

Chairman's Summary

Irregular Warfare in Historical Perspectives

Junichiro Shoji

The subject of this year's International Forum on War History is "Irregular Warfare in Historical Perspectives." Since the "9.11 Attacks on the United States" that occurred in 2001, the problems over the al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and "Islamic State (IS)," the Russian way of war called "hybrid warfare" and waged in Ukraine,¹ and various terrorist acts and insurgencies, have attracted the attention of the entire world.

There, not the warfare between sovereign states in the past, but non-state organizations have become involved in warfare in addition to states, and the diversification of the actors of war is remarkable. Besides, as regarding the way of war, some states with prominent military technology such as the United States, are using asymmetrical warfare means with advanced technologies including unmanned reconnaissance planes (drones), laser weapons, stealth weapons, robots, etc. against the classical and traditional battles.

Meanwhile, in the battle between states, it spreads beyond the conventional clash of direct hard power to the fields of soft power such as cyberspace, propaganda, etc. so the boundaries of warfare are becoming ambiguous.

Therefore, in this Forum we took into multi-layered considerations of "irregular warfare" from the theoretical and historical viewpoints. Through these considerations we aimed to deepen our insight into the future perspective of wars and conflicts, as well as the response that Japan should make in the future, and the defense capacity it should sustain.

In the first place, we need to minimize the confusion of concepts that resulted from the use of abuse of many terms such as "irregular warfare," "unconventional warfare," "asymmetric warfare," "hybrid warfare," "low-intensity conflict," etc. so we will try to sort out their respective meanings. Secondly, we believe that comparative studies can be achieved by historically analyzing the cases of such wars/conflicts on a worldwide scale.²

An overview of this year's Forum is as follows.

The Forum commenced with a keynote address by Professor Akira Kato entitled "LICs Revisited: From the Perspective of International Order."³ At the beginning of the address,

¹ Kenro Nagoshi, "Russia Ryu no Senso Hoho: 'Hybrid Senso'" [Russian Way of War: Hybrid Warfare], *Atarashii Senso towa Nanika? : Hoho to Senryaku [What is the "New Warfare"? Methods and Strategies]*, edited by Takashi Kawakami, Minerva Shobo, 2016.

² As literatures for the conceptual definition of "irregular warfare," refer to Naofumi Miyazaki, "Teikyodo Funso" [Low-Intensity Conflict], *Anzen Hoshō Gaku Nyumon: Shin Pan [Introduction to Security: New Edition]*, edited by the National Defense Academy Security Studies Group, Akishobo, 2001; Yuichiro Nagao, "Hitsujosen: Kokka to Buryoku Funso no Shiten kara" [Unconventional Warfare: from the Perspective of Armed Conflict with States], *Senso no Honshitsu to Gunjiryoku no Shosho [The Nature of Warfare and Aspects of Military Power]*, edited by Tomoyuki Ishizu, Sairyusha, 2004; Yoshio Katayama, "Teikyodo Funso Gainen no Saikochiku" [Redefinition of the Concept of Low-Intensity Conflict], Boei Kenkyujo Kiyō [NIDS Journal of Defense and Security], Vol. 4, No. 1 (August 2001), etc.

³ Professor Kato had already published a work with the title *Gendai Senso Ron – Posuto Modan no Funso LIC [The Theory of Modern Warfare – Post-Modern Low-Intensity Conflict]*, (Chuko Shinsho) in 1993.

Professor Kato revisited irregular warfare from the perspective of the formation and destruction of the Western international order established in 1648 (Westphalian system) and focused on historical transformations in low-intensity conflict (LIC), a general term for irregular warfare, due to the effect of the birth of modern sovereign nation states and the globalization of the modern world system. Then he pointed out that the causes of LIC are confrontations in the principles of the formation of world order.

Professor Kato stated that the characteristics of modern sovereign nation states in the modern world system are founded on the separation of the religion and secularity, which have their own domains, and the freedom and equality. And he mentioned that in the globalization of the principle order brought about the fragmentation, subordination, and Westernization of the old order. Then he stated that since the modern sovereign nation states and modern world system became the established order, LICs were precisely challenges to the new order against the old. Regarding the historical transformations of LICs in the modern world system, Professor Kato referred to David C. Rapoport's "Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" to explain that currently the world is facing the "religious wave" which has been continuing since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. In the end he concluded that the principle order of freedom premised on the separation of religion and secularity as embraced the United States, is being challenged by the Islamic fundamentalist forces aiming for Islamic Empires, based on the union of religion and secularity and the status system, and the China based on the world views expressed in the new Confucian thought and the Hua-Yi Order. He predicted that these would probably become the cause of new LICs.

In Session 1 there were three presentations on "Irregular Warfare: Theory and Practice," as well as comments and questions concerning these topics.

Dr. Martin Van Creveld gave a presentation entitled "Will Hybrid Warfare Come to Japan?" Dr. Creveld pointed out that there are only two kinds of war: trinitarian and nontrinitarian. The former is waged between states based on a clear division of labor between the government, the armed forces, and the people. The latter is waged by, or against, non-state actors. Then he stated that due to the proliferation of nuclear weapons to some states since 1945 the trinitarian war rapidly declined, and the non-trinitarian war by non-state actors increased greatly, and he made the criticism that the use of armed forces by states in non-trinitarian war had been an abysmal failure. And regarding the possibility of Japan becoming involved in hybrid warfare, he stated that it is hard to imagine this due to the robustness of the Japanese government and its geographical condition as an island country, but pointed out that in the case that it brought about any attempt to interfere Japan's extremely high level of dependence on foreign trade, military intervention would become necessary, and this would almost certainly be a hybrid one. Furthermore, he reached the conclusion that in that situation the laying of mines on trade routes and ground-to-ship cruise missiles, etc. would be launched in addition to cyberwar.

Next, Professor Christopher Coker gave a presentation entitled "Insurgency and Risk Society." Professor Coker referred to the "risk society" advocated by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck while pointing out that since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States the international society has been required to manage unexpected results. Then he presented the

concept of “blowback” as a characteristic example of the risk society, mentioning the rise of al-Qaeda due to the support of the United States in Afghanistan in the 1980s and the birth of ISIS from war of prisoners in the Iraq, and stated that the concept of “blowback” is a side-effect in the risk society. Finally, Professor Coker concluded that insurgency is asymmetrical warfare in every sense, and the risk society has vulnerabilities with respect to terrorism and insurgency, while on the other hand terrorists and insurgents are deliberately relying on the anxiety of people to act, and this is asymmetric warfare at its most profound.

Thirdly, Professor Tetsuya Endo gave a presentation entitled “The Conceptual Definition of “Irregular Warfare” and Today’s International Security Environment.” Professor Endo pointed out that the use of English word “irregular warfare” began to increase in official documents related to the U.S. military from the middle of the 2000s and at the root of this trend it exists the situation of a large decline in regular warfare shown in statistics about the occurrence of war. Furthermore, Professor Endo stated that it is necessary to mention the scope of activity that could be called warfare to summarize the concept of “irregular warfare” and he explained that warfare has a “geographical” nature and the actors of war are “territorial” in this presentation. Then he stated that in the contemporary world the possibility of warfare between states is gradually decreasing, although not completely, and progress in “retreat of the military” and “civilized (establishment of civil order)” can be seen in the entire world. On the other hand, he also pointed out that there was a greater possibility that non-state actors attempt to achieve their interests or strike a blow against their opponents and competitors through “means other than warfare.” He concluded that cautiousness was required in bringing the context of the military into civil domains, while elaborate thinking and consideration about the definition of warfare was necessary.

As a discussant for this session, Eiichi Funada, former Commander in Chief of the Self Defense Fleet, made the following comments and questions. First he stated that three presentations were all given from the broad perspective that warfare is a social phenomenon and social activity conducted by the human beings, and they were all valuable for deepening perceptions regarding irregular warfare. Then with regards to the presentation of Dr. Creveld he asked questions about the main cause of the fact that many states could not achieve the war objectives in non-trinitarian war, and about the way of state’s military forces to respond to non-trinitarian warfare effectively. Next, he asked Professor Coker questions about the role of traditional security required of the risk society for managing unexpected results, and about the potential of military forces from the perspective of preventing major security risks, most notably nuclear proliferation. Finally, he asked Professor Endo questions about “personalization of warfare” in which individuals wage war against states in irregular warfare, about the significance of regarding warfare itself as a “geographical” nature, and about the relationship between the armed forces and the police in an international society in which “civilized” has progressed.

In response to these questions, Dr. Creveld answered that the cause of the continuous defeats of states in non-trinitarian warfare is that they are unable to adopt a consistent strategy, and pointed out the importance of capacity to formulate coherent policies and continue maintaining them for overcoming this. Furthermore, he indicated the necessity of clear

decision-making and readiness for the military forces to respond effectively, and required the joint of information and operation. Next, Professor Coker answered that in the risk society we are required to manage unexpected results by ourselves, and although that had been seen in the nuclear deterrence strategy of the Cold War era, it was difficult to see an effective deterrence strategy in the non-traditional security of cyberspace. Then he presented the fact that the government of the United Kingdom stated that it was necessary to respond to cyberattacks using conventional military capability at the beginning of this year. Finally, Professor Endo answered regarding the “personalization of warfare” that it may exist some attacks by non-territorial actors, but perhaps need to discuss the scope of activity that can be called warfare, including whether or not there is an appropriate continuity for the word “warfare” and are clear points of compromise. Furthermore, regarding the relationship between the armed forces and the police, he stated the essential role of police organizations is to control the civil domains, and answered that involvement of the armed forces in civil domains should be avoided as much as possible.

Finally, as the Chairman of this Forum, the author stated in relation to Professor Kato’s presentation that it was necessary to examine the contentious issue of the internationalization of military affairs as one aspect of irregular warfare. This is symbolized by the fact that when irregular warfare had the meaning of a challenge to the modern world-system centered on the Western international order and modern sovereign nation-states as an established principle order, military affairs that had previously converged between states were internationalized in order to respond to irregular warfare. The author finished by saying that it was also necessary to discuss this point as one aspect of irregular warfare.

In the special address, Dr. Thomas G. Mahnken gave a presentation entitled “Warfare in the 21st Century.” At the beginning of the address, Dr. Mahnken mentioned that he would explore three mutually-related themes through this presentation, and discussed the relationship between theory and history, the characteristics of warfare and their continuity and change, and the reemergence of warfare between great powers in the international security environment. Firstly, regarding the relationship between theory and history, Dr. Mahnken pointed out that in the contemporary world warfare is discussed a lot in theoretical study, and as a result this is causing a lack of experience in military profession. Secondly, regarding the characteristics of warfare, he mentioned that geopolitical changes and changes to military technology were important elements, and pointed out that in a similar way to the “the fog of war” indicating the uncertainty of the battlefield, “the fog of peace” indicating the uncertainty of the characteristics of warfare in the future was important. Then, regarding continuity and changes in warfare, he pointed out that even though the actors of war change due to the deployment of air battle and cyber warfare, there has been no change to the fact that the nature of war is “an act of force to compel our adversary to do our will” and that the motives that lead to war are brought on by “fear, honor, and interest.” Thirdly, regarding the reemergence of warfare between great powers, he explained that the contemporary world is characterized by competition in peacetime between the United States, China, and Russia, and stated that it was facing an increasing possibility of warfare between great powers, albeit only a slight. As for these reasons, he listed the enormous consequences of warfare between great powers, the fact that the majority

of modern civilian politicians and military leaders have no experience of warfare between great powers, and that in the contemporary world the armed forces that the United States and its allies possess were developed for very different circumstances than they had anticipated. Finally, Dr. Mahnken said that it was necessary to thoroughly study the history of warfare between great powers, and stated that we should assess the similarities to and differences from the past. He concluded that it would be necessary to rebuild intellectual capital and capabilities to deal with the foreseeable future.

In Session 2 there were two presentations on “History of Irregular Warfare before mid-20th Century,” exploring the examples of the Japanese Army in the Sino-Japanese War and the French Army in the Algerian War, as well as comments and questions concerning these topics.

Firstly, Professor Nobu Iwatani gave a presentation entitled “Japanese Counterinsurgency Operations in Mainland China.” This year marks exactly 80 years since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. Professor Iwatani focused on the counterinsurgency operations developed against the Chinese Communist Party Army by the Japanese Army in the North China area in the Sino-Japanese War, and verified the counterinsurgency operations from the perspectives of both Japan and China by analyzing the strategies and responses of not only the Japanese Army but also the Communist Party Army. Then he said that the Japanese Army began to perceive the Communist Party Army as a threat from summer 1940, and stated that after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War the Communist Party Army rapidly spread its forces by adopting the guerrilla tactics of Mao Zedong and the strategies placing great importance on the construction of bases, and grew into opponents that threatened the Japanese Army. On the other hand, he pointed out that the initial response of the Japanese Army was faced with some problems such as the inadequacy of the information gathering system and the military equipment and unit formation. And he revealed that in order to overcome these problems the Japanese Army improved its gathering intelligence capacities to reinforce the code-breaking and the study on the Chinese Communist Party, and built the Special Guard Unit which were specialized in countering the Chinese Communist Party. Finally, he concluded that the counterinsurgency operations of the Japanese Army in mainland China initially achieved the expected results, but failed in the end due to the deterioration of the entire war situation, the inadequacy of battle experience, and the lack of administrative measures other than military affairs and of local people’s support.

Next, Dr. Kyoichi Tachikawa, Chief of the Military History Division, gave a presentation entitled “Algerian War: A Model of Counterinsurgency Operation.” Dr. Tachikawa pointed out that the counterinsurgency operations of the French Army had an influence on the doctrine of the United States in the Iraq War, raised the argument that the French Army won in the Algerian War, and discussed the necessity of historical verification of these claims. In particular regarding the range of measures adopted by the French Army, Dr. Tachikawa explained not only the operations that aimed for the alienation of the local residents and insurgency forces while gaining ascendancy, such as the establishment of the “grid operation” and “forbidden zones,” “regrouping,” etc., but also the “battle of the frontier” that closed the border to hinder the movements of the insurgency forces and the search-and-destroy operation carried out with the cooperation of the local residents by a unit specializing in counter-guerrilla warfare

(the Challe Plan). Though he praised the military outcome of driving the insurgency forces to collapse to some extent, but pointed out the poor living environment at the immigration destinations of the local residents and that there was a limit to the winning of hearts and minds and psychological actions by the French Army. Finally Dr. Tachikawa concluded that although the French Army achieved the extinction of the insurgency forces, this did not lead to a victory in the war due to the international tendency of “decolonization,” and the skillful diplomacy of propaganda of the National Liberation Front (FLN) exploiting the inhumane actions of the French Army, etc.

Based on these two presentations, a discussant for this session, Col. Takuya Tani, Senior Fellow, made the following comments and questions. Firstly, as questions common to both presentations, he asked the reasons for the delay in the response to the insurgency forces by the Japanese and French armies, which both had experience in counterinsurgency operations, and the cooperation of local residents regarding intelligence. Then he asked Professor Iwatani questions about the problems in the all-arms operations in the Special Guard Unit, and the effect of the battle experience with the Nationalist Party Army and the bandits. Furthermore, he asked Dr. Tachikawa questions about the factors behind the success of French Army alienating the insurgency forces and gaining the support of the local residents, and whether or not there was comprehensive cooperation with the armed forces, administrative organizations, and the local government.

In response to these questions, Professor Iwatani pointed out that the Communist Party Army which spread its forces with covert operations and political maneuvering had a completely different character to the bandits and Nationalist Party Army in Manchuria, so the threat perception of the Japanese Army was delayed. In addition to that, he discussed the fact that Japan aimed to win hearts and minds by utilizing pacification operations and secret societies. Though he praised the Japanese intelligence as achieving the results to some extent, but noted that sufficient cooperation could not be obtained because of the countermeasures by the Communist Party Army and Japan’s lack of resources. Furthermore, regarding the Special Guard Unit, he pointed out that the increase of percentage of common soldiers lead to a decline in effectiveness due to the lack of understanding of intelligence and strategy by the common soldiers and the inadequacy of combat capacity of the military police. Next, Dr. Tachikawa pointed out the reason for the delayed response of the French Army to the insurgency forces that they had anticipated conventional warfare against the Soviet Army in the Cold War era and they lacked understanding of the Algerian War. In addition, he stated that the reflection of the lessons learned from counterinsurgency operations was delayed due to the delay in redeployment from Indochina. Furthermore, he pointed out that intelligence targeting the local residents could not guarantee their security and its results were insufficient, on the other hand there were many local residents who did not support the insurgency forces and cooperated with the French Army because of their historical identity with respect to France. As for the local government, he stated that there was the situation which the local army rebelled, so the cooperative structure between mainland France and the local government was not monolithic.

Finally, as the Chairman, the author commented that the common point of both presentations is that they are historical case studies in which civil wars were fought in parallel.

Then as for the viewpoint mentioned by Dr. Tachikawa that in the Iraq War the U.S. Army learned the lessons from past counterinsurgency operations, the author introduced the fact that the U.S. Army referred to *Senshi Sosho: Hokushi no Chiansen* <I> [Counterinsurgency Operations in North China <I>], written by the Office of War History, National Institute for Defense Studies (Asagumo Shimbunsha, 1968) to analyze the counterinsurgency operations of the Japanese Army.

In the Session 3 there were three presentations on “History of Irregular Warfare from mid-20th Century to Date,” exploring the examples of the U.S. Army in the Gulf War and the counterinsurgency in the Iraq and Afghanistan War, as well as comments and questions concerning these topics.

Firstly, LTC Yuichi Shinpuku, Research Fellow, gave a presentation entitled “The Trend of COIN in the U.S. Army after the Gulf War: With a Central Focus on John A. Nagl in the 1990s.” LTC Shinpuku focused on John A. Nagl, who was a central figure in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations studies in the U.S. Army from 2000, and clarified the perceptions of the U.S. Army with regards to irregular warfare from the Gulf War hereafter. In particular he focused on the process through which Nagl reevaluated COIN in the 1990s, and discussed the fact that Nagl positioned the countering insurgency forces as the future challenge of the United States, and perceived asymmetric threats would become serious due to the use of weapons of mass destruction and expansion of cyberspace. Furthermore, he pointed out that Nagl reconsidered the force structure for conventional warfare, and explored the effectiveness of COIN in confronting asymmetric threats for “Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)” missions. Finally, regarding the different perceptions between the top brass of the U.S. Army and Nagl, LTC Shinpuku stated that the top brass and Nagl had the same perceptions of future threats, but they were thinking differently about the aspect of future warfare. Then he concluded that Nagl did not think that MOOTW would be an extension of conventional warfare even if the United States became the only superpower.

Next, Dr. Carter Malkasian gave a presentation entitled “Insurgency in Iraqi-Afghanistan and COIN. Dr. Malkasian focused on the failures in the counterinsurgency operations and interventions of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 21st century, and discussed the importance of strategic thinking in irregular warfare. In particular Dr. Malkasian pointed out that the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2004 to 2011 achieved major successes but the enormous expense of the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations began to hinder that success. Then he stated that due to the withdrawal of the U.S. Army from Iraq and Afghanistan based on the budget deficit reduction plan, the success in both countries collapsed. Furthermore, regarding the reasons for deterioration of security in both countries over the subsequent few years, he listed sectarianism having an effect on the administrative agencies, armed forces and police, the politicization and corruption of the armed forces, and the decline in the morale of the armed forces and police. Finally, he reached the lesson that the success or failure of the counterinsurgency operations and interventions was deeply connected to ethnicity, culture, and religion, and the change would not come easily just through the military presence of the United States over several years. Then, regarding the ideal counterinsurgency operations and

interventions, he stated that the strategy of executing long-term reforms through short-term interventions required carefulness, and concluded that it was important to deploy military units only to the extent that the local government was not overthrown, and to continue to put pressure on terrorist acts.

Finally, Professor Philip Sabin gave a presentation entitled “Air Power in Asymmetric Warfare.” Professor Sabin discussed the importance and effectiveness of the air power that evolved through two world wars, taking into account the situation that deployment of air power has grown in asymmetric warfare since 1945. In particular Professor Sabin focused on the loss of aircrew in battle has declined extremely in recent years, and pointed out that due to the facts that modern aircraft have become safer and more reliable, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) systems have developed, etc. political leaders have increasingly tended to commit air power for the purpose of minimizing the damage to their own forces. On the other hand, he stated that air power does not have as much “flexibility” as is possessed by ground troops, so it is effective against enemies that can be clearly identified but not effective in interactions with complicated ground environments. Professor Sabin also recognized the effectiveness of the tactical swift of air power, but stated that there are many cases in which time is required to have a strategic effect, and specifically pointed out that air power does not have a marked effect against the enemy’s rocket bomb attacks and suicide bomb attacks. Finally, he stated that air power would be an important element of asymmetric warfare hereafter, but stated that superiority in air power would not necessarily lead to victory in asymmetric warfare. However, at the same time, he concluded that air power is effective for gaining superiority in asymmetric warfare, and is an essential element.

Based on these presentations, a discussant Col. Aihito Yamashita made the following comments and questions. Firstly, as common comments to three presentations, he mentioned the grey zone situation in the vicinity of Japan, and pointed out the similarities of the “crisis management” methods in the grey zone situation and the principles applied to the COIN operations. Furthermore, he focused on the differences in the character of dealing with the irregular warfare and the grey zone situation compared to large-scale warfare, and argued for the necessity of considering the impact of these differences from the aspect of civil-military relations. Then he asked LTC Shinpuku questions about the persistent organization culture under which the top brass of the U.S. Army is attempting to adopt the approaches of conventional warfare to MOOTW as well. Next, he asked Dr. Malkasian questions about specific measures for developing and establishing an identity in the local army from the perspectives of a light and long-term intervention strategy. Finally, he asked Professor Sabin questions about the collateral damage of air power and its relationship to the principle of winning hearts and minds on which David Galula, Robert Thompson and others place importance.

In response to these questions, LTC Shinpuku stated that it was important how the organization culture of the U.S. Army believed in a way of war. Then he answered that the idea of the top brass of the U.S. Army is to destroy the enemies by perfection, but Nagl pointed out the problems of use of large amounts of firepower to defeat enemies from the tactical perspective. Next, Dr. Malkasian stated that the priority issues of a light and long-term intervention strategy were to prevent terrorist attacks in countries around the world and to the

overthrow of local governments. In addition, Dr. Malkasian answered that developing and establishing the identities of local armies was an unexplored issue. Furthermore, he mentioned the ethical problems of a long-term intervention strategy. Finally, Professor Sabin pointed out that although mistaken bombings as collateral damage of air power attracted the attention, but the ground troops carried out more mistaken bombings than air power. Furthermore, regarding the relationship between air power and the principle of winning hearts and minds, he answered that publicity and public relations activities aimed at local residents are important, that if we look at examples of collateral damage such as mistaken bombings, etc. most of them are fabricated by propaganda, and are not necessarily caused by air power.

Finally, the author would like to summarize “Irregular Warfare in Historical Perspectives” through the whole discussion as follows. Firstly, “irregular warfare” is not a phenomenon that suddenly appeared after the end of the Cold War; it has been from ancient times as a means of the weak. In particular we can point out that as a character in recent years it is not merely resistance to the rule of the great powers; rather it is caused by the complicated structural problems in the international society.

Therefore, because of its multilayered nature, the response is not simple compared to previous traditional warfare between great powers, and for the great powers the result has largely been a “succession of failures” (Creveld). The factors behind these failures exist in both the great powers and the third world. In the great powers, and in particular the democratic states, there are weaknesses brought about by the “risk society” (Coker). On the other hand, in the third world in addition to the structural problems such as political systems, there is the difficulty of winning hearts and minds – particularly using the foreign forces – caused by the fundamental issue of identity.

Under these circumstances, advanced military power such as air power, etc. cannot be a decisive blow for the developed countries. On the contrary, it is anticipated that responses will become more difficult for developed countries due to falling birthrates and growing awareness of human rights, etc. Hereafter how should we overcome these problems to confront “irregular warfare”? For the developed countries a more historical and structural discussion is required. In particular previously “irregular warfare” was developed on the ground, but as pointed out Dr. Creveld, in the case of Japan it is anticipated to occur on the ocean, so we can conclude that Japan is facing new challenges.

