

**Theory to Strategy:  
War Insight for the Strategic Soldier**

**A Monograph**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

Theory to Strategy: War Insight for the Strategic Soldier by MAJ Luis A. Fregoso, United States Army, 48 pages.

Improvements in technology worldwide have amplified the impact strategic lieutenants and strategic corporals have on strategic matters. These Strategic Soldiers and their respective leaders must not only be aware of their potential influence in a war environment, they must learn how to harness this ability in support of their nation's war strategy. For this reason, investing in war theory and strategy education for potential Strategic Soldiers is imperative for a 21<sup>st</sup> century military.

This monograph uses the theories of Carl Von Clausewitz, Sir Robert Thompson, and Mao Tse-tung to illustrate how war theories converted into cognitive mental models can be effective tools for today's Strategic Soldiers. The paper also attempts to show that understanding the uses of theory-to-strategy cognitive models facilitates a better understanding of the nature of a current war, helps anticipate adversary actions, and allows better nesting across the levels of war. This monograph provides an example of how to convert theories into something practical for planners and leaders at all levels.

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## INTRODUCTION

*“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before the defeat.” -Sun Tzu*

In 1975, Colonel Harry Summers had a conversation with his North Vietnamese Counterpart from the American Vietnam War. Summers explained to his counterpart, “You know you never defeated us on the battlefield.” The counterpart replied, “That may be so, but it is also irrelevant.”<sup>1</sup> The counterpart’s response has great insight in the context of Vietnam. Vietnam is one of many historical examples demonstrating that tactical victories, even in large quantities, will not necessarily lead to strategic victory. After all, winning strategically means a country or non-state actor has triumphed over its adversary. We must never forget that achieving the strategic victory is the ultimate goal between two competing world actors.

Leaving the responsibility of strategy in the hands of the top-level leadership seems intuitive. However, with the inevitable improvements in technology, the ability to affect the strategic scenario is now at the fingertips of every human being. With innovations like the internet and multi-media phones, along with the saturation and abilities of news media conduits, anyone who desires can find an outlet to send his or her message and possibly affect a strategic setting. So this begs the question, should others share in the burden of strategic responsibility?

The effects of technological advancement did not avoid the United States Military. Today, most of the military is familiar with the terms ‘Strategic Lieutenant’ and ‘Strategic Corporal.’ While the lexicon suggest a specific rank, in actuality the terms refer to any Soldier (officer or enlisted respectively), regardless of the war level they occupy, who directly affects strategic matters purposely or accidentally. This monograph will refer to both officer and enlisted Soldiers having the potential for strategic influence as ‘Strategic Soldiers.’

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, Presidio Press, Novato, 1982, 1.

Accepting the Strategic Soldier variable, the United States Army must take measures to shape this phenomenon so it supports the nation's grand-strategic campaign. The best suited to help in this matter and first line of defense against Strategic Soldier mishaps is company grade officers and mid-career non-commissioned officers (NCOs); they generally lead the front line. With formal education on how strategy works, how to nest efforts with the national strategy, and how to mitigate the negative effects of any Strategic Soldier's mishap, these front line leaders may be better suited for warfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is through the familiarity and understanding of war theories that will provide Strategic Soldiers with helpful cognitive references that can assist in attaining better situational understanding of the contemporary operating environment (COE).

Through theories, Soldiers can devise grand-strategy models and use them at all levels of war to gain the insight that might provide the necessary edge to defeat an adversary. These model references will also assist tactical leaders in providing valuable information to strategic and operational campaign designers as they prepare to update their 'problem hypothesis,' how they perceive and understand the environment, for the given situation. This becomes most apparent while conducting the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP), or the emerging Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design (CACD) process.<sup>2</sup>

For these reasons, today more than ever, the United States military needs to invest in educating Strategic Soldiers in theory and its application toward enhancing the understanding of strategy. Perhaps giving the initial priority of this strategic education to company grade officers will best facilitate United States strategy. In turn, this will support national victory through better situational understanding and effective nesting of the three levels of war: strategic, operational,

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<sup>2</sup> *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500: Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, January 2008, version 3.38.

and tactical.<sup>3</sup> An appropriate start to strategy education may include familiarizing our company grade officers with theories of war.

In his work, Clausewitz explains that every war is unique.<sup>4</sup> Accepting this fact, there tend to be three overarching categories. First, there are conventional wars, which refer to two opposing nations or organizations whose armies attempt to destroy each other. A second category involves an insurgency opposing a counterinsurgency force. A third category is a form of warfare, known as a compound warfare, which includes both a conventional military and an insurgency.

Based on the categories outlined above, three appropriate theorists for initial study include Carl Von Clausewitz, Sir Robert Thompson, and Mao Tse-tung. Their theories respectively focus on the categories mentioned and can provide useful insights for those types of warfare. The first three chapters of this monograph will briefly describe the perspective each theorist had and attempt to derive a strategy model as a system of systems diagram for each theorist based on their respective theory. The resulting cognitive model will highlight both physical and intangible aspects of the theory that most affect the strategy. It will also highlight how some of the sub-systems interact within the overall system. Each cognitive model could be a quick reference for Strategic Soldiers in their war endeavors. In essence, the model can act as a mental reference front line leaders and planners could use in better understanding the war they are fighting.

In chapter four, this paper will analyze the three models and attempt to demonstrate how a Strategic Soldiers may apply their insights to war. The intent is to show how exposing Strategic Soldiers to cognitive models and theory can facilitate a better understanding of the environment and thus assist in taking better actions to support operations for all three levels of war.

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<sup>3</sup> JP3-0, 17 Sep 2006, II-1.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret), Everyman's Library Typography, New York, 1993, 162.

Additionally, these models may provide insights as to what an adversary may do depending on the nature of the war. By using recent history, this monograph will also attempt to show how cognitive models may assist in developing strategic campaign design considerations and how front line leaders can help strategic and operational level leaders learn and gain a better understanding of the situation.

Ultimately, this monograph will provide ideas as to how Strategic Soldiers can successfully nest their efforts and actions with the strategies designed at all levels of war. The monograph will also discuss how preparing our company grade leaders to understand theory will support the Army's move to adopt the Systematic Operational Design (SOD) process as it relates to CACD and how it supports the national grand-strategy. The education of war theories and understanding of cognitive strategy models will help facilitate the success of nesting our hierarchical military and the CACD process.

As this monograph will discuss, the common denominator for the discussed strategies is the desire to 'influence' an adversary. Whether it is political influence, ideological influence, or attempts to influence the populace, influence remains the goal. This highlights the significance of the military revolution caused by new technological media conduits. The military can further facilitate strategic success through these conduits; with the saturation of media devices and outlets, the importance of Strategic Soldiers becomes obvious.

This leads to the focus audience for this paper. In every level of war, officers up to the rank of Major and mid-career NCOs fill positions designed to assist the decision makers and ultimately the commander. The responsibilities include researching information, collecting data, and monitoring activities. This makes them prime candidates to provide relevant ideas based on their findings and theoretical models. Additionally, at the tactical level, this same group carries the bulk of the leadership responsibility in the front lines. They are also the first to be on the site of a developing situation. Knowing theory, having awareness of the national strategy, and

understanding how their part nests with the other levels of war will make this group ideal for taking appropriate first response actions in exploiting opportunities or mitigating damage.

It would be naïve to believe that the models depicted in this monograph will be all-inclusive or relevant to all wars. However, the intent is not to develop universal models; it is to provide insight and strategic-level, cognitive references for Strategic Soldiers. Ideally, commanders and planners, with some understanding of theory, can consult these and other models in order to make informed tactical, operational, or strategic decisions informed by systemic cognitive processes. Informed, decentralized decisions, along with information sent up the chain of command, could be the edge needed for future success in war fighting.

## Chapter 1: Carl von Clausewitz

“Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy. Once it has been determined, from the political conditions, what a war is meant to achieve and what it can achieve, it is easy to chart the course.”

- Clausewitz

### Clausewitz's Theory

Carl von Clausewitz's, in his work *On War*, lists and defines what he believes are the root elements of war. Clausewitz regularly reinforces his trademark links between the government, the army, and the people of a nation as it relates to war. His theory explains that nations fight wars; armies are only one element in the approach to winning a war.

Carl von Clausewitz bases his theory on what he saw happen in and out of his Prussian country during the Napoleonic era. Clausewitz was no stranger to war. He saw much death, both in victory and defeat. While he was loyal to the Prussian Army, he resigned his commission in order to work for Emperor Alexander's Russian Army against Napoleon's French Army.<sup>5</sup> An artilleryman by training, Clausewitz was known as a brilliant staff officer and tactician; however, he was never afforded the opportunity to command during war, something he desperately desired.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that his book, *On War*, was never completed, but published posthumously by his wife Marie von Clausewitz.<sup>7</sup>

Clausewitz's primary audience for his work was military and political leaders. He intended to depict the importance of their role in the conduct of war. While the Napoleonic wars were his primary source for study, lessons also came from the American and French revolutions,

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret), Everyman's Library Typography, New York, 1993, 73.

as well as the Persian civil war. During those wars, the most common tactics included two opposing militaries facing off while they each attempted to integrate artillery, infantry and cavalry. Today, we consider this linear type of warfare as a conventional war.

Clausewitz defines war as “an act of force intended to compel the enemy to our will.” He is adamant that war is the extreme extension of political influence. Within the conduct of war, there always exists the influence of three components: the government (policy), the Army (probability), and the people (passion).<sup>8</sup> These three systems constitute Clausewitz’s Paradoxical Trinity. The development of his trinity implies the successful execution of war requires all three elements. Therefore, each is a necessary requirement for a strategy model. If one element fails to support the war effort, the most likely outcome of the war effort is failure. Additionally, throughout the discussion of the trinity, Clausewitz also describes how all three systems of the war effort must use all elements of national power. This includes diplomatic, information, military, and economic influences we today refer to as DIME. This reinforces the notion that the whole nation must contribute to any war endeavors.

Carl Von Clausewitz also describes war as a living entity. The more an organization tries to restrain the entity known as war, the more war fights against the control. Clausewitz further explains that war is naturally unpredictable. For this reason, Clausewitz advises that planning contingencies beyond the first order effect is unnecessary and a waste of resources. Attempting to manage the unknown through detailed processes and/or synchronization is essentially futile and counterproductive. Clausewitz explains that leaders only need to anticipate the friction of war in order to maintain relative control. All one can do is mitigate effects to achieve relative control.

Another key element to Clausewitz’s theory is that every war is different. For this reason, considering theories as all-inclusive is inappropriate. At most, war theories provide

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 101.

insight to some aspects of war and are useful as a starting point in understanding a current conflict. This is especially true, as Clausewitz argues, since probabilities in war are not always reliable. However, he does explain the undeniable advantage of the defense over the offense. Additionally, Clausewitz explains the notion that along with the quantifiable aspects of warfare is the existence of an art to war. As described by Clausewitz, the art includes morality, the human factor, invisible forces, and the unexpected: all witnessed in combat.

A critical aspect of Clausewitz's theory is the notion that the enemy has a 'center of gravity.' The center of gravity may tie in to the people, the government, the army, or any combination of the three aspects of his trinity. The key to winning a war, according to Clausewitz, is to attack and defeat the enemy's center of gravity. Doing so theoretically destroys the enemy's will to fight (at least for the moment) thus bringing victory.

Clausewitz carefully avoids specificity in his theory. As he put it, "the author cannot bring himself to be in the slightest degree more scientific than he considers his subject to warrant."<sup>9</sup> His theory therefore refers only to key systems and avoids the trap of prescriptive antidotes to strategy. This is in contrast to his peer Antoine-Henri Jomini, author of *The Art of War*, who wrote prescriptive steps to the conduct of war based on the French, Russian, and American armies of the time.<sup>10</sup> Since Clausewitz theory attempts to explain what is required for all war efforts, it is intuitive that the enemy would also have the same systems supporting its war-fighting capabilities.

It is also important to point out that Clausewitz's theory is adamant that attaining allies is instrumental in warfare.<sup>11</sup> An ally can provide needed support necessary for direct combat with an enemy. Additionally, allies can provide support and assist in the indirect combat against a

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, 63.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret), Everyman's Library Typography, New York, 1993, 88.

common enemy. Minimizing the amount of allies an adversary has may also limit its options. For instance, the restriction in use of terrain, coastal waters, or other factors will eliminate some adversary courses of action and perhaps compliment friendly plans.

Finally, Clausewitz notes that morality is a factor affecting every individual person involved in war.<sup>12</sup> Though intangible and influenced by culture and religion, morality ties directly to the human factor, which can also affect the friction of war. A fighting organization may initially have a moral consensus among its members. However, morality is subject to change over time. Individuals at every level of Clausewitz's trinity, to include allies, are always reevaluating their morals. Therefore, it is important to attain and keep the moral high ground in order to achieve victory in war. This is especially true when widely disseminated domestic and international war news is influencing public opinion. Failure to keep a moral consensus could cause a disintegration of support for the war, which obviously makes it more difficult to fight.

Figure 1, below, outlines the primary sub-systems required in a successful war strategy system, according to Clausewitz's theory as discussed above. This model depicts one actor attacking another; the dashed sub-systems constitute the rival. The model does not have a start or end. It attempts to depict how the sub-systems are related. An arrow leaving a sub-system toward another represents a direct relation or action taken from the first to the second. An arrow coming into a system denotes that the arrow's origin is somehow influencing or attacking the system. At any given time during the conflict, including prior to the commencement of actual combat, all sub-systems may be in play and all connections may be active.

It is important to understand that the cognitive strategy model shown in figure 1 is one interpretation based on Clausewitz's theory. Strategic Soldiers should understand the basics of this model, its theoretical basis, and feel free to contribute their own modifications in order to gain additional insight and understanding. A discussion of practical use of this model, and the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 216.

others in this paper, is in chapter four. For now, this model is a quick reference describing the major components of the theory discussed above. Additionally, it is important to note that modification to this and other models may be appropriate to depict reality in a war. In other words, each sub-system may also attain further definition with additional sub-systems within it and the specificity of actual actors. The intent would be to learn and try to understand what is occurring in the reality of war.

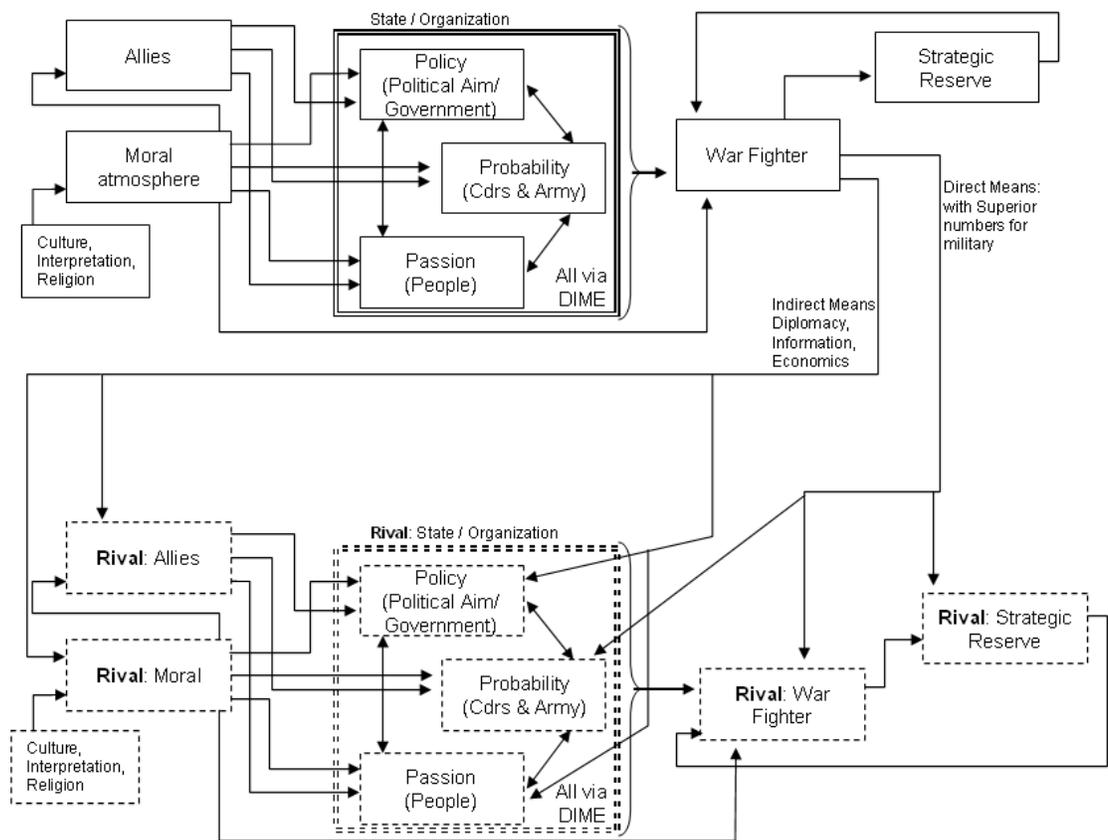


Figure 1: Cognitive Strategy Model – Based on Clausewitz’s Theory

As shown in figure 1, Clausewitz designates the war-fighter as something more than just the army. One interpretation is that this includes the individuals engaging in both direct and indirect combat. Those attempting to destroy an opposing force with conventional weapons conduct direct combat. In contrast, the indirect war-fighters consists of those who use other

means, primarily diplomatic, information, or economic, to give friendly forces support or a distinct advantage in destroying the opposing army.<sup>13</sup> Clausewitz describes the two primary approaches for indirect combat. The first is operations having direct political repercussions; the second is influencing the enemy's expenditure of effort, making war for him too costly.<sup>14</sup> A state can use these indirect approaches to attack the enemy's trinity, alliances, and moral support. Synchronization of both approaches is necessary to achieve the maximum desired effects.

Another portion of Clausewitz's theory necessary for all leaders to consider is his belief that nations must choose whether to go to war based on if achieving the political aim is worth expending the resources required to attain those desired ends.<sup>15</sup> A few considerations include examining both the friendly and enemy political aims, gauging the strength and situation of the opposing state, assessing the character and ability of both the friendly's and enemy's government and people, and evaluating the political sympathy of other state's and the effects the war may have on them.

Finally, as depicted in figure 1, Clausewitz recommends that if a nation does choose to go to war that it go with superiority in number. The intent is to conclude the war as quickly as possible. Failure to do so will only expose a full generation to the horror of war and drain precious resources.

## **Clausewitz and non-state actors**

Acknowledging a military revolution, where non-state actors fight wars, some might argue that Clausewitz's theories no longer apply to the current COE. Support for this belief comes from the fact that there are currently no real military peer competitors for the United States. Thus, other countries must adapt by using asymmetric warfare, which features smaller

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 212-213.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 708.

unit operations and guerilla warfare. However, despite the rise and war involvement of non-state actors like Hezbollah and Al Qaeda, who also perform insurgent-type activities, Clausewitz's theories remain relevant and true. Today's COE has moved away the notion that only nations fight other nations. However, when it comes to Clausewitz's theory as described in *On War*, two key aspects directly show how his philosophy still applies. First, while most recognize the "Paradoxical Trinity" as the government, the army, and the people, Clausewitz's primary description of the three elements is as the policy, the probability, and the passion.<sup>16</sup> Second, regardless of whether a National or non-state group's leadership leads its organization into war, both types of groups desire to achieve a political objective.

For the sake of simplicity and to use as a planning or design tool, the army has become accustomed to recognizing the "Paradoxical Trinity" as the government, the army, and the people. However, as already mentioned Clausewitz emphasized the metaphysical and meant for his trinity to be an evaluative tool with the components policy, probability, and passion. These intangible elements more realistically describe the realities affecting war.

The 'policy' would consist of the leadership in charge of a group, the cultural affects, as well as the method and laws used to run the country. This holistic policy develops the strategy and outlines the parameters in which to engage in war. Non-state organizations, including Al Qaeda and Hezbollah also demonstrate this part of the trinity. The leadership of non-state organizations and their respective cultural and ideological rules and restrictions constitute a policy component to their war effort. This leadership, like heads of states, will direct the 'means' toward achieving the desired end-state.

The realm of 'probability,' covers the chance inherited by an organization's means, usually the military. While large nations build armies, non-state actors recruit volunteers who lead their own paramilitary forces into combat operations. These non-state fighters also inherit

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 101.

the same chance experienced by national militaries and therefore become the probability for the organization. The fact that these groups also serve as the means for the policy, directed by its leadership, further supports their role as the probability. Though they may work autonomously, they share a common goal and readily assume guidance from the group's strategic headquarters. This link makes them a second component to a non-state actor's war effort.

The 'passion' generally does come from a group of people, most commonly within a nation. However, one must inquire why a desire for something from a particular group exists. For instance, a nation's people generally desire to support their state's national sovereignty. In this case, one can easily see the group's desire to support a cause for the nation. The same is evident within non-state actor organizations. Organizations such as Al Qaeda recruit worldwide in order to find others who support their cause or passion. Although an organization may mislead its potential recruits, ultimately this does not prevent volunteers from sharing a common desire to achieve the organization's policy goals. Non-state actors only need to exploit a common conviction within a group in order to develop a passion that will conjure up support for its cause. Without this passion, no support will be available. This makes passion another requirement for a non-state actor's war effort, thus completing the trinity previously only affiliated with regard to nations.

As mentioned earlier, Clausewitz's philosophy explains that the ultimate goal of war is to achieve a political objective. Proof of this theory is evident many times through the actions of non-state actor groups. Actors such as Hezbollah routinely attempt to influence the politics of Lebanon and Israel through war. Al Qaeda, which desires to create a world Caliphate, endeavors to influence American and Middle East political objectives through terrorism. Even non-state actors like the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) conduct economic activities that affect world politics and policy. These actions show that non-state actors can and do engage in warfare as an extension of political policy.

Though war actors are transforming through the aid of technology and globalization, we can still apply Clausewitz's theories to gain insight toward both their indirect and direct stratagem toward war. Clausewitz deliberately broke down war into its bare elements. This dissection of war allows one to attribute the elements of war to non-state actors now influencing our world. One can also infer that Clausewitz's terms, including "center of gravity," "fog of war," "friction," "culmination," and many others, will also apply to non-state actors. Ultimately, like the cognitive model in figure 1, Strategic Soldiers can conceptualize the required systems necessary for war from any type of actor. Using Clausewitz theory and a derived cognitive strategic model can provide important insights to a given war, regardless of the type of actors involved.

## Chapter Two: Sir Robert Thompson

*“An insurgent movement is a war for the people.”*

*- Sir Robert Thompson*

Sir Robert Thompson based his insurgency and counter-insurgency (COIN) theories on his experiences of the Malaya and Vietnam wars from 1948-1960 and 1961-1965 respectively.<sup>17</sup> His experiences allowed him to compare and contrast the two countries' efforts in COIN operations: one successful and the other a failure. In these operations, both the insurgents and counter-insurgents fight for the support of the people.<sup>18</sup> At the outset of an insurgency, according to Thompson, less than one percent of the population directly supports the insurgency while approximately ten to twenty percent remain loyal supporters of the government. The real war is the fight for the neutral population. The neutrals are the prize and ultimately the key to success.

### The Insurgency

Sir Robert Thompson describes the insurgency as a three-phased campaign. The first phase is a build-up phase. This begins with a cause for the insurgency. The cause must appear legitimate to the populace. Here the focus is to recruit insurgents to fill cells and obtain sanctuaries. These cells and sanctuaries will be the backbone of the insurgency. Within these cells and sanctuaries, political organizations will reside and start operations to collect food, supplies, recruits, and intelligence for future phases and operations.<sup>19</sup> It is these initial units, designated as A-level units, which will provide support for future larger units as well as district level committees.

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, Hailer Publishing, St. Petersburg, Florida, 1966, preface.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

During this first phase, it is also the desire of the insurgents to discredit popular leaders of the current authority and start breaking down the ability for the government to provide services and security for the people it represents.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, the insurgents are setting the conditions to break the link between the government and the people. A tool used to facilitate this separation is terrorism. Attacks on leaders or government facilities intimidate government officials, the neutral population, and supporters of the government. Terrorist acts also intend to gain support for their cause by demonstrating the insurgent's ability to defy the existing government with little or no consequence.

Phase two involves capturing more equipment, including weapons, ammunition, explosives, et cetera and continued attacks on both governmental facilities and its supporting organizations. It is here where A-level units start contributing personnel and supplies to form B-level units. These platoon-to-company size insurgent forces will conduct larger guerilla-type operations. In turn, B-level units will eventually contribute to C-level units, company-to-battalion size forces, which will act as regular military units.<sup>21</sup> All level units have the primary purpose of throwing the government off balance and creating panic within the population. They will focus attacks on police stations, communication conduits, and weak military targets. Throughout this and all other phases, the insurgent leadership continues to push its propaganda in order to gain support for its cause.

The third and final phase begins once the insurgent leadership feels the guerilla phase has reached its climax. Thompson describes three options the insurgency has to achieve its political victory.<sup>22</sup> The first is resorting to seek military victory, similar to that described by Mao Tse-tung, discussed in chapter three of this paper. The second is to maintain current guerilla operations in order to continue discrediting the government and convince the population to force

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 42.

change. The key here is not to engage on any major combat-type operation, yet convince the government to concede and agree to negotiate for a cease-fire where the insurgents gain favorable terms. The third option is maximize the amount of guerilla and insurgent actions against the government. The goal here is to demoralize the government, force the rural population to enter towns for security, thus causing additional problems via refugees and the creation of more ungoverned terrain. Eventually these issues will overwhelm the state thus making the government incapable of maintaining any form of control.

## **The Counter-Insurgency**

Robert Thompson outlines five principles for the counterinsurgent. The majority of these principles came from the trial and error learning he saw during Malaya's COIN operations. It is important to note that Sir Thompson attributes a great deal of credit for Malaya's success to the well-established government administration. A sound government is necessary for COIN to be successful. In contrast to Malaya's relatively good government, South Vietnam lacked an effective government, which led to their complete dependency upon United States support. In addition, Sir Robert explains that the careful mixture of military and civil operations facilitate the success of COIN operations. The five principles are as follow:<sup>23</sup>

1. The government must have a clear, long-term political aim to support the people. This includes any corrections of government weaknesses or problems like corruption, ineffectiveness, etc.
2. The government must function in accordance with the law. Maintaining the moral high ground is essential in order to maintain the support of its populace or allies. This applies to all activities: to include detention, military operations, etc.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 52-57.

3. The government must have an overall plan. This plan should include the roles and preservation of the following functions: security, military, political, social, economics, administration, police, and any other measures having bearing on the insurgency. The roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined to avoid duplication of effort and ensure no gaps in government actions.
4. The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion of the insurgency, not the guerillas. This includes an intelligence focus on the people who must cross from the insurgent cells (A-level units) to the others (district committees, B&C-level units, and insurgent leadership). The intent is to eliminate the support, thus starving out resistance units.
5. In the guerilla phases of an insurgency, phase I and beginning of phase II, the government must secure its base area first. Very quickly, the government must also start protecting developed areas in order to gain security and instill confidence in the people. The population must also be prepared for a long COIN effort.

In addition to these five principles, Thompson points out that a government's military must work to gain the support of the people. This requires the military to make extra efforts to be good to its citizens. This also means that the military must be able and willing to use its own resources to support the population. This includes necessities like medical care, security, and food. Additionally, Thompson makes it clear that the counter-insurgency effort is a junior leaders' war. This implies that junior leaders (civil and military) must be prepared, trained, and educated for the job.

Sir Robert Thompson describes three forces that influence the people. First, there is nationalism and national policies. Second is religion and customs. Third is material well-being and progress. These three areas must be included in a campaign design to defeat the insurgency. As mentioned earlier, the key to this is a sound administrative structure. This administration must

earn the respect and cooperation of the people. It must instill confidence between senior and junior leaders. It must also facilitate effective discourse before action; the cabinet must help the government take action with full knowledge, reasoning, and understanding of the pros and cons of those decisions.

Obviously, the administration must effectively control all aspects of the sovereign country. In the system of systems model depicting Thompson's strategy, there exist three major sub-systems to an administration. The largest encompasses the requirements within services, economics, and taxation. This section includes sub-necessities like education, agriculture, medical, and public works. This ties in very closely to the 'material well being & progress' realm to influence the population. Its effectiveness is also a measure of how well the government is doing. For this reason, and its inherent vulnerabilities, it makes for an ideal target for insurgents.

The second section is the political leadership at every level of the country. The most important being the lowest level, local representatives. These civil servants have a close tie to the other two influencing forces on the populace: 'religion and customs' and 'nationalism and national policies.' Sir Robert suggests that civil leaders should always start their service to the country at the lowest level in order to test their character and ability. Ideally, only the best suited, based on performance and genuine desire to support the people and the government, would ascend to higher levels. These tactical-level officials are also the front line leaders in the information side of the conflict. Through a coordinated and synchronized effort by the government, the lowest level of the administration conducts the discrediting of insurgent propaganda.

The third section is the national war council. This council will develop and continually update the campaign against the insurgency. Thompson suggests that at a minimum, this group should include the Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, Minister of Finance, Minister of Information, Head of Intelligence, and senior military and civil officers involved in COIN operations. He also recommends the selection of a director of operations within this

council to supervise, not command, the day-to-day operations of the council’s campaign plan. Though a civilian can hold this position, Sir Robert Thompson suggests that a military officer might be best suited for the director position.

While counterinsurgency is a national effort, Thompson suggests that the main effort come from the national police force, assuming it is still in existence. This effort includes the collection of intelligence.<sup>24</sup> Since the national police already exists throughout the country, knows local areas and populations, and has training in finding criminals, it is best suited for a national scale counter-insurgency operation. Additionally, for the reasons just stated, it is also best suited for intelligence collection; not to mention it helps to have police authority when collecting intelligence. In conjunction with all elements of national power, the national police can effectively lead the COIN effort. Below is Thompson’s suggested division of labor between the national police and the military:<sup>25</sup>

Primary Actor	Area	Primary Threats
Police, supported by intelligence organization	Populated areas under government control	Subversion, minor terrorist acts, sabotage, and propaganda (conducted by cells – A-level units)
Police, supported by intelligence organization and military support to clear insurgent unit sections	Rural areas disputed between government and insurgents	Guerilla squads conducting subversion, minor terrorist acts, sabotage, and propaganda. Supported by district or regional insurgent units (platoon to company size – B-level units)
Military, supported by intelligence organization	Lightly populated areas under insurgent control	Same as above but also supported by insurgent regular units (company to battalion size – C-level units)

Table 1: COIN Division of Labor for Police and Military

It is vital to reiterate the importance of the information side of the counter-insurgency. As necessary, the government will take control of private media conduits for the sake of national security and success in the COIN offensive. The government’s information plan must address two audiences, the insurgents and the population. All themes and messages must support creating the image of a strong government. One caveat is that when addressing the population,

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

information operations must provide what Thompson calls “true propaganda.”<sup>26</sup> The government must never lie in order to maintain positive credit in the eyes of the people. This will also aid in discrediting insurgent messages.

In conducting information operations against the insurgents, otherwise known as psychological operations (psyops), the goal is to reduce their will to fight and encourage their surrender. These operations should work to cause dissention between insurgents and their higher-level leaders. An effective mechanism must also exist to counter any messages sent by the insurgents. As Sir Robert points out, it is vital to gain the propaganda initiative via themes based on policy. This should, in-turn, rally and encourage support from the people.

Below is a system of systems cognitive strategy model that outlines Sir Robert Thompson’s theory of both an insurgency effort and the counterinsurgency’s approach to fight it. Users may be able to gain insight from either perspective. It is obvious the main goal is to win support of the populace. In this type of warfare, winning over the people must be the main effort. As in the previous model, there is no beginning or end and all sub-systems are in effect at all times.

Additionally, similar to the previous model, figure 2 is also a cognitive strategy model based on Sir Robert’s theory of insurgent and COIN operations. Strategic Soldiers can use this model as a quick reference to compare with reality on the ground. In addition, having the COIN’s perspective modeled with the insurgent’s perspective provides insight toward their clashes as well as how each works to gain support from the people.

As with the other models, the derivation of this one comes from one interpretation of Thompson’s theory. Strategic Soldiers, especially those charged with designing and planning, should feel free to adjust this model based on their understanding and the situation they are trying to affect.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 97.

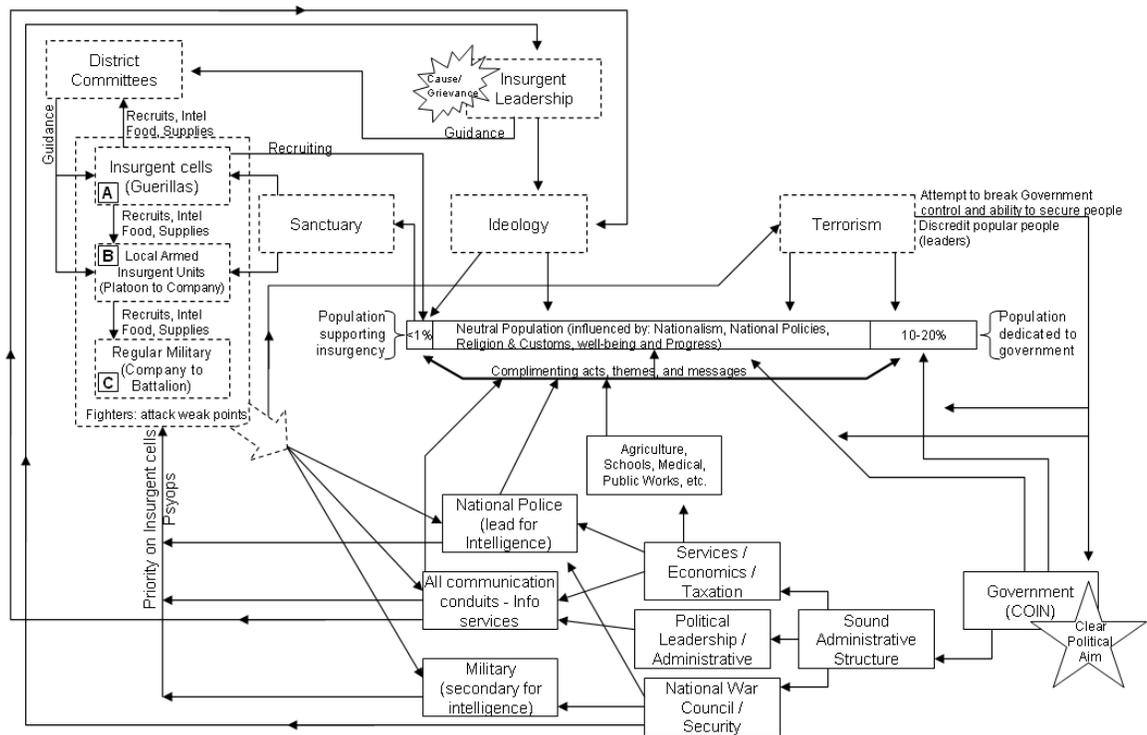


Figure 2: Cognitive Strategy Model – Based on Sir Robert Thompson’s Theory

Within his strategy, Sir Robert dictates four stages of the operation for the counterinsurgent. These are Clearing (the designated territory), Holding (the cleared area), Winning (the population), and Won (the area is free from insurgent influence).<sup>27</sup> The tactics involved in these stages are beyond the scope of this monograph. However, it is important to understand that strategically, throughout the area of operations, different locations can be at different stages at the same time. This will require the campaign to have flexibility and agility. Leaders must adjust their priorities appropriately and resource the elements of national power in support of the counter insurgency.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 112-13.

## Chapter Three: Mao Tse-tung

*“Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive one; it is man and not materials that counts.”*

*-Mao Tse-tung*

Mao Tse-tung developed his theory during his military struggles in China. Within his struggles, Mao placed a higher priority on political aims than mere military accomplishment. His first struggle in China is an example of a revolutionary war. In this type of war, the political desires are very direct. He, the revolutionary, desired a change in the way the Kuomintang leadership governed throughout China. Mao and the Red Army desired an ideological conversion, which meant an abrupt change to politics. In Mao's mind, the first step was to teach others the new political thought and get them to support his effort. Mao was convinced that stirring up emotions within an indoctrinated peasantry would provide him a great deal of support; next, he would only need to provide guidance in his cause.<sup>28</sup> Through schools, Mao passed his political messages to Soldiers and civilians alike.<sup>29</sup> In the early stages of the struggle, Mao's political conversions contributed to at least forty-thousand peasant volunteers.<sup>30</sup> Eventually, ideological converts helped spread Mao's philosophy to the extremities of China. Consequently, Mao was able to gain support for his cause throughout the country, all for the sake of political change.

In addition to his revolutionary war, once in power, Mao defended against an invading Japanese army. A few common reasons motivate one nation to invade another. These reasons include a desire for additional resources, defense, or to make another acquiesce to a demand.

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<sup>28</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerilla Warfare* (translated by Samuel B. Griffith II), The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, Baltimore, Maryland, 1992, 34.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 48.

<sup>30</sup> Liu Jikun, *Mao Zedong's Art of War*, Sun Light Printing & Bookbinding Factory, Hong Kong, 1993, 32.

Each of these reasons for invasion represents a political end sought by the invading group. Resources motivated Japan's aggression against China in the 1930s. The Japanese wanted to annex parts of China in order to increase their means to power and influence. Mao was able to use this external political threat to unify the Chinese within a common political banner in opposition to Japan's imperialistic desires.<sup>31</sup> It is also important to note that when developing his theory, Mao Tse-tung's perspective was that of a weaker force fighting a larger and more powerful one.

Mao adamantly believed that war is politics. The examples described above are bits of history seen through a Maoist perspective; they also demonstrate the close relationship between war and politics. While he recognized war and politics have separate characteristics, just as Clausewitz depicts the inseparable relationship of the elements of his trinity, Mao also depicts war and politics are indivisible. Mao suggests that throughout the full spectrum of warfare, politics is always involved at every level of war, but most strategically.

In order to depict Mao's strategy of protracted war, three separate models are necessary to represent his three phases.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, his strategy attempts to structure causality in his favor. Thus transitioning from phase is dependent on setting lasting conditions that facilitate support for his cause. As appropriate, Mao's strategy also allows going back to a previous phase if necessary to gain a stronger strategic posture.

## **Mao's Phase I (Shape and Educate)**

Mao's first phase is the shaping and education of the people. It requires his forces to be on the strategic defense and assumes that the enemy is on the strategic offensive. This, according

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<sup>31</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Selected military writings of MAO-Tse-Tung*, printed in A699: The evolution of military thought, required reading, Fort Leavenworth, KS: ILE-AAP, AY2006-07, 227.

<sup>32</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerilla Warfare* (translated by Samuel B. Griffith II), The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, Baltimore, Maryland, 1992, 34.

to Mao, is especially effective with a large peasantry. Mao stated that, “an aroused, indoctrinated, and guided peasantry would be the key to success.”<sup>33</sup> In this phase, the primary goal is to gain support for his ideology. This is possible through spreading propaganda exploiting the issues and problems of the established regime or invading enemy.

In addition to the ever-important civilian population, Mao depicts three war-fighting entities. The “regular forces” constituting a conventional force, the “irregular forces” which are organizationally trained Special Forces or militias, and the “real guerillas” whose loyalties generally stay with those who share a common grievance. Ideally, all four of these groups receive the indoctrination education. However, based on resources, the priority of education goes to civilians, followed by the real guerillas, irregular forces, and finally the regular forces. This is especially true if the struggle begins within the people, as in Mao’s first struggle, opposed to beginning from the established government.

In essence, the spreading of an ideology shapes conditions to be hostile against the enemy. The requirement that all supporters of the ideology must be able to intelligently teach the ideology and spread it to those they encounter reinforces this idea. The development and distribution of supportive propaganda also consumes a great deal of effort and resources. The cognitive model in figure 3 below depicts this phase.

As with the previous models, the derivation of this one and its subsequent phases comes from one interpretation of Mao Tse-tung’s theory. Strategic Soldiers as front line leaders and those charged with designing and planning should feel free to adjust these models in order to best suit their war effort.

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<sup>33</sup> Samuel B. Griffith II, *Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, (Baltimore, Maryland: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992), 48-49.

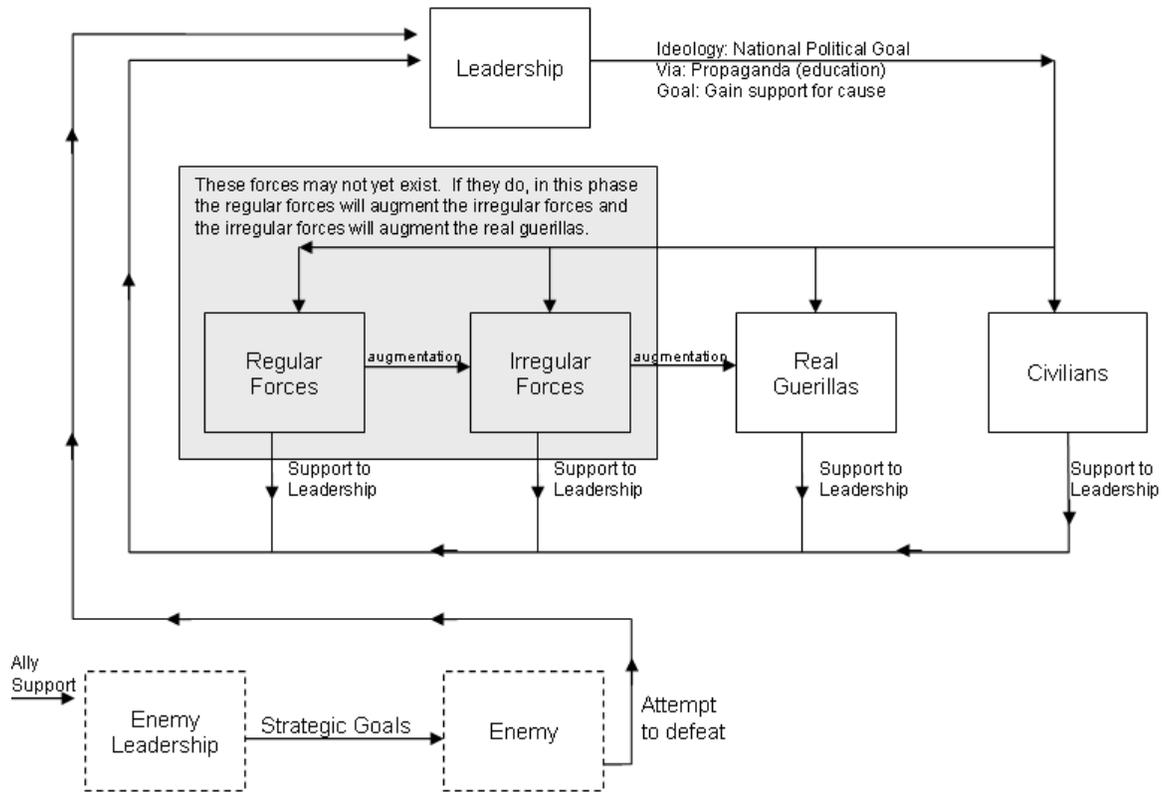


Figure 3: Phase I (Shape and Educate) Cognitive Strategy Model – Based on Mao’s Theory

As you can see from the system model above, the first phase is primarily for educating and gaining support from its constituents. If any combat occurs, the primary tactics are defensive. In fact, in this phase it is appropriate to avoid enemy forces until meeting requisite conditions to allow transition to the second phase. The requirements for moving on to the second phase include a substantial support for the cause and an overwhelming apathy from those not supporting. Additionally, it requires the alliance with any existing real guerillas, any organization of civilians trained to act as real guerillas, and if possible other actors outside of the country sympathetic to the cause.

During this phase, if regular forces exist, they will contribute by augmenting the irregular forces while also training and educating civilians. If any irregular forces exist, they will augment real guerillas while also training and educating civilians. The primary objective, as mentioned earlier, is gaining support of the general population. The overall intent is to set conditions for future recruitment of civilians to the other three components.

## **Mao's Phase II (Sabotage and Terrorism)**

The second phase starts the preparation for a strategic counter offensive. This phase assumes that the enemy is beginning strategic consolidation. At this point, the revolutionary leadership is starting to take an active role in orchestrating resistance efforts against the enemy. Now real guerillas and irregular forces start to conduct sabotage and terrorist acts against enemy forces and infrastructure. As these forces execute operations, the leadership exploits their success to further encourage the national spirit of resistance as well as demonstrate the faults and weaknesses of the enemy. This will cause civilians to become more sympathetic to the resistance and become more prone to provide safe havens to fighters.

On occasion, irregular forces might conduct operations against enemy soft targets; these are military forces with light defenses against an attack. At this point, targets primarily consist of lines of communication (logistics) nodes and command assets (leaders and communication conduits). As operations continue to succeed, this will encourage civilians to volunteer and further fill the ranks of real guerillas and irregular forces. As recruits saturate the irregular forces, they will also start training some groups as regular units in anticipation of the next phase. If regular units already exist, their primary purpose is to augment irregular forces. Below is a model that describes this phase.

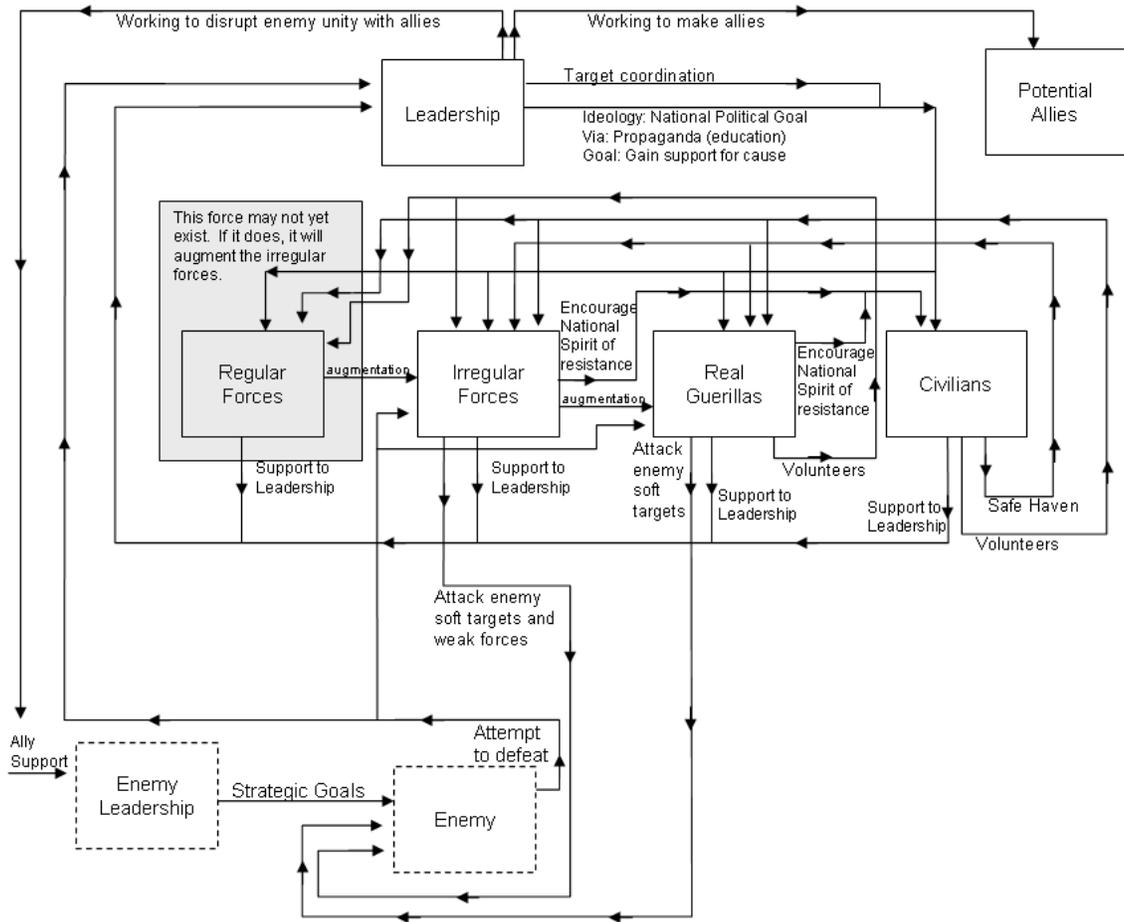


Figure 4: Phase II (Sabotage and Terrorism) Cognitive Strategy Model – Based on Mao’s Theory

It is during this phase that the leadership is solidifying its role as head of the legitimate resistance and shaping the conditions for control of the populace. Additionally, during this phase the leadership works on developing or improving their regular forces and procuring arms, radios, medical supplies, and other essential materials for larger military engagements. At the same time, the leadership works diligently toward gaining outside allies and makes efforts toward reducing the allies of the rival.

## Mao's Phase III (Enemy Destruction)

In order to transition to the third phase, the resistance must have enough forces to conduct decisive military operations against the enemy. These operations will only occur if a marked advantage over the enemy exists with a high probability of success. This phase will begin the start of the counter-offensive that should force the enemy to begin its strategic retreat. In conjunction with regular military operations, irregular forces and real guerillas will also have targets in the strategic offensive. This phase should culminate with the surrender of the enemy. Below is a model of phase III:

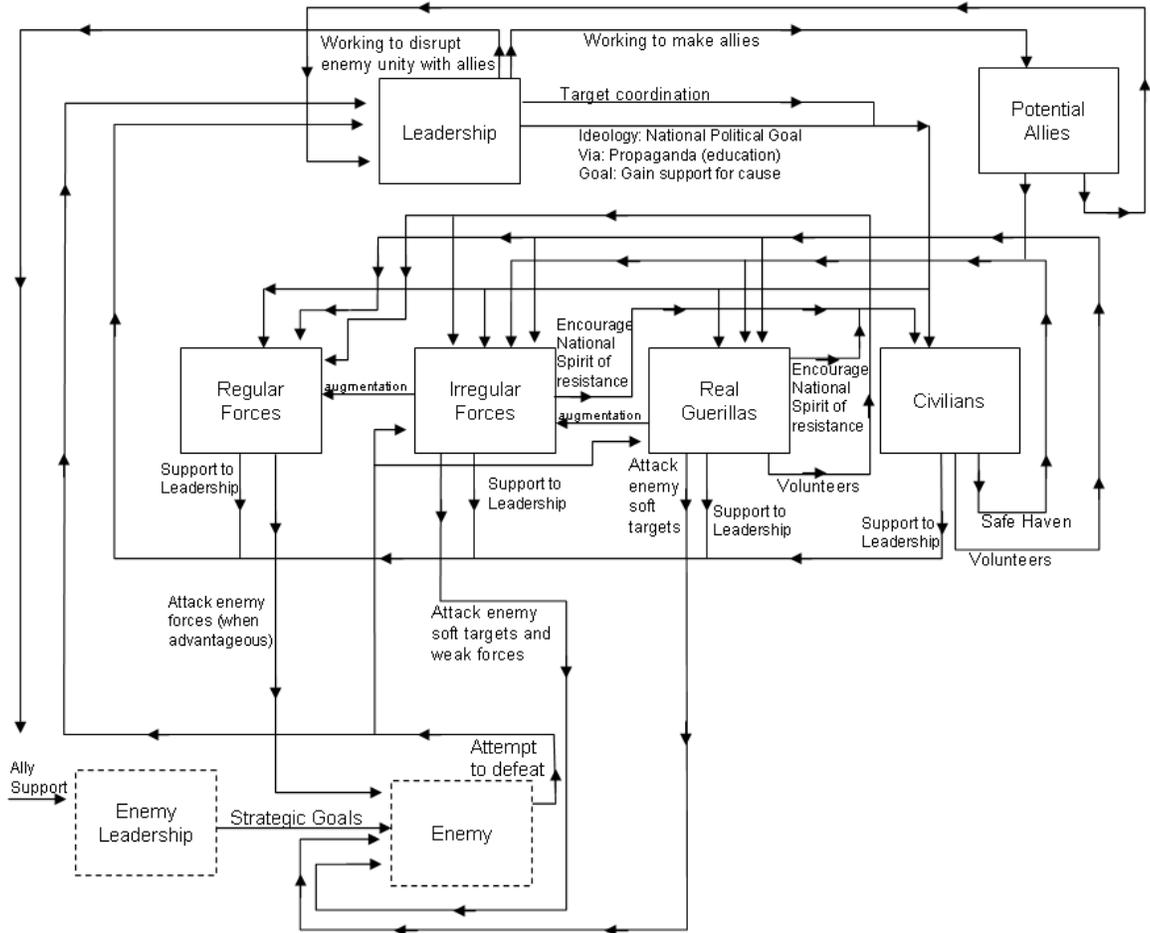


Figure 5: Phase III (Enemy Destruction) Cognitive Strategy Model – Based on Mao's Theory

If at any time during phase II or III friendly forces feel they have lost the initiative, it is appropriate to revert to a previous phase. How far back depends on the current conditions of the struggle.

America encountered a Maoist type strategy when it supported South Vietnam within the years 1965-1975. While the American experience in Vietnam was primarily an example of failure in a compound war, the insights gained should assist if once again facing a similar enemy strategy. One important lesson from Vietnam was not recognizing the disparity between the National Strategy and the tactics that occurred. When the adversary is fighting a protracted war, it is important to ensure the United States is behind the strategy. Otherwise, all efforts may be in vain.

## Chapter Four: Using the Strategy Models

*“...Strategy decides where to act... grand tactics decides the manner of execution and the employment of the troops.”* -Jomini

Understanding the theories described in the previous chapters can greatly assist in the general understanding of a type of warfare. Therefore, the first issue becomes how one determines the type of war he or she is fighting. Even after one knows the type of warfare occurring, one must determine when the war's nature is preparing to change. This is where a proper education in theory and its application for our Strategic Soldiers can help. Using strategy cognitive models, like those discussed in this monograph, can provide insight facilitating discovery and learning in war. Prior to the execution of war, these same models may provide crucial considerations necessary for the design and implementation of a sound strategy campaign. It is worthwhile to explain how these models can help. This monograph will limit its analysis to the three theories discussed in chapters 1-3.

We start by examining the three cognitive strategy models. Each uses both direct and indirect methods toward achieving their desired goals. Table 2 below shows these distinctions, from the perspective of the friendly force, based on the activities described in the specified strategy. It is also important to understand that the intended audience for this monograph is Strategic Soldiers in the front lines as well as those helping to design or plan a campaign. This audience primarily consists of company grade officers and mid-career non-commissioned officers. For this reason, the analysis that will follow remains general for the three strategies discussed above. More in-depth analysis that includes the realities of a given situation must occur at the operational and strategic levels of war as they conduct discourse to understand the situation they wish to change. The table below shows the general actions for each strategy. Numbering each item will facilitate subsequent analysis.

	Indirect	Direct
Clausewitz	<p>1. Diplomatic, Information, and Economic (DIE) means to attain allies</p> <p>2. DIE means against rival's allies</p> <p>3. DIE means against rival's moral beliefs</p> <p>4. DIE means against rival's Policy (government)</p> <p>5. DIE means against rivals Military Institution</p> <p>6. DIE means against Passion (citizens)</p>	<p>7. Military war fighters (personnel and equipment) against adversary's military</p> <p>8. Military war fighter (personnel and equipment) against adversary's strategic reserve</p>
Thompson - COIN	<p>9. All communication conduits and information services to win support of populace\</p> <p>10. All communication conduits and information services against insurgent ideology</p> <p>11. National Police to win support of populace</p> <p>12. Government services (Agriculture, Schools, Medical, Public Works, etc.) to win support of the populace</p> <p>13. National War Council/Security against Insurgent Leadership</p> <p>14. Government actions (clear political aim) to gain support of the neutral and dedicated populace</p>	<p>15. National Police against insurgent cells</p> <p>16. Military against insurgent cells</p> <p>17. All communication conduits and information services against insurgent cells</p>
Thompson - Insurgent	<p>18. Insurgent leadership's ideology to maintain and gain support of supporting and neutral populace, respectively</p> <p>19. Insurgent fighters conduct terrorism against neutral and government dedicated population to sway their support against the government</p> <p>20. Insurgent cells conduct recruiting operations within supporting populace</p>	<p>21. Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National Police</p> <p>22. Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National Military</p> <p>23. Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National communication conduits</p>
Mao	<p>24. Leadership Ideology (national political goal) propaganda to gain support of the populace</p> <p>25. Leadership diplomacy with neutral or ally countries to gain support</p> <p>26. Leadership diplomacy with allies of the adversary</p> <p>27. Information exploitation of guerilla and forces success to gain support of the populace</p> <p>28. Leadership "education" of civilians</p> <p>29. Guerilla "encouragement" of civilians to volunteer</p>	<p>30. Guerilla attacks on enemy enemy's soft targets</p> <p>31. Irregular Forces attack enemy soft targets and weak forces</p> <p>32. Regular Forces attack enemy forces when advantageous</p>

Table 2

Using the information depicted in Table 2, we can see the similarities and differences between each strategy. We will compare the three theories with each other. It is important to reiterate that attempting to devise a universal strategy or theory for all wars is futile. Using the three strategies described in the first three chapters, however, we can gain insight into some general activities we can expect based on the nature of the war. The next step is to take the activities shown on Table 2 and organize them into general categories.

Based on the elements on Table 2, there seem to be ten general categories that distinguish them all. These categories became apparent once trying to find commonalities within the elements. Below is a list of the ten categories delineated by letters 'A' through 'J.' At the end of the category name, in parentheses will be the initial of the theorists who's listed elements fall under that category: for instance, 'C' for Clausewitz and 'M' for Mao. Sir Robert Thompson's Strategy was divided into its two perspectives: the counter-insurgent (T1) and the insurgent (T2). As shown in Table 2, the elements, or types of activities, are numbered. Activities 1-8 come from Clausewitz, 9-17 come from Thompson's COIN perspective, 18-23 come from Thompson's Insurgent perspective, and 24-33 come from Mao. We can see the categories below:

A. Diplomacy with other states to gain support (C,M)

1-Diplomatic, Information, and Economic (DIE) means to attain allies  
25-Leadership diplomacy with neutral or ally countries to gain support

B. Diplomacy against adversary's allies (C,M)

2-Diplomatic, Information, and Economic (DIE) means against rival's allies  
26-Leadership diplomacy with allies of the adversary

C. Actions against adversary's moral and/or ideological beliefs (C, T1,T2, M)

3-DIE means against rival's moral beliefs  
10-All communication conduits and information services against insurgent ideology  
18-Insurgent leadership's ideology to maintain and gain support of supporting and neutral populace, respectively  
24-Leadership Ideology (national political goal) propaganda to gain support of the populace

D. Actions against Government and/or its policy (C, T1)

4-DIE means against rival's policy (government)  
13-National War Council/Security against Insurgent leadership

E. Military specific (C,M)

- 5-DIE means against rivals Military Institution
- 7-Military war fighters (personnel and equipment) against adversary's military
- 8-Military war fighter (personnel and equipment) against adversary's strategic reserve
- 32-Regular Forces attack enemy forces when advantageous

F. Cells specific (T1,M)

- 15-National Police against insurgent cells
- 17-All communication conduits and information services against insurgent cells
- 30-Guerilla attacks on enemy's soft targets

G. Military & Cells (T1,T2,M)

- 16-Military against insurgent cells
- 22-Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National Military
- 31-Irregular Forces attack enemy soft targets and weak forces

H. "Recruitment" of local populace for cells (T2,M)

- 20-Insurgent cells conduct recruiting operations within supporting populace
- 29-Guerilla "encouragement" of civilians to volunteer

I. Actions to win support from populace (C,T1,T2,M)

- 6-DIE means against passion (citizens)
- 9-All communication conduits and information services to win support of populace\
- 11-National police to win support of populace
- 12-Government services (Agriculture, Schools, Medical, Public Works, etc.) to win support of the populace
- 14-Government actions (clear political aim) to gain support of the neutral and dedicated populace
- 19-Insurgent fighters conduct terrorism against neutral and government dedicated population to sway their support against the government
- 27-Information exploitation of guerilla and forces success to gain support of the populace
- 28-Leadership "education" of civilians

J. Attacks on Civilian (National supporting) organizations (T2)

- 21-Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National Police
- 23-Insurgent fighters attack weak points against National communication conduits

We can further analyze the results by comparing which strategies share the over-arching theme category of the grouped activities. The intent is to discover which activities are similar between the types of warfare and which distinguish one from the other. Table 3 shows this comparison.

	Clausewitz	Thompson COIN	Thompson Ins	Mao
Clausewitz	ABCDEI	CDI	CI	ABCEI
Thompson COIN	CDI	CDFGI	CGI	CFG I
Thompson Ins	CI	CGI	CGHIJ	CGHI
Mao	ABCEI	CFG I	CGHI	ABCEFGHI

Table 3

Based on Table 3, we can see some trends. ‘C’ and ‘I’ are common to all strategies, so they are not a factor in determining the type of warfare. ‘J’ is only observed in Thompson’s insurgency perspective. ‘D’ is common to Clausewitz and Thompson’s COIN perspective. ‘H’ is common to Thompson’s Insurgent perspective and Mao. ‘F’ is common to Thompson COIN perspective and Mao. ‘G’ is common to Thompson’s COIN perspective and Mao. Activities ‘A,’ ‘B,’ and ‘C’ are observed in both Clausewitz and Mao. Figure 6 is a pictorial depiction of these results.

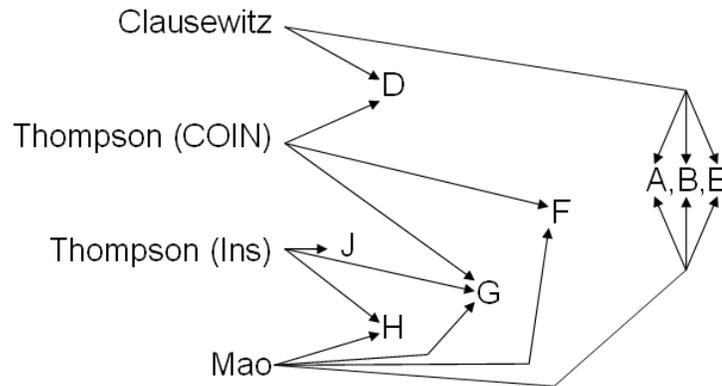


Figure 6

Based on these commonalities and the basis of the strategies discussed above, we can make some postulations. First, the potential for protracted warfare exists with any war. We see that the Maoist strategy contains activities also observed in the other strategies. This implies that war fighters must always consider and anticipate Maoist type actions.

A second potential postulate is that if attacks occur on civilian organizations supporting the national government, ‘J’ category activities, there exists a high probability that an insurgency

may be present or emerging. This is evident since observing these types of activities are solely within Thompson's insurgency perspective model. This means that if units start observing attacks on local police, any government type official, or government communication conduits, leaders should place measures to determine if an insurgency exists. If one indicator reveals the potential for an insurgency, then counter insurgency operations must begin immediately: or at least the contingency planning for COIN operations. Additionally, if an organization also discovers attempts to recruit local populace into activities against the government, 'H' category activities, this increases the probability of an insurgency. Exploitation of any intelligence within these types of discoveries may confirm an insurgency's existence.

A third potential postulate is anticipating aggression from an actor based on observing its diplomatic jockeying to gain support against another actor or overt acts on its military capability: category activities 'A,' 'B,' and 'E.' These activities are generally explicit and focused against allies and militaries. While also observed in Mao's strategy model in addition to Clausewitz's strategy model, these activities tend to focus on a more conventional type of warfare. This implies that prior to combat, diplomacy should be the main effort. If war occurs, diplomacy must continue, but destruction of the adversary's military will initially be the decisive operation.

## **Examples**

The use of the following examples is primarily to demonstrate how the strategy models can provide Strategic Soldiers an idea of the type of warfare to expect based on the conditions observed. By understanding how each of the strategic references work, a user should understand the possible significance or expectations of observed activities. With understanding, leaders may be able to anticipate adversary actions and adjust friendly operations as appropriate. We must also realize that other existing cognitive models from theorists or planners could also provide insight in addition to the ones discussed in this monograph. The intent is to show how a Strategic

Soldier may gain valuable insights through understanding strategic theories and cognitive strategy models.

One example is the U.S.-Iraq war. Prior to its execution, there existed a great deal of rhetoric coming from the governments of both the United States and Iraq. More significant was each state's attempt to win over the support of potential allies. One of the primary forums came in the form of the United Nations. The United States made great efforts to build a coalition to invade and cause regime change in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> These attempts at gaining additional ally support included Vice President Cheney's visit to Muslim countries<sup>35</sup> and culminated with a presentation given by Collin Powell as he showed evidence implying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.<sup>36</sup>

Iraq also used the United Nations to present its case as a sovereign country posing no threat. In addition, Iraq strived to gain support from Muslim countries. Were it not for Kuwait and its suffering due to Saddam's 1991 invasion, Iraq may have attained more support from the Muslim community. Saddam Hussein also pressed hard, using international media, in order to put pressure on the United States to stop its aggressive stance.

Another obvious characteristic prior to execution was the existence of each country's respective militaries. Iraq, at the time, possessed an army of 200,000 Soldiers.<sup>37</sup> While the United States had its own technologically advanced forces. Both countries had already demonstrated their willingness to use their militaries.

When comparing the strategy models, we can easily see both the Clausewitz and Mao models fit the situation. The distinction lies with the overt willingness of both countries to engage their military forces in conventional combat. For this reason, the Clausewitz model may provide the most insight, though one must not ignore the possible contributions of other models.

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco*, The Penguin Press, London, 2006, 346.

<sup>35</sup> Michael R. Gordon, *Cobra II*, Pantheon Books, NY, 2006, 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>37</sup> John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, Alfred A. Knoph, London, 2004, 127-129.

By looking at the Clausewitz model, a user may notice gaining allies is one of the crucial requirements for success in this type of war. The world saw very quickly that the United States and its limited allies for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) were not as effective as the strong coalition of the 1991 Gulf War. Turkey not allowing the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to travel through its country and the lack of international economic support for the invasion demonstrate the importance of this aspect of the Clausewitz model.

Second, the moral atmosphere must support the war. This requires an understanding of cultural and religious aspects of both self and the adversary. Failure to do so leaves the war fighters and civilians to interpret the morality of the conflict on their own. This implies a necessity in regional cultural training in order to mitigate potential negative effects. It also implies that Soldiers and the citizens they represent must be comfortable with the reasons for the war in order to attain full commitment as well as maintain a long lasting drive to fight for the cause. Otherwise, the potential to sway home front or ally support for the war could cause a decrease in the passion thus destabilizing the war effort.

Another component for discussion in this example is Clausewitz's prescription of superior numbers in the forces. This refers to the number of Soldiers on the ground. The United States compensates for limited troops with its arsenal of high-tech munitions, unmatched communication's conduits, as well as extensive training. However, despite success in the campaign, the Coalition's limited number of troops caused gaps in security throughout the country.<sup>38</sup> Though these are observations made in hindsight, the lessons may be timeless. This knowledge allows leaders at all levels of war to at least consider these possible hurdles and plan contingencies for them. Most importantly, if observations at the tactical level confirm these issues, effective and prompt reporting to operational and strategic headquarters can and must

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco*, Penguin Press, London, 2006, 125-126.

occur. This in turn should facilitate further analysis, design, and planning to mitigate the enemy's ability to exploit the discovered issue.

More interesting about the beginning of OIF is the gradual changes that occurred in its nature. This included a change in Iraqi citizen attitudes towards American Soldiers, terrorist acts on government buildings, and assassinations of Iraqi leaders. Some of this is attributable to initial looting and tribal fighting. However, when these types of activities continued after the destruction of the Iraqi military, the disbanding of the Ba'ath Party, and the election of an Interim Government, leaders had to search for another model or cognitive reference that better accounted for these activities.

The major change in activities started with the August 7, 2003 car bombing of the Jordanian Embassy, the same day the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) announced indicators of improvements in Iraq.<sup>39</sup> General Sanchez noted four distinct activities: sporadic attacks on U.S. Forces, attacks on U.S. Ally Forces, attacks on Iraqi security forces, and attacks on politicians.<sup>40</sup> The most striking activities are the attacks on Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi Politicians. Of the three strategy models discussed in the first three chapters, the Thompson model depicts these activities best.

As tactical level leaders observe these types of activities and report them up, all levels of war should consider the realistic possibility of an insurgency based on the Thompson model. Despite needing further confirmation of an insurgency, familiarity with the Thompson model provides leaders at all levels a cognitive depiction of initial objectives to attain and protect. In this model immediacy would focus on the most critical objective for this model, the neutral population. This requires effective communication with the local population and an offensive to discredit an opposing ideology. Additionally, it requires the protection of government buildings and officials. These additional protection requirements demand a larger number of Soldiers. This

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 215.

revelation would then have to reach the national level for decisions on the reallocation of troops and supplies.

While applying these models to OIF after the war began may appear as forcing the models to work, this monograph does not assert that these models would have predicted or mitigated any of the issues that occurred. The intent is only to demonstrate how a cognitive model may provide some insight to a given situation. The usefulness of these types of models may be more apparent when under the stress and time constraints inherited to operational and strategic captains designing and planning a campaign for an imminent war. Having familiarity with cognitive models could assist in quicker, more accurate framing of the situation. For tactical leaders, understanding these models during war can assist in better nesting activities with the upper levels of war as well as send up apt observations that could positively influence the direction and method of war fighting.

If we consider the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) as a whole, we can also find trends that mimic one of the models above. First, we know many terrorist groups advocate the common goal of eliminating Western influence around the world. Second, there are obvious terrorist acts conducted around the world that include attacks on political sites, strikes on military bases, and assassination of political figures. Third, there is a very clear ideology, via a hijacked Muslim religion, that promotes a world Caliphate and death of non-Muslims. Moreover, perhaps the most telling characteristic is an overt plan protracted over one-hundred years.

Obviously, in the macro level, these acts fall within the Mao model. Using this cognitive model, it implies that the primary targets include the adversary's ideology, the targeted civilian populations (those ripe for recruitment and safe havens), and potential allies. Considering the scope of this war, these types of objectives require a great deal of resources, creativity, and ally support. The internet also adds an additional dimension to warfare that allows decentralized cells to share information and train all over the world. The internet's availability also facilitates easy spreading of propaganda, another key component to the Maoist model.

To take this a step further, we can add Thompson's model to the GWOT within any of the adversary's targeted civilian populations, as individual microcosms compared to the global war. Given the scope of the war, these microcosms could encompass an individual city, country or region. This implies a potential worldwide epidemic of insurgencies. There already exist numerous reports of Al Qaeda affiliated groups in the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other countries around the world. More telling is that most of these groups share the common goal of reducing western influence. Both Mao's and Thompson's models would suggest we must proactively combat any negative ideology and take effective measures to gain support of the people. Failure to do so allows the adversary to gain a foothold in another part of the world. This is an indicator of guerilla type activities depicted in both the Thompson model and phase-one of the Mao model.

This second example does not intend to imply this monograph has modeled the GWOT. It attempts to show how Strategic Soldiers can use these cognitive references to assist at all levels of war. We can also add insights from Clausewitz's ideas in influencing an adversary's war expenditure of effort to the GWOT. This idea is something that directly affects the passion of the United States: war effects on the economy. This demonstrates how one can gain insight to a single war from several theorists. Ultimately, the more a Strategic Soldier is educated in military theory, the more cognitive references are available for more informed decision-making in both actions and planning.

These models may also provide insight toward how to act. For instance, in 2003, an example that occurred many times in Iraq is troops reacting to direct fire coming from Mosques. At the end of the combat, an Al-Jazeera reporter approaches the Soldiers for information, only to hear "no comment" or find a lack of cooperation.<sup>41</sup> Of course, this becomes a strategic problem

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<sup>41</sup> Josh Rushing, *Mission Al Jazeera*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007, 171-173.

once Al-Jazeera reports the adversary's version of the story, which describes Americans attacking peaceful men in prayer.

Whether through media or overt propaganda operations, it is very apparent in all three models that the effective use of information is extremely important. This is especially true when attempting to gain support from the local population infested with an insurgency. Additionally, the support from the international community can sway based on the initial reports coming from combat. Strategic Soldiers must understand the importance of information, must nest their information operations with those of the operational and strategic level of war, and must know the second and third order affects of contributing to written, televised, or internet media conduits.

A case-in-point is the 2004 Abu Ghraib prison scandal involving personnel of the 372<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company. These Soldiers mistreated Arab prisoners and released photographs illustrating their conduct of human rights violations. As mentioned above, one of the common components in the three strategy models is information. This implies that along with sending out the positive messages to support the friendly cause, we must take measures to mitigate enemy exploitation of negative events. In this example, the world saw how quickly the United States lost credibility and anger spread throughout the region due to the wrongful actions of a few Soldiers. Further exacerbation came from the ease in which technology allows these negative messages and images to travel around the world.

Another example is the publicized beheadings in Iraq conducted by Al Qaeda affiliated militants lead by the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In this example, tactical leaders took it upon themselves to conduct these atrocities in order to demonstrate their resolve. However, as explained by a message sent to Zarqawi from Al Qaeda strategic captain Abu Muhammad Zawahiri, his actions were triggering negative reactions from their support base.<sup>42</sup> This suggests

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<sup>42</sup> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Lesson C432 – The Enemy: An Assessment methodology, Module C430, Block C400, Published July 2006, 10.

a direct affect to Al Qaeda strategic recruitment operations as well as economic donations for their cause.

In both the Abu Ghraib and beheading examples above, it is very apparent that Strategic Soldiers at the tactical level can make huge impacts strategically. While the two examples depict the negative side, positive effects can also occur. Al Qaeda and its affiliates are very quick to exploit successes over the internet. They also immortalize and praise suicide bombers as martyrs through glamorizing videos and posters, striking deep into the psyche of the Muslim culture.

Unlike Al Qaeda, the United States military is not quick to exploit the media. In fact, it is against the law for the U.S. military to target propaganda against its citizens. The military has also developed an antagonistic relationship with media outlets. However, training in units and service schools like the Command and General Staff College is changing the military's approach toward the media. The U.S. military is now embracing all media conduits and is making great strides toward getting out the truth and positive messages.

While the importance of information is apparent in the strategy models described in this monograph, there exist many more insights a Strategic Soldier can gain from those and other existing models. Exposure to cognitive models and theory may help Strategic Soldiers to understand complex concepts and increase their contributions to the war effort. Operational and strategic leaders must also take heed to the insights gained from cognitive models and incorporate them into their designs and plans. However, they must understand that they are models and not reality. Planners and executors must continually strive to learn from reality and improve upon those cognitive models. Understanding theory and strategy models will help facilitate this necessary learning cycle.

## Conclusion

*“A prince should therefore have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study but war and its organization and discipline, for that is the only art that is necessary to one who commands.”*

*-Niccolo Machiavelli*

The discrepancy in perspective from a lower and higher headquarters during war has probably existed since the development of a hierarchical headquarters system. There is a cognitive tension between the formulation of strategy and its execution in a campaign.<sup>43</sup> The higher a headquarters exists, the larger the mission as well as area of responsibility. This forces a higher headquarters to allocate resources depending on a broader understanding of the situation. However, this broader perspective may not realize the significance of lower level activities. This problem is difficult to avoid when coordinating between the different levels of war.

Current Joint Doctrine states there are three levels of war: Strategic, Operational, and Tactical.<sup>44</sup> The greatest number of Strategic Soldiers is within the tactical level of war. In a time of international media, the internet, and instant communications conduits, military personnel at the lowest level can influence strategic or operational efforts. This is in large contrast to media limitations of the 1991 Gulf War, the delayed and misleading reports of the Vietnam War, and the media censoring of the World Wars. For this reason, Strategic Soldiers must understand strategy in order to mitigate negative effects.

Using the models described in the first three chapters, a Strategic Soldier can start to understand the importance of diplomacy and make efforts not to disrupt it. The same Soldier can also realize the significance of information and propaganda. This will help a Soldier to prevent information fratricide (a contradiction with intended messages sent to the populace), as well as

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<sup>43</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory*, New York, Frank Cass, 1997, 9,309-310.

<sup>44</sup> JP3-0, 17 Sep 2006, pg II-1.

mitigate faultfinding activities an adversary could exploit. Just as important, the Strategic Soldier can use these models in order to send up information that can help educate and inform the higher levels of war as to the true nature of the conflict. It is these types of reports and the promptness of its delivery that could help operational and strategic leaders adapt their design and campaign, possibly creating greater success toward the effort.

In order to facilitate the mutual complimenting of the three levels of war, the imposing of appropriate measures must take place in order to nest their plans. Two crucial components to effective nesting are the information going down from a higher headquarters and the information going up from subordinates. Using the strategy models discussed above, we can gain insight toward what information will be useful for leaders regardless of the level of war. However, all levels must have a common aim and understanding. This should be explicit in the higher headquarters strategy and ideally in the national strategy.

This reinforces the notion that Strategic Soldiers must be educated in strategy theory. As in the example of information, which includes propaganda, ideology, as well as general updates given to mass media, leaders at all levels must support the nation's strategy. This implies that tactical actions must also support and coincide with strategic level themes and messages. In other words, while the overarching messages come from strategic leaders and are refined at the operational level, tactical leaders get the message to the target audience. This requires tactical leaders to understand not only how to provide the message, but also understand cultural and local perceptions of the message. Concurrently, tactical leaders must also seek out the messages sent by adversaries. Units must establish a method to collect this contending information and send it to higher-level headquarters. This will allow strategic leaders to adapt their information strategy as well as refine their overall campaign as appropriate.

Another positive aspect of Strategic Soldiers understanding theory and cognitive strategy models would be their contributions to better understanding of the real nature of the war. More precisely, providing insight as to what type of warfare is truly occurring. Knowing this allows all

levels of leadership to adjust war approaches and campaign designs. This is especially true during transitions in warfare as described in the Iraq example in chapter four. At the tactical level, it allows leaders to prioritize the type of training and resources needed for the expected warfare.

As the nature of war changes, leaders at all levels can adjust their approach against an adversary as well as adapt training in order to make it more effective for units preparing for deployment into theater. Tactical leaders must also take a proactive role in seeking indicators of the type of warfare and sending the information up to their higher headquarters. While one event in a battalion sector may seem insignificant, as consolidated information reaches the higher levels, the operational and strategic level may notice significant trends requiring adjustments in the campaign. The only way to adapt a campaign at the operational and strategic level effectively is through learning from the reality on the ground. The Strategic Soldier is instrumental in this process.

The emerging Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design process described in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500 attempts to account for the learning required of campaign designers. It mandates the development and implementation of a feedback loop from tactical to higher levels of war. More specifically, the nesting of all three levels of war support the assessment and reframing requirements of the CACD process.<sup>45</sup> CACD assigns primary responsibility for campaign design to the operational and strategic levels of war. Ensuring the accuracy of the design is a responsibility of all levels of war. However, it is incumbent on the tactical level to provide the accurate information painting the true nature of the conflict.

Incorporation of feedback sent from subordinate units in subsequent iterations of Systemic Operational Design, the backbone to CACD, is essential to learning and maximizing effectiveness in war. While describing the SOD approach is beyond the scope of this monograph,

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<sup>45</sup> *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-0500: Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, January 2008, version 3.38, 17-18.

it is appropriate to point out that the information gathered within the process' discourses needs constant updating. The design created via SOD requires direct tests with actions. Whether or not friendly or adversarial means perform an action, the design teams must learn and try to understand why the effects observed on the system resulted from these acts. This facilitates the appropriate and necessary reframing of the design hypothesis (operational understanding) for the situation. Within this process, however, it is important planners are familiar with theoretical and newly developed cognitive models of the situation. Lack of exposure to theories and cognitive models may delay or even prevent success.

Understanding strategy references and nesting the levels of war will also facilitate the Strategic Soldiers' ability to mitigate potential strategic crises. It is important to apply the available cognitive models throughout the three levels of war. Theory can provide useful insights and relevant cognitive models that will assist in gaining the edge necessary to defeat an adversary. The military can start by investing in educating Strategic Soldiers in theory, especially company grade officers and mid-career NCOs. Doing so can greatly increase the effectiveness of nesting lower and higher headquarters. Additionally, it facilitates the crucial aspect of tactical feedback in order to learn at the higher leadership levels.

We must also realize that not understanding strategic cognitive models could place our nation at a disadvantage. Our military's theoretical study should not be confined to well known Western theorists. It should also seek Middle East and Eastern philosophies. While the particulars are outside the scope of this paper, Francois Jullien, in his book *A Treatise on Efficacy*, is an appropriate example that describes a Chinese method of strategy design in which America may have already started falling victim. At a minimum, we must not allow our nation's military to follow conventional mental structures dogmatically. We must study theory and evolve our thinking in order to mitigate current and future vulnerabilities. Failing to take heed may keep our military from reaching its true potential, or worse, keep it from successfully defending our nation.

Ultimately, national success is a matter of placing the priority on strategy instead of tactics. In order to do this, we must insure the nesting of tactical level leaders in the strategic process, but more importantly, educate all leaders in strategic matters. At a minimum, spending the resources and efforts to educate our Strategic Soldiers in theory will facilitate the staffing of future Flag Officers saturated with years of strategic knowledge and perhaps strategic experience stemming from their company grade years. We currently do have great strategic leaders and thinkers, but how much better prepared would they be if they had started thinking, knowing, and executing strategy at the start of their career? Recalling the lessons of our nation's Vietnam experience, focusing on strategic education and supporting its execution are appropriate. Since current world trends forecast continued conflict and war in the future, supporting this proposal may be worth consideration.

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