Iraq – Model for the New Wars?

COL Alex Crowther, Ph.D.
Strategic Studies Institute
US Army War College
Methodology

• Examine what the new theorists say
  – Mary Kaldor – “New & Old Wars” - 1998
  – Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui – “Unrestricted Warfare” - 1999
  – Mats Berdal & David Malone – “Greed and Grievance” - 2000
  – Mark Duffield – “Global Governance and the New Wars” - 2001
  – Herfried Münkler “New Wars” - 2002
  – Colonel Thomas X. Hammes – “The Sling and The Stone” – 2004
Kaldor – “New Wars”

- Political violence omnipresent
- Violence concentrates on civilians
- Blurring of distinction between war and crime
- Terror as a weapon; human rights violations
- Prevalence of identity politics
- Large variety of armed actors
- High unemployment informal & illegal economy
Qiao and Wang - “Unrestricted Warfare”

- Omnidirectionality
- Synchrony
- Limited objectives
- Unlimited measures
- Asymmetry
- Minimal consumption
- Multidimensional coordination
- Adjustment and control of the entire process
Berdal & Malone – “Economic Agendas in Civil Wars”

- Violence
- Criminal elements
- Perceived grievances
- Powerful economic motives and agendas
  - Not Clauswitzian logic
- Economics
  - Diversion of aid
  - Criminal activities
  - Smuggling of oil/minerals
- Intensification of transnational commerce
- Political economy of violence inside a particular category of states
- Conflict cession requires a realignment of political interests and a readjustment of economic strategies
Duffield – ““New Wars””

- Strategic complexes of liberal peace
  - Relations between governments, NGOs, militaries and the business sector
  - Dissolving conventional distinctions between peoples, armies and governments
- Adaptation to the effects of market deregulation and qualification and attenuation of nation-state competence
- Polyarchical, non-territorial, public-private networks
- Multi-level and increasingly non-territorial decision-making networks
- Parallel trans-border trade
- Local-global networks and shadow economies
- Transformational goals of international society
- Poverty, resource competition and weak or predatory institutions
- Development is ultimately impossible without stability and security is not sustainable without development
Münkler - “New Wars”

- Distinguished from state-on-state warfare
- “New Wars” similar to “Old Wars”
  - Before the state had a monopoly of violence
  - 30 Years War a good example
- Ethnic-cultural tensions
- Religious Convictions
- Social-revolutionary ideologies
- Multiplicity of interest groups
  - Groups expect to derive more disadvantages than advantages from a lasting renunciation of violence
- State, para-state and private actors
- Asymmetry of force
- No fronts; few engagements; violence directed at civilians
- War has lost its well-defined contours
Hammes – “4th Generation Warfare”

• Focus on political will
• Networks
  – Political; Economic; Social; Military
  – International; transnational; national; subnational
• Evolved form of insurgency
• Transnational nature
• Does not seek to defeat military forces
• Lengthy conflicts
• Movement of money and ideas
  – No need for logistics or production capability
• Will not be fought in isolation
Smith – “Wars Amongst the People”

• Paradigm shift
  – Conventional force-on-force war no longer exists
  – Current force structure not optimal

• Utility of force is minimal
  – Force does not deliver required results

• Fight amongst the people
  – The people are the battlefield and the objective

• Conflicts tend to be timeless
  – No decisive victory

• Mostly non-state actors
• Irregular forces operating outside of the laws of the state
• Conversion of irregular forces into regular forces
Shultz & Dew – “Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias”

• Traditional concepts of warfare do exist
  – You have to seek the information
• Action almost always done by small units
• Need for good intelligence
• Armed groups very flexible and adaptable
• Operations have been diversified
  – Traditional guerilla tactics sometimes used
  – Broadened traditional unconventional repertoire
  – Changes in types of operations have changed traditional targets
• When an outside power intervenes, strict customary codes are often modified and even suspended
• The role of outside actors must be considered at the outset
Hoffman – “Hybrid Wars”

• Merging/blurring/fusion of conflict and war forms
  – War and peace
  – Combatants and non-combatants
  – Regular and irregular warfare
• Seeking synergies by combining modes of war
• Criminal activity
• Indiscriminate violence & coercion
• Undermining the capability of the state
• Perplexing to characterize states as essentially traditional forces or non-state actors as inherently irregular
• Post-Westphalian, non-trinitarian, post-Clausewitzian
Synthesis - The “New Wars”

- Challenge conventional thinking
- Political violence
  - Both targeted and indiscriminate
- Economic in nature
- Transnational
  - Borders are only important to state actors
- Unconventional/asymmetric tactics
- Involves entire population
  - Population is the target
- Networks
  - Criminal
  - Transnational
  - Local
    - Tribal/ethnic/religious
- Importance of Information Operations
- International pressure for ‘good governance’
  - Includes democratization
Iraq = New Wars

• War Amongst the People
• Triggered by lack of government capability
• Religious Issues
• Resources
  – Oil & other smuggling
• Transborder influences
  – Including large aggressive neighbors
• Networks
  – Tribalism; Criminal; Global Jihad
• Importance of Information Operations
• International pressure for democracy/good governance
• International ‘enablers’
  – Training/advising
  – Technical assistance (intelligence; fires; Info ops etc)
Iraq ≠ New Wars

• Will not see 160K + US Troops deployed to one country
• Will not usually see “New Wars” triggered by state-on-state invasion
• Usually not triggered by an “occupation”
• Iraqi opposition actually started out stronger than the government
• Partner nations will not usually have access to $Bns in resources