Post-Conflict Resolution: Carrying forward U. S. Constabulary Operations Lessons Learned to the Global War on Terrorism

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15 January 2004

Introduction

The United States is deployed and engaged worldwide in response to terrorism. The on going deployments and the future conflict that could result during actions against terror make it critical to understand how the U. S. military and the U. S. foreign policy apparatus will define success. Subsequently, the U. S. needs to plan on how to best structure forces and promulgate policy to return stability to nations and regions affected by terrorism. The paper focuses on large-scale conflict resolution where a significant multinational or unilateral campaign was or is required to remove a hotbed of terrorism activity or training. It centers on developing lessons for transitioning from the coordinated combat operations to that of occupational stability and support activities from a historical context. For purposes of definition, the period of transition from operational combat operations to the point of a new or re-installed government will be called post-conflict resolution.

Post-conflict resolution develops many fundamental questions that seem to be framed by a media establishment that is culturally tied to the concept of rapidly completing closure for every event in today's world. The media contributes to the expectation of quick solutions to questions such as: When do we exit?, What are the conditions of exit—is it a based on a time or is it event driven?, and, how do we re-deploy to home--individuals, with a unit, or do we set up a permanent command structure? While these questions are relevant, they may only be superficial. In order to better understand what it takes to achieve post-conflict resolution in a failed or failing state harboring terrorism, it is more useful to think in terms of transitioning leadership responsibilities among the instruments of governing power, (diplomatic, information, military, and economic structures)[1] between the host nation state, international partners, and the United States. Therefore, an evolving and continuous commitment to the nation with the terrorist or insurgent presence is achieved rather than an 'exit strategy'.

For the foreseeable future, the U. S. and those nations of the international community that feel equal risk to their national sovereignty and way of life must and, it seems currently, will act to preserve

their social, economic, and democratic values abroad. Specifically addressed, the use of the tools of terror (assassination, sabotage, extortion, bombing, propaganda, etc.) to foment uncertainty, destabilize national agencies, or reduce international economic stability will not be tolerated. The problem is multi-faceted.

Some states harbor the perpetrators of terrorism freely. In others, nations promote their existence; and, in others, the states are not nationally formidable enough to remove the organizations that purvey the terror. Therefore, these nations will inevitably request assistance, or be forcibly entered to remove or degrade existing terrorist capabilities. The acts of degrading these unconventional elements through force will inevitably lead to pockets of chaos that varying in size shape and composition unless pertinent action is taken. The concern and scope of this paper is to focus on those instances where the terrorist training and execution apparatus is so large that it will require initial and continued effort to degrade their capability and not on the removal of small isolated action cells. After initial conventional or host-nation supported activities occur the nation or area of operations will require a transition plan that is organized, vetted and includes an end state supported by an international consensus of states.

U. S. involvements in constabulary operations in the early 20th century provide insight to the operational strategies of post-conflict resolution after conventional or sustained operations. Foremost to these insights is the relationship between the principal occupying nation(s) and the host-nation government and, secondary, (in the case of understanding the U. S. approach) is the relation between the U. S. military and the U. S. Department of State. In each of the cases presented, a trend of two transition points before the country is returned to host nation control is observed. The first point of transition is when the military is completely in charge of all civil authority operations and establishing stability. During this period a larger emphasis is on quelling acts of violence. The second point of transition is when the military begins to support the host nation in creating national organizations and infrastructure. While both population support and stability operations occur simultaneously at some point a shift of priority of importance occurs. The measures of effectiveness as to the success or failure of the host-nation is ultimately tied to level the insurgent/terrorists have been marginalized and security restored.

The note here is that in the cases of successful U. S. foreign support the insurgency has not always been exterminated but, rather, suppressed and, in some cases, recognized in a remote enough faction so as to make it legitimate but ineffective.

The illustrative examples of past pre-emptive operations were conducted by the U. S. government in cooperation and against destabilizing foreign nations between 1900 and 1940 in the Philippines, Nicaragua and Cuba. This era was chosen because U. S. nation building missions and occupations were prevalent and their expeditionary nature provides many similarities to the dilemmas faced by the U. S. today. The cases of the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Cuba form a base foundation that allows for comparison and contrast with U. S. and coalition efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq since September 11, 2001 and future operations that may occur.

U. S. Constabulary Operations, 1900-1934: Philippines, Nicaragua, and Cuba

U. S constabulary operations in the Philippines, Nicaragua and Cuba provide a composite framework which allows one to understand how the U. S. has developed counter-insurgency doctrine.[2] The U.S. intervened in each of these cases to create conditions that would provide a better environment for the people; create a stable legitimate government with which to conduct relations; and to protect that U. S. investment and economic ventures.

Constabulary operations or small wars as a form of pre-emptive policy are enticing in that they can allow a nation to achieve it's interests by prohibiting, inhibiting, or quelling destabilizing international conditions with out expending large amounts of political and military capital. Another reason to enter into pre-emption strategy is because it buys diplomatic leverage and an ability to negotiate from a position of strength. The position of strength is gained because even if constabulary operations do not satisfactorily achieve a level of self-governance envisioned by the foreign entity as an end state, the fact that the operation allows the supporting external government and military a period where full dedication of resources and manpower are not required constitutes a diplomatic form of success. This is much the same as the current pre-emptive terrorism policy. The action of eliminating a potential threat

even if the demonstration of national terrorism support or activity is not completely overt or founded is still an action of reducing the terrorism capability in an area and, ultimately, reduces the risk of terrorism in the host nation and abroad.

During constabulary operations military forces are called upon to establish and enforce civil authority. Because military forces are self-sustaining, bring overwhelming force, and can re-establish law and order rapidly, they can react before a conflict becomes larger, or civil disobedience fractures into unmanageable civil war. However, the military force in each of these areas must be closely vetted by international consensus (e.g. UN, OAS, OSCE, et. al) in order to discern the lead military's ability to enforce and maintain good order and discipline. Ultimately, the focus of the military force is to find a point of peaceful transfer of civil authority to the new host nation government while ensuring the conditions of entry do not worsen.

The U. S. constabulary operations examples that are discussed further in this paper highlight historical occurrences of where the points of peaceful transfer occur. The historical examples also provide relevant lessons to the current U. S. operations as to how the points of transition can be recognized and how the U.S. and coalition nations should think about organizing forces during the post-conflict resolution period.

In the Nicaragua example, a *Guardia* (the name for the national defense force of Nicaragua and modeled after the Haiti and Dominican Republic forces) was re-established in 1926 using U. S. Marine trained Nicaraguan militia members. The *Guardia*'s mission was to protect the outlying areas and ensure the continued Conservative Party Rule. While the *Guardia*-Marine cooperation had initial problems, its continued presence and support from the U. S. State Department provided enough firepower and authority to ensure that a full civil war was never able to erupt. The presence of the U. S. Marine officers and their constant attention to civil matters ensured that eventually the *Guardia* became strong enough to secure the outlying areas and remain sufficiently loyal to the government enough that they would not overthrow the elected regime. The Marine actions allowed negotiations to occur amongst internal Nicaraguan party

factions and the neighboring state of Honduras along with regional influence of Mexico. In fact, it was the very presence and discipline of the *Guardia* and the Marines that allowed a successful national election in 1928; enforced the Peace of Tipitapa; and allowed for the withdrawal of the Marines in 1933.[3]

The Nicaraguan example is a lesson that demonstrates the use of U. S. presence to maintain order and enforcement of agreements created by the international diplomatic process.[4] The interest and open support by Mexico and Honduras of the insurgency in Nicaragua provide a telling story of why the U. S. must remain committed to fledging governments who are at risk for self-determination. However, the Nicaraguan case also demonstrates the precarious conditions a U. S. military force is subjugated to perform under when the U. S. is still formulating policy positions while a combat action is on going. In the war on terrorism the Nicaraguan example gives us lessons on the importance of a trained law enforcement force and the need to remain and advise this force for long periods in order to promote diplomatic developments. While the Nicaraguan campaign demonstrates successful post-conflict structure, a more streamlined approach to constabulary operations conducted by the U.S. is the Philippine expedition.

The Philippine case provides similar anecdotal evidence to the validity of intervening in national affairs where U. S. interests may be at stake and will, most certainly, have a negative impact on the economy, security, and persons of the U. S. if left unchecked. The keynote in looking at the history of the Philippine constabulary experience of the United States is that it was a U. S. military unilateral operation. The military had full and complete authority to organize and conduct civil-military programs toward the end of returning control to the Filipino representative government. This differs greatly from the approach that the Nicaraguan example provided because of changing U. S. Department of State policies and agreements along with the limited-objective constraints imposed by the advent of the Wilsonian Doctrine.[5]

The other unique and positive contributing factor to the successful 'Pacification' of the Philippines is the presence of senior leadership that was comfortable with civil administration and policy

enforcement. In the case of the Philippines, this individual was Brigadier General Henry T. Allen. General Allen, as Chief of the Philippine Constabulary, bore the responsibility to quell the Philippine insurrectionists and set up a provisional government. A 5,000 man Filipino constabulary force organized by his predecessor; a strong belief in self-governance; and a belief in firm and fair discipline enabled General Allen to begin to address the problems of the post-conflict Philippines from 1902-1907.[6]

The Philippines situation demonstrates some critical lessons in the successful establishment of a self-governing nation after conflict. The first critical lesson is the fact that there was unity of effort *and* unity of command. General Allen would remain in the Philippines as the Chief of the Constabulary until its retirement in 1908. General Allen also quickly established the Philippines into jurisdictions with American officers as governors but with local representation. He enforced hygiene laws, reduced sickness, formed 'scout' companies, and instituted concentration camps to create visible note where the insurgents were living. The U. S. should take this lesson to heart in thinking about post-conflict resolution. The presence of a command element that has oversight of both the military and civic programs is essential. This should not be an ambassadorial relationship of consensus. In order to be as effective as the Philippines, the use of a hierarchical and centralized governing structure would appear to be essential for transition to self-governance by the host-nation.

The next critical lesson was the use of only small amounts of U. S. regular troops to support the efforts of the Constabulary force. Thus, the populace saw that the forces of the government were solving the problems and not a foreign occupation force. This is not to say that U. S. forces did not partake in counter-insurgency operations but it is to say that they did so only as a small advisory force, not the bulk of the any combat operation element. Post-conflict resolution policy should consider this lesson carefully. Large footprints of foreign forces no matter their intentions of good will are still large footprints of foreign forces. There is no way to stop the perception of puppeteer governance and this type of post-conflict policy severely hampers the tempo of transition to a point of national self-determination. Even in the cases where there is no viable military force available after an operational conflict in a weakened state

it may be better to form 'freedom zones' with a small lethal and trainable force rather than try to build the entire national structure at once. Again, a long-term commitment and a competent military force are the essential ingredients for success.

The final observation of the Philippine operation is that the U. S. constabulary command fully utilized the 'carrot and stick' approach to gaining compliance in the Philippines. While discipline was swift and extreme on insurgent offenders, the U. S. took great strides to educate the populace; build roads; increase health care capability; and establish a fair and equitable justice system. In the final note, though, the success of the Philippine campaign may be best ensconced in General Allen's vision of constabulary operations by the statement that, "the only remedy is killing and for the same reason that a rabid dog must be disposed of. Education and roads will effect what is desired, but while awaiting these, drastic measures are obligatory."[7] This speaks to the necessity of hard-line discipline and enforcement of policy that only a military force can bring to a failed or weak state until stability is established. This statement also speaks to the concept of providing progress as a part of a 'privilege package of services' that the populace can appreciate when given in reciprocation for complying with government rule.

Constabulary operations in Cuba were dissimilar to those conducted in the Philippines and Nicaragua. The focus in Cuba was on humanitarian aid and civic assistance. The Cuban effort was America's attempt at 'bloodless' nation building. It failed mainly because of a lack of a unified political objective. However, the actions in Cuba demonstrate the military's ability to contain a lawless and subverted foreign government situation until U. S. foreign policy can be determined. This case is relevant because the U. S. during this Global on War Terrorism period may be called on frequently to support a weak government from collapsing to point of chaos that promotes terrorist support or training and all during a period of incomplete formulated national policy.

The Cuban situation is unlike the other two cases in that during the armed conflict period the U. S. was not involved. Rather, the United States gained rights to Cuba from a brokered agreement with the Spanish in 1898 with our occupation beginning in January of 1899 and inherited a lawless society

with an armed revolutionary force that outnumbered the American force by almost 5: 1.[8] The U. S. forces under the command of General Brooke were successful in disarming the military force; putting large portions of the civilian populace back to work by instituting public works projects and beginning education reforms but this was not enough for Washington.

The problem in the Cuban occupation is that it was all American and all the way, too fast. The progressive nature of the occupation did not account for the cultural and socio-economic differences of the Hispanic heritage and Roman Catholicism of Cuba. The results were felt when the U. S. left the newly paved streets in 1902 and the country of Cuba slipped back into ruin almost immediately. The Cuban occupation in today's terms would be much closer to disaster and humanitarian relief than anything else and the lessons of this three year debacle seems to read as some historical amalgamation of Somalia in 1993 and the Haitian invasion in 1994. [9] This example speaks of what not to do in post-conflict resolution. The creation of democratic institutions and infrastructure are irrelevant and wasteful if not first put in the context of a stable governing force and an enforcement element of law and order. The Cuban experience also relates the need to for post-conflict resolution to be thought of in terms of a bilateral, at the least, and, in the norm, a multi-national effort.

Conclusion: What Have We Learned and Where Are We Today?

The constabulary operations of the inter-war period are strangely similar, yet each operation demonstrates different applications of national power and will depending on the role of diplomatic power and the application of military force. This will not be unlike the unique situations each case in the onward moving Global War on Terrorism will provide. The actions in Nicaragua provide lessons that constabulary operations can be effective as economy of force applications with defined political objectives but only if those political objectives (and the factions that represent those objectives) don't change with each foreign election or whimsical whiplash from Congress. The actions of the Philippines give us the long-term solutions of a periphery operation in which the military was left to itself to solve all areas of the problem and unity of command and effort were synchronized. While the Philippines would

seem to be the archetypal solution to use for formatting future operations stabilizing senior leadership would come at a high cost. This type of dedication may be just the solution needed to create conditions of a successful hand-over to new national governments, especially in the wake of multi-lateral coalition efforts—no matter what the previous professional models dictated.

Recognizing further the trends of the constabulary operations to the future of post-conflict periods, the Cuban example and, to a smaller degree, the Philippine operation, demonstrate the needed presence of both 'carrot and stick' policies to propel a fledgling nation-state forward. The host nation government must be compelled to have ownership and responsibility for every program began and supported in the country. Also, each program must meet the cultural and socio-economic conditions of the country at its current growth rate—not at an anticipated growth rate.

The assessment of constabulary operations relevance and impact continues even further today. While the advent of WMD devices has ensured that the terrorist can deliver his message with much more cataclysmic effects in one operation than in previous history the terrorist is still required to find a place to live amongst, at best, a conciliatory population and, at worst, a hostile population. The terrorist organization must also plan, organize and resource the concepts of any action. These activities require communication, transfer of funds, and feedback. This means civil law, enforcement, and authority can be brought to bear with overbearing force. And, like the lessons of constabulary operations history, in the time of the most chaos and uncertainty the military is the right instrument of national power to use to achieve U. S. national security objectives abroad—it is not the time to gradually negotiate a brokered conflict or form multiple policy and authority entities.

The lessons of the historical cases of the inter-war constabulary period provide us with guidance as how to make the environment of the terrorist the least hospitable. The lessons of our military forefathers also tell us that the U. S. cannot afford to create shifts in policy based on political party change, nor can we afford to forget the programs that return the population to its nature state of self-determination and growth. While the future may not hold a large scale conflict looming on the horizon

like the small-wars of the constabulary period were moving toward in 1940, the future does seem to require efforts to thwart insurgent and terrorist forces using pre-emptive policy that will surely require post-conflict resolution.

Notes

[1] The concept of the instruments of governing power is taken from the concept of the components of national power as conceived in Field Manual,

[2] The constructed period of this paper does not allow for the acknowledgement of the formative contributions of the U. S. Western expansion campaigns to U. S. military nation-building. However, the author wishes to admit that much of early foreign expansionism policy and execution was conceptualized from the U. S. frontier experience. To include, and, perhaps, most importantly, General Orders 100 being issued in 1863.

[3] Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas., *H100: Transformation in the Shadow of Global Conflict.* Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2003. Dirty Jobs and Doctrinal Development: The USMC between Wars, pp. 95-110.

[4] The U. S. State Department was the prime force which conceived of the employment and need for U. S. military involvement in Nicaragua from 1912 – 1933. And, in each case of negotiation for cessation of activities it was the State Department which ensured that U. S. military forces would be available to keep the peace.

[5] Birtle, Andrew J., *U. S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine.* Washington, D. C.: Center for Military History Press, 2001. Chapter 6: " Military Interventions During the Wilson Administration 1914-1920" in *H100: Transformation in the Shadow of Global Conflict.* Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2003. Dirty Jobs and Doctrinal Development: The USMC between Wars, p. 135.

[6] Birtle, Andrew J., *U. S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine.* Washington, D. C.: Center for Military History Press, 2001, pp 153-154.

[7] Ibid. p. 154.

[8] Ibid, p. 104.

[9] Ibid, pp. 105-108.