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My first lesson on insurgency was not in a classroom but in the village of Haditha, Iraq. As a machine gunner on a three-vehicle convoy, our mission was to put the entire area in and around Haditha on curfew for the nearby attack on a similar convoy the day before. With the loud speaker on the psychological operations vehicle conveying a message to the residents of the town, we put out the message: after dark, stay inside your homes. As a soldier, the whole idea made sense to me: all non-combatants stay inside while we patrol the streets looking for the bad guys. We patrolled the surrounding area with the message until well after dark. Then the hunt was on for the violators of the curfew. We patrolled the village and surrounding area for over four hours and saw nothing. The order was eventually given to head back to the forward operating base.

In order to get back to the base, we had to pass through the center of the town. The one thing that I can remember from that night was that the village was strangely silent, not a dog on the street. The lights of the town were blinding to me through my night vision goggles so I flipped them up and scanned using my unaided eyes. At that moment, I heard an explosion and looked back to the last vehicle only to see it get rocked by a second rocket propelled grenade. I began to lay suppressive fire on the ambush area. Hearing the pop and crack of bullets above me, I turned and shot in the direction from which the fire came. The ambush was extremely advanced. Fire came from both sides of the road and the attempt at isolating the last vehicle with rocket-propelled grenades.

The next morning, I found out that we had killed five insurgents, also doing severe damage to the hospital and one of the nearby mosques. The group responsible for the attacks was known as "The Party of the Return." From then on, the situation only got worse in Haditha. Within two months the town's pro-American mayor had been killed and there were countless attacks on coalition forces in the area. Recently, Haditha was the site of the alleged killings of civilians by Marines after a similar ambush.

In executing my research, I found that there are interesting parallels between the Iraq insurgency and the Algerian insurgency.

Introduction and History of the Conflict in Algeria

> Over the past decade, from Algeria to Vietnam to the Middle East, it has been demonstrated
> that a well-organized and sufficiently financed insurgency is nearly impossible to defeat (Bender, 331).

"Insurgency is a technology of military conflict characterized by small, lightly armed bands practicing guerilla warfare from rural base areas (Fearon and Latin 75)." As in Algeria, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq the tactics of the insurgent are much the same. With shootings, bombings and other unconventional acts being their tools. It has become increasingly difficult to fight an enemy with conventional means because the enemy is not fighting a "Western Style" of warfare (Poole 152).

The conventional response to these tactics seems to be almost universal between the two conflicts in Algeria and Iraq. The response involves conventional means, to include: saturation patrols, firepower based tactics, and attempts at isolating the enemy. The response also includes unconventional tactics: torture of detainees, mass roundups of suspected insurgents, and mirroring insurgent techniques and tactics (Poole 156-158).

The French had colonial rule over Algeria from 1830 to 1962. The insurgency began in 1954 and lasted until 1962. The primary insurgent group was known as the *Front de Liberation Nationale* or FLN. The FLN was created by the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA) in order to conduct paramilitary action against the French in Algeria. To include being an insurgent group, the FLN was also evolved into a political entity and swallowed up most of its political opposition before 1956. This created a unified front against the French politically and militarily (Horne 83-104). "The fundamental face about insurgency is that the insurgents are weak relative to the governments they are fighting, at least at the start of operations (Fearon and Laitin 79)." The FLN needed support of the nations other insurgent groups to survive and as stated before, they did so early on in the conflict.

Knowing that they could not fight the French conventionally, one of the staples of the strategy of the FLN was to never engage in combat with the French via conventional means (Horne 83-104). "In the early days of the Algerian War, once the

FLN realized it was not strong enough to take on the powerful French Army, it concentrated its attacks on the native police loyal to France. Result: a deadly loss of morale among the police with defections to the FLN and the French Army defensively reduced to protecting the police. . ." (Horne 18). This shows the well thought out and unconventional means that the FLN used to reduce the effectiveness of the French military without actually engaging them in linear warfare.

Here the problem lies: how do countries like the United States and France stack up against insurgencies? What lessons can the United States learn from the Algerian War?

The Winning of Hearts and Minds

> The power to hurt can be counted among the most impressive attributes of military force. . . . It is measured in the suffering it can cause and the victims' motivation to avoid it. . . . To inflict suffering gains nothing and saves nothing directly; it can only make people behave to avoid it. The only purpose, unless sport or revenge, must be to influence somebody's behavior, to coerce his decision or choice. . . . For the United States modem technology has drastically enhanced the importance of pure, unconstructive, un-acquisitive pain and damage. . . . Military strategy can no longer be thought of as the science of military victory. . . . It is now equally, if not more the art of coercion, of intimidation, and deterrence (Shultz, 444).

One of the most interesting parallels between the two conflicts is the concept of the "Winning of Hearts and Minds." The two insurgencies differ in the fact that the French were trying to hold on to colonial power in Algeria and the United States is attempting to set up a friendly democracy in Iraq. The French empire at the time was highly prone to civil wars and had a total of six colonial wars within the 1950s alone and the United States failed to extinguish the insurgency in Vietnam in the 1960s.

One of the main clashes within the military is the struggle between the "Winning of Hearts and Minds" and the combat role. "Effective counterinsurgency requires government forces to distinguish active rebels from noncombatants without destroying the lives and living conditions of the latter" (Fearon and Laitin 80). The problem from the outset of the Algerian war was that a large number of the civilian administrators had left the country leaving a vacuum that the military had to fill. The SAS (Special Administration Section) was set up to fill the vacuum left by the civilian administration (Sutton 244-266). Over 400 SAS detachments were formed and were essentially pseudo-civilian organizations each led by a French Army Lieutenant who were experts in Arabic (Horne 109). These SAS detachments were crucial to the French plan of "regrouping." Later in the war, the IGRP was created to replace the SAS detachments.

Regrouping essentially was a plan to pacify the country by regions. Algeria's mountainous areas were homes to guerilla groups and the French wanted to isolate these groups away from the population in order to destroy them. The French had a four-stage plan to pacify these regions. The first stage is commandos cleared the upland areas that were occupied by the rebels. The next stage is population in and around these rebel areas were cleared and set up in defensive *regroupement* centers. The military's presence in the area is increased until pacification has been achieved. Then the final step is the military's presence is reduced and the centers become permanent settlements (Sutton 248).

The problem with this strategy is that the French had to get the local population to agree to leave. Also, the French had a policy to destroy all of the homes of the people they were moving out of the area. A document in 1960 "advised officials or army officers to get local people to agree voluntarily to the destruction of their houses so as to avoid later demands for compensation (Sutton 248)." This policy probably did not sit well with the local population and served as a recruiting tool for disaffected Muslims to join the FLA. "Often the clearance operations were fairly brutal, some of the centers were very large and as a consequence, up to 90% of the nomads' flocks were lost (Sutton 255)." With the speed and the scale that the French army was going about its *regroupement* plan, this most definitely played into the hands of the FLA. From 1957 to 1960 over one million people had been put into these centers and the failure to follow through on providing jobs and decent living conditions, served only to undermine the French military operations (Sutton, 243-270).

The disaffection towards the French also spread to the ranks of the Algerian military that was loyal to the French. The French failed to support the Algerian military and on several occasions there were defections to the FLN. "With less coercion . . . allies were flowing in to join the rebellion of their own accord (Horne, 138)."

The reason the French did so poorly in the *regroupement* plan was that too much emphasis was placed on combat opera-

tions. They had created "free-fire zones" where no person could travel without being fired upon by French troops. The heavy use of aircraft and French commandos in these areas proved effective, however, the de-emphasis on the civil affairs missions created a recruiting base for the FLN (Sutton 243-270). No matter how many insurgents are killed, if the recruiting base is still active, it only serves as a means of dealing with the problem but there would be no end.

Creation of free-fire zones is a good idea if you can isolate the enemy from the civilian population. If the military can indeed isolate the combatants from the non-combatants, then it makes it easier to close with and kill the enemy. What the French failed to realize is that the displacement of the population out of these free-fire zones would take more than just moving the people out. The failure of the plan came from the lack of care for the population that left those areas. Also, those that stayed loyal to the French had their weapons taken away from them so they were vulnerable to FLN attack and this forced some to side with the FLN (Horne 134).

What the United States can learn from this is that heavy-handed action and creating free-fire zones has to be coupled with a solid Civil Affairs regimen. In Fallujah, in 2005, the military displaced most of the population of the city and attacked to remove guerilla fighters. The situation in Fallujah has improved but armed insurgents still roam with local popular support. This creation of the free-fire zone can be seen from the Algerian War point of view as an overemphasis on combat operations. After the fighting was over, the people slowly started to move back into the city, a heavily defended one, with most of the homes and businesses left in ruin (Poole 35-54). This is eerily like those centers of *regroupement* that the French used and that drained their capacity for military operation because of the amount of man-power needed.

> ". . . to defeat the insurgency, the underlying grievances about lack of basic services must
> be met. That means fixing the infrastructure-most notably water, sewage, trash, and electricity.
> With no more neighborhood security problem, a free and prosperous Iraq would emerge (Poole 256)."

SSG Sean McSherry of the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, a veteran of the early stages of the war in Iraq said that, "The critical time in that first month and a half after the ground war when we could have easily started reconstructing Iraq, we did not have the funding to do so. The focus was still directed towards combat operations." This highlights the failure to follow through on reconstruction, also in the same way the French failed to follow through in providing a decent living environment in the new settlements.

The problem early on in the Algerian War was that the French did not know when the FLN was at its weakest. Failures in intelligence had led to many opportunities to defeat the FLN to be missed. "Throughout the war internal dissent and personal animosities were the FLN's greatest enemy. . . the greatest strength was the secrecy which prevented the French from seizing an advantage (Horne 128)." This coupled with the failure to win hearts and minds only made the FLN stronger in the end. If the mission was based more upon civil affairs and less on combat operations, then intelligence failures could be overlooked because the FLN would be defeated in time by its own internal struggle.

The "Hearts and Minds" aspect of fighting an insurgency was one of the main downfalls of the French in Algeria and currently is a big problem for the United States in Iraq. However, it is not the be-all and end-all of the conflict. The United States must still close with and defeat the insurgents.

Combating the Insurgents

The "Hearts and Minds" aspect goes hand in hand with the actual combat operations. However, the combat operations should take on a secondary role to the civil affairs mission of reconstruction. The backwards approach of conventional 'combat operations first, civil affairs second' that the United States and France have taken in their counter-insurgencies in Algeria and Iraq has severely damaged their ability to defeat these insurgencies in the end.

The French started to fight the FLN unconventionally during the Battle of Algiers in 1957 under the command of General Jacques Massu. "Massu's attitude throughout his memoirs is that FLN terrorism was so inhumane, so unjustified, that all means of extirpating it were warranted. . . (Brosman 728)." This view was taken to extremes with the torture being a staple of French policy especially in Algiers in 1957. Massu's critics claim "that the FLN gained honor by rebelling, not lost it" through the use of torture and extreme counter-insurgency techniques (Brosman 728). The effects of using torture have two main consequences: the population becomes more disaffected through the use of these techniques, therefore undermining the "Hearts and Minds" mission and the soldiers themselves become disaffected with the techniques used because they are dishon-

orable. ". . . ultimately torture and other mistreatment gave rise to multiplied atrocities as new rebels replaced the martyred ones and vowed revenge (Brosman 726)." These techniques were effective in the short term but with the pool of recruits that were flowing to the FLN they were not as effective in the long term.

Among the techniques used was torture, killing of FLN supporters, and later on in 1961 with the Organization of Secret Armies (OAS), mirroring terrorist techniques such as bombings. The OAS was a group of radical French Army that completely mirrored the insurgent techniques and pushed well past the borders of terrorism. "A car would slow down alongside a group of Muslims and promiscuously mow them down with machine-pistol fire. . . (Horne, 488)."

Mirroring insurgent techniques is one unconventional way of fighting insurgency. The French took it too far. An effective way of countering insurgency is to mirror the insurgent technique without committing atrocities along the way. Fourth Generation Warfare seems to be the best way to fight the insurgent using techniques combining the eastern and western styles of warfare. Taking what the French failed to do in Algeria and combine that with the better aspects of the mirroring or "going native" approach can be an effective way at fighting the insurgency in Iraq (Poole 249). Also, insurgent groups practice "Hearts and Minds" activities themselves and have become expert at "providing alternative basic services and infrastructure. This can only be bested by highly decentralized light infantry (CAP) (Poole 256)."

The staple of this strategy is to use what are called Combined Action Platoons (CAP). These are small units that are set out in the cities to patrol on foot. The current use of mechanized patrols has made Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) become the major threat to American forces. These CAPs, are put into a neighborhood safe house in order to win hearts and minds, collect human intelligence, improve infrastructure, and improve the local economy. The heavy handed actions such as bombing of suspected enemy safe houses because the human intelligence would flow in off the street easier than collecting intelligence from a forward operating base sometimes miles away (Poole 250). "Local wells, sewers, and security would receive immediate, if not incremental attention (Poole 250)." These CAPs would also contain Iraqi police and army integrated within the platoons, therefore eliminating the need for extra manpower to protect the Iraqi Police from attack (Poole 251)." As stated before, this was a major problem for the French because they had to commit so much extra manpower to protect the loyal forces.

The actual combat role would be during the nighttime in order to defend their safe houses within the city. They would be dropped off outside the compounds in small groups within the city in order to set up small ambushes in order to catch the insurgents moving at night to attack the safe houses and Iraqi police/army headquarters (Poole 250-252). This is mirroring some of the same small unit techniques that insurgents in both cases used.

Conclusion: How It All Comes Together

The emphasis on civil affairs operations over combat operations and directly integrating combat operations into the civil affairs mission, or "Hearts and Minds" aspect, is the key to stabilizing Iraq. Learning from the mistakes of the French with the emphasis on combat operations over civil affairs missions directly lead to the downfall of the French rule in Algeria. Also, the use of the extreme insurgent or terrorist mirroring tactics by the French can be learned from by mirroring the actual small unit tactics and not the terror techniques used by insurgent groups. The combined use of these techniques will undermine the insurgent effort and essentially drive them out of their hiding places in the city because they will no longer be safe. This would drive them to less populated areas where they could be easily closed with and destroyed without alienating the population. This contrasts the French idea of *regroupement* where cities were created in order to isolate groups. The idea that I present is to cause the insurgent groups to isolate themselves from the civilian population as to avoid making a recruiting base from disaffected Muslims. This is while the active civil affairs mission is improving and rebuilding the infrastructure in Iraq; the providing of basic services was something the French failed to do in their centers of *regroupement*.

I did not realize until now what the effect of my actions in Iraq, especially the experience I shared at the beginning of the paper, had on the situation in Haditha. While doing our jobs, we did damage two facilities that were crucial to the civil affairs mission. The presence or lack of a proper "Hearts and Minds" strategy combined with a secondary combat role in Iraq will affect the outcome of the conflict.

A critic of this combination of ideas would probably argue that it might be too late for Iraq and this strategy would not work. I would respond and say that if it does not work, then at least we tried something other than the misguided strategy we are currently using in Iraq.

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