



Fourth Generation Warfare

The History of Terrorism
as a Strategy of Political
Insurgency
Section 6

The Sling and the Stone

On War in the 21st Century

by Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, USMC

Is war different in the 21st century? Hammes thinks so.

Hamme's view is influenced by:

- The Fall of South Viet Nam to the Communists
- 1986-87 Academic study of Insurgency
- 1987 -90 Training of insurgents
- The Iraq War
- Somalia in 1993
- 1994 Study at the National Defence College of Canada

So what is 4G Warfare? What were the first 3?

Emergence of the Nation State and the first G

- The French Revolution and Napoleon – massive, nationalist armies
- Political Changes – Feudalism ends, Nation States emerge
- Economic Changes – Increased wealth from the new world, improved agriculture and transportation
- Social Changes – urban populations
- Technology Changes – both invention and innovation
- Total War is now possible

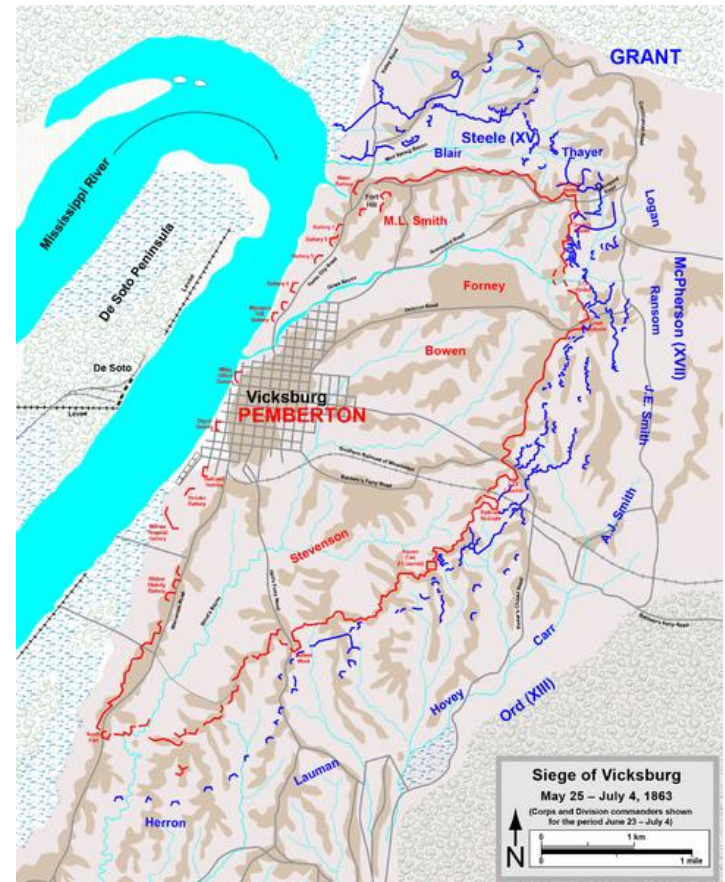
Large Armies and massed, directed firepower were the characteristics that defined 1G war

2G Warfare

Requirements:

- Higher GDP (more surplus)
- The mass output that comes from Industrialization
- Mass production and accompanying Urbanization
- Mature transportation systems
- Improved Communications
- Nationalistic sentiments

American Civil War was an early example



3G Warfare - Blitzkrieg

Maneuverability

- Tank and Airpower significantly improved

Combined Arms

- Coordinating attacks using air armor and infantry

Adaptability

- Development of concepts and tactics without actual equipment
- analysis of what went right, what went wrong in Poland
- Changed perceptions on roles in combat

The 4G Society

Pre World War II international climate was dominated by nation states and their empires

Post WWII, things started to change with the emergence of:

- International and Regional Organizations (UN, NAFTA)
- Increase in number and change in “standards” of nations
- Stateless Actors (Greenpeace, Al Qaeda)
- Sub national Groups (Kurds, Serbs, IRA)
- International Financial Markets (speed, clusters)
- Human Mobility
- Technology

The Emergence of “Peoples War”

In 1921, classical Marxist revolutionary views were dominant in the Party

- Insurgency based on urban proletariat

China had no significant urban proletariat so Mao saw a different path

- Avoid direct confrontation with superior enemy forces
- Build a base of support among the peasants

The weakened Party split following the ascendancy of Mao's views based on a peasant-based revolution

- The Communists were almost defeated using the COIN Blockhouse Technique and had to take the “Long March”

The Strategy

Political Power was the key to victory

- Long term struggle, with an ebb and flow
- Networked, mass organizations were the key to political power

Peasants were to be treated well

- Valuable supporters with materials and cover
- Valuable human intelligence

War was to move forward and backwards between 3 phases

- Political build up with limited actions (Assassination/Terrorist)
- Guerilla Insurgency
- Conventional offense in the final confrontation

Some Key Points about the Evolution of War

None were the result of sudden transformation

- In fact most started evolving in prior conflicts

The changes reflect, and required, broader societal changes

- Political, social, economic

The goals of the conflict mode have changed

- 1st and 2nd Generation goals were destruction of the opposing force
- 3rd Generation Goals are the destruction of the enemy's logistics and supply, i.e. their capacity to wage war
- 4th Generation war focuses on destroying the enemy's political will to wage war

Additional Reading

Ross Terrill has written many books on China.

Specific recommendations:

- Mao: A Biography
- The New Chinese Empire: And What it Means for the United States

For fun, read the book reviews on Amazon about the second book. He is accused of being a China lover by some and a China hater by others.

Speaker Notes Slide 2

- Colonel Hammes is a very bright guy who has had a number of experiences that have significantly shaped his paradigm of the world. This section is really from his book, The Sling and the Stone. It is a very good book, and I think it should help set up a good framework for student discussion and their conceptual understanding of the topic.
- This first slide is from his introduction. It is worth emphasizing to students how an individual's experiences evolve their thinking, and with any historical analysis, it is important to understand the human experience of the historian, and their perspective as they do their analysis. It is also worth referencing how difficult it is at times to reconcile much of the "where what when and why" on non-Western history, primarily because most non-western histories are written by westerners, who often interpret things from a western perspective, assuming universality of western views, morality, ethics.
- Hammes entered the military in 1975, the year the communists seized South Viet Nam. This was a devastating loss for the US military. A very small country had caused the US to lose its first war in 200 years. It is also notable that the Communists, who won the war, never won a significant battle against the US. So how did they win a war in which they won no major battles against US troops? There was not much literature or research on insurgency at the time.
- In the Academic Year of 1986-87 Hammes was given a Fellowship at the Mershon Center for Strategic Studies and focused on studying the insurgent strategies of Mao, Ho, the PLO, IRA, and Sandinistas.
- From 1987 to 1990 Hammes actually trained insurgents and left with two clear observations. 1st, the ideas they fought for were central to how they acted. This created a belief that their Political Power could neutralize the military power of an opponent. The second observation was how ingenious the insurgents could be. They worked through whatever tactical, military, logistical or political issue that came up. They worked around situations that they could not confront directly to achieve their goals.

Speaker Notes Slide 2 part II

- The Iraq war confirmed in the minds of many military personnel that US technology was the key to winning wars in the future, and this led to an expansion of these capabilities. Hammes believes that is the wrong lesson to be drawn from the conflict (essentially the US defeating a Soviet style enemy), and that future conflicts would be different.
- Somalia in 1993 was the type of conflict he sees as the one we needed to prepare for. He was on the ground in Mogadishu and states that for the first 5 months the US led coalition, with Humanitarian, military, and political efforts tightly controlled and intertwined, saw intense saturation patrolling, around the clock, by US Marines. The troops made and kept extensive contacts with the locals, knew where people belonged, and gathered very good human intelligence to coordinate with their intense patrolling. Later, when the efforts were under UN control, troops stayed in compounds and the streets returned to the control of the very fragmented, essentially dissolved, clan and tribal based Somali social situation.
- Teaching tip - It would be worth mentioning Black Hawk Down, the book, and the role of contractors. The book is fascinating, and explains the situation very well, while helping to flesh out the context of 4G warfare.
- Then after Somalia, I am guessing in 1994, he went to the National Defence College of Canada. Here the coursework was dominated by the topics of Canadian society, and international society, in today's world. The role of society, how it functions, what makes it work, not work, and how external agents interact within a society made an impact on him.

Speaker Notes slide 3

- Political – the end of Feudalism and the emergence of Nation States accelerated with Napoleons defeat.
- Economic – improved agriculture generated food surpluses. Improved roads (or at least more of them) enabled armies to move.
- Social – urbanization, nationalist sentiments start to develop, cultural influences start to trickle through more
- Technological Innovation– Gunpowder gets attention here, but I would also mention that innovation in trades and manufacturing were important factors. Craftsmen were developing more standard techniques, utilizing templates and such to “rough in” a lot of work. They also were moving about more, which sped the transfer of innovations. In Europe, the clock makers would move from town to town and build clocks, before eventually ending up predominantly in Switzerland and England. In New England, the Colt company in Hartford and other fire arms manufactured in Springfield and Chicopee saw the regular movement of trades men between the towns accelerate technology transfer.
- In the last 19th century, the role of trains in war would be demonstrated in the American Civil war (the big warm up for the style of war fought in WWI and the first big 2G war)
- Total War – By the 19th century, Total war was possible, with all segments and resources of a nation mobilized to prosecute such and action. Hammes uses Waterloo as the example, with 200,000 troops involved.

Speaker Notes Slide 4

- American Civil War – trench warfare, use of rail roads, telegraphs, mass production of weapons, etc.
- By the time the North was pushing into the South, defenders on both sides learned that entrenched troops (literally troops in trenches) were very successful at repelling attackers. Artillery and other siege weapons came into play late in the conflict. It took awhile for the Generals to figure out that the trenches and rapid fire from trenches had literally changed the rules of engagement 1G was dead. So were a lot of troops.
- Troop rotation out of the trenches also started to be used, at least by the Union, when it was noticed that the constant danger and firing of extended trench warfare did a lot my damage to morale than the prior type of battle, which was essentially one, two or three days of mass fighting.
- Fun fact -Since canning is 10x faster when salt is added, and the fellow who figured it out lived near the Chesapeake Bay, oysters in a can were an important food for Union troops (and here is where our sodium issues start).
- I do feel it is worth pointing out that the North had a significant economic and population advantage. When Grant used it, the grinding attrition was much to the Unions advantage.

Speaker Notes slide 5

- Hammes sees the birth of 3G warfare as starting in 1915, during World War I. It is worth noting before we get too far into this that the Germans saw the military as a skilled profession, something to be studied academically and to become learned in. This created a very strong intellectual rigor in their approach to war, similar to good science. Develop hypothesis, test the hypothesis, study the facts, modify the hypothesis if needed, retest.
 - In 1915, a German Captain Rohr, with frontline experience in WWI, was given the assignment of taking the lessons learned and to develop new tactics. He began to test the combined arms approach using a mix of motors, machine guns, infantry rifles and other standard weapons, in combat. The first tests were small scale tests, but as they learned they increased the scale until 1918, when General Ludendorff's offensive broke through allied lines using the new methods. The strategy basically involved small units with combined arms penetrating the trenches and opening up breaches to be exploit. Decision making was very frontline, with the units taking the initiative to exploit the breach. This greatly expanded the attacking units flexibility while pulling the military leadership much closer to the frontline elements.
 - Unfortunately for the Germans, they could not resupply the units that advanced, and the Allies reinforced the front, ending Germany's last major offensive.
 - The main take away from this though was a significant number of German officers had seen away around trench warfare, and it involved combined arms, maneuverability, and flexible decision making. In the 1930s they would test these concepts with cars instead of tanks, and with other props to create scale. They also studied the use of armor and air power in World War I, focused on continuing to solve the problem of the trenches, and training techniques for the new style of war.
 - This does not mean that the German army rushed into a full scale application of these principles though. When they invaded Poland in 1939 of the 34 German Divisions, 6 were mechanized Panzer divisions, and 4 were "light" divisions. The other 24 were WWI type infantry with horse drawn supply carts.
 - What they did exceptionally well after the Blitzkrieg was to study what went right and what went wrong, and then they spent the winter in intensive retraining and restructuring of their forces.
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- And when the Spring rolled around, they had the British on the beaches of Dunkirk in 16 days and France's capitulation a month later.

Speaker Notes slide 6

- The period between the 1G war and the emergence of 2G war was approximately 100 years. The movement from 2G war to 3G warfare was approximately 21 years.
- In discussing the movement from 3G to 4G war, Hammes first considers the changes in society, both its organization, its technology, institutional structure, and international dynamics.
- Pre WWI, nations had significant sovereignty, really complete sovereignty over things within their borders – money, legal actions, voting, etc. When the international and regional organizations started to emerge, things changed. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank started to chip away at national sovereignty regarding currency valuations and macroeconomic structures. The UN, although apparently powerless, became a forum for dialogue and grievances, and through their Development bank, the IMF, and the Atomic Energy Commission gained influence and authority. Regional organizations required negotiations on tariffs, and other economic decisions. AS nations ceded portions of their sovereignty, nations that operated outside this sphere were often at risk of being labeled “rogue”.
- There was all a huge increase in the number of nations, and the types of nations they were. When founded, there were 51 nations in the UN, most with some relative level of economic development (at least in some areas), and some national cohesion.
- By 2004, there were approximately 190 nations with a wide range of economic, political, cultural and social conditions. Consider a club with Saudi Arabia, wealthy and Feudal, Somali, collapsed and gang run, with Chad, poor and nomadic, with France, Britain, the US, and Russia and Nepal all equal partners, trying to figure out the way things should be and with equal voices. How would it be different from a Euro-American club, with a few loud guests like Russia tolerated at best?

Speaker Notes slide 6

Stateless actors are very interesting, and the key characteristic is they are not nation based, but typically an idea based community or network (these things are destined to grow exponentially – Facebook and other similar vehicles guarantee massive, massive growth in this area).

Sub national groups, particularly when things get violent, get much more attention in the post WWII era. Previously domestic issues become international causes.

International markets, particularly with their weapons of mass financial destruction, and their main clusters in places like New York, London, and Tokyo are also important and poorly considered factors in the 4G evolution. It is not just the ability to wire money and launder it for the terror networks, but it is also their ability to create bubble, such as in the housing market, and to manipulate currencies (Soras and the Thai Baht), that help generate uncertainty and volatility.

Lastly, although Hammes does not focus on it, I would not underestimate the role of human mobility in the increased volatility of the 4G war era. People fly around the world for \$800. Millions of college students spend a semester abroad. Farm kids become city kids. As people move, ideas and expectations change dramatically.

I won't talk much about technology here, but it includes the vast ability to move ideas and information, in mere seconds. The 24 hour news cycle, disposable cell phones, and web are major, unregulated changes in how we interact and the rate at which we interact.

Speaker Notes Slide 7

- Mao was the first to write about and execute a campaign that had some of the major conceptual elements of a 4G war (although the Boers had used the strategies and tactics to a certain extent).
- Mao is really interesting – he grew up as the son of a rich peasant in the country side during a time when there was still an Emperor in China (19 when the last Emperor abdicated in 1912) and watched from 1912 to 1916 as a new “Emperor” tried to take over, then as the 1916 to 1928 civil wars occurred. He joined the Communist party at its first meeting in Peking in 1921. In 1928, the Nationalist under Chang Kai-Shek won out, for awhile, and immediately started trying to eliminate the communists.
- Now at this point, the Communists were ideological Marxist – the Revolution would come on the backs of the urban, worker proletariat. This was dogma, communist faith, and not to be disputed. Mao saw the core problem a core problem with this, and that was the basic fact that most of the Chinese were rural peasants, and there were very, very few members of the industrial urban class. Now remember that the main tutors of the Communists at this point were the Soviets. They had succeeded in their revolution, and they had faith (and I am sure human ego) vested in the correctness of their views, regardless of the environment they were in (Hi, we are here from Headquarters, and we are here to help). The dogma was going to be followed, until it was no longer feasible. Significant cultural and social differences were to be ignored since their was a historical imperative, an evolutionary direction, that would occur naturally over time. Like most consultants, these guys were total asses; wrong, and arrogant about it. So naturally they attracted followers and gained substantial influence.
- But remember now that Mao was a country boy, and his thoughts soon crystallized around the concept that only the rural areas had the mass required to achieve the revolution.

Speaker Notes Slide 7

- As a military commander, he also learned two things
 - Avoid direct confrontation with a superior force
 - peasant support, through food, shelter, and human intelligence, was a critical factor to success. This led to him stressing “good behavior” to the peasants.
- Now Mao did gain influence in the party, and his ideas did gain some traction, but not completely, until 1930 when under Soviet direction, the Chinese Communists decided to seize cities. The Communist armies led by those influenced most by the Soviets, attacked and tried to seize the cities. The Nationalist forces hammered them, inflicting heavy casualties, and they retreated.
- Mao, having his own thoughts on things, followed orders but with a slight variation. He only encircled target cities. When the time came to pull back, he did, with minimal losses. He did not win anything, but he did not lose either.
- The communists as a whole were weaker, but Mao was much stronger, and his influence grew such that he was clearly “first among equals”. The Nationalists pressed their advantage, using the blockhouse technique developed by the British during the Boer war, and so the Long March commenced. An epic military retreat, the Communist army that numbered between 80,000 and 100,000 troops, marched 5,000 miles over the course of one year, and fought over 200 battles during that time reached Yanan with between 5,000 and 8,000 of the original group in tact. Here, Mao reflected on the lessons learned while rebuilding his forces.

Speaker Notes Slide 8

- For Mao, only the Peasants had the mass required to gain victory, and as such, they needed to be treated well, and be politicized. Militarily the strategy was to not be beaten until sufficient politicization of the masses could occur.
- Winning the peasants enable more maneuverability for the communists, gave them sources of information, and supplies. The strategic elements of the war could move forwards and backwards at different rates and different times.
- Mao was a fast learner. When he failed, he assimilated the information into a new strategic approach. He documented his lessons and published a book that was the blue print for many of the coming national liberation struggles.