

# **Civilian Wargames: Wargaming Irregular Warfare**

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# Who Am I?

- Brant Guillory
- Military Analyst, CC Intelligent Solutions
- 14-year Army veteran (Active, Reserve)
- PhD, Communication, OSU, expected 2010 (ABD)
  - Dissertation focused on interactivity in training (games vs non-games)
- Founder, Wargame Designer, [BayonetGames](#)
- Writer for [Wargamer.com](#) and [Battles](#) Magazine
- Editor of [GrogNews](#)



# Why Irregular Warfare

- Heavy focus in current operations
- Most near-term engagements seen having large component of IW
  - Horn of Africa
  - Sub-Saharan Africa
  - Philippines
- Depending on how the narrative is shaped in Afghanistan, IW may become ‘playbook’ for future US antagonists



# Wargaming Irregular Warfare

- What is “irregular warfare” in a game context?
- What are the design challenges with wargaming irregular warfare?
- What are some considerations for wargaming IW and how are designers accomplishing it?



# IW In Civilian Games

- Gaining in prominence due to current events
- Design challenge for creators
- Many types of games, topics, mechanics
- Not many “contemporary” games with IW
- Some current games...



# Current Games: *Battle for Baghdad*

NEW FROM MODERN CONFLICT STUDIES GROUP

## BATTLE for Baghdad

The Game is Played on a Satellite Map of Baghdad. Event Cards Drive the Political Climate. Performance Hinges on Proper Anticipation and Adaptation to this Dynamic Environment.

A 3-6 PLAYER GAME OF STRATEGY AND POLITICS IN US OCCUPIED BAGHDAD CIRCA 2003-2008

EACH PLAYER CONTROLS ONE OF SIX FACTIONS: US, IRAQI GOVT, SHIA, SUNNI, NGO, OR JIHADI

EACH FACTION HAS UNIQUE ABILITIES AND VICTORY CONDITIONS TO MODEL THE REAL WORLD SITUATION

TEST HISTORICAL TACTICS OR DEVELOP YOUR OWN IN THIS REALISTIC AND ENGAGING GAME

**CONTENTS:**

- One 22"x22" Mounted Map
- Rules Book & Strategy Guide
- Example of Play
- Two Commitment Indicators
- Six Reference Cards
- Six Faction Displays
- 30 Command Cards
- 35 Arab Street Cards
- 63 Arms Bazaar Cards
- 280 Die-Cut Counters

Each card includes a small image and text describing its effect. Examples include:

- ARMED SAUVIS:** Place Political Control in all Green/Contested Zones.
- REINTEGRATION:** Restore all Political Power and Infrastructure within the Green/Contested Zone.
- NO CONFIDENCE:** Negate one of another player's Armies in the Green/Contested Zone.
- INFILTRATION:** Negate one of another player's Armies in the Green/Contested Zone.
- REVENGE:** Negate one of another player's Armies in the Green/Contested Zone.
- RECKLESS ATTACK:** Negate one of another player's Armies in the Green/Contested Zone.



<p><b>ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE</b></p> <p>Negate one Arms Bazaar card OR Negate one use of a player's Special Power OR Win the Initiative this Turn.</p>	<p><b>ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE</b></p> <p>Negate one Arms Bazaar card OR Negate one use of a player's Special Power OR Win the Initiative this Turn.</p>	<p><b>UPRISING</b></p> <p>Revolving: Gain three Base units at no cost. Place in any Contested Zone or Zone of your Color. OR Win the Initiative this Turn AND Retain and place normally five Mobile or Base units or one neutralized Command at no cost.</p>	<p><b>SURGE/JIHAD</b></p> <p>Revolving: Gain three Mobile units at no cost. Place on any Zone in which you have at least one unit, or in the Sanctuary.</p>
<p><b>COMMAND CONTROL</b></p> <p>Take an extra turn OR Make another player lose his or her turn.</p>	<p><b>WMD</b></p> <p>Conventional Officer: Discard all cards, Neutralize all Commands, and Eliminate all Units in the Battle Zone AND Reform all Conditions AND Reshuffle all discarded Disintegration cards into the deck.</p>	<p><b>TERRORIST SPECTACULAR</b></p> <p>Disconventional Officer: Discard all cards, Neutralize all Commands, and Eliminate all Units in the Battle Zone AND Reform all Conditions AND Reshuffle all discarded Disintegration cards into the deck.</p>	<p><b>CONTRACT SECURITY</b></p> <p>Revolving: Gain three Mobile units at no cost. Place on any Zone in which you have at least one unit, or in the Sanctuary.</p>

# Current Games: *Ici, c'est la France!*





# Current Games: Angola

Side  
Unit Type  
Nationality  
Combat Strength

**FNLA** Merc  
Zairois  
**5** [+2]

Combat Dice Bonus

**FNLA**  
1

**FAPLA**  
1 [+1]

**FNLA**  
**B**  
Column

**MPLA**  
1

**UNITA**  
1 [+1]

**FAPLA**  
Airgroup





# What is “Irregular Warfare”?

- Synonyms?
  - Counterinsurgency
  - Hybrid Warfare
  - Police Actions
  - “Emergency”
- *Anything up to the level of declared states of war and high-intensity conflict between nations*



# What is “Irregular Warfare”?

*Anything up to the level of declared states of war and high-intensity conflict between nations*

- Lebanon 2006, Israel v Hezbollah did have facets of high-intensity conflict and featured Israeli regulars conducting doctrinal combat operations
- Hezbollah operations mixed both guerilla and ‘normal’ tactics
- Israelis internalized lessons before Gaza operations in 2008



# What is “Irregular Warfare”?

*Anything up to the level of declared states of war and high-intensity conflict between nations*

- Afghanistan 2009?
- Afghanistan 1986?
- Malaysia 1950s?
- Caribbean Interventions 1910-1938?
- Philippines 1901-03?
- Indian Wars 1870s?
- American Revolution 1770s?



# How do we model this in a game?

*Anything up to the level of declared  
states of war and high-intensity conflict  
between nations*



# Challenges

- Victory Conditions
- Scaling
- Accounting for all the actors
- Non-gameable factors





# Victory Conditions

- Definitions of victory for each side being portrayed are much more challenging than in 'normal' wargames
- When in doubt, many wargames resort to either (a) kill the bad guys, or (b) take that spot on the map
- Irregular warfare may not require either of these for one side or the other to be successful



# Victory Conditions

- “Avoid defeat”
- “Change public opinion”
- “Force external involvement”
- “Converts to the cause”



# Achieving Victory Conditions

- Without the tools to achieve the victory conditions, the game reverts to a slugfest with awkward chrome grafted onto it
- *“Avoid defeat”* - relatively easy / turn limits
- *“Change public opinion”* - need a mechanism for measuring
- *“Force external involvement”* - who, how, when, what conditions?
- *“Converts to the cause”* - mechanism for recruitment

What other conditions are there?



# Scaling the game

- Irregular warfare frequently combines macro-level effects (public opinion) with micro-level actions (5-man firefights)
- Large-scale commitments of forces (MNC-I roughly 125,000 soldiers) with small-scale actions of great importance (shooting the Koran)
- High-level diplomacy (between national leaders) alongside low-level diplomacy (battalion commanders and local sheiks)



# Scaling the game

- Macro-level effects with micro-level actions
  - What's the mechanism to translate one to the other?
- Large-scale commitments of forces with small-scale actions of great importance
  - How many counters do you need for platoon-level echelons for MNC-I? Roughly 500 line platoons (US only)
- High-level diplomacy alongside low-level diplomacy
  - What are the game effects that result from each of these and how do you distinguish them?





# Accounting for all the actors

- Easy to build an order of battle for military, police, paramilitary
- May not be too hard to build an order of battle on diplomats, or other government agencies
- How to build an order of battle on a decentralized organization, especially when parts of the organization may only be single-purpose (finance, logistics, transport, etc)?
- How to build an order of battle for inherently-classified organizations? (TF ODIN)
- How do you address contractors?



# Some things just can't be put in a game

- British uniforms during operations
  - Basic kit on patrol is beret, non-subdued badges, minimal load-carrying equipment
  - Next level of escalation is subdued badges, helmets
  - Next level is increased load-carrying equipment, badges removed altogether
  - Finally add body armor, camouflage on helmets, extra ammunition on load-carrying equipment



# Some things just can't be put in a game

- British uniforms during operations
  - Increase in “kit” allows the British to convey their intentions with regards to the local population without ever saying a word
  - Local population learns that based on uniform, the British are either contented with local behavior, or expecting trouble
  - No way to convey this in a game without creating separate counters for each, or multiple levels of ‘escalation’ cards
  - How do you model a local reaction to these changes in kit?
  - Does this have an actual game effect based on any anticipated mechanics in the game?



# Some things just can't be put in a game

- Hezbollah Fire Support in Lebanon in 2006
  - Hezbollah stationed live-broadcast cameras in empty buildings, sited on expected avenues of approach and pre-set targets
  - Once activity in target area was observed, pre-sited rockets were fired
  - Israelis had no way to counter this fire through either (a) trying to kill observers who weren't there, or (b) trying to bring in counter-battery fire on launch sites that were crawling with civilians and only used once



# Some things just can't be put in a game

- Hezbollah Fire Support in Lebanon in 2006
  - Easy to model the Hezbollah artillery operations with pre-planned single-shot targets
  - Very difficult to model the effects on Israeli soldiers and inherent confusion over their rules of engagement as they came under this fire, especially depending on how morale is modeled in the game





# Gaming “Irregular Warfare”

*Anything up to the level of declared states of war and high-intensity conflict between nations*

- Irregular warfare seems to be increasing in frequency (though seems to have been equally-frequent from 1870-1930)
- Victory conditions may not be battlefield-related and therefore need appropriate mechanisms to achieve and/or deny them
- Challenges in scaling result in necessary abstraction at either high or low levels in order to maintain a game of manageable size
- Difficulty in ‘gaming’ the myriad individual interactions that may impact the success/failure of “irregular warfare”



**Questions? Comments?  
Obscene Remarks?**

Thanks!

