The Experience of British Counter-Insurgency Campaigns and Implications for Iraq

The war and civil strife in Iraq are now in their sixth year. Much has been written on the war and the demoralizing American experience in dealing with it. A burgeoning literature has examined the rationale for going to war and how and why the aftermath of the toppling of Saddam Husayn was handled so ineptly. Considerable attention has centered on the problem of Iraq's persistent insurgency and efforts to counter it.

Two historical parallels have received worthwhile attention. The first – and most obvious – is the British experience in invading then-Ottoman Mesopotamia during World War I, legitimized (at least in international eyes) by the creation of a League of Nations mandate and the founding of a new state. The parallels with the present situation have been observed in such respects as military invasion, establishment of a new government by the occupying power, and, subsequently, the emergence of insurrection.[1]

The second, even more popular, historical parallel is Vietnam. Numerous observers have maintained, correctly, that Vietnam is not Iraq and that the nature of the combat, the opposition, and the terrain are markedly different. Nevertheless, the parallel holds validity in terms of US policy-making. Deceptive tactics were employed to rationalize the requirement for war, mistaken assumptions were made about how the initial engagement would spell success, and then the deepening and protracted spirals of involvement are remarkably similar.[2]

The intention here is not to cover ground already well and capably trod. Instead, this study examines the relevance to Iraq of a history of British counter-insurgency efforts – particularly those taking place after World War II and in the Third World.

British Counter-Insurgency Efforts After World War II

While the origins of each of these conflicts

naturally were distinct and unique, by and large they tended to fit in the category broadly defined of revolutionary war. That is, they sought to overthrow existing governments and gain independence, employing guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics to achieve their aims.[3] The most relevant of these are briefly summarized below.

Malaya.[4] In the post-World War II era, the Communist takeover of China provided the earliest example of a successful "revolutionary war" strategy. But the Malayan insurgency of 1948 to 1956, with a Communist front composed of largely ethnic Chinese battling the British and mostly Malayan plantation workers, was defeated by successful British counter-insurgency strategy, notably reliance on effective intelligence, extensive patrolling that hampered guerrilla movements and refuges, and cultivation of popular support with progressive moves towards the granting of Malayan independence. The United States made use of the lessons of the emerging British model of counter-insurgency warfare in the Philippines but failed to apply them in Vietnam.[5]

Kenya.[6] The origins of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya lay in the grievances of the Kikuyu over "stolen land" worked by the white population. Under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, some dissident activities began in 1948.   The so-called Mau Mau grew increasingly extremist over the following years but the government seemed ill-prepared to respond effectively.   By 1953, more than 10,000 British troops were fighting the insurgency, along with 15,000 police and 20,000 home guard. Their efforts, however, were hampered by the expanse of territory to be contained and the rough forest terrain. A mile-wide "prohibited area" was established to deny the Mau Mau sanctuary in the Forest Reserves, complemented by a 50-mile long ditch filled with sharpened stakes and barbed wire, and the forests were bombed while stringent measures were introduced to control the civil population.   Frank Kitson, then a young British officer, introduced "pseudo-gangs" to infiltrate Mau Mau gangs and gain intelligence.   Massive sweeps were carried out to capture or kill Mau Mau insurgents and the capture of the remaining leader effectively ended the war in 1956. Kenyatta was freed in 1961 and became president of an independent republic in 1963.

Cyprus.[7] The Cyprus insurgency began in the early 1930s when Greek Cypriots began opposing British rule and calling for union with Greece. Following World War II, George Grivas organised harassing activities against the British through the EOKA and the British decision in 1954 to move its Middle East land and air headquarters from Suez to Cyprus, thus indicating its intentions to keep sovereignty over the island, inflamed the situation.   The   following   year,   EOKA organised protests and began attacking police. Negotiations with moderate Greek Cypriots were halted in 1956 when Archbishop Makarios was exiled to the Seychelles, leaving leadership in the hands of the more extreme Grivas.   In response, EOKA stepped up its attacks and the government responded with heavy-handed tactics that alienated much of the population. British security measures were attenuated because of the Suez War that year, allowing the small EOKA forces to expand their activities, while British recruitment of Turkish Cypriots into the police widened the conflict into a Greek-Turkish divide.   Two years later, Britain offered sovereignty in return for permanent base rights: Makarios agreed and Grivas was forced to disband EOKA and relocate to Greece.

Oman.[8] Since the 19th century, Oman had been divided between a hereditary régime, the

Sultanate, based on the coast and a semi-independent theocracy, the Imamate, in the interior. It was the intention of the coastal ruler, Sultan Sa'id bin Taymur, to peacefully reassume control over the interior upon the death of the theocracy's highly respected religious leader. But the latter lived until 1954 when external Arab politics intruded on Oman. The leader's replacement was heavily influenced by his brother and a prominent tribal leader. The Sultanate's small, British-officered forces easily captured the Imamate's capital in late 1955 and its leaders either capitulated or fled the country. But they returned in 1957 with Saudi and Egyptian help and briefly regained control of the interior before being forced to retreat to a plateau high in the mountains. Although the local forces faced no resistance from the general population, they were unable to dislodge the small core of Imamate leaders and followers from their aerie, from which they regularly descended to plant mines and carry out other acts of sabotage. It took two squadrons of Britain's Special Air Service (SAS), just completing their operations in Malaya, to ascend the mountain and force the hard-core to flee to Saudi Arabia. This action brought the insurgency to an end although minelaying and other sabotage continued on a low-level until 1970.

Aden.[9] By the mid-20th century, the strategic harbor of Aden at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula had become a British crown colony while a network of treaties of protection bound the various tribes and petty rulers in the surrounding hinterland to Britain as the Aden Protectorate. A strong labor movement emerged in Aden and adopted political overtones as some of its leaders opposed a continued British presence. The attempt to create a Federation of South Arabia to unite urban Aden and the undeveloped Protectorate never achieved its intended legitimacy and the start of a serious insurgency was marked by an attempted assassination of the British High Commissioner for Aden in 1963. With the declaration of an "emergency," attention focused on the mountainous region of Radfan north of Aden. British attempts to pacify the area faced increasingly violent opposition, fueled by Egyptian assistance and enhanced by sanctuary in neighboring North Yemen. A struggle for control of the insurgency emerged between the Egyptian-backed FLOSY (Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen) and the more radical NLF (National Liberation Front). The insurgency increasingly employed terrorism against British targets in Aden itself at the same time that it was busy displacing the traditional rulers across the Protectorate. By 1967, the British Labor government announced that, despite Aden's importance as Britain's last major base in the Middle East, it would withdraw its forces and negotiate with the NLF on the terms for independence.

Dhufar.[10] The insurgency in Dhufar, the southern province of Oman, began in the early 1960s as a protest against the repressive rule of Sultan Sa'id bin Taymur. Essentially a nationalist movement at first, the insurgency gradually turned farther to the left. Months after a Marxist régime emerged in neighboring South Yemen, Marxist elements in the Dhufar insurgency took control of the front. Despite their British leadership, the undermanned and under-equipped Sultanate's forces gradually were forced to retreat to the small coastal plain. In 1970, the Sultan was overthrown by his son, Qabus bin Sa'id, a Sandhurst product, who declared his intention to modernize the country. Britain provided additional support, the Sultan expanded his armed forces and provided them with new weapons and equipment, and later Jordan and especially

Iran provided troops. But as the Sultanate's capabilities grew, so did those of the front, which received sanctuary and political support from South Yemen and military assistance from China and the Soviet Union. The Sultanate forces gradually were able to clear successive zones of the mountainous province and force the insurgents to concentrate in the west. At the same time, the Sultan offered amnesty and membership in home guards to surrendering insurgents and emphasized civil development. A final push in 1975 liberated the western zone of Dhufar, forcing nearly all insurgents and all of the supporting South Yemeni troops to retreat across the border.

The application of counter-insurgency strategy to defeat these movements evolved over time. As insurgency concepts develop, so must counter-insurgency theory. While insurgencies were transformed into guerrilla warfare and revolutionary goals, so incumbent authorities were forced to adapt their strategies. It was recognized from an early date that conventional responses to guerrilla activities, let alone terrorist tactics, were useless. But armies tend to be configured to fight conventional wars and small wars tend to be unglamorous, time-consuming, without clear-cut victories, often politically ambiguous, and inexpedient in terms of typical training and organization. It is not surprising, therefore, that armies traditionally have disliked fighting small wars and that police or gendarmeries have played important roles in such conflicts.[11]

Undoubtedly the most crucial factor in developing strategies to overcome armed dissidence has been experience in the field. Various writers have commented on the difference between British and American approaches. Perhaps because of Britain's imperial outlook, it tended to view each insurgency uniquely. The British treated the Malayan Emergency, for example, as a local problem requiring the granting of unusual latitude for the local commander and the army and police forces involved. The Kennedy administration, however, came to view insurgencies as one aspect of a Communist grand design. Thus, they formed one part of the global strategic picture and, because the Cold War was seen to have a zero-sum basis, they must be managed centrally from Washington.[12] Vietnam, of course, was the principal testing ground for this conception but also a clear illustration of its failure.

British Counter-Insurgency Theorists and Their Strategies

Not surprisingly, the "brush-fire" wars that engaged the British generated a considerable amount of theorizing about "counter-insurgency" methods, in large part meant to guide British military policy in future conflicts. In particular, three "working" theorists were important in exerting impact on British operational thinking and formulating British strategy on the subject.

Robert Thompson's ideas grew out of his experiences as a field officer and then a staff officer in Malaya during the "Emergency" in the 1950s and then as head of the British Advisory Mission to Vietnam in the early 1960s. His earlier writings were largely specific to the Vietnam case study but the third of his books on the subject encompassed explanation of what he termed "revolutionary war" and the role of the Soviet Union and Communist China in promoting it.[13]

Building on his experience in Malaya, Thompson elucidated five principles of counter-insurgency. Governments should have a clear political aim, function within the law, establish a co-ordinated overall plan

encompassing both political and military objectives, place emphasis on countering political subversion, and secure their base area before conducting a military campaign. Additional points including placing reliance on police above the military and the necessity of operations by small units in order to carry the offensive to the insurgents.[14]

These principles were subsequently reformulated in terms of six essential factors contributing to the successful containment of Maoist insurgencies in Malaya and the Philippines. These were: ① the recognition that political action designed to prevent the insurgents gaining popular support should take priority over purely military action; ② the requirement for complete civil-military co-operation; ③ the need for co-ordination of intelligence; ④ the separation of the insurgents from the population through the winning of hearts and minds; ⑤ the appropriate use of military force to support pacification; and ⑥ lasting political reform to prevent the recurrence of insurgency.[15] While other countries slavishly applied the same principles to significantly different circumstances, the British approach was hailed as being flexible in recognizing that different social and economic conditions required alterations in tactics.[16]

Julian Paget was a serving British officer tasked with developing measures to counter the anti-British groups in Aden in the second half of the 1960s. He had also served in Palestine in 1945 to 1948. The outcome of his researches from earlier conflicts and his experience in Aden was a book titled *Counter-insurgency Operations: Techniques of Guerrilla Warfare*.[17]

Writing in the mid-1960s, Julian Paget, laid out what he regarded as the essential requirements for counter-insurgency operations. These were: ① civil-military understanding, ② a joint command and control structure, ③ good intelligence, ④ mobility, and ⑤ training. These dovetailed with conditions that Thompson had observed earlier. Furthermore, Paget stressed that "These requirements are different from those in conventional warfare in several ways, and it is not sufficient merely to adapt conventional warfare methods to meet the special conditions of counter-insurgency campaigning."[18]

Frank Kitson had seen action with the British Army in Kenya and Malaya before a War Office appointment involved him in the planning for the 1950s operations in Oman. Subsequently, he saw action in Cyprus as well. Although his ideas of counter-insurgency warfare took form during his involvement with these wars, their exposition in book form did not appear until the 1970s.[19] Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations* caused a stir on its publication in 1971. His central thesis was that the British Army had been trained primarily for conventional warfare whereas most of its operations since World War II had involved small wars. He therefore advocated greater emphasis on counter-insurgency training and stressed that responsibility for intelligence should rest with the army rather than the police. But since his book appeared at a time when Northern Ireland was becoming particularly troublesome, controversy arose over the application of his ideas to urban unrest rather than colonial or Third-World conflicts.[20]

Meanwhile, Kitson emphasized the complementarity of defensive and offensive operations in the framework of a co-ordinated political and economic plan. He classified defensive operations as "those designed to prevent insurgents from disrupting the government's programme. ... [O]ffensive operations ... are those designed to root out the insurgents themselves."[21] There must be a balance between the two: too little reliance on

defensive operations gives insurgents the opportunity to score successes and undermine pro-government morale while insufficient attention to offensive operations allows insurgent movements to grow and thus require more and more resources to be devoted to quelling the problem. Kitson saw part of the political aspect as countering insurgent propaganda, a difficult act to accomplish given the delicate nature of offensive operations in areas of uncommitted or hostile populations. While defensive operations involve guarding and protecting assets, as well as maintaining law and order, another priority is thwarting insurgent attempts to cultivate support from the population. This involves a "hearts and minds" campaign and a close relationship between civil and military authorities.[22]

As mentioned above, many of Kitson's ideas were formed as a result of his observations in Kenya in particular (where he seems to have acquired his insistence on the importance of "trackers"), and in Malaya, as well as northern Oman and later in Cyprus. Operations in Kenya were more dependent on the application of large-scale force and were less successful in accomplishing "hearts and minds" aspects, although some long-term reform was carried out and an accelerated path to independence was instituted.[23]

Tactics Developed in British Wars

With time and experience, these strategists were able to identify and codify a significant number of tactics and approaches. The following discussion lists some relevant tactics that were incorporated into the body of British counter-insurgency theory and provides examples – particularly in Oman – of where they were used effectively.[24]

The Centrality of Intelligence. The creation of effective intelligence – beyond, strictly speaking, military (or operational) intelligence – played a key role in countering all insurgencies. For Oman in the 1950s and 1960s, this factor consisted mostly of "tribal" intelligence: determining relations between tribes, assessing the extent of *shaykh*ly authority within tribes, and maintaining files of suspects. After 1970, there was a shift to a broader based intelligence, with a strong urban focus, reflecting changing threats to internal security.

The Evolution of Appropriate Counter-Measures Against a Mix of Insurgent Tactics. As Paget observed, "Insurgency may consist of guerrilla warfare, sabotage, subversion and terrorism, or only some of them, according to the circumstances."[25] The Imamate movement in Oman only flirted with these tactics and so was only intermittently successful. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) in the south of that country, however, studied the Maoist textbook thoroughly and applied as many principles to its cause as possible. Still, in many ways, the application to Dhufar was an imperfect fit.

At the same time, many shared insurgent tactics emerged independently in geographically separated battlegrounds. A common feature has been the ad hoc fashioning of available weapons and a growing proficiency in their use. In this sense, all modern insurgencies display tactical similarities. As another writer remarked recently,

> The pattern of Iraqi activity thus far looks remarkably similar to that in Palestine with roadside bombs, which have also been used by Hezbollah in Lebanon, and other so-called improvised explosive devices; ambushes of soft-skinned vehicles; opportunistic rocket-propelled grenade and shooting attacks on military personnel; attacks on civilian members of the Coalition authorities and foreign

personnel working in some way for the Coalition; attacks on Iraqi 'collaborators,' most recently police and army recruits; and attacks on economic targets such as power stations, oil installations, and pipelines. There has also been an increase in the number of attacks upon 'soft' targets, principally civilian gatherings. This does not reflect the tactics employed in Palestine during the Mandate but does reflect insurgencies elsewhere and an increasing confluence between insurgent and terrorist methods.[26]

Appropriate Use of Forces: Army vs. Police. Before World War II (and even as late as the 1950s), British counter-insurgency operations were better known as "imperial policing." Insurgencies almost always consist of guerrilla war. By definition, conventional armies are not well suited for guerrilla war. Indeed, countering insurgencies often consists in the main of policing rather than waging war. Should police forces, therefore, be in the vanguard of counter-insurgency efforts instead of regular army? Activities of insurgents resemble those of criminals and thus can be better dealt with by the police with the army in support. Furthermore, defeating insurgents depends on effective intelligence, which the police can acquire more efficiently than the army.[27] This was not possible in either Oman campaign since no police force, local or national, existed in the 1950s and the Royal Oman Police, established after 1970, were not physically present in Dhufar until after the war ended there. Instead, all intelligence was concentrated in the army.

Appropriate Use of Forces: Special Forces. It should be remembered that Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) was important to the success of both campaigns in Oman, but it was not primarily an SAS show in either war. The foundations for success in the 1950s were pacification of the countryside through extensive patrolling (by both Sultanate and British forces) and the development of good civil-military relations. The SAS role came at the very end. Although it is unlikely that the Imamate leaders would have been dislodged from al-Jabal al-Akhdar massif except by the SAS, it should be noted that the campaign of bombings and mining continued in Oman despite the absence of the leaders. If they had remained on the mountain plateau, it is unlikely to have made much practical difference.

In Dhufar, the SAS units (operating under the euphemism, British Army Training Teams [BATT]) played an essential role in demonstrating for the first time the benefits of government to the *jabbali*s (mountain people) and in organizing and leading the *firqat* (home guard units of surrendered tribesmen), which not only countered the forces of the Front on their own terms but increasingly reduced grassroots support for the Front. Nevertheless, the successful prosecution of the war required long, dangerous years of combat by 10,000 members of the Sultan's Armed Forces, backed by other British, Jordanian, and Iranian units, as well as artillery, air, and defensive support.

Successful Creation and Use of Local Armed Forces. The key military element in the Sultanate's success in the 1950s was the creation of a trained and professionally commanded Sultanate army. Again, the key element in Dhufar was the development of a larger, better trained, more highly motivated, and professional armed forces. While the Omanis and the Baluch constituted the rank-and-file in Dhufar, Omanization in the officer ranks was making headway well before the end of the war. Although British and other external assistance was considerable, in the end the war was won on the ground by local forces.

Support of Local Population and "Hearts and Minds." The insurgents in Oman failed to win or sustain support throughout the target populations. This was particularly the case in

northern Oman where continued activity came to be viewed as tribally, rather than nationally or Imamate, based. In Dhufar, the Front alienated the population by its anti-Islamic zeal and tribal connections became increasingly paramount as the war progressed. Available manpower decreased with mounting defections. In the Dhufar case, the replacement of the régime provided the defining moment when the momentum began to shift back to the government. Sultanate victory in Dhufar was due to winning hearts and minds through civil development projects. While this was a substantial factor in southern Oman, it was of less importance in northern Oman. This difference may reflect a growth and evolution in popular expectations between the two periods.[28]

Separating Insurgents and Population. "Isolating the populace from the insurgents succeeded in Malaya and Kenya in denying mobility to the insurgents, because it deprived them of intelligence, food and shelter. Without intelligence about the Security Forces, the insurgents have to move more cautiously for fear of attack or ambush; without easy access to food, they have to move farther afield and to known areas to obtain their own supplies. Without the shelter that the villages offered, they have to stay in the jungle or forest."[29] This was less of a factor in Dhufar given the small population, its being scattered through the region, the transhumant nature of society, and the primacy of tribal ties.

"There are two basic requirements to be met before the support of the local population can be won by the counter-insurgent forces, either in the short or the long term. Firstly, the Government must demonstrate its determination and its ability to defeat the insurgents, for no one likes backing a loser, particularly in an insurgency. Secondly, the Government must convince the populace that it can and will protect its supporters against the insurgents, for no one likes being shot as the reward for loyalty."[30] The Sultanate recognized the priority of establishing careful civil-military relations from the 1970 coup on. The "hearts and minds" campaign, spearheaded initially by the BATT teams, emphasized improving the lives of both the people of the coastal towns and the *jabbali*s. These first medical and veterinary initiatives were followed by civil development efforts that followed the army into safe areas across the Jabal. This approach paralleled closely the earlier strategy in Malaya.[31]

Denial of Bases and Sanctuary. "Guerrillas need a base somewhere from which to operate, and from where they can be organized and controlled. It will usually be in a highly inaccessible area, difficult to locate or to attack; it may be in the theatre of operations, or, on occasions, it may be outside the theatre of operations altogether, as in the Korean and Vietnamese wars."[32] This held true in northern Oman in only the limited resort to the fastness of al-Jabal al-Akhdar when nearly all momentum had been lost. In Dhufar, however, it took two important forms. First, the stores of arms, ammunition, other supplies, and medical facilities were concentrated in the Shirshitti cave complex on one side of a steep canyon. The complex was impregnable to bombing and an ambitious attempt to seize control from the ground ended in nearly disastrous failure in 1974. Second, the sanctuary of Hawf and other nearby towns in South Yemen provided numerous benefits. The role of the Front's "capital" at Rakhyut was more symbolic than of military importance and it was easily captured as government operations began to clear the western sector.

Establishment of Firm Bases. The strategy in this regard was composed of a number of

essential components. "Offensive action need not be on a large scale, and may consist only of active and aggressive patrolling from a firm base, in order to dominate the areas required by the insurgents. ... The firm base thus established should be expanded gradually and systematically, so that the insurgents are excluded from complete areas one after another."[33] In Dhufar, firm bases began with the towns, including army and air facilities, secured behind perimeter wire. In the years after 1970, Sarfayt was established on the western border while posts were created throughout the mountains, beginning in the east.

Division of Theater into Zones. A complementary strategy was to divide Dhufar into zones (eastern, central, and western) and to eliminate insurgent "space" and neutralize the Front's presence in each zone beginning in the east. In the latter stages of the war, these divisions became more tangible with the creation of the Leopard, Hornbeam, and Damavand Lines. These tactics were eerily similar to Chiang Kai-shek's campaign against the Communists in the early 1930s.[34]

Establishment of a Home Guard. "As each area is freed of insurgent domination, it should be handed over to the local Armed Forces or Home Guard for protection and to the civil authorities for administration. This not only frees trained troops for more offensive operations, but also gives the Government an opportunity to win the support of the populace by wise and beneficent government."[35] The "local armed forces" in Oman were already the forces doing the clearing in most cases but the "home guard" in Dhufar was the *firqah* system administered by the BATT units under the supervision of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF).

Mobility to Aggressively Pursue the Offensive. "Once the Security Forces are released from local operations around the populated areas, they can set about pursuing the insurgents farther afield, following them up relentlessly wherever contact is made and harassing them at every opportunity. This calls for mobility to enable them to outmarch and outmanoeuvre the enemy, and can be achieved in several ways. The troops must be lightly equipped and suitably organized for small-scale operations, and must be fully airportable; the air forces can contribute tremendously to the mobility of the ground troops, particularly by the use of helicopters, which did more than any other measure to deprive the insurgents of their mobility in Cyprus, and in Malaya; in Vietnam they are the basis of almost all tactical mobility. Air supply also plays an important role."[36] Gradually as the SAF built up after 1970, it moved from its defensive posture to an offensive one involving more patrolling and contacts in the mountains and the establishment of permanent positions on the Jabal (including the capability to remain on the Jabal through the monsoon instead of withdrawing every year). The arrival of the Agusta Bell helicopters, beginning in early 1970, made an enormous difference in the field while the increase in fixed-wing aircraft permitted more substantial bases to be created throughout the region.

Advantage of Obscurity. Another advantage of both wars in Oman was their general obscurity. Vietnam is the most famous example of how the war effort was affected by adverse publicity and extensive television coverage but Britain also faced similar problems in Aden and Northern Ireland.[37] The wars in Oman, on the other hand, were little known outside the country and attracted little interest even in Britain. The secrecy surrounding them, however, generated a small but persistent attack on Britain and its "puppet" the Sultanate, especially by the Arab

League in the 1950s and various leftist organizations in Europe.

Impact of Technology. "Unconventional wars remain less affected by technology than their conventional counterparts primarily because technological innovation in warfare has concentrated on enhancing firepower. An overreliance on this kind of innovation contributed to the disaster of Vietnam. Technological improvements in transportation and logistics have, however, enhanced the counterinsurgency capabilities of the security forces. The helicopter was the unsung hero of the post-imperial era."[38] Although the war in Dhufar made good use of helicopters and other aircraft, advanced communications, and even Iranian naval vessels at the end, it was won mainly on the ground in small contacts. In part, this approach was necessary in order to spare the civilian population, livestock and their forage areas, from damage. It took years to expand the ranks of the SAF and to create a professional armed force, as well as to develop the *firqat*, but these soldiers – of different ethnicities and nationalities – fought long campaigns of close contact in hardship conditions and fought well. The equal tenacity of the Front's fighters contributed to the long duration of the small war. All of these wars, of course, would have been fought far differently if they had been chronologically located in an era of computers and smart munitions.

Broader Lessons of Oman. Sultanate success was conditioned on both political and military factors. Among the political factors, a key aspect was the establishment of firm control over the territory in question, as well as supervising and policing local affairs in a fair and just manner.   More generally, where counter-insurgency succeeded in these wars, it was due as much, or even more, to political considerations than to military victory.[39]

Relevance of the British Experience to Iraq

While Britain indisputably was fighting colonial/imperial wars, Iraq can and should be considered in terms of an imperial war as well. The same underlying factors exist in Iraq, such as resistance to foreign occupation and the problem of how to establish a legitimate and functional government to replace that foreign presence. The profusion of insurgent groups and goals – even the so-called "negative" or nihilist goals – should not be allowed to detract from the argument. Fundamentally, these factors have fallen within the parameters of modern insurgent wars.[40]

Certainly, the British wars discussed above exhibited significant dissimilarities from the Iraqi experience. Malaya was a "classical" Communist insurgency, overlaying a principal ethnic division. Cyprus was an anti-colonial independence movement, overlaying tensions between the Greek and Turkish communities. Oman in the 1950s was a religious/tribal insurrection overlaying an anti-colonial movement. Aden was quintessentially an anti-colonial movement. Oman (Dhufar) was an irredentist insurgency that eventually became a Marxist movement.   Most of these insurgencies took place in difficult terrain – mountains or jungles – that afforded good shelter and places to hide. Most did not encompass urban warfare, except Cyprus and Aden; a better example of urban fighting lies in Northern Ireland. In general, however, insurgencies have become more urban-based since the 1960s.[41]

Most of these earlier conflicts consisted of what Thompson termed "revolutionary wars." Iraq, however, represents a multiplicity of sources of varying ideologies and, even more importantly, differing goals – not all of which

are limited to or even principally directed at changing the state in Iraq. Some of the insurgent forces simply seek negative results. The mix includes resistance to American occupation, jihadism (pan-Islamic extremism), and elements of civil war in jockeying for position between ethnic and sectarian communities and for position inside specific communities (especially the Shi'ah). Nevertheless, much of the opposition exhibits "revolutionary" goals – defined in this context as an attempt to completely overthrow the existing system. In this sense, even the Saddamists can be seen as revolutionary in this context. Is Iraq different? Fundamentally, probably not.

> [Iraq] has been characterized as perhaps an example of a 'net war', in which loose groups often diametrically opposed to one another gravitate towards one another to carry out attacks, trade weapons or intelligence, and then disperse never to cooperate again. Yet, the pattern of insurgency in Iraq looks remarkably similar to that in Palestine in the Mandate years or Cyprus in the 1950s with the same dependence upon roadside bombs and IEDs. There was the same transition from amateur to more sophisticated insurgent operations in Aden in the 1960s, the same transition from shorter to longer-range attacks in the Dhofar in the 1970s. The increasing attacks on soft targets reflect many previous urban campaigns, while the suicide bombings clearly reflect Islamic practises in Lebanon, Israel and elsewhere.[42]

In addition, many of the tactics of insurgency and of counter-insurgency emerging over the last half century are germane to Iraq.

> It has been suggested above that the basic patterns of insurgency have not changed materially, and, indeed, that there are similarities between the emerging situation in Iraq and some earlier insurgencies in the Middle East. It follows, therefore, that the essentials of counterinsurgency also have remained fairly constant and that the kind of basic requirements for success that can be identified in campaigns since 1945 still hold

good. ... These are as applicable to offensive or defensive insurgency as to irregular conflicts falling short of insurgency. Equally, they are as applicable to Iraq as they were once to the British mandate in Palestine, or to Aden, Algeria, and Oman. Where they were not adhered to, as in Palestine, Aden, and Algeria, counterinsurgency failed; where it was, as in the Dhofar, counterinsurgency succeeded.[43]

Furthermore, many of these points have been enshrined in the recently released Army/Marine Corps counter-insurgency manual, the first revision in 20 years for the army and in 25 years for the marine corps. As the preface states, "Counterinsurgency operations generally have been neglected in broader American military doctrine and national security policies since the end of the Vietnam War over 30 years ago. This manual is designed to ... merge traditional approaches to COIN with the realities of a new international arena shaped by technological advances, globalization, and the spread of extremist ideologies – some of them claiming the authority of a religious faith."[44]

Relevance of Aden to Iraq

The insurgency in Aden displayed a number of aspects familiar to recent headlines from Iraq.[45] It embraced both a sustained guerrilla war in the hinterland and an equally persistent campaign of urban violence. At the same time, Britain's presence in Aden had been considered particularly important as nearly all British bases elsewhere in the Middle East and eastern Indian Ocean had been abandoned already. The largest military construction program in British history to date was carried out in Aden in the late 1950s, RAF Khormaksar on the outskirts of Aden was the busiest RAF airfield outside Britain in the early 1960s, and by 1964 there were more than 8000

British troops in Aden, not including dependents.[46]

The British presence in Aden and southern Yemen began with the occupation of Aden in 1839. Aden became a crown colony in 1937 when responsibility for the area was transferred from the British Government of India to the Colonial Office in London. Meanwhile, gradually increasing control or influence was exercised over Aden's hinterland. Treaties of protection – involving British responsibility for foreign affairs and defense but not internal administration – were signed with various statelets in the western region during the 19th and early 20th centuries, spurred in part by hostilities with Ottoman forces moving down from North Yemen in the 1870s and during World War I. Later forward policies in the east brought the states there under British protection as well. The contrast in political involvement between Colony and Protectorate was mirrored by economic and social differences. Aden, possessing one of the most important harbors on the sea route between Britain and India, became a heavily populated and prosperous port city with a diverse population of Europeans, Arabs, and South Asians. Most of the Protectorate, on the other hand, saw little change in its economic status and continued to be ruled by hereditary families deriving from a complex tribal social milieu.

The Radfan campaign opened a year after a 1962 revolution in North Yemen installed a government hostile to the British presence in southern Yemen. The government of the Yemen Arab Republic distributed propaganda in the Protectorate and supplied arms to tribal dissidents in Radfan, an isolated mountainous area north of Aden and adjacent to North Yemen that had long resisted British authority. The traditional form of punishment in Radfan had been "air control" but by the 1960s this

was considered politically unacceptable.[47] Thus a ground operation was organized to provide a "demonstration of force." When local forces were unable to hold the territory secured, a larger British force was organized. This force faced the obstacles of rough terrain, an exceedingly hot climate, a lack of intelligence, and logistical shortcomings. Although Radforce of 1963-1964 was a military success, what had been planned as a one-battalion operation requiring three weeks had grown to brigade strength and took three months. All the Protectorate was henceforward relatively quiet with a low level of dissidence until June 1967 – at which time dissidence broke into the open and led to the overthrow of all the Federal rulers.

At the same time, however, the focus of insurgency moved from rural guerrilla war to urban terrorism in Aden. Grenades were thrown at British targets, cars were sabotaged, British soldiers were shot at and killed, the local populace was intimidated by propaganda, threats, and assassinations (and, in particular, civil administrators and police officers), the local security forces were paralyzed by insurgent threats and penetration, attacks on local police disrupted intelligence gathering, and an effective propaganda campaign was carried out internationally.[48]

On 14 October 1963, the nationalists decided to pursue a "full revolutionary struggle" – thus the date became the anniversary of the revolution. A campaign of terrorist attacks ensued shortly afterwards. The numbers of terrorist incidents increased dramatically from 36 in 1964 with 36 casualties to 286 in 1965 with 239 casualties to 510 in 1966 and 573 casualties and finally to approximately 2900 in the first ten months of 1967 with 1248 casualties. This made a total of 3732 incidents and 2096 casualties.[49]

The 1964 Defence White Paper announced

that it expected South Arabia to achieve independence by 1968. Thus, the dissident groups and their supporters (Egypt in particular) began jockeying for position after independence. The aims of the nationalists were to undermine the positions of both the Federal and British Governments in such a way as to discredit them, and also to open up the way for a revolution leading to their overthrow; and to force the British to withdraw their military base from Aden. The methods that they adopted in order to achieve these aims were: intimidation of the local populace by every possible means; neutralization of the intelligence system of the Government; discrediting the Government and the Security Forces in every possible way; gaining maximum control by infiltration and subversion of Government bodies, and particularly those controlling the affairs of the people; and building up the maximum propaganda locally and worldwide for their cause and against that of Britain and the Federation.[50] Accordingly, an increasingly complex approach to counter-insurgency strategies was required.

The increasingly fraught and violent situation required a careful mix and balance among the many elements at play.[51] First, relations between civil authorities were complex, with principal figures being the High Commissioner (and behind him competition between the Colonial and Foreign Offices in London); the Federal Minister for Internal Security; and the Chief Minister of Aden State (ardent nationalist ʿAbd al-Qaʾim Makkawi).

Military authorities were equally complicated, consisting of the Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East and his subordinate Service commanders (Aden was just one of their responsibilities throughout the region); Commander Aden Brigade (with strained relations with a second brigadier at Little Aden

principally responsible for up-country operations). When situation became more serious, it was obvious that a two-star was required to take charge and the General Officer Commanding Middle East Land Forces was tasked with overall command.

Civil police formed the last part of the triumvirate. These consisted of the Aden Police (mostly Arab with some senior British commanders under the High Commissioner); the Police Special Branch (Arab and British personnel under the High Commissioner); and the Federal Armed Police (largely drawn from up-country Arabs for riot duties; technically it was a federal unit but fell under control of the High Commissioner and was based in Aden State). The police evinced divided loyalties and were troubled by realization that in an independent state they might be required to serve the very same people that they now hunted as enemies.

Intelligence was gathered wherever possible but was very scarce. The special branch played the biggest role but troops in the field were required to gather what they could. Civil-military relations were strained by the attitude of the Federal government (led by Chief Minister Makkawi), by the desire of most people for the British to leave, and by the nature of British soldiers defending themselves by fire in ambiguous circumstances.

In the final stages of the war, the fight was also hampered by the attitude of the British government and conflicting opinions regarding the importance of and motivations for remaining in Aden.[52] The 1966 Defence White Paper announced that Britain would withdraw all military forces at Aden's independence in 1968, thus abrogating its defense treaties with the Federation and other Protectorate rulers. This cut the ground under their agreement to cooperate and caused British forces to lose all local support (as

everyone had to plan forward to the day when they would be subject to local political forces). Britain was forced to assume direct control of the Federal government and, by early 1967, the commander of British forces was obliged to order the army to take control of internal security with the weakened police in support, rather than the more logical reverse.

At the same time, the nationalists began concerted large-scale actions aimed at exerting control over strategic locations of Aden, such as Shaykh 'Uthman. At the same time, hostilities between the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Southern Yemen (FLOSY) erupted into the open. The NLF had been backed originally by Nasir's Egypt and had reluctantly merged with its rivals into the Egyptian-backed FLOSY. This did not last long and the NLF withdrew, subsequently carrying out a campaign of assassination that effectively doomed their remaining rivals in FLOSY (the latter's position was weakened by Egypt's defeat in the June 1967 war and the evacuation of its forces from Yemen).

As the time before independence shortened, there arose the problem of a preponderance of 'Awlaqis in senior positions in the army and police. Since the 'Awlaqis had always cooperated with the British, it was becoming increasingly clear that their jobs were threatened and, in some cases, their lives as well. (After independence, most 'Awlaqis were purged, leading to a loss of professionalism in the security forces.) Enmity between officers of different tribes provoked mutiny on 20 June 1967. British forces were fired upon with loss of life and Crater fell into the hands of mutineers and the NLF. For political reasons, British forces felt unable to mount a drive to regain control and it took two weeks for the gradual re-assumption of British supremacy in Crater.

By August, it was clear that the NLF-led insurgency was taking control of the situation. In rapid succession, the NLF killed or expelled the Protectorate rulers who were unable to resist following the withdrawal of all British forces from the Federation in June. Meanwhile, the South Arabian Army (SAA) found itself in the middle between the Federal government and the nationalists, and therefore incapable of taking any action. At the same time, the Federal government effectively ceased to exist.

With this sequence of events, the only remaining duty for the British was to complete successfully a full withdrawal from Aden itself and the date was brought forward to 29 November 1967. Whether the withdrawal would be peaceful was kept in suspense due to continuing negotiations between the British government and the NLF in Geneva. The deteriorating situation forced the SAA to take decisive action and they declared for the NLF even as they were forceful in putting a stop to NLF/FLOSY infighting. All allegiance to the Federal government was terminated and the force restyled itself the "Arab Armed Forces in Occupied South Yemen." Many of the 'Awlaqis had been pro-FLOSY and left the army at this time.

The Lessons of Aden and Other Insurgencies

Certainly, there are many differences between Aden in the 1960s and Iraq in the 2000s. Aden had been in British hands for well over a century and the British outlook was tempered by its East-of-Suez rundown. Nevertheless, there are a number of aspects of the Aden war that can help illuminate difficulties in Iraq.

- The war in Aden had two aspects. On the one hand, parts of the Protectorate (particularly Radfan) exhibited a "traditional" tribal resistance to central authority. This was fanned by outside support and agitation into a sustained anti-British movement. On the other hand, urban labor and political unrest in Aden itself gradually gained momentum and eventually demonstrations and peaceful opposition descended into sabotage and terrorism. The campaign in Aden reinforced earlier British experience in Palestine and Cyprus that urban insurgencies are far more difficult to counter than rural ones.
- The British position in Aden suffered from the political unworkability of its attempt to merge two radically different political entities together: the urban, advanced Aden State with a rural, virtually unchanged hinterland in the Protectorate.
- The struggle for independence in Aden began with a variety of diverse bases of opposition and advocated means to achieve them. These ranged from the conservative South Arabian League based in the Protectorate and the relatively moderate People's Socialist Party that had grown out of the trade union movement in Aden to the NLF and FLOSY. The multiplicity of anti-British elements not only disappeared over time but the most radical group eventually trumped.
- Outside sanctuary and external assistance to the insurgents was of key importance. The sanctuary was primarily in North Yemen where the NLF and FLOSY had their headquarters and supplies. North Yemen had been hostile to the British in Aden during the days of the Imamate and became more so after the 1962 revolution. Equally significant was the role played by Egypt

during this period. Egypt had played a vital role in North Yemen's 1962 revolution and an Egyptian army dominated republican areas until the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Thus Cairo was able to easily provide funds, weapons, and supplies, and to manipulate Adeni insurgents, safe from British interference.
- The country as a whole exhibited divided loyalties. There was no sectarian divide as in Iraq but tribal differences and suspicions were possibly as serious. They threatened to destroy local security forces. At no time were these security forcees capable of replacing British authority.
- The effort on the ground was hampered by uncertain resolve back in London. New timetables for withdrawal were periodically issued and dates were regularly advanced. Thus, those individuals and groups that Britain had earlier persuaded to cooperate in the creation of a Federal government were completely undermined.[53]
- The early "amateur" nature of insurgent attacks on British and Federal targets evolved into more effective and sophisticated methods as the war progressed.[54]
- In the last months of the war, an escalating pattern of threats and assassinations against local administrators, security officers, and civilians as a whole dampened any enthusiasm or even reluctant willingness to cooperate with the British and the moribund Federal government.
- As the war wore on, the weakness and lack of legitimacy of indigenous government forced the British political and military establishment to take increasing charge of even routine affairs. This in turn provoked more attacks on British civilian as well as military targets.

The relevance of many of these points to

Iraq should be obvious but it may be helpful to draw a number of specific conclusions from Aden and the other British counter-insurgency wars. Foremost among these must be careful consideration of the extreme difficulty in devising and creating a viable successor government. Political systems cannot be imposed but must grow naturally out of the environment. Similarly, it is exceedingly challenging to create and administer effective local security forces. A strong, sustained effort is not always enough. Tailoring efforts to local criteria and providing only as much guidance and supervision as is absolutely necessary is crucial.

Divisions among insurgent groups often have a way of working themselves out – frequently through violence. Frequently, the more radical or extremist faction tends to win out. The longer a conflict persists, the less successful or relevant a solely military response becomes. That is, continued resistance tends to legitimize and strengthen the opposition. The escalation of forces deemed necessary to fight the war on the ground is often not enough to do the job and escalations are generally matched by increases in enemy capabilities.

It is worth repeating often that political concerns require priority over military goals. These include the importance of a "hearts and minds" emphasis, the devising of a viable successor government, and recognition of the political limitations of effective counter-insurgency operations in both rural and urban environments.[55]

At the same time, the lack of – or volatility of – resolve at home creates facts in the theater and accelerates withdrawal – although generally not fast enough. It is vital to know when to call it quits. It was perhaps easier for Britain because the wind-down of East-of-Suez and imperial obligations was seen as inevitable: it was better to leave for political and financial reasons than to stay and pursue a military solution.[56]

Finally, the imperial power should be prepared to deal politically with all possible opponents. To repeat the frequently employed paraphrasing of Yitzhak Rabin, you don't make peace with your friends, you make peace with your enemies. Because of the prolonged British presence in Aden and the escalating war, the British found themselves left with no choice but to turn the country over to the NLF, the element that they most wished to avoid.

The British experience in fighting insurgencies provides multiple lessons for Iraq, both positively and negatively. Fundamentally, success was achieved when local political considerations were favorable and received proper attention. In the long run, these considerations played a more important role in successful resolution of the insurgency than the application of military force, even when the latter was appropriate and nuanced. When the political situation was unfavorable or hostile, such as in Aden or Algeria, no amount of military response could suffice and withdrawal became the only option. Recent developments may make that conclusion moot for Iraq. Nevertheless, it is clear that the political outlook of Iraq remains volatile and thus the denouement of the present struggle can only be regarded as uncertain.

Notes:

1. Representative explications include Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Michael Eisenstadt and Eric Mathewson, eds., *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience* (Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003); and Judith S. Yaphe, "A War and Occupation in Iraq: What Went Right? What Could Go Wrong?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 381-399. Yaphe identifies a number of useful lessons for the US from the earlier British experience, including never assuming that a campaign will be easy or that the people liberated will be grateful and do not impose a system that cannot be protected or defended. She concludes that "As nation-builders, the British created an impressive array of institutions – a monarchy, a parliament, a Western-style constitution, a civil service, and an army. We will certainly do the same. They established a government that would protect British interests at the least possible cost to the British taxpayer. The US will try to do the same. They appointed Iraqis to highly visible public posts but denied them real authority or responsibility. Years of British occupation and manipulation would result in the rise of nationalist groups – Arab and Iraqi – opposed to foreign occupation and protectorates, imposed treaties and constitutions, and the creation of political and military institutions intended to consolidate foreign and not Iraqi control. They would also produce a disturbing pattern of military revolts, political repression, ethnic cleansing, and civil unrest. Let us hope this pattern does not repeat itself." *Ibid.*, p. 399.

2. Representative works include: Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (March-April 2006), pp. 2-14; Robert K. Brigham, *Is Iraq Another Vietnam?* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006); Kenneth Campbell, *A Tale of Two Quagmires: Iraq, Vietnam, and the Hard Lessons of War* (New York: Paradigm, 2007); John Dumbrell and David Ryan, eds., *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies, and Ghosts* (London: Routledge, 2006); and John Mueller, "The Iraq Syndrome," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 6 (November-December 2005), pp. 44-54.

3. An encompassing typology of insurgent movements that have operated during the post-World War II period identifies six types. <u>Secessionist</u> movements seek to withdraw from an entity. <u>Revolutionary</u> insurgent movements seek a new and radically transformed régime along Marxist lines. <u>Restorational</u> movements also desire to replace existing régimes but instead wish to restore an elitist character to the entity. <u>Reactionary</u> insurgents differ from restorationists by looking back to a golden age as their example. <u>Conservative</u> insurgent movements wish to maintain the existing régime despite the attempts of authorities to change it. <u>Reformist</u> movements are similar to secessionists but define their goal more narrowly as autonomy and better treatment within the existing polity. Bard E. O'Neill, "Insurgency: A Framework for Analysis," in Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), p. 3. The 2006 Army/Marine Corps manual on insurgency provides the following definitions. "Joint doctrine defines an insurgency as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (JP 1-02). Stated another way, an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or

other political authority while increasing insurgent control. Counterinsurgency is military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency (JP 1-02)." United States Army Headquarters and United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC, 15 December 2006; Army Field Manual 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5), p. 1-1.

4. Good concise summaries of all these campaigns can be found in Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: Guerrillas in History* (New York: William Morrow, 1994); Malaya is covered on pp. 563-574. The Emergency is also covered, *inter alia*, by Michael Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars: Minor Campaigns of the British Army since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press; London: Robert Hale, 1984), pp. 27-44; and John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (Houndmills, UK; New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 31-59. A more thorough treatment is to be found in Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960* (Singapore; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

5. Charles Maechling, Jr., "Counterinsurgency: The First Ordeal by Fire," in Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh, eds. *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), pp. 23-24.

6. Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, pp. 624-642; Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars*, pp. 50-62; Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, pp. 60-83. Recent critical studies of the war and its effects include Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); and David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

7. Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, pp. 643-656; Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars*, pp. 68-82; Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, pp. 84-107.

8. J.E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Saqi, 2007), pp. 63-182. Many of the other works on counter-insurgency cited in this article also discuss the two Oman campaigns.

9. See footnote 45 below for sources.

10. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, pp. 183-399.

11. Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 25.

12. Maechling, 'Counterinsurgency', pp. 24-25.

13. Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malay and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus; New York: Praeger, 1966); *ibid.*, *No Exit From Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969); *ibid.*, *Revolutionary War in World Strategy, 1945-1969* (London: Secker &

Warburg; New York: Taplinger, 1970).

14. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies*, p. 107.

15. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies*, p. 107.

16. Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott, 'Introduction', in Beckett and Pimlott, eds., *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency* (London : Croom Helm; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 6.

17. Julian Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations: Techniques of Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Walker, 1967). Paget's account of the war in Aden was also published as *Last Post: Aden 1964-67* (London: Faber, 1969).

18. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, pp. 156-157.

19. Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (London: Faber, 1971); *ibid., Bunch of Five* (London: Faber, 1977).

20. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies*, p. 225.

21. Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, p. 292.

22. Kitson, *Bunch of Five*, pp. 294-296.

23. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies*, pp. 129-130.

24. A number of these comments are derived from my recent book, *Oman's Insurgencies*.

25. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 20.

26. Ian F.W. Beckett, "Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective" (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005), pp. 7-8.

27. Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 95; Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency in the Post-Imperial Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 1-2. The Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual recognizes the key role of the police: "The primary frontline COIN force is often the police—not the military. The primary COIN objective is to enable local institutions. Therefore, supporting the police is essential." *Counterinsurgency*, p. 6-19. But it also observes that "the police are only a part of the rule of law. Police require support from a law code, judicial courts, and a penal system. Such support provides a coherent and transparent system that imparts justice. Upholding the rule of law also requires other civil institutions and a HN ability to support the legal system." *Ibid*. The manual provides the example of Malaya in how to create and enhance an effective police organization.

28. The use of strong methods to gain intelligence or intimidate the enemy generally has been counter-productive. "In Algeria, of course, intelligence was often obtained through institutionalized torture, where the attempt to separate insurgents from population by the erection of physical barriers and through large-scale resettlement also tended to alienate the population rather than win hearts and minds." Beckett, "Insurgency in Iraq," p. 16. As another example from Malaya, "the indiscriminate shooting of rural Chinese squatters fleeing army patrols, the burning of rural homes, and the brutal treatment meted out by the police, all served to swell the ranks of both the guerrilla army and the communists' political-support organizations." Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, p. 256.

29. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 172.

30. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 176.

31. Dewar, *Brush Fire Wars*, p. 178.

32. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 170.

33. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 175.

34. 'The communist soviets were sealed off and progressively divided with networks of over 3,000 well-defended and fortified blockhouses, and new roads patrolled by armoured cars and aircraft. Four categories of area were identified – safety zones, adjacent to bandit areas, semi-bandit areas and full-bandit areas – and co-ordinated mobile columns were used progressively to drive the communists against the blockhouse lines. It was not unlike the methods used by the British against Boer commandos. Robbed of mobility, by October 1934, the communists were forced to abandon their base areas and try to break out of the encirclement, initiating that great epic of Chinese communist history, the "Long March".' Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies*, p. 72.

35. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, p. 175.

36. Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, pp. 175-176.

37. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, pp. 147-148.

38. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 148. Mockaitis also notes the enormous advantage that computer technology offers to counter-insurgency forces. *Ibid.*, p. 149. It was not yet available for use in Dhufar of course but the effectiveness of the computer and the Internet has more recently been demonstrated in resistance in Afghanistan and Iraq.

39. Thomas R. Mockaitis makes the point that the "methods" developed by the British to fight these wars are far less relevant to today's situation than the underlying principles. "Some of these methods were made possible by the extraordinary control that a colonial power could exercise over subject peoples and cannot easily be duplicated. The only two governments still employing

British-style emergency regulations are South Africa and Israel. The former is a pariah, and the latter is coming under increasing world criticism." *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60* (London: Macmillan in association with King's College, London, 1990).

40. "Despite this success [in fighting insurgencies] and the abysmal failures of the French in Indochina and Algeria and the Americans in Vietnam, critics of the British approach have rightly pointed out that it was inseparably connected to imperialism. Even the most successful post-war campaigns were little more than holding actions that could stem but not stop the flow of nationalism and perhaps hand over to the most pro-British of the nationalist parties. British methods they further note, depended on an extraordinary degree of colonial control not likely to be repeated in future campaigns. ... Even mistakes such as the use of internment in Aden and Northern Ireland can only be understood in terms of the colonial legacy." Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, p. 2.

41. "Compared to earlier periods when protracted rural insurgency was difficult to contain but urban insurgency generally easily contained, the sheer growth of population has arguably diminished the former advantages of the security forces in urban areas." Ian Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 31-32.

42. Beckett, "Future of Insurgency," p. 33.

43. Beckett, "Insurgency in Iraq," p. 15.

44. *Counterinsurgency*, p. vii.

45. The following discussion is based largely on Paget, *Last Post: Aden*; R.J. Gavin, *Aden Under British Rule, 1839-1967* (London: C. Hurst, 1975); David Lee, *Flight from the Middle East: A History of the Royal Air Force in the Arabian Peninsula and Adjacent Territories, 1945-1972* (London: HMSO, 1980); David Ledger, *Shifting Sands: The British in South Arabia* (London: Peninsular, 1983); Joseph Kostiner, *The Struggle for South Yemen* (London: Croom Helm; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Karl Pieragostini, *Britain, Aden and South Arabia: Abandoning Empire* (Houndsmill, UK: Macmillan, 1991); Glen Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in Her Last Three Arab Dependencies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia 1962-1967* (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount, 2005). See also Peter Hinchcliffe, John T. Ducker, and Maria Holt, *Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

46. Phillip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez, 1947-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs), pp. 209-210; Pieragostini, *Britain, Aden and South Arabia*, p. 187; Gavin, *Aden*, p. 344.

47. For more details regarding "air control" or "air policing" in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf, see J.E. Peterson, *Defending Arabia* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp. 28-40. Following World War I, the Royal Air Force (RAF) secured its continued existence by touting its superior and

cheaper ability to police British-controlled territory in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Aden. As a consequence, the RAF played a prominent role in the region's post-World War II counter-insurgency campaigns, as detailed in Lee, *Flight from the Middle East.*

48. Paget reproduces a translation of an NLF circular titled "How to Disturb the British." Among the recommendations are rendering their air conditioners useless, pouring sugar in the gas tanks of their vehicles, puncturing tires, breaking water papers in houses and offices, and setting fire to anything inflammable. Paget, *Last Post: Aden*, p. 263.

49. Paget, *Last Post: Aden*, p. 115. Paget also asserts that 57 British servicemen were killed and 651 wounded during the war. But Jonathan Walker points out that these figures were for Aden State only and did not include lightly wounded casualties. He estimates the total number of killed at about 200 and wounded at over 1500. *Aden Insurgency*, p. 285.

50. Paget, *Last Post: Aden*, p. 114.

51. The following summary draws from Paget, *Last Post: Aden*, pp. 125-133.

52. "Both the Conservative and Labour Governments held two sometimes complementary, sometimes conflicting images of the British presence at Aden. One was of Aden as a military asset to be employed in the furtherance of Britain's world role. The other was of Aden as a colonial responsibility in the post-colonial world: a territory to be prepared for independence." Pieragostini, *Britain, Aden and South Arabia*, p. 183.

53. "Increasingly, indeed, federal officials and even local governments in the emirates, sultanates, and sheikhdoms either left the country altogether or threw in their lot with the insurgent movements. In any case, intelligence had never been forthcoming freely from the population, and there was now little incentive to cooperate. Arab members of the Special Branch already had been targeted by the insurgents, and the local police forces were thoroughly infiltrated, both the South Arabian Police and Aden Armed Police mutinying in one particularly notorious incident in June 1967, killing 22 British servicemen and taking control of the Crater district of Aden for 15 days until order was restored." Beckett, "Insurgency in Iraq," p. 12.

54. "In Aden between 1965 and 1967, there was a cognate transition from amateur attacks in which insurgents often blew themselves up – in one early attack the insurgent threw the pin rather than the grenade – to more effective and more numerous incidents. Incidents thus rose from 286 in 1965, to 540 in 1966, and to 2,900 in 1967, with grenades, road mines, and sniping taking most British lives." Beckett, "Insurgency in Iraq," p. 8.

55. Examples of this point in Aden include the prohibition for political reasons of the decades-long tool of air control as a response to rural unrest, and the soft and gradual approach required to regain control of the Crater district in Aden following a mutiny in the South Arabian Army without alienating the population.

56. There is a large body of literature on the British "end of empire." Darby, *British Defence Policy* is a particularly pertinent and useful work.