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War Evolves into the Fourth Generation

THOMAS X. HAMMES

Since the early 1990s the Pentagon has been promulgating its vision of a new form of war. While the name of the vision has changed from year to year, the concept remains the same. High-technology, light forces will dominate the battlefield through a tightly connected network that allows United States commanders to see everything, decide rapidly and execute immediately. The foundation of this concept is information dominance. It will come from the application of new technology.

The latest manifestation of this concept is 'Transformation', in which information age military forces will be less platform-centric and more network-centric. They will be able to distribute forces more widely by increasing information sharing via a secure network that provides actionable information at all levels of command. This, in turn, will create conditions for increased speed of command and opportunities for self-coordination across the battlespace.[1]

Transformation is simply an updated version of four earlier concepts – the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Joint Vision 2010, the Revolution in Military Affairs, the Navy's Network-Centric Warfare and Joint Vision 2020 (JV 2010's updated version). All these concepts saw a future where 'systems of systems' dominate the battlefield through high-technology sensors linked to precision weapons by a sophisticated and highly automated command and control system. All disregard any action taken by an intelligent, creative opponent to negate the technology.

Initial results in Afghanistan and Iraq seemed to validate that vision. Relatively small, high-technology forces smashed the Taliban and the Baathist regime. Unfortunately, in both cases, the enemy refused to accept defeat. Instead, they turned to insurgency. They drew us into the political, protracted conflict that is a fourth-generation war.

This kind of warfare is not new or surprising; rather it has been evolving around the world over the past seven decades. In fact, America has lost to fourth-generation warfare (4GW) opponents three times: Vietnam, Lebanon and Somalia. This form of warfare has also defeated the French in Vietnam and Algeria and the USSR in Afghanistan. It continues to bleed Russia in

Chechnya and the US in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world against Al Qaeda. The consistent defeat of major powers by fourth-generation opponents makes it essential that we understand this new form of warfare and adapt accordingly.

There is nothing mysterious about 4GW. Practitioners created it, nurtured it and have continued its development and growth. Faced with enemies they could not possibly beat using conventional war, they sought a different path.

Mao Tse-tung was the first to define insurgency as primarily a political struggle and use it successfully. Each practitioner since has learned from his predecessors or co-combatants in various places in the world. Then, usually through a painful process of trial and error, each has adjusted the lessons to

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Characteristics of Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW)

4GW uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy's political decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. It is rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power. 4GW does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces. Instead, combining guerrilla tactics or civil disobedience with the soft networks of social, cultural and economic ties, disinformation campaigns and innovative political activity, it directly attacks the enemy's political will.

4GW spans the spectrum of human activity – political, economic, social and military. Politically, it involves transnational, national and sub-national organizations and networks to convey its message to the target audiences. Strategically, it focuses on breaking the will of decision-makers. It uses different pathways to deliver different messages for different target audiences. The messages serve three purposes: to break the enemy's will; maintain the will of its own people; and ensure neutrals remain neutral or provide tacit support to the cause. Operationally, it delivers those messages in a variety of ways from high-impact, high-profile direct military actions to indirect economic attacks such as those designed to drive up the price of oil. Tactically, 4GW forces avoid direct confrontation if possible; while seeking maximum impact they use materials present in the society under attack. To minimize their logistics requirements they can attack using industrial chemicals, liquefied natural-gas tankers or fertilizer shipments. Finally, 4GW practitioners plan for long wars – decades rather than months or years.

In sum, 4GW is political, socially (rather than technically) networked and protracted in duration. It is the antithesis of the high-technology, short war the Pentagon is preparing to fight.

his own fight. Each added his own refinement, and the cumulative result is a new generation of war. The anti-Coalition forces in Iraq, the Taliban, the Chechens, the Palestinians and the Al Qaeda network are simply the latest to use an approach that has been developing for decades.

The question this essay will seek to answer is whether the current insurgencies are merely aberrations or if the insurgencies represent the evolution of a new generation of war, one that is different from the Pentagon's vision of the future of warfare.

Theorists

While the Pentagon has commissioned numerous studies that predict warfare will evolve to the high-technology future its official documents predict, independent authors have disagreed.

As early as 1993, J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt outlined two possible forms of future warfare in their article 'Cyberwar is Coming'. One – cyberwar – envisioned a high-technology, short duration war where technology is vital and essentially machines fight machines. The other – netwar – envisioned complex, long-term conflicts.[2]

Martin van Creveld, in his essay 'Through a Glass Darkly', points out that the past 50 years have led to a fundamental erosion of the state's monopoly on the use of force. The roughly 300-year period which was associated primarily with the type of political organization known as the state – first in Europe and then, with its expansion, in other parts of the globe – seems to be coming to an end. If the past 50 years or so provide any guide, future wars will be overwhelmingly of the type known, however inaccurately, as 'low-intensity'.[3]

In 1989, Bill Lind, G.I. Wilson and their co-authors, published 'The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation'. They stated three previous generations of modern war had evolved over the past few hundred years. The first was based on line and column, the second on firepower and the third was manoeuvre warfare.[4] Theirs was one of the first, if not *the* first, attempt to understand how modern warfare was actually changing. They evaluated modern eras where the dominant military force was distinctly different from each previous era. In proposing the concept that these differences represent different generations of war, they outlined a very useful model. That model will allow us to study why and how the generations evolved and then see if we can detect similar evolutionary changes taking place in today's warfare.

From this very brief survey, it is clear than numerous authors have seen that warfare was changing. Those associated with the Department of Defense (DOD) have concentrated on the technological changes driving warfare. Others, primarily historians, have a broader interpretation of the reasons for change. They contend that such change requires changes in all

major aspects of a society – political, economic, social and technical – to bring about a generational change in warfare.

In this paper, I intend to show that a new form of war has, in fact, evolved. It is visible and distinctly different from the forms of war that preceded it. It evolved in conjunction with the political, economic, social and technological changes that are modifying our world.

Further, I intend to show that, like its predecessors, this new form of war did not arrive on the scene as a fully developed instrument but has evolved over decades and continues to evolve at widely scattered locations. We are not in the midst of a revolution of military affairs but rather an evolution. We can trace that evolution by examining our recent past.

For clarity in terminology and to provide a framework for study, I will adopt the generations model laid out by Lind, Wilson, et al. Like all models, it is not a perfect representation of reality. But it provides a framework to examine how previous generations evolved.

First, we will examine the factors that drove the development of and transition to the first three generations of modern war. Then we will conduct a very brief survey of the political, economic, social and technological changes since third-generation warfare evolved. Next, we will trace the development and evolution of 4GW. In doing so, we can develop a clear view of how this form of warfare has evolved and allows superior political will to defeat greater military and economic power.

First-Generation War

Lind, Wilson, et al. stated that each of the first three generations evolved in response to technical solutions to specific tactical challenges.

While technical advances clearly had an impact, attributing the generational changes in warfare primarily to technical factors oversimplifies the problem. The first generation of war grew not just from the invention of gunpowder, muskets and cannon but also from the political, economic and social structures that developed as Europe transitioned from a feudal system to states ruled by monarchs.

The transition from the feudal to Napoleonic warfare required centuries. It required not only reliable firearms but, more importantly, the political system, the wealth-generating national economies, the social structures and the technologies capable of sustaining the mass armies of the Napoleonic era.

Politically, it required the evolution of the nation state to raise, train, equip and sustain its huge armies. Economically, major advances in agriculture and transportation were absolutely essential to generating the wealth and resources required to field, move and sustain them. Both the population[5] and the GDP per person[6] were increasing significantly faster than prior to

1500. The combination increased the overall wealth of the nation, provided additional food for major armies and freed manpower from agriculture for mobilization.

As the wealth and trade of European society increased, so did the road and inland barge transportation networks essential to move and sustain the much larger armies across Europe. In 1415 at Agincourt, a maximum of about 55,000 men fought.[7] In contrast, by 1812 Napoleon took almost 450,000 men with him into Russia.[8]

Socially, the development of patriotism was essential to enable Napoleonic warfare. Growing out of the French Revolution, patriotism allowed the poorly trained French columns to smash other nation's lines. With the success of the French, the Allies had to widen the base of their forces and the concept of nationalism overtook the other nations of Europe.

Technically, the mass production of the reliable smoothbore musket and the development of lightweight artillery contributed to the change in war. In short, it required changes across the political, economic, social and technical arenas to field the armies and massed direct-fire weapons that marked the culmination of the first generation of war at Waterloo.

Second-Generation War

Similarly, the second generation of war did not grow just from improvements in weaponry. It too required changes across the spectrum of human activity. While the political structure of the nation state was essentially in place at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the states' power to tax and enforce taxes increased dramatically during the 100 years between Waterloo and the Marne. More important than an increase in the ability to levy and collect taxes was the fact there was much vaster wealth to tax. The GDP per person in Western Europe almost tripled from 1800 to 1915 while the population increased about 50 per cent.[9] The combination of increased GDP per person, major population increases and significantly better government control greatly increased the wealth available to the national governments of Europe.

Second-generation war also required massive industrial output to produce the weapons and the huge quantities of ammunition it consumed. Further, transportation systems also had to mature. In particular, extensive rail systems and their supporting telegraph networks were necessary to move, control and coordinate the armies and their mountains of supplies. The strengths of national armies increased from hundreds of thousands to millions of men.

All of these factors – political, economic, social and technical – came together in a way that allowed massed firepower to dominate the battlefield by World War I.

Transition to Third-Generation Warfare (3GW)

In 1939, Germany shocked the world with Blitzkrieg. While it made use of aircraft, armour and radio communication, all European nations had access to the same technology. So why did the Germans develop Blitzkrieg while the French and British did not?

The political and social atmospheres of the opposing sides were a critical aspect in the difference in development. While the politically unified state that permitted third-generation warfare (3GW) still existed throughout Europe, the social contract between governed and governors had been dramatically altered by World War I.

In the democracies, people no longer had blind faith in the institutions of government. Virtually every family in Britain and France had lost at least one male relative to the apparently pointless slaughter of the trenches. The Allies had mobilized almost 28 million men and suffered almost 12 million casualties.[10] The populace of the Allied nations rightly blamed these staggering losses on failures of both their governments and their militaries and would not support a military buildup.

The German people, despite suffering proportionately heavier casualties – six million of 11 million mobilized, did not react in the same fashion.[11] They never withdrew support from their armed forces. In fact, the armed forces remained a respected institution in the German government. Over time, the Germans developed the myth of the 'stab in the back'. They came to believe their army had not been defeated on the field of battle but rather betrayed by subversive elements in the civilian sector.

Thus the political conditions were very different in the interwar period. Hitler was able to use the myth as part of his drive to power. The political will of Hitler allowed the German Army to begin rebuilding years ahead of the Allies. In contrast, the Chamberlain government in Britain did not begin rebuilding until February 1939, only seven months before the outbreak of hostilities.

For their part, the French were content to focus their assets on the deeply flawed concept of the Maginot Line. They prepared for the war they wanted not the war that was coming.

While the political climate varied greatly between the future belligerents, the economic factors were similar for all the nations involved. The fact is that despite the Great Depression, all three nations, as well as the US, had the economic base to build the combined arms forces that made Blitzkrieg possible.

Since the end of World War I, each nation had developed a society capable of producing the equipment and the mechanics, drivers and electricians necessary to run it.

Only the Germans had the political will, intellectual honesty and strategic imperative to build a complete combined arms team to execute the tactics they had developed in World War I.

While the Germans' new tactics failed to win World War I, they introduced an entire generation of German officers to the idea of mission-type orders, reconnaissance pull and exploiting penetration. The Germans studied the war intensely and honestly. They came to understand what had actually happened and built on the foundation of 1918 so they were ready to exploit the technological improvements in 1939.

The French also conducted an intensive study of World War I seeking doctrinal and organizational lessons. Unfortunately, the institutional bias toward 'methodical battle' insured the study was limited to those battles that 'proved' that a tightly-controlled, centrally-directed battle that emphasized firepower was the key to victory. Reinforcing the institutional bias was the requirement that 'all articles, lectures, and books by serving officers had to receive approval by the high command before publication'.[12] The uninspired interwar army leadership, the stifling of discussion and the emphasis on the 'methodical battle' insured the French Army completely missed the evolution that drove Blitzkrieg.

It is interesting to note the similarities in the French interwar 'discussion' and our current DOD 'discussion' of future war. The French General Staff defined the discussion and then insured all 'experiments' and 'developments' adhered to that definition. Currently, DOD has defined the future as technology and is driving all experiments and developments in that direction. Much like the French, DOD has not seen the evolution of war taking place in our time but instead insists war is evolving according to its pre-conceived technological vision.

Summary of First Three Generations

In tracing the evolution of the first three generations of war, a few facts leap out. First, none of them came from a sudden transformation. Second, each new generation required developments across the spectrum of society. Each required major changes in the political, economic, social and technological arenas to create the conditions necessary for the next generation to evolve. Finally, each succeeding generation made use of the changes in society to reach deeper into the enemy's rear. If 4GW is a logical progression, it must reach much deeper into the enemy's forces in seeking victory.

Societal Changes

Since war evolves along with society, a key question is: has society changed enough since the evolution of 3GW to allow an entirely new generation to evolve?

This paper is too short to provide a definitive list of the enormous changes since World War II but a sampling of those changes will stimulate thought concerning the breadth and types of changes in society since the 1940s – and lead the reader to consider how those changes have affected warfare during the same period.

There have been extensive changes across the range of human activity since 3GW evolved in 1939. Politically, there are vastly more players in the arena. In 1945, there were 51 states in the UN, today there are 191.[13] Beyond the increase in states there are numerous other players. For instance, transnational groups such as Greenpeace, Islamic Brotherhood and drug organizations influence decision-making in even the most powerful countries. A situation not even conceived of in 1939.

Economically, powerful states used to control their own investment, tariff and trade policies. Today, various international organizations – such as the North American Free Trade Organization, European Union, World Bank and others – severely limit every nation's ability to set those policies independently. An even bigger economic change has resulted from what Thomas Freidman has called 'Supermarkets' and 'Electronic Herds'.[14] Today, they dominate international trade and commerce. In fact, 'by the end of 1997 twenty-five Supermarkets controlled 83 percent of the world's equities under institutional management and accounted for roughly half of global market capitalization – around $20 trillion'.[15] Yet no state controls them.

Socially, the world is dramatically smaller. In 1945, the vast majority of people in the world knew only their own village. Even in developed nations, most knew only what they read in their newspapers and had little or no contact with people of other nations. Today, citizens of developed nations communicate with and travel freely around the globe. Small generators and satellite TV have delivered the world to even isolated, primitive villages. People's perception of what life should entail has changed dramatically.

The basic changes in technology are so obvious as to not need reviewing but one should consider a few examples. In 1939 when 3GW came to the fore, there was not a functioning computer on the planet, international communication was very expensive and the first transoceanic flights had just started.

It is obvious to any observer that there has been extraordinary change in the past 60 years. While not all sectors of a society are evolving at the same rate, they are all moving in the same direction. As we moved into the industrial

era, governments, business, social organizations all moved to a hierarchical structure that was often national in scale. In the same way, as we move into the information age, all sectors of society are becoming networked on an international scale.

What is less obvious is the fact that the rate of change has been accelerating – and not just over the past 60 years but over the recorded history of man. In warfare, change is also accelerating. It took hundreds of years for first-generation warfare to evolve. Second-generation warfare evolved and peaked in the 100 years between Waterloo and Verdun. Third-generation came to maturity in less than 25 years. Clearly, 3GW cannot be the leading edge of war over 60 years later. So what form of warfare has been evolving and where?

Mao and the Birth of 4GW

Given the fact insurgency has often defeated third-generation powers since 1945, we have to examine its evolution to see if it is leading us to 4GW.

The first practitioner to both write about and successful execute a 4GW, Mao Tse-tung, was a product of the intense turmoil that characterized China in the early twentieth century. Nineteen when the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty abdicated in 1912, he grew up under the collapsing imperial system. He was intensely interested in what form of government would fill the vacuum.

From joining the Communist Party in 1921 until he led their forces to victory in 1949, Mao developed and tested his theories of government and war constantly. He did not develop these theories in an academic setting. He lived them. During this period, he rose from activist to army commander to supreme commander. He understood he must avoid direct confrontation with superior warlord and government forces and he needed the peasants on his side to win. He developed a strategic approach around those two precepts.

This was summed up in a pithy folk rhyme, which conveyed the essence of the Red Army's future strategy. In its final form, drawn up by Mao and Zhu De[16] and popularized throughout the army, it contained 16 characters:

> Di jin, wo tui, [When the] enemy advances, we withdraw,
> Di jiu, wo roa, [When the] enemy rests, we harass,
> Di pi, wo da, [When the] enemy tires, we attack,
> Di tui, wo jui, [When the] enemy withdraws, we pursue.

Meanwhile, the guidelines for the army's treatment of civilians, which Mao had first issued at Sanwan in September 1927, were expanded into what became known as the 'Six Main Points for Attention'. Solders were urged to replace straw bedding and wooden bed-boards after staying at peasant homes overnight; to return whatever they borrowed; to pay for anything

they damaged; to be courteous; to be fair in business dealings; and to treat prisoners humanely.[17]

Mao saw revolution as a political struggle where he must pay great attention to maintaining the goodwill of the people. He knew only the peasants could provide an unbeatable intelligence network and a constant source of manpower and resources in the form of food and labour.

As the first practitioner to define insurgency, Mao, like Clausewitz, understood war is fundamentally a political undertaking. However, he went much further than Clausewitz stating: 'The problem of political mobilization of the army and the people is indeed of the utmost importance . . . political mobilization is the most fundamental condition for winning the war'.[18] He further emphasized the primacy of political efforts when he stated: 'This is a matter of the first magnitude on which the victory primarily depends'.[19]

After firmly establishing the overriding political character of insurgency, Mao outlined his famous three phases for the successful conduct of insurgency. Phase I is political mobilization. Phase II is guerrilla warfare to wear down the government. Phase III is the destruction of the government using conventional forces.

Mao knew insurgents could not match the government's conventional military forces initially. Therefore, he conceived the careful buildup of political, social and economic power during Phase I and II. His goal was nothing less than to change the 'correlation of forces' between the government and the insurgent. Only after that shift would the insurgent be ready to move to Phase III, the final destruction of the government by conventional forces.

'People's War' was correctly hailed as a new form of war. Mao was the first to envision political power as the key to insurgency. Mao also understood that networked, interlocked, mass organizations were the key to political power. He advanced warfare by showing how powerful manoeuvre forces could be beaten by political strength applied over time. His was the fundamental work upon which the fourth generation of war would be built.

The Vietnamese Modification

Necessity being the mother of invention, the next major modification of communist insurgency doctrine was developed and employed by Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap. Faced with defeating a powerful outside government, they developed an interesting twist to the concept of People's War. While maintaining the Maoist model of a three-phase insurgency based on the peasants, they refined the model to include an aggressive attack on the national will of their real principle enemy – first, France and then the US. Ho and Giap developed the ability to take the political war to their distant enemy's homeland and destroy his will to continue the struggle. They were greatly aided in

their efforts by both the French and US inability to understand the type of war they were fighting. A decade after the war ended, Colonel Harry Summers wrote: 'There are still those who would attempt to fit it into the revolutionary war mold and who blame our defeat on our failure to implement counterinsurgency doctrine'.[20]

Yet both the First and Second Indochinese wars made use of People's War – as explicitly stated by Ho Chi Minh. In his address to the Second National Congress of the Viet-Nam Workers' Party in 1951, Ho summarized the Viet Minh revolution to date:

> Our Party and Government foresaw that our Resistance War has three stages. In the first stage ... all we did was to preserve and increase our main forces. In the second stage, we have actively contended with the enemy and prepared for the general counteroffensive. The third stage is the general counteroffensive.[21]

Ho categorically stated he was using People's War to defeat France and then did so.

Following the defeat of the French, the US subsequently decided to back the South Vietnamese government and incrementally increased its commitment until it had over 500,000 troops in Vietnam. Confronted with a much more powerful foe, Ho did not change his strategy. As he explained to Bernard Fall, French author and expert on the Indochina conflict, in 1962:

> Sir, you have studied us for ten years, you have written about the Indochina War. It took us eight years of bitter fighting to defeat you French in Indochina ... The Americans are stronger than the French. It might perhaps take ten years but our heroic compatriots in the South will defeat them in the end. We shall marshal public opinion about this unjust war against the South Vietnamese.[22]

He openly explained how he expected to beat the US/South Vietnamese alliance. He planned a war of attrition accompanied by intensive national and international propaganda to weaken American resolve. After accurately explaining what he planned, Ho then executed that plan. Ho had advanced 4GW another step. He twice defeated massively superior military and economic powers despite the fact he could neither threaten their homelands nor even fully defeat the military forces they sent to Vietnam.

The Sandinistas Refinement

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas, through evolutionary steps, further increased the emphasis on political development driving the battlefield outcome. They refined the Maoist doctrine by making political strategy itself the endgame.

In the Sandinista strategy, political manoeuvring would not be the precursor to a conventional invasion – it would serve as the invasion itself by destroying external support for the Nicaraguan National Guard. However, like previous innovations, it took time, mistakes and numerous false paths before the Sandinistas found the solution to seizing power.

Founded in 1961, the Sandinistas initially had no clear concept on how they would take power. They tried, in turn, a 'foco'[23] insurgency, an urban-based insurgency and then a rural peasant-based one (three times). In each case, their organizations were quickly identified and attacked with disastrous results for the insurgents.

After all these failures, Humberto Ortega chose a very different course for the movement. Ortega's bold solution was to create a 'third way' between the competing urban and peasant proponents. He formed a broad-front, urban-based coalition whose strength rested in a network of middle-class business-men, entrepreneurs, unemployed students and urban poor of the shantytowns. On 4 May 1977, he published a new FSLN strategy paper that:

> contained the basic insurrectional strategy, including (1) development of a program without leftist rhetoric; (2) creation of a broad anti-Somoza front with non-Marxist opposition groups; (3) creation of mass organi-zations to support the FSLN; (4) agitation to bring about the radi-calization of the moderate opposition; (5) action to undermine the integrity of the National Guard; and (6) unification of the three FSLN factions under a joint leadership.[24]

His emphasis on concealing the FSLN's leftist doctrine combined with active propaganda for a moderate coalition allowed him to convince a wide range of Somoza's opponents to join the coalition.

His real innovation was that, despite the appearance of a broad front, Ortega insured the key elements of power, namely all of the coalition's mili-tary and security elements, remained firmly in the hands of the communist leaders.

Much more important to the revolution than activities within the country was the work the Sandinistas did to further undermine support for the Somoza regime in the international community. They showed true strategic vision and operational finesse in orchestrating this campaign while simultaneously con-solidating their control on the 'popular front' that was opposing the regime.

After the war, a Sandinista leader explained why the revolution was successful:

> An armed element is still a key requirement for revolution wherein the cadres are educated and 'blooded.' We earn our leadership positions in the new order by paying our dues in Sierra. The mass appeal of

broad-front political organization is also a must in which disaffected non-Marxists and non-Marxist-Leninists are brought into the movement. This ensures not only better and wider internal support but outside support that does not have Cuban, Eastern Bloc or Soviet taint can also be obtained.

Because of the superior unity and discipline of the Party, the real power will not be shared with those who provide essentially window dressing for the revolution.

The Church, by now heavily infiltrated with Liberation Theologists, gives us guerrillas the moral high ground we've never enjoyed before.[25]

This honest appraisal shows clearly how the Sandinistas advanced the art of war. Notice he never claimed the guerrillas were essential to victory. Rather he stated that, like all insurgents before them, the leaders earned their positions by fighting. So although the Sandinistas consistently failed in the efforts to instigate a rural insurgency, the rural efforts provided a crucible to toughen the leaders who would lead the guerrilla elements of the insurgency.

He is very clear that the broad-front political organization was essential to both attract people to the movement and to insure external support from non-communist bloc countries. He states that the Party (the FSLN) was the real power behind the coalition at all times – and had no intention of ever sharing the power with the moderate coalition members. The moderates were simply window-dressing. Finally, he clearly states that the Sandinistas used the priests and philosophy of Liberation Theology to provide unassailable moral high ground for the insurgency.

The Sandinistas' unique contribution was to eliminate the requirement for the final conventional military offensive. Their political efforts so severely changed 'the correlation of forces' that the government collapsed and they occupied the vacuum.

Intifada

The next evolution in 4GW came out of the Palestinian Intifada. Ignited by a spontaneous uprising, the Intifada demonstrated both networking and emergence as new characteristics of insurgency. The isolation of Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian Liberation Organization in Tunisia forced the local Palestinian leadership to take charge of the uprising. Although they could draw upon existing self-help organizations that provided medical services, education and social services, the Palestinians had no national organization in the Occupied Territories when the Intifada literally exploded on to the political landscape.

In response, the local organizations rapidly formed a coalition that provided local guidance to the people in each area. In turn, these local organizations were guided by a self-organizing, self-appointed national council via regularly published 'night letters'. The Palestinians knew they couldn't defeat the Israelis militarily, so they:

> concentrated on out administering, not outfighting the enemy. The aim ... is not simply to inflict military losses on the enemy but to destroy the legitimacy of its (the Israeli) government and to establish a rival regime[26]

They targeted different messages to the three primary groups involved in the struggle. To the Palestinian people the message was simple, 'We are continuing to fight'. They hammered the point home that the Palestinian people, fighting by themselves, had lasted longer than all the Arab states put together. The Palestinians knew the will of their people was critical and they worked very hard to maintain it.

The message to the Israelis was different but also simple: 'As long as the Israelis occupy the territories there will be no peace'. Since most Israelis serve in the armed forces, Israeli parents knew their sons and daughters would face continual unrest. While these parents were prepared for their sons and daughters to fight to preserve Israel, they were not as certain they wanted them to face continual bombardment with rocks, bottles and hate in a questionable attempt to hold onto the Occupied Territories. The casualty figures reinforced Israeli reluctance to continue the occupation. While such figures are a source of much controversy, the Israeli group B'Tselem states that during the Intifada only 80 Israeli civilians were killed while 1,019 Palestinian civilians were killed.[27] Israelis could not reconcile their self image as a liberal democracy with the actions necessary to suppress the uprising in the Occupied Territories. The Palestinian message reinforced this unease.

Finally was the message for international consumption: 'The Palestinians are an oppressed, impoverished but very brave and resolute people fighting for human dignity. They asked only to have the occupying power go home and allow the Palestinians to be citizens of their own country'. The constant repetition of this theme accompanied by daily media coverage of teenagers in jeans and t-shirts armed only with rocks confronting tanks changed the image of Israel in the world's eyes. Israel was no longer seen as a tiny state surrounded by a sea of hostile Arabs but rather as a brutal occupying power denying legitimate Palestinian aspirations for their own nation.

The Palestinians used a network of anonymous leaders to sustain the movement through six long years. They remained focused on the will of the Israeli voters and, in the end, those voters replaced Likud with Labor. Labor negotiated the 1993 Oslo Accords. For the first time in history, an

Arab organization had forced the Israelis to give up territory and they did so without a military force or a centralized command. Rather a coalition of the willing, united by an idea sustained by a network defeated the dominant military power in the Middle East.

Al Aqsa Intifada

With the Oslo Accords on 13 September 1993, the Palestinians had apparently started down the path to a state of their own. After decades of conflict, it appeared that the Palestinians would finally have a territory to call their own. The six-year Intifada set the internal and external conditions necessary for both sides to accept the unthinkable – recognition of the blood enemy. Yet, at the time of this writing, that dream has faded to dust.

The obvious question is what happened? How did the Palestinians go from a well-executed fourth-generation campaign to the bloody war of attrition that is the Al Aqsa Intifada?

In short, Arafat returned and reasserted his authority. Between Arafat and the Israeli security services, the new Palestinians leaders were neutralized and Arafat's corrupt, inflexible regime took charge. As the Oslo Accords fell apart (with significant help from both Palestinian and Israeli radicals), the Palestinians reverted to the current bombing campaign. Motivated by the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the radicals became convinced they could force the Israelis from the West Bank.

Unfortunately, for the Palestinians, the message they sent to both Israelis and the West was the desire to completely destroy Israel. No Israeli government can negotiate in the face of such a threat and no Western government could pressure them to. They had completely abandoned 4GW and reverted to pure terror.

The Israelis, on the other hand, had learned from the Intifada. This time, they had multiple messages. For the international community, they projected a reasonable approach of a democracy under attack. They stated they could not negotiate with people who bombed their children intentionally. They allowed full media coverage of attack sites so the impact was passed to the Western world.

To their own population, they repeated the Palestinian message of utter destruction. When faced with that threat, the Israelis had no choice but to support the harsh Likud methods.

Under the cover of these 4GW messages, the Israelis continued a rapid expansion of settlements on the West Bank. Sticking to Sharon's long-term strategy, they established 'facts on the ground'. Using security requirements as the reason, they built roads and outposts that cut the West Bank into economically unviable enclaves.

In short, the situation is completely reversed since the end of Intifada I. Israel is back to being the oppressed nation fighting for its survival, Palestinians are terrorists again and the US policy on the struggle could have been written in Jerusalem. The rapid reversal of fortunes shows the political message and image are central to 4GW. The Israelis mended theirs for the international and domestic audiences – with a great deal of assistance by bad Palestinian decisions. Projecting the image of a small, brave nation struggling for survival, they have been able to virtually recreate apartheid without any significant Western outcry.

In contrast, the Palestinians have managed to project the worst possible image to their own people, the Israelis and the Western community. They have insured that even their legitimate grievances are buried in the avalanche of outrage over the suicide bombing campaign and stated desire to destroy Israel. Compounding the damage, the actions are being taken by corrupt, incompetent leaders who clearly care more about themselves than about their people. The Palestinians have proven to be their own worst enemy.

The death of Arafat may provide an opportunity for the Palestinians to abandon their disastrous approach. The election and the initial steps of the new Palestinian administration give reason for hope but it will require patience and courage from both sides to pursue peace.

Common Sense

Common sense virtually demands that movements seeking political and social change will use 4GW. Since World War II, wars have been a mixed bag of conventional and unconventional. Conventional wars – the Korean War, the Israeli–Arab wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973, the Falklands (Malvinas) War, the Iran–Iraq war and the first Gulf War – have ended with a return to the strategic status quo. While some territory changed hands and, in some cases, regimes changed, in essence each state came out of the war with largely the same political, economic and social structure with which it entered.

In sharp contrast, unconventional wars – the Communist revolution in China, the First and Second Indochina wars, the Algerian War of Independence, the Sandinista struggle in Nicaragua, the Iranian revolution, the Afghan–Soviet war of the 1980s, the first Intifada, and the Hezbollah campaign in South Lebanon – display a markedly different pattern. Each ended with major changes in the political, economic and social structure of the territories involved. While the changes may not have been for the better, they were distinct changes. Even those unconventional wars where the insurgents lost (Malaya, Oman, El Salvador) led to significant changes. The message is

clear for anyone wishing to shift the political balance of power: only unconventional war works against established powers.

This brief survey of history, societal changes, current events and common sense indicates warfare has moved beyond high-technology manoeuvre war.

Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW)

Beginning with Mao's concept that political will defeats superior military power and progressing to Intifada I's total reliance on the mass media and international networks to neutralize Israel's military power, warfare underwent a fundamental change. It shifted from an industrial age focus on the destruction of the enemy's armed forces to an information age focus on changing the minds of the enemy's political decision-makers. With the al Aqsa Intifada and Al Qaeda, we have seen that 4GW can develop a variety of strategies depending on the goals of the practitioner. In Iraq, we have seen that 4GW can hold its own even against the most technologically advanced and militarily powerful nation in the world.

Moreover, states have recognized that many of the 4GW techniques used by insurgents to neutralize superior military power are also available to them. Even a dictator as isolated as Saddam Hussein attempted to use some of these techniques. To build Islamic support, he posed as a protector of Islam, as a supporter of the Palestinians. To muddle the discussion in the UN, he claimed to have complied with the UN inspectors while using a series of delaying tactics to keep the inspection option open. He also worked to split the West, focusing his efforts on France and Russia. While none of these actions prevented the invasion of his country, they did force the Bush administration to expend significant political capital in responding to them.

China has also taken note of the potential for shifting the conflict to a wide range of fields rather than focusing on the military aspects. In *Unrestricted Warfare*, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui ridicule the US focus on 'military technical' war and propose that war must be expanded to six other fields: diplomatic, economic, financial, cyber, media/information and network warfare. While working to improve their own conventional forces, they also seek expansion into all these fields to neutralize the US advantage in high-technology weaponry.[28]

Recent history indicates that a new form of war has arrived. One that can defeat the previous generation, manoeuvre warfare, by making use of superior political will employed over time.

War has entered a new generation. Unfortunately for the West, it is not the high-technology war that plays to our strengths but rather an evolved form of insurgency that attacks our weaknesses.

4GW uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy's political decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. It is rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power. 4GW does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces. Instead, combining guerrilla tactics or civil disobedience with the soft networks of social, cultural and economic ties, disinformation campaigns and innovative political activity, it directly attacks the will of enemy decision-makers. Historically, fourth-generation wars are lengthy – measured in decades rather than months or years.

4GW is a very different concept from the short, intense war the Pentagon has envisioned and focused on for the past 15 years. Unfortunately, it is the type of war that we see actually being fought in the world today.

Strategic Aspects of 4GW

Strategically, 4GW does not attempt to achieve superiority on the battlefield. The first- through third-generation objective of destroying the enemy's armed forces and his capacity to regenerate them is not how 4GW enemies plan to defeat their opponents. Both epic, decisive Napoleonic battles and wide-ranging high-speed manoeuvre campaigns are irrelevant to 4GW. Instead, 4GW will target specific messages to policy-makers and to those who can influence the policy-makers. Although tailored for various audiences, each message is designed to achieve the basic purpose of war – change an opponent's political position on a matter of national interest. The fights in Iraq and Afghanistan show these characteristics. In each, the insurgent is sending one message to his supporters, another to the mass of the undecided population and a third to the Coalition decision-makers. The message to their supporters is that they are 'defending the faith and their country against outside invaders'. The message to their uncommitted or pro-Coalition countrymen is that it is 'a fight between us and the invaders. Stay out of it or you will get hurt. You know the Americans will eventually leave and we will still be here'. Finally, their message to the Coalition, particularly to Americans, is that, 'unless you withdraw, you are engaged in an endless and costly fight'.

4GW is not bloodless. In fact, we have seen in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Palestine that most 4GW casualties will be civilians. Further, many will not be victims of military weapons but rather of materials made available within the society. This is an aspect of 4GW that we must understand. The 4GW opponent does not have to build the warfighting infrastructure essential to earlier generations of war. As displayed in the Beirut bombings, the Khobar Tower bombing, the Northern Ireland campaign, the African

Embassy bombings, 9/11 and the ongoing bombing campaign in Iraq, 4GW practitioners are making more and more use of materials made available by the society they are attacking. This allows them to take a very different strategic approach. It relieves the 4GW practitioner of the strategic necessity of defending core production assets, leaving them free to focus on offence rather than defence. It also relieves them of the logistics burden of moving supplies long distances. Instead, they have to move only money and ideas – both of which can be digitized and moved instantly.

Even at the strategic level, the importance of the media in shaping the policy of the participants will continue to increase. We saw a demonstration of this when US interest in Somalia, previously negligible, was stimulated by the repeated images of thousands of starving Somali children. Conversely, the images of US soldiers being dragged through the streets ended that commitment. The media will continue to be a major factor from the strategic to the tactical level. In fact, worldwide media exposure can quickly give a tactical action strategic impact.

Political Aspects of 4GW

In the political arena, 4GW warriors will seek to use international, transnational, national and sub-national networks for their own purposes. Internationally there are a growing variety of networks available – the United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, OPEC and dozens of others. Each organization has a different function in international affairs; but each has its own vulnerabilities and can be used to convey a political message to its leadership and from there to targeted capital cities. While these international organizations may not be capable of directly changing the minds of national leaders, they can be used to slow or paralyze an international response.

Their obvious use is to create a political paralysis in both the international organizations (not usually a difficult task) and in the target nation (difficulty varies with the nation being targeted). However, in addition to normal political attacks, 4GW planners can influence other aspects of the target society. They know that the security situation in a country has a direct effect on the ability of that nation to get loans. The international marketplace is a swift and impersonal judge of credit worthiness. This gives the attacker a very different avenue to affect the position of a nation – the mere threat of action may be enough to impact the financial status of the target nation and encourage them to negotiate. Thus if his objective is simply to paralyze the political processes of a target nation, he can use a number of avenues to create that effect. Recent attacks on oil production infrastructure in Iraq have painfully illustrated this fact. The Nigerian rebels have also used the threat to oil production to force negotiation on the Nigerian government. The fact that oil prices were at an

all time high gave the rebels more leverage because each day's delay increased the costs to the Nigerian government. As the world becomes ever more inter-connected, the potential for varied approaches increases and the effects may reinforce each other.

A coherent 4GW plan will also include transnational elements in a variety of ways. They may include belief-based organizations like Islamic Jihad and mainline Christian churches; nationalistic organizations such as the Palesti-nians and Kurds; humanitarian organizations; economic structures such as the stock and bond markets; and criminal organizations such as narco-traffick-ers and arms merchants. The key traits of transnational organizations are that none are contained completely within a recognized nation state's borders; none have official members that report back to nation states and they owe no loyalty to any nation – and sometimes very little loyalty to their own organizations.

The use of such transnational elements will vary with the strategic situ-ation. But they provide a variety of possibilities. They can be a source of recruits. They can be used – at times unwittingly – as cover to move people and assets. They can be an effective source of funds – charitable organ-izations have supported terrorists as diverse as the IRA and Al Qaeda. During the 1970s, Irish bars on the east coast of America often had jars where patrons could donate to the 'cause'. The jars indicated the money was to provide support to Irish families when in fact much of the money went directly to support IRA insurgent operations. At times, entire organizations can be used openly to support the position of the 4GW operator. Usually this is done when the organization genuinely agrees with the position of one of the antagonists but false flag operations are also viable. Such support can lend great legitimacy to a movement and even reverse long-held international views of a specific situation.

National political institutions are primary targets for 4GW messages. The Congress of the United States was both a target of and a network for the North Vietnamese, the Sandinistas and the Palestinians. They knew Congress con-trols the US budget. If the Congress cut off funds, the US allies would lose their wars. Thus Congressmen were targeted with the message that 'the war was unwinnable and it made no sense to keep fighting it'. The Sandinistas even worked hard to make individual Congressmen part of their network by sponsoring trips for Congressional aides and mainline church groups to insur-gent-held areas in Nicaragua. If they could convince their guests that Somoza's government was indeed corrupt, they would actively lobby Congress to cut off aid to Somoza.

Non-governmental national groups have also been major players in shaping national policies – churches, diaspora associations, business groups and even lobbying firms. We must assume 4GW opponents will continue these efforts.

Sub-national organizations can both represent groups who are minorities in their traditional homelands such as the Basque and those who are self-selecting minorities such as Sons of Liberty and Aryan Nation. These groups are in unusual positions. They can be either enemies or allies of the established power. It depends on who best serves their interests. Even more challenging, since they are not in fact unified groups, one element of a sub-national group may support the government while another element supports the insurgent.

Political alliances, interests and positions among and between insurgents will change according to various political, economic, social and military aspects of the conflict. While this has been a factor in all wars (Italy changed sides in the middle of the biggest conventional war of all time), it will be prevalent in 4GW war. It is much easier for non-nation state entities (tribes, clans, businesses, criminal groups, racial groups, sub-national groups, transnational groups) to change sides than it is for nation states or national groups. A government usually ties itself to a specific cause. It has to convince decision-makers or its people to support it. Thus it can be very awkward for that government to change sides in mid-conflict without losing the confidence of its people. Often, the act of changing sides will lead to the fall of the government. In contrast, non-state entities get involved only for their own needs and if these needs shift, they can easily shift loyalties. In Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and innumerable skirmishes in Africa, alliances shift like a kaleidoscope.

Operational-Level Techniques for 4GW

To succeed, the 4GW operational planner must determine the message he wants to send; the networks best suited to carry those messages; the actions that will cause the network to send the message; and the feedback system that will tell him if the message is being received. He must seek different pathways for his messages. Traditional diplomatic channels, both official and unofficial are still important but are no longer the only pathway for communication and influence. Other networks rival the prominence of the official ones.

The media has become a primary avenue as has been painfully obvious in Vietnam, the West Bank and Iraq. Professional lobbying groups have also proven effective. An increasingly important avenue is the Internet and the power it provides grass-roots campaigns. Whether the anti-land mine campaign or Zarkawi's terror campaign in Iraq, the Internet provides an alternative channel for high-impact messages unfiltered by editors or political influence. It can also be used to raise money.

A key factor in a 4GW campaign is that the audience is not a simple unified target. It is increasingly fragmented into interest groups who shift sides

depending on how a particular campaign affects their issues. During Intifada I, the Palestinians tailored different messages for different constituencies. The Israelis are doing the same during al Aqsa Intifada and the anti-Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are also.

To date, the US has not understood the importance of messages in 4GW. As recently as last year, military spokesmen kept insisting that the insurgent attacks on US troops in Iraq were 'militarily insignificant'. This was at a time each attack was on the front page of major daily newspapers in the US and Europe. While the actual casualties may have been few, each story reached the decision-makers in Congress and the public.

In contrast, 4GW practitioners have used networks successfully for a variety of reasons. In Kosovo, the seizure of UN hostages was the first step of a cycle. The media was then used to transmit images of them chained to a bridge. Then the insurgents watched TV to determine the response of the various governments. It allowed them to commit the act, transmit it via various channels, observe the response and then decide what to do. All this occurred much faster than the bureaucratic reporting processes of NATO could complete the same cycle.

During Intifada I, the Palestinians made an operational decision to limit the use of violence. They confronted the Israeli Army not with heavily armed guerrillas but with teenagers armed only with rocks. By doing so, they neutralized US support for Israeli action, froze the Israeli defence forces and influenced the Israeli national election which led to the Oslo Accords.

Similarly, the series of bombings conducted by the Iraqi insurgents throughout the fall and winter of 2003–04 carefully targeted the organizations most helpful to the Coalition Provisional Authority – the police, the UN, NGOs, coalition partners, the Kurdish political parties and Shia clerics. Each event was tactically separated by time and space, but each tied together operationally to attack America's strategic position in the country.

The campaign continues even today with each attack designed to prevent a stable, democratic government from emerging. Not all have succeeded but they did drive the UN and many NGOs out of the country. Further, the Coalition is shrinking and the insurgency has clearly impacted the price of oil. The threat of instability spreading to the rest of the Gulf increases the upward pressure on oil prices.

To complicate matters, 4GW will include aspects of earlier generations of war in conjunction with those of 4GW. Even as Israelis struggled with the Intifada, they had to be constantly aware that major conventional forces were on their border. Similarly in Vietnam, the US and later South Vietnam had to deal with aggressive, effective fourth-generation guerrillas while always being prepared to deal with major NVA conventional forces. Clearly 4GW seeks to

place an enemy on the horns of this dilemma. Just as clearly, this is an intentional approach and goes all the way back to Mao.

Action in one or all of the fields above will not be limited to the geographic location (if any) of the antagonists but will take place worldwide. Al Qaeda has forcefully illustrated this to us. Though some elements will be more attractive as targets, no element of US society, no matter where it is located in the world is off limits to attack.

The range of possible 4GW opponents is broad. It is important to remember that such an opponent does not need a large command and control system. At a time when US forces are pouring ever more money and manpower into command and control, commercial technology makes worldwide, secure communications available to anyone with a laptop and a credit card. It also provides access to 1-metre resolution satellite imagery, extensive information on US troop movements, immediate updates on national debates, and international discussion forums. Finally, it provides a worldwide, fairly secure financial network. In fact, with the proliferation of Internet cafes, one doesn't need either the credit card or the laptop. All one needs is an understanding of how email and a browser work and some very basic Humint tradecraft.

At the operational level, all that an opponent has to move is ideas and funds. He can do so through a wide variety of methods from email to snail mail to personal courier to messages embedded in classified advertisements. He will try to submerge his communications in the noise of the everyday activity that is an essential part of a modern society. He will disguise the movement of material and funds as commerce – using commercial sources and vehicles. His people will do their best to merge into whatever civil society they find themselves in. As a result, it will be extraordinarily difficult to detect the operational level activities of a sophisticated 4GW opponent.

Tactical Considerations

Tactically, 4GW takes place in the complex environment of low-intensity conflict. Every potential opponent of the US has observed the Gulf War, Operation 'Iraqi Freedom' and Afghanistan. They understand that if you provide America with clear targets, no matter how well-fortified, those targets will be destroyed. Just as certainly, they have seen the success of the Vietnamese and the Somalis. They have also seen and are absorbing the continuing lessons of Chechnya, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. They will not fight us conventionally.

In attempting to change the minds of key decision-makers, antagonists will use a variety of tactical paths to get their message through to presidents, prime ministers, members of cabinets, legislators and even voters. Immediate,

high-impact messages will probably come via visual media – and the more dramatic and bloody the image, the stronger the message. Longer-term, less immediate but more thought-provoking messages will be passed via business, church, economic, academic, artistic and even social networks. While the messages will be based on a strategic theme, the delivery will be by tactical action such as guided tours of refugee camps, exclusive interviews with insurgent leaders, targeted kidnapping, beheadings, car bombings, assassinations, and so on.

Tactically, 4GW will involve a mixture of international, transnational, national and sub-national actors. Since the operational planner of a 4GW campaign must use all the tools available to him, we can assume that we will have to deal with actors from all these arenas at the tactical level as well. Even more challenging, some will be violent actors and others will be non-violent. In fact, the very term non-combatant applies much more easily to conventional conflicts between states than 4GW involving state and non-state actors. Non-violent actors, while being legally non-combatants, will be a critical part of tactical actions in 4GW. By using crowds, protestors, media interviews, Internet websites and other 'non violent' methods, 4GW warriors can create tactical dilemmas for their opponents. It will require tactical resources in police, intelligence, military, propaganda and political spheres to deal with the distractions they create.

Tactical military action (terrorist, guerrilla or, rarely, conventional) will be tied to the message and targeted at various groups. The 19 August 2003 bombing of the UN facility in Iraq convinced the UN it was too costly to continue to operate in Iraq. The 19 August 2004 burning of the southern Iraq oil buildings had an immediate effect on the per barrel price of oil. These were two tactical actions with very different messages for very different target audiences; yet, they both support the strategic goal of increasing the cost to the US of staying in Iraq.

War evolves along with society. Recent history, current events and common sense all point to the fact a new generation of war has evolved. It evolved as practical men solved real problems in an attempt to win against a militarily more powerful force. 4GW has been the result and it is being used by intelligent, ambitious men across the world.

Iraq: High Technology Versus 4GW

In March 2003, the Bush administration launched Coalition forces across the Iraq/Kuwait border without understanding the type of war they were embarking on. They thought it would be a short, high-technology conventional war. Confident that things had turned out as they predicted, President Bush essentially declared victory on 1 May 2003 when 'major hostilities ceased'.

Unfortunately, the underlying character of the Iraq war is not that of a high-technology war but rather that of a 4GW. Hostilities did not end on 1 May. Rather, they are continuing with no apparent end in sight. This is not surprising given the fact many insurgencies last over 20 years and have been networks rather than hierarchies.

Complicating the situation is the fact the Bush administration was very slow to recognize the war had slipped into an insurgency. Despite the numerous attacks on Coalition forces after the official 'defeat' of the Iraqi armed forces, US leadership refused to accept the war was continuing, much less that it had become an insurgency:

> It's a very small group – one or two people – in isolated attacks against our soldiers.
>
>   Major General Buford Blount, III, 27 May 2003[29]

> We do not see signs of central command and control direction...these are groups that are organized, but they're small; they may be five or six men conducting isolated attacks against our soldiers.
>
>   L. Paul Bremer, 12 June 2003[30]

> I guess the reason I don't use the phrase 'guerrilla war' is because there isn't one, and it would be a misunderstanding and a miscommunication to you and to the people of the country and the world.
>
>   Donald Rumsfeld, 30 June 2003[31]

> One, guerrilla and insurgency operations (must be) supported by the people, and I've demonstrated to my own satisfaction that the people of Iraq do not support the violence that we're seeing right now.
>
>   General Tommy Franks, 10 July 2003[32]

It was not until 18 June 2003 that Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz became the first to indicate we might be involved in a guerrilla war. He was subsequently firmly corrected by both Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Commander Central Command General Tommy Franks. Not until more than ten weeks after the President declared an end to major combat, did General John Abizaid, the new Commander Central Command, declare the US faced an insurgency in Iraq. He was the first senior US official to categorically state the obvious, explaining: 'I believe there are mid-level Ba'athist, Iraqi intelligence service people, Special Security Organization people, Special Republican Guard people that have organized at the regional level in cellular structure and are conducting what I would describe as a classical guerrilla-type campaign against us'.[33]

Even after this clear statement by the man responsible for fighting the insurgents, the Pentagon would not refer to it as an insurgency and instead

avoided defining the type of conflict on which we had entered. Lawrence Di Rita, the Pentagon Spokesman, stated on 16 July 2003 that: 'The discussion about what type of conflict this is ... is almost beside the point ... It's worth remembering that as we kind of have this almost kind of, you know, academic discussion, is it this or is it that'.[34]

The Pentagon's efforts to avoid discussing the type of war we are fighting could not be more diametrically opposed to Clausewitz's caution that the single act of determining the type of war one is to engage in is the supreme act of the statesman and commander. Rather than identifying the war they were really in, the Bush administration continued to denigrate the resistance in Iraq as merely the aftermath of the short, decisive war they had planned.

Unfortunately, events during the balance of 2003, 2004 and early 2005 confirmed General Abizaid's judgment. The anti-Coalition forces (ACF) in Iraq are clearly an intelligent, adept and adaptable enemy. Unfortunately, in February 2005, the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz continued to assert the insurgency 'is not a nationalist insurgency. It is an unholy alliance of old terrorists and new terrorists'.[35] He also stated they were 'remnants of deposed President Saddam Hussein's regime and "new terrorists drawn from across the region"'.[36] While the Secretary of Defense called it an insurgency, Wolfowitz continues to insist it is inspired by Saddam and externally based rather than a genuine insurgency.

In contrast to the US leadership, the insurgents proved to be fast learners. As early as August and September 2003, they showed a sophisticated understanding of the political and protracted character of insurgency. They attacked a police academy graduation, the UN headquarters (twice), the Jordanian Embassy, the Turkish Embassy, Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer, the Chief of Police of Baghdad (unsuccessfully), Red Cross facilities (twice), numerous police stations, an intelligence centre in Ibril, the mayors of Fallujah, Haditha, Khalidiya, the deputy mayor of Baghdad, the Italians, Japanese aid workers, Korean contractors, hotels where relief workers and Western officials were staying and numerous US military positions and convoys. Their choice of targets showed the clear strategic concept of destroying American will by attacking US forces, any government or NGO supporting the US and any Iraqis working for or believed to be collaborating with the US.

Expanding on this campaign, they began an active effort to create distrust and suspicion between the various elements of Iraqi society. During early 2004, the near simultaneous bombing of the political headquarters of the PUK and KPP during Id al Adha, an Islamic holiday, was clearly intended to drive the Kurds away from Iraq. Similarly, the multiple bombings and mortar attacks on the Shia community during their holy day of Ahoura was intended to deepen the divisions between Shia and Sunni. The ACF continued its relentless attacks with the assassination of Shia clerics. Increasing the

tension, the ACF personnel began conducting attacks while wearing Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and Iraqi police uniforms. In doing so, they created distrust both of and between the elements of Iraqi security forces. As a direct result of their actions, neither Coalition nor Iraqis can assume that a uniform means a friend.

Starting in December 2003, their bombing and assassination campaign began to focus on Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi civilians working with the Coalition Provisional Authority. By March, they were killing a minimum of one policeman per day. Throughout this period, they continued to use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against Coalition forces but their focus had clearly shifted to the Iraqi security forces.

In fact, the nationwide surge of attacks in April 2004 in response to the US offensive in Fallujah hammered home the fact the Coalition faces a competent, networked and determined fourth-generation enemy. At the time, the US leadership was emphasizing the transition to sovereignty. Unfortunately, they were not able to explain what that meant or exactly whom they would turn the country over to. The US leaders were clearly surprised by the extent and power of the resistance in April.

They should not have been. The nature of the early targets and results of the first six months of insurgency clearly indicated the ACF was conducting a well thought-out operational campaign. Each tactical act was minor in itself. But orchestrated as a continuing campaign, they were moving towards the strategic goal of driving US and international reconstruction elements out of Iraq while simultaneously setting the conditions for civil war.

Magnifying the impact of the insurgent actions was their aggressive use of the media and the Internet to publicize those actions. They understand high impact visual images transmitted quickly to the enemy decision-makers and public are powerful 4GW weapons. As the insurgents learned, it became obvious they were filming each attack and then rushing the video to various news outlets as well as posting it on the Internet.

By forcing out international aid organizations and intimidating those Iraqis willing to work with the US, the ACF obviously intended to reduce the support of these organizations' key functional roles and drastically reduce US capacity to establish stability in Iraq.

When US Marines were ordered to cease operations in April in Fallujah, the ACF celebrated it as a major victory. Accordingly, they stepped up operations in the Sunni Triangle. At the same time, Muqtada Sadr, in response to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) decision to shut down his newspaper, instigated an uprising in Najaf. It took several weeks before the uprising was controlled through a combination of negotiation and military action. With the Sadr uprising tamped down and Fallujah theoretically isolated, the CPA focused on turning over sovereignty to the Iraqis. Many hoped an Iraqi

government would deflate the insurgency. While it did provide a more legitimate government, the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) could not control the insurgents. In fact, from the time it took over until the elections in January, both the number of attacks and total casualties steadily increased. While the focus of the insurgents' campaigns has shifted with the situation on the ground, they have never let up in their deadly improvised explosive device campaign to inflict US casualties. Nor have they let up on the video releases. In fact, they are obviously studying both Western and Arab reaction to their videos and beginning to target them accordingly. After an initial surge of beheading videos, they learned the images were not helping their cause and suddenly they stopped showing up on the Internet. While the beheadings and point-blank executions of bound Iraqis continued, the films did not.

From their actions, the ACF clearly plan to drive the US out of Iraq. Their goal is clear. However, the nature of the ACF itself is not totally understood.

The definitive picture of the ACF may not be clear for years, if ever, but based on open source reporting through January of 2005, the ACF seems to be a coalition of the willing. They are a diverse collection of groups with only one unifying goal – ejecting the US from Iraq. They include Ba'athist loyalists, Sunni secularists, disgruntled military and security elements not necessarily Ba'athist, criminal elements of Iraqi society (to include Saddam fedayeen), Sunni and Shia Arab religious extremists, factions such as Ansar al-Islam and elements of Al Qaeda and those who simply seek revenge for personal reasons.

Beyond the single goal of driving the US out, the various groups are not only incompatible; they are actively hostile to each other. The Sunni Salafists cannot possibly be part of a government that includes Shia fundamentalists. Each has specific religious guidance that the other is an enemy of Allah. This hostility within the network is not a surprise. The Palestinian, Chechen and Afghan insurgencies were all fractious coalitions that fell into intramural fights any time the external threat receded.

Despite internal differences, the ACF seeks to win by wearing down the political will of the Coalition. They know they must convince the Coalition members that any potential gains are not worth the cost.

While the leader of only a single faction of the ACF coalition, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has pointedly and repeatedly stated it will be a long war. After Coalition forces cleared Fallujah, he exhorted his followers not to be discouraged. He stated 'the fruits of jihad (holy war) come after much patience and a lengthy stay in the battlefield . . . which could last months and years'.[37]

The ACF plans a long drawn out struggle. They are clearly trying to convince America that it cannot prevail and are counting on defeating its political will as well as that of the Coalition. They talk about US aversion to casualties

as proven by Vietnam, Lebanon and Somalia. They fully expect that when a sufficient number of body bags go home, the US will withdraw.

The ACF are also working to convince the Iraqi people that supporting the Coalition is not a safe or smart move. First, they portrayed the US eagerness to turn over to the IIG by 1 July 2004 and the administration's increasing focus on the November US elections as signs of US weakness and unwillingness to stay the course. When that passed, they pointed to the apparent absence of a US plan for after the Iraqi elections on 30 January. At the time of this writing, 31 January 2005, the ACF has not responded to the fact that up to 70 per cent of Iraqis chose to vote. However, we can be sure the ACF remembers the strategic centres of gravity for the Coalition members are their people's political will. The ACF has exhibited a keen sense for projecting their messages through the media. Further, they know the real key to the Coalition is the US.

For the Coalition's peoples and their political leaders, the ACF simply wants to show the cost of staying exceeds any benefit that can accrue from doing so. In their minds it worked in Spain on 11 March 2004 when bombers struck the rail system killing 201 and wounding over 1,400. Conducted just days before the Spanish national elections, the attacks resulted in the defeat of Prime Minister Aznar's government and the installation of a government dedicated to withdrawing Spanish troops from the Coalition. While intelligence organizations are struggling to construct a picture of the bombers, they appear to be connected to Al Qaeda and seem to have targeted Spain as part of their overall effort to weaken the Coalition.

Further, the steady increase in the number of attacks on Coalition and Iraqi civilians from August 2004 to November 2004 indicated yet another step in the ACF effort to strip away support for the Coalition and the IIG. The slight reduction in the number of attacks between December 2004 and January 2005 may be an indication they were hurt badly by the Fallujah offensive or it may just be the same up and down cycles we have seen in past insurgencies.

The ACF is sending a clear message to the US and its Coalition partners. 'We are engaged in a long-term fight and will use 4GW techniques and tactics to destroy the will of your people and the people of Iraq who are assisting you. You cannot win and will continue to lose your sons and daughters'. They reinforce that message with the videos of their attacks on Coalition targets.

The message the ACF are attempting to send to their fellow Iraqis is not nearly so unified. The very diversity of the ACF makes it impossible to put out a single, unified political message. Instead, they have focused on the negative message that they will drive the US out and that they are setting the pace of the fighting by selecting soft targets. They plan to defeat the US by killing or driving out anyone who assists the Coalition. They hammer home their message that the US will leave and the ACF will remain.

The ACF represents a genuine fourth-generation enemy – a loosely affiliated network joined in a temporary alliance to achieve a specific, short-term goal. While we have seen indications of a command and control structure, the ACF do not seem to be centralized under a single leader. Rather, they remain a coalition of the willing. Each group fights for its own goals. The goals of each may be at odds with the others but that does not keep the various elements from cooperating when it comes to fighting the US. They know that their first, and most difficult, problem is to drive the US out of Iraq. Since the very nature of the various elements of the ACF means there can be no unified goal other than the negative one of driving the US out, the ACF cannot have a coherent plan for the political future of Iraq. All elements know that if the US withdraws before establishing a stable government, they will still have to settle among themselves who will be in power. That struggle may escalate into a civil war; the consequences of which will have implications far beyond the borders of Iraq.

US Versus 4GW Elsewhere

Unfortunately, Iraq is not the only 4GW the US is currently fighting. The other two, Afghanistan and the misnamed Global War on Terror, represent very different enemies but, like Iraq, are clearly 4GW. While the circumstances, conditions and level of violence in the three conflicts is very different, each enemy is using 4GW organizations and techniques and fully expects to defeat the US.

In Afghanistan, the resistance is a network based on tribal and family relationship. The motivation for the Afghans varies from religious to ethnic to tribal to pure criminal. The most important single factor has been the Pashtun's perceived loss of prestige. Feeding on that loss are the remaining elements of Al Qaeda which operate on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border. Each group took up the fight against the Karzai government and its supporters for its own reasons. They did not have a common political vision of what happens if they do defeat the current government. If they should defeat the Karzai government, the most likely outcome will be ethnic/tribal warfare like that which broke out with the defeat of the Soviets.

Fortunately, the arrival of Ambassador Khalizaid and Lieutenant General Barno gave the US a team that truly understands insurgency is about governance. Working closely with the Karzai government, they have coordinated a genuine counterinsurgency approach. As a result, President Karzai has managed to slowly ease out hostile warlords while integrating Pashtuns into key billets. The result has been to show the Pashtuns they will be part of the government and greatly reduced their hostility to it. With improved political position, the Pashtuns have begun cooperating with the government and

reducing their support for the insurgents. The overall progress is notable. The Afghans enthusiastically participated in elections further enhancing the legitimacy of the Karzai government. The government still faces an exceptional challenge from the narcotics traders and faces at least a decade of continued struggle, but the successful application of counterinsurgency doctrine has vastly improved the situation in Afghanistan.

While on the retreat in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda is by no means finished. As we learn more and more about Al Qaeda, it becomes clear that they too are a network of diverse groups with widely varied immediate goals even if they share the overall goal of an Islamic caliphate.[38]

This is characteristic of 4GW movements. Much like business and social groups now organize as networks to achieve short-term common goals and then go their own way so do insurgents. Call them coalitions of the willing. We have seen this pattern in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq and Al Qaeda. Networks have clearly evolved as the most effective way for small groups to take on major powers. They are successfully defying the best technology America can send against them. Only the low-technology counterinsurgent approach we are using in Afghanistan is succeeding – and it has years to go before victory.

Each of our opponents is mounting an information campaign targeted at their supporters, neutral nations and the US. In a logical expansion of Ho's efforts to mobilize international support for his struggle, today's insurgents use every available network to get their message out. Mass media and the Internet carry much of the message to the Western world. Within the Islamic world, they also make very heavy use of audio CDs and tapes. Expanding on the traditional political messages that are part of weekly sermons, the insurgents tape these sermons to insure much wider dissemination of their messages.

Final Caution

Let me close with a final thought. 4GW has been around for over 70 years. No doubt fifth-generation war (5GW) is evolving even as we attempt to deal with its predecessor. We may not recognize it as it evolves around us. Or we may look at several alternative futures and see each as fifth-generation.

One possible form of 5GW is represented by the anthrax and ricin attacks on Capitol Hill. Although similar to fourth-generation attacks, they seem to have been conducted by an individual or, at most, a very small group. It is much too early to tell if these were fifth-generation attacks, but super-empowered individuals or small groups conducting such an attack would be in keeping with several emerging global trends – the rise of biotechnology, the increasing power of the knowledge worker and the changing nature of

loyalties. Each of these trends increases the destructive potential of small groups and makes the DOD's current structure less and less relevant. It is essential that we remain alert to these changes and examine all aspects of them rather than the purely technological ones.

Super-empowered individuals are only one possible form of future war. Yet the very fact these new attacks took place reinforces the requirement to look at actual conflicts rather than remain wedded to our own high-technology cyberwar vision of the future. In short, America needs to understand that war evolves rather than transforms. But if America can develop the force to fight a fourth-generation war, that force will also have the flexibility to adapt to the fifth generation as it evolves.

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