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**Lieutenant Colonel Sándor Farkas**

**Insurgency and counterinsurgency operations in modern warfare**

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## Introduction

The United States and its allies, including Hungary, withdrew from Afghanistan before the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Based on the news reports, what is in the media, and my experience during four operational deployments between Afghanistan and Iraq,<sup>1</sup> it is my assessment that any strategic goals were achieved, and that no long-term, reassuring solutions have been accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

In the region of Afghanistan where I spent more than two years in various positions, I found that although some results were achieved in one region on a temporary basis, they were always temporary and did not win the actual support of the population on a permanent basis. Another important experience was that the insurgents were always one step ahead of the Allied forces and found an effective antidote to newly established Allied procedures in a very short time. This speed of adaptability has been, and continues to be, a huge challenge for Western armed forces despite their overwhelming military, technological, and economic strength.

### Rationale for choice of topic and scientific problem

For nearly the past two decades, the United States and its allies, including Hungary, have suffered a total of more than 7,000 casualties and 52,000 injuries on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that there was, and still is a significant difference between the opposing parties in terms of both the number of forces and technological development, the Allied goals were not accomplished in either conflict.

The state with the most advanced war machine and strongest economy in the world – and its allies – has been defeated by an adversary that is significantly undermanned and has negligible economic potential and outdated technology. Even though the majority of the tactical-level clashes have been won by more advanced and well-trained Western forces, they lost the war in Afghanistan and there is no clear victory in Iraq.

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<sup>1</sup> The author fulfilled positions in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) on the Afghan battlefield: during the second shift he held the positions of platoon leader, company executive officer in PRT-5, deputy chief of operations in PRT-11 and company commander in PRT-13. On the Iraqi battlefield, he was in charge of the eighth shift of the Iraqi Training Insurance Contingent.

<sup>2</sup> Lessons Learned Interviews

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=lute\\_doug\\_11\\_01\\_d5\\_02202015](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=lute_doug_11_01_d5_02202015) (Download date: 02/02/2012)

<sup>3</sup> Resperger István – Túri Viktória: Iszlám Állam modus operandi harctéren, médiában és a pszichológiában. (Islamic State modus operandi in the battlefield, media and psychology) Katonai Nemzetbiztonsági Szolgálat, Budapest, 2021. pp.124-126.

Number of US Soldiers Killed in the Iraq War from 2003 to 2020

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263798/american-soldiers-killed-in-iraq/> (Download date: 01/05/2021)

The world and society have changed radically: the rapid development of info-communication tools and the advent of the Internet have brought about a change in warfare. The use of state-of-the-art technology and weapons alone will not suffice against the new type of fast-adapting opponent with access to the Internet and info-communication tools. While Western countries are searching for a solution through networking modern computers and devices, the adversary is employing a new generation of warfare and is relying on their network of people within their populations to succeed. They do not seek victory on the battlefield in defeating our military potential, but rather by circumventing the traditional armed forces with political, economic, social, and irregular military platforms. They seek to directly influence the will of their opposing policy makers to convince them that their goals are unachievable or will involve an unacceptable level of sacrifice if continuous attempts are made.

Mao Zedong first presented the principle that with the right political will, an economically and militarily weaker party can defeat the stronger party. Insurgents and/or terrorist organizations today have further developed Mao's principles to bypass well-functioning military technology and weapons to force a type of war against the world's only military superpower and its allies in which their political and strategic goals are never achieved. Given that these organizations are always adapting to the problems that arise, they develop practical solutions to tactical level challenges to achieve victory.

The choice of the topic of the dissertation is justified in that the lessons Western militaries can learn from the study of the procedures, command and control principles of the fourth-generation warfare organizations can be integrated to facilitate effective actions against a warring party that fights in accordance with the principles of fourth-generation warfare.

The applicability of the topic is also supported by the NATO 2030 document on NATO's objectives, and the Brussels Summit Communiqué issued on 14 June 2021. In these documents a separate chapter addresses the challenges posed by non-state actors,<sup>4</sup> terrorism,<sup>5</sup> hybrid and cyber-attacks,<sup>6</sup> and mentions the ability to adapt to change as a key element of NATO's success.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Brussels Summit Communiqué, paragraph 31  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_185000.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm) (Download date: 03/07/2021)

<sup>5</sup> Brussels Summit Communiqué, 16-21. point  
NATO 2030: United for a New Era. Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group appointed by the NATO Secretary General, 25 November 2020, pp.32-33.  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf)  
(February 22, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> NATO 2030: United for a New Era. pp.45-56.

<sup>7</sup> NATO 2030: United for a New Era. pp.7-8.

## Research objectives

Through research on war theory and warfare in Hungarian military science, the dissertation intends to contribute to the development of more effective strategic leadership of the armed forces, the renewal of its organizational structure and activities, and the establishment of principles and procedures that will enable the Hungarian Armed Forces and other NATO forces to succeed, and to fight and win against insurgent organizations and terrorist groups that fight according to fourth-generation principles.<sup>8</sup>

The aims of the research are:

1. Explore the principles and philosophy of today's insurgent and terrorist organizations, the procedures, methods, management and organization methods and technology they use in their activities. Understanding the opposing party will help Western states successfully fight insurgents that employ the principles of fourth-generation warfare.
2. To prove that Mao laid the foundations for the operating principles that insurgent organizations employ today with a high degree of efficiency, in turn enabling them to successfully confront, and defeat, states with significantly greater economic and military capabilities.
3. To show how globalization, the emergence of the Internet, and the rapid development and spread of info-communication tools have affected, and are affecting, the mechanism of operations of insurgent organizations.
4. Analyze the ways in which non-state actors engage in fourth-generation warfare and how they can exert such effects, even on a superpower, to give up armed struggle against them, by circumventing the traditional military power of nation-states.
5. Identify and record the procedures by which insurgent organizations can take control of significant sections of a population and society with a high degree of efficiency.
6. Identify procedures that the armed forces of traditional states can use to combat insurgent forces more effectively in the struggle to win over the population and society.

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Brussels Summit Communiqué, paragraph 77

<sup>8</sup>Boda József – Boldizsár Gábor – Kovács László – Orosz Zoltán – Padányi József – Resperger István – Szenes Zoltán: A hadtudományi kutatási irányok, prioritások és témakörök. (The directions, priorities and topics of military research) Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, 2016., pp.3-9.

7. Identify the leadership and organizational procedures that provide today's insurgent organizations with the flexibility and adaptability to deal with rapid change. Based on these, analyze, and evaluate which elements can be incorporated into the operations of Western forces in such a way that they preserve the stability bureaucratic operations provide, but enable them to transform into a more flexible organization capable of implementing changes more quickly.

Based on the above, the dissertation seeks answers to the following main research questions:

1. Where do they originate and what are the procedures, methods, leadership and operational characteristics that guarantee today's insurgent organizations that enables them to successfully fight Western state forces despite their enormous economic and staffing disadvantages?
2. The success or failure of the struggle between the insurgents and the counterinsurgent forces lies primarily in the establishment of control over the population and gaining their support. Insurgent organizations do not simultaneously take power over the entire territory of a state but extend their dominance over the population starting at the lowest local levels in a step-by-step approach, thus resulting in subsequent dominance over the territory. In contrast, Western states simultaneously seek to consolidate the power of the local leadership throughout the entire territory of the conflict state. From recent events, it can be concluded that this method is not successful. At strategic level, can Western states achieve greater and lasting success by applying the area-to-area principle?
3. What are the insurgent's organizational procedures, command, operational principles that Western states and armed forces could obtain and learn from? Can these principles in the future be implemented by Western forces to enable a more successful fight against insurgent organizations?

## Hypotheses

The dissertation is based on the following hypotheses to answer the research questions:

H1: The strategy, procedures, and methods today's insurgent organizations employ are not revolutionary, but the result of an evolutionary process, the foundations of which were first presented by Mao Zedong.

H2: Analysis and practical examples show that in a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency operations, efforts to gain control of society, whether insurgent or counterinsurgent, should focus primarily on isolating the population from the opposing party, which can be achieved through the use of force.

H3: Theoretical analysis and practical examples show that the number of Western soldiers deployed in counterinsurgency operations is far below the number needed to effectively control the population and isolate the population from insurgents. Practical examples show that to achieve more effective control, counterinsurgency operations should not be launched throughout the entire state but should depend on the number of counterinsurgency forces available, and therefore should then determine the size of the area in which they initially operate. It is advisable to extend the operations to another area only when the stability of the first region can be guaranteed by the local administration and law enforcement forces.

H4: It can be demonstrated and verified that counterinsurgency operations can be described as adaptation struggles. Today's insurgent organizations have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by information-communications technology<sup>9</sup> to develop a flexible form of organization, leadership, and operations that have given them a high degree of adaptability. The sluggish organizations of Western states, operating in segregated bureaucratic stovepipes on the principle of necessary information sharing, are not always able to compete effectively against insurgent organizations operating within the principles of networking. To be able to confront the new type of enemy effectively, and to adapt to the situation at the right pace, it is necessary for Western forces to combine the predictability, stability, and efficiency of

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<sup>9</sup> Many variations of the term can be found in the literature. In the dissertation I use the form used by Zsolt Haig and László Kovács.

Haig Zsolt – Kovács László: Kritikus infrastruktúrák és kritikus információs infrastruktúrák. (Critical infrastructures and critical information infrastructures) Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, Budapest, 2012., p.6.

[https://tudasportal.uni-nke.hu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12944/13291/kritikus\\_infrastrukturak\\_es\\_kritikus\\_informacios\\_infrastrukturak.pdf?sequence=1](https://tudasportal.uni-nke.hu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12944/13291/kritikus_infrastrukturak_es_kritikus_informacios_infrastrukturak.pdf?sequence=1) (Download date: 26/02/2020)

bureaucratic operations with the principles of network-based operation that enable greater freedom of action.

### **Applied research methods**

The aim of my scientific research is to present, through applied research, more effective methods, procedures, and principles for solving problems encountered in practical life and for addressing the challenges that may arise in the future, all of which can be applied in a short time and meet immediate practical needs.

This dissertation applies the method of comparison among the theoretical-logical research methods to explore the similarities and differences between the principles and procedures applied by Mao and the Islamic State.<sup>10</sup> The goal in conducting this comparative analysis is to highlight that today's non-state opponents that apply the principles and methods of fourth-generation warfare, have not suddenly emerged, but are at a stage in a long process of development from Mao's foundational principles.

During the comparative analysis, using the method of abstraction and analyzing the principles and methods of Mao and the Islamic State, the correlations were examined separately. This simplification of the processes - the examination of them in itself - resulted in a deep dive into the aspects examined in the dissertation and understand their essential elements.<sup>11</sup>

Using the historical method, the dissertation also presents and analyzes the evolutionary process from Mao's principles, procedures, and methods used through the Vietnam War, the Sandinista movement, the Intifada, and al-Qaeda – to the principles, procedures, and methods of the Islamic State.<sup>12</sup>

In the sixth and seventh chapters of the doctoral dissertation, comparative analysis is applied to identify the differences between the operational, organizational, and command systems of today's insurgent organizations and the armed forces of Western states. With the goal being exploration of the factors that allow insurgent organizations to operate flexibly, exercise rapid adaptability, and to identify the components that prevent rapid adaptation for Western forces. During the analysis, the properties that are relevant to the analysis are

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<sup>10</sup> Gőcze István: A tudományos kutatás módszerei. (Methods of scientific research) In.: *Hadtudományi Szemle*, 2011/3., p.162.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.160.



separated, then synthesized to provide solutions to counter the flexibility of the fourth-generation warfare party, while maintaining the advantageous properties of bureaucratic operations, as well as how to incorporate the principles and procedures into their own systems to ensure adaptability.<sup>13</sup>

## **Results of the Research**

### **General concepts**

To establish a well-founded analysis, the general concepts are presented and described in a unified scientific system starting from asymmetric warfare, the structure, intensities, and main features of the guerrilla military mindset, uprising and anti-uprising operations, and generations of warfare.

The irregular form of indirect warfare is guerrilla warfare, which has been introduced through the guerrilla military mindset approach. In this dissertation, it was discovered that the asymmetric form of warfare is a conscious choice of the party with weaker technical and human resources but superior information. The weaker party attempts to break the traditional warfare party, exhaust them, and deprive them of its social base to balance the forces and eliminate the asymmetry.

It was also discovered that during the development of a guerrilla organization, three different intensities of activity can be applied, of which the low (terrorism) and medium (guerrilla warfare) intensity pathways have been analyzed.

Regarding the new type of uprising, the fourth-generation warfare, it is stated that its primary goal is to change the correlation between the forces of the opposing parties<sup>14</sup> to achieve its political goals, and to directly influence the thinking and reactions of the opposing society and political decision-makers. Fourth-generation warfare parties achieve political goals through armed or unarmed struggle across the political, information, military, and economic fronts.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp.162-163.

<sup>14</sup> Galula, David: Counterinsurgency Warfare. Theory and Practice. Praeger Security International, London, 2018, p.39.

## **The protracted guerrilla warfare - The birth of a new form of insurgency**

This chapter analyzes the medium-intensity form of activity of the guerrilla military mindset. The protracted guerrilla warfare consists of three superimposed military phases, from which Mao Zedong seized power in a protracted struggle.

Mao developed practical and workable solutions to the tactical and operational problems, laying the groundwork for the future of a new fourth - generation of warfare. He developed a new strategic concept that highlighted guerrilla warfare with supporting traditional warfare. He transformed it into a form of warfare with which the weaker party in an asymmetric struggle, regardless of traditional warfare, can win the war and achieve its strategic goals. By placing special emphasis on political mobilization, the role of propaganda, and building control over the population, Mao was able to accomplish his strategic goals by offsetting the larger military force and economic strengths of his adversary.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted, however, that Mao saw the key to taking power and achieving ultimate victory, was in a decisive battle with traditional military forces and procedures.

## **Stages in the development of fourth-generation warfare**

Based on the analysis of the activities of the insurgent organizations, it is concluded that today's insurgent organizations, using the principles of fourth generation of warfare, no longer aim to destroy the military power of the party with greater economic and military potential. Rather, they want to achieve their strategic goals by imposing their influence. Their goal is to convince the political leaders of the opposing party that the any strategic goals are unattainable or will require too much human and material resources to achieve.

Based on Mao's principles and further development, Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap succeeded in achieving North Vietnam's objectives. The northern insurgents were defeated many times at the tactical and operational levels, yet they won the war. The strategic focus was shifted from the battlefield to counter propaganda and address the political struggle.<sup>16</sup> The tactical moments were organized into military operations to grind away at the strategic level and political will of the United States, essentially the commitment to continue the war, thereby

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<sup>15</sup> Hammes, Thomas X.: *The Sling and The Stone - On War in the 21st Century*. Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2006, pp.50-51.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp.68-70.

changing the correlation of forces. The ultimate victory continued to be based on the activities of regular forces.

With the “*tradition*” of winning the ultimate victory through the decisive battles of traditional forces, the Nicaraguan Sandinists broke for the first time. In the absence of adequate military potential, they were unable to carry out large-scale military operations against government forces. Relying on the strength of the political front, which included a broad social base within the population, hidden behind a moderate and democratic disguise, they achieved the collapse of the government and then seized power.

Palestinian leaders also recognized that in the absence of adequate economic and military potential, the realization of a shift in the balance of power to their own side is feasible through a change in international political sentiment towards Israel’s internal political situation.<sup>17</sup> During the first Intifada, armed struggles were almost entirely devoid of purpose. Yet, relying on the power of the media, they achieved their goals by conveying different messages to different target groups.<sup>18</sup>

Today, a degree of networking can be observed in each organization. For the Palestinians, a network-based bottom-up system of government has been a key element of success. Additionally, the former leader of al-Qaeda further developed the networked organization and made it global, with the goal to overthrow the current world order and create an Islamic caliphate. To achieve this, he created an economic, military, and information organization based on an ideology that encompassed the entire world. Like its predecessors using fourth-generation warfare, al-Qaeda sought to shift the balance of power in their favor through messaging in the media.

### **Warfare of the Islamic State**

This chapter discusses the Islamic State – one of the most well-known jihadist groups today. It is concluded that the Islamic State cannot be considered a mere terrorist organization. Based on the ownership of territory, the state-like operation, and the application of all three intensities of the guerrilla military mindset, the it can be described as a state-like terrorist

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<sup>17</sup> To achieve, within the framework of a democratic vote, that the Israeli people, instead of the Likud party, bring power to the Labor Party.

<sup>18</sup> Galula: Counterinsurgency Warfare. Theory and Practice. p.32.

organization that intends to enforce its policy and to create a worldwide Caliphate as its ultimate goal.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to achieving rapid tactical success, the organization seeks to achieve the mental and physical exhaustion of the enemy, which it accomplishes at a strategic level as part of a lengthy, three-phase process. Throughout the phases, the combined and flexible application of the guerrilla military mindset with three different intensities of activity provides them with an extreme capability to survive.

Control over a broad section of society and their institutional system (that is independent from the government) have played a key role in their success. Intimidation tactics, brutal acts of terrorism and their propagation in detail by modern information technology have allowed the organization to have a significant influence not only on the people under its control, but also on the societies of the Western world.

The activities of the Islamic State bear a significant resemblance in many areas to the actions of former insurgency groups engaged in guerrilla warfare. Its novelty lies in the dominance of information beyond the narrow scope of operations, the establishment of a state-like organization, and the effective and widespread exercise of control over society, the global process of economic, market, financial, and social unification, the explosive development of information technology, and the emergence and spread of the World Wide Web.

### **Counterinsurgency operations**

While it is well understood that we must know our opponent, we also need to be aware of our own abilities. It is necessary to identify shortcomings that need to be addressed to succeed in the fight against the adversary of the fourth – or fifth – generation warfare in the future.

Guerrillas – for their long-term survival – do not stand up to decisive battles with the much stronger regular armed forces. They do not stand in open struggles to protect the territories they control, they do not have the infrastructure they want to maintain at all costs, so their military fixation not feasible through the means and procedures used in traditional warfare. For their survival, they can force the fight in the human dimension. It follows that counterinsurgency forces, like guerrillas, must focus on building control over the population and isolating them physically and mentally from insurgents. To effectively implement isolation

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<sup>19</sup> Resperger – Túri: Iszlám Állam modus operandi harctéren, médiában és a pszichológiában. (Islamic State Modus Operandi in the Battlefield, Media, and Psychology) p.22.

and control over the population, counterinsurgency forces must be able to develop and operate a predictable, consistent, broad-spectrum system of normative rules, the essential and primary element of which is the use of armed violence, as well as propaganda and a well-functioning administration.

In this chapter, it is also revealed that counterinsurgency operations can best be characterized as an adaptation struggle between guerrillas and the counterinsurgency forces, and that in this race insurgents are currently winning.

### **Solution for the state security forces to carry out operations successfully**

In our rapidly changing and complex world, media and social media can directly influence the mindset of policymakers. Thanks to modern technology and the Internet, networked insurgent organizations with a central ideology, and decentralized organizations, can coordinate their attacks globally with extreme flexibility and adaptability.

In contrast, the armed forces of Western states operate without strategic alignment, with an excessive bureaucracy, a hierarchical organizational model, with a centralized leadership style, excessive standardization, and rigid adherence to rules. While these characteristics guarantee predictability and efficiency, they also make the ability to quickly adapt extremely difficult, or, in some instances, completely unattainable.

To compete effectively with fourth-generation organizations, Western states must make changes, beginning with increased decentralization and decrease in bureaucracy. This is not to say completely abandon Western organizational concepts; however, the concepts require a new organizational set-up that can combine the existing predictability, stability, efficiency, and flexibility of organizations while applying the principles of fourth-generation warfare within the current bureaucratic operating systems.

In order for an organization to achieve a common goal, i.e. strategic alignment, it is necessary to develop a shared consciousness throughout the organization, therefore, it is essential to rethink the management and organizational processes currently in place so that every commander can communicate their intent as directly and quickly as possible.

It is also necessary to connect multiple individual organizational elements on a personal relationship basis, which can be achieved through the exchanging of liaisons. Not only can a system of such links form a bridge between two organizations, but an informal network of links

greatly facilitates strategic coordination between multiple organizations, in turn, enabling the collective group to achieve strategic alignment.

In order to make the organization more flexible and to speed up the adaptation cycle, it is necessary to delegate decision-making powers to the lowest possible level. For this to be achieved, we must focus on the role of the commander to communicate clearly and quickly to enable the bureaucracy to operate effectively. The commander must provide the largest number of subordinates with critical information that supports their independent performance of their duties. The information and intent must enable subordinates to understand the context needed to oversee operations and the resources required to remain consistent with the strategic goal, and within legal and moral bounds.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Today's insurgent organizations employ their strategy, procedures, and methods with great success against the Western armed forces; however, it is not revolutionary. Mao Zedong first presented and successfully applied the foundations of the operating principles. The social changes of the last 70-80 years coupled with the development of information technology have made their current form possible. Mao and the Islamic State strategies, principles, and procedures have been analyzed and compared based on a chosen set of criteria discussed in the dissertation. Based on the analyzed literature and daily news, the dissertation proves that there are fundamental similarities in the strategy and operation of the two organizations operating at a significant distance from each other in space and time. In order to describe the development process, several insurgent organizations were presented that operated in the period between Mao and the Islamic State. It was confirmed that the strategy and operations were in fact applied and further developed based on Mao's founding principles, while also adapting and integrating to the current day social and information technology development.

Gaining control of society, whether insurgent or counterinsurgent, is possible only through the use of armed violence. However, even in the context of a population-based approach, as opposed to reconstruction, development, and humanitarian tasks, the focus should be on security operations, ie, isolating the population from insurgents. This dissertation demonstrates that the insurgents, unlike in traditional warfare, fight for the sole purpose of maintaining control over society; therefore, proving that their fixation – and the organization's subsequent destruction – can only take place through the population. It is also demonstrated that the isolation of the population can only be carried out effectively if the counterinsurgency

forces do not retreat and consolidate in isolated camps but are present and able to stand up for the protection of the population on a continuous basis. Only a continuous presence and the uninterrupted isolation of society from guerrillas through armed violence can create favorable conditions to separate the population physically and ideologically from the insurgents and create the conditions for the social and economic developments that leads to successful long-term results.

The principle described above can only be effectively implemented if, contrary to recent procedures in Iraq and Afghanistan, counterinsurgency forces are not deployed in an area where operations are scattered over large areas, leaving gaps for insurgents to infiltrate. Accordingly, the size of the initial area of operation should be determined by the number of properly trained and prepared counterinsurgency forces to ensure an effective isolation of the population from insurgents. The extension of operations to new areas should only be carried out when the local administration and law enforcement forces are able to execute the security tasks almost – or completely – independently. This dissertation also illustrates that both Mao and the Islamic State, following the steps of the three-phase strategy, did not gain control over a large area and a large population simultaneously, but achieved significant success and applied the principles of area-to-area expansion and bottom-up administration. Based on the principle laid down by Galula, the ratios between the population and the counterinsurgency forces, as well as my own operational experience, it is reasonable to assume that the principle successfully applied by the insurgents would lead to a more lasting result for the counterinsurgency forces.

Counterinsurgency operations can be described as an adaptation struggle. Insurgent organizations operate along a networked, centralized ideology, and with a high degree of freedom, and they use advanced information technology to their advantage. In today's complex environment, for overly bureaucratic Western forces to compete, they must adapt and find a type of operation that combines the predictability of bureaucratic operations with the flexible operation and decentralized execution of tasks that result from networked operations, similar to insurgent organization operational methods. Based on practical examples, this dissertation demonstrates that given their common ideology, and use of networking and decentralization to survive, insurgent organizations are able to adapt more quickly to changes in the operational environment than Western armed forces at both the strategic and tactical levels. Effectively integrating these qualities (strategic alignment, mutual understanding of the common goal, building trust, new leadership philosophy, and organizational structure) can greatly help Western forces to compete with insurgent organizations.

### **New scientific results**

1. I have demonstrated that the activities of the Islamic State, as well as other insurgent and terrorist organizations that are able to effectively confront with states with greater economic and military potential, are based on the principles developed by Mao in many respects.
2. I have analyzed and proved that today's insurgent organizations through the increased use and accessibility of the Internet, info-communications, and social media are able to influence the thinking of the wider community faster than before, bypassing the traditional military power of Western forces and directly impose their will to influence the population and enable them to win.
3. Based on my theoretical research, I have created a new, refined concept of counterinsurgency operations. As a result of the change, information warfare – which is a key element of today's warfare – became part of the concept.
4. I analyzed and verified that Mao and the Islamic State, over a well-structured three-phase strategy, relying primarily on the use of armed violence, gradually took control of a large population from area to area. Based on these investigations and given the limited military and police forces available to Western forcercs, it is reasonable to assume that counterinsurgency forces using the same methods and principles as insurgents and by applying security forces that are capable of isolating (physically and mentally) the society from insurgents (anytime and anywhere) can contribute to the cornerstones of long-term success such as stable social, political and economic environment.
5. I have analyzed, evaluated, and demonstrated that in today's complex operational environment, in a cyclically repetitive, adaptive struggle between insurgents and counterinsurgency forces, network organization and central ideology-driven decentralized implementation, insurgent organizations are able to adapt faster than bureaucratic forces. I have identified and defined organizational and managerial characteristics and requirements such as strategic coherence, common understanding of a common goal, horizontal cooperation based on trust, centralized decision-making but decentralized implementation, and a new management philosophy that would create a networked force that maintains the stability of bureaucracy and will be more effective operationally.

Based on the results of the dissertation, it is recommended to further investigate the following issues:

- The dissertation demonstrates that counterinsurgency operations can be described as adaptation struggles, from which it is clear that the nature of this form of warfare and the



organizations opposed to Western forces are undergoing constant change. The present dissertation provides only a snapshot of the characteristics of this type of warfare and the parties involved. Accordingly, on the one hand, there is a need for continuous study of state and non-state actors applying the principles of fourth- or fifth-generation warfare, now and in the future, and on the other hand, a permanent examination of the form of warfare itself.

- Due to the scope of this dissertation, there was not an elaborate study on the indispensable organizational changes, procedures, and methods by which Western forces, including the Hungarian Armed Forces, could adapt to the challenges of this age in the most effective way possible against public or non-state actors. A more thorough examination of the issue can present a good basis for the central topic of another doctoral dissertation.
- Today, more and more state actors (China, Russia, Iran, North Korea) are operating within the concepts of fourth-generation warfare through cyber-attacks, the use of proxies, influencing the masses through the media, etc <sup>20</sup> – all with gray zone elements. Examining the possible systems along which these states apply the procedures discussed in this dissertation in such a way that they remain below the threshold of a full scale, conventional war could also be a potential topic for a doctoral dissertation.

### **Practical applicability of research and scientific results and recommendations**

The results presented in the dissertation can be applied in several areas. Throughout the course of the research, a significant amount of Hungarian and international literature and current events were discovered and synthesized, of which the research results can help those who want to interpret the strategy, operating mechanisms, and procedures of today's non-state actors.

Following the failures in Afghanistan and Iraq, the dissertation can also serve as a starting point for developing a new strategy to compete more effectively against insurgent organizations fighting in accordance with the principles of fourth-generation warfare.

The results of the research can be used in the preparation of candidates and officers studying in the undergraduate and master's degree courses of the Faculty of Military Sciences and Military Training of the National University of Public Service, as well as in the training and teaching of theoretical foundations prior to mission preparation. The knowledge revealed

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<sup>20</sup> Giles, Keir: Handbook of Russian Information Warfare. Research Division NATO Defense College, 2016, pp.19-21, pp.48-49.  
<https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=995> (Download date: 01/09/2021)

in this dissertation can also facilitate the work of intelligence officers who have areas of interest in regions and conflicts where uprisings are taking place, or the possibility of uprisings can be expected in the future.

The procedures, solutions, and management processes that ensure more flexible organizational operation examined in the seventh chapter of the dissertation can serve as a starting point for the transformation of the Hungarian Armed Forces and lead to a renewed and more effective management philosophy.

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUTHOR RELATED TO THE SUBJECT

Bakos Csaba Attila – Farkas Sándor: Gyakorlatorientált oktatás, képzés és kiképzés, avagy a pályaszocializáció a katonai felsőoktatásban. (Practice-oriented education, training and education, and career socialization in military higher education) In.: Honvédségi Szemle, 2016/4., pp.85-92.

Farkas Sándor: A földrajzi és a társadalmi tér megszerzéséért folytatott küzdelem. Az ISIL hadviselése Mao Ce-tung tanainak tükrében. (The struggle for the acquisition of geographical and social space. ISIL's warfare in light of the teachings of Mao Zedong) In.: Honvédségi Szemle, 2018/1., pp.12-25.

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Farkas Sándor: The Role of Critical Infrastructures in Counterinsurgency Operations. In.: Hungarian Defence Review, 2019/1-2., pp.50-57.

Jobbágy Zoltán – Farkas Sándor: Alkalmazott néprajz: T. E. Lawrence és a hadszíntérre vonatkozó társadalmi és kulturális ismeretek fontossága. (Applied Ethnography: TE Lawrence and the Importance of Social and Cultural Knowledge of the Battlefield) In.: Hadtudományi Szemle, 2017/3., pp.340-355.

## **Professional Biography of the Doctoral Candidate**

Lieutenant Colonel Sándor Farkas was born on January 12, 1980, in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary; divorced, with one daughter. He began his higher education in 1998 at the Miklós Zrínyi University of National Defense, Lajos Kossuth College, Faculty of Mechanized Infantry. He spent the 2001-2002 academic year at the Virginia Military Institute (Lexington, Virginia, USA) as part of a competitive scholarship program where he primarily studied political subjects. He completed his Hungarian college studies in 2003 and, after his inauguration graduation, served in the 1st Light Mixed Regiment of the Hungarian Armed Forces – and its successors – in the positions of platoon leader, company executive officer, and operations officer.

In 2013, he joined the Department of Combined Operations of the National University of Public Service, where he participated as an instructor in the tactical and leadership theory training of full-time military officer candidates.

He obtained his university diploma in military command at the National University of Public Service in 2016, after which he was the Deputy Battalion Commander of the 39th Battalion of the 5th Bocskai István Infantry Brigade of the Hungarian Armed Forces, and from August 2018 he served as Special Operations Task Group commander with the 2<sup>nd</sup> vitéz Árpád Bertalan Special Forces Brigade.

From August 2019 to March 2022, he served in the Under Secretary of State for Human Policy of the Ministry of Defense, initially as Chief Executive Officer and then as Head of Secretariat. Since March 16, 2022, he has been the Commander of the 5th Bocskai István Infantry Brigade of the Hungarian Armed Forces.

In addition to his studies at home he also has extensive training and education abroad. He has attended the United States Infantry Officer Basic Course and Maneuver Captain's Career Course, as well as the United States Army Ranger School. Most recently he graduated from the Senior Officer Course at the NATO Defense College in Rome.

He has been a doctoral student since 2016 at the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of the National University of Public Administration, where he received his leaving certificate in 2020. He began his research on the topic of his dissertation during his university studies, recording his first scientific results in his dissertation.

In connection with the topic, 5 publications of scientific value were published independently in Hungarian, 2 in foreign languages and 2 in Hungarian as co-authors. He gave presentations at conferences held at home and several abroad (NATO Defense College 2016, West Point USA

2017). Based on the knowledge gained during his research at NATO Defense College, his final paper, “Information Warfare: Russia's Alternative and Cheap Solution to the Counter the Conventional Superiority of the West” was published by the school in the online journal, “The College Series.”

He has advanced English and basic Spanish language examinations with military specialization. He has expanded his professional experience in an international combat operations environment once in the Iraq Training Contingent as contingent commander – and four times in Afghanistan, where he served as a Commander of the Afghan Provincial Reconstruction Team, Deputy Commander, Squadron Commander, and Deputy Chief of Operations.