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*Running a Country: The British Colonial Experience and
its Relevance to Present Day Concerns*

by Michael Crawshaw

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DEFENCE ACADEMY
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

‘RUNNING A COUNTRY’

THE BRITISH COLONIAL EXPERIENCE
AND ITS RELEVANCE TO PRESENT-DAY
CONCERNS

BY

MICHAEL CRAWSHAW

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Executive Summary

The paper sets out the principles and practice of British colonial and other forms of overseas governance, and summarises the development of British military doctrine for counter-insurgency. It then briefly covers the highlights and lessons of fifteen campaigns or near-campaigns, including post-World War II occupied Europe, and continues with a challenge to the received wisdom that full solution democracy, and full solution global capitalism are the ideal outcome for every case.

The development of insurgencies, and the applicability and relevance of British counter-insurgency methods to present-day situations are then examined including the development of flat-structure, network-based insurgencies. The paper suggests that since a major factor in British successes was numerical as well as technological military superiority leading eventually to tactical dominance, TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) of the past are not a good fit with today's situations. The explosive growth of private military contractors is a consequence of the extreme shortage of military personnel. However, it would appear that some at least of the principles of classical counter-insurgency are applicable even in a netwar setting.

At the higher level there are lessons to be learnt and methodology which could be of value if adapted to the needs of today's situations in the conventional sphere. The simplicity of British command and control arrangements for counter-insurgency in a colonial setting, arising from being the government and owning the territory, were a major factor in achieving success where success was achieved. The effectiveness of the 'British Model' lay more in its long-term maintenance of good order and containing minor revolt than in its performance in the face of major insurgency. These goals were achieved principally as a result of devolved responsibility and power exercised by high-quality individuals operating with a marked degree of autonomy. Creation of similar structures would be of advantage today.

The paper concludes that the critical factor in the application of the British or any other counter-insurgency model is ownership of the campaign. If an indigenous government is seen by its people to be playing a major role in the direction of operations, then support to that government from outside the country gains legitimacy which it would otherwise lack. The five Principles of Counter-Insurgency Warfare (to which should be added the intelligence and information warfare dimensions) formulated by Sir Robert Thompson in the aftermath of the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War still have validity, subject to minor modification, in current counter-insurgency situations. Finally, the paper suggests a number of secondary principles derived from previous British practice, of which the most important is 'getting government on the ground' - creating a visible and viable legitimate civilian government presence at local level while pacification operations are still in progress.

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**‘Running a Country’ The British Colonial Experience and its Relevance to
Present-Day Concerns**

by

Michael Crawshaw

Quidquid agas, prudenter agas, et respice finem.

(Whatever you do, do it with care, and think end-states).¹

You cannot win the war without the help of the population, and you cannot get the support of the population without at least beginning to win the war.²

BACKGROUND

The United States’ COIN programme has sparked off a number of initiatives, among them a recognition that British principles and practice in managing counter-insurgency, derived from experience in the governance of colonial territories, may have significant relevance to present-day and near-term problems faced by the US and UK governments world-wide.³ The paper is written in response to this perception, with a view to providing an input to the US programme.

SCOPE

The paper briefly examines examples of British practice in the governance of the Crown Colonies, and in addition of the former dominions, of India, the League of Nations mandated territories post-World War I, and in the occupied territories of Germany, the Dutch East Indies and French Indo-China post-World War II. It touches upon British experience of counter-insurgency campaigns, including reasons for success or failure in particular cases. The paper then draws on this background to establish practices and principles relevant to the conditions of the present day and the near future.

AIM

The aim of this paper is to arrive at a set of principles, derived from British colonial and related experience, for the governance of states in situations where Allied forces and supporting civilian agencies are engaged in counter-insurgency operations, stabilisation and nation-building.

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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

The first of Sir Robert Thompson’s Five Principles of Counter Insurgency states:

‘The government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable’.

(Annex A).

No clearer exposition of a desired end-state could be made. CAMI (Comprehensive Approach to Modern Insurgency) operations must be driven by the need to establish a clear choice between the end-states offered by the insurgents and those by the Government, and to convince them that the latter is preferable.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

Top Level Concerns. Any one of the following may cause current problems to diminish in significance, even in the short term:

- The schism between Muslim and Western⁴ cultures, if not resolved on a live and let live basis, may soon make current concerns irrelevant.
- Climate change, at present seen as a medium to long-term threat, may have an earlier impact, particularly by causing large-scale population movements.
- Dependency on Russian, as well as Muslim state-controlled energy supplies may place constraints on Western freedom of action.
- Any early exit from Iraq will be viewed by the Arab street as another defeat for the West, following on from Hezbollah’s good result against Israel, and Iran’s continuing snook-cocking over control of its nuclear ambitions.
- Open conflict between the United States and Iran will not only reorder the pieces on the board but probably break the board as well.

The outcome of some or all of these considerations may be to render impossible any further adventures by the West, and even to call in question the continuation of present commitments. Far from assuming further commitments, we may in the worst case have to apply ourselves solely to the defence of the heartlands.

Current Issues and Principles

- Present concerns with stabilisation and nation-building, predominantly in Islamic states, are the product of close focusing on a currently high-profile but nevertheless small subset of larger long-term problems
- Any principles for solutions must not be specific to a particular problem area. General principles must be very general if they are to have wide applicability.
- The Iraq model is a one-off which is unlikely to be repeated. Those involved ‘have learned an imperial lesson’. Developing tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for another Iraq is a waste of time; lessons learnt from Iraq, on the other hand, are anything but.

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- Revolutionary movements, in which genus militant Islam must be classed, operate on a long-haul basis. They cannot be countered by short-term emergency- based countermeasures. Northern Ireland is the most recent example directly affecting the British Armed Forces, but the Arab-Israeli dispute has now been an active confrontation for more than 75 years. The Malayan emergency lasted 12 years, during the first four of which very little was achieved.

THE BRITISH APPROACH - PRINCIPLES

Background Basics and Cautionary Caveats.

- In the British Empire, trade did not follow the flag - the flag, often reluctantly, followed trade when trade called for help.
- The big idea of ‘Empire’ only got going when the Empire had plateaued and was on the verge of decline
- There is an understandable tendency to look at the ‘British Model’ in the context of the major armed insurrections in the era of decolonisation - Palestine, Kenya, Malaya, and Cyprus. In fact, the system was developed as a means of running a country long-term under largely peaceful conditions, in which it was generally successful. However, it did provide, as a matter of course, structures capable of containing and quickly resolving civil disorder and the occasional armed revolt. Transition to major operations was therefore a matter of changes in scale rather than a start from square one. These changes in scale, however, did not happen without difficulties, often personality-based, as those operating the system adjusted, or failed to adjust to new realities.
- The new US attitudes to British techniques and procedures tend to be rosetinted. Some of the principles set out below were honoured more in the breach than the observance. Several were developed only during the period of decolonisation.

Perceived Modus Operandi - The ‘British Approach’⁵

- Trust and legitimacy, legitimacy and trust (circularity).
- Personal responsibility - large areas administered by high quality individual officers,⁶ with minimal interference.
- Accessibility of civil government institutions down to low level: ‘Government on the ground’.
- Understanding the country, its people and their customs, based on long experience in country.
- Government in accordance with local custom and practice (unless intolerable, e.g. suttee, cannibalism), retaining indigenous structures for lowest-level administration
- Light touch, but early and firm⁷ response.
- Conditioned by Treasury parsimony.
- Quality public works (within cost limits), provided by Government PWD.

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- Locally raised military⁸ and police forces (low-cost), limited or no British Army presence under normal conditions.
- Intelligence gathering facilitated by decentralisation, use of local forces, and long experience of the territory.
- A single operational command structure providing executive responsibility and power under the three heads - civil government, police, and military - at each level of administration; the ‘three-legged stool’.
- In major counter-insurgency situations, close control by the executive of all activity whether by government or non-government agencies and individuals, empowered by tight legislation and regulation, and strictly enforced.
- Isolation of insurgents from supply and intelligence-gathering support.
- Avoidance of illegal acts by security forces.
- The principle of the use of minimum force.
- British Army experience, usually successful (eventually), of numbers of ‘small wars’ world wide.⁹
- Willingness to compromise (eventually) and to lose gracefully.
- Counter-insurgency doctrine summarised in Sir Robert Thompson’s Five Principles - see Annex A

THE BRITISH APPROACH - PRACTICE

Colony - General Case. All structures were based on the colony model, even the dominions in their early stages of development, and also India. The ‘colony model’ itself was not a hard and fast structure. Colonies were not identically organised, as will be seen below.

- **Top level.** Governor/High Commissioner supported by advisory/legislative council, comprising senior civil service staff, Police Commissioner, Military Advisor; in certain cases colony citizens as co-opted or elected members.
- **Province/District level.** Province/District Commissioner and staff. Police Commander. Local military commander, if operations in progress in district. PWD Province/District Officer. DC would have advisory group of local leaders, possibly elected.
- **District/Sub-district.** District Officer, on his own. Permanent police representation probably no higher than locally enlisted inspector or sergeant. As with the DC, the DO would have his local advisors, at community headman level. In smaller colonies, or where a provincial level of government was introduced, DOs would report directly to the central administration or to province. In more developed colonies, some DOs were recruited from the indigenous population.
- **Boundaries.** The boundaries of civil police and military areas of responsibility were made to coincide with those of the civil administrative districts. Although the common-sense value of this practice is obvious, it was not always followed; Northern Ireland was a case in point.

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Dominions

- The defining characteristic of the dominions was their predominantly British origin populations.
- Dominions developed from colonial structure initially, progressing to eventual independent status, on the basis of Westminster pattern democracy.
- The same process was adopted as the model for development of the colonies. With hindsight, more thought should have been given to possible alternatives on a case-by-case basis.

India

- Despite its size, India, following the 1857 Mutiny, was reorganised on a similar basis to that shown above for a colony. For ‘Governor’ read ‘Viceroy’, with C-in-C India as military representative.
- A province level of command, under a provincial governor, was inserted into the system.

Mandated Territories

- Mandated territories were as variegated in their characteristics as were colonies. In some cases, e.g. the former German colonies in Africa, a simple substitution of one authority for another, the incoming administration being similar in character to the outgoing and perceived as less severe in its approach, took place with minimal upheaval. In the former Ottoman territories of Palestine and Iraq, the United Kingdom inherited intractable security situations without the benefit of a previous extended period on the ground and in circumstances where recognition of the authority of the mandate was far from universal.
- The governance of a League of Nations mandated territory was similar to that of a colony.
- The mandated territory model has relevance to the present day, in that were the UN to adopt it as standard practice (not quite the same as trusteeship), a degree of legitimacy could be given to situations not far removed from the existing position in Iraq. However, such legitimacy is more likely to be recognised at the international level than in-country. Internal recognition may be expected only in cases where state institutions have totally collapsed.

Nation-Building

The entire process of colonial development was by definition ‘nation-building’, but in contrast with today’s use of the term, it was nation-building over a long term and evolutionary, rather than short-term proactive. The growth of political institutions, the civil service, and economic development happened at their own pace. Post-World War II, the build-up of pressure for early decolonisation caused this process to be accelerated, and some territories were pitch forked into independence before their internal structures had attained maturity.¹⁰

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**BRITISH COUNTER-INSURGENCY MILITARY DOCTRINE IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY¹¹**

The British Army entered the twentieth century in reflective mood, following a mixed performance in the South African War (1899-1902). The first decade of the new century was a period of recognition of shortcomings and institution of substantial reforms. Unfortunately, counter-insurgency doctrine did not figure greatly in these. There was a general perception that Kitchener's operational concept and tactics for defeating the Boer forces during the guerrilla phase of the conflict had brought about success. These were based on population and resource control measures (farm burning and enforced relocation of non-combatants to internment ('concentration') camps), coupled with large-scale drives and sweeps within a network of barrier fences, these being reinforced with large numbers of blockhouses.

The effect of this perception was to enshrine the principle of sweeps, cordon-and-search, and formal attacks, all on a large scale, as the basis of counter-guerrilla operations. This was later read across into counter-insurgency doctrine. The third edition of Calwell's *Small Wars* (1906) reflects this thinking. It remained firmly lodged in the minds of British commanders into the early 1950s, and was still evident in the campaign against EOKA 'A' in Cyprus after 1955, despite a track record of negative results in Palestine, Kenya, and the early part of the Malayan emergency. Callwell's book remained the main doctrinal source until the 1930s, when the War Office published *Notes on Imperial Policing 1934*.¹² This was in effect only a minor updating of previous doctrine in the light of more recent experience, as was *Imperial Policing*,¹³ written by Major-General Sir Charles Gwynn in 1936 and adopted as semi-official doctrine. Crucially, neither of these took great account of the lessons of the 1920-21 campaign against the IRA, which had many of the characteristics of a modern insurgency. Given that the War Office had itself disseminated the *Record* of the campaign,¹⁴ this was a surprising omission, explained by the judgment that the Irish campaign was *sui generis* and irrelevant to normal internal security operations.

British counter-insurgency doctrine for the last fifty years of the century evolved from a variety of sources. The Second World War saw British agencies (SOE, Force 136) in the business of fomenting insurgency in German- and Japanese- occupied territory, and studying enemy counter-action. German use of special forces and of pseudo-gangs against partisans (methods pioneered by Orde Wingate during the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39) was of particular interest. Similar techniques were taught by the SAS to Government forces during the Greek Civil War, and then adopted to a limited extent in Palestine. Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus saw the development of British concepts until they attained their familiar characteristics:

- Emphasis on winning the politico-strategic battle while containing at the tactical level.
- joint unified command structures integrating civil government, police and military: integration obviated the need for CIMIC staffs;
- intelligence-based operations;
- continuous offensive pressure on the insurgents by all elements of the security forces;
- small unit, patrol-based offensive tactics, but supported by a large security force;

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- use of turned enemy personnel;
- population/resource control, and self-defence measures, to isolate the insurgent from the support of the population;
- establishing, clearing, securing and extending base areas to provide safe zones;
- emphasis on winning hearts and minds, and on psyops in general.

These were encapsulated in the successive editions of the manual *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, familiarly known as ATOM, which was adapted for use in other theatres and became the basis of the British Army’s tactical doctrine manual *Keeping the Peace*.¹⁵

The extent to which the military aspects of the ‘British Model’ remain relevant to modern insurgency is debated later in the paper.

CASE STUDIES

South Africa 1899-1902

The Second Boer War, fought between the Imperial forces and the Afrikaner (Boer) inhabitants of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State was a counter-secessional conflict, with the aim of keeping these Boer republics within the orbit of British rule.

- Operations regressed from conventional main force battles into a protracted and bitter guerrilla phase after the substantial, well-equipped and well-led Boer main forces were defeated in the field.
- The Boer detachments (commandos) were brought under control by a combination of compartmentalisation of the country by fences and blockhouses, the destruction of farms, and the incarceration of the farming population in concentration camps, thereby separating the fighting element from their logistic support. This process was operated in parallel with negotiations for a settlement.
- ‘Safe zones’ were established within the former Boer republics with a view to restoring normal living and working conditions.
- The final settlement was a collection of compromises which succeeded in being acceptable to the majority of the European population of both sides and led rapidly to Dominion status for the Union of South Africa, but laid the foundations for later troubles trouble by nipping in the bud the growth of the multi-racial franchise already operating in British areas.¹⁶

Iraq 1919-39

- The Iraq commitment was notable for the early emergence of an indigenous government with wide popular support, following major (multi-divisional) counter insurgency operations.
- Thereafter, the British role was more supervisory.
- The case has parallels with present-day Afghanistan as well as Iraq.

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Palestine 1930 - 48

- Palestine is a prime example of an unsuccessful mandate. The situation was impossible; ‘The ‘Long War’ started with Sykes-Picot’ (and Balfour).
- The British position, particularly after 1945, was without legitimacy in the eyes of anyone. No acceptable negotiated solution to the inter-communal was possible. The situation could not be contained even with the deployment of three divisions.
- British intelligence was poor, and suffered severely from targeted assassination of intelligence officers. Tactical methods, until too late in the campaign, were ruled by the doctrine of large-scale sweep and cordon/search operations, which had little success.
- The difficulties were exacerbated by differences of opinion between the Attlee Government and the CIGS (Montgomery) on the one hand, and between CIGS and in-theatre commanders as to the degree of force appropriate to the situation, with CIGS favouring the heavy hand.¹⁷
- The solution adopted was to walk away from the impossible.

Dutch East Indies 1945-46, Indo-China 1945

These operations are mentioned because their noteworthy feature was the employment of Japanese forces under British command to contain post-war insurgency, until Dutch and French forces respectively could move in and assume responsibility. The lesson is that where forces are needed, squeamishness as to their origin should take second place to necessity; contrast this with the precipitate disbandment of the Iraqi Army in 2003.

Kenya 1953-60, Cyprus 1955-60, Aden/South Yemen 1964-67

- All three of these examples illustrate the point that however effective the ‘British Model’ may have been, it could not defeat the **aims** of insurgency in situations where the insurgents enjoyed a sufficiently large measure of support to present themselves and be accepted as the people’s choice.
- Britain’s track record in holding on to possessions against genuine popular movements is no better than that of any other former colonial power.
- In Kenya, the (ill-) armed insurgency was crushed, but its aims were achieved when independence was granted by the Macmillan Government over the objections of the settler community.
- Cyprus was badly handled from the beginning of British rule in 1878, which until formal colony status was instituted in 1923 was barely distinguishable from the previous Ottoman regime. An educated, significantly Europeanised population never settled into the ‘acceptance’ phase of colonial government. Insurgency began in the early 1930s.
- During the 1950s EOKA ‘A’ campaign external pressures were significant. With the Malayan emergency continuing, there can have been little enthusiasm in London for another long haul solution.¹⁸ Greece’s support for the insurgency was unhelpful. Turkey’s involvement, encouraged by the UK, muddled the waters in the short term and was to

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prove catastrophic in the long. US influence was always present; its effect varied in accordance with the US priorities of the day. It is fair to say, however, that the external event having the greatest impact was the Suez operation of 1956. This diverted resources from the counter-insurgency effort,¹⁹ and its aftermath caused the UK Government to seek an even quicker fix rather than a more measured solution.

- Cyprus is also noteworthy for the degree to which the issue was carried to the UN, with Greece acting as mouthpiece for the insurgents.
- Aden is noticeable for the disastrous effect of the Prime Ministerial long screwdriver. Communications had evolved sufficiently by 1967 to permit micro-management from London.

Malaya 1948-60, Brunei (Confrontation) 1962-64, Oman/Dhofar various

- The common thread joining these is that British forces enjoyed major success defending or establishing, not a British colonial status quo, but **non-British governments enjoying their own legitimacy**.
- The Malayan emergency is in danger of becoming a template for other campaigns. In fact, although the situation was benign in comparison with some other theatres (e.g. force ratios were extremely favourable for the security forces), success did not come without a great deal of effort and many mistakes. Little was achieved in the first four years.

Ireland 1919-21

- This period in the troubled mutual history of Britain and Ireland (the ‘Tan War’) can be regarded as the first encounter between British security forces and a recognisable insurgency in the modern sense of the term.
- The IRA was forced to the negotiating table more by its own misjudgment in moving to main force operations without possessing the resources to do so than by security force success against its lower level activities.
- The British Army produced a lessons learned publication - the Irish ‘*Record*’ (see above) - which contained valuable insights into counter-insurgency methods. Unfortunately, the campaign was regarded as an aberration and atypical of internal security operations generally, and the findings were largely ignored until World War II, when the British became interested in encouraging insurgency in enemy occupied territory.

Northern Ireland 1969 - present day

- At first sight Northern Ireland is a case where the British have successfully defended an existing position. In fact, a very substantial measure of success has been achieved, but accompanied by massive changes to the political and social structure of the province.
- The case illustrates the need to allow a long time frame if fundamental differences are to be resolved or contending parties are to be persuaded to compromise.
- The peculiarities of the status of the Province, its political, and its police organisation led to difficulties in applying tried and tested counter-insurgency solutions, particularly in command and control and information-sharing.

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- Internationalisation was a significant factor, whether in terms of cross-border support and safe havens, PIRA links with other insurgent groups (e.g. ETA), or rogue states for supply of materiel (Libya). US influence, whether official or unofficial, was for a long time adverse, reflecting the effectiveness of PIRA information warfare.
- Northern Ireland also illustrates the deleterious effects of the long screwdriver, writ large. Much of the effectiveness of the ‘British Model’ in former times stemmed from the autonomy enjoyed by its operators.
- Northern Ireland remains a special and atypical case, in that the two sides were fighting different wars, one to maintain the integrity of the state, the other to liberate the Province from ‘colonial’ rule. The campaign contains elements of ‘classical’ and ‘modern’ insurgency, examples of the latter being the small size of PIRA active service units and their integration into the civilian population, and the high profile of information warfare. Finally it provides a pointer to the future, as an indication of the circumstances in which a democracy can summon the will, across party divisions, to see a campaign through to a solution over a generation of conflict.

Supremo

- In the setting of a major counter-insurgency campaign, appointing a supremo is an option with a respectable pedigree. Success in Malaya is indelibly associated with Templer’s leadership, combining charisma with competence. In Cyprus Harding’s performance has attracted mixed reviews;²⁰ however, his own assessment was that the security forces were on the verge of achieving military success over EOKA ‘A’ in 1956 (see above), when the Suez operation caused a fatal diversion of effort. More recently, the option of establishing a supremo for Northern Ireland was debated on a number of occasions throughout the period of the emergency.
- Both cases mentioned in the last paragraph pre-date the communications revolution of the mid-60s. A supremo requires a substantial degree of autonomy if he or she is to operate effectively. Establishing such autonomy is ever less possible, contributing to the decisions not to establish such an appointment for Northern Ireland. In contrast, an outstanding level of trust developed between Templer and the Cabinet.²¹

Germany 1945-49 - Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories²²

- Although not strictly speaking a colonial example, AMGOT is mentioned here as a model that has wide potential application in failed as well as in occupied states. In Germany from 1945, each of the Western Allies provided an administration for its occupied zone. Features were:
- In Germany the Nazi party and the government were synonymous, as with the Ba’ath in Iraq. In the context of reconstruction, the collapse of the party structure had more deleterious effects at local government level than at national.

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- The AMGOT organisational structure was capable of managing the individual zones for a limited period, proceeding to re-establishment of German executive responsibility under a steadily diminishing degree of AMGOT control, and eventual re-establishment of national government in the three Western Zones.
- The de-nazification process was critical to success. Screening and categorisation of Nazi officials permitted a rapid return of the majority to their former or similar employment.
- As far as Germany was concerned, Allied concepts, recruiting, training and deployment were the result of planning begun in 1942 against a specific and long-anticipated requirement. Training of staffs began in 1943. The problems of government of liberated or reconquered territories were being addressed by the British as early as 1941. Previous experience of occupation of the Rhineland post-1918 was a valuable aid to planning.²³
- A significant factor in the success of the operation in Germany was the willingness of the great majority of the population to cooperate, and their acceptance of its legitimacy. However, this cooperation was not assumed at the planning stage. There were examples of unrest involving both German nationals and the large forced labour population, particularly in the initial stages of the occupation, but immediate and robust action prevented these developing into a large-scale problem.
- The AMGOT model has substantial relevance to the reconstruction of Iraq, and to similar commitments. In terms of its multi-disciplinary character it has significant parallels with the comprehensive approach, and its emphasis on and arrangements for re-integrating enemy personnel as an essential feature of governance capacity building are worth studying in their own right. However, the success was very much a product of the willingness and ability of the population to help themselves.

Postscript - The Case That Never Happened

The arrangements in force during the Cold War for the governance of the United Kingdom in the event of all-out nuclear war are a direct read-across from the ‘British Model’ of colonial government, and make interesting reading in the context of how to regenerate failed or collapsed states.²⁴

- The colonial government principle of devolution was followed to the letter, with responsibility and power being exercised at regional, county, district, and parish levels. Democracy was in suspension, although it was intended that regions should be headed by ministers - if they could reach their seats of government in time.
- Below region, power was firmly in the hands of the administrators, with the chief executives at county and to a lesser extent district having the key role in managing survival and reconstruction.
- The colonial ‘three-legged stool’ command structure (including the military) was in place down to county level.

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Summary

- The ‘British Model’ is not a panacea. It depended very much on trust of the governors by the governed, and to a significant amount in the reverse direction. As such, it was an excellent instrument for the routine maintenance of order and the early suppression of minor insurrection and rebellion, but lost its effectiveness when the legitimacy of the system itself was challenged.
- In the post-World War II period, only in Malaya did the British truly defeat an insurgency directed against a British colonial administration, and even there **a significant factor in the success was the transfer of power to an indigenous government**, albeit one not representing the insurgents. In other cases where a degree of success was achieved, it led to a negotiated settlement. In the British experience, ‘you always ended up talking to them’.
- Although in some cases external support and safe havens were available in neighbouring territories, internationalisation of support for insurgency was not a significant factor except in the cases of Palestine, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. UN involvement was limited; the doctrine of state sovereignty was still very much in force, and though decolonisation was a major issue at the UN, it remained largely a matter for debate and expressions of displeasure.
- Military tactical success against major insurgencies was chiefly achieved by patrol action based on good intelligence, but to enable offensive patrolling to be carried out, large forces, military, police, and auxiliaries, had to be committed to framework operations, to ensure that secure base areas stayed secure - in today’s parlance, stabilisation. Success in major emergencies was very much dependent on achieving massive numerical superiority over the insurgent forces.
- It must also be remembered that the ‘British Model’ was applied to situations, and attitudes, of long ago, and mostly to operations in what were then very undeveloped countries. It ran on mission command principles, and modern communications did it no good at all. And it was fortunate that the media climate of those days was more benign than that of today. All this is not to say, however, that some features of the model cannot be applied to modern day situations.

DEMOCRACY AND DARWIN

Two Great ‘Truths’:

- That British Governments always worked towards the establishment of Westminster-style democracy in all colonies.
- That the only acceptable end-state for stabilised, recovered or rescued states is Western-pattern democracy coupled with free-market capitalism.

The first of these ‘truths’ is fairly true as applied to the post-WWII world. Prior to that, it was by no means universally acknowledged. Independence movements in the colonies were given impetus by the collapse of the British position in the Far East in 1941-42, by India and Pakistan achieving

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independence in 1947, and not least by the active support given by the United States to the break-up of the British Empire. It is vital to distinguish between Britain’s reasonable track record on running colonies, and her less impressive performance in holding on to them against the opposition of their populations. The viability of Westminster-pattern democracy in former colonies has been called in question by a multiplicity of breakdowns, of which Sierra Leone is only distinguished by being the most recent.

The second ‘truth’ poses awkward questions:

- Define ‘Western democracy’.
- Western democracy has taken a long time and a lot of pain to reach its present still imperfect state.
- States evolve; they are not created overnight in the image of Westminster or Washington DC.
- Attention needs to be given to alternatives to democracy as at present understood. Less mature societies may find themselves more comfortable with something very different from Western models of government.
- Monarchy, and non-constitutional monarchy at that (or its equivalent, dictatorship by consent), may still have a place in the development of nations today.
- There is still undoubted nostalgia in Eastern Europe for the comfort zone provided by the former regimes. One-party government may also be a positive step forward in a country’s progress.
- The economic needs of developing nations may be better served by mixed economy solutions than by modern free-market capitalism. Again, Eastern Europe provides examples of the difficulties and dangers of a too-rapid transition to the latter.

The lesson here is that the process of nation-building requires intelligent assessment of what each individual country needs in the way of structures and systems. The ‘one size fits all’ approach of regarding Western-style democracy (and tooth and claw capitalism) as the aspiration of every developing nation is suspect.

EVOLUTION OF INSURGENCY, AND APPLICABILITY OF THE ‘BRITISH MODEL’ TO MODERN INSURGENCIES²⁵

Counter-insurgency operations are warfare, not some lower order of conflict. Whether we are dealing with ‘classical or ‘modern’ insurgency, this applies, and the principles of war apply also. There is one principle of war (or living) which does not appear in the usual list, but is particularly applicable to counter-insurgency warfare. This principle states:

‘Every dependency brings with it a related vulnerability.’

In dealing with insurgents, it is vital to identify their dependencies and to attack them through the vulnerabilities which they reveal.

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‘Classical’ and ‘Modern’ Insurgencies

- The British experience dealt with ‘classical’ insurgencies, ranging from smallscale revolts to major campaigns. The common thread in classical insurgency is the attempt to change a government by violent means - the attempt to throw out a colonial or occupying power, or an indigenous government viewed as oppressive. The end is secular in nature, even though the players may be driven by a greater or lesser element of religious fervour, e.g. the Iranian revolution of 1979, or religion-related nationalism, as with the 1955-59 Cyprus insurgency. In classical insurgency, the fact that the insurgents have some defined material goal makes it easier both to comprehend and then counter their military activities, or to engage them in meaningful negotiation.
- In contrast, modern insurgencies may be little more than ends in themselves. In Iraq, ongoing destabilisation with the aim of making the country ungovernable, with the possibility that this may cause coalition forces to leave, is apparently a sufficient driver. Nebulous ambitions toward the re-establishment of the Caliphate may be sufficient motive for violence, while in the UK a desire to punish the British people for their government’s policies in the Middle East is enough to drive a campaign. There is a common thread of negativity in all three cases, which makes negotiation meaningless.
- To categorise insurgencies in a hard and fast manner as ‘classical’ or ‘modern’ , however, may be misleading. The expression ‘no two cases are the same’ turns up elsewhere in this paper, and an insurgency may show characteristics of both. The instability provoked by a modern insurgency may provide cover for other players to further some very old-fashioned political/territorial aims, as in Iraq. Present activity in Afghanistan has many features of 19th century frontier warfare, and it is a mistake to regard jihadist aspects of the campaign as being something that has emerged in the last couple of decades.
- Whether Marxist/Maoist or plain nationalist in their politics, classical insurgent movements were hierarchical in structure. An hierarchical structure has intrinsic vulnerabilities simply by having a leadership and a chain of command. Modern networked insurgencies drive a coach and horses through this thinking. Flat, networked structures have no commanders. Action cells numbering only two or three people, active service unit members living respectably at home and possibly holding down a day job, are the reverse of large organised guerrilla bands living in camps in the forest. Leadership is by shared ideas; group identity is self-generated, derived from the various information exchange and sharing methodologies available today. The group as a group only exists in the virtual environment, hence cannot be targeted as a physical entity.
- In classical insurgency, in addition to the command hierarchy, insurgents’ dependency on sympathisers in the population at large for logistic support, concealment, and transport could be targeted, together with communications - frequently by courier. Developed insurgency, with significant numbers involved, meant that logistic support activity was difficult to conceal from the security forces. Separating the insurgent from his support mechanisms in the general population would put pressure on him even when the measures were not totally effective. In contrast, not only may the modern insurgent be self-sufficient

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within the community, but the inflow of funds from outside sympathisers or in-theatre criminal activity may result in areas of the community becoming dependent on the insurgents, and resistant to any population or resource control measures.

- The effects of offensive action by modern insurgents must be measured in two separate spheres, or battlespaces. In the one are the direct effects of an incident - the conventional battlespace. In the other are the effects arising from media exploitation, in the virtual, the electronic, the netwar battlespace. In a world where perception has become more important than ground truth, and where perception is formed by presentation rather than fact, it is not the bomb that matters, but its timing and presentation to achieve maximum perception by the target audience.
- Key dependencies in modern insurgencies are the ideas held by the insurgents, their means of dissemination, and the comfort zone provided by the feeling of shared mission, all themselves dependent on the means of communication available today. Counter-insurgency forces must work to destroy this cohesion.
- The fourth Thompson Principle, ‘contain at the military (tactical) level while seeking an outcome at the political (-co strategic)’, applies in information warfare as much as in conventional, as does the fifth, ‘secure base areas and let the spots spread’. However, the conventional element of counter-insurgency has not gone away. Containment, stabilisation, the creation of a safe environment must continue to be an objective. What has changed is that the intelligence- based offensive, ‘deep patrol’ tactics that brought success in Malaya, Kenya and Indonesia are inappropriate against a net-based insurgency. Or rather, they are inappropriate in the conventional sense. What is needed is a similar concept, but applied in a netwar setting.
- What this means is that the essential ingredients of classical counter insurgency - intelligence gathering, identification of targets, their neutralisation, or their turning, are equally essential in modern insurgencies but must migrate to the electronic battlespace, the same space where the effects of terrorist activity gain their multiplied effect. Intelligence operators must hang out in chat rooms and engage with bloggers while maintaining a wearying trawl through a mass of information. The equivalent of ‘patrol’ activity in this context is working through the information undergrowth to make eventual contact with a target. Thereafter action may switch back to the physical battlespace for neutralisation, or efforts to turn the contact continue in the electronic. Orthodox electronic surveillance and target acquisition has a place in this process, but voice over internet communications give targets protection against intercept.
- Priority should be given to identifying critical dependencies within the network, e.g. bombmakers, paymasters, website designers. Particular attention should be given to any indication of hierarchical structures developing, with their attendant opportunities for attack.
- The processes outlined in the last two paragraphs call for a reorientation of thinking and a massive investment in people. The scale of effort required, both in terms of resources and of mental adjustment, bears comparison with the shifts in thinking, policy, and resource

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allocation which took place in Malaya between 1950 and 1952. Application of these ideas must not be limited to specific operational areas, but applied on a global basis. The advantage is that the effort can be mostly UK-based and civilian-manned.

- The scale of the operations suggested above may be daunting. It involves strategic level action for tactical results. As such it constitutes another illustration of the withering away of the distinction between the levels of warfare, of which the ‘strategic corporal’ is the quoted-to-death example. However, this withering away is a fact of life; another example of it is that the target of ‘netwar patrol activity’ may himself be acting on his own individual reading of politico-strategic level concepts, available on his laptop.
- Netwar is two-sided; counter-insurgents do not have a monopoly on offensive action. Attention must be given to force protection in the electronic as in the conventional battlespace, although the nature of networked insurgency indicates that a coordinated EW effort is a contradiction in terms. However, the nature of the beast is such that offensive action does not have to be limited to a physical theatre of operations. An example is the aborted plot to kidnap and possibly execute Muslim members of the British Army in the UK. The facts behind this case have yet to emerge, but whether it was directly initiated from Iraq, or simply the action of an independent UK cell inspired by events in Iraq, the incident illustrates the reach of net-based operations.

The Conventional Dimension

The effect of the ideas set out above is to move elements of offensive action by counter-insurgent forces from the conventional to the netwar battlespace. However, the growth of the netwar dimension of counter-insurgency does not mean that the conventional dimension has gone away. Networked terrorism is still terrorism, and still depends on conventional means of attack, and similarly, intelligence derived from netwar will still call for offensive action in the conventional battlespace.

Trying to win today’s counter-terrorist battle at the conventional tactical level is attritional warfare, just as it was against classical insurgency, with all that implies in terms of nugatory activity. The aim in modern, as in classical insurgency, should be to make counter-action at the politico-strategic level the main effort, while doing just enough to contain terrorist activity at the tactical. The challenge in modern insurgencies is to identify the strategic issues, and to focus countermoves accordingly. Which means that Thompson’s fourth principle, and Kitson’s emphasis on intelligence,²⁶ are as valid in today’s contexts as they ever were.

There is, however, a circularity which links the lower tactical level to the grand strategic and back again, which is explicit in the Oliver Lyttleton quotation at the head of this paper, and also in the idea of the strategic corporal. Given that the space between the tactical and strategic levels has all but disappeared, the implication is that planners must think a lot more than two levels down. Going further, as discussed above, in modern emergencies the ‘strategic’ level of command, in any conventional sense, may not exist. Solutions may have to be sought in thinking the unthinkable: simply to walk away

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Know Your Enemy, Know Your Friends - Command and/or Control

Classical counter-insurgency operations normally included just two sets of players - insurgents and government. Complex modern insurgencies feature a multiplicity of insurgent bodies, each with its own agenda, some mutually supporting, some in competition. They will certainly involve the presence of international bodies, NGOs of various functions and attitudes, private contractors with responsibilities extending into the operational field, and the all-pervading media. Operations are likely to be carried out in conjunction with allies and host nation military or paramilitary forces and police. Unity of command was the whole purpose of the British ‘three-legged stool’ approach, but cannot be achieved across the board when whole swathes of the effort are outside the control (let alone command) of the counter-insurgency forces, and may even be hostile in their attitude to the military. In such circumstances even unity of effort may be impossible to achieve. However, it remains a goal, while unity of command, at all levels, of the military, paramilitary, and police forces, of whatever origin, is an essential. If some effective form of civil government is able to operate in the area, then integration of this into a joint command structure is equally an essential.

Legitimacy

Colonial governments had a legitimacy based on acceptance, which was less in evidence in mandated territories. Today’s intervention forces will only achieve legitimacy in two settings:

- In a failed state where no accepted authority exists
- Where the force is operating in support of a legitimate government.

In the second case the danger is that the government will be seen by its own people as the client or puppet of the force. To avoid this it is essential that the government itself is seen to have responsibility for the conduct of operations. Because the success or failure of the campaign will be determined at the strategic level, this indicates that the indigenous government must have the major say in its strategic direction - must have ownership. This situation was being achieved in the latter stages of the Malayan Emergency, and is a significant pointer to modern situations.

A corollary of this is that the colonial model internal structure for running a counter insurgency campaign can be applicable in a modern emergency, provided that the ‘civil government’ leg of the three-legged stool command structure is provided by a legitimate and accepted indigenous government. **The major challenge is to establish this system both at national, and at province level and below.**

HEARTS, MINDS, AND HUMANITARIANS

Classical counter-insurgency operations involved a substantial traditional - good works and deeds - hearts and minds element. The theory that government would maintain or even extend the provision of basic amenities and ensure that primary needs were met, and that the grateful population would thereby be encouraged to stop supporting the insurgents, was more likely to succeed in a backward environment than one that was politically more sophisticated. An example is Cyprus in the 1950s - ‘a tarmac road, electricity, and a water supply to every village’. This programme was pushed through by the PWD during and despite the EOKA ‘A’ insurgency.²⁷ It was a strategic level measure,

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implemented across the entire island and could not be disputed as a universal benefit; but while it may have contributed to the surprisingly rapid restoration of (reasonably) friendly relations between the Greek Cypriots and the British at the end of the emergency, it did not appear to have had any impact on the campaign itself.²⁸

As with other issues, the traditional analysis is too simplistic for modern insurgencies. None of the counter-insurgency campaigns engaged in by the British involved the levels of humanitarian and development aid or the scale of reconstruction now common in both insurgency and emergency situations.²⁹ With relief operations and other measures falling within the hearts and minds area no longer being the exclusive preserve of government, what impact such programmes may have had in turning the civil population towards supporting the government must have diminished, particularly given the aggressive neutrality of some NGOs. The main effect of government-executed or -sponsored humanitarian programmes may well be indirect; media coverage may work to improve the image of the counter-insurgency effort outside the theatre of operations. Nevertheless, restoration or provision of essential facilities to improve the lot of the population remains worth doing for its own sake, regardless of payoff considerations.

Thinking about hearts and minds may be too closely (and automatically) associated with public works, and formal programmes at that. Some of the most effective humanitarian/hearts and minds work is done on an ad hoc basis at very low level, e.g. medical aid given by SAS patrols in Dyak villages during Confrontation with Indonesia, 1962-65. More recently, pictures of British soldiers playing cricket with village children in Sierra Leone may have done something to temper the ‘warrior’ image of the modern soldier. And ideas of ‘three block war’ by definition encompass low-level humanitarian work carried out by fighting troops.

The establishment of the rule of law and assured security of the individual citizen is:

- the primary function of government;
- a basic human need, and right;
- fundamental to hearts and minds;
- arguably, ahead of all other measures in influencing attitudes.³⁰

INTELLIGENCE³¹

That internal security or counter-insurgency campaigns stand or fall according to the effectiveness of their intelligence components is a truism, but one that must be restated. Despite lessons from previous campaigns, the Northern Ireland emergency, in its early stages, was noteworthy for the lack of coordination of intelligence effort, of trust between competing agencies, and of willingness to share information.³²

- What is required, therefore, is the reverse of the above - a competent organisation making use of all sources within and outside the theatre, reporting to the command authority in-theatre. The major challenge is the fusion and effective use of material derived from an extreme range of inputs, ranging from strategic-level secret intelligence down to the lowest tactical, and including the vast quantity of information flowing around the Internet and other open sources. The sheer volume of material available is a problem in itself.

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- A major commitment for intelligence services will be to provide comprehensive pre-deployment briefing material to compensate for the lack of that local knowledge which was one of the strengths of colonial-era counter-insurgency. Keeping this material free of cultural and other bias is essential - and challenging.
- Intelligence does not rate as one of the Thompson Principles of Counter- Insurgency; the omission should be rectified.

THE MEDIA FLANK

Classical British counter-insurgency campaigns were conducted in an age of innocence, when the media were unintrusive and at least the British press, radio and television were more or less on the same side as the forces of government until the early 1960s. That is not to say that the media environment was entirely benign. During the Cyprus emergency Athens Radio ran a ruthless propaganda campaign against the British Government and Armed Forces, and Radio Cairo followed a consistently anti- British line during most of the 1950s and 60s. In general, though, media representatives actually in theatre (even the newspapers) did not see it as their job to act as critical commentators to the extent seen today.

- Forces deployed on any operations today have to contend with a media environment which ranges from the critical to the declaredly hostile. The media flank is not just a vulnerable area but a theatre of operations in its own right. Leaving traditional modes of communication aside, militant Islam has taken the battle to the Internet and its use of the medium is as sophisticated as any. Websites (themselves becoming yesterday's news), blogs, chat rooms, use of Voice Over Internet Protocol to defeat intercept, podcasts for operational orders dissemination - these are common currency, in a communications environment that cannot be taken down without destroying what has become an essential part of the fabric of society worldwide. In this environment, presentation rules perception, and perception is more important than fact.
- Counter-insurgency forces need to take the battle to the opposition in the information war as much as the physical, and win it. The media equivalent of ‘secure bases’, and ‘oil spots’ in the Thompson Principles is to have a presence in the information war that is accepted as truthful and trustworthy. Up to the mid-1950s, the UK had a priceless information asset in the World Service of the BBC, which was trusted to tell the truth by citizens of countries whose own media carried only government propaganda. This reputation was lost at the time of the 1956 Suez operation and took a decade to recover,³³ by which time the era of classical counter-insurgency had come to an end.
- The importance of winning the information war is so great that it, like intelligence, deserves to be upgraded to a major ‘principle of counter-insurgency’. It also calls for the commitment of resources, not so much in terms of hardware but of brainpower. This brainpower may well, and indeed should, employ approaches to problems which differ from those of the conventional military.

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- In the information/propaganda war, the home populations of the nations making up an Allied force may present a more vulnerable target than troops in the field, either in the mass or in terms of specific targeting of family members of troops serving in the operational theatre. Action must be taken to cover this vulnerability.

MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY FORCES

Pared to the bone, but still expensive regular armies on the US and UK model are ill suited to large-scale counter-insurgency operations, which routinely call for the commitment of more troops than are available over a longer period than is convenient. The situation is not helped if every deployment is regarded as an ‘emergency’ tour. National Service soldiers in Malaya spent twice as long in theatre as those currently in Iraq, despite being moved to and from by troopship.³⁴ Longer tours mean a more effective presence, whether one is thinking at tactical level, or in the sense of commitment - ‘we are here to stay’ - with strategic level impact.

- The initial stage of pacification of a territory, with or without a period of warfighting preceding it, calls for the commitment of high end - in Sun Tzu’s terminology, ‘extraordinary’ forces. In the ‘British Model’, these were the units which initially cleared and secured base areas and then fielded the patrols that carried the war to the insurgents. However, to employ such forces, by definition expensive and therefore limited in numbers, for stabilisation operations is a waste of assets. British practice was to make use of local forces, military, police, auxiliaries, and home guards to relieve regular units as far as possible of responsibility for routine security, ‘ordinary’ duties, where numbers count.
- The capability/capacity crunch needs to be honestly addressed. Stabilisation calls for capacity rather than capability, but the troops involved and the countries supplying them must appreciate that stabilisation involves a combat commitment. However, if nations are genuinely prepared to commit to providing fighting troops for the ‘ordinary’ task while being unable or unwilling to equip and train them to ‘extraordinary’ standards, this should be welcomed, not disparaged. On the other hand, there is nothing that non-combatant soldiers can do that cannot be done more cheaply and at least as well by civilian agencies. Soldiers who are not allowed to act as soldiers become an addition to the problem rather than a part of the solution.
- Indigenous armed forces, police and auxiliaries may be available for security duties subject to screening and retraining for role. If even moderately competent and trustworthy, they will assist in alleviating the numbers problem. The contribution now being made by 10 Division of the Iraqi Army to operations in and around Basra is an indication of how much was lost by the precipitate disbandment of the Iraqi forces in 2003.
- The growth of private military contractors (PMCs) is a consequence of the lack of regular forces. Employing contract security forces is potentially dangerous, in that the practice introduces an additional element of paramilitary force outside the chain of command. A security firm contracted to a particular NGO will follow the direction of that NGO because that is how contractors work. Such forces are likely to become part of the problem rather than of the solution; in some situations (e.g. where narcotics or other high value commodities are involved), the potential for exploitation by criminal elements is very real.

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- Nevertheless, if the principle is accepted that contractor provision of paramilitary forces is a fact of life, the ‘ordinary’ part of a force might be contractor provided to an even greater extent than hitherto. Existing contractor provision of combat service support could be extended to the combat support area, e.g. construction engineer units armed to self-defence standards. Such a solution is tidier than unarmed doers protected by private security personnel. From there it is not a huge step to contract paramilitary defence troops taking on responsibility, within the military chain of command, for the protection of secured base areas. The key to operating with PMCs lies in establishing an internationally-recognised code of practice to regulate their activities.
- Alternatively, there is scope for recruiting lower-cost paramilitary (auxiliary) forces under full governmental control and subject to military codes of conduct. Such forces could contain units of different functions as for regulars. There is no shortage of examples whether in British service or that of other nations. Certain factors should be emphasised, e.g.
 - The recruiting base for such forces could be world-wide, including UK. An example of such a force under UK command was the polyglot Mixed Service Organisation (MSO) in Germany, which included defence as well as administrative units. However, the cheaper solution is to follow the lead of the PMCs and recruit in-country for the duration of the emergency.³⁵
 - Gendarmerie units offer advantages in terms of cost and effectiveness, and also acceptability over full-scale military forces in settings short of outright war, and where law enforcement has become a significant role for security forces, i.e. stabilisation.³⁶ Additionally, formed gendarmerie units are likely to be both operationally and administratively more effective than individual seconded police officers. Examples in British service, employing British nationals, were the Royal Irish Constabulary³⁷ and the Palestine and British South African Police Forces. Such forces can provide a vital stepping-stone between a conventional military presence and the establishment of effective indigenous policing.
 - Defence ministries could do worse than to study the *modus operandi* and cost structure of PMCs and cherry-pick methods appropriate to government forces.
- It is essential to enter a caveat as to the dangers of tailoring force structures to meet the demands of short-term necessity. Requirements, and fashions, for warfare are cyclical.³⁸ We may need a full scale air force for the next generation of conflicts - not to mention the preservation of the nuclear deterrent.³⁹

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NATION-BUILDING

General

During the preparation of this paper, the author has been led more and more to the conclusion that an emphasis on the early establishment of the full panoply of democratic institutions as part of a nation-building programme is deleterious as far as practical results are concerned, however attractive it may be presentationally. An effective executive structure, integrating incoming and indigenous actors, is more important.

Planning and Preparation

- Every case is different in its characteristics and its requirement. No country can be considered as a tabula rasa on which can be drawn all the detail of a modern Western state.
- A general methodology must be based on the principles set out below. These may appear simplistic but history, recent and otherwise, abounds with examples where their application might have been helpful.⁴⁰
 - Where are we now? (Start state).
 - Where do we want to go? (Aim/desired end-state).
 - What can we do?
 - What can't we do? (More important).
 - Where can we actually get to, balancing demands against resources and realities? (Achievable end-state, probably implying new aim).
- Planning for the post-conflict phase must never again be allowed to go by default, as in the case of 2003 Iraq. Sufficient time was available in that instance for an assessment that the situation called for an organisation on the lines of AMGOT, and for its implementation.

Technologies and Institutions

- For a variety of reasons, including unavoidable necessity due to resource limitations but also indolence, development in former British colonies tended to be evolutionary until pushed. Despite modern pressures for quick results, there are advantages in hurrying slowly. Evolutionary progress tends to stick.
- A country which cannot supply clean water to its inhabitants may have a fully functioning mobile telephone network, internal air travel coexisting with bullock carts, and a great many Mercedes motors for its ministers.
- Whether one is looking at appropriate technologies or appropriate institutions, there is no one model to fit all countries. However, one issue is common to all, which is the establishment of effective and impartial judicial and policing systems. This is in keeping with the primary functions of the state, referred to above.
- Coupled with the need for an effective judicial system is the requirement for viable, honest, and properly audited financial institutions.

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- In most cases a state will have some political structures in place which may serve at least as scaffolding for rebuilding. Wherever possible, existing structures should be made use of as giving the population the feeling of ownership of new institutions.
- Decisions on appropriate levels of technology may be difficult but are essential. The bullock cart/mobile phone coexistence may be perpetuated - there is no point in having anything other than state of the art telecomms. However, older/intermediate technologies (e.g. light railways) may be able to play an important part in evolutionary development. And it is preferable to spend money on employing a large number of labourers in-country than on buying and importing expensive construction plant.⁴¹
- The first priority is to restore public services to the best level they had reached prior to intervention, and then go on improving them in slow time.
- Evolutionary progress means getting a thorough grounding in walking before breaking into a trot. It involves, as already suggested, thinking about parish pumps, but parish pumps on a strategic scale, and avoidance of individual grandiose projects.

People

- Trust, and the habit of honest dealing, are essential to nation-building.
- The ‘British model’ of governance depended on a small number of quality individuals capable of taking responsibility and exercising power with minimum oversight. These characteristics are equally advantageous in nationbuilding, provided that structures are adopted which permit such autonomous working. Regrettably, this approach is a bad fit with modern bureaucracies.
- A country needs a large number of technicians to make it work; many suffer from an excess of graduates (particularly lawyers) and a dearth of middle order skills. Reconstruction calls for the education, training, and personal development of middle level individuals in all disciplines, which in view of the numbers involved can only be carried out in-country; a ‘training the trainers’ programme is a requirement.
- Early screening of individual professionals for connections with an enemy regime, with a view to the quick return of as many as possible to previous employment, will be a major factor in promoting rapid recovery.
- Societies with a numerous, reasonably prosperous (as opposed to small and filthy rich), and politically active middle class have a vested interest in peace and stability. Iraq, pre-1980, was renowned as being the most middle-class and secular-minded of all Muslim states; that middle class has largely disappeared, partially as a result of action by the previous regime but also as a consequence of economic decline and the effects of sanctions. Reconstruction programmes should encourage the development of local businesses; local contractors be used in preference to international, or to direct employment of local labour, and assistance given to business start-ups.

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PRINCIPLES - THE ‘BRITISH MODEL’ IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Overarching principle - no two cases are the same.

Major Principles

- The aim stated in Thompson’s First Principle, ‘**a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable**’ (but not necessarily democratic) remains generally applicable, even in a changed world.
- Establishing the **legitimacy** of an Allied military and other presence (Thompson’s Second Principle, updated) is vital.
- This is only likely to be achieved by operating **in support of an established government**. Delegated UN authority, if no established government exists, still may not be accepted by the population. Self appointed authority is no authority, whether in the eyes of the populace or at international level.
- Early establishment of the **rule of law** is essential, the priority being personal safety and security. Security forces themselves must avoid any illegal activity.
- Legitimacy and security generate **trust**. ‘
- Adequate time, thought, and effort must be devoted to **planning and preparation** (Third Principle, expanded).
- **Contain** in the tactical military battle while concentrating on **winning** at the **politico/strategic** (Fourth Principle, modified), and be prepared for the long haul. In this context, **perception** of the situation, whether in-country or internationally, is of greater importance than is ground truth. This calls for a major commitment to **information warfare**, with particular attention being given to securing support from the home populations of the countries contributing to the force.
- Establish and hold **secure base areas**, then let the oil spots spread (Fifth Principle, modified). The holding of cleared areas - stabilisation - is a major consumer of soldier numbers, arguably the major weakness in countering today’s insurgencies.
- In today’s settings, this principle applies equally to **information warfare**. Creating a situation where media sources are providing truthful, balanced reporting is as important as establishing secure physical basing - and equally susceptible to ‘oil spot’ spreading.
- **Intelligence** in counter-insurgency operations is of such paramount importance that it deserves to be a Principle in its own right. This importance applies in all phases - prior to deployment, during the pacification phase, and continuing through stabilisation into ‘peacetime’ conditions. The requirement for pre-deployment **briefing material** on a variety of potential target countries will be a major task for intelligence agencies, given that the advantage of long acquaintance with the territory, inherent in the colonial model, no longer applies.
- **Winning the information war** is now such a high priority that, like intelligence, it deserves the status of a Principle.

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Secondary (Derived) Principles

- Civilian governmental mechanisms, including police or gendarmerie, must deploy behind fighting troops even into insecure areas. Indigenous personnel should be involved as early as possible in all areas of government activity, but:
- Indigenous individuals or agencies must initially be integrated with the incoming organisation. Hand over to local agencies, when it can take place, must be complete and tightly controlled; **duplication of responsibility means no one takes responsibility.** Following from this:
 - Unity of Command of security forces at least - military, paramilitary, and police - remains essential. If this can be extended to bring indigenous government agencies (national and local) within its umbrella, to recreate the ‘three-legged stool’, so much the better.
 - Structures and procedures for coordinating NGO activities with the main effort remain a legitimate aspiration.
 - It may be the case that establishing effective command and control structures in a multi-national, multi-agency operation will only be possible where the UN itself is in command, given the distaste felt not only by NGOs but by some governmental bodies and individuals for operating under any form of military direction. In this context, the UN is preferred to regional governmental bodies as having both a hierarchical structure and the ability to engage at any level of conflict.
- **Power** as well as **responsibility** must be delegated to individuals at local administration level, initially incoming personnel, indigenous later. This calls for high quality individuals capable of carrying responsibility and exercising extensive delegated powers competently and honestly.
- **Public utilities** should be restored as soon as possible to status quo ante, then improved on a long-term basis.
- **Normalisation of business** and trading should be encouraged, initially as a move towards individual, then to national self-sufficiency. **Pump-priming** measures should be funded, and local contractors employed, where possible, in direct support of forces and in infrastructure projects, to promote entrepreneurial spirit and build local business, assisting the emergence of a numerous and prosperous **middle-class**.

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CONCLUSIONS

- Generalisations are dangerous. When considering the issues covered by this paper, the varying states of development of possible candidate countries, from sub-Saharan poverty to Asian tiger, preclude any general solution.
- The ‘British Model’, tied as it is to the era of colonial counter-revolutionary war and earlier, is dated. Nevertheless, much of its methodology can be applied to modern insurgencies **provided that there is a legitimate indigenous government capable of taking ownership of the campaign**. Additionally:
 - The Thompson Principles stand up to examination in a contemporary context and require only minor modification to form guidelines for the conduct of counter-insurgency operations and post-conflict activities. Regarded purely as principles, they retain their validity even when applied to a network-based insurgency.
 - The importance of intelligence and of information warfare justify their elevation to the status of ‘Principles’ in their own right.
 - The essential principle of colonial administration, referred to here as ‘getting government on the ground’, that is the maintenance of a legitimate and viable local civilian government presence even while pacification is still in progress, is as valid and as vital as ever.
 - The simplicity of command structures in the ‘British Model’ was a major source of strength. Finding a means of replicating this in the context of modern insurgencies should be a high priority.
- The ‘British Model’ depended for success in major emergencies on achieving a favourable balance of forces, against movements fielding relatively small numbers of armed insurgents. Such balances cannot be achieved using the limited numbers of regular soldiers available today and against more numerous and better-armed oppositions, given the unwillingness of most nations to commit troops to opposed operations. Nevertheless, the numbers problem remains crucial to success in stabilisation.
- The force requirement divides into high and low end commitments. In the ‘British Model’, the low end was provided to a significant extent by locally raised forces, police and auxiliaries, and home guards in large numbers. Using indigenous forces to provide this ‘ordinary’ presence on the ground will be essential.
- The conclusion cannot be avoided that the growth of private military contractors is, at least in part, a consequence of governments’ unwillingness adequately to resource their regular armed forces. However, the contractor is here to stay. There may be scope for the adoption by the British Armed Forces of some private military sector methods of operating, while the possibility of extending current contractor support arrangements to include more operational functions should be explored.
- Internationally agreed codes of practice for private military contractors are urgently required.

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- The AMGOT solution repays study as an historical model with substantial relevance to present-day situations, and features in common with the comprehensive approach. It has particular lessons for situations where it is necessary to integrate former enemy personnel into new state structures.
- The principles set out in the penultimate section of this paper represent a distillation of former British practice in colonial governance, coupled with an input from the conduct of military/civilian government in post-World War II occupied territories, and taking account of more recent developments. They retain significant relevance to present day situations.

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ANNEX A

PRINCIPLES OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY

Sir Robert Thompson’s Five Principles of Counter-insurgency:⁴²

- The government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable.
- The government must function in accordance with law.
- The government must have an overall plan.
- The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.
- In the guerrilla phase of an emergency, a government must secure its base areas first.

Two further matters are of such importance today as to justify their being added to the five above:

- The government must be supported by a first-class intelligence structure, both within and outside the theatre of operations.
- The government must win the information war, both intra-theatre and worldwide.

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Notes

- 1 ‘Gestae Romanorum’ 13, Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, OUP 1979, p 10:18
- 2 Oliver Lyttelton, Colonial Secretary, on the situation in Malaya, CAB 129/48 C(51)59, 21 Dec 51.
- 3 This interest in British methods is not totally new. See Nagl, John A, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counter Insurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, Praeger, Westport CT, 2002.
- 4 ‘Western’ may be translated as ‘Graeco-Roman Judaeo/Christian materialistic liberal humanist’. This comment is not made with humorous intent. The span of influences on modern Western thought leads to a lack of a central universally accepted set of simple beliefs and principles that is a major weakness in the Western position when set against the terrifying certainties of militant Islam. Instead, the habit of moving from opposition to tolerance, then through approval, and finally to positive discrimination in favour of minority beliefs, customs or practices has been a pernicious influence weakening Western society’s ability to recognise threats to itself and to do something about them. The same argument applies to outright opponents. The truly liberal-minded Westerner has been so conditioned to compromise that he finds it difficult to locate a principle on which to stand fast, and is surprised when someone actually does so.
- 5 Credits for inputs to this section to Donald Walker, onetime Resident of Sabah, and Jonathan Allen, District Works Officer Famagusta 1958-59.
- 6 ‘Those who seventy years ago would have been selected as District Officers are the people you now find as City high-fliers.’ Comment by Brigadier Tom Longland after reading early draft of this paper.
- 7 Sometimes exceedingly firm, or even excessively so, as at Amritsar in 1919
- 8 The third edition (1906) of C. E. Callwell’s classic *Small Wars* is still in print (Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1996).
- 9 It should be borne in mind that the Indian Army was primarily an internal security force, not organised for deployment in field formations. Large-scale operations, as in the 1898-1900 North-West Frontier campaign where two corps equivalents were deployed, required major feats of ad-hocery.
- 10 Giving rise to what Professor Christopher Coker has christened ‘Collapsing ex-Colony Syndrome’.
- 11 This section is largely based on material contained in Jones, T., *Postwar Counterinsurgency and the SAS 1945-52*, Frank Cass, London, 2001.
- 12 Notes on Imperial Policing, War Office, 1934.
- 13 Gwynn, C., *Imperial Policing*, Macmillan, London, 1936.
- 14 Jeudwine, H., *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland 1920-21, and the part played by the Army in dealing with it*, (two volumes), War Office, 1922.
- 15 *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations*, Malaya, Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1952, 1954, 1958. *Keeping the Peace* (three parts), War Office, 1963.
- 16 Strictly speaking, the term ‘AMGOT’ was discontinued after experience in Sicily, where the separation of civil administration from the military chain of command led to difficulties. In NW Europe the two were integrated. However, the acronym continued in use as a convenient if unofficial shorthand, and is so used here. For an admirably succinct comparison of post-conflict arrangements in 1945 Germany with those in 2003 Iraq, see Barnett, C., *Post-Conflict Civil Affairs: Comparing War’s End in Iraq and Germany*, Foreign Policy Centre, February 2005. Acknowledgments to Miss E. B. Makower, former Control Commission officer, and Colonel Hugh Boscawen, for background on the organisation.
- 17 Barnett, op cit., pp 10-11.
- 18 Judd, D., and Surridge, K., *The Boer War*, John Murray, London, 2002, pp 287-297.
- 19 Jones, op cit., pp 26-33

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20. In 1955 the Middle East was the main area of British strategic interest, with Nasser's Egypt, then emerging as a major regional power, seen as the main local threat to the British position. A lengthy, Malayan-style pacification campaign in Cyprus was a bad fit with other commitments in the region.
21. COS56 419, 26 Nov 56, quoted in O'Malley and Craig, *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, I B Tauris, London, 1999, pp 43-44.
22. Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely is critical of Harding: '...basing his campaign on a police force renowned not only for its partiality and ill-discipline, but also for its corruption and brutality...' 'Learning about Counter-Insurgency', *RUSI Journal*, December 2006. On the other hand, Harding has some surprising supporters, such as the author Lawrence Durrell, who served as Press Officer in Harding's HQ. (Durrell, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, Faber & Faber, London, 2000, pp 222-224, 261-262.)
23. 'He dominated the scene... In a few months I had almost dismissed Malaya from my list of danger spots.' Lyttelton, quoting himself in *Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, p 382. See Nagl, *op cit*, p 90.
24. The author's responsibilities from 1985-89 included the mobilisation Home Defence appointment of County Military Commander, Hereford and Worcester.
25. Thanks to Babak Ganji for input to this section.
26. Kitson, F., *Low Intensity Operations*, Faber & Faber, London 1971, particularly pp 95-131.
27. Jonathan Allen, private communication to author.
28. Author's observation from service in Cyprus, 1960. The cynicism here expressed is reflected in anecdotal material from Iraq and Afghanistan (author's discussions with Royal Engineer junior officers recently in theatre, January 2007). The labelling of public works projects as 'Quick Impact' and 'Consent Winning' tends to give the show away. As stated in the text, if such a programme is to have lasting impact it needs to be carried out on a large scale over an extended period, and not be too blatantly targeted.
29. Although not strictly speaking an insurgency, AMGOT reconstruction was in a similar category, and called for a major national commitment. In the winter of 1946-47, the UK civilian ration scale was reduced by 300 calories a day to make food resources available for Germany and Holland (personal recollection).
30. Bull, H., *The Anarchical Society*, Macmillan, London, 1995, p 4.
31. Although the heavy emphasis on intelligence in the 'British Model' is often ascribed to Kitson, Templar had a strong intelligence background, having served as DMI, and before that, following experience in pre-WWII Palestine, in the DMI Military Intelligence Research staff branch, which included in its members Sir Colin Gubbins, later Head of SOE.
32. Author's observation, based on service in Defence Secretariat, 1971-72.
33. Conversations with staff of Middle East Broadcasting Station, Diplomatic Wireless Service of the Foreign Office, Cyprus 1961. The morale of staff members had been severely affected by the feedback being received from listeners across the Middle East, accusing the BBC of having become a British Government propaganda mouthpiece during the Suez crisis.
34. The two-year National Service engagement produced a soldier who after training was available for more than a year of uninterrupted operational service, depending on theatre. British conscript soldiers proved to be well up to the requirements of operations in Malaya.
35. A policy which would have been frowned upon by Imperial Rome. Roman policy was never to employ auxiliaries in the province where they were enlisted.
36. EUROGENFOR has a planned strength of 3000 gendarmes including an 800-strong rapid reaction element. Jakobsen, P. V., 'The ESDP and Rapid Reaction', *European Security*, Vol 15 No 3 September 2006, p 308.

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37. At which point it is inevitable that the Black and Tans will be mentioned. For the record, it is important to distinguish between the Tans, who were individual reinforcements to the RIC and did not as a rule operate as autonomous units, and the Auxiliaries who most certainly did. Most of the obloquy attached to the Black and Tans should be more properly directed towards the Auxiliaries.
38. It is possible to detect a rough ten-year cycle of mutations of British defence posture deriving from changes in threats, concepts, commitments, organisations, or headline technologies (not necessarily all at once), going back over the last half-century. Debate of this point is likely to be subjective, but could be interesting. The *deus ex machina* factor cannot be ignored, e.g. 9/11. An attack on Iran by the United States and/or Israel would be just that, but at a less cataclysmic level, a Democrat administration from 2009 will inevitably lead to policy shifts which will in turn impinge on British positions.
39. See Lindley-French, J., *British Strategic Leadership: Food for Thought*, The Shrivenham Papers No 2, Defence Academy of the UK, Shrivenham, 2006.
40. And see note 1 above.
41. Policy in Cyprus PWD in the 1950s (Jonathan Allen). This can be a problem when employing contractors, in that the contractor is interested in doing the job as cheaply as possible and does not care about the wider issues. There is also the problem that in developing societies contractors may wish to be seen as being modern in their approach, as an image consideration.
42. Thompson, R. F., *Defeating Communist Insurgency; Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*. Chatto & Windus, London, 1972.

END

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