



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
**UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY**  
West Point, New York 10996

MADN-HIST

19 November 2004

SUBJECT: Suggested Historical Reading List for Commanders and Staffs Supporting OIF

Dear Captain Mack:

The USMA Department of History has compiled the attached reading list in response to your inquiry of 4 November 2004. Unfortunately, we were unable to identify any historical case studies that furnish the vignettes you sought. Yet, we considered it to our mutual benefit to compile a reading list that would prepare you for the task ahead. The final product is the result of the collaborative effort of some of our Department's finest officers, including our subject matter experts on the Middle East and unconventional warfare. While the annotations for each of these sources explain the rationale for their inclusion, a few words may be in order to explain the usefulness of the list as a whole.

First, it is important to understand that history offers no lessons learned. Had a vignette existed that established a precedent for regaining the initiative under similar situations, it is not unlikely that the "lessons learned" from this example would have proven themselves invalid. A superficial reading of history that yields such "lessons" is rarely useful (perhaps the greatest example of this is the adoption of the Strategic Hamlet Program in Vietnam based upon British success in Malaya). Why, then, study history at all? In short, studying these works will equip commanders and their staffs with a conceptual framework that will let them *ask the right questions* to analyze each unique situation on its merits. Ultimately, we study history not to find the answers, but rather to find the right questions. It remains for thinking men and women to derive thoughtful solutions. That is the real utility of history.

Seemingly dissimilar situations often have much to offer. Because you are looking for questions to apply to an inherently unique case, similarities can often cloud the more critical differences in each situation. For instance, our reading list includes many books on the Vietnam War. Obviously, we have not included these books because you are about to face Maoist guerrillas waging a people's war in Southeast Asia. Instead, these books will provide you with a conceptual understanding of the sort of conflict you are about to wage. Although consensus is difficult to achieve in the study of unconventional wars, scholars are virtually unanimous in their judgment that conventional forces often lose unconventional wars because they lack a conceptual understanding of the sort of war they are fighting.

Because this approach to history does not lend itself toward easy summation or PowerPoint bullets, many find it daunting. For this reason, I have included points of contact to facilitate discussion and understanding of each of the recommended sources. Certainly, they will answer any questions that you might have, but they are eager to do more. Via email or telephone, they can lead discussion groups, propose study questions, and otherwise act as online instructors. Much of our faculty has performed this role through the auspices of

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CompanyCommand.com, and all involved have found this sort of dialogue both rewarding and crucial to a full understanding of a book's importance.

Finally, I'd like suggest a method of putting this reading list to use. To make it more accessible, we limited the list to ten books (although we've thrown in an article and a movie for good measure). It is unrealistic to expect all or most officers in your unit to read all of these books. At the same time, the usefulness of these books increases exponentially when they are read by multiple officers and subsequently *discussed*. Hence, I suggest that at least two officers read any book on this list. Moreover, it is important that officers gain the depth of perspective gained by reading more than a single book. The more books read, the more sophisticated the conceptual framework that emerges (whereas the reading of a single book often results in the derivation of "lessons learned").

It has been our privilege to compile this reading list. Although the effort required to put this list to use will be considerable, the dividends may be invaluable. We are committed to you through this product; please call upon us at any time to facilitate its utility.

Sincerely,



MATTHEW MOTEN

LTC, AR

Chief, Military Division, Department of History

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TAB A: Reading List

TAB B: Points of Contact

## **Middle Eastern Case Studies**

*Battle of Algiers*. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo with Brahim Haggiag and Jean Martin. 120 minutes. 1965.

This movie provides a fictional account of the revolutionary movement in Algeria that incorporates documentary-style footage and even incorporates many of the leaders of the actual revolution. It is renowned for its subtle depiction of the internal dynamics of cell-based revolutionary movements.

Esposito, John L. *Islam and Politics*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998.

*Islam and Politics* provides three critical perspectives to conflict in the Middle East. First is the historical view of Islam as a unifying and expansive force on the Arab peoples. Many of the groups opposed to American influence "yearn" backward for the good old days. Their ideology is focused on how to get there from now. Secondly, Islam has definite and specific political connotations. It has cultivated its own legal systems (the *shariah* [law] and various "schools" of interpretation), social welfare system, and enfranchisement system. Only God is sovereign, and therefore only God may make law. People fall into two categories: those who submit to God's will and are subject to God's law, and those who do not, which by the way includes Muslims who are not aligned with God's will. *Jihad* is therefore required to bring all into submission. Lastly, the proliferation of Islamic groups indicates a dynamic and decentralized movement, with motives, objectives, and tactics that are not necessarily congruent between groups.

Haldane, Aylmer L. *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, 1920*. Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922.

Personal account by the commanding officer of British forces that suppressed a large-scale insurrection against British occupation in 1920. Methods used were innovative, if brutal, causing short term pacification but long-term resentment of British influence.

Nakash, Yitzhak. *The Shi'is of Iraq*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Most noted Western scholar of Iraqi Shi'ites, Nakash is unique in dealing with the Iraqi Shi'i as a distinct group from greater Iranian/Lebanese influences. An essential read for those serving in the South.

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Paret, Peter. *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria: The Analysis of a Political and Military Doctrine*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

The author examines official reports and directives and the large body of writings by French officers who participated in these campaigns. He describes the destructive and the constructive components of counter-revolutionary warfare, stressing the use of psychological tools—re-indoctrination centers, health services, and other techniques—to construct a superior ideological base. After detailing the organization of the French Army's psychological-action units, he analyzes the official case history of an actual operation, Operation Pilote, to demonstrate how the doctrine worked in practice.

### **General Studies of UW, Guerrilla Warfare, & Counterinsurgency**

Cummings, Bruce. *The Origins of the Korean War*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981-90.

*The Origins of the Korean War* (vol. 1, *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes*, and vol. 2, *The Roaring of the Cataract*) details the American occupation experience in post-war Korea. Significantly, US forces arrived in Korea three weeks after the surrender of Japan, which put the Americans on the defensive politically. The Korean people agitated for immediate independence, while the American occupation was distracted with a host of other seemingly equally important issues. The result was a race between the forces of anarchy, dissolution, and never-ending violence; and, an American occupation trying to find its way through a cultural and ideological conundrum. Ultimately, the Americans won, but the result was messy, required a sustained military and economic commitment, and a three year "hot" war.

Herrington, Stuart. *Stalking the Vietcong*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1997.

Stuart A. Herrington's *Stalking the Vietcong* provides a first-hand account of an American intelligence officer's personal struggle with Vietcong shadow government. Assigned as an Operation Phoenix advisor to the Hau Nghia province of South Vietnam in 1971, Herrington worked on debriefing and exploiting Vietcong defectors and NVA prisoners in attempts to neutralize the Vietcong infrastructure. His experiences with the both the Vietcong and the South Vietnamese intelligence service officers he came in contact with provide valuable insights into the challenges the United States military faced during the Vietnam War.

Keats, John. *They Fought Alone*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963.

This is a narrative account of Lt. Col. Wendell Fertig's campaign against the Japanese on Mindanao in the Philippines during WW2. This shows how Fertig puts together an insurgency against the occupation forces, showing important aspects such as

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recruitment, supply, intelligence, movement of insurgents in denied areas, role of the auxiliary, etc. Critical is the psychological connection between insurgent and populace. For example, at one point, Fertig asks the local women to cut up their curtain rods and slowly sand them down into bullet shapes to provide ammunition for the guerillas. This was not needed from a logistics viewpoint, as bullets made in this fashion would be less useful than captured Japanese ammunition, but it played a critical psychological role: it provided a direct connection between the population and the insurgents. Each Filipino woman, spending time each day for months working on a bullet, would have an attachment to the insurgency and feel she was doing her part for the cause. It was a seemingly minor task that created a shared sense of resistance. This type of connection is critical, and must be identified and broken or replaced by the counterinsurgency force.

Linn, Brian M. "Intelligence and Low-Intensity Conflict in the Philippine War, 1899-1902." *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (January 1994): 90-114.

Like Linn's book on the Philippine War, this article emphasizes the paramount importance of local collection and analysis of intelligence in this sort of conflict. Intelligence will (should) flow up more than down, and efforts to homogenize and disseminate intelligences at higher levels of command are often counterproductive.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000.

Linn's book is something of an "instant classic" on counterinsurgency operations. Linn examines the Philippine War as a combination of multiple, smaller regional wars. The U.S. Army achieved success as it recognized the predominance of regional disparities and tailored its efforts to local conditions. The book provides positive examples of decentralized (and therefore effective) operations and intelligence collection, as well as the successful integration of the civil and military components of a pacification campaign.

Race, Jeffrey. *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1972.

Simply put, this book is a must-read to understand guerrilla warfare or insurgencies as a social phenomenon. Implicitly a scathing critique of conventional military thinking, Race's book equips commanders and their staffs with the conceptual framework necessary on conducting *meaningful* IPB. This book also questions many of the ways in which we typically measure "progress" (schools built, areas "secured," etc.) in such wars. If you want to know what you're doing wrong, read this book.

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Truong, Nhu Tang. *Vietcong Memoir*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985.

This is the memoir of a member of the NLF underground in Saigon during the Vietnam War, who then left Vietnam for France after 1975, when the North Vietnamese took over and dismantled the provisional revolutionary government of the south. A good description of the viewpoint of the insurgent, particularly in urban areas. Of particular interest are the strategic thinking of the NLF (e.g. creating the image of a broad-based popular movement, as opposed to purely communist), methods of recruiting, activities of the mole Pham Ngoc Thao (sabotaging the Strategic Hamlet program, "pacifying" a province, thus creating a VC safe haven, coup attempts, etc.) Emphasis is on subversion and propaganda.

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    - (1) *Battle of Algiers*.
    - (2) Haldane, Aylmer L. *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, 1920*.
    - (3) Nakash, Yitzhak. *The Shi'is of Iraq*.
    - (4) Paret, Peter. *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria*.
  
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    - (1) Cummings, Bruce. *The Origins of the Korean War*.
    - (2) Esposito, John L. *Islam and Politics*.
  
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    - (1) Linn, Brian M. "Intelligence and Low-Intensity Conflict in the Philippine War, 1899-1902."
    - (2) Linn, Brian M. *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*.
    - (3) Race, Jeffrey. *War Comes to Long An*.
  
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    - (1) Keats, John. *They Fought Alone*.
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  - c. POC for the following sources.
    - (1) Herrington, *Stalking the Vietcong*.
    - (2) Truong, Nhu Tang. *Vietcong Memoir*.