

4GW and OODA Loop Implications of the Iraqi Insurgency

Panel on Conceptual Frontiers
16th Annual AWC Strategy Conference
12-14 April 2005

Col G.I. Wilson, USMC
LTC Greg Wilcox USA (Ret.) (Presenter)
Col. Chet Richards USAF (Ret)
<http://www.d-n-i.net>

What you really do with OODA loops

Transients

- Observe, orient, decide and act more inconspicuously, more quickly, and with more irregularity

or put another way

- **Operate inside adversary's observation-orientation-decision action loops** or get inside his mind-time-space.



permits
one to

Intentions

- ...
- ...
- **Subvert, disorient, disrupt, overload, or seize** adversary's vulnerable, yet critical, connections, centers, and activities ... in order to dismember organism and isolate remnants for wrap-up or absorption.
- Generate uncertainty, confusion, disorder, panic, chaos ... to shatter cohesion, produce paralysis and bring about collapse.
- Become an extraordinary commander.

Raises a question:

Who is operating inside whose OODA loops in Iraq?

OBSERVE

In broad terms, fourth generation warfare seems likely to be widely dispersed and largely undefined ... It will be nonlinear, possibly to the point of **having no definable battlefields or fronts. The distinction between "civilian" and "military" may disappear.**

Source: The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,
William S. Lind, Colonel Keith Nightengale (USA),
Captain John F. Schmitt (USMC), Colonel Joseph W.
Sutton (USA), and Lieutenant Colonel Gary I. Wilson
Marine Corps Gazette
October 1989, Pages 22-26

ORIENT

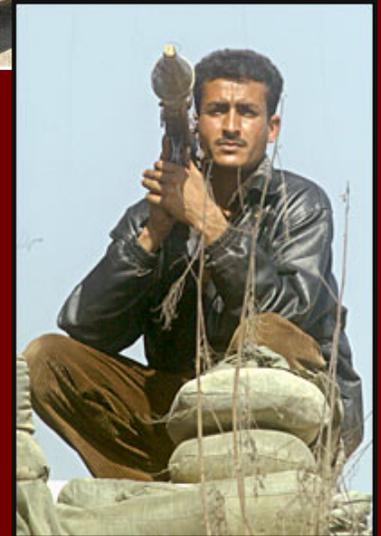
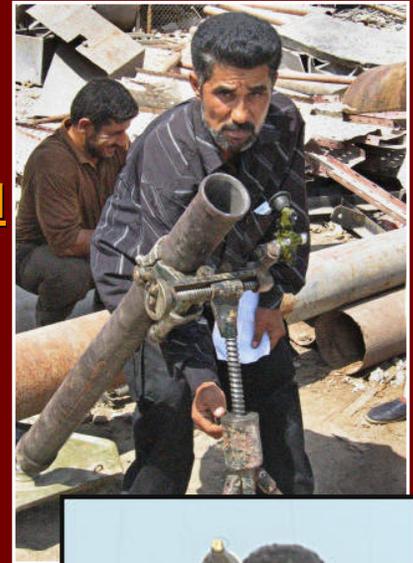
Insurgency includes a diverse collection of bad actors, criminals, “dead enders,” ethno-religious extremists, “Iraqi freedom fighters,” and networks who thrive on chaos. Keep in mind **these people are a resourceful and dedicated enemy.**

These cells and **transnational networks** often have contradictory, diverse or loosely connected political, social, or religious objectives.

All are adept at using information/media as an integral part of their operations to attempt to **defeat the US and the West on the moral level** (i.e., make us quit.)

All are very agile and adaptive in their Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs).

All of these observations support the conclusion that we are facing 4GW in Iraq.



ORIENT

Moral, Mental, and Physical

While important, there is frequently fixation with the physical or kinetic level of war—to the **virtual exclusion of the more powerful mental & moral levels.**

What we do at the physical or kinetic level **can work against us at the mental & moral levels.**

At the mental level, there needs to be a more effective use of IO. Of the moral level of war, which John Boyd argued is the most powerful level, there remains little appreciation of its power. In Fourth Generation war **what wins at the physical level tends to lead to defeat at the moral level. It makes no difference how we fare on the battlefield if the US loses faith and withdraws our forces**

DECIDE

Center of Gravity Is The People

The first step must be focused on **security for the people** and the establishment of public safety (local police and military forces.)

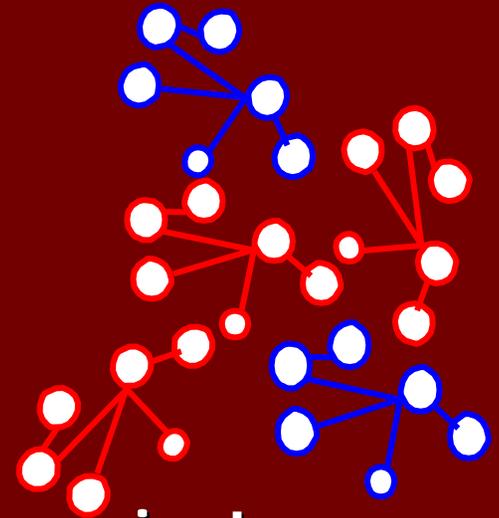
The establishment of an effective intelligence collection system is an imperative. Local police, National Guard, and security forces are good for collecting actionable Intelligence. However, covert US controlled indigenous HUMINT is best.

Establish small, specialized counterinsurgency units, to neutralize or destroy the leadership of the insurgents fighting against the Coalition forces.

Establish disciplined, well-trained and highly mobile, counter-guerrilla forces.

Source: H. Thomas Hayden
The Road to Success in Iraq starts with Fallujah,
MCIA Convention, Reno, Nevada

DECIDE



Leverage unconventional capabilities against insurgents. Become cellular like “them.” Defeat a networked threat with a network.

Develop small independent action forces (SIAF).

“We should be the ones in the village, not the people attacking the village.”

— John Boyd on winning guerilla warfare.

DECIDE

Power of Perception & Influence As “Ammo”

Money is ammunition

Food is ammunition

Medicine is ammunition

Education is ammunition

Fuel is ammunition

Employment is ammunition

Recognition is ammunition

Respect is ammunition

***ABOVE ALL, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE
ARE AMMUNITION***

ACT

The Three Block War— Different battle needs: **Fast Transients!**

- Humanitarian aid, *and*
- Peacekeeping and Peace-enforcement, *and*
- Mid-intensity warfare against trained, well-equipped enemy



The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the
Three Block War
Marines Magazine, January 1999
Gen. Charles C. Krulak, USMC

ACT

Viable **actionable** intelligence is critical

- Know what intel is ... expectation
- Know how to use intelligence
- *Rely on the skill, cunning, experience and intelligence of our front line forces to convert information into intel and then into knowledge and understanding—WHILE IT STILL MEANS SOMETHING!*
- *TIME IS CRITICAL: Sometimes unprocessed information is more valuable than processed intelligence*

Put our intelligence analysts out on patrol with the squads, platoons, and companies.

ACT

Regional Fusion Centers



Establish regional fusion centers (RFC) to provide tailored intel/info/IO/CA near critical areas such as near Ramadi-Fallujah–Baghdad corridor, Haditha Al Quam, Najaf, Rubat, Iskandariyah and so on.

Personnel manning these fusion centers would be intelligence and cultural specialists, security personnel, AT/FP, LNOs, linguists, contracting specialists DOS representatives, civil affairs, political military specialists, engineers and public works specialists, PSYOPS, media relations specialists, and economic advisors – all under one roof – coordinated the regional fusion center OIC.

The regional intel centers would collect, analyze, process, define courses of action, and then disseminate the necessary intel to vetted Iraqi Security Forces, and U.S forces in the area. Operational forces would operate in and around the RFC with access to the regional centers of the area they are operating in.

Benefit is derived from specialized personnel staying in place for longer periods of time than operational forces providing tailored products based upon the variance in the region.



ACT



Need to provide trainers and advisors for the new Iraqi Army, Navy, AF:

- This is a SF mission, but they are stretched too thin.
- We are now doing this ad hoc (i.e., with 98th USAR Training Division, SF, Marines, and Navy).
- We have to rebuild an Advisory Corps a la Vietnam.
- We have to train the trainers.
- **SEND IN THE FIRST TEAM!**

This is critical to any exit strategy.



The Company Commander's War

- So how do we aid the warfighter?
 - By understanding the nature of the conflict: political, social, economic, and religious
 - Spell military with a small “m”
 - Resource the small unit level
 - Help them get around bureaucratic roadblocks
 - Trust in your subordinates
 - Power Down! Integrate functions under company level
- Common information themes for everyone
 - Why we are here
 - Plans for the future
 - Return of control to the hosts
- Provide continuous overhead surveillance
 - Critical population areas and infrastructure
 - Borders
 - Convoys
- Form Regional Fusion Centers to support combat units
- Train and Educate for 4GW (Culture and language)

Boyd's Paradigm

