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There has been a lot of noise made in the past series of years about the rise of counterinsurgency doctrine within the US military, and some great writing on the topic, including Fred Kaplan's new history of the rise of David Petraeus and a recent piece by Adam Curtis, which summarizes this history well (www.bbc.co.uk). My interest in this topic is not only connected to the impact that COIN operations have had on domestic policing, which Kristian Williams wrote about at length in a piece called The Other Side of the COIN: Counterinsurgency and Community Policing (www.interfacejournal.net), but how the failures of COIN, and its ossification in doctrine, have caused a fundamental shift in US strategy into a post-counterinsurgency form of counterterrorism; which predictably is worming its way into domestic policing as well, with increases in grand jury proceedings, entrap-

ment cases, uses of domestic drones and the use of extreme police force against domestic radical movements, creating a situation that many, including myself, feel is significantly more dangerous than anything we saw under Bush. This shift into a more fluid, responsive, dispersed form of military operation is structured around the concept that the US will never allow itself be caught in a situation like Iraq, where their logistical capacity was stretched almost to the breaking point, opting, rather, to wage a constant, global security operation, complete with killer flying death robots, international networks of snitches and intelligence officers, secret prisons and Special Ops raids, that can strike anywhere at any time.

These changes have also generated a series of modifications to the institutional culture of the military itself, as can be seen in the recent Department of Defense directive eliminating gender restrictions on all roles with all branches of the military. This announcement came with a series of other announcements, all part of the same directive, to increase the necessary qualifications to fulfill certain roles and remove a lot of the gender specific fitness requirements attached to certain units within the military, including Special Forces and airborne units. Thus far, commentary on this topic has tended to be of two sorts. The misogynist argument has perpetuated on the right wing, arguing that women are not fit for combat roles; of course ignoring the fallacies of binary gender, the particularities of body structure and the stark reality that many female bodied members of the military have already been thrust into combat as the concept of coherent front lines has broken down. Various liberals have begun to write about how these restrictions either should or should not be lifted, centering around an argument of whether it is a good thing to open up more people for combat roles and how this balances itself against concerns of gender equality. All of these arguments completely miss the point. This move, like the earlier removal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, may be the result of political pressure (although it is pure speculation whether or not

this is the case), but these moves, as was indicated by Panetta, are about increasing force quality, and thus must be understood as a strategic decision. This move to increase force quality, rather than force quantity, can only be understood in the framework of a series of moves that the Pentagon has made over the past decade to make the military smaller, faster and more able to cover ground quickly.

This year begins the often talked about military drawdown. The goal of this process is to enshrine, in the structure of the military itself, something that John Nagl, the author of Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife, came to understand after Operation Desert Storm; the era of the large tank battle on the plains of Europe is over, and the conflicts that the US military is likely to become involved in will be centered around "irregular" forces and quick engagements. The drawdown itself has roots in the moves, around 2003, to structure the military around so-called "modularity". Much like the fragmentation of police forces into zones, policed by specific teams, the goal was to divide the general force into smaller units, each of which has a certain degree of autonomy, and is, therefore, able to be deployed in more places simultaneously. In the absence of the war of frontal assault, or the war of firepower, much like the hypothetical war in Europe during the Cold War, the concept of having to concentrate entire divisions in a certain area became obsolete; the concept of "modularity" separates these divisions into brigade sized forces, more capable of covering more ground as a whole by concentrating less numbers in specific sites.

The drawdown itself calls for a drop in the number of active duty personnel from 570,000 to 490,000 over the next series of years. This has been done for a series of reasons, primary among these has been an odd fusion of counter-insurgency doctrine and the weapons systems developed through the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs initiatives of the 1990s through today. Underpinning this move is a recognition that counter-insurgency operations are long, resource heavy, and require a large force footprint on the ground. The experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have pointed

out a series of problems with the patched together combination of overwhelming force and counter-insurgency. During the invasion of Afghanistan, a relatively small number of Special Operations troops and Intelligence units were able to operate as forward observers, essentially, spotting out Taliban infrastructure, sending the coordinates to a drone that was flying overhead, which sent the coordinates to a base in Saudi Arabia, and finally to a B52 which could drop a satellite guided bomb on the spot. But, after a couple of weeks of this, all of a sudden, there were no targets to hit and ground forces had to be committed in order to actually hold space. As I argued in my last post on this blog, as ground forces are committed, this creates a problem of generating a force footprint, maintaining supply lines and having to maintain the security of transportation lines. In other words, as Galula argues, the military force moves from a mode of interdiction, and hitting specific targets on a map, to having to cover all space simultaneously.

This process of covering space, or policing, was fit under the general umbrella of counter-insurgency, at least since the mid-2000s, but this also creates a problem. As we see in community policing, the police have to exploit local communities for information, build camera networks, patrol streets and eventually raid houses, all of which erodes trust within targeted communities and generates friction. As friction builds the police have to move into a more defensive mode, focusing on protecting themselves, which usually comes with the use of more force. A similar dynamic played itself out during the early phases of the occupation of Mosul by the 101st Airborne, immediately after the invasion and occupation of Iraq began. Initially they were able to pour in money, raided from the Baath regime's reserves, and could find enough collaborators to construct the semblance of normalcy, of course with armed troops occupying the streets. But, after the Coalition Provisional Authority disbanded the military, and threw thousands out of work, demonstrations started, which resulted in Iraqi police shooting demonstrators, which led to counter-attacks against

thin force out means that space can be covered, but only lightly. As conflict accelerates, and police force becomes increasingly concentrated, these zones of indiscernibility become wider, possibility is amplified, the speed of action accelerates, creating crisis in the ability of policing to function more or less coherently; as this capacity to contain conflict is stretched it can reach a point of rupture, a point that is termed insurrection. The move of the military into increasing forms of projection at distance, and lighter force footprints, is an attempt to project globally, but to do so in particular spots and at low concentration. Though this form of armed containment may seem frightening to many, it vastly increases the amount of space that must be covered, thinning out force capacity, and making them rely on more localized assistance, localized intelligence, and localized cooperation in order to function. Just like in demonstration contexts, where the police derive most of their pre-action operational information from our postings on the internet, our announcements for actions, and whatever informants that can be planted; just as our tendency to concentrate numbers dramatically cuts down our effectiveness; the ability to eliminate information visibility, the ability to eliminate coherent target sets, the ability to move with speed across wide areas of space and then melt away, and the ability to operate with even a basic level of secrecy and opacity, will prevent this form of total force projection from functioning coherently. As in May 68, or as during the recent disturbances in Greece, we can see the effectiveness of speed and opacity in action against dispersed forces. As speed increases, and as the terrain of conflict spreads and becomes more complex, the ability of dispersed forces to compensate drops dramatically, leading to either force concentration or logistical rupture, the limiting of the spaces that can be policed, or insurrection.

American troops and so on. As a result the military quickly shifted into a battle posture, closing off blocks to conduct raids in the middle of the night, engaging in firefights and so on. This acceleration of conflict, at the slightest provocation, points to a tension in counter-insurgency; on one hand counter-insurgency is based on isolating and decelerating conflict, but this, on the other hand, can only be accomplished through a deployment of force into space, to police space, generating conflict.

The drawdown creates a situation in which protracted on-the-ground conflicts become a thing of the past, while smaller scale engagements, for less time, become more possible. This is coupled with the growth of JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) and the increasing use of drone strikes, as well as the integration of private security forces, as is mirrored in urban police departments, with the rise of pseudo-police units, SWAT and surveillance. Obama announced the adoption of this policy shift in a document called "Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities of 21st Century Defense", which, along with announcing a general shift of forces from Europe to the Pacific region, and discussing a renewed focus on China and cyber-security, begins to discuss this move into a fluid, post-counterinsurgency military, capable of intervening in ways that are either temporary and leave a relatively small force footprint, or in ways that are targeted at single targets and momentary, through the use of bombing runs, drones and Special Ops operations. This both increases projection and lessens the material footprint on the ground, denying the possibility of counter-attack or attacks on supply and infrastructure.

In the wake of the restructuring of US military force composition this comes to reinforce the discussion that I began with the most recent blog post; the failure of US counter-insurgency has led to a series of changes in the approach to force composition. As we see in the Yemen, where drone strikes have increased dramatically as of late , this move is meant to solidify the base force composition before the primary transition. In Irregular Army, Matt Kennard is

speaking about stop gap measures that were put in place to address the stretching of logistical capacity in the wake of the failure of counter-insurgency, but what is missed in this book, and its horrendous conclusion, that this is something that should be remedied, is that these recruitment measures, and the loosening of qualifications, are temporary measures, and ones that ended up damaging force capacity more than helping. By opening up combat roles, and other military jobs, to anyone willing to sign their lives away, while at the same time lowering the numbers of soldiers needed for operations, the military is attempting to improve force quality, and eliminate the problems caused when they became logistically stretched over the past decade. The shift into a post-counter-insurgency US military, and bleeding into the police, is based on a series of shifts; the solidifying of qualifications for combat roles, the widening of the possible pool of soldiers that can serve combat roles, the specification of combat roles into more highly trained units with less numbers, the ability to move and strike without holding space, the use of private security and the focus on allied forces and the use of surveillance including drones.

This also, however, sets the stage for a profoundly disturbing trend, the manifestation of a state of perpetual war. As the Council on Foreign Relations has been arguing in a series of recent pieces, and as I argued in my last post, there is a danger within this strategy for the US military. As these points of conflict are engaged, either through drone strikes or JSOC operations, conflict is created through the effects of these actions, but the lack of ground forces ensures that that conflict cannot be contained. Though it eliminates localized targets for counter-attack, it also fails to engage in a total policing, as occupation and the deceleration of dynamics of conflict require. Therefore, there is a paradox in this approach, through the new force restructuring and military drawdown are constructed to increase force flexibility and security constancy, it fails to actually engage with the dynamics of conflict, except on a target by target basis. As I argued in the last post, this is important for insurgents and insurrectionists to understand; without a legible command structure, without a legible and constant form, these targets become impossible to identify, making this security at a distance strategy irrelevant. The conflict generated through these operations have been, and will continue to be amplified on the ground through the actions of insurgents/insurrectionists, and this amplification could cause, and is causing in some areas, a fundamental break down in the ability of this security operation to function.

This approach takes COIN's focus on multilayered and responsive operations further, into a post-counterinsurgency strategy. The drawdown centers on this attempt to wage a constant security operation, both through weapons of distance, like drones, but also through the insertion of troops into sites of concentrated conflict, wherever they may arise. The trend toward perpetual war is not something that is an anomaly of this point in history, but rather draws its lineage to the rise of the Enlightenment state. In the rise of the Enlightenment state, with the American revolution, the concept of the state began to project totally, across all time and space, as an expression of some concept of existential totality. In this projection, across the totality of time and space, the state only comes to function to the degree that it can police all space, at all moments. This mirrors an argument Carl Schmitt makes in any number of pieces, the conceptual structure of the state is merely a conceptual content, but the state is, in itself, a profoundly paradoxical institution. For it to function it must move outside of this world of discursive rationality and into agonistic, political, immediate material deployments of force, in order to attempt to frantically construct a unity of time and space in all moments.

This total deployment, however, also generates conflict, effects and causes crisis in the attempt of the state, as policing, to maintain its own coherence, let alone the coherence of space. We can see this in massive police operations, when the police concentrate force there are spaces that become unable to be covered; but to