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## RESEARCH REPORT

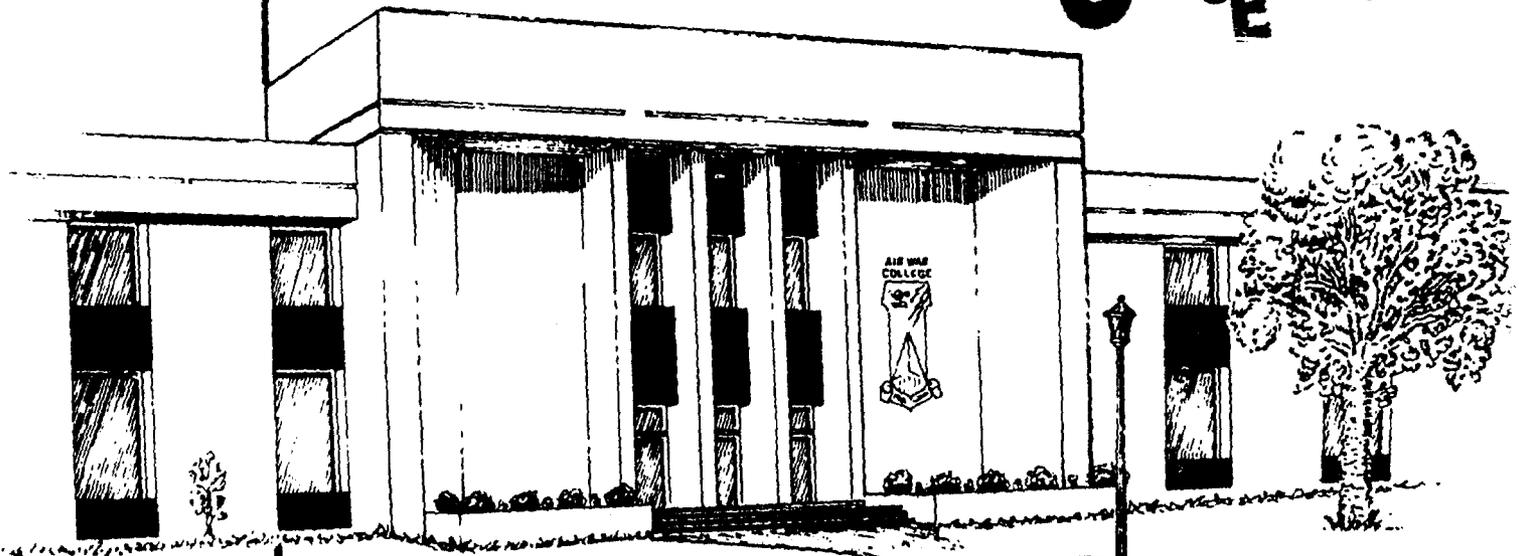
FRAMING A SPECIAL OPERATIONS UMBRELLA CONCEPT  
FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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FRAMING A SPECIAL OPERATIONS UMBRELLA CONCEPT  
FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

by

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
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REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Charles J. Jernigan

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Framing a Special Operations Umbrella Concept for Low Intensity Conflict

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This paper examines some of the major issues facing the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as it frames an umbrella concept for operations in low-intensity conflict (LIC). A brief historical perspective provides insight on the evolution of the U.S. policy and strategy that has led to the current shortcomings in U.S. capability to fight in LIC. The author then stresses both the importance of doctrine to the development of a special operations capability in LIC and the necessity to develop an umbrella concept. The current approved Department of Defense definition of LIC is found suitable for developing doctrine. A review of the principles of war establishes the principles of the objective, unity of command, and security as dominant in LIC. The author then examines the debate over the applicability of the tenets of the AirLand Battle to LIC and finds the tenets unsuitable as a foundation for LIC doctrine. The importance of other imperatives on military operations in LIC are reviewed. The author emphasizes the relevancy of the LIC imperatives found in Army Field Manual 100-20: Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict. Two additional principles are recommended for inclusion as LIC imperatives. Finally, the author stresses that thorough knowledge of the application of both the principles of war and LIC imperatives are necessary to fight and win. The principles of war and LIC imperatives are strongly recommended as foundations for USSOCOM's umbrella concept for LIC.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	DISCLAIMER . . . . .	ii
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH . . . . .	iii
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . .	iv
I	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II	HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE . . . . .	3
III	TERMS . . . . .	8
	Doctrine . . . . .	8
	Umbrella Concept . . . . .	10
	Low Intensity Conflict . . . . .	12
	LIC Component Categories . . . . .	17
IV	PRINCIPLES OF WAR . . . . .	19
	Objective . . . . .	21
	Unity of Command . . . . .	22
	Security . . . . .	23
	Offensive . . . . .	23
	Surprise . . . . .	24
	Maneuver . . . . .	25
	Economy of Force . . . . .	26
	Mass. . . . .	27
	Simplicity . . . . .	28
V	AIRLAND BATTLE DOCTRINE . . . . .	30
VI	LIC IMPERATIVES . . . . .	39
	Political Dominance . . . . .	40
	Unity of Effort . . . . .	40
	Legitimacy . . . . .	42
	Adaptability . . . . .	44
	Patience . . . . .	45
	Initiative . . . . .	46
	Intelligence . . . . .	47
VII	CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	50
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	52

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Re-organization Act of 1986 makes the United State Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) responsible for developing strategy, doctrine, operational concepts and requirements for Special Operations Forces (SOF). (45:--) To provide a logical, systematic approach for fulfilling its responsibilities USSOCOM developed a Joint Mission Analysis (JMA) process similar to the Army's Concept Based Requirements System. The purpose of the JMA is to provide an orderly process that will take national security policy and transform it into useful operational concepts, capabilities and requirements to be used as the foundation for the development of SOF strategy and roles. (44:6-3)

An integral part of the JMA is the requirement to formulate an umbrella concept to articulate a philosophical strategy base that can be integrated with national policy to provide meaningful capabilities and plans throughout the conflict spectrum. (44:6-6) The Army's AirLand Battle concept and the Navy's Maritime Strategy are current umbrella concepts that provide the broad philosophical base under which SOF operations in mid- to high-intensity conflict can be conducted. For low-intensity conflict (LIC) no satisfactory umbrella concept currently exists.

Heated debate and disagreement has accompanied

every attempt by the military services to provide doctrinal guidance for operations in LIC. The diverse components of possible SOF missions in LIC make development of doctrine difficult. This difficulty is magnified by intense debate between those that believe the principles of war and the tenets of AirLand Battle should form the foundation for LIC doctrine and those that believe there are other LIC imperatives that should predominate.

This study will examine the major issues being debated as USSOCOM frames an umbrella concept for LIC. Specifically, it will address: the importance of SOF doctrine to LIC, the necessity of a LIC umbrella concept, the suitability of the current Department of Defense (DOD) definition of LIC, the dominant principles of war in LIC; the applicability of the AirLand Battle tenets to LIC, and the other imperatives that are applicable to military operations in LIC. Resolution of these issues will provide a useful framework for USSOCOM's umbrella concept for LIC.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Any analysis of LIC doctrinal concepts must begin with a brief historical perspective on how United States (U.S.) strategy evolved. This will offer insight into the thought that led to our current shortcomings for fighting in LIC. This chapter briefly examines the changes in U.S. military thought and strategy, particularly since World War Two (WWII).

Beginning with the American Revolution, the U.S. has had a variety of experiences fighting unconventional wars; however, since the Civil War the American military has focused its tactics and doctrine on conventional warfare. In World War II special operations forces played pivotal roles in the Desert Campaign of Northern Africa, with the French Resistance, on the Burma Road, and in the Balkans. However, these special operations were primarily adjuncts to the conventional battle.

With the explosion of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki the U.S. became unquestionably the most powerful military in the world. It was assumed immediately after WWII that the atomic bomb would make future war so horrifying that it would become unthinkable. U.S. military doctrine began to develop around nuclear deterrence. Even small wars were unthinkable because of the likelihood they

would escalate to nuclear war. The nuclear dominant strategy was considered the most economical and effective way to prevent war and to achieve policy goals.

Conventional forces were relegated to little more than home guard and follow-on forces after a nuclear engagement. The strategic Air Force and Navy became the mainstay of US defense because of their abilities to deliver nuclear weapons on any target. (33:183)

The Korean War destroyed the myth that nuclear superiority would deter all conflicts. The U.S. discovered how difficult it was to use nuclear weapons to end a conflict. Further conflicts in Southeast Asia and in other parts of the world revealed the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of the nuclear dominant policy. Could the U.S. use nuclear weapons against even the smallest country to challenge the U.S. power? The nuclear dominant strategy lost its credibility. (31:183)

In 1959 Khrushchev announced the strategy of supporting wars of national liberation; a low cost effort of using surrogate forces in order to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States. (1:63) The U.S. response to this challenge, under President Kennedy, was a new emphasis on the need for a counterinsurgent capability. In the early sixties through the first years of Vietnam, Special Forces and Green Berets became the vogue. The Special Forces performed admirably in Vietnam as the

operations escalated from counterinsurgency to conventional warfare. Vietnam was a major wound in the psyche of not only the American people but the U.S. Armed Forces. Military leaders searched to rediscover the Army's fundamental roles, principles and precepts. Counterinsurgency doctrines were swept away by a re-emphasis on conventional war.

The response following the Vietnam war was the turning away from virtually anything that resembled counterinsurgency or the Vietnam situation. Vietnam became the forgotten war as the U.S. military concentrated all its efforts towards European type wars. The Special Forces which conducted a variety of unconventional operations, became the symbol of what went wrong with the war. In the late 1960s there were 13,000 Special Forces and by the late 1970s there were fewer than 4000. (31:155)

In the aftermath of Vietnam, U.S. strategy became one of flexible response in which the focus was on Europe, with the main attention given to conventional capability and extended nuclear deterrence. The Army developed new initiatives in nuclear strategy and sophisticated battlefield weapons.

While the U.S. scaled back its SDF during the 70s the Soviet Union continued its support of "wars of national liberation" and directly or indirectly intervened to overthrow legitimate governments. In face of this threat,

by 1981, U.S. capability to conduct low-intensity conflict was almost nonexistent. The disastrous Iranian hostage rescue attempt forced civilian and military leadership to look at the consequences of a decade of SOF neglect. The Defense Guidance issued by the President in 1981 directed the Armed Services to develop a special operations capability.

Historically, U.S. policy and strategy have emphasized preparation for war in mid- to high-intensity conflict. The result of this higher spectrum preparation is seen in the success of nuclear and conventional deterrence which has prevented warfare at the higher levels of conflict. However, the actions and programs used for deterrence in mid- and high-intensity conflict are not successful in LIC and peacetime contingencies. The failure of the Iran hostage rescue attempt, the Marine tragedy in Beirut and the frustrations of feeling helpless to react to terrorist actions and threats led to a resurgence in congressional, military and public concern over the military's capability to deal with events on the low end of the conflict spectrum.

Today, there is a proliferation of events in the lower levels of conflict that impact on U.S. national interests and also require the same kind of deterrence and successes found in mid- and high-intensity conflict. These events include terrorism, limited conventional wars,

subversion, propaganda and disinformation. They occur under a different set of rules and therefore require unique weapons to oppose them.

Low-intensity conflicts are expected to be more prevalent during the remainder of the 20th century, and in this arena, U.S. policy recognizes that indirect applications of military power are the most appropriate and cost effective ways to achieve national goals. The first step in realizing these capabilities must come from the development of sound doctrine and concepts that will ensure the proper strategy, force structure, training and equipment. The proposed SOF umbrella concept for LIC is the first step toward identifying how USSOCOM plans to fight in low-intensity conflict.

## CHAPTER III

### TERMS

Before framing an umbrella concept for LIC, USSOCOM must consider, first, why doctrine is important; second, why an umbrella concept is necessary; and finally, how LIC should be defined. To help understand their importance this chapter will examine the terms doctrine, umbrella concept and low intensity conflict. Additionally, at the end of the chapter is included a brief description of each of the four major LIC component categories.

#### Doctrine

The 1986 Defense Reorganization Act made CINCSOC responsible for the development of LIC strategy, doctrine and tactics. A discussion on the importance of doctrine must answer the questions: what is doctrine? What is its purpose? And why is it important to LIC?

There are a number of definitions of doctrine. Webster's simply defines it as "something taught as a body of principles one considers to be the truth." (47:208)

The U.S. Army officially defines doctrine as:

a compilation of principles and policies applicable to a subject, which have been developed through experience or by theory, that represent the best available thought and indicate and guide but do not bind in practice. Essentially doctrine is that which is taught ..... a truth, a fact, or a theory that can be defined by reason ..... which should be taught or accepted as basic truths. (9:328)

Colonel Dennis Drew of the Air University and Dr. Ronald Snow, of the University of Alabama, provide perhaps, the best description of doctrine in their book Making

Strategy:

Perhaps the best doctrine is also the simplest. Military doctrine is what we believe about the best way to conduct military affairs. It's what we believe is the best way to do things. It should be time tested and based on experience. . The importance of doctrine is that it 1) provides a tempered analysis of experience and determination of beliefs, 2) teaches those beliefs to succeeding generations, and 3) provides a common basis of knowledge and understanding can be used for guidance for all actions. (10:163,171)

The development of SOF doctrine for LIC is crucial. Special operations forces do not fit easily in the conventional military structure and their capabilities and requirements are poorly understood. If SOF is to become truly effective its doctrine must be clearly articulated and understood. Doctrine provides the justification in peacetime for force structure, weapons system procurement, strategy and tactics.

The lack of a philosophical base has had a profound effect on SOF capabilities. For example, the delays experienced in the procurement of the MC-130 Talons have their roots in doctrinal disagreement. The requirement for the aircraft was never clearly stated. Disagreement on which command should own the aircraft, what the Talon mission was, how many aircraft were required, and what

specialized equipment should be installed on the aircraft, all stemmed from the lack of sound doctrinal principles. As a result, eight years later, in 1989, the first Combat Talon has yet to be delivered. (18:104)

#### Umbrella Concept

As previously described the JMA is the process of translating national security policy into strategy, plans and requirements. The development of umbrella concepts for SDF is essential to this process because it provides the broad guidance from which operational plans, capabilities and requirements are derived.

Using the U.S. Army's definition, an umbrella concept is:

a broad concept which describes what operations are to be executed by Army forces on the future battlefield. It applies to the development of mission area and battlefield concepts. An umbrella concept is written in general terms, capable of being implemented worldwide and provides the basis of developing future warfighting capabilities. (40:2-3)

The Army's current umbrella concept, the AirLand Battle, as described in Army Field Manual 100-5, Operations (FM 100-5), is also the Army's keystone doctrine. It describes, in general, the way the Army plans to fight. All strategy, tactics and operational concepts must be firmly grounded in the AirLand Battle umbrella concept. It insures that all missions, force structure, and logistics support the AirLand Battle. To a great extent it

guarantees a unity of purpose and an integrated effort throughout the Army.

The AirLand Battle is suitable as an umbrella concept for SOF in mid- to high-intensity conflict. The AirLand Battle recognizes the importance of SOF, civil affairs and psychological units in the conduct of special operations supporting the conventional battlefield. (41:40) The AirLand Battle provides a sufficient conceptual base for USSOCOM forces to develop capabilities to operate in mid- to high-intensity conflict.

Low-intensity conflict is another story. There is significant difference between military operations in LIC and military operations at higher levels of conflict. Low-intensity conflict defies simple application of traditional military thought. The imperatives for military success are different and the LIC environment must reflect and address unique constraints. Therefore, the AirLand Battle umbrella concept is less than adequate when addressing the LIC environment.

Without an umbrella concept that provides a general philosophical base for SOF operations in LIC, the JMA process would fail to provide a logical step down from national policy to USSOCOM strategy and tactics. Additionally, the lack of a broad unifying LIC concept and doctrine makes it difficult for units to develop coordinated operational concepts, standardized equipment

and mutually supporting strategy and tactics.

### Low Intensity Conflict

No single issue has held up the development of policy, strategy, training and organization than lack of consensus in the meaning of LIC. (39:1-2) Different definitions and questions on the form of LIC abound. Is LIC war, or as many believe conflict short of war? If LIC is war, is it conventional or unconventional? Is there even a need for the term LIC? These and other arguments have made the problem of providing clear doctrine and concepts at the lower end of the conflict spectrum difficult.

Just how difficult it is to come to agreement on a definition for LIC was demonstrated when Loyola University of Chicago professor Sam Sarkesian held a workshop on U.S. policy and low-intensity conflict in 1979. The participants never reached an acceptable definition of the term. They had to settle on a working term just to keep the conference going. (9:xii)

In the late 1970s there was a proliferation of LIC definitions. Some referred to LIC in terms of risk; a conflict that was relatively low-risk to the stability of the United States, but in long-term strategy had to be fought to prevent growth into higher intensity war. Others defined LIC as conflict ranging from domestic disturbances and terrorism through insurgency and guerilla

warfare. One that was characterized by small unit actions and was geographically confined, usually to one country.

General Paul F. Gorman, U.S. Army, Retired, former commander in chief, U.S. Southern Command provided another view. He separated LIC from mid-intensity conflict at the point where one began to use conventional forces for support or maneuver. He felt that entry of U.S. combatants into the conflict would automatically transform it into a higher level of conflict. (36:9)

Dr. Sarkesian commented on the evolution of the concept of LIC:

Earlier attempts at defining or explaining this term/concept were in the main, based on the size of forces engaged and purpose of the conflict. The primary distinction, however, rests more with the character of the conflict than with its level of intensity or the specific number of forces involved. Some include both limited wars and terrorism in the concept, but the substantive dimension of such conflicts evolve primarily from revolutionary and counter revolutionary strategy and causes. (9:12)

In the early 1980s as the Department of Defense (DOD) grew more serious about military capabilities at the low end of the conflict spectrum, it recognized the importance of defining LIC. In 1985 the DOD approved the following definition of low-intensity conflict:

Low-intensity conflict is a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic and psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic and psychosocial pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low-intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic

area and is often characterized by constraints on weaponry, tactics and level of violence. (39:12)

Publication of an official definition did not end the debate on what LIC entailed or how useful the term was. Many experts concluded that the DOD definition was too broad and as a result, too diverse to stimulate development of a single doctrine. Others felt that LIC ought to be referred to as conflict short of war.

Colonel Richard M. Swain in a 1987 article for Military Review proposed that LIC was not war but a parallel level of national activity designed to resolve conflicts with other external polities. He felt that the activities of military forces generally could be categorized one of two ways; those directed towards prosecution of war and those involving the application of military forces short of war. He believed that operations short of war better described LIC than intensity. (36:10)

Contrary views were delivered in another Military Review article. Lieutenant Colonel Charles McInnis eschewed the idea of military operations short of war. He called it a nonsense phrase. His concern was the idea that the Army's doctrine on warfighting had no application in limited war. He claimed that one of the major reasons the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam was because it was thought of as operations short of war which resulted in a failure to apply the principles of war. (25:64-69)

Professor John M. Gates, in another Military Review article didn't like the term LIC. He felt the term distorted the perceptions of Americans who used the term. If a majority of the world's wars were continually referred to as LIC some officers may at some point actually believe the term provides an accurate description of the intensity of war or that the concept is a valid one on which to build doctrine. Gates also didn't like the term short of war because he felt it might foster a state of mind that such operations would be free of risks associated with a war or it might demand less attention to security than in wartime operations. (15:59-63)

Finally, several military experts including General Bruce Palmer, U.S. Army, Retired, thought maybe there was no need for the term LIC. Palmer states that we should get away from trying to invest generic terms to cover a multitude of limited missions. He suggests that we write manuals applying only to the specific kinds of limited operations such as insurgencies. We should recognize the shortcomings of the word intensity and drop it when referring to conflicts. Low-intensity is misleading because people get killed and maimed and it implies the conflict is less important. He prefers the term short of war because at least it recognizes that combat can occur regardless of whether the country is at war. (29:102-3)

The continued disagreements over whether LIC is

war or operations short of war demonstrates the critical need for concepts and doctrine that cover LIC. If LIC is treated as war, where the solution is essentially military, than wrong strategy can result. For example, large amounts of combat power employed where the center of gravity is not the battlefield but in the political/social system of an indigenous state can be counterproductive.

The official DOD definition of low-intensity conflict has been under attack from every direction. However, there is no fine, compact, neatly packaged way to define LIC. No definition can cover every situation; there will always be some low-intensity conflict that doesn't satisfy part of the definition, but there is an overwhelming need for doctrine that will provide the foundation for the concepts and requirements needed to fight at the low end of the conflict spectrum.

Despite the less than unanimous agreement over the suitability of the current DOD definition of LIC, the term is useful as a starting point for doctrinal development. The DOD definition recognizes the key difference that distinguishes LIC from higher levels of conflict. It includes the admission that LIC is not solely a military operation. It recognizes that the primary instrument of U.S. power in LIC is not military, but social, political, economic, and diplomatic strength. The definition implies another important distinction; in LIC the center of gravity

may not be the destruction of an enemy army, but instead, winning the hearts and minds of the people. If this is so, than the applicability of current military doctrine comes into question.

Finally, the DOD definition does not identify LIC as war or operations short of war because LIC is conflict where both combat and noncombat operations may occur. The development of an umbrella concept for LIC is clearly needed because as the arguments demonstrate current doctrine is inadequate.

#### LIC Component Categories

The Joint Low Intensity Conflict Project Final Report divided low-intensity conflict into four major categories. A brief description of each category is now provided to facilitate LIC discussion in the following chapters.

1) Insurgency/counterinsurgency.

Insurgency/counterinsurgency is generally an internal dispute. The dispute is usually between the government and those seeking to radically change the government rather than by foreign belligerents. The two opposing sides are normally trying to either establish or destroy the legitimacy of the government in power. Insurgencies are usually protracted military operations, and at least in the beginning, consist of terrorist acts, hit and run raids and small unit operations. Insurgents try to destroy the legitimacy of the existing government in the eyes of the civilian population. Countertinsurgency operations, in contrast, try to legitimacize the government by providing security against insurgents, and taking actions to reduce any social, economic, or political grievances against the government. U.S. support

for counterinsurgency is normally indirect consisting of economic, civic and military aid. Insurgency operations usually are aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government. U.S. support for Insurgencies is usually covert and indirect in the form of money, weapons, and intelligence.

2) Terrorism counteraction. This normally is composed of antiterrorism which is a defensive measure to reduce vulnerability to a terrorist act. Counterterrorism (CT) consists of offensive measures to respond to terrorist acts.

3) Peacetime contingencies. These contingencies cover a wide range of direct and indirect military actions. Operations include short-term power projections short of conventional war. Examples are military strikes, raids, shows of force and intelligence operations. Noncombat operations such as humanitarian efforts, rescue and recovery are also included in this category. Many of these operations are politically sensitive and are brief and rapidly executed.

4) Peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations are conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to achieve, restore or maintain peace in areas of potential conflict.

CHAPTER IV  
PRINCIPLES OF WAR

Regardless of the debate over the definition of LIC there is no doubt that military operations are an important national policy instrument that can be used in LIC. The arsenal of national power includes political, economic, informational and military instruments.

In the ambiguous environment of LIC the contributions of military force to the strategic aim can be direct or indirect. Most often military operations support noncombat activities such as civic actions and humanitarian support; however, they may include tactically direct operations such as direct assistance, strikes, raids, and shows of force or demonstration even though political restraints are placed on the activity.

It must be recognized that frequently in LIC, the military is faced with providing security assistance against a foe waging total unlimited war, while the government being protected is trying to nation build. Strict adherence to certain principles of war can, without attention to other constraints, such as those imposed by political, economic, social, and psychological operations bankrupt a nation building program. Commanders in LIC must exercise self-restraint in the use of firepower and have the ability to operate within complex political constraints.

The principles of war are, of course, applicable in any LIC operation where combat is involved; however, a large part of LIC does not include combat activity. The military is used in peacekeeping roles, civic actions, humanitarian assistance and psychological operations. Even during noncombat operations the principles of war remain applicable; however, other constraints may impinge on the way the principles are applied. The principles of war which are most applicable in a given LIC situation depend on the objective and the integration of the military operation with the other instruments of national power.

In forming a USSOCOM umbrella concept for LIC emphasis must be made on the applicability of the proven principles of war. In combat operations its obvious that the principles of war must be adhered to; however, in noncombat situations their applicability is less clear. An umbrella concept for LIC must include general guidance on the importance of the principles of war to all LIC situations. Additionally, it should also identify which principles are most dominant in LIC and emphasize the importance of recognizing situational constraints on the use of the principles. This chapter analyzes the importance and applicability of the principles of war in LIC. From this discussion the dominant principles in LIC will be identified. The following section discusses each principle of war and its importance in LIC:

## Objective

Every military operation must be directed towards clearly defined, decisive and attainable objectives. In LIC the principle of the objective is the most important, yet often the most difficult to identify and develop. Failure to clearly identify the objective can lead to failure of the mission, embarrassment to the government, and disaster to the operation. Operations in LIC, particularly for combat strikes, raids and peacekeeping is high risk. However, even in noncombat situations the failure to clearly identify the objective can lead to disaster.

In combat operations usually the objective is clear, but not always. In the Persian Gulf, the lack of a clear objective contributed to the USS Stark incident. The purpose of the Navy in the Persian Gulf was to protect shipping from attack. Concern about the Iranian threat may have clouded the objective and led the USS Stark crew to mistakenly regard protection against Iranian attack as its prime objective. However, there were two belligerents in the Gulf and while military was focused on the Iranian threat the ship was unprepared for the accidental attack by an Iraqi warplane.

The Beirut barracks bombing attack in 1983 is an

example where an impossible objective created a situation that led to disaster. The Marines were in Beirut ostensibly as a peacekeeping force. Their mission statement was ambiguous at best; it read "to establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area."

Marine Corps Commandant General P. X. Kelly later described the mission as "presence." (19:54) The threat from anarchy and war between well-armed rival militia bands reduced the Marine presence to almost exclusively garrison duties. In garrison, the Marines served as easy targets for terrorist acts, while attempting to maintain a presence from an exposed static position. The bombing exposed the weakness of U.S. policy in Lebanon and proved a major embarrassment to the U.S. government. From the beginning Marine presence in Beirut was strategically, operationally, and tactically flawed because the objective was unattainable.

#### Unity of Command

Unity of command is the second most dominant principle of war in LIC. It insures that all efforts are focused on one common goal. Every recent military failure in LIC can be attributed at least in part, to the failure to make one person in charge with the responsibility and authority to make decisions. The Desert One fiasco is the most frequently cited example of a failure to ensure unity of command for an operation. At Desert One there was

confusion, indecision, and dissension caused by the lack of authority. The ground troops were under one command, the helicopters under another and the transports under another. Because of security concerns even training for the mission was disjointed. There was never a full scale rehearsal that included all the forces in the operation. (1:131)

#### Security

The principle of security is the third most important principle in LIC. When military forces are engaged, regardless of the type of LIC operation, security must be a primary concern. In LIC, security is easy to overlook because the forces engaged are usually small and often are not actively involved in combat. It must be remembered; however, that U.S. forces are usually against an enemy fighting total war. Even in peacekeeping operations, one of the belligerents is likely to want to end the peace. A belligerent may try to destroy the peace by military or terrorist actions designed to reduce U.S. or host government legitimacy. The most striking example of a LIC operation where security precautions were inadequate was the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing.

#### Offensive

The principle of the offensive suggests that offensive action and maintenance of the initiative, are the most effective and decisive ways to pursue and attain clearly defined goals. In combat operations, the offensive

clearly applies. In noncombat operations its importance varies with the objective. For example, in peacekeeping operations the offensive principle is less important because forces are trying to maintain neutrality, balance and stability. Humanitarian and civic actions in support of counterinsurgency operations are designed to seize the initiative from the enemy, but these roles should not be confused with offensive combat operations as implied by the principles of war. In counterinsurgency operations depending on the stage of the conflict the offensive may or may not be applicable. The military commander must take into account the impact of offensive operations on the overall LIC objective. In many cases, he will find offensive operations counterproductive and he may be required to exercise self-restraint. The principle of the offensive must be applied only after careful consideration of the objective and other constraints that may apply to the particular situation.

#### Surprise

Surprise to strike the enemy at a time or place, or in a manner for which he is unprepared is one of the most important principles of war that apply to LIC operations. In counterinsurgency actions, peacetime contingency combat, and counterterrorist operations, surprise is essential. In LIC, the probable presence of the media in areas of operations makes surprise more difficult to attain.

Deception and covert operations are often required to achieve surprise. There are many LIC operations where surprise is not desirable. Shows of force and demonstrations of power need to be observed to have an impact on the enemy. Humanitarian projects, civic and psychological operations in LIC are often performed for the express purpose of letting the enemy see the operation. In LIC, the relevancy of surprise depends on the objective.

#### Maneuver

Maneuver is the act of placing the enemy at a disadvantage through flexible application of power. In combat, at the operational level, maneuver and flexibility are most important. In counterterrorist operations CT forces must be ready and available to strike quickly when the chance is available. The Achille Lauro affair is an example where military forces were able to respond to late breaking intelligence to intercept an Egypt Air 737 carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers. (1:277) In peacekeeping and civic action operations the need for maneuver is much less applicable. When performing nation building roles its often better to be visible and more entrenched. When performing military operations that are focused on improving social conditions it becomes important that the operations are conducted over a protracted period. Civil affairs programs must be in place long enough to show commitment, reliability, and concern; often until the host

government is strong enough to continue the programs on their own. The principle of maneuver should be applied with careful consideration to other LIC objectives and constraints.

#### Economy of Force

The principle of economy of force must be applied carefully in most LIC situations. In counterinsurgencies, terrorist counteraction and even peacekeeping operations the enemy's tactics are often surprise hit and run raids and terrorist attacks designed to disrupt security efforts. Imprudent application of economy of force measures can be dangerous since the aim of the enemy is to attack where least expected.

The failure of the El Salvadoran National Campaign Plan "Operation Maquelishuat" resulted from not planning enough resources to protect pacified regions from insurgents. The plan required Salvadoran Army and security forces to move significant numbers of forces into an objective area to provide security. Under the security umbrella combined political-military effort organized peasant cooperatives, reopened schools and medical clinics, restored government, and conducted extensive civic action projects. The intent of the campaign was to stay in one region long enough to pacify the area then move on to another area. Real progress was made in the beginning, but the campaign faltered when the government soldiers moved to

the next pacification area. The government failed to leave behind enough security forces to prevent the insurgents from moving back and wiped out the campaign achievements.

(46:48-59)

#### Mass

In military operations mass means to concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time. Mass is the principle of war most likely to be affected by nonmilitary constraints. During peacetime contingency military operations and shows of force, there is a need to balance the force employed with political constraints such as low casualty rates. One of the major justifications for special operations forces is their ability to perform small unit actions, independently, sometimes covertly, decisively with few casualties. Tailoring the right force to combat power at the decisive point and time with political constraints is one of SOF's most difficult jobs.

In LIC the principle of mass doesn't necessarily lead to success. In El Salvador, the army has been slow adopting small unit tactics to fight insurgents; instead trying to rely on large forces and massive firepower. As a result, they are a long time forming up, and their operations are not quick and decisive. The enemy often melts away into the jungle before the Army arrives in the objective area. (46:34-48)

Excessive use of mass can also affect the

legitimacy of both the incumbent government and of U.S. presence in a conflict. Proportionality must be observed. Failure to observe proportionality can result in excessive collateral damage that can alienate the general population and drive them into the arms of the enemy. In LIC use of mass is likely to be restricted by political constraints.

#### Simplicity

The preparation of clear, concise, uncomplicated plans and orders improve the likelihood of success at any level of conflict. It's especially important in LIC where the objective sometimes is not as clear as in normal conventional operations. LIC operations are conducted in highly sensitive environments where the impact of errors and mistakes are amplified. The results of failure can effect the very psyche of the country. The Iranian hostage rescue attempt is an example of an operation that was too complex. The entire operation to completion would've used over 21 different agencies or units, using 51 different radio frequencies, with over 150 code words and call signs and using 17 different landing zones or airfields. (1:131) The objectives must be clearly understood, the chain of command clearly identified, and orders simple enough to reduce the chances of misunderstanding and confusion. Simplicity is a principle that must be adhered to in all LIC operations.

The principles of the objective, unity of command and security are the principles of war dominant in the LIC environment. Failure to abide by these principles is likely to increase the chances of failure in any LIC scenario. The other principles of war are more or less applicable depending on the objective and the political constraint placed on the situation. In general, for combat operations the remaining principles of war apply; while in noncombat situations they are frequently restricted by other LIC imperatives. In some cases, strict adherence to the principles of war without attention to the other LIC imperatives can be detrimental to the conflict.

In LIC, the principles of war should be used as a checklist, with the applicability of each principle determined by the objective of each operation. They should never be overlooked because failure in LIC is too great a risk.

## CHAPTER V

### AIRLAND BATTLE DOCTRINE

As the United States Special Operations Command develops its doctrine and operational concepts to fight in LIC it has to come to grips with the great debate on the validity of AirLand Battle doctrine to Special Operations Forces in LIC. Army Field Manual (FM) 100 - 5 is the Army's keystone manual for warfighting. It is heavily imitative of the classical warfighting theories of Clausewitz and Jomini. The manual acknowledges the growing incidents of war at the low end of the conflict spectrum then goes on to virtually ignore LIC and focus on mid- and high-intensity conflict. The AirLand Battle tenets form the cornerstone of the Army doctrine on how to fight. The manual states that AirLand Battle tenets apply equally to military operations in LIC. As a result many proponents think that AirLand Battle should form the foundation on which to build the structure, equipment and training for special operations in LIC. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate this debate and determine if the AirLand Battle tenets should be the cornerstone for USSOCOM's LIC umbrella concept.

The effort to reexamine American military doctrine in the late 1970s and early 1980s emerged as a result of our defeat in Vietnam and the challenge of a numerically superior Soviet and Warsaw Pact armies in Europe. (20:2)

From this examination grew the authoritative statement of the U.S. Army's doctrine commonly known as "AirLand Battle." This doctrine provides general guidelines on how to fight on the battlefield and how to exploit our resources through synchronized assaults deep into enemy positions and maneuver at the point of attack. It's the theory of securing the initiative and maintaining it until victory is achieved. (20:3)

In identifying the challenges facing the U.S. Army FM 100 - 5 recognizes that Army forces must be capable of meeting worldwide strategic challenges against a full range of threats from terrorism through low- and mid -intensity to high-intensity and nuclear operations. The current FM 100-5 states "While AirLand Battle doctrine focuses primarily on mid-to-high intensity warfare, the tenets of AirLand Battle apply equally to low-intensity warfare." (41:6)

Many experts disagree. Herbert I. London in his pamphlet on Military Doctrine and the American Character felt:

Despite the impression that doctrine is a general statement on how battles will be fought, it is unrealistic to assume that FM 100-5 covers all types of conflict. It seems desirable to define the conditions in which the AirLand Battle applies, rather than to convey the false impression of universal applicability. (20:59)

Richard Swain in an article for Military Review

writes:

the implications of LIC for Army doctrine is the need to change or produce an equal manual for operations short of war. FM 100-5 describes a doctrine of traditional warfare between continental armies. To be a warfighting manual, it must also address the U.S. military forces in revolutionary war, war where the military operations are not the primary activity but subordinate to political, economic and social initiatives. (36:13)

He goes on to ask how strike operations in peacetime or foreign internal defense (FID) can be included in FM 100-5 when they are governed by a different set of constraints. Foreign Internal Defense must be drafted in recognition that AirLand Battle is probably unsuited for host-nation armed forces that are not equipped or structured similarly to comparable U.S. units. The issue of revolutionary war must be considered from the standpoint of assisting a host government, not from defeating insurgents with U.S. forces or doctrine. (36:13)

Major Guy Swan in a letter to Military Review wrote:

In reading FM 100-5 one gets the impression that LIC is merely AirLand Battle fought in a Third World country. As ridiculous as that sounds we simply cannot expect units schooled in the application of conventional AirLand Battle doctrine to perform well in operations short of war without fundamental changes in our doctrine and the way we, as Americans perceive the use of military force in pursuit of our national objectives. (37:86)

On the other hand, there are vociferous supporters

of the applicability of the AirLand Battle to LIC. General Donald Morelli, one of the early proponents of AirLand Battle, strongly endorsed its applicability to LIC in an article for Military Review in 1984. In the article he proclaims:

The U.S. Army's basic operational concept is the AirLand Battle, and its basic principles guide the Army's efforts at the operational and tactical levels. Although the tactics, techniques and procedures employed in a given situation may vary, the concept on which the actions are based is appropriate to each of the levels of war and to a conflict in any intensity. The logic of the AirLand Battle is as appropriate to LIC as it is to high intensity conflict. The basic tenets of the concept are initiative, synchronization, agility and depth. (26:8)

General Morelli further comments on the AirLand Battle tenets:

It is the underlying purpose of every military effort to seize and retain the initiative and retention of the initiative. The key to this is an offensive or proactive orientation. Proactive efforts must be followed up with a synchronized effort with other agencies to resolve the conditions that foment the conflict.

Synchronization is an all pervading unity of effort across the political, military, economic and psychological spectrum.

Agility requires a flexible organization with an appropriate mix of soldiers, equipment and skills to meet the unique characteristics of the LIC environment. Operational planning must be precise enough to preserve interagency cooperation, but it also must be sufficiently flexible to respond to change or to capitalize on fleeting opportunities to influence the situation.

In depth time and distance are factors in assessing the conditions, potential threats and allocation of resources. Depth in resources - men and material - influences the nature of the action taken. Most important to LIC is depth in thought and will. (26:8)

When reading General Morelli's description on the application of the basic AirLand tenets to LIC, it is hard to find anything to disagree with. Initiative, agility, depth and synchronization can be important in LIC. However, when put in the context of the description in FM 100-5 of the tenets of the AirLand Battle one views the tenets in a different light. In FM 100-5 the tenets are described in terms: such as: battle by action, risk in combat, turning the tables on the attacker, in the chaos of battle. When describing agility FM 100-5 mentions formations at every level and overcoming confusion in battle. Synchronization is: an arrangement of battlefield activities, synchronized maneuver of supporting fires, shifting of reserves and rearrangement of air defense. Finally depth is covered using terms such as: momentum in attack, elasticity in defense, reserves in depth positioned for maneuver, observation of enemy units in depth.

It's clear that the tenets of AirLand Battle when defined by General Morelli make sense, but his definitions are nowhere near the context used in FM 100-5 when explaining the importance of the tenets. FM 100-5 is

clearly talking battles, engagements and combat; not about relationships with other government agencies, and synchronization of economic, social and civic actions. When reading about the AirLand Battle tenets in FM 100-5 it certainly doesn't conjure up the images of peacekeeping operations, humanitarian projects, foreign internal defense operations and other noncombat operations that may be just as important in LIC success as combat.

A clear indication of the relevance of AirLand Battle tenets is the fact that in General Morelli's article he spends one page describing how the AirLand Battle tenets apply to LIC, then spends the next eight pages explaining and amplifying the differences between LIC and more conventional and higher levels of conflict.

The basic difference between military operations in LIC and mid- and high-intensity conflict is the nature of military success. At mid- to high-conflict levels, military success is measured in terms of winning campaigns and battles. In LIC, success is achieving national objectives without recourse to protracted combat involving U.S. forces.

In LIC, nonmilitary factors play a far greater role at all levels from strategic to tactical. Dealing effectively with LIC requires an understanding of the other instruments of national power and persuasion and their relationship to the military aspects of the conflict. Actions taken in the

military arena cannot be separated from - and will have an effect on - the political, economic, psychological and social environments as well.

Placed in context with the rest of the discussions on AirLand Battle it is easy to understand why Maj Guy Swan wrote "those of us who serve in line armor, infantry, cavalry, aviation and field artillery or air defense artillery units cannot recall training our soldiers for anything other than mid- to high- intensity AirLand Battle warfare."

AirLand Battle tenets as represented in FM 100-5, are of course applicable where combat is involved; however, in the large part of LIC that does not involve combat the tenets don't apply. In fact, nation building programs can hurt by strict application of AirLand Battle doctrine, if it is applied without regard to other factors. Peacekeeping, humanitarian and medical activities are tremendous tools in winning LIC, but other than the fact they use military forces, in the classical sense they are hardly military operations.

As Michael Pearlman wrote in an insight published in Military Review:

The AirLand Battle advocates quick, violent and decisive blows from unanticipated angle on the "center of gravity" of enemy armed forces; LIC, however, was often a patient, protracted struggle in which a long term presence protecting civic action is more effective than rapid mobility.  
(31:79)

AirLand Battle tenets imply combat power. It doesn't address the use of military units not applying force, such as peacekeeping duties, civic action and psychological activities. Many of those who resent the questioning of AirLand Battle doctrine use the example of Vietnam as a case of LIC where we forgot we were at war and failed to apply the principles, imperatives and tenets of war. This is misleading. Vietnam was both LIC and mid-intensity conflict; both unconventional and conventional. Just as one of the reasons we lost the war was because we forgot it was a war; another reason we lost was because it was an insurgency and we failed to coordinate the effective economic, social, and military actions needed to win the hearts and minds of the people.

The AirLand Battle is clearly oriented toward mid-to high-intensity conflict. The equipment, force structure and training to conduct the successful AirLand Battle is inappropriate in LIC. Special operations in LIC cannot rely on mass, firepower and maneuver to win. Operations in LIC emphasize small unit functions, specialized skills and equipment, and the ability to operate in politically sensitive scenerics under constraints that deny unlimited application of the principles of war. The minimal relevancy of the tenets of

AirLand Battle doctrine to LIC, makes its inclusion in

USSOCOM's LIC umbrella concept inappropriate.

## CHAPTER VI

### LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT IMPERATIVES

Only recently has the U.S. Army acknowledged that LIC defied purely military solutions. In LIC, restrained military power is most frequently used. The primary emphasis for success is on the indirect application of military capabilities such as security assistance, civic action programs, mobile training teams and medical operations. These programs are effective and efficient means for improving the security and quality of life of the populace targeted in most LIC.

The military has been slow to realize that simple application of standard military doctrine such as the AirLand Battle is not enough to win in LIC. The imperatives for military operations in LIC must reflect the unique constraints and requirements found at that level of conflict. In an attempt to fill the void in doctrine for military operations in LIC, the Army recently completed the final draft of a new FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict. The draft manual recognizes the four major component categories of LIC and includes new imperatives that must be considered when developing LIC strategy regardless of the category of operation. FM 100-20s proposed LIC imperatives represent a quantum leap forward in the development of LIC doctrine; however, they are incomplete and should include two additional principles

for operations.

This chapter will establish the relevance of FM 100-20s LIC imperatives: political dominance, unity of effort, adaptability, legitimacy, and patience to military operations in LIC. It will also suggest the addition of intelligence and initiative as imperatives to all aspects of LIC operations. These imperatives are recommended as guidelines for success in integrating military power with the other instruments of U.S. power used to win in LIC.

#### Political Dominance

In LIC, political and diplomatic endeavors take precedence over military operations. From unified commanders to field trainers particular attention must be paid to the boundaries of control. Commanders must review the activities of other government agencies to determine if their military actions complement nonmilitary activities. They also must coordinate operations with the host nation and the appropriate U.S. agencies. The commander must realize that he doesn't have free reign to pick and chose his methods and tactics or even possibly his force structure. Every move will be scutinized and the effects of his actions assessed by its contribution to the overall objective. Political dominance is an overriding consideration in all LIC.

#### Unity of Effort

In LIC military operations must be recognized as

only one of the instruments of national power used for resolution. Depending upon the objective, military power can be the primary force in policy or as in most cases a supporting instrument being relegated in importance behind economic and political power. In all cases, however, military planners must consider how their actions contribute to initiatives which are also political, economic and psychological in nature. In LIC, nonmilitary factors play a far greater role at all levels from strategic to tactical. Actions taken in the military arena will have an effect on the political, economic, psychological and social environment as well.

The failure to work planned action together can quickly lead to failure. A fundamental problem in Vietnam was the inability of political and military leaders to work together to achieve a political goal. Vietnam was a war of tangled jurisdictions, rivalries and missions which bureaucratized its conduct. U.S. and allied troops fought valiantly under difficult conditions; military and civilian civic action efforts at nation building were equally heroic. However, without a clear operational plan of organization and unity of effort many operations failed to fulfill their promise. (4:268)

There is general agreement that the command system in the Vietnam war lacked unity and coherence. (4:269) The nature of the war was such that any chance of reasonable

success necessitated an integrated response crossing bureaucratic lines and encompassing military and nonmilitary organization. At the highest levels, a variety of committees, subcommittees and task forces were periodically established to deal with Vietnam and then disbanded. All were attempts to integrate the various aspects of unconventional warfare and to coordinate the conduct of the war. (4:269) The U.S. must have an organizational command and control structure that enables it to efficiently and effectively meet the challenges of LIC.

#### Legitimacy

Legitimacy is the willing acceptance of the right of a government or a group or an agency to make and enforce decisions. The issue of legitimacy is critical in every LIC category because it is the center of gravity necessary for political control. In insurgencies the struggle between the insurgent and the incumbent government is over the legitimacy to govern. The center of gravity is same for both the government and the insurgent; the right to represent the people. The means to achieve legitimacy is through security, economic, psychological and political support. Dealing with insurgencies is difficult because the insurgent can afford to be ruthless, fighting a total war, while the incumbent is struggling to build or restore a nation. The most effective way to fight an insurgent

requires a suspension of civil liberties; yet, an attempt to clamp down on personal freedoms may reduce the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the people its trying to gain support from.

Before committing U.S. forces to take part in any LIC the legitimacy of the operation must be considered by all parties. For example, in counterterrorist operations there must be a just cause necessitating the action. It must be clear that any action is part of collective self defense. The same applies to peacetime contingency raids such as the Libyan air strikes. Even in peacekeeping operations the legitimacy of the peacekeeping force must be established by the consent of all parties.

Every military operation in LIC must consider its effects on legitimacy in its planning. If U.S. forces are to intervene in a counterinsurgency it must consider that intervention in support of a governing elite, or a political system that doesn't have some level of support, is likely to erode further indigenous public support for the existing system.

Proportionality must be observed. An action that is completely justified in terms of ordinary military necessity may cause effects that are contrary to the political good of the conflict. To illustrate, too many search and destroy missions causing too much collateral damage may attribute significantly to the disaffection of

the population, a political loss that may outweigh any military gains. Firepower must be discriminate. Combat may occur in populated areas where revolutionary forces routinely hide behind the population. If firepower is indiscriminate unnecessary deaths could bolster support for the revolutionaries.

Even in peacekeeping operations, the soldier must be highly disciplined and realize that a protagonist may try to provoke an undisciplined response that could sabotage the legitimacy of the peace.

The struggle over legitimacy is what makes USSOCOM's specially trained civil affair and psychological units so important. These units have unique capabilities designed to support civic action, medical operations, engineering projects, disaster relief, humanitarian and public affairs programs. These operations are specifically targeted on strengthening government legitimacy among the populace.

No matter how sound the LIC strategy success will depend on the ability to win and maintain legitimacy.

#### Adaptability

Adaptability is the skill and willingness to change or modify structures or methods to accommodate different situations. It requires careful mission analysis, comprehensive intelligence and regional expertise. In LIC military operations must be flexible enough to execute

indirect versus direct application of power and resources. In insurgency/counterinsurgency, operations must be flexible. Since revolutionary wars have various stages military forces must be prepared to use different tactics and methods at different stages. One stage may require defensive operations, another offensive operations, in a third stage non-military actions may dominate.

Special operations forces must be able to adapt to different situations. They may be required to rescue hostages from a hijacked airplane or from an embassy inside large city, or find a kidnap victim in the countryside. In LIC, SOF must be more than just flexible, they must adapt to the dynamics of a wide range of action and develop creative plans that can meet any contingency.

No two LIC situations are the same, adaptability of existing force structure, training and equipment must be stressed in all operations. Adaptability is an important key to success in LIC.

#### Patience

Low-intensity Conflict rarely have clear beginnings or endings marked by decisive actions culminating in victory. Insurgencies may last for years, even decades. A review of the major insurgencies in Latin America and Africa between 1900 and 1965 show an average conflict of almost six years. (8:---) Before any commitment to counterinsurgency/insurgency operations the U.S. must

consider the supportability of a long protracted struggle.

Peacekeeping and even counterterrorist operations must be prepared for the long haul. It may take months and years to apprehend one terrorist. Peacekeeping forces have been on duty in certain areas of the world such as the Sinai Peninsula for almost a decade. Even short, sharp contingency operations are better assessed in the context of their contributions to long-term objectives.

#### Initiative

To win in LIC the initiative must be seized from the enemy and retained. Although initiative is one of the tenets of AirLand Battle it is also essential to the successful conduct of LIC. During the pre-revolutionary phase of an insurgency, civic actions and economic assistance can take the initiative from the insurgent by eliminating the grievances that advance the insurgents cause. The insurgent must be placed on the defensive and made to react to counterinsurgent actions. Virtually every successful counterinsurgent campaign since WWII forced the insurgent to be reactive rather than proactive. In the famous Philippine counterinsurgency against the HUKS in the early 1950s the combined affect of proactive military actions, and social and political reform reduced the attractiveness of the HUK's and reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Philippine government in the minds of the people.

(23:73)

Owning the initiative is fundamental to counterterrorist operations and combat contingency strikes. Even in humanitarian operations the importance of seizing the initiative shouldn't be underestimated. Being first to supply emergency aid in international relief efforts often can provide a psychological lift and add to the mantle of legitimacy, particularly to Third World countries amid the process of nation building. Initiative is decisive in every LIC category regardless of the instrument of power being used; initiative is a principle that must be considered and understood in every LIC option.

#### Intelligence

Intelligence is obviously critically important to the success of any military endeavor. However, in LIC the quality of intelligence is as important as the quality of the forces. The importance of intelligence is pervasive in every category of LIC. The success of high risk, high stakes politically sensitive operations can hinge on the accuracy and timeliness of intelligence. Compare the dramatic airborne intercept of the Egyptair 737 carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers with the Mayaguez rescue attempt off Cambodia in 1975. Superb intelligence work pinpointed the whereabouts of the Achille Lauro hijackers in Egypt. Intelligence sources were able to identify the aircraft carrying the hijackers and relay its departure from Egypt to four Navy F-14 Tomcat fighters that

intercepted the airliner and forced it to land in Sigonella, Italy. (1:277)

By contrast, intelligence was conspicuous by its absence in the Mayaguez rescue operation. Maps of the target area weren't available to the Marines for tactical planning. Once the fighting started the Marines found themselves against an enemy much stronger and more aggressive than they had been led to expect. Finally, the Marines were left fighting the enemy unaware that the Mayaguez crew had already been released by the Cambodians. (4:182)

Although intelligence is the vital link between operations and success in all four LIC categories, the type of intelligence common to each category differs. While air strikes and raids require sophisticated satellite imagery and electronic surveillance; insurgency operations normally find reliable human intelligence (HUMINT) information and area analysis most useful. Intelligence operations in the revolutionary wars typical of the Third World is critical. The insurgent units work in small cells making it difficult to defend against their hit-and-run raids or terrorist attacks without reliable intelligence.

Philippine Army leaders fighting the HUK insurgency in the late 1950s found the value of intelligence essential to their operations. The Philippine Army had little success against the insurgents until they were able to

establish a reliable intelligence network. (2:17)

Intelligence must include analysis of the economic, political and social climate of the conflict so that all the tools of national power are employed correctly to win the popular support of the people against the insurgents. Perhaps, the most important intelligence in revolutionary war is an accurate assessment of the general population's attitude towards the ruling government and the insurgents.

It's entirely appropriate for intelligence to be included as an imperative for success in LIC. No operations, whether military or not, in any category of LIC can succeed without reliable and accurate intelligence. Disregard of this imperative will likely lead to failure.

Low-intensity conflict cannot be won or even contained by military operations alone. The challenge of winning in LIC requires the combined application of all elements of national power across the entire range of conflict. This chapter has suggested the relevancy of political dominance, unity of effort, adaptability, legitimacy, patience, initiative and intelligence to every LIC situation. Consideration of these seven imperatives are essential for success in any LIC category, and therefore, should be considered one of the cornerstones of any USSOCOM umbrella concept for LIC.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The Goldwater-Nichols Act charges USSOCOM with the responsibility to develop doctrine, strategy and tactics for special operations forces. This study examined six of the major issues facing USSOCOM as it comes to grips with building an umbrella concept for operations in LIC. The following conclusions have been reached:

1) The development of sound SOF doctrine in LIC is critical. The current lack of a philosophical base has had a debilitating effect on the capability of U.S. forces to operate successfully in LIC.

2) An umbrella concept is necessary to provide a general philosophical base for SOF operations in LIC. This broad philosophical base is required as part of the orderly process used to transform national policies and strategies into USSOCOM concepts and requirements. Failure to provide a broad unifying umbrella concept will hinder development of coordinated operational concepts, standardized equipment and mutually supporting strategy and tactics.

3) Despite heated debate the current official DOD definition of low-intensity conflict is sound. The definition recognizes the key difference that distinguishes LIC from higher levels of conflict. It recognizes that the primary instrument of U.S. power in LIC is not military, but social, political, economic and diplomatic power.

4) The principles of the objective, unity of command and security are the dominant principles of war in LIC. They are applicable in every LIC situation. The applicability of the other principles of war depend on the objective and the constraints placed on them by LIC imperatives.

5) The basic tenets of the AirLand Battle focus on mid- to high-intensity conflict. The

significant difference in character between LIC and higher levels of conflict make the AirLand Battle tenets inappropriate to the development of LIC doctrine and USSOCOM's umbrella concept for LIC.

6) Low-intensity conflicts are dominated by conflicting demands on military power and resources. Certain imperatives must be considered in planning for success in every LIC operation. FM 100-20s LIC imperatives: unity of effort, political dominance, adaptability, legitimacy, and patience are relevant to every LIC situation. Additionally, intelligence and initiative are vital links to success in every LIC. They should also be considered as LIC imperatives.

Both SOF and conventional forces operating in LIC must understand the relationship and importance of both the principles of war and the basic LIC imperatives when planning and conducting military action. Successful operations require a blend of the principles and imperatives. These two concepts should be used to form the broad philosophical foundation for the development of USSOCOM's umbrella concept for low-intensity conflict.

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