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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS REQUIRED
BY AN INSURGENT FORCE

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INTRODUCTION

With insurgent warfare increasingly being the form of warfare faced by the world's major powers, the subject of counter-insurgency has lately been given due recognition. Often, however, there is insufficient importance given to understanding the intricacies of insurgent warfare from the insurgent's perspective - in essence why the insurgents react in a certain way or implement a particular strategy or tactic. How can one type of military force hope to defeat another type of force if it does not understand it?

This work seeks to answer the question 'What are the essential elements required by an insurgency when fighting a superior resourced conventional force'? In order to answer this question this research will analyze three very different insurgent wars fought during the period of the latter half of the twentieth century and the closing years of the Cold War. The conflicts in Chechnya – both the first Russo-Chechen War 1994-1996¹ and the second Russo-Chechen War 1999-2002² - and the French Indochina War (1946-1954)³ and the French Algerian War (1954-62)⁴ have been chosen as they represent three distinctly different theatres of operation on three different continents. Chechnya, with its plains, mountains, extremely harsh winters and close proximity to its Russian aggressor; French Indochina with its jungles, heat, monsoon rains and its distance from its French aggressor and Algeria with its arid deserts, mountains and proximity to its supporters in the form of newly independent Morocco and Tunisia.

¹ Richard H. Shultz, & Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 124.

² Hodgson Quentin, 'Is the Russian Bear Learning? An Operational and tactical Analysis of the Second Chechen War, 1999-2002', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2003, pp. 64-91.

³ David Saul, *Military Blunders: The How and Why of Military Blunders*, Robinson Publishing, London, 1997, pp. 279, 285.

⁴ Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, Potomac Books, Washington, 2009, p. 58.

Despite the geographical, climatic and cultural differences, these three insurgent wars illustrate the fact that all three conflicts depended on an identical set of elements in order to defeat a superior resourced force.

As stated above, the analysis of these three conflicts will be examined through the exploration of three fundamental elements: These three essential elements are, Superior Will; Superior Tactics and Strategy and, finally, External Assistance. I have deliberately characterized these as elements as to mark them as principles is too constrictive and is contrary to the very uniqueness and flexibility of the nature of insurgency. One of the definitive differences between insurgency and conventional warfare is the fact that conventional warfare is dictated by the principles of war. These principles are not hard and fast rules which must be strictly adhered to and different situations allow for one or more of the principles not to be met without having an adverse effect on the outcome. The conventional forces' principles are, however, far more rigid than the rules governing the insurgent force. In fact, one of the enduring features of insurgency warfare is that there are no rules.⁵ This appears to be one of the concepts military commanders find difficult to grasp - the fact that insurgent forces do not follow what they consider to be a conventional way of fighting, instead refusing to react or engage in a conventional manner. This is evident with most insurgent forces when they refuse to engage in battle but rather disperse into surrounding countryside following an ambush such as the Algerian rebels successfully employed against the French forces in the mountains.⁶

⁵ Roger W. Barnett, *Asymmetrical Warfare: Today's Challenge to U.S. Military Power*, Potomac Books, Washington, 2008, p. 20.

⁶ Martin S. Alexander & J. F. V. Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p. 9.

Insurgents will utilise every element in order to gain an advantage over their opponent and the uniqueness of each insurgency highlights the impact local conditions have on the implementation of many of the insurgents' tactical moves. Take, for example, the Vietminh in Indochina. The natural elements of Indochina negated many of the French forces technological advantages as the country's topography and meteorological conditions provided the insurgent force with numerous advantages, especially against an opponent which relied on technological superiority.⁷

Insurgency, obviously, is not a new military phenomenon. Since Sparta defeated Athens,⁸ it has been a constant and effective form of warfare. Throughout the history of warfare the military machine has evolved, employing mechanisation and utilising ever larger forces which covered vast areas of land and sea. When large armies met in strict formations on open fields, the art of insurgency was often ignored by those in command of these new and powerful forces.⁹ It was not, however, forgotten by those who had to defend themselves against superior forces and often proved very problematic for those in command of what were considered more dominant and experienced armies. Warfare mythology has centred around the stories of the

Scottish¹⁰, Irish¹¹ and Welsh¹², whose insurgent forces utilised non-conventional forms of warfare in an attempt to defeat the far superior-resourced forces of the British Empire.

⁷ Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy*, The Stackpole Company, Mechanicsburg, 1964, p. 322.

⁸ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. vii.

⁹ John R. Elting, *The Super Strategists: Great Captains, Theorists, and Fighting Men Who Have Shaped the History of Warfare*, W.H. Allen, London, 1987, p. 89.

¹⁰ Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Millennium: A History of Our Last Thousand Years*, Black Swan, London, 1996, p. 324.

¹¹ Reader's Digest, *Family Encyclopaedia of World History*, Berkeley Square, London, 1996, p. 319.

¹² John Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun: A History of Guerrilla, Revolutionary and Counter-Insurgency Warfare from the Romans to the Present*, Greenhill Books, London, 1995, p. 44.

Insurgent forces or militia of the early American settlers, who fought against the British for their independence, used guerrilla tactics such as hit and run, their knowledge of the surrounding terrain to hide and utilised the very effective method of multiple simultaneous engagements which forced the British to disperse across the country and prevented them forming up in numbers and fighting a conventional battle.¹³ Insurgency has continued to be effective in modern times where major military forces experience great difficulty in countering insurgent forces and their techniques. Insurgency today is just as powerful a tactic as it has always been.

In more modern times the topic of insurgent warfare has been brought back into the mainstream. It has now been given the in-depth analysis it should have received following America's humiliating withdrawal from South East Asia.¹⁴ This withdrawal highlighted the Western military's inability to assimilate to an insurgent war, instead continuing to implement conventional tactics and rely on technological advantages.

The growth in active terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and its offshoots and the West's desperate attempts to stem the flow of recruits and financial aid to these groups has led to an increase in insurgent wars in which the Western nations have immersed themselves. Ten years on from September 11th in 2001, the West and its supporters are still in Afghanistan with little to show for their efforts. Almost immediately following the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq a simultaneous Improvised Explosives Attack or IED. The West now faces the

¹³ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, Pimlico, London, 1994, p. 348.

¹⁴ Bernard C. Nalty (ed.), *The Vietnam War: The History of America's Conflict in Southeast Asia*, Salamander Books, London, 1998, p. 10.

problem of not only dealing with the issues in Afghanistan but with its politically unstable nuclear neighbour, Pakistan.

Pakistan also seems unwilling or unable to protect its borders and repel the unwanted insurgent movements or to remove those Madras which openly teach and feed the Jihadist movements.¹⁵ This was highlighted in 2011, when American Special Forces successfully killed Osama Bin Laden at his compound inside Pakistan. The Pakistani government and its intelligence agency, the ISI, still maintain that they had no knowledge of the fact that bin Laden was hiding in its country, incidentally, just down the road from a major military base.¹⁶

All is not lost, however. These insurgent groups are militarily defeatable. The French in Algeria, despite withdrawing from the country (24th October 1962)¹⁷, were, in the final phases of the war, militarily beginning to take control by the implementation of new operating procedures. These new procedures, in conjunction with the 'Maurice Line'¹⁸, - a line of fortified fencing which ran the length of the Moroccan border, were beginning to have an impact on the Algerians' abilities to run and hide in neighbouring countries. This was combined with an increase in the operational tempo in running down insurgents in the mountains using specialised forces.¹⁹ This fundamental change in tactics was having a definite negative impact on the Algerian insurgents' operational capabilities. Had the French government stayed the course in Algeria, the change in the military's plan of action may well have produced a

¹⁵ Stephen Philip Cohen, 'With Allies Like This: Pakistan and the War on Terrorism', in Adam Garfinkle (ed.), *Winning the War on Terrorism*, Hoover Press, Stanford, 2004, p. 112.

¹⁶ Derek Cheng, Hayden Donnell, Paul Harper, *New Zealand Herald*, Monday 2 May 2011.

¹⁷ Robin Hunter, *True Stories of the Foreign Legion: From Beau Geste to Desert Storm – The World's Most Feared Fighting Force*, Virgin Books, London, 1997, p. 219.

¹⁸ Alexander & Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

different result, militarily at least.²⁰

Modern military commanders need to develop an understanding of the way in which an insurgent force will react if they are to prevent their troops from being embroiled in a war which costs lives and money but result in failure or, at the very least, a political withdrawal. Modern commanders need to understand that if they attempt to bring an insurgent force to battle that the insurgents will do what comes naturally and disappear into the country side until it can tip the balance of power in its favour. An understanding of the insurgents' tactics and how best to counter them will provide a modern military force with the best defence against the insurgents' most effective weapon, protraction.²¹ Fighting an unlimited war with a limited mindset is the most destructive methodology a modern force can employ and serves only to increase the destructive effects that the element of protraction creates.

There are three fundamental facts which need to be understood about insurgency. Firstly, it is a point that insurgencies rarely win. "Steven Peter Rosin, in his survey of 39 wars from 1848 through 1945, found that the materially stronger side won 80 percent of the time."²² Insurgency has become notorious, not so much for its ability to defeat a larger force, but for the amazing amount of trouble, high body counts, when taking into consideration the limitations of insurgent resources and the protracted nature that insurgent tactics produce. The outcome often confuses and frustrates political and military leaders unsure as to why their forces have been unable to quickly and decisively crush weaker opponents. One only has to look at the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

²¹ Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, Potomac Books, Washington, 2005, p. 53.

²² Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 8.

French and Americans in South East Asia to immediately grasp the significance of protraction as an insurgent tactic. It is one of the core principles of insurgency, designed to defeat an enemy through a willingness to fight as long as necessary and to sacrifice as many as necessary in order to be victorious; something many opposing forces are unwilling to do. Rosen states in his work *‘War Power and the Willingness to Suffer’* that “The guerrilla’s superiority is not in his ability to harm, but in his greater willingness to be harmed”.²³

The effect of this was illustrated in a quote from the American Secretary of Defence McNamara, during the Vietnam War, who said “I never thought [the war] would go like this. I didn’t think these people had the capacity to fight this way. If I had thought they could take this punishment and fight this well, could enjoy fighting like this, I would have thought differently from the start”.²⁴

Insurgencies do not necessarily attempt to claim a purely military victory, rather the insurgencies forced the stronger opponent to withdraw through political pressure brought about by the public at home who were weary of the protracted nature of the conflict and placed corresponding pressure on the government.²⁵ Decisive victories such as was seen at the battle of Dien Bien Phu are not as common as forcing a political withdrawal through protraction. Insurgencies tend to carry on the fight often with little territorial gains, and an understanding that you may not always retain a vital piece of territory, through bombings and random engagements. An insurgency, therefore, can and does win wars but the odds are that it will not emerge victorious in their battles.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Tom Wells, *The War Within: America’s Battle Over Vietnam*, Henry Holt, New York, 1994, p. 99.

²⁵ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 13.

The second point which needs to be stressed is that insurgency is not the preferred choice of any force. In fact, it is not a choice at all. It is just a fact that the weaker force is militarily unable to meet the superior force in a conventional battle without being effectively annihilated and, therefore, a weaker force has no other choice but to adopt insurgent techniques. The American colonists against the British Empire; the Scottish, Irish and Welsh against the English; the Algerian forces against the French; the Vietminh against the French; the Vietcong against the Americans; the Chechen people against the Russians - the list goes on. Not one of these groups was in a position to conduct a head-on battle with their aggressors without risking immediate defeat.

The result of a weaker resourced commander attempting a conventional battle prematurely against a superior resourced force with devastating results was the Tet Offensive launched in 1968 by the Viet Cong against the American forces.²⁶ The folly of this move is illustrated by the writings of Tran Van Tra, a senior Communist general in 1982. He writes that “During Tet of 1968...that we did not correctly evaluate the specific balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy, did not fully realize that the enemy still had considerable capabilities and that our capabilities were limited. We suffered large losses in materiel and manpower...”²⁷ The decision to run an insurgent war, therefore, is reached out of necessity for survival, utilising whatever small advantage existed over the stronger force while simultaneously exploiting the stronger forces’ weaknesses. Insurgency uses the weakness of the conventional force against itself in order to gain parity of power; to weaken the physical and mental resolve of the enemy

²⁶ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History: The First Complete Account of Vietnam at War*, Penguin Books, New York, 1983, p. 523.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

and to buy time to eventually train and arm its forces to a point where the transition to a conventional form of warfare can be made.

This leads directly to the third point; insurgency should be a transition type of warfare. It is utilised until the insurgent force has enough parity of power on the battlefield to meet the superior force head-on in a conventional battle resulting in a decisive decision.²⁸ Vo Nguyen Giap, the Vietminh's military leader in Indochina, was a brilliant tactician who understood both forms of warfare and accepted insurgency was a temporary but unavoidable phase to be used to his advantage until the time was right to transition his tactics to a more conventional form of warfare. This could not have been more brilliantly demonstrated than it was during the war in Indochina against the French. During the early stages of the war in Indochina, Giap did attempt conventional engagements, such as the confrontation at the Hoa-Binh Salient on 1 October 1950,²⁹ but underestimated his forces' capabilities and, in combination with other factors, he was defeated and forced to flee and regroup in the mountains.³⁰

Giap's reality check forced him to then revert to an insurgent type war. The Vietminh began forcing the French forces to disperse all over the country through detailed and convincing diversions and by forcing the French to extend their lines of communication to breaking point. When the French and the Vietminh met again at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Giap's forces were in a position of strength. They outnumbered the French, controlled the high ground, held superiority in weapon numbers and controlled the ability of the French to re-

²⁸ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 9.

²⁹ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 32.

³⁰ John Colvin, *Volcano Under Snow: Vo Nguyen Giap*, Quartet Books, London, 1996, p. 7.

supply their base.³¹

Although the French offered themselves up through their poor choice of defensive positions, the Vietminh were ready and willing to make the transition to conventional tactics when the odds shifted convincingly enough in their favour. This they did with tragic consequences for they annihilated the French forces and is one of the few examples of an insurgent force emerging victorious against a superior force through a purely conventional military engagement.

In order to militarily counter an insurgency one must understand the core elements of this type of warfare. Failure to appreciate how and why insurgents implement certain tactics will make it impossible for a military commander to predict his enemy's moves and to minimise his own weaknesses so they cannot be turned against his force. Without doubt, a combination of arrogance and a lack of understanding have historically played a large role in the success of any insurgency. The French forces in Indochina and Algeria provide glaring examples of the huge costs incurred when military commanders underestimate their enemy and displayed a lack of understanding of the type of warfare they were fighting. This arrogance was evident in the earlier engagements between the Chechens and the Russian forces.³²

The three previously mentioned elements are essential if an insurgent force is to emerge victorious and it is these elements a modern military commander must seek to deny the

³¹ Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu*, Da Capo Press, Philadelphia, 1966, p. 451.

³² Carlotta Gall & Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, New York University Press, New York, 1998, p. 41.

insurgent force or be sucked into a bloody, costly, protracted war. The initial chapter of this work seeks to define insurgency or at the very least a set of common threads that can be used to determine which movement is a legitimate insurgency and more importantly, which type of insurgency and the corresponding difficulties they each present. The following chapters will then investigate the essential elements of Superior Tactics and Strategy, Superior Will and External Assistance. By analysing the wars in Indochina, Chechnya and Algeria against the afore mentioned elements it will determine just how essential these elements are if an insurgent force has any hope of emerging victorious against a superior resourced force.

Chapter 1

A DEFINITION OF INSURGENCY

In order to produce a study of the elements of insurgency one must have a working definition of what constitutes an insurgency. A working definition, however, is far more elusive than one might think. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that terms such as terrorism, insurgency and guerrilla warfare are used liberally, inter-changeably and often incorrectly. The problem of reaching a solid definition is further compounded by numerous other facts. These include the fact that few professionals are in agreement on an exact definition, that the multitude of definitions available seem to differ between countries as well as specific academic disciplines and the impact that individual circumstances appears to have on the labelling of a particular group. This latter obstruction stems from the adaptation of the old adage of one mans' criminal is another man's freedom fighter. It all depends what side of the fence you are on as to what your label may be.

Another aspect which seriously hampers the forming of an adequate definition is the effect of attaching the label of 'terrorist' to insurgent and the inability of the academic community to agree on its working definition. Graham E Fuller in his article, 'Terrorism: Sources and Cures', argues that finding a cure for terrorism is hampered by an inability to define terrorism.¹

¹ Graham E. Fuller, 'Terrorism: Sources and Cures', in Garfinkle (ed.), *Winning the War on Terrorism*,

This lack of a definition too often leads to groups being labelled terrorists when they clearly are not and serves only to muddy the waters further. An example of the dilemma when applying labels to a group is apparent when one considers the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. Many of the Palestinian groups are widely regarded as terrorist organisations based, accurately enough, on the fact that they employ terrorist tactics, such as suicide bombers. This, however, is a definition based solely on their tactics and not on their motives, which are politically-based. Conversely, are these Palestinian groups perceived by the Palestinian people as terrorists or freedom fighters who are engaged in a politically motivated insurgency against a perceived illegitimate power? Or are they, as Daniel Byman claims in his work *Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*, to be “better described as insurgencies which use terrorism than typical terrorist movements”?²

Chaliand and Blin, in their work *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*, also note the dangers of labelling a movement as ‘terrorist’ and they illustrate this point with: “The Hezbollah movement of Lebanon, deemed a terrorist organisation by the United States, is above all a militant political movement. It is not chiefly characterised by acts of terrorism.”³ Bard O’Neill *‘Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse’* states that “...insurgents may use more than one form of warfare, with the combination of terrorism and guerrilla warfare being the most common.”⁴ The question

p. 16.

² Daniel Byman, ‘Understanding Proto-Insurgencies’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31:2, 2008, p. 166.

³ Gerard Chaliand & Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2007, p. 229.

⁴ O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 36.

then remains: when does a politically-based insurgent group, which utilises terrorist tactics, cross the divide to become labelled terrorists? Or is this decision to be left to those who retain the capability to utilise the media more effectively? Or do all insurgent forces use terror tactics to one degree or another legitimately within the acceptable parameters of insurgency warfare?

Probably the most obstructive element in the search for a definition is the fact that, by its very nature, each insurgency is unique and ever-evolving.⁵ This is in direct contrast to conventional warfare in which certain principles are adhered to regardless of the environment.⁶ An Insurgency by its very nature, is flexible and seeks to utilise any and all advantages, it is not confined by having to follow a stock set standard of principles which the western military doctrine require modern military forces to follow. This inherent lack of structure and complete abandonment of rules conspires to prevent an easily definable set of characteristics which can be used to differentiate insurgency from the other predominant forms of warfare in modern times.

In Bard O'Neill's *'Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse'*, he argues that there are six problems associated with identifying the type of insurgent movements. These range from the changing of goals to conflicting goals, such as in Chechnya where the movement has fractured between the movement for independence

⁵ David Kilcullen, 'Counter-Insurgency Redux', *Survival*; 48:4, 2006, p. 122.

⁶ *Land Warfare Doctrine*, Doctrine Wing, Australian Army, Canberra, 1998, pp. 1-4.

and the newly established Islamic movement wanting to create an Islamic run state.⁷ Other problems O'Neill's work points out are misleading rhetoric, ambiguous goals and confusion of ultimate and intermediate goals.⁸ A group's goals can be affected not only by lack of internal organisation and an inability to get its message out to the public, but also by a more powerful opponent who is far more skilled at media manipulation and propaganda and utilises this ability to print misinformation. The final difficulty in identifying the type of insurgency is the form of warfare.⁹ This difficulty comes down to whether or not its operational and tactical methodology is guerrilla, urban, terrorism or a mix of all of them.

In order to create a working definition of insurgency, therefore, we need to seek an understanding of the strategical or political objectives and the operational or tactical objectives of different insurgencies and isolate the common threads. The difficulty here lies in the formerly stated fact that no two insurgencies are alike. The differences, however, would appear to be primarily at the tactical level rather than at the strategical and operational levels. The motivation at the higher levels are more easily defined as the boundaries of what is considered an insurgency and what is considered a terrorist-based organisation are more clearly demarcated. This chapter will seek to define and explore the ever growing number of forms which encompass the term insurgency.

O'Neill's work is but one author's attempt to group insurgencies based on identifying the

⁷ O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 29.

⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

problems of identifying the type of insurgency faced. John Mackinlay in his book *Globalisation and Insurgency* postulates a different set of three primary operational objectives which routinely appear as legitimate sources of motivation in most insurgencies¹⁰. Firstly, the *Liberation insurgencies*, or the liberation from colonial rule: Following the conclusion of World War Two, this particular type of conflict became all too common as the world order began to change and a bi-polar struggle emerged in the form of the Cold War between the ideologically opposed U.S.A and U.S.S.R. With the onset of this new global power struggle many colonised nations took advantage of the opportunity to regain their independence from their colonial masters via the aligning of support with one of these two great powers. This type of struggle was played out all over the globe from Africa to Asia.

Although always passionate, these particular types of insurgent liberations are extremely difficult and never smooth. Filip Reyntjens in his work *Post-1994 Politics in Rwanda: Problematising 'Liberation' and 'Democratisation'*, examines the difficulties of moving from an authoritarian leadership to a democratic one. Reyntjens uses the example of Rwanda to illustrate the inherent problems of this attempt to remove one type of power base and replace it with another which resulted in the return to violent inter-clan warfare through the desire of each group to assume power in the region.¹¹

From amongst the many examples of this type of insurgency, two of the more well-

¹⁰ John Mackinlay, *Globalisation and Insurgency*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 40.

¹¹ Filip Reyntjens, 'Post-1994 Politics in Rwanda: Problematising "Liberation" and Democratisation', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No 6, 2006, p. 1103.

known examples involve the same occupying nation France and its struggles in Indochina and Algeria. The end of the Second World War left France with not only its infrastructure and economy devastated, but the French country as a whole demoralised.¹² Previously, as part of its great colonial empire, France had, in the 1880's and 1890's, controlled what it termed Indochina (a grouping of Annam, Tonking, Cambodia and Cochin China)¹³. France's colonial ties to Indochina dates back to the 17th century when the French Government used the excuse of murdered French missionaries to invade and take control of Saigon and the surrounding provinces.¹⁴ At the conclusion of World War Two, the French sought to reaffirm control of Indochina following the devastating and crushing defeat of the Japanese by the United States. The French viewed this as a perfect opportunity to reassert their colonial influence.

Unlike Great Britain, France followed the Jacobin concept, which saw an empire as an indivisible entity.¹⁵ It was this attitude which dictated the method by which France would handle all their colonies through to the war in Algeria. The Vietnamese Republic, however, had been declared in September 1941 under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh¹⁶ and was refusing to acquiesce to a colonial power again. The subsequent war in Indochina began in December 1946 and culminated in the embarrassingly crushing defeat of the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and was officially ended by the Geneva

¹² O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 2.

¹³ Peter A. Poole, *Dien Bien Phu 1954: The Battle that Ended the First Indochina War*, Franklin Watts, New York, 1972, p. 11.

¹⁴ Jacques Dalloz, *The War in Indochina 1945-54*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1987, p. 1.

¹⁵ R.E.M. Irving, *The First Indochina War*, Croom Helm, London, 1975, p. 3.

¹⁶ Alan Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History 1900-1991*, Penguin Books, London, 1992, p. 206.

Agreements formalised on the 20th July 1954.¹⁷ The ensuing battles between the French and the Viet Minh contained, at the strategical and operational levels, a pure and clearly stated political and operational objective: to be free of colonial rule and expel the French from Indochina.¹⁸ If this pure, even simplistic, barometer of what constitutes an insurgency is accurate, then the war in Indochina was an insurgency in its purest form.

To elaborate further, one must again look at France and its desperate attempts to reassert its position as a global colonial power. Following defeat in Indochina, the French government moved its attention closer to home and to Algeria. Just as in Indochina, Algeria had a long history of French colonialist rule which lasted for 132 years¹⁹ and from 1954 to 1962 the Front de la Liberation Nationale or F.L.N waged an insurgency war against a superior French force in an effort to regain their independence.²⁰ Eventually, the culmination of inept generalship from French commanders,²¹ (especially regarding to fighting an insurgent war) weak political leadership²² and a military which, at times, was at odds with Paris' strategic objectives led to an inevitable defeat and withdrawal by the French and thus freedom from colonial rule for the Algerian people.²³

Despite the F.L.N maintaining an almost identical political objective to the Viet Minh,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁸ Michael Maclear, *10,000 Day War: Vietnam 1945-75*; St Martins Press, New York, 1981, p. 5.

¹⁹ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*, Yale University Press, London, 2007, p. 27.

²⁰ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 11.

²¹ J. Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and development of a Nation*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1992, p. 175.

²² Irving, *The First Indochina War*; p. i.

²³ A. Harrison, *Challenging de Gaulle: The O.A.S. and the Counter-revolution in Algeria 1954-1962*, Praeger, New York, 1989, p. 5.

primarily that of freedom from colonial rule, the tactics employed by the Algerian freedom movement could, at times, be considered terrorist tactics. This was because many of the tactics employed were solely for the purpose of influencing the indigenous people through actual or perceived threats of violence.

If freedom from colonial rule is one of the measurements to gauge whether or not a war can be considered an insurgency, then these two battles qualify unequivocally for this title. This simplistic form of 'pigeon-holing', however, fails to take into account the actions at the tactical levels and whether or not those actions crossed the threshold into terrorism.

The second primary strategical objective is the *Separatist Insurgency*, or the desire for a separate ethnic or religious state within a state. Miller in his work '*Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria: A Theoretical Anyalysis*', defines separatist insurgencies as "National-separatist groups...often utilizing the vocabulary of revolutionaries, seek territory and autonomy from a government regarded as foreign."²⁴ This type of insurgency has also become more common as the powers of old release their grip on their satellite states. A modern example of this type of insurgency is the war waged by the Tamil Tigers who fought aggressively for an independent state in Sri Lanka. Often these struggles have come about because of the meddling by more powerful actors who seek to redraw age old boundaries into more modern lines which suit their immediate

²⁴ William H. Miller, 'Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria: A Theoretical Analysis', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2000, p.70.

requirements.

In the case of Sri Lanka, it was the British who unified the country in 1815 until granting it independence in 1948.²⁵ This action is often carried out with little regard for clans, tribes, ethnic or religious groups which had established these earlier boundaries in an effort to live in relative peace. Even less consideration was given to age old burial grounds or areas of cultural significance. In the case of the Tamil Tigers, history records a colonial power which relinquished control leaving behind two distinct groups which both felt aggrieved towards one another.²⁶

The objective of an independent state within a state appears to be one which refuses to die and the dream of its own nation is passed on from generation to generation. The ongoing hostility has proved to be easily maintained and is often a direct result of inhumane and violent scenes witnessed by the youth of the country and the desire to avenge lost friends and family members. There are many examples of separatist insurgencies, most notable of which have been the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, the Basques Separatist group and their extreme wing E.T.A, and the I.R.A of Northern Ireland.

Sri Lanka and its ongoing fight with the insurgent group the Tamil Tigers provide a very modern example of an ethnic group seeking a separatist state of its own. What was once a

²⁵ Joel Krieger (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p. 873.

²⁶ Ibid.

group of 30 or so dissidents in 1983 had by 1991, developed into one of the most well-known and well-organised military forces whose troops were exceptionally well trained and armed.²⁷

Following the independence of Sri Lanka the majority Sinhalese sought to change what were considered discriminatory practices and take up positions of power over the minority Tamil people, who controlled the Jaffna Peninsula. The “Conflict in Sri Lanka shares with other conflicts...a popular majority in one sovereign territory threatened by a minority with ethnic (including cultural and religious) links to a dominant neighbour, and ethno national aspirations that challenge existing state sovereignty.”²⁸ Since Sri Lankan independence nearly 30 years ago, the Tamil Tigers have fought to gain their own state. This conflict has resulted in the estimated death of some 60,000 people²⁹ and an increasing level of violence up to 2009.

Most notably, this group, it is claimed, may have been one of the first groups to develop and use the suicide jacket bombs. It has a long and successful record for utilising suicide attacks and killing politicians.³⁰ This employment of suicide tactics also extends to a specialist group of martyrs within the Tamil Tigers. This group known as the ‘Black Tigers’, are the LTTE’s elite female suicide bombers.³¹ Miller postulates that separatist

²⁷ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 380.

²⁸ H. Heiberg, B. O’Leary, & J. Tirman (eds.), *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007, p. 58.

²⁹ Lloyd Pettiford & David Harding, *Terrorism: The Undeclared War*, Selectabook, Devizes, 2004, p. 48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

³¹ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 380.

insurgencies tends to employ terrorism as an answer to their inability to form safe operating zones within its theatre of operations.³²

As late as October 23rd 2000, the Tamil Tigers were actively targeting Sri Lankan military installations. The suicide bombers slipped into the Trincomalee Naval Facility in four boats packed with explosives. They succeeded in killing themselves, destroying a ship and killing many soldiers.³³ Government operations have successfully decimated the ranks of the Tamil Tigers in mid-2009 although whether or not the group manages resurgence is yet to be seen.

Another example of a *Separatist Insurgency* is the Basques people of Spain. These are a traditionally intensely religious people who settled in earliest times in the area of western Pyrenees. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Basques had made progress with promises from the Spanish government for an independent state located in Guernica. Unfortunately, the Franco nationalists, supported by German and Italian forces, chose this time to launch the Spanish Civil War and, in the process, the area of Guernica was destroyed on April 26 1937.³⁴ The new power in Spain, under the leadership of Francisco Largo Caballero (September 1936-May 1937)³⁵ chose to ignore the Basques and their demands for a separatist state and the dissatisfaction grew into the clandestine political

³² Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 70.

³³ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 380.

³⁴ Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1987, p. 139.

³⁵ Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, p. 872.

force in early 1959 and eventually Euskadi at Askatasuna or ETA.³⁶

The situation came to a head when the Spanish government refused to release Basque political prisoners in 1974,³⁷ and the group, in response, instigated a series of terrorist bombings. In Robert Clark's work '*Negotiating with Insurgents: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country*', he notes that there has been twenty identifiable attempts at negotiating a peace settlement between the two parties, lasting from hours to a few months.³⁸ By 1989 an estimated 575 people had been killed as a result of the insurgent group's separatist goals.³⁹ The government and its forces have been successful in reducing the Basque Separatist movement to one which is no longer a threat.

The I.R.A of Northern Ireland has also campaigned with a long and violent war against Great Britain in an effort to fulfill its strategic objective of gaining an independent status. In November 1913, the Irish volunteers were established by a militia group. Its title was to become the Irish Republican Army or I.R.A.⁴⁰ One of the most infamous and influential members of this new radical group was Michael Collins.⁴¹ The Irish Republican Army has a history of a long and brutal struggle against the British in an attempt to gain independent status.

³⁶ Richard Gillespie, 'Peace Moves in the Basque Country', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 1, Number 2, 1999, p. 120.

³⁷ Payne, *The Franco Regime*, pp. 614-15.

³⁸ Robert P. Clark, 'Negotiating With Insurgents: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1990, p. 490.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

⁴⁰ Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 10.

⁴¹ David McKittrick, *Through the Minefield*, The Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1999, p. 195.

The tactics employed initially by the guerrilla force were brutal and included a long and savage campaign of bombings. These include the bombing of Coventry on the 25th August 1939 which killed five people;⁴² The Birmingham bombing on 21st November 1974, where 21 people were killed;⁴³ the famous bombing of Enniskillen on Poppy Day 1987;⁴⁴ and the Lisburn Bombings of 1996.⁴⁵ In December 1969, the I.R.A separated into two distinct groups: the 'Official I.R.A' and the more radical 'Provisional I.R.A'.⁴⁶ Although the Provisional I.R.A is noted as being a more radical arm of this insurgency, both sides perpetrated acts of terrorism. The I.R.A, was also the recipient of external assistance from countries such as Libya in the form of weapons.⁴⁷ It was also active in other countries such as Germany and Netherlands where it targeted British soldiers and, in retaliation, members of the I.R.A were killed in Gibraltar by the British S.A.S⁴⁸ in March 1998.⁴⁹ Even today there are continued rumblings from this formerly active element and, although a far cry from the force of the earlier days the 'Provisional I.R.A' has yet to be totally silenced.

The third primary strategical objective is *Reform Insurgency*. This is basically the desire of a section of the community to remove from power an opposing form of government. There have been many examples of this type of insurgency fought with equal passion

⁴² Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 231.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴⁴ McKittrick, *Through the Minefield*, p. 176.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p. 81.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁴⁹ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 213.

from both sides of the political spectrum. More commonly, in recent years, this has been illustrated in the desperate struggle for power between democratic-based politics and communist-based politics and between those who want a non-secular led government as opposed to a secular government.

Through the support provided by the U.S.S.R and the U.S.A during the scramble to carve up the globe into politically like-minded supporters and while attempting to rapidly buy political support in order to maintain a balance of power, many small politically based insurgencies developed. Countries where people were impoverished were easily led by the Kremlin to believe, that its form of communism was the only way to rid themselves of their current corrupt leadership and replace it with one which would work for the good of the people. Conversely, there were the countries which had had communism forced upon them and struggled to rid themselves of this in favour of a more free, fair and frank form of government.

The onset of the Cold War witnessed communist-based groups on different continents launch attempts to replace all forms of government with their particular brand of communism. One example of this is the Communist Party of the Philippines. The Hukbalahap or Huks, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP), played a small but significant role against the Japanese forces during the Second World War.⁵⁰ Following the defeat of the Japanese, the CCP expected to have a working role in the political

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 196.

reformation of the Philippines.⁵¹ Their conservative wartime allies, the United States, however, were extremely wary of the communists. This distrust was only increased when the Huks successfully contested seven seats in the 1946 elections.⁵² The Huks' desire to see communist ideals implemented, especially in the agricultural regions of the Philippines, was of major concern. This concern stemmed from more than just ideological differences but also because of the importance of the agricultural sectors revenue-generating capacity for the government. The political elite were panicked by the possibility of communist ideals contaminating the government's current plans for the future. This heralded an end to any probability of successful negotiations between the two dialectically opposing sides and the beginning of an armed insurgency.

The Huks, eventually, overestimate their ability to rally support outside of their war time stronghold of Luzon. This was, in part, due to the fact that the majority of the farm tenants had a strong relationship with the land-owners and were not willing to risk losing such a successful business partnership. By 1950 the Huks had reached their peak in popularity. In a stroke of luck, intelligence received via a defector enabled the military to carry out a successful raid in Manila by government troops.⁵³ The military were able to arrest the majority of the Huks' leadership, effectively cutting off the head of the movement with the 105 members of the Politburo arrested.⁵⁴ As a result the Huk

⁵¹ Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, Seventh Edition, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1997, p. 168.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009, p. 101.

⁵⁴ Reynaldo C. Ileto, 'Heroes, Historians, and the New Propaganda Movement 1950-1953', *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 58, Nos. 1-2, 2010, p. 225.

insurgency faded away with its captured leaders.

A very modern example of a reform insurgency is the Taliban in Afghanistan. This group has the added dimension of not only wanting to replace the current government with their own form of leadership but also replacing it with a form of government based on the religious doctrine spelt out by Islamic law.⁵⁵ The British attempts to put a leader into Afghanistan that they could work with were a total failure. The British put Nadir Shah into power but he was assassinated by 1833.⁵⁶ His son, Mohammed Zahir, reigned from 1933 to 1973.⁵⁷ On the 25th of December 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan as political instability provided Russia with what it considered a good opportunity.⁵⁸

Today, we are witnessing a move by many different Middle Eastern countries whose public are attempting to remove from power their current Monarchisms and dictatorial leaders. In 2011 the world has witnessed uprisings in countries including Yemen, Syria, Libya and Egypt where sections of the population are defying government orders and publicly demonstrating against fierce opposition in an effort to exact a change of leadership for one which is considerably more democratic.

The previously mentioned groupings although satisfactory, fail to make the transition with globalisation and in many respects, fall short of incorporating some of the new

⁵⁵ Chaliand & Blin, *History of Terrorism*, p. 321.

⁵⁶ Schultz & Drew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, pp. 159-60.

⁵⁷ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Alex Hook, *Modern War: Day by Day*, Grange Books, Rochester, 2004, p. 110.

phenomenon such as al Qaeda.

An opposing set of definitions and groupings are also postulated in John Mackinlay's book *Globalisation and Insurgency*, which states that the changes in the global order in recent decades, has resulted in a new type of insurgency and, correspondingly, different groupings of insurgency based on strategic objectives. The four categories he uses to define the modern insurgency are Lumpen, Clan, Popular and Global.

The *Lumpen Insurgency* is a term used to describe a force which draws its members from the lowest rung of society. These groups have very little and react violently, if with little cohesion, when what they do have is threatened or taken away. "Lumpen energy arises from the street, from the volatile Lumpen culture itself and not from an intellectually-developed ideology."⁵⁹ These insurgencies flourish where the government is weak, social structure is fragmented and where the government is unable or unwilling to financially sustain its security forces to a level necessary to crush these types of uprisings. This failure to act by a government can lead to the development of 'no-go' areas outside of the city where lawlessness reigns and troops refuse to go. Miller also accounts for the development of no-go areas but goes further to point out that these no-go areas are the results of successful hit and run tactics. These areas also have the added bonus of providing the insurgent force with a forward operating base free of government harassment.⁶⁰ It is within these regions that the Lumpen force commander cements his

⁵⁹ John Mackinlay: *Globalisation and Insurgency*; p. 46.

⁶⁰ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 64.

persona, becoming a quasi-warlord controlling his troops through a combination of charisma and brutality in order to increase his personal wealth and own mythology.⁶¹

The organisation of such a group is loose at best with a horizontal structure and fierce independence with little or no external support. The need for local civilian support is absent and, as a direct result, many hostile actions are perpetrated against the local population. This group is predominantly concerned with power and wealth.⁶² “Lumpens use violence more to secure their day-to-day living than to prosecute a long term political strategy.”⁶³ A Lumpen force will move around a village if the odds are not in its favour, as to misinterpret an enemy’s strength and have to retreat is costly in terms of acquiring ammunition and the resources they required. So weak is this type of organisation that even a small defeat can have devastating consequences on its survivability. Lumpen forces not only have to be aware of government troops but other Lumpen forces that may be willing to fight for whatever resources the former group has acquired. This displays a complete lack of structure, leadership and political objective and for these reasons this is the weakest type of insurgency.

The former mercenary group Executive Outcomes (EO), on behalf of the Sierra Leone government, easily quashed the rebel group the Revolutionary United Front or RUF in April- May 1995, in return for a substantial cash injection and diamond and mining

⁶¹ O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*; p. 28.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶³ Mackinlay, *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 54.

concessions.⁶⁴ This is only one amongst many examples of Executive Outcomes and its branch companies like Sandline Internationals ability and willingness to assist an ailing government to restore order in its country, for a price. The organisation then uses other holding companies to continue to reap rewards in that country.⁶⁵ These examples highlight the weakness of the Lumpen type of insurgency and illustrate that this type of insurgency is no match for a properly trained and organised military force. It can only survive because of the weakness of the state.

The second type of modern insurgency is the *Clan Insurgency*. This is as old as the term insurgency and is replicated in many parts of the world. Although traditionally linked to the Clans of the Scottish Highlands, there are Clan based insurgencies seen from Kashmir to Somalia.⁶⁶ The Clan insurgency brings with it a unique structure in that the people are tied together by blood. This results in a very tight-knit group in which a leader can easily utilise the group's cohesion and successfully adapt it towards becoming a fierce military unit. Because the Clan cohesion is based on kinship it makes it a much stronger force than the Lumpen, with Clan members displaying unwavering loyalty to each other. Another advantage the Clan based insurgent holds over the Lumpen force is the structure of command, which is well-established during times of peace and agreed by all and practiced through inter-clan warfare.⁶⁷ This leads directly to a more disciplined fighting force. Members are motivated by a single objective, the survival of the Clan. The

⁶⁴ Sean Dorney, *The Sandline Affair: Politics and Mercenaries and the Bougainville Crisis*, ABC Books, Sydney, Australia, 2001, p. 30.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Mackinlay: *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 55.

⁶⁷ Natalia Rigol, 'Clash of the Clans: Challenges to Somali Government', *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer 2005, p. 7.

emphasis on survival produces members who put the need of the Clan before their own personal needs and wants, helping to eliminate stronger personalities, who under a Lumpen structure could easily rise to become a brutal and uncontrollable warlord. Basically, all recognise that without the Clan, they will not survive.⁶⁸

A Clan is historically an agrarian unit based around the need to protect each other and their grazing rights and cropping areas.⁶⁹ With urbanisation, however, the Clan cohesion began to break down, weakening the discipline and separating members from their traditions. This breakdown is exacerbated by the melting pot which is indicative of the large urban area, resulting in people from opposing clans living in close proximity. In Somalia, for example, this has become a major problem as youth, lacking traditional Clan cohesion, form together in the streets in a similar fashion to Western street gangs.⁷⁰

One clan-based insurgency which has managed to avoid this structure break-down is that of the people of Chechnya. There are many reasons why this group has maintained its cohesion but the three fundamental reasons are the historical deportation of the entire population by Stalin in 1944 and the effect this had on the nation's psyche;⁷¹ the geographical isolation the country maintains and the fact that a high percentage of the population are still located in the surrounding countryside, rather than in the capital of Groznyy, where age-old traditions are more easily maintained. Although, James Hughes

⁶⁸ Emily A. Schultz & Robert H. Lavenda, *Cultural Anthropology: A perspective on the Human Condition*, Fourth Edition, Mayfield Publishing, Mount View, 1998, p. 242.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁷⁰ Mackinlay: *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 62.

⁷¹ John Russell, *Chechnya: Russia's War on Terror*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2007, p. 45.

in his work In '*Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*', claims that these traditions of old are being slowly replaced as the tiep is being replaced by a highland-lowlands divide or agrarian- industrialisation separation.⁷² In the twenty-first century, this clan cohesion is being further eroded by the introduction of Islamic fundamentalism.

As a military force the Clan is far superior to the Lumpen force and when its territory is threatened, will put up a formidable fight as was clearly illustrated when the far superior-resourced Soviet Union attempted to invade Afghanistan. The Afghani men fought with unwavering resolve and eventually forced the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan in February 1989.⁷³ The Clan insurgent cannot be taken lightly by an invading force regardless of the perceived weakness of the Clan or the technological strengths of the invader.

The third type of insurgency is the *Popular Insurgency*, and, as its title implies, it is a movement which sustains its momentum through the passion of the people within the country. This type of insurgency differentiates itself from the Lumpen and Clan insurgents on many levels. The Popular Insurgency, unlike the Lumpen and Clan, can survive under a strong government as is being witnessed currently in many Middle Eastern countries which are fighting to change their system of government. Organised police and military forces are not deterrents to this type of movement and can only serve to push the insurgency further underground and increase the already complicated

⁷² John Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007, p. 10.

⁷³ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth Century History*, p. 5.

structure of the organisation. The structure of this type of organisation is usually held secret with many of its members holding respectable and open positions in a wide range of careers.⁷⁴ Popular Insurgencies also tend to develop in countries which are democratic, strongly-led, maintain high levels of education and standards of living, with a free and open media in which to publicise the cause. They are usually considered extremely well-organised with well-thought out targets and protests.⁷⁵ With careful and considered target acquisition, the Popular Insurgency often enters into a tit-for-tat type action which escalates as a direct result of government pressure being applied.⁷⁶

The Popular Insurgency is motivated by a feeling of outrage at society and of being excluded or treated differently from other parts of society. Miller states that “As the name suggests, urban insurrection takes place in major population centres and is characterized by rapid seizure of power from the major former elite.”⁷⁷ Miller is in agreement with MacKinlay, in that the rapidity of the popular uprising points directly to an inherent and popular displeasure with the leaders.⁷⁸ Violence is justified by members’ sense of indignation.

To this end, the Popular Insurgency, unlike the Lumpen Insurgency, needs to ensure that its “heart and minds” programme is strong and it is imperative that politically-savvy use of the media is made in order to maintain a growth of support from the wider community.

⁷⁴ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 74.

⁷⁵ Mackinlay, *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 62.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷⁷ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 63.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

This is especially important when choosing target selection. One mistake can turn the public against the group and minimise its objectives which will be quickly obliterated by scenes of destruction or injury to innocent people. The Popular Insurgency must also be careful not to allow the group to abuse logistical targets, especially through greed, as this will also have a direct impact on the public support. This is in direct contrast to the Lumpen force which cares little for anyone outside of its unit except for what they can take from them. Hamas and Hezbollah are great examples of Popular Insurgencies which know how to take care of the people its organisation depends so greatly on.⁷⁹

Miller's expressed opinion is that in order for a popular insurgency to be successful, the leaders need to sway public support to such a level that the military will empathise enough with the situation that they refuse to follow the government orders and use violence against the people. If the military refuse to engage the insurgents the fate of the government is most likely sealed.⁸⁰

The final new form of insurgency is the Global Insurgency. This has obviously come into being following the rise of Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda organisation. bin Laden's organisational skill, finances and natural leadership gave rise to an insurgency which contradicts all others before it. Traditionally, insurgencies were localised to a distinct area and developed within the borders of a particular country through the outrage felt by a certain group. bin Laden turned his insurgency into a multi-continent organisation which

⁷⁹ Mackinlay: *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 62.

⁸⁰ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 63

supports groups waging Islamic war in any country they feel aggrieved towards and whose sole aim appears to be to kill as many unbelievers as possible and disrupt the world's economy. bin Laden ingeniously utilised the more radical elements in many Muslim nations in order to take his fight to those he considers the enemy, namely non-Muslim countries, while maintaining his distance.

Despite the global reach of this organisation, bin Laden and his funded groups in different countries can still be considered as insurgents. This is because the actual location of the fight is still being maintained within the boundaries of a particular country and the war is primarily still being fought by locals (although they can be supported by outsiders). Due to this, bin Laden's financial and moral support can be viewed as external assistance providing one of the three essential elements of an insurgent war, rather than a battle fought by foreign troops.

In order to illustrate further the difficulty in defining the types of insurgency and the inability of even academic experts to agree on basic definitions or groupings of insurgencies, the following authors provide a different set of definitions.

John Arquilla and Theodore Karasik in their work *Chechnya: A Glimpse of Future Conflict*, propose there are three types of insurgency.

- *Netwar*, which consists of connected but independent squads who are concerned with social activism such as the Zapatistas (Army of National Liberation-Mexico);

- *Terror* such as al Qaeda;
- *Crime* such as the Asian Triads.⁸¹

William Miller in his work '*Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria: A Theoretical Analysis*,' again provides definitions for modern insurgencies which differ from the previous groups. Miller defines six primary groupings.

- *Urban Insurrection* such as was seen in Somalia during the 1990s;
- *Rural Guerrilla Warfare* such as Algerian Islamists and the Tamil Tigers;
- *Focoism*, as was seen in Cuba;
- *Revolutionary* such as the Italian Red Brigades;
- *National Separatist*; and
- *Terrorism* such as al Qaeda, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

Further, Bard O'Neill in his work *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*; defines nine different types of insurgency.

- *Anarchist* who wish to remove all forms of government such as the 17 November in Greece; Revolutionary Initiative Group in Italy and the Black Star in Austria;⁸²
- *Egalitarian* which seeks to replace the existing political system for one of more equal distribution such as the Huks of the Philippines and the Popular Front for Liberation of Oman;⁸³
- *Traditionalist* which is the most current of the threats facing today's powers, these aim to reinstate political systems of the past based on old values and methods.

⁸¹ J. Arquilla & T. Karasik, 'Chechnya: A Glimpse of Future Conflict?', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1999, p. 207.

⁸² O'Neill; *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 20.

⁸³ Ibid.

(These include Spanish Nationalists of 1936-39, Contras in Nicaragua in the 1980s, Shia-based Party of God (Hezbollah) of Lebanon and of course the modern Jihadist.);⁸⁴

- *Apocalyptic-Utopian* which are “religious cults with political aims, some of which transcend the confines of the state. Essentially, they envisage establishing a world order - in some cases, involving divine intervention-as the result of an apocalypse precipitated by their acts of terrorism.”⁸⁵ (An example of this is the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) in Japan.);
- *Plurist* who seek to establish a system based on personal freedom and liberty. An example of a group who represent this type of insurgency is the African National Congress (Spear of the Nation) who was active during the Apartheid in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s;⁸⁶
- *Secessionist* desiring an independent country that is a complete and separate nation from the one currently ruling it. (Examples of this type of insurgency are the Chechens, Basques in Spain, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and the Liberty group in Spain.);⁸⁷
- *Reformist* which targets policies of its government based on personal beliefs or causes. (Examples of this type of movement are the anti-abortionists, animal rights groups and environmentalists.);⁸⁸
- *Preservationists* which are movements that target non-governmental organisations

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

with the aim maintaining financial and societal standing. (These types of groups can be racially motivated such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Afrikaner resistance Movement in South Africa, the Ulster Volunteer and the IRA.); and

- *Commercialist* which is a basic movement intent on gaining material resources with few long term gains. (One of the most infamous of the Commercialists is the Revolutionary United Front or the RUF of Sierra Leone.)

The previous paragraphs provide the parameters of what four different works believe constitute an insurgency. It clearly illustrates that “In reality, an insurgency is more complicated than any one model; none fits the parameters of a model precisely, and each has characteristics that spread across more than one type.”⁸⁹ What is evident, however, is that there are constant themes which define an insurgency and these seem for the most part to be restricted to two main aspects. Firstly, they are primarily conducted within the borders of the insurgents’ country. Once again there are exceptions to this rule such as the Chechen fighters who are more recently taking their fight into Russian territory. This is, however, the exception. The reason for the insurgency to remain within the borders of its own country is what leads us to the second aspect, and that is that an insurgency develops when a certain part of a society feels aggrieved towards either the government, a foreign power or another select part of society. This is evident with many of the previous examples of insurgency. This also adds weight to the current theme of an insurgency having a clear and present political objective.

⁸⁹ Mackinlay: *Globalisation and Insurgency*, p. 43.

What is evident is there is no one definition of an insurgency and that insurgency appears to be an ever evolving beast, especially from the tactical perspective. At the strategic level, however, there remains a more identifiable set of objectives.

Considering the different types of insurgencies and what is known of the rules which govern what could be considered a legitimate insurgency, we need to marry them up with the core essential elements of this type of warfare. As stated earlier, an insurgency requires three elements in order to cultivate a situation which would provide the force with the greatest chance of success against a superior- resourced aggressor. Under the parameters of what is legitimately considered an insurgent war this work will explore the elements of superior tactical and strategical skills, superior will and external assistance, by studying the French war in Indochina, the Algerian fight for independence and the Chechen struggle to retain their independence.

Chapter 2

SUPERIOR STRATEGY AND TACTICS

A superior strategic and tactical ability is not restricted to insurgency. It is in fact one of the most fundamental aspects of warfare regardless of what form that engagement takes. In an insurgency, however, when the insurgent is fighting an opposing force with superior technology, numbers and resources, the ability of its commanders to tactically out-think, their opponent takes on even more fundamental importance. This is because the stronger side can often afford to absorb mistakes that could ultimately be devastating to the weaker side. This is a lesson learnt as early as AD66 when an attempt by a Jewish force to retake Jerusalem from a superior resourced Roman force failed.¹ This superior tactical element is what a great insurgent military leader excels at and what develops into legends.

Every nation is different. Its individual culture, beliefs and methods are shaped and developed by its history. A nation's military is no exception. It is shaped by its past battles and its nation's individual threats and Western and European militaries have been molded as a direct result of their enemies' capabilities. For the United States, this has essentially led to its fighting forces' doctrine being based on its resource and technological advantages in an open theatre and characterised by an inherent over-confidence which can border on arrogance when faced with an irregular force.

¹ Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, p. 22.

“Conventional training, tradition and a reliance on technology have often combined to produce a false sense of security and a dangerous tendency to denigrate the enemy’s capabilities.”² This attitude was aptly illustrated by the Russian General Alexei Yermolov, who led the Russian forces in the early 1800’s against Chechnya.³ Yermolov’s underestimation of the Chechens as fighters was only equaled by his belief in his own talents as a commander.⁴ This arrogance only served to harden the resolve of the Chechen people against their Russian invaders and lead directly to the emergence of a more radicalised population. This doctrine, combined with over-confidence and a lack of understanding of irregular warfare, has continued to create a dilemma for stronger forces and is one which, even today, the stronger force has failed to solve.

Insurgent force commanders and their soldiers live in the environment in which they fight. They know the country extremely well and will utilise the natural advantages provided by the land. These advantages include aspects such as the weather. By reading local conditions far more accurately than a military meteorologist, an insurgent force’s tactician can use local knowledge to plan the force’s next move. This can, for example, lead to moves such as a sudden push for the mountains, which may draw an enemy force in only to find that the weather has turned and their escape route has been cut off by rising rivers.⁵

² Howard. R. Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu: The Epic Battle America Forgot*, Brassey’s, Washington, 1994, p. xix.

³ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 39.

⁴ John Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 14.

⁵ Stasys Knezys & Romanas Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1999, p. 155.

The terrain also provides a good tactician with opportunities to gain the advantage on the battlefield. Mountains and rivers are used as a means to escape quickly or pull an enemy force into a prepared kill zone as was seen in 1722 when Peter the Great's forces were pushed back against the banks of the Aktash River and destroyed by local Chechen men.⁶ The Chechens guerrilla skills continued to cause Russian forces problems in more modern times. When in the 1990's the Chechen rebels were forced by the Russians back to the mountains, the Chechens used the forests to their advantage forcing the Russian troops into spaces which negated Russians technological advantages.⁷

This situation had previously occurred in Indochina, where the Viet Minh used vegetation in different ways to negate French technological advantages.⁸ This was one of the primary reasons that French air interdiction operations failed to rupture the Viet Minh's lines of communication.⁹ Many of these countries have little in the way of accurate maps and this can place a foreign soldier at a distinct disadvantage while they are still familiarising themselves with the area. There will be many small enclaves and escarpments which may well not be present on a map. This results in the local insurgent force utilising them to trap an enemy force which has been encouraged to chase down an apparently fleeing rebel force. A great insurgent tactician will use every means at his disposal to minimise his own force's weaknesses while simultaneously exploiting the

⁶ John Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 7.

⁷ Gall & de Waal; *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 44.

⁸ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 322.

⁹ Colvin, *Volcano Under Snow*, p. 125.

enemy's weakness. This is where legends are made.

French Indochina

One of the greatest examples of an insurgent force commander whose tactical and strategical brilliance almost certainly led to the withdrawal of a far superior resourced force is Vo Ngyuen Giap, the military commander of the Viet Minh during the war against the French in Indochina 1946-1954.

As history has demonstrated, to fight in Indochina using a conventional style of warfare, restricted by a European military doctrine, is a recipe for defeat. These restrictions included the use of fortifications, attempting to take and hold ground and reliance on technological superiority. This fact was repeatedly borne out in the Indochina theatre. The war in Indochina was a classic example of a conventional, resource-superior force fighting a protracted but limited war against a weaker force implementing an irregular unlimited strategy.

The war in Indochina culminated in the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. It was here that General Giap was able to surpass parity of resources in theatre to gain the position of the stronger force in theatre especially in terms of man power. By the beginning of the battle Giap was fielding a combat force of around 49,000 men to the French 7,000, while Giap

also maintained the ability to replace combat force numbers.¹⁰ The French, conversely, were unable to re-supply the base due to the accurate and constant anti-aircraft fire by the Viet Minh artillery. He was thus able to take this hard-won advantage and successfully transition to a conventional-style offensive operation.

Superior strategy for a weaker force generally consists of the application of an opposite-approach strategy. This is where the stronger power employs a conventional high-fire power strategy and the weaker force employs an irregular strategy campaign in an attempt to negate any resource or technological advantages held by the invading force. This opposite approach is essential for the weaker force to exploit the stronger force's limitations. This is accomplished by manoeuvring in such a way as to deny the stronger enemy a solid target and forcing the enemy to meet at a time and place of the weaker force's choosing such as Giap's strategy at Dien Bien Phu. This strategy is also a great multiplier or divider of force and at times it provides a weaker force parity of resources in the battle field. This was eventually the position Giap had managed to orchestrate by the commencement of fighting at the battle of Dien Bien Phu.

So what were the strategies employed during the Indochina war? The French military strategy during this war was indicative of the period, its colonial history and its arrogance. Its strategy was characterised by French inability to adapt to guerrilla-warfare style tactics. The French instead, remained locked within the European ideals of

¹⁰ Gerard de Groot, *A Noble Cause?: America and the Vietnam War*, Pearson Education, Harlow, 2000, pp. 46-47.

positional warfare, over-burdened lines of communication, doctrinal inflexibility and a reliance on supposed technological superiority. This fact is borne out by Dominique Bastiani who summed up the problems of the French strategy stating, “In this country one does not block direction. That is a European notion with no value here.”¹¹ General Henri Navarre, the French commander, unfortunately “... had failed to realise that Indochina contains no fronts and is basically devoid of military targets.”¹² Navarre would continue with this attitude through to the commencement of the battle of Dien Bien Phu when he stated that he believed that “...Laos could not be defended by a war of movement...”¹³ It would appear, based on this statement, that Navarre was unable to grasp the significance of a fluid and flexible battlefield and was unable to adapt to the requirement of constant movement, rather to counter the insurgent techniques he established a defensive base in the form of Dien Bien Phu.

With this attitude it is no wonder that the military commanders were unable or unwilling to adapt to the tactical situation they were facing. How could they employ an appropriate military strategy against an enemy they neither respected nor understood? General Giap, formerly a history teacher, had prepared a plan to organise local forces prior to the war with France during World War Two. Giap had a three step plan for his forces overall strategy:

- Giap was going to run a guerrilla war. This would allow Giap’s forces to dictate the tempo of the battle by refusing to engage at a place and time of French

¹¹ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 4.

¹² Karnow, *Vietnam*, p. 197.

¹³ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 316.

choosing, rather when the terrain and numbers tipped the balance of power in his favour. This would be accomplished by denying the French forces a chance to consolidate man power in an attempt to bring the Viet Minh forces to battle.

- Giap's plan was to then combine strategic moves with guerrilla warfare. Giap was extremely clever with this combination and to devastating effect. He was aware of the French shortage in available man power and used deception and simultaneous engagements to force the French to spread its troops even more thinly. This was all in an effort to achieve his strategic aim of superiority on the battlefield.
- Giap planned to have gained enough strength to launch a counter-offensive. The opportunity was provided via the French commander's choice of Dien Bien Phu as a defensive position. By this stage Giap had achieved a superiority of resources on the battlefield and was able to take full advantage of the situation¹⁴

Giap began by educating the local peasants of the mountain region in politics in order to motivate the fighters before the war began. His long term goal, however, was to establish safe bases in the mountains where the technological advantages of the French would be negated.¹⁵ Over the course of the war, the Vietminh had developed from the poorly-armed and trained group which harassed the French in 1946 into a well-armed, trained and led army capable of defeating the French force.¹⁶ Giap initially attempted to carry out a conventional offensive operation against the French forces. This occurred at the battle

¹⁴ Dalloz, *The War in Indochina*, p. 97.

¹⁵ Abdual Zahoor Khan, 'The Cold War in Southeast Asia: Vietnam Conflict', *International Journal of Business & Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 12, 2011, p. 157.

¹⁶ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 6.

of Vin Yen in January 1951.¹⁷ He then launched Operation Tran Hung Dao, which forced the French to counter by utilising all available resources, including their last reserve force and the dropping of Napalm.¹⁸ Giap responded with two separate counter attacks: Operation Hoang Hoa Tham and Operation Ho Nam Ninh.¹⁹ Both failed and the Vietminh were forced to scatter into the jungle.

Giap realised that his troops were not yet ready to face the French in open battle and returned to the guerrilla warfare tactics of hit and run until such time that he could face them in the open again. Giap's guerrilla tactics obliged the French to meet his forces at a time and place of his choosing. He did this by "...attacking many widely dispersed targets simultaneously, forcing the enemy to scatter his resources. Then, when possible, revolutionary forces would use large units to attack individual positions that had been drained of manpower to meet attacks elsewhere."²⁰

One essential area where Giap could exploit the French strategy was through the number of men on the ground. The Americans, decades later, would estimate that they needed at least a battalion of 700 men to secure an area of no more than 1500 yards (1371 metres).²¹ Nowhere was this French shortcoming more glaringly obvious than at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Here, the perimeter was 31 miles, which based on the American

¹⁷ Colvin, *Volcano Under Snow*, p. 7.

¹⁸ Spencer Tucker, *Vietnam*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1999, p. 62.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*.

²⁰ Khan, *The Cold War in Southeast Asia*, p. 160.

²¹ De Groot, *A Noble Cause?*, p. 42.

calculations worked out to around 27,000 troops.²² The French, however, fielded 7,000²³, whilst Giap believing that an assault needed at least a 5-1²⁴ advantage fielded 49,000 combat troops.²⁵

In the lead up to Dien Bien Phu, however, Giap was already exploiting the French commanders' decisions, in order to exacerbate the French shortage in combat troops. The numerical disadvantage of the French force was caused by two fundamental factors. Firstly, the inability of the French commanders to consolidate their forces, either through their reaction to General Giap's diversionary tactics or through their insistence on running concurrent operations. Secondly, the continuation of the construction of French fortifications in isolated areas.²⁶

The persistence of the French military command to maintain small fortifications all over Indochina proved they were not only incapable of understanding the type of war they were fighting but that they could not grasp the impact that this was having on their ground force's ability to deploy reserve forces. Overall, the construction of the fortifications were time and resource-consuming and more importantly, effectively tied up approximately 90% of French combat forces to isolated areas protecting bridges and outposts.²⁷ This equated to approximately 100,000 troops manning 917 outposts.²⁸

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

²⁴ Poole, *Dien Bien Phu 1954*, p. 28.

²⁵ De Groot, *A Noble Cause?*, pp. 46-47.

²⁶ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 54.

²⁷ Ibid.

In direct response to this French weakness, Giap began launching simultaneous diversionary raids. This, in effect, involved all French forces in pointless skirmishes, while avoiding direct confrontation and denying the French any substantial target. In response to the continued use of fortifications the normal tactic of the Viet Minh was to hit an outpost, en mass, while simultaneously preventing reinforcements from reaching the besieged post. The Viet Minh would then retreat back into the jungle. Giap's methods of simultaneous diversionary tactics were also used to great effect against larger French forces. This operational co-ordination was brilliantly conducted by Giap when, for example, in late 1951, he launched diversionary manoeuvres in the Hoa Binh Salient while simultaneously pouring thousands of troops into the Delta region. Although French forces fought and gained control of some of this area, they were unable to counter the entire 320 Division which was located south of Hanoi-Haiphong Rd in Ly-Thai Binh area as well regiments from the 308th and 312th Divisions.²⁹ Hard fought gains made by the French forces were negated when, due to another of Giap's diversionary moves, the French commanders pulled their troops out and sent them to reinforce the French defensive position in the upper reaches of the Black River.³⁰

Giap then launched a series of simultaneous raids into Central and Southern Laos and increased the guerrilla activity in the Delta region. These actions were in preparation for

²⁸ Donald Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1961, p. 265.

²⁹ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 51.

³⁰ Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina*, p. 254.

an invasion of Northern Laos.³¹ Giap was aware of the relationship between Laos and France and predicted, correctly, that France would move quickly to protect Laos and, in doing so, exacerbate the French weakness of a limited logistical capability and lack of combat force numbers. The irregular strategy employed by Giap also allowed him to dictate the tempo of the battle through his refusal to meet the stronger power in a single engagement at a time and place dictated by the French. Giap remained steady in this application despite the urgings of his Chinese advisors who were pushing for a frontal assault.³² The scrambling effect Giap's strategy had on the French kept them off balance by forcing them to constantly attempt to counter simultaneous engagements while preventing the French forces from taking control of the battle field. The irregular tactics he applied cost the French forces repeatedly in man power, time, resources and all without providing the French with any real targets or tactical gains.

As noted earlier in the introduction, insurgent warfare should be a transitional phase which allows the weaker side to gain parity of power in the theatre of operations and successfully make the transition to a conventional style engagement. The French commanders, in Indochina, provided Giap with the ultimate opportunity for his forces to make this transition successfully. Giap himself was extremely well-prepared for this eventuality and had the courage to make the move to an open battle. This move was not however, made without due consideration and much thought. In fact Giap delayed the original attack date for Dien Bien Phu as he was not completely satisfied that all of his

³¹ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-75*, John Wiley & Sons, Toronto, 1979, p. 26.

³² Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. xii.

men and weapons were one hundred percent ready.³³ It was the French commander, General Henri Navarre's,³⁴ choice of a defensive position at Dien Bien Phu which provided Giap with the perfect setting for a final and crushing defeat.

Choosing a site for a defensive position is critical to the success of an operation. The position should aid the defending force by providing opportunities to gain tactical dominance in order to smooth the transition from the defensive to the offensive. The five primary reasons for staging a defensive battle are: to gain time, increase the enemy's vulnerability by forcing it to concentrate: wear down its offensive capabilities: fix the enemy elsewhere as part of a secondary offensive and to retain key or vital ground. The French at Dien Bien Phu had no need to gain time, neither militarily nor strategically, as General Navarre had been ordered by Paris to avoid forcing a military situation³⁵ and the valley, prior to becoming a base, could not be considered vital ground even for the protection of Laos. As for increasing the enemy's vulnerability, forcing it to concentrate forces, wearing down its offensive capabilities and fixing the enemy, Dien Bien Phu actually allowed the Vietminh to reverse the situation, forcing the French to capitulate to the objectives of their own defensive plan.

The choice of the valley as a defensive location was, in itself, a major blunder, ignoring logic, the basic principles of the defence and provided Giap with many of his advantages. The Viet Minh, using their much proven guerrilla skills, were able to prevent the French

³³ Poole, *Dien Bien Phu 1954*, p. 46.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁵ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 71.

forces from carrying out long range reconnaissance operations. They constantly stopped any French attempt to move outside the valley, costing the French dearly in troop numbers, a cost the French could ill-afford.³⁶ Security was also hampered by the elimination of long range reconnaissance missions in the preliminary stages.

As the French forces were unable to deploy effective covering forces to disrupt and dislocate the approaching enemy they were, consequently, unable to prevent the Vietminh from gathering intelligence. As Giap's forces tightened their grip on the surrounding countryside the French forces found themselves held static on the valley floor. Giap's force's held the territory in the hills surrounding the valley, allowing them to maintain unhindered observation of the French positions and movements. They had access to real time and accurate battlefield intelligence as well as having unimpeded fields of fire making for extremely accurate target acquisition. This was due to the fact that French air interdiction operations had failed to rupture the Viet Minh's lines of communication or their well camouflaged artillery positions.³⁷ This height advantage can be better understood when looking at the height differences between the Viet Minh in the hills and the French forces held static on the valley floor. The valley floor at Dien Bien Phu is at a height of 350-380 metres, the two highest strong points of Gabrielle and Beatrice stood at 491 and 509 metres respectively. The Viet Minh positions in the surrounding hills were some 5029 metres from the centre of the French base and reached an average height of

³⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

³⁷ Colvin, *Volcano Under Snow*, p. 125.

1100 metres.³⁸

The French position lacked depth and as long range reconnaissance missions were replaced with close range due to the harassing of the Viet Minh the French became held static on the valley floor. This situation was only exacerbated by the French forces ineffectual layering of their weapons systems and extremely accurate Viet Minh artillery which provided Giap with free access to French base-core positions.

One of most devastating effects of the valley was the inability of the French to re-supply the base. The French commanders chose this site, aware that its only means of supply was by air and against the advice of air power experts from the French Air Force who were openly opposed to this site.³⁹ Among those in positions of authority to disagree with the choice of site was Col Jean-Louis Nicot, Head of France's Air Transport in Indochina.⁴⁰ The sole road leading to the valley was too dangerous and at certain times of the year, impassable. The frying pan shape of the valley restricted the French pilots to only two approach vectors, thereby allowing the Viet Minh to have prepared and accurate anti-aircraft firing positions.⁴¹ The Viet Minh's fire had an immediate effect and prevented the French from re-supplying the base from the start. The initial impact was felt during the preparation phase when a minimum of 36,000 tonnes of supplies was needed for proper

³⁸ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 317.

³⁹ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 71.

⁴⁰ Karnow, *Vietnam*, p. 190.

⁴¹ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 28.

construction of bunkers and strong points.⁴² Due to the anti-aircraft fire, however, the French were able to deliver only 3,300 tonnes prior to the commencement of the battle.⁴³

It was not only the aircraft which the Viet Minh targeted but the airstrip and airport facilities and less than 24 hours into the battle the tower and locator beacon had been destroyed.⁴⁴ The loss of the tower and locator beacon had far-reaching consequences as the fog and low cloud, common to the area, made unassisted landings impossible. The Viet Minh also targeted the airstrip directly, effectively closing it at regular intervals and forcing the French to resort to inaccurate supply drops. A combination of damaged air strip, accurate Viet Minh anti-aircraft fire which prevented French aircraft from conducting smooth approaches for parachute drops and technological limitations of the period resulted in much of the French supplies landing well clear of the French base.

Even with these few examples it is clear that General Giap was a far superior commander. His tactical and strategical abilities allowed the Viet Minh to gain the advantage in theatre against a superior resourced enemy. As stated previously, superior command and tactical ability is essential regardless of the type of warfare, however, the need is greater for the insurgent force as they are often unable to absorb the great losses that a much larger force can without causing irreparable damage to their cause. During the war in Indochina Giap exploited French weakness by implementing a flexible insurgent strategy which the French commanders were ill-equipped to counter. This war

⁴² Poole, *Dien Bien Phu 1954*, p. 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁴ De Groot, *A Noble Cause*, p. 47.

highlights the need for the irregular force to maintain flexibility and utilise non-regular operating procedures. By thinking outside the box and using tactics which negated any French technological advantages the Viet Minh were able, eventually, to gain parity of power on the battle field. Giap's use of insurgency warfare as a means to protract the war in Indochina to a point in which his troops could successfully transition to a conventional form of fighting is one of the core reasons insurgent warfare strategy is employed by a weaker side. By the commencement of the battle for Dien Bien Phu Giap actually had resource and numerical superiority over the French and he was prepared to make the transition to a conventional form of fighting when the odds had shifted considerably in his favour. Giap's handling of the war in Indochina illustrates how essential the element of superior tactical and strategical abilities are if an insurgent force is to be victorious over a superior resourced force.

Algeria

French rule in Algeria, as in Indochina, had been long and harsh with few periods of total peace being experienced throughout the 130 years of French rule.⁴⁵ Colonisation by the French of Algeria was established between 1830 and 1860.⁴⁶ In the early stages of the war, the military tactics employed by the French proved to be incapable of launching effective counter-insurgency strategies. The Algerians had been fighting against the French for years and were well-aware that they were "... hopelessly out classed in the

⁴⁵ Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 201.

⁴⁶ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth Century History*, p. 11.

sphere of conventional military action... therefore... the FLN were inevitably driven to clandestine and terrorist tactics.”⁴⁷ These tactics were specifically developed to counter a materially stronger force using guerrilla tactics and the surrounding environment. The French employed some 400,000 troops, helicopters, armour and artillery⁴⁸. The F.L.N, conversely, could barely arm itself.

In 1955 F.L.N. raids became more frequent and successful, highlighting the ineptitude of the French forces at this time.⁴⁹ Armed groups routinely hit outposts and French patrols inflicting heavy casualties before rapidly withdrawing into the mountains. Insurgents also targeted public buildings, police stations and other infrastructures associated with French control such as railway, electricity and post offices.⁵⁰ The inability of French forces to counter the insurgency’s attacks together with the high casualty rates caused by hit-and-run tactics were, in some part, responsible for the French force’s adoption of increasingly brutal tactics.

The F.L.N initially took to the hills where it waged an effective game of hit-and-run, ambushes and other guerrilla tactics. The F.L.N had local knowledge of the terrain, local population, weather and the physical capability to move fast and high in the rugged mountains, operating in small mobile groups of around 100-200 men called Katibas.⁵¹

The local knowledge of the Insurgents was aptly illustrated by their ability to vanish into

⁴⁷ David C. Gordon, *The Passing of French Algeria*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Alexander & Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 192.

the bled (interior)⁵² and traverse the steep mountain terrain which the French forces proved unable to follow.⁵³

The skirmishes between the French forces and the insurgents were hard and brutal, with the F.L.N. utilising the element of surprise, taking the initiative by engaging the French at a time and place of their choosing and then disappearing back into the mountains before the French could regroup and counter. These tactics allowed the F.L.N. to choose the battle ground which in turn enabled them to utilise pre-planned ambush sites, prepared escape and evasion routes and established and well-hidden caves in which to completely disappear.⁵⁴ This tactic, the same one which the French had faced in Indochina, cost the French forces a far higher casualty rate in comparison to the insurgents.

In tactics similar to the Chechens (subsequently), the fighting groups or Katibas would join forces for a two-pronged ambush or they could be used to reinforce one another if they required. The majority of the time, however, each Katiba worked as a solo fast-moving unit.⁵⁵ The F.L.N. also learned from past engagements not to meet the French in a head-on conventional battle. Instead, “They elected to fight a terrorist war, a war of hit-and-run, in the big cities like Algiers or Oran, backed by an all-out terrorist campaign in the countryside, attacking isolated French-owned farms, killing French men, woman, and children, slaughtering any Algerian who failed to support the FLN, and torturing and

⁵² Martin Alexander & J.F.V. Keiger, ‘France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2002, p. 9.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hunter, *True Stories of the Foreign Legion*, pp. 191-192.

killing any Algerian who openly supported the French position in Algeria.”⁵⁶ In 1956 the Algerian military leaders of the F.L.N. made the decision to openly target French civilians, police and military in order to create an environment of fear. This is a common and effective insurgent technique which the Algerians utilised to great effect.⁵⁷

The F.L.N., like the Vietminh, were also very good at booby traps. French soldiers learned to be very suspicious of everything and anything as possible explosives such as soft drink cans and roadside flags. The Algerians also perfected urban warfare and the French soldiers had to be extremely careful entering dwellings through windows and doors. Algerians turned Casbahs into fortresses with false walls, tunnels bomb making factories and arm caches.⁵⁸ The insurgents also utilised the common insurgent tactic of disappearing into the civilian population. As with all insurgencies, differentiating between combatants and non-combatants can be impossible. The lack of a standardised uniform or any uniform at all provides an insurgent with the capability to blend in with the local population. This may help the insurgent to disappear but has proven to be very costly for the local population. This cost stems from the frustration of the opposition soldiers who through lack of command or through orders begin indiscriminate torture and killing of innocent locals. This tactic of blending in included the passing and securing of weapons by civilians who may or may not have been willing and made it very difficult for the French patrols to locate weapons and identify

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Alexander & Keiger, 'France and the Algerian War', p. 8.

⁵⁸ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, Penguin Books, New York., 1987, p. 184.

insurgents.⁵⁹

The introduction, by the French, of helicopters to move reserve troops quickly to isolated mountain regions began to change the face of the battle for the insurgents.⁶⁰ Helicopters proved to be fundamental in countering the successful and commonly used insurgent tactic of falling back to a forward operating base set up across the borders of neighbouring countries. In the case of the F.L.N, this was back into the neighbouring and newly-independent countries of Tunisia and Morocco.⁶¹ This tactic continued to prove problematic for the French who were unable to follow across international lines without sparking a full international incident.

The French response was to build an extensive fence system along the borders of Tunisia and Morocco.⁶² The barbed-wire fences were electrified and extensively lit and operated by tripwires. They were monitored by troops in watch towers, who, when alerted to a breach, would move to hold the breach until helicopter-borne reinforcements would arrive to mop up.⁶³ The F.L.N. counter tactic was to attempt a breach, holding it open long enough to rush men and weapons through to the Algerian side. This proved of only limited effectiveness and was costly in terms of insurgent troop numbers. The value of these border barriers was proven when an attempt by Arirouche, an F.L.N. military commander, to lead 1200 men across from Tunisia to Algeria was met with harsh

⁵⁹ Alexander and Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, p. 162.

⁶¹ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 65.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Alexander and Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 11.

resistance by the French and only 10 men out of the 1200 who started out made it back to Tunisia.⁶⁴ The most well-known of these lines was 'The Maurice Line' which ran along the Moroccan border and was occupied by no less than 80,000 French troops.⁶⁵ Although the fence line had a definitive impact on the insurgents' ability to move it also tied down a large number of French troops, a problem that was never solved by French military commanders⁶⁶ and one, that once again, the insurgent force exploited against the French by continuing diversionary raids in other parts of the country and forcing the French to attempt countering operations with inadequate troop numbers.

The war in Algeria may have shared with French Indochina the French habit of fortifications, however, unlike Indochina, certain aspects of this strategy did prove useful. In Indochina the French attempted to hold terrain and stem the flow of Viet Minh around the country through pointless fortifications that the Viet Minh would simply move around. In Algeria, conversely, the fortifications included the 'Maurice Line' and other fencing strictures which may have tied down a number of French troops but were also very successful in cutting off the essential external assistance of the F.L.N. Despite the control the French had achieved over the insurgents' ability to successfully fall back across the borders, they were still unable to really impact on the insurgents' ability to operate both in the countryside and in the cities. Following the 'Battle of Algiers', French political will was waning. French President Charles de Gaulle, however, agreed to one last military push and promptly replaced the current commander of French forces,

⁶⁴ Gordon, *The Passing of French Algeria*, p. 59.

⁶⁵ Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 196.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Insurgency Theory and the Conflict in Algeria*, p. 65.

General Salan, with General Maurice Challe.⁶⁷ One of the most commonly held explanations for this change was that President de Gaulle viewed General Salan as a rival both politically and due to his military support.⁶⁸ This changing of the guard was to lead to a dramatic change in the military tactics and strategy applied on the ground. Challe, recognising that too many of his 400,000⁶⁹ troops were occupied holding useless fortifications, introduced a bold new strategy calling for the use of small tracking teams inserted into bleeds or mountainous regions. As Robin Hunter has noted, Challe's commando de chasse teams "soon located the Katibas and the follow up forces from the 10th Parachute Division and the Legion ran them down and brought them to battle. In three weeks they killed over 1,600 F.L.N. and captured another 400, twice the number in one month than the best regiment in Algeria, the crack 1st REP, had previously managed in a year."⁷⁰

Once a Katibas was located and engaged French troops moved rapidly to intercept insurgents through the use of helicopters.⁷¹ French helicopters became so vital to the war effort that Challe ordered all officers to stop using them for personal transport in order to make each and every one of them available for front-line troops.⁷² He also employed the use of helicopters as aerial command posts.

⁶⁷ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 175.

⁶⁸ Harrison, *Challenging de Gaulle*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ Alexander & Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 14.

⁷⁰ Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 203.

⁷¹ Alexander & Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62*, p. 12.

⁷² Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 203.

The new French tactics were forcing the Katibas to break down into even smaller groups, severely affecting their communication and limiting their military capabilities. The kill ratio dropped to 10-1 in favour of the French and many insurgents were surrendering rather than fighting to the death.⁷³ This led to a correspondingly large increase in the amount of intelligence being collected. As the battle on the ground turned, Challe banned torture tactics such as throwing prisoners out of helicopters and implemented another 'hearts and minds' programme, rebuilding schools, hospitals, roads and other essential infrastructures throughout the country in attempt to sway both the public and F.L.N. members to give up the fight.⁷⁴

With Challe taking military command, the tide was turning against the insurgents and they were beginning to, militarily at least, lose the war. The F.L.N. was becoming increasingly isolated from its support base on both sides of the border. The cyclic effect of capturing prisoners and intelligence gathering was increasing constantly, making it more difficult for the insurgency's leaders to stay one step ahead of the French forces. The F.L.N. was incapable of countering a materially superior force which was now implementing a superior strategy. It was at this time that the French government's will to continue the war completely collapsed and the fight to extricate themselves from Algeria begun in earnest. The French government had finally capitulated to the demands of the international community, many of its own citizens and the Algerian insurgent movement. Despite the military gains being made on the battle field the French government was

⁷³ Ibid., p. 205.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

being placed under increasing pressure by these different groups to extricate itself from the war. By July 1962 France had given Algeria its independence.⁷⁵

The initial tactics and strategies employed by the insurgency were wholly effective against a poorly led French force. Despite facing superior numbers and resources, the initial battle strategy was true to the guerrilla fighting tactics and utilised the weakness of the French forces through the insurgents' flexibility, manoeuvrability and the use of local knowledge. How much longer the F.L.N. could have continued to fight once they had lost their access to external assistance and were facing the new superior tactics of the French is unclear. The Algerian insurgency may well have evolved, as insurgencies tend to do, and found new counter-measures to the French tactics. Whether or not, however, it could replace troop numbers quickly enough in the face of French success is doubtful. The element of superior tactics and strategy, however, combined with other elements provided the Algerians with the ability to protract the conflict to the point of French political failure which is its core function.

The war in Algeria highlights the need for an insurgent force to maintain a steady source of external support. The war in Algeria illustrates two of the fundamental elements of external support military assistance and political assistance. Throughout the war in Algeria the political external assistance received was ever increasing and able to apply ever intensifying amounts of pressure on France to withdraw. Through political manoeuvring in Algeria, in France itself and via the international forum of the United

⁷⁵ Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, p. 18.

Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Algerian insurgency was eventually successful in achieving its aim. In order to accomplish this, however, the political aspect of this war was reliant on its military to protract the war long enough for the slower moving diplomats to gain support.

The military wing of the Algerian insurgency was until the end of the war accomplishing this. The construction of the border fortifications, however, seriously impeded the military from sustaining its fight. The loss of a safe haven and the material conduit of neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco as a result of the fence line had a devastating impact on the insurgents' ability to hide and re-supply its troops. This war clearly illustrates the essential need for external support for a materially weaker insurgent force to succeed. The fact that the political pressure bought to bear on France coincided with this loss of external assistance and the complete collapse of French political will can only be attributed to luck. If the battle had continued in the form witnessed in the latter part of the war, the insurgents' military wing would have had to find another source in which supply its forces or a more successful way in which circumvent the effective border defences of the French.

Chechnya

“The destructive depth and sustained nature of the violent conflict in Chechnya over the fifteen-year period 1991-2006 make it the most protracted of all the violent post-Soviet

conflicts.”⁷⁶ In comparison to the Vietminh, the Chechen military effort was not as structured and had not had the benefit a single long term commander such as General Giap. This was primarily due to the fact that the Chechen effort to regain their independence had given new meaning to the term ‘protraction’. The earlier military leaders of the Chechen insurgency were primarily Avars, religious leaders, from the more fanatical neighbouring Dagestan.⁷⁷ These leaders performed with mixed results and some proved to be far better religious leaders than military strategists and, as a result, the Chechen’s military efforts had mixed outcomes.

The earlier strategies employed by the Chechen forces were wholly guerrilla. They used hit-and-run tactics employing the naturally mountainous landscape, for example, to isolate and ambush Russian forces. This tactic was effective as early as the 27 July 1722, when Russian forces, led by Peter the Great, landed in Dagestan. As a detachment of Russian forces moved inland they encountered a local Chechen force. As the Russian were forced back towards the Caspian, the Chechens utilised a river and the mountains to manoeuvre the Russians into an effective kill zone essentially wiping them out.⁷⁸ The Chechens continued true to form throughout their earlier engagements, implementing guerrilla tactics to successfully counter any Russian attempts to move into the Caucasus Region. During these engagements the Chechens continued to utilise all natural advantages such as the weather and the terrain and they also had the advantage of

⁷⁶ Hughes, *Chechnya*, p. ix.

⁷⁷ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 23.

⁷⁸ Carlotta Gall & Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*; New York University Press, New York, 1998, p. 37.

unlimited support from the surrounding villages. This advantage allowed the insurgent units to maintain the light and mobile forces necessary for this type of war.

As will become evident, the way in which a military commander leads his forces against a weaker force can, not only, have long term implications for future peaceful relationships but can directly impact on the recruitment and support of the insurgent forces. Historian Hugh Seton-Watson wrote in *The Russian Empire: 1801-1917* that General Alexei_Yermolov's "extreme brutality... achieved results opposite to his intentions."⁷⁹ Yermolov (1777-1861) was one of the most brutal of the Russian military commanders to be sent to Chechnya. He suffered under the delusion that he was a great military leader and strategist. He despised the Chechens and viewed them as being no better than savages. His treatment of them via his operational plan caused nothing but widespread suffering, fear and hatred by utilizing scorched-earth policies in an effort to force the people of the low-lands out.⁸⁰ This essentially became a forced mass deportation of Chechens from the low-lands to the mountains in an attempt to compel them to capitulate through lack of food during the winter months.⁸¹ Yermolov openly condoned the rape and enslavement of the Chechen woman as common practice.⁸² His barbaric methods were not only incapable of countering the guerrilla tactics of the rebels but were single handedly responsible for uniting the people of Chechnya against the Russians. The Russian commander's attitude and tactics aided the tactics and strategy of the Chechens

⁷⁹ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ Christopher Panico, *Conflicts in the Caucasus: Russia's War in Chechnya*, Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, London, 1995, p. 3.

⁸¹ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 16.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

by maintaining a flow of new recruits in which to replenish Chechen rebel force numbers.

Not all the Russians disregarded the Chechen fighters' skill. General Vel'Yaminov, wrote in the early 1800's that the Chechens:

“are very superior in many ways both to our regular (Russian) cavalry and the Cossacks. They are all but born on horseback. The nineteenth-century Cossack... functioned as an agriculturalist as well as a soldier, putting him at a disadvantage compared to the mountaineers.”⁸³

Another officer wrote in 1832 that:

“As opponents the Chechens merited the fullest respect, and amidst their forests and mountains no troops could afford to despise them. Good shots, fiercely brave, intelligent in military affairs, they like other inhabitants of the Caucasus, were quick to take advantage of local conditions.”⁸⁴

In past battles, the Chechen forces were small mobile groups which moved in the mountains swiftly, not hampered by heavy and burdensome logistic lines. Instead they relied on their natural skill and the support of the locals to supply them with what they

⁸³ Ibid., p. 20.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

required. They also used the weather in the mountains to hamper the Russian forces in an attempt to slow them down and make life as miserable for them as possible. The mountains are deadly cold in the winter, treacherous to traverse and effective at slowing columns and shaping approaching troops.⁸⁵ They used the natural shape of the land, the gullies and rivers to form natural pre-prepared kill zones to hit and confuse any Russian force brave enough to take the fight to the Chechens on their own land.

The Chechens utilised the elements of speed, surprise and closeness to the land in order to out-think and out-manoeuvre the inexperienced Russian forces.⁸⁶ They also perfected the method of luring the Russian columns into the mountains and hitting them on all sides while simultaneously cutting off their retreat. This proved just as an effective tactic in the urban setting and was as successful in 1845 as it was in 1996. The weather during the 1990's war also continued to hamper Russian efforts, stopping columns in their tracks, effecting support capabilities and effecting laser guided munitions.⁸⁷

An Avar, named Imam Shamil, the Chechen military leader of the 1840s was not only a strong and clever military leader but developed financial aid packages for those who lost husbands and sons, a taxation system and other standard societal requirements. Shamil also managed to unite Dagestan and Chechnya.⁸⁸ He had a trained reserve force of 30-40,000 men, a cavalry of 5580 and an infantry of 8870 men with which to take on the

⁸⁵ Carlotta Gall & Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*, p. 44.

⁸⁶ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 117.

⁸⁷ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 177.

⁸⁸ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 14.

invading Russian force of Tsar Nicholas I.⁸⁹ Although this force may seem strong on paper they paled in comparison to the numbers that the Russians could throw at the conflict and hence the need for an insurgent war.⁹⁰ This superiority in resources, however, did not aid the Russians and it took more than half a century to reconquer Chechnya.⁹¹

Fast-forward to the modern conflict still waging in Chechnya. The insurgent force is still utilising the methods of old and the Russian forces seem incapable of learning from past engagements, repeating the same mistakes over and over again.⁹² The current makeup of the Chechen insurgent forces in the last few decades can be separated into two distinct groups. The freedom fighters or moderates, whose sole aim remains true to the dream of their ancestors, independence. The other group was led by Assayed. The more radical element of the original movement mirrored a relatively new phenomenon which has grown as a direct reaction to Russian brutality and coincided with the rise in Islamic global terrorism. This second group has a distinctly separate aim from the original insurgent group. The original aim of a return to a truly independent nation is being eclipsed by the second group whose aim is based on an Islamic-free state led by a non-secular government.⁹³ There are many of these groups now in Chechnya but three of the main organisations are the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR), who are allegedly responsible for the Dubrovka theatre incident; The Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and

⁸⁹ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*, p. 45.

⁹⁰ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 27.

⁹¹ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 14.

⁹² Shultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 136.

⁹³ Chaliand & Blin, ed, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 228.

Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs and the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB).⁹⁴

These strategic aims are not the only difference between the two groups. Even more importantly the tactics employed for achieving their individual goals are drastically different and have had a major effect on the support offered globally, for their aims. The second group, with their religious goals, is directly responsible for the change in tactics. The choice of the Islamist sections, who view this as an Islamist Jihad movement, not a natural insurgency, has led to the Jihadist operating beyond the borders of Chechnya into Russia proper in the form of a series of suicide bombings.⁹⁵

In response to the Russian bombing of a Wahabbi village in Dagestan, for instance, the Islamist forces carried out a series of retaliatory bombings. These included the 1999 August 31st bombing of the Manezh underground shopping centre near the Kremlin, the 1999 (September 4th) bombing of Russian apartments in Dagestan, the 1999 (9th and 13th) September bombings of two apartment buildings in Moscow and the 1999 (16th) September bombing of an apartment block in Volgodonsk.⁹⁶ These separate entities lack a strong unifying leadership and, as a result, the groups in Chechnya will fall back into old habits of non-co-operation and warring only joining forces when faced with a sudden and overwhelming common threat.

⁹⁴ Hughes, *Chechnya*, p. 139.

⁹⁵ Anna Badkhen, 'Nightmare in Chechnya: A Journey to the Source of the Moscow Bombings', *The New Republic*, 7 April 2010, p. 10.

⁹⁶ Andrew Meier, *Chechnya: To the Heart of a Conflict*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 2005, p. 46.

Recently the individual groups have not been faced with a threat which has forced unification. President Putin, however, may yet provide the Chechens with that very threat. Putin may not have started this war but, under his leadership, it has become more radicalised and brutal and has led to the use, for the first time, of suicide bombers.⁹⁷ Although the two groups have distinct methods, this heavy-handed and brutal approach by Russia may yet prove to be unifying. This unification could prove to be fateful for the Chechens. The Islamist group's actions have had a direct negative impact not only on global support for the Chechens' insurgency, but also providing Russia with a politically legitimate reason for its devastating retaliation.

Today the guerrilla tactics employed by the Chechen fighters has the same effect on the Russian soldiers that it had in the 1700's: "As in any guerrilla war, the division between fighters and civilians was vague. Fighters moved among the civilians and often lived at home, inevitably endangering the lives of their own people."⁹⁸ The frustration of the hit-and-run tactics and the inexperience of the Russian forces created a situation where a Russian soldier began to view every Chechen as the enemy and behaved towards the population accordingly. The tactics of insurgent warfare have remained tried, true and tested and have adapted through to modern times, from the mountains to urban warfare, without losing its core elements.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁸ Gall & De Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 247.

In both the modern wars in Chechnya (first Chechen war 1994-1996⁹⁹, the second Chechen war 1999-2006¹⁰⁰), the tactics for dealing with the Russian advances into the cities were the same. The insurgent fighters maintained their small, well-armed, team formations which were independent yet interconnected.¹⁰¹ The Chechens knew that the Russian forces were young and inexperienced conscripts, who were so poorly lead and had no idea of the level of fighter they were about to engage with.¹⁰² The sniping and hit-and-run tactics employed by the Chechens were not only used to create casualties but harass and intimidate the enemy.¹⁰³ Urban warfare is a specialty at which the Chechens excel and which the Russian forces had little experience.¹⁰⁴ Lack of experience at this form of warfare and a tendency to lose control of their troops when under fire was a well-known weakness exploited by the Chechens.

The Chechens had also developed very successful tactics to deal with the Russian armour invading their city. Primarily the Chechens deployed in teams of 15-20 men which were then broken down into four man teams.¹⁰⁵ These self-contained units comprised of an anti-tank gunner, machine-gunner and sniper.¹⁰⁶ Ex-Soviet trained snipers were devastating against the Russian infantry both for their individual skills and those they passed onto the young fighters coming through the ranks. These small teams forced the

⁹⁹ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 339.

¹⁰⁰ Shultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 136

¹⁰¹ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 208.

¹⁰² Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militants*, p. 103.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁰⁴ Meier, *Chechnya*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁵ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 214.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Russian soldiers to bunch up through coordinated attacks, making them extremely vulnerable to RPG fire.¹⁰⁷

Russia's lack of skill in urban warfare was fully exploited following President Yeltsin's re-election and his subsequent breach of the peace agreement between Chechnya and Russia. Yeltsin stated November 30th 1994 that he was declaring war on Chechnya with the aim of "...re-establishing constitutional order and disarming illegal armed formations."¹⁰⁸ Once again, Russian politicians' overconfidence and arrogance led directly to the deaths of an estimated 2000 or more Russian conscripts.¹⁰⁹ The Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev stated at the commencement of the 1994 war that "Grozny could be taken in two hours with one parachute regiment... and the rest of Chechnya brought to heel in seventy-two hours."¹¹⁰ The Chechens responded by attacking the city of Grozny with over 1500 fighters and hitting pre-selected targets simultaneously.¹¹¹ By the day's end the Chechens had brought down 4 helicopters and were within 100 yards of the central government compound. The Russians had over 12,000¹¹² men in Grozny but the Chechens pinned down every garrison and post, cutting and controlling all routes into the city. In one day they had virtually taken their city back.

Once again in control of the city and with Russian forces trapped in a small area in the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militants*, p. 104.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

¹¹¹ Gall & De Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 331.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 332.

central government buildings, the Chechens had to then prepare for an attempt by Russian forces to rescue their comrades. It was widely known that Russian tanks deployed in this region were old and were not provided with adequate armour.¹¹³ This left them vulnerable to many methods of countering them in close quarter battles. In true urban warfare style the Chechens allowed the rescue column into the city spreading out along Pervomaiskaya Street. It was immediately noted that the column was lacking the infantry support which is essential for providing protection of the convoy.¹¹⁴ Once into the city the Chechens ambushed the column by taking out the first and last vehicle in the column,¹¹⁵ blocking the exits, setting tanks on fire and scattering the soldiers.

The Chechens targeted the Russian tanks through tried and tested methods. Those with infantry support would be targeted by the sniper and machine gunner allowing the anti-tank gunner to target the armoured vehicle.¹¹⁶ These four man teams would work in unison with 5 or 6 teams launching a coordinated assault.¹¹⁷ Tanks were being driven wildly, backing through fences, back-yards and down streets in an attempt to extricate them.¹¹⁸ The Russian soldiers were so inexperienced that the Chechens, who were expert marksmen and well trained in urban and guerrilla warfare, began picking off fleeing soldiers easily and causing even more chaos. The Chechens were also experts at tunnelling and using the basements of the closely packed houses to move under the

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Shultz & Dew, *Insurgency, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 103.

¹¹⁵ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 214.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Gall & De Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*, pp. 8-9.

streets unimpeded and out of sight.¹¹⁹

The Chechens also utilised a method of dealing with the Russian forces when they found themselves occupying the same building in the city. The Chechens would then manoeuvre troops below the two floor occupied by the Russians. The Chechens would instigate a fire fight which more than often led to Russian on Russian casualties.¹²⁰ They also utilised the sewerage pipes to move around the city and maintain a mobile and flexible force, able to respond to any points of weakness in their defence by quickly moving a reserve force to shore up their troop numbers.¹²¹ By taking the city of Grozny back, the Chechens acquired stockpiled weapons from the Russians which would allow them to carry on their fight. The Chechens were armed with a mixture of rifles, Molotov cocktails, some Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG's) and a small number of rocket launchers which were highly effective in close quarters against the un-protected Russian tanks.

By 1995 the battle had moved south of the river where aerial bombardments began against the Chechens with one count of 4000 detonations in one hour during an engagement in January.¹²² By 1996, President Yeltsin, unwilling to pulverise the city of Grozny further, agreed to a cease-fire and once again pulled troops from Chechnya.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

¹²⁰ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', pp. 214-15.

¹²¹ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 206.

¹²² Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War*, p. 219.

¹²³ Norman Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, Third Edition, Macmillan Press, London, 1997, p. 340.

This fragile peace, however, was shattered, in 1997, by terrorist bombings in Moscow and other Russian cities and led to large numbers of Russian troops being sent into neighbouring Dagestan.¹²⁴ This area of Dagestan contained within it breakaway areas of radical Islamic elements attempting to form a separatist nation with the help of Chechen Islamic fundamentalists. Russia brought Dagestan under control and, as a direct result of the collaboration between Dagestan and Chechnya, Russia re-entered Chechnya in force and re-took Grozny, destroying it and sending the rebels back into the mountain regions, launching a new war.¹²⁵

As the war in Chechnya moved out into the country side, the Chechen fighters fought the Russian advance every step of the way. Eventually, however, the combination of aerial bombardments of their villages and the impact of the armoured columns which moved across the plains forced the Chechen fighters back into the mountains where their special brand of guerrilla warfare really came into its own. In the mountains the Chechen fighters maintained their small highly mobile units.¹²⁶ The Chechens used small trucks and cars to move quickly around the mountains.¹²⁷ The speed and flexibility this allowed these small Chechen units was essential for countering the Russian airborne assaults and the movement of the infantry up the mountain side. The mountain fighters moved their mobile air defences often, and immediately following an engagement in order to prevent

¹²⁴ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 339.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 216.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

the Russian forces launching a devastating counter attack.¹²⁸ As with their urban warfare strategy, the Chechen fighters would lure the Russian air assets into pre-prepared kill-zones and actively targeted Russian forward air controllers. The Chechens also employed more high tech, electronic warfare measures to counter the Russian advancement into the mountains such as regularly jamming radio transmissions in an effort to slow and confuse advancing Russian columns.¹²⁹

As the war in Chechnya dragged on, the more radical Islamic elements replied in kind. On October 23rd 2002, a calculated series of terrorist type bombings was launched. They initiated this retaliation with the seizure of a Moscow theatre. This was the first of many terrorist attacks and all have been blamed, with or without proof on the Chechens. In 2003 there were at least 11 bombings in Russia and these were followed by bombings of subway stations and the attack on Beslan School. These attacks, however, have done little to develop the world wide support the Chechens so desperately need. This type of tactic has also provided the Russian leadership with a politically justifiable reason for its continued presence in Chechnya based on the modern theme of fighting Islamic Jihadist.

The Chechens will continue to utilise their natural warlike abilities and extensive experience and will not capitulate in their fight for independence. What is of concern is the impact Islamic fighters are having on the legitimacy of the Chechens' fight for independence as a direct result of the tactics and strategies they are applying. Primarily

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

and of greatest concern, are the current tactics being employed by certain elements of the Chechen fighters. Indiscriminate bombings and especially the Beslan School massacre have done nothing to maintain the necessary international support essential for placing international diplomatic pressure on Russia as was seen in Algeria. The employment of terrorist tactics practiced by the Islamic section of this conflict does not qualify as an insurgent war and this deviation makes it difficult for the insurgent independence force to maintain its globally recognised fight for freedom instead being labelled as Terrorists.

The Chechen fighters have waged a long and brutal insurgent war against the Russian forces. They have mastered both guerrilla and urban forms of warfare and have remained true to the tactics of the past while combining them with new initiatives which have been introduced in order to counter technological advances. The Chechen fighters appear to out think their Russian counter-parts and illustrate a superior tactical knowledge combined with a flexibility which allows them to utilise all the advantages that the natural terrain and weather conditions provide. The Chechens continue to fight at a material disadvantage, however, although this makes life very difficult for the rebel fighters and the local population the Chechens refuse to yield.

The Chechens epitomise the term insurgent both through their tactical abilities and tenacity and through their refusal to capitulate to Russian demands. As this chapter has demonstrated, there is a common thread of 'superior will' that flows through those insurgencies that either are successful or have a strong chance of success. In spite of the various historical, geographical, social and ethnic differences, the experiences in

Chechnya and earlier in Algeria and French Indochina demonstrate the strong threads that flow through significant insurgencies, both across time and across geographical areas. One of the key threads is that to be able to achieve the aim insurgent groups require organised and superior strategy and tactics that may also evolve during the conflict.

Chapter 3

SUPERIOR WILL

Superior will is paramount to both the conventional and insurgency forms of warfare but often appears to be an element which, although essential, is easier for the insurgent force to maintain than that of the conventional force. For both sides, superior will is essential because one of the primary principles of irregular warfare is protraction or time. Time and will are symbiotic. The longer the war is drawn out the more it can erode the will to fight. The loss of will spreads like a cancer from the government to the public at home to the soldiers in the field. This aspect of irregular warfare can be seen in both past and current irregular conflicts, irrespective of continent. It is very apparent in the struggle of the Chechens, who have been fighting for centuries, firstly against the Soviet Union and more recently against the Russians. All insurgencies require superior will if they going to have the will to protract the war long enough for the political will of the enemy wane.

The level of superior will can also be determined by the type of regime the insurgent force is facing. It is far more difficult for the insurgent if they are facing a communist, fascist or military dictatorship regime rather than a democracy.¹ The reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, regimes outside the democratic sphere are not as concerned with re-election or, consequently, the public's view. The Soviet Union's leadership under Stalin,

¹ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 15.

for example, had absolutely no interest in what the general public thought.² There was even less concerns with breaking the moral rules of war laid out by the Geneva conventions as has been proven over a long period by Russian actions in Chechnya. Secondly, non-democratic regimes are not held as accountable for the body count of its troops as a democratic regime. America has suffered under this restriction since the Vietnam War. A restriction placed on a democratic regime eventuates when the cost-ratio becomes too high for the general public at home to tolerate³ and the publicised justification for the war is not considered enough of a legitimate reason for a high body count.

The interference of the public in state affairs affects the manner in which the government approaches the war, possibly leading directly to a more limited approach which automatically hinders the military forces' capabilities. It also affects the way in which the troops' are viewed at home and directly impacts on troop morale. This is clearly illustrated in the comparison between the public support of the American troops of the First and Second World Wars and those returning from Vietnam.⁴ Consequently, superior will is not limited to military troops' ability to fight a protracted war but also highlights the importance of will in the political and domestic arena. It is also integral to the will of the government to apply every available resource and to see the war through to its conclusion and, just as importantly, the will of the people to support the war effort.

² Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, p. 875.

³ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 17.

⁴ Paul Boyer, Clifford Clark, Sandra Hawley, Joseph Kett, Neal Salisbury, Harvard Sitkoff, and Nancy Woloch, *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*, Concise Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1998, pp. 676-77.

The superior will of an insurgent leadership and general public is far more easily maintained when insurgent group and supporters are fighting for their independence, lives and way of life. A democratic government will face a far more difficult task of maintaining superior will when pitting its military forces against a determined insurgent force. This was illustrated by the Viet Minh and their ability to maintain both military and public will to fight. Ho Chi Minh and general Giap were revered figures whose actions evoked the loyalty of both their men and the public.

The type of insurgency appears to also have a direct impact on the level of will displayed and the group's willingness to suffer under extreme conditions in order to prevail. The Clan-based insurgency shows a higher degree of will than, for example, the Lumpen Insurgency with its loose and unstable structure. This is due to the close blood ties and Clan-based loyalty in comparison to the complete absence of loyalty displayed by Lumpen type insurgents. The other highly motivated type of insurgency is the religion-based insurgency such as the Taliban. The belief of the Islamist fighter is so ingrained and death during battle, considered such an honour, that their will to sacrifice themselves for their cause is all-consuming and unwavering.⁵ It is virtually impossible for soldiers from a foreign country to match this level of will or commitment.

Superior can also be positively or negatively affected by the media. This becomes more problematic for a democratic government whose public are used to a relatively open and

⁵ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 388.

free media based on the principles of freedom of speech. This type of relationship between the media and the people can provide the public with enough of an understanding of the war and what is happening that an anti-war sentiment can begin to take hold.⁶ This is commonly known as the CNN factor.⁷

In countries where censorship and control over the media is taken for granted it is much easier for the public to be kept in the dark and for the government, via controlled media, to print disinformation in order to maintain support from the public or to hide the real situation, especially to prevent any political opposition from being publicised.⁸ Many non-democratic governments are masters at controlling the media and manipulating situations in order to directly maintain public will for the conflict.

Control of the media has, in today's technological world, become more difficult. Internet and cell phones with video capabilities have made it easier for people to publicise a current conflict on an international level and governments have been unable to completely stop the public utilising this form of media. Iran is one such regime which struggled to ban unsanctioned media releases. During the 2009 elections the Iranian government attempted to censor and block non-sanctioned media releases via the internet which publicly disputed the official version of events.⁹ People of Egypt and Syria continue to supply live footage for international news stations in order to counter the media censorship of its government. The inability of a country's government to

⁶ Boyer, et. al., *The Enduring Vision*, p. 676.

⁷ Barnett, *Asymmetrical Warfare*, p. 53.

⁸ Daniel Calingaert, 'Authoritarianism vs. The Internet', *Policy Review*, April-May 2010, p. 64.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

prevent the public from posting via the internet scenes of government troops shooting and killing innocent civilians who are protesting peacefully, has also been illustrated during the 2011 fight for democracy throughout the Middle East. Despite the best attempts of the controlling regimes to prevent this, many citizens managed to film scenes of government troops' violence against its own citizens and post them on the internet and some footage has even been viewed on prime time news around the world. Visual proof of events can aid an insurgent force if they are able to access this form of media and publicly counter government statements on a global scale. Although often unverifiable viewing these clips can have a powerful sway on the opinions of people around the world.

Superior will for the forces on the ground is translated into more than just a willingness to absorb massive amounts of casualties without it affecting their resolve. Their willingness to live and work through atrocious conditions in order to continue fighting is paramount. This is especially true when dealing with an insurgent force with little or no technological aids, such as the Taliban or the Vietminh against the French. The ability to withstand adversity at an extreme level is evident in a statement made by General Tran Do, a Division commander at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. On account explains that:

“The ten kilometre track was so narrow that if a slight deviation of the wheels had taken place, the gun would have fallen into a deep ravine. The newly opened track was soon an ankle-deep bog. With our sweat and muscles we replaced trucks to haul the artillery into position...We ate_only

rice sometimes undercooked or overdone...To climb the slope, hundreds of men crept before the gun, tugging on long ropes, pulling it up inch by inch. On the crest the winch was creaking, helping it to prevent it from slipping...It was much harder descending the slope...The gun was all the heavier, the track full of twists and turns...steering and jamming (the wheels) were the work of the artillerymen. Infantrymen worked the ropes and windlass. Entire nights were spent labouring by torchlight to gain 500 or 1,000 metres...planes buzzed overhead making constant dives while fighters strafed and bombed...The heroic haulers had to lie flat on the ground for a few seconds, not losing hold on the ropes, even if their hands were bleeding.”¹⁰

This type of will is not unique to Indochina but all insurgencies. Che Guevara wrote: “He (the revolutionary) must be indefatigable. He must be able to produce another effort at the moment when weariness seems intolerable. Profound conviction , expressed in every line of his face, forces him to take another step, and it will be followed by another, and another...”¹¹

Nearly all insurgent forces experience hardship during their struggle. They do not, as a rule, have access to modern conveniences as do most conventional forces. The need for fast-moving flexible forces during an insurgency reduces or removes altogether the option of having the organised rear-echelon luxuries which a conventional force has

¹⁰ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 52.

¹¹ Hugh Purcell, *Revolutionary War: Guerrilla Warfare and Terrorism in our Time*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1980, p. 11.

become accustomed. Most insurgent forces have little or no logistic tail, instead relying on friendly locals for shelter and food or, in some cases, just taking what they need. They generally lack services such as good medical facilities and, more importantly, an organised re-supply base. They are typically a rag-tag band of men with different uniforms and weapons, unable to standardise even ammunition in some circumstances. The will to (not necessarily) win but to hold out indefinitely, is an intangible prerequisite which cannot be measured or re-created by an opposing conventional force. The fundamental element of outrage or desperation is what feeds the cycle of will and helps maintain its momentum from generation to generation.

Superior will is essential regardless the type of war being waged. Where it is essential for an insurgent force is it is directly related to protraction. Protraction is necessary in order to wear down the will of the enemy both politically and militarily and in order to accomplish this, the insurgent force must maintain a superior will, despite the material and resource disadvantages.

French Indochina

*“It was in 1885, 65 years earlier, that the French first had military experience of Dien Bien Phu when the valley was the last area to be subjugated by France in its initial attempt to control Indochina”.*¹² As noted at the beginning of the chapter, superior will does not just apply to the military forces on the ground. It is an essential requirement

¹² Maclear, *10,000 Day War*, p. 29.

that the political and national will is maintained at all costs. The three spheres of political, public and military will are symbiotic. The success of one of these has a direct effect on the ability of the other two to maintain their momentum. It is, for instance, far easier for political and national will to be maintained when their forces are succeeding on the battle field. Conversely, it is essential that political will be displayed in order for the military to be given both the resources and the encouragement to continue the fight. All political leaders need to display unwavering determination when facing an insurgent force, especially one in a foreign country.

The example of the French in Indochina illustrates most aptly the results of lack of will at the political level and how this can affect the performance of the forces on the ground.¹³ The Vietminh, conversely, had two leaders who showed unwavering commitment to the battle and the final end state. Ho Chi Minh was a charismatic leader, who was trusted by the people and one who never wavered from the end objective of freeing Indochina from outside control. General Giap was a proven tactical commander who had the loyalty and respect of his men and the country's people. Loyalty and respect for General Giap had started before the war began. During the famine of 1945, Giap organised peasant raiding parties to re-take and distribute the grain held in Japanese silos. This raid not only intensified the hatred felt towards the French, for starving the Indo Chinese people but symbiotically increased the respect felt towards Giap.¹⁴

¹³ Alain-Gerard Marsot, 'The Crucial Year: Indochina 1946', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1984, p. 337.

¹⁴ Khan, 'The Cold War in Southeast Asia', p. 159.

Despite the insurgent war being fought, Giap, as a commander, was very aware of the role that morale played in maintaining the will of his soldiers and support personnel to continue in face of so much adversity. The hardships that an insurgent fighter is forced to endure would test the resolve of most people but this type of warfare requires a level of commitment which transcends hardship. Giap's understanding of the importance of maintaining a high level of will continued through from the earlier peasant raids. This understanding of the link between morale and will was illustrated during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. It was during this battle that Giap noted the attacks across open ground and the subsequent casualty rates and deaths were beginning to have an impact on his troops' morale. Giap reduced the number of attacks and ordered a tunnelling network to be started. He ordered that tunnelling commence around the strong points of Dominique and Eliane, with the slogan 'Dig now-Fight later'.¹⁵ The engineers who built these tunnels and trenches were protected by new artillery pieces fired from fixed positions dug into the caves of 'Phony' Mountain.¹⁶ This change in tactics rapidly improved the morale of Giap's troops, reduced the casualty rates and proved an extremely effective method for moving troops right up to the base of a strong point in preparation for launching an attack.

Giap, in true communist style, also believed in rousing speeches and slogans as a means to unify and encourage his soldiers and the local population to give all they had and more. His mentality was one where "...Everything was subordinated to the one gigantic,

¹⁵ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 103.

¹⁶ Khan, 'The Cold War in Southeast Asia', p. 160.

single minded effort of feeding the front.”¹⁷ One of his slogans was “ Everything for the front, everything for victory.”¹⁸ It was this type of encouragement which rallied his people, unified their efforts and helped maintain the will of the people to continue the fight. In response “... like hundreds of little streams joining together to form a major river, the flow of Vietminh coolies, trucks, thousands of hand pushed bicycles, and pack animals converged on the valley.”¹⁹ Giap is a good example of a military leader who understood the type of warfare and the essential element of superior will. This he used to rouse the population and push them beyond normal limits for the good of the war. Some people were more able than others to cope with the atrocities they witnessed in war. Giap, however, was able to engage much of the countryside for the war effort.

Trung Chinh, one of General Giap’s officers understood the necessity of maintaining will and his commander’s ability to do this. He later wrote in his book ‘*La Resistance Vaincra*’, “...(There are) those who have a tendency only to rely on military action...They tend to believe that everything can be settled by armed forces; they do not apply political mobilization, are unwilling to give explanations and to convince people...”²⁰ Chinh exemplified Giap as a commander who understood the need for political and national superiority of will when fighting an insurgent war. His rousing speeches and the loyalty he commanded from both his troops and the public was essential in maintaining the military will to carry on the war.

¹⁷ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 128.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

²⁰ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, pp. 372-73.

What cannot be denied is that superior will is far more easily maintained when your force is comprised of local men and women fighting against a foreign invading force. This can be enhanced, depending on the type of people who make up the population. The Vietnamese have, over many different wars, proven themselves to be an extremely tenacious and single-minded people who will live and fight under terrible conditions to protect their homes and lands. Any force attempting to enter this country with military intentions had better be prepared to stay the course. These people epitomise superior will and it has been proven to be very difficult to undermine this mind set.

One aspect of will, which although not synonymous with French warfare, has been perfected by the French, is the inclusion of women in combat for morale purposes. The French Foreign Legion has long held a tradition of taking these women with them on campaigns. In Indochina they were known as *Bordel Mobile de Campagne* (BMC).²¹ These woman often performed beyond their original duties and at times were witnessed carrying out acts of bravery which amazed the men. In one incident, volunteers were called to visit the besieged out-post of Tsinh-Ho. The woman were airlifted to Lai-Chau and then marched for 48 hours to cover the 30 miles through the jungle to the outpost. On the return trip the group was ambushed and the girls behaved like seasoned professionals. Within Dien Bien Phu, the working girls pitched in working as auxiliary nurses in appalling conditions in the French underground medical facility.²²

The French soldiers at Dien Bien Phu, on the other hand, were seriously short on morale,

²¹ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 134.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

due partly to the constant and well-aimed Vietminh artillery fire which kept them pinned down. The conditions they were living in, often knee-deep in mud and water and the inability to re-supply the base began to have an effect. Poor morale was demonstrated with glaring results on the valley floor. The group which came to be known as the 'Rats of the Nam Yum', was a group of deserters who lived by the river bordering the strong point of Dominique and who refused to fight.²³ They scavenged miss-dropped supplies which they sold back to the camp. Internal desertion is not unheard of and command decided against attacking the 'Rats'.²⁴ Some of the men retaliated in their own way and closed off access tunnels, forcing the 'Rats' to climb out into the open to retrieve supplies and risk being fired upon.²⁵ This kind of low morale is lethal and highly contagious to any fighting force. It demonstrates what can happen when a group of foreign fighters face a determined force of local insurgents.²⁶

The Vietminh displayed what appeared to be unlimited superior will. Their leaders were able to maintain unbelievable determination amongst both their troops and the thousands of coolies who worked through atrocious conditions to move tons of supplies through mountainous and muddy tracks to the front lines. General Giap was also conscious of the morale of his men and, when it became evident that his forces were struggling, he addressed the problem immediately. Giap instituted a major change in tactics and this rectified the problem of low morale, renewing the vigour and intensity of his men. The superior will of the military aspect of this war was more easily maintained due to the

²³ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 164.

²⁴ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 209.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

political and civilian support it received. This nationwide attitude was directly responsible for the Viet Minh's ability to protract the war to the point of political failure of the French.

Giap led a long and drawn out insurgent war. Throughout the French War in Indochina, the Viet Minh maintained superior will to fight. With the exclusion of earlier conventional battles the majority of the war in Indochina was an insurgent war. Giap proved to be a leader who his men admired and respected. He is remembered as a leader who understood the finer points of mobilizing public support for the war and the necessity of having the public support as an integral aspect of maintaining overall superior will.

At the battle of Dien Bien Phu General Giap maintained a close link with his soldiers and reacted swiftly when certain tactics were causing high casualty rates and affecting morale. He immediately changed tactics and began tunnelling towards Dien Bien Phu. This had an instant effect on his troops' morale as well as their tactical capabilities. The Viet Minh once again displayed superior will and combined with a military defeat forced the French government to lose its will to continue the fight.

Algeria

The Algerian insurgency is an interesting example in that it highlights the devastating effect lack of superior will of the invading force at the political level has and

dramatically demonstrates how this can affect a fighting force, especially in regards to properly supplying a force for the task.²⁷ Conversely, Algeria also highlights examples of mistreatment by the insurgent force against its own people in an attempt to gain public support or eliminate those who would not support the cause.

At the conclusion of the war in Algeria, France was, militarily at least, beginning to take back the initiative on the battlefield as a direct result of new military leadership and the implementation of new tactics. This was, however, a case of too little too late and the government in Paris had, essentially, lost the will to fight. Robert Gildea in his work '*France Since 1945*' draws a direct correlation between the loss of political will in France and the development of an extreme force in the form of the O.A.S. " This loss of nerve, which soon affected French politicians too, drove the *pieds-noirs* to desperate measures. Establishing links with extreme right-wing organisations and disgruntled army officers..."²⁸ Loss of will at the political and national level was directly related to the political instability which was indicative of the French Republic during the period known as the 'Fourth Republic' which, with terrible consequences for their former colonies, stumbled from one colonial war to the next.²⁹ The well-known political volatility of France is aptly and simply illustrated when one considers that in 170 years "they have had fifteen constitutions."³⁰ The instability was finally alleviated, at least for those in France, when General de Gaulle took control of the government. Following

²⁷ Anthony Clayton, 'Algeria 1954: A Case Study', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 144, No. 5, 1999, pp. 65-66.

²⁸ Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945*, Oxford University Press, London, 1996, p. 24.

²⁹ Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, p. 317.

³⁰ Philip M. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1964, p. 2.

initial changes in French policy, de Gaulle eventually announced a determined plan to extricate France from the quagmire which had become Algeria.

On the 16th September 1959, de Gaulle announced that "...the only course open to a great nation like France was to offer self-determination to the Algerian people."³¹ This new approach was also developed via a small but very influential group of politicians in 1956.³² For the military and French Algerian population, however, this was not an end state to which they were willing to acquiesce. It was at this point the war becomes interesting as, not only was the French government fighting the Algerian insurgency but it was also fighting, at times, the French Algerian population and its very own military. "Thus as a result of the Algerian War, two forces, settlers and rebellious soldiers, came together in an alliance to challenge de Gaulle."³³ Once again we see evidence of superior force behaviour and or policy being primarily responsible for the unification of two previously distinct groups. The uniqueness of this situation is that French political and military behaviour not only unified certain groups of Algerians but also its own forces and people against itself.

With the unique situation in Algeria there needs to be an acknowledgement of the three distinct parties involved and the influence that 'will' had on these groups' abilities to operate. The French government, as has been shown, seriously lacked the political will to maintain this protracted conflict. This political apathy was consequently adopted by

³¹ Gildea, *France Since 1945*, p. 25.

³² Dorothy Pickles, *France: The Fourth Republic*, Methuen & Co., London, 1958, p. 64.

³³ Harrison, *Challenging de Gaulle*, p. 5.

large portions of the general public at home in France. They, too, were tired of the on-going conflicts which were seemingly endless and costly. This apathy, however, became more vocal in its opposition due to a combination of public political manoeuvring by the Algerians and more importantly the call up of French reserve forces. This call up constituted up to 70,000 young French soldiers who had completed their compulsory service.³⁴ Maintaining public support, a typically difficult status to maintain for a democratic government, led to a leadership whose approach to Algeria was limited to say the least. The government's unwillingness to provide the forces on the ground with the necessary leadership directly led to the splintering of the French forces stationed in Algeria.

On the ground in Algeria, however, the amount of will was far from waning. It was, in fact, growing continuously. There were two distinct groups which formed the fighting factions. The primary Algerian pro-independence movement was the Front de Liberation Nationale or F.L.N. and its political wing, the Armee de Liberation Nationale or A.L.N.³⁵ Another facet of the independence movement was the anti-independence forces which were a combination of mutinous military members, the Foreign Legion, French Algerian citizens and some of the pro-French local population, these formed the notorious Organisation de l'Armee Secrete or O.A.S.³⁶ The O.A.S was led by former French commander, General Salan and made several assassination attempts on General

³⁴ Gildea, *France Since 1945*, p. 23.

³⁵ Evans & Phillips, *Algeria*, p. 55.

³⁶ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 312.

de Gaulle.³⁷ It was also responsible for many terrorist-type attacks in Algeria.³⁸ The group was eventually eliminated when many of its leaders were either captured or forced to flee in 1963 due to a government operation.³⁹ This produced a wholly unique situation and one which only served to reinforce the French government's need to extricate itself from Algeria.

Algerian will is not as clear cut as, say, Chechnya or Indochina. One of the best methods of measuring the will of a people is to look at the recruitment capabilities of the insurgent force. There is a direct correlation between the disillusionment people feel towards a force and the ability of the insurgent force to replace its members. The A.L.N/F.L.N. needed to replace the very real losses inflicted by the French forces during skirmishes and through arrests. This made effective recruitment a concern and priority. The F.L.N. initially, hoped to orchestrate a national uprising but this failed to eventuate and the insurgent force instead chose to resort to violence as a means of forcing the population into compliance.⁴⁰ This is in direct contrast to an insurgency such as in Chechnya where Russian actions were directly responsible for the level of support for the insurgency force, uniting the previously isolated *Tieps* and eliminating the need for the Chechens to use force to maintain its numbers. In Algeria, the population was treated appallingly by both their own independence forces and the French troops. Insurgencies, historically, tend to be portrayed as a totally national movement. Algeria, in reality,

³⁷ Gildea, *France Since 1945*, p. 25.

³⁸ James McDougall, 'Savage Wars?: Codes of Violence in Algeria, 1830s-1990s', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2005, p. 121.

³⁹ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 312.

⁴⁰ Evans and Phillips, *Algeria*, p. 58.

contained sections of the Muslim population who were either pro-French or were, at least, willing to accept an Algeria operating under the auspices of the French. Some were pro-independence and some just wanted to get on with the struggles of day-to-day living. Beyond the hard core supporters for a totally independent Algeria, the popularity for the insurgent movement ebbed and flowed. This was dictated by many factors including public perception of the movement's success, the area of the country from which they originated and a village's individual experiences. There were two primary aspects of the war which directly affected the A.L.N/F.L.N. support: the way in which the insurgency treated the local Muslims and the methods employed by the French troops against the local population.

The insurgency was brutally harsh in its dealings with the indigenous population but particularly harsh in its treatment of those involved in opposition political movements, those regarded as being pro-French and those who were seen to be unwilling to support the cause.⁴¹ Determined to take control of Algeria once the French had departed, the A.L.N/F.L.N. targeted any opposing political movement, forcing them to dissolve. The Movement National Algerian or M.N.A, whose base support was primarily derived from Algerians living in France, was the only political movement which refused to be silenced. In typical A.L.N/F.L.N. style, their refusal to dissolve was handled by attacking the village of Melouza (May 31st 1957), a pro-M.N.A. stronghold, slaughtering every male over 15 years of age, all 300 of them.⁴² Villages working for wealthy French citizens were also targeted and harshly dealt with. "In time, whole communities which

⁴¹ McDougall, 'Savage Wars?', p. 124.

⁴² Philip M. Williams & Martin Harrison, *De Gaulle's Republic*, Longman's, London, 1960, p. 39.

refused to co-operate with the F.L.N. were subjected to the most severe sanctions. During the first two and one-half years of the war, the F.L.N. killed only one European for every six Muslims liquidated.”⁴³

This was not a successful method of uniting the population and creating a true popular uprising and the French military missed a golden opportunity to gain local support. One of the most infamous massacres of the war was carried out as a response to a combination of French and Muslim treatment. As a direct result of French military brutality and failure to provide captured insurgents with the rights of a combatant, an outraged Youssef Zighout,⁴⁴ one of the leaders of the resistance, lifted the moratorium of protection for French civilians and ordered his troops to begin targeting Europeans. These orders had a resounding effect on the local population with Muslims in the Philippeville area indiscriminately targeting European civilians. The frenzy escalated until a Muslim attack was carried out on the mining town of El-Halia on August 20th 1955, where Muslims and Europeans had lived and worked in harmony, enjoying relative equality at the mine. The local Muslim population, forewarned about the impending attack, fled the town leaving the entire European population to be slaughtered. The French forces replied in kind and one soldier recounted how they needed a bulldozer to bury all the Muslims killed.⁴⁵

The French forces, having failed to learn from Indochina, were accused of many

⁴³ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 164.

⁴⁴ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, p. 119.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

atrocities against both the population and the captured insurgents. The French military actions were also directly responsible for turning the tide of public support away from France and towards the insurgent forces. This subsequently, helped to maintain the ‘will’ to fight amongst certain sections of the population and inadvertently aided the insurgent force’s recruitment process. This was accomplished by the “... systematic and routinized practice of torture by French military and security forces throughout the conflict.”⁴⁶ Torture of local population was one of the worst-kept secrets of the Algerian conflict and, following the Battle of Algiers (30 September 1956-24th September 1957), torture became almost a standard operating procedure, lynching men, beating women and prisoners disappearing at an alarming rate.⁴⁷

These acts of torture, more than any other tactic employed by the French forces, led to widespread condemnation and caused many Muslims, who may not initially have become involved, to actively seek out the insurgent movement and volunteer their services. The relationship between France and the Muslim civilian population was also hampered by other French initiatives such as relocating thousands of Muslim villagers and forcing them to resettle away from their lands in an attempt to remove all avenues of support for the F.L.N.⁴⁸ These practices only served to increase the support, both active and passive, for the F.L.N. In spite of the lessons learned during the war in Indochina, the French still failed to recognise the difference between short-term gains and long-term implications with their strategy. “ Had they not done so, they might not, in winning

⁴⁶ Alexander and Keiger, *France and the Algerian War*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Evans and Phillips, *Algeria*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ McDougall, ‘Savage Wars?’, p. 126.

the battle, have lost the war, for the brutality and torture rebounded on them and any popular support for the continuation of French rule in Algeria...”⁴⁹

In actual fact, the mentality of brutality begets brutality was entrenched on both sides with innocent civilians bearing the brunt of the violence. The failure of the insurgent forces to orchestrate a mass uprising should have indicated to them that they needed to increase their own hearts and minds strategy. Instead, they panicked and implemented a strategy of fear and brutality against their fellow Muslims as a result “ During the first two and one-half years of the war, the F.L.N. killed only one European for every six Muslims liquidated.”⁵⁰ This reduced the A.L.N/F.L.N.’s primary means of increasing support to one which was forced to rely on French brutality to slowly sway the population’s support back to the F.L.N. Had the insurgent forces implemented a strategy of support for the locals, they would have had a much better chance of creating the kind of popular mass uprising they were seeking and may have proved, on an international level, that their fight was truly a national movement for independence.

Due to the French government’s political withdrawal from Algeria it can only be surmised whether the level of will would have been strong enough within the Algerian insurgency to see the conflict through to the end. Based on both past and current ongoing insurgencies in Muslim-based countries, these people have shown themselves to be extremely single- minded in their ability to maintain superior will. The French military, as previously noted, were actually beginning to make military gains against the

⁴⁹ Hunter, *True Stories of the French Foreign Legion*, p. 199.

⁵⁰ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 164.

insurgents. If France had stayed the course this may have had an impact on the insurgents' will and it also may have encouraged newly independent Tunisia and Morocco to increase support for Algeria.

Whether or not the insurgent force itself would have been able to maintain enough superior will to continue the protracted conflict for as long as necessary remains unproven, due to French withdrawal from the conflict. What is known is that the insurgent force would have had to implement a stronger hearts and minds programme in order to negate any changes in strategy if the French had stayed the course.

Chechnya

*“It is only before God and the Chechen people that we consider ourselves guilty because, in spite of all the sacrifices, we were not able to reconquer the freedom God gave us.”*⁵¹ If anyone was unsure what ‘superior will’ looks like when translated into action, one only has to look at the Chechen people and their struggle to regain independence. The Chechen People, barring the period of Stalin’s deportation, have lived in this region for close on 6000 years, have always been fiercely independent and have responded rapidly against any invading force.⁵² From around the 1550’s to the 1700’s the Chechen people and their strategically important country have been the focus of much interest from countries such as Iran, the Muscovy, the Crimean Khanate and

⁵¹ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 32.

⁵² Arquilla & Karasik, ‘Chechnya’, p. 210.

other smaller nations.⁵³

John Keegan pondered in his work *'The Warrior's Code of No Surrender'*, the Chechen people's ability to bring the massive Russian military machine to its knees in 1995. He states "In Afghanistan, Russian armoured divisions were ambushed and bamboozled by mountain tribesmen. Now Chechnya, a nation of mountain warriors, less than 2 million strong, has defied a Russian task force of tanks, strike aircraft, and as many as 40,000 soldiers for over a month. The Chechens will probably lose their capital in the end. That will not mean the war is over...What is it about peoples like the Afghans and Chechens that make them so difficult to defeat?...What supplies the Chechens with their determination and fighting skills?"⁵⁴ To aid in answering Keegan's question one needs to understand the mentality of these warring people. "From an early age, a Chechen boy is taught he is a warrior, fighting is part of life, courage is a supreme virtue, honour is precious, cruelty towards enemies is no sin, and cowardice brings shame on family and clan."⁵⁵

War and warfare have dominated the Chechen experience. As Christopher Paneco has explained, "For more than two centuries, ever since Tsarist Russia began its large scale pacification of the North Caucasus in the late 18th Century, the Chechen people have suffered war, forced exile, internal deportation, and scorched earth tactics for their

⁵³ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ John Keegan, 'The Warrior's Code of No Surrender', *U.S. News and World Report*, 23 January 1995, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 111.

resistance to Russian rule. Peace has been the exception.”⁵⁶ There is a direct correlation between the actions of the invading force and the impact on recruitment, the shift of loyalties towards the insurgent force and the sustaining of superior will. A sustained and brutal approach, as has been seen in Chechnya, leads to only one conclusion: The unification of previously independent groups and the participation of peaceful citizens against the invading force.⁵⁷ Villagers, who would rather concern themselves with providing enough food to get through winter, have been compelled to take up arms as a direct result of the torture and indiscriminate killings perpetrated by undisciplined troops and an invading force intent on their extermination. The failure to grasp this fact was still evident in Chechnya as recently as 1995, when villagers, wearied by the indiscriminate bombings and looting began to fight back. They commenced laying mines, ambushing and sniping at the Russian troops.⁵⁸ As is demonstrated in Chechnya, superior will is more easily sustained when faced with daily mistreatment by the invading force rather than a force which implements a strong ‘hearts and minds’ programme.

It was earlier noted that one of the four types of insurgency was ‘Clan Insurgency’. This is one of the more difficult insurgencies to break, primarily due to the fact that the clan structure transitions easily into a military structure and the loyalty displayed by these groups is based on genealogy and the clan’s survival.⁵⁹ The history of the Chechen clan has been religiously handed down from generation to generation. Most Chechens can

⁵⁶ Panico, *Conflicts in the Caucasus*, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War In Chechnya*, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Panico, *Conflicts in the Caucasus*, p. 18.

⁵⁹ Schultz & Lavenda, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 241.

recite the names of family members back seven generations and maintain an almost obsessive commitment to past war heroes, whose monuments are tended with devotion.⁶⁰ The Chechen warrior would rather “...fight to the death rather than shame his family, clan, or ethnic nation.”⁶¹ The clan structure only serves to enhance the war-like qualities of the people of the Caucasus mountains and reinforce their will to fight.

Chechens have an organised society with a clear linear structure. Chechen clans or *tieps* are grouped together into tribes called *tukhum* which are spread across the country, maintaining their own dialects, taboos and practices, they are also organised by location,⁶² genealogy and geographical origins and mutual support.⁶³ The *Tieps* are then divided into what is locally believed to be pure-blood *Tieps*. These pure-blood *Tieps* are predominantly located in the mountains as they are the more independent of the Chechens and, due to their location, have come into less contact with Russian and Cossacks than the *Tieps* of the lower plains.⁶⁴ The mountainous *Tieps* display an extremely high level of will to fight regardless of the cost. *Tieps* consist of two to three villages of between four to six hundred people with a council of elders.⁶⁵ *Tieps* are then further broken down into what is commonly known as sub-clans called *ne'ke* or *orgar* consisting of ten to fifty families.⁶⁶ This highly organised structure allows the Chechen people to move quickly into an extremely organised fighting force. During times of war

⁶⁰ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 20.

⁶¹ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, terrorists and Militias*, p. 107.

⁶² Arquilla & Kasrasik, 'Chechnya', p. 210.

⁶³ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ Arquilla & Kasrasik, 'Chechnya', p. 210.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the *tieps* rotate their fighters allowing groups to return home for a break and maintain touch with their families. This also had the added bonus of allowing the sharing of information between other fighters of Russian tactics and of tactics which the Chechens were using to their advantages.⁶⁷ This tight knit societal structure also helps to maintain high levels of will.

In more modern times, these strong and war-like people have added another element to their psyche which only serves to strengthen the resolve of the already tight-knit clan structure. This element is the increase of Islamic fundamentalism which has permeated all levels of their society to varying degrees.⁶⁸ The Chechens were first introduced to Islam about the 8th century.⁶⁹ Sunni Islam was initially incorporated into the religious practices of the time which were predominantly Paganist and Animist.⁷⁰ This practice is known as Sufism and this differs from traditional Islamic denominations as it allows for the clan-based beliefs to continue to be practiced.⁷¹ It does not include Islamist law being applied to civil crime. Different forces, however, have conspired to lead some of the Chechen people down a path of religious fanaticism.⁷² Initially, the influence of various Avars from Dagestan who, at different times, stepped in to lead the Chechen people in their fight against the Russians, had a dramatic effect on the religious leanings of sections of the populous. The ultimate culprit leading to fundamentalist Islam taking hold in sections of Chechen society, however, was Russia and its treatment of the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 228.

⁶⁹ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 31.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 148.

⁷² Chaliand & Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 341.

population. This shift towards fundamentalism can be “...associated with a profound societal crisis, usually arising from rapid socioeconomic transformation or a social breakdown caused by conflict or war.”⁷³ From the outset “...beginning with General Alexsei Yermolov, the Tsarist military and political leadership were unwittingly engaged in accelerating the national formation and religious self-identification of the Chechen people.”⁷⁴ The introduction of fanatical Islam compounded the already ingrained refusal to acquiesce to Russian demands. A combination of generation-old hostilities and religious fanaticism resulted in a populous which would rather die than surrender its independence. This fundamentalism has become more shocking with the introduction of what has infamously become known as the ‘Black Windows’. These are women – often widows of the war – who have become suicide bombers.⁷⁵

The people of Chechnya have the misfortune to be geographically located at a point of immense international strategic interest. Interest initially centred around its geographic location in relation to the warm-water ports of the Black Sea and the fact that Chechens controlled the Daryal Pass which provided the most direct route from Christian Russia to Christian Georgia and Armenia.⁷⁶ In more modern times there are oil and gas which needs to be piped from surrounding countries across Chechnya to the warm-water ports, oil and mineral wealth in the mountains and these add to the value of control of

⁷³ Hughes, *Chechnya*, p. 97.

⁷⁴ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 36.

⁷⁵ David J. Kilcullen, ‘Countering Global Insurgency’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2005, p. 600.

⁷⁶ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 8.

Chechnya.⁷⁷ Russia has also signed off for a pipe-line between Azerbaijan and Europe, across Chechnya and are loathed to re-route the line along the more convoluted path around Chechnya.⁷⁸ This unfortunate location has resulted in Russia acting like a dog with a bone and, due to the financial implications, it is unlikely to be willing to let go.

As far back as the 10th Century Russia had its first contact with Chechnya while moving through the Caucasus on route to invade Persia.⁷⁹ It was not until 1722 when Peter the Great decided that Russia was in a strong enough position militarily to attempt to control the Caucasus region that Russia had its first actual contact with the people of the Caucasus.⁸⁰ He landed his troops in what is now modern-day Dagestan and began to push inland. It was here they had their first military engagement with the Chechens at the village of Enderi on the Aktash River where the Russians were soundly defeated by the mountain men.⁸¹ Catherine the Great loyally continued Russia's subjugation efforts in Chechnya and in 1816 posted General Aleksei Yermolov as commander-in-chief of Georgia and the entire Caucasus region.⁸² Yermolov suffered from the common misconception of many commanders of superior forces. The total belief in his own superior skills and an under-estimation of those of his enemy. His attitude and tactics caused such wide-spread suffering and hatred and only served to fan the flames of the fight in the Chechens.⁸³

⁷⁷ Arquilla & Karasik, '*Chechnya*', p. 209.

⁷⁸ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 27.

⁷⁹ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ Hughes, *Chechnya*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Stanley Green, *Open Wound: Chechnya 1994-2008*; Trolley Books, London, 2003, p. 3.

⁸³ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 117.

In what became known as the ‘ Yermolov system’, he commenced a campaign which included building lines of fortifications, forcibly relocating villages and replacing the villagers with Cossacks.⁸⁴ Yermolov also planned to starve the Chechens out by forcing them to move up the mountains where he knew that they would be unable to sustain any sort of population during the winter months. Yermolov’s troops forced the villagers to the mountain through systematic attacks on villages, raping woman and razing their homes and crops.⁸⁵ The Chechens fought back and in one incident the Russians replied in kind, exterminating the entire village of Dadi-Yurt on the 15th September 1819.⁸⁶ John Baddeley noted that Yermolov’s plan “aroused that fierce spirit of fanaticism and independence which alone made political union possible amongst the turbulent tribesman of Dagestan and Chechnya.”⁸⁷ This is backed by historian Hugh Seaton-Watson: *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* where he states that, “Yermolov’s extreme brutality... achieved results opposite to his intentions.”⁸⁸

During Stalin’s reign of power (1924-1952) his answer to the problem that was Chechnya was to attempt to deport almost the entire population.⁸⁹ The method employed by the Russians was to call all the people of the village together under the guise of a meeting and then force them onto trucks where they would be taken to the trains for deportation. In the village of Khaibakh, however, not all the people were lured by the

⁸⁴ Green, *Open Wound*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 15.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 113.

fake meetings and did not attend. The response of the Russian forces was to burn alive all 700 inhabitants of Khaibakh.⁹⁰ In other villages the people who failed to comply were shot or drowned.⁹¹ By February 29 1944, after shipping an average 80,000 people per day by train, the Russians had deported 478,479 people. 91,250 Ingush and 387,229 Chechens to Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan.⁹² Although eventually allowed to return to Chechnya, their return was not a smooth one, as their homes and lands were already occupied by Russian and Cossacks. The returning Chechens were treated as less than second class citizens.⁹³ This treatment only served to increase the will of the Chechen people to maintain separate lives to those who now occupied their homes and land and their desires for the independence of their country again.

From 1991 onwards the situation in Chechnya steadily degenerated. Criminal acts perpetrated by Russian troops, although not a new phenomenon, were seen through modern societal eyes as being unacceptable. What was once common- place should have been abolished with the introduction of internationally acceptable rules of engagement and the Geneva Convention. This was not the case. Whether or not this is because Russia views Chechnya as its own personal domain and holds true to the old Soviet way of dealing with a disobedient subject, is not entirely clear. What is clear, however, is that super powers such as the United States of America were hesitant to intervene. Ample evidence exists of Russian-lead atrocities against the Chechens and vice versa. The atrocities perpetrated, by the Chechens, however, would not have been carried out if

⁹⁰ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 65.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 60.

⁹³ Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 121.

Russia had allowed them to regain their independence. Russian actions instead led directly to unification of the Tiefs and an increase in the will to fight. This resulted in the typical clan behaviour of uniting usually warring clans against a common enemy or aggressor. This was the result of Russian aggression.⁹⁴

The will of the Chechen people was severely tested in the late 1990s when the Russians, suffering from an inability to isolate rebels from civilians, set up filtration camps.⁹⁵ These camps were set up to allow intelligence units a chance to separate the rebels from the civilians. These camps, however, scarily resembled Russian gulags and housed people in conditions as harsh as those seen in Siberia and other places Russia maintained these types of camps. Even Russians were appalled at the conditions in which the civilian population in Chechnya were held.⁹⁶ A Cossack, who worked towards prisoner exchange, noted sadly the difference between the state of the Chechnya prisoners in comparison to the Chechen-held Russian soldiers.⁹⁷

There exists an abundance of documented atrocities carried out by the Russian forces. The following statements elucidate the mindset of the Chechen fighter and how he views the Russian attempts to subjugate him. Also evident are the means by which the superior will of the Chechens not only fails to wane but has, in fact, increased over time as a direct result of Russian behaviour. It shows that no matter how strong the natural will to survive may be in a people, that it can be fed and nurtured by an invading force with

⁹⁴ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 209.

⁹⁵ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 232.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

detrimental effects on its strategic objective.

In the 1930s, 137 Chechen fighters, most of whom were under the age of 30 were found guilty at a 'puppet trial'. This was despite showing all the signs of torture including missing teeth and one who was castrated⁹⁸. An unnamed Chechen rebel interviewed on a television broadcast on November 4 2002 stated: "I swear by God we are more keen on dying than you are on living."⁹⁹ Alessandra Stanley was quoted in the *New York Times* on the 20th January 1995, In this article he states "We realise that Russia has a great army... I don't want to say that we would ever defeat it, because that would be stupid". But he added: "The only right we have now is the right to die on our own land. The Russians should know that we will fight to the last Chechen."¹⁰⁰ During the 1994 war in Chechnya, another unknown fighter stated, " Even if they take Grozny, the war will not end- we will find a place to fight."¹⁰¹

These statements reflect the sentiments of many Chechen people. Their will to fight to the end is no exaggeration; they have been doing this for a long time. This attitude is, however, indicative of many insurgent forces. What makes the Chechen example so extraordinary is the protracted nature of the conflict- a fact which makes the level of will even more astounding. For over two centuries Chechnya has, at different times, been raging against Russian attempts to control it. But the Chechen people have superior will. This will to survive has been passed down from generation to generation and

⁹⁸ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 56.

⁹⁹ Green, *Open Wound*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰¹ Panico, *Conflicts in the Caucasus*, p. 17.

strengthened and reinforced by a combination of ruthless Russian tactics and the introduction and steady increase in fundamentalist Islam. The Russians are still continuing to attempt to subjugate Chechnya to this day. The Chechens, however, have yet to resign themselves to a fate of Russian servitude. The experience with the previous case studies suggests that so long as the Chechens maintain superior will, there remains the strong chance of succeeding in the insurgency and attaining the objective of an independent Chechnya.

Chapter 4

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

No insurgency can be successful without external assistance in some form. External assistance has the ability to equalise the sparse in-theatre resources available to an insurgent force and this is often to the surprise of the stronger power. Traditionally large resource rich forces rarely employ all their country's resources to an external conflict, therefore, if an insurgent force can access external assistance it has an increased chance of reaching parity of power in theatre. Byman in his work '*Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*' states that external assistance can be a mixed blessing in that the negatives of which is "often at a heavy price in long-term effectiveness."¹ But despite this, multiple insurgencies have proven that to attempt to maintain the necessary element of protraction, external assistance is essential as was illustrated by the Algerian insurgency and the impact that the loss of external assistance was having on its ability to fight in the closing stages of the war.

External assistance comes in many forms; direct assistance is usually provided in the form of weapons acquisition, military advisors or through the aid of neighbouring countries who provide not only military assistance but a safe haven for an insurgent force to regroup and train. These neighbours also help act as a conduit to move supplies, fresh troops and weapons into a blockaded country. Blockades may be a conventional

¹ Byman, '*Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*', p. 167.

warfare tactic but the ability of an insurgent force to circumvent the blockade is severely limited in comparison to a far superior resourced force that has access to air-lift or naval capabilities for instance.

External assistance is also provided though through less obvious means. This is primarily derived through political means. Work done by diplomats at both the national and international levels can take time and produce less obvious results than the military aspect. By bringing the plight of the insurgents to the international forum, however, it can help to apply more legitimate political pressure on the stronger force than the insurgent force alone could hope to do.

Another means by which assistance can lead to parity in-theatre is through unintentional assistance. This is frequently provided by a weakness or strategy employed by the superior resourced force. The most obvious means by which the superior resourced force provides assistance is by the strategy employed by its military force. The in-country behaviour of the superior force has a direct correlation on the ability of its troops to win over the local population. The more the local civilian population are mistreated by the superior force then, correspondingly, the more quickly the local population will turn its support towards the insurgents. As was previously noted, this scenario was most aptly displayed by both the Russian forces behaviour in Chechnya and the French forces behaviour in Algeria.

Another method by which a stronger force can provide assistance to an insurgent force is

by being politically weak in its application. Political will is essential for the invading force. Any force entering into an insurgent-type war needs to have full political support or it will be providing the rebels with a very exploitable weakness. Moore and Tumelty argue the point that there is also a negative associated with soldiers from one country fighting in another country.² This negative is not concerned with the act of fighting in the host country, rather the soldier's mindset and ideology that they return to the native country with. By returning with a more radicalised and warring attitude these soldiers can have a detrimental effect on achieving a peaceful resolution. These soldiers have a tendency to attach themselves to more radicalised factions and can continue the insurgency through far more brutal tactics than may have previously been employed.³ Moore and Tumelty, stated that many Soviet-Jihadist could not initially return to their homes for fear of police action, so in the interim continued fighting for other causes, increasing their fighting skills and experience.⁴

One of the best examples of an insurgency which was unable to access external assistance is the Malayan Emergency. The British forces were able to isolate the Malayan forces from all forms of assistance and this played a major part in the failure of the insurgency.⁵

In more modern times, the birth of the internet has provided insurgents with a form of

² Cerwyn Moore & Paul Tumelty, 'Foreign Fighters and The Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment', *Studies in Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 31, No. 5, 2008, p. 413.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 418.

⁵ Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 57.

external support via the ability to reach a global audience in which to advertise their cause and gain international support. David Kilcullen in his work '*Counter-Insurgency Redux*' states that "One of the most significant 'globalisation effects' is the rise of a worldwide audience, giving insurgents near-instantaneous means to publicise their cause. Globalised internet communication also enables moral, financial and personnel support, creating a strategic hinterland or 'virtual sanctuary' for insurgents".⁶ Although this is a more modern weapon for insurgent forces to utilise, it did have its beginnings in the late part of the twentieth century and was beginning to be used by insurgents such as in Chechnya.

External Assistance is vital for an insurgent force. This is especially pertinent to a force which lacks naval or air power or the invading force holds air superiority. The insurgent force has to re-supply its forces in order to protract the war to the point of political or military failure by the superior resourced force. To be denied any external assistance is fatal to the insurgent force and must be of prime concern if it has any hope of winning.

French Indochina

Both intentional and unintentional forms of external assistance were present during the war in Indochina. The insurgent Vietminh were, initially during the period from 1946 to 1949, isolated from outside assistance, they were short on military experience, poorly armed and incapable of mounting the kind of major military operation which finally

⁶ David Kilcullen, '*Counter-Insurgency Redux*', p. 113.

collapsed French political will in 1954.⁷ This was not, however, to last and the Vietminh were to be the recipients of much external assistance throughout the war, especially from their Chinese neighbours and this assistance grew to a pinnacle during the battle for Dien Bien Phu.

Given the global situation at the time, the war in Indochina was to become another pawn in the effort to establish a position of global domination during the Cold War. The United States had refused to acknowledge Ho Chi Minh's request for assistance, instead remaining loyal supporters of the democratic French.⁸ This lack of support was confusing to Ho Chi Minh, as the Viet Minh previously, had been the recipient of American aid against Japan during the closing stages of World War Two via the Office for Strategic Services or OSS.⁹ The United States missed a golden opportunity to prevent Communism from gaining a foot-hold in South East Asia. The Americans needed French support in Europe and conceding Indochina seemed a small price to pay for that support.¹⁰ This American attitude would change drastically, however, following the Chinese Communist Party's victory in China. December 30th, 1950, the National Security Council released NSC 48/2- this study proposed that the United States policy should be directed to block further Communist expansion in Asia, particularly Indochina.¹¹ America had missed the opportunity to do this. Due to the unwillingness of America to intervene, Ho Chi Minh had little choice but to turn to communist China and

⁷ Poole, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 27.

⁸ Neil Sheehan, Hederick Smith, E. W. Kenworthy and Butterfield Fox, *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War*, Bantam Books, London, 1971, p. 2.

⁹ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 42.

¹⁰ Irving, *The First Indochina War*, p. 98.

¹¹ Sheehan, et. al., *The Pentagon Papers*, p. 9.

Russia for assistance. Thus turning the war in Indochina into another ideological war funded by two super powers. “The initial support for the Indochinese was the P.L.A.’s victory in China in 1949 and the subsequent conversion of the Sino-Vietnamese border into a conduit of major Chinese military assistance...”¹²

This statement, although true, fails to take into consideration the military aid, in the form of weapons and advisors, which the American government provided to Ho Chi Minh and his forces during the war against the Japanese. This may not have amounted to a great deal in the overall picture of the war against the French but does provide a different picture of the Vietminh as not such a completely rag tag bunch and more importantly as a group which had come to expect American assistance due to the previous assistance provided.¹³

The Vietminh, however, now had access to Chinese arms and advisors. The border areas between China and Indochina became a major tactical advantage which the Vietminh exploited to their great benefit during the Indochina war.¹⁴ Following the end of the war in Korea in 1953, both the local situation in Indochina and the global political position changed, for the most part, in Ho Chi Minh’s favour. On the ground in Indochina, the end of the Korean War allowed for a major increase in all forms of aid from its neighbour China, whose resources were now not being given priority for its ideological

¹² Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 44.

¹³ Maclear, *10,000 Day War*, p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

fight in Korea.¹⁵ China was now in a much better position to use its power, resources and its close proximity to support its neighbours against the French and their democratic backers.

On a global political level, the end to the war in Korea and the new interest China was paying to Indochina did not bode well for the French. The Americans, the primary supporters of the French, were physically and mentally exhausted following the conclusion of World War Two and the Korean War and were not in a position to aid the French other than financially. The financial aid to France by 1954 equated to over three billion dollars or 60% of the total war costs.¹⁶

Of primary concern, however, were the restrictions now placed on French actions in case it should initiate Chinese intervention on a large military scale. This would have spelt disaster for the French as the military might and sheer volume of troops the Chinese could have brought to the battle field in a very short time would have overwhelmed them. China's increased interest in the situation in Indochina also worried other nations which, in other situations, may have aided the French. This was especially true of India, whose government was so apprehensive of angering Russia and China that it refused to allow the U.S C-124s to land and refuel on route to Indochina to support the French.¹⁷ The only negative facing Ho Chi Minh was the result of politically getting into bed with communist countries. The refusal of the United States to intervene on behalf of the Indo

¹⁵ John Nordell Jr, *The Undetected Enemy: French and American Miscalculations at Dien Bien Phu, 1953*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1995, p. 6.

¹⁶ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 57.

¹⁷ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 311.

Chinese left Ho Chi Minh with little choice in an effort to maintain external assistance. This collaboration directly led the Vietminh to be viewed on a global scale as a pariah by democratic nations.¹⁸

China's scope for supplying aid to Indochina came in many forms. Training facilities, for instance, in the border provinces of Yunnan and Kwangsi¹⁹ were made available for Ho Chi Minh's soldiers. This provided the Indo Chinese with the chance to learn from the Chinese and ensured that the issue of standardisation of tactics would be of benefit in future engagements. Also, Indo Chinese deserters attested to the French that there were Chinese advisors attached to artillery batteries in the field.²⁰ The training the Indo Chinese received would have helped when working with the Chinese in battle, as familiarity with techniques, which would have been invaluable and even language barriers would have been diminished. The Chinese also provided military advisors throughout the war in Indochina and this assisted in maintaining Chinese interest in the war, ensuring this support would not wane.

More importantly, though, is the interest in the military hardware Giap managed to amass for the battle at Dien Bien Phu. The majority of this weaponry came via two different sources. The Chinese, obviously, supplied the bulk of the weapons but the Russians also provided weaponry via China.²¹ Giap also had a smaller stock of weapons which had been provided courtesy of the Americans during the war in the Pacific against

¹⁸ Maclear, *10,000 Day War*, p. 27.

¹⁹ Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina*, pp. 254-255.

²⁰ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 266.

²¹ Maclear, *10,000 Day War*, p. 37.

the Japanese. The amount of firepower brought to bear at the battle of Dien Bien Phu is testament to the number of weapons being supplied by China and Russia to the Vietminh. The French were taken by surprise at the amount of weaponry and as revealed in post analysis of the battle, it had totally eclipsed the French force's number of artillery pieces. This disparity in firepower continued to be exacerbated during the battle. At Dien Bien Phu the Vietminh prevented the French from re-supplying its forces in the valley by effectively shutting down the air strip. The battle commenced on the 13th March 1954 and by the 27th of March had effectively closed the airstrip.²² Giap accomplished this while still maintaining an open logistics line to re-supply the Viet Minhs' own forces. Giap maintained a logistic base 70 road miles away in Tuan Giap. The French in comparison had to fly a 400 mile round trip from its supply base in Hanoi which was the maximum operating range of the French aircraft at the time.²³

The French were aware of this relationship and managed, multiple times, to intercept radio transmissions between Giap and the Chinese.²⁴ Through the interception the French were able to listen to Giap requesting certain weapons be re-supplied and brought to the front. It was estimated that by the beginning of April 1954 the number of weapons supplied by the Chinese to Giap's forces were 40-37mm anti-aircraft guns with 20 Chinese advisors; 1000 trucks manned by Chinese drivers; 40 Bofors and super Molotova trucks; 395 Machine guns; 1200 automatic rifles; 4000 sub machine guns; 4000 rifles; 4400- 37mm rounds; 60,000 mortar rounds; 5,000,000 cartridges including

²² Ibid., p. 41.

²³ Poole, *Dien Bien Phu 1954*, pp. 45-46.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

1,5000 rounds for heavy machine guns; 4000 cubic litres of gasoline and 4300 tons of rice.²⁵

On the 4th and 5th of April 1954, during the early stages of the battle, a radio message between Giap and the Chinese was intercepted. During this message it was learned that Giap was requesting not only that his force send another 25,000 reserves forward but he was also requesting that the Chinese send another flak regiment with 67 guns.²⁶ Again, on the 14th of April 1954, Giap was once again overheard requesting an additional 720 tons of ammunition and 1 complete flak regiment with 67-37mm anti-aircraft guns.²⁷ This must have raised serious concerns for the French, especially considering that they were unable to re-supply their own forces with any regularity.

The fact that Giap was able to bring so much firepower to bear at the battle of Dien Bien Phu was a direct result of external assistance provided by the Soviet Union and the Chinese. Although Giap's troops had shown themselves to be extremely tenacious when faced with overwhelming odds, the fact is that without this major influx of hardware Giap would have found it very difficult, if not impossible to be in the position of weapon superiority at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. No amount of resources, however, would have been enough if it were not for the hundreds of thousands of coolies who moved thousands of tons of supplies to the front of the battlefield. These coolies shifted 8,286

²⁵ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 117.

²⁶ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 223.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

tons of supplies across mountains and mud caked valley's over 600 miles in length.²⁸ Without this local assistance Giap would have been forced to continue his asymmetrical war, in the hope that the French would lose the will to continue the war before the Vietminh were physically incapable of continuing the fight. The external assistance provided allowed Giap to bring the war to a successful conclusion in a single large-scale engagement.

The French, albeit unintentionally, also provided the Vietminh with assistance. One of the many ways the French did this was through its continuation of a doctrine of positional warfare and attempts to hold terrain through fortifications in multiple locations.²⁹ This resulted in the French spreading their ground forces so thinly they rarely had even a small contingency of reserve forces available for support operations, thus effectively removing the danger of the Vietminh facing the entire French force. This form of assistance is still common with the insurgent type of warfare and a good insurgent commander will always exploit this weakness for the good of his own force. Giap accomplished this by creating feints and diversionary movements of troops essentially forcing the French to meet his forces simultaneously in many locations.³⁰

As has been noted, the French commander's choice of Dien Bien Phu as a defensive location was the greatest form of unintentional assistance any commander could have given Giap. As a defensive site this valley placed the French in a position of weakness

²⁸ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, p. 452.

²⁹ Tucker, *Vietnam*, p. 54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

from the outset. The choice of the valley resulted in the French being held static on the valley floor with the Vietminh holding the high ground. This assisted the Vietminh by providing them with the ability to gather constant intelligence on French activities, provided an unobstructed platform from which to site their artillery and allowing the Vietminh unimpeded fields of fire.³¹

The Vietminh prevented the French from moving out of the valley on reconnaissance missions, in effect shutting them down altogether. The inability of the French to re-supply the base was also a form of external assistance. The French selected a defensive site which had no real road access and had instead to rely on air power for re-supplying everything from food, troops, medical supplies and ammunition.³² This assisted the Vietminh whose anti-aircraft weapons made any attempt to land aircraft a suicide run. This, in turn, forced the French to resort to very inaccurate air drops as the only method of providing their troops with the necessary supplies to maintain the fight. The inaccuracy of these drops led the French to attempt different methods in an effort to improve the accuracy and prevent the supplies falling into enemy hands. “One Vietminh regiment alone had recuperated over fifty tons of cargo, including artillery shells and rations. The *bo doi* were enjoying the luxury of tinned sardines, Gitane and Bastos cigarettes, Vinogel, and the occasional bottles of rum, cognac, or eau-de-vie courtesy of the French army.”³³ In another miss-drop the French forces supplied the Viet Minh with

³¹ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 321.

³² Poole, *Dien Bien Phu* 1954, p. 59.

³³ Simpson, *Dien Bien Phu*, p. 117.

19 tons of 105mm and 120mm heavy mortar ammunition.³⁴

External assistance is essential whether or not it is provided intentionally or unintentionally and a smart insurgent commander makes the best use of both types in an effort to gain superiority of resources in the field. Giap's' battle with the French may well have had a different outcome or dragged on for much longer without the external assistance being provided by the Chinese. Giap also used the unintentional assistance provided by the French through their continuation of resource hungry tactics and operations and the choice of Dien Bien Phu as a defensive site.

During the war in Indochina the Viet Minh had ever increasing amounts of aid via friendly communist countries. This aid rose to a pinnacle following the end of the Korean War, when China turned its attention to its other neighbours. Without Chinese and Russian external assistance and with the French being a far resource superior nation, it would have made the job of protraction extremely difficult for the Viet Minh. It is also highly unlikely that without this assistance, that Giap would have been able to transition to a conventional battle where his forces held superiority in every way as they did at the battle for Dien Bien Phu.

Algeria

The ability of all insurgencies to obtain external assistance is crucial for its ability to

³⁴ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, p. 327.

sustain a conflict. The insurgency in Algeria was able to exploit both intentional and unintentional assistance to aid its military and political struggle. It is one of the best examples of the massive impact that external political support can have on the ability of an insurgent force to utilise this element for a successful insurgent campaign.

The Algerian insurgency received until the latter part of the conflict, intentional assistance from Tunisia and Morocco. As noted earlier, in order to avoid the French forces, the Algerian insurgency used the offer of sanctuary from neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco, both of which had recently obtained their own independence from France and Italy as safe areas. These safe forward operating bases gave the F.L.N. an organised withdrawal and escape route and a safe haven to re-group following a skirmish. More importantly provided a secure place to train new troops and process troops and weapons through to Algeria.

The absolute importance of this form of external assistance was displayed with tragic consequences for the F.L.N. with the introduction of the 'Maurice Line', a line of fortified and manned fencing along the Tunisian and Moroccan borders. The removal of the sanctuary had a massive impact on the ability of the Algerians, not only to escape following an engagement but, more importantly, it prevented them from reinforcing Algeria with fresh troops and weapons essential for maintaining the war effort.³⁵ External assistance of this type is essential to the success of an insurgent force as it provides a direct route to military and logistical aid which could lead to parity of

³⁵ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 169.

resources on the battlefield.

What is less well-known is that support also came from some unlikely allies, specifically communist-led countries. When placed in the context of the era, namely the initial stages of the Cold War, it becomes clear why support came from these other regions. "...the fact that the enemy was a major western power and used N.A.T.O. weapons, led the F.L.N to draw close to China and Russia and their satellites, all of whom provided much moral and practical aid directly or indirectly."³⁶ This provided the Algerians with the type of assistance, which, if utilised wisely, could provide a far more level battle field and the increasing of international political pressure on France. With this newly-found Communist support base, it is not surprising that support also came from Cuba's Castro as well as their immediate neighbouring countries of Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt.³⁷ After 1956, however, "more aid came from Yugoslavia and Tunisia than from Egypt."³⁸

Unintentional assistance can be just as effective and important as intentional assistance and is often derived from the weakness of the superior power. Unintentional assistance came from France via four separate aspects. The first is that from the French population, which was becoming far more vocal concerning France disentangling itself from the war.³⁹ The national political pressure being placed on the Republic from the home front was forcing de Gaulle to move away from negotiations with the F.L.N. to thoughts more towards outright independence for Algeria. This pressure was also providing the F.L.N.

³⁶ Gordon, *The Passing of French Algeria*, p. 65.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 171.

with a national voice that no politician could afford to ignore and brought Algeria's plight to the attention of those in power in a far more forceful manner than the insurgency itself could have ever hoped to do. The swell in national animosity towards the colonial war was used to great advantage by the M.N.A. which worked tirelessly, from its base in France, to maintain the momentum of the vocal opposition, despite its supporters being brutally targeted by the F.L.N at home in Algeria.⁴⁰

The French population was tired of the ongoing battles and had, for a period, experienced terrorism firsthand in some areas through the actions of the O.A.S.⁴¹ Bringing the war home to the French population did far more damage to the goals of the O.A.S. than it did to help and served to reinforce the French population's desire to end the ongoing war. This pressure accelerated when the government began calling up French reservists to fight and often die in Algeria, which was not as acceptable to the French public as sending in foreign troops in the form of the French Foreign Legion.⁴² The French public would not have been quite so vocal about the war if the government had sent only regular troops or, even better, Foreign Legionnaires to die. As the French people watched their children return home, either in body bags or psychologically scarred by their tour, public outcry grew loud enough to be heard by de Gaulle's government.⁴³

⁴⁰ Williams & Harrison, *De Gaulle's Republic*; p. 39.

⁴¹ David L. Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower: Algeria and Vietnam*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991, p. 5.

⁴² Record, *Beating Goliath*, p. 60.

⁴³ Hunter, *True Stories of the Foreign Legion*, p. 207.

France also provided unintentional assistance through the methods employed by the French forces on the ground with two distinct results. Primarily, the continuation of barbaric tactics, with little or no concern or recognition of the Geneva Convention was bringing the condemnation of the world down on France.⁴⁴ The extremely effective work of both the M.N.A. in France and the A.L.N to highlight, on a global scale, the atrocities being perpetrated by the French was wholly successful in creating international political support.⁴⁵ These two groups concentrated on the Non-aligned Movement and the United Nations as a method of creating significant diplomatic pressure on France to give Algeria its independence.⁴⁶ This method proved very effective, especially as it was in conjunction with the pressure being applied from those inside France.

The unintentional assistance France was providing through its troops behaviour in Algeria was now being examined on a global scale and the consequences of political pressure being applied by other nations was only adding to French troubles on the ground. French behaviour also began to solve the initial problems the F.L.N. were experiencing concerning recruiting supporters on the ground. French atrocities directly led to an increase in volunteers for the F.L.N. The actions and behaviour of the French troops on the ground began to sway local support towards the insurgent force.⁴⁷ People and communities who had not previously been actively involved in the insurgency began to offer support either wholly or by providing essential aid. The French forces' actions were beginning to produce something more akin to a national movement which had

⁴⁴ Alexander & Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1854-62*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Evans & Phillips, *Algeria*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 11.

previously been non-existent, thereby creating unintentional support at a local level for the F.L.N. force.

In a twist unique to Algeria, the strategical plan of extricating France from Algeria as set out by de Gaulle also provided the insurgent force with unintentional assistance through an attempted mutiny by certain sections of the military.⁴⁸ In a violent reaction to de Gaulle's extrication plan, France was now forced to cope with a mutiny within sections of the Foreign Legion led by some of his most experienced generals. "The army's outlook changed essentially because of resentment at internationalization, fear of capitulation, and a growing conviction that the Fourth Republic was so incapable of consistency or determination that under it French Algeria was ultimately doomed."⁴⁹

The desert holds a special place in the Legion's heart:

"They were fighting for their home, Sidi Bel Abbes, the Legion base for more than 100 years, for their tradition, their monument to the dead, for their barracks and facilities that their predecessors had built with their hands and defended with their blood. Besides, the Legion had no home in France and there were well founded fears that if the Legion went back to France it would soon be disbanded."⁵⁰

De Gaulle reacted swiftly and posted the difficult military commanders back to France in an attempt to quell the rising anti-independence voice. Two leading military figures

⁴⁸ A Harrison, *Challenging de Gaulle*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Williams & Martin Harrison, *De Gaulle's Republic*, p. 57.

⁵⁰ Hunter, *True Stories of the Foreign Legion*, p. 206.

returned quietly to Algeria, formed up with other dissatisfied military leaders and formed the O.A.S. These military leaders included Generals Salan, Jouhard, Zeller and the very experienced, General Challe.⁵¹ They were joined by parts of the Legion including members of the 1st REP and 1st and 2nd Legion Cavalry and eventually some members of the 2nd REP.⁵² It was, however, far from a total military coup.

Not only was this group extremely violent but they made several unsuccessful attempts on de Gaulle's life. The O.A.S was unable, in the end, to rally enough support to continue with its objectives of retaining French control of Algeria and faded out of contention in the race to take control in Algeria.

The civilian members of the O.A.S, however, were not prepared to give up so easily. Under the leadership of former Legion Officer, Captain Roger Degueudre the cities of Algiers and Oran were converted into mini war zones as they fought to take control of Algeria.⁵³ The ranks of the O.A.S. continued to be buoyed by members of the Legion who were restless with the inactivity they were now forced to endure.⁵⁴ As the French military eventually began to take back control and the evacuation of French citizens continued the ranks of the O.A.S. slowly eroded and the F.L.N. filled the vacuum.

The knowledge that de Gaulle was planning on pulling French troops and support out of Algeria provided the F.L.N. with unintentional assistance by splintering de Gaulle's

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 213.

⁵² Ibid., p. 214.

⁵³ Palmer, *The Penguin Dictionary of Twentieth-Century History*, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Hunter, *True Stories of the Foreign Legion*, p. 215.

power base in Algeria. This forced France to fight with not only the insurgency but some of its own troops and local French citizens as well.⁵⁵ While the mutinous French Foreign Legionnaires and the loyal French forces battled, the F.L.N was able to reaffirm its hold on the more isolated sections of the countryside with far less resistance.

The Algerian independence movement also received political assistance from different forums. Firstly, the newly developed Non-Aligned Movement,⁵⁶ which was gaining international power and standing, was proving to be a very valuable ally to the Algerian insurgency in the form of international diplomatic pressure applied to France. The pressure brought to bear by the Non-Aligned Movement resulted in an agreement from the United Nations to investigate the situation in Algeria.⁵⁷ The support offered by these organisations gave the insurgency a legitimate grievance on the international stage and the political cause was expertly handled by the insurgency's political wing.

Alexander and Keiger have observed that, "Some years ago the expert commentator on Algerian politics, Yahia Zoubir, persuasively suggested how the skilled use, by the F.L.N, of opportunities to draw worldwide political and media attention to their cause damaged the credibility of the rival cause of French Algeria."⁵⁸ Between the years of 1957 and 1961, those responsible for publicising Algeria's plight and encouraging international condemnation by bringing the issues to light in forums such as the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movements and any liberal quarters willing to listen, worked

⁵⁵ Williams & Martin Harrison, *De Gaulle's Republic*, pp. 45-46.

⁵⁶ McLean, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, p. 344.

⁵⁷ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 165.

⁵⁸ Alexander and Keiger, *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy*, p. 19.

tirelessly to get their message out. “French brutality, atrocities and repression of the rights of the Algerians to popular self-determination were debated and attacked in highly public places, tarnishing and weakening France’s claims to epitomize ‘Western civilization’ and carry the banner for the ‘Rights of Man.’”⁵⁹ So persuasive were the arguments of the Algerian diplomats that, at the Bandung Conference of non-aligned countries held in Indonesia in 1955, the Conference unanimously adopted a resolution to uphold Algeria’s right to independence and the United Nations agreed to investigate the on-going saga that was Algeria.⁶⁰ This expertly-timed diplomatic pressure was given credible evidence in the form of continued French military tactics with which to help its case for French withdrawal.

The political wing of the Algerian insurgency was the A.L.N. This group appears to have been far more effective than the military wing as this war was won on the diplomatic level not the military. This does not, however, minimise the military effort as it was this aspect which provided the necessary protraction, hence, allowing the political wing time to slowly build up the external support.

The evidence for the argument of Algerian independence was provided by the French force’s harsh measures which were, for some time, unknown to the international community. A combination of French reservists returning to France and speaking openly about the barbaric actions they were forced to implement and the effective campaign by the insurgents to get their pleas for international support heard, successfully turned much

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, p. 165.

of the world against the French. One such example of the French force's tactics which led to an international outcry took place on February 8th 1958. In direct retaliation against insurgents' attempts to shoot down a French military aircraft, the French bombarded the Tunisian village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef, killing 69 civilians and wounding 130 more. Not only did the French target innocent civilians but the village was on the wrong side of the Tunisian/ Algeria border.⁶¹

“The widespread use of torture naturally further alienated the masses from France and did the French army's reputation enormous harm in metropolitan France and internationally.”⁶² The methods successfully used by the French to maintain control of its colonies in the past were, in a world still reeling from Hitler's Germany, now unacceptable and the Algerians did all they could within their limited power to make sure the world was aware of what was happening in their country.

It has to be noted that timing played an important part in the success of the A.L.N. The post-World War Two global position regarding colonies was changing and the A.L.N. played it to its advantage in an effort to manipulate French politics. The Algerians were recipients of both intentional and unintentional assistance from France itself and from other foreign nations. At the international diplomatic level external assistance was achieved via evidence presented to the United Nations and Non-Aligned Movement. This evidence bought international condemnation of the torture and severe military tactics employed by the French military forces and pressure on France to desist. The

⁶¹ Gordon, *The Passing of French Algeria*, p. 60.

⁶² Ibid.

timing of the Algerian war in terms of global opinion and the intelligent way in which the Algerian diplomats used this to their advantage eventually help to convince the French government to pull out of Algeria. Therefore, French actions provided unintentional assistance to the Algerian diplomats who were fighting for international recognition of their plight.

The French forces' behaviour and tactics also provided a form of external assistance. The brutality of the French forces was responsible for many Algerian citizens either offering support to the F.L.N. when they previously had not or even more concerning it increased the number of men and women willing to fight with the insurgents or offer to become suicide bombers. Although the F.L.N. was also notorious for its treatment of Algerian people who they considered to be non-supportive or whose loyalties lay with France, the on-going torture and wrongful incarnation of local men and women did have an impact on the level of support for the F.L.N. and helped to increase its recruitment capabilities.

External assistance also came from within France itself as national distaste for any ongoing conflict in Algeria grew. This assistance came via two means. Primarily the French public were becoming more vocal about the continuation of the war especially when it was resulting in reservists being killed in action. The pressure being applied by sections of the French population could not be ignored by the government. The M.N.A also played a role in maintaining the momentum of French opposition to the war and used any opportunity to publicly highlight the plight of the Algerian people.

Until the construction of the fortified line of fencing along the Tunisian and Moroccan borders, these two countries provided external assistance in many forms. This included safe havens for training and re-grouping of F.L.N. members and they provided a conduit for weapons, supplies and replacement forces. The importance of this form of external assistance was highlighted by the effect that it had on the F.L.N. to operate once it was closed off to them. External assistance in both forms was paramount to the success of the F.L.N. in persuading France to relinquish its hold on Algeria and grant the country its independence. Both intentional and unintentional assistance was present in this conflict and played equally important roles.

Chechnya

The Chechen people have had mixed results over the centuries in terms of external assistance. In the latter part of last century, different forms of assistance have come from Islamic supporters from a variety of countries and organisations. The lack of a steady benefactor over the long course of this conflict, however, has done little to aid the Chechens in removing the Russian threat once and for all.

1559 was, in hindsight, a very important mark in Chechen-Russian relations. It was in this year that pleas from the North West Caucasus to Russia asking for those in power to send a priest to baptise the people were ignored, thus allowing Islam a foot-hold in the

door and an opportunity for the religion to slowly take hold.⁶³ There is no proof that this assistance would have prevented Islam from taking hold in Chechnya, even in the strange form that the original Islam took. The possibility that stronger ties to Russia could have been formed at this early stage and may have led the two countries down different paths cannot, however, be discounted. This stronger relationship between the two areas while they adhered to similar religious beliefs could have made issues such as access to the Darayl Pass a less contentious one and it would not have placed Chechnya in the unenviable position of being located in the middle of two Orthodox Christian countries. At this stage the Darayl Pass was the most direct route from Russia to Georgia. Historically, this was one of the earliest requests for assistance and it was totally ignored.

In the years between 1834 and 1859 Imam Shamil, a Dagestani who led the resistance for 25 years, appealed directly to Queen Victoria for aid but, once again, none was forthcoming.⁶⁴ To have received this aid and come under the protectorate of England could have provided Chechnya with a better chance of maintaining its independence from Russia. This is because Great Britain has, in the last century, behaved in a much more democratic and internationally acceptable way when dealing with its protectorates and the eventual granting of independence. Once again a Christian country turned its back on the Chechens when they most needed support and it only served to encourage the Chechens to look towards Islam. This refusal appears to be indicative of all requests for aid the Chechens encountered throughout their history. Not one country, save various

⁶³ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁴ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 49.

Islamic groups, was willing to assist the Chechens and this played an instrumental role in setting the country of Chechnya on its present path.

External support not only stems from governmental levels, as has been previously explored, but can also be provided in a spontaneous form at ground level. External Assistance originally came to Chechnya in the form of Islamic religious leaders, many of whom originated from neighbouring Dagestan and followed the Sufism form of Islam.⁶⁵ This was not a government level decision but rather the opportunity for Islamic religious leaders to aid and teach its newly Islamic neighbours and, hopefully, continue to establish and grow an Islamic presence amongst the rough mountain people of the Caucasus region. The Chechens originally, however, were not great Muslims, preferring to continue to drink and smoke rather than forgo all their old ways.⁶⁶

In more recent times, ground level support from neighbouring countries has played a small but interesting role in the Chechens' fight against subservience to Russia. There has long been a relationship between Dagestan and Chechnya and incidents of co-operation against the Russians. One of the more modern examples of this type of support began on the 11 December 1994, when the Russian forces began to move on Chechnya from three separate directions. One force moved from the North West border town of Mozdok, another moved in from Vladikavkaz, the North Ossetian capital and yet another moved in from Dagestan.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁶ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

In a display of spontaneous low-level external support, the force moving in from Dagestan was met by crowds of angry civilians at the border who disarmed the Russian soldiers and took them prisoner. Simultaneously, the Russian soldiers moving in from Vladikavkaz met even more fierce resistance. This opposition escalated after an Ingushetia minister, who while attempting to reason with the Russian soldiers, was physically abused and subsequently died of a heart attack at the scene. This led to an exchange of fire and consequently the Russian force was stopped in its tracks.⁶⁸ This may not on the surface appear to equal some of the external support Algeria received from its neighbours, but it was none-the-less a form of civil assistance which proved to be very effective and sent a clear message to Russia and proves that all forms of assistance no matter how small can be useful to an insurgency.

One of the most unusual turn of events, and one which illustrates the strange politics of the region, was seen during the 1992 Abkhazia-Georgian conflict, where Chechen troops were flown on Russian aircraft to shore up Russian troops who were engaged on the border. Even more astounding was that Shamil Assayed, a Chechen wanted by the Russians for his role in the 1991 hijacking of a Russian plane, was one of the troops flown to the area.⁶⁹ In the often unaccountable political alliances that are indicative of this area, the Chechens provided external support for the Russians in order to protect a border region which would directly affect both sides.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Hughes, *Chechnya*, p. 71.

In modern times due to the strengthening ties with Islam one of the predictable areas from which external assistance is derived from was other Islamic countries and organisations. The foundations for this assistance was actually formed centuries ago with the development of ex-pat Chechen communities in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Jordan.⁷⁰ But the actual level of Islamic support, however, is extremely hard to gauge. The level, understandably, is often exaggerated by the Soviets as fuel for its propaganda machine and efforts to unite public support for the wars in Chechnya. Giuliano states in her work '*Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared*' that following the massacre at Beslan School in North Ossetia, President Putin maintains that "...international terrorists associated with Islamist organisations including al Qaeda are behind the incident"⁷¹ and that this attitude is an attempt to shift the blame away from the war between Russia and Chechen separatists to a global Islamic movement. This attitude has been aptly assisted by the change in tactics by the more radical elements of the Chechen insurgent forces and the introduction of suicide bombings and hostage taking. Schultz and Dew in '*Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*' note that the Russian Prime Minister during the 1994-1996 war, Victor Chernomyrdin, claimed that "mercenaries from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and the Ukraine are stoking the conflict in Chechnya."⁷² Although there is evidence of external assistance from other Islamic countries in the form of fighters, this type of statement from the Russian government is more for propaganda reasons than based on factual numbers.

⁷⁰ Moore & Tumelty, 'Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya', p. 416.

⁷¹ Elise Giuliano, 'Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2005, p. 196.

⁷² Schultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 143.

The Russian government has also provided unintentional assistance through the Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979-1989). By sending Chechens as part of the Soviet forces in to the Russo-Afghan War, the Soviets unintentionally trained to a high level Chechnya fighters experienced in insurgent warfare courtesy of the Soviet military. The Russians would later face many of these fighters during the Chechen wars. Chechen insurgency training also received through external assistance when “Later generations of *mujahideen* fought together in Kosovo, Bosnia or Chechnya. Many went to school together, fought together in sectarian conflicts and trained together in terrorist camps.”⁷³ These men returned to Chechnya hardened fighters and well versed in Russian tactics and limitations. One of the most influential of the returning fighters was Fathi Mohammed Habib, who, in 1993 returned to Chechnya and established a Salafi Islamic Jamaat, known as al-Jama’ at al-Islamlyya and was influential enough to attract a small following.⁷⁴ Fathi was not only successful in recruiting and establishing foreign fighters in Chechnya, he also organised finance through his former association with the Muslim Brotherhood.⁷⁵

The Islamic connection initiated through relationships formed when Chechens fought in other Islamic wars illustrates how external assistance, with this new form of insurgent warfare, is created and utilised. One of Fathi’s most influential imports was Samir Salih Abdallah al-Suwaylim also known as Emir Khattab. An experienced fighter Khattab

⁷³ Kilcullen, ‘Countering Global Insurgency’, p. 600.

⁷⁴ Moore & Tumelty, ‘Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya’, p. 416.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

gained acceptance from the Chechens through his tactful dealings, bravery and praise from legendary Chechen fighter Shamil Assayed.⁷⁶ Khattab was also a very smart political operator and utilised the media, film, DVD's and the internet to both publicise the Chechen cause and to reach young fighters of the future.⁷⁷

As a result of increased Islamic co-operation, the late 1990s witnessed soldiers returning to Chechnya from training in the mountainous region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Giuliano claims that one of the most influential of these training schools is Akora Khattak in Pakistan near the Afghanistan border. This school provide religious training and more than likely military training before returning them to Chechnya to fight the Russians.⁷⁸

Chechen fighters have also gained valuable experience fighting in other Islamic wars which they in return passed onto the Chechen men. Many Chechens had fought in wars in Azerbaijan, Abkhazia, Afghanistan and Georgia.⁷⁹ This form of external assistance was a logical expectation. New relationships had been forged between the more radical Islamic sections of Chechnya and these other Islamic countries that were also proficient in guerrilla warfare, especially against the Russians. The next logical step was for those organisations to offer training and aid in the forms of weapons and Islamic fighters of different nationalities who were prepared to die for an Islamic Jihad.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 417.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Vinod Anand, 'Export of Holy Terror to Chechnya from Pakistan and Afghanistan', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2000, p. 541.

⁷⁹ Arquilla & Karasik, 'Chechnya', p. 211.

Turkish citizens also provide another example of low level spontaneous external assistance. Turkish sympathisers gave their support during the border town standoff at Pervomaiskoye, between the Russians and the Chechen fighters who were attempting to return to Chechnya following a failed hostage-taking attempt in the city of Kizlyar in Dagestan on 14th June 1995. Pinned down in the town of Pervomaiskoye with their hostages, the Chechens were fast running out of time and ammunition. In response, Turkish sympathisers hijacked a ferry of 240 people on the Black Sea and threatened to blow it up unless the Chechens were freed and allowed to return to Chechnya.⁸⁰ This was successful and the Chechens were allowed to return to Chechnya.

With the new global growth in Islamist movements there is, predictably, apparent evidence to support the claims that, in more recent times, Chechnya was supported by al Qaeda and other Islamic countries. The numbers, however, appear to be grossly exaggerated by Russia for use in its propaganda war. Moore and Tumelty claim that around 80 Arab fighters/ jihadist fought in the 1994-1996 war and a lesser number of North African, Turkish and central Asian Jihadist most of whom were funded through charities and one-off donations.⁸¹ Although actual numbers are difficult to establish, the numbers posed by Moore and Tumelty do not appear to constitute the Arab Jihadist invasion that the Russian propaganda would have the world believe. Shultz and Dew also concur with the claim that the numbers of Islamic Jihadist fighting in Chechnya

⁸⁰ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*. p. 299.

⁸¹ Moore & Tumelty, 'Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya', p. 417.

have been inflated by Moscow.⁸² What cannot be denied, however, is the change between the objectives of the two wars fought during the 1990s. The first war was primarily about independence first and religion second. The second war was about religious freedom.⁸³

Another unfounded allegation is the one concerning a link between the Chechen resistance and al Qaeda. This link appears to be tenuous at best with little substance to the rumours. Of those connected to al Qaeda known to have been involved in the war in Chechnya, none were top level operatives, although a few went on later to martyr themselves in very high profile suicide attacks.⁸⁴ al Qaeda tends to offer more external assistance such as finance, training camps and advisors, rather than directly sending in forces.

In 1999 the Chechens boasted of the amount of aid and fighters sent to them from their Islamic brothers.⁸⁵ This appears to be more of an attempt by the Islamic radicals of the Chechen independence movement to maintain external assistance from Islamic organisations. One of the more recent public announcements of support of the Chechens came from Professor Ghafoor Ahmed (second in command) of Jamaat-I-Islami based near Lahore in Pakistan. He publicly asked for donations of food, money and medical aid to support the Chechens in their fight against the Russians, in what he considers to be

⁸² Shultz & Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, p. 143.

⁸³ Meier, *Chechnya*, p. 72.

⁸⁴ Moore & Tumelty, 'Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya', p. 423.

⁸⁵ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*; p. 81.

a continuation of the Soviet-Afghanistan War.⁸⁶ The amount of money raised by Jamaat-I-Islami was estimated to be around \$200,000.⁸⁷ There is also evidence that “The Saudi Arabian based Islamic Relief Organisation did set up in the Chechen region and was probably a source of substantial funds to fighters.”⁸⁸

On a tactical level there is a correlation between Islamic Jizvat (Holy War) fighters (or suicide fighters). These fighters, using methods which had been perfected in other Islamist conflicts, blew up Russian tanks by throwing themselves intentionally under the tank tracks. The Afghani fighters taught the Chechen fighters how to attach Napalm charges to regular anti-tank grenades. Once the grenades exploded the Napalm would eat through the tank and explode the ammunition.⁸⁹ This highlights another example of external assistance with the passing of tactics from Islamist- guerrilla trained nations to their Chechen ‘brothers’.

The constant requirements for replacement weapons is filled through multiple means. Some were given to the Chechens by Russia as part of a deal during different Russian withdrawals, and some weapon stocks were acquired by the rebels after taking control of Russian bases and stockpiles.⁹⁰ Between February 6th and 8th 1992, 4000 weapons and 3 million rounds were taken by force from various Russian military units including

⁸⁶ Vinod Anand, ‘Export of Holy Terror to Chechnya from Pakistan and Afghanistan’, p. 543.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 544.

⁸⁸ Gall & de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, p. 308.

⁸⁹ Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*; p. 50.

⁹⁰ Stasys Knezys & Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya*, p. 36.

machine guns, various motor vehicles, food stores and uniforms.⁹¹ Weapons were also purchased from the neighbouring Republic of Georgia, despite its 'sometime' relationship with Russia and other ex-Soviet states.⁹² More confusing was the fact that some of the Chechen's weapons were purchased directly from Russian arms factories. This was discovered when Russian soldiers taking Chechen weapons as trophies found the weapons were so new they had not yet been issued to the Russian troops.⁹³

As with the conflict in Indochina, Russia itself provided unintentional assistance in the form of unifying and solidifying Chechen will. As was previously mentioned the tactics used by Russia in its attempts to subjugate Chechnya were wholly barbaric and have provided the Chechen insurgency with a constant flow of new recruits to replenish its forces. From the time of General Yermaolov forward, the Russian approach of wholesale torture and murder carried out through mass exterminations, burning people alive and mass deportations has assisted the Chechens greatly and goes some way to explaining the unbelievable refusal to acquiesce to Russian demands.

In the form of unintentional assistance, the behaviour of both Russian forces and its leaders have assisted the Chechen people in maintaining their superior will. As was seen in Indochina and will be noted in the following chapter regarding Algeria, the behaviour of the invading force is of monumental importance in providing the insurgent force with the momentum for sustaining superior will. The biggest problem for the Chechens in

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p. 38.

⁹³ Ibid.

gaining external political assistance and producing international political pressure on the Russians was that the countries with the necessary power refused to become involved. They turned their backs under the auspices of it being a local issue that Russia needed to resolve. The United States did not intervene, primarily because it had worked so very hard to orchestrate the election of a co-operative Russian president that they could work with. Yeltsin was too important to the post-Cold War world-order to let the issue of an insignificant satellite state like Chechnya jeopardise their plans. This forced the Chechens to look to other sympathetic Islamic states and organisation in which to gain financial and military support.

Following September 9/11, however, the Chechen's Islamic associations have guaranteed that no western help would be forthcoming especially under Putin's reign of power. No other major power country has stepped up to help raise the issue of the people of Chechnya. So in direct comparison to Algeria, who enjoyed unprecedented international support, Chechnya, devoid of any diplomatic pressure from significant power players were reliant on ground level support from neighbouring countries and fellow Islamist groups.

Chechnya has a chequered history when it comes to external assistance. The Russian government and its forces has provided assistance through its treatment of the Chechen people and aided in only unifying and solidifying their fight. There has in the past been assistance from the neighbouring Republic of Dagestan through their shared religious beliefs and incidents of civilian protest which has halted Russian columns. This is not,

however, enough to sway the Russians from continuing their attempt to subjugate Chechnya.

Most recently, the Chechen insurgency has been aided by other Islamic movements and organisations which provided assistance through finances, training in foreign camps and foreign fighters willing to help. This has been a double edge sword for the Chechens in that the patronage of Islamic groups has only aided the Russian propaganda machine in labelling the Chechens as terrorists and even more reluctance of Western nations to intervene on their behalf. The lack of a major benefactor, however, has played a small but significant role in preventing the Chechens from transitioning to a conventional style of warfare and engaging the Russians in a major decisive battle. Being the great insurgency force that they are, these tenacious people are able to take any external assistance and utilise it as effectively as possible. The war in Chechnya still drags on with no sign of abating and as long as the Chechen forces can continue to access even small amounts of assistance the rebels will not give in to Russian demands.

CONCLUSION

Insurgency warfare is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as warfare itself and continues to this day to pose a major dilemma to more powerful conventional forces struggling to perfect a counterinsurgency strategy.

This work sought to answer the question of why and how insurgent forces are able to defeat a superior resourced conventional force. What are the essential elements required to emerge victorious from such an encounter?

The initial aim was to attempt to define insurgency based on the type of insurgency and its operational objectives. What became clear from this was that defining insurgency warfare based on its tactics was difficult, as no two insurgent wars were the same. But by looking at an insurgent force's strategical end state a more common theme emerged. The strategic goals of an insurgent force such as removal of a foreign occupation, removal of an opposing system of government or a grievance against another section of society is what defines an insurgency rather than solely their tactics.

Another difficulty lay in separating insurgency from terrorism. The final conclusion reached is that most insurgencies incorporate tactics at some stage which can be classed as terrorist without necessarily being a terrorist organisation. And an insurgency needs to primarily take place within the borders of a particular country and be carried out predominantly by the people of that region for it to be considered an insurgency.

Insurgency warfare success is derived from who are willing to sacrifice the most for the longest period of time and this is often a price which is too high for many superior conventional forces to pay. Depending on which type of government the insurgent force is fighting, this can be a fundamental weakness that the insurgent force can exploit. It has been shown that payment is especially high for a democratic government and this is in direct contrast to a more autocratic type regime.

A democratic government is hamstrung when facing an insurgent force due to the expectations held by both its own population and the international community that the forces will conduct themselves within the parameters of the Geneva Conventions and the Law of Armed Conflict. This restriction does not appear as necessary for countries ruled by dictatorship or similarly autocratic type regimes. Some of these regimes are not held as accountable by their people for their force's behaviour and at times appear to openly disregard the outrage of the international community, although there are some democratic nations who are also less concerned than their political ideology would suggest. This approach, however, is more often than not counter-productive to these countries strategic end state and only serves to reinforce the insurgent forces will and provide the fuel necessary for the fundamental element of protraction. The effect that the type of government fighting counter-insurgency has been illustrated with the selected examples. Both Indochina and Algeria were facing a democratic France and this definitely provided these countries with ammunition when attempting to utilise the essential element of external support. Chechnya, conversely, has been embroiled in a

war over a much longer period with Russia. Fighting this type of autocratic government has removed, to a much larger extent, the option of the Chechen people to appeal to the Russian population for support.

The type of insurgency also provides an insight into how effective an insurgent force will be when pitted against a superior resourced conventional military. In modern times the four primary types of insurgency have all been represented in various forms. The Lumpen force has not now, nor will it ever be, a problem for an organised and well-funded opposing force. The weakness of a Lumpen force derives from the lack of control by a central commander and as a result, a lack of structure. Lumpen forces are totally disorganised with selfish and extremely limited goals and often do not plan more than a day ahead. This type of insurgency is primarily found in a third world country where it forms and remains at street level. Lumpen type of insurgencies are easily countered by government forces and even private military companies and tend to fold quickly when faced with a well-trained and led military force.

Clan insurgencies are at the opposite end of the spectrum to Lumpen insurgencies. This type of insurgency is solidly grounded and members are loyal to their respective clan. The consequence of this structure is that the group is quickly and easily transformed from an agrarian based clan into a cohesive military force who will fight to the end. Its structure also provides it with strength. It is a well-established structure which is respected during periods of peace and indisputable during times of war.

A central command structure often comprised of clan elders, not only streamlining decision-making and strategic goals but ensures all members of the clan are fighting for the same objective, not individual aims which would be devastating to the necessary unity of an insurgent force. Their strength is derived not only from the clan's history which is religiously passed down from generation to generation but also from a very real threat to the clan's survival. Clans of similar areas will, when faced with an external threat, work co-operatively to fend off the threat and often return to inter-clan warring following its resolution. This type of insurgency, as seen in Chechnya, is extremely difficult for an invading force to conquer. The only real way to defeat a strong clan-based insurgency is to exterminate the entire group. No other method will break them as can be attested by the Russians in Chechnya. Deportation of almost the entire population was as close to control over the Chechens as the Russian government has ever managed to achieve. Democracies will ultimately struggle to conquer this type of insurgency as the necessary level of brutality would not be acceptable to the government, its people or the international community. Even a government such as the Russian government, which continues to treat the Chechens brutally and as less than human, has been unable to break their will.

Popular insurgencies are rarer but do occur. Today the Middle East is providing us with examples of popular insurgencies as the people fight to remove their current forms of rulers and replace them with democratic based governments. Countries like Libya, Egypt and Syria have recently experienced true popular uprisings with people from all walks of

life taking a stand despite the consequences and civilian deaths. These uprisings currently appear to be maintaining their momentum which is in no small part due to the brutal tactics being used by government troops to suppress them. These popular uprisings are also managing, via the internet, to publicise their plight on a global scale, a new phenomenon which autocratic governments are having major difficulty in controlling.

The Islamic religious based insurgency, is once again taking centre stage in world politics and the cause of the concentration of conventional forces fighting counter-insurgency battles around the world. This type of force is also extremely difficult, if not impossible, to defeat. The fanatical religious element adds another dimension to what is often a clan-based insurgency and provides the force with a double dose of will. No conventional force can match the will of these Islamic Jihadists and their unquestioning willingness to die for their beliefs that this type of insurgency brings to the battle field.

Even when the Religious Insurgency is thought to be weakened to the point of no longer being a threat, this is often just wishful thinking. As has been seen in Afghanistan, the belief that the insurgent force has been sufficiently weakened is false and tends to point only to a lull in activity while the insurgent force indoctrinates a whole new generation of men and woman willing to die and the seasonal cycle to the insurgents fighting. The Islamist or religious insurgency also has the advantage of external assistance from fellow Islamists in other countries. This global support network provides a constant source of recruits who are also willing to give their lives for their brothers' fight for

religious intolerance. Once again any nation attempting to conquer this type of insurgency needs to be prepared to fight a long and bitter war and be willing to meet violence with violence.

As nice and neatly as these four groupings appear to be this work has shown that many different groupings of insurgency exist and lends only to make the difficulty of isolating a particular type of insurgency almost impossible. This is because not only do academic authorities appear unable to agree on a set of definitions but because each insurgency is different and insurgency as a phenomenon is ever-evolving.

This work investigated the three fundamental elements that are imperative if an insurgency has any hope of fulfilling the essential principle of protraction. These are superior will, superior tactics and strategy and external assistance. As has been noted, these are also essential requirements for a conventional force, however, these elements take on a more significant importance for an insurgent force as the loss of one of these elements could have catastrophic effects on its ability to survive. For example, the loss of a certain number of troops which can easily be absorbed by a superior resourced conventional force could be a loss that an insurgent force could not recover from. The failure of the insurgent force to master any one of these elements will make it almost impossible for an insurgent force to defeat a conventional military.

The issue of superior will is one which has no simple answer. Insurgent groups such as clan-based insurgents or religious fundamentalists maintain a level of 'personal will'

which cannot be replicated by a conventional force, except in a situation where the conventional force is defending its own territory. A clan-based insurgency inspires the level of will which is created through a loyal, almost religious, devotion to war heroes, ancestors, a fierce independence, a high level of suspicion of strangers and is only reinforced by the invading forces behaviour. The religious-based insurgency's level of will originates from total religious indoctrination beginning as a young child who is denied access to any other form of education. This form of indoctrination is akin to 'brain washing' and the young adults who have been raised solely on religious teachings and expectations of their actions for guidance are willing to take superior will to the limit, particularly in the form of suicide bombers. No conventional force can match this level of will.

An insurgent force needs to protect superior will through its ability to maintain the superior will of the people. Chechnya and French Indochina illustrate aptly how a true superior will can aid an insurgent force to maintain the necessary protraction. The F.L.N. in Algeria, conversely, had great difficulty in creating superior will at a national level and choose, unwisely, to utilise terror tactics in an attempt to force the Algerian public to react. The saving grace for the F.L.N. was the brutal tactics of the French forces and the effect this had on swaying the Algerian public towards the independent movement.

The insurgent force can also suffer from periods of lack of will. Giap's forces, once they had transitioned to a conventional battle at Dien Bien Phu, were suffering from the effects of high numbers of casualties and Giap quickly responded by ordering tunnelling

as an alternative to the direct attack. This had an immediate effect on his troops' morale and overall superior will. The reverse of this is the Algerian insurgency which, in reaction to the change in French military tactics, was beginning to surrender rather than taking the fight to its conclusion. This points to the F.L.N. experiencing difficulty in maintaining superior will, especially when the force was meeting severe resistance or the previous tactics used are suddenly not producing the same results. In Algeria, the combination of the French closing the borders to their external support and a change of French military tactics began to have an impact on the F.L.N.'s willingness to fight to the end. The French in the latter part of the war had implemented new tactics to counter the insurgents' formula.

The French began to use small highly mobile tracking teams which moved quickly through the mountains to track down and bring to battle the F.L.N. groups. Once they had contact, the French forces were quickly reinforced by helicopter-borne troops. After increasingly successful results the French forces noted that the insurgents were beginning to surrender rather than fight. This proves that the superior will displayed by insurgent forces is breakable and seems, in part, to be maintained only by their success and damage caused by their hit and run tactics on the conventional force. Although superior will is easily maintained through victory and success, it is a core element of an insurgent force as often they do not win battles but through protraction they win the war. This takes superior will to maintain despite losses in battle. Once again, with the Algerian example it is sheer conjecture, as to whether the long term capabilities of the insurgent forces ability to regroup and recover their will as the French forces were

shortly pulled out of the country.

The only answer to the dilemma of superior will, for a conventional force, is to utilise tactics which will erode the insurgent forces will such as successful military tactics in conjunction with a strong 'hearts and minds' programme which denies them support. Superior tactics are essential regardless of what form the warfare takes. For the insurgent, however, the ability to out-think, tactically, a superior-resourced conventional force, is essential. This is because a large conventional force has the ability to recover from a loss of troops that may well be crippling to a smaller insurgent force. French Indochina provides a classic example of conventional force commanders who seemed incapable or unwilling to let go of their conventional World War Two tactics and adopt the small fast-moving mobile groups necessary to counter the Vietminh's speed and ability to move quickly.

The biggest weakness of the Vietminh was their logistic capabilities. The French failed to use unlimited air power to target, disrupt and remove altogether the Vietminh re-supply capabilities. In reality what the French needed to do was use a scorched-earth approach along Road 41, the sole road leading into Dien Bien Phu. This may not have stopped the Vietminh's supply abilities but would have severely disrupted it and allowed closer monitoring of any movements along this primary track. Giap proved a master at exploiting the French forces' weaknesses such as limited troop numbers due to the strategy of maintaining isolating fortifications and French commanders responses to Giap's' diversionary tactics.

The Chechen example also highlights the need for strong, flexible and experienced military leaders. The Chechen forces, outnumbered and resourced regularly engaged with and defeated a superior resourced conventional Russian force. This is because the Chechen fighter often employed tactics which were not only appropriate for the type of war they were fighting but because they were flexible in their approach which is the complete opposite to the Russian forces approach.

Algeria is an example of an insurgent force that successfully utilised tried and tested guerrilla tactics and strategies against a conventional force. The French, however, began to adapt their tactics for a more highly mobile and flexible one, removing the operational ability of the F.L.N. to exploit traditional French tactical weaknesses. This change in French tactics had an immediate impact on the F.L.N. combat capabilities. Whether or not the F.L.N. forces would have, in true insurgent form, adapted its tactics can only surmised but both past and current conflicts involving Muslim based insurgencies have shown them to extremely tenacious and adaptable.

External assistance is also essential for any insurgent force which is facing a superior resourced enemy. External assistance is not only essential for protraction but it can, in certain situations, provide the insurgent force with parity of resources in theatre. This is made possible by superior forces which enter into this type of war by approaching it in a limited fashion. Being a superior resourced force does not, necessarily, equate to superior resources in theatre. This could be due to a country being involved in more than

one conflict simultaneously or it could be an underestimation of their opponent's capabilities caused by arrogance or a lack of understanding of insurgent warfare.

The Russians entered into Chechnya in a less than unlimited fashion and this was a weakness that the insurgent force could exploit. The French in Indochina, did hold a large number of troops on the ground, but the manner in which it chose to fight the war actually resulted in the French fielding a smaller force than the Vietminh. The assistance provided by the Chinese was invaluable and essential to the Vietminh's fight and was a fundamental factor in the Vietminh gaining material, logistical and tactical superiority in theatre over the French.

Chechnya has only recently become the recipient of external assistance through the connections formed within the Islamic states and organisations. They have had the benefit of training, financial aid and at certain points small numbers of fighters. The Chechens, however, have not had the external assistance at the level of either the Viet Minh or the Algerians. The Chechens have not been able to sway any nations or international organisations to help publicise its plight. The actions of the new more radical Islamic arm of the independent movement has only served to isolate Chechnya from most countries outside of the Islamic community.

The Algerian insurgency illustrates how important external assistance is to an insurgent force and the damage to the fight that losing this assistance can have. On completion of the Maurice Line, a fortified line of fencing along the Tunisian and Moroccan borders,

the F.L.N. forces options for assistance were instantly limited. This had an immediate impact on the tactical abilities of the F.L.N. to utilise its safe forward operating bases in Tunisia and Morocco as conduits for resources to the battle field.

There is a lot to learn still about insurgent warfare and the fact that each and every one of these is unique in some way makes forming standard operating procedures difficult. If an insurgent force can utilise the three fundamental elements of superior will, superior tactics and strategy and external assistance, it will have the best chance of maintaining the protraction necessary to defeat a conventional enemy. There is no argument that these three elements are essential to all forms of warfare, the basis of this thesis is that these elements are more fundamental to an insurgent force and are far more difficult to sustain than for a conventional force.

Superior tactical skill is essential to all forms of warfare. Where an insurgency force is concerned, however, the need to tactically out-think and out manoeuvre a superior resourced conventional force becomes even more paramount. The ability to maintain a mobile and flexible strategy in an effort to exploit a superior resourced force technological superiority cannot be underestimated. Giap was the master at this and effectively operated an insurgency war in preparation for the transition to a conventional battle at his time and choosing in order to ensure his forces held the superiority in numbers and weapons.

Superior will is essential to every military but is much more difficult to maintain for an

insurgency especially when insurgent forces tend to loose battles while attempting to protract the conflict long enough to win the war. The Chechens are a great example of superior will as, despite the fact they have at different times defeated the Russians in battle, the Russians have replied with mass bombings, scorched earth tactics, mass deportation and torture. The Chechen superior will is the primary reason why the Chechens have refused to acquiesce to the Russians' since Peter the Great invaded in 1722.

External assistance is far more essential for an insurgent force than that of a superior resourced force. For strong conventional military force such as the United States of America, their logistical capabilities to move resources in to a theatre of operations regardless of distance is massive. Compare this to a small insurgent force whose logistical capabilities are almost non-existent and who have to rely on other sympathetic nations in order to carry on the war. The Viet Minh maintained an open line of communication with China across the border that French air interdiction operations failed to rupture. The end result was an insurgent force which had managed to achieve resource superiority in theatre by the commencement of the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The F.L.N. in Algeria, conversely, lost their primary source of external assistance and prior to the French forces pulling out of the country, the F.L.N. was having great difficulty in maintaining the fight and replacing men and material resources.

Simply put for an insurgent force to be victorious over a superior resourced conventional force, the insurgent leaders must ensure that these three elements are a priority.

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