


# The Importance of Intelligence in Combating a Modern Insurgency

Kevin Reamer

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# The Importance of Intelligence in Combating a Modern Insurgency

## **Author Biography**

**Mr. Reamer** enlisted in the National Guard in 2009 as an intelligence analyst. He has a BA in Political Science from the University of Maryland Baltimore County where he focused on international relations, the Middle East, and national security. He is currently working on a MS in Intelligence Management from Henley Putnam University with concentrations in Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence.

## **Abstract**

Throughout history the world has been plagued by insurgencies. While the underlying causes of each new insurgency have been different, they are all similar in certain areas. This similarity entails that the effective countering of an insurgency can be turned into a science with a set of guidelines to follow based on conditions on the ground. Guidelines are important because insurgencies are flexible and to defeat them the counterinsurgency must be equally flexible if not more flexible. Good intelligence is critical to the success of an insurgency. With their small, poorly equipped forces, the leaders of insurgencies need to know when to strike and when to pull back. This reliance on intelligence means that an effective counterinsurgency must also rely on good intelligence so that the counterinsurgents may know where the insurgency will strike, where they are based, how they are supplied, where they keep their weapons, and other essential pieces of information.

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Throughout history the world has been plagued by insurgencies. While the underlying causes of each new insurgency have been different, they are all similar in certain areas. This similarity entails that the effective countering of an insurgency can be turned into a science with a set of guidelines to follow based on conditions on the ground. Guidelines are important because insurgencies are flexible and to defeat them the counterinsurgency must be equally flexible if not more flexible. Good intelligence is critical to the success of an insurgency. With their small, poorly equipped forces, the leaders of insurgencies need to know when to strike and when to pull back. This reliance on intelligence means that an effective counterinsurgency must also rely on good intelligence so that the counterinsurgents may know where the insurgency will strike, where they are based, how they are supplied, where they keep their weapons, and other essential pieces of information.

The United States has run effective insurgencies against the British in the American Colonies during the Revolutionary War, the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II, and provided critical aid to the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviets during the Soviet–Afghan War. With these prior triumphs the United States should be better prepared to counter insurgencies. However, having failed in Vietnam, Somalia, and Lebanon, their successes on the side of the insurgent have not translated into success on the other side. The verdict is still out on the current counterinsurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq but victory can be achieved in both situations.

In order to discover what actions need to be taken to wage an effective counterinsurgency and why intelligence is critical to the process, it is important to look at the past successes and failures of both insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. It is also important to note what has changed in modern insurgencies and what has stayed the same in order to ensure that effective strategies from the past will still be effective today. Lessons learned from the American Revolution, Boer Wars, Filipino Insurgency during World War II, Vietnam War, Soviet–Afghan War, and the Lebanese Civil War can help us understand the challenges facing us today in Iraq and Afghanistan. From these case studies, a broader picture can be drawn regarding the intelligence successes and failures of each war. From here, a better plan can be developed that will be effective in

eliminating the problems of the past and thus support for the insurgency can be reduced until it is no longer a viable force.

## The American Revolution: 1775-1783

The success of the American Revolution is due, in large part, to the successful intelligence operations conducted by George Washington. During the French and Indian Wars, Washington had learned that “There is nothing more necessary than good intelligence to frustrate a designing enemy, & nothing that required greater pains to obtain.”<sup>1</sup> In December 1776, the future of the revolution was looking grim. Washington’s army had been continually pummeled by British regulars and Hessian mercenaries at Long Island, White Plains, and Fort Mifflin. The Colonial Army had managed to retreat across New Jersey and cross the Delaware River and the British decided to wait until warmer weather to put an end to the rebellion. Both sides thought the end was near until a man named John Honeyman was seized near the camp and brought before Washington as a suspected spy. Honeyman had fought beside Washington during the French and Indian Wars and was currently one of Washington’s spies. Honeyman told Washington that the British and Hessians were off guard and distracted because Christmas was approaching. Washington locked him in the guardhouse overnight to preserve his cover and then engineered his escape the same night by causing a fire. Honeyman reported back to the British commander, Colonel Rall, about his escape and that the Americans were completely incapable of mounting an offensive. This confirmed Rall’s own thoughts so he ignored the talk from his other agents saying that the Americans were about to attack. The Americans attacked during a blizzard and took Trenton. Only four of their men were wounded.<sup>2</sup> The American Revolution was saved due to the effective use of intelligence.

During his stay at Valley Forge the following winter Washington wrote letters mentioning fictitious infantry and cavalry regiments which he passed on to his double agents. The letters made it to the British and caused them to believe that Washington had over eight thousand more troops than he actually had. They concluded that he was too strong to attack at that time.<sup>3</sup> Just as it had the previous winter, intelligence once again saved the American Revolution.

In the summer of 1780 the French landed at Newport, Rhode Island. The Culper Spy Ring warned Washington that Clinton, whose army was in New York, planned to attack the French. Washington slipped reports to British spies claiming that he was planning an offensive against

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New York. Clinton called off the attack on the French forces after learning of Washington's plans.<sup>4</sup> Instead of conducting an attack against an unprepared French force, Clinton's army sat in New York and waited for Washington's attack which never came. Had Clinton attacked the French at Newport it is likely that he would have been victorious.

In the summer of 1781, Clinton received American dispatches about a combined attack from Washington's army and the French forces against New York. This had in fact been the original plan but Washington changed his mind and decided to head south and attack Cornwallis instead. To trick Clinton he prepared letters stating that his original plan still stood and both his forces and the French forces would be attacking New York. He also set up a camp at Chatham, New Jersey and set boats on the shore leading the British to suspect an invasion of Staten Island.<sup>5</sup> As the French and American forces moved south, Clinton's army stayed in New York and prepared for an attack that would never come.

George Washington's use of intelligence during the American Revolution paved the way for the American victory. When they used intelligence the Americans were able to fight when they knew they could win and convince the British not to attack when they knew they would lose. When the future of the revolution looked bleakest it was the use of good intelligence that brought them through it. Had Colonel Rall listened to his other intelligence reports and prepared his defenses, then the American Revolution may have been crushed at Trenton in 1776. Had the British sent scouts to Valley Forge and discovered the true strength and condition of Washington's forces, the revolution may have ended there in 1777. Had Clinton verified the reports sent to him concerning Washington's impending attack in the summer of 1780 he may have discovered it to be a ruse and defeated the French forces in Newport. Had Clinton learned from that previous deception and monitored the movement of Washington's forces and the French forces in the summer of 1781 then he may have been able to provide support to Cornwallis in Yorktown.

The insurgency and counterinsurgency of the American Revolution was significantly different than those of today. The encounters between the two forces were still set-piece battles. Despite that difference, this case study still shows that the effective use of intelligence by one side led to significant advantages. The clarity of the advantages that intelligence produced in the American Revolution provides the groundwork from which effective strategies to defeat insurgencies and the use of intelligence in those strategies can be built.

## The Boer Wars: 1880-1881 and 1899-1902

The Boer Wars offer an interesting case when looking at the use of intelligence in effective counterinsurgency strategies because the two wars are close together chronologically and the wars had a different outcome. The British were resoundingly defeated during the First Boer War while the Boers were defeated despite high British casualties during the Second Boer War. These results allow a look at the different tactics used that allowed the British to succeed during the Second Boer War and caused them to fail during the first.

The First Boer War was a few months long and saw three major battles. The first battle at Laing's Nek was an attempted incursion into the Boer's territory in Transvaal. The British, led by General Colley were crushed at Laing's Nek and retreated to Schuinshoogte hill. The Boer's attacked the hill causing the British to once again retreat. The British forces used easily recognizable fighting formations, bright red uniforms, and shiny white helmets. All of which led to their downfall.<sup>6</sup> The Boers were better marksmen and hid in whatever cover they could find. General Colley ascended Mount Majuba with most of his troops, approximately 375 riflemen. This is where the final battle was to take place. Historians are still unsure as to why Colley chose to take this mountain but the most accepted idea is that he wanted to make a show of force from what he saw as an unassailable position. The Boers attacked with no more than 350 men. They attacked early in the morning and performed what has been called a perfect example of fire and movement which is still being taught to this day. They used the brush and terraces as cover and advanced behind a knoll. After a lull in the firing, the Boers flanked the British and hid beyond the crest of the hill. This position allowed them to shoot the British in the backs at close range. The British began to retreat and many were shot as they fled. Some tried to hide but were rounded up by the Boers. Only one Boer was killed. This crushing defeat for the British ended the First Boer War and pushed the British to negotiate a peace settlement.<sup>7</sup>

Colley made several mistakes both before and during the battle. He was overconfident in the abilities of his troops and in the terrain which he chose to fight on. His belief that the position was unassailable may have been swayed had he conducted proper reconnaissance of all sides of the mountain. The knoll that the Boers were able to enter behind was a clear weak point and he should have had more troops stationed there. This lack of GEOINT enabled the Boers to exploit the terrain to their advantage. Colley also should have conducted watches and patrols around the clock so as not to be surprised by a Boer attack. Tactical intelligence on the movements of the Boers, especially just prior to the attack, would have

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allowed Colley to prepare his men accordingly and set up defensive formations in positions that would have given them a wide view of the slope that the Boers were advancing on. This failure is reminiscent of the German Hessians at Trenton during the American Revolution where lack of intelligence also led to a crushing defeat in a decisive battle.

The Second Boer War was longer and the British learned from some of the mistakes they had made during the First Boer War but were slow to catch on to other mistakes. One important change that was instituted early was that they painted their red uniforms khaki. This adoption of a more camouflaged appearance made the field a little less unbalanced.<sup>8</sup>

The Boers had a high level of individual training and could be likened to an army of snipers. They had a high level of confidence in their own abilities and had a great degree of initiative. They did not use any particular maneuvers and instead relied on a sort of swarm technique in which they would surround the enemy and each individual Boer would close in whenever they saw the opportunity to do so. When defending an area from advancing British troops, the Boers would use the terrain to their full advantage. They would build trenches at the bases of small hills and camouflage them with leaves and branches. This allowed them to fire while standing and still be concealed. It also confused the British who would fire their artillery at the tops of the hills as they expected the Boers to occupy the higher ground. The Boers also developed what is known as a strongpoint defense. They created a series of partially roofed zigzagging slit trenches at the bases of hills. They lured the British advance in between their trenches and then opened fire on them from the front and from either side. Sometimes the Boers would create dummy trenches at the tops of hills, where the British would expect them to be, so that the British would fire their artillery at the dummy trenches. The Boers also used scouts to track the movement of the British forces so they were able to easily evade the British who always traveled in large groups.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the effective use of both GEOINT and HUMINT by the Boers, they were unable to effectively assault the British garrisons due to their lack of artillery. General Kitchener, who was in command of the British forces from 1900 to the end of the war in 1902, employed three strategies that proved to be decisive in the defeat of the Boers. These were scorched earth, civilian internment camps, and blockhouse chains.<sup>10</sup> The scorched earth policy involved burning farms and slaughtering cattle. The Boers were unable to protect the farms from being destroyed and this led to large food shortages in the Boer population. The civilians from these farms were then put into camps that became overcrowded very quickly.

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Over one-third of the civilians who entered the camps died from either disease or malnourishment.<sup>11</sup> The blockhouse chains were critical in hampering the movements of the Boers. A blockhouse is an isolated one-building fort used against enemies who do not possess artillery. By building a chain of these forts the British were able to see across vast distances and protect large areas from Boer attack. Even with these effective strategies, the British required a force of 4,50,000 soldiers to stop the Boers whose force was never more than 50,000.<sup>12</sup>

## Filipino Insurgency during World War II: 1942-1945

Following the defeat of the main U.S. forces at Bataan on April 9, 1942 some of the U.S. soldiers who had been separated from the main force were left with the decision to either surrender or try to escape the islands. A few of them chose another route and decided to stay and develop a Filipino insurgency movement against the Japanese occupiers. One of the commanders, who was also one of the only commanders on Luzon who had not been captured or killed by 1943 was Lieutenant Ramsey.<sup>13</sup> He traveled all across the Philippines, mostly on the island of Luzon, to recruit Filipinos into the insurgency. They did not usually fight against the Japanese patrols and usually just kept tabs on where the Japanese were, how many there were, what defenses they were building, and how many ships they had. Cells were developed in towns and villages and in the capital, Manila, that reported, through the use of runners who hand delivered messages to Ramsey's headquarters, a highly camouflaged camp on the top of a mountain.

To combat these cells the Japanese would conduct raids on villages they suspected of housing insurgents and on outposts whenever they found them. Sometimes the villages and outposts were given advanced warning through the use of scouts and sometimes they were not. The Japanese would also do sweeps of the city of Manila when they heard that Ramsey was there. They never caught him.

In 1944, they stepped up their offensive operations with a plan to place small bombs on varying timers all over the city of Manila. They created small lead bombs filled with black powder. The timing mechanism was sulfuric acid which would slowly eat through a copper plate and light matches which would ignite the black powder. The copper plates were of varying thickness depending on what time of day they were supposed to be placed so that the bombs would go off at roughly the same time. They trained saboteurs to place the bombs near fuel or ammunition where they would cause secondary explosions.<sup>14</sup> The saboteurs went about



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their normal business in Manila carrying the small bombs with them. When they got to a target they would place their bomb and activate it. The bombs were supposed to go off around midnight that night but as Ramsey and the others waited and watched the city the bombs did not go off. Two hours later, they were about to lose hope when explosions ripped through the city. The Japanese's main fuel depot was exploding and then the tanker cars at the rail station exploded. Oil lubricant tanks also exploded and the explosions continued throughout the night. Near dawn there was a massive explosion on the bay. One bomb had been placed into a 50 gallon oil drum and that drum had been loaded onto a 10,000 ton Japanese tanker. The entire Japanese tanker exploded causing a nearby tanker and cruiser to go up in flames.<sup>15</sup> In response to this attack the Japanese constructed roadblocks all across Manila, confiscated food from the citizens, many of whom had already been starving, and doubled their patrols. None of these efforts were effective because nobody betrayed the location of Ramsey's base.<sup>16</sup>

Ramsey sent messages to General MacArthur every day via radio describing what the Japanese were doing. As MacArthur's invasion of the Philippines drew near, the messages sent out from Ramsey's base increased significantly. Reports poured in from Ramsey's scouts which detailed the Japanese defenses.<sup>17</sup> When MacArthur's invasion force landed at Leyte Gulf on October 20, 1944, Ramsey's guerillas worked even harder. They ambushed Japanese patrols and convoys. One ambush was especially fruitful when they found the new plans for the Japanese defense of the island on one of the officers they had killed. The details of the plan were radioed to General MacArthur.<sup>18</sup> When the American forces pushed forward, the Japanese became trapped between the Americans and the Filipino guerillas. The intelligence and support provided by the guerillas saved many American lives and shortened the amount of time it took to retake the Philippines.

This case study provides a few lessons in combating insurgents. None of the efforts by the Japanese were effective in combating the insurgency. The roadblocks did not restrict their movement since they could easily evade them. The patrols were also ineffective in restricting the insurgent's movement or catching large numbers of them because of their use of scouts to track the Japanese patrols. The patrols were also easy targets for ambush by insurgents. The cutting off of food supplies to civilians did not weaken the civilian support for the insurgency and nobody betrayed the location of Ramsey's base to the Japanese. The brutal treatment of prisoners was also ineffective in gaining any useful information about the insurgents. The insurgency continued to grow despite the efforts of the Japanese.

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It is also important to note how the insurgents could inflict significant damage on the Japanese with small and simple explosives. What was essentially a pipe bomb was able to sink two Japanese tankers and cripple one cruiser simply because it was placed in a good location. The rest of the pipe bombs destroyed significant amounts of Japanese oil which could not be easily replaced.

## Soviet-Afghan War and Aftermath: 1979-September 2001

In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in order to prop up the floundering Afghan communist regime. In response, the United States significantly increased their funding of the anti-communist Afghan Mujahideen. Much of this funding went through the Pakistani ISI who distributed it to their favored commanders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.<sup>19</sup> The CIA also dealt directly with other effective commanders who were being undermined by the ISI such as Ahmed Shah Massoud.<sup>20</sup> However, this direct aid was not enough to influence post-Soviet Afghanistan.

In 1986, the United States began shipping Stinger missiles to the Mujahideen. These missiles were so effective against the Soviets that they were no longer able to carry out low-flying attack raids or evacuate their wounded by helicopter. This turned the tide of the war against the Soviets.<sup>21</sup> Gorbachev began wondering what the Soviets were doing there and planned to withdraw within a year or two. The Soviets were completely surprised by the presence of this advanced weapon on the battlefield. Without any warning, the Soviets were unable to prepare any defenses against it. In 1989, the Soviets left Afghanistan leaving the communist Najibullah government to fend for itself.

In 1992, Massoud's forces captured Kabul. When they occupied the city, there were no retributions and their primary goal, according to Massoud, was to protect the Afghan people in the city. An interim government was formed with Burrudin Rabbani being declared the president and Massoud being named the minister of defense.<sup>22</sup> However, Pakistan did not favor this government and supported Hekmatyar in his fight against the interim government. By mid-1992, the two sides began fighting on the streets of Kabul.<sup>23</sup> In 1994, Hekmatyar was defeated and the Pakistanis shifted their support to the Taliban, a new group formed in the madrassas of the Pakistani provinces of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier.<sup>24</sup>

The Taliban moved out of Pakistan and into Afghanistan in 1994. They wielded brand new weapons and promised to bring an end to the violence

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plaguing Afghanistan. Many Afghans initially welcomed the Taliban because they believed their pledge to stop the violence. The Taliban were able to buy many of their victories and many Afghans joined their side. When they got to Kabul in 1996, the interim government withdrew because they did not wish for the city to be damaged any further. They withdrew to Bagram Air Base to the north of Kabul.<sup>25</sup> They held the line here until U.S. military aid and bombing allowed the Northern Alliance to drive the Taliban out of Kabul in November 2001<sup>26</sup> even though President Bush did not want the Northern Alliance to be the ones to take the city.<sup>27</sup>

This case study provides some important lessons in the type of strategic intelligence that should be collected in order to ensure that the situation does not destabilize in the long term. During the Soviet–Afghan War the United States was supporting the insurgency, but this lesson can be applied when combating an insurgency as well. The United States either failed to consider or failed to fully realize Pakistan’s intentions in regards to Afghanistan. Pakistan wanted Afghanistan to be a fundamentalist Islamic state that they could influence. They also wanted more radical fighters to use in their fight over Kashmir. The United States should have collected more intelligence on Pakistan’s intentions instead of allowing them to dictate who the funding and weapons went to for most of the war. When fighting an insurgency, it is important to monitor the neighboring countries very closely because support in the form of weapons, supplies, or more volunteers could flow from neighboring countries and insurgents could hide in neighboring countries.

The United States also failed to pay attention to those who saw the need to aid the Afghan interim government following the fall of Najibullah’s government. The intelligence was there and the radicals clearly had an advantage, having received most of the aid that the United States and Saudi Arabia had funneled through Pakistan, but the warnings that these radicals would be a threat were ignored. When fighting against an insurgency, the decision to pull out of that fight should be taken with great care and that decision should rely on intelligence reports. Intelligence should be collected on the country where the insurgency is taking place and on the insurgent group or groups. The reports should include how much support the government has and how much support the insurgency has, the military and police capabilities of the government, the ease with which the insurgency can inflict damage, and an analysis of whether or not the government will be able to withstand the insurgency. If the report finds that the insurgency will be able to overpower the government, then the supporting country should continue its support of the government against the insurgency.

## U.S. Involvement in Lebanese Civil War: 1982-1984

The U.S. Marines came to Lebanon as peacekeepers in August 1982. They went there to facilitate the withdrawal of the PLO forces from Lebanon but America did not understand the deep history of Lebanon or the roots of their conflict which was full of passion on every side. During the first few months the Marines were there, the fighting did die down but soon the Lebanese grew tired of the lectures from the Americans and returned to their fighting.<sup>28</sup> The Marines had originally only been scheduled to be there for one month but they withdrew two weeks earlier than the deadline because all of the PLO fighters had departed and they did not want an open-ended mission. After they left, Israel invaded West Beirut and the massacres of the Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila occurred. So, the Americans returned out of guilt.<sup>29</sup>

The American's thought that Lebanon already had the right political institutions and that those institutions were merely too weak in their current state so they decided to try and rebuild the central government and the army.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately they were unaware of Lebanese President, Amin Gemayel's intentions. He used the Americans against his Muslim enemies. By training the Lebanese national army, the Americans came to be seen by the Muslims as being on Gemayel's side of the conflict rather than as being peacekeepers. It started with rocks being thrown at Marines who were on foot patrols, then a grenade injured five Marines, and then the U.S. embassy was struck by a suicide car bomber on April 18, 1983. Finally, on the morning of September 19, the Americans ceased to be peacekeepers and became just another faction in the civil war. The commander of the Lebanese Army, General Tannous claimed that Syrian- and Palestinian-backed Druze units were launching a major offensive against his army at Souk el-Gharb and they would not be able to hold out. If Souk el-Gharb was taken, the Druze would be able to fire down onto the presidential palace. Without seeking confirmation of General Tannous' report, the guided missile cruisers *Virginia*, *John Rodgers*, and *Bowen* and the destroyer *Radford* fired 360 5-inch shells at the Syrian, Palestinian, and Druze attackers. The next day the Americans discovered that only eight Lebanese army soldiers had been killed the day before. On the morning of October 23, 1983 the Marines' headquarters was struck by a suicide car bomber and 241 American servicemen were killed. On February 26, 1984 the Marines finished pulling out of Lebanon. Their 18 month stay in Lebanon had accomplished nothing because the policy makers did not have the proper intelligence to understand the conflict they were sending the Marines into.

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**Assessment of Intelligence Operations and Tactics**

	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Ineffective/Not Done</b>
<b>American Revolution</b>	Give British false intelligence concerning troops movements and troop strength	British didn't seek to corroborate their intelligence through multiple sources
<b>First Boer War</b>	Boers exploit terrain to their advantage	British did not scout terrain—assumed it was and unassailable position
<b>Second Boer War</b>	Boers built fake defenses where the British thought their defenses would be and hidden defenses in other places British removed Boers base of support by burning crops and putting civilians in camps British watched Boer movements with blockhouse chains	
<b>Filipino Insurgency</b>	Intelligence gathered by Filipinos using cell structure  Filipinos used runners for communications. Only one radio at the camp which was used to communicate with MacArthur.	Japanese patrols Japanese raids Japanese torture Japanese roadblocks

	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Ineffective/Not Done</b>
<b>Soviet–Afghan War and aftermath</b>	<p>Filipino scouts tracked Japanese patrols</p> <p>Japanese eventually did triangulate on radio position</p> <p>Stinger missiles devastated Soviet aircraft</p>	<p>Soviets failed to foresee introduction of advanced American weapons like the Stinger</p> <p>Americans failed to see the strengthening of the radical Islamists</p> <p>Americans did not look into Pakistan’s intentions concerning Afghanistan</p>
<b>Lebanese Civil War</b>		<p>Americans failed to realize Israel’s intentions</p> <p>Americans failed to understand the culture and history of the conflict</p> <p>Americans failed to see how the government was not representative of the citizens and was merely another faction</p> <p>Americans used overwhelming naval firepower without checking their own intelligence</p>

## Lessons Learned

In each conflict there were effective and ineffective intelligence operations and tactics performed. In some cases only one side did anything effective. In other cases both sides were effective in different ways. The following charts categorize each operation as being either effective or ineffective/not done.

There are two effective non-intelligence operations that should be highlighted as well. These are the pipe bombs used during the Filipino Insurgency and the suicide car bombs used during the Lebanese Civil War. Once the pipe bombs were planted, there was little that the Japanese would have been able to do even if they had learned of the operation. The targets were chosen by each individual and although a few individuals were caught, the bombs still inflicted a massive amount of damage. The one that did the most damage was dropped into a barrel of oil so it was impossible to see after it was planted. During the suicide truck bombings in Lebanon, the only warning was the truck speeding toward each building. These operations are similar to the planting of improvised explosive devices by insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan. Once an IED is planted it is difficult to detect and while some can be jammed, insurgents will just revert back to lower-tech detonators that cannot be jammed such as hardwired detonators. The safer and more effective way to counter the threat of IEDs is to learn of the operations beforehand and learn where they are being kept. Each bomb has a bomb maker. Lieutenant Ramsey and the Filipinos relied upon one man, the technical director of the Manila Gas Company, to make the pipe bombs. Modern insurgents rely on many bomb makers and also ship in bombs from neighboring countries. Discovering intelligence on both of these types of operations and stopping them is critical.

False intelligence can be used by insurgents to turn people against the counter-insurgents and prevent their supply lines from being disrupted, their weapons caches from being discovered, or their cells from being discovered. A counterinsurgent force should not fall into the same trap that the British did during the American Revolution. That is why the first lesson is to gather intelligence from multiple sources.

During the Boer Wars the terrain was hilly and the Boers were able to use this to their advantage on many occasions. In Iraq, much of the combat occurs in cities. The insurgents know this terrain well. They have lived there and can blend into the civilian population. Where the Boers used trees and bushes for cover, the insurgents in Iraq use the fact that they

are inconspicuous. It is important for a counterinsurgent force to know the terrain and each part of the terrain that can be exploited. In these urban environments the civilians are in a way part of the terrain. Troops assigned to an area should get to know as many of the civilians there as they can. Getting to know the people provides counterinsurgents with multiple benefits. The troops can build trust and understanding with the people, the people may provide them with actionable intelligence, it lessens the pool of possible recruits for insurgents, and it removes those people as cover for the insurgents.

The British built chains of blockhouses so that they could contain the Boers. This was effective because the Boers had previously been able to slip by the large British garrisons and strike wherever they wanted. The blockhouse could be adapted to work in the mountains and fields of Afghanistan as well as the cities of Iraq. By creating a series of armored, unmanned observation posts along the border with Pakistan where the insurgents infiltrate, U.S. forces would gain real time intelligence on their movements. With this intelligence, U.S. forces could either move in to intercept them or call in air strikes on their positions. In an urban environment, the idea could be adapted by creating a series of small outposts throughout the city rather than concentrating forces in the large bases. Small scattered outposts would allow soldiers to protect larger areas of the cities from insurgent attacks and respond quicker when insurgents do attack. These bases would be close enough together that they could support each other if they came under attack.

The British also denied Boer civilians of their food supplies and placed them into camps. These were effective tactics against the Boers but they would not be effective against the modern insurgent. The case of the Filipino insurgency illustrated why. The Japanese had used similar techniques against the Filipinos and none of them were effective. Instead, Filipino resolve only strengthened in each instance. The modern insurgent is more like the Filipino than they are like the Boer. Tactics like torture, rounding up civilians suspected of being insurgents, and cutting off food supplies would only strengthen the resolve of the modern insurgent and provide more reasons for more people to join the insurgents. Insurgents use propaganda to recruit people and each of these tactics feed the insurgent's propaganda machine. The Taliban used propaganda during their rise to power and many Afghans got behind them because they wanted an end to the fighting. The Taliban's propaganda is all lies but they are still able to attract people to their cause with it. The counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan are noble missions. U.S. soldiers are there to protect the popularly elected government and their citizens. The insurgents lure people in with



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lies about U.S. intentions. It is important to learn the sources of the propaganda and counter the propaganda with both words and actions.

It is also important to keep a close eye on the neighbors of countries that are battling insurgencies. Often these countries have their own plans for their neighbors. Weapons and volunteers have been known to cross over from bordering countries. That this happens does not necessarily mean that it is happening with the consent of that country. If it is not, then that neighboring country should be pressed to take action against those helping the insurgency. Additionally, the borders should be tightly guarded to curtail, and hopefully stop, the flow of weapons and volunteers from neighboring countries.

When fighting an insurgency it is important to understand their culture and why the conflict exists in the first place. Without collecting intelligence on these two areas, mistakes, such as the mistakes that the United States made in Lebanon, could be made. A conflict has to be understood before it can be diffused and a culture has to be understood because the culture provides the backdrop for every aspect of their life. The United States tried to interpret Lebanon in terms of American culture. This misinterpretation caused many of the problems that drove the Muslim factions in Lebanon against the United States.

Some of these tactics are being used today to combat insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan but each one of these tactics is like a piece of a puzzle. By not using every piece, the puzzle cannot be completed and the counterinsurgency cannot progress. A counterinsurgency is a long, difficult process. An insurgency cannot be defeated through brute force. It requires the precision that only good intelligence can deliver.

## Endnotes

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- 29 Ibid. pg. 191.
- 30 Ibid. pg. 193.

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## Author Biography

Mr. Reamer enlisted in the National Guard in 2009 as an intelligence analyst. He has a BA in Political Science from the University of Maryland Baltimore County where he focused on international relations, the Middle East, and national security. He is currently working on a MS in Intelligence Management from Henley-Putnam University with concentrations in Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence.

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