

The prime way to drain the swamp, to pick up on Thompson’s approach, is the economy. The political process had produced elections [and a government]. The outcome might not have been a democracy, but as a process it worked. The security line by comparison had not worked: we wanted to follow the principle of minimum force but low force levels made that difficult. But if you keep people on side because life is getting better, security problems reduce. However, overemphasise the military line of operation and increase the pressure on the population and the likelihood is that violence itself will increase as more people get drawn in.

One proven way of improving the security balance was to develop the host nation’s security forces. Commanders identified the importance of SSR very early in the campaign and successive brigades saw it as their main effort. The result of their efforts was surprisingly disappointing. One senior staff officer observed “I don’t think that we remained true to our traditions. We have a fine history of raising, training and developing indigenous forces by embedding personnel into their organisations, yet we did not do this in Iraq; that in itself was a huge mistake.”⁷³ Although battlegroups were assigned to training the ISF,⁷⁴ until Operation Charge of the Knights, only the two IA battalions from 10 (IA) Division, sent to Baghdad in 2007, had British training teams embedded with them. This proved very successful and once again proved the value of embedded MiTTs. Despite this success, the approach of embedding training teams was not extended further with the IA until Operation Charge of the Knights. A senior officer summarized the problem and the solution:

We have had over two hundred years of imperial history, and we have never before trained indigenous troops without embedding training or command teams. I feel that we have failed the Iraqi Army by distancing ourselves from them and, by stepping back, we have allowed them to become weak, corrupt and undermined. When the Battalion mutinied in August, [100 members of a battalion in the 4th Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army Division, who were serving in the southern Maysan province, refused to deploy to Baghdad] I sent a Military Training Team to them to try to sort them out. This was shortly after Camp Abu Naji had been sacked, and my concern was that the Iraqi Army there would become unstitched. As always, the British Infantry soldier saved the day, and transformed that Battalion almost overnight. All [the IA] needed was leadership and command and, following a ten-day cadre in Shaiba, they were really quite competent. This is important; the Iraqi Army must be capable (and be seen to be capable) of confronting JAM. They can only achieve that by having sizeable embedded training teams who are prepared to go out on operations with them.⁷⁵

6.3.5 Neutralize the Insurgent

Counter Insurgency Operations explains that the insurgent, once isolated from support, should be neutralized physically through arrests or through strike operations to kill, capture, demoralize and deter insurgents, and psychologically through information and counter-propaganda and attempts to promote desertions. The aim, it explains, is to “defeat the insurgent on his ground using enough but no more force than is absolutely necessary.”⁷⁶ Wall identified the explicit link between this principle and that of separating the insurgent from his support “by building indigenous capacity which goes towards reinforcing legitimacy and establishing primacy.”⁷⁷

During 2007, attempts to promote desertions, as suggested in *Counter Insurgency Operations*, moved on from encouraging individuals to change side, as had been the case in Malaya and, most notably, in the Oman where former enemy fighters were formed as the *Firqat*. By the summer, a number of Sunni tribes, which had been fighting alongside AQI to attack the Coalition, had been brought into the political process through engagement and reconciliation by senior Coalition officers. Generally referred to as the ‘Sunni Awakening,’ this process dramatically reduced the number of attacks on Coalition forces, particularly in Anbar province and the ‘Sunni Triangle’, and the former Sunni insurgents turned on AQI.⁷⁸ Lamb explained the value of the engagement process:

Engagement does not necessarily produce coherent political solutions but it does keep the dialogue open between factions, it allows differences to be discussed and resolved without recourse to violence and it allows us to disseminate factual information to allay, dispel or counter other messages circulating at the time. Language is important and in engagement the key distinction is between the reconcilable and the irreconcilable; the outlawed. Somewhere you have to draw the line between the legitimate and the outlawed, taking direct action against the outlawed. This clearly identifies the threat: outlaw equals threat. When we talk about reconcilables, we are talking about those who can be reconciled to the future of Iraq, be that political, economic, security or ideology. All this is part of the normal political process, although in Iraq, it is possible to alienate one section without realising it.

This policy was not followed in MND(SE), although engagement through an intermediary with JAM’s leadership in Basrah resulted in the so-called ‘accommodation’ in September 2007. However, rather than it bringing the Shi’a militia under the aegis of the ISF and Coalition security framework, the ‘accommodation’ left JAM free to maintain control of its own area, maintain its popular support and protect its political and economic ambitions.

Although strike operations continued at an increasing rate until the ‘accommodation’ effectively removed both the British presence in Basrah and the freedom to conduct them, neutralizing the insurgent in the sense developed in doctrine was simply not possible because of limited force levels. As Everard noted, “Basra is the same size as Birmingham and yet I only had two battlegroups at best.”⁷⁹ Basrah’s population is over one million in size. The generally agreed ratio of security force levels needed to maintain effective security, where civil and civic life can continue normally, is 1:50.⁸⁰ The best force ratio Everard could provide was 1:700, or fourteen times smaller than the generally agreed optimal. This meant that the inevitably limited British presence in the

city found it was almost impossible to neutralize the insurgent either physically or psychologically. The very sophisticated strike operations which they undertook disrupted JAM leadership in particular, but not in a way that seriously challenged JAM as a military organization. This would need numbers, as Thompson had explained in *Countering Communist Insurgency*, and Operation Charge of the Knights demonstrated.

6.3.6 Long-Term Post Insurgency Planning

Pimlott and Bulloch developed the principle of long-term post-insurgency planning to highlight the importance of accounting for, and making clear the host government's intention to improve the economic and social life of its population. The announcement of such government initiatives, *Counter Insurgency Operations* makes clear, can play a key role in winning the hearts and minds of the local population during a campaign and this principle "probably holds the key to the effective application of the other five."⁸¹ The approach adopted in Iraq, first through the CPA, then through the Iraqi Interim Government, and finally the Government of Iraq, created a number of political discontinuities that British doctrine had not anticipated. Uncertainty and an unclear future compounded the structural difficulties the Iraqis and their Coalition partners faced. Crocker and Petraeus identified the GOI's institutional fragility and made it the central theme of their Joint Campaign Plan. This at least provided the planning structure by which longer-term objectives could be discussed, developed and communicated to the Iraqi population.

Counter Insurgency Operations was written on the assumption that it would be the host government, not its coalition partners, which needed to make clear its longer term intentions.⁸² From the start of the campaign, there was uncertainty about the approach the British intended to adopt in the south: whether to develop MND(SE) as a British exemplar, or to integrate the region into the overall Coalition effort. From the views of those interviewed, neither approach took primacy. On the one hand the FCO set up the Southern Iraq Steering Group, co-chaired by the Consul General and GOC MND(SE), and which "focused assets and money, [encouraged] coherence among regional players and targeted application of donor resources."⁸³ On the other, British forces used U.S. money to support civil projects and made much use of U.S. capabilities, in particular intelligence systems and aviation. All this might have been resolved if the co-ordinated government machinery had been put in place to run the British contribution in harness with the wider Coalition campaign plan and not, as has been identified, in a way that appeared to be at odds with the overall campaign.

Doctrine offers no real guidance on how planners and strategists might better reconcile the potentially conflicting priorities of individual contributing nations and the coalition as a whole. Kitson's prescient suggestions that "the various contingents [in a coalition] must have a common understanding of the problem,"⁸⁴ that aid should be co-ordinated through one representative at the highest level, and that there needed to be full co-operation between the host country and the ally to ensure the full integration of the full range of civil and military efforts, had they been reflected in doctrine, might have better served national and Iraqi interests.

6.4 Continuity

In previous campaigns the use of standing formation headquarters and residential tours of duty for battalions provided continuity in command, the approach adopted,

intelligence and situational awareness. In Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Northern Ireland, formation commanders and their staffs served for two years, giving them the time to establish not just an understanding of the situation and campaign trends, but to develop their relationships with civil servants, policemen and the other government departments involved. Brigade commanders in Northern Ireland, for example, got to know the overall situation and could set events in each battalion's area in the broader context of the brigade and theatre. As Kiszely notes, "a resident headquarters was able to exercise considerable influence and control over commanders and units coming in on 6-month tours."⁸⁵ In Iraq, British headquarters changed over every six months. Continuity was not a factor.

In Northern Ireland continuity was further improved at battalion level, by the introduction of Continuity NCOs (CONCOs) who worked in company and battalion intelligence cells to provide the background information and context which is almost impossible to pick up during pre-deployment training. They completed longer tours of duty than the battalions so that they could build up expert local knowledge, and they changed over once the new battalion was settled in. Both the mindset and the approach this instilled guarded against any idea that the campaign could be won in the space of a single tour of duty. The situation in Iraq was somewhat different:

I was astonished that, having been there for four years, we had such little understanding of the region... I found battalions arrived in Basra as though they were the first ones to be there. There was little intelligence, and absolutely no depth; we started anew each time. There was little continuity and no corporate knowledge, and the good times appeared not to have been used to gain a decent understanding of the society or, if they had, it had been lost. Memories were individual not corporate.⁸⁶

Counter Insurgency Doctrine provides clear guidance about continuity:

Insurgent commanders and their staffs usually remain in the same posts and in the same areas for considerable periods to build up a wealth of background knowledge. Even though the police provide long term continuity within the security forces the Army should aim for as much stability as possible, especially in important posts, as is consistent with career planning and the length of tours in operational theatres.⁸⁷

... Units should be kept in the same area of responsibility (AOR) for as long as possible. This ensures that they become familiar with the local inhabitants, the other security forces, such as the police, and the terrain and infrastructure. They are better able to get the measure of their opponents and they acquire the ability to develop information into intelligence. In short, they get a feel for what is normal as a background against which to observe the abnormal.⁸⁸

However, despite this generally well-understood need for continuity, the lessons of Northern Ireland were not applied in Iraq. Even as late as 2007, the lack of continuity was still an issue. No overall solution had been developed, beyond adhering to the Army's policy of a six-month deployment for brigades and their sub-ordinate units. Rollo identified three reasons why continuity had to be achieved:

First, counterinsurgency campaigns are complicated. They are very specific and we have to spend time in theatre to gain the level of situational awareness

needed to make sensible decisions. Secondly, countering insurgency is about people and building human relationships, so if the rate of *roulement* [replacing one unit with another] is too high, particularly amongst our commanders, we limit the overall effectiveness we can achieve. Third, the environment is harsh and there is a limit to what soldiers can be expected to sustain. Force generation issues limit how short tours can be and for an army like ours, with hard-wired brigades, the headquarters should change with their brigade units. Given our scale of effort, it would have been difficult to do otherwise. But a static, resident headquarters with the time to build up relationships, with good situational awareness and corporate memory has a very clear role in enduring operations.⁸⁹

Rollo raises a valid point about the wear and tear on battlegroups in Iraq, where the environment, the tempo of operations and the increasing intensity placed demands on soldiers for which it was hard to fully prepare, and from which it took time to recuperate. “However complex we make training,” Gen. Lamb noted, “it is simple compared to reality.”⁹⁰ Since the Army’s approach in Iraq was to prepare, train, deploy and fight brigades as brigades, the issue of continuity at brigade level appeared to be insurmountable if tours of duty were not to be extended, as the U.S. forces did by introducing twelve- to eighteen-month tours, or if a residential brigade or formation headquarters was not to be created into which battlegroups would deploy.

In 2007, operational tours for divisional commanders and key staff appointments for colonels and above were extended to nine months. While this improved matters within U.S. headquarters, it did not fully address the issue of maintaining situational awareness and continuity of relationships between brigade and battlegroup commanders and their Iraqi, and in some cases U.S. counterparts. Kiszely is clear that “relationships are essential,” but in 2005, the brigade commanders changed five times in MND(SE). In Kiszely’s view, “We got the balance wrong in the key appointments and we did not apply the lessons of Northern Ireland.”⁹¹ A senior commander explained what the impact was on the ground: “This is not sensible; the Arabs will ignore you if they don’t like you, because they know you will be gone soon.”⁹² A brigade commander was more explicit, highlighting the problem that the six-month tour created for continuity and approach:

The campaign is disjointed and blighted by the 6-month horizon. We got it wrong right from the start and the conditions we expected did not materialise... short-termism has complicated things. Where is the campaign plan? It changes every time a commander changes and personality is now a dynamic that affects us.⁹³

6.5 Command and Control of the Campaign

The issue of continuity is linked very closely to the issue of campaign management and command and control arrangements. One senior commander believed that “the deployed commander is given too much latitude and PJHQ does not do for incoming troops into theatre what HQNI did for Northern Ireland. The discontinuity between successive MND(SE)s was significant, and it is not the way to conduct an enduring campaign. There needs to be a stronger controlling campaign ownership.”⁹⁴ This discontinuity manifested itself in a number of ways; while there is no sense that commanders felt they were engaged in the wrong activity or for the wrong reasons, an

occasional sense of isolation appears:

Being in Iraq is like being in a darkened corridor, and if you wait for someone to turn on the light for you at the end of the corridor, you will stay uncomfortably lost. The theatre was just too dynamic for that to happen and so I took my commander's (very clear) statements of intent and got on with it. I got the impression that everyone who had been there before me had done the same thing.⁹⁵

Lamb suggested that one reason for the discontinuity in approach was a failure by those in the UK to correctly identify one point of command in Iraq and concentrate its attention on it:

Strategic architecture needed to leverage the strategic points of contact: Chief of Defence Staff's LO [liaison officer, a brigadier] in Washington DC, [Senior British Military Advisor] in CENTCOM and the SBR-I [Senior British Military Representative-Iraq]. Instead we focussed on MND(SE), forgetting that it is in reality a division within a corps, within a force, within a very large theatre of operations. In my view, we should have had PJHQ headquarters deployed forward as part of the Corps headquarters, because that is the focus of all tactical activity going on in Iraq, and MND(SE) is a tactical HQ. The breaks between the tactical, operational and strategic levels have meant that political decisions being taken in London are readjusting the mission to suit political not the strategic, operational or military imperatives [in Iraq].⁹⁶

Carter agrees suggesting that even when PJHQ was being designed in the 1990s there was a concern about its ability to run simultaneous operations, to cope with the demands of enduring campaigns and its ability to provide the necessary level of continuity. While there was logic to PJHQ owning the UK campaign plan, Carter observed,

...geography is everything and there is a great deal to be said of owning the campaign in theatre. This leads back to the role of the divisional headquarters. It has the capacity to plan the campaign and run it, to provide the continuity. We know the model works because that was the essence of what HQNI did.⁹⁷

A senior staff officer developed this concern in relation to the difference between the U.S. and UK strategic approaches from January 2007, once the Surge had been announced:

The British position meant that, as the Tactical-level command, we still had to sell UK policy to our Corps Commander. This, I suspect, made us uncomfortable subordinates to have under command at times. The solution to this dilemma should have included either some form of PJHQ Forward based in Baghdad, or an empowered SBMR-I who was not double-hatted inside the American Chain of Command. Such a solution would not only have given us top cover in theatre and enabled the GOC to concentrate instead on the tactical tasks he had, but would also have achieved a degree of continuity in theatre that had previously been lacking.⁹⁸

Again, the idea of a focal theatre headquarters is not new, and *Counter Insurgency Operations* makes reference to a Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) but in the context of a British-led campaign. While the campaign in Iraq was U.S.-led and dominated, the disaggregation of British interests between MND(SE), where the bulk of British forces

were based, and MNF-I and MNC-I, where a number of officers were embedded in key, influential staff appointments, would have benefitted, as Lamb highlights, from a central in-theatre British HQ where national concerns and requirements could have been integrated into the overall campaign effort. The Army's own view was that this resulted in,

an absence of local (UK) political direction for what, overall, the UK wished to achieve in its Provinces. There was no firm political view as to how political factions and their militias, or political affiliations among newly appointed Iraqi officials, and by extension economic development and reconstruction, should be handled.⁹⁹

At the tactical level, the Army's hierarchy of doctrine considered Theatre or Operation Instructions to be a vital supplement to doctrine, because they adapted general practice to the specific demands of the operational theatre. *ATOM* and NISOPs demonstrated the valuable role played by doctrine owned by the theatre commander, developed by the theatre headquarters in response to tactical changes, validated by it, and introduced quickly into pre-deployment training. No such theatre doctrine was produced, although classified SOPs were produced by MND(SE) for specialist capabilities, and to counter specific threats. The Land Warfare Centre produced a halfway house in the form of the *Op TELIC Aide Memoire*,¹⁰⁰ to bridge the gap between standard tactics and those in use in MND(SE) which acknowledged the inevitable lag between a change in practice and revised theory being published:

Application Through Leadership

Although doctrine and Tactics, Techniques & Procedures (TTPs) provide practical guidance on the conduct of operations, their publication alone will not sufficiently add to operational success. Unless soldiers understand doctrine, are well trained in TTPs and are sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks to the best of their ability their effectiveness on the battlefield, as individuals or as part of a team, will be limited. It is leadership which ensures that training is effective and that drills are learned and followed correctly. It is leadership which drives effective action and motivates soldiers to give their utmost to achieve the common purpose. It is leadership which turns the bald statements of fact in this publication into life saving or battle winning action. And moreover, it is strong leaders who recognise that doctrine writers do not have a monopoly on wisdom and adapt and develop this guidance to win in the Contemporary Operating Environment.¹⁰¹

Although *Counter Insurgency Operations*' attention to the practical problems of multinational operations was thin, it did, however identify the need to establish a common doctrine for the operation. NATO's doctrine and procedures were well known, well understood and were used extensively in the Balkans. Coalition operations were a different issue and the doctrine is explicit: "in the case of a coalition operation, the lack of a common doctrine will need immediate attention."¹⁰²

The U.S. struggle to come to terms with the unconventionality of counterinsurgency operations is well known and examined in Chapter 7. Mention has been made of the efforts made by the UK between 2004 and late 2006 when Petraeus published FM 3-24, to shape the U.S. approach, what Mockaitis described "ungenerous, over-simplified, and often glib comparisons between ... Vietnam and ... Malaya," and American officers

becoming “understandably resistant to what they see as ‘more British tripe.’”¹⁰³ In order to establish a common start point for tactical best practice and the development of theatre-specific TTPs, on 26 November 2005, Gen. Casey, established the COIN CFE at Taji. Its purpose was to collate and provide information on the latest enemy TTPs and how to counter them, and the latest ‘best friendly practices’ for all incoming battalion commanders, Iraqi army battalion commanders, company commanders, intelligence officers and information officers in an attempt to “level the playing field for COIN operations.”¹⁰⁴ It taught doctrine for Iraq based on an interim U.S. Army field manual, and once FM 3-24 was published, it taught that.

The COIN CFE was based on the Malayan JWS model and it was successful for five reasons. First, it was command-directed receiving first Gen. Casey’s then Gen. Petraeus’ personal involvement. It was supported directly by the chain of command, with each U.S. divisional commander presenting his concept of operations and scheme of manoeuvre to each new brigade in his division. It was authoritative, operating under CG MNF-I’s authority to examine every aspect of the campaign and visit every part of the theatre to find out what was going on, and what else needed to be done to improve education, training and understanding across the force. It was the dynamic focus for change, being the theatre authority for all doctrinal and procedural changes, and being responsible for setting the standards for all U.S. pre-deployment training. Finally, it provided continuity, maintaining situational awareness and spreading best practice among U.S. forces.¹⁰⁵

Somewhat surprisingly given the CFE’s position with the U.S. chain of command and the breadth of understanding it gained of the campaign as a whole, British engagement with it was limited. A handful of the senior officers serving in Baghdad visited in 2007 and 2008 and occasionally presented to U.S. brigade combat teams to explain operations in MND(SE), and a small group of British officers attended a course in early 2008. The absence of any meaningful presence at Taji allowed myths and uncertainties to perpetuate at brigade level and below in the U.S. forces about the British approach in the south, supported by such unchallenged views expressed in 2007 as “the British are moon-walking out of the country.”¹⁰⁶

6.6 The Ink Spot Method

Since 1949, British counterinsurgency doctrine has laid out the Ink Spot method as being the most effective concept by which governmental control could be re-established over an insurgent controlled area. Its stages of establishing a secure base area, clearing, securing and pacifying selected areas, consolidating government control and finally extending government influence to neighbouring areas were taught at the Staff College. They have been a feature of doctrine and they were used in Malaya and the Oman. The assumptions which underpin the successful application of the model are that intelligence would be needed to focus security force operations to secure a controlled area; the forces and resources would be at hand with which to establish control quickly and re-introduce good governance effectively; and there would be a transition plan to return each area to the full control of the civil administration as conditions allowed.

As such, the method adopted for Operation SINBAD in 2006 is broadly in line with the doctrinal model laid out in *Counter insurgency Operations*. Intelligence-led strike operations started a ‘pulse’ of activity to take control of a target area, after which carefully targeted civil development projects were undertaken to improve general

conditions in the target area. Thompson's approach was, however, designed to wrest control permanently from the insurgents. SINBAD's pulses could only achieve a temporary effect because of the limited British forces available, and the ISF were not capable at that point in the campaign of either taking control of an area or resisting militia intimidation. The theory and thinking behind SINBAD were sound; the problem was its effects could not be sustained.

The first stage of the 'Concept of Military Operations' in *Counter Insurgency Operations* was to secure a base area, from which to mount the operation and within which 'the government could demonstrate its ability to govern effectively.' Herein lay the first problem: the stage assumed that the host government had some control, yet Iraq did not have anything approaching an effective government until 2008, and even then the Coalition had major concerns about malign sectarian influence among GOI ministries. At the provincial level, as British commanders found repeatedly, effectiveness and engagement with the Coalition were patchy and certainly could not be assumed. The Ink Spot's second stage was to establish a firm forward operational base, 'typically in an area where government control could be re-established quickly.' The important task was to secure the population "from an insurgent offensive and serious terrorist attack."¹⁰⁷ This assumed a strong security force presence and having the non-military resources lined up to help consolidate the area promptly.

In practice, the sustained security presence envisaged in the doctrine simply could not be met with only a brigade routinely available, which, in the last two years at least, amounted to two battlegroups which could be used for security operations. Operation SINBAD was in keeping with doctrine's third stage of securing a controlled area, in which military operations would concentrate on "just one or a selected few areas in turn,"¹⁰⁸ to "seize the initiative ... by separating the insurgent from his support and then neutralizing him and his cause."¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, the doctrine correctly anticipated the response that securing an area would prompt, anticipating that insurgents would react and fight back. This is exactly what first 20 then 19 Brigade experienced as the tempo of their operations in 2006 provoked violent counteractions from JAM, and, on a larger scale, what U.S. and Iraqi forces encountered when they took control of Baghdad in summer 2007.

Separating insurgents from their support and neutralizing them proved impossible to achieve until Operation Charge of the Knights took place, and the GOI's ISF-led, Coalition-backed political, military and development actions re-gained control of Basrah from the militia. Only then could the fourth stage of consolidating controlled areas start, re-establishing civil administration, and starting the process of transition from military- to police-led operations. Up to March 2008, British force levels, and limited ISF capacity to secure and hold an area, and to withstand militia pressure, were not enough to achieve the core tasks of separating and neutralizing the insurgent. Instead, British operations were limited to strike operations against selected targets and short 'pulses' of development aid. Although this fits into the pattern of re-establishing control laid out in doctrine, the underpinning assumption necessary for its successful completion, that of providing the forces and resources necessary to secure an area, was not met.

Operation ZENITH may have been entirely in line with Gen. Casey's strategy of transition, and it may have made sense in terms of the early progress made in

MND(SE), but the logic of continuing with force reductions despite the ISF's inability to deal with JAM made no sense doctrinally or in terms of Washington's revised strategy. The last three years of the campaign in Basrah have been interpreted by some as early as 2007 as a defeat.¹¹⁰ It would be tempting, therefore, to challenge the validity of the Ink Spot concept on the evidence of the failure of British operations to counter JAM. To do so would be to ignore the British failure to meet the requirements laid out in its own doctrine, and to ignore that the Ink Spot was the very concept which Gen. Petraeus was to use first in Baghdad, and then further afield in Iraq, and Gen. Mohan and Prime Minister Maliki adopted in Operation Charge of the Knights. From Briggs and Templar in Malaya, to Maliki and Petraeus, the Ink Spot concept works when enough forces are made available to establish and maintain security, development resources are on hand to improve conditions quickly in the target area, and there is the political will to complete the task.

6.7 Education and Training: Learning and Adapting

Counter Insurgency Operations emphasized the importance of education and training for counterinsurgency, explaining that "One of the keys to mission command working in COIN lies in the selection and education of commanders and preparing troops prior to and throughout operations."¹¹¹ Chapter 3 showed how, as a subject at the Staff College, counterinsurgency was almost completely marginalized between 1997 and 2007, when somewhat belatedly some remedial action was taken to redress the balance to take account of the pressures of current operations. Riley recognized the problems inherent in balancing the theoretical with the practical, a difficulty to which Kitson also drew attention. While Riley does not discount the need to develop an understanding of a general warfighting capability, "because it has a profound influence on the way the Army is structured, manned, trained and equipped and we need to be able to get warfighting right," his comments on counterinsurgency are important:

The top end of COIN is every bit as demanding and has so much in common with warfighting. There are ways in which COIN is more demanding, namely the generation of intelligence from such a wide range of sources and in ways that go so much further than identifying platforms or units and formations, the coordination of activities that go beyond purely military tasks and the reality that the legal and media factors are so much stronger. Faced with this, there is a very strong case to prepare the man for the most dangerous and complex task he is going to face.¹¹²

A firm base of doctrinal understanding is implicit in what Riley advocates, yet that was exactly what was not provided in staff training or general professional education. Professional education in doctrine is not an indulgence; it is an essential step to establish what Everard describes as "the language of operations."¹¹³ Kirkland explains the value of doctrine in this context very clearly:

I first learnt the COIN principles in PQS2 [promotion qualifying for promotion to major and the staff college exam], and since then they have provided me with a frame of reference. When I was a student at Camberley, I remember that we spent a lot of time learning about COIN. The answers were in the doctrine so we had to read it, and to read the key texts – Thompson and Kitson – if we were to understand the subject and make progress on the course. ACSC was a wonderful opportunity to get under the skin of the subject. This is why doctrine

is so important. It is not just having the opportunity to study but having the right material – the right doctrine – from which to work.¹¹⁴

However, education is now a much more complicated issue than simply teaching soldiers counterinsurgency doctrine. Operation TELIC was run by PJHQ at Northwood, and its staff officers were drawn from the three services. For those Army ACSC and HCSC graduates in key appointments, their counterinsurgency education and training was scant. Those from the Royal Navy and the RAF received no education at all in counterinsurgency. Gen. Wall highlights the problem that having ill-prepared commanders and staff presents:

The modern era demands we prepare for the type of campaigns we face. If COIN is not covered, we are not preparing ourselves properly, particularly if we accept our own premise that insurgency takes time to fix and we face up to the fact that we are in an enduring operation. Now that ACSC does not do component [single service] education, COIN needs to be taught as a joint subject. Whilst it is undeniably a land-centric operation, the other services need to really understand it.¹¹⁵

At the tactical level, despite the intensive, theatre-focussed pre-deployment training for Iraq, doctrine was not taught *per se*. OPTAG, NITAT's successor, taught company-level TTPs, not the principles or the theory laid out in doctrine. There is ample evidence that British TTPs changed as the threat changed, particularly once insurgents resorted to evermore technically advanced IEDs, and the EFP emerged as their favoured weapon. Those TTPs which troops in MND(SE) developed remain classified to protect capabilities and tactics, but post-operational reports reflect the considerable tactical and technical effort expended in keeping up with a highly adaptive insurgent. The following report is typical:

We introduced the Threat Forum, which brought together all of those staff branches and national agencies who had a stake in the C-IED (Counter-IED) battle, in order to ensure that stovepipes were broken down, information was shared, and that sensible risk assessment could be made by the commanders on the ground, rather than being dictated by the staff branches in the headquarters. It gave them the very latest technical and intelligence information we had, so that they could make decisions... and the SO2 [responsible] would update ongoing C-IED TTPs.¹¹⁶

The insurgent reaction should also be noted: “whenever we changed our tactics, the enemy changed theirs. After a couple of weeks of our successes, in [neutralizing IEDs] and capturing equipment, they wised up; they became pretty savvy quickly.”¹¹⁷ Everard recalls that,

On average, it took between 26 and 47 minutes for [the insurgents] to launch an attack on our cordon. The old Northern Ireland patrol rule was different routes out and back. In Basra, we picketed the route with [Challenger Main Battle Tanks] in order to meet the threat, so we went out and back on the same route.¹¹⁸

The insurgent was not just agile, he was responsive. As a commanding officer considered,

We were in a constant cycle of change with the enemy. We would produce a Countermeasure for every measure the enemy took and, when we did, he would

change again. I spent a lot of my time with my Command Group trying to think about what the enemy would do in response to our actions, what his tactics were, how he would use the ground and what was the most dangerous threat we faced. The balance of these factors changed regularly and we had to adjust our tactics accordingly. That smart-thinking enemy is not one that appears on our training exercises, and we do not learn to read the battle properly as a result.¹¹⁹

Riley noted that TTPs were adapted to meet changing circumstances but he also noted that “insurgents have adapted in a similar way to Northern Ireland. All have tried to find our weaknesses. We have had to relearn a great deal from what we did in Northern Ireland.”¹²⁰ Riley linked this point to the role of the Scientific Advisor (SCIAD), a post established in Northern Ireland in 1969 to provide operational analysis and technical support in the design of technical measures and countermeasures. By the end of the operation “SCIAD had evolved a broad-based scientific and analytic capability. It is highly significant that SCIAD worked in HQ Northern Ireland and reported directly to the GOC,”¹²¹ who owned his own budget and could commission directly the equipment needed to fight the campaign. It took several years for the SCIAD post to be fully established in MND(SE).

It is evident that staff training and education did not place enough emphasis on counterinsurgency to provide officers with the necessary knowledge of the doctrine and with understanding necessary to deal with the complexity of the insurgency problem. Riley notes the “similarities between Baghdad and Basra and Belfast in the 1970s: ethnic tensions, underinvestment, minority groups, corrupt police, military force imposed from outside with low levels of consent.”¹²² While this was true, Everard was concerned that Iraq was much more complex than anything the Army had confronted in the previous twenty years: “The level of violence, the social dynamics, the expectations of the people and their tolerance levels are new. It is Krulak’s 3 Block War¹²³ plus in both time and space.” He was also concerned about the Army’s intellectual preparation:

Even the briefest study shows that Iraqi society is inherently complex and historically dysfunctional. It also shows that Iraqis have consistently failed to fuse sectarian groups into a single identity. We understood all this, yet were still surprised by the need to change the way we thought. Western logic and western rules of rational behaviour do not apply in Iraq. This is an area worthy of further pre-deployment study.¹²⁴

Riley agreed. He identified language training as an important enabler, and criticised the poor level of language skill British forces accepted:

Language training, a key factor in intelligence gathering as in SSR, is likewise inadequate. Not nearly enough officers and NCOs are being afforded language training. During the Cold War, officers were given the opportunity to learn German instead of doing Division III [of the ACSC] at Shrivenham. This was abandoned in favour of over-training everyone on technological matters, which most students never used. We are now far more expeditionary, with a greater requirement for linguistic skills, and yet we offer fewer opportunities than we did 20 years ago. This is not right and it needs to be addressed.¹²⁵

6.8 Revising Counterinsurgency Doctrine

It would be wrong to assume that in the six years that British forces were in Iraq, no

attempt was made to update counterinsurgency doctrine. As early as May 2005, writers at DGD&D, working on ADP *Land Operations*, were aware that operations in Iraq should prompt a review of *Counter Insurgency Doctrine*. Maj. Gen. Kirkland took special care over the short counterinsurgency section it contained, redrafting some of the principles [*Ensure* political primacy and political aim; *Build* coordinated government machinery; *Develop* intelligence and information; Separate the insurgent from his support; Neutralize the insurgent; *Plan* for the long term].¹²⁶ He went back over Gavin Bulloch's work, and polished up some of the main ideas:

This was because I had recognized that any update of our COIN doctrine should properly stem from the brief synopsis of recent experience and revised thinking that ADP *Land Operations* represented. We were, after all, 18 months into our campaign in Iraq.¹²⁷

He noted that the doctrine published in July 2001 was built on the presumption that there was one sole power in charge. It offered no detailed guidance on coalition operations, or any inference that the indigenous government might be ceded powers as the campaign progressed, sometimes more rapidly than the systematic military mind might feel possible. Kirkland raised the same criticism of *Counter Insurgency Operations* that Bulloch had of *Counter-Revolutionary Operations* in the mid-1990s, observing that,

the old doctrine still had the whiff of empire about it, where the intervening power held all the cards, and it dictated how power would be handed back. The reality now is, of course, very different, and transition of authority on a gradual, [incremental] basis is now a key part of contemporary campaigns and one of the biggest challenges.¹²⁸

Kirkland, like those practitioners who had struggled in Iraq without SSR doctrine, and those like Riley who had been forced to develop doctrine for transition while embroiled in operations, identified an area where the intention – to build up the host nation's security forces and handover responsibility to them on a gradual basis as conditions allowed – was implicit rather than explicit. Of course there was little recent operational experience to shape thinking at DGD&D but, like the failure to develop areas concerning multi-nationality, the requirement for SSR, transition and multi-nationality, with hindsight, should not have been avoided.

The issue of judging when doctrine is no longer fit for purpose is crucial to address and potentially difficult. Doctrine writers have to remain very critical of their work and to watch for the circumstances where the doctrine no longer fits. For *Counter Insurgency Operations*, the changes that started to challenge its validity were gradual. During 2005 and 2006, the Army held the view that there was no evidence counterinsurgency doctrine had failed. Lamb, for example, argued this point forcefully at ADC throughout 2006. Kirkland considers that “this may have had something to do with Northern Ireland where the key tenets of COIN were so familiar to us, and where we had been applying them for many years, and where there was nothing new about General Smith's ‘War among the People.’”¹²⁹

Lamb, however, judged the doctrine against his experience in Iraq and concluded that there was no evidence from British operations that it needed wholesale change. Just as important was the U.S. dimension which Lamb introduced into the debate, because since October 2005, a small group of British officers had been working with their U.S.

Army counterparts at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, who had started to develop what would eventually become the U.S. Army's FM 3-24:

Whilst we should do everything possible to develop our doctrine, [his] feeling is that we should exercise caution, particularly in following too closely US Army and USMC changes. They, after all, are trying to close the gap with us by incorporating our approach to COIN into their doctrine. We can do a lot of work collaboratively with our US counterparts but it seems counterproductive at this point to change the essence of the very thing they want to capture.¹³⁰

Kirkland's observations on context are, however, important and he believed that the strategic context in which counterinsurgency doctrine was applied had changed. He identified that the emphasis of contemporary operations was now firmly on multi-nationality, sovereignty and building legitimacy; "the trouble is that unless doctrine reflects these changes in context, it will feel wrong to the reader, he will be put off and quickly lose confidence in what it says, even though there may be nothing wrong with the doctrine *per se*."¹³¹ *Stability Operations in Iraq* identified some of the contextual changes which had taken place and suggested areas for revision.¹³² These are listed in Table 5 below along with, where relevant, the associated principle from *Counter Insurgency Operations*.

Revision Identified	Associated Principle
The obligations of an Occupying Power in the 21st Century	Political primacy and political aim
The legal aspects of military action in the major combat and post-combat operations phases	Political primacy and political aim
Co-ordination of 'Comprehensive Approach' campaign planning and concurrent operations with OGD, and external agencies, including the UN, OSCE and NGOs	Coordinated government machinery
The use of a range of 'soft' and 'hard power' or 'kinetic' approaches in varying circumstances	Separating the insurgent from his support Neutralising the insurgent
Peace enforcement operations in large urban areas e.g. of the size of Fallujah	Separating the insurgent from his support Neutralising the insurgent
Contending with an 'extra-state' terrorist influence e.g. of the Al Qa'ida type	Separating the insurgent from his support Neutralising the insurgent
Information Operations, both offensive and defensive	Separating the insurgent from his support Neutralising the insurgent
Occupation, transition and nation-building activities	Separating the insurgent from his support Neutralising the insurgent
Network Enabled Capability: its strengths and limitations in counter insurgency	
Force protection, in its widest sense, and the use of armoured vehicles in counter insurgency; suicide bomb threats significantly affect tactical decision making.	Neutralising the insurgent
The use of novel weapons and equipment systems, including ISTAR developments	Neutralising the insurgent
Coalition counter insurgency ideas and differences in approach, including legal viewpoints	

Table 5 - Changes to Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Source: *Stability Operations in Iraq (Op TELIC 2-5)*, July 2006, p. 13.

It is interesting to note that the amendments suggested in *Stability Operations in Iraq* reflect the changing operational environment and do not, in themselves, challenge or invalidate the existing principles or the Ink Spot approach. Instead they indicate how the British approach might have to adapt to circumstances.

Kirkland makes the link between doctrine being set in the right context and the experience of the reader. If the reader is experienced, he suggests, to some extent the issue of outdated context can be overcome: the senior officer should be able to identify anachronisms, make an allowance for them and use what is left which is still valid. This judgement is harder to make for the perhaps less experienced younger officer where professional education may not yet be complete. Once again, this is where doctrine and education are so closely linked. On the one hand, high educational standards demand up-to-date, valid doctrine on which courses can be designed. On the other, however complete and up-to-date the doctrine is, to be effective it must be taught and assimilated. *Counter Insurgency Operations* may have had overtones of the past, just like all its recent predecessors, but commanders and staff officers who fought the campaign in Iraq concluded that its principles and its approach were valid. The problem was that nowhere was it taught.

6.9 Conclusions

Iraq posed a number of unique challenges to the Coalition forces which had to accept responsibility for running the country in the period after the collapse of the Saddam regime and the installation of the Transitional Iraqi Authority in 2005. It would be reasonable to suppose that, absent of an effective Iraqi political system and in the face of increasingly violent and capable insurgencies, British doctrine, which could be traced back one hundred years and was rooted in post-colonial campaigns, would be no longer relevant. Yet, despite the complicated Iraqi situation – political, security, diplomatic and economic – and despite initial confusion over the character of the campaign, practitioners found by hard fought experience, rather than education, that British doctrine was both relevant and applicable. The problem was that it was not followed. This can be attributed to three principal factors.

First, there was confusion over what sort of campaign it was. In the very early stages of the campaign, once major combat operations were concluded, there was a short period when the theme was nation-building; the operation was one of peace support operations. That was a short period, a matter of months, and soon clear signs of a more deep-rooted political problem were evident as factions and parties competed for power or to protect their interests. It was from this political struggle that Iraqi insurgent groups emerged, some supported by AQI, to challenge the nascent GOI and the Coalition presence. British doctrine recognized that this period of transition, when insurgents resort to the use of force in pursuit of their objectives, is difficult to identify. In Iraq's case, it was all the more difficult since its government ministries were not fully functioning and in some cases were under the control of the militias causing the instability. It was at that point, in mid-2004 when the Sadr uprising was brought under control, that the reality of the campaign switched from peace support to counterinsurgency. That it did not as a matter of policy, is the second factor.

The UK was given responsibility for Basrah and the four southern provinces at the last minute, after Turkey denied the Coalition a northern option into Iraq. Fortuitously, the largely Shi'a population received the British presence well and, unlike the Sunni areas

of Iraq, where the Americans faced a bitter and violent backlash from insurgents, political and economic progress was possible. The Coalition policy of transition and withdrawal initially made sense in UK terms given the ease with which the campaign in the south made progress. Despite the promising start, clear indicators emerged of underlying tensions. The first was the Sadr uprising in 2004 which, although stamped out by the U.S. in Najaf and around Baghdad, was never fully brought under control across the south. The second was the increase in violence against Coalition forces in the aftermath of the 2005 elections, which clarified the new political order and removed any remaining requirement for the parties in Basrah in particular to co-operate with the British presence.

The British policy of transition and withdrawal was at odds with the increasingly aggressive insurgency fought by JAM to establish control over Basrah and the south. The British military presence was not strong enough and the ISF were not capable enough to contain the situation. British doctrine is clear that security requires force levels which can if necessary 'pacify' an area. British policy followed an exact reversal of the Ink Spot; rather than expanding its area of influence to re-establish government control, it withdrew its forces against conditions determined in Whitehall rather than conditions in the south. By 2006, when successive GOCs followed a more discernable counterinsurgency approach, the best that they could achieve was to carry out temporary security and development surges into carefully targeted areas of Basrah. The method they followed had echoes of the Ink Spot and Thompson's tactical method of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won but only in the logic which combined security operations and economic development, not in the scale of the operation that was conducted. The validity of planning, resourcing and sustaining the Ink Spot method was demonstrated in the south in March 2008 with Operation Charge of the Knights. Although it got off to a bad start, once it was supported by Coalition forces, the methodical clearance operation wrested control of Basrah from the militia and established GOI control of the city.

The third factor was that doctrine did not provide the baseline of common understanding which its author always intended and assumed that it should. Its principles and method, generally agreed by those who took part to be still valid, were not applied. By comparison, the invasion of Iraq was conducted exactly as warfighting doctrine described and in which the Army had been educated and trained. The failure to apply counterinsurgency doctrine may be due in part to the mischaracterization of the campaign, and the failure to adjust the approach as the insurgency intensified. However, it is much more to do with the failure to teach doctrine effectively to staff officers and commanders, as evidenced by the need to run remedial education packages in Iraq, in the middle of the operation, from 2006.

Doctrine is what is taught, yet since 1997 counterinsurgency doctrine simply was not taught at JSCSC, in a way which would instil even a basic understanding to soldiers, and not at all to the other two services. Tactics may have been amended as the campaign progressed and very sophisticated tactics developed, for example those for strike operations which were more closely related to Special Forces' tactics than generally associated with the Field Army. They were not, however, underpinned by doctrine and they introduced a new, informal lexicon of terms, many of which existed only for the length of the particular TELIC in which they were coined. It was left to senior commanders to inculcate the British doctrinal approach to counterinsurgency,

although, as this chapter has established, this was very much dependent on individual interpretation.

This chapter set out to examine the validity of *Counter Insurgency Operations*' central themes against practices adopted in Operation TELIC. It did so by looking at the general approach, the principles and the Ink Spot. The general approach was shown to be valid, the principles still applicable and the Ink Spot an effective method when followed. These are not conclusions which might have been predicted given the criticisms from predominantly U.S. commentators of the British approach in MND(SE) and their conclusions that the British were defeated in Basrah. The issue, as Gen. Lamb identified, was that "we don't find them applied in Iraq."¹³³ He was referring to the British campaign in the south. Where they were applied, the outcome was very different, and Operation SINBAD gave a brief glimpse of what was possible. The U.S. 'Surge' and the Baghdad Security Plan were not only based on doctrine which had been strongly influenced by the British approach, but they put it into practice and tested it against unprecedented levels of civil violence, and against multiple insurgencies, not just one which doctrine envisaged.

¹ Inge, "The roles and challenges of the British armed forces", p. 3.

² Carter, interview.

³ *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 4 July 2007.

⁴ Everard, interview.

⁵ Carter, interview.

⁶ Lamb, interview, Bagdad 2007.

⁷ Iron, interview, Oxford 2008.

⁸ Daniel Marston, *The British Campaign in MND (SE): Defeat into Victory?* Presentation, Bulford, 25 November 2008.

⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰ Two Iraqi battalions from 10 Division in Basrah were sent to Baghdad to take part in the Baghdad Security Plan and a small British team went with them and took a full part in all operations.

¹¹ Daniel Marston, note to author, 17 March 2007.

¹² Irwin, interview.

¹³ Carter, interview.

¹⁴ Riley, interview.

¹⁵ Cited in John Kiszely, "The British Army and Approaches to Warfare since 1945", in Brian Holden Reid, (ed.), *Military Power: Land Warfare in Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge, May 1997, p. 202.

¹⁶ Wall, interview.

¹⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁸ Wall, interview. Kiszely develops this argument further in "Learning About Counterinsurgency", p. 18. See also Thornton, "Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Months of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland - August 1969 to March 1972".

¹⁹ Kiszely, interview.

²⁰ Lt. Gen. Bill Rollo, interview with author, Pewsey, 3 March 2007.

²¹ *Stability Operations in Iraq*, p. 14.

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- ²² ADP *Land Operations*, p. 184.
- ²³ Riley, interview. Emphasis added.
- ²⁴ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-2.
- ²⁵ Kiszely, interview.
- ²⁶ (Senior officer, interview with author, May 2007).
- ²⁷ Lamb, interviews with author, Warminster, February 2006, and Baghdad, June 2007.
- ²⁸ Everard, interview.
- ²⁹ Riley, interview.
- ³⁰ Maj. Gen. Gerry Berragan, interview with author, Baghdad, 15 June 2007.
- ³¹ Wall, interview.
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- ³³ 071101-GOC MND(SE).
- ³⁴ Holden Reid, *The Occasional*, No. 33, p. 27.
- ³⁵ Maj. Gen. Lamont Kirkland, interview with author, Upavon, 29 October 2008.
- ³⁶ ADCC/2/304 Army Doctrine and Concepts Committee, Minutes of the 57th Meeting, 26 June 2006.
- ³⁷ Riley, interview.
- ³⁸ Rollo, interview.
- ³⁹ Lamb, interview, Baghdad 2007.
- ⁴⁰ *Idem*.
- ⁴¹ *Idem*.
- ⁴² 040517- COS 3 DIV.
- ⁴³ Lt. Gen. Jonathon Riley, correspondence with author, *Commanding General's Directive to Multi-National Division (South-East)*.
- ⁴⁴ 040517- COS 3 DIV.
- ⁴⁵ (Senior officer, interview with author, May 2007).
- ⁴⁶ Tim Shipman, "British Forces Useless In Basra, Say Officials", *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 August 2007.
- ⁴⁷ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-5.
- ⁴⁸ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 58.
- ⁴⁹ 061107-CO 4 SCOTS.
- ⁵⁰ 070309-COS MND(SE).
- ⁵¹ (Senior officer, interview with author, May 2007).
- ⁵² Joint Discussion Note 4/05, *The Comprehensive Approach*, promulgated as directed by the Chiefs of Staff, January 2006.
- ⁵³ Rollo, interview.
- ⁵⁴ 0602150-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁵⁵ 060714- COMD 7 ARMD BDE.
- ⁵⁶ (Senior officer, interview with author, March 2007).
- ⁵⁷ Rollo, interview.
- ⁵⁸ *Stability Operations in Iraq*, p. 6.
- ⁵⁹ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-7.

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- ⁶⁰ For example see Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: SAS and the Secret Struggle Against the IRA*, Faber and Faber, New Edition, 2001.
- ⁶¹ Everard, interview.
- ⁶² Riley, interview.
- ⁶³ Rollo, interview.
- ⁶⁴ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-8.
- ⁶⁵ Everard, interview.
- ⁶⁶ *Idem*. Emphasis added.
- ⁶⁷ Lamb, interview, Baghdad 2007.
- ⁶⁸ Kiszely, interview.
- ⁶⁹ Lamb, interview, Baghdad 2007.
- ⁷⁰ See Knights and Williams, *The Calm before the Storm*.
- ⁷¹ Lamb, interview, Baghdad 2007.
- ⁷² Carter, interview.
- ⁷³ 070309-COS MND(SE).
- ⁷⁴ See "Security Sector Reform - What Does it Mean for the Infantryman in Basra?", *The Infantryman*, 2005, pp. 93-97, and "Building Capacity in the Iraqi Security Forces is Essential to Develop Lasting Security and an Exit from Iraq", *The Infantryman*, 2006, pp. 83-86.
- ⁷⁵ 070101-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁷⁶ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-10
- ⁷⁷ Wall, interview.
- ⁷⁸ Frederick W. Kagan, "Sunni Skies Ahead? Iraq's Sunni Arab insurgents are turning against al Qaeda, and that's not a bad thing", *The Weekly Standard*, 12 June 2007; Dave Kilcullen, "Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt", *Small Wars Journal*, posted on 29 August 2007 accessed at smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/08/print/anatomy-of-a-tribal-revolt; David J. Kilcullen, *Expanded Field Note on Iraqi tribal rebellion against al Qaeda, and tribal reconciliation processes*, made available to the author by Dr. Kilcullen.
- ⁷⁹ Everard, interview.
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- ⁸³ House of Commons Defence Committee, *UK Operations in Iraq*, Thirteenth Report of Session 2005–06, Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence, London: The Stationery Office, 19 July 2006, p. 12.
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- ⁸⁵ Kiszely, interview.
- ⁸⁶ 071101-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁸⁷ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, pp. B-5-4 – 5.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. B-6-8.
- ⁸⁹ Rollo, interview.
- ⁹⁰ Lamb, interview.
- ⁹¹ Kiszely, interview.

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- ⁹³ (Brigade commander, interview with author, summer 2007).
- ⁹⁴ 071101-GOC MND(SE).
- ⁹⁵ 050210-COMD 1 MECH BDE.
- ⁹⁶ Lamb, interview.
- ⁹⁷ Carter, interview.
- ⁹⁸ 080128-COS MND(SE)
- ⁹⁹ *Stability Operations in Iraq*, p. 36.
- ¹⁰⁰ Army Code No 71854, *Op TELIC Aide Memoire*, Prepared under the direction of Colonel Mission Support Group, 2005, Edition 6, 2007.
- ¹⁰¹ *Op TELIC Aide Memoire*, Edition 6, November 2007, p. viii.
- ¹⁰² *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-8-2.
- ¹⁰³ Mockaitis, *The Iraq War*, p. 11.
- ¹⁰⁴ MNF-I FRAGO 05-324, Establishment of the Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence (COIN CFE) In Iraq, effective 26 November 2005; see also Eric Schmitt, "U.S. To Intensify Its Training In Iraq To Battle Insurgents", *New York Times*, 2 November 2005.
- ¹⁰⁵ Lt. Col. Jan Horvath, interview with author, Taji, 12 June 2007.
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- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. B-8-3.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. B-8-1.
- ¹¹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The British Defeat in the South and the Uncertain Bush 'Strategy' in Iraq: 'Oil Spots', 'Ink Blots', 'White Space', or Pointlessness?* Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 21 February 2007; Tim Shipman, "British Forces Useless in Basra, Say Officials", *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 August 2007; "Beating the Retreat", *The Economist*, 19 December 2007; Warren Chin, "Why did it All Go Wrong: Reassessing British Counterinsurgency in Iraq", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2008, pp. 119-135.
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- ¹¹⁵ Wall, interview.
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- ¹¹⁷ 070709-COS 19 BDE.
- ¹¹⁸ Everard, interview.
- ¹¹⁹ 070801-CO 2 LANCS.
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- ¹²¹ *Operation Banner*, p. 7-4.
- ¹²² Riley, interview.
- ¹²³ Gen. Krulak coined the phrase 3-Block War, to describe a situation in which armed forces were "confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of three adjacent city blocks." See Gen. Charles C. Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War", *Marines Magazine*, January 1999, p. 32.

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¹²⁵ Riley, interview.

¹²⁶ ADP *Land Operations*, pp. 18-19.

¹²⁷ Kirkland, interview.

¹²⁸ *Idem.*

¹²⁹ *Idem.*

¹³⁰ Lamb, correspondence with DGD&D dated 1 February 2006.

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¹³² *Stability Operations in Iraq*, p. 13.

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7 The U.S. Army in Iraq: Theory and Practice

The U.S. Army is a doctrine-based army.¹ As John Nagl observes, it is “enormously important to the United States Army. Doctrine codifies both how the institution thinks about its role in the world and how it accomplishes that role on the battlefield.”² Doctrine underpins how the U.S. Army should be organized, what missions it should train to accomplish, how it should accomplish those missions, and what equipment it needs. Its significance is formally reflected in the U.S. Army’s policy statements, warranting an annex, for example, in its annual Modernization Plan:

Doctrine touches all aspects of the Army and ... embodies fundamental principles by which military forces or elements guide their actions in support of national objectives... Army operations are based on doctrine and training standards. Doctrine forms the basis for training. Together, doctrine and training are key aspects of readiness. Doctrine facilitates communication among Soldiers – no matter where they serve – and contributes to a shared professional culture that serves as a baseline.³

Given its institutional importance, the issue this raises is straightforward: if doctrine is the foundation on which the U.S. Army is designed, equipped, trained and acts, what happens when its doctrine is considered to be out of date and irrelevant, or when it is not well understood or, worse, when there is a ‘doctrinal gap’ between institutional understanding and the demands of the operation in which armed forces are engaged? These were problems which the U.S. Army faced in Iraq and for which, certainly until late 2006, no institutional response seemed relevant or likely to succeed. For an organisation built on doctrine, the implications of such problems are potentially calamitous. In the light of what Gen. Petraeus achieved in Iraq in 2007 and 2008, it is directly relevant to a study of British counterinsurgency to examine how the U.S. Army responded to the challenges it faced in Iraq and in Washington and to identify the lessons.

Considerable criticism has been published concerning the paucity of U.S. post-conflict planning following its invasion of Iraq in 2003. Just as much debate focuses on the unsuitability or not of U.S. forces for counterinsurgency operations, as Gray, Aylwin-Foster, and Record, among others, highlight.⁴ That criticism was not confined to the political and academic groups in the United States. The argument about whether military planning took enough account of the potential for politically motivated armed opposition has some relevance for this analysis. However, the more important issue for this thesis is that, almost irrespective of how well developed or not the post-conflict plan was, the U.S. military found it very difficult to bring stability to Iraq as quickly as the Iraqi people expected. Furthermore, since counterinsurgency was not part of the mainstream military discussion, the U.S. Army found it difficult to determine a coherent approach it could apply effectively. It lacked a well-understood and institutionally accepted approach to such problems, and without a generally acknowledged doctrine for what developed into counterinsurgency, this constrained what could be achieved. Doctrine and strategy are not synonymous, although the absence of the former and confusion over the latter undoubtedly complicated the U.S. campaign in Iraq and the

policy of Transition – standing down as the Iraqis stood up – took it to the point of defeat. John Nagl notes that in Iraq,

Many early *ad hoc* approaches to counterinsurgency failed to protect the population from insurgent attacks and alienated the people through the excessive use of force... It was not until 2007 that the Army finally adopted a unified approach that effectively secured the population and coopted reconcilable insurgent fighters in Iraq.⁵

A state of denial existed in the two years or so after the invasion of Iraq, when the conflict was seen as anything but an insurgency. In 2004 Gen. John Abizaid, the new commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), concluded that the United States was facing “a classical guerrilla type campaign... It’s low intensity conflict in our doctrinal terms,” he said, “but it’s war, however you describe it.”⁶ Under the heading *Denial as a Method of Counter-Insurgency Warfare*, Anthony Cordesman makes the point in his exhaustive analysis of the insurgency in Iraq that,

US policymakers and many in the US military initially lived in a state of near-denial about the rise of terrorism and insurgency. The US assumed for much of the first year after the fall of Saddam Hussein that it was dealing with a limited number of insurgents that Coalition forces would defeat well before the election. It did not see the threat level that would emerge if it did not provide jobs or pensions for Iraqi career officers, or co-opt them into the nation building effort.⁷

The heart of the problem was, as Bruce Hoffman observes, “the failure to detect early on the signs of incipient insurgency, combined with initially hesitant and uncoordinated responses in terms of meshing political as well as military approaches.”⁸ This, Hoffman notes, gave the insurgents “time to entrench themselves in the civilian population and solidify their efforts” while the security forces groped and stumbled about. By the time the authorities realized the seriousness of the emergent situation, it was already too late.

Yet despite this, by mid-2006 the U.S. Army had started to find a way out of what was seen by many as an intractable problem. Stephen Biddle observes that in 2006, “Iraq was the single most controversial subject in the U.S. The view was that the war was hopelessly lost, and that U.S. forces simply had to pull out.”⁹ A crucial component in changing this hopeless position proved to be doctrine. In December 2006, the U.S. Army published Field Manual 3-24 - *Counterinsurgency*.¹⁰ It proved to be a crucial point in the U.S. campaign and important in the overall development of counterinsurgency doctrine. After three years in Iraq the U.S. Army at last had an authoritative, relevant counterinsurgency doctrine against which it could develop its thinking, planning and the conduct of counterinsurgency operations. FM 3-24 started to close an institutional gap in understanding evident since the invasion of Iraq and which could be traced back to the end of the Vietnam War.¹¹ The first paragraph of FM 3-24’s foreword acknowledged the difficulties created by the absence of an appropriate doctrine:

This manual is designed to fill a doctrinal gap. It has been 20 years since the Army published a field manual devoted exclusively to counterinsurgency operations. For the Marine Corps it has been 25 years. With our Soldiers and Marines fighting insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is essential that we give them a manual that provides principles and guidance for counterinsurgency

operations.¹²

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency doctrine, its development in the light of experience in Iraq, and the way in which the U.S. Army then applied its doctrine in Iraq. It provides the comparator against which the British Army's doctrinal approach to counterinsurgency and its application in Iraq can be judged. The subject will be examined in four sections. Section I examines the role of doctrine and importance in the U.S. Army, the general effect of the Vietnam War on the U.S. Army as an organization and on its consideration of counterinsurgency, the impact of operations in El Salvador on the development of doctrine, and the development of counterinsurgency doctrine before the invasion of Iraq. The underlying question to be addressed is the extent to which the U.S. Army was institutionally attuned to counterinsurgency. Section II focuses on FM 3-24 in response to Iraq, the manual's doctrinal origins, and way it was developed. It provides a textual and thematic analysis, examines the concept of Clear-Hold-Build and the imperative of Learning and Adapting. Section III examines the application of FM 3-24 in Iraq. Against the backdrop of a brief analysis of the campaign as a whole, the section analyzes the detailed application of classical counterinsurgency theory. The final section provides a critical analysis of FM 3-24 against the criteria for effective doctrine established in Chapter 2. The Chapter draws on interviews conducted in Iraq and the U.S. with those at the heart of the counterinsurgency doctrine review, and with those who put it into practice in Iraq. Account has also been taken of opinion and editorials published in the American media, whose principal defence correspondents are kept well-informed by the Department of Defense and senior officers.

7.1 Section I – The Role of Doctrine in the U.S. Army

7.1.1 The Reaction to Vietnam and Its Effect on Doctrine

The emphasis the U.S. Army places on doctrine stems directly from the reforms which followed the Vietnam War. Even before the general U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam had started in the early 1970s, the U.S. Army's Chief of Staff, Gen. Creighton Abrams, instigated a process of wholesale reorganisation to deal with "serious problems of manpower, morale, strategy and leadership"¹³ exacerbated, if not created by the war. Part of the response was to move to a smaller, professional, all-volunteer army. Another was to shift the American strategic focus from guerrilla warfare in South East Asia to deal with the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact on NATO's Central Front in Europe. While American attention was focussed on Vietnam, the Warsaw Pact had modernised its forces and was now numerically stronger.¹⁴ Analysis of the 1973 Middle East war showed the areas where the U.S. Army had to address in its doctrine and tactics. The doctrine which followed provided the unifying concept during the process of change.¹⁵

Given doctrine's institutional importance, the issue is simple: if doctrine is the foundation on which the U.S. Army is designed, equipped, trained and acts, what happens when doctrine is believed to be irrelevant, or is not well understood or, worse, when there is a 'doctrinal gap' between what is required of an organization and the responses it can make? For an organisation built on doctrine, the implications are potentially serious, and it is relevant, therefore, to examine how the U.S. Army responded to the clear gap which appeared following the invasion of Iraq.

7.1.2 Training and Doctrine Command

On 1 July 1973, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) was created as part of the major post-Vietnam reforms, under the direction of Gen. William E. Depuy.

TRADOC's prime responsibility was, and still is, to develop and promulgate tactical doctrine, and to teach the U.S. Army how to fight using that doctrine.¹⁶ Its mission has not changed: it "recruits, trains and educates the Army's Soldiers; develops leaders; supports training in units; develops doctrine; establishes standards; and builds the future Army."¹⁷ The resources allocated to it for developing and maintaining the link between tactics, weapons, equipment and organizations reflects the importance the U.S. Army places in TRADOC. Its strength is about one third that of the British Army, with over 30,000 military and 15,000 civilian staff. Despite TRADOC's size, the U.S. General Accountability Office (the National Auditing Office's equivalent) investigated to see if it was sufficiently resourced to meet its wide range of responsibilities.¹⁸ The GAO's concern was how TRADOC would prioritize its work if its resources were limited. It concluded that TRADOC had concentrated on the most dangerous form of conflict, namely major combat operations conducted in an interventionist setting against a near-peer opponent. The most likely – operations short of war against an asymmetric or insurgent opponent – was not considered. This mirrored the approach taken by DGD&D.

The U.S. Army's doctrine is developed, written and published by the Combined Arms Centre (CAC), commanded by a Lieutenant General, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. CAC provides

leadership and supervision for leader development and professional military and civilian education; institutional and collective training; functional training; training support; battle command; doctrine; lessons learned and specified areas the Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command designates in order *to serve as a catalyst for change* and to support developing relevant and ready expeditionary land formations with campaign qualities in support of the joint force commander.¹⁹

Within the CAC, its Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD) develops, writes, and updates Army doctrine at the corps and division level. CADD also provides doctrine experts for the Combat Training Centers, the Battle Command Training Programme, and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). It produces field manuals that cover operations, command and control and tactics. Its doctrine is developed in the joint and multinational contexts to ensure consistency throughout the Army and with joint and multinational forces.

TRADOC was "born of frustration with the service's response to war in Southeast Asia."²⁰ The lessons from Vietnam were not to be forgotten and TRADOC was the means by which focus and expertise were to be maintained. The principal lesson the U.S. Army drew was that Vietnam was a strategic mistake which the U.S. Army should not repeat. As James Corum notes, it was "adamant that there should be no more Vietnams. This translated into the concept, 'no more insurgencies.'"²¹ To meet the threat posed by the Soviet Bloc, the U.S. Army needed to revise its outdated warfighting doctrine and it had to do so quickly.²² Between 1974 and 1976 TRADOC reformulated doctrine for winning the land battle by better using the weapons it had, and by building an army designed to "*win the first battle of the next war.*"²³ The U.S. Army achieved

that when it won the Battle of Baghdad in April 2003; its problem was it did not know what to do next.

7.1.3 The Rise to Dominance of FM 100-5 *Operations* and AirLand Battle

FM 100-5 *Operations*, published in 1976, was, as Richard Lock-Pullan notes, “the army’s first post-Vietnam War doctrine manual.”²⁴ It became the central doctrine for operations and the conceptual catalyst by which the U.S. Army re-established its warfighting capability. It provided the intellectual underpinning on which the U.S. Army designed, developed and ultimately perfected its approach to defeating the Warsaw Pact, using doctrine to argue for new equipment and weapons such as the M1 Abrams tank, the M2/3 Bradley, the AH-64 Apache, the UH-60 Blackhawk, and the Patriot.²⁵

In 1977, Gen. Donn Starry took over from Depuy and under Starry’s direction FM 100-5 was twice revised in 1982 and 1986. James Stensvaag notes that Starry “brought with him to TRADOC the idea of an integrated and extended battlefield – the ‘central battle’ – to engage the enemy not only at the point of attack but also in depth.”²⁶ Starry had been involved with the development of the 1976 ‘Active Defense’ version of FM 100-5 before commanding V Corps in the Fulda Gap in Germany, at the heart of the NATO main defensive position. There, Starry had seen the drawbacks of Active Defense’s tactics which placed too much emphasis on positional defence rather than gaining the initiative; it took away the traditional reserve; and it emphasized the forward placement of forces rather than the conventional approach using the depth of a defensive position to absorb the enemy’s advance.²⁷

Starry wanted a new doctrine which returned to historical principles and which “should educate Army officers in how to apply them.”²⁸ He selected Lt. Col, later Brig. Gen., Wass de Czege to be the principal writer, supported by Lt. Col., later Lt. Gen., Don Holder. They read into the problem in detail, studying U.S., German and Soviet doctrine, and military history. Wass de Czege recalls that Holder “brought with him great practical experience under a respected coach, and a broad self-education in the literature of many of the outside ‘maneuverist’ reformers and had been quoting, e.g., B. H. Liddell Hart and J. F. C. Fuller.”²⁹ The major development was to recognize that “winning successive line-of-sight engagements, as the 1976 doctrine emphasized, was a sure path to failure.”³⁰ To overcome this, Wass de Czege and Holder developed an operational framework that fought a whole campaign not just an individual engagement. This would be achieved by fighting the close, rear and deep battles simultaneously. The logic of Deep, Close and Rear organising framework proved central to the doctrine’s success and was later taken into British doctrine in ADP *Operations* by the then Col. Richard Dannatt. The concept of the deep battle brought in the Air Force to engage the Warsaw Pact’s second and third echelons in the enemy’s depth. This meant that FM 100-5 became the new doctrine for the joint operational level of command, and the 1982 edition attended to and thus became the logic of joint operations. In the absence of any joint doctrine for counterinsurgency, FM 3-24 assumed a similar role.³¹

Starry read every chapter and every revision, an approach Petraeus would follow with FM 3-24.³² Starry’s doctrine was innovative because it required commanders to “look beyond the range of their weapons and picture the enemy in organizational wholes, within the context of higher commands and support, arrayed on the terrain and postured to perform

missions.”³³ Where Active Defense had been “attritionally-minded,” Lock-Pullan notes “AirLand Battle was a fundamental move away from attrition [and that] there was doctrinal innovation without a corresponding change in the strategic environment.”³⁴ Wass de Czege considers that FM 100-5 provided,

sound guidance and useful precepts for fighting a ‘counter-aggression’ campaign in response to the invasion of an ally. It not only took into account a specific and very powerful enemy, but it also hypothesized that the host nation would tend to many very specific and very messy details that could be ignored by U.S. forces when the strategic aim is the restoration of territory.³⁵

Wass de Czege’s last point is important, and the implication from it is clear: soldiers are there to fight and win battles, not to worry about issues of civil administration, jurisdiction and development and aid work. For an army inculcated in major combat operations, having to take responsibility for a whole range of non-warfighting tasks, for which it was not trained, in an alien, hostile environment, would be difficult.

Interestingly, the pre-publication draft was made available to CGSC so that it could be used to “train intensively those officers destined for future assignments where they would be implementing *AirLand Battle* doctrine.”³⁶ More generally, training was improved, refined and updated on the basis of FM 100-5 and the outcome was an army “transformed into a superb force for conventional warfare.”³⁷ Education at CGSC played an important part in this transformation because, as Wass de Czege recalls, “it taught rigorous thinking about important conventional warfare issues that had been neglected during the Vietnam years.”³⁸ Significantly for this discussion of doctrine, FM 100-5 succeeded “in making the officer corps care about doctrine... and it led to a renaissance of professional discourse on how the Army should fight that has continued to the present.”³⁹ The issue which would emerge and which caused such problems in Iraq was that the professional discourse the U.S. Army entered into as a result of FM 100-5 was concentrated almost exclusively on how to fight a major conventional campaign.

7.1.4 Turning Away from Counterinsurgency and Ignoring Vietnam

The U.S. Army’s focus on the central themes of FM 100-5 only served to divert its attention further and further away from counterinsurgency. James Corum considers that the American officer corps made a conscious effort to forget Vietnam and made erasing the memory of Vietnam central to its transformation during the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁰ The Vietnam War thus became synonymous with counterinsurgency, despite the fact that the U.S. Army never really tried to fight a counterinsurgency war in Vietnam as many experts advised it to do at the time. John Nagl and Andrew Krepinevich both consider that what Krepinevich describes as the Army Concept – “the Army’s perception of how wars *ought* to be waged and ... reflected in the way the Army organizes and trains its troops for battle”⁴¹ – prevented the U.S. Army from approaching counterinsurgency as effectively as it should. In his biting criticism of U.S. military intransigence written in 1970, Brian Jenkins concluded that “the Army’s doctrine, its tactics, its organization, its weapons – its entire repertoire of warfare was designed for conventional warfare in Europe. In Vietnam, the Army simply performed its repertoire even though it was frequently irrelevant to the situation.”⁴²

The general characterization of the Vietnam War became that of a conventional Army trying to apply Jominian battlefield geometry to a large scale revolutionary war. Yet despite such views, in the early years of the U.S. campaign, the key elements of

effective counterinsurgency were put in place. From 1950 until 1963, when President Johnson expanded the campaign into a conventional war, the U.S. Army used advisors in Vietnam to train and mentor the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) to fight the insurgency rather than any conventional North Vietnamese force. It also attempted to apply the lessons from Malaya, inviting Thompson and a small British Advisory Mission (BRIAM) to Saigon.⁴³ He, for example, proposed a plan that concentrated on providing political stability, securing the population, increasing the role of police, improving intelligence, and using the ARVN in clear-and-hold operations.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, as John Nagl notes, Thompson's advice was largely ignored.⁴⁵ The U.S. did, however, create an inter-departmental group to provide a co-ordinated mix of political, military and economic measures to address the root cause of the problem, and through President Johnson's policy of pacification – "the specific strategy or program to bring security and political and economic stability to the countryside of Vietnam"⁴⁶ – the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development (CORDS), the State Department, the CIA, the US military mission in Vietnam and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) were brought together.

Of particular relevance to this thesis, a U.S. Army report into pacification in March 1966 (Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of Vietnam, or PROVN) identified three criteria for the co-ordination of U.S. effort in Vietnam and to ensure a better cross-department interpretation of the situation. Although, as Andrew Birtle points out, the PROVN report has been used by critics to attack Gen. Westmoreland, the U.S. commander-in-chief, and to inflate the position of Gen. Abrams, his successor,⁴⁷ it provides a useful insight into the conclusions that were being drawn even at quite an early point in the Vietnam campaign. There are strong similarities between what PROVN identified and the guidelines Kitson proposed for the effective integration of allied and host nation effort:

- (1) that a Washington executive agent coordinate Vietnam support activities in the United States;
- (2) that the US ambassador be the single manager in South Vietnam with two coequal deputies, one for US military forces and one for pacification;
- and (3) that below the deputies there be a single American representative or chief at each level in the field.⁴⁸

After the war, the U.S. Army started to view Vietnam as the wrong war, fought at the wrong time, against the wrong enemy and by the wrong army.⁴⁹ This idea was given much credence by Col. Harry Summers' analysis in *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*.⁵⁰ It was adopted by the U.S. Army War College and CGSC as the standard text and became, as Conrad Crane, Director of the U.S. Army Historical Branch, and the man eventually selected by Gen. Petraeus to lead the FM 3-24 writing team observes, "the prism through which the Army viewed Vietnam."⁵¹ As the TRADOC-led reforms took hold, Corum concludes that in "the minds of the senior military leadership, the very term 'counter-insurgency' became associated with a failed strategy and doctrine."⁵² As the U.S. Army focused on and became unquestionably proficient with AirLand Battle, the lessons from Vietnam were ignored, and it turned away from counterinsurgency. Crane summarizes the effect of Vietnam on the institutional response to counterinsurgency:

Army involvement in counterinsurgency was first seen as an aberration and then as a mistake to be avoided. Instead of focusing on the proper synchronization of

military and political tools with objectives necessary for success in low intensity unconventional conflicts, the Army continued to concentrate on mid to high intensity conventional wars.⁵³

7.1.5 The Impact of the War in El Salvador

Despite the U.S. Army's rejection of Vietnam and the notion of counterinsurgency, President Reagan's decision in 1981 to support the government of El Salvador against a major Marxist insurgency helped develop a new model for counterinsurgency.⁵⁴ The United States provided aid, advisors, equipment and training but Congress, with Vietnam in mind, limited the number of U.S. military personnel in El Salvador to only fifty-five. Originally, planners at U.S. Southern Command calculated that they would need 250 but they did not think that this figure would get support in Congress so they took a guess that fifty-five would be more acceptable.⁵⁵ It was, and the arbitrary limit Congress placed on U.S. military operations El Salvador demanded a very different approach from that adopted in Vietnam. With no possibility of U.S. forces being in a position to take the lead in tactical operations, the campaign concentrated on encouraging, pushing and supporting the Salvadorian government to instigate the wide political, economic and military reforms needed to defeat the insurgency.⁵⁶ As such, there are strong similarities with the British experience in the Oman.

The conditions and constraints imposed by Congress forced the U.S. military to develop a response closely akin to well-established principles of British and American counterinsurgency. Through their careful application, the U.S. operation led and encouraged the Salvadorian government through a painful transformation to democracy and a viable political solution. It was active economic, political and psychological efforts which were decisive not military action.⁵⁷ Steven Metz identifies that the "absolute crux of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, then, was finding ways to encourage or force an allied government and elite to do things they vehemently opposed."⁵⁸ Echoing Kitson and Galula, Max Manwaring concludes in his analysis of El Salvador, that the "ultimate outcome of any effort to deal with a given conflict is not primarily determined by the skilful manipulation of violence in one of the many military/police battles that take place," rather it is about social, political and economic reform.⁵⁹

The impact of the El Salvadorian experience on doctrine is important. The U.S. campaign provided a new, novel and ultimately successful counterinsurgency approach yet its impact on the U.S. Army was imperceptible. With so few soldiers involved in the campaign, El Salvador could not possibly have the organizational or cultural impact on thinking and approach that Northern Ireland had on the British Army.⁶⁰ At the strategic level, Corum identifies that it had no affect on improving inter-departmental coordination in the way that the theories of Thompson, Kitson and Galula recognised as essential.⁶¹ This lack of formal, legally binding co-ordination and policy still bedevils U.S. counterinsurgency efforts. Yet, the doctrine that was written after the Salvadorian experience captured the essence of what had been learnt and is recognisable in today's terms as best practice.

7.1.6 FM 90-8 Counterinsurgency Operations

FM 90-8 *Counterinsurgency Operations* was published in August 1986.⁶² It made the distinction between counterinsurgency, which addressed the security and development requirements needed to alleviate the conditions which caused the insurgency, and

counterguerrilla operations “geared to the active military element of the insurgent movement only... [which are to be] viewed as a supporting component of the counterinsurgency effort.”⁶³ It laid out the requirements for U.S. forces to meet if their contribution was to support and not undermine, or be detrimental to the overall counterinsurgency campaign:

- (1) Be appropriate – response is appropriate to the level of threat and activity.
- (2) Be justifiable – actions taken are justifiable in the eyes of the host country’s population and the US public.
- (3) Use minimum force – the goal is to restrict the use of force and the level of commitment to the minimum feasible to accomplish the mission. However, the principle of minimum necessary force does not always imply minimum necessary troops. A large number of men deployed at the right time may enable a commander to use less force than he might otherwise have done, or even to avoid using any force at all. Commanders must, however, keep in mind that a peaceful situation could become hostile because of the provocative display of an overlarge force. Doing too much may be a greater danger than doing too little.
- (4) Do maximum benefit – US forces should select operations so they accomplish positive benefit for the population. If this is not possible then the operational concept is wrong and should not be executed.
- (5) Do minimum damage – US forces ensure that operations preclude unnecessary damage to facilities, activities, and resources. Since this is almost an impossibility, compensation for any damage to property must be made and the property restored, as much as possible, to its original state. In any case, a major consideration is to plan activities to limit damage.⁶⁴

The authors of FM 90-8 made an effort to address the problem of counterinsurgency in conventional doctrinal terms, integrating the tenets and imperatives of *AirLand Battle* into counterguerrilla operations: ensure unity of effort; direct friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses; designate and sustain the main effort; sustain the fight; move fast, strike hard, and finish rapidly; use terrain and weather; protect the force.⁶⁵ Several years later, *Counter Insurgency Operations* adopted a similar technique, successfully setting the British Army’s warfighting operational principles and framework into the context of counterinsurgency.⁶⁶

FM 90-8 explained that the “use of armed forces in a counterguerrilla role is primarily to provide enough internal security to enable the host country to initiate counterinsurgency programs and pursue national objectives,”⁶⁷ as opposed to the conventional view of the use of armed forces in defeating the opposing force. This reversal of the counterinsurgency paradigm was to become a central tenet of FM 3-24 and subsequently the Baghdad Security Plan. FM 90-8 identified three groups for the counterinsurgent to deal with, in line with the thinking of Galula, Thompson and other mainstream counterinsurgency theory. The first group was the population, the support of which the government must “win back ... through providing them security and showing an honest effort to correct those conditions which caused dissatisfaction.”⁶⁸ The second group was the insurgents, which must be isolated “from the population, both physically and psychologically, thereby denying him personnel, materiel, and

intelligence support.” The final group was those external actors who provide active or passive support to the insurgent or the counterinsurgent. The military’s role and function were made clear:

The military assists the COIN program through the conduct of six major operations: intelligence, psychological operations, civil affairs, populace and resources control, advisory assistance, and tactical operations. The successful employment of these operations contributes to the success of the COIN program. They are normally conducted simultaneously, in conjunction with each other, and require close coordination of diverse government agencies.⁶⁹

This is an important point. It listed the tasks which first FMI 3-07.22 (2004) and then FM 3-24 later restated as core counterinsurgency capabilities. It emphasized, as the CORDS programme had in Vietnam, the need to integrate the military contribution with those of other government departments. The tasks, and by inference the training and equipment required to conduct them, reinforced the central tenet of placing the population firmly at the centre of the counterinsurgency campaign. The order in which it listed the military tasks is also significant. Although it is not clear that they are listed in priority – it is reasonable to assume that they are following the convention in doctrine of establishing priorities – they are clearly at odds with the requirements for a conventional army designed to fight a large conventional war. John Waghelstein, writing in 1985, the year before FM 90-8 was published, highlighted this conflict of interests:

In many respects, best counterinsurgency techniques are a step toward the primitive (for example, less firepower that is more surgically applied). The keys to popular support, the *sine qua non* in counterinsurgency, include psychological operations, civic action and grass-roots human intelligence work, all of which runs counter to the conventional U.S. concept of war.⁷⁰

FM 90-8, based on the Salvadorian experience, not only reflected the by then well-established theories of Thompson and Galula but it emphasized the central point of classical counterinsurgency: “The focus of all civil and military plans and operations must be on the center of gravity in any conflict – the country’s people and their belief in and support of their government.”⁷¹ The important point to note is that FM 90-8 was the U.S. Army’s extant doctrine when the Iraq insurgencies developed; the principal themes and concepts it contained were then redeveloped and re-emphasised in FM 3-24. The issue at stake is that whilst the U.S. Army had learnt from El Salvador, it had not gone on to assimilate the lessons and the doctrine which it subsequently published. That doctrine was and remains a valid approach to countering insurgency, but the U.S. Army failed to absorb its central tenets into its culture. Clint Ancker, CADD’s director, observed, “no one knew it existed.”⁷²

7.1.7 Assimilating Counterinsurgency Doctrine

In addition to FM 90-8, the U.S. Army published other manuals. These included FM 100-20 *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, published in 1990, and FM 7-98 *Operations in a Low-Intensity Conflict*, published in 1992. Although these publications included much of classic counterinsurgency theory, and while they had evolved as the result of U.S. operations in El Salvador and Panama, they harked back to small scale, largely covert Special Forces operations in Central and South America. They were not written with large-scale interventions in mind. Despite having a valid doctrinal model

for counterinsurgency in FM 90-8, it had little discernable impact on the U.S. Army. FM 100-5 was clearly the centrepiece of army thinking, and, as Wass de Czege notes, the “depth, breadth and substance of the doctrine, and the understanding of it... reached levels never before attained.”⁷³ Unfortunately, perfecting the central tenets of FM 100-5 came at the cost of developing any capacity and subsequent professional understanding for other forms of conflict. In an army where, as Waghelstein notes, counterinsurgency had “virtually become a non subject in the US military educational system,”⁷⁴ no new doctrine for counterinsurgency or low intensity operations would make any impression on an army so focussed on winning the conventional battle.

The U.S. Army thus came to regard counterinsurgency as a specialist’s task and not something to which it should devote any time. Low intensity operations and counterinsurgency, although covered at CGSC were electives, not core subjects. Col. Mike Smith and Dr. Tom Marks taught counterinsurgency and irregular warfare at CGSC in the 1990s, where theory and British, French and U.S. history were part of the curriculum. Smith used British doctrine and taught case studies from The Oman (where he fought in the War) and Northern Ireland.⁷⁵ Inevitably, however, with such a tremendous institutional focus on ‘winning the first battle,’ with the exception of those officers who studied the lessons of Vietnam – notably for this discussion, Gen. Petraeus, Col. H. R. McMaster, and John Nagl⁷⁶ – or those with experience from El Salvador or Panama, counterinsurgency was not generally well understood. Gen. Jack Keane, who was to be the catalyst for the U.S. Surge and a former Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army, concluded that the U.S. Army was untrained to deal with insurgency:

We put an army on the battlefield that I had been a part of for 37 years. The truth of the matter is: it doesn’t have any doctrine, nor was it educated and trained, to deal with an insurgency. And that insurgency challenged us, as I knew it would for that first year.

After the Vietnam War, we purged ourselves of everything that dealt with irregular warfare or insurgency, because it had to do with how we lost that war. In hindsight, that was a bad decision.⁷⁷

7.2 Section II – The Development of FM 3-24

7.2.1 Interim Doctrine: Field Manual Interim 3-07.22

In December 2003, Gen. Wallace, then commanding the CAC, discovered that no counterinsurgency doctrine existed to support III Corps’ mission rehearsal exercise for Iraq (III Corps was to form the nucleus of HQ MNF-I in Baghdad). Ancker recalls that Wallace gave him six months to produce it,⁷⁸ and the new doctrine was published as an interim Field Manual on 1 October 2004.⁷⁹ This was a new departure for the U.S. Army because doctrine normally takes time to develop and is only published after gaining official endorsement. In this case, Wallace took the decision to get an unendorsed interim version into the field as quickly as possible to help with the problem at hand; irregular, not conventional warfare. The new manual was well received.⁸⁰

Lt. Col. Jan Horvath, a Special Forces Officer and a doctrine writer at CADD, was given the task of writing the new doctrine. The first two books he read were British counterinsurgency manuals (*Counter Insurgency Operations* and *AFM Vol. 1 Part 9 Counter Insurgency and Peace Support Operations Tactics*). He then looked at the challenge posed by the fast developing insurgencies in Iraq, and attempted to identify at

which level of command insurgency had the greatest impact; “It was a bit Clausewitzian. If it was at the operational level, how did it affect the tactical and the strategic? If it was a tactical problem, how did it affect the operational and strategic levels?”⁸¹ He concluded that the primary audience was the corps headquarters since it provided the political-military interface but, more importantly in terms of consistency of approach, it established the framework within which divisions and brigades operated. Horvath then broke the subject into its key component parts, worked out how they were inter-related and then, rather like Bulloch with *Counter Insurgency Operations* in 1994, he laid out the chapters, and wrote a draft. Like Bulloch, Horvath circulated it to those he felt would contribute and improve the manual. With military expertise in counterinsurgency limited, he drew heavily on U.S. academics.⁸²

FMI 3-07.22’s publication was an important step, being the first official U.S. *counterinsurgency*, not just counter-guerrilla doctrine since 1965. Although it included new tactical lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, its supporting analysis indicated that many of the traditional counterinsurgency strategies and tactics remained valid. This was particularly true of the point emphasized by Max Manwaring that Legitimacy is crucial for effective counterinsurgency. Crane would re-emphasize this in FM 3-24:

... the moral right of a regime to govern is the most important single dimension in a counterinsurgency war. Thus, a politically strong and morally legitimate government is vital to any winning internal war strategy. The rectitude and legitimacy of the incumbent regime is the primary target—the primary center of gravity—as far as the insurgent organization is concerned.⁸³

Although FMI 3-07.22 used a mainly Maoist model of insurgency and did not address the new forms appearing in Iraq, its very publication, the speed with which it was produced, and its contents, provided an important means by which institutional misunderstanding and confusion over what counterinsurgency required could be addressed. Interestingly, FMI 3-07.22 was not simply an update of FM 7-98 *Operations in a Low-Intensity Conflict* or FM 90-8 *Counterinsurgency Operations*. It was a fresh look at counterinsurgency, and rather intuitively, Horvath included the essential themes which would be developed yet further in FM 3-24:

Planning for a counterinsurgency focuses on the following conditions that the force must establish to be successful:

- A secure populace. Security of the populace is imperative...
- Established local political institutions.
- Reinforce local governments.
- Neutralize insurgent capabilities.
- Information flow from local sources.⁸⁴

FMI 3-07.22 went on to describe in detail the role of Civil Affairs groups, and the importance of close civil-military relations. It emphasized the central role of intelligence, the need to develop effective host nation security forces, the role of media and psychological operations, and it introduced the concept of ‘Clear and Hold.’ This was another key development because it made clear that clear and hold operations focussed civil-military effort, combat operations, information operations, intelligence and psychological operations to create specific conditions in the target area: the

creation of a secure physical and psychological environment, the establishment of firm government control of the population and the area, and the securing of “willing support of the population and their participation in the governmental programs for countering insurgency.”⁸⁵

The planning process FMI 3-07.22 described, and its explanation of the conduct of each stage of the operation – clearing, holding and consolidation – were entirely in keeping with the logic of Thompson’s method, the British Ink Spot, and the very detailed method provided by David Galula.⁸⁶ Although FMI 3-07.22 lacked contemporary context, interim or not, it was a very sound piece of doctrine. Once published, it became the core text at the COIN CFE at Taji, and from December 2004, when the first brigade combat team went through, U.S. commanders, down to company level, were taught a version of Clear-Hold-Build.

7.2.2 Revising the Interim Doctrine

During 2005, Horvath continued to revise FMI 3-07.22. Interest in it increased and he received a great deal of advice and material for the next edition. He recalls his difficulty was trying to find anyone who would offer an objective criticism of what he had published: “There were lots of good ideas but did not much ‘push back’. Trusting that I had got it right was not what I needed at that point; the manual needed rigorous criticism to keep the ideas clear and succinct.”⁸⁷ Without any firm guidance, his second draft incorporated many new views but he did not feel it made the subject any clearer.

The second draft, published in October 2005,⁸⁸ included both Thompson’s and T. E. Lawrence’s principles, and used examples from Vietnam to illustrate new ideas about complexity and adaptation. It covered intelligence in much more detail, it introduced the concept of logical lines of operation – based on the work of Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli and 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad⁸⁹ – but surprisingly the explanation of clear and hold operations were removed without any alternative being provided.

The major conclusion to draw from the October 2005 edition is that Horvath’s initial, intuitive and theoretically sound work had been re-cast more in the mould of conventional operations. Counterinsurgency was now portrayed as a form of warfare to be conducted within the framework of existing structures and approaches, not as one that required a change in approach from being enemy-centric to population focussed. Krepinevich’s ‘Army Concept’ could be seen to be attempting to re-cast the emerging counterinsurgency doctrine in the image of the well-understood and intellectually familiar tenets of conventional operations.

7.2.3 Developing FM 3-24

The startpoint for what became FM 3-24 was a meeting held in April 2005 at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle, PA, between John Nagl, Steven Metz, David Kilcullen and Jan Horvath. The meeting had been called to shape the next draft of FM 3-07.22, due to be published in October, but it highlighted to those present how difficult it would be to reconcile the expectations of the conventionally-minded army with the demands of counterinsurgency.⁹⁰ In October, the then Lt. Gen. Petraeus returned from Baghdad where he had commanded MNSTC-I. On his way to Fort Leavenworth, where he was to take command of the CAC, he paid several office calls in Washington DC. One was with Paul Wolfowitz, then Deputy Secretary of Defense and for whom John Nagl worked as Military Assistant. Nagl took the opportunity to raise his fundamental

concerns about the emerging doctrine with Petraeus. In Nagl's view, the new draft had plenty of material, but it lacked a clearly defined logic or approach. More seriously, it epitomized the problems of developing doctrine by consensus, and the U.S. Army's conventional mindset. Unless both were resolved, he told Petraeus, the Army would not get the doctrine it needed to change the campaign in Iraq.⁹¹ A month later, at a conference in Washington, Petraeus described changes he had already made at CAC to collective training and to the curriculum at CGSC, and he announced that Nagl was to lead the team to rewrite counterinsurgency doctrine.⁹² On the evening of 7 November 2005, Nagl and a group of friends planned the pamphlet's outline on a napkin in a 'The Front Page' bistro. Nagl's plan introduced chapters on training local forces, leadership and ethics.⁹³

Petraeus wanted the new writing team to have some academic credibility so he invited Kalev Sepp and Andrew Krepinevich to join (Sepp declined because he was too busy), and had Nagl released from his job in the Secretary of Defense's office.⁹⁴ After some further discussion with Petraeus it was agreed that Conrad Crane would be a more appropriate editor than Nagl. Crane and Petraeus were West Point classmates, both had PhDs, and the relationship between a serving 3-star and a retired officer, one of 'Dave' and 'Con,' would be more effective than a service-based, hierarchical sponsor-editor relationship.⁹⁵ Horvath mentions the sense of trust between editor and sponsor was evident from the outset.⁹⁶

Nagl and Crane's review of the principal counterinsurgency doctrines and the classic theories identified that the essential logic of counterinsurgency was population-, not insurgent-focused. With this agreed, they then started to develop the principles, imperatives and paradoxes – reproduced in Table 6 over – which were to provide the manual's conceptual framework. Crane's work on the principles drew directly from British counterinsurgency doctrine.⁹⁷ Crane and Prof. Sarah Sewall then developed the paradoxes. These were not intended to be truths, rather they were to act as mental prompts to planners and provide an intellectual framework against which plans could be held.⁹⁸

The paradoxes were greatly influenced by T. E. Lawrence and recent experience from Iraq, particularly Petraeus',⁹⁹ and they supported what Sepp identified as the best counterinsurgency practices and argued against the worst.¹⁰⁰ The value of the paradoxes was that they were counter-intuitive to the conventional U.S. military mind, a point which was explained in an early article published by the FM 3-24 authors to introduce their framework to the rest of the Army: "COIN operations present complex, often unfamiliar missions and considerations. In many ways, conducting COIN operations is counterintuitive to the traditional American approach to war and combat operations."¹⁰¹ As Nagl observes, "the nine maxims turn conventional military thinking on its head, highlighting the extent of the change required for a conventional military force to adapt itself to the demands of counterinsurgency."¹⁰²

Principles	Contemporary Imperatives	Paradoxes
Legitimacy as the Main Objective	Manage Information and Expectations	The more you protect your force, the less secure you are
Unity of Effort,	Use Measured Force	The more force you use, the less effective you are
Political Primacy	Learn and Adapt	Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction
Understanding the Environment	Empower the Lowest Level	The best weapons for COIN do not shoot
Intelligence	Support the Host Nation	The insurgents doing something poorly is sometimes better than us doing it well
Isolate the Insurgent		If a tactic works this week, it won't work next week
Security under the Rule of Law		If it works in this province, it won't work in the next
Long Term Commitment		Tactical success guarantees nothing

Table 6 - FM 3-24: Principles, Contemporary Imperatives and Paradoxes

Source: *FM 3-24*, pp. 1-20-1-28.

At a conference at Fort Leavenworth in early December 2005 Petraeus took the opportunity to marshal potential contributors. Crane and Nagl picked the chapter authors on 10 December 2005, and sent them the principles, imperatives and paradoxes, and an outline of the book so that they could start work. Horvath recalls how the book was to be organized:

After Dr. Tom Marks, [Col.] Tom Western and I wrote half the draft FM, we sat down with Con Crane and John Nagl and re-organized the chapters in December. We adopted John [Nagl]'s chapter titles/sequence and stayed with my internal chapter topical organization except in Chapters 1 and 2 [Insurgency and Counterinsurgency] where Con integrated them into one chapter. Then, we brought in all the other writers. Our Intel writer reduced most of the operational-level Intel in that chapter, and Gen. Mattis contributed to Chapter 4.¹⁰³

The working assumptions were that that U.S. military dominance in major combat operations had driven the U.S.'s enemies away from conventional warfare to insurgency and terrorism, and that the response to these threats required a joint service and a cross-governmental approach. As Nagl notes, the latter was an old lesson rediscovered.¹⁰⁴ Petraeus recalls the approach during this stage of the manual's development:

We tried to capture our thoughts prior to setting the formal process underway but it soon became clear that we needed a comprehensive review that walked us through what we knew and what our experiences were telling us. It was evident to us all that it was much more than classical COIN. We were dealing with enemies beyond the classical populist insurgent; terrorists - AQI and the Shi'a militia secret cells - violent criminals, limited government capacity, outside interference. All these had to be addressed when coming to terms with counterinsurgency.¹⁰⁵

The first draft was produced within a month and it proved to Nagl the importance of not writing doctrine by committee and of using a hand-picked writing team. The draft was circulated widely for comment and experts – human rights groups, government officials, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations, anthropologists and military officers from across the armed services – were brought together by Petraeus for a two-day doctrine workshop at Fort Leavenworth in late February 2006. In what Sarah Sewall describes as “an unprecedented collaboration, a human rights center partnered with the armed forces to help revise the doctrine,”¹⁰⁶ the Carr Centre for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University co-sponsored the workshop with Gen. Petraeus to critique the U.S. Army’s draft manual.¹⁰⁷ It also allowed Petraeus to give advance notice of his intentions. Even as early as February 2006, there was already discussion among senior officers that Petraeus would return to Baghdad to command the Multi-National Force. If that were to be the case, he was developing the doctrine his troops would use.¹⁰⁸

Petraeus refers to the February conference as his opportunity to start to shape more general expectations about what the doctrine would contain and how the approach would be laid out. Participation was important; “a process like this, producing something as important as COIN doctrine, where so many seem to hold a view, needs engagement with a much wider group than standard doctrine has traditionally needed. You have to get as many as possible inside the tent.”¹⁰⁹ Petraeus’ views on the outcome of the conference are also informative:

The result was that not only did it give the doctrine good substance; it gained a greater sense of investment from those who were involved. If a point was important, we had to find out what it was, who held it, who disagreed and, eventually, make a decision about which view was to be included. I had to adjudicate a lot of ‘Solomon’ moments. The strongest arguments centred on the balance between kinetic and non-kinetic and the wording of the paradoxes and imperatives. Adding the word ‘sometimes’ managed to get us out of the argument and allowed us to get on. We really had to work hard at reworking some of the newer ideas in order to strike the right balance.¹¹⁰

During the conference, discussion and debate were open, inclusive, non-defensive, high quality, and very positively led by Gen. Petraeus; there was unanimous agreement on the Principles, Contemporary Imperatives and Paradoxes (although subsequently Petraeus had to soften the paradoxes), on how the Field Manual should be developed, and for whom it was intended; that it needed to be linked to Stability Operations; that it needed to provide more focus on the host or partner nation; and it had to emphasize the Rule of Law and rules of engagement. It is interesting to note that none of the material presented provided a clear view of how the complex coalition dynamic would affect the U.S. contribution to counterinsurgency operations; no obvious hooks were provided to either U.S. forces or their allies and partners. Given the tensions and misunderstandings that would arise, for example, between the UK and the U.S. which Petraeus would have to handle, rather like *Counter Insurgency Operations*’ omission of the multinational dimension, this was an important oversight.¹¹¹

While a number of academics had called for a radical reconceptualising of the insurgency-counterinsurgency dynamic,¹¹² the FM 3-24 writing team, with its strong historical background, returned to the classical theories.¹¹³ David Galula’s influence

was particularly important. Crane read Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* in December 2005, having had it recommended to him by Nagl and Horvath.¹¹⁴ What Nagl describes as Galula's "intellectual roots" were important, the way he blended his experience from French Indo-China and Algeria into a coherent, persuasively presented theory that accounted for two very different and equally violent forms of insurgency.¹¹⁵ Galula used his analysis of his counterinsurgency experience, in particular that in Algeria, to develop laws, principles and an approach which centred on securing and protecting the population, gaining its support, and then acquiring information to identify and locate insurgents in order to defeat the insurgency. FM 3-24 reflected this:

An essential COIN task for military forces is fighting insurgents; however, these forces can and should use their capabilities to meet the local populace's fundamental needs as well. Regaining the populace's active and continued support for the [Host Nation] government is essential to deprive an insurgency of its power and appeal. The military forces' primary function in COIN is protecting that populace.¹¹⁶

Work continued over the summer. As editorial and content issues were gradually resolved, as Nagl observes, "Iraq was spiralling downhill."¹¹⁷ Two chapters caused some concern. The first was the chapter on intelligence. The early drafts were too far removed from the day-to-day requirements of divisional and brigade operations, so Nagl brought it back to the tactical level which was where most of the U.S. Army's intelligence officers were comfortable.¹¹⁸ The second was the chapter on operational design, which was written by the USMC. Horvath recalls that its authors kept missing deadlines. Eventually the chapter arrived with strict instructions that it could not be amended. This caused some consternation and required Petraeus to speak with Lt. Gen. Mattis, his USMC counterpart to resolve matters. It transpired that Mattis wrote the chapter and it was his concerns about how it might be edited which had prompted the instruction about amendment. The chapter was amended.¹¹⁹

To meet publication deadlines, writing had to stop in October, even though there were some areas which still needed to be developed. One was engaging with allies and the host nation; "We Americans always have trouble getting our partners to do what we think they should. How do you influence the host nation to do what you think is best, at all levels?"¹²⁰ Second, having introduced the concept and importance of legitimacy, he still thought that the principle had not been fully developed, in particular in the context of a global insurgency. Third, there were still disagreements over definitions. "Words matter and there was institutional dissonance over meaning and interpretation."¹²¹ Finally, a point was raised at the Fort Leavenworth conference that doctrine had to avoid using overt military terminology if it was to get greater non-military 'buy in.'¹²²

7.2.4 Developing Doctrine: *AirLand Battle* and FM 3-24 Compared

Comparing the development of FM 3-24 with *AirLand Battle* highlights some interesting similarities that highlight the importance of clear-sighted leadership and well-founded experience in major doctrine projects. Both publications were likely to have profound changes on the U.S. Army; both were likely to run into internal opposition and ran the risk of failing to achieve Downie's sustained consensus, not least in the case of FM 3-24 because the approach it developed was very likely to be at odds with the approach being followed in Iraq. *AirLand Battle* and FM 3-24 both required high-level sponsorship to break through any institutional reticence. Like *AirLand*

Battle, FM 3-24 was written to meet the U.S. Army's immediate and pressing needs. Like Gen. Starry and the development of *AirLand Battle*, Gen. Petraeus took charge of the counterinsurgency project when he took command of CAC; like Starry, he brought his considerable experience and understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency from two tours in Iraq, where he commanded the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) throughout the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom and then MNSTC-I between June 2004 and September 2005. Like Wass de Czege and Holder, Crane and his writing team started by conducting a thorough review of the main doctrine, the history and the classic theories.¹²³ Like Starry, Petraeus read every chapter and every revision and it was at his insistence that the emerging doctrine was tested by as wide a range of interested parties as possible.¹²⁴ The result was the same: FM 3-24 had as profound an effect on today's U.S. Army as *AirLand Battle* had in the 1980s.

7.2.5 Overview of FM 3-24

The introduction to FM 3-24 explains the intention of establishing a counterinsurgency doctrine, based on lessons learned from past campaigns and contemporary operations. As has been demonstrated, it was a development of the existing interim doctrine (FMi 3-07.22) and that doctrine had been developed since 2005. Both in the introduction and the preface, written jointly by Petraeus and Mattis, there is a clear sense of wanting to put right the neglect the U.S. Army had shown counterinsurgency:

Counterinsurgency operations generally have been neglected in broader American military doctrine and national security policies since the end of the Vietnam War over 30 years ago. This manual is designed to reverse that trend. It is also designed to merge traditional approaches to COIN with the realities of a new international arena shaped by technological advances, globalization, and the spread of extremist ideologies—some of them claiming the authority of a religious faith.¹²⁵

Crane introduced the February 2006 conference at Fort Leavenworth by explaining that the purpose of the work was to make up for what had been recognised, painfully, as thirty years of institutional disregard of counterinsurgency doctrine. In order to overcome this, the project intended to build understanding from scratch in order that the doctrine would provide useful guidance for commanders, their staff and troops on the ground. Crane handed out small, polished pieces of fossilised dinosaur dung to the attendees as a warning; he did not want “a new polishing of old crap.”¹²⁶

The manual follows a conventional format, similar to its British counterpart, and begins with a description of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, with the first chapter explaining the principles of successful counterinsurgency operations and introducing contemporary imperatives and paradoxes. Chapter 2 describes the characteristics, objectives and methods of the non-military organizations commonly involved in counterinsurgency operations and principles for integrating military and civilian activities. Chapter 3 addresses aspects of intelligence specific to counterinsurgency operations, while the next two chapters discuss the design and execution of those operations, including Clear-Hold-Build. Chapter 6 covers the development of host-nation security forces, acknowledged as an essential aspect of successful counterinsurgency operations. Chapter 7 covers leadership and the ethical dimensions of counterinsurgency and the final chapter describes sustainment operations. The appendices cover factors to consider during the planning, preparation, execution, and

assessment of a counterinsurgency operation, two appendices on intelligence, Appendix D covers further legal issues and Appendix E describes the role of air power. It is a comprehensive book.

From the outset, FM 3-24 was intended to be applicable to counterinsurgency in general and not to be specific to Iraq and Afghanistan. The model was built essentially on counterinsurgency designed to defeat a Maoist-style insurgency but in putting the doctrine together, the writing team examined a great number of campaigns to test the validity of the central themes they had identified. Just as FM 90-8 had attempted to introduce the key tenets of *AirLand Battle* into counterinsurgency doctrine (albeit couched as counterinsurgency doctrine), so FM 3-24 based its general approach on the Offensive-Defensive-Stability Operations balance that characterise conventional operations. The result, in Clinton Ancker's view, is a doctrine which is compatible with the main ideas of Stability Operations. There is an obvious logic to this: stability and security must go hand in hand if a vacuum of power or effective governance is to be avoided in post-conflict operations or in the specifics of countering insurgency.¹²⁷

7.2.6 The Campaign Planning Framework

FM 3-24 presents an operational framework which centres on securing the population rather than seeking out and destroying insurgents. The population is therefore central to the approach U.S. counterinsurgency was to follow. By securing and controlling the population, it argues, insurgents can be isolated from the people they seek to control, they will lose the initiative and this will force them to react in ways the counterinsurgent can exploit. Such an approach, redolent of the Ink Spot method, requires the counterinsurgent to understand why the insurgency exists in the first place, and to recognise that the solution will require a broad range of responses, not simply military. Thus Clear-Hold-Build operations were part of a broad, multi-faceted response from "joint, interagency, multinational, and [Host Nation] forces toward a common purpose."¹²⁸

Just as FM 100-5 integrated joint operations into a conventional warfighting campaign, FM 3-24 sought to integrate military operations "into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power."¹²⁹ Chapter 2 explained how to integrate civilian and military activities, and Chapter 4 explained a new method of campaign design which used logical lines of operation (LLO) to create a framework for interagency planning and co-ordination. LLOs were a planning tool used "to visualize, describe, and direct operations when positional reference to enemy forces has little relevance."¹³⁰ They helped articulate how individual operations were inter-related to achieving the campaign's overall objectives:

Guided by the campaign's purpose, commanders articulate an operational logic for the campaign that expresses in clear, concise, conceptual language a broad vision of what they plan to accomplish. The operational logic is the commander's assessment of the problem and approach toward solving it. Commanders express it as the commander's intent. Ideally, the operational logic is expressed clearly and simply but in comprehensive terms, such as what the commander envisions achieving with various components or particular LLOs. This short statement of the operational logic helps subordinate commanders and planners, *as well as members of other agencies and organizations, see the campaign's direction. It provides a unifying theme for interagency planning.*¹³¹

To design such a plan, FM 3-24 modified conventional U.S. military planning, introducing an *iterative* planning process. This started with a diagnosis of the problem, and a dialogue to further develop understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions which affected the situation. Once the character of the problem was understood, the campaign plan could then be designed. Implementing the plan then presented opportunities to learn, to achieve a greater understanding of the problem, and to allow modifications to be made. The process of diagnosis, dialogue, design, and learning would then be repeated. The process is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

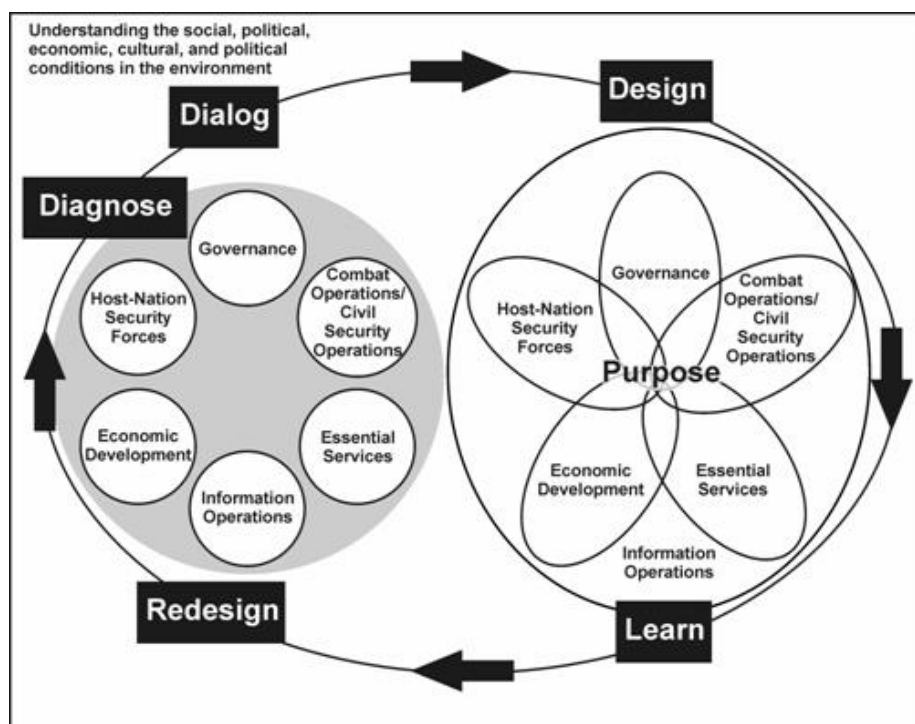


Figure 4 - Iterative Counterinsurgency Campaign Design

Source: FM 3-24, p. 4-5.

Petraeus was particularly struck by the logical way the iterative approach allowed further development and adaptation and adopted it in Iraq.¹³² FM 3-24 also offered illustrative LLOs which Petraeus would develop in his revision of the MNF-I Joint Campaign Plan in April 2007: conduct information operations, conduct combat operations/civil security operations, train and employ the host nation's security forces, establish or restore essential services, support development of better governance, and support economic development.

7.2.7 The Central Operational Framework: Clear-Hold-Build

FM 3-24's central operational framework was Clear-Hold-Build, the intention of which was to take control of an insurgent area, re-establish government control and create what Petraeus would describe as 'the political space' for resolution. FM 3-24 defined it as follows:

A clear-hold-build operation is executed in a specific, high-priority area experiencing overt insurgent operations. It has the following objectives: create a secure physical and psychological environment; establish firm government control of the populace and area; gain the populace's support.¹³³

The November 2004 edition of FMI 3-07.22 had already introduced the Clear and Hold, paraphrasing much of Galula's eight-step method. FM 3-24 built on both and included more recent experience from Iraq and academic thinking to develop the Clear-Hold-Build approach, itself an example of learning and adaptation. Horvath identified four particular influences which helped develop the concept further: McMaster's operation at Tal Afar in 2005, Krepinevich's paper *How to Win in Iraq*, published in October 2005, Col. Sean MacFarland's 1st 'Ready First' Brigade operation in Ramadi in the summer 2006, and a prize-winning article published in *Military Review* in July 2006.¹³⁴ Krepinevich later cited Tal Afar and Ramadi as evidence that the U.S. was making at least some progress in the campaign.¹³⁵

7.2.8 McMaster at Tal Afar

In many ways the catalyst was provided by McMaster's operations in Tal Afar in Nineweh province with 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3 ACR), between August 2005 and May 2006. As early as October 2005, 3 ACR's operation was being held up as an exemplar.¹³⁶ McMaster believed that "one of the responsibilities of professional officers is to ... prepare yourself and your organization for combat through the study of history, because it's very difficult before a war to understand completely the demands of that war."¹³⁷ It was a view entirely in keeping with Kitson's view of education and training. 3 ACR's pre-deployment training emphasized cultural awareness and Arabic language skills:

One out of every 10 soldiers received a three-week course in conversational Arabic, so that each small unit would have someone capable of basic exchanges with Iraqis. McMaster... distributed a lengthy reading list to his officers that included studies of Arab and Iraqi history and most of the classic texts on counterinsurgency. He also quietly relieved one battalion commander who didn't seem to understand that such changes were necessary.¹³⁸

By mid-2005, Tal Afar had become a significant insurgent problem and a major staging area into Iraq for foreign fighters but McMaster did not move into the city straight away. Instead, he took time to learn about the social and political situation in the area, and to isolate the city before taking control of it. His operations on the Syrian border disrupted insurgent movements into and out of Tal Afar, and a preliminary clear and hold operation in a nearby town helped McMaster to refine his plan, gain the confidence of MNC-I, and secure the additional forces and equipment needed to build a berm (sand embankment) around the entire city.¹³⁹ By the time 3 ACR launched its clearance operation, much of the city's population had moved into a specially built camp outside the berm, and many insurgents were detained as they tried to leave the city. McMaster's operation to clear Tal Afar was a carefully controlled, sequenced operation, not a rapid advance which might have been expected. Having cleared the city, 3 ACR then built twenty-nine patrol bases to dominate all the main routes, recruited 1400 police and started civil development projects.¹⁴⁰

McMaster's operation and the results it obtained were noted by senior policy makers and commanders.¹⁴¹ In October 2005 and influenced by what had happened in Tal Afar, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used Clear-Hold-Build to explain U.S. strategy in Iraq:

Clear the toughest places ... Hold and steadily enlarge the secure areas, integrating political and economic outreach with our military operations... Build

truly national institutions... [to] sustain security forces, bring rule of law, visibly deliver essential services, and offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future.¹⁴²

A month later it became a central theme in the White House's *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, published on 30 November 2005. The new strategy set Clear, Hold, Build as the centrepiece of security operations in Iraq:

Objective: To develop the Iraqis' capacity to secure their country while carrying out a campaign to defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency.

–To achieve this objective, we are helping the Iraqi government: *Clear* areas of enemy control by remaining on the offensive, killing and capturing enemy fighters and denying them safe-haven.

Hold areas freed from enemy control by ensuring that they remain under the control of a peaceful Iraqi government with an adequate Iraqi security force presence.

Build Iraqi Security Forces and the capacity of local institutions to deliver services, advance the rule of law, and nurture civil society.¹⁴³

The authors of FM 3-24 reflected the thinking behind these policy developments and cited the operation in Tal Afar as an example of best practice.¹⁴⁴

7.2.9 “How to Win in Iraq”

As the impact of McMaster's operation became more widely known, Krepinevich published *How to Win in Iraq*. In it, he called for a radically new approach to the conduct of the war in Iraq, albeit that the approach he suggested was a return to classical counterinsurgency.¹⁴⁵ Krepinevich argued that the U.S. campaign had not and could not defeat the insurgencies it faced because it did not secure the Iraqi population. The population, he concluded, was one of the three centres of gravity – the American people, and the American soldier were the others – and, to be true to U.S. doctrine, this meant it had to be secured. He argued that the oil-spot strategy as the ‘way to win’:

The oil-spot strategy, in contrast [to search-and-destroy operations], focuses on establishing security for the population precisely for the sake of winning hearts and minds. In the 1950s, the British used it successfully in Malaya, as did the Filipinos against the Huk insurgents. Given the centers of gravity and the limits of U.S. forces in Iraq, an oil-spot approach – in which operations would be oriented around securing the population and then gradually but inexorably expanded to increase control over contested areas – could work.

Krepinevich recalls how his paper became for a short time in late-2005 the focus for discussion in Washington, because it made the argument that there was “no clear, coherent, understandable strategy in Iraq at this point in time. But here [was] a strategy [the oil spot] that I [thought would give] the best chance for success.”¹⁴⁶ Krepinevich's recommendation was noted by Nagl and Horvath and it reinforced their thinking.¹⁴⁷

7.2.10 The ‘Ready First’ in Ramadi – June 2006-May 2007

As work on FM 3-24 continued into summer 2006, another operation demonstrated the value of the Clear-Hold-Build method. In June 2006, as Operation Together Forward faltered in Baghdad, Col. Sean MacFarland and 1st ‘Ready First’ Brigade, 1st Armored

Division arrived in Ramadi. What McFarland achieved there was as significant as McMaster in Tal Afar. When 'Ready First' arrived in Ramadi, Anbar province's capital, attacks averaged over thirty per day. Less than one hundred police out of a total of 4,000 were present and few left the safety of their stations. As in Tal Afar, the population expected the Americans to launch a full-scale assault to retake the city, similar to that when U.S. Marines retook Fallujah in October 2004.¹⁴⁸ Previous units had tried to engage with key leaders but twelve sheiks were killed in two weeks by AQI, and police recruiting stations were targeted by suicide bombers. These were symptoms of a lack security.¹⁴⁹

Instead of launching a conventional clearance operation, MacFarland disregarded the theatre strategy of withdrawing to large forward operating bases. He built FOBs to isolate the city then pushed his forces forward into the city to build company combat outposts in the worst insurgent areas. These outposts restricted insurgent movement and demonstrated willingness to confront AQI in its sanctuary. The outposts were a demonstrable sign that McFarland wanted to wrest the city from insurgent control and that he was prepared to stay and fight. He then engaged with those tribal leaders who remained, offering protection and economic development in exchange for police recruits to clear the city. They provided over 4,000 recruits during the following six months to police the city.

MacFarland followed his concept of clear, hold, and build, building more combat outposts to further limit insurgent freedom of movement, and he used an information operations campaign to further discredit AQI in the eyes of the people. Intelligence provided by the allied tribes led to raids which further demoralized AQI. The Iraqi Army and U.S. forces took control of the city's large hospital, freeing access to medical care. Micro- and macro-economic development projects started in co-operative areas, providing much needed local jobs and alternative, legitimate sources of income for the population. Sensing diminishing support and legitimacy among the population, AQI attempted to retaliate against co-operating tribes through a murder and intimidation campaign. The 'Ready First' provided the tribes with air and artillery support and troops to defend against insurgent attacks when required. This demonstration of unity solidified the tribal rebellion, which expanded exponentially.¹⁵⁰

Police recruits were used to hold cleared areas, and they allowed MacFarland to expand his operation to clear the remaining insurgent areas. He also established a leadership academy to develop local forces' ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Soldiers and local security forces lived and worked together in joint security stations throughout the city. The tribal councils selected mayors and local leaders to rebuild the human infrastructure of the city. By February 2007, violence decreased by nearly seventy per cent, and by summer 2007 attacks practically ceased in Ramadi. The 'Awakening' spread quickly from Ramadi to the rest of Anbar, changing the course of the Iraq war.¹⁵¹ MacFarland's approach confirmed what the authors of FM 3-24 had concluded, that Clear-Hold-Build was an effective and appropriate approach to develop.¹⁵²

7.2.11 'Producing Victory'

The final influence on Clear-Hold-Build was Lt. Col. Douglas Ollivant's paper *Producing Victory*, in which he distilled his experience in Iraq in 2004 to present a simple thesis: "The combined arms maneuver battalion, partnering with indigenous

security forces and living among the population it secures, should be the basic tactical unit of counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare.”¹⁵³ Ollivant argued that responsibility for operations should be disaggregated to battalion level, rather than brigade or division, and that companies and platoons should live and work among the population not operate out of large bases. He emphasized the importance of tactical intelligence, particularly HUMINT, the need to train and build local forces, the vital role of civil-military operations and economic reconstruction, and the need to foster political institutions even at the lowest level. Although all these themes were being followed in Iraq, they were not integrated effectively enough to make the progress necessary in security and political terms:

As the institutional Army gradually recognizes the importance of full-spectrum operations, maneuver commanders will realize the need to integrate kinetic and non-kinetic targeting. Community relations are the main effort of the entire counterinsurgent force, not just a specialized unit.¹⁵⁴

Ollivant’s approach was founded on five lessons from Galula: successful COIN operations require assistance from the community; a static unit with responsibility for a specific area of responsibility is preferable to a mobile unit moving from area to area; no one approach can defeat an insurgency; the principle of unity of command is even more important in COIN than it is in conventional warfare; and effective COIN requires a grid of embedded units.¹⁵⁵ The article won the CAC Commanding General’s Special Topic Writing Competition, judged by Crane, Horvath, Marks, Nagl, and Sepp, and Petraeus contacted Ollivant directly, who was by summer 2006 the divisional planner in Baghdad, to find out how the ideas outlined in the essay were working in the field.¹⁵⁶ Ollivant’s ideas and the logic supporting them were incorporated into the developing doctrine and later evident in MNF-I’s Counterinsurgency Guidance, published in July 2007 as the Surge got under way.

7.2.12 Learn and Adapt

The second important development introduced by FM 3-24 is that of learning and adapting. John Nagl was instrumental in developing this, drawing on and incorporating the main themes of his doctoral thesis. As a Rhodes Scholar, Nagl examined how armies adapted to changing circumstances during the course of a campaign for which they were initially unprepared. Comparing the experience of the British Army in Malaya with the U.S. Army in Vietnam, Nagl concluded that in order to succeed in counterinsurgency – to be seen as hard, slow, dirty, protracted campaigns not suited to rapid victories – an army must adapt to the changing circumstances. In particular, Nagl posed five questions as a way of determining whether an army had the ability to learn and adapt:

- 1) Does the Army promote suggestions from the field?
- 2) Are subordinates encouraged to question superiors and policies?
- 3) Does the organization encourage theoretical thinking about the problems it faces?
- 4) Are doctrine and training centres developed locally in response to local conditions?
- 5) Is the high command assisted by a small, responsive staff or isolated by a

large, unresponsive one?¹⁵⁷

Nagl concluded, like Downie before him, that, against the criteria he identified, the U.S. Army did not have the culture and attitude of mind to respond to changed circumstances; “The culture of the American army does not, unless the changed situation falls within the parameters of the kind of war it has defined in its primary mission.”¹⁵⁸ Nagl’s findings go some way to explain the failure of FM 90-8.

Nagl’s thesis was republished by University of Chicago Press in 2005 as the U.S. Army sought to adjust to Iraq. Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, wrote the foreword, and encouraged its readers to develop a spirit of innovation, to learn lessons and to integrate those lessons quickly. As one of the contemporary imperatives of counterinsurgency, learning and adaptation is a theme which runs through FM 3-24. Metz describes insurgency and counterinsurgency as “a deadly learning contest between insurgent and counterinsurgent,”¹⁵⁹ and this comes through clearly in the Learn and Adapt imperative:

An effective counterinsurgent force is a learning organization. Insurgents constantly shift between military and political phases and tactics. In addition, networked insurgents constantly exchange information about their enemy’s vulnerabilities—even with insurgents in distant theaters. However, skilful counterinsurgents can adapt at least as fast as insurgents. Every unit needs to be able to make observations, draw and apply lessons, and assess results. Commanders must develop an effective system to circulate best practices throughout their command. Combatant commanders might also need to seek new laws or policies that authorize or resource necessary changes. Insurgents shift their AOs looking for weak links, so widespread competence is required throughout the counterinsurgent force.¹⁶⁰

7.2.13 Sepp’s “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency”

In October 2005, Casey commissioned Sepp and Hix to analyze the campaign. Their findings showed that the U.S. Army in Iraq found the conditions laid out in FMi 3-07.22 (secure the populace, establish local political institutions, reinforce local governments, neutralize insurgent capabilities, create an information flow from local sources) difficult to meet. In autumn 2004, Casey asked Sepp, who was working in HQ MNF-I in the Strategy, Plans and Assessments division, to determine what constituted best practices in counterinsurgency to assist in the development of the campaign plan. Sepp, who had taught insurgency at West Point and American small wars history at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, took thirty-six hours to produce a report which identified the best and worst practices from fifty-three historical campaigns. The table which summarized his report, reproduced in Table 7 (over), was included in the campaign plan, and used by Sepp and a colleague from MNF-I (Col. Tom Hix) to conduct a theatre-wide appraisal of how brigades were performing across the country.¹⁶¹ Sepp recalls, “It was, at the time, actually a mixed assessment and reflected the different way that commanders at the lower levels understood the war. The most successful of them were the lieutenants and captains. They came in with the fewest prejudices and the most creativity in how they were going to deal with the war.”¹⁶²

Sepp concluded that the U.S. Army’s performance in counterinsurgency in Iraq was inconsistent. As late as 2007, he noted “unsettling signs that the US Army’s adaptation to small wars is uneven.”¹⁶³ He highlights the example of an airborne regiment

operating with a shoot-to-kill policy – “The colonel commanding the regiment had sternly declared, ‘The Rakkasans don’t do warning shots’”¹⁶⁴ - ‘exclusion zones’, and ‘kill zones’ at the same time as McMaster was in Tal Afar. Sepp offers U.S. political and military fixation on large-scale conventional war as a major contributory factor. An army focussed on overwhelming firepower, speed and mass was likely to ignore the context of the conflict and treat all wars the same. This was the ‘Army Concept’ again.

Successful	Unsuccessful
Emphasis is placed on developing intelligence	Military direction has primacy
Attention is focused on the population, its needs, and its security	The priority is to “kill or capture” the enemy, not on gaining the support of and securing the population
Secure areas are established, and then expanded	Large battalion-sized operations are the norm rather than company or small-scale operations
Insurgents are isolated from the population (population control)	Military units are concentrated on large bases for protection and administration
There is a single campaign authority	Special Forces operations are focused on killing and capturing insurgents
Effective, pervasive psychological operations campaign supports the lines of operation	Ensuring the right sort of people are appointed to MiTTs and advisory teams is a low priority in personnel assignment
Amnesty and rehabilitation are offered to insurgents	Peacetime government processes continue as normal
The police leads; the military supports	Borders, airspace, coastlines are not controlled
Police forces are expanded, diversified and professionalized	
Conventional military forces adapt and re-organize for counterinsurgency	
Special Forces advisers are embedded with host country forces	
Building, training and mentoring host nation forces is a priority	

Table 7 - Successful and Unsuccessful Counterinsurgency Practices

Source: Kaley I. Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency”, *Military Review*, May/June 2005, p. 10

The uneven approach Sepp identified was one of the principal reasons why Casey gave orders in September 2004 to establish an academy, the COIN Centre for Excellence at Taji, with a view to it teaching FMI 3-07.22, and for it to be the focal point in Iraq for the collection, analysis and dissemination of lessons and best practice. He wanted to standardize the approach in-coming brigades took to counterinsurgency operations. Sepp recalls that,

Hix ... proposed this to Gen. Casey, and Gen. Casey, constantly after that, referred to it as the Hix Academy, and then finally gave the order, after our report ... included that specific recommendation that Bill had generated, to establish a counterinsurgency, or COIN, academy. Gen. Casey received the report at the end of August; he gave the order to establish the academy in September; in October it was set up with the cadre formed, and the first units

began to attend.¹⁶⁵

The COIN CFE mirrored the British Jungle Warfare School in Malaya, which was set up to standardize training and tactics and to ensure best practice was shared. The problem for the U.S. Army, until FM 3-24 was published and the Petraeus reforms of education and training started to take effect, the broken link between its approach and the tenets of FM 90-8 were painfully evident. While the tenets of the doctrine it contained, just like *Counter Insurgency Operations*, may have been entirely valid, the issue for the U.S. Army in Iraq was that its FM 90-8 and the approach it laid out had not shaped any common understanding of counterinsurgency.

7.3 Section III – Putting Doctrine into Practice: the New Doctrine and the Surge

7.3.1 The Conflict's Character and Its Evolution

The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 collapsed the Iraqi state and overturned its political structure by taking control from the Sunni minority and giving it to the Shi'a majority. One immediate effect of this was a primarily Sunni insurgency to which the Coalition responded and largely contained despite facing an adaptive adversary, even when AQI materialized. Iraq's collapse as a state produced sectarian conflict which, by 2006, threatened to undo the fragile progress made since 2003 to rebuild the country, and which AQI attempted to explode into civil war to exacerbate the political and military problems faced by Iraq and its coalition partners. MNF-I's slowness to recognise the deepening communal power struggle took the campaign close to failure.¹⁶⁶ Cordesman concluded in 2006 that the U.S. was "slow to see that the emergence of civil violence, and sectarian and ethnic conflict, was becoming at least as serious a threat as the Sunni insurgency."¹⁶⁷

For the first three years, MNF-I characterised the conflict in Iraq as a war against the Sunni insurgency which was resisting the Coalition's presence and its attempts to instate a new democratically based political order, and hoped to return the Sunnis to power. The result was that the U.S. Army and the USMC quickly found themselves involved in an unfamiliar form of warfare in which, as counterinsurgency theory makes clear, U.S. military prowess alone could not produce a stable Iraq. By 2006, the legacy of the Hussein regime and the prolonged failure of the Iraqi state to exercise any form of effective government caused a strategic shift in circumstances which had been obscured by the U.S. efforts which focussed on the Sunni insurgency and AQI. The nature of the conflict had changed.

Iraq's disintegration as a state, and the emergence of militant groups to fill the power vacuum, had profound implications for Iraq politically and the likelihood of MNF-I achieving success. Without a strong, responsive and effective government, the militant ethno-sectarian factions used violence and subversion to oppress and intimidate sections of the population. It was eventually recognized by MNF-I as a 'zero-sum game', where factions fought to secure their political and economic power: "a struggle for the division of power and resources among and within ethnic and sectarian communities."¹⁶⁸ In response, the Iraqi population returned to its foundations of tribe, sect or ethnic group and society, polarised under the Ba'athist regime, fractured along ethnic and sectarian lines.

By mid-2006, it was clear that the Coalition's focus on supporting the elected GOI and defeating the Sunni insurgents and AQI was adding to the problem rather than solving it. The approach was clear and unequivocal but it was "rushing to failure."¹⁶⁹ Supporting the Shi'a-led government only fuelled continued violence from and disengagement by the Sunni minority. In turn, the Shi'a government was unable to provide basic services, to lead the counterinsurgency effort and to make any serious steps to reconcile the country politically. Several destabilising forces emerged to disrupt and frustrate Iraq's stabilisation and development: "the insurgencies; communal power struggles; weak and divided institutions; destabilising aims and fears of the participants and regional interference which verged on being a foreign-fuelled proxy war."¹⁷⁰

On 15 December, Petraeus published FM 3-24. Five days later, President Bush admitted publically for the first time that the campaign in Iraq was struggling.¹⁷¹ His views reflected those of an internal MNF-I assessment which concluded, "we are failing to achieve our objectives in economic development, governance, communicating and the security lines of operation."¹⁷² The prerequisite to success, the MNF-I report identified "will be *protecting the Iraqi population* from the violence spurred on by AQI and extremist organizations such as JAM." The key to making political progress was to reduce sectarian violence. This meant having to "retain the cleared areas to guarantee a sustained security," which in turn meant there was "a need for and a mission for a surge of forces."¹⁷³

7.3.2 The Surge

The story of the Surge is highly relevant to this thesis because the arguments for it are founded on the guidance FM 3-24 provided,¹⁷⁴ and it returned U.S. strategic thinking and policy to classical counterinsurgency theory, which was at odds with the apparent and pressing logic to withdraw U.S. forces out of Iraq as quickly as possible. During the summer of 2006, a small group of military officers, some serving and some retired, and strategists concluded that the U.S. policy of Transition in Iraq was flawed and that force reductions, while politically and generally attractive in terms of reducing the casualty rate, were adding to the problem not solving it. The principal protagonists were Gen. (Retired) Keane, Fred Kagan, a former West Point history professor who worked at the American Enterprise Institute, and the then Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, who had been selected to take command of MNC-I in early December 2006. Keane's role was particularly important because he used his position as an influential, credible retired officer to challenge the accepted view of U.S. policy with its leading proponents in the Department of Defense. He argued with them persuasively enough to prompt an internal analysis of the concept of a surge, and this, in turn, gave him the opportunity to influence President Bush personally.¹⁷⁵

In early December 2006, Keane and Kagan presented their case at the Pentagon and then to the President. They argued that the campaign in Iraq, which was vital to U.S. security, was at a critical point, the approach to eliminate the insurgency by political reconciliation and accommodation had failed, and widespread sectarian violence threatened the whole campaign. Focussing on Baghdad, which they identified as the decisive point, they argued that, through a quick, decisive change in U.S. policy, security and stability could be restored. The essence of their proposal was:

We must balance our focus on training Iraqi soldiers with a determined effort to secure the Iraqi population and contain the rising violence. *Securing the population has never been the primary mission of the U.S. military effort in Iraq, and now it must become the first priority.*

- We must send more American combat forces into Iraq and especially into Baghdad to support this operation ... *to support clear-and-hold operations* ... sufficient to improve security and set conditions for economic development, political development, reconciliation, and the development of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to provide permanent security.
- American forces, partnered with Iraqi units, will clear high-violence Sunni and mixed Sunni-Shi'a neighborhoods, primarily on the west side of the city.
- After those neighborhoods are cleared, U.S. soldiers and Marines, again partnered with Iraqis, will remain behind to maintain security, reconstitute police forces, and integrate police and Iraqi Army efforts to maintain the population's security.
- As security is established, reconstruction aid will help to re-establish normal life, bolster employment, and, working through Iraqi officials, strengthen Iraqi local government.
- Securing the population strengthens the ability of Iraq's central government to exercise its sovereign powers.¹⁷⁶

Five days after Keane, Kagan et al briefed President Bush, he announced his intentions: "I'm inclined to believe that we do need to increase our troops," he said. "And I talked about this to Secretary [of Defense] Gates, and he is going to spend some time talking to the folks in the building, come back with a recommendation to me about how to proceed forward on this idea."¹⁷⁷ In January 2007, the White House published its new strategy for Iraq, *The New Way Forward*.¹⁷⁸

7.3.3 Appointing Petraeus and Revising the Joint Campaign Plan

With the doctrine published and planning for the Surge underway, hints that Gen. Petraeus would take over from Gen. Casey in Baghdad emerged in early January 2007.¹⁷⁹ Rumours about this had been circulating in military circles for nearly a year,¹⁸⁰ and they were substantiated when Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate Armed Services Committee on 23 January.¹⁸¹ During his confirmation hearing, Petraeus affirmed that "making security of the population, particularly in Baghdad, and in partnership with Iraqi forces, [was to be] the focus of the military effort."¹⁸² On 10 February 2007 Petraeus took command of MNF-I.

In March 2007, Petraeus issued initial guidance to his staff in Baghdad based on the findings of a review he commissioned when he arrived. The Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT), a multi-disciplinary team of experts which included H. R. McMaster, identified the fundamental changes to the threat and the operational situation since the last major review in 2006 and provided three sets of findings. First, it concluded that success would not be possible without accommodation and reconciliation among the competing sects, factions and parties, which meant that the political line of operation had to be the main effort. Second, it identified that conflicting factors had resulted in

slower progress than previously expected: the increasing application of Iraqi sovereignty, which increasingly hampered U.S. political freedom in Iraq; reducing support for the Coalition presence; and slow development of Iraqi ministerial capacity, largely as a result of sectarianism and corruption. Finally, it identified the key tasks the campaign needed to implement: protect the Iraqi population from criminal and extremist organizations; break the cycle of sectarian violence; establish representative and responsive government; ensure effective application of the Rule of Law; and create sustained economic development. All these tasks were, as might be expected, entirely congruent with FM 3-24 and classical counterinsurgency theory.

Casey ordered MNF-I's first joint campaign plan (JCP) to be written over the summer of 2004 and it was published that August. Thereafter, at six-month intervals, the direction the plan gave and progress the campaign had made against it were reviewed and adjusted by the MNF-I Combined Assessment and Strategy Board.¹⁸³ From the start, the JCP followed four broad lines of operation: security, governance, economic development and essential services. These were reflected in the corps and divisional plans and mirrored, eventually, in FM 3-24, albeit in the Chiarelli mould. Following the March 2007 review, Petraeus concluded that the original thrust of JCP 2006 remained broadly relevant but short- to mid-term objectives had become disconnected and this was likely to prevent long-term plans from being achieved.¹⁸⁴ The JSAT and staff from MNF-I and the U.S. Embassy then re-wrote the JCP to provide a plan which linked the creation of short-term, localized security across Iraq, through sustainable, Iraq-led security in the mid-term, to longer-term Iraqi national reconciliation and development. As such, Petraeus' first campaign plan was not a revolutionary change but it introduced new themes.

The first theme, in line with FM 3-24, was the central importance of the political line of operation (LOO). Military operations were to focus on protecting the population, which became the campaign's centre of gravity, shifting under Petraeus's direction from maintaining support within the Coalition to securing the broad support of the Iraqi people for the GOI. This would require security to be established locally, what MNF-I defined as "sufficient protection against hostile acts to enable effective civic and civil life."¹⁸⁵

All other LOOs were to be focussed toward the end of established legitimate national and regional governance. Second, the JCP placed renewed emphasis on regional diplomatic initiatives designed to secure an international and regional environment in which Iraq could flourish. Third, it introduced major cross-cutting initiatives to engage with disenfranchised but reconcilable actors – principally Sunni – to move them away from violence and to reintegrate them into Iraqi political, economic and social development. Finally, actions had to take place in partnership with the Government of Iraq and the "transition of security responsibility had to take place at a responsible rate based on conditions and the GOI's capacity."¹⁸⁶ These themes were reflected in a revised mission, developed personally by Petraeus in discussion with President Bush:

The coalition, in partnership with the government of Iraq, employs integrated political, security, economic and diplomatic means, to help the people of Iraq achieve sustainable security by the summer of 2009.¹⁸⁷

In parallel with the effect FM 3-24 was to have on the U.S. Army's training and education, the 2007 MNF-I JCP was a crucial step forward in terms of the considerable

collaborative civilian and military effort made in Baghdad to develop it. The planning process, although ostensibly military, and not readily embraced by the State Department staff, drew a wide range of ideas together, and the planning process started to shape the behaviour of all the agencies involved.¹⁸⁸

7.3.4 The Baghdad Security Plan

On 15 June 2007, Iraqi Security Forces supported by the 30,000 U.S. reinforcements made available by the Surge, launched the Baghdad Security Plan. Its objectives were to secure Baghdad and to clear what were referred to as insurgent ‘belts’ surrounding the city. The overall intention was to secure the population and to take control of Baghdad. Lt. Gen. Odierno’s plan pre-dated the announcement of the Surge by a month or so,¹⁸⁹ but it was designed explicitly to make use of the surge troops to secure the population.¹⁹⁰ By November 2007, the operation’s results were apparent and that albeit fragile security, which had been so lacking in Iraq since the invasion of 2003, had returned to Baghdad:

There has been striking success in the past few months in the attempt to improve security, defeat al-Qaeda sympathisers and create the political conditions in which a settlement between the Shi’a and the Sunni communities can be reached. This has not been an accident but the consequence of a strategy overseen by General David Petraeus in the past several months. While summarised by the single word “surge” his efforts have not just been about putting more troops on the ground but also employing them in a more sophisticated manner.¹⁹¹

David Kilcullen, a retired Australian Lieutenant Colonel and author of the thesis *Countering Global Insurgency*,¹⁹² was one of General David Petraeus’ counterinsurgency advisors in Baghdad and one of the operation’s architects. Kilcullen considered that the operation was qualitatively different from any operation in Iraq over the previous four years.¹⁹³ While a number of factors contributed to the much improved security situation – the Sunni ‘Awakening’, the increased U.S. troop numbers, a much increased ISF presence and capability, and Moqtada al Sadr’s cessation of hostilities – for the U.S. military, having a doctrine was an important factor.¹⁹⁴

Odierno’s plan embodied FM 3-24 but adapted Clear-Hold-Build into a concept of operations of Clear-Control-Retain. In an army which built its approach on doctrinal uniformity, the MNC-I variation from what was fast becoming the common terminology was unusual. There was a rational explanation: the doctrine had only just been published and, as Col. John Murray (Odierno’s planner) notes, the corps planners believed that using a commonly understood terminology was important:

Clear/Control/Retain was an attempt to put US ‘doctrinal’ terms against the problem. At the MNC-I level we all pretty much understood what Clear/Control/Build meant but they were not terms that were found in our doctrine – something a Soldier could look at in a manual and understand. Clear, Control and Retain are all specific doctrinal terms with specific meanings. Of course, it does not include things like reconciliation, reconstruction, economic development, etc. – those were added later. In many ways it was not much different than Clear/Control/Build, at least not in the effect we were attempting to accomplish.¹⁹⁵

The MNC-I plan focused on securing the people where they lived; operations would be intelligence- and Iraqi Government-led; areas were to be cleared of insurgents and then held and secured by Iraqi and Coalition forces at the same time as political and economic development programmes got underway. Iraqi and Coalition forces were to establish “localized contacts, collect excess weapons, and use human intelligence to detain large numbers of suspected militants.”¹⁹⁶ Unlike previous operations, security forces were to remain in the areas they had secured and to work to reduce the threat of violence and intimidation which sat over so much of Iraq since 2003.

Ambassador Crocker and Gen. Petraeus reflected the more promising picture in Iraq in their testimonies before Congress in April 2008.¹⁹⁷ Both emphasized that the progress made in Iraq was fragile and reversible, but it was clear from their reports that enough progress had been made to allow questions to be asked which had been almost unthinkable six months before, when the situation then was so uncertain: had the strategy worked, what exactly would constitute success, and when would America be able to leave Iraq? That these questions could be entertained at all marked a significant change in circumstances from the state of denial that existed in the two years or so after the invasion of Iraq.

FM 3-24 provided the doctrinal stimulus for planning and developing tactics appropriate for counterinsurgency. Just as Petraeus drew in experts to form the JSAT, so he and Odierno brought in proven counterinsurgency thinkers and practitioners, such as Kilcullen and Sky. Petraeus selected as his executive officer Col. Peter Mansoor who had set up the U.S. Army’s Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth in 2006 and who had been part of the Council of Colonels which analyzed the Surge option in November that year. Their collective influence was evident. As the Surge brigades arrived in Iraq, their command groups went through a five-day package at the COIN CFE in Taji, where Kilcullen and Horvath, later supported by Daniel Marston, led seminars and gave presentations on counterinsurgency doctrine and best practice from across Iraq. Petraeus gave the closing address to each course and the divisional commander and MNC-I principal planning and operational staff presented their concept of operations and laid out their expectations in terms of approach. In June 2007, Petraeus published guidance to MNF-I to focus attention on how to secure the population:

As you read, think through, talk about, and ultimately operationalize these points, always remember that in this environment, “business as usual” will not be good enough. Complacency will kill us; we must visibly improve security. A sense of urgency and good situational awareness will also be critical. Troopers on the spot, and their immediate instinctive reactions, will win or lose the perception battle at the local level. Everything we do supports and enables this battle of perceptions, locally here in Iraq and also in the global audience.¹⁹⁸

He then listed his ten requirements for the conduct of operations. They are evidence of a clear understanding of what constitutes an effective counterinsurgency approach, and they provide a clear rationale, if one were needed, as to why the approach in Iraq had to change. The positive, decisive approach Petraeus required MNF-I to adopt – changing mindsets, taking the offensive against the insurgents to secure the population, and returning to tried and tested counterinsurgency principles – is in stark contrast to that adopted at the same time in Basrah. Petraeus’ guidance is summarized below:

1. Secure the people where they sleep. Population security is our primary mission. And achieving population security promises to be an extremely long-term endeavor – a marathon, not a sprint – so focusing on this mission now is essential... This protection must be kept up until the area can be effectively garrisoned and controlled by Iraqi police.
2. Give the people *justice and honor*... *Second only to security, bringing justice to the people and restoring their honor is the key task.*
3. Integrate civilian/military efforts — this is an inter-agency, combined arms fight... *Close working relationships, mutual respect, and personal interaction between BCT/RCT commanders and PRT Team Leaders are critical to achieving “interagency combined arms”.*
4. Get out and walk — move mounted, work dismounted. *Stop by, don’t drive by. Patrol on foot to gain and maintain contact with the population and the enemy.*
5. We are in a fight for intelligence — all the time. Intelligence is not a “product” given to commanders by higher headquarters, but rather something we gather ourselves, through our own operations. *Most actionable intelligence will [be] locally produced... Work with what you have.*
6. Every unit must advise their ISF partners. Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts have put coalition and Iraqi forces shoulder-to-shoulder throughout the battlespace... *Regardless of mission, any coalition unit operating alongside ISF is performing a mentoring, training, and example-setting role.*
7. Include ISF in your operations at the lowest possible level... *Units should build a genuine, field-based partnership with local ISF units: move, live, work, and fight together.*
8. Look beyond the IED — get the network that placed it... *Over time, units that adopt a pro-active approach to IEDs will degrade enemy networks and push back the IED threat in their area. This will ultimately save more lives than a purely reactive approach.*
9. Be first with the truth... *Tell the truth, stay in your lane, and get the message out fast. Be forthright and never allow an enemy lie to stand unchallenged.*
10. Make the people choose... *People in Iraq exercise choice collectively, not just individually; win over local leaders to encourage the community to shift to the side of the new Iraq.*¹⁹⁹

Petraeus’ first principle was taken directly from classical counterinsurgency doctrine: troops had to secure and serve the population and this would have them living among the people they were to secure, in combat outposts not big bases. This completely reversed his predecessor’s process of transition – handing security responsibility to the Iraqis as soon as they had the numbers to take over – and was highly controversial, particularly as casualties continued to rise as al Qaeda fought back. But the approach worked. American military efforts, fighting alongside the Iraqi security forces, and using money from the Commanders’ Emergency Response Program, started to win

round the people and, most surprising of all, turned Sunni insurgents from fighting against to fighting alongside U.S. troopers.

7.3.5 Case Study 2: Summer 2007, 1-4 Cavalry in Baghdad

In March 2007, as 4 RIFLES were about to deploy to Basrah Palace, a U.S. Army cavalry squadron (the equivalent of a British battlegroup) deployed as part of the Surge into Doura, a Sunni neighbourhood in Rashid, at that time the most violent part of Baghdad. In its first thirty days in Doura, 1-4 Cavalry (1-4 CAV) of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, was subjected to more than fifty-two attacks, over seventy per cent of which were IED attacks.²⁰⁰ Sunni insurgents had unrestricted freedom of movement to place IEDs almost wherever they wanted. 1-4 CAV's mission was,

combat, stability, and support operations in coordination with the Iraqi Security Forces to defeat Al Qaeda and irreconcilable extremists, neutralize insurgent and militia groups, and gain the support of the people in order to reduce violence, protect the population in [the AO], and secure the eastern flank of [the neighbouring task force].²⁰¹

Lt. Col. James Crider, the commanding officer, faced two categories of insurgent, AQI and disgruntled Iraqis. AQI hid among the population and intimidated it, trying to separate Coalition Forces from the public by fostering the belief that Doura's desperate economic and social conditions were in some way the fault of the Coalition. It coerced support on the pretext that without AQI, JAM would come into the district to kill innocent Sunnis. As it did elsewhere in Iraq, AQI, recruited the young and uneducated and used money from criminal activity to turn insurgency into employment for young men with no prospects. The GOI perpetuated this by not providing any essential services, no legal system, and doing nothing to counter the perception among Sunnis that it was subject to Persian influence on all its policy decisions.²⁰² With no governance extending from the GOI, Crider was the *de facto* government. Unfortunately, to start with, he had virtually no intelligence to work with. However, by 30 June 2007, and reflecting the effort Crider put into building the intelligence picture from the ground up in a very Kitson-like approach, it had thirty-six sources.²⁰³

Crider soon realized that the enemy was hiding in plain view and that his unit could not "detain or kill [his] way to victory." It was, instead, about the people. He readjusted his plan so that he could re-establish authority over the population, physically isolate the population from the insurgents, and establish a robust intelligence network. His approach was to make contact with the population, protect and control it, collect intelligence and win the support of the population. At the same time, operations would seek to "purge the insurgents from the population." Crider's plan also acknowledged the long-term solution through establishing and legitimizing local security efforts, and through local elections. Crider later discovered that the approach he devised "is aptly described in Chapter 7 of Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare*."²⁰⁴

Making contact with and protecting the population meant, first and foremost, providing a continuous presence on the streets so he put two platoons on the streets 24 hours a day for the duration of the tour. Crider notes that this had an immediate effect: "In the 10 days following this tactic, IED attacks dropped to 4—with 2 of those found prior to detonation—and civilian murders dropped to only 1."²⁰⁵ The troops began to realize

that the longer they were out, the safer they were, not least because their permanent presence meant that it was difficult for the insurgents to plant IEDs undetected.

Crider fostered a very active interest in intelligence gathering, encouraging his soldiers to be curious. 1-4 CAV took photographs of everyone they met, platoon commanders visited every house, where the people were generally much more open and informative, and spoke to everyone they could. They gradually gained the confidence of the general population, and since they knew where people lived, and they conditioned the population to their visits, there was no need to mount large arrest operations. Platoons simply went to the target house and detained the suspect. Population control measures, including a curfew, were imposed across Baghdad. Large concrete barriers were used to isolate troubled districts, with checkpoints manned by local people – many former insurgents – opened to control general movement and channel insurgents.

Coupled with the intelligence effort, 1-4 CAV set about improving essential services. This included attempting to repair the dilapidated electricity supply, clearing and disposing of rubbish, running clinics and providing micro-loans to stimulate the local economy. Crider's operation brought fuel into the neighbourhood, thus avoiding insurgent-run price rackets, hired trusted and proven contractors and hired local workers.²⁰⁶ This approach followed FM 3-24 exactly: "Counterinsurgents should use every opportunity to help the populace and meet its needs and expectations. Projects to improve economic, social, cultural, and medical needs can begin immediately. Actions speak louder than words."²⁰⁷

Attacks against 1-4 CAV reached their height in June 2007 but they quickly fell away as the final surge brigade took its place in Baghdad, the operation to build the concrete walls got underway, the small-scale, local development projects started to improve the economic situation and Crider's approach started to have effect.²⁰⁸ The recruitment of Sons of Iraq to provide local security within Doura (a programme which ran throughout Sunni areas in Iraq and which brought a great many Sunni insurgents across to the GOI) from September saw a further marked reduction in violence, to the point where in November and December there were no attacks at all. In January 2008, most remarkably, given the security situation less than nine months before, displaced Shi'a families started to return to Doura, although there was a small increase in violence as a result. Crider summarized his battalion's achievements:

In just over four months, using the 'close encounters' strategy, and a constant presence, we forged a strong alliance with the local population, denying the insurgents the ability to operate effectively. In fact, 1-4 CAV was not attacked inside our area of operations in any way over the final six months of our time there. We detained 264 insurgents and transferred over 80 percent of them to prison. Twenty of those cases were tried in the Iraqi criminal court system. Parks and soccer fields replaced burning piles of trash, hundreds of stores reopened, and happy customers filled formerly empty streets.²⁰⁹

A journalist made the comparison between Doura before 1-4 CAV and as its tour came to an end:

A Sunni neighborhood in the Doura section of Baghdad ... is a showcase for our counterinsurgency successes. Once, for Americans to come here was a 'deliberate combat operation,' in the words of Col. Ricky Gibbs. Then, in late September, the neighborhood turned. Now, it is 'what right looks like.'²¹⁰

From his approach and the results that his battalion achieved in what had been seen as an area of Baghdad unlikely to be secured, Crider concluded that the doctrine had worked and that it was “imperative that we should embrace principles that have proven successful over time.”²¹¹

7.3.6 Comparisons: Baghdad and Basrah

The contrast with the situation in Basrah could not be sharper. Isolated, with restricted intelligence and with no possibility of employing proven doctrine to achieve any of the objectives which Crider understood he had to achieve in Doura, Sanders was limited to violent raids against JAM. Crider’s detention operations took place without incident; British raids added to the perception that it was the British who were destabilizing the city. Crider’s method reduced attacks on 1-4 CAV within weeks of taking over his area of operation; by July 2007, attacks on Basrah Palace, as Sanders noted, were at their all time high.²¹² Crider, as part of the Surge, was deployed to Doura for over a year; his British counterparts were there for only six months at a time. Crider had to take the long-term view. Despite his AO being one of the most violent and fiercely contested in Iraq, Crider pacified it using an approach which he based on a thorough understanding of doctrine backed up by a detailed study of Galula’s work. In contrast, by July 2007, British counterinsurgency doctrine had become wholly inappropriate, with no prospect at all of it being applied because its value had been nullified by the central theme of Operation ZENITH. Instead, raiding, relief in place and withdrawal were the tactical options available to British forces in Basrah. The results of the two approaches could not be more different: Crider pacified his area of operation, as the Baghdad Security Plan did across the capitol, while in Basrah, British withdrawal handed control of the city to Shi’a militias.

7.4 Section IV – Conclusions: Is FM 3-24 Effective Doctrine?

7.4.1 Criticisms of FM 3-24

From mid-2006, draft editions of FM 3-24 appeared in the public domain. Each prompted a very public debate about the validity and the efficacy of the approach Petraeus and his writing team had developed.²¹³ Crane gathered the comments, both positive and negative, from a wide range of commentators and experts.²¹⁴ They are illuminating and identify a number of potential weaknesses in the doctrine and the central approach it describes.

Some saw the doctrine as philosophically flawed. Edward Luttwak suggested that, among other things, only brutality works and that the doctrine did not reflect the truly violent character of the insurgency and the punitive measures which might be necessary to re-establish control: “Occupiers can ...be successful without need of any specialized counterinsurgency methods or tactics if they are willing to out terrorize the insurgents, so that the fear of reprisals outweighs the desire to help the insurgents or their threats.”²¹⁵ Ralph Peters considered it too politically correct, “designed for fairy-tale conflicts and utterly inappropriate for the religion-fuelled, ethnicity-driven hyper-violence of our time. We’re back to struggling to win hearts and minds that can’t be won.”²¹⁶

Stephen Biddle considered the doctrine as irrelevant since Iraq was, by 2006 in a civil war, where identity not ideology was the determining factor. Biddle suggested that most discussions of U.S. policy in Iraq assumed that it would be informed by the

lessons of Vietnam. However, since the conflict in Iraq was communal civil war, not a Maoist ‘people’s war,’ so those lessons were not directly applicable, and the U.S. policy of ‘Iraqization’ or Transition, Biddle believed was likely to make matters worse, not better.²¹⁷ Steven Metz was one who viewed the new doctrine as being too traditional, suggesting that classic COIN thinking was out of touch with contemporary realities, and was inexplicably still tied to Mao and 1960s theory, and it therefore failed to reflect the complex insurgencies that exploited factors such as globalised media and interconnectedness:

The traditional American solution to insurgency is to strengthen the regime and encourage it to reform. Today, that may no longer be adequate...the state-centric approach to counterinsurgency codified in American strategy and doctrine swims against the tide of history.²¹⁸

Jeffrey Record, in similar vein to Colin Gray who identified thirteen characteristics of what he described as the American way of war (apolitical; astrategic; ahistorical; problem-solving, optimistic; culturally challenged; technology dependent; focused on firepower; large-scale; aggressive, offensive; profoundly regular; impatient; logistically excellent; highly sensitive to casualties),²¹⁹ considered that the U.S. social, political, and military culture was too impatient and too focused on rapid success and conventional war to adjust to counterinsurgency. As a consequence, FM 3-24 would be impossible to put into practice:

The very attributes that have contributed to the establishment of unchallenged and unchallengeable American conventional military supremacy—impatience, an engineering approach to war, confidence in technological solutions to nontechnological problems, preference for decisive conventional military operations, sensitivity to casualties, and, above all, the habit of divorcing war from politics—are liabilities in approaching war against motivated and resourceful irregular enemies.²²⁰

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile was vociferous in his criticisms. A serving officer who had commanded a battalion in Baghdad in 2006,²²¹ he argued that counterinsurgency was a temporary and dangerous preoccupation of the moment, which, because of the specific skills and equipment it required, would erode the military’s ability to conduct large scale decisive operations in the future. Although he subsequently developed his arguments during 2008, the essence of his criticism of FM 3-24 was that *AirLand Battle* assumed that fighting was the essence of war and the new doctrine did not; “Fighting gave the 1986 manual a coherence that reflected the true nature of war. The Army’s new COIN manual’s tragic flaw is that the essence of war fighting is missing from its pages.”²²²

Another criticism Crane noted was that the inter-agency approach which underpinned the doctrine would “lead military practitioners to expect too much from the rest of the US government. We all talk about a comprehensive whole government approach, but the US never really gets there.”²²³ Finally, there was a criticism that FM 3-24 was essentially Luddite, neglecting technology and air power, and avoiding alternative approaches which would avoid having to put U.S. troops in harm’s way. Maj. Gen. Charles Dunlap, a U.S. Air Force lawyer, considered the doctrine was “a one dimensional, ground-centric perspective almost exclusively, as evidenced by the fact that considerations of airpower are confined to a short, five-page annex.”²²⁴ His

solution was for a joint approach to counterinsurgency that moved away from ‘boots on the ground’ – his interpretation of securing the population - to one that better reflected the capabilities of all the services involved.

While each critic presented a logical, generally dispassionate view, none of those who publicly criticized FM 3-24 would have to put the doctrine into practice. Interestingly, Petraeus took some account of what was raised and tempered and adjusted some of the contentious issues accordingly. Nagl recalls that “Ralph Peters’ criticism in particular served to impose delay on publication as Petraeus responded by adding more red meat to the book.”²²⁵ Petraeus noted that “adding the word ‘sometimes’ managed to get us out of the argument and allowed us to get on.”²²⁶

7.4.2 Is it Manageable and Accessible?

FM 3-24 was published on the internet on 15 December 2006 and was downloaded more than 1.5 million times in the first month. This did not address the issue of how people were to read it, or what specifically they were to take away from it. At over 220 pages, concern has been raised about both the manual’s length and how much information it contains. Conrad Crane explains that it was decided from the outset that the first edition had to include a great deal of information that otherwise might have been omitted to re-establish the scope of the subject and the knowledge baseline. It was General Petraeus’s intent to break new ground, and the writing team recognized that not everyone would read it from cover to cover. As a result it included very specific themes that were not covered elsewhere in doctrine.²²⁷ Nevertheless, some account was taken of the reader who merely dipped into doctrine, so each section was self-contained. The point has to be made that so much more might have been included, it brings in the How or What to Think debate and the editor’s dilemma: at what point does doctrine become too descriptive or too prescriptive?

7.4.3 Suitability as educational material?

Doctrine and what is taught should be synonymous, and this is certainly the case with FM 3-24. It became the principal text at CGSC, and for all divisional, brigade and battalion command teams deploying to Iraq. It reinforces the Learn and Adapt imperative which, as British and American experience has shown, is crucial to effective counterinsurgency. This is worth highlighting, not just in terms of learning from operations per se but also learning from history. Nagl made this point, and one of Metz’s main themes is the need to take a broader view than simply the present.²²⁸

7.4.4 Contemporary Relevance?

FM 3-24 was written to meet the needs of the soldier in the field and to provide guidance for commanders. One obvious difficulty the doctrine writer faces when starting from scratch is identifying at which level of command the doctrine is to be focused. Horvath explained the dilemma:

Pitch it too low and gearing the command chain and its decision-making would have been hard. Pitch it too high and it is difficult for the battalion commander and the company commander to translate it into action. The audience I settled on was the corps, division and brigade staff officer and that range allowed me to touch on the strategic and still get down to the coal face of COIN at the company level.²²⁹

In the case of FM 3-24, the focus is the tactical level, albeit spanning from corps to battalion in the context of a joint, combined campaign for which no doctrinal guidance existed. Here, Galula's assertion that counterinsurgency was eighty percent political, twenty percent military is relevant. It raises the question of how can doctrine be developed without a clearly articulated joint and inter-agency approach? In the absence of a unified or agreed inter-agency position in Washington DC, Petraeus and his writing team used their experience and initiative to make FM 3-24 at least a start point, one which he developed effectively with Crocker in Baghdad.

The doctrine writer generally must make a sensible assessment of what would be required in ideal circumstances for the successful completion of a campaign. He has to recognize that reality may fall well short of the ideal. There was thus a tension between what the writer presented and the soldier who had to apply doctrine in far from ideal circumstances. As the example of 1-4 CAV illustrates, soldiers had to carry out far more non-military tasks than was ideal, since civilian agencies could not or chose not to be present on the ground. While FM 3-24 explains operational design and the integration of non-military lines of operation into the campaign, this is still an area of weakness. This is not in terms of what the pamphlet outlines but in terms of the absence of doctrine and policy to draw in the full range of instruments of national power.

7.4.5 Endurability?

Whether the doctrine has general military acceptance is difficult to judge from afar. In two obvious ways, the requirement for its acceptability becomes secondary if doctrine is not just the teaching focus in the schoolhouse but it underpins the operational concept for subsequent use in the field. Teacher knows best and orders are orders. While what the principal approach to counterinsurgency the doctrine describes might have been challenged on the grounds that it was unfamiliar to some, the coverage the Baghdad Security Plan has received has gone a long way to explain what it is, why it is being followed and what is different about it.²³⁰ The approach of Clear-Hold-Build has clearly identifiable theoretical roots based, like all effective doctrine, on experience and sound analysis. Those familiar with Thompson will see his basic operational concept of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won, a concept which is similar to that which Galula puts forward and which is central to FM 3-24.

7.4.6 Was the Approach Acceptable to The Reader?

There is an inevitable tension between personal experience and doctrine, particularly when doctrine is written in the heat of war. This can make doctrine jar with the reader. The challenge for the writer is all the greater when a large proportion of the Army has been so deeply involved. FM 3-24 makes the point that a counterinsurgency campaign has stability, defensive and offensive operations running through it, with the emphasis that each set of operations required varies depending on the specific time and place. The net outcome is very likely to be a mosaic of activity which has an effect on perception and understanding. This in part explains the criticism of "that's not the war I saw" made of FM 3-24.²³¹ Petraeus recognized the doctrine's strengths but he also recognized it was not the final statement on counterinsurgency. In his view, "it had to be more explicit about the doctrine being more than classical COIN. It needs to be in big bold print who our enemies are and what the lack of government capacity really means for us."²³²

7.4.7 Was it Assimilated? Did FM 3-24 Deliver in Iraq?

The questions of whether the doctrine is useable, intuitive, applicable, relevant and current – criteria identified for it to be effective – fold into whether FM 3-24 delivered in the field. It was clear from the assessment Petraeus delivered to Congress in September 2007 that the doctrine helped engender coherency in Iraq. When interviewed in June 2007, he observed,

It is still early days but I can see that it is delivering. The doctrine is being used and this really underpins everything that we do. The doctrine is general enough that not too many changes or gaps seem apparent. The more general the doctrine is, the more applicable it is proving to be.²³³

Doctrine has to be assimilated if it is to be effective. In the case of FM 3-24, the enormous effort needed to first produce counterinsurgency doctrine and then to recalibrate training, education and the road to deployment worked. The palpable coherency that was created in Iraq, underpinned by the Clear-Hold-Build approach, enabled a clear improvement to be made in the conduct of the campaign. Doctrine does not, however, stand alone: it is the sum total of understanding, experience, training and resources, applied through a plan, to a specific set of circumstances. If a soldier's understanding is reasonably complete and is guided by sound doctrine, his likelihood of success in accomplishing his mission is that much stronger.²³⁴

7.5 Conclusions

In his introduction to Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations*, Gen. Sir Michael Carver noted it was "written for the soldier of today to help him prepare for the operations of tomorrow."²³⁵ FM 3-24 is not general enough to allow fully for future insurgencies. However the issue when it was written was not to address the aspirational or predictive function of doctrine, but the more pressing problem of winning, or in the words of *Counter Insurgency Operations* 'simply not losing', the campaign in Iraq. The authors, particularly Gen. Petraeus who faced the prospect of taking command of the operation in Iraq, could not be criticized for concentrating on the practical issues of effective campaign design and appropriate tactics. Although the British model was influential, particularly in terms of principles and general approach, the first edition of FM 3-07.22 discarded the British assumption of effective intelligence on which an insurgent-centred approach could be followed. Instead, it returned to the classical thinking of Thompson and Galula, both of whom recognized the critical importance of securing the population first. As such, FM 3-24 better reflected the dynamics of interventionist counterinsurgency, where intelligence would be difficult to establish and in the time taken to develop it the population would be at risk from insurgents until secured.

Although FM 3-24 drew criticism during and after its publication, and those criticisms are generally reasonable, the issue is not that they have been made. In themselves, they are not enough to demonstrate irrelevant or inappropriate doctrine. What matters much more is whether or not it has been assimilated and converted into an effective military approach. It was evident by the summer of 2007 that they were. As Michael O'Hanlon and Kenneth Pollack were able to observe at first hand in Baghdad:²³⁶

Here is the most important thing Americans need to understand: We are finally getting somewhere in Iraq, at least in military terms. As two analysts who have harshly criticized the Bush administration's miserable handling of Iraq, we were

surprised by the gains we saw and the potential to produce not necessarily “victory” but a sustainable stability that both we and the Iraqis could live with.

FM 3-24 provided the intellectual foundations for success on operations and has started to shape the development of counterinsurgency doctrine to meet future challenges.

The U.S. Army in 2003 was trained, equipped and organised to win large scale conventional battles and campaigns and to do so rapidly. It was not educated, trained and organised to counter armed political opposition to the government and democratic processes it strove to put in place in post-Saddam Iraq. By and large, it struggled and one of the first conclusions it came to was that it needed a doctrine on which its approach could be built. The steps that followed proved to be by no means conventional; while all the organisational strength that an army designed to win could harness was brought to bear, it also drew in a wide cross-section of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. In this case it was to develop, agree, promulgate, assimilate and act on a doctrine and approach relevant to the considerable problems it faced. The U.S. Army’s response to the conditions that prevailed in Iraq in 2006 is pivotal in terms of the development and application of counterinsurgency doctrine and sets a new benchmark for the development of doctrine in general terms.

At the time of writing, in summer 2009, the outcome in Iraq was still far from certain however in general terms, the development of FM 3-24, the change in U.S. strategy which followed, the development of a true counterinsurgency campaign plan, the surge of five additional American brigades to Iraq during 2007 and 2008, and the shift to protecting the Iraqi population, met with success.²³⁷ The approach Petraeus instilled in MNF-I enabled a level of security to be reached in Iraq which in turn allowed the necessary and significant political progress to be made. Whatever its failings, omissions, over-simplifications and misunderstandings, FM 3-24 prepared the way for success on operations and started to shape the development of counterinsurgency doctrine to meet future challenges.

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8 Conclusions

This thesis has analyzed whether the British Army's doctrinal approach for countering insurgency is still valid in the light of its experience in Iraq. Why is the British approach to counterinsurgency important? Insurgency remains a prevalent form of insecurity and instability, and in the absence of a major conventional threat to British national interests, it is one which is very likely to confront the Army for the foreseeable future. If British doctrine for counterinsurgency has been invalidated by the campaign in Iraq, there are profound implications for the way the Army approaches, and is organized, equipped and trained for counterinsurgency in the future. If the doctrine it has is valid, there are equally profound questions to be asked about why the campaign in Iraq ended as it did, with the British Army's reputation as skilful counterinsurgents doubted by its allies and the operations it conducted in Iraq of questionable strategic value.

8.1 What was the Doctrinal Approach to Countering Insurgency?

During the 1990s, the intellectual impetus provided by Field Marshal Sir Nigel Bagnall enabled the Army to publish authoritative doctrine that codified best practice, and introduced a manoeuvrist approach based on sound historical analysis. The principal influences on doctrine's development in the 1990s became the manoeuvrist approach to warfare and its accompanying philosophy of mission command. At the same time a growing pressure developed to take account of the Revolution in Military Affairs and the advantages which information technology offered. The focus at DGD&D thus switched from writing doctrine to developing concepts for future conventional, high-intensity warfare drawing on the RMA. Little attention was paid to counterinsurgency, and lessons from operations in the Balkans went largely ignored.¹ Yet those lessons suggested that the most likely form of conflict in the early part of the twenty-first century would be distinctly asymmetric, and conducted between antagonists among the population. This was a manifestly different vision than the characterization of war posited by those writing conventional concepts and the one for which the Army prepared.

The Army's manoeuvrist doctrine took three to four years to be fully assimilated through education and training.² Once it had been, the Army demonstrated great confidence in applying its manoeuvrist approach. It started to discuss and develop doctrine's central tenets and to use them in shaping tactical- and operational-level thinking. The new doctrine was introduced successfully into the campaign in Northern Ireland, where previously there had been no doctrine *per se*. In turn, lessons from Northern Ireland were used to shape revisions of counterinsurgency doctrine. Mission command proved effective in the Balkans where a relatively small British force was dispersed over a large area, and initiative proved essential. In March and April 2003, the advance on and investment of Basrah was founded on the Army's warfighting doctrine which proved effective in high tempo coalition operations with the U.S. It provided the common language of operations and provided the common understanding of approach and practice.

Counter Insurgency Operations was written as part of the revision of the Field Manual series. It blended the key tenets of manoeuvrist doctrine, operational art, and the operational framework with the well-established themes of counterinsurgency: political primacy, co-ordinated government approach, pre-eminence of intelligence, separating insurgents from their support and then neutralizing them. It was entirely recognizable in terms of the essential British approach. Unusually for official doctrine, it was written because the author thought relevant counterinsurgency doctrine would be necessary, not because of any organizational recognition that counterinsurgency might be important. On the contrary, the Army's generally held view in the late 1990s was that counterinsurgency was no longer relevant as a form of warfare; instead Peace Support Operations provided the new paradigm for future operations short of full scale war. If these types of campaign materialized, the Army took the view that an army trained for high intensity warfare could 'step down' to deal with the lesser problem. It held that the converse was not true. The missing piece in this logic, as Kitson identified twenty years before, was that officers had to be educated in the demands of planning, conducting, and training for counterinsurgency. This did not happen.

Running against the general trend of conventional warfare, Brigadier Gavin Bulloch, the Army's principal doctrine writer, reviewed the Army's existing counterinsurgency doctrine and the principal theories. He then identified the main lessons from Northern Ireland, and then wrote *Counter Insurgency Operations*. He consulted those who had something to contribute to the counterinsurgency debate, he avoided those who he considered would be disruptive, and he short-circuited the intrusive process of circulating working drafts of the doctrine.³ *Counter Insurgency Operations'* publication went almost unnoticed. Its much-restricted distribution to the Staff College limited the extent to which the new doctrine could be assimilated by the Army as a whole. The move to joint command and staff training further marginalized counterinsurgency as a subject and severely reduced the only opportunity staff college students had to learn about the complexities of counterinsurgency. The U.S. Army had a similar experience although by design, as part of the 'never again' response to Vietnam, counterinsurgency as a subject was removed from the core syllabi at the Staff College and arms schools. In Iraq, both armies struggled to adjust to the increasing violence and complexity of the insurgencies. One army had both relevant experience and a published doctrine on which to draw, the other had a published but little known doctrine but no recent experience of counterinsurgency. Their respective responses were very different. Even before the Petraeus-led reformation, the U.S. Army learnt from and adapted to conditions in Iraq; the British response was to reduce its presence and withdraw which ran counter to its doctrine for counterinsurgency.

Although Bulloch developed new principles for *Counter Insurgency Operations*, they reflected those themes which had evolved as doctrine for counterinsurgency evolved from 1909. As such, Bulloch's principles are readily identifiable as classical counterinsurgency thinking and for the first time they provided a logical sequence against which a campaign could be planned, conducted and assessed. The concept of operations it described was a development of the by now well established and proven Ink Spot method. The Ink Spot's sequence is important for this analysis because the British operation in Iraq followed almost its exact opposite: secure a base area, establish a firm forward operational base, secure a controlled area, consolidate the controlled areas, and continue to restore and extend government control. A similar

sequence can be found in all similar western doctrine and in the principal theories. British campaign experience, notably in Malaya, Kenya, Borneo, and the Oman, amply demonstrates the efficacy of this approach. In contrast, the operation in Iraq secured bases in Basrah and Amarah but rather than develop them into secure forward bases, from which areas could be controlled and consolidated, a process of force reductions and withdrawals followed, without restoring and extending Iraqi government control.

Like the British, the U.S. Army had doctrine for counterinsurgency. It was published in FM 90-8 *Counter Guerrilla Operations*. Unlike the British Army, which followed a twin-track approach of conventional armoured warfare in Germany and counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland, the U.S. Army institutionally turned its back on counterinsurgency after the Vietnam War, and instead concentrated on major combat operations. It therefore had no organizational understanding of the complexity of counterinsurgency on which to build. FM 90-8 stressed the importance of protecting the population, using minimum force, being justifiable in the eyes of the population, doing maximum benefit and minimum damage, and isolating the insurgent physically and psychologically. Its approach used intelligence, psychological operations, civil affairs, population control, assistance to the host nation's security forces and, finally, tactical operations to secure the population and allow the host country to address the root cause of the insurgency.

8.2 Was the Doctrinal Approach Sound Theory and Relevant?

Side-by-side, FM 90-8 and *Counter Insurgency Operations* provided a comprehensive view of insurgency, and they both described a classical approach to counter it. It would be tempting to question their relevance in 2003 since neither addressed the specific questions of large scale militias or transnational insurgencies of the type which emerged in Iraq. To do so would ignore the central tenet laid out in both manuals: to counter an insurgency the host government is required to re-establish control over its country. This means securing the population, isolating the insurgent and neutralizing the effects of the insurgency both physically and psychologically. Effective counterinsurgency focuses on securing the population and not solely on the insurgent. Both extant British and U.S. doctrine in 2003 were sound and relevant to contemporary problems. They were both weak, however, in the area of multinational operations. Neither took account of the complexity of the contemporary strategic environment, nor the tensions inherent in major campaigns.

The pressing issue for both armies was the extent to which respective doctrines were understood. The U.S. case is clear cut: it was not. There were, however, a small number of well-informed officers who understood counterinsurgency, and who seized the opportunity to develop an appropriate new doctrine on which the U.S. Army's approach to the campaign in Iraq could be built. Gen. Petraeus proved to be the catalyst for change, and he provided the leadership, energy and top-level protection needed to get the doctrine published and introduced into training and education at a remarkable speed. There is no evidence that he achieved, or indeed was seeking to achieve sustained organizational consensus; there is, however, ample evidence that he got what he thought the U.S. Army needed. That was a sound doctrine, which was good enough to form a startpoint for reform of the U.S. Army's approach to counterinsurgency, and relevant enough to help him change mindsets quickly enough to avoid defeat in Iraq.

By contrast, the British Army had a recognizable organizational aptitude for counterinsurgency. *Counter Insurgency Operations* provided sound, relevant theory and was readily identifiable in terms of the classical British approach. This thesis has identified eight themes of counterinsurgency which recur throughout British doctrine and represent the essential elements of the approach. *Counter Insurgency Operations* has all but one of them: political primacy and the need for a political aim, the requirement for co-ordinated government action, legal considerations, the importance of intelligence, the need to separate the insurgent from his support, the need to maintain public confidence, the requirement to neutralize the insurgent.

The element missing in *Counter Insurgency Operations* is education and training. This was not a careless omission on Bulloch's part, but a reflection of the conditions in 1995 when *Counter Insurgency Operations* was written. The draft had been developed at the Staff College and taught there in 1994, as was all Army doctrine. Doctrine was actually that which was taught. It was reasonable for him to assume that staff-trained officers understood counterinsurgency theory and, because the counterinsurgency module at Camberley was so designed, they could analyze and evaluate its component parts and its key tenets. Many officers were very familiar with operations in Northern Ireland and this added context to the theory taught at Camberley.

By 2001, this was no longer the case. Students at JSCSC were simply not taught counterinsurgency doctrine. *Counter Insurgency Operations* may have been on the reading list but it was a flawed assumption that students would read, understand and learn the complexities of insurgency, counterinsurgency, campaign design, and the British approach. Furthermore, the campaign in Northern Ireland had reached its final phase. The threat of terrorism remained but military operations no longer matched the tempo and intensity which they had up to the first PIRA Ceasefire in 1994. The result was that the Army had a field manual which laid out a valid approach. It was not, however, understood in the way it had been only six years before, and there was no operational theatre in which it could put theory into practice. Of course, there were individual exceptions. Officers steeped in the Northern Ireland campaign undoubtedly understood the requirements for successful counterinsurgency, but they understood it from a practical viewpoint rather than the theoretical. Those who had worked at headquarters level in Northern Ireland knew about campaign management, but within the Army as a whole, no one had been instructed in the complexities of putting a campaign together. By 2003, it is safe to conclude that the Army was familiar with counterinsurgency, but it was not well-versed in its general theory, and far less its doctrine.

8.3 Did the Doctrine work and, if not, why?

8.3.1 Political Primacy and Political Aim

Once the British Government took the decision in 2006 to reinforce operations in Afghanistan, the political aim was to withdraw from Iraq. While UK civil authorities retained primacy, the British operation in Southern Iraq had neither the resources nor the opportunity to defeat the political subversion of Shi'a extremists, neither did it have the means to neutralize the insurgents. In the absence of a fully co-ordinated plan, by default, interest focussed on military operations. There is no evidence of a clear UK national plan other than to withdraw; any account of longer term post-Insurgency conditions in Iraq was taken by the U.S. campaign plan, but really only after Petraeus

and Crocker forced the issue in mid-2007. While British security forces were aware of the complexities of the provincial and national Iraqi political situation, the discontinuous relationship at provincial level, and limited intelligence coverage limited the extent to which they could subsequently act.

8.3.2 Co-ordinated Government Action

Co-ordinated government machinery was not established at every level for the direction of the British campaign. Successive commanders worked to develop and improve local arrangements with those representatives of other government departments present, but working groups and committees lacked the same focus and authority which characterized the emergency committees set up in Malaya or those subsequently formed in Northern Ireland. Doctrine calls for close co-operation between Civil and Military authorities, and effective intercommunication must be maintained between departments and agencies. These may have been achieved in Basrah but this was not evident in Whitehall. The U.S. eventually achieved a co-ordinated approach in Baghdad, largely through the forceful leadership of Petraeus and Crocker but this was at campaign level. The Americans too lacked co-ordinated government machinery in Washington to develop strategy and unify inter-departmental efforts.

8.3.3 The Law

The essential British approach requires a legal system to be maintained adequate for the needs of the moment. There is no evidence that the legal framework within which British forces operated was inadequate, and for the most part they operated in accordance with British law. There were a handful of cases where soldiers broke the law and were subsequently court martialed. The Army went on to investigate a number of cases of serious abuse and unlawful killing of civilians in Iraq in 2003 and early 2004. It found that there was in those cases, a failure of those involved to obey the law and also to reflect the Army's core values. The wider issue at first in Iraq was the absence of Iraqi rule of law. This was addressed through the U.S.-led campaign effort to develop legal capacity and to foster belief in the value of the Iraqi judicial system. These efforts, in line with FM 3-24, serve to reinforce the essential British view of the importance of conducting a counterinsurgency campaign through the legal system and the authorities it provides.

8.3.4 Intelligence

Since 1923, British doctrine has emphasised the importance of creating an intelligence organisation to integrate intelligence into the co-ordinated government response. In Iraq, efforts to set up such an organization proved frustratingly difficult. This was both in integrating the considerable volume of intelligence available from military sources, and in capturing and exploiting the limited and reducing flow of intelligence provided by the Iraqi population. The essential British approach placed emphasis on developing an understanding of the background to the unrest, identifying the dissident elements, having good topographical knowledge of the area of operations, and maintaining a deeply rooted sense of the importance of security and employ effective security measures.

In Southern Iraq, it is now clear that it took too long to identify the underlying causes of insurgent activity. By the time they were understood, insurgent groups had gained the power and control that they needed, and British and Iraqi forces were not strong enough

to counter them directly. This experience only serves to reinforce the critical importance of intelligence: all involved in countering an insurgency must understand the problem, and for that level of understanding being developed quickly. Kitson was clear that the requisite level of understanding was built from the bottom up, with company commanders learning about their area of responsibility and being pro-active, not reactive in gaining intelligence.

British forces were never strong enough to control their area of responsibility fully, or to gain the confidence of the local population so that the population provided intelligence on which operations could then be based. U.S. forces experienced the same paucity of intelligence until Gen. Odierno ordered the move out to forward-based forces in which U.S. forces were to live to secure the people where they lived. The comparison between the intelligence picture and the security situation in Basrah and Baghdad in September 2007 could not be starker. British forces, having withdrawn from Basrah, had virtually no intelligence from the population; U.S. forces established local security across some of the most troubled and violent districts of Baghdad, attacks against them fell and the intelligence picture was improving greatly. Iraqi forces experienced the same upwards spiral of intelligence, noted by Thompson, Kitson and Galula, when they retook Basrah in April 2008. The pre-eminence of intelligence is underlined by the campaign in Iraq.

Commensurate with developing understanding is the need to maintain it. Continuity among intelligence staff and in the approach followed proved remarkably difficult to maintain. It was a problem heightened by the rate at which battlegroups and headquarters changed over. The British policy was for units and headquarters to serve for six months. The U.S. response was to lengthen tour lengths. Although this placed increased pressure on individuals and unit cohesion, particularly those in the most violent areas, this gave units the time to learn about their area of operation and to understand its dynamics. The U.S. method proved to be effective. Rapid changes among British commanders proved to be utterly disruptive for their Iraqi counterparts, whose culture placed emphasis on relationships and trust. While continuity among British commanders and senior staff appointments was eventually addressed and tours extended, by the time policy was adjusted, the damage had been done. The essential British approach depends on continuity; the experience of Operation TELIC reinforces its importance. No change is necessary; the doctrine simply has to be followed.

8.3.5 Separate the Insurgent from his Support

The essential approach requires base areas to be secured and for them to be expanded to allow government authority to be re-established over former insurgent areas. A government's first move must be to bring the population back under its control and give it effective security. This will isolate insurgents from the rest of the community, disrupt their contacts, and allow the security forces to maintain a continual attack on the periphery of the enemy organization to eliminate the rank and file and to open up opportunities for deeper penetration. All this is tied into an information campaign to "drive a wedge between enemy elements and the people and to develop resistance to the political ideologies of the former."⁴ But most importantly it would help to increase the people's confidence in the government.

Attending to the psychological aspect of the campaign is as important as establishing a strong physical security presence. It is evident that the British presence was never strong enough to secure the Iraqi population; the reverse Ink Spot meant that it was

never a possibility. However, as with so many aspects of the British doctrinal approach, although it was not applied in Southern Iraq, when the U.S. moved out of its big bases to secure the population in Baghdad, the approach worked. The extent to which insurgents had the support of the general population in the south is unclear. It was generally felt that the militias had a tight control over the population and that they were well supported. Operation Charge of the Knights soon showed how tenuous that control was, as JAM leadership fled under pressure, and the population started to point out arms caches and individual insurgents and criminals.

8.3.6 Maintain Public Confidence

The essential British approach seeks to ensure that the insurgents do not win the war for the minds of the people by fostering strong and popular security forces, and by safeguarding civilians. This means using effective publicity and counter-propaganda to influence public opinion, and requiring the security forces to maintain relations with the press. It emphasizes using the minimum force necessary to achieve military objectives. Almost from the start, the British presence in Southern Iraq struggled to win public confidence among Iraqis and domestic support for the war was never strong. Public confidence continued to decline as the campaign progressed, and the campaign never fully or effectively addressed the requirement, identified in *Counter Insurgency Operations* 'to win and hold popular support, both at home and in the theatre of operations.'⁵ Minimum force was followed as a policy and nothing from Operation TELIC suggests that its underpinning logic, which is to protect the population, has been undermined. On the contrary, if the doctrine had been applied fully, and greater efforts made to secure the population, Iraqi confidence may have been higher and the security situation may not have deteriorated as it did. Operation Charge of the Knights restored confidence in the Iraqi Security Forces and the security situation benefitted accordingly with an increased flow of intelligence and information.

8.3.7 Neutralize the Insurgent

Neutralizing insurgents requires adequate force levels to be deployed. The population has to be secured where it lives, and it must be secured on a permanent basis. This means that the military commander must establish and maintain a continuous and effective presence on the ground. Security forces must then remain adaptable, maintain the ability to carry out offensive action with surprise, and be mobile. It has been emphasized a number of times that force levels were never high enough to be considered 'adequate'. As British force levels reduced, so did the tactical options available to commanders, and as bases were closed and forces concentrated on the COB at Basrah Air Station, so the ability to introduce surprise and unpredictability into plans reduced. Moves into and out of the city were limited to a few routes which channelled British movement and left operations open to ambushes and increasingly more complex and extensive IED obstacle belts. Their gradual withdrawal from Basrah city ceded control of the population to the militias, and restricted British options to raiding, which produced only a temporary and limited security effect.

U.S. forces suffered similar problems as they concentrated on large FOBs and had to 'commute to work.' The limited time troops could spend in their areas of operation after driving for several hours made their operations increasingly less effective. They were channelled by limited routes, they lacked HUMINT, and increasing casualties, particularly from IEDs, created the sense that the campaign had become unwinnable.

The Surge and the switch to classic counterinsurgency reversed this, with U.S. and Iraqi forces living among and protecting the population. They soon outmatched insurgents in Baghdad and security was restored on a localized basis but one which spread across the city over the coming months. Outbreaks of violence from JAM in March and April 2008 were dealt with aggressively, breaking up the militia's military leadership, destroying many of its mortar and rocket teams and removing its safe-haven in Sadr City. The U.S. experience supports the long-held view that adequate forces are necessary to secure the population; the British experience demonstrates the dangers of under-resourcing an operation of this sort.

8.3.8 Education and Training

The essential British approach ensures that forces are trained for the theatre of operations. This was the case in Operation TELIC. A great deal of effort went into preparing forces for operations in Southern Iraq. At the tactical level, companies and battlegroups were trained in specific and often rapidly evolving tactics, techniques and procedures. There is, however, no evidence that doctrine served any planning purpose at all, despite it having been written specifically with a counterinsurgency campaign in mind. In the six years leading up to the invasion of Iraq, education in counterinsurgency was negligible. Although the Army published *Counter Insurgency Operations* (1995), it was not taught at JSCSC to the level necessary to inculcate future commanders and staff officers with any meaningful understanding of a highly complex form of warfare. The response came from the bottom up. Two years into the campaign, battlegroups started to arrange their own in-theatre education packages to ameliorate the problem. Young captains who had been taught counterinsurgency as part of their promotion course were the driving force. They alone had been taught the history of counterinsurgency, its principles and best practice. Counterinsurgency is a complex business. It is not, as both the British operation and the U.S. approach from 2003 to late 2006 show, something which should be learnt in the theatre of operation in the middle of a campaign. While forces must learn from and adapt to circumstances, they must be, as Kitson observed, attuned to the complexity of the problem before they are deployed. In the case of Operation TELIC they were not.

8.4 What was it about the campaign in Iraq which made theory difficult to apply in practice?

In overall terms, the issue at stake for the British campaign in Iraq was that policy rather than doctrine or conditions on the ground determined how it developed. Until Iraq's civil war took the campaign to the brink of defeat, the imperative was to hand over security to Iraqi forces as quickly as possible. This gave some credence to the reverse Ink Spot. When Bush and Petraeus turned the whole U.S. approach on its head, the weaknesses of the British method were exposed. While British forces had a base from which to operate, the Iraqi government was unable to demonstrate its ability to govern in Southern Iraq; the population was not secured from insurgents, the insurgents were the authority until defeated in April 2008; there was no 'Controlled Area', nor was there any attempt to consolidate or expand it. Petraeus introduced conditions-based transition, and emphasized that transition not based on security conditions would result in chaos. The British withdrawal from Basrah City in 2007 took little account of the actual security conditions in the city, and it left Baswaris exposed to militia violence and coercion. Whitehall did not agree to the conditions-based plan, and contrary to

doctrine and Kitson's guidelines for working with allies, MND(SE) deferred to London and not to the Coalition chain of command in Baghdad.

A principal compounding problem in the campaign was the failure to identify the true character of the problem correctly. The question was raised at the beginning of this thesis; what happens when doctrine is relevant but it is not understood? In the case of Southern Iraq, it meant that otherwise highly competent, well-trained officers misjudged the problem they faced. In comparison to the violent insurgency which flared up in and around Baghdad, the relative early calm in the south fostered the view that Iraq was a stability operation akin to what went on in the Balkans model. Yet the presence from an early stage of militias, prepared to resort to violence in pursuit of their aims, met the doctrinal definition of insurgency. The fact that the Iraqi government and British forces were confronted by powerful, violent militias meant that a comprehensive campaign plan was required. Doctrine explained that a national plan should be nested within the objectives of the host nation and the multinational force. This was not the case in Southern Iraq. The Army did not understand its own doctrine, and did not follow its own precepts. This created a condition which was beyond the influence of those with experience from Northern Ireland or the Balkans. In campaign terms, the British operation became more one of making a manageable contribution to the Coalition effort rather than making a decisive contribution.

One counter-balance might have been the development of Theatre or Operation Instructions. They were of proven value in Malaya, Kenya and, eventually, Northern Ireland, where they set general doctrine in the context of the operational theatre. Yet no such doctrine was written for Iraq. Why? The campaign in Iraq was highly complex and multi-faceted with a wide range of cultural, political and ethno-sectarian influences. The political situation was particularly volatile. The U.S. taught every brigade and battalion its counterinsurgency doctrine from December 2004. By comparison, although every British brigade was taught the tactics for company-level operations, they were not taught doctrine in the same way as their U.S. counterparts. It took initiative from individual commanding officers once they had deployed to realize that something was missing from their preparation and called for in-theatre counterinsurgency education. The Tactical Aide Memoire, regularly amended as the campaign wore on, provided low-level procedures, but there was no attempt to set them in the wider context of operations in Iraq. By contrast, although the U.S. did not produce a theatre handbook, they used their interim doctrine and finally FM 3-24 as the doctrinal foundation for their training and final preparation.

Practical constraints placed on the British force, in particular troop numbers, meant that from the very start, the British operation could only have a limited effect on the security situation. What followed was the Ink Spot in reverse: instead of building a security infrastructure from which governance could be established, the British operation consistently scaled down efforts from its high water marks of presence and influence in summer 2003. The British operation made developing Iraqi security forces a priority but not with the level of commitment to make an appreciable difference. Those forces which had been developed under British guidance failed at their first test and 10 Iraqi Division was eventually recognized to be so thoroughly infiltrated by the Shi'a militia that a second division had to be raised. By comparison, the U.S. not only trained and equipped Iraqi forces but its forces fought alongside them, and provided crucial enabling capabilities of intelligence, firepower and logistic support. When British

forces adopted the same model in March 2008, it proved to be highly successful, just as it had been when used in the past. There was nothing new in embedding training teams with indigenous forces; *Counter Insurgency Operations* explained its importance, principally because of the success the approach had had in the campaigns in Malaya and the Oman. Attention to the doctrine and some knowledge of the lessons from history were missing from the campaign.

Doctrine has traditionally been viewed as ‘that which is taught;’ if doctrine is not taught, does the Army have a doctrine? Without the philosophy contained in doctrine being assimilated, where is the central idea? There was none. The view of what the campaign was changed with every new commander. Some came closer to recognizing the reality than others. There is, however, no evidence that there was anything wilful or incompetent in this; as the campaign rolled on, so successors had to live with decisions made or the effect of indecision from previous tours, often being desperately frustrated by the conditions which they faced. Continuity, the watchword in Northern Ireland, became institutionalized discontinuity as the campaign veered from being cast as nation-building, to peace support, to stability operations, to – eventually – counterinsurgency, and then counter-corruption, crucially, with no underpinning intelligence database, or established connections with the Baswari population. With every change came a further reduction in forces available to commanders in Iraq, not matched by a commensurate increase in the capacity or capability of the Iraqi security forces, nor linked to the security situation in Southern Iraq.

8.5 Where does Iraq leave the British approach to countering insurgency?

The British Army found itself intellectually unprepared for what transpired in post-invasion Iraq. Many of its officers had relevant experience from Northern Ireland and the Balkans, but they had not been given the education necessary in counterinsurgency to establish a common philosophical foundation on which they could build. The Army was not familiar with its own doctrine, and this prevented it from establishing the unified and consistent approach necessary in counterinsurgency. The little which was known about counterinsurgency doctrine was applied idiosyncratically and sometimes inappropriately. As a consequence, it is difficult to make a case that the Army’s doctrine was inappropriate, or that it was a significant contributory factor in how the campaign developed. On the contrary, as the campaign progressed the Army maintained the view that its principles remained valid. Indeed in June 2006 the Army’s Doctrine and Concepts Committee endorsed them as valid. All those interviewed agreed: there is no evidence that the principles *per se* were inappropriate to contemporary campaigns or indeed invalidated by Iraq. Yet all the evidence indicates that they were not followed. As the result of his sound analysis in 1994, Bulloch provided a logical set of principles which could be used to both plan a campaign and to assess its progress. They were not tested as intended, yet when the U.S. applied its new doctrine, which drew heavily on Bulloch’s work, and resourced the campaign in Iraq, the principles were used to good effect.

Doctrinal principles underpin the two armies’ respective operational concepts. In the British case the approach was the Ink Spot; in the U.S. case it was Clear-Hold-Build, adapted by MNC-I to match the circumstances in Baghdad. There is no appreciable difference between the two. The British approach was not followed, except briefly and

in a very limited way with Operation SINBAD. It offered a glimpse of what might have been achieved if the doctrine had been followed. By contrast, properly resourced and with the clear intent of establishing security and government control, the U.S. Surge demonstrated that the underpinning logic of the Ink Spot method remained sound: counterinsurgency depends on security, and establishing security requires force numbers. British forces in the South did not have enough troops to achieve the necessary level of security, and their efforts to develop the Iraqi Army were limited in effect when compared with the performance of U.S.-trained divisions. This division became apparent when sufficient forces were made available in March 2008, in support of Prime Minister Maliki's Iraqi-led security operation to retake Basrah. The plan he adopted was based on Clear-Hold-Build, and Operation Charge of the Knights was entirely in keeping with the Ink Spot method.

It was established early in this thesis that one aspect of the doctrine which was clearly lacking was its failure to address multinational operations in a meaningful way. Virtually none of the experience from the Balkans carried over into doctrine, and although the Army had doctrine for UN operations, the traditional approach of writing British doctrine for British-led operations had been overtaken by policy which assumed that future operations would be with the U.S. Basrah and the south east became neither an exemplar of the British approach nor a fully integrated part of the overall U.S. campaign. MND(SE) used British nomenclature and staff processes, and the difference between the Shi'a south and the rest of Iraq became an operational divide. The approach adopted in the south was markedly different, both in intentions and tactics, from that in the U.S. area. The significance of the difference only became apparent when President Bush took the decision to reverse his strategy in Iraq in late 2006. By then, British and Iraqi forces could not maintain security in the south, and they were not in a position to replicate what American and Iraqi security forces were by summer 2007 achieving in operations in and around the capital. The contrast between the two units examined in the two case studies – 1-4 CAV and 4 RIFLES – could not be sharper. Both acknowledged they were fighting an insurgency yet one followed classic doctrine and fought for and pacified its area of operation in Baghdad; the other had to resort to warfighting doctrine to conduct raids so that it could withdraw from Basrah city.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the doctrine available to the British Army in 2003 was valid in terms of counterinsurgency theory, but there is no evidence that the doctrine was in any way a determining aspect of the campaign in Iraq. For an army with such an extensive history in small wars and counterinsurgency, the second point is an almost unimaginable conclusion to draw, akin to the British Expeditionary Force deploying to France in 1914 without having a formal understanding of organization, tactics and administration laid out in its *Field Service Regulations*. For the British in Basrah, although some commanders used their previous experience and understanding of counterinsurgency intuitively and effectively, for the most part, those interviewed turned to doctrine retrospectively. Thus, while *Counter Insurgency Operations* laid out all the key elements for effective counterinsurgency, it did not provide the philosophical foundation on which the operation in Southern Iraq should have been built.

British operations in Iraq between 2003 and 2009 were relatively modest in terms of military forces committed. The political and strategic outcomes of Operation TELIC are much more significant than the scale of effort required. The British Army's reputation for counterinsurgency has suffered a major setback, on a par with the

withdrawal from Aden in 1967. Beckett and Pimlott noted that when the British encountered insurgency in Palestine between 1945 and 1948, “their neglect of lessons of Ireland left them little prepared to respond satisfactorily. Thus the British were required to extemporise a response to insurgency in Palestine as it developed.”⁶ This problem was repeated in Iraq. It might be tempting to regard the campaign as a strategic aberration and therefore dismiss it from future discussion of counterinsurgency. This would not be right. It must inform future analysis because it has much to tell us about the conduct of operations. Reappraisal of the British operation must be part of any effort to avoid repeating the mistakes of Iraq. Like any campaign, it has its limits, and the applicability of lessons from Operation TELIC will depend on the circumstances of future campaigns. The Army’s doctrine for counterinsurgency remains sound but, to return to the original definition of doctrine, it must be taught.

¹ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 3 November 2008.

² Wall, interview, Blagdon, 15 May 2007.

³ Bulloch, interview, Enford, 3 November 2008.

⁴ *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)*, 1963, p. 66.

⁵ *Counter Insurgency Operations*, p. B-3-1.

⁶ Beckett and Pimlott, *Armed Forces & Modern Counter-insurgency*, p. 5.

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