

Redefinition of the Concept of Low-Intensity Conflict

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To begin with – where the question lies

When security issues are on the agenda today, the word Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) frequently makes its appearance. It is sometimes defined as “a new type of war” which exists between “the Hot War” and “the Cold War”.¹ However, what does it mean by “between the Hot War and the Cold War”? It is far from clear. Although there exists a theory that regards the LIC as a “conflict between a sub-state and a state”² in which the former challenges the current state-centring world order, a group that attempts to overthrow the central government intends to govern the state in place of the present administration, and a group who aims at the independence by separation intends to establish a new state. Then, it is not a challenge to the current state-centring world order but a struggle for power within the existing framework. Furthermore, a conflict between two states can also be considered within a category of the concept of LIC, for instance, State A’s supports to anti-government groups in State B or economic and diplomatic pressure over State B to overthrow the present administration.

In general, LIC appears to be used as a general term for terrorism, guerrillas, racial or religious disputes, etc., but it is an obscure concept that simply covers armed conflicts other than nuclear wars and conventional wars between major powers. Is such an ambiguous concept really effective as an analytical tool of the present-day security? In this article, this author will investigate the essence of phenomena generally called LIC and redefine the concept in order to make it more effective to analysis and policy planning.

1 The conventional concept of Low-Intensity Conflict

A definition of LIC has been established under the US Department of Defense. According to this, LIC is “political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional wars and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the

¹ By Tetsuo Maeda. The Asahi Shimbun: Evening edition 26 Aug., 1998.

² Akira Kato, *Gendai Senso-ron (Modern Wars)*, (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 1993), pp. 18-19, 40-42.

Third World, but contain regional and global security implications”³

In spite of (or, rather, due to) the existence of such official definition, LIC is a very obscure concept and can be interpreted either narrowly or widely.⁴ Analysis of activities carried out in the past as LIC can be categorized into six patterns; foreign internal defense, pro-insurgency, peacetime contingency operations, terrorism counteraction, anti-drug operations, and peace-keeping operations.⁵ This shows that LIC is a concept having a wide range of meaning. For instance, it will be harder to find common elements than differences between pro-insurgency and terrorism counteraction or peace keeping operations.

On the other hand, there is an attempt to proceed with definition itself in negative terms, that is to say, what LIC is not rather than what it is. Obviously it is not central war involving both the home territories and military forces of the superpowers, nuclear or non-nuclear. It is not large-scale conventional war between NATO and (the then) Warsaw Pact forces. It is not limited conventional war on the scale of Korea or Vietnam (1965-75). It is conflict in which exogenous actors have limited objectives, even though those of endogenous participants may be less limited. It is conflict in which the military component may superficially obscure more fundamental socioeconomic-political issues and goals. It is conflict most likely to arise in developing countries. It could involve high risks of escalation, but such risks probably will not be high or obvious at the offset. The “intensity” of conflict could be measured in a variety of ways. The possible variables might be lethality of weapons systems employed, amount of death and destruction, number of people involved, quantity of material resources introduced, length of time “conflict” continues, and public perception.⁶ Notwithstanding, it is not appropriate to investigate the essence of the phenomena by such elimination, because it will expand the scope of applications and will be unable to fix a focal point. It is true that the “intensity” is relative, but that makes the definition more ambiguous as the recognition will vary by each person.

2 Experiences of some countries

For better understanding, we will grasp the experiences of LIC in some

³ Poupade, Mike (ed.), Dictionary of Small Scale Contingencies/Operations Other Than War Terms, http://www.msosa.dmo.mil/ootw_documents/sscdictionary/body_1.htm,00/11/20.

⁴ An expression of the Low-Intensity Conflict is not always used, but words of “low-intensity contingencies” and “low-level conflict” – Weinberger, then Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Defense were used as having the same meanings at times. Klare, Michael T., “The Interventionist Impulse: U.S. Military Doctrine for Low-intensity Warfare,” Klare Michael T. and Kornblugh, Peter (ed.), *Low Intensity Warfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), pp.49-50.

⁵ Klare, “The Interventionist Impulse: U.S. Military Doctrine for Low-intensity Warfare,” pp.53-56.

⁶ Osborn, George K., and Taylor, Jr., William J., “The Employment of Force: Politico-Military Considerations,” Sarkesian Sam C. and Scully, William L. (ed.), *U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981), pp.20-21.

countries.

(1) The United States

Despite a long record of irregular warfare with American natives and local people in the Philippines,⁷ the US Army before the Second World War regarded counter-guerilla operations as a subsidiary branch of warfare. The only US Army counter-guerilla doctrine to appear before 1961, Field manual 31-20, Operations Against Guerrilla Forces (1951), was based on Soviet and Yugoslav partisan activities during the War. The manual was designed for US troops operations alone, and assumed the existence of a US military government or US control of the local political structure-i.e., a typical occupation situation. Wholly lacking was any reference to a protracted revolutionary war scenario or to the mission of training or supporting local forces. The Pentagon had a rudimentary counter-guerrilla doctrine (a doctrine for armed combat against guerrilla forces) but not a comprehensive counterinsurgency doctrine (politico-military strategy for overcoming an ideologically driven revolutionary struggle).⁸

In 1962, National Security Action Memorandum No.124 (NSAM-124) was promulgated. This initiated a government-wide counterinsurgency effort, and stipulates not only military but also political, economic and social response to rebellions. Though a term of the LIC was not yet in use, but it can be said that this laid a foundation. The United States invited military personnel of the so-called third world countries and trained them for contribution to the public welfare as part of its policy to put emphasis on politics. However, this resulted in promoting the excessive intervention into the government by the military authorities, and later gave rise to a large scale of human rights violation and suppression in respective countries.⁹

As seen from the above, President Kennedy placed emphasis on unconventional warfare. But those personnel in charge seemed to be unable to change their way of thinking and the emphasis in counter-insurgency doctrine and training was almost exclusively military aspects of unconventional warfare. However, the centre of gravity of revolution and counter-revolution, which is the most difficult of LIC, was (and is) the political-social milieu of the indigenous system. The purpose of revolution is to overthrow the existing system by unconventional war combined with political mobilization, and guerrilla warfare is only an adjunct part of revolution. However, this was hardly understood in the United States.¹⁰ In other words,

⁷ In this article, historical value judgement will not be referred to.

⁸ Maechling, Jr., Charles, "Counterinsurgency: the First Ordeal by Fire," Klare and Kornblugh, (ed.), *Low Intensity Warfare*, p.26.

⁹ Maechling, Jr., Charles, "Counterinsurgency: the First Ordeal by Fire," pp.27-31.

¹⁰ Sarkesian, Sam C., "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: The Formative Period," Charters, David and Tugwell, Maurice (ed.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict –A Comparative Analysis* (London: Brassey's, 1989), p.38.

preoccupied with subduing the guerrillas, an effort to change the milieu where guerrillas are active was overlooked.

A typical example of the intervention to rebellions by communist guerrillas is the Vietnam War. There were two mistakes. One is the support to the local government. The South Vietnam Government was so incompetent that they could not carry out the social reform, and their ground was weak. Another one is that they fought against guerrillas with weapons and the strategy for regular warfare. They physically gave considerable blows to the communists, but caused death of many civilians, occurrence of refugees, and destruction of regional economy and livelihood of residents, while public opinion in the United State was estranged. Both politically became heavy disadvantage. In addition, Viet Cong had a “sanctuary” in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and South Vietnam respectively where they can prepare for recovery and receive logistic supplies.¹¹ The United States military forces could not defeat communist guerrillas under such situations as mentioned above, and they were drawn into the quicksand and finally forced to withdraw from the war, while Vietnam was finally unified into the communist government by the North Vietnam Regular Army.

Examining the doctrines in the age after the Vietnam War, it seems that they are getting out of a partisan policy of guerrilla counteractions. First of all, it should be provided with wider ability in both quality and quantity. For instance, it should have ability to carry out a large scale of operations at a certain place to support the current administrations, but dispatch advisers to overthrow the current government and simultaneously to maintain the peacekeeping activities at another place. Secondly, in case of committing the regular forces, they should win a victory in a short period, taking advantage of the overwhelming military forces. Gradual commitment will cause the situations drawn into the quicksand and lose domestic supports. In this connection, thirdly, long lasting counter measures to public opinions are essential for two reasons. Firstly, it is necessary to reflect that even conflicts in the so-called third nations are important to the interests of the United States, and secondly to ask for understanding and supports to a policy that is not necessarily acceptable to democratic sense of values, for instance, death of civilians or taking part in the authoritarian regime.¹²

In the intervention to the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua by the Regan Administration, instead of direct military intervention, indirect approaches, such as propaganda, diplomatic and economic means or supports to the anti-government groups, were adopted to put pressure on the Sandinista Government.¹³ It can be said

¹¹ Maechling, Jr., Charles, “Counterinsurgency: the First Ordeal by Fire,” pp.40-46.

¹² Klare, “The Interventionist Impulse: U.S. Military Doctrine for Low-intensity Warfare,” pp.74-79. Though not the Low-Intensity Conflict, this doctrine was applied in the Gulf War.

¹³ Cultural Symbol Study Room, Regional Science Dept. Literature Faculty, University of Kumamoto. Text Engine Project (TEP), Low-Intensity Conflict: Counter Guerrilla Strategy,

that positioning the LIC not merely as the counter-guerrilla strategy but as the political struggle at a larger scale.

(2) France

It is told that there will be no other country than France except the super powers that was engaged in the restricted LIC.¹⁴ In France, this restricted LIC is defined as 'peripheral wars as opposed to European 'central' wars or external or overseas intervention.¹⁵ Concretely speaking, the peripheral war includes conflicts in Africa, the former French colonies or territories in the Southern Pacific Sea.

In France, there is no French word falling under direct translation of LIC, and they place wars in the former French colonies or territories under a conception of LIC. If any, the expression of "the Algeria War (guerre algerienne)" is used as a equivalent word to LIC.¹⁶ Generally in this type of wars, the lightly armed infantry is employed, but there are some cases where missiles and fighter planes were used.¹⁷

(3) Canada

Actual experiences of the Canadian military forces in a period from the Korean War till the Gulf War (exclusive) was peacekeeping operations and maintenance of internal order, and has enough experiences in these fields. In a series of terrorism caused by the Quebec Liberation Front, that is, "October Crisis" in 1970, Canadian Army was called in and placed under the command of the director of Quebec Provincial Police . The army established the joint operational headquarters at the office of Quebec Provincial Police and unit and troops were directed by the police through respective commander. In fact, the armed forces carried out no arrests on their own. That task was left to police. Most of troops were deployed on static guard duties. During the entire period of active duty from October 15th till January 4th of the following year, there were ten cases of firing by military forces, all being warning shots. Like this case, the Canadian Forces in the "October Crisis" had been given a clear and restricted assignment. They were dispatched in a large scale for patrolling of the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976, as well.¹⁸

<http://www.let.kumamoto-u.ac.jp/cs/cu/tep019.html>, 01/01/22

¹⁴ Martin, Michel L., "From Algiers to N'Djamena: France's Adaptation to Low-Intensity Wars, 1830-1987," Charters and Tugwell (ed.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict –A Comparative Analysis*, p.77.

¹⁵ Martin, Michel L., "From Algiers to N'Djamena: France's Adaptation to Low-Intensity Wars, 1830-1987," p.129.

¹⁶ Martin, Michel L., "From Algiers to N'Djamena: France's Adaptation to Low-Intensity Wars, 1830-1987," p.81.

¹⁷ Martin, Michel L., "From Algiers to N'Djamena: France's Adaptation to Low-Intensity Wars, 1830-1987," pp.100-01.

¹⁸ Charters, David A. and Leblanc, James, "Peace-keeping and Internal Security: The Canadian Army in Low-Intensity Operations," Charters and Tugwell (ed.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict –A Comparative*

Canada is positively participating in the UN Peace Keeping Operations. Trainings for the Peace Keeping Operations includes controls of the crowd, use of policeman' s clubs and shields, guards for VIPs, vehicles, and buildings, road blockades, searches, patrolling, first aids and sanitary controls. Such trainings are useful for public order, too.¹⁹ Therefore, it is the convenient overlapping for the Canadian military forces, of which main assignments are PKO activities and domestic public order. They had very dangerous experiences in the conflict in former Yugoslavia, though they were linked to PKO activities.

(4) The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom carried out about 100 operational commitments after the Second World War, including the Korean War, the Suez Crisis, the Falklands Conflict, the Gulf War and air campaign against Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding, its activities are mainly low-intensity operations such as internal security duties, PKOs, peace recovery activities, or counter-insurgency campaigns.²⁰

The British experienced LIC in their colonies. In order to obtain obedience and cooperation from the native people, military suppression alone could have been counter-productive, and conciliatory measures were taken, even though they were of deceptive nature.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom had to alter its counter-insurgency strategy after the Second World War. That is because, first of all the United Kingdom was no longer regarded as a legitimate suzerain in the colonies, secondly clandestine activities became popular in addition to armed uprising. However, no change of ideas was made, and the maximum military power was exerted without any political consideration. Campaigns for independence in India were basically non-violent type, but the United Kingdom still stuck to suppression by the military power after the War and brought officers and soldiers of the Indian National Army to justice for treason who deployed struggles for independence in cooperation with Japan during the War. This ignored the Indian nationalism and induced vigorous protest movements by exertion of power or general walkout simultaneously throughout India. Finally, the United Kingdom became unable to control the situations by its own power, and India won victory for independence in 1947. In Palestine, underground activist groups who had been operational before the War aiming at the construction of a Jewish state carried out a large scale of terrorism that induced military suppression soon after the War. The United Kingdom was completely trapped by this strategy and compelled to

Analysis., p.151-55.

¹⁹ Charters, David A. and Leblanc, James, "Peace-keeping and Internal Security: The Canadian Army in Low-Intensity Operations," p.159.

²⁰ Charters, David A., "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," Charters and Tugwell (ed.), *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict –A Comparative Analysis*, p.171.

lower its own standing in Palestine. The British reign of Palestine terminated in 1948 and foundation of the state of Israel was declared.²¹ In cases of India and Palestine, the U.K. could not maintain its colonies but also had to make dishonorable withdrawal, different from a case of Malaya as described below.

It was through the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) that the United Kingdom understood the essence of LIC. After a promise for independence, they succeeded in suppression by isolating Chinese Communist guerrillas from the general public. By the middle of 1950s, those Communist guerrillas had lost power and Malaya became independent in 1957. The British doctrine of the LIC that experienced the Malayan Emergency gradually changed to the one that places importance on political and psychological factors.

However, Northern Ireland had serious difficulties. Though the Irish problem has a long history, it was in the latter half of 1960s that the still lasting conflict was intensified. In the beginning, activities of the British army were peacekeeping and welcomed by Catholics who were scared by violence of majority Protestants and terrorism was not anticipated. But terrorist incidents by Catholics occurred, though scattered, and the British Army could not effectively and selectively cope with terrorism because information from the local police was lacking, thus resulting in excessive suppression ignoring the human rights. This played right into hands of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) comprising Catholic radicals.²² PIRA deployed propagandas that the British Army is a symbol for those who illegally rule Ireland and continued fierce terrorism. The Northern Ireland problem developed to a conflict over thirty years and its solution was carried over to the then Prime Minister Major's initiative for political negotiations, after his succession of administration by the former Prime Minister Thatcher who obstinately refused negotiation.

3 The characteristics of Low-Intensity Conflict

(1) Common elements of the LIC

LIC varies in accordance with duration, parties concerned, culture, topography, meteorology, political milieu, operational environment, etc. However, it has common characteristics that can be distinguishable from regular wars.

Firstly, as the most important point, politics should control thoughts and actions of the armed forces including soldiers at the front line. In regular wars, political considerations are entrusted to the highest level of politicians or military officers, and troops can concentrate themselves on defeating the enemy. Under the

²¹ Charters, David A., "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," p.188-91.

²² Charters, David A., "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," p.192-94.

“high-intensity” situations, a distinction between politics and military affairs is clear-cut. At the operational level, soldiers are free to act in accordance with military priorities and relevant procedures.²³ In LIC, however, even a small scale of activities at the restricted area can give strong political influences and, therefore, the individual soldier should be made aware of the political nature of his or her actions and the consequences of ill-advised or excessive application of force. Furthermore, a close if not always comfortable working relationship with the civil power and political limits in the use of force (the weapons that could be used and the circumstances in which their use would be considered appropriate) are necessary. Operations take on a policing character, wherein the capture of individuals is more important than killing them. Political and legal constraints often leave the initiative in the hands of the opposition, who could strike at will, while armed forces have to wait until the “crime” is committed before being permitted to act. This and the fact that the final outcome of any conflict is determined by political and other intangible factors, and not by military action, produce frustration for soldiers and a certain degree of civil-military friction.²⁴

Secondly, a characteristic of LIC is implicit in the concept itself, low-intensity. The number of personnel engaged in operation and victims at any one time is small, and the extent of weapons and the scale of the operation have restrictions. It is the infantry’s activities.²⁵ This is a reason why the operation is called merely police activities. However, if the conflict continues for a long time, the number of military personnel to be thrown in and the number of victims are likely to become large in total.

Thirdly, opponents’ operations are covert. Guerrillas, terrorists or militiamen are unseen among general public and difficult to identify. Therefore, collection of necessary intelligence and cooperation with the police are essential when the army carries out operations, though not easy.²⁶ Needless to say, there must be good relationship, or, at least, not unfriendly relationship with the police, army and local people are required.

The fourth characteristic is the importance of psychological factors. Physically inferior rebel groups are extremely disadvantageous, unless they have an image that they are powerful and justifiable.²⁷ On the other hand, an image that the authorities

²³ Tugwell, Maurice, “Adapt or Perish: The Forms of Evolution in Warfare,” Charters and Tugwell (ed.) *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict - A Comparative Analysis*, p.8.

²⁴ Charters, David A., “From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations,” pp.171-72.

²⁵ Charters, David A., “From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations,” pp.172-73.

²⁶ Charters, David A., “From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations,” p.173.

²⁷ Charters, David A., “From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations,” p.174.

are cruel and estranged from the will of the people is disadvantageous to them. They should act not to produce such images, and otherwise such images will be restrictions on their activities. However, putting psychological wars aside, democratic countries deny themselves, unless they execute countermeasures and activities reflecting democratic values. There are vectors of wars with weapons and wars of ideologies²⁸, those challenging the wars of ideologies can choose the scale of battles to supplement their quantitative inferiority and they do not follow the social rules to take the reins of government with non-violent means. The army coping with such a threat should act without utilizing merits of the superior military power.²⁹

The fifth point is the nature of tactics. The rebel side avoids head-on collisions and takes up an irregular tactics. These are guerrilla attacks, ambushes, assassinations, demolitions, kidnapping, hostages, riots, etc. The authorities should be provided with measures that can respond to such tactics, but the persuasion of general residents is more important than physical and quantitative superiority. Different from the regular war, since a trend of these types of struggle is not determined by a single time of decisive battle and the rebellion side often continues the struggle for a long period, patience is required to the authorities.³⁰ On the other hand, the rebellion side does not need to physically suppress the authorities, but they have only to continue the struggle until the authorities are forced to have negotiations due to exhaustion.³¹

If quoting basic principles for carrying out LIC, taking the above-mentioned characteristics into account, the first priority is given to establishment of clear political object. Especially, with this object, it will be made clear how the army must be employed and what the army has to do. In case the political object is not made clear or it is not acceptable to the local situations, even though the object is clearly described, a total activities including the army's will be losing principles. However, in fact, appropriate political object is not established in many cases. The second basic principle is for the army to keep close relationship with the civilian authorities, the police and civilians, and the third one is to obtain confidence and supports of the residents. These will protect general residents and isolate the rebellion side.³²

(2) LIC and operations other than wars

The Center for Low Intensity Conflict (CLIC) organized by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Forces in March 1986 was closed in June 1996. It is explained that analysis and planning of Military Operations Other Than Wars (MOOTW) or Operations

²⁸ Tugwell, "Adapt or Perish: The Forms of Evolution in Warfare," p.9.

²⁹ Tugwell, "Adapt or Perish: The Forms of Evolution in Warfare," p.13.

³⁰ Charters, David A., "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," p.174-75.

³¹ Smith, M.L.R., *Fighting for Ireland?* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.36.

³² Charters, David A., "From Palestine to Northern Ireland: British Adaptation to Low-Intensity Operations," p.194-95.

Other Than Wars (OOTW) have come to be made by the Army and the Air Forces separately.³³ What relationship do LIC and MOOTW have to each other?

OOTW includes supporting activities in the peacetime support operations, counter-insurgency and limited intervention. Though the level of intensity of OOTW are various, from rescue activities in disasters to military interventions, not inclusive of the declared wars,³⁴ but overlaps with cases construed as LIC. However, OOTW simply means military activities, and LIC means mainly political engagement rather than just including political tactics. Therefore, the former is to be carried out by the military force (of course, under the strict civilian control), while the latter is to be carried out by the plural numbers of organizations, and it is even doubtful that the military force is to take the leadership. It can be said that the military sector of LIC is OOTW.

Whether it is called a military matter or other operations of the LIC, a problem that thrusts the military forces is more difficult to harmonize with the military culture, organizational structure and duty as a battling group than an increase of the number of cases. How should they trade off preparedness for activities that are not originally the military duty and preparedness for wars? Which kind of troops will be appropriate for the assigned duties? Should the number of military personnel and resources for wars be cut down for other activities than military activities? How time and place for training should be shared? ³⁵

Since the kinds of OOTW are diversified, it is improper to assign specific troops to the military activities in the Low-Intensity Conflict or all of other activities than wars. Therefore, allocation of a considerable volume of personnel, resources and time will be necessary, if this matter is sincerely studied.

4 Reconstruction of the concept

(1) Confusions related to the Low-Intensity Conflict

Why was the concept called LIC created? Until the beginning of 1970s there had been no necessity of the term including various phenomena. However, it is told that a new term called LIC is supposed to become appropriate since threat of terrorism was recognized. ³⁶ That is, the LIC was designed as a wide range of strategy to be substituted with the traditional counter-guerrilla, and was not intended to directly (military intervention) but indirectly (by economic compression,

³³ Federation of American Scientists News, The Center for Low Intensity Conflict closes after 10 years, http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996/n19960626_960615.html, 00/11/21

³⁴ Wheeler, J.R., Is the Operational Art Applicable to Operations Other Than War, Information Rescue Centre, Canadian Force College, <http://www.cfsc.dnd.ca/irc/nh/nh9798/0084.html>, 00/11/17

³⁵ RAND Corporation, From Sideshow to Center Stage: Military Operations Other Than War, <http://www.rand.org./publications/RRR/RRR.fall97.QDR/sideshow.html>, 00/11/20

³⁶ Paschall, Rod, *LIC 2010*, p.97.

propagandas, diplomatic isolation, etc.) offer a method of suppressing the targeted areas.³⁷ It should be appreciated that the new concept seeks for new counter-insurgency in addition to direct military actions. In this meaning, creation of a new concept was significant but too wide in range, because it came to be construed as a term to indicate overall military activities other than regular wars.

For instance, confusions arose by accommodating counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism in the same category. Theoretically, guerrillas, partisans and rebels are prescribed by the International Law (that is, carrying weapons openly, being identifiable from a distance, respecting the International Law, or taking actions under the commander), being subject to obligations by the Law of Wars, simultaneously being the legally approved fighting personnel and qualified to receive the prescribed treatments as prisoners of war, if caught. Being able to be a main constituent under the International Law, and not being a criminal suspect. On the other hand, terrorists conduct illegal activities, (carrying hidden weapons, sneaking in the crowd, or taking of hostage), being treated as an ordinary criminal. In other words, guerrillas engage battles and attempt to physically obtain something, while terrorists aim at being recognized as right political powers usually by drawing attention from the society by activities.³⁸ As a matter of course, response should be different.

Furthermore, there are some points that are widely misunderstood in connection with LIC. The first one is confusion of the special operations themselves and the special forces-type missions, and the second one is a way of thinking that LIC is a part of the conventional operation.³⁹ The special operations are direct use of armed force, and the special forces-type missions are indirect activities such as maneuvering to local people and propagandas. In view of characteristics of LIC the latter one or the special forces-type missions are more important. As already mentioned in this article, LIC is a political conflict and different from the conventional operations.

Relationship between the special operation forces and the LIC is also confused. What the special operation forces can do in a field of counter-insurgency is limited but it is apt to be taken as if the special operation forces were an agency in charge. Counter-insurgency include resident control, land reform, intelligence, propagation of information, training of local military personnel, and political activities that make appeals to residents by the rebel group less attractive and are told to be able to classify to about 60. Among those, for instance, even the U.S. special operation forces (they are told to be assigned with the largest number of duties of the special operation

³⁷ Cultural Symbol Study Room, Regional Science Dept. Literature Faculty, The University of Kumamoto. Text Engine Project (TEP), Low-Intensity Conflict: Counter Guerrilla Strategy, <http://www.let.kumamoto-u.ac.jp/cs/cu/tep019.html>, 01/01/22

³⁸ Paschall, Rod, *LIC 2010*, p.9.

³⁹ Sarkesian, Sam C., "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: The Formative Period," p.44.

forces in the world.) can afford to accomplish only eight to ten duties. ⁴⁰ In other words, cooperation with other agencies is essential.

LIC is a battle of a revolutionary force and a conservative power in a wide meaning (regardless of overthrowing the administration or separation/independence). The revolution in any type is more intensive than guerrilla wars or rebellions, and is a total war against the present political systems at the front of political and social environment. In revolutions, public mobilization, psychological wars, propagandas and terrorism are main battling means and armed struggles are important but merely collateral.⁴¹

(2) Misunderstanding of “Low-intensity”

Essence of LIC is apt to be misunderstood due to the word “Low-Intensity”. Only for a reason that the weapons used were limited chiefly to small firearms till now, it was construed as “low-intensity”. The reasons why weapons to be used were limited to small firearms are supposed to be two. Firstly, rebellion groups could obtain nothing but small firearms. Secondly, the central government is superior in military power in general, but the rebellion groups employ firearms not to let the government use far more superior military power. If highly powerful weapons are used, ordinary citizens are likely to be involved. Overreactions by the government may direct the public sympathy to rebellion groups and are likely to draw criticisms by the public and the international society towards the government.

However, the essence of this phenomenon is not the physical intensity of the conflict but the specific gravity of political and social factors. We should not lose sight of the essence of a phenomenon misled by the “low intensity”. We must pay attention to the “specific gravity of a political factor” which has two meanings. One is that actions of war are subject to the political objective, as expressed by Clausewitz’ so famous saying, “Wars are extension of politics.” ⁴² This is true with wars in general. However, in the LIC, roles of politics are so great that even the military superiority is likely to be crossed off depending on political situations.

In other words, the essence of the LIC is battles for supports by the local people, and in the long run are battles of who has legitimacy. Different from the conventional wars, it is not right that the military superiority decides a winner or a loser. Physical intensity is not essence of a phenomenon, and the future of a conflict will be influenced by political factors and legitimacy.

This question of the legitimacy is important to obtain the domestic popular support even in case of interventions to other countries. LIC strategy during the Cold

⁴⁰ Paschall, Rod, *LIC 2010* (London: Brassey’s, 1990), p.9.

⁴¹ Sarkesian, Sam C., “The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: The Formative Period,” p.45.

⁴² Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege* (19 Aufl.) (Bonn: Dummler, 1980), s.210.

War where even the authoritarian suppressing system was supported, just because it is anti-communistic are different from that in the post-Cold War where human rights and democratization must be taken into account. Aspiration for autonomy or independence by minority has substituted communism and become one of causes of today's conflicts. Whether the intervention to ethnic conflicts is advantageous or not, and what is the criteria for such a decision, should be clarified to convince the public.

Democratic countries must be careful not to be contradictory to their fundamental values. The retired US Lt. Colonel Sarkesian who has war experiences in the Korean War and the Vietnam War said that the LIC does not accept democratic values and tactics but any means such as kidnapping, torture and assassination of rebels.⁴³ However, such a policy will drive our own democracy and moral into dangers.⁴⁴ If such a policy is known to the public, the government will lose their legitimacy and authority, and is finally apt to result in a defeat.

In order to secure legitimacy, it is effective to ask for an approval by the United Nation Security Council. It may facilitate to obtain supports by the public opinion in the intervening country or the international public opinion, but this does not mean that supports by local residents were obtained or this does not necessarily lead the favourable solution. For example, dispatch of peacekeeping forces or multinational forces to Somalia (1992 to 1995) was carried out by the resolution of the United Nation Security Council, and demonstrated effects to reduce the number of residents who starved to death. However, Somali antipathy toward foreign troops was deep-rooted and their opposition escalated to occurrence of the dead and wounded. Circumstances being as such, UN activities terminated without achieving their duties of disarmament of rebels or political solution.⁴⁵

(3) The LIC in the future

Both suppression of communist guerrillas and supports to the anti-communist guerrillas are mementos of the Cold War. In the 21st century, peacekeeping operations or peace enforcement will become the major activities of the LIC. These activities would be combined as stabilization operations. For instance, in East Timor, peace enforcement was smoothly transferred to peacekeeping operations by the United Nations (1998). However, it should not be forgotten that the peace enforcement aims at termination of hostilities by means of military power, while peacekeeping

⁴³ Sarkesian, Sam C., "Low-Intensity Conflict: Concepts, Principles, and Policy Guidelines," *Air University Review* Vol.26, No.2 (1985), pp.7,11, cited in Klare, Michael T. and Kornblugh, Peter, "The New Interventionism: Low-Intensity Warfare in the 1980s and Beyond," Klare. and Kornblugh (ed.), *Low Intensity Warfare*, p.15.

⁴⁴ Klare and Kornblugh, "The New Interventionism: Low-Intensity Warfare in the 1980s and Beyond," p.19.

⁴⁵ In this respect, refer to "Somalia ni Taisuru Jinndoutekikainyuu no Gouhousei to Jikkousei (Legality and Efficiency of Humanitarian Intervention to Somalia)," by Misako Takizawa. *Kokusai-mondai (International Affairs)*, Apr. 2001 issue. No. 493, p.48-62.

operations are premised on a ceasefire agreement. Both are different in doctrine, armament and legal basis. ⁴⁶

The world should prepare for resolution of ethnic disputes or efforts for relaxation of it. Though intervention in all disputes is technically impossible, selective involvement must be considered in case where unstable situations caused by a certain conflict are greatly damaging to other nations. A desirable policy is to prevent actualization of armed disputes and groping of the political solution. There are various methods to realize this, for instance, promoting negotiation between the parties of the dispute, aids and guidance of economic and social reforms, or pressures by economic means. The use of military power should not be excluded but should be the last resort.

The LIC Strategies are being compounded, just like peacekeeping operations have been compounded by including not only cease-fire monitoring, but also election monitoring, civilian police duties and construction of the social infrastructure, etc. ⁴⁷ In other words, it includes not only military duties but also joint works with civilians on the site like peacekeeping operations, such as arbitrations between two mutually opposing groups, economic and social undertakings. As the portion occupied with political activities is large, there are many factors overlapping with preventive diplomacy. With expansion of civilian activities, guard of civilians has become an important mission.

(4) Redefinition of the concept and future problems

To improve the US official definition, recognize importance of political factors in the LIC and stress the essence of the concept, the following modifications are proposed. Revise “political-military confrontation” to “political confrontation”, “competing principles and ideologies” to “competing principles, values, ideologies, ethnicity, and religions”, and delete “below conventional war” and “Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force”. The intensity of military activities should not be made as the criteria. “Public welfare and judicial means” cannot be ignored. “The third world” is an improper term nowadays. That is to say, the LIC is “a political dispute other than peaceful competition and often develops to a prolonged struggle concerning the competing principles, values, ideologies, races, and religions. It is carried out comprehensively in combination with politics, economy, welfare, intelligence, justice and military means. Generally, it often occurs or originates in the developing countries but is closely related with the regional and global security.”

⁴⁶ Boutros-Ghali, B., *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* (United Nations, 1995), para.33-36.

⁴⁷ Kasai Shigeru, “Kouren to Sekaiheiwa no Iji (The U.N. and Maintenance of World Peace),” *Kokusai-mondai (International Affairs)*, Nov. 1995, No. 428, P.28.

It is important to recognize that the essence of LIC is the political conflict. It is, so to speak, the “total war” which is carried out in combination with politics, economy, welfare, intelligence, justice and military means. The traditional total war is a war that mobilizes national resources totally for military purpose. However, the meaning that LIC is a “total war” is not to subordinate other factors to military affairs but a war to seek for solution by every available means. A duty related to military affairs is one of various policies and the roles vary depending on each case.

A military sector of the LIC consists of the following four categories; supports to legal and civilian authorities (counter-terrorism and –drug trafficking and disaster rescue), peacekeeping operations, guerrilla wars (including suppression and agitations), and restricted conventional military activities (air raids and missile attacks). This is not different from the conventional concept. However, it must be remembered that there is no activity called LIC itself. It is just like a case that there is a classification of the marsupials, but there is no individual organism called marsupial and it can be a kangaroo or a koala. Some conflicts can be classified to LIC, but each activity can be peacekeeping operation, supports to civilian activity or else. Even if there were no individual being called marsupial, animals belonging to the marsupial have common characteristics. Likewise, what is called LIC in entirety has common characteristics, as explanatory in the preceding chapter.

Since LIC has such wide meaning, respective duties must be subdivided into precise segments. Therefore, as already mentioned, there can exist no troop specialized in the LIC. For instance, certain troops are specialized in urban warfare, some other troops are specialized in mountain fighting, and some other troops are specialized in counteractions in special disasters. In some occasions, troops are dispatched for transportation or other general disaster relief, though these duties are within categories falling under LIC, whenever deemed necessary.

What must be emphasized is that the “low intensity” does not mean that the decision is entrusted to the spot and that political decision is not required. The low-intensity operations are different from LIC. Political decisions should be made deliberately enough from the political centre to the front line. In the LIC, physical damages are smaller compared to the conventional wars and the conflict rarely relates to the national survival. But politics, attitudes of the people and diplomacy after the conflict are likely to give serious influences. That is LIC.

However, it cannot be denied that the cases called LIC are possible to cause serious physical damages like in the case of terrorism due to development of weapons technology including mass destructive weapons and concentration of the social infrastructure. The expression of “low-Intensity” may become no longer appropriate. It can be well thought that the LIC could escalate (to the conventional war) as a result of mutually losing controls. If so, the influences cannot be local. Political solution of conflicts will become more and more important and the weight of politics in LIC is obvious.

Supplements

The recent US forces manual raises concrete principles for LIC operations.⁴⁸ It should be noted that those principles do not attach undue importance to military matters.

Indirect, rather than direct, applications of military power are the most appropriate and cost-effective. For example, assistance in the form of training or equipment;

The threat to the United States in LIC is the exploitation by groups opposed to US goals;

Technological advances have created an environment favourable to LIC. Established societies have become more vulnerable because technology has made advanced weapons available to insurgent or terrorist groups;

Legitimacy is the central concern of all parties directly involved in a conflict;

LICs rarely have a clear beginning or end marked by decisive actions culminating in victory;

Peacetime contingency operations include such diverse actions as disaster relief, counter-drug operations or land, sea and air strikes. Peacetime contingency operations may require the existence of restraint and the selective use of force or concentrated violent actions;

A deep understanding of host nation culture is indispensable;

The military planner must synchronize use of the military instrument with agencies employing the other instruments of national power;

The military planner may have to depend more on persuasion and cooperation than on the direct exercise of authority;

LIC, more than war, will often present the United States and its armed forces with difficult ethical and moral challenges. LIC may pose a threat to US interests, but the threat to national survival may be neither imminent nor obvious. The US response to this threat must be consistent with US and international law and US national values;

Not just simply capturing ground or destroying the enemy, military leaders must exercise a constructive influence to achieve larger political and psychological objectives;

Rules of engagement and legal restrictions on the use of force must be agreed upon and clearly stated before commitment of the force;

In order to accomplish their larger objectives in LIC, military leaders must consider the effect of all actions on public opinion;

⁴⁸ FM (Field Manual) 100-20 Chapter 1 Fundamental Of Low intensity Conflict, http://earthops.org/sovereign/low_intensity/100-20.1.html, 00/11/22

The military leaders must ensure his or her troops understand that a tactically successful operation can also be strategically counterproductive because of the way in which they executed it and how the people perceived its execution;

The military leader must recognize the moral dilemma pose to his or her troops by the lack of clear distinction between enemy combatants and noncombatants. He or she must convey to his or her subordinates a clear understanding of who the enemy is and, equally important, who he or she is not;

In the country teams and other interagency and international organizations, military leader's voice is only one among several.