

Dear Mr. & Ms. 1RP: Welcome to the 21st Century

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I

INTRODUCTION

FIRST RESPONDERS: WARRIORS IN A MORTAL STRUGGLE

It will be protracted, bloody, and horrible.¹

First responders today must be feeling like inhabitants of some medieval castle: We've just defeated the neighboring baron, but arrows and stray boulders keep flying over the walls killing people and destroying things. Where are they coming from? Why do they hate us out there? What's going on and when will it all stop?

First responders are on the receiving end of some type of military action, but a quick scan of the Internet and evening news finds nothing that would fit the military definition of "war": a major campaign against a worthy opponent armed with weapons similar to ours. So by definition, we're into a "military operation other than war," or MOOTW ("moo-taw.") Although our situation may seem mysterious, it's nothing new. Soldiers and defense analysts have been studying MOOTWs for a long time – one of the best known books on the subject, the Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual*, came out in 1940 – and a lot is known about why they start, how they spread, and in some cases, how they can be won.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the latest thinking on the subject to the first responder (1RP) community, show how your jobs fit into the prosecution of MOOTWs, and suggest ways that you can become more effective warriors in what promises to be a long struggle.

To better understand what a MOOTW is, let's consider what a military operation other than a MOOTW, a "MOOTMOOTW," might be. Presumably anything that isn't one is the other, if you're still following me.

WHAT WOULD A MOOTMOOTW BE?

What are military operations other than MOOTWs? Answer – there aren’t any! As former defense official Thomas P. M. Barnett argues, persuasively in my opinion, there haven’t been any as far as the United States is concerned since the early 1970s, when all of the countries that could or would want to fight a “real” war with us acquired nuclear weapons.² On the other hand, states that don’t have nuclear weapons are too weak to be candidates for what the Pentagon would consider a real war, so any conflict with them, by definition would be a “military operation other than war,” or a MOOTW.

Since the only war we have is MOOTW, let’s drop the unpronounceable acronyms and just talk about *war*, that is, the types of armed conflicts that could involve the IRP community over the next several years. These formerly humble MOOTWs are now the real wars, and all others will be relegated either to science fiction or to nuclear holocaust Armageddon, but in either case outside the purview of this book.

IS WAR A RELIC OF HUMANITY’S PRIMITIVE PAST?

For those of you worried about peace breaking out, relax. As of last count, there are between 20 and 30 of these “small” wars going on around the world. The reason there are so many is that they have proven to be a most successful way for determined but poorly armed fighters to confront an established power. Virtually every conventional power has suffered at least one defeat at the hands of guerrilla fighters.³

Power	Successful Guerrillas
France	Indochina, Algeria
Britain	Kenya
United States	Vietnam
Russia	Chechnya
USSR	Afghanistan
Vietnam	Cambodia
Israel	Intifada I, Hezbollah (Lebanon)
India	Sri Lanka
South Africa	Namibia
Ethiopia & USSR	Eritrea
United Nations	Somalia

As one of its most successful practitioners, North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap observed of this style of warfare,

This is the way of fighting the revolutionary war which relies on the heroic spirit to triumph over modern weapons, avoiding the enemy where he is stronger and attacking him when he is the weaker ... thus undermining his spirit and exhausting his forces.⁴

WHY WE STILL HAVE WARS

The classic explanation is that of the Prussian general and military philosopher, Carl von Clausewitz, who insisted that war is simply the conduct of policy by other means.⁵ Clausewitz wrote in the early 1800s and was describing war on the chessboard of states and principalities that made up the Europe of his day. War, in his view, was simply a play in the game of power and influence between them.

Many people still think of war in this way, but the notion that war is the sole purview of a collection of sovereign states is breaking down, along with the idea that war represents a more or less rational act of policy. Entities other than states are waging war—tribes and clans, criminal cartels, transnational ideological groups such as al-Qa’ida, nations that cross state boundaries, such as the Kurds, and so on. They are waging war for a myriad of reasons, few of which fit comfortably into the category of policy carried out by other means.

In his seminal 1991 book, *The Transformation of War*, the distinguished Israeli military historian, Martin van Creveld, identified a number of these other reasons, including:

- Will of God or other religious imperative or the protection or spread of some other ideology
- Justice and perceived injustice
- National or tribal existence, honor, or well being
- Personal honor/status/fulfillment, particularly of the ruler
- “War fever” and the resulting excitement among the population
- National virtues and “myths” such as freedom, the Union, honor, State’s rights, etc.⁶

As he notes, these causes are capable of inspiring tremendous sacrifice and dedication.⁷ They motivate men, women, and children to become suicide bombers and, as in Rwanda, to slaughter some 600,000 of their fellow countrymen and women with machetes.

It is as if the international laws of war, which date back to the writings of Hugo Grotius in the early 1600s, are breaking down. To some extent, this is true, and although it may shock people in modern Western states, including first responders, it should not be surprising. Even Clausewitz, writing of relatively civilized European warfare two hundred years after Grotius, observed that in any war, the side willing to shed the most blood will obtain an advantage, and that only the norms of civilized states restrain this impulse.⁸ As non-state groups discard these norms, we should expect the limits on their levels of violence and brutality to disappear, a development that all first responders should keep in mind.

As new non-state groups form, and as they embrace both old and new justifications for war, the very nature of conflict is changing. The principal trend appears to be that militarily weak groups, which in the past were almost always insurgencies trying to either overthrow a state government or carve out a piece of an existing state for themselves, are developing into true transnational entities and they are targeting not just their national governments but distant superpowers as well.

This is where you come in. As impressive as insurgencies have been, at first glance they don't seem to involve the 1RP community. Although many of them are nasty, brutish affairs—more than 100,000 people have been killed in Russia's effort to rein in its breakaway province of Chechnya (1994 – present), for example, and some 3 million in the ongoing civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-present)—they are all far away, and most of them do not threaten American or European troops or civilians.⁹ They may be tragic, but as far as the 1RP community is concerned, they can be safely ignored.

This view, while comforting, is wrong. Being wrong, it is also dangerous. To see why, people who study these conflicts insist that they must be considered not as curious space-fillers on the evening news, but, as Barnett puts it, “within the context of everything else.”¹⁰ This means, among other things, that spillover from these wars finds its way to the United States and other developed nations (what Barnett calls the “Functioning Core.”) Participants, for example, may attack each other's friends and relatives or fund-raising and recruiting operations, or embassies and so on in Core countries. Or they may see us as favoring the other side and decide to send us a message to back off and get out. Or they may cause a problem and blame it on the other side. Or they may cause a problem in our country to raise international consciousness of their struggle. Or they may attack to signal to both their local enemies and potential followers that they are a potent force, as may have been one of the motivations for al-Qa'ida's attack on September 11, 2001. In any of these cases and so many others, something happens that would involve the first responder community.

Insurgency as a form of war, and a very successful one, is evolving into something else. And it is coming to a neighborhood near you.

II

EVOLUTION OF MODERN CONFLICT

FOUR GENERATIONS

Although war is evolving in response to changes in the world's social, political, and economic condition as well as to the introduction of new technologies, it is important to keep in mind that it is still war, that is, an attempt to coerce another group of people into doing something they would rather not do. One of the most influential strategists of the 20th Century, the late USAF Colonel John R. Boyd, observed that in order for one group to accomplish its goals, it may become necessary for them to:

- Diminish their adversaries' capacities for independent action
- Deny them the opportunity to survive on their own terms, or
- Deny them the opportunity to survive at all.¹¹

When this situation occurs conflict erupts, and if one side attempts to resolve it with violence, then we call it "war."

In a famous 1989 paper, a group of military officers and defense analysts concluded that armed conflict – war – had evolved through three stages since the dawn of the nation state system in the mid-1600s and appeared to be on the verge of a fourth.¹² The first generation was the era of the smoothbore musket, when armies used line and column tactics to make the most from the musket's limited range and firepower. Clausewitz was describing and prescribing for first generation warfare.

By the time of the American Civil War, firepower had gained the upper hand. Rifled muskets, then breech-loading clip-fed rifles, machine guns, long-range indirect artillery, and barbed wire dominated the battlefield. Tactics were still linear, although most armies entrenched when given the chance, since direct exposure to second generation firepower would destroy any unit. Armies attempted to win battles by pounding enemy trenches into impotence with artillery (the preparation for the Battle of the Somme, which began July 1, 1916, lasted a full week and expended a million rounds) and then following with waves of infantry assaults. Casualties soared, reaching more than a million in the Battle of Verdun (21 February – 18 December 1916) with no significant results on the battlefield.

The third generation attempted to mitigate this firepower by dodging it. A short barrage to keep the defenders' heads down, not to try to annihilate them, would be followed by fast moving storm troops who would break through the line of trenches. Once this was accomplished, exploitation forces would force a deeper penetration and breakthrough. Although these tactics achieved only limited success in World War I, when the Germans combined them with tanks, close air support aircraft, and modern wireless communications at the start of World War II, the result was the *Blitzkrieg*.¹³ During one two-week period in May, 1940, the *Blitzkrieg* destroyed the fighting ability of the French

and British armies, a feat neither side had been able to accomplish during four years of horrific battles a generation earlier.

Careful readers may have noted that first, second, and third generation warfare represented increasingly sophisticated ways for state armies to fight other state armies. This changes when we move on to fourth generation warfare, where one of the opponents is something else. This form of warfare is not new, per se, since irregular fighters – guerillas – have been around since the dawn of time.¹⁴ Until after World War I, however, guerillas were usually adjuncts to conventional first, second, or third generation armies, or they were insurgents operating against and largely within a single country. As noted above, they have achieved an impressive record against larger but conventionally armed powers. So it is logical that guerrilla methods will provide the key for the next generation of warfare.¹⁵

Beginning with Mao Tse-Tung, and continuing to the present day, guerrilla warfare and other forms of non-state armed conflict have become more potent and much more dangerous in at least two ways:

- Groups other than states – that is, multinational organizations ranging from al-Qa’ida to the narcotrafficking cartels – are beginning to acquire high levels of sophistication in organization and in the information technologies that allow them to plan and conduct operations while widely dispersed.¹⁶
- These same groups increasingly have the financial wherewithal to acquire virtually any type of weapon, from small arms to chemical and biological to nuclear, that they need to carry out operations. The only exceptions are conventional weapons such as tanks, combat aircraft, and fighting ships that require large facilities to support them, but are primarily of use only against other military forces armed with the same types of weapons.

They are using their new capabilities not only to fight local governments, as was the case with traditional insurgencies, but to attack distant superpowers as well.

FOCUS OF FOURTH GENERATION OPERATIONS

*He will try to submerge his communications in the noise of the everyday activity that is an essential part of a modern society.*¹⁷

Because they can’t field sizable amounts of conventional military hardware, fourth generation (4GW) forces, like the guerrillas from whom they evolved, will never try to achieve victory by defeating the military forces of a state in stand-up battles. Instead, they will try to convince their state opponent that it is simply not worth it to continue the fight. As the late US Army Colonel David Hackworth put it, guerrilla warfare isn’t about holding territory. It’s about making an opponent bleed until he decides to quit and go home¹⁸. Guerrilla warfare can take decades and the guerrillas can lose ten fighters for every one lost by the state they are fighting. No matter. If their moral strength is sufficient, the state gives up first. The same is true of 4GW.

In a classical insurgency, guerrillas attack the forces of the local government in the early years and once the government is sufficiently weakened, the insurgents can finish it off with a conventional push. In fourth generation warfare, the situation is more complex. The 4GW organization and its goals transcend state boundaries and may replace existing states as the focus of peoples' loyalties. To achieve its goals, fourth generation forces, like guerrillas, must sometimes contend with a major outside power, first. So Osama bin Laden, in his *fatwa* of February 23, 1998, declared war against America and the West in these terms:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.¹⁹

In other words, the first order of business for this 4GW organization is to get the Americans out. Successful 4GW campaigns in modern times would include those against the French in Algeria, the US in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, where the insurgents never defeated the foreign armies in any major battle, but eventually persuaded the governments back home to withdraw them. In a well run 4GW campaign, everything the 4GW forces do – including fighting and usually losing the occasional major battle – will support this goal.

Persuading governments to withdraw forces, rather than defeating them on the battlefield, is an “information age” goal.²⁰ To achieve the necessary level of persuasion, practitioners of 4GW will use every information tool they can find to spread their messages to the enemy population and decision makers:

- Our cause is just and no threat to you
- There's nothing here worth your effort and sacrifice
- Your troops are becoming brutal and your tactics ineffective
- If you keep it up, you're going to bleed for a very long time
- So why not just leave now?

As we enter the 21st Century, 4GW organizations are becoming adept at spreading their messages through these new channels, such as global news services (CNN, Al Jazeera) and of course, web sites, blogs, and mass e-mailings. What you may not be aware of is that 4GW organizations are also using the latest information tools to communicate with each other and to share information, particularly about what is and is not working (what the military calls “lessons learned.”)²¹ Messages may be encrypted, or sent using code phrases, or even hidden in web site images, a practice called *steganography*. As with so many information age techniques, instructions for encryption and steganography are floating all over the Internet.

Information age techniques are ideal for loose networks of highly motivated individuals, which is a typical form of organization for 4GW groups. Modern information warfare

places a higher premium on creativity and innovation than it does on things 4GW organizations typically don't have, like massive forces, volumes of regulations, and expensive hardware.²² By emphasizing speed and innovation, 4GW groups can often invent new techniques faster than more structured and bureaucratic organizations such as the Pentagon.²³

First responder organizations themselves may be targets of information warfare operations. The information systems of 1RP organizations, including operational systems as well as payroll and administrative, might make attractive targets in coordination with a physical attack. This is a real threat: Many members of al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups are from the educated classes in their countries, were technically trained (Osama bin Laden is a civil engineer), studied and lived in the West, and are quite capable of conceiving and managing such attacks.

WAR AGAINST NETWORKS

*The one thing the terrorist will certainly not do is stand up in an open fight.*²⁴

There are other advantages to the non-state player from operating in a loose social network. Obviously a social network is harder to find than an organization that requires a fixed infrastructure and wears uniforms. But perhaps most significant in wars of the weak against the strong, networks are highly resilient, so killing their leaders and destroying portions of the network can leave the rest to regenerate under new leadership in different locations.^{25,26} So long as enough of the network survives to pass along the ideology and culture, along with lessons learned, the new network will likely be more dangerous and more resilient than its predecessor, much like the more resistant forms of bacteria that can emerge as a result of mis-use of antibiotics. In fact, the European resistance movements during World War II exhibited just this kind of toughness and survivability.

In addition to its networked structure, there are other attributes of 4GW that should concern the 1RP community. The first is its transnational nature. As mentioned above, guerrillas have long had to deal with an outside power first before turning on the locals. In 4GW, the insurgency itself is going international and often ideological, and networking is an ideal organizational model. An operation can be approved in Afghanistan, planned in Germany, funded in the Middle East, and carried out in the United States, as was the 9/11 attack. There is no one state we can retaliate against, nor one nationality we can profile against. Further, because it is transnational, it can involve networks of networks, such as al-Qa'ida attempting to cooperate with narcotrafficking organizations in Latin America to trade access to potential base areas and help in infiltrating the US for assistance in distributing narcotics.²⁷ The upshot is that the lack of identifiable 4GW activity may not be an indication that an attack is not in the works, if the surveillance is being conducted by someone else.

One of the more unpleasant aspects of insurgencies that will likely carry over to 4GW is their use of disguise, camouflage, and the other tools of deception. Because they are

militarily weak, 4GW groups survive not by confronting superior firepower but by staying out of its sights. Those that have survived have become masters of concealment and deception, making it even more difficult to pick up early warning signals. This is why simple ethnic or national profiling will not work – 4GW teams will go to great lengths not to be identified as members of the groups in question. Skin color, eye color, and hair color are trivially easy to change, and the criminal infrastructure that already exists in most developed countries makes it simple to get drivers licenses or other means of identification (as any victim of identity theft can attest.) In a pinch, one can always recruit a member of a non-targeted group, such as the British “shoe bomber,” Richard Reid, and it would be a mistake to assume the next batch will be as poorly trained. If we’re going to let Icelanders (or grandmothers or parents with toddlers, or whoever) through with less security screening than Saudis or Pakistanis or Jordanians, see if you can guess what the next aircraft hijacker will look like.

Another unpleasant fact of 4GW is that like insurgency from whence it sprang, 4GW will be a protracted struggle.²⁸ As Henry Kissinger once noted, if the insurgents don’t lose, they win, so they have all the motivation they need to keep going for as long as they think it will take.²⁹ First responders should not draw comfort from what seems like a pause in attacks – operational cycles can stretch over several years, and a fourth generation war can span decades.³⁰

But the most unpleasant fact of 4GW is that in it, we have finally reached the level of total war.³¹ *In the eyes of the 4GW attacker, there are no civilians and no non-combatants.* A concern for public relations offers the only reason for limiting the scope or violence of the attacks. *What seems like “terrorism” to us, or senseless, random violence, may appear to the 4GW network as a legitimate way to persuade the foreign state government to withdraw, that is to stop the war.* Such a strategy is nothing new. It was what Sherman had in mind during his marches through the South after the fall of Vicksburg (July 1863).³² In its local areas, the 4GW organization will spread the message that the foreign state has killed many civilians, which in a war of an advanced state versus a Third World country will often be true and will always be believed.

What this means is that when a 4GW group decides to directly attack the United States or another state involved in “their” struggle, no level of violence, even nuclear, is ruled out. They may calculate that the message they are sending to the state government, to the state’s population, to undecided elements in other parts of the world, and to their own members is worth any backlash from the scenes of horror and brutality that ensue.

III

WINNING FOURTH GENERATION WARFARE

WHAT DOES “WIN” MEAN?

If marines have become accustomed to easy victories over irregulars in the past, they must now prepare themselves for the increased effort which will be necessary to insure victory in the future. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual, 1940, p. 8.

No competent strategist believes that we can ever eliminate attacks against civilians and non-combatants. These are frequent enough in conventional wars, and not all of these casualties are accidental: recall the Rape of Nanking, the London Blitz, the firebombings of Hamburg and Dresden, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. National governments, even those of democracies, will deliberately target civilian populations when they convince themselves that such actions are needed to win the war, or shorten it, or reduce the number of friendly casualties.

It is also difficult, especially in the early stages, to tell insurgent or 4GW activity from ordinary crime³³, and there is a tendency for authoritarian governments to delude themselves that the violence is coming from criminals or gangs long after it has evolved into something much more serious. Good 4GW organizations encourage this as long as possible, since it forestalls effective countermeasures. What this means for the 1RP community is that 4GW activity may be indistinguishable from street crime until the very moment it carries out a major operation, and arrested operatives will try to pass themselves off as ordinary criminals.

WINNING AGAINST “TERRORISM”

The concept of using death and destruction as the primary vehicle to influence the enemy’s will to continue characterizes “attrition warfare,” one of Boyd’s three categories of conflict.³⁴ As van Creveld noted, in 4GW, however, attrition is a one way street: the weaker can use it against the stronger, but if the state attempts to use attrition as its primary weapon, it will lose the moral high ground and soon the support of its own population – which is, of course, exactly what the 4GW force has in mind.³⁵ This is one reason why goading national governments into bloody, indiscriminate attacks is a standard tactic for 4GW organizations (another reason is that such attacks are great for recruiting.) You may have noted that when these occur, representatives of the mass media are rarely far away, and this is no accident.

So although “terrorism,” that is, seemingly gratuitous violence against civilians and non-combatants, is a common technique for 4GW groups, it is only that, *one technique*. Thus there can be no “global war on terror” any more than there can be a “global war on ambushes.” *We must stay focused on much larger objectives*: Who is attacking us? Why? Who supports them? Why? How do we want the issues to be finally solved? Ask yourself this: If the situation in the Middle East, for example, were to result in the destruction of key allies, imposition of ideological and unfriendly governments, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and, oh yes, \$10.00/gallon gas at the pump – but no further “terrorism” was used against US civilians – would we have “won”?

As far as terrorism itself is concerned, the best the United States and other national governments can hope for is to keep casualties at an acceptably low level. This may sound callous, but suicide, homicide, and motor vehicle accidents *each* kill more than 10 times the number of Americans every year than died in the 9/11 attacks³⁶ Certainly 3,000 deaths from 4GW attacks every year are unacceptable, but are 300? 30? How much of our limited national resources are we willing to spend to try to drive the number below, say, 100?

GRAND STRATEGY AND MORAL CONFLICT

To a large degree, “victory” against a 4GW opponent means denying them their goals until the tides of history change and they disperse or dissolve to such a low level that their actions return to incidents impossible to distinguish from ordinary street crime.³⁷ The key to doing this is what defense analysts and military historians call “grand strategy.” It is an extremely old idea. When Sun Tzu talked about attacking alliances as superior to battle or insisted that harmony between the general and his men was the key to military power, he was talking grand strategy.³⁸

At its core, grand strategy encompasses those actions that a side in a conflict takes to pump up its own morale – and so stay in the fight; degrade that of the opposition – and hopefully cause them to quit; and attract the uncommitted to its cause.³⁹ Enormous failures at the tactical and strategic levels of war can be offset by victory at the grand strategic, if the “winner” of the battles finally quits and goes home. This is the terrible attraction of protracted war.⁴⁰ As many have noted, if the United States eventually loses in Iraq, that is, withdraws before achieving its objectives of establishing a stable democracy, it will largely be because of failure of grand strategy.⁴¹ We will have failed to keep our population on board, to keep our alliance together, and to attract uncommitted peoples to our cause, while our opponents will have succeeded in their efforts to do likewise.

The tools of grand strategy encompass diplomatic, economic, and political measures, good mass communications, and the judicious use of military force, “judicious” because military (destructive) actions always cause resentment and have the potential to produce unpredictable results. As a first responder, you might be asking, “This is way above what I deal with. What does any of this have to do with me?” It turns out that you are a key player.

IV

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FIRST RESPONDERS

THE NATION'S IMMUNE SYSTEM

Despite all our efforts to the contrary, some attacks against civilians will succeed. You can take all the vaccine you want, but you are going to get sick from time to time. When attacks happen, the 1RP community, like white blood cells in the body, swing into play.⁴² Let's look at just this aspect of 4GW. From the viewpoint of strategy, 1RP are by definition a reactive force. Generally, strategists don't like to be in this position. They much prefer to keep the initiative, that is, to take the action to the enemy, to throw him off balance, to hurt his morale and to lure him into making mistakes. This sounds good—and when the country has suffered an attack, retaliation may be politically irresistible—but a superpower must be very careful. Virtually always when a militarily strong power strikes out at an elusive, hidden, and deceptive enemy, it causes far more damage to the civilian population on the other end than it suffered and so aids the 4GW organization in its recruiting efforts.

Whether we retaliate or not, the first actions the world will see are those of our first responders, and how they do will set the tone for the rest of our response. Even as this is written, the country retains tremendous sympathy for the Fire and Police Departments of New York City as a result of their heroic efforts on the morning of September 11, 2001. So by their actions, the 1RP community becomes front line warriors in 4GW at the highest, grand strategic, level of war. In addition to their critical missions of treating the injured and containing the damage, a successful 1RP operation restores our morale and determination, weakens that of the enemy, and will attract the uncommitted to our cause. These are the textbook functions of grand strategy, as we have seen. Heroic 1RP actions are made even more effective as strokes of grand strategy by their being performed in front of local television cameras right here in the United States and carried instantly around the world.

If the 1RP community can avoid, deter, or defeat direct attacks on their personnel—or in the extremity take their casualties, like any other elite force in any type of war—and accomplish their mission with the world watching, the effect on friendly morale will be incalculable. Even in those European countries that opposed the invasion of Iraq (for many reasons including their own long experiences fighting in the Third World) there is still admiration for the way we responded to the attacks in New York and Washington.

WHAT BEING A 1RP WARRIOR ENTAILS

The future opponent may be as well armed as they are; he will be able to concentrate a numerical superiority against isolated detachments at the time and place he chooses
...Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual*, p. 8.

Because first responders are on the front line in the 4GW struggle, they offer attractive targets to 4GW organizations, who may try to attack them both directly and in more deceptive ways. I have already noted how the information systems that assist 1RP organizations are vulnerable, but the men and women in uniform and wearing the gear present the most attractive targets. The 4GW force may attack these responders directly by devices left behind just for this purpose, or by a second wave of suicide attackers, or they may follow up a suicide attack with armed, non-suicide attackers. They are using all of these techniques in Iraq today, and as veterans of that conflict spread around the world, some will come to the West and to the United States.⁴³

The goals of such horrifying tactics are to increase the visibility and so the impact of the attack, cause additional casualties, and deter or delay further relief activities. They always have an objective of making the responders gun shy in the future. If brutality *per se* is one of the objectives of the initial attack, as it usually is, such secondary actions can greatly increase the effect. A successful operation can send strong messages that the 4GW force means business and that it has reached the level where it is capable of sophisticated planning and execution. For these purposes, the more blood the better.

Another way that we can expect 4GW groups to attack the 1RP community appears to be less damaging, but its effect can be much stronger on the outcome of the struggle: Fourth generation groups can try to discredit the responders to their constituency. If the rescue effort is seen as unsuccessful, perhaps because of poor training, lack of coordination, or worst of all, lack of will by the 1RP groups to place themselves in danger (possibly as a result of earlier attacks on them), then the effect on the country's morale may be devastating and thus have a significant impact on our will to continue the struggle.

To this end, an obvious tactic for 4GW groups is to employ their information tools to spread rumors and other forms of disinformation, including doctored photos, with the goal of discrediting the character of the first responders. They may reinforce these lies with other deceptive practices to discredit the 1RP community, such as having stay-behind elements dressed in 1RP uniforms and be seen on world-wide TV and the Internet fleeing the scene of the attack. *Our 4GW opponents understand us well and will try any trick or deception that they feel will support their cause. The only fair fight, in their view, is one they win.*

STRATEGY FOR WINNING IN FOURTH GENERATION WARFARE

THE OODA “LOOP”

The remainder of this chapter introduces a framework that has proven extremely effective for winning in the types of rapidly changing military situations that we face today and is slowly making its way into the IRP community⁴⁴. In particular, it is designed to ensure that people use their initiatives, while harmonizing their efforts to accomplish their goals in the most chaotic and threatening of situations. Clearly this applies as much to IRP activities as to any other operation in any form of warfare.

Originally created for fighter pilots, this framework has been expanded to land warfare, where it now forms the basis for the official doctrine of the US Marine Corps, and has recently been translated into a strategy applicable for business.⁴⁵

At its heart, the concept is extremely simple. In any form of competition the side that can do the following three things better than its competitors or opponents will create opportunities to achieve decisive results (not just acquire a competitive advantage):

Keep its world view, or “orientation,” most closely matched to the situation in the real world.

Harmonize this orientation in real time throughout the organization. This means that not only does the boss have the big picture, so does everybody else and it is up to date and accurate.

Possess a range of actions or responses that it can intuitively and nearly instantaneously apply to nearly any situation. Again, this means actions at all levels of the organization, and it means people taking the initiative, not waiting for commands.

ORIENTATION

“Orientation” is your mental model of the universe. One secret to winning in human-to-human competition is to keep your orientation matched to the external environment, while taking actions to detach your opponent’s.⁴⁶ Then for a short period of time (the length depends on how well trained your opponent is) you will have an opportunity to exploit the gap between what he or she thinks is going on and what actually is. Although Boyd’s conception of orientation incorporates modern psychology and physiology, the basic idea is extremely old and was the foundation for martial arts training during the samurai period in medieval Japan.⁴⁷

UNITY AND HARMONY

Working together and minimizing Murphy's Law in the process requires not only a clear conception of the situation, but also that everyone involved in the operation have a *common orientation* in those areas where they have to work together. Partly this common orientation arises from working and training together so that we intuitively share the same concept of how things should be done – the military calls this “doctrine” – and partly the common orientation comes from accurate, essential, and timely communications.

It is important to emphasize that the common orientation must apply to everybody involved in the response operation, not just to firefighters or just to police or just to emergency medical personnel. Also, it involves more than physical communications, although this is clearly necessary. A friend of mine in law enforcement, when discussing homeland security requirements in his jurisdiction, summed it as, “Sure it's critical to be able to talk to the fire, medical, and FEMA guys, but it's also important to understand what they're trying to say.”

For this reason, the 1RP community must develop a “joint” doctrine, as the US military has done particularly since the end of Vietnam. This will be difficult, given the highly fragmented nature of the 1RP community around the country, but times are changing, the threat is changing, and responders in their role of warriors in 4GW will need to change or risk being attacked and defeated in confusion and in detail.

MAGIC

Any stage magician will tell you that the key to magic is practice, so that all the actions and the patter flow together at just the right time and with just the right intonation and expression that the audience never notices how the trick is done.⁴⁸ The end result is, well, magical. The same thing is true of military operations. The idea is that through increasingly more realistic practice and exercises, actions begin to flow intuitively and without delay – magically it will seem to an untrained observer – from orientation. Then the trick is to incorporate wider and wider ranges of possible situations in our training and exercise program so that the vast majority of the time, appropriate actions flow smoothly and instantaneously from orientation.

In other words, when people are properly trained in this approach, decisions in the usual sense of comparing and selecting between alternatives rarely happen.⁴⁹ This is just as well since formal “decision” methodologies would only slow things down. It can not be emphasized too often that training and exercises intended to achieve intuitive and rapid actions must start with individuals but to be effective must soon involve the entire responding team across all departments and agencies. You fight, as an old military maxim goes, like you train.

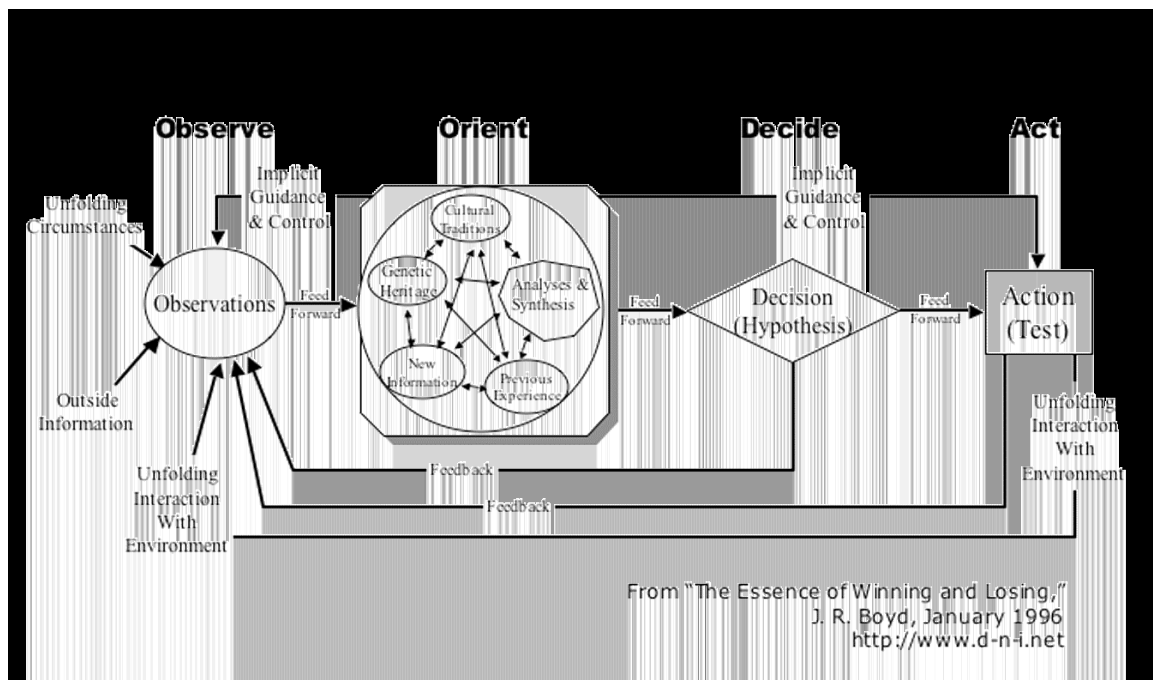
Once the groundwork of individual, departmental, and joint training is in place, the military begins what they call “freeplay exercises.” These serve the same purpose as sparring in the martial arts. Such an exercise is a type of simulated war, which starts with a general scenario and then pits the team to be trained against an “opposing force” (OPFOR) that will react to their moves. This way, the group can experience the value of

training as a team as well as see what can and will happen to them if they are not prepared to make a unified response. They can experience friction and frustration first hand, before citizens' lives are in danger.

The OPFOR must be knowledgeable in likely 4GW tactics, such as the second wave attack noted above, and experienced in employing them. It will probably need to be a national resource that can deploy elements to work with and train local IRP communities. Such an organization will not come cheap, but either we are in a real war or we are not. If we are, then we as a nation must start taking it seriously and take the measures necessary to win.

THE OODA “LOOP”

The most common way of representing the idea that orientation is fundamental and that actions should practically always flow from it is the “OODA ‘Loop,’” shown below:



The acronym stands for Observe – Orient – Decide – Act. However, the common phrase “OODA loop speed” or “decision cycle time” actually refers to the time required to re-orient in response to changes in the environment and *not* to the time required to go through the observe-to-orient-to-decide-to-act-to observe cycle. Such a “cycle” would not describe how highly competitive organizations actually work. We do not (or should not), for example, stop observing while we are orienting, deciding, or acting.

Because we may be subject to waves of attacks in multiple phases, the situation may change rapidly. We will need to spot these developments and change our actions accordingly. If action really is flowing intuitively and instantaneously from orientation, then the time it takes for us to change our tactics is largely driven by how long it takes a new orientation to form, that is, to reorient. New orientation, new action.

Experience has shown that the OODA “loop” is the basis for causing the enemy to come apart in a combat situation. If our OODA “loop” speed is quicker than our opponents’, our orientation will stay more closely matched to reality, effective actions will flow from our orientations, and we will be able to set up and exploit situations more quickly than they can handle. Future domestic response operations will take on some of the attributes of small unit combat, where the 1RP commander finds him- or herself in a deadly battle of wits with the 4GW team leader. In these situations, a well-prepared 1RP commander will be able to spot preparations for a second wave attack, for example, and take action to frustrate it before it begins.

If we can keep up our quick operating tempo, we begin to chip away at their physical structure, their mental processes (including orientation), and their morale and will to continue. The result will be chaos and collapse – they will bicker among themselves and panic, or lose heart and call off further waves. Their only antidote is to develop the ability to operate at even faster OODA “loop” speed than we can through study, practice and intense training both as individuals and as groups.

What determines OODA “loop” speed, that is, what allows one group of people to reorient and act in response to changes in the situation faster than another? Boyd suggested that an organizational climate or culture that embodies the following four attributes will naturally run at very high OODA “loop” speed.⁵⁰

- Individual technical competence, practiced to such a high degree that it seems mystifying to outsiders. This applies to every level, from the foxhole to army HQ, from the loading dock to the boardroom.
- Unity and mutual trust, which imply a common orientation and the high degree of unit cohesion that necessarily accompanies it. It is impossible to overestimate the power of unity: It is the force that pushed men out of the trenches at Verdun and into the field of enemy fire. It comes from training together as a team in increasingly complex and stressful situations.
- Designation of clear focus and direction, emphasizing the intent of the person assigning the mission. This will give guidance of what to do when its not clear what to do. For the 4GW force itself, this is always the will of the state opponent, the United States, for example, to continue the fight.
- After all of the above are well in hand, and only then, leading by ensuring that subordinates have a firm grasp of the leader’s intent and of their own objectives or roles in it, and then leaving the method of accomplishment largely up to them.

These are tested principles by military forces practicing both third generation, or maneuver, warfare as well by guerrilla units. They enable people to work together smoothly under stress and cope with the surprise and shock of enemy actions. The result is quicker OODA “loop” speed under fire. For more information, I recommend the Marine Corps’ doctrine manuals, particularly MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, and MCDP 6, *Command and Control*.⁵¹

OODA “LOOPS” AND THE FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNITY

Although the idea of the OODA “loop” arose from combat experience, the concept of intuitive decision making as the basis for effective group performance can be found in many areas. Interestingly, one of the primary research sources was the first responder community itself, particularly firefighters. Investigation has shown that the most effective fireground commanders use what is known as “recognition primed decision making,” where actions appear to flow intuitively from a person’s mental models that he or she has developed through years of experience.⁵² This is the sort of “decision making” that IRP commanders will need in order to deal with complex attacks in the future and it fits well with the OODA “loop” as described above.

CONCLUSIONS

As I have insisted several times in this chapter, the first responder community mans the front lines in what used to be called “military operations other than war.” I hope that readers have now adopted the more sophisticated concept of “fourth generation warfare” and will find useful weapons for conducting it through continued study of 4GW techniques and through working as a unified community to develop common or at least complementary doctrines. All students of OODA “loop”-type strategies emphasize that you will only master them if you study them and practice them – sparring, not rehearsing – relentlessly. Practice may not make perfect, but it will make you good enough.

Finally, as front line troops in 4GW, the rest of our defense establishment will be looking to you increasingly in the future.⁵³ The lessons you learn in responding to or preventing attacks on our homeland will apply to our forces conducting similar operations directly against the bases of our opponents elsewhere.

VI

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

EVOLUTION OF MODERN WARFARE

Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, Free Press, New York, 1991. The bible of non-state warfare, and still one of the best sources on the nature of post-state conflict.

Thomas X. Hammes, Colonel, US Marine Corps, *The Sling and the Stone*, Motorbooks, St. Paul, MN, 2004. The history of fourth generation warfare and an informed discussion of how to fight it.

Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 2004. Sweeping overview of the new world stage and the role of the US and other developed countries in it. One view of what it will take to truly win the global 4GW we are in today.

JOHN BOYD AND THE OODA "LOOP"

Chet Richards, *Certain to Win*, Xlibris, Philadelphia, 2004. Concise introduction to the OODA loop and the applications of Boyd's strategies to business and war.

Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed The Art of War*, Little, Brown, New York, 2002. The definitive biography of one of America's most influential strategists.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Van Creveld, M., *The Transformation of War*, Free Press, New York, 1991, 212.
- ² Barnett, T.P.M., *The Pentagon's New Map*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 2004, 80.
- ³ Van Creveld, M., "Through a Glass Darkly," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 2003.
- ⁴ Giap, General Vo Nguyen, *People's War, People's Army*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, p. 104.
- ⁵ Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War*, Penguin, Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1968, 119.
- ⁶ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, Chapter 5.
- ⁷ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 155.
- ⁸ Clausewitz, C. *On War*, 102-3.
- ⁹ For an excellent discussion of this hideous war, largely ignored in the West, I recommend John Pike's article at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/congo.htm>. Some estimates of the casualties since 1994 range as high as 5 million.
- ¹⁰ Barnett, T., *The Pentagon's New Map*, 95.
- ¹¹ Boyd, J.R., *Patterns of Conflict*, unpublished briefing, December 1986, 10.
- ¹² Lind, W.S. et. al., "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989, 22. Also available at <http://www.d-n-i.net>.
- ¹³ Gudmundsson, B.I., *Stormtroop Tactics*, Praeger, Westport CT, 1989, 178.
- ¹⁴ The word means "little war." It dates from the Spanish attempt to resist Napoleon in the early 1800s, when Spain's conventional armies were no match for the French. Operating in conjunction with Wellington's conventional army, however, *guerrilleros*, tied down large numbers of French forces and were a significant factor in Wellington's success.
- ¹⁵ There is a difference between *guerrilla warfare* and *insurgency*. Guerrilla warfare is a style of fighting, a way to wage war. An insurgency is simply a rebellion, which may be waged by any available method. Although many insurgencies began as guerrilla wars (the American Revolution for the most part did not and neither did the US Civil War), those intended to remove a sitting government often culminate in an attack by conventional forces waging 1st, 2nd, or 3rd generation war. For a discussion, see Hammes, T.X., *The Sling and The Stone*, Motorbooks, St. Paul, MN, 2004, 218. Many writers, myself included, have become lazy in distinguishing between the two terms since it is usually clear which meaning is intended.
- ¹⁶ Barnett, T., *The Pentagon's New Map*, 165.
- ¹⁷ Hammes, T.X., *The Sling and The Stone*, 218.
- ¹⁸ Hackworth, COL David H., and Julie Sherman, *About Face*, New York: Touchstone, 1989.
- ¹⁹ Widely available on the Internet. This version is from the International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism (in Israel): <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/fatwah.htm>.
- ²⁰ Hammes, T., *The Sling and The Stone*, 208.
- ²¹ Hammes, T., *The Sling and The Stone*, 140.
- ²² Hammes, T., *The Sling and The Stone*, 201.
- ²³ Cassidy, Lieutenant Colonel Robert M., U.S. Army, Winning the War of the Flea: Lessons from Guerrilla Warfare, *Military Review*, September-October 2004. No. 5, 41-46.
- ²⁴ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 174.
- ²⁵ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 183.
- ²⁶ Lind, W.S., Understanding Fourth Generation War, *Military Review*, September-October 2004, No. 5, 12-16.
- ²⁷ Seper, J., Al Qaeda seeks tie to local gangs, *The Washington Times*, September 28, 2004.
- ²⁸ Hammes, T., *The Sling and The Stone*, 216.
- ²⁹ Van Creveld, M., *Defending Israel*, Praeger, 2004, XXX
- ³⁰ Lacquer, W., *The Terrorism to Come*, Policy Review, 126.
- ³¹ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 212.
- ³² Hanson, V.D., *The Soul of Battle*, The Free Press, New York, 1999, Chapter V.
- ³³ Wilson, Col G.I., USMCR, Bunkers, F, Maj., USMCR, and Sullivan, Sgt J.P., Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, "Anticipating the Nature of the Next Conflict," on Defense And the National Interest, <http://www.d-n-i.net>, September 20, 2001.
- ³⁴ Boyd, *Patterns of Conflict*, 113.

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- ³⁵ Van Creveld, M., Why Iraq Will End As Vietnam Did, *Defense and the National Interest* (www.d-n-i.net) 2004.
- ³⁶ US Government, National Center for Health Statistics, *Atlas of United States Mortality*, 1997.
- ³⁷ Lacquer, W., *The Terrorism to Come*, 126.
- ³⁸ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. and with commentary by Thomas Cleary, Shambhala, Boston, 1988, 17-19.
- ³⁹ Boyd, *Patterns of Conflict*, 139.
- ⁴⁰ Giap, V.N., *People's War People's Army*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, 99-101.
- ⁴¹ Barnett, T., *The Pentagon's New Map*, 285-294.
- ⁴² Barnett, T., *The Pentagon's New Map*, 176.
- ⁴³ For more information on how al-Qa'ida and its allies are using Iraq as a training ground for future leaders, please consult *Mapping the Global Future, Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project*, 2004. The National Intelligence Council is an advisory group reporting to the Director of National Intelligence. There is speculation that the London bombers (July 2005) were British converts to Islam who learned their techniques practicing against the coalition in Iraq. See Bender, Bryan, "Specter Surfaces of World of Local Qaeda Offshoots," *Boston Globe*, July 8, 2005.
- ⁴⁴ Leland, Lt, Fred T., Jr., Walpole MA Police Department, "How Understanding The Boyd Cycle and Non-Verbal Communication Can Save a Law Enforcement Officer's Life!," on Defense And the National Interest, <http://www.d-n-i.net>, July 9, 2004.
- ⁴⁵ Richards, C.W., *Certain to Win*, Xlibris, Philadelphia, 2004. Chapter III.
- ⁴⁶ Hammond, G.T., *The Mind of War, John Boyd and American Security*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 2001, 164.
- ⁴⁷ Cleary, T., *The Japanese Art of War*, Shambhala, Boston, 1992, 32-38.
- ⁴⁸ "Never show the rubes how the magic is done." Old carnival adage.
- ⁴⁹ Klein, G., *Sources of Power*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, Ch. 7.
- ⁵⁰ Richards, C., *Certain to Win*, Chapter III.
- ⁵¹ Both of these are available through Amazon.com (search on "marine corps doctrinal.")
- ⁵² Klein, G., *Sources of Power*, Chapter 1.
- ⁵³ Lind, W.S., *Understanding Fourth Generation Warfare*.