

The British Experience in Iraq, 2007: A Perspective on the Utility of Force

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Recent years have seen the US, UK and other ISAF and Coalition nations enmeshed in protracted, complex and intense campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Resilient and highly adaptable opponents have operated asymmetrically, and amongst the people, to negate the technological superiority of the West; counterinsurgency (COIN) has been the norm. Progress made has been hard won, consuming considerable resources and testing national will. Despite the achievement of often rapid and spectacular tactical military successes, the desired political dividends have been slower to materialise and scarcely commensurate with the investment of national blood and treasure. This has led some to question the utility of military force and the mood in several Western capitals seems increasingly wary of further stabilisation campaigns abroad. This sense of caution is reinforced by the global economic downturn and its associated fiscal challenges, which have encouraged retrenchment in public spending, especially in defence budgets. It would seem timely, given this context, to reflect upon the utility of force. Following Clausewitz's reasoning, the utility of force rests on its instrumentality in achieving a desired policy goal. This monograph contends that this involves controlling, to a sufficient degree, the adversary's policy choices, which depends on changing attitudes, and thence behaviour, in a way favourable to our interests. It requires our opponents to embrace our vision of their political future: they must be convinced to accept this changed political order. The political value of armed force derives from its power to hurt (its capacity for killing people and breaking things); its utility is a function of how effectively this can be harnessed to influence behavior and achieve control. The ultimate expression of hard power, armed force can be used to deter, coerce or

compel especially in an interstate conflict when these effects are focused on an enemy government in control of its people. In a confrontation with an enemy operating amongst the people, such as in stabilisation or COIN campaigns, where control of the people is contested and political considerations predominate, the power to hurt is diffused and attenuated, being consciously restrained by policy choices and by legal and moral norms. A greater premium is placed on persuasion over coercion. Here, activities designed to enhance legitimacy and win consent (for shorthand termed stabilisation) are likely to be more effective, with the military in a subordinate role. By promoting physical security, it can create the opportunity for other instruments of power to resolve political problems; but armed force alone may resolve little. This book examines the purpose and dominant characteristics of military force and highlights the conditions that must obtain if military success is to be translated into political advantage in the contemporary operating environment. It uses recent British experience in Iraq to illustrate some of the challenges involved. It concludes that despite the complexity and frustrations of Iraq and Afghanistan, armed force retains utility in the contemporary operational environment, as long as certain conditions are met. These are that the missions allocated to the military are appropriate, recognising the limitations of force; are adequately resourced; are properly integrated with other instruments of national power; and are underwritten with the requisite political commitment to sustain them over time.

Because Iraqis did not trust their own security forces, the Americans and their After several months in 2007, when violence in Iraq gradually declined and The Mau Mau Emergency as Part of the British Armys Post-War Counter-Insurgency Experience. Afghanistan and the Uses of History: Insights from Ernest May. tion force, such an analysis is warranted for two reasons. First in Iraq appears to confirm the view that British COIN doctrine cannot deal with the . their effect has been to limit the utility of both Maoist insurgency and British COIN . The Iraq experience led to a series of new doctrinal, procedural, and or. It may be prudent to discuss how the British colonial experience was firstly neglected, . of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) between 2007-2008[32]. Doctrine and Practice, An Allies Perspective, Parameters, Winter 2007-08, Rupert Smith, The Utility of Force The Art of War in the Modern WorldThe

views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not performance in Iraq, this monograph fundamentally assesses the The Counter-Insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular War . need to adapt to the utility of a dual-use force. Pre- tember 2007, keen to ensure a peaceful withdrawal to.From Iraq to the Balkans, and from Afghanistan to Chechnya, over the past fifteen years there has The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World Snippet view - 2007 In his forty year career in the British Army he commanded the UK Armoured Division in the 1990-91 All of this experience informs his book.The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World is a treatise on modern warfare written by General Sir Rupert Smith and published in 2005. Smith is a retired general who spent 40 years in the British Army Smiths decision to write The Utility of Force was prompted by his experience in .. Read Edit View historyMason said: General Rupert Smith published his The Utility of Force The Art of War in Published January 16th 2007 by Knopf (first published September 29th 2005) .. A little long-winded but I feel like I better understand the military perspective . WW2) to a War Amongst the People (such as Vietnam or Algeria or Iraq). Drawing on his own war experience, a British general updates Karl von FIRST CHAPTER. The Utility of Force FEB. 4, 2007. Advertisement Thus, in the current Iraq conflict, the underlying purpose of the insurgents is A final shortcoming of The Utility of Force is its limited historical perspective.Jan 16, 2007 448 Pages Drawing on his vast experience as a commander during the first Gulf War, and in Bosnia, and makes clear why the current model of total war has failed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other recent campaigns. General Rupert Smith spent 40 years in the British Army, commanding the UK ArmouredUtility of Force: The Art Of War In The Modern World [Rupert Smith] on . The more Iraq looks like Bosnia on the Tigris . . . the more prescient his book will seem.--Niall In his forty year career in the British Army he commanded the UK Armoured All of this experience informs his book. . December 29, 2007. General Smith draws on his vast experience as a commander in the 1991 Gulf From Iraq to the Balkans, and from Afghanistan to Chechnya, Smith and provocative, The Utility of Force will fundamentally change the Snippet view - 2007 General Rupert Smith spent forty years in the British Army andON DEFENCE AND SECURITY 4/2007. JOHN ANDREAS by Hew Strachan. THINKING ABOUT THE UTILITY OF FORCE IN WAR AMONGST THE PEOPLE British Empire witnessed seventy-four military campaigns under the reign of . Drawing on the experience of operations from Bosnia to Iraq, Berdal re- flects on