BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION INTO SIERRA LEONE: A CASE STUDY

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General Studies

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WALTER GRADY ROBERSON, MAJ, USA
B.S., United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, 1995

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This paper is a case study of the British military intervention into Sierra Leone in 2000. The successful British intervention led to defeat of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), final peace accords, and brought order to a failed state. The paper will explore the following points: what was the British foreign policy and what impact did it have in the decision to intervene; what was the British counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and was it useful for the forces in Sierra Leone; did the British forces use their own doctrine or was the situation in Sierra Leone unique; why was the intervention successful and what lessons can be drawn? Beyond the scope of this paper is a comparison of United Kingdom (UK) COIN doctrine and current United States (US) COIN doctrine. The focus will be to analyze the UK's actions against their doctrine, not the doctrine of the US. There is one major assumption for this case study. The paper categorizes the intervention into Sierra Leone as successful. The justification for the assumption is current day Sierra Leone. Instead of a war torn failed state, Sierra Leone has lasting peace, completed disarmament of insurgent forces, ended the large scale human rights abuse, and democratic elections, not coups, determining the leadership of the country.

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Walter Grady Roberson

Thesis Title: British Military Intervention into Sierra Leone: A Case Study

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
LTC (Ret) Stuart D. Lyon, M.A.

_____, Member
LTC (Ret) Edward J. Robarge, Ph.D.

_____, Member
LTC John M. Rochelle, O.B.E., M.A.

Accepted this 14th day of December 2007 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION INTO SIERRA LEONE: A CASE STUDY, by MAJ Walter Grady Roberson, 109 pages.

This paper is a case study of the British military intervention into Sierra Leone in 2000. The successful British intervention led to defeat of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), final peace accords, and brought order to a failed state. The paper will explore the following points: what was the British foreign policy and what impact did it have in the decision to intervene; what was the British counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and was it useful for the forces in Sierra Leone; did the British forces use their own doctrine or was the situation in Sierra Leone unique; why was the intervention successful and what lessons can be drawn? Beyond the scope of this paper is a comparison of United Kingdom (UK) COIN doctrine and current United States (US) COIN doctrine. The focus will be to analyze the UK's actions against their doctrine, not the doctrine of the US. There is one major assumption for this case study. The paper categorizes the intervention into Sierra Leone as successful. The justification for the assumption is current day Sierra Leone. Instead of a war torn failed state, Sierra Leone has lasting peace, completed disarmament of insurgent forces, ended the large scale human rights abuse, and democratic elections, not coups, determining the leadership of the country.

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ACRONYMS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CDF	Civil Defense Force
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Re-integration
DFID	Department of Foreign Internal Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
ICG	International Contact Group
IO	Information Operations
JFHQ	Joint Force Headquarters
JRRF	Joint Rapid Reaction Force
NEO	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation
OPPLAN	Operations Plan
ORLT	Operational Reconnaissance and Liaison Team
OTHR	Over the Horizon Reserve
PAC	Partnership Africa Canada
PARA	Parachute Regiment
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
RSLA	Republic of Sierra Leone Army (Rebuilt SLA by UK)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAS	22 Special Air Service
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Group Sierra Leone
US	United States

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> "I saw stiffened, blood-caked corpses littering sidewalks like macabre manikins placed there to haunt the living. The stink of death – dried blood, stale urine, and monkey-house fear – hung all over Freetown. Black smoke billowed from dozens of arson fires that still smoldered from combat several days earlier."[1]

> "All power comes from the barrel of an AK-47."[2]

In February 1999, rebel forces concluded operation "No Living Thing" with the assault on the capital city, Freetown, of Sierra Leone. This attack was the pinnacle of years of violence and human suffering within war torn Sierra Leone, leaving some 6,000 dead.[3] The rebel leader's stated mission objective was to kill everyone in the country "to the last chicken."[4] The insurgency, characterized by human rights abuses, financed by blood diamonds, drugs, and child soldiers, destroyed the fabric of an entire country. Years of international aid and intervention by numerous countries and organizations had done little to stem the violence or bring peace.

By May 2000, nine years of insurgency marked by several coups in the government and the complete collapse of internal security forces reduced Sierra Leone to the status of a failed state. For several years aid packages and the deployment of peacekeepers by two main organizations, the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), attempted to bring order to the country. However, the insurgents, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), continued to defeat and undermine the efforts of both the peacekeepers and the Sierra Leone Army (SLA). The situation inside the country collapsed to the point where the United Kingdom (UK) ordered the deployment of their new Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF) to conduct a

Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) of British, EU, and commonwealth citizens within Sierra Leone (Operation Palliser).

This paper is a case study of the British military intervention into Sierra Leone in 2000. The successful British intervention led to final peace accords, restored order to a failed state, and allowed the democratic restoration of the government of Sierra Leone. The paper will explore the following points: what was the British foreign policy and what impact did it have in the decision to intervene; what was the British counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and was it useful for the forces in Sierra Leone; did the British forces use their own doctrine or was the situation in Sierra Leone unique; why was the intervention successful and what lessons can be drawn? Beyond the scope of this paper is a comparison of UK COIN doctrine and current United States (US) COIN doctrine. The focus will be to analyze the UK's actions against their doctrine, not the doctrine of the US. There is one major assumption for this case study. The paper categorizes the intervention into Sierra Leone as successful. The justification for the assumption is current day Sierra Leone. Instead of a war torn failed state, Sierra Leone has lasting peace, completed disarmament of insurgent forces, ended the large scale human rights abuse, and democratic elections, not coups, determining the leadership of the country.

Background of the Conflict

The armed conflict in Sierra Leone began in 1991; however, the roots of the conflict started much earlier. The UK founded Freetown as a colony for freed slaves. Eventually, the remainder of the country came under British rule as a protectorate. Under the British Empire, Sierra Leone looked to have an extremely bright future. As an example, the best universities in Africa were found in Sierra Leone.

The culture of Sierra Leone, as with most African countries, has always been extremely diverse with numerous tribes living next to each other. While Islam is the dominant faith, there is a significant Christian population as well as many tribes that practice traditional pagan religions. The conflict in Sierra Leone is unique for the African continent because despite the complex diversities of the ethnic and religious nature of the peoples, ethnicity and religion were not significant factors in the war. The two largest tribes, the Mende and the Temne, dominated the social and political scene, but their only significant contribution to the war was the formation of their own fighting forces (elements of the Civil Defense Force) to ward off attacks from the RUF.

The slide to war began soon after the UK granted independence to Sierra Leone in 1961. Due to a political and social development of a small ruling elite, a classic situation of the “haves” and “have nots” developed in the country.

1961--Sierra Leone becomes independent.

1967--Military coup deposes Premier Siaka Stevens' government.

1968--Siaka Stevens returns to power at the head of a civilian government following another military coup.

1971--Sierra Leone declared a republic, Stevens becomes executive president.

1978--New constitution proclaims Sierra Leone a one-party state with the All People's Congress as the sole legal party.

1985--Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh becomes president following Stevens's retirement.

1987--Momoh declares state of economic emergency.

War and coups:

1991--Start of civil war. Former army corporal Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) begin campaign against President Momoh, capturing towns on border with Liberia.

1992--President Joseph Momoh ousted in military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser, apparently frustrated by failure to deal with rebels. Under international pressure, Strasser announces plans for the first multi-party elections since 1967.

1996 January--Strasser ousted in military coup led by his defense minister, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

1996--Ahmad Tejan Kabbah elected president in February, signs peace accord with Sankoh's rebels in November.

1997 Peace deal unravels. President Kabbah deposed in May by coalition of army officers led by Major-General Paul Koroma and members of the RUF; Koroma suspends the constitution, bans demonstrations and abolishes political parties; Kabbah flees to Guinea to mobilize international support.

1997 October--The UN Security Council imposes sanctions against Sierra Leone, barring the supply of arms and petroleum products. A British company, Sandline, nonetheless supplies "logistical support," including rifles, to Kabbah allies.

1998 February--Nigerian-led West African intervention force ECOMOG storms Freetown and drives rebels out.

1998 March--Kabbah makes a triumphant return to Freetown amid scenes of public rejoicing.

1999 January--Rebels backing Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh seize parts of Freetown from ECOMOG. After weeks of bitter fighting they are driven out, leaving behind 5,000 dead and a devastated city.

UN intervenes:

1999 May--A ceasefire is greeted with cautious optimism in Freetown amid hopes that eight years of civil war may soon be over.

1999 July--Six weeks of talks in the Togolese capital, Lomé, result in a peace agreement, under which the rebels receive posts in government and assurances they will not be prosecuted for war crimes.[5]

In October 1999, the UN deployed its Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to enforce the terms of the Lomé Peace Accord (July 1999). The deployment of UN peacekeepers to Sierra Leone had little effect. In May 2000, the RUF captured 500 UN peacekeepers and their equipment. Soon indicators developed that showed the RUF could advance on the capital of Freetown. The capture of the UNAMSIL soldiers and the

threatening posture of the RUF towards Freetown triggered the UK High Commissioner (equivalent of US Ambassador) to request a NEO.

United Kingdom Foreign Policy

"The most pressing foreign policy problem we face is to identify the circumstances in which we should get actively involved in other people's conflicts."[6] In 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair made these comments in a speech delivered in Chicago. He further outlined five considerations that should frame the decision making process for an intervention into a foreign country.

> First, are we sure of our cause (is it just)?
> Second, have we exhausted all diplomatic options?
> Third, on the basis of a practical assessment of the situation, are there military operations we can sensibly and prudently undertake?
> Fourth, are we prepared for the long term?
> And finally, do we have national interests involved?[7]

In the case of Sierra Leone, the British government could answer yes to all the questions. The national interest and cause, the safety of British citizens, were easy to answer. The Lomé Peace accords had failed, so there were no more diplomatic solutions. The recently created JRRF provided a tailored force package that could achieve the military objectives. Finally, the UK was already committed to the long term with contributions and aid packages. The case for the military intervention fell directly in line with the standing foreign policy of the Prime Minister.

United Kingdom Military Doctrine

Looking back to the lessons learned from the Falklands campaign, the UK realized that their military needed to change. Specifically, the British military recognized a need to increase both the tactical and strategic mobility of their forces. Services

indentified equipment shortfalls, and the military required joint capability and mobility. This included the development of airlift and naval helicopters. Additionally, the UK formed the mobile Marine Commando amphibious force with specifically designed aircraft carriers for support.[8] This transformation continued with the creation of the JRRF. The JRRF's first mission was Operation Palliser to Sierra Leone using airlifted paratroopers and a marine commando amphibious force.

The UK's experience in Kenya, Cyprus, and Malaya taught lessons as well and became the basis for Low Intensity Conflict principles. Identified was the need to apply principles of economy and efficiency. These experiences created the following tactical principles:

1. Timely declaration of a State of Emergency for maximum advantage in terms of maintaining civil power.

2. The coordination and cooperation of the military, police, and civil administration.

3. The development of an integrated intelligence network.

4. The use of small, specially trained forces for precision strikes in lieu of operations requiring large numbers of troops.[9]

The British Military's experience in Northern Ireland continued the development of counterinsurgency knowledge and culture within the force. Further refinement and thought continued the evolution of the British COIN doctrine. By the time of British mission to Sierra Leone, their COIN doctrine evolved to encapsulate six main principles. These six principles incorporate the history of their operational experience and the themes of the original four principles. These principles are:

1. Political Primacy and Political Aim

2. Coordinated Government Machinery

3. Intelligence and Information

4. Separate the Insurgent from his Support

5. Neutralize the Insurgent

6. Conduct Longer Term Post Insurgency Planning

United Kingdom Response and Intervention

Many consider the British deployment to Sierra Leone in May 2000 as a model example of a low intensity operation. Within a few weeks, the British set conditions for success. In the forty-eight hours following the British High Commissioner's call for a NEO on Monday, 8 May, UK forces evacuated approximately 500 of the 1,000 estimated entitled personnel to Senegal. The remaining portion either chose to stay because of the renewed security through British presence or because they were in other parts of Sierra Leone and unable to evacuate. Immediately following the NEO, Operation Palliser transitioned to counterinsurgency operations to stabilize the country.[10] British forces secured the capital of Freetown and the airport. With limited engagements with the RUF, the British forces concentrated on securing the capital and increasing confidence with the local populace through patrolling, live fire exercises, an extensive Information Operations (IO) campaign, and placing Sankoh, the RUF leader, in prison.

The British intervention provided legitimacy to the UN mission, time for the UN peacekeeping mission to build up forces, and allowed the British to reconstitute the SLA as a force to counter the RUF. Designed as a Short Term Training Team under Operation Palliser, the UK established a central training center and began the training support

mission. Eventually transformed into a longer term International Assistance and Training Team during Operations Basilica, Silkman, and Keeling, the British trained and rebuilt the entire SLA. Reformed as the Republic of Sierra Leone Army (RSLA) with British advisors and trainers, the RSLA began to take control of parts of the country outside the capitol and into the interior, long the domain of the RUF.

Later in September, the West Side Boys, a splinter faction of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), took eleven soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment hostage. The successful hostage rescue, Operation Barras, again reinforced the British commitment to Sierra Leone. Operation Barras holds great significance as it was the first attack into a rebel base in the hinterlands. Prior to Barras, no forces, neither the RSLA or UN, nor ECOMOG, attacked a rebel force in one of their safe havens. This attack, with its defeat of the West Side Boys, provided a clear signal of intent to all the insurgents in Sierra Leone. The decade-long technique of hit and run tactics would no longer work due to the UK's willingness to attack into the hinterlands and assault a base of operations.

The UK government and governmental agencies directly aided the counterinsurgency effort. British government agencies such as the Department of Foreign Internal Development (DFID) instituted stability and reconstruction programs. Civilian departments of the UK government supported the military effort of the COIN campaign with several lines of effort, including: rebuilding and retraining the SL police, training and advising the GoSL on good governmental procedures, and providing direct budgetary aid to sustain the GoSL. Additionally, the UK state department pushed through UN sanctions and embargos against Liberia. These sanctions stopped the flow of arms into

Liberia, thus to the RUF, and the flow of diamonds out of the country. These diplomatic actions cut off the external support to the RUF by ending the blood diamond trade.

In addition to the international trade sanctions on Liberia, one other major external factor affected the RUF. In late 2000, the RUF attacked across the border to secure the Guinean diamond fields. The Guinean army, with intelligence support from the UK, counterattacked in force and destroyed large numbers of the RUF. Faced with direct threat to their forces, their spiritual and charismatic leader Sankoh in prison, and no means to fund their fight, the RUF's insurgency looked bleak. In November, the Sierra Leone government and the RUF signed a cease fire. By March 2001, the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Re-integration (DDR) program disarmed over 14,000 fighters and the RUF re-entered the political process. In May 2002, multiple party elections occurred, confirming the existing government. In two years, the British and UN forces ended the horror in Sierra Leone and established the peace. Today the government of Sierra Leone is now in full control of its territory, many of the rebel leaders are now in prison awaiting trial, and the UN withdrew in 2005.

Conclusion

The British intervention into Sierra Leone presents a case study that holds many lessons for military interventions, but especially any potential interventions into Africa. Sierra Leone was a failed state. The government, while democratically elected, could not provide security, enforce the rule of law throughout the country, or provide essential services for the people of Sierra Leone. The call of the British High Commissioner to conduct a NEO speaks to the condition within the country. A military force with expeditionary capability can execute a NEO operation simply enough; however, to then

choose and support the government of a state in the condition of Sierra Leone with a COIN effort to stabilize and rebuild the country was a gamble.

The UN failed to keep the peace. ECOMOG failed to defeat the RUF. Why would the UK feel that they could succeed? The UK entered Sierra Leone to protect commonwealth and European citizens from the RUF. In less than two years, the UK's actions changed the course of the country. In light of recent military interventions by western powers and the resulting aftermath of combating insurgencies, the fact that the UK could deploy a force, execute a campaign, and redeploy within two years is remarkable.

The remainder of this paper will explore the actions of the UK military in Sierra Leone during the COIN campaign. In an effort to understand how the British were successful in Sierra Leone, this paper will outline the British military doctrine and then explore how well the British forces applied their doctrine during their campaign. Chapter 2 will cover the research material. Chapter 3 will establish the framework for this case study using the British COIN doctrine. Chapter 4 will then analyze the actions of the British in Sierra Leone against their doctrine. Chapter 5 will conclude the paper and highlight associated areas that are worthy of further study.

Assumptions and Key Terms

There is only one major assumption for this paper. This paper characterized the British intervention into Sierra Leone as successful. The paper assumes that the reader will agree that the intervention was successful. The justification for this assumption is current day Sierra Leone. There is lasting peace, a completed DDR, the end of human rights abuse, and democratic elections to determine the leadership of the country.

There are two key terms used throughout this paper that have differing definitions. For the purpose of this paper, insurgency and failed state are defined as:

Insurgency: The actions of a minority group within a state who are intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such a change.[11]

Failed State: Three elements can be said to characterize the phenomenon of the "failed State" from the political and legal point of view.

> There is the "geographical and territorial" aspect, namely the fact that failed States are essentially associated with internal and endogenous problems, even though these may incidentally have cross-border impacts. The situation confronting us then is one of an implosion rather than an explosion of the structures of power and authority, the disintegration and destructuring of States rather than their dismemberment.
>
> There is the "political" aspect, namely the internal collapse of law and order. The emphasis here is on the total or near total breakdown of structures guaranteeing law and order [2] rather than the kind of fragmentation of State authority seen in civil wars, where clearly identified military or paramilitary rebels fight either to strengthen their own position within the State or to break away from it [3].
>
> There is the "functional" aspect, namely the absence of bodies capable, on the one hand, of representing the State at the international level and, on the other, of being influenced by the outside world. Either no institution exists which has the authority to negotiate, represent and enforce or, if one does, it is wholly unreliable, typically acting as "statesman by day and bandit by night."[12]

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[1]Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa, the RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 118.

[2]Ibid., 5.

[3]International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 2000/2001* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 234.

[4]Gbrie, 120.

[5]BBC News, Timeline: Sierra Leone, A Chronologyof Key Events, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1065898.stm (accessed 14 November 2007).

[6]Colin McInnes and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Dimensions of Western Military Intervention* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 159.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer M. Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict, The Development of Britain's "Small Wars" Doctrine During the 1950s* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991), 11-12.

[9]Ibid., 20-21.

[10]Andrew Dorman, *The British Experience of Low Intensity Conflict in Sierra Leone*, Report presented at annual British International Studies Association Conference, Cork, December 2006, http://www.bisa.ac.uk/2006/pps/dorman.pdf (accessed 14 November 2007.

[11]United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *Army Field Manual Volume 1 Combines Arms Operations, Part 10: Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)*, (Crown Copyright: 2001), P.A-1-1.

[12]David Thurer, The "Failed State" and International Law, *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 836 (31 December 1999), http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/57JQ6U (accessed 14 November 2007).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This paper will focus on the period of the direct British involvement. However, the stage setting conditions will be outlined prior to the intervention. The paper will not go back to the beginning of the war, but instead will provide a "common operational picture" of what the conditions were at the time of the decision point for the UK. However, it is important to understand the history of the conflict, and particularly, the RUF. This chapter will outline the resources used to understand the roots of the conflict, who the RUF were, and why they fought. Next, this chapter will document who the actors in the war were. The effects of Liberia, ECOWAS, and the UN were all critical to the situation and set the conditions at the time of the UK intervention. Finally, this chapter will cover the UK in Sierra Leone. The literature will cover why the UK chose to intervene, what the British foreign policy was, what actions the UK forces took in Sierra Leone, and what doctrine existed to provide guidance for the UK forces.

Common Operational Picture

There are good sources for this topic. While not the most widely written topic, there are several good source locations. Frequently, in military writings, Sierra Leone is mentioned in passing, or grouped in with several other counterinsurgencies conducted by the UK as part of imperial policing. Much has been written or documented about the human rights' abuses that occurred during the war, the use of child soldiers, and the conflict diamonds. While that is all important to providing background to understand the

culture of the people in Sierra Leone (vital to defeating an insurgency), those areas give more of the initial Common Operational Picture for this thesis.

David Keen's work, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, is a full academic accounting of the war in Sierra Leone. He explores the historical background of Sierra Leone, the roots of the conflict, the failures of the various governments during the war to counter the RUF, the development of internal groups in Sierra Leone like the Sobels and the Civil Defense Force, and concludes with the final peace process. It is the most comprehensive work that the writer has found about the war.

Joint Operations: A Short History dedicates one chapter to Sierra Leone. The author asserts that the British Mission "began as a Non-Combat Evacuation Operation (NEO) but it soon became apparent that British strategic end-state was far more ambitious."[1] However, to "understand the nature of British intervention in Sierra Leone and draw conclusions from it, one must first place it in proper context. That involves both a grasp of the specific dynamics of conflict in Sierra Leone and of the general issues of peacekeeping today."[2] After explaining the situation in Sierra Leone, the chapter provides an in depth analysis of the campaign. In conclusion, "Britain's experience in Sierra Leone did not fall neatly into any one category of military operations: it was part COIN, part warfighting, peacekeeping, and peace-building."[3] This defines the British mission as a full spectrum operation. This characterization is unique as most analysts look at Sierra Leone as either COIN or some form of peacekeeping.

What Were the Roots of the Conflict?

The conditions for insurgency in Sierra Leone were certainly ideal. The Sierra Leone government had become a corrupt, one party institution that did little more than

preserve the status quo of the society's elite. The perceived and real injustices that permeated throughout the society provided a readily available cause for the people to rally against. The government, nebbish in nature, provided little services outside the capital. In addition, the president had essentially disbanded the SLA in fear of potential coups. Thus, there were no readily available forces to combat the RUF. The terrain of Sierra Leone provided hidden and not easily accessible locations for base camps of the RUF. The porous border with Liberia not only provided a safe haven for fighters but also made the lines of communication between the RUF and their outside supporter, Taylor of Liberia, easily sustainable.

Bound to Cooperate--Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone is an edited publication published by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research. The authors of the collected works vary in background from professors at Fourah Bay College in Freetown to the Superintendent of Police. All the authors are leaders in the Sierra Leone society. While the purpose of the book is to look at the DDR process in Sierra Leone, the research provides a comprehensive analysis of the war in Sierra Leone. Respecting that successful disarmament cannot be achieved without understanding the roots of conflict, the culture surrounding the combatants, and overcoming corruption, select chapters are important to understand the roots of the conflict, the origins of the insurgency, and how culture impacted the war.

The brief look at the war and its conduct by the RUF quickly raises questions. If insurgencies are political in nature, then how did the RUF sustain itself? The actions of brutality consistently displayed by the RUF throughout the war should have only alienated the populace from their cause and shrived their ranks. However, the RUF

continued to grow and even gained more power when the AFRC junta joined their cause. Answers to these questions are found in the culture and how the RUF's techniques created an alienated youth, separated from their tribal ties, that had little choice but to join the RUF. *A Dirty War in West Africa, the RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* by Gberie provides further insight into the culture of Sierra Leone.

Gberie's book provides a very unique perspective to the war. Gberie is a native Sierra Leonean who worked as a reporter during the first part of the war. He then pursued higher education in Canada, and as part of his thesis work, he traveled back to his home country to continue research on what would become this book. Gberie is unapologetically biased in his point of view; however, even this is telling to understanding the issues from a local's perspective. Gberie conducted several interviews with major figures of the war, to include RUF leaders. His book is a passionate, intelligent, and frustrated first hand account of the war.

Who Were the Revolutionary United Front and Why Did They Fight?

"Sierra Leone: The Forgotten Crisis" was a report made to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada. This is a comprehensive report covering the history of Sierra Leone, the period of the war up to 1999, the current security situation (as of 1999), humanitarian issues, and the political and peace process. The report provides a great analysis of the RUF insurgency:

> The RUF and its newfound army colleagues defy all definitions and typologies of guerilla movements . . . the RUF is neither a separatist uprising rooted in a specific demand . . . nor a reformist movement with a radical agenda . . . nor does it possess the kind of leadership that would be necessary to designate it as a warlord insurgency. The RUF is a peculiar guerilla movement without any significant national following or ethnic support . . . it has remained a bandit organization solely driven by the survivalist needs of its predominantly

> uneducated and alienated battle front and battle group commanders. Neither the peasantry, the natural ally of most revolutionary movements, nor the students, amongst whose ranks the RUF-to-be originated, lent any support to the organization during the eight years of fighting.[4]

Bard O'Neill provides further analysis of the RUF. In the second edition of his book, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, O'Neill defines the RUF movement as a commercialist insurgency. Political legitimacy is unimportant to the leaders. The aims of the RUF were driven by coercive power to seize material resources, wealth, and control of political power. In particular, the RUF used the horrifying techniques of murder, rape, and mutilation to gain control of the population. The Government of Sierra Leone's (GoSL) presidential spokesman, Septimus Kaikai, noted: "There are no issues for these people. They do not have a political agenda. They do not have a social agenda. They do not have a religious agenda. What they're simply doing is simply personal; it's personal aggrandizement, selfishness on their part, just to amass wealth."[5]

Who Were the Players in the Sierra Leone War?

The war in Sierra Leone is a complex issue that has numerous issues and participants. Before the RUF crossed the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone, ECOMOG forces were already in Sierra Leone, using the airport as a base of operations for their efforts to defeat the insurgency of Taylor in Liberia. Providing one of the sparks for the war, Taylor quickly saw the advantage of backing the RUF in Sierra Leone to destabilize the nation and potentially divert resources of ECOMOG away from Liberia. ECOWAS, followed by the UN, continued to attempt to bring stability to Sierra Leone for many years. Tired of the cost and effort, ECOWAS forces began to pull out in 1999, providing an opportunity for the RUF to launch Operation No Living Thing into

Freetown. Indicators of another attack on Freetown coupled with fear of another episode of butchery, placed British citizens at risk and began the intervention.

Jane's Intelligence Review provides who, what, where, when, and why for UNAMSIL, United Nations Observer Group Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), and the RUF. These reports identify the mission statements of the different groups (RUF), as an example, the UNAMSIL mandate was:

1. To provide security at key locations and government buildings, in particular in Freetown, important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport;

2. To facilitate the free flow of people, goods, and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares;

3. To provide security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program;

4. To co-ordinate with and assist the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities;

5. To guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction.[6]

What Caused the United Kingdom to Intervene?

"The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions into Sierra Leone (2000) and Afghanistan (2001-2002)" is an article explaining the mechanics of the military intervention into the two countries. Counnaughton, the author, seeks to show that Operation Palliser, from a military standpoint, was "as good as it gets." He contrasts the UK's experience in Sierra Leone with the deployment to Afghanistan, which he

characterizes “as bad as it gets.” Counnaughton argues that there were six factors in Sierra Leone that the UK could not overlook:

1. British nation’s citizens were at risk.

2. The UK was Sierra Leone’s former colonial power.

3. The failure of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1998 to prevent British arms being shipped to Sierra Leone in breach of UN sanctions.

4. Criticism leveled at the government from being slow to react to the Mozambique floods of February 2000.

5. The fact of a UN presence in Sierra Leone.

6. The regional power was becoming part of the problem.[7]

Following the NEO for British nationals and completion of Operation Palliser, the British commander realized that the withdrawal of his troops would seriously undermine the UNAMSIL and could empower the remnants of the RUF and AFRC. Consequently, the commander took it upon himself to begin the training of SLA forces. The entire operation had the advantage of the consent of President Kabbah and the UK government having a virtual free hand to dictate the policy and conduct of the operation.

British Foreign Policy

In addition to Prime Minister Blair’s Chicago speech, there were additional considerations and motivations for the UK to intervene in Sierra Leone. Paul Williams work, *Fighting for Freetown: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*, argues that the British certainly had a humanitarian impulse to end the years of violence; however, the need to defend democracy and stick to their foreign policy principles had greater influence to instigate the intervention. Sierra Leone did have a democratically elected

government, but the war and previous coups completely undermined its ability to govern, protect itself, or the people. With the RUF's threatening an advance on Freetown, the GoSL might have been forced into exile once again. If the RUF could attack Freetown again, it would have been the complete failure of the UNAMSIL mission. As a voting member of the UN Security Council, the UK had an international obligation to bolster the UNAMSIL mission and prevent its failure.[8]

Actions of the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone

The UK intervention can be separated into three phases. First, Operation Palliser was the NEO effort involving the first deployment of the UK's JRRF. Second, Operation Basilica and follow on operations (Silkman and Keeling) expanded the UK's involvement and commitment to Sierra Leone. Recognizing the need to support the UN and stabilize the nation, the UK undertook the tasks of restructuring the SLA, the police force, and government. In addition to the military trainers, the UK provided police advisors from the commonwealth to professionalize the Sierra Leone police force and improve security. Advisors from the British ministries of government worked to improve good governance. A vigorous IO campaign let the people of Sierra Leone know that the UK was committed to restructuring the nation. All of these measures were long-term commitments for the UK. The third phase, while not planned, greatly aided the UK's efforts to stabilize the country. Operation Barras was a raid into the rebel stronghold of the West Side Boys to rescue British soldiers taken hostage. The raid achieved its objective, rescue of the hostages, but also achieved significant secondary impacts. Operation Barras was the first attack by any of the forces in Sierra Leone during the entire war into a rebel stronghold. This sent a clear message about the commitment and

intent of the UK, their willingness to use force, and demonstrated the futility of continued resistance.

Operations Palliser and Barras

Fowler's work is the account of Operation Barras, the hostage rescue raid to free six British and one SLA soldier from the West Side Boys. Fowler outlines the operation in extreme detail, but also sets the stage for Barras by explaining operation No Living Thing by the RUF, the role of UNAMSIL, and Operation Palliser. Of note, the West Sides Boys commander's intent was to "Do a Somalia" on the British. If they could abuse some British soldiers on the BBC, then the UK would leave the country.

As an additional operational study, Dr Andrew Dorman presented a paper, "The British Experience of Low Intensity Conflict in Sierra Leone," at the annual British International Studies Association Conference in 2006. Dr Dorman presents the British experience in Sierra Leone as a model example of a low intensity operation. After outlining a brief history of the conflict and the actions of the British in Sierra Leone, Dr Dorman presents the following lessons to draw: prepare for the unexpected, doctrine does not cover everything--so beware of your default settings, focus at the Operational Level from the beginning, take risks but not chances, the value of off shore basing, challenges of other departments of state, and the challenge of corporate memory. Dr Dorman's paper is valuable to understanding the operational level issues and concerns with the Sierra Leone mission. The integration of the departments of state with the military effort is vital. In Sierra Leone, this integration met with success and failure.

Operation Basilica

In January 2001, the Defense Headquarters of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces published the Campaign Plan for the Defeat of the RUF by Government Forces in Sierra Leone. This campaign plan, signed by the Chief of the Sierra Leone Defense Staff and the British Commander, is a complete five paragraph base order encompassing the strategic lines of operation and endstate, commander's intent with scheme of maneuver, and how the friendly forces (RSLA, UK, Guinea, UNAMSIL, and Sierra Leone police) integrated into the plan. Having the published campaign plan exposes how well the British followed their doctrine's COIN principles. Reading the campaign plan reveal the direction of the counterinsurgents. As the British commander would comment on, the campaign plan did not cover all the lines of doctrinal effort.

In 2006, Major General Jonathan Riley delivered a lecture to members of the Heritage Foundation, "The UK in Sierra Leone: A Post Conflict Operation Success?" In the summer of 2000, then Brigadier General, Riley was the commander of British Forces in Sierra Leone and signer of the campaign plan for defeat of the RUF. In his lecture, Riley outlines what the aim of the British government was, what his duties were, and what the elements of the campaign were. Broadly, his objectives were to rebuild the army and the civil society. However, Riley frankly outlines many areas where the UK fell short. As an example, the integration and support of the British government's ministries to the campaign were lacking and not coordinated. The British provided security but fell short on improving governance and essential services. There were also areas of great success like the IO campaign. To explain his attitude towards the mission, Major General

Riley said, “They [the rebels] could either fight me and get killed, or go to the UN, and enter the DDR process. I did not really mind much.”[9]

The International Crisis Group (ICG) published six reports between April 2001 and December 2004. These reports are excellent for their analysis of all the problems and conflicts that remained in the country after the war. They take an international approach and identify what actions the players need to take to improve the status inside the country. These reports also outline what actions the UK took on for themselves, and what actions fell onto the international community. As examples, the UK committed to run the International Military Advisory and Training Team until 2010 as well as provide an “over the horizon” force within seventy-two hours if hostilities break out once again. The continued support to train and develop the SLA provided the backbone for security in the country. Equally vital, the threat of force with a JRRF against any insurgent force keeps the prospects for any renewed conflict very low, less the belligerents risk destruction, as seen with the West Side Boys. Perhaps the most telling feature of the reports from the ICG is the lack of any further reporting on Sierra Leone past December 2004.

Additionally, the ICG reports bring out failures in the reconstruction process. As an example, the British intention to restore and reinforce the 149 paramount chiefs did little to address the grievances between the chiefs and the populace. After spending over two million US dollars over two years, the ICG considered the program a failure and classified the effort as a missed opportunity to encourage the population to reconsider the rule of governance and law at the local level.

Sierra Leone: Current Issues and Background is an edited work analyzing the war. The book is written from an American perspective and is most valuable in the

descriptions of the actions of UNAMSIL and the DDR. While obviously not under the control of the UK, understanding how UK forces incorporated into the peace process is important. "In areas where disarmament had proceeded, it was followed by the UN and new trained [by the UK] SLA deployments, and government began to extend its authority into formerly RUF-controlled areas."[10] Additionally, in the newly disarmed areas, the UK and UNDP funded bridge and road reconstruction projects using ex-combatants as laborers. One of the most key services provided by the British military was the retraining and restructuring of the SLA. Their British Military Advisory and Training Team, followed by a Short Term Training Team and the UK led International Military Advisory and Training Team, completely rebuilt the SLA in order to provide forces for the extension of government control throughout the country. The work goes on to answer three critical questions: (1) Why has the RUF sought a peace agreement now? (2) Is their desire for peace genuine? and (3) Is it likely that the peace will hold?

United Kingdom Doctrine

The Foreign Policy Research Institute published a study done on Iraq in 2006. The study, "Succeeding in Phase IV: British Perspectives on the U.S. Effort to Stabilize and Reconstruct Iraq," while not about Sierra Leone, it is enlightening to understand how the British view "stability and reconstruction" doctrine. The conclusions in the report come from interviews of British leaders with experience in Iraq. While most interviewed were too young to have been in the Army during the height of fighting in Northern Ireland, their perspectives and what they considered to be imperatives for the conduct of a counterinsurgency fight were uniform and imprinted. The analysis of the British

military culture underscores many of the reasons why the UK's forces are well suited for counterinsurgency.

> The core principles underpinning the British approach to S&R [Stability and Reconstruction] operations are more than just doctrinal guidelines; to the British Army they are in fact articles of faith. Every British officer interviewed considered most of these principles to be the immutable basis for all planning and command decisions at all levels.[11]

The attitude and performance of British forces in Iraq are the result of their military's unique experiences. The RAND Corporation has produced several works that "provide objective analysis and effective solutions" to a myriad of warfare topics, specifically counterinsurgency. Of note, "On 'Other War' Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research" and "Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict, The Development of Britain's "Small Wars" Doctrine During the 1950's" provides excellent insight and condensed knowledge of counterinsurgency and the British experience. These works show how the British have historically conducted some very successful counterinsurgencies; they frequently repeated mistakes in different operations, and had to relearn lessons. These studies provide the background knowledge of the British COIN experience and doctrine development.

Current British doctrine addresses counterinsurgency at the joint, service capstone, and army field manual levels. An analysis of all of British doctrine is far beyond the scope of this chapter, even if only focusing on the elements of counterinsurgency at all of the levels of their doctrine. This paper is limited to an examination of the British doctrine at the operational level of war. Additionally, there are research limitations for British military publications. The intent was to find doctrine

publications published prior to the intervention into Sierra Leone; however, this did not prove feasible.

First, capstone document *The Application of Force*, published in 1998, is the introduction to British Army Doctrine and the Conduct of Military Operations. An entire chapter is devoted to Operations Other that War, with the first section covering counterinsurgency. There are three broad fundamentals of doctrine for counterinsurgency: minimum force, civil and military cooperation, and tactical flexibility. Refraining from a specific approach to dealing with insurgencies, the British make use of guidelines and practices to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Additionally, the British outline that military force is part of the broader political purpose; therefore, the military commander will unlikely direct the overall campaign.

For the research methodology in chapter 3, the analysis of the intervention into Sierra Leone will use *British Army Field Manual, Volume 1: Combined Arms Operations; Part 10: Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)* dated 2001. The work details the aspects of analyzing insurgencies, and the influence of Bard O'Neil is prevalent. Next, the manual covers the integration of legal, media, intelligence, ground, air, civil affairs, host nation, and British ministries towards the counterinsurgency effort. All the aspects of the operation must follow the principles of counterinsurgency. The British identify six principles:

1. Political Primacy and Political Aim
2. Coordinated Government Machinery
3. Intelligence and Information
4. Separating the Insurgent from his Support

5. Neutralizing the Insurgent

6. Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning.[12]

While this manual was not published prior to the intervention into Sierra Leone, the assumption is that just like in the US military, a final approved and published doctrinal manual in 2001 would have been well circulated in 2000 in draft form. Given this assumption and research limitations, this field manual is valid for the analysis within this paper.

Conclusion

Much of the writings on Sierra Leone and the war during the 1990s focus on the horror of the conflict, the blood diamond trade, or a case study of a nation that collapsed. Many writers explored the roots of the conflict and why the war lasted for such an extended period. The history of the UK in COIN is extensive, but not many writers have looked at Sierra Leone as a continued extension of their COIN experience. Additionally, most of the writing about the various intervention forces in Sierra Leone focuses on the UN and their chapter VI and VII missions. This is understandable as UNAMSIL was the largest UN mission to date.

This case study will explore the role of the UK in Sierra Leone from their perspective. The consensus of most writings is that the UK intervention saved the UN mission and provided the purposeful direction to change the course of events inside Sierra Leone. If this success is inherent, then how did it come about? This paper will analyze the UK's actions in Sierra Leone against their doctrine. To establish the framework for analysis, chapter 3 will outline the COIN principles of British doctrine.

[1]Stuart Griffin, *Joint Operations: A Short History* (JDCC 2005), 196.

[2]Ibid., 197.

[3]Ibid., 216.

[4]David Pratt, "Sierra Leone: The Forgotten Crisis." Report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 23 April 1999, http://www.sierra-leone.org/pratt042399.html (accessed 14 November 2007), 10-11.

[5]Brad E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (Brassey's (US), 1990), 28-29.

[6]Janes.com, http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/jir/doc_view.jsp?K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/mags/jir/history/jir2000/jir00168.htm@current&Prod_Name=JIR&QueryText=%3CAND%3E%28%3COR%3E%28%28%5B80%5DUNAMSIL+%3CIN%3E+body%29%2C+%28%5B100%5D+%28%5B100%5DUNAMSIL+%3CIN%3E+title%2 (accessed 14 November 2007).

[7]Richard Connaughton, The Mechanics and Nature of British Intervention into Sierra Leone (2000) and Afghanistan (2002), *Civil Wars* (Summer 2002), 83.

[8]Colin and Wheeler, 140-168.

[9]Jonathon P. Riley, *The U.K. in Sierra Leone: A Post Conflict Operation Success?* The Heritage Foundation, no. 958: 2, http://www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl958.cfm (accessed 14 November 2007).

[10]Bret Sillinger, ed., *Sierra Leone: Current Issues and Background* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003), 27.

[11]Andrew Garfield, *Succeeding in Phase IV: British Perspectives on the US Effort to Stabilize and Reconstruct Iraq*, http://www.fpri.org/books/Garfield.Succeedingin PhaseIV.pdf (accessed 14 November 2007).

[12]United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *Army Field Manual*, B-3-2.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> "If you wish for peace, understand war, particularly the guerrilla and subversive forms of war."[1]
>
> B H Liddell Hart, 1961

The UK has a long and well documented history of involvement in counterinsurgency operations, reflected in a wide range of military and academic publications. Like the US military, the UK has one specific manual for COIN; however, the British COIN aspects are more thoroughly incorporated into the broader relevant doctrine. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the important and applicable portions of the UK doctrine in light of the intervention into Sierra Leone. For the UK doctrine, this chapter will borrow directly from Army Field Manual 10, *Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)*. Additionally, the chapter will only briefly highlight the how the UK analyze insurgencies and focus mainly on COIN principles and techniques.

Introduction

UK government policy requires that its Armed Forces are available for use in support of foreign policy objectives. This requirement was instrumental in the development of the JRRF used in Sierra Leone. Having a military force with global expeditionary capabilities could clearly lead to involvement in different types of conflict and probably contact with a variety of enemy forces. Such contact may not necessarily involve direct confrontation, but could occur while operating under international mandates in regions where insurgency and civil disorder are rife. The Army, in

conjunction with the other two services and even allies, might be called upon to provide advice, support, or overt assistance to a friendly state threatened by some form of insurgency, as occurred in Sierra Leone.

In other situations, some of the principles and tactics of COIN may be applicable. For instance, in a period of fragile peace after a war (when the civil administration in a defeated or liberated country has broken down), or in a peace support operation (when armed factions interrupt humanitarian relief or attack peacekeepers as in Sierra Leone), troops may selectively employ the relevant COIN tactics and techniques. In the field, neat doctrinal distinctions and definitions require adaptation rather than simple implementation. To be ready to confront insurgency and its impact or any related internal threats at short notice in a wide variety of environments demands, there must be a clear understanding of the problem from the commander down to the individual soldier.

Insurgency

British COIN doctrine begins with a requirement to define and understand the concept of insurgencies. Insurgency is defined as "the actions of a minority group within a state that are intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such a change."[2]

To quantify and qualify insurgencies, British doctrine draws on the writings of Professor Brad O'Neill, Director of Studies at the US National War College, as outlined in his book, *Insurgency and Terrorism--Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*. O'Neill categorizes seven main forms of insurgency: Anarchist, Egalitarian, Traditionalist, Pluralist, Separatist, Reformist, and Preservationist. Each type may use one or more of

the following insurgent strategies to achieve its aims: Conspiratorial, Protracted Popular War, Military Focus, Urban Insurgency, and Isolated Terrorism.[3]

In numerous states across the globe, the potential of insurgency--the classic style of warfare used by the weak against the strong--has clearly been demonstrated. History shows that in certain circumstances it can be a remarkably successful means of change. Well developed insurgencies with strong leadership and a good cause are usually adaptive and learning. Commanders and staff officers must watch and learn from current insurgencies. Military intervention into a foreign nation is a last resort. However, commanders must understand that there is always the potential commitment of forces to help a host nation resolve an insurgency. To combat insurgencies, UK COIN doctrine remains flexible and demands that the commander analyze each situation and develops a campaign plan to meet the particular requirements of the host nation, the insurgency, and the political objectives of the UK government.

Counterinsurgency

UK doctrine strictly adheres to the mandatory guidelines of minimum necessary force and legitimacy. To achieve these guidelines, there are six COIN principles, arranged into a logical sequence to provide a government with a general pattern on which to base and review its COIN strategy (see figure 1).

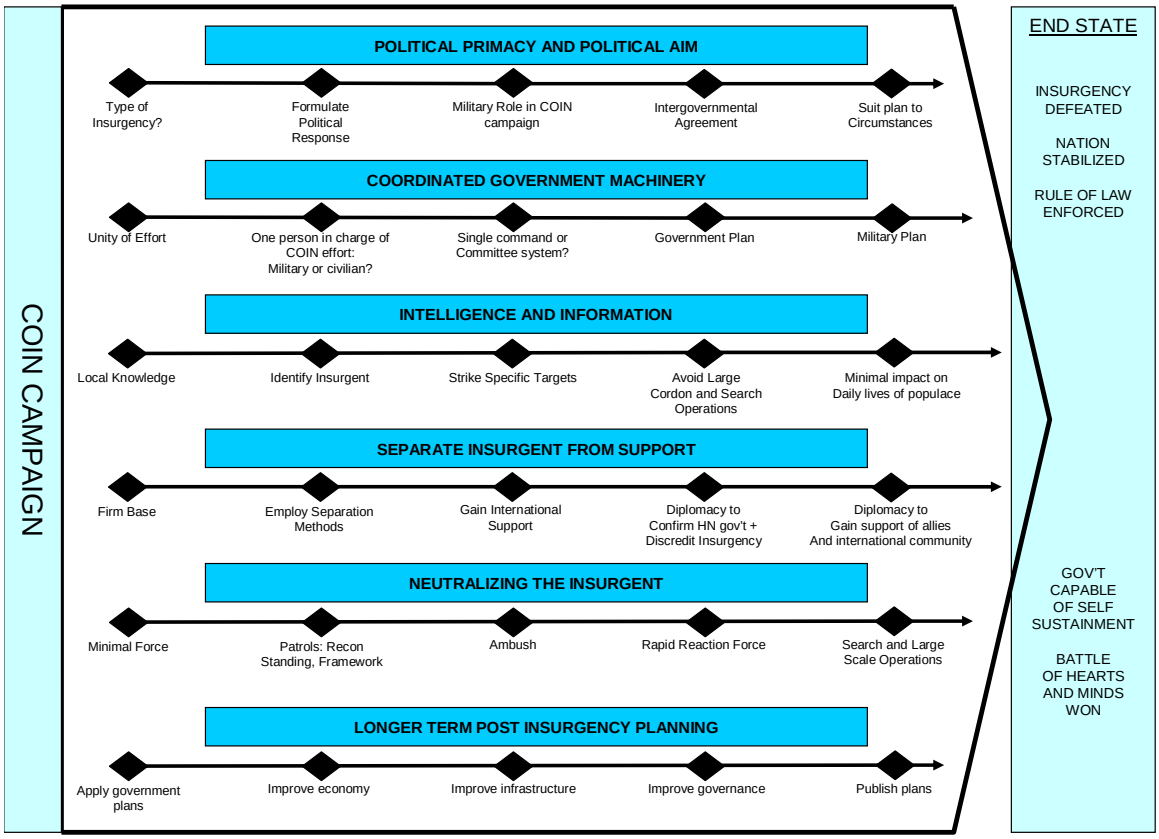

Figure 1. The COIN Campaign

Political Primacy and Political Aim

UK doctrine cautions commanders to understand the unique aspects of COIN operations. Undue focus on military action clouds the key political realities which can result in a military-dominated campaign plan that misses the real focus of an insurgency. Military force is not an end in itself, but always a means to achieve a wider political purpose. This implies that the military commander will operate under political constraints, and indeed, in a well orchestrated COIN strategy, is unlikely to direct the

overall campaign. This impacts the part that military forces will be given (and should seek) to play in COIN, and of any doctrinal approach to the situation.

In conventional warfighting, soldiers expect that once broad political parameters have been established they will be left to decide the best way to achieve tactical goals; this is not necessarily the case in COIN, and this has important implications. This is due to the relationship between "success" and the center of gravity in COIN operations.

Success is the state of affairs which needs to be achieved by the end of a campaign. Since insurgency is principally a political struggle, it may be that the desired aim of the government falls short of victory in a strictly military context and setting. In COIN, success may equate to handing over an internal security problem to the civil police, or simply not losing.

In an insurgency the strategic center of gravity is generally seen as the support of the mass of the people. The insurgency is an attempt to force political change; therefore, it logically follows that the center of gravity can only be reached by political action. The government's response to an insurgency should take as its fundamental assumption that the true nature of the threat lies in the insurgent's political potential rather than his military power.

The host nation government should move rapidly to provide an analysis of the type of insurgency it faces and its subsequent implications; then it should decide how to stop, neutralize, or reverse the consequences of such an insurgency. The military commander plays an effective part at this time by advising the government of the role, scope, and potential of the military forces available in the COIN planning. The UK

government can then match this potential to their own political, legislative, and economic aims.

The overall campaign plan is a function of both the host nation government, which requires an agreement between the UK and host nation government. Both must agree on the overall aims, the role UK forces will play, and whether there are any constraints on their employment. The UK force commander usually will be an advisor to the host nation government. Each commander must understand that each situation is unique. Local circumstances and the type of insurgency will directly impact the campaign plan developed by the government and executed by the commander.

Any COIN environment is a highly politically charged atmosphere. Proper use of mission command empowers subordinates, vice constraining them, and is even more important in a COIN fight. Well disciplined soldiers who understand their task and purpose and the atmosphere the campaign desires to create will be able to target the many parts of an insurgency. Commanders can then target not only the armed fighters of an insurgency, but also the insurgents will to fight, their cohesion, and use better tempo to keep the enemy off balance.

Coordinated Government Machinery

Unity of effort is a prerequisite for success. The suggested solution is for the UK government to give one person overall responsibility for the direction of the campaign allowing differences of opinion between agencies to be resolved by an impartial Director. The Director could be a soldier, a politician, or civil servant. When the UK provides forces for the assistance of a host nation government, forces assigned would be

subordinate to the host nation government. Subordinated command relationships support the host nation's legitimacy in the eyes of their populace.

The UK identifies two command paradigms for use in COIN: the committee and single command systems. The choice for which system to use is heavily influenced by the situation in the host nation. The committee system better serves a campaign in support and at the invitation of an established, working, and legitimate sovereign government, thus a politician or senior civil servant would better fill the role of the chairman. The military, police, and civil administration become his advisors. The UK used the committee system in Malaya and Cyprus. The single command system better serves conditions of an intervention in a failed or failing state, like Sierra Leone, where there are no or limited government capabilities for the British civil servants to advise and coordinate with. The chairman is the commander, usually a soldier, with the senior civil service and police as advisers. To be successful, the single command system requires an outstandingly able commander and a relatively uncomplicated insurgency threat with no serious internal complications, apart from the insurgency itself, and no major external threat.

Regardless of which command system the UK government chooses, planners must conduct a net assessment or analysis to identify the shortages and vulnerabilities within the host nation. An analysis of the situation will reveal shortfalls that the host nation may have in its ability to secure itself and protect the people. The plan must identify where the host nation government and the insurgents are most vulnerable. This analysis (see Appendix A) will help to identify where the host nation's military must defend the host nation's government vulnerabilities and take offensive action against

insurgent vulnerabilities. Analysis is the basis for the development of a coordinated host nation's national campaign plan that should cover the entire political, economic, administrative, operational, and intelligence fields. Finally, based off of the insurgency analysis, the national plan can allocate priorities. Usually two stand out: identify insurgent support and identify the readily targetable insurgent weaknesses. With the government plan in place, the UK military commander can then construct his plan.

In a perfect world, the government plan will specifically spell out the British government's strategic goals and national aims as stated in an issue of a Strategic Directive. However, in practice, the British government may be unable or unwilling to provide specific details of their strategy. The British commander may have to make some general assumptions about the goals of the campaign, and base his detailed planning upon the short- and medium-term security requirements. The six COIN principles provide a sound basis to guide and organize the campaign plan. As the situation develops, it will be necessary to review and alter detailed lines of operation as conditions evolve, decisive points are reached, or set backs occur. It follows that in COIN, the aim of the military plan is not necessarily identical to the political aim, but the two must be complementary.

Intelligence and Information

UK doctrine stresses the overriding importance and value of intelligence. Good intelligence allows precise attacks against specific enemy targets; without it, military forces may conduct large scale search and attack or clearing operations to find the enemy. Such operations disrupt the daily lives of the population, certainly not gaining their trust and support, and can attract negative attention from the international community.

It is vital to understand and properly analyze intelligence data, quickly gaining local knowledge within the host nation. Knowledge of the host nation, its ethnic composition, culture, religions and schisms, the political scene and party leaders, the clandestine political organizations and their armed groups, the influence of neighboring states, and the economy takes time to build up. The host nation police and other agencies are likely to be the primary source for information and intelligence, although the recruitment of insurgent source will be a high priority. This background information is essential because intelligence relies on an ability to discern patterns of change in behavior.

Separating the Insurgent from His Support

The purpose of separating the insurgent from his support is to deny the insurgents information, logistics, recruits, safe bases, and popular support. Achieved both through physical separation, but also with a coordinated attempt to win the psychological battle for “hearts and minds,” closely linked to the need for the government side to retain legitimacy. A well developed attack on the enemy’s will strikes at the center of an insurgent’s philosophy. As part of a deliberate hearts and minds campaign, it should incorporate psychological operations, effective use of the media, and troop information (message for troops to convey to the people). The physical and psychological battles guide the complex task of separating the insurgent from his support. Figure 2 depicts the elements and the requirements for the task:

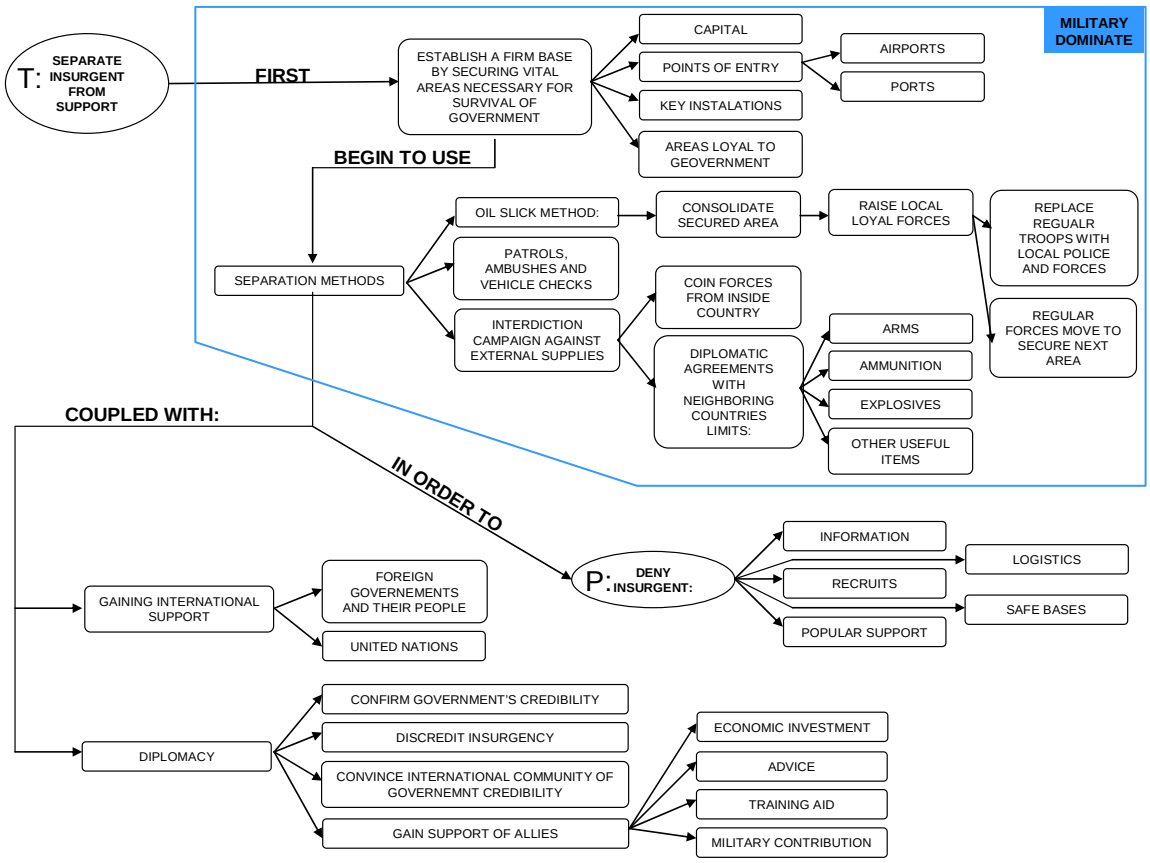

Figure 2. Separating the Insurgent From His Support

Firm Base

The most urgent requirement is to secure the base areas essential to the survival of the government, state, its capital, points of entry, key installations, and those areas which are loyal to the government. The provision of security in those vital areas encourages their inhabitants to rally to the government. Once a lodgment is secure for the military force and the host nation's base of power is not in jeopardy, COIN forces can concentrate on beginning to separate the insurgent from his support.

Separation Methods

The counterinsurgent must apply a skillful combination of methods to separate the insurgents from their subversive and supporting organizations. This list does not cover all of the techniques listed in the doctrine; however, these are some of the main points:

1. The gradual spread of government control by the oil slick method is a well tried approach to combating an insurgency. Initially, COIN forces may have to accept that the insurgents control remote areas, inaccessible jungle and mountain country, and territory adjoining the borders of a state friendly to the insurgents. Success could lie in applying a long term, methodical, oil slick policy. As each area is consolidated, loyal local forces would be raised to secure the area to release mobile regular troops to secure the next area while the host state's civil administration and police reestablished themselves in the recently liberated territory.

2. Application of force, including patrols, ambushes, and vehicle checks.

3. Interdiction campaigns against the entry of external supplies coupled with the use of diplomatic agreements with neighboring or more distant countries to limit supplies of arms, ammunition, explosives, and other items useful to the insurgents.

Gaining International Support

Winning the support of foreign governments and the sympathy of the majority of their people, or at least their benevolent neutrality, and obtaining a favorable attitude in the UN make the task of dealing with an insurgency much easier. To win this support, the UK government and military plans must be coordinated. The overall campaign plan must apply the principles of morality, law, and minimal force together with the social and

economic aid packages to improve the host nation and legitimize the mission. This all helps to produce a favorable international climate.

Diplomacy

Careful diplomacy will aim to:

1. Confirm the government's credibility and standing as the legal government.

2. Discredit the insurgency movement as unrepresentative and criminal.

3. Convince the international community that the government's political aims are legitimate and that its methods are legal, moral and respectful of human rights.

4. Gain the support of allies in providing economic investment, advice, training and, if required, an advisory mission and a military contribution.

Neutralizing the Insurgent

Neutralizing the insurgent places stresses the intellectual and psychological aspects of operations, not simply the kinetic. It emphasizes focus on people and ideas, not only on terrain or the enemy. Targeting identifies insurgent cohesion for attack by applying appropriate force against critical weaknesses. Commanders use surprise, tempo, and simultaneity to execute operations faster than the insurgent can react, getting inside of the insurgent's decision cycle. Creating conditions where the insurgent is reactive fosters the collapse of his will to fight, and ultimately helps to create the conditions for his political defeat. As in conventional warfighting, counterinsurgents apply force selectively, constantly balancing force against desired effects: destruction is a means not an end. The doctrine cautions against accepting battle for battle's sake and aims to create conditions for government success with less force, more quickly, and at less cost.

The means of attacking cohesion in COIN are readily adapted from conventional warfighting: firepower (which in the warfighting context is severely constrained to lethal actions and targeting, but in COIN can be broadened to include evidence gathering, arrest, and legal action [non-lethal actions and targeting]), and surprise (achieved through developing information gathering technology which is exploited by either covert action or rapid concentration of overt force into a given area).

Tempo is judged not by the "pace" of operations, but the speed of action and reaction relative to the insurgent. At the tactical level, tempo is just as applicable. A commander can seek to establish his own tempo to seize the initiative in the local area of operations and force an insurgent group into a reactive role. Troops and commanders at all levels should have the mental agility to adapt to rapid changes, in the mood of the population for example, quicker than the insurgent. Commanders enhance high tempo through physical mobility, timely and accurate contact intelligence, coordinated command and control, and a flexible combat support and combat service support system.

While military action is only one aspect of neutralizing the insurgent, the basis of much successful COIN action is the British junior commander leading a small patrol into the terrain the insurgent sees as his own. The aim should be to defeat the insurgent on his ground using enough, but no more, force than is absolutely necessary. A degree of attrition will be necessary, but the number of insurgents killed should be no more than is absolutely necessary to achieve the success. Commanders should seek "soft" methods of destroying the enemy; by arrest and subsequent conviction and imprisonment, physical isolation, or infiltration may achieve similar or even greater effects. Minimum necessary force is a well proven concept in COIN operations. This does not mean that commanders

should avoid risk or forfeit initiative to the enemy, merely that pure attrition can have negative impacts with the local populace and even the international community. The application of force comes through the use of raids, ambushes, and patrolling. In addition, UK doctrine calls for the use of rapid reaction forces, search operations, and larger scale offensive operations to destroy or neutralize the insurgents. In Sierra Leone, the main technique was patrolling and is the focus in this chapter.

The types of patrol and their purpose are the same for COIN operations as for conventional warfare with suitable modifications. Reconnaissance, standing, and fighting or offensive patrols all play a role in a COIN fight. Peculiar to COIN is the framework patrol system, a method specifically designed for COIN warfare. In detail:

Framework Patrols

Framework patrols provide a mixture of information, protection, and security force presence. They operate on a team system that varies in accordance with the environment, the threat, their tasks, and other security forces. The patrols work from a secure base and preferably within reach of a standing patrol. Their aim is to deter insurgent attack by saturating an area and threatening the escape of the insurgent. In broad terms, their tasks include:

1. Provide local protection for security force base.
2. Reassure the population.
3. Deter terrorist attack through overt presence.
4. Enable security forces to maintain the initiative.
5. Inhibit insurgent’s freedom of movement by random deployment.

6. Provide an instantly available detection and reaction force on the ground.

7. Provide a regular update of local information.

Reconnaissance Patrols

The presence of patrols generally has a steadying effect on the population in areas loyal to the government. Commanders can not send weak patrols into areas hostile to the government as civilians can mob and send the patrol in retreat. This would only encourage the insurgents and depress the morale of the loyal population. However, well planned patrolling based on the nature of the threat can achieve useful results. Tasks may include:

1. Gathering information by observation and contact with local populace.

2. Harassing insurgent movements by carrying out snap checks and searches.

3. Dealing with minor incidents as within the capabilities of the patrol.

Standing Patrols

After the initial deployment of military forces, establishing overt and covert standing patrols over key positions provides an important means of acquiring information and furnishing a security presence. Their tasks include:

1. Obtaining general information on activity and noting significant patterns.

2. Observing the movement and activity of terrorist, curfew breakers and crowds.

3. Identifying ring leaders and law breakers.

4. Directing patrols, police, or reserve units to incidents.

All of these types of operations aim to wrestle physical control of territory from the insurgent and interdict his ability to influence the population. Commanders can use

standing and reconnaissance patrols in both urban and rural environments, although rules of engagement and political sensitivities may limit their use. However, much of what they do can be done as part of framework patrolling. It can not be over emphasized that success in offensive operations is not won by launching masses of troops into an area on the chance of finding the enemy. Only operations based on good information and sound planning produce results.

Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning

The Application of Government Plans

This last principle probably holds the key to the effective application of all the other five principles. Merely planning for the military defeat of insurgents within the host nation's territory does not end the host nation government requirement to make suitable longer-term plans. These plans need to enhance the economic and social aspects of its population and ensure that the political causes of the insurgency have been eliminated and overcome.

Publication of Longer Term Plans

The announcement of bold, government initiatives for the country for after the defeat of the insurgency can have a real and significant effect on winning the hearts and minds of the population during any campaign.

Conclusion

In short, UK COIN doctrine does not provide a playbook or step-by-step model for commanders to follow. The doctrine outlines principles and provides guidelines that commanders must adapt, based on their analysis, to each individual situation. Not all

aspects of the doctrine will be applicable for a particular situation. Insurgencies are political struggles, thus the counterinsurgent must apply political action to target the enemy center of gravity. For a COIN campaign to be successful, the political objectives and aims must synchronize all the elements of national power against the insurgency. The military plays an important role, but equally vital are the economic, diplomatic, and informational capabilities of the government and its departments. The UK doctrine incorporates all the capabilities of the British national power to develop a coordinated COIN campaign.

At the end of the withdrawal of British military forces from Sierra Leone, the COIN campaign was won. The RUF were demobilized and disarmed. The Sierra Leone government and the RUF signed a final and still lasting peace accord. The RUF agreed to transform into a political party to run in the next national elections. Sierra Leone was not immediately transformed due to the British intervention. The country still faces a long and difficult future to turn the state towards prosperity. However, the British intervention set the conditions for the country to develop by achieving security, providing a rebuilt and trained army, and continues to serve as the single largest donor of aid. So the question remains, what actions did the British forces and government take in Sierra Leone to achieve this endstate?

Chapter 4 will use the same framework outlined in this chapter to examine the roles of both the British military and governmental departments. In some lines of effort, the UK was extremely successful, in others, they fell short. Additionally, the other international forces within the country, notably UNAMSIL and Guinea, played large

roles in the COIN campaign. Chapter 4 will apply British doctrinal principles of COIN to their actions in Sierra Leone.

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[1]United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *Army Field Manual*, i.

[2]Ibid., A-1-1.

[3]Ibid., A-1-3-11.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> "There is little doubt that British intervention saved the UN mission, the peace process and, by extension, the state itself."[1]

Introduction

This chapter will use the framework of British doctrine outlined in chapter 3 and examine the roles of the British forces in Sierra Leone. This analysis will determine whether the British forces in Sierra Leone followed the principles of counterinsurgency outlined in their doctrine and or adapted their actions to unique environment within the country. As this chapter will outline, the British forces did follow their doctrine; however, many of the elements outlined in their doctrine required for a successful campaign plan were provided by other organizations or countries trying to influence the conditions within Sierra Leone.

Before outlining the actions of the UK in Sierra Leone, it is important to understand the specific context. This involves understanding the specific dynamics of the conflict at the time of the intervention. This is not an easy question to answer as Sierra Leone was beset by numerous internal factions, heavily influenced by regional issues and neighboring countries, as well as occupied with a litany of foreign international countries peacekeepers working for the UN under UNAMSIL.

After nearly eight years of fighting, coups, and changes in government, with strong international and domestic pressure, President Kabbah signed the Lomé Peace Agreement with the RUF in July 1999. This agreement heavily favored the RUF, giving their leaders immunity from prosecution and four out of twenty-two posts in the Sierra

Leone cabinet. These positions included the key post of Minister for Strategic Resources. This enabled the RUF to retain control of the diamond mines in the east of the country. The Lomé agreement also called for the DDR process and authorized UNAMSIL to oversee the peace and disarmament process. With the Lomé agreement, the UN changed the mission of UN forces in Sierra Leone to a chapter VII force and expanded UNAMSIL's size in February of 2000 to 11,100 peace enforcers.[2] Changing the size and mission of the UN force demonstrated the fragility of the situation in Sierra Leone. Peace was not assured, and the UN realized that the RUF might not willingly enter the DDR process. Unfortunately, contributing nations to the UNAMSIL mission were slow to deploy their forces to Sierra Leone, leaving the mission vulnerable.

Events inside Sierra Leone deteriorated before UNAMSIL could reach full strength. On 1 May 2000, the RUF began to detain UN forces. "Within a week, close to 500 peacekeepers had been taken hostage by the RUF, including an entire Zambian battalion. The RUF also managed to capture 13 UN armored vehicles and some 1000 UN-issue small arms, as well as seizing most of the 5000 arms they had surrendered to the UN since the Lomé peace agreement."[3] By the fourth of May, it seemed RUF forces were once again on the offensive and in position to threaten the capital of Freetown. With the credibility of UNAMSIL in jeopardy and with the memory of the slaughter from the last RUF incursion into Freetown, Annan, the Secretary-General of the UN, pleaded for intervention by a major power.[4] Only the militaries of the US, France, and the UK had the expeditionary capability to rapidly project combat power to Sierra Leone. The US and France declined, leaving the UK. The UK government also initially declined; however, the rising threat to commonwealth citizens in Sierra Leone changed their commitment.

The UK response began with the initial deployment of an Operational Reconnaissance and Liaison Team (ORLT) by the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). With limited real time information, the ORLT and British High Commissioner's task was to make a rapid assessment of the situation. Arriving 6 May 2000, within two days Brigadier General Richards, commander of the ORLT and British forces in Sierra Leone, and the High Commissioner determined that Sierra Leone was in a state of near collapse and the situation required a NEO to evacuate all entitled personnel.[5] Meanwhile, British forces began to focus on how to counter the RUF, stabilize the situation, and obtain release of the UN prisoners. As Richards later stated:

> What transpired . . . was a fascinating example of modern day intervention operations in an uncertain environment. It started as a NEO but developed into something that has characteristics between counter-insurgency and small-scale war-fighting operations. I found myself directing a campaign at the operational level.[6]

Despite the more limited initial mission of evacuating the entitled personnel, the uncertain environment expanded the scope of the UK's intervention. As Brigadier General Richards estimate of the situation expanded, he realized that the UK needed to take further steps to stabilize the situation within the country. With UNAMSIL still weak, Sierra Leone needed a creditable force to counter the RUF or the UN mission would fail, leaving the UK with the probability of returning to Sierra Leone in the future to conduct another NEO.

Insurgency

As outlined in chapter 1, by the time of the British military intervention, the war in Sierra Leone was nine years long. Perhaps the true origin of the war, being a failed state makes it challenging to ascertain who the truly legitimate elements within the

country were. This presented both advantages and challenges to understanding the elements and context of the war. The advantage was a long history of the nature of the war, but the challenge remained understanding the context. During the war, coups and elections changed the government of Sierra Leone several times. The nature and the composition of rebel forces changed as well. At times, the RUF leadership changed or became fractured with each commander following his own agenda. Additionally, former AFRC junta elements, such as the West Side Boys, switched between support of the government, pursuing their own interests, and outright alliance with the RUF.

RUF claims of government corruption and demands for reform were certainly valid. In the downward spiral to failure as a state, the leadership of Sierra Leone encouraged and promoted their own survival and standing at the expense of the country as a whole. The "haves" within the country became fewer in number with more power and money while the "have nots" became larger, poorer, and with less influence. In 1991 Sierra Leone was a country ripe for an insurgency to take form and grow. With the financial and training support of Liberia, Sankoh crossed the border and launched his first attacks.

Insurgency aims to create political change through the use of violence. After four years of war in 1995, the RUF published their manifesto, "Footpaths to Democracy--Toward a New Sierra Leone,"[7] outlining their political agenda, issues, and explaining why they took up arms and continue to fight. Even at the time of the British intervention, RUF spokesman, Massaquoi, claimed that the RUF was an organization, and ten years of armed struggle was "to create awareness to the poor people of Sierra Leone."[8] However, the RUF's actions simply did not support their words. The British found themselves

confronted with an insurgency that apparently did not desire legitimate political reform or power.

British COIN doctrine begins with a requirement to define and understand the concept of insurgencies. Unfortunately, the RUF did not neatly fit into the doctrinal classifications of insurgencies. The RUF were not an Anarchist, Egalitarian, Traditionalist, Pluralist, Separatist, Reformist, or Preservationist movement. "Although the RUF sometimes made ideological statements and there were sketchy reports of "revolutionary" and "egalitarian" practices, the words of the rebels were repeatedly and dramatically contradicted by their actions--notably, by atrocities against civilians, including widespread abduction, exploitation, and sexual violence, and the coercion of their own fighters once recruited."[9] Furthermore, in a 1999 report to the government of Canada, their special envoy reported:

> The RUF and its newfound army colleagues (AFRC) defy all definitions and typologies of guerilla movements. Abdulla and Muana argue that the RUF is neither a separatist uprising rooted in a specific demand, as in the case of Eritrea, nor a reformist movement with a radical agenda superior to the regime it sought to overthrow. Nor does it possess the kind of leadership that would be necessary to designate it as a warlord insurgency. The RUF is a peculiar guerilla movement without any significant national following or ethnic support . . . it has remained a bandit organization solely driven by the survivalist needs of its predominantly uneducated and alienated battle front and battle group commanders. Neither the peasantry . . . nor the students . . . lent any support to the organization during the eight years of fighting.[10]

It would appear that the RUF were not a true insurgency; however, that would not be correct. In the second edition of his work, O'Neill classified the RUF as a commercialist insurgency. Commercial insurgencies "main aim appears to be nothing more than the acquisition of material resources through seizure and control of political power.

Essentially, they consider political legitimacy to be relatively unimportant. Coercive power is what counts."[11]

Despite the RUF political claims, the evidence of their actions does not bear out. The best demonstration of the RUF's true nature lies in the Lomé Peace Accord. The peace agreement awarded the RUF seats in the government and most importantly, the post of Minister for Strategic Resources. Lomé provided the opportunity for the RUF to legitimize their movement. The power to control the diamond and other natural resource export trade (timber, off shore oil, and others) negated the need to maintain control of the diamonds mines through force of arms. With this position of power within the government, the RUF could have transformed, developing into a political party, and sought political change through legitimate means. However, with power based on coercion and terror, not legitimate leadership, there was no base of support for the RUF cause with the people. Chance of retaining legitimate power was very small, so the RUF broke the ceasefire, captured UN soldiers, and once again threatened Freetown.

As stated in British doctrine, by watching events and carefully analyzing possible new trends, commanders and staff officers are able to direct their thought to meet the likely demands of any future crisis. Commanders must understand that there is always the potential for the UK government to commit forces to help a host nation defeat an insurgency. British COIN doctrine remains flexible and demands that the commander analyze each situation, and develops a campaign plan that meets the particular requirements of the host nation, the insurgency, and the political objective of the UK government.[12]

Due to the no notice nature Operation Palliser, the UK government and the battle group commander could not fully appreciate the nature of the insurgency. Despite the wealth of knowledge about the RUF due to the ten years of fighting, the immediate nature of the deployment prevented the development of cohesive campaign plan with a clear political end state. "As JFHQ prepared for Palliser, it was presented with a common awkward problem; lack of definitive political guidance concerning its role."[13] However, despite the not falling into one of the doctrinal categories of insurgency, by remaining flexible, and through analysis of the situation once on the ground, the UK quickly came to grasp the nature of the RUF. This understanding of the RUF is best seen in the enemy paragraph of the Government of Sierra Leone campaign plan:

> Rebel forces of the RUF have no discernible political or moral motivation: they are driven solely by material greed. This is a poor basis on which to form a movement, and is therefore a weakness which can be exploited. At present, however, the rebels do as they will over much of the territory of the country. They control the diamond fields, one of the economic power-houses of the state and the RUF's operational centre of gravity. They are provided with finance, weapons and safe-haven by the neighboring state on LIBERIA, the strategic centre of gravity. The RUF has established a regime of terror by which it maintains obedience among its own followers, and the civilian population in area under its control. It takes hostages from the UN and other international organizations, and it kills or mains other captives. Its troops in the field remain a potent military force, expert in fighting in the harsh conditions of climate and terrain which exist throughout the region. It is a regional rather than just local enemy.[14]

Counterinsurgency

Political Primacy and Political Aim

As the third attempt at peace in Sierra Leone, the ICG brokered the Lomé Accord. The ICG was an international, British led effort to bring peace. At the time, the British government fully supported the accord.[15] Tony Blair "suggested it offered the people of Sierra Leone 'the prospect of an end to the terrible suffering they have endured over the

past eight years of conflict.'" Furthermore, Foreign Secretary Cook "emphasized that Britain expected 'both sides to honor the agreement and to implement it fully.'"[16] However, these hopes did not last.

Once the RUF broke the ceasefire, captured the UN soldiers, and threatened Freetown, the British government moved very rapidly:

4 May--Emergency meeting of UN Security Council: Secretary Annan calls for emergency intervention from major power[17]

5 May--ORLT deploys and Spearhead BN (1 Parachute Regiment (PARA)) Alerted

6 May--ORLT arrives, 1 PARA forward deploys to Senegal and Amphibious Ready Group initiates movement

7 May--Lungi Airfield security complete by 1 PARA

8 May--British High Commissioner, Alan Jones, asks Brigadier General Richards to execute NEO of all Entitled Personnel.

Both Brigadier General Richards and British High Commissioner Jones were on the ground in Sierra Leone to make an assessment of the situation. Brigadier General Richards could advise the UK government representative in person on the role, scope, and potential of the military forces committed to the operation. This process quickly executed the NEO; however, Brigadier General Richards "was aware that the UK commitment to the UN made it difficult for the British Government to simply walk away from an impending disaster for UNAMSIL."[18] Additionally, Brigadier General Richards stated, "it was clear to me from the outset that the (UK) Government would want me to

do all I could, within tactical constraints, to prevent the UN from failing and to bolster the Sierra Leone government."[19]

This assessment was only possible with an understanding of the government's intent. The UK government's intent was not fully made public until 23 May: "The establishment of sustainable peace and security, stable democratic government, the reduction of poverty, respect for human rights and the establishment of accountable armed forces."[20] Furthermore, in a statement to the House of Commons on 6 June, Foreign Secretary Cook outlined the British strategy:

> The first priority was to equip the government of Sierra Leone with an effective and accountable army. The second was to restore momentum to the peace process --in September Cook suggested that Britain would help achieve this by supporting an expanded UNAMSIL and funding the disarmament process. The third priority was to reduce the incentive that the illicit trade in diamonds had provided by the violence.[21]

Both the government of Sierra Leone and the UK came to an agreement on the direction of the campaign. With the NEO complete, Britain's reached its short-term objective, so immediately following Operation Palliser, the UK set up Operation Basilica to begin to reach the long-term objectives of the national strategy. The transition from Palliser to Basilica marked the end the JFHQ mission. Operation Basilica "put in place a British one-star officer with a small staff as Military Advisor to the Government of Sierra Leone, a team of advisors and trainers, plus an infantry battalion, tasked with restructuring Sierra Leone's Army from top to bottom."[22] The British Commander in Sierra Leone and Operation Basilica, Brigadier General Riley, fulfilled many roles:

> I was, simultaneously, Commander British Forces West Africa with about 1,000 British troops ashore on any given day; Commander Military Advisory and Training Team; Military Advisor to the Government of Sierra Leone, with a seat on the national security council, responsible for coordinating the military effort to support government objectives; and Commander Joint Task Force, the over-the

> horizon reaction force of an embarked brigade, with supporting aviation, naval, and air firepower. I was also the de facto commander of the 14,000 strong Sierra Leone Army and its small air force and coastal navy.[23]

Brigadier General Riley and Brigadier General Carew, Chief of Combined Defense Staff, Sierra Leone, cosigned Operations Plan (OPPLAN) 1/01, "Campaign Plan for the Defeat of the RUF by the Government Forces in Sierra Leone." In addition to the coalition reflected in the approval authorities of the campaign plan, the stated political end state of the campaign in OPPLAN 1/01 was a nearly verbatim copy of the UK's strategic guidance from 23 May. Both governments agreed on the overall aims, the role of British forces, and the constraints of their employment.

The UK government well exercised political primacy and directed their political aim. The UK could have easily massed all the elements of national power in Sierra Leone, essentially taken over the country, and destroyed the RUF with overwhelming combat power. However, this would have made the GoSL appear to be the puppets of the UK. The political leaders of the UK understood the challenges faced in Sierra Leone, but did not undertake actions to solve all of them. The GoSL needed to right their own course and learn to solve their own problems. Without addressing the internal issues within Sierra Leone, the insurgency could continue. The GoSL had to be in charge of the COIN campaign. After an estimate of the situation within the country, the UK government decided in which areas they would support the GoSL. Once the two governments agreed on the course of action and the UK's role in it, the GoSL could develop the overall COIN campaign plan.

Coordinated Government Machinery

The newly established PJHQ and JRRF capability provided the UK government a readily available command and control and force package structure to deploy to Sierra Leone. This capability immediately lends itself to the single command system. In addition to the multiple roles of the military commander and his forces fulfilled, the UK placed expert trainers and advisors throughout the government. These programs included:

1. A complete restructuring of the Police Force "conducted by a (cadre) of Commonwealth Police officers under a British Commissioner."[24] The UK's DFID paid Keith Biddle, an expatriate British police officer, to head "the Sierra Leone Police force from 2001 to 2003. Under Biddle's efficient command, Britain provided new uniforms, vehicles, and other logistical support for the police, and upgraded officers' pay."[25]

2. Capacity building in civil ministries "by embedding civil service advisors; running courses for Sierra Leone civil servants; sending Sierra Leone civil servants and senior officers on courses at British universities and defense; and using DFID funds for selected projects like infrastructure, communications, and information technology."[26] One such project built small houses in villages and towns destroyed during the war.[27]

3. Establishment of an anti-corruption unit in Freetown that "exposed corrupt practices by government officials, including senior cabinet ministers, one of them being sacked as a result. The aim is virtually to rebuild the collapsed state institutions in the country."[28]

4. In further efforts to restore legitimacy to the state, "a former colonial District Officer has returned to the country to engage in chieftaincy rehabilitation."[29]

5. “The British have rebuilt, in a grand way, the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone.”[30]

All these programs demonstrate a net analysis that identified shortages and vulnerabilities within Sierra Leone. In addition to the UK, the government of Sierra Leone also had UNAMSIL and Guinea forces to combat the RUF. This coordinated comprehensive plan identified where military forces of the Sierra Leone, the UK, UNAMSIL, and Guinea needed to target RUF vulnerabilities and included political, economic, and developmental lines of effort. As stated in OPPLAN 1/01, the Grand Strategic Lines of Operation were:[31]

1. Political: Separating the RUF from external support in Liberia and elsewhere.

2. Economic: Restricting the RUF’s profits from diamonds while encouraging investment in government controlled areas.

3. Military: Bringing sufficient force to bear on the RUF that either the war is won, or is terminated on terms favorable to GoSL.

4. Developmental: A good future for Sierra Leone. International donors and the DDR process link to this.

The campaign plan then allocated priorities in the scheme of maneuver:[32]

Phase I: Building Confidence and Regaining Initiative. Prevent further successful RUF operations; reinforce and redeploy own defensive positions; development of information operations and cooperation with Guinea; handover of police primacy in Freetown; offensive operations to extend areas of government control; and interdiction of RUF food supply.

Phase II: Offensive Command and Control (C2) Warfare. Attack RUF C2 centers; RUF leadership will be targeted with air and ground troops; strong information operations aimed to maximize defection from RUF into the DDR process; disrupt and possible sever RUF supply lines from Liberia.

Phase III: Expulsion of RUF from north and northwest of country. Sustained combined arms offensives to destroy RUF; once secure, areas will be handed over to UNAMSIL and police.

Phase IV: Attacking enemy Operational Center of Gravity. Remaining RUF elements in diamond mining area in the east of the country will be given the opportunity to surrender. If the enemy does so, forces will secure diamond producing areas and UNAMSIL will initiate a full DDR process. If the enemy does not surrender, forces will attack and secure the diamond fields.

Phase V: Post Conflict Activities. Implement the Military Reintegration Plan (MRP); restructuring, reorganizing, and training of the armed forces; deter any re-escalation of the conflict from remnant RUF (see figure 3).

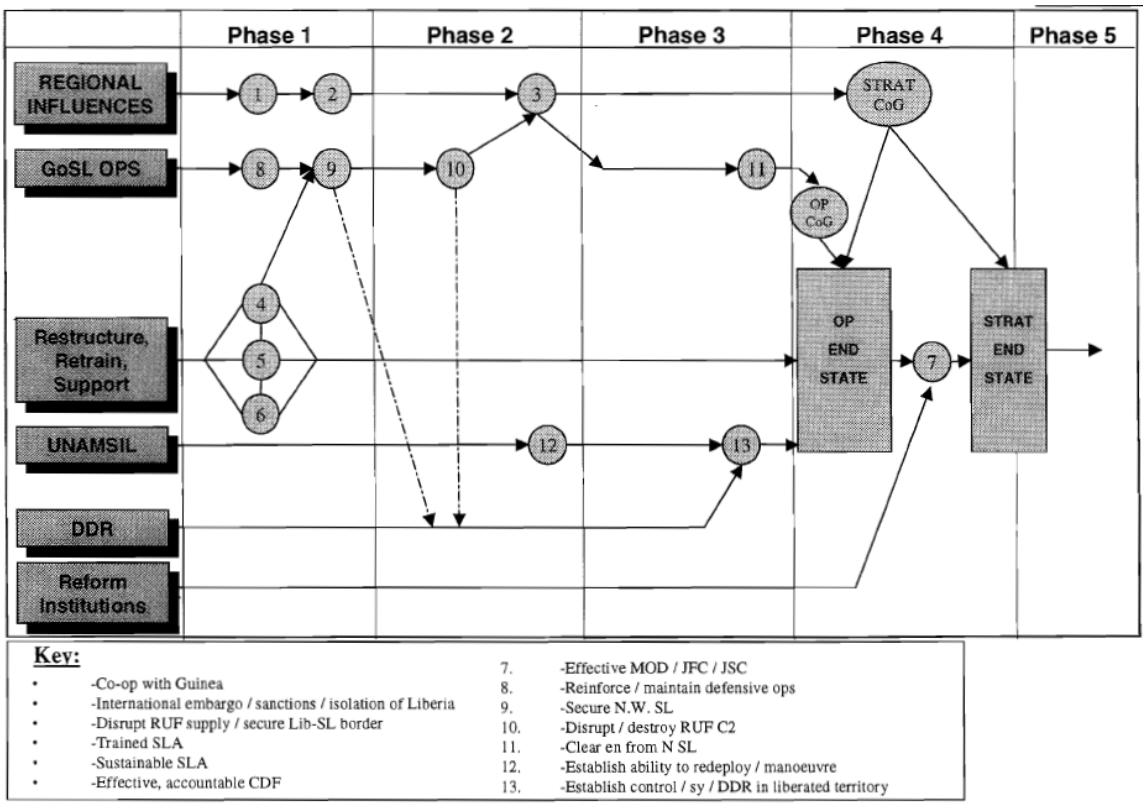

Figure 3. Scheme of Maneuver
Source: Defense Headquarters Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, *Campaign Plan for the Defeat of the RUF by Government Forces in Sierra Leone* (Freetown, Sierra Leone: January 2001), Annex A.

Due to the immediate nature of the initial deployment to Sierra Leone, the UK government could not provide specific strategic goals and national aims, other than safeguard British citizens and conduct a NEO. However, within sixteen days of British soldiers on the ground in Sierra Leone, the UK government had public strategic goals and could provide better guidance to the commander on the ground as the situation changed and developed within the country. Perhaps even more remarkable, within eight months of the UK intervention, the governments of Britain and Sierra Leone, in concert with an

international organization of UNAMSIL and neighboring Guinea, could produce a coordinated campaign plan to restore stability within the country.

Intelligence and Information

British forces never conducted any large scale search and attack operations. However, direct confrontation with the RUF was not the focus for British forces within Sierra Leone. Direct engagements between the RUF and UK forces only happened twice. The first, during Operation Palliser, was with the Pathfinder platoon at Lungi, where the pathfinders repelled an enemy force of roughly forty. The second engagement was Operation Barras, a hostage rescue raid conducted by 22 Special Air Service (SAS) and one company of PARAs to free British soldiers taken hostage by a former AFRC turned rebel force, the West Side Boys. Regardless of the limited confrontation with the enemy, British forces still understood the importance and value of intelligence in Sierra Leone.

During Operation Palliser, the PARAs understood that their forces could not simply remain static and only secure the airfield. Maintaining their own force protection and gaining situational awareness required expanding their footprint and projecting force up to twenty kilometers from the airfield. This was not done without coordination. "We [PARAs] had secured agreement from the UN sector commander and the Freetown police commissioner to operate mobile and foot patrols outside Aberdeen and deeper into Freetown."[33] This deliberate effort paid dividends in intelligence gains and situational awareness. "The first week's patrolling achieved a great deal about the city and gathering valuable information on RUF tactics, strengths, deployments, and so on. The amputee camp that housed hundreds of victims . . . were a stark opportunity . . . to gather information on the RUF's modus operandi."[34] Interaction with the local populace, the

police force, and victims of the RUF provided direct intelligence sources for the British commanders.

Operation Barras required even more specific intelligence. Any raid is high risk and heavily reliant on accurate and current intelligence to ensure success. A hostage rescue requires more refined information in order to ensure target discrimination and evacuation of hostages. The best information comes from soldiers directly observing the objective. The SAS needed a steady stream of high grade intelligence to gain the situational awareness of the enemy camp.[35] To gain this intelligence, the SAS inserted reconnaissance teams to observe the objective. "Almost from the outset of the hostage crisis, the SAS had two four-man patrols on the ground . . . the patrols remained hidden by day and at night infiltrated through the thick brush to monitor the movements around the West Side Boys base positions, identify weapons and log routine."[36] Before launching the raid, the SAS maximized the chances of mission success by knowing the location of the hostages and the disposition of the enemy in order to array their forces to accomplish the mission.

British intelligence also targeted the flow of diamonds. Appreciating the RUF needed the diamonds for support, British intelligence worked to define the diamond trade. "A confidential intelligence report from the former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook in 2000 concluded that Taylor's strategy was to maintain his influence over the diamonds of eastern Sierra Leone through the RUF, capitalizing on the breakdown of all state authority in the area. Minin's (an arms dealer) bag of documents provided a rare window into the details of the arms deals that fueled the conflict."[37] This report showed that the

key to removing the value of the diamonds to the RUF, and thus their desire to fight for them, was Taylor in Liberia.

British forces used patrolling to increase their situational awareness and gather information. While this was valuable, the COIN force's true task was to remove every option from the RUF other than entering the DDR process. British intelligence helped to uncover the facts about the diamond and arms trade between the RUF and Liberia. Armed with factual intelligence, the UK could expose the RUF vulnerability to international sanctions. The role of British intelligence was vital to ending the RUF cause and influenced their entry into the DDR process.

Separating the Insurgent from his Support

Separating the insurgent from his support is a complex task consisting of many elements on multiple lines of effort. In Sierra Leone, several actors, not just the UK, focused effort to separate the RUF from his support. Militarily, the UK, UNAMSIL, and GoSL security forces all worked to establish a firm base. With a firm base secure, RSLA and UNAMSIL forces could begin to expand areas of government control by employment of the oil slick method. Diplomatic efforts driven by the UK and the UN helped to interdict external supplies while Guinea forces engaged the RUF in the border regions. One advantage the UK had for the intervention was inherent international support. The UN resolutions and the UN force in Sierra Leone provided international legitimacy for the cause while large diplomacy efforts ensured that the international community understood UK forces were there to support the UN and their mission.

As part of the hearts and minds effort, the British implemented a vigorous IO campaign targeting the general population and the RUF. The campaign had three major

themes. First, the UK was in Sierra Leone to stay. The British support to Sierra Leone and its reconstruction effort was long term. Second, UK forces in Sierra Leone were serious. The RUF should not test the fighting ability or resolve of the UK military. Third, the RUF should enter the DDR process on their own accord. If the RUF chose not to enter the DDR process, then counterinsurgent forces would force them into the DDR process.[38] To deliver the IO message, the UK commander spoke on local radio stations throughout the country. Additionally the British Forces Broadcasting Service began to broadcast British radio and television programs. Avidly watched by the locals, these shows produced an unexpected success for the IO campaign. "That we were doing this [broadcasting British shows] did as much as anything to convince the rebels that we were there to stay. I [Brigadier General Riley] did not realize this for some time, until rebel deserters and DDR candidates told me about it."[39]

Firm Base

The first task accomplished by the British forces in Sierra Leone was securing the Lungi Airfield. Certainly a requirement for the NEO, but also facilitated the reception and staging of follow on UN forces still deploying into country. Once the Amphibious Ready Group arrived off the coast, UK forces had control of the only deep water port for the country. Within twenty days, British forces controlled the key points of entry into Sierra Leone.

The unique situation within Sierra Leone allowed an economy of force operation to secure the capital and the area loyal to the government. At the time of Palliser, the only area not in RUF control was the capital, thus the area loyal to the government and the capital were the same location. Expanding patrols to cover the capital and defending the

airport from likely enemy avenues of approach, the UK had a firm base. After the PARA Pathfinder platoon repelled a RUF advance towards the capital, the RUF tried to advance the next day. "Fortunately they were recognized by the locals and severely dealt with by the resident Nigerian troops."[40] After these two encounters, there was never another threat to the capital or the airport.

Separation Methods

With only Freetown in government control, the RUF retained freedom and maneuver in the remainder of the country. As stated in OPPLAN 1/01: "At present, however, the rebels do as they will over much of the territory of the country."[41] The COIN forces had to accept that the RUF controlled remote areas, inaccessible jungle, and territory adjoining the borders of Liberia. To overcome this situation, the COIN campaign called for using the oil slick method.

Of note, British forces were not directly required to expand that area of government control. "UK assistance to AFRSL [Armed Forces Republic of Sierra Leone] is limited to training, supply, equipment, ops support an advice out of contact. UK forces are not to engage in combat unless attacked. In the event of Freetown peninsula/Lungi coming under threat it is assumed that UK forces would be reinforced to prevent RUF capturing these areas."[42] The main force providers for the oil slick method were the RSLA, Civil Defense Force (CDF), and UNAMSIL. "An effective UN force is key to achieving success, as it must take over responsibility for some area formerly under RUF control after they have been liberated by SLA/CDF, if only to begin the DDR process. In time, it may lead the way with SLA/CDF following."[43] Finally, beginning in Freetown, "it is intended to reestablish police primacy in government territory, once the military

situation has been stabilized."[44] However, the lack of direct combat troops should not diminish the importance of the British effort. As stated by Brigadier General Richards, "we effectively found ourselves de facto directing the SLA campaign and heavily influencing the UN's."[45]

Interdiction against entry of external supply came in direct and indirect forms. Indirectly, international sanctions brokered by the UN impacted the flow of supply to the RUF. With international sanctions against diamond export from Liberia, the RUF lost their primary source for arms and support. The RUF controlled the diamond fields, but they lost their source to trade the diamonds for arms, money, and supply. Directly, neighboring Guinea's armed forces fought the RUF. Initiated by RUF raids across the border into Guinea, Guinea's combined arms force took heavy tolls on RUF combat power. The RUF became isolated within the country of Sierra Leone.

Gaining International Support

UN resolutions, sanctions, and deployment of UN soldiers all show the extent of the international support for intervention and foreign aid for Sierra Leone. The Lomé peace agreement involved many international actors. At the time of the British intervention, there was no question that the consensus of the international community called for peace and rebuilding in Sierra Leone. Additionally, in January 2000, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) published a report that exposed more of the details about the war and the diamonds that fuelled the conflict for nearly a decade.

The PAC report, "The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security," placed much of the blame for the war on diamonds. The report outlined how the "RUF maintained special armed mining units which supervised mining operations,

employing captives and illicit freelance miners."[46] The report concluded that Charles Taylor in Liberia "was the principle beneficiary from this criminal business, having trained, armed and mentored the RUF for the purpose of plunder."[47] This report received worldwide circulation and publicity. Major newspapers, radio, and television around the world--in Canada, Britain, Belgium, the US, Japan, Australia, and numerous African countries--covered the report and highlighted its findings in stories.[48] While certainly not the sole source of international condemnation of conflict diamonds and the war in Sierra Leone, the PAC report brought major attention to the issue of the illicit diamond trade and how it funded continued conflict in the region.

Diplomacy

In response to the PAC report, British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain visited Sierra Leone. He referenced the report in a speech "to parliamentarians and civil society activists: 'I am determined to look for ways to stamps out the theft of Sierra Leone's diamonds, and the way they have been used to fund conflict.'"[49] Hain called for the UN force to move on the RUF strongholds in the diamond mining areas:

> I want to see the United Nations peacekeepers, in particular the Indian battalion which I saw camped at the main airport outside Freetown, deployed across the country where they ought to be, which is the eastern side of the country where the RUF rebel combatants have been, and are still in large numbers; where the diamonds are and where a lot of trouble has occurred.[50]

After continued pressure, a few months later the UN force declared that they would deploy into the diamond rich Kono district. This statement immediately drew response from the RUF, who became more aggressive. RUF activity peaked with the capture of the 500 UN peacekeepers and began to once again threaten Freetown. This sparked the British military intervention which improved stability with the continuous

threat of direct action against the RUF. The bolstered UNAMSIL either negotiated their soldier's release or conducted a deliberate breakout to return surrounded UN forces into safe areas. With crisis passed, the UN "subsequently imposed targeted sanctions on Liberia: a ban on Liberian diamond sales and on travel by Liberian officials, including the President, and tougher weapons sanctions."[51]

Diplomacy before and during the UK mission helped to separate the RUF from their support, the diamonds, and Liberia. The UK pressured the UN to move forces into the Kono district and interdict the diamond trade. While this did not work in practice until 2001 when a large Pakistani force deployed into Kono,[52] the initial attempt demonstrated the resolve of the international community and their understanding of the relationship the RUF's ability to sustain the conflict with diamond trade. When the initial interdiction on the ground failed, diplomacy drove the international sanctions against Taylor and Liberia. UNAMSIL failed to stop the flow of diamonds out of Sierra Leone, but diplomacy and international sanctions stopped the flow of diamonds out of and weapons into Liberia.

The greatest direct contribution of the UK to the COIN campaign was their actions to separate the RUF from their support. The UK first secured a firm base to protect the GoSL and secure the areas not in RUF control. The UK then employed highly effective diplomatic measures, IO campaign, and training program for the RSLA and police. These actions gained international support for the mission in Sierra Leone, won the hearts and minds campaign, and provided the GoSL with the forces to expand their area of control through the oil slick method.

Neutralizing the Insurgent

The presence of British soldiers in Sierra Leone immediately placed the RUF on guard. On two main occasions, rebel forces tested British resolve. Soon after the interdiction of the PARAs, the RUF probed the PARA perimeter with a concentrated attack at Lungi Lol. The resulting firefight delivered loses to the RUF, repelled their attack, and caused no British casualties. This engagement placed notice to the RUF that the British would fight. More significantly, Operation Barras delivered the most convincing symbol of British resolve to the rebels. The speed, surprise, and tempo of the raid shocked the RUF. The RUF knew that the British could reach them in any of their strongholds. The RUF understood that contact with UK forces would be a losing proposition. The British presence neutralized enemy offensive operations in Sierra Leone. Instead the RUF chose to attack into Guinea. To support deterrence against the RUF and promote security, British forces conducted continual patrolling operations.

As outlined in after action reports from British Army units that rotated through Sierra Leone during the various operations, army units conducted ambushes, vehicle check points, and the typical COIN patrolling:

> "The Patrols Platoon . . . conducted a live ambush on the outskirts of Lungi."[53]
>
> "Platoons immediately set up VPCs (Vehicle Check Points) on the hwy routes into Aberdeen and with the two other platoons with me . . . we could guard our security perimeter, provide a QRF and patrol Aberdeen."[54]
>
> "We had secured agreement from the UN sector commander and the Freetown police commissioner to operate mobile and foot patrols outside Aberdeen and deeper into Freetown. With this our profile and influence was raised and a sense of real security amongst the population was tangible."[55]

The British patrolling presence further neutralized the RUF by bolstering the SLA and police force to capture the RUF leaders in Freetown. By 9 May, several members of

the RUF leadership, including Mike Lamin, Eldred Collins, and Idrissa Kamara were in jail. On 17 May, the RUF suffered the decapitation of their main leader. SLA troops shot Sankoh in the leg while he attempted to return to his house. The detention would have gotten out of control if not for the British forces in Freetown. "After being briefly under British protection, [Sankoh] was transferred to Pademba Road prison."[56] British presence prevented Sankoh from becoming a martyr of the RUF; instead he became a symbol of their lost cause.

As time progressed, UNAMSIL came to full strength allowing the UK to reduce their presence. Remaining UK forces concentrated on training the RSLA. To ensure that the RUF would not try and exploit the withdrawal of the significant combat presence of the UK and to keep the RUF neutralized, the UK government promised to reinforce the GoSL with an Over the Horizon Reserve force within seventy-two hours. The UK backed up the promise with action. "2 RGR Brigadier General's mission was to deploy throughout SL [Sierra Leone], demonstrating the United Kingdom's 'Over the Horizon Reserve' [OTHR] commitment to UNAMSIL. . . . It was to be prepared to conduct the additional specific tasks: Provide deterrence through high profile patrols . . . [and] Conduct route recces."[57]

The British effectively neutralized the RUF through both physical and psychological means. The training teams built a RSLA to directly combat the RUF. The direct contacts the British forces had with the RUF certainly caused physical damage; however, their greater impact was psychological. These engagements demoralized the RUF and affected their cohesion. The IO campaign promoted the UK's long-term commitment to Sierra Leone. Finally, the UK's continued commitment to support the

GoSL with the OTHR force successfully kept the RUF deterred from offensive operations against the GoSL.

Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning

The Application of Government Plans

The application of the longer term plans is where the British government and the GoSL COIN campaign fell short. The COIN campaign accounted for the defeat of the RUF; however, did not take enough measures to enhance the economic and social aspects of the populace. The UK did not apply any efforts to improve the economy, create or restore essential services, develop a working banking and financial system, or systematically remove the institutionalized corruption that permeated all the branches of government.[58] The UK's actions in Sierra Leone fell well short of nation building.

Part of longer-term post-insurgency planning is improving economy, infrastructure, and governance. Looking back on his role in Sierra Leone, the commander for Operation Basilica commented:

> We did security. We made a contribution to governance but did not address the whole system, and we did nothing about essential services. In particular, we allowed corruption to continue. There was no coordinated inter-ministerial effort. Once the war left the newspaper front pages, Whitehall rather lost interest and left me to get on with what I could.[59]

Despite these shortcomings, the GoSL still achieved the desired endstate of a COIN campaign. The RUF's insurgency ended, the nation stabilized, civil authority could enforce the rule of law, the government is seemingly capable of self sustainment, and the battle for hearts and minds won.

Publication of Longer Term Plans

In 2000, Sierra Leoneans could see the future direction of the country through the announcement of two main events. First, the GoSL planned to conduct national elections, on schedule, in 2002. This legitimized the democratic government and enforced the rule of law. The second was the UN plans to form the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The purpose of the committee, supported by a special court, was to indict and try war criminals. Although at times controversial, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee was a vital component to restore justice for the people of Sierra Leone. The people of Sierra Leone needed to know that the leaders responsible for the atrocities committed against them would be publicly held accountable for their actions.

Conclusion

This chapter used the framework of chapter 3 to outline the actions of the UK in Sierra Leone. From the outset of the intervention, the UK rapidly adapted to the situation and began to apply effort towards the development of a coordinated COIN campaign. Overall, the UK effectively applied their own doctrinal principles during the conduct of operations within Sierra Leone. Wisely, the UK did not wholly undertake the conduct of the COIN campaign with their forces. Choosing to orchestrate the counterinsurgency with the GoSL and integrating their military efforts with the RSLA, UNAMSIL, and Guinea proved to be effective. This arrangement allowed the UK to help the GoSL develop a campaign plan that applied the British COIN principles while minimizing their force presence.

Chapter 5 will summarize the findings of this case study and suggest areas that are worthy of further research. As already demonstrated, the UK provided security and

directed the campaign for the defeat of the RUF; however, the UK undertook minimal efforts for the long-term reconstruction of Sierra Leone. Chapter 5 will discuss how Sierra Leone presents a case where a foreign intervention into a long war torn state may only need to support the host nation government and end the violence. When a population is weary of war, the foreign force can resolve the conflict and turn the support of the people towards the host nation government by simply providing security.

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[1]Griffin, 196.

[2]Andrew Dorman, "The British Experience of Low Intensity Conflict in Sierra Leone." British International Studies Association Conference, Cork, December 2006, http://www.bisa.ac.uk/2006/pps/dorman.pdf (accessed 14 November 2007).

[3]International Institute for Strategic Studies, 237.

[4]Griffin, 203.

[5]Dorman, 5.

[6]Griffin, 204.

[7]Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone, http://www.sierra-leone.org/footpaths.html (accessed 14 November 2007).

[8]Sierra-leone.org, Gibril Massaquoi Interview, 2, http://www.sierra-leone.org/massaquoiinterview0601.html (accessed 14 November 2007).

[9]David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (James Currey: Oxford, 2005), 39.

[10]Pratt, 10-11.

[11]Brad E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (Brassey's (US), 1990), 28.

[12]Chapter 3.

[13]Griffin, 205.

[14]Defense Headquarters Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, *Campaign Plan for the Defeat of the RUF by Government Forces in Sierra Leone* (Freetown, Sierra Leone: RSLAF, January 2001), 2-3.

[15]McInnes and Wheeler, 147.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Griffin, 203.

[18]Ibid., 205.

[19]Ibid., 208.

[20]Ibid.

[21]McInnes and Wheeler, 155.

[22]Riley, 2.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., 3.

[25]Gberie, 175.

[26]Riley, 3.

[27]Gberie, 176.

[28]Ibid., 175.

[29]Ibid., 176.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Defense Headquarters Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, 1-2.

[32]Ibid., 6-7.

[33]A. Charlton, *The Infantryman 2000--Sierra Leone*, 109

[34]Ibid., 110.

[35]William Fowler, *Operation Barras: The SAS Rescue Mission, Sierra Leone 2000* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 123.

[36]Ibid., 124.

[37]The Center for Public Integrity, Drugs, Diamonds, and Deadly Cargo, 18 November 2002, http://www.publicintegrity.org/bow/report.aspx?aid=156 (accessed 14 November 2007).

[38]Riley, 3.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Fowler, 89.

[41]Defense Headquarters Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, 2.

[42]Ibid., 4.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Griffin, 212.

[46]Gberie, 183.

[47]Ibid., 184.

[48]Ibid., 185.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., 186.

[51]Ibid., 189.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Charlton, 111.

[54]Ibid., 109.

[55]Ibid., 108.

[56]International Institute for Strategic Studies, 237-238.

[57]LTC I. N. A. Thomas, 2nd Battalion, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, *OP Keeling Post Operational Report* (Folestone, Kent: Sir John Moore Barracks, 2003), 2.

[58]Riley, 3-4.

[59]Ibid., 4.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

This paper is a case study of the British military intervention into Sierra Leone. The purpose is to explore the British foreign policy and its impact on the decision to intervene; the British COIN doctrine and its usefulness for the forces in Sierra Leone; the actions of the British forces in relation to their COIN doctrine, and what lessons can be drawn from the successful intervention. In an attempt to answer these research questions, this case study outlines the relevant UK COIN doctrine and then analyzes the actions of the UK against their own doctrine.

There was one major assumption for this case study. This case study categorizes the British military intervention into Sierra Leone as successful. The justification for the assumption is current day Sierra Leone. Instead of a war torn failed state, Sierra Leone has lasting peace, completed disarmament of insurgent forces, ended the large scale human rights abuse, and democratic elections, not coups, determine the leadership of the country.

Interpretation of Findings

The British COIN doctrine presented a well organized framework for the analysis of this case study. As outlined in the previous chapters, the framework of understanding the insurgency and the six principles for COIN will continue in this chapter to organize the conclusion of the case study. The first doctrinal task is to understand the insurgency.

Once the UK government understands the threat, then the coordinated departments of government can develop a coordinated campaign plan.

Insurgency

When faced with an insurgency, British COIN doctrine first requires an analysis of the insurgency. Whether faced with an emerging internal insurgency, or considering support to an allied government against their own insurgency, doctrine requires the UK government to understand the enemy. In the case of Sierra Leone, the UK's decision to support a host nation's COIN effort proved to be reactive vice a deliberate predetermined move. The immediate nature of the initial deployment by UK forces to Sierra Leone prevented a thorough analysis of the insurgents, the RUF. Despite the limited lead time for the commitment of forces, the UK government's involvement in the Lomé Peace accords had to shed some light on the RUF leadership and their desires. Even with this limited contact, the RUF were a type of insurgency not previously encountered by western forces, making them not readily identifiable.

The RUF did not fall into any of the UK's doctrinal classifications of insurgencies. These classifications would have proven useful in understanding the RUF if they were a political movement. Indeed, the RUF had certainly made a concerted effort to publicize themselves as a typical insurgency with legitimate motives. The RUF even published a manifesto on their web page to promote their cause. On the surface, the RUF appeared to desire change, true reform, and better lives for Sierra Leoneans. However, their actions challenged every premise of their public words. When analyzing the RUF, it is hard to understand their motivations and reasons for armed conflict. Classifying the RUF as an insurgency with political objectives did not make sense.

The RUF's only true objective was power. Power gained through terrorizing and exploiting the people of Sierra Leone, and power gained through controlling Sierra Leone's most lucrative natural resource, diamonds. Because the RUF was not a political movement, it would appear that the counterinsurgent could end the conflict with the application of force. However, this would not solve the underlying problem within Sierra Leone that caused the conflict. Despite the RUF's greedy motivations, the origin of the conflict still lied in the disillusionment of the people in Sierra Leone. The RUF could not have initially grown without the group of poor, separated, and disenfranchised people within Sierra Leone. While individuals may not have directly supported the RUF, they certainly did not support the government either.

The GoSL needed to restore their connection to the people of Sierra Leone. Without improvements in legitimacy and governance, the conditions for the RUF to reemerge, or another insurgency to develop, would still remain. An analysis of any insurgency must factor in the historical events and cultural impacts within the country. Recognizing these elements within Sierra Leone, the British worked with the GoSL to make lasting improvements within the country.

At the time of the British intervention, the RUF were a powerful force. With the exception of Freetown, the RUF held the entire country within their grasp. However, with no true unifying agenda, the RUF had weakness that the counterinsurgent forces could exploit. Their main center of gravity and power base was control of the diamond mines. Through their analysis of the RUF, the UK attacked their center of gravity by removing the value of holding the diamond mines. The challenge of restoring the confidence of Sierra Leoneans in their government still remained. The UK trained the RSLA and police

so that the GoSL could provide security for the people. Other UK governmental departments provided funds and initiated programs to improve governance. This coordinated effort attacked the RUF center of gravity and turned the support of the people to the GoSL.

Counterinsurgency

The final conflict resolution in Sierra Leone came about through the presence and actions of several international and regional states. Without the presence of the UN forces on the ground, international sanctions brokered by the UN against Liberia to end the diamond flow, and even the military force of Guinea, the UK may have been able to attain their short-term goals; however, the UK's long-term goals would need dedication of more resources and time.

Political Primacy and Political Aim

The UK initially deployed forces to Sierra Leone with a clear limited objective: conduct a NEO to protect commonwealth citizens. Once on the ground, the military commander, in concert with the British High Commissioner, developed their estimate of the situation and expanded the objectives for the mission. With the UNAMSIL force not at full strength and the SLA ineffectual, the simple execution of the NEO, and withdrawal of forces would have left a vacuum that RUF forces could continue to exploit. The UK needed to take direct steps to support the GoSL and UNAMSIL, or the country would continue to suffer, and the RUF would never feel pressured to disarm. These steps evolved into a campaign plan for the military defeat of the RUF, designed to use the

newly transformed and British trained RSLA, police, and UNAMSIL to achieve objectives.

Coordinated Government Machinery

The design of the single command system worked well for Sierra Leone. While there were definite weaknesses within the GoSL, the single command system allowed the British to directly coordinate with the civilian government. In appearance, the British Force commander worked for the GoSL. This was important to maintain the GoSL legitimacy. In reality, the system placed the British commander in a position where he could directly influence the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defense. Additionally, by working in concert with the British High Commissioner, the British commander could influence all the GoSL departments.

The purpose of the coordinated government machinery is to create the unity of effort in development of the campaign plan. This starts with coordinating the elements of the UK government with the GoSL. Once both the UK and the host nation government have built relationships and understand one another's capabilities, the two governments could orchestrate overall unity of effort using the resources of both governments. The resulting COIN campaign plan then applied the resources of both governments to achieving the desired endstate.

Sierra Leone demonstrates how this process can work well. The resulting campaign plan covered political, economic, military, and developmental lines of operation. Without support, the GoSL could not have achieved success in these operational lines. The guidance and support of the UK, coupled with the force multipliers of UNAMSIL and Guinea, allowed the GoSL's campaign plan to be successful.

Intelligence and Information

Intelligence operations in support of tactical formations will always be vital. Vital in COIN is the use of minimal force. The COIN forces require precise intelligence to reach objectives with the use of minimal force. This principle held true in Sierra Leone. However, the UK intervention into Sierra Leone highlights the importance of intelligence to achieve strategic effects.

As a whole, the international community understood how the blood diamond trade fueled the war. However, it was not until British intelligence exploited the captured documents from an international arms dealer that the world could see hard evidence of the relationship between arms and diamonds. The UK government could then use this intelligence to influence international opinion and encourage sanctions to stop the flow of diamonds.

Separating the Insurgent from his Support

This case study highlighted the importance of what the UK's doctrine categorizes as separating the insurgent from support. The military dominate portion becomes self evident. As a foreign force, the UK first established a firm base to operate and sustain from, secured the host nation government, capital, key facilities, and the points of entry of airports or ports. The UK rapidly accomplished all of these doctrinal requirements within the first few days of Operation Palliser. As the UK, RSLA, and UNAMSIL began to execute the separation methods and expand the areas of government control, the UK maximized diplomatic efforts as a combat multiplier. The COIN forces needed to interdict the RUF's external supplies. One option would have been to seal the borders

with military force. However, through diplomacy and diplomatic efforts, the UK effectively turned off the RUF supply line.

By brokering a diamond trade embargo on Liberia, coupled with even tougher arms trade restrictions, the UK stopped the Liberian arms supply to the RUF. Liberia could not import arms into the country for the RUF or export the diamonds to pay for the arms. The RUF were left in control of the diamond fields but had no capability to gain anything from the diamonds. This was one of the major factors that finally pressured the RUF into the UN's DDR Program. The RUF had long fought to hold on to the diamond fields, not only as their main sustainment source but also as their major bargaining chip with the GoSL. With the embargo, the diamonds held no political or monetary value. This stopped the flow of arms but also destroyed the RUF "cause."

Sierra Leone also showed the importance of winning the hearts and minds campaign. Sierra Leoneans knew that the UK could affect change in their country. Simply through their presence, the people of Freetown felt secure, and had no fear of the RUF. The challenge became to send the message that British support was long term. The people needed to know that the immediate improvements that they saw on a daily basis were not short term. The UK did not intend to only take short-term measures for the country and then leave. Once the people began to understand that the UK intended to back the GoSL on a long-term basis, then they could turn their support towards the government without fear of reprisals from the RUF once the UK left. This IO campaign also accomplished the dual effect of demoralizing the RUF. Because the RUF could not just wait for the UK to withdraw for a return to their old tactics, they felt increased pressure to enter the DDR process.

Neutralizing the Insurgent

Once armed conflict begins, COIN forces will always have to neutralize the insurgent to stop the violence. The counterinsurgent must target the insurgent with both lethal and non-lethal means. British doctrine calls for neutralizing the insurgent through both the kinetic methods of patrols, ambushes, and raids and non-kinetic methods to take away his will to fight. In Sierra Leone, the UK patrols deterred further RUF attacks. Direct attacks reduced some of RUF combat power. However, these actions produced greater effects by taking away the RUF's will to fight the UK or the forces they supported. Sierra Leone highlights how the minimal use of force reached operational objectives. A deliberate offensive operation could have forced the RUF to fight and hardened their resistance. With the violent application of force at specific times, the RUF quickly understood that they could not confront British forces.

Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning

In support of the campaign plan, the UK operated on three major lines of effort. The first was the restructuring and rebuilding the SLA and the Ministry of Defense. The purpose of this effort was to provide the GoSL a creditable military force to combat the RUF. The second effort was to retain and rebuild the Sierra Leone police with the purpose of providing the GoSL a trained police force for transition of former RUF areas from military to civil control. The third effort, limited in scope, was capacity building in the other civil ministries with the purpose of providing better governance institutions for Sierra Leone.[1] These are all critical lines of effort; however, some notable ones are absent.

Directly and indirectly, the UK provided security for Sierra Leone. By either using direct force, by mentoring and controlling the SLA, and working with UNAMSIL, the areas under GoSL control expanded using an oil slick method across the entire country. However, the UK did not apply any efforts to improve the economy, create or restore essential services, develop a working banking and financial system, or systematically remove the institutionalized corruption that permeated all the branches of government.[2] The UK's actions in Sierra Leone fell well short of nation building.

Conclusions

Despite these shortcomings in the long-term post-insurgency planning, there is still peace in Sierra Leone. In 2007, the country continued on the path of stability with successful national elections. The electoral process went well and confirmed the rule of democracy in Sierra Leone. Peace in Sierra Leone may continue simply because the people were tired of war. The country needs time to heal, and internal threats are not going to gain traction as long as the country's path continues to improve. The lesson is that in long war torn nations, intervention forces may not need to rebuild the entire nation. By ending the conflict, demobilizing the combatants, and providing the host nation government with the capability to perform the functions of government, foreign nations supporting the COIN campaign of another host nation may achieve success.

Insurgencies increasingly use criminal means to finance and support their movements. Once the lure of easy money and the power that it brings corrupts the leadership of an insurgency, it is possible for the altruistic motives of the insurgent's original cause to be cast aside. The desire for political change becomes secondary to maintaining the flow of money. Much like the RUF, once an insurgency transforms to

what O'Neill later classified as a commercialist insurgency, then the insurgent becomes vulnerable. Greed can easily alienate the populace and the insurgent looses his base support. While not specifically designed to counter this type of insurgency, the British COIN doctrine at the time of their intervention was inclusive enough to guide the commanders in the conduct of the COIN campaign. The principles outlined in their doctrine provided the necessary framework to assist the GoSL in countering the RUF.

Unexpected Findings

The research for this paper developed one unexpected finding, and certainly a major factor that pressured the RUF into the DDR process. In late 2000 and early 2001, RUF forces crossed the border with Guinea and attacked into its forested regions that are rich in diamonds. Indications are the RUF conducted these attacks at the instigation of Taylor from Liberia. The Guinean military quickly and forcefully responded. The Guinean military, supported by UK intelligence, countered the RUF with attack helicopters and fighter jets.[3] Targeting RUF bases in Sierra Leone and in Liberia, the Guinean forces delivered significant losses on the RUF, causing a large portion of the RUF fighters to retreat into Liberia.

The UK took advantage of the RUF's tactical error. By crossing the border and drawing the attention of Guinea, the RUF added another ally for the GoSL. In accordance with UK doctrinal principles of denial of safe havens and separation of the insurgent from support, the RSLA and UK integrated the Guinean military into the COIN campaign plan for the defeat of the RUF. Thus, the RUF became pressured from multiple directions. The major factors of tactical defeats by both UK and Guinean forces, pressure from RSLA

and UNAMSIL forces, and losing the value of the diamonds all greatly contributed to the RUF laying down arms and entering the DDR process.

Recommendations

There are several areas that merit further study, particularly for professional military officers. Operation Palliser was the UK's first use of their PJHQ. All braches of their military contributed combat power for the operation. The joint nature of a no notice immediate action deployment holds many lessons. A study focused on the UK's procedures for these types of deployments could highlight areas where the UK may have a better system than the US military. The study of the UK's joint warfare could expand to also include how the UK integrates the other departments of government into operations. Looking not only at Sierra Leone, but also at major deployments to Afghanistan or Iraq might also provide useful insights. The US recently added political advisors to division and higher commands. A study to compare the UK's integration of all the elements of government machinery to current US procedures certainly merits further study.

This paper has focused on one part of the UK's COIN doctrine. Further study would be the comparison of the UK and US COIN doctrine. A doctrinal COIN comparison would be a large and extensive topic. Research topics could include the comparison of the two doctrines principles, a comparison of the cultures of the two militaries to determine cultural impact on COIN doctrine, or a comparison of the past experience of the armies to determine historical impact on the development of COIN doctrine. There are discernable differences in the UK and US doctrinal approach to COIN. As an example, the current US COIN field manual focuses on regime change, the UK does not. This study could expand to analyze how the US sees operations across a

full spectrum to the UK view. The UK recently developed a Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit. This implies the UK sees the need for specialized units that operate in a specific spectrum of conflict, the US does not.

This paper focused on the British military intervention into Sierra Leone. However, the UK was not the only country during the history of the war to intervene with combat troops. The countries of the ECOWAS placed their monitoring group (ECOMOG) into Sierra Leone. ECOMOG failed to stop the insurgency. The UN and numerous contributing countries initially placed their observer group (UNOMSL) into Sierra Leone, but failed to keep the peace. The UN then placed UNAMSIL into Sierra Leone, but was on the brink of failure when the UK intervened. The war in Sierra Leone could be a case study of foreign interventions in support of a host nation government. A research topic could be an analysis to determine why the previous attempts to intervene failed, while the UK succeeded. One factor might have been the timing of the UK's intervention, or the UK took better deliberate action to ensure success.

Insurgencies are considered armed movements that use violence to effect political change. The RUF's insurgency is unique and is worthy of further study as its nature can easily replicate in other areas of Africa. The initial formation of the RUF fought for political change and espoused an ideology. However, the RUF broke three peace accords including Lomé, where the RUF won true political power and seats in the government. The RUF's efforts put them in a place to legitimately make political change; however, they chose war. The RUF became a force that fought for money (diamonds) and power through terror and intimidation. The situation in Sierra Leone seemingly became a zero sum gain. Research topics could be to explore why the RUF did not seek a political

solution, why the RUF kidnapped, raped, mutilated, and terrorized the people of their own country, or how did the RUF sustain itself without popular support.

Summary

Any solution to an insurgency will be political rather than militant in nature. Militaries can destroy insurgent fighters; however, their cause still remains. Even faced with military defeat, insurgent movements can simply revert to overt means until leadership can recruit new forces. In the past, western powers have struggled against various insurgencies, sometimes successfully withdrawing as the British did in Malaya, and sometimes withdrawing in failure as France did in Algeria. Historically, COIN efforts have been long in nature and required commitments of vast resources. Sierra Leone stands somewhat apart. In the course of a couple of years after the British intervention, Sierra Leone stood stable, with the RUF disarmed, the army rebuilt, and rule of law enforced. This came not only through the performance of the British military, but through the application of all the elements of national power.

British COIN doctrine recognizes the importance and primacy of political aim. The principles outlined in the doctrine are intended to guide the military commander in development of the campaign plan. The commander uses political policy and guidance to formulate the direction of his campaign. COIN principles maximize the application of diplomatic, economic, and information aspects of national power. The UK doctrine requires huge diplomatic efforts to gain support of allies and make agreements with neighboring countries to isolate the insurgent from arms, ammunition, explosives, and other supplies. The commander of the COIN campaign can rely on economic packages to improve the host nation economy and governance. The COIN doctrine relies on unity of

effort from all the departments of government and needs the informational power of the government to confirm the host nation government, discredit the insurgency, and gain support from the international community.

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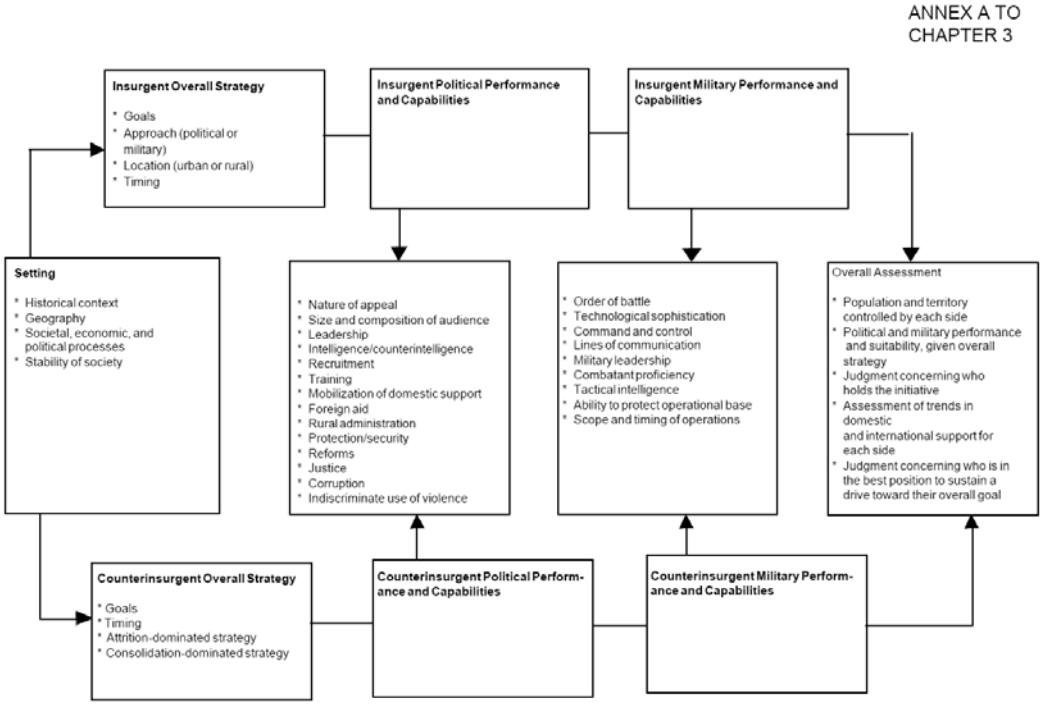
[1]Riley, 3.

[2]Ibid., 3-4.

[3]Gberie, 172.

APPENDIX A

ILLUSTRATIVE NET ASSESSMENT OF AN INSURGENCY



Source: United Kingdom Ministry of Defense. *Army Field Manual Volume 1 Combines Arms Operations, Part 10: Counter Insurgency Operations: Strategic and Operational Guidelines* (Crown Copyright: 2001), B-3-A-1.

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