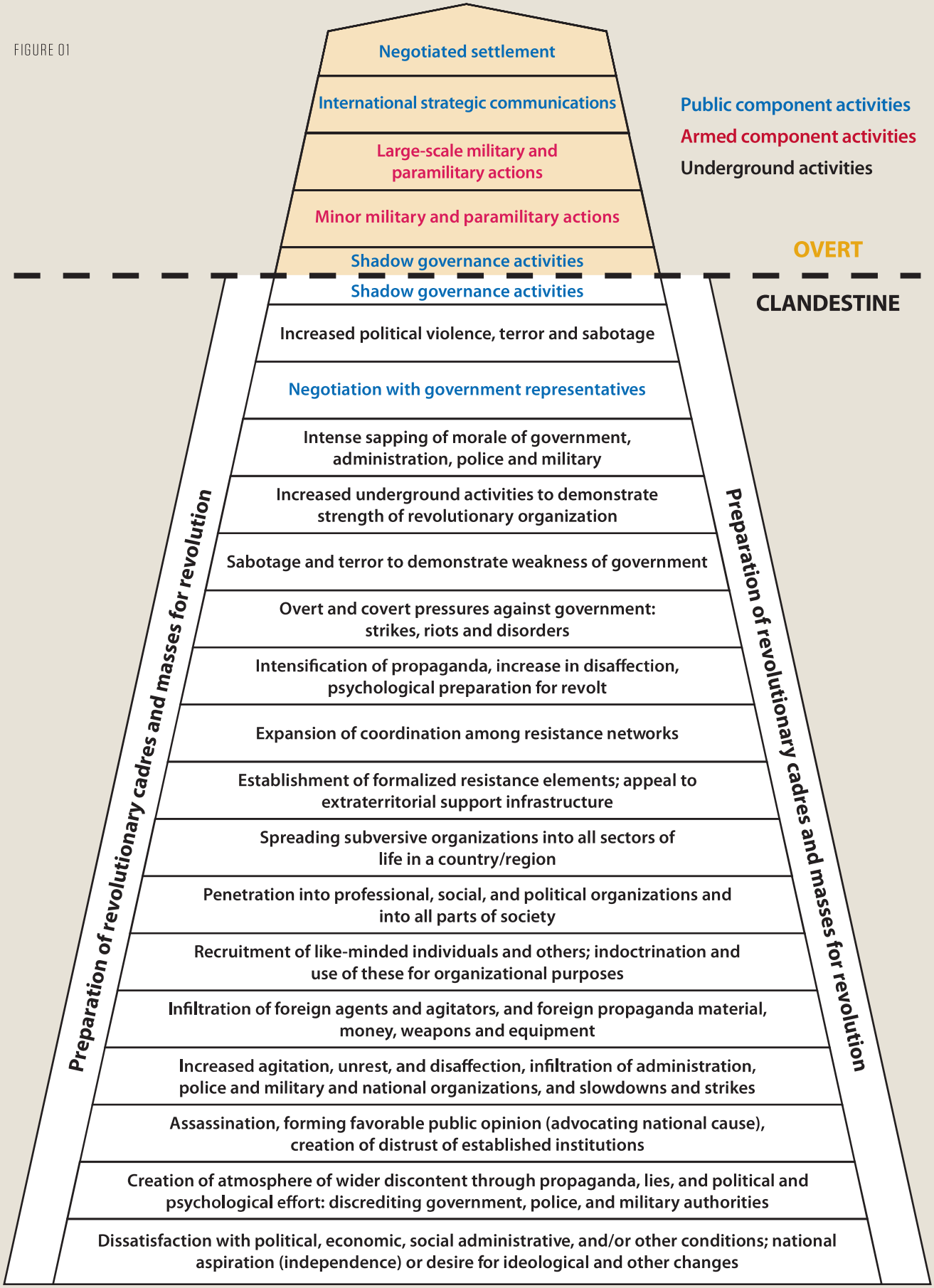
FIGURE 01



SORO RESISTANCE PYRAMID

THE SORO RESISTANCE PYRAMID CHALLENGED

Critical observations and questions on a classic.

BY JEFFREY HASLER

INTRODUCTION

For decades, serious students of resistance and unconventional warfare have regarded the Special Operations Research Office Resistance and Insurgency Pyramid as a classic model of how to think about resistance. Appearing in 1963, it has influenced Special Forces and other thinkers and practitioners of UW for decades. Its enduring usefulness is apparent by its inclusion in the United States Army Special Operations Command recent 2012 updates to the SORO studies, and by its inclusion in current official Army UW doctrine.

As useful as it is, it is time to look at the model with loyal, but questioning, opposition. Where the model is useful in conveying the important gestalt that many activities typical of and necessary to resistance must be done in a clandestine manner or have clandestine aspects, it is simultaneously simplistic, redundant and demonstrably mistaken throughout its entire structure. A great many things below the overt-clandestine "waterline" which purport to show a division between those activities which are "clandestine" and those which are "overt" are superficial, assume too-narrow of a focus, suit only a specific example or are arguably misleading or inarguably wrong.

To the extent SOF and Department of Defense doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel and facilities and U.S. government policy decisions are made based on conclusions internalized from the model — and that model and those conclusions are in error — our resistance-related DOTMLPF and policy decisions risk being fallacious. It is therefore necessary to look at the model with a fresh and critical eye.

THE PROBLEM

The classic model (with minor updates as included in ARIS and UW doctrine) is presented in *Figure 01* "SORO Resistance Pyramid." In *Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare* 2nd edition this figure is labeled "Underground Operations."[01] In *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies* 2nd edition it is labeled "Covert and Overt Functions of an Underground."[02] Seeing the model in terms of "undergrounds" instead of "resistance" is understandable in both cases because they are predicated on the assertion stated in *Undergrounds* that "the report's main thesis — that the underground part of an insurgency is the *sine qua non* of all such movements – is demonstrably accurate today."[03] Why should that assertion be accepted as valid? A more holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon of resistance should be rooted in its political and organizational efforts; not seen primarily through the operational lens of only one of its components.

When one conceives of "an underground," the classic notion is of some who are solely members of a separate component distinct from others. In other words, one is either *in* the underground, or *in* the auxiliary, or *in* the guerrilla (or armed) force or *in* the public component. "Underground" understood like this is a noun. But is that simple model true? Is it not more accurate to say that in doctrine, opinion and academia we have tended to use these nouns as gross generalizations that allow us to crudely model essential functions required in resistance? We "bin" participants of resistance into these structures instead of focusing on required functions; "underground" (and "auxiliary," "armed force" and "public component") should really be emphasized as adjectives. Despite our longstanding traditional view that these functions can be meaningfully delineated by group, they actually represent responsibilities that blur across such groups.

Here are a select few guiding definitional assertions from the preface of *Undergrounds* that drive the work:[04]

- The preface mentions the 1963 study's definition of underground and then states that "*almost every part of this definition deserves examination*."
- The preface observes that lines between legal and illegal have blurred, stating that "*many insurgencies operate simultaneously in the legal, illegal and quasi-legal domains...*"
- It observes that "*likewise, it is hard to find the boundary between clandestine and overt operations because modern insurgencies simultaneously conduct both*."
- It continues to say that "*today it is more likely that the successful insurgency will gain some level of legitimate, open political acknowledgement while simultaneously continuing quasi-legal and illegal activity*."
- It observes that "*modern insurgencies now almost universally include both criminal activity and some form of alliance or cooperation with criminal networks*."

The repeated emphasis on "blurring" seems to support the idea that strict delineations between where a resistance member might be "functionally assigned" are no longer valid.

The preface also makes three decisional statements or assertions that have skewed resistance professionals' understanding:

• First, the study identifies a need to add a "public component" to UW doctrine's three components of underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force. However, because the original study and its authors and the recent study and its authors/sponsors are fixated on the "primacy" of the underground in resistance, the current study authors arbitrarily define the public component as not having any clandestine aspects, stating that *"the public component is different from the underground in that it is not clandestine and most often a legal entity."*[05] This characterization is incongruent with both its own guiding definitional assertions (above) and with reality.

• Second, the study usefully recognizes that the so-called "guerrilla force" component from the classic study (and throughout UW doctrine) needs some qualification to more accurately identify that there is more than one single template for "armed force." Unfortunately, the characterization included is arguable and further complicates understanding, as there are many variations of "armed force" that are not covered in the revised editions.

What the study could have done is describe a more accurate spectrum of what could be called "irregular armed force." Such force could be contrasted with standing conventional state armies and state legally constituted police forces. It should include everything on a spectrum from the individual resistor's single, criminal act of assault/mayhem/murder/assassination through small-scale element illegal acts of violence such as rioting, ambushes, raids, bank robberies, kidnappings, sabotage, bombing etc., up through a progressively larger scale of similar actions, and finally up-to-and-including relatively large-scale and extensive guerrilla army actions. The "armed force" discussion could have articulated that the function of "armed force" is only sometimes the popular and mythical notion of the guerrilla on horseback in the forest. "Armed force" is every bit a function of violence wielded by members of an "underground," "auxiliary," "guerrilla force" or "public component."

Regrettably, the study contrived a much less necessary contrast between so-called "armed components" denoting regular-like standing military organizations and a so-called "guerrilla component" differentiated respectively by so-called "regular and irregular organization and tactics."[06]

• Third, the single most egregious decisional statement or assertion is the final characterization in the preface. Saying the original work focused on underground functions, it says the latter work "*includes a look at the function of leadership specifically.*"[07] The elaborating sentences that follow are quite telling; in some ways inadvertently for the *Undergrounds* authors.

"*The leaders of insurgent, resistance and revolutionary movements often create or emerge from the underground. Underground leaders provide strategic and tactical direction, organization, and the ideology of the movement. They perform those functions within the unique and compelling context of their country, culture and political economy. How they manage the often conflicting trends that define the framework of their insurgent movements in large measure determines ultimate success and failure*."[08]

These studies are explicitly about the underground, but it is unfortunate to so easily recognize the obvious bias implicit in both stating and implying that everything strategically critical to resistance emanates from the underground component. The preface's own statement belies this foundational assumption. "*Leaders…often create or emerge from the underground.*" If leaders *create* undergrounds then they *emerge* from outside of them; logically one cannot be borne of that which he himself begets. This allows that leaders who provide strategic and tactical direction, organization, movement ideology, and manage that which will determining ultimate success or failure – do not equate to the underground itself. The underground is established to perform certain functions required by the resistance leadership; it is not automatically and inherently the root from which all other manifestations and ideology of the movement grow.

Unfortunately, the authors begin with leadership as the subject, but then transition the subject to "underground leaders." They automatically equate leadership with underground. Note that the authors acknowledge that resistance (and its prospects for success) exists within a larger "*compelling context of… country, culture and political economy,*" but they choose to narrow the actors from resistance leadership writ large — eschewing the strategic political leadership which could exist anywhere — to very specifically underground leadership.

METHOD

To highlight some of the problems inherent in overemphasizing the role of undergrounds within the context of resistance as a whole, the author developed an examination model to deconstruct the classic SORO Pyramid by examining each line separately, in order, starting from the bottom of the pyramid and working towards the model's explicit end-state tip at the top of the pyramid.

The examination model constructed to conduct this analysis is shown in *Figure 02 (see page 14)*. This examination model is not intended as a replacement for the classic SORO model. Nor does it purport to comprehensively include every consideration germane to resistance or to any specific support to resistance event. It is simply a tool to highlight and consider a few select areas of inquiry: (1) to help test the validity of long-standing assumptions about the overt, low-visibility, clandestine and covert aspects of resistance-related activities; (2) to identify the spectrum of actors who might undertake or employ these activities; (3) to challenge the spatial placement of activities in the linear logic of the classic model; (4) to illustrate a logically-proper contextual relationship of political activity subsuming all DIMEFIL and subsuming subversion, which itself subsumes sabotage and other activities. Finally, following Clausewitz, if "war is politics (or policy) by other means,"[09] then it follows that resistance "war" and STR is a sub-class of what is fundamentally and inescapably a political act. Therefore the model (5) emphasizes the dominant and ubiquitous role of political activities, and correspondingly de-emphasizes what many would traditionally regard as "military-centric" activities.

The resistance professional community has a 21st century emphasis on seeking to better its understanding

of, and capabilities in, enduring engagement and preparation in the so-called "steady state," "phase zero," 'left-of-bang" or "left-of-the-beginning," etc. Such capabilities can provide early understanding, strategic shaping and proactive policy options that promise enhanced security, legitimacy and economy. It therefore seems particularly appropriate to emphasize the variety of *political* aspects in the so-called policy "Gray Zone" between a small, homegrown resistance suffering local disgruntlements that the USG may be unaware of, or only dimly aware of, through the long and wide resistance spectrum of limited stakes, interests and involvement, up-to-and-including deliberate support for a major, deadly resistance capable of taking down an entire nation.

Each item on every line of the pyramid was considered and observations and distinctions were made. Questions for the community's consideration and comment have been raised, and colored-in or annotated on the examination model where appropriate to the activity. The colors and annotations yielded reportable patterns. Readers can use the examination model provided to arrive at findings similar to those in *Figure 02*.

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS-GENERAL (LIMITED TO TOP 10):

1. The line between so-called "overt" and so-called "clandestine" is inaccurate and should be removed.

2. Every human being acts clandestinely. Sometimes humans act clandestinely to hide relationships, interactions, their own deliberate actions or the actions of others, expected effects, etc. Most of the time these clandestine activities are not very important. Sometimes they are done for very serious reasons; up-to-and-including matters of war/peace, tyranny/freedom and life/death.

3. Activities attributed solely to the underground are in fact conducted by many different kinds of actors in all resistance components.

4. There is a conceptual tension between differing interpretations of "underground." The SORO/ARIS studies contend that undergrounds are essentially equated to "leadership." An opposing school — represented by this article — contends that "underground" is only a function of a required method of operation; that is, in certain specific circumstances, only by conducting some aspects of activities in a clandestine (and/or covert) manner will it be possible to conduct those activities at all.

5. Resistance does not equate to underground.

6. Clandestine does not equate to underground.

7. Leadership does not equate to underground.

8. The overwhelming majority of resistance activities are political (persuasion and organizational), not "military."

9. A large percentage of the activities shown as "clandestine" can, and are done, by legal, standing organizations.

10. The examination model figure showing where an activity is located horizontally on the pyramid graphic in the SORO model in almost all cases could be represented by a vertical line, as the activity in most cases can be conducted anywhere along that process.

SO WHAT?

- ***If*** we conceive the essence of resistance as an underground as the SORO Pyramid in the Human Factors and Undergrounds studies do — and the "underground" is effectively equated to "leadership" — ***then*** this will support an emphasis on advising the "underground" versus advising the "resistance."
- ***If*** we accept the further assertion conveyed in the SORO Pyramid that the overwhelming preponderance of activities that comprise a resistance phenomenon are "clandestine" without looking carefully at what each activity comprises, ***then*** this will support an overemphasis on "clandestinity."
- Correspondingly, ***if*** our notion of "underground" conjures an image of flesh-and-blood people in an organization who are always a hair-trigger away from exposure and destruction by an omnipotent and omnipresent state — ***then*** we will tend to make DOTMLPF decisions that emphasize techniques to physically conceal people and activities.
- ***If*** we accept the parallel assertion by many in the resistance professional community that clandestine activity cannot be done without sensitive activities, ***then*** this will support a conception of resistance and support to resistance that emphasizes the tool bag of sensitive activities and those officially sanctioned to use that tool bag as the vanguard of such an effort.
- ***However, if*** the Human Factors and Undergrounds studies are in error — if underground does not equate to leadership and undergrounds are not the sine qua non of resistance — ***then*** understanding of resistance requires a broader, more unifying context which explains it; the underlying political and organizational activities that are fundamental activities of human interaction since time immemorial.
- ***Moreover, if*** the emphasis on "clandestine" is dissected to show that in the majority of activities and specific examples it is the intent — the hidden agenda — that is most often clandestine, and most activities are a combination of overt, low visibility, clandestine and sometimes covert aspects, ***then*** this downplays the centrality of physical concealment and the associated sensitive activities tool bag to a relatively rare application of techniques to very specific and high-risk situations.
- ***The challenge in short: Resistance is primarily a function of political activity; not a function of "clandestinity."*** By overemphasizing the role of what the SORO Pyramid denotes as "clandestine," and by overemphasizing the role of the underground as the Human Factors and Undergrounds studies do, the resistance community has morphed into believing that resistance should be seen primarily through the lens of sensitive activities, related subjects and derivative actors.
- Instead, resistance should be seen through the eyes of its leadership, and any prospective STR should be seen holistically through the eyes of the policy maker, senior executive civilian leader and commander; not the subordinate staff section or special office for highly-specialized specific problem solving. "The sensitive activities 'tail' should not "wag the UW 'dog.'"

1: Essential Activity or Event in Resistance Development *(Example: Dissatisfaction with political, economic, social administrative and/or other conditions; national aspiration [independence] or desire for ideological and other changes)*

Target Country Activities

D(P) ☐ I ☐ M ☐ E ☐ F ☐ I ☐ L ☐

Direct Activities

Target Country Political Activities

Government Supporting

Legal Parties Political Activities - Strengthening Government

Legal Parties Political Activities - Neutral/Apathetic

Legal Parties Political Activities - Loyal but Effectively Subversive

Can these activities *only* be done by a resistance underground? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If clandestine activity is required, is most of that necessary activity essentially "ASOT" ☐ Yes ☐ No

If clandestine activity is required, is most of that activity essentially " political activity" ☐ Yes ☐ No

Underground

Auxiliary

Guerrilla Force /Armed Force

Public Component

Political Cadres /Leadership

Area/Sector Commands

Area/Sector Complex

Shadow Government

Mass Base (Populace)

Government in Exile

Overt

Low-vis

Clan

Covert

Primarily Political

Primarily Organizational

Primarily Operational

Primarily Illegal Actions - Non-Paramilitary

Primarily Illegal Actions - Paramilitary

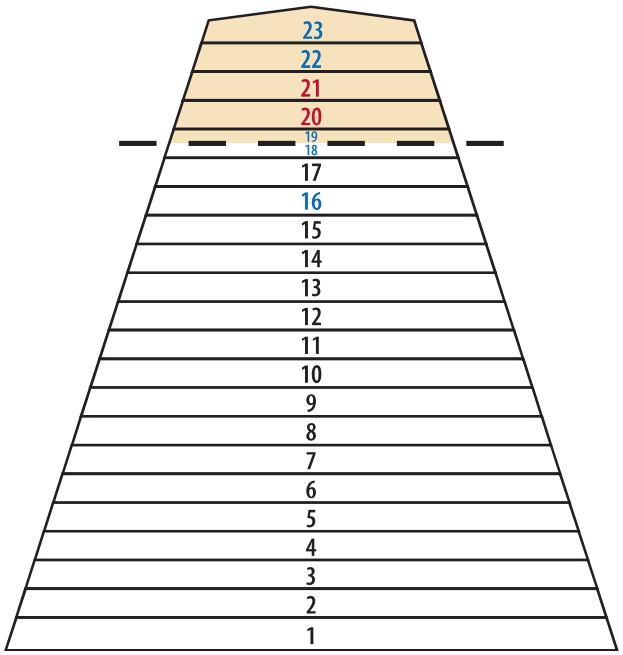
Primarily External Actor

Leadership .....
Intelligence Gathering
Political Activity.....
Political Activity.....
Political Activity.....
Political Activities .....
Political Support .....
Sabotage .....
Sabotage .....
Organizational Support .....
Organizational Support .....
Organizational Support .....
Organizational Support .....
Organizational Support .....
Operational Support .....

Note: The widely used model for USG instruments of power categorized as diplomatic, informational, military and economic, rendered as "DIME," or its sometimes expanded version adding financial, intelligence and law–enforcement, rendered as "DIMEFIL," is for this article modified a second time. The D in DIME and DIMEFIL is "diplomatic," which is only one subset of all that would be considered "po–

FIGURE 02 (Above)
Examination model SORO Pyramid.
HASLER APR16

FIGURE 03 (Right)
The specific finding and observations section starts with the bottom of the SORO Resistance Pyramid and works through all 23 levels.



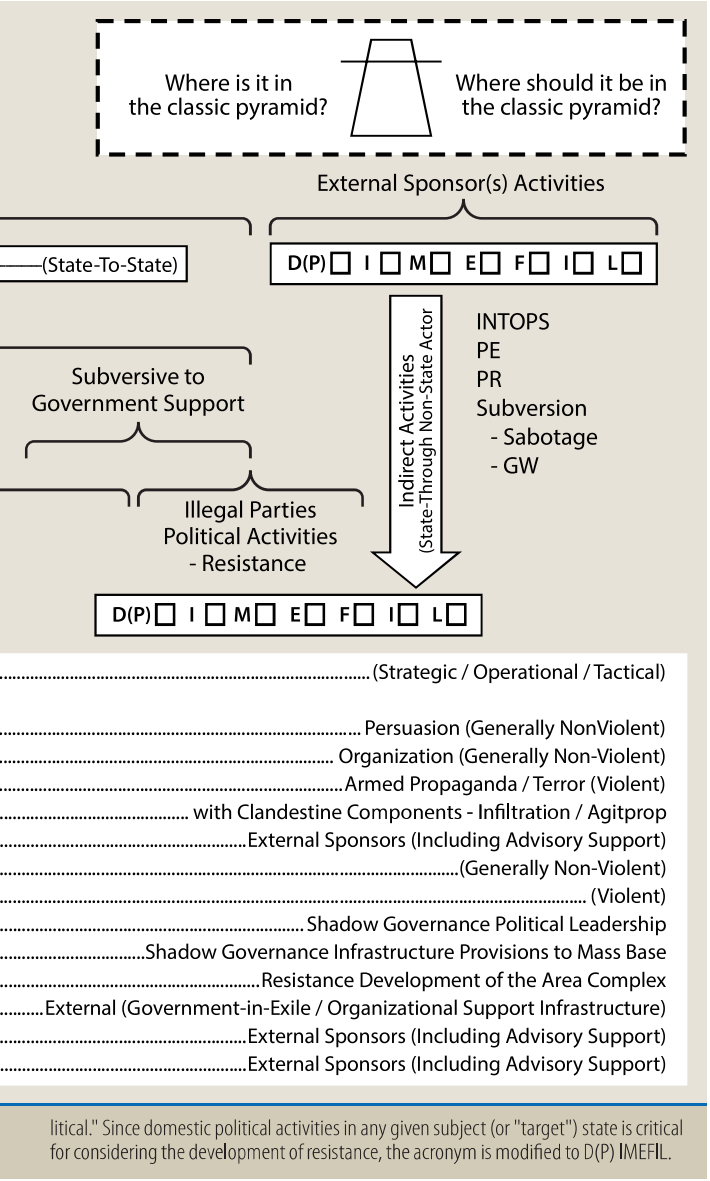
FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS- SPECIFIC

starting at the bottom of the SORO Resistance Pyramid, see figure 03

1

1. Dissatisfaction with political, economic, social administrative and/or other conditions; national aspiration (independence) or desire for ideological and other changes

This is the base condition of all states. Grievances are addressed within the legal system allowed using formal and informal political persuasion. Political organizations exist, and all organizations and individuals have a political point-of-view which they represent, defend and/or advance. Human affairs naturally comprise a mix of overt, low-visibility, clandestine and covert activities. All "components" of resistance exist in civilianized form. Even the ability to use arms and conduct violence is present in all actors albeit in a dormant, force-in-reserve posture. This layer is not only *not* clandestine,



litical." Since domestic political activities in any given subject (or "target") state is critical for considering the development of resistance, the acronym is modified to D(P) IMEFIL.

it is not the "purview" of, and should not be seen as a function of, the underground.

2

2. Creation of atmosphere of wider discontent through propaganda, lies, and political and psychological effort: discrediting government, police and military authorities

Whatever the initial spark of resistance, an early generic purpose of a resistance pursuing goals is the exploitation of the prevailing base atmosphere. Resistance will seek ways to widen discontent using propaganda, lies and political and psychological effort; discrediting government, police and military authorities; forming favorable opinions in key target audiences to support resistance goals; fomenting distrust of established institutions; provoking agitation, unrest and disaffection; organizing and supporting strikes, riots and disorders; sapping morale of government, administration, police and military members; generalized sabotage; select and carefully synchronized specific acts of sabotage, terror, assassinations, bombings and other political violence. This "creation" of effects is the key "subversion azimuth" that characterizes resistance.

Note that the description above is largely synthesized from the activities spread throughout the pyramid. Any of these activities can occur at any point during the course of a resistance effort. They will be limited or expanded in scale and effectiveness as a function of the conditions specific to that resistance context. Note, too, that in the pyramid there are only three instances of the verb to "create" or its equivalent. This means that the SORO model reflects expansion or replication versus creation of wholly new activities. The height and width of the model is largely a sedimentary pile of layers of repeated similar activities. To the extent that the proportions of what is purported to be "clandestine" and "underground" is visually influential it is, in fact, largely an optical illusion of redundant (or continuous) content piled higher and deeper.

Although most of these activities at some specific times, and some of these activities at most times, will require some clandestine aspects to execute, they are inherently political and organizational functions and effects. They are not inherently functions of the need to act in a clandestine manner. Therefore they do not "belong" to a supposed "class of clandestine activities." They are not the purview of the underground.

3

3. Assassination, forming favorable public opinion (advocating national cause), creation of distrust of established institutions

These are four separate, dissimilar things or ideas which should not be lumped together.

3a. Assassination

This is clearly a violent, illegal political (and operational) activity. However, there are nuances as to how and when it occurs, and this activity provides a useful illustrative example of how activities and actors do not fall neatly into contrived bins. Every act of assassination requires individual or conspiratorial secrecy to hide the intent before the action occurs; a (clandestine) concealment of what is to occur before the fact. In most cases a low-visibility posture is preferable upon final approach to the target to minimize the chances of scrutiny and intervention by security forces, passersby, etc. The act itself can be a decidedly overt political one (e.g. Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in 1914). Even when a death is obvious (e.g. car "accidents," "heart attacks," etc.), the actual cause of death may hide the fact that it was a deliberate, clandestine assassination mission. Oftentimes, and for obvious reasons, sponsors are likely to wish to remain unknown (covert). Therefore, overt, low-visibility, clandestine and covert aspects represent a mix of characteristics for activities like assassination; it is not simply a "clandestine" activity.

Nor is the categorization of the actor necessarily clear cut. Consider this realistic example:

Imagine a resistance member "Farmer Joe", a full-time farmer, living in a rural area who transports his goods by truck into the regional town center once a month for sale. In his home

village he is considered an elder whose wisdom and counsel is respected. When times are hard he knows the right people to make sure no one from his village will go hungry, or without shoes, or medicine or a bed. If the government needed someone to speak for the village he would certainly be elected by his neighbors to do so. He can also be trusted to look after village security, has setup a neighborhood watch and has enlisted volunteers to put out fires and run off the occasional predator.

Unbeknownst to the entire village, he can also muster perhaps six others who Are loyal enough to him that they are willing to break the law. In fact, as a small band they have been conducting criminal raids on local landlords' properties to conduct acts of harassing and dispiriting vandalism, sabotage the landlords' vehicles and communications, and to steal whatever they can for immediate use, sale or hide it for later use.

During his monthly trips to town, he stops and talks to select neighbors, friends, acquaintances and business partners. Once in town, a portion of his items are unobtrusively dropped off at a town charity for sorting, packaging and further transport to worthy recipients before taking the bulk of his goods to market. After the market is concluded, he dines or drinks tea with other associates before heading back to his home village. The gathering includes some from the town, some from other towns and regions, and not a few who have business or other interests in even far-flung locales. The farmer relates every relevant and interesting subject and they all agree that some of what they have experienced and hope will be relayed to the farmer's associates on his return trip to his home. They make contingencies for alternate places and times should they not be able to make it next time. They make sure they know a couple of ways to get back in touch. Before he leaves, the farmer gives a list of hard-to-find items that his village needs, as well as giving a share of the proceeds from the sale of his goods to the far-flung associates.

On his way home, he stops off at select spots to share the news and drop off some prized acquisitions from town. He also pays attention to what he observes on this return route; looking for vehicles that might have followed him from town. Once at home, he musters his small band, retrieving some of the dynamite he keeps on hand for removing stumps. He ensures everyone is armed and leads them over paths in the forest to some hidey holes for more dynamite and equipment, before heading to a bridge over a deep ravine. After placing lookouts, he and a helper place the dynamite on the bridge and wait for a text messages that will tell him when some government VIP will return to the capitol via the bridge. As he crosses it, the dynamite is detonated; the bridge collapses and the VIP is dead. They then quietly return to village life.

Farmer Joe is an assassin. He is not really conducting activities where others can't because of state repression, so by that criteria he doesn't technically belong to the underground. However, one could argue he is at least connected to what we think of as "the underground." He is also an auxiliary, a member of the "shadow government," and most definitely a member of an "armed force." He is an intelligence collector, a transport agent, a security organizer, part of a communications network, contributor and patron of the local area complex, etc. His many roles cut across all components of the resistance. It further shows that assassination and clandestine activities do not "belong" to the underground.

3b. Forming favorable public opinion

Every means of conveying a message from one human to another is a method of forming opinions. These methods are a normal, routine and inseparable part of human life – not the specialized purview of undergrounds. There is also a significant difference between what this activity means at the tactical and strategic levels. As a tactical concern, this should connote a list of techniques. At the strategic level, this can be interpreted as an objective (or objectives). Tactically, Farmer Joe is engaging in muddy boots, retail communication to the "public," which is a function partly of his individual interpersonal skills, and partly what he represents as an exemplar of a political position. Do the raids on local landlords by persons unknown contribute to a local, favorable public opinion or can such actions be shaped to do so? How does or could the assassination of a government VIP in some provincial locale affect public opinion in the regional town, the capitol or to international audiences? How do open, legal indigenous political parties, apolitical opportunists or foreign meddlers exploit the events? "Resistance" in many ways is an art. Most of these permutations have nothing to do with the underground, and apart from the clandestine nature of "hidden agendas" have nothing to do with being clandestine.

3c. Advocating national cause

This specific goal is out-of-place in a generic list of activities because not all grievances and attempts to address or leverage them are "national" in nature. It would be much more appropriate to outline how different narratives are used by the resistance to address the motivating concerns of specific target audiences, and how all such approaches properly synchronized contribute to resistance initial, intermediate and strategic objectives. The Marxist Viet Cong example of downplaying the overall Communist national objectives and emphasizing local grievances is instructive.

3d. Creation of distrust of established institutions

This is the second of only three examples throughout the entire model where a deliberate act of "creation" as opposed to exploitation of something is stated. Are there subtle differences between leveraging and creating for resistance cadre? In any case, this is redundant with layer #2 above.

4

4. Increased agitation, unrest, and disaffection, infiltration of administration, police and military and national organizations, and slowdowns and strikes

These are three separate, dissimilar things or ideas that should not be lumped together. If there is a logical order to these three activities, infiltration should be listed first as the ability to foment the other activities are often subsequent to having actors manipulate organizations from the inside. The extent to which this is not true – that it is not insider manipulation but a typical political agreement to collude for mutual objectives – reinforces the

assertion that a majority of resistance "warfare" is less a matter of "clandestine organization" and use of "sensitive activities" than it is pedestrian political activity.

4a. Increased agitation, unrest, and disaffection are redundant with previous activities

Not new activities; redundant with previous activities.

4b. Infiltration of administration, police and military and national organizations

Infiltration is an important, signature activity of resistance to conduct espionage. Infiltration to conduct active operations such as preparation for sabotage, shaping agendas, co-opting leadership at all levels, targeting of opposition, etc., is also fundamental to resistance. The longstanding history of Communist resistance experience is a treasure trove of examples for these techniques. Oftentimes it is easier to infiltrate existing organizations in society than it is to create front groups.

The question for this article is to what degree is this "underground" or "clandestine" activity? *What is the difference between "infiltrate" and "join?"* If John Smith has radical "left-wing" political convictions but hides these by joining an organization whose charter is to further "right-wing" causes, has he not "infiltrated?" His joining is entirely overt, but he may want to keep his overt membership low visibility. If someone or some entity dispatched Smith on a "mission" to join the rightist organization for some purpose, then the sponsor of that relationship may want the relationship to be concealed. So, Smith's joining of this group is (or could be) overt and low visibility membership, with a clandestine hidden agenda, and possibly covert sponsorship all at the same time. *There is nothing essentially "underground" about it.* Instead of Smith, think again of Farmer Joe. The reader has already seen that his activities cut across many components and many roles. If Joe, as the de facto village headman and security organizer is invited to join the local government police auxiliary, is this an act of infiltration? Is he doing so as a member of the "underground?"

4c. Slowdowns and strikes

Standard, routine political activity. The operational effects desired by standard political activity of such activities and how the timing of such effects are part of a coherent, forward-looking synchronized operational plan is a matter of legal, *standard political operational art*. When the goal of a given political purpose is "resistance," we can sometimes claim that it is also "resistance" operational art. The clandestine nature of the hidden agenda is more fundamentally a function of political activity than it is of a resistance component "underground." None of this routine political and organizational activity requires sensitive activities to understand or to be effective.

5

5. Infiltration of foreign agents and agitators, and foreign propaganda material, money, weapons and equipment

These are six separate, dissimilar subjects or ideas – similar only by the qualifying verb "infiltrate" – which should not be lumped together. To the extent that there is some linear logic to how these subjects are ordered, from the perspective of being perceived as provocative by all parties the order of introduction is likely to be this: money; propaganda; equipment (non-lethal); foreign agents (non-violent); agitators; foreign equipment (lethal); weapons; and foreign agents (violent).

This use of "infiltration" here differs from the previous discussion where "infiltration" largely meant "join." Here the meaning is closer to the Army definition (paraphrased) to move undetected through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage.[11] Both meanings are used in UW doctrine.

Infiltration of something foreign does not denote "external support" in the sense that the reader might assume there is external sponsorship. It can simply mean foreign-sourced. A criminal organization that buys a bulk shipment of cell phones assembled perhaps in Japan for an American company, shipped upon completion on South Korean cargo ships into Hong Kong for sale to anyone who can meet the asking price cannot be said to be receiving "external support" from Japan, the U.S., South Korea or Hong Kong.

The activity of "infiltration" is an operation that may have many component parts and many disparate actors. An incomplete list of such considerations includes: Who identifies what or who may be desirable to infiltrate and for what intended purpose? Who makes the decisions to take the risks and bear the expenses of infiltration from the perspective of the resistance, the subject provider(s), and the subject sponsor(s) — if any. Who develops the overall infiltration plan? Who develops the plan for each subordinate segment of the larger operational plan? Who arranges and executes payments for that infiltration? This may be different persons making several separate payments to various segments of the operation? Does some or all of the payment mechanism have to be hidden from authorities, and if so who constructs these transfer mechanisms?

Who or what will do the actual transport or transfer of the subject? Who will stage the subject on the far external side of a border, the near external side, and the near internal side? Who is responsible for transporting the subject deeper into denied area? If the subject is to be broken-down, reconfigured, re-packaged, cached, stored, concealed, etc., who is responsible for this? If the stored subject becomes an asset of the area complex, how does this transfer take place and who manages area complex assets? If the manner of concealment contains a misinformation plan who is responsible for developing it, approving it and executing it? How do all of these actors securely communicate? Who provides security during each segment and individual step of executing this infiltration plan? If the subject is a person or item that must eventually be retrieved who does all of these considerations in reverse for exfiltration...and so on?

This list shows that even a simple concept such as infiltrating (something or someone) into a denied area can be expected to be a complex operation with many moving and stationary parts and many, many participants. It requires an operational plan, approved by a significant leader, in accordance with a larger resistance (or other) strategic and political policy plan. None of these need be in an "under-

ground." Does such an operation require an underground operating clandestinely and using sensitive activities? In some cases the answer is "Yes, it can't be done without it," but it is not always the case and does not apply to most of the rhetorical questions raised above. *Not every aspect of such an operation is planned, approved or executed by members of an underground; it is at first an operational plan that may or may not include some underground elements for specific purposes.* Nor is smuggling something — even across an unfriendly international border with potentially deadly consequences if caught – "sensitive activities" in the intelligence community jargon meaning of the term. To assert otherwise is to ignore millennia of human experience.

Moreover, situations vary. The reader has already seen that the level of what "underground" participation is involved is blurred by the Farmer Joe example. In addition, variables of urban/rural proportions; developed/undeveloped; relative lawfulness or unlawfulness; the state of electronic commerce; access to coastline and means of transport; the state security posture and many other variables will affect the 5Ws of how an infiltration will occur. Infiltration does not "belong" to the underground.

5a. Infiltration of foreign agents

The term foreign "agent" is too broad and too vague because the specific characteristics of each possible type of agent presents different risk profiles and challenges to execute. Here are four of several possible examples:

1. Is the foreign agent an *intelligence operative* of a foreign power, responding to a resistance appeal for external assistance, come to assess the target country's strengths and weaknesses and to conduct negotiations with and assessments of the resistance itself regarding the *feasibility of potential support at a national policy level?* Espionage against the target country and possible collusion with individuals regarded by that country as enemies of the state are both illegal and arguably acts of war. And yet, this foreign intelligence operative may enter the country through the capitol airport, with a passport, with a target country-approved visa, for business with local citizens approved and monitored by the state, permitted some leisure activities and travel while in country, and officially stamped out of the country by state border officials before his visa expires. Let's assume one or more of those meetings for business included discussions of mutual interest between the foreign government representative and a legal local political figure who is not a member of the resistance but is clandestinely sympathetic to and willing to relay messages from the foreign government to the resistance. From the perspective of the resistance, what of this is "underground" activity? The local politician is a member of a legal political party. To the extent he can be identified with the resistance at all, he could be considered a member of a "public component" or as an auxiliary who provides communication or intelligence.

2. What if one of the primary organizations involved in legal opposition to the state is a church, synagogue, mosque or temple (CSMT)? Assume this CSMT is aligned with the resistance organization only at the senior-leader decision-maker levels and only because the two organizations share some similar political outlooks and objectives. However, the rank-and-file priest, pastor, rabbi, imam, etc. (PPRIe), do their work for and among the populace that the resistance is trying to mobilize. What if a PPRIe from another country was invited to travel to visit the CSMT in the target country as a *visiting scholar* and give lectures on Gene Sharp's methods of non-violent resistance — in the context of larger CSMT doctrine – to other PPRIe of the CSMT? What of this is "underground" activity? The organization is known and legal, and even known by the state to be in opposition to it up to some tolerable threshold. The visiting PPRIe is known openly as a foreigner, a member of an organization is at least partially resistant to it, in this case has a reputation for being an authority on non-violent resistance methods, and can be expected to teach such methods to others in the tolerated opposition organization. By giving such instruction he is engaging in a kind of cadre building that is essential to the CSMT method of organizational growth and doctrinal strength. How is this "underground" activity?

3. What if the "foreign agent" is an *independent, non-government-affiliated technical expert* in telecommunications invited and paid by an existing resistance organization to improve its communications equipment and procedures and advise on target country X's communications weaknesses. If the expert is smuggled across the border into some hinterland resistance base area and works openly inside the security cordon provided by the armed component at that resistance base, what about this infiltration is "underground?"

4. What if the "foreign agent" is a *USG military advisor*, sent in by the USG to assess an existing resistance to determine the feasibility of USG support to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives at an *operational level*. If in this case the target country state security posture was so restrictive that it was not worth the risk to attempt sending the advisor into a major city or town, but only allowed movement into relatively remote, sparsely populated areas, what role is the underground playing in his infiltration? Imagine if the advisor was to infiltrate over a rural border to meet with the aforementioned Farmer Joe. The same question applies: "What part of this operation is 'underground?'" A simple border crossing can — at least sometimes — be a simple tactical operation. Moving on discrete paths known only to locals and secured by locals does not usually require highly-specialized techniques or sleight-of-hand maneuvers. The skills to secure a visitor out of sight, in a remote meeting place is no more advanced than the standard skills of a hunter or bootlegger.

And what of the assessment? In only a tiny minority of times is the USG advisor likely to be afforded the opportunity to witness all that Farmer Joe knows, is capable of, and is able to touch. In an even smaller percentage of that tiny minority of times will the USG advisor possess the physical appearance, language skills and cultural believability to travel along all of the indigenous networks that Farmer Joe knows. Although certain segments are easier than others – accompanying an ambush party, cache detail or select specific meetings with other resistance personnel, for example — in practically all

cases such comprehensive accompanied travel over the whole of these networks is not going to happen. What difference does it really make then whether the USG advisor is secreted into some megalopolis basement which he then cannot leave, or whether he is hidden out on some farm from where he can only travel in limited distances on a small portion of the resistance net, and then only at times completely controlled by the resistance itself. How much of this advisory activity is "underground?"

Finally, this inquiry doesn't even address the resistance's overriding concern for its own security. What resistance is going to expose its entire operation to an outsider: a foreigner, an American who from their perspective likely can't be trusted? The initial contact between resistance representatives and the USG may have happened months ago in Geneva, and the details of what advisor would enter and who he would meet and when and where and how were all worked out in negotiations conducted in various places, so by the time the advisor receives the order to conduct the mission he is focused on that link-up like a surgeon working within a sterilized field. And he links up with… who? The second-in-command of Farmer Joe's armed action band.

After a cooling-off period where he is kept waiting to see if there is any reaction to his presence — and perhaps to gauge the outsider's character - he may then meet with Farmer Joe. Over time — dependent on the variables of each specific situation — the advisor is permitted to witness some of the local tactical actions. He may be afforded an opportunity to meet other leaders and members of the resistance at controlled times and places of the resistance organization's choosing. He should attempt to outline the capabilities of the resistance to the extent he is taken into their confidence. And yet, the likelihood of this advisor tracing the same pattern of life covered by Joe is unlikely in the extreme; let alone networks higher up in the resistance leadership. What he is invited to accompany and see locally and tactically, what he is permitted to know from interviews and discussions with Joe and others, the occasional observation of a network segment here and a specific resistance action there, is probably the extent of his "infiltration" into a position where he can understand the resistance. How much of this activity is "underground?"

5b. Infiltration of foreign agitators

A foreign agitator is a very specific kind of agent; one that is likely to be used sparingly because observable rabble-rousing by foreigners should be relatively easy to spot and suppress. Even foreigners who share the goals of indigenous resistance population may lack perceived legitimacy. Given the increased profile and associated risks, why would a resistance employ a foreign agitator? If the intent is that the agitator is not to conduct man-in-the-street agitation himself, but rather to teach the methods of agitation, then he is being infiltrated to be an instructor, not an agitator per se. If he is being infiltrated for his "foreignness" then that is not primarily a function of his agitation skills but the messaging effect of his presence.

Imagine a legal, indigenous opposition political party clandestinely and covertly bringing outsiders into the country to foment trouble anticipating an overactive crackdown by the state. If messaged adroitly, such reactive state repression might inflame public opinion into greater upheaval and political mobilization, which might lead to pressuring the state to make policy changes favored by the original sponsoring party. This would represent a tactical use of "foreign agitators" to affect strategic (political) change. If the primary engine of change is public mass action, and the spark is events that must be witnessed and responded to, then we should acknowledge that only specific parts of this phenomenon is "underground;" such as the sponsorship, ultimate purpose and some of the handlers.

5c. Infiltration of foreign propaganda material

The definition of propaganda found in ADRP 1-02, Terms and Military Symbols, is "*any form of adversary communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.*"[12]

"Adversary" is so broad as to include any entity great or small, inchoate or organized, and foreign or domestic. "Any form" includes any phenomenon that can deliver a message. "Designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior" is comprehensive of that which can be influenced in the Human Domain. "Directly or indirectly" is the total possible set of approaches available. The only limits to the meaning of the term are "… to benefit the sponsor…" and "…especially of a biased or misleading nature." However, the sponsor is unspecified, and if it can impact indirectly and in any form, the sponsor will often be unknowable. "Especially biased" is a qualifier that is in the eye-of-the-beholder (or target); it does not have to be reasonable or objectively acknowledged. Moreover, "especially" allows that it is a special type that does not exclude what is not especially "biased;' once again it is and can be effectively anything.

What then is "underground" about the "infiltration of foreign propaganda material?" If the reader is thinking of handbills and leaflets, or pre-recorded programming on thumb drives smuggled in this may fit. But this would appear to be the exception rather than the rule. In an age of cyber communications when digital communications crisscross the planet, flood across almost all borders in ways difficult for regimes to control, and deliberately and more narrowly focused can cross even the most resolutely closed borders, does this make sense? The meaning of "infiltration" is not (only) what it used to be. It is possible that there could be some "infiltrated foreign propaganda material" that is so specifically targeted to gaslight a specific individual or spoof an audience for a very specific purpose and must be delivered in a highly specific and contrived way that it must be clandestinely brought across the border. However, these rarities are likely to be the exceptions which challenge the assumption that this activity should be considered an "underground" activity.

5d. Infiltration of foreign money

"Foreign money" is similar to "foreign propaganda materials" in many ways with regards to what it means to "infiltrate." Infiltration could be bags of bills airdropped

or smuggled across a border on the backs of mules destined for some remote guerrilla base, where it supports their needs. This is a classic vision of what this type of infiltration means.

However, it can also mean operating capital of a foreign / multinational company that chooses to engage in contracts with local entities possibly tied to opposition political parties. It can be money donated to the local, indigenous branches of international religious organizations earmarked for specific constituencies including those underrepresented to, or underserved, neglected or abused by the state; constituencies prepared by circumstance to support those who offer survival and hope. It can be money for criminal enterprises that coincidentally provides useful mechanisms for anti-government contraband. All of the aforementioned can be done by digital transfers.

Is the bureaucrat or bank official hitting the send button or opening the received file a member of the "underground," or is this a routine business activity, done most of the time between open and legitimate institutions that happen millions of times a day? The intended subversive purpose (and / or primary sponsor) of the funds may be hidden. But how is this hidden purpose essentially different from much routine legal political or business activity, or the multifarious methods of illegal or unethical forms of political activity such as cronyism, parochial patronage, influence peddling, graft, embezzlement, etc.? Clandestine activities are typical of human life. To say that this is the "purview of an 'underground'" as *Undergrounds* does is to artificially stovepipe reality.[13]

Money's three classic functions: a store of value, a unit of account and a medium of exchange — can be suspended in the cause of resistance. Examples include representative forms of "money" such as trade in guns, drugs, slaves, livestock, fuel, food or other commodities. The *hawala* system uses delayed, displaced settlements built on personal networks and the honor system. How is the traffic of representative forms of money the purview of an "underground" if they have occurred since human interaction began?

5e. Infiltration of foreign weapons

In probably all cases, the "infiltration" of foreign weapons where infiltration connotes "outside of legal state scrutiny" is illegal, whether it is for resistance, purely criminal or any other purpose. The same airdrop or mule skinner methods come to mind, as do the same merely tactical techniques of smuggling referred to in other examples. Aside from concealing the tactical operation in the manner any patrol would to smuggle in and cache or distribute the weapons, what is "underground" about this standard, routine, relatively straightforward operation?

However, what if "infiltration" is "importation?" What if the weapons are imported with state knowledge, that is "legally," but the final destination, recipient, and / or intended full-time or part-time use is hidden?

Infiltration of weapons does not equate to their immediate use, and this is not a trivial distinction. Each degree of effort has its own risk profile. If weapons are to cross a boundary and be cached somewhere for planned future use, up until such time as their use renders them unable to be further concealed – at least for a brief time segment – what is the difference between weapons and any other equipment? The process of infiltrating weapons is no more difficult or sophisticated than infiltrating "widgets."

What about the relative importance of weapons by time and scale? One pistol or small explosive device in the hands of a lone assassin who manages to kill the head-of-state at the outset of conflict can have strategic effects, whereas infiltrating a freight car full of heavy weapons and massive demolitions to a country that has progressed to a resistance stage of full mobilization and constant large-scale unit actions in direct combat with state forces may be a drop in the bucket of resistance logistics.

5f. Infiltration of foreign equipment

See widgets discussion above. The infiltration of objects is oftentimes no more difficult than standard patrolling procedures in the hinterland, or misplacing a shipment, mistaken transloading of cargo to the wrong hold, falsification or loss of bills of lading, or boxes mysteriously "falling off of a truck" in the megalopolis.

Consideration, too, should be given to the specific nature of the equipment. Much equipment is dual use; equipment useful to a resistance would often not be out of place in any normal civilian setting. In the appropriate context, medical supplies, cell phones, pre-paid debit cards, barrier materials, tools, electrical cable, cameras, radios, computers, binoculars, machine parts, vehicles, etc., etc., are part of the normal background of daily life. Once again, what is clandestine about this is the purpose to which these items may be used; it is more a function of a hidden intention or plan than it is the inherent nature of the items or those who may employ them per se. Farmer Joe is out in the open almost all of the time surrounded by items that can be used in the service of resistance. Provided the items are appropriate for and natural to the context in terms of quality, quantity, origin, newness, etc., a great deal of this infiltration is less secretive than assumed.

6

6. Recruitment of like-minded individuals and others; indoctrination and use of these for organizational purposes

Once again, although they are related, these are three separate activities, and once again, the reader should avoid the assumption that these mostly require techniques more specialized than standard political and organizational activities.

Indoctrination is a continuous matter. One could argue that the most important indoctrination is that which occurs at the initial, mutually recognized accession into a resistance organization. But indoctrination for the committed resistor is ongoing. As a useful parallel consider the following vignette:

A civilian asks to join the Army, the Army accepts him and sends him to basic training for initial indoctrination into what a Soldier is and how to become one. Throughout that Soldier's professional life standards of duty will be constantly

reinforced (indoctrinated) at progressively more advanced levels of knowledge, experience, ability and responsibility. This indoctrination will include standards of behavior for both on and off duty. This continuous indoctrination includes the fundamental principles justifying the Soldier's and organization's role in society and the expected legal and moral parameters of how the Soldier will execute his duties. The indoctrination inculcates an ethic of selfless service to a larger, noble cause. It reinforces subordination to a hierarchy of command. The continuous indoctrination seeks to improve the value of the Soldier individually, teaches him how to work as a member of a unit, how to work according to plans with multiple objectives imbedded in larger contexts, and how to adapt to changing circumstances in the environment. His indoctrination includes his personal responsibility to commit violence against named enemies and inoculates him with the understanding that the full range of his commitment includes the potential ultimate sacrifice for "the cause."

Does the above sketch require trained cadres, a support structure and leaders at many levels to succeed? Absolutely. But how much of the realistic sketch above requires clandestine activity or an "underground?" None, because it is conducted in the open in a lawful manner and in support of the sponsoring indigenous state itself. If this sketch had an iceberg diagram it would be entirely above the waterline of that which can only be done if concealed. However, assuming this pattern generally applies to the indoctrination of a basic resistance member, it is useful to ask how much of this activity really requires an underground to perform. The degree to which clandestine activity is required is proportional to the severity, omnipresence and omniscience of state repression. These exist on a spectrum and "omnipresence" and "omniscience" are difficult to achieve and maintain; and in many ways are actually myths. Much of the time and effort, many of the meetings and discussions, many of the lessons and training, many of the affiliations and many of the repeated and guided rationales for behavior will be done — perhaps discretely — in plain sight

The above example discusses indoctrination only after accession. What about the indoctrination foundation which made the civilian willing to be recruited in the first place? This relates back to and is inseparable from the initial base conditions of the resistance model. The underlying political and philosophical worldview which informs and shapes the individual potential resistor is not — at least initially – the creation of a resistance; it springs from the underlying society and all those who shape it.

Consider the religious example mentioned above in the "foreign advisor" section. The religious organization posits a divine entity utterly apart from the "omniscient and omnipresent" state; often directly and openly at odds with that state. Recruitment of "like-minded individuals" in this case is a cause that largely sells itself. How much of this is natural human political activity and how much can only be done through "specialized techniques" of an "underground?"

What about "recruitment of others" (other-than like-minded). Those who are "like-minded" have a mutually shared understanding like similar visions and objectives. In some sense, they are working together as comrades; they co-operate. The relationship one has with those one recruits but are not "like-minded' — who do not share mutual understanding — is that of employer and employed. The latter are used; they are surrogates for what cannot be done by the sponsor. It is "recruitment" in the manner of a corporate headhunter or general contractor; a contract.

7

7. Penetration into professional, social, and political organizations and into all parts of society

This sedimentary layer is redundant. Penetration can have a nuanced implication of getting into something with prohibitive boundaries. Nevertheless, the essential meaning of this activity is no different from the previous infiltration of other segments of society; "infiltration" more often than not simply meaning to "join." Once again, the near-total preponderance of this activity is standard political and organizational activity and has nothing to do with an "underground." Moreover, the linear phasing of this activity is questionable. Is it not more likely that those with resistance intentions will already be a part of non-security segments of society first as a matter of normal life and routine political activity? Later, after specific objectives are determined which require manipulation of specific groups, is it not more likely that members of society at large who have become radicalized will then seek to gain entry into the security segments of society? As every resistance situation is different, it is probably best to not put them in any linear order.

8

8. Spreading subversive organizations into all sectors of life in a country / region Spreading subversive organizations into all sectors of life in a country/region

This sedimentary layer is redundant, as it happens from the very beginning of the resistance and here it simply expands the efforts.

9

9. Establishment of formalized resistance elements; appeal to extraterritorial support infrastructure

These are two separate, dissimilar activities which do not belong grouped together.

9a. Establishment of formalized resistance elements

What does this mean? Can one establish "informal" resistance elements and then at a later date formalize them? Does "formalized" mean structured in accordance with a set organizational structure? Does this mean "recognized," and if so by whom? Is it internally-recognized for strictly internal organizational purposes, or is it meant to be externally-recognized? Does the resistance issue press releases announcing its arrival on the political stage? Does it adopt special costumes or insignia and parade overtly? Does it do so by claiming responsibility for acts observed by the public and reported in the press? Is it a function of some "other" announcing the resistance's existence? If so, is it the tar-

get government? Political opponents? The press? And for all of the considerations above, why should any of this be considered activities of the "underground?"

9b. Appeal to extraterritorial support infrastructure

This has nothing to do with the previously listed activity. Like so many of these other sedimentary layers of activities, where it has been layered into the diagram is not an accurate depiction of where it occurs in reality. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of this activity is political and organizational and has nothing to do with being an activity of the "underground."

Part of the vagueness of breadth of this activity is a matter of scale. It can be any size effort between any resistance member or affiliate inside the denied area with any entity outside of it. This does not equate to sponsorship and is not necessarily about the extraterritorial provider even being witting to the purpose of the contact inside (refer to the example above about the criminal organization buying cell phones). As a matter of scale, this will occur anywhere along both the temporal and intensity timelines; smaller nascent efforts are likely to have smaller requirements than larger, experienced, wide-spread conflicts. It is also partially a function of what the appeal is for. "Smaller" does not necessarily mean "less important." Granting of international recognition and /or legitimacy to a resistance effort in its early stages might be the difference between survival or extermination at the hands of the state. Appeals for non-lethal humanitarian aid is much more likely to be granted, and by a politically wider range of suppliers, than appeals for weapons or intervention.

Many – perhaps a majority — of these appeals will be made as part of routine political and organizational processes if the resistance has any public component representation inside and/or outside of the denied area; even more so in the few cases where there might be a legitimate government in exile. The operative word in this activity is "appeal." A significant amount of diaspora appeals to support political causes elsewhere inside a troubled state will be done openly at the local expatriate community bars, CSMT religious foci, schools and community centers. Wide dissemination, not carefully withheld and stove-piped control, of information is often a necessity. What of this "underground" activity is uniquely different from routine political activity?

10

10. Expansion of coordination among resistance networks

This sedimentary layer is redundant. This is happening from the very beginning of resistance activity.

11

11. Intensification of propaganda, increase in disaffection, psychological preparation for revolt

Once again: although they are related, these are three separate activities; the reader should avoid the assumption that these mostly require techniques more specialized than standard political and organizational activities; these are continuous activities; this is yet another sedimentary layer that is redundant; and so all this layer says is "expand your efforts."

The third activity bears some additional consideration. The implications of "psychological preparation for revolt" varies by scale and time in significant ways. As shown above, the most important preparation for any resistance requiring significant public participation is the beginning base conditions which are the petri dish and raw materials for resistance to emerge. These base conditions are a fundamental and initial *sine qua non* for mass resistance and are not deliberate activities. A resistance manipulating broad appeal may then seek to manipulate broad opinion by a variety of techniques able to coordinate broad coalitions of dissimilar demographics. Many of these techniques by their nature will be not only overt but deliberately obvious by design. These conditions vary from a more narrowly-supported resistance such as an insurgency based on a narrow demographics where the resistance is interested in preparing only those within that same relevant demographic. It matters whether the preparation involves reaching some large, dramatic, mass-participant culminating event or crisis, or whether it only seeks to prepare some elect few or strategic vanguard. "Preparation" itself is a vague term. Not only does the entire resistance enterprise need to be prepared for major milestones from a strategic viewpoint, but each individual requires preparation on a personal commitment level.

12

12. Overt and covert pressures against government: strikes, riots, and disorders

This sedimentary layer is redundant and means "expand your efforts."

13

13. Sabotage and terror to demonstrate weakness of government

These are two separate, dissimilar activities which do not belong grouped together.

13a. Sabotage and terror to demonstrate weakness of government

This sedimentary layer is redundant: "expand your efforts." Subversion and sabotage are often misunderstood as something very specific rather than the profoundly broad considerations allowed by definition in joint and Army doctrine.[14] ATP 3-05.1 states:

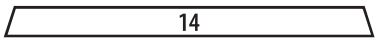
"The terms "sabotage" and "subversion" have distinct military definitions, but in common English usage they are frequently used interchangeably. Sabotage is defined as an act or acts with intent to injure, interfere with, or obstruct the national defense of a country by willfully injuring or destroying, or attempting to injure or destroy, any national defense or war materiel, premises, or utilities, to include human and natural resources. Sabotage is technically a component of subversion because it consists of actions which do contribute to the 'undermining of the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a governing authority.' However, subversion generally connotes the actions directed at

human beings and meant to undermine the sources of political power, whereas sabotage generally connotes actions directed at physical things and processes and meant to undermine the sources of material power. Nevertheless, there will continue to be instances such as "noncooperation with authorities" which are equally understood as both subversion and sabotage."[15]

Sabotage is a subset of subversion, and subversion is a subset of political activity. As resistance is fundamentally a political phenomenon, "subversion" and "sabotage" (considered broadly) are integral activities of resistance from its origins.

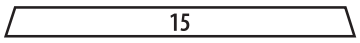
13b. Terror to demonstrate weakness of government

Terror – like assassination and "foreign agitators" – is something very specific. The purpose of terror is to affect the observing audience(s); a premeditated calculation that goes beyond mere killing and destruction. Terror is a form of subversion. Like subversion, it can be conducted at any point of the resistance effort. Like assassination, the objective of terrorism can be small or grand — a local official for tactical effects, or a head-of-state for grand strategic effects — depending on the desired effect. Methods of terror are as broad as the breadth of human fears. Smashing a skull with a club, beatings, immolation, decapitation, torture, duress, captivity, arbitrariness, upheaval, explosions, arson, uncertainty, disappearances, superstitions, devouring, anarchy, etc., etc., are just some of the methods of applying terror. But whatever the method and objective, it is separated from mindless violence by being purposeful; a political and operational consideration. If the reader can envision Farmer Joe's band leaving the local landlord's disemboweled body on the village commons to be discovered the next morning you will see that fundamentally, this has nothing to do with being "underground."



14. Increased underground activities to demonstrate strength of revolutionary organization

This sedimentary layer is redundant. This is happening from the very beginning of resistance activity, so all this layer says is "expand your efforts."

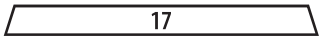


15. Intense sapping of morale of government, administration, police, and military

This sedimentary layer is redundant. This is happening from the very beginning of resistance activity, so all this layer says is "expand your efforts."

16. Negotiations with government representatives

This sedimentary layer is redundant and misplaced. To the extent that "negotiations between two political positions" is rooted in larger contexts than the objectives of a specific and structured resistance organization, these political negotiations occur in the base political struggle underlying, pre-dating and spawning the resistance. Once again, this is fundamentally a political act first, and only a function of the derivative 'specific-and-structured-resistance second." To assert these negotiations only happen approximately around some arbitrary overt/clandestine dividing line is unsupportable.



17. Increased political violence, terror, and sabotage

This sedimentary layer is redundant: "expand your efforts."

18. Shadow governance activities

This is the point at which it is claimed that there exists a distinct dividing line between the preceding activities labeled "clandestine" and the subsequent activities labeled "overt." The reader has already seen that this is not an accurate model of reality. The SORO model also categorizes activities into gross functional areas that do not accurately model reality in either actor capabilities or temporal linear sequence.

That some shadow governance activities are done overtly and some are done in a clandestine manner or with clandestine aspects is not in question. Nor is the fact it also does low-visibility and possibly covert activities as well. What does not comport with reality is the graphic representation which suggests that these shadow government activities are somehow at the late temporal stage atop multiple sedimentary layers of supposed clandestine-only progress toward a culmination. In fact, like practically all other activities previously considered, the activities of shadow governance occur throughout the course of the entire effort; at least for resistance efforts characterized by any constituency that could be provided for. Therefore, the position of the shadow governance activities just below and just above the overt-clandestine "waterline" is a mischaracterization. Not only is this bad in itself, it reinforces the misperception that shadow governance has more to do with key leadership rather than organizational sustainment of resistance constituencies.

19. Shadow governance activities

See above.

20. Minor military and paramilitary actions

These are two separate subjects. The minor/major and military/paramilitary dualities can be considered together for all of the "armed component" activities in the layers below. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there has been a need in doctrine and concepts to paint a broader and more variegated spectrum of armed, violent or paramilitary actions beyond the traditional component labeled "guerrilla warfare." Guerrilla warfare is as relevant in theory and practice for doctrine and conceptual discourse as it ever has been. It is, however, not enough.

When the *Human Factors* introduced "armed component" it could have been the opportunity to consider a broader context which included all of the ideas relevant to "armed, violent or paramilitary" *and* guerrilla war-

fare, *and* resistance use of traditional military operations *and* anything else. Unfortunately *Human Factors* divided "armed component" into "military" Actions — characterized by regular, standing state-like military organizations – and "paramilitary" actions characterized by irregular organization and tactics.

While this adds to the variety of "armed, violent or paramilitary activities" it was nevertheless a missed opportunity. There are still two critical problems with the breakdown; it misses all the techniques of basic political violence observable in any resistance that resorts to — or bursts into — violence and it exiles such activities under this blunt categorization into a contrived "overt" side of the "watermark."

When resistance develops, by whatever paths, to a point where standing semi-permanent or permanent paramilitary or military structures exist overtly and take the field in direct combat against state forces there is obviously an "armed component" operating overtly. There are many historical and modern examples. However, most resistances throughout history do not succeed. Many may conduct various kinds of paramilitary activities relying on the characteristics of guerrilla tactics; survival is paramount, attack without notice where the enemy is weak and withdraw quickly, pitched battle with state forces usually means annihilation, etc. Most do not eventually progress to a point where they can openly defy a state with guerrilla forces significant enough to defeat state forces in pitched combat on open battlefields; let alone progressing to such strength as to conduct major combat operations against national armies with resistance field armies as near peers. The pattern of the great communist revolutions of the 20th century in Russia, China and Vietnam which developed such armies are the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, in these cases the objective was unconditional victory; total war, regime change - an "unconventional warfare objective" of "overthrow." More limited objectives — "unconventional warfare" to "coerce" or disrupt" — doesn't even require this pattern of progressing to standing forces and usually does not.

Assuming a given resistance is committed to using them, the overwhelming majority of "armed, violent or paramilitary activities" characteristic of resistance are woven into the strands of a resistance enterprise from the alpha-to-omega. When a nascent resistance movement — barely large enough to yet be noticed by the local police — strong-arms a rival nascent political band with bats and razors...Is that not "armed, violent or paramilitary activities?" What about the murder of a claimant to resistance leadership when that organization has not even grown past the pub, café or union hall level? What about the near fatal beating of a professor with opposing political views? The torching of a newsroom which published anti-radical editorials? The spraying of a police captain's house with bullets? The intimidation of the commissioner's kids on their way to school? At what point can one reasonably establish a so-called "threshold of violence;" one side of which is "armed, violent or paramilitary activities"-free and the other side where it is clearly present? The state and state-supporting society itself may be unaware, uncoordinated or irresolute enough itself to make (and act on) such a distinction though it itself is the target of the activities.

Consider other examples of this question. If every reader concurs that Mustapha is a member of the so-called "underground," and Mustapha is ordered by the leadership to slit the throat of an informant — to commit political murder — is that not "armed, violent or paramilitary activity?" Why then would we artificially conceive of "armed component" as a separate entity rather than primarily as a function (in this case of the "underground")? If every reader agrees that Raoul is a member of the so-called "auxiliary," and his job routinely allows him access to the fuel cells of a factory which he one day ignites causing destruction and terror, is that not "armed, violent or paramilitary activity?" Why then would we artificially conceive of "armed component" as a separate entity rather than primarily as a function (in this case of the "auxiliary")? If every reader concurs that Sean is a member of the so-called "public component," and he is tasked to organize popular demonstrations in support of a given political position, and these demonstrations go beyond mere work stoppages, strikes, sit-ins and traffic interdiction to include voter intimidation, scuffles with counter-protestors, resisting and punching and throwing rocks at the police, rioting, arson, vandalism, looting, mob assaults and so on, is that not "armed, violent or paramilitary activity?" Why then would we artificially conceive of "armed component" as a separate entity rather than primarily as a function (in this case of the "public component")?

And as we have previously seen at length, Framer Joe crosses all of these categories; he represents a blend of all of these functions — which include at certain specific times — the role of assassin, demolitionist and small armed unit leader. And yet it would be a profound mischaracterization of reality to pretend that this member of the guerrilla / armed force is somehow nothing but the organization's "muscle."

The SORO model, with its separation of functions by component with the "armed component" at the top of the pyramid is inaccurate. In terms of "armed, violent or paramilitary activities" the figure if anything should be turned upside-down to convey the truth that such activities are part-and-parcel of the entire effort from start (or near start) to finish.

20a. Minor military actions

See above.

21

21. Large-scale military and paramilitary actions

See above.

22

22. International strategic communications

The same objection of claiming most of resistance is "clandestine" and somehow "fenced-off" to the "underground" (and "auxiliary") is consistent here but in reverse. International strategic communications *is* a

legitimate activity of a public component, but does not belong solely to this component. It is a function wielded as necessary by anyone at any time within the resistance lifespan from whatever vantage point or "component." If the leader of a nascent resistance — though he may be clandestinely calling or writing from a pub, café, union hall, dormitory, or prison cell — makes contact with foreigners who can provide him or his movement political support, press, legitimacy, money, supplies, weapons, converts, etc. is this not "international strategic communications?" How is this an example of a "public component"-specific activity? Is a smuggling network that routinely crosses an international border to provide the lifeblood resources keeping a struggling resistance alive not "international strategic communications?" Such communications should not denote official deputations to the consulate or political committee meetings; they are as broad as propaganda was described but in reverse. They are any foreign connections that have strategic impact on or for the resistance; regardless of what time during the effort of from what "component" they correspond.

23

23. Negotiated settlement

The SORO model presents a resistance model culminating in a negotiated settlement. This is consistent with the thesis of *Human Factors* that this endstate is the most likely of modern outcomes. The accuracy of that thesis aside, there are many other models of how a resistance might culminate other than by negotiated settlement. To only show the SORO model as is limits the reader's conceptual options and skews his understanding. Other models are needed.

Figure 04 "SORO Pyramid Deconstructed" (*see page 26*) is a graphic representation of the line-by-line, subject-by-subject analysis conducted above. It shows the redundancies, inaccuracies, and artificialities observed in the narrative discussion. The model is limited and inadequate to inform and educate resistance professionals. The resistance professional community should craft alternatives for future doctrine and education.

CONCLUSIONS

The classic, deservedly-honored graphic — as useful as it has been and remains to basic instruction on the nature of resistance and insurgency — needs critical review and updating or replacement.

It is a safe assumption that most successful enterprises could be characterized by a progression from a start point to a conclusion. For decades, however, it has been too uncritically accepted that the linear organization from the bottom of the SORO model towards the top endstate reflects a general linear reality. Based on a deeper understanding of resistance now than the community had in 1963, we know this is both generally untrue and too-narrowly specific.

As has been observed, many of the items located in some sedimentary layer are repeated in other layers; the only difference being qualifying expansion of some primary activity. Therefore successive horizontal layers stacked in a vertical pile are a misrepresentation of a reality that should look more like a continuum of activity.

Moreover, a large majority of these activities – at least for the participants indigenous to the target country's area – can / will be done at any point along such a resistance continuum. To assert, for example, that all or even most small military or paramilitary activities only exist above the "waterline" of "overtness" is simply not true.

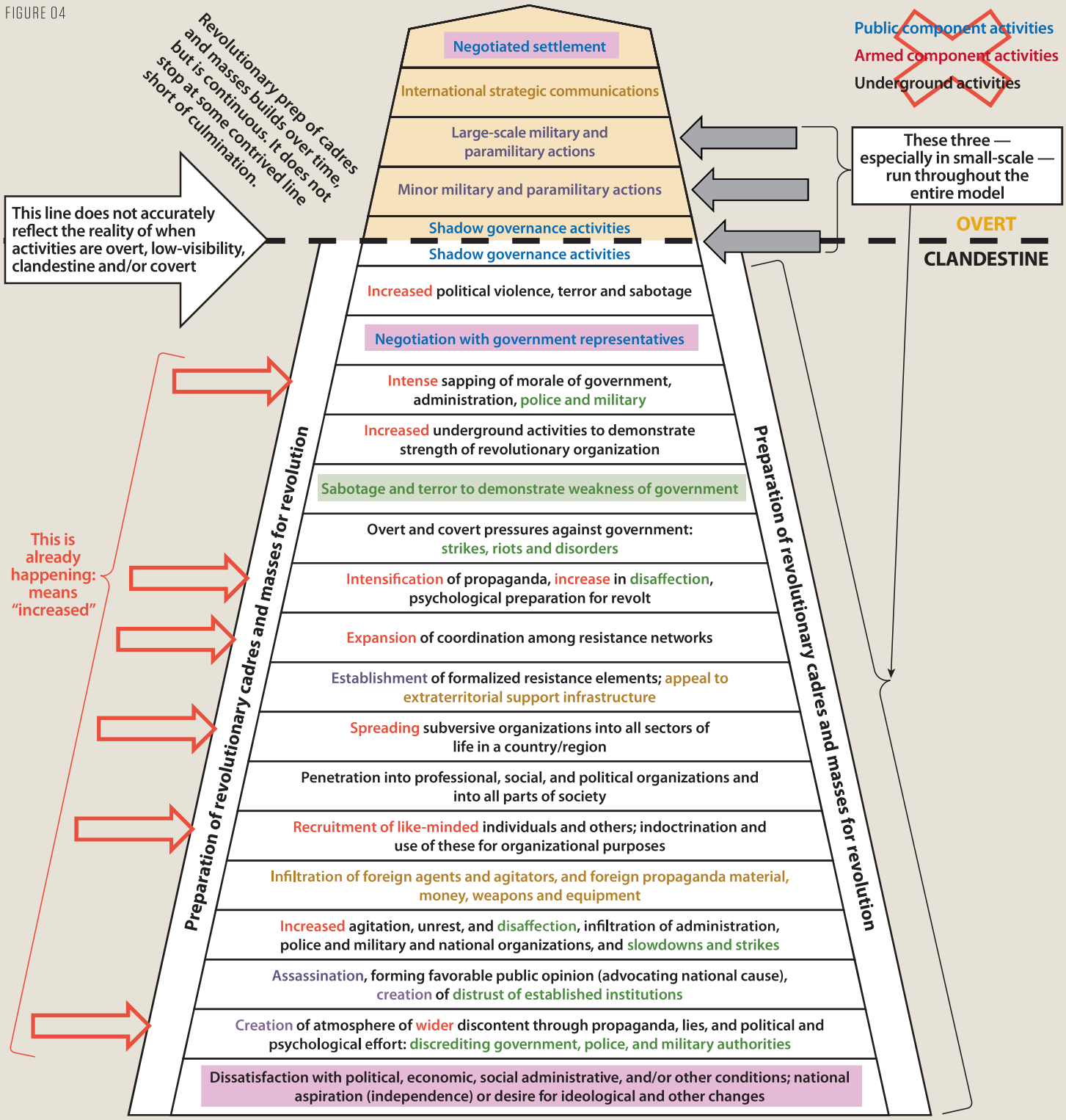
Correspondingly, it has been long-asserted and widely-proselytized that everything below the "waterline" is a clandestine activity or requires clandestine activity for success. This is demonstrably untrue and exaggerated. In reality all of these activities can have some mix of overtness, low-visibility, and clandestine aspects. Should it be deemed politically or operationally important or desired that the sponsor of activities remain hidden, any one of these same activities could also have a covert aspect.

The classic model divides the vast majority of these activities into "underground" activities, with only relatively minor roles accorded to the "armed" and "public" components in the conduct of resistance. This division is based on an asserted blanket clandestine nature of the activities below the waterline. This deconstruction critique has shown that these gross categorizations are invalid. It is much more accurate to say that most activities in the classic model are not clandestine activities at all, that most activities will actually have a mix of overt, low-visibility, clandestine and covert aspects, and only a relative few will be completely clandestine. Fewer still will be covert.

The underground is still very important to resistance; especially where state repression is extreme. However, the assumptions that the underground plays the central, foundational actor in establishing resistance and that it plays this role as a function of the overwhelming "clandestinity" of the many activities involved are both shown to be relatively diminished in importance compared to the classic SORO model. Instead, an enormous amount of early foundational activity upon which a resistance is formed is actually political discourse and decisions and political organizing. The unknowable ubiquity of "clandestine activities" inherent to standard political activity and indeed human life itself does not automatically make it the "purview" of "undergrounds" in the classic sense of organized, illegal, violent resistance.

Nor does the universe of human interaction that may be categorized loosely as "clandestine" motives, agendas or effects equate to the presence, deliberate application or requirement for the resistance itself to conduct sensitive activities. Discretion, misdirection, lying, concealment, understatement, flattery, seduction, subversion, intimidation, bribery, legitimacy, charisma, allegiance, etc., etc. are human political attributes central to political opposition up-to-and-including armed violent rebellion and beyond. Only in specific situations and specific resistance lines-of-effort do these resistance activities require what we might call "sensitive activities," and who we may deem qualified to use it. Most of that participation and most of

FIGURE 04



SORO RESISTANCE PYRAMID DECONSTRUCTED

LEGEND

- Political negotiations from the steady state foundation, run through everything start to finish
- International outreach (as political activity) can happen anytime; does not equate to sponsorship
- Violence is applied at any time by any actor in any component; not just a function of "guerrillas"
- "Governance" is political, organizational and operational; it occurs throughout the entire model
- Indicates an increase in some activity; not a new activity
- Sabotage (and subversion) are continuous throughout the entire model
- Highlights the very few times the model mentions deliberate "creation"

those inputs also don't equate to the presence, deliberate application or requirement for external participants to conduct sensitive activities either. The resistance professional community's and USG's inability or preference not to distinguish between the two levels of activity — to confuse the primary political activities for a bag of procedures and techniques — has and will continue to have consequences in how the USG identifies problems and hopes to craft solutions. In short:

- We have over-emphasized the uniqueness of operating "clandestinely" out of all reasonable proportion to the overall operation.
- This overemphasis on the centrality of clandestine *activity* versus clandestine *intent*, and "clandestine" versus "overt" and "low-visibility" has fostered an atmosphere which radically overemphasizes the supposed role of a distinct, separate "underground" component.
- Overemphasis on the distinctness of "undergrounds" fosters DOTMLPF overemphasis on specializing to understand that specious "distinctness."
- Beyond military DOTMLPF concerns, the whole-of-government resistance professional enterprise has over-specialized in *military* terms that which is utterly typical of and fundamental to basic, routine, average normal human *political* interaction since time immemorial.
- Those who would understand resistance must understand its political and organizational nature first, followed by operational and support considerations.
- The classic SORO model is inaccurate, and has played a seminal role in mischaracterizing the phenomenon of resistance as a whole by overemphasizing the role of the "underground" component.

It further follows that DOTMLPF decisions based on such fallacious assumptions will be made on an uncertain foundation. The "pyramid" is an important and evocative icon rich with insight and resistance professional community cultural meaning for all who seek to teach and better understand the phenomenon of "resistance." Counterintuitively, however, the SORO "pyramid" is a rickety structure upon which to base TO&E or policy decisions. A new, more accurate and honest conceptual resistance structure model is necessary. The SORO model is flawed and the resistance professional community needs a better, more realistic model to understand the phenomenon of resistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Senior leaders with a stake in the accuracy of the classic SORO model should convene symposia, seminars, workshops, war games, etc., to promote critical but constructive thinking on finding better models of resistance as seen through the political and organization lenses.

2. Models of resistance that emphasize the political and organizational foundation of resistance should not be fundamentally dominated by military approaches. Therefore the study lead should exist outside of DOD and its affiliates, and should be unconnected to the DOD contract system.

3. Models of resistance that emphasize a politically-centric approach in deliberate contrast to an "underground" and sensitive activities-centric approach to resistance should not be ultimately adjudicated by those with a vested interest in the current SORO model and its conclusions.

CHALLENGE TO THE SOF COMMUNITY AND KINDREDS

The intent of this article has been threefold. ***First***, to make observations, provide some clarity of concepts, to ask some provocative questions and to forward some recommended analytical lenses and models for reconsidering the classic SORO pyramid. This article does not presume to provide all of the answers. However, it is appropriate to occasionally revisit our most seminal classics and rethink them, and this article will have served part of its function if it spurs others to do that. ***Second***, the need to question is based on the need to challenge the all-too-pervasive and fashionable attitude that UW and STR — or at least that which is quintessential to UW and STR — is essentially sensitive activities rather than the larger context of political relationships and realities that comprise the warp-and-woof of human endeavor; including resistance warfare and UW. ***Third***, the explicit purpose of this article is to solicit meaningful substantive feedback from the community; feedback that will contribute to the improvement of UW and resistance professional related doctrine to keep it enduringly relevant and more accurately applicable to the 21st century. **You the reader can be a part of that effort by starting a conversation or sending comments to AOJK-DT-SF@socom.mil.**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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BONUS CONTENT ONLINE http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/3003/SoroPyramid

Want to know more? Read the full version of this article with additional details and graphics on our website.

NOTES **01.** USASOC, *Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare*, 2nd Ed., 26 March 2012, Fig. 10-1, pg. 172. **02.** USASOC, *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies*, 2nd Ed., 26 March 2012, Fig. 1-1, pg. 45. **03.** *Undergrounds*, pg. v. **04.** ibid., pp. v-vii. **05.** ibid., pg. vi. **06.** ibid., pg. vi. **07.** ibid., pg. vii. **08.** ibid., pg. vii. **09.** Clausewitz, Carl von., *On War*, Princeton University Press; 1st edition 2008 **10.** Hasler APR16. **11.** ADRP 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, 02 February 2015, pg. 1-47. The verbatim Army definition for infiltration is: "A form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires." (FM 3-90-1) **12.** ibid pg. 1-74. **13.** *Undergrounds*, pg. 171. **14.** ADRP 1-02, pg. 1-86; JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010 (As Amended Through 15 February 2016), pp. 209, 228. **15.** ATP 3-05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, C1 25 November 2015 pg. 3-14, para. 3-69.