# THE CANADIAN NORTH WEST REBELLION 1885: A CASE STUDY IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

by

R. Chris Rankin

B.A. University of New Brunswick, 1985

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Masters in Arts**

in the Graduate Academic Unit of History

Supervisor: David Charters, PhD, History

Examining Board: Chair Marc Milner, PhD, History
David Frank, PhD, History
Rodney Cooper, PhD, Computer Science

This thesis is accepted by the
Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

September, 2013

© R. Chris Rankin, 2013

# ABSTRACT

From 2001 until 2012, the Canadian Army was actively involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. These were widely referred to within the Canadian Forces, the media and academia as counterinsurgency operations. In order to support this effort, for the first time in its history, the Canadian Army drafted a doctrinal manual on counterinsurgency operations in 2008. One example cited as a successful counterinsurgency campaign being ended by a decisive military victory is the North-West Rebellion, where on 12 May 1885, Métis and First Nations insurgents were defeated by Canadian government forces after three days of battle at Batoche. This study will examine the North-West Rebellion through the lens of the theories and principles of counterinsurgency in order to more fully understand its significance to the Canadian experience in the conduct of these operations.

# DEDICATION

To Laurel, Emily, Kathleen and Andrea who have at one time or another have been a widow or orphan to this project and without whose support and encouragement its completion would not have been possible.

## *Table of Contents*

*ABSTRACT* ..... *ii*
*DEDICATION* ..... *iii*
*Table of Contents* ..... *iv*
*Introduction* ..... *1*
*Conceptual Framework for Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* ..... *9*
*Introduction* ..... *9*
*Insurgency* ..... *10*
*General* ..... *10*
*Classic Military Theory* ..... *12*
*Early Revolutionary Theory* ..... *16*
*Modern Revolutionary Theory* ..... *19*
*Framework for Examination* ..... *21*
*Summary* ..... *23*
*Counterinsurgency* ..... *24*
*General* ..... *24*
*Early Military Theory* ..... *25*
*French Colonial School* ..... *28*
*British Colonial Experience* ..... *33*
*Classical Counterinsurgency Theory* ..... *39*
*Summary* ..... *42*
*Conclusion* ..... *43*
*Métis and First Nations Insurgency* ..... *44*
*Background* ..... *44*
*Red River Crisis* ..... *49*
*Métis Unrest* ..... *49*
*Treaty One* ..... *55*
*North West Rebellion* ..... *57*
*First Nations* ..... *57*
*Métis* ..... *67*
*Nature of the Insurgency* ..... *77*
*Conclusion* ..... *85*

*The Canadian Counterinsurgency Campaign* ..... *86*
*Introduction* ..... *86*
*Government Instruments* ..... *87*
*North-West Mounted Police (NWMP)* ..... *88*
*Department of the Interior* ..... *90*
*Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)* ..... *93*
*Canadian Militia* ..... *94*
*Government Reaction* ..... *97*
*Military Campaign* ..... *98*
*Non-Military Efforts* ..... *106*
*Campaign Analysis* ..... *111*
*Conclusion* ..... *120*
*Bibliography* ..... *125*
*Appendix A – North West Rebellion Campaign Map* ..... *133*
Curriculum Vitae

## Introduction

From 2001 until 2012, the Canadian Army was actively involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. These were widely referred to within the Canadian Forces, the media and academia as counterinsurgency operations. In order to support this effort, for the first time in its history, the Canadian Army wrote a doctrinal manual on counterinsurgency operations in 2008. Drawn heavily from a similar British publication, the manual gave a breakdown of the nature of an insurgency, as well as the principles and methods to successfully combat it at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The publication used a number of historical examples, both Canadian and foreign, to support the conceptual and philosophical approach it put forth. Central to the Canadian Army's doctrinal approach was the recognition that it is rarely military action alone that is the key factor in the successful prosecution of a counterinsurgency campaign. Rather, military forces play a supporting role to primarily political actions that can determine a positive, long term outcome. Indeed, it stated, "It is unlikely that the conflict will be suddenly ended with a major military victory against the insurgents who are often fleeting and scattered in small clandestine cells."[1]

Nevertheless, it did concede that on occasion this may in fact be the case. One example cited as a successful counterinsurgency campaign being ended by a decisive military victory the North-West Rebellion, where on 12 May 1885, Métis and First Nations insurgents were defeated by Canadian government forces after four days of battle

---

[1] B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations,* (Kingston: DND, 2008), 1-14.

at Batoche. This is one of a few references to Canadian insurgency that has survived the final drafting of the doctrine.[2] The initial draft of the doctrine included not only the North West Rebellion but other Canadian examples such as the Oka Crisis and the FLQ crisis. These were subsequently removed from the final version due to concerns raised by several organizations that they were too provocative and discriminatory. This also resulted in the final version of the doctrine being devoid of any detailed historical vignettes or case studies of domestic insurgency. As such, while the North West Rebellion continues to be used as an example within the doctrine manual and in the Army Staff College lectures on counterinsurgency, there is no detailed examination of the campaign that fully explores the events within the full context of the theory of counterinsurgency proposed by the doctrine itself.

The North-West Rebellion manifested itself on 5 March 1885, when Louis Riel, leading a group of prominent Métis frustrated by failed peaceful attempts to have their land rights recognized by the Government in Ottawa, declared the intent to resolve the issue by force if necessary. Three weeks later, having declared a provisional government and taken numerous hostages, Métis forces under Gabriel Dumont joined by a small number of Natives from neighbouring reservations, engaged and routed a body of North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) at Duck Lake. Within days, the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald raised and dispatched a force of Canadian Militia to suppress the uprising. In addition to the Métis force concentrated around Batoche, Cree bands under Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear were also taking threatening actions further to the northwest.

---

[2] Other Canadian examples cited are the United Empire Loyalists in the American Revolution (1774-83) and the Fenian Raids (1866 and 1870).

In the span of the forty-seven days between the clash at Duck Lake and the battle at Batoche, the course of the rebellion seemed to strongly favour the rebel forces with Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt being abandoned, Battleford invested by First Nations forces, a massacre of whites having occurred at Frog Lake and a disappointing showing by the Canadian Militia and NWMP during engagements at Fish Creek and Cut Knife Hill. Anxiety among citizens of the North-West was high and the potential for disaster evident, should the twenty to thirty thousand Indians who lived in the North-West chose to throw their full support behind Riel.[3] A broader Indian uprising, in addition to the Métis action, could easily have spun the situation in the Territories out of the control of the young nation of Canada and the as yet fully tempered Canadian Militia.

The Canadian victory at Batoche and Riel's subsequent surrender has generally been seen as the climax of the rebellion and the end of crisis. However, the full campaign would not be brought to a close until early July after two months of pursuit operations to capture the key Cree leaders deemed responsible for the perceived First Nations participation in the rebellion. With the surrender on 26 May and 2 July of Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear respectively, the military campaign reached its final conclusion. By November 1885, the key figures in the uprising would be imprisoned or hanged. In slightly over seven months one of the most dramatic episodes in Canadian history was concluded.

However, behind the more obvious battles of the military campaign was the involvement of government departments and agencies who, along with the constabulary

---

[3] Desmond Morton, *The Last War Drum: The North West Campaign of 1885*, (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972), 6.

NWMP, worked to contain the spread of the rebellion and help set the conditions for the successful completion of military operations. How these helped to maintain at least the passive support of the population, may well have been a critical factor in preventing the spread of the rebellion beyond the capability of the government forces to control, particularly with regard to the large First Nations population. This aspect of the campaign calls into doubt the contention that the Rebellion represents a case of a successful counterinsurgency campaign based on military victory alone.

The contention in the Canadian Army's counterinsurgency manual that the North-West Rebellion is a historical example of insurgency and that the counterinsurgents were able to prevail through principally the use of military action poses several interesting questions. First, can the North-West Rebellion be properly considered an insurgency? Second, does the short campaign by the Canadian forces and sudden defeat of the Métis and First Nations forces at Batoche adequately explain the Government of Canada's ability to so effectively and quickly contain and end the insurgency? Finally, based on the answers of the proceding questions, what if anything can be taken from the conduct of this campaign that may be of use in the current Canadian military context?

The aim of this study is to examine the North-West Rebellion through the lens of the theories and principles of counterinsurgency in order to more fully understand its significance to the Canadian experience in the conduct of these operations. As such, although the study will not introduce an abundance of new source material that might radically change the current interpretation of events, it will attempt to broaden the understanding of the Rebellion and its significance to the national experience in conducting counter-insurgency operations.

The contention of this thesis is that the North-West Rebellion can be accurately interpreted as a valid case study for counterinsurgency. It will demonstrate that the uprising meets the criteria for definition as an insurgency and that the government's response contained many of the complexities currently associated with contemporary counterinsurgency operations as generally defined in the context of historical and contemporary western academic and military thought. Further, it will show that the contention that the North-West Rebellion represents a case of successful counterinsurgency based on military victory is an over-simplification of the campaign and ignores important details in the Canadian experience in conducting counterinsurgency campaigns. Finally, in the context of the North-West Rebellion, it will highlight the potential lessons that can be drawn from the campaign by examining the actions of the participants against the established principles for the conduct of insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The remainder of this thesis will be broken down into three subsequent chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 will examine the theories and principles of insurgency and counterinsurgency respectively in the context of modern, western military thought. The purpose of these chapters is to provide a conceptual framework within which the campaign North-West Rebellion can be examined in the broad context of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations. There is a vast amount of literature available on the subject of insurgency and counterinsurgency running back to ancient times. This literature has expanded exponentially with the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In order to narrow the examination of these two concepts, the chapter will be restricted to deal with the theory of insurgency and counterinsurgency from the Napoleonic period to

present with a focus on those most closing related in time and space to the events of 1885. It will focus on major theoretical works (Clausewitz, Marxist-Leninist, Mao, Guevara) on the conduct of insurgency, as well as works that have focused on potential methods to combat insurgency (Jomini, French Colonial School, Callwell, Gwynn, Galula, Thompson,). From this examination an understanding of the nature of insurgency and counterinsurgency will be established, as well as, the general principles that should guide the conduct of each. It will also propose a framework to examine the aims and strategies for insurgency that will be used to subsequently analyse the conduct of the North-West Rebellion from both the insurgent and counterinsurgent perspective.

Chapter 2 will focus on establishing the events surrounding the North-West Rebellion. It will examine the period spanning Canada's acquisition of the North-West Territories and the events leading up to the outbreak of the insurgency. Specifically it will focus on Canadian expansion into the North-West Territories and establishing the grievances that led to the insurgency. This examination will expose the complexity of the rebellion beyond the purely military context and identify the political, economic and sociological issues that influenced the course of events. It will expose the diverse nature of the insurgency given the separate aims and strategies of the Métis and First Nation elements.

Using the understanding of the historical events of the North-West Rebellion and the conceptual framework established in the previous chapter, Chapter 3 will examine the course of the events that took place during the Rebellion but with a focus on the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign.

Finally, the conclusion will be based on the factors laid out in the previous chapters, that the North-West Rebellion was an insurgency; that military action alone does not fully explain Canada's success in defeating the insurgency; and that there are deeper lessons other than the importance of military success in conducting successful counterinsurgency.

The author recognizes that the terms used to identify aboriginal peoples referred to in this study have evolved significantly since the events described herein. For the purposes of this study, those terms currently recognized by the Government of Canada will be used to describe the participants in the North-West Rebellion. Currently aboriginal peoples are comprised of: Indians, commonly referred to as First Nations; Métis; and Inuit.[4] For the most part, this paper will use First Nations unless specifically quoting from historical or academic references, in which case the term used in the reference will remain consistent with the original source. In referring to Métis peoples, and again for the purposes of this study, it is recognized that in the historical context of the North-West Rebellion, these comprise people of mixed First Nations and European origins (French or English). Unless specifically noted as English-speaking Métis, the term "Métis" will refer to primarily French-speaking Métis. In addition, when referring to First Nations "Cree", it is recognized that there is a distinction between Woods and Plains Cree. Further, for simplicity, where reference is made in this paper to interaction between Cree leaders and Government of Canada officials, it is recognized that the First Nations populations that participated in events surrounding the Rebellion, or were

---

[4] Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, "Aboriginal Peoples and Communities," Government of Canada, last accessed 12 March, 2013, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1304467449155

affected by it, were diverse and included Assiniboine, Salteaux, Sioux, Blackfoot, and others.

The use of historical examples or vignettes to support current doctrinal concepts can be a useful tool. While they tend to make the doctrine more interesting and relevant to the reader, this practice can at times lead to the selection of supporting examples that may, upon closer examination, be found inappropriate or incomplete. Such may be the case for the North-West Rebellions as an example of ending an insurgency through decisive military victory alone. This paper will allow the exploration of this particular instance in more detail to determine if this is the case in the Canadian Army's B-GL-324-003/FP-003 Counterinsurgency Operations.

## Conceptual Framework for Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

### Introduction

Examining the North-West Rebellion through the lens of counterinsurgency theory, as this thesis proposes to do, can present a number of challenges. First, the word insurgency, particularly in light of the recent conflicts witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan, appears to have gained a negative connotation. For example, when the 2005 draft of the Canadian Army's first manual on counterinsurgency doctrine was first exposed to the public, aboriginal organizations strongly objected to the use of radical native organizations as examples of insurgency movements, claiming that it promoted hatred toward First Nations and implicated them as terrorists.[5] An analysis along these lines was perhaps overstated. In fact, some commentators seemed to have overlooked the core guiding philosophy of Canadian military counterinsurgency doctrine: that insurgencies stem, to some extent, from legitimate social and political grievances. Therefore to recognize these movements as insurgents would be to simultaneously recognize that they stem from a legitimate, unresolved grievance. Indeed, Canadian military doctrine contended that the failure to correctly view insurgencies in their proper social context, and to view them as merely military or criminal issues, only fuelled insurgencies and added to any perceived and real injustice.[6] Second, the application of the terms insurgency and counterinsurgency may appear anachronistic to some when applied to the events of 1885 but, upon examining the conceptual understanding of conflict at the time,

---

[5] Bill Curry, "Forces Terror Manual Lists Natives with Hezbollah," *Globe and Mail*, March 3, 2007, A-1.
[6] B-GL-323-004/FP-003 *Counter-Insurgency Operations,* (Ottawa: DND, 2008), 1-2.

it is possible to discover the rudimentary beginnings of the theoretical foundations of insurgency and counterinsurgency theory that could apply to the North West Rebellion. These reflected the cultural understanding of conflict at the time and represent the conceptual fundations for the development of the current understanding as articulated in documents such as the Canadian counterinsurgency doctrine.

This chapter will establish a conceptual framework within which the rebellion by the Métis and First Nations and Canadian Government response can be examined in the context of an insurgency. It will focus on the early theories of insurgency and counterinsurgency that are most relevant to the time of rebellion but also, to a more limited degree, extend the survey forward in time in order to create the conceptual bridge to the current doctrine. It will also propose a framework within which the general causes, aims and strategies of North West Rebellion can be examined.

**Insurgency**

*General.* Gaining an understanding of the precise nature of insurgency is by no means an easy task. The range of material on the subject is vast and growing exponentially with the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The tendency of military theorists, academics and commentators to use different terms to describe this type of conflict presents yet another problem and is evident through the examination of their writings. Whether described as people in arms, national wars, insurrection, guerrilla warfare, small wars, fourth generation warfare, rebellion, or insurgency, this type of conflict seems to have several core characteristics that separate it from other forms of warfare. First, it is principally conducted within a given state. Second, at least one of the

parties to the conflict is not a recognized state. Third, it often involves the use of protracted violence or threat of violence as a method. Finally, it is conducted to achieve some sort of political purpose.

Contemporary western military thought is relatively consistent in its definitions of insurgency. The Canadian definition of insurgency is a competition involving at least one non-state movement using means that include violence against an established authority to achieve a political change.[7] United States Army and Marine Corps doctrine similarly describes insurgency as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.[8] Likewise the British Army has defined insurgency as an organized, violent subversion used to effect or prevent political control, as a challenge to established authority.[9] More academic sources such as Bard O'Neill define insurgency as struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.[10]

For the purpose of this thesis, insurgency is defined as a conflict, internal to a state, involving at least one actor that does not represent a sovereign state, using violence or the threat of violence against an established authority to achieve political ends. Insurgency normally relies on a protracted strategy and seeks popular support to promote its cause.

---

[7] *B-BL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations,* (Ottawa: DND, 2008), 1-2.
[8] *FM 3-24 US Army /USMC Counter-insurgency Field Manual,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.
[9] *Army Field Manual - Countering Insurgency Vol 1 Part,* (London: MOD, 2010), 1-4.
[10] Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism,* 2nd ed (Washington: Potomac Books, 2005), 15.

*Classic Military Theory.* The Prussian Carl von Clausewitz has arguably been the most influential theorist in modern, western, military thinking. Clausewitz's unfinished manuscript, *On War*, is a staple in staff college curriculums across the western world. Clausewitzian concepts such as friction, the fog of war, center of gravity and the culminating point are still prominent features on the landscape of contemporary doctrine. *On War* articulates Clausewitz's theory of war and its relation to the other elements of human social behaviour. In spite of the fact that the bulk of his study is focused on war as manifested between nations, and specifically among their professional, conventional armies, Clausewitz does address insurgency.

In Chapter Twenty-Six of Book Six, entitled "The People in Arms", Clausewitz turned his attention to what he called a "phenomenon of the nineteenth century".[11] Given his perception of the immaturity of this form of war, he stated that his thoughts were "less an objective analysis than a groping for the truth".[12] Set in the context of Prussian defeat at the hands of revolutionary French forces, Clausewitz saw the extension of participation in war to the general population as a logical response to the French use of the *levee en masse*.[13] The mobilization of the population seemed the only option to resist, or reverse, occupation by the overwhelming power and energy of the new French war machine. In spite of the potential limitations that this form of defensive strategy might have in achieving that end, and the dangers it could pose to the established order, Clausewitz

---

[11] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed and trans Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 479.
[12] Ibid, 483.
[13] While Clausewitz would have been most personally affected by events in Prussia his thoughts may also have been influenced by the insurgency waged by the Spanish against French occupation during the Napoleonic War.

viewed the arming of the people as an "outgrowth of the way in which the conventional barriers have been swept away in our life time by the elemental violence of war."[14] He may have been implying that he saw the balance within his proposed trinity of primordial violence, chance and reason was undergoing a fundamental shift due to the loss of monopoly on war by purely military elements within society. It is not certain but; this would seem to fit within his conceptualization of the nature of war.

Clausewitz's concept of insurgency was framed by his overall interpretation of war as an instrument of policy, the nature of which may vary with the particular circumstances and motives for its conduct.[15] For Clausewitz, the first principle of strategy was to understand those unique circumstances and motives. This examination rests on understanding the nature of any particular conflict through three key aspects: primordial violence or natural force; chance or probability; and reason, as articulated though the establishment of policy or desired aims.[16] The nature of these aspects and the unique, relative importance of each was crucial to understanding war: "A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless."[17] While Clausewitz relates these three aspects to the people, the army and the government respectively, it was the aspect and not the example that was important.

The examples of people, army and state used by Clausewitz to illustrate this "remarkable trinity", often appear in contemporary discussion of counterinsurgency and

---

[14] Clausewitz, *On War*, 479.
[15] Ibid, 88.
[16] Ibid, 89.
[17] Ibid, 89.

this often sets the people as the objective for which the opposing military and governing forces compete. This not only shifts the focus from the original source to the example, but tends to fix the relationship between them rather than allowing a broader understanding of the potential change in dynamics and balance among them.

In his subsequent discussion on the means available in the pursuit of success in the conduct of war, Clausewitz clearly identifies that the sudden destruction of the opponent's force was but one means to achieve the desired effect. An alternative was to outlast the enemy: "Wearing down the enemy in a conflict means using the duration of the war to bring about a gradual exhaustion of his physical and moral resistance."[18] Insurgency was a means to achieve that effect.

At the tactical level, Clausewitz outlines five conditions for the success of insurgency.[19] First, it must be fought in the interior of the country. Clausewitz saw the use of insurgency as a method or element in the conduct of defensive operations, enhancing the state's ability to resist invasion or occupation. Insurgency was therefore likely to be used in one of two scenarios: post-defeat or as part of a decisive battle with an anticipation of subsequent withdrawal to the interior. Insurgency was therefore "...a special form of indirect resistance – a form that destroys the enemy not so much by the sword as by his own exertions."[20] Clausewitz recognized that as an attacker penetrated deeper into hostile territory his line of retreat and communications became increasingly vulnerable, including susceptibility to insurgent attack: "They may be small in numbers, lacking in depth and in capacity to follow through; but think what a constant interference

---

[18] Ibid, 93.
[19] Ibid, 480.
[20] Ibid, 469.

with the line at so many points along its length can mean!"[21] Second, the insurgency should not attempt to decide the war in a single decisive battle. Clausewitz was keenly aware of the limitations involved in utilizing armed citizens against professional armies and characterized insurgent actions as similar to those fought by "second rate" forces.[22] The insurgency should "nibble at the shell and around the edges" and should never concentrate in battle where superior regular forces could potentially deal it a decisive blow. The insurgency had more value as a strategic than tactical method, which needed to be incorporated into an overall plan. Third, the theatre of operations must be large. As the use of insurgents focuses on the exhaustion of the enemy, Clausewitz emphasizes the need to conduct it over as wide an area as possible, draining as many assets as possible from the enemy to guard against insurgent action. Using the analogy of water evaporation, Clausewitz suggests that the greater the surface area over which the opponent can be spread, the greater the general effect of his exhaustion will be over time.[23] Fourth, the national character must be suited to this type of warfare. While Clausewitz does not elaborate specifically on this condition, he does state that "...poor men, used to hard and strenuous work and privation, are generally more vigorous and more warlike."[24] Given his experiences during the Napoleonic invasion of Prussia, this condition may have been apparent to Clausewitz. As Peter Paret points out, because of the passive nature bred into Prussian society by the state's authoritarian rule, "it could not

---

[21] Ibid, 463.
[22] Ibid, 482.
[23] Ibid, 480.
[24] Ibid, 480.

tap the population's potential energy and idealism when the crisis came."[25] Dismayed by the populace's indifferent reaction to the 1806 defeats, reformers like Clausewitz wanted to cultivate patriotism within the country, or in other words, to establish the ability to rally the people to a cause, in this case the idea of the state. As he concluded near the end of Chapter 26, "No matter how small and weak a state is in comparison to its enemy, it must not forego these last efforts, or one would conclude that its soul is dead."[26] Finally, the country must be rough and inaccessible. Much like the requirement for a large theatre in which to operate, the nature of the terrain should be such that it presented the enemy with difficulty in effectively occupying it while at the same time affording the insurgent refuge. The more compartmentalized by geography and limited in infrastructure for sustaining regular forces the country was the better, as it will foster "...the most characteristic feature of insurgency in general will be constantly repeated in miniature: the element of resistance will exist everywhere and nowhere."[27]

In sum, given Clausewitz's view that the use of force was merely a means to achieve a political outcome, his concept of insurgency would appear to support the definition of insurgency as an expression of desired political change or resistance by the population through the use of violent means. It also establishes some initial criteria to successfully conduct it.

*Early Revolutionary Theory.* Beyond the classic writings of Clausewitz, the theory of insurgency and how to counter it received little attention until the early part of

---

[25] Peter Paret, "Clausewitz," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 192.
[26] Clausewitz, *On War*, 483.
[27] Ibid, 480.

the twentieth century. The rise of Marxism-Leninism and its emphasis on the relationship between the use of violence and politics to create social change altered this perspective. Notably, it also impacted the language used to describe insurgency. Particularly during the 1960-70s, perhaps the most prolific period of writing on insurgency until the early part of the twenty-first century, revolutionary warfare was often used to describe the more generic form of conflict.

In their essay "Revolutionary War" in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, John Shy and Thomas Collier contended that prior to 1941 no clear body of thought on revolutionary warfare "was seen to exist or, if it existed, to deserve space..."[28] In particular, they noted that prior to the 20th century writings of Mao Tse-Tung the history of revolutionary warfare constituted "...false starts, dead ends, at most brief flashes of the future." But this was perhaps too harsh an assessment and ignored the evolutionary process in the theory of insurgency that moved from Clausewitz and perhaps culminated in its most popular form with Mao Tse-Tung.

While Karl Marx focused on the economic and political aspect of Marxist socialism, it was Frederick Engels who provided the bulk of the early conceptual framework for the relationship between politics and violence. With limited practical experience as a soldier, Engels sought to address several key aspects of conflict. These are summarized by Martin Berger as "...the odds facing efforts at insurrection, the effects of war upon the prospects of revolution, and the role of the army in revolutionary

---

[28] John Shy and Thomas Collier, "Revolutionary War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 815.

tactics."[29] Unlike other early revolutionary thinkers such August Willich or Louis Blanqui, who believed that force of will combined with violent action could bring successful revolution, Engels sided with Marx, committing to the belief that while violence was a useful tool to the revolution, the necessary economic and social conditions must exist first if there was to be a prospect for success. Indeed, as Marx stated, "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."[30] But to attempt to execute the revolution without the broader support of the population brought on by social and economic plight would only end in the unnecessary loss of life.[31] Nevertheless, there was no doubt that the state of war, particularly of a grand scale, could help to create the conditions to make society ripe for revolution.

Engels, like Clausewitz, recognized that "insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, subject to certain rules and proceeding...insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes the value of which may change every day..."[32] Included in these rules Engels noted the need to act with determination and an offensive focus when conducting insurrection, as well as to accept the necessity of destructive consequences that would ensue in order to achieve success. But like Clausewitz, Engels was sceptical of the ability of insurgency to defeat the overwhelming advantages in force possessed by the existing state. While guerrilla warfare was a useful method to combat these forces, "the support of a regular army is now-a-days necessary to the progress of all

---

[29] Martin Berger, *Engels, Armies, and Revolution: The Revolutionary Tactics of Classical Marxism,* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1977), 14.
[30] Ibid, 67.
[31] Ibid, 41.
[32] Ibid, 57.

insurrectionary or irregular warfare against a powerful regular Army."[33] As such, so long as the state retained the army as an instrument to suppress insurrection, the insurgent's success seemed unlikely. The power of the state to physically crush insurgent forces plagued Engels. Berger states that he could see no way for the insurgency to defeat the state. "He considered that training and organization gave armies such a decisive advantage over insurrectionary masses that discussing revolutionary tactics was a waste of time."[34]

In his later writing, however, Engels did find a possible solution in the theory of the vanishing army.[35] The shift of armies away from professional soldiers and the recruitment or conscription of peasants and workers into the ranks of the army, started by the *levee en masse*, had potentially sown the seeds of its own destruction. Surely, Engels thought, these elements would be more sympathetic to the revolutionary cause and subvert the state's instrument from within. It was simply a case of raising the class consciousness of those sympathetic elements through a concerted propaganda and education effort. In short, subvert the state's army. Ultimately therefore, early Marxist theory on the use of insurgency to achieve revolutionary change remained a passive approach, to the extent that it waited for the proper pre-conditions to create themselves before committing to open conflict with the established state forces. But if the early Marxists were willing to wait for the moment, their successors were not.

*Modern Revolutionary Theory.* Modern Marxist revolutionary war found the father of its aggressive nature in Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Lenin's most significant

---

[33] Ibid, 61
[34] Ibid, 153-154.
[35] Ibid, 161.

contribution to modern revolutionary theory was the need for an organization adept at providing the necessary leadership to that upsurge in order to achieve the revolution. This 'vanguard' party, "must 'go among all classes of the population' as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators and as organizers."[36] In much the same way that Engels complemented Marx's political focus with his writing on military issues, so Leon Trotsky provided the equivalent for Lenin. As the father of the Red Army, Trotsky had a firm grasp on the role of insurgent forces and oversaw the transition of the early communist guerrilla forces of the revolution into a permanent state army and is perhaps too often overlooked in favour of the Chinese revolutionary example posed by Mao, of the need to transition through the phases of revolutionary conflict from guerrilla to decisive force.

Indeed, the perceived theoretical culmination point of modern insurgency theory is widely considered to be found in Mao Tse-Tung's articulation in *Guerrilla Warfare*.[37] Like his fellow revolutionaries before him, Mao recognized the power of insurgent guerrilla forces in promoting political objectives and resolving social grievances: "*War is* the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage..." [38]

Mao clearly stated, "There is in guerrilla warfare no such thing as a decisive battle; there is nothing comparable to the fixed, passive defence that characterizes

---

[36] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "What is to be Done," *V. I. Lenin, Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Vol. 26, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), prepared for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo, (1997), last accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.marx2mao.com/Lenin/WD02NB.html , 102.

[37] In contemporary military circles counterinsurgency is often referred to as the graduate level of operations. This may be in part due to Mao's statement that "Guerrilla hostilities are the university of war..." See Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans Samuel Griffith, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 73.

[38] Mao Tse-Tung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung. Available from http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1-12.htm.

orthodox war."[39] Likewise, Mao understood the requirement to gain popular support, "Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if it's political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, cooperation, assistance cannot be gained."[40]

The experience of Cuban revolutionaries in the 1950s offers another interpretation in insurgent theory. Encapsulated in Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*, the Foco theory of revolutionary warfare proposes some unique variance from traditional Marxist-Leninist theory. Guevara claimed three significant aspects to the Cuban experience: first, that it proved that popular forces can defeat the army; second, that in under-developed Latin America, the countryside was where the 'struggle' would take place; and most significantly, that it was not necessary to wait for the right objective conditions to exist before starting the revolution, that the Foco, a dedicated group of revolutionaries, could subjectively create the conditions for revolution.[41]

*Framework for Examination.* As noted by several of the authors in this chapter, each insurgency has its own unique characteristics. This is in no small part due to the particular nature of their cause or aim and the emphasis they place on the broader principles outlined above with regard to the general method used to achieve those aims. In *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, Bard O'Neil suggests some general classifications into which insurgencies may fall with regard to their aim and several distinct strategies that they may follow.

---

[39] Ibid, 52.
[40] Ibid, 43.
[41] Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, (New York: Ocean Press, 2006), 13.

O'Neil proposes nine forms of insurgencies: anarchist, which aims at the destruction of the current system with no proposed alternative; egalitarian, which seeks a centrally controlled structure to provide equality among the masses; traditionalist, which aims at reverting back to a previous order based on history or mythology; secessionist, or a break away from the established order; reformist, or a reform of the current order; preservationist, which seeks to prevent change to the existing order; apocalyptic-utopian, which aims at bringing about a new order through precipitating an apocalyptic event; pluralist, which involves establishing a system that emphasizes the values of individual freedom, liberty and compromise with an indifferent or autonomous political structure; and commercialist, the goal of which is material gain through the attainment of political power. [42]

In addition to understanding the form of the insurgency, understanding the strategy used by each is also important. Here too O'Neil proposes several distinct approaches that insurgency may take. O'Neil admits that not all insurgencies will precisely fit within these defined approaches; nevertheless, they are useful in discerning the unique method employed by each movement. Of particular interest to this study are the popular support and military strategies. The popular support strategy places political action and the building of popular support in opposition to the established authority at the forefront of its activities. This does not mean that it will not use violence or the threat of violence to achieve its aims; however, these are subordinate to achieving the desired

---

[42] Bard O'Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, (Dulles: Brassey's inc, 1990), 20-29.

political end.[43] The military strategy places primacy on military action with the belief that popular support is already sufficient or will be a by-product of military victories.[44] O'Neil also proposes a conspiratorial and urban warfare strategy. The former uses a limited and swift use of force by a secretive and well organized group to remove ruling authority. The latter uses urban density as a sanctuary to conduct terrorism and urban guerrilla warfare in order to undermine government authority. [45]

*Summary.* A survey of the most prominent theorists of insurgency since the French Revolution reveals several themes or principles that stand out as essential for the successful conduct of insurgency. These may be divided into higher level strategic and more practical tactical level considerations.

At the strategic level, insurgency remains a particular form of warfare confined to intra-state conflict. While each society in which it is fought has its own unique aspects and considerations, there are some broad general factors that are consistent. First and foremost, it entails combining the use of force with the desire to achieve a distinct and defined political aim. That political goal remains at the centre and all actions are subordinate to its achievement. Tactical loss is acceptable if it supports the strategic political aim. The aim must be clearly articulated and must, even if only passively, be supported by the population. Therefore, active effort to sway the population to the cause of the insurgents is fundamental to success. In addition, because insurgency is a form of warfare used by the weak against the strong (at least in military terms) insurgency often

---

[43] Ibid, 49-55.
[44] Ibid, 56-60.
[45] Ibid, 46-49 and 61-63.

relies on protraction. It should seek to draw out the conflict and exhaust the enemy to a point where there is a realization that victory is either improbable or too costly. In this sense, there is no single decisive battle to be fought. While it is possible that over time the insurgency might gather the strength to transition to a more offensive conventional conflict, prior to that point, the focus should be on a guerrilla campaign that avoids potentially costly engagements.

At a more tactical level, these high strategic considerations translate into the practical methods to be followed by the insurgent. As a political struggle, and one relying on the support of the population, agitation, education, and propaganda should be a principal activity among insurgent forces. As there is no decisive battle to be won for the insurgent, guerrilla tactics, hit and run, and avoidance of costly battles is the preferred method of combat engagement. This would allow the insurgents to use space and spread enemy forces out, while selecting the point of engagement on their terms. To achieve this, the insurgent forces must use suitable terrain and superior intelligence to their advantage. In addition, they require an effective organization with strong leadership to skilfully apply their limited resources and secure the active or passive support of the population.

**Counterinsurgency**

*General.* The common dictionary meaning for counter is to "speak or act in response to."[46] As such, the dictionary definition for counterinsurgencies is stated simply

---

[46] *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 11th Edition, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. 326.

as "military or political action taken against guerrillas or revolutionaries."[47] Contemporary military sources do not stray far from this general definition. Canadian and American military definitions are virtually identical. According to the Canadian definition counterinsurgency consists of "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency."[48] The American definition differs only slightly, adding that the actions are taken by a government.[49] Meanwhile, the British Army definition is somewhat unique in its explicit inclusion of the need to resolve root causes in its definition.[50] Given the consistency of these definitions, this study defines counterinsurgency simply as the range of measures employed to counter the efforts of an insurgency.

*Early Military Theory.* If Clausewitz saw the utility of insurgency in countering French Revolutionary forces, Antoine Henri Jomini was his counterinsurgent opposite. The Swiss born military theorist was an influential writer of military theory and still profoundly influences modern thinking on war.[51] Jomini's rationalist approach to operations focused on broad fundamental principles that could be adapted to changing circumstances to ensure success in operations. John Shy encapsulated Jomini's theory as three basic ideas: that strategy is the key to warfare; that strategy is controlled by

---

[47] *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 327.
[48] *B-BL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations,* (Ottawa, DND, 2008), 1-3.
[49] *FM 3-24 US Army /USMC Counter-insurgency Field Manual,* (Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.
[50] British Army definition is "those military, law enforcement, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency, while addressing the root causes."*Army Field Manual - Countering Insurgency Volume 1 Part,* (London: MOD, 10 Jan, 2010), 1-4
[51] Daniel Moran, *Strategic Theory and the History of War*, (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2001),last accessed March 8,2013,http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Moran-StrategicTheory.pdf#zoom=100,6. Also John Shy states, "Jomini more than Clausewitz, deserves the dubious title of founder of modern strategy." Shy, "Jomini", *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed Peter Paret,(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 144.

scientific principles; and that these principles indicate that the application of mass force at the decisive point leads to success.[52]

As part of Marshall Ney's VI Corps, Jomini had served in Spain and had been on the receiving end of a war waged by an insurgent force. After the French invasion of the Iberian peninsula, what remained of the Spanish and Portuguese armies assisted by armed civilians and eventually supported by British forces under Wellington, fought a protracted war of attrition against Napoleon's Army to regain independence. As such, Jomini experienced the frustration of being constantly harassed by bands of guerrillas along exposed lines of communication and suffered the difficulties of identifying such an enemy among a broader population. Jomini's experience in Spain may be the reason for his general approach to war which John Shy described as "abstracting it from its political and social content...turning war into a huge game of chess".

In general, Jomini's attitude was a mechanistic approach to the conduct of operations that focused on the total destruction of the enemy's force as the principal means to victory in a conflict that unfolds in a vacuum divorced from the realm of political influence. This is in stark contrast to Clausewitz's linking of actions in war to political purpose. John Nagl has suggested that Jomini's focus on the battle of annihilation as the key to success has had a significant impact on students of counterinsurgency, and focused them on the destruction of the insurgent's forces in the field.[53] It might be implied this approach ignored the underlying motivations that drive insurgents and as they cannot be brought to engage in decisive battle, leads to prolonged

---

[52] Shy, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 146.
[53] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 19.

and inconclusive conflict. This in turns creates the conditions of exhaustion on the part of the counterinsurgent forces and their ultimate defeat as suggested by Clausewitz.

However, like Clausewitz, Jomini did speak specifically to the issue of insurgency, and his thoughts, although brief, were instructive. Classified by Jomini as national wars, these stemmed from occasions when "a people enthusiastic in its political opinion" take up arms.[54] Jomini spoke from experience when he described the difficulty of operating against an elusive insurgent force where friendly forces were constantly under threat and "even the non-combatants have an interest in his ruin and accelerate it by every means in their power."[55] These non-combatants may be led by a nucleus of disciplined troops and may receive assistance from an external source as was the case in Spain. When combined with difficult terrain, of which the insurgent has intimate knowledge and the counter-insurgent's inherent difficulty in gathering effective intelligence on his opponent, Jomini admitted that success in counterinsurgency was difficult. He suggested that the only way that the counterinsurgent could possibility triumph was if he was willing to commit a force that was "strong enough to hold all the essential points of the country, cover its lines of communication, and at the same time furnish an active force sufficient to beat the enemy wherever he may present himself."[56] This was a daunting task for any army. But beyond this purely military, force on force, aspect, Jomini demonstrated that perhaps he did have a deeper understanding of the nature of counterinsurgency. In addition to recognizing the need for sufficient mass of

---

[54] Antonie Jomini, *The Art of War,* trans G.H. Mendell and W.P. Craighill, reprinted by Greenwood Press, Westport, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott and Co, 1862), 26.
[55] Ibid, 27.
[56] Ibid, 29.

forces, Jomini advised that the counterinsurgent must be prepared up front for a protracted conflict and that he must "calm the popular passion in every possible way, exhaust them with patience, display courtesy, gentleness, and severity united, and, particularly, deal justly."[57] This would appear to be an early articulation of what would later be commonly referred to as 'winning hearts and minds'.

*French Colonial School.* If there is an origin to modern population-focused counterinsurgency doctrine then it is perhaps to be found in the French post-Napoleonic colonial experience. In his survey on the roots of counterinsurgency, Ian Beckett suggested that this approach culminates in the practices and writings of Marshal Louis–Hubert Lyautey at the turn of the 20th century and defined the doctrine of the French Army's 'Colonial School'.[58] This was summarized, he suggested, as the codification of a strategy for the liberation of native populations from despotism and their subsequent pacification through a combination of political, economic and military means. It was a doctrine developed over time and can generally be traced back to the French campaign in Algeria in the 1840s. In his chapter on the development of French Colonial warfare in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Douglas Porch noted that this was a generally neglected period during which the French Army abroad "prided itself on its ability to adapt to the new conditions of warfare that it met outside of Europe..."[59] In an earlier edition of the same book, Jean Gottmann described the approach as a method that "aims not at the destruction of the enemy but at the organization of the conquered people...to defeat the

---

[57] Ibid, 29.
[58] Ian Beckett, *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency,* (London: Blandford Press, 1988), 40.
[59] Douglas Porch, "Burgeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* edited by Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 376.

enemy in the most decisive manner as to subordinate him at the lowest cost and in a way to guarantee permanent pacification."[60] All three authors divided the development of this doctrine around three phases that roughly correspond to periods during which Generals Thomas-Robert Bugeaud (Algeria 1840s), Joseph-Simon Gallieni (Tonkin/ Madagascar 1890s) and Louis-Hubert Lyautey (Morocco 1900s) were its major proponents.

In his article "Razzia: A Turning Point in Modern Strategy", Thomas Rid described the adaption of the *razzia* by Bugeaud in Algeria as a "necessary step in modern military thought." [61] Essentially a raid on populated areas controlled by the enemy or believed to be supporting the enemy, the *razzia* under Bugeaud's administration was adopted in favour of the previous practice of relying on static fortifications and heavy columns to attack insurgent forces. Bugeaud, like Jomini, had served in Spain during the Napoleonic Wars; however, Bugeaud's experience was slightly different than Jomini's, as he had served under General Louis Gabriel Suchet in Aragon. Unlike many of Napoleon's other generals, Suchet combined strong military action with skilful political and economic initiatives to create a relatively stable operational environment within the province of Aragon.[62] Bugeaud's realization that guerrilla forces in Algeria refused to be drawn into open engagement and lacked a well

---

[60] Jean Gottmann, "Burgeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *The Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, edited by Edward Mead Earle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 234-235.

[61] Thomas Rid, "Razzia: A turning Point in Modern Strategy," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, (2009), last accessed March 3, 2013,http://thomasrid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/rid-razzia1.pdf, 617. It should be noted that authors such as Archer Jones identify a raiding strategy as a feature of strategy in western warfare dating back to the ancient Greeks. Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 54.

[62] For an account of the methods used by Suchet see Jean-Philippe Rollet's thesis "Conqueror and Administrator: Civil and Military Actions of Marshall Louis-Gabriel Suchet in the Spanish Province of Aragon 1808-1813," (MA Thesis: United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2008), last accessed March 3, 2013, www.dtic.mil/cgi-bn/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA491525.

identified center of gravity that could be attacked led him to adopt a similar method. As one observer noted, "How can you impose your will on a population whose only link to the land is the pegs of their tents?"[63] Bugeaud's solution was to use light columns, "roaming the countryside and fighting the enemy wherever he presents himself, leaving him neither security nor rest."[64] In this way, the French would be able to penetrate deeper into the country and disrupt the insurgents at their base among the population. As Bugeaud stated, "The more popular a war becomes, the more the citizens of the state act as part of its army, using all means and resources in support of one party, the less can it be expected that these resources should be spared by the other party."[65] The *razzia* spared neither man, woman or child and its brutality would ultimately lead to deep divisions between the colonial army and its continental counter-parts, as well as with the political establishment at home. This dark trend in the French approach toward counterinsurgency would resurface again in the next century.

Notwithstanding his comfort in using the *razzia,* Bugeaud realized the need to balance its destructive and deterrent approach with a more constructive element. In looking at how the insurgents in Algeria had sought to separate the French from the population, Bugeaud realized that, "the population in direct and free relations to us, would find such advantages in this exchange, that the interest would soon wither the political and religious passions" and the insurgent would "lose his influence and his power."[66] As such Bugeaud used the areas cleared by the *razzia* to form a base from

---

[63] Rid, *Razzia*, 622.
[64] Ibid, 620.
[65] Ibid, 627.
[66] Ibid, 625.

which the French could expand their control. He reorganized the *bureaux arabes* to improve civil-military relations with the indigenous population in what Beckett described as "constructive occupation."[67] Manned by officers who understood the local population and often spoke the language, the *bureaux arabes* "administered the population and disrupted the insurgent's cohesion by means of political warfare."[68] In addition to winning over the populace, the *bureaux arabes* were able to support the military effort by controlling locally raised forces and gathering critical intelligence. Rid suggested that the *razzia* and *bureaux arabes* were military activities that both focused on the population; the *razzia* punished those uncooperative elements and the *bureaux arabes* rewarded those who were supportive. In addition, they offered a deterrent or incentive to those still undecided in their allegiances.[69]

From this foundation, Gallieni and subsequently Lyautey further refined the formula of combining military action with political and economic actions in Tonkin, Madagascar and Morocco, with an ever increased emphasis on the political and economic over the militray. Porch made the point that this may not have been necessarily out of any sense of humanitarianism but, rather, a response to the military's vulnerability to criticism from an increasingly left-oriented politics at home.[70] Nevertheless, others have suggested that the methodology developed by Gallieni and Lyautey constituted a "revolution in colonial warfare" at the operational and tactical level driven by the need to

---

[67] Beckett, *Roots of Counterinsurgency*, 42.
[68] Ibid, 42.
[69] Rid, *Razzia*, 632.
[70] Porch, *Bugeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey*, 387.

conceive a better way to deal with colonial military problems.[71] Gallieni focused on a cooperative approach allied with local authorities in what has come to be widely known as the *'tache d'huile'* (oil spot) approach. Secured and stable areas were created where commerce was conducted and local administration was developed in cooperation with the French authorities. This also included the creation of local security forces. From here the counterinsurgent's influence progressively expanded out like an oil stain, eventually joining other such areas and gradually bringing the country under control. The key, Gallieni maintained, was to "enter into intimate contact with the populations, exploring their tendencies, their mentality, and striving to satisfy their needs in order to attach them through persuasion to the new institutions."[72] In addition to reducing the reliance on military action, Gallieni was able to unite military and civil authority in a single military led command authority but with a clear view to an eventual return to a civil administration.[73] Summarizing Gallieni, Rid noted that:

> Instead of operating against the enemy's resources, markets were created and trade encouraged; instead of cutting communications, streets, rails and telegraphs were built; instead of burning villages, settlements were protected and fortified; instead of killing the population, neutrals were trained and armed.[74]

These methods were continued by Lyautey, who had been a subordinate of Gallieni's in both Tonkin and Madagascar, during his campaign in Morocco. Lyautey

---

[71] Christopher Griffin, "A Revolution in Colonial Military Affairs: Gallieni, Lyautey and the 'tache d'huile,'" paper submitted for British International Studies Association Conference, Leicester, December, 2009. Available from www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task=view_pu.
[72] Thomas Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:5 (2010), last accessed March 10, 2013, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2010.498259, 750.
[73] Ibid, 750.
[74] Rid, *Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, 752.

understood that the initial military campaign of occupation was not necessarily the end of resistance; the enemy could easily resurrect himself as an insurgent force. Thus, Lyautey saw success as not dependent on a traditional military organization, but rather on an "organization on the march"; one " ...able to fight, win, then administrate and govern, as local conditions required."[75] In this manner, his front would not be formed by the spearhead of columns as with Bugeaud, but by a progressing tide of well-organized occupation.[76] This required men who were adaptive and had ability beyond pure military proficiency. In addition, a sound knowledge and understanding the population was essential.

*British Colonial Experience.* Most of the post-Napoleonic knowledge gained by British military professionals in the conduct of conflict against insurgent forces is captured in C.E. Callwell's *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*. Callwell was an artillery officer who had both experienced numerous campaigns including Afghanistan and South Africa, as well as having spent time in the Intelligence Department of the War Office where many of the Empire's small war campaigns were studied in detail. Written at the height of British imperialism, *Small Wars* aimed to articulate those principles and practices of small wars as regards "strategy and tactics and of the broad rules...which are universally accepted...a code from which it is perilous to depart."[77] While the majority of the book dealt with the tactical considerations and accompanying detailed examples, the earlier chapters contained useful instruction on how these campaigns should be

---

[75] Ibid, 753.
[76] Gottmann, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 241.
[77] Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practices*, 3rd ed, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1996), Ibid, 22-23.

understood in the broader context of warfare. Initially published in 1896, *Small Wars* would not have directly informed the Canadians who participated in the North-West Rebellion. Yet it should be noted that some of the participants on the Government side would have directly experienced the wars from which Callwell's observations were drawn. In particular, senior leaders like Generals Middleton and Strange, who had colonial service in the British Army, would have directly experienced what Callwell discusses in *Small Wars.*

Callwell used the term 'small wars' not to indicate their size but rather to denote "... operations of regular armies against irregular, or comparatively speaking irregular forces."[78] Among these Callwell noted three categories: first, those involving conquest or annexation, which are fought on foreign soil and usually against an enemy that was "tangible and defined"; second, those conducted to correct an insult or wrong done or to overthrow a dangerous enemy, which tended to be less full campaigns and more along the lines of punitive foreign expeditions; and finally those involving the suppression of insurrection or pacification of territory conquered or annexed. These tended to be more internal in nature and fought against "indeterminable" forces.[79] In further describing the latter, Callwell notes that operations of counter insurgency forces "...stand on very different footing" and that these are particularly difficult when conducted in "...remote regions peopled by half civilized races or wholly savage tribes..."[80]

Recognizing their unique features, Callwell like Clausewitz, highlighted the need to understand the nature of the conflict and its desired objective from the outset.

---

[78] Ibid, 21.
[79] Ibid, 25-27.
[80] Ibid, 26

However, he noted the difficulty that this may pose in an insurgency where it may be difficult to determine a definable objective.[81] Further, he noted that in these conflicts there may be a need not only to demonstrate superiority in victory but, to impose punishment on the insurgents.[82] At the same time he stated, "Expeditions to put down revolt are not put in motion merely to bring about a temporary cessation of hostility. Their purpose is to ensure a lasting peace..."[83] Callwell followed this with the statement that in spite of the potential of engaging the enemy force and defeating it in the field, that "moral effect is often far more important than material success..."[84] In this respect, Callwell seemed to have captured the concepts of both the centrality of the post-conflict political solution and the importance of the psychological battle for the minds of the population that would become more prominent in later writers.

Callwell placed significant emphasis on the engagement and destruction of the enemy military force; however, it is clear that he understood the fundamental asymmetry of approach between the insurgent and the counterinsurgent forces. He acknowledged that at the tactical level, superior organization and physical resources favour the regular counterinsurgency forces; while at the strategic level, the protracted guerrilla war approach to conflict favoured the insurgents. Indeed, Callwell warned that "Guerrilla warfare is what regular armies have most to dread, and when this is directed by a leader with a genius for war, an effective campaign becomes well-nigh impossible."[85] As such,

---

[81] Ibid, 37.
[82] Ibid, 40.
[83] Ibid. 41-42.
[84] Ibid, 42.
[85] Ibid, 126.

Callwell advocated that the counterinsurgent forces focus on a strategic as well as tactical offensive approach. In addition to trying to bring the enemy to decisive battle on a scale and intensity to ensure the destruction of his military forces, the counterinsurgent "must force his way into the enemy's country and seek him out...it must play to win and not for safety."[86] In this way the counterinsurgent must seek to shorten the campaign as much as possible with an emphasis on fighting over manoeuvre that seeks not only the defeat of insurgent forces but the disruption of their base of support. Yet Callwell cautioned that it is not just about seizing the initiative early. Rather once the campaign has commenced, it must show steady progress: "An ephemeral triumph is dearly purchased at the cost of a subsequent period of discreditable inaction."[87]

Callwell recognized a key principle that runs through most writing on counterinsurgency: the requirement for good intelligence in order to effectively combat the insurgent forces. Callwell was well aware of the advantage that the insurgent had in this regard not only through his knowledge of the local geography but of the counterinsurgent's movements through information offered by the population. This information traveled quickly and in a "mysterious fashion".[88] When combined with the insurgent's ability to move quickly within the theatre of operations, this created a strong advantage in initiative for the insurgent. However, if the counterinsurgent could gain a sound understanding of the terrain and the insurgents, not only their numbers and

---

[86] Ibid, 75.
[87] Ibid, 72.
[88] Ibid. 54.

organization, but their fighting ability, he would be able to take decisive action with greater confidence.[89]

*Small Wars* made several references to the population during insurgency but certainly did not focus specifically on the necessity of attempting to gain their support. This is perhaps a product of the time, as the insurgents were often viewed simply as 'savage, 'semi-civilized' or 'barbarous' upon whom civilization was to be imposed. Referencing Bugeaud's experience in Algeria, Callwell observed that in the case of insurgency, counterinsurgent forces must contend "not with a hostile army but with a hostile population..."[90] As such, Callwell seemed to focus his attention on the population with a view toward the potential need for reprisals or punishment for their support to the insurgents. Alternatively, actions against the insurgent's base of support could force him to respond to these actions and commit to the tactical battle that Callwell believed favoured the counterinsurgent forces. This is reflective of Bugeaud's use of the mobile column and *razzia*. In addition, Callwell noted that "irregular armies count many waivers...a vigorous offensive has the effect of keeping at home those who hesitate to take up arms..."[91] Only in passing did Callwell caution that these actions needed to be confined to the "dacoits and marauders who infested the country and were reducing it to anarchy."[92] For Callwell, a potentially hostile population was a factor in insurgency that, while necessary to consider, was not one that could potentially be turned to his advantage. Dalton McCarthy has characterized Callwell's attitude to counterinsurgency

---

[89] Ibid, 47.
[90] Ibid, 129.
[91] Ibid, 76.
[92] Ibid, 147.

as an "enemy centric approach in which many of his recommended practices would be considered too harsh for the sophisticated tastes of the modern counterinsurgent."[93]

In 1934, another practitioner of counterinsurgency, Sir Charles Gwynn wrote *Imperial Policing*, which he described as providing the principles and doctrine for the use of the military in a policing function. Like Callwell, Gwynn had served in the Intelligence Department of the War Office and as the Commandant of the British Army staff college directly influenced a generation of officers. Gwynn noted at the outset of *Imperial Policing* the need for civilian authorities to be equally aware of the principles and doctrine of employing the military in this function in order to eliminate any potential "friction" between military and civilian efforts.[94]

From this conceptual understanding Gwynn drew four key principles of counterinsurgency. The first was the maintenance of the civil aim.[95] Even if the military was in sole lead of the campaign, it must ever conduct itself in such a manner as to ensure the desired political aim. Gwynn's second principle was closely related to the first, the use of the minimum level of force required to achieve the desired objective.[96] As the objective was the quick restoration of civil order, excessive use of force could prolong the process or increase support for insurgent elements. The third principle proposed by Gwynn was timely action.[97] Like Callwell, Gwynn cautioned the military to take early

---

[93] Dalton McCarthy, "Big Books on "Small Wars': Milestones or Millstones in Counterinsurgency Thinking?" *Australian Army Journal*, Volume VII, Number 3, last accessed March 11, http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/DARA/Our-publications/Australian-Army-Journal/~/media/Files/Our%20future/DARA%20Publications/AAJ/2010Summer/AAJ_Vol7_No3_Summer2010.ashx . 79.
[94] Charles Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 2nd ed, (London: MacMillian and Co,1939), 1.
[95] Ibid, 13.
[96] Ibid. 14.
[97] Ibid, 15.

and decisive action to suppress insurgent forces. Gwynn noted that there could be tension in methodology of approach between the military and civil components as the natural military inclination was to concentrate force for decisive action whereas the civil inclination to promote protection and stability across the breadth of the population in general would tend to favor a more dispersed approach.

*Classical Counterinsurgency Theory.* David Galula was one of the most often referenced authors from the classical counterinsurgency phase. Galula's career in the French Army during the 1940s-50s had placed him in a position to observe a number of insurgencies in action, including China, Malaya, Indo-China and Algeria. The cumulative expression of his views on waging counterinsurgency was presented in his study *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice.*[98]

Galula pointed out that if the underlying grievances or problems supporting the legitimacy of the insurgent cause were removed and the counterinsurgent was simply left with the requirement to militarily defeat the insurgent forces, counterinsurgency would simply entail a minor adjustment in strategy, tactics and organization on the part of the counterinsurgent force.[99] But as it was popular support that held the key to victory, the military component was not an effective weapon. The proper approach must be political

---

[98] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), 1-2. Galula uses the terms insurgency and revolutionary warfare interchangeably. Insurgency, a protracted struggle with progressive objectives during which the support of the population is acquired. Galula defined insurgency as conflict that was "primarily an internal conflict... [that] results from the action of the insurgent aiming to seize power...and from the reaction of the counterinsurgent aiming to keep his power."

[99] Ibid, 71

in nature with the military's purpose being to "afford the political power enough freedom to work safely with the population."[100]

Using the principles established above, Galula directed that the counterinsurgent's approach should be methodical. He must select an area and commit enough capability to remove the in-place insurgent forces and ensure their subsequent inability to re-enter that area; effectively isolating the insurgents from the population. Having succeeded in that, the counterinsurgent must establish contact with the population, particularly the minority supporters of the counterinsurgent forces and re-introduce government control while simultaneously continuing to dismantle the insurgent's organization and support network. The re-introduction of government authority should be conducted through local leadership to the greatest extent possible and this leadership must be developed and improved over time; this should include the development of local self-defence units. Finally, and if possible, the remaining population and indeed the remaining insurgents should be won over to the counterinsurgent side by addressing genuine grievances and promoting the counterinsurgent's overall legitimacy.[101] Galula was clear to note that these were not purely military tasks. In fact dismantling the insurgent organization through arrests and prosecutions would fall to the police and judiciary. Likewise, the establishment of contact with the populace and re-introduction of political control along with the constructive work required to win popular support was a political task.[102] The

---

[100] Ibid, 63.
[101] Ibid, 55-56.
[102] Ibid, 61.

defeat of the insurgency was "not an addition but a multiplication of these various operations; they all are essential and if one is nil, the product will be zero."[103]

Another one of the studies from the classical counterinsurgency theory phase that is frequently referred to is Sir Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya to Vietnam.* Thompson gained his experience in counterinsurgency during the Malaya Emergency and subsequently as an observer and advisor in Vietnam. His work specifically focused on defeating communist insurgency and offer a "basic theory of counter-insurgency as it should be applied to defeat the threat in similar circumstances"[104]

Thompson understood that if identified early there was an opportunity to disrupt the insurgency in its infancy before it reached the guerrilla phase. Once the insurgency had reached the guerrilla phase, the counterinsurgent must first secure his base among the populated areas above all else.[105] If necessary this could mean initially conceding rural areas. The counterinsurgent should proceed from the easier areas to the more difficult, building confidence in his forces and amongst the population in an effort to build irreversible momentum. By following these principles, the counterinsurgent should be able to recreate a simple equation in the mind of the population: "legality + construction + results = counterinsurgent force; while illegality + destruction + promises = insurgent forces."[106]

This was inherently an offensive approach, as Thompson stated:

---

[103] Ibid, 61.
[104] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), 9.
[105] Ibid, 57.
[106] Ibid, 68.

> It must be the aim of the counter-insurgent forces to compel guerrilla forces to go on the defensive so that they lose the initiative, become dispersed and expend their energy on mere existence. Their condition then changes from one of automatic expansion to one of certain contraction, as a result of which both their strength and morale steadily decline.[107]

*Summary.* A survey of material produced on counterinsurgency reveals certain consistent themes and established principles related to the successful prosecution of a counterinsurgency campaign. Moreover, as with the principles and fundamentals of insurgency, these can be largely broken down into higher strategic and lower tactical considerations.

At the strategic level, the political aim must be foremost in the counterinsurgent's mind during the execution of the campaign. Cooperation of the population is essential for restoring order and a stable environment. This can only be achieved through establishing the counterinsurgent's credibility, legitimacy, and therefore support, amongst the population. To maintain that legitimacy, the counterinsurgent must operate within the legal framework. As such, unlike for the insurgent, intimidation and terror are not effective tools. Support must be achieved through provision of the needs (economic, political, and social) of the populace. This cannot be achieved by the military alone and therefore requires a combined and coordinated military-civil effort and must be supported by a concerted information plan. Time does not favour the counterinsurgent. Fighting an insurgency is costly in blood and treasure, and while the counterinsurgent must be prepared to commit to a long term effort, the quicker it can be concluded the better. It

---

[107] Ibid, 116.

must be understood that insurgency as a political problem requires a political, not a military, solution. The principal job of the military must be to create the environment within which civil action can occur.

At the tactical level there is a need to maintain contact with the population and deny the insurgent the same. This will promote a sense of security and stability as well as help foster a relationship from which intelligence and support will flow. Protecting the population as opposed to killing the insurgent must be the focus. When the use of force is required, it should be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired effect. This does not negate the need to retain an offensive approach to operations. The penetration of insurgent areas through a 'clear, hold, build' methodology must be pursued.

**Conclusion**

This introduction to the theories and concepts of insurgency and counter-insurgency shows that applying them to the North West Rebellion in 1885 will not be an exercise in anachronism. The basic principles of each were beginning to be grasped and articulated at the time in the writings of practitioners and theorists. While the terminology of early efforts to articulate that conceptual framework may differ from later, or indeed current use, this is natural given the evolution in understanding this type of conflict. That neither the rebels nor the forces fighting them may have fully understood them, they are a useful means to more fully understand the conflict. The remainder of the thesis will demonstrate the relevance of this analytical framework.

## Métis and First Nations Insurgency

### Background

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Canada, barely established as a Dominion, was expanding westward. The purchase of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company meant that with the stroke of a pen Ottawa had effectively acquired half a continent. But the Canadian experience was not completely without its difficulties as its aspirations for expansion into the North West Territories immediately clashed with the interests of the established inhabitants. Though sparsely populated this vast expanse of territory, which lay between the boundaries of Ontario in the east and the British colony of British Columbia in the west, was home to a diverse number of First Nations and Métis. The friction created by Canada's expansion into the North West would precipitate two significant political crises between the Canadian government and those inhabitants; the first in 1869, focused on the Métis community at Red River and a second in 1885, focused on the Métis and First Nations bands living along the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers.

While the particular circumstances and conditions of the crisis in Red River and the North-West vary, at the center of each are frictions between the Government and the indigenous population over issues of land, culture and political representation. The nature and validity of these issues are in and of themselves subject to debate. As Sarah Carter noted, "The events of 1885, and the causes leading to those events, remain topics of great controversy among historians and the general public and a vast literature has

been produced."[108] In many respects this is a result of the ongoing legal issues surrounding aboriginal land claims that extend to the present day. Legal arguments and briefs presented before the courts by both appellants and respondents are replete with interpretations of historical documents and circumstances, supported by the work of historians.[109]

In *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, Carter goes on to place Canadian expansion westward in the second half of the nineteenth century within the greater context of a global process of colonization and the contest over land and resources between indigenous and foreign peoples.[110] In doing so, she noted a tendency by some historians for "exceptionalism", an interpretation that holds that in the Canadian context the process of colonization was somehow more orderly and peaceful when compared to other examples. This particularly noteworthy regarding the United States, where American expansion required significant investment in both blood and treasure, as the United States Army entered into numerous conflicts with First Nations. As evidence to the contrary, Carter pointed to the events of 1869 and 1885. As an early example of this "exceptionalist" interpretation Carter noted George Stanley's work, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions.*

---

[108] Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 150-151.
[109] Manitoba Métis Federation Inc, et al v. Attorney General of Canada et al. Supreme Court of Canada Case 33880, Factums, last accessed March 2, 2013. http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/case-dossier/cms-sgd/fac-mem-eng.aspx?cas=33880.
[110] Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 101.

Stanley contended that the rebellions were the products of a clash between primitive and civilized peoples.[111] He drew little difference between the case of the Métis and First Nations bands, suggesting that both were either unsuited or unwilling to be civilized and subsequently rose up against the Government as a matter of "survival".[112] He noted that by the 1880s, the Canadian government and population viewed the opening of the west as bringing "new horizons of adventure, but to the red man it brought disaster and decline."[113] As such, both the Métis and the First Nations were easily stirred to open rebellion under the influence and charismatic leadership of Louis Riel. Later studies by Bob Beal and Rod Macleod supported the colonization thesis describing the rebellion of 1885 as "an incident in the occupation of the North-West Territories by white settlers and the imposition of their institutions of government on the indigenous population."[114]

A different interpretation, specifically in the case of the North-West Rebellion, was put forward by Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser. In *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*, Stonechild and Waiser marked Stanley's work as the most influential expression of what they call the "Indian- Métis conspiracy".[115] They viewed the portrayal of the First Nations bands as a primitive culture responding to colonization by a 'superior' civilization through open rebellion, as "seductive in its simplicity" but

---

[111] Carter fundamentally does not object to the thesis but seems to prefer the terms "dominant and subordinate populations." Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 103.
[112] George Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), Preface vii.
[113] Ibid, 193.
[114] Bob Beal and Rod Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion*, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1984), 11.
[115] Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*, (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd, 1997), 2.

disconnected from the truth.[116] They opposed the image of First Nations as "confused, angry allies who played a secondary, supporting role in the rebellion" alongside the Métis, whose "savage democracy" was the only thing that prevented them from decisively engaging Canadian forces. Using oral narrative history combined with a re-examination of primary government documents, Stonechild and Waiser offered an "Indian point of view" of the events surrounding the 1885 rebellion.[117] This view depicted First Nations collaboration and participation with the Métis as "isolated and sporadic". First Nations leaders had their own grievances and a strategy for resolving them distinct from that of the Métis.

Any examination of the history of the North-West Rebellion could not avoid consideration of perhaps one of the most polarizing figures in Canadian history: Louis Riel. As one scholar noted, "Riel is simultaneously a sage and a madman; a Catholic mystic and an Anabaptist Missionary; a First Nations leader and a puppet of white forces; a cultural mediator and a promoter of racial warfare; a prairie maverick and a pan-Canadian patriot."[118] There can be no doubt that Riel played an important role in both the Red River Crisis and North-West Rebellion. As Stanley noted, regardless of his perceived image, his one constant theme was the cause of the Métis people.[119] Nevertheless, there is some controversy surrounding Riel's motivation in assuming such a role. Stonechild and Waiser noted that Riel was a fundamentally different person

---

[116] Ibid, 2.
[117] Ibid, 4.
[118] Albert Riamundo Braz, "The False Traitor: Louis Riel in Canadian Literature", (Doctoral Thesis: University of Toronto, 1999), last accessed March 12, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape9/PQDD_0001/NQ41111.pdf, 246.
[119] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 296.

during the North-West Rebellion and the Red River Crisis, more religious than political in nature in 1885, acting as "God's emissary" to create a homeland for the Métis in preparation for the day of judgment.[120] Joseph Howard was perhaps even less generous in his assertion that Riel "...against his conscious will, became a dictator...to lead the people he loved into a suicidal crusade."[121] But beyond these assertions, as Beal and Macleod observed, while one cannot deny the central role played by Riel in the Rebellion, to fully comprehend it a broader appreciation of the conditions that affected the various participants is at least equally important.[122] In this sense, Riel should be seen as more of a catalyst than a cause.

While none of the approaches to the history of the North West Rebellion suggested above specifically indicate or classify the events in the spring of 1885 as an insurgency, there are some general trends that would suggest that this is a viable framework. Indeed, when Louis Riel and the key First Nations leaders involved in the North-West Rebellion, Poundmaker and Big Bear, stood trial in Regina, it was on charges of treason. In Riel's case it was high treason, while Poundmaker and Big Bear were charged with a lesser offence of felony treason. In his instruction to the jury during Riel's trial, Judge Hugh Richardson stated that high treason consisted of a "leveling of war" or "insurrection", the use of force to achieve an aim, against the Crown.[123] But how does this compare with the current understanding of what constitutes insurgency? An examination of the events leading up to and during the Rebellion will indicate that it

---

[120] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 57.
[121] Howard, *Strange Empire*,16.
[122] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 12.
[123] Douglas Linder, "Famous Trials: Louis Riel Trial 1885," University of Missouri and Kansas City, 2004, last accessed March 13, 2013, http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/riel/instructions.html.

meets the basic requirements of an insurgency as defined in the previous chapter; a conflict, internal to a state, involving at least one actor that does not represent a sovereign state, using violence or the threat of violence against an established authority to achieve political ends. In addition, by using the framework of insurgency to deconstruct these events, a firmer understanding of the distinct features of the Métis and First Nations approaches to confronting its political differences with the Canadian government can be established.

## Red River Crisis

*Métis Unrest.* In looking at the North-West Rebellion, Thomas Flanagan stated that "all historians agree that the origins of the Rebellion must be traced to the Resistance of 1869-70 in the Red River colony."[124] In examining the 1885 Rebellion as a case study in insurgency, it seems prudent to follow this advice, particularly when trying to identify and trace the underlying causes or grievances that served to create the basis for the conflict.

Lying between the end of the Great Lakes and the Rocky Mountains, the prairies of the North West were a strategic area in the contest for control of the North American continent, "the half open gate through which the United States might enter the north and seal Canada off at the Great Lakes."[125] Significant raids from the United States across the border in the east had been fended by Canadian authorities off in 1838 and again in 1866. While not explicitly carried out by the United States government, neither did it seem that

---

[124] Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered*, 2nd ed, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 9.
[125] Bruce Hutchison, *The Struggle for the Border*, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1955), 368.

American officials felt inclined to forcibly prevent them from taking place. Canada's ability to successfully fend off these attacks was in part due to the fact that they took place in areas where Canadian authority was well established and the population was actively supportive of the government. In addition, the government had a military presence in the region upon which it could draw to defend itself. These factors were much less applicable across the coveted prairies, as Canada was to discover during the Red River incident in 1869-70.

In 1869, the Canadian government had successfully negotiated the purchase and transfer of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) to Canada. By the time of the sale's completion in 1869, however, the Canadian government had not firmly established a comprehensive plan for the transfer and imposition of its political authority. In effect, the sales transaction absolved the HBC of the authority and responsibility to exercise political authority on behalf of the Crown within Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territory but, did not articulate the ways or means by which Canada would assume these authorities and responsibilities in turn.

A shift of political authority of this sort was bound to create a certain level of apprehension among the existing communities in the North West. This was aggravated by the fact that the inhabitants had been excluded from the negotiations between the Crown, the Canadian government and the HBC on the purchase and transfer of the territory. For the residents of the North West, this understandably led to a deep sense of anxiety about their future. Both the First Nations and Métis communities saw themselves as distinct societies and the expected impact of an influx of settlers on their way of life and culture caused considerable concern. Premature action by government surveyors to

prepare the new territory for occupation by the anticipated wave of Canadian settlers from the east sparked the initial confrontation with the Métis community, who would became the focal point for these insecurities as well as the center of local resistance.

Given the apparent political vacuum and concerns over land entitlement, political rights and the preservation of their distinct culture, opposition arose to openly resist Canadian government initiatives. The Métis had used a traditional seigniorial style system to establish their land plots based on tracts of land in narrow strips running back from river frontage. In contrast, government surveyors used a square grid method to lay out land plots that would create potential discrepancies in title. As such, immediate assurance of existing land title needed to be resolved both for current and future generations of Métis communities along the Red River. In addition, being predominantly French-speaking and Catholic, the Métis were equally concerned about the impact of a large group of English-speaking Protestant settlers moving into the Territories that could see them become a minority with their language and culture smothered by the Canadians. Thus securing their land rights and preserving their cultural and religious privileges became the core issues of Métis discontent.[126]

In response, a provisional government was formed in order to fill the void left by the abolition of HBC authority and to enter into discussion with the Canadian government on the terms and conditions under which the peaceful integration of the North-West Territory into Canada could proceed. In a proclamation issued by the Provisional Government in December 1869, it noted the community's sense of

---

[126] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 58.

abandonment "without consent to a foreign power" and "firmly resolved in future, not less than in the past, to repel all invasions from whatsoever quarter they may come..."[127] Nevertheless, they pledged to "hold our-selves in readiness to enter in such negotiations with the Canadian government as may be favourable for the good government and prosperity of this people."[128] In the end, no actual conflict would occur between forces of the provisional government and Canadian forces.

At the center of the resistance movement and Red River community's negotiations to join Canada was Louis Riel. Well educated and from a respected Métis family, Riel emerged as the dominant figure and leader. It was under Riel that in October of 1869, a group of Francophone Métis had stopped the survey by Government agents at Saint-Norbert and subsequently formed a Métis political organization, which would eventually combine with their Anglophone Métis counterparts to form the provisional government. In November of the same year, a group of Métis barred the entry of the designated Lieutenant Governor, William McDougall, into the North-West Territory. Meanwhile a larger group led by Riel had moved to seize Fort Garry.

Throughout the crisis, the Métis had been supported by the Catholic Church clergy. [129] Seeing the Métis as a bastion against Protestant Ontario settlers, the Catholic Church was happy to provide encouragement and practical assistance in the negotiations between the Métis and the Canadian government. From the beginning of the crisis, a local priest, Father Noel Ritchot, provided counsel and encouragement to Riel. Father

---

[127] "Declaration of the Peoples of Rupert's Land," *Manitoba Pageant*, April 1964, Volume 9, Number 3. Available from http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/pageant/09/rupertslanddeclaration.shtml.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 61.

Ritchot would subsequently be one of three persons sent to Ottawa to broker a deal between the Métis and Canada. As well, in recognition of his influence among the Métis, Bishop Taché, the prominent Oblate priest, was requested by the Canadian government to return to Canada from Rome to act as an intermediary between the Government and the Métis provisional government.

Under Riel's leadership, the crisis would ultimately be resolved through negotiations and resulted in the creation of the Manitoba Act in 1870 that established conditions for the entry of the Red River community into Confederation as part of the province of Manitoba. One author characterised the Métis situation as one in which "[A] self-respecting, undefeated, and unchastened people offered an alliance, not submission."[130] The Manitoba Act's terms included democratic representation both provincially and federally for the inhabitants of Manitoba, established an arrangement for separate French schools and secured the use of the French language. It also included, under Sections 31 and 32, a guarantee of 1.4 million acres of land to be distributed to the children of Métis residents as well as confirmation of the titles of the Métis occupying lots along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

While the strongly Métis provisional government included some English-speaking members from within the community, it was opposed by a predominantly English-Protestant, pro-Canadian element. An attempt by this element to overthrow the provisional government led to the arrest and imprisonment of a number of its members. Through a series of subsequent events, one of the prisoners, Thomas Scott, was tried and

---

[130] Joseph Howard, *Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest*, (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1952), 130.

executed on Riel's authority. Even before Scott's execution, the Canadian cabinet had discussed the need to send a military expedition to increase its leverage during the negotiation process and ultimately to enforce its authority in the Territory.[131] Prime Minister Macdonald also wanted a military force deployed to preserve the peace but insisted that it contain a detachment of imperial troops in addition to Canadians. Given previous cross border incursions from the United States, imperial troops were needed "to convince the American people that England would not abandon her colonies and was not wholly indifferent to the future of the West."[132] In August 1870, a combined British and Canadian contingent under the command of British General Garnet Wolseley arrived in Red River to establish Canadian authority, but only after a final political agreement for the entry of Manitoba into Canada had been negotiated between provisional government representatives and the Canadian government.

The execution of Scott at Riel's direction was a stain on the otherwise bloodless events of 1869-70. This unfortunate incident caused considerable outrage in Ontario among those who supported the pro-Canada political element. The Canadian government's view was that Scott had been murdered and writes J.M. Bumsted, this "point of view influenced the admission of Manitoba into Confederation and certainly controlled the subsequent life of Riel."[133] It negatively shaped the public perception of Riel and tainted his future involvement in the affairs of 1885. Uncertain of how he would be treated under Canadian law and fearing possible reprisal from those sympathetic to

---

[131] J.M. Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada: The Making of a Rebel*, (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2000), 73.
[132] Quoting Prime Minister MacDonald to Colonial Secretary Granville. Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest,* 139 and Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 129.
[133] Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 7

Scott and the pro-Canada cause, Riel fled Manitoba on the arrival of the Canadian force under Wolseley. Riel settled in the United States for many years before finally returning to the North-West again in 1885 to once more lead his people in resistance to Canadian government authority.

*Treaty One.* Throughout the Red River incident the First Nations bands had remained effectively neutral. In September of 1870, Adams Archibald arrived in Manitoba as the new Lieutenant Governor for the Province and the North-West Territories. Among the instructions given to Archibald were to establish friendly relationships with the First Nations bands within the Province. In addition, he was to promptly assess the conditions further north and west of Manitoba to determine the best means not only to establish relations with the bands there but, specifically to ensure the "removal of any obstructions that may be presented to the flow of the population into the fertile lands that lie between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains."[134]

The First Nations bands for their part were anxious to enter into an agreement with the Canadian government fearing potential dispossession of their lands to which they clearly held title under the HBC Charter. In July 1871, Archibald met with First Nations Chiefs at Fort Garry to conclude a treaty arrangement. He expressed the desire on the part of the Crown to have the First Nations bands settle on reserves and adopt farming as a means of sustaining themselves. On 3 August 1871, Treaty One, the first of what would become the Numbered Treaties, was signed between government

---

[134] Wayne Daugherty, *Treaty Research Report Treaty One and Treaty Two (1871)*, Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Research Branch, Corporate Policy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, 1983. Last accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/trel-2_1100100028661_eng.pdf

representatives and those from First Nations bands within Manitoba. In broad terms, the bands agreed to keep the peace and cede to the Dominion control of lands as defined within the terms of the treaty in exchange for designated reserve areas and an annual annuity payment.

However, as early as February 1872, problems with the administration and implementation of the treaty began to arise. These were largely centered on the entitlement and delivery of the means to assist the First Nations bands in making the transition from a nomadic hunting existence to an agricultural one. These conditions fell within what would be termed "outside promises", those items which were agreed to during the treaty negotiation but not written into its text.[135] On 30 April 1875, an Order in Council formalized these requirements by attaching a memorandum to the treaty which obligated the government to provide the promised assistance. In spite of this effort to more clearly define the government's obligations under Treaty One, as expansion moved west subsequent treaty negotiations would seek to avoid, or at least minimize, such commitments. The government's unwillingness to commit to or fulfill these and future obligations would remain a point of friction between the government and First Nations bands up until the rebellion in 1885.

From the initial contact between the Canadian government and the Métis and First Nations in the North-West, the political grievances that created the basis for the insurgency of 1885 were evident. For the Métis, the issues were the establishment of land rights and preservation of their cultural identity, and for the First Nations, the need

---

[135] Ibid.

for assistance to transform their society from a nomadic to agricultural base. Almost immediately following the crisis, a failure on the part of the government to address these issues in an effective way created distrust and tension. This would continue to mount until 1885.

**North West Rebellion**

*First Nations.* The formal effort to make a treaty with the First Nations in Saskatchewan commenced as early as 1875. Government representatives found that, for the most part, the Cree chiefs were eager to make arrangements with the government. As one study noted, First Nations leaders "were unanimous in their determination to oppose the running of lines, or the making of roads through their country, until a settlement between the Government and them had been effected."[136] Through a series of negotiations between Government representatives and First Nations leaders, Treaty Six was concluded in 1876.

There is a conflicting view of the motivations and aims of First Nations leaders throughout this process. According to Stanley, Cree leaders were psychologically influenced by events to the south and the violent, disruptive impact of American expansion on the tribes across the border.[137] In addition, the years proceeding Treaty Six and Seven had not been kind to the Plains Cree. The social impact of the whiskey traders, disease, the disappearing buffalo, and the famine that followed were exerting severe pressures on the First Nations bands. Given these circumstances Stanley's image

---

[136] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 54.
[137] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 201.

was one of a desperate society unwilling or unable to adjust to the advances of a superior civilization: "Thus with their minds unsettled, their lands threatened, and their beliefs, convictions and mode of life rudely shaken, the North-West Indians were thoroughly disquieted at the white man's presence."[138] As such, Cree leaders sought refuge inside the conditions of the treaty agreements.

Stonechild and Waiser objected to this image and argued that it was not reflective of the reality of the situation at the time.[139] They characterized the Cree as a proud, self-governing, adaptable, people, experienced in treaty and alliance making for the benefit of their nation. Their view of the Cree leaders was one similar to that of the provincial Fathers of Confederation negotiating for considered, favourable terms for entry into the Dominion. Cree leaders were all too aware, they argued, of the need to restructure the economic base of their society and adapt to the coming changes to the North-West: "they had no interest in or need for a Canadian crutch."[140] But they did need assistance.

Whether driven by desperation or foresight, Cree leaders clearly tried to direct treaty negotiations in such a manner as to secure the means to provide them with the necessary assistance to transition their society. Building on the arrangements secured in the previous Numbered Treaties for equipment and training to take-up agriculture, Cree leaders added an item not previously included in any of the Numbered Treaties; the "famine clause".

Given that it was the subsequent difference in interpretation and application of the "famine clause" that created the greatest friction point between the First Nations bands

---

[138] Ibid, 202.
[139] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Until*, 8.
[140] Ibid, 8.

and the Government following the signing of Treaty Six, it is worth outlining it here in full. It stated:

> That in the event hereafter of the Indians comprised within this treaty being overtaken by any pestilence, or by a general famine, the Queen, on being satisfied and certified thereof by her Indian Agent or Agents, will grant to the Indians assistance of such character and to such extent as her Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs shall deem necessary and sufficient to relieve the Indians from the calamity that shall have befallen them.[141]

Cree leaders entered into Treaty Six in good faith. Based on a positive, two hundred year old symbiotic relationship with the previous White administrator of the North-West, the HBC, they must have thought they had laid some insurance down on their future. Stanley noted, the HBC standing rules of the fur trade stipulated that, "Indians are to be treated with kindness and indulgence..."[142] In simple terms, if sick they should be cared for, if hungry they should be fed and if down on their luck they should be given a loan, as the success of the company depended on their well-being.[143] Sadly, this was not to be the Canadian government's approach.

However, not all of Cree leaders were enthusiastic about entering into Treaty Six. Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear, future antagonists in the 1885 Rebellion, would emerge as leaders who stood in opposition to signing the Treaty without full assurance that the government would provide the necessary assistance for the First Nations bands to adjust to the change in the North-West. Each had attended separate negotiating sessions, at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt respectively, yet both expressed a common concern over government guarantees of aid and assistance. Their outspoken nature and insistence in

---

[141] Ibid, 246.
[142] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 197.
[143] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 72.

bringing up these issues, which the government would have preferred to avoid, earned them the label of trouble-makers.[144] However, their concerns would shortly be justified.

Most of the First Nations bands in Saskatchewan would sign Treaty Six within the coming years, but not all. Even among those who had signed the Treaty and taken up the reserve, there was almost an immediate sense of dissatisfaction. Poundmaker and Big Bear would continue to be at the forefront of those Cree leaders who pressed the government for better terms and compliance with the promises made within the treaty.

In 1878, the First Nations situation continued to decline. In a desperate hope that they might once again harvest the last of the buffalo herds south of the border, large numbers of First Nations bands, including Cree, Blackfoot, and Sioux, concentrated around the Cypress Hills area near Fort Walsh. Because they refused to settle on a reserve, the government was under no obligation to provide them with assistance and they suffered accordingly. Among them was Chief Big Bear, who attempted to build a political alliance among the Cree in order to create a united front against the government. Beal and Macleod suggested that "a combined army of Cree, Blackfoot, and Sioux could easily have kept the whites out of the Canadian North-West."[145] While this may have been true, there is little evidence to suggest that at this point Big Bear aimed for anything more than a diplomatic assault. As Police Commissioner Macleod noted, "It is not that the Indians are disaffected towards the rule of the government; they appreciate that rule,

---

[144] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 19.
[145] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, p-61.

and never cease expressing their gratitude...but in some parts of the country they are already brought face to face with starvation." [146]

Given the knowledge of the desperate state of First Nations conditions and Big Bear's agitation, Government authorities were clearly on edge. As Commissioner Macleod noted, "hungry men are dangerous whether they be Indian or White..."[147] The building tension was clear even to the general public. As one newspaper noted, "He must be fed, if he does not get it he will take it; and he is in position to do so. It is easier and cheaper to feed them than to fight them." [148] Nevertheless, the Lieutenant Governor, Edgar Dewdney, tried to put a hopeful face on the situation insisting that, "the Government is doing much to assist him, and after a sharp trial, during which there will doubtless be not a little suffering, let us hope that the crisis will be overcome."[149]

Even where First Nation bands had taken up the reserve, the provision of the promised implements to take up farming was dependent on the completion of government surveys of the land, but these were often delayed. While some bands travelled to the capital at Battleford to press demands for the Government to fulfill their Treaty obligation, others threatened to seize trading posts if something was not done.[150]

In 1879, Big Bear continued to travel both sides of the border trying to gather support for a native confederacy in order to mount political opposition against the Canadian government. Concurrently, Cree leaders petitioned the Government for several tracts of land to be set aside as reserves to accommodate a significant concentration of

---

[146] Ibid, 61.
[147] Ibid, 61.
[148] Ibid, 64.
[149] Ibid, 64.
[150] Ibid, 62.

bands around the Cypress Hills area. This was a tactic that would be repeated in subsequent years. A concentration of Cree, particularly in the Cypress Hills area, was contrary to the interests of the government and was rejected. The area was too close to the border with the United States to help dissuade any cross-border incidents and potential clashes between Canadian First Nations and American authorities as well being too close to Canada's new economic lifeline, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). More importantly, it ran contrary to the government's policy of divide and conquer.[151]

During the winter of 1879-80 a familiar figure in the North-West Territories returned to commence what would become a critical leadership role in the Rebellion: Louis Riel. Now an American citizen living in Montana, Riel met with both Chief Big Bear and Chief Crowfoot, leader of the Blackfoot. Riel urged an uprising by the First Nations and Métis and the declaration of a provisional government. As Crowfoot's interpreter subsequently reported to Dewdney, Riel stated that, "... the N.W.T is the natural property of the Indian and Half-breed, ought to be set apart for their exclusive use, ruled and governed by them alone..."[152] Riel's offer seemed to have little appeal to either Big Bear or Crowfoot, in spite of the inability of the government to fulfill its promises under the treaty agreements to assist First Nations. Indeed, the government mindset was quite to the contrary.

The famine crisis affecting the First Nations population beginning in 1879 seemed to offer an opportunity for the government to force its issues with First Nations. As one author described it, "marginalization with a touch of forced labour (that is, work for

---

[151] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 49.
[152] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 68.

rations) dressed up in a language of a *mission civilisatrice* became the Dewdney solution."[153] The distribution of rations would be tied to the First Nations settling on the reserve and working the land in order that they might become self-sufficient; the degree to which they achieved this and the amount of remuneration was left to the discretion of government officials. Unfortunately, this approach was aggravated by the recession in which the Canadian government found itself during the 1880s. The need for cost savings provided an added incentive to tighten the distribution of rations at precisely the time they were needed most. It seemed the fiscal threat was more important than one of 'Indian war'. While the First Nations were trying to build on the concessions secured within Treaty Six, the Canadian government was trying to minimize both commitment and cost.[154]

In 1883, with the Department of Indian Affairs under fire from the auditor general and the Parliamentary opposition, Deputy Superintendent VanKoughnet toured the North-West on an inspection visit. [155] The result was a series of recommendations to change practices and cut personnel in order to reduce costs. In particular, the work for rations policy was to be strictly applied; only if First Nations bands settled on a reservation and worked would rations be provided. This approach to carrying out the "stipulations and covenants in good faith and to the letter" was distinctly at odds with First Nations leader's interpretation and further pressed a people on the brink of

---

[153] Brian Titley, *The Frontier Life of Edgar Dewdney*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), viii.
[154] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 10.
[155] Ibid, 52.

starvation. Ottawa's need to cut costs would increasingly override humanitarian concerns or treaty obligations.

The impact of the strict work for rations approach, and the ensuing tension it created, had already begun openly manifesting themselves in 1881. In this year, incidents of violence by First Nations against Indian Agents and Farm Instructors began to arise. The horsewhipping of one agent at Frog Lake and the stabbing of another at Battleford were indicative of the deteriorating relationship between the government and First Nations. For now, these acts were mostly aimed at those individuals that the First Nations viewed as particularly unwilling to show some degree of sympathy or flexibility in the application of government policy on ration issuing. As further restrictions on the issuing of rations to the First Nations bands occurred these incidents would continue to escalate in the coming years and become more general in nature.[156]

VanKoughnet's instructions to tighten the issue of rations also coincided with the Government's decision to close Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills area. Now, without even a minimal source of government assistance, Big Bear and the other reluctant chiefs were forced to move further north and take up a reservation in order to gain government aid. In a certain sense, the closure of Fort Walsh only shifted the concentration of disaffected First Nations bands to other areas, perhaps even making the problem more difficult. Several chiefs, including Big Bear, moved to the Battleford area, where Poundmaker's on-going dissatisfaction with government policy had convinced him to re-enter the effort

---

[156] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 68.

for political action against the government.[157] The two key leaders of First Nations resistance were now co-located. The winter of 1883-84 was particularly harsh and with little assistance available from the government the suffering of the First Nations population increased. Nevertheless, Big Bear remained active and throughout the winter sent messengers to First Nations leaders calling for a meeting at Battleford in the spring to discuss efforts to deal with the government on issues of assistance and the designation of reserves.

One of the most significant incidents to highlight the deteriorating relations between First Nations and Canadian authority occurred on a Salteaux reservation at Crooked Lakes in February of 1884. In an altercation between one of the band members and the local Indian agent over the issuing of rations, the latter was assaulted. When the NWMP arrived to effect an arrest they were openly resisted by band members. Although the suspect was eventually arrested, it was not before the government official agreed to issue rations to the band and drop any charges of resisting arrest. As Jim Wallace noted in *A Trying Time: The North-West Mounted Police in the 1885 Rebellion*, "Where there had previously been deference, there was now defiance."[158] Big Bear's diplomacy over the winter months resulted in a number of meetings being held by Cree bands, along with Salteaux and Stoney, throughout the spring and summer. The most significant of these took place around Qu'Appelle, hosted by Chief Piapot who had been one of the Chiefs with Big Bear at Fort Walsh. Another was held in June at Battleford, where both Big Bear and Poundmaker were present and during which another incident similar to that

---

[157] Ibid, 84.
[158] Wallace, *A Trying Time: The North-West Mounted Police in the 1885 Rebellion* , (Winnipeg: Bunker to Bunker Books, 1998), 15.

which had taken place at Crooked Lake occurred. The Craig Incident, named after the assaulted farm instructor John Craig, forced authorities to once again initially back down from apprehending the assailant and make concessions to the First Nations bands to resolve the affair.

By this point it was becoming clear both to the government and to the public, that given the poor conditions of the First Nations bands and their growing frustration, a firm decision in policy must be made; either the government would have to provide the necessary resources to properly assist the bands or it would have to forcefully assert itself over them through military action if necessary.[159] Nevertheless, by the middle of 1884, First Nations bands had made little progress in altering the government's policy of adhering to the strict requirement to take up the reserve and work in exchange for food or to improve their ability to reach self-sufficiently.

In late July, another council consisting of the Carlton area bands was held at Chief Beardy's reserve near Duck Lake. Big Bear also moved from Battleford to Carlton in order to participate. Once again, dissatisfaction was expressed and once again minor concessions were given by government representatives. However, in his report to Dewdney, Indian agent Macrae stated that the bands had threatened to "wait until next summer to see if this council has the desired effect, failing which they will take measures to get what they desire."[160] This must have appeared a particularly ominous statement given a new factor: the return of Louis Riel to Canadian soil and his presence at Duck Lake. Riel had come to Carlton just prior to the council in order to hold discussions with

---

[159] These potential courses of action were expressed in local newspaper, members of the NWMP and Indian Department Officials. Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 99.
[160] Ibid, 116.

First Nations Leaders. According to a NWMP report, he had told them that, "they had 'rights' as well as the half breeds, and that he wished to be the means of having them addressed."[161] To the Government, the potential for a Métis and First Nations alliance in opposition to its authority was not something they were happy to see for the Métis also had deep rooted issues that needed to be resolved.

*Métis.* Métis migration westward had begun long before the events at Red River in 1869-70. As early as the 1840s, Métis from the Red River area had started to migrate deeper into the North-West in order to follow the annual harvest of buffalo. Their numbers grew with further Métis movement in the 1860s, when crop failures forced many to seek better economic conditions in the west. While many Métis remained in Manitoba in the wake of the Red River crisis, another significant movement did occur after the crisis. This was primarily among those at the lower end of the economic spectrum who sought either to follow the buffalo economy or to avoid being overwhelmed by settlers from Canada.[162] Yet another wave of migration took place in 1879, comprised of the better-off river lot owners who had sold their property for profit. Many of these settled on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River, particularly in the areas of Qu'Appelle, Duck Lake and Batoche.[163] The community of Batoche "was the spiritual and political centre for the Plains Métis."[164] The 1871 census of the South Branch communities had almost all men listed as "hunter."[165] By the 1880s, a general

---

[161] Ibid, 115.
[162] Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 243-244.
[163] Ibid, 244.
[164] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 39.
[165] Ibid, 39.

economic downturn, the decline in buffalo, crop failure and the government's decision to run the Canadian Pacific Railway further south than originally planned were having a significant impact on these people. As one official noted in 1884, "There is not sufficient overland freighting going on in the country to afford labour to a third of their number, hence they are getting poorer year by year."[166] These conditions, added to a pre-disposition to distrust the government based on their experience in Manitoba, would mean that the people in this region were an ideal support base for Riel on his arrival in Saskatchewan.

In the 1870s the dominant personality with regard to advancing Métis issues however, was Gabriel Dumont. As Beal and Macleod described him, Dumont was "the stuff of legend."[167] From a well-established family within the Métis community, Dumont was a renowned frontiersman and demonstrated able leadership as the head of the Métis buffalo hunt. Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, he would be the prominent leader among the Métis and would subsequently be among the delegation sent to seek Riel's return to Canada and would subsequently become his Adjutant General in 1885.

As early as 1872, the Métis petitioned the Government for the settlement of land claims. Unfortunately, over the next several years discussions were generally held through intermediaries with neither side very sure of the precise position of the other.[168] Subsequent requests by the Métis for resolution of land issues would continue unabated up until 1884.[169]

---

[166] Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 245.
[167] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 37.
[168] Ibid, 41.
[169] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 246.

The Métis were not a part of the Numbered Treaty agreements signed with First Nations. The government's chief representative Lieutenant Governor Morris noted this deficiency in his report in 1876. While not feeling it necessary to bring them directly under 'treaty', he stated, "I would suggest that land should be assigned to them, and that on their settling down, if after an examination into their circumstances, it should be found necessary and expedient, some assistance should be given them to enable them to enter upon agricultural operations."[170] Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

In 1878, another petition signed by Dumont and other Métis representatives once again emphasized "the most urgent necessity that the government should cause to be surveyed, with the least possible delay, the lands occupied and cultivated by the half-breeds or old residents of the country, and that patents thereafter be granted them."[171] These grants were to be made on the basis of the Manitoba Act. Any failure to do so would undermine the sense of security among the Métis population, just as it had at Red River.[172] While some surveying did take place it was incomplete and it was not until 1881 that a lands claims office was opened to begin to process claims and it, as noted earlier, was plagued by inefficiency. Only at the beginning of 1885 would a commission be raised to more effectively deal with Métis land issues. But by that stage, it was too late.

By 1884, the Métis political movement was unable to turn their frustration and concern into tangible results. While Dumont was a capable leader, what was needed was someone who could more effectively deal with the government in Ottawa and, who better

---

[170] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 59.
[171] Ibid, 45.
[172] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 250.

for the task, than the leader that had engineered the Manitoba Act in the first place: Louis Riel. In the spring of 1884, a delegation of White and Métis representatives, headed by Dumont, rode to Montana and convinced Riel to come to Saskatchewan and lead his people's protest against the Canadian government. Riel's task would be to draft a petition of grievances and propose the means of resolving them.[173] Henceforth Riel would provide the political leadership, while Dumont acted as the Métis war chief.

Having only recently arrived in Saskatchewan in July, Riel began speaking publicly to gather support for a petition to prompt government action. He emphasized the need for unity and harmony among the distinct communities in the North-West in order to influence the government. Indeed, Riel's demeanour during this period is described by one of his biographers as "calm, moderate, thoughtful."[174] At this point Riel's approach remained moderate and it was evident that his intent was to proceed within constitutional lines.[175] In October, a draft of the petition was circulated to the various parties of concern with something for everyone: acknowledgement of the First Nations plight, demands for Métis land grants, reduction of tariffs and reform of homesteading processes for White settlers, and a call for more representative government and provincial status for all.[176]

Throughout the summer and fall of 1884, Riel would continue to gather support. However, his desire for a united front was already starting to unravel. The first thread to pull apart was his relationship with the Catholic Church, which had been such a strong supporter during the Red River days. Initially this was a result of what Riel sensed to be

---

[173] Maggie Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution*, (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 341.
[174] Ibid, 344.
[175] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 298.
[176] Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution*, 356.

a lack of enthusiasm for the Métis demands against the government on the part of the Church and would eventually grow into a full break as Riel further pursued his claim as being chosen by God to create and head a new church separate from Rome in the North-West. This was further complicated by Father André, a local priest, who played a role in attempting to bribe Riel into leaving Saskatchewan by offering to satisfy personal financial claims he had with the government as a result of events at the Red River. These had been added to the petition sent to Ottawa in December. In fact, the Church representatives, including Father André, had not been in favour of Riel's return and feared that under his leadership the grievances the Métis had with the government could spin out of control.[177]

By February 1885, it appeared to Riel that both the petition to ensure Métis rights and his request to receive some kind of personal compensation had been rejected by the Canadian government. The government had informed Dewdney that Parliament had authorised the Department of the Interior to create a commission to investigate Métis land claim issues but offered no evidence of a concrete policy to satisfy any of their demands.[178] From a Métis perspective, this would have appeared as more mere promises offered by a government that had for over a decade demonstrated a lack of willingness to effectively address their grievances. In addition, Prime Minster Macdonald had written to Dewdney that, "We have no money to give to Riel...He has a right to remain in

---

[177] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 309.
[178] Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 78.

Canada and if he conspires we must punish him. That's all."[179] On 24 February, Riel addressed a gathering at Batoche to announce that he had done what he could to get Ottawa to deal with the Métis demands and had failed; he now intended to return to the United States. The crowd expressed their desire for Riel to stay and continue his efforts. Buoyed by this support, Riel decided to remain, but his strategy henceforth would take a far more aggressive form.

On 5 March, Riel held a meeting with a group of prominent Métis at which they swore to "save our country from a wicked government by taking up arms if necessary."[180] At a public meeting three days later, Riel announced his intent to form a provisional government. The effort to resolve grievances through purely constitutional means was over. This was too much for most of his White and English Métis supporters and completed the rift between Riel and the Church. Whether or not Riel's original strategy was to resort to violence is unclear. But a sequence of events quickly followed that would bring events to open insurrection.

Since Riel's return to Saskatchewan, the NWMP had been keeping track of his activities.[181] Aware of his increasingly radical approach, Dewdney and the Commissioner for the NWMP Commissioner, Acheson Irvine, had begun to increase the number of police in the Carlton area. On 18 March, Irvine himself would depart Regina with another one hundred police headed for the Carlton area.

---

[179] Note this response was written on 20 February and was never actually received by Riel, however, Riel had self-imposed a date of 4 February for a reply after which he would assume a negative response to his request. Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 129.
[180] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 135.
[181] Ibid, 310.

Riel's forces had taken effective control of the area around Batoche, had seized supplies and ammunition from local stores and were holding a number of people hostage including Indian Department and HBC personnel. As rumours of police coming to arrest Riel turned into confirmed intelligence, the Métis needed to do something to prevent themselves from being caught between the police already at Carlton and those approaching from the south. On 21 March, a message was sent to Superintendent Leif Crozier demanding the surrender of Fort Carlton; Crozier refused.

As the tension between the Métis and government authorities mounted, both sides attempted to occupy the community of Duck Lake for both the significant cache provision and ammunition held in the local store, as well as to secure control of the trail along which an attack from Prince Albert could be launched against Batoche or from which reinforcement from the south could reach Fort Carlton. On 26 March, the NWMP and Métis forces converged around the area of Duck Lake. Upon encountering each other an attempt was made to enter into negotiations. At some point a shot was fired and a general engagement broke out between the two forces. By the time it was over, numerous casualties had been suffered on both sides. While it was the police who were forced to retreat, the victory was a pyrrhic one for Riel in at least one sense; any thoughts that he might have had about repeating the bloodless resistance of 1869-70 were now dashed. The clash at Duck Lake not only ended the Métis hopes for a negotiated settlement, it also sounded the death knell for the First Nations diplomatic push to force the government to discuss the implementation of Treaty Six.

On 27 March, the day following their defeat at Duck Lake, the NWMP under Crozier, now joined by the troops coming from Regina under Commissioner Irvine, were

forced to abandon the poorly fortified and vulnerably located Fort Carlton. Removing anything of value to the insurgents, they fell back on the town of Prince Albert. As the news of open hostilities between the government and Métis spread, citizens fearing the possibility of a general uprising among First Nations flocked to the larger town centers seeking security. Looting of abandoned property and the settling of personal scores ensued throughout the countryside. This included the murder of a number of government personnel, principally among Indian Agents and Farm Instructors who had been at the forefront of denying First Nations assistance and aid. Other civilians for the most part were either left alone or taken hostage. The one shocking exception was at Frog Lake, where the scale of violence exceeded all other incidents.

Given the events at Duck Lake, the NWMP had suggested to the local Indian Agent at Frog Lake, Thomas Quinn, that white residents should either come to Fort Pitt or that the police should maintain a permanent presence at the post.[182] There had been a troubled history between Indian Department representatives and some of the key Cree leaders, including the war chief Wandering Spirit as well as Big Bear's son Imasees. During Big Bear's absence on a hunting trip, these more aggressive leaders managed to gain increased influence over the band in the atmosphere of increased tension and uncertainty fuelled by news from Duck Lake. On 2 April, a dispute over the distribution of government rations sparked an outbreak of violence at Frog Lake. When it had ended, nine whites had been killed.

---

[182] Wallace, *A Trying Time*, 92.

A short distance away from Frog Lake was Fort Pitt. Like Fort Carlton, it was barely worthy of the name fort. Inadequately fortified, poorly located and with no source of water within the confines of the garrison, it was highly vulnerable to attack from insurgent forces. After pausing some time to determine their next step, some two hundred and fifty First Nations, comprised of Big Bear's and other neighbouring bands, moved to Fort Pitt. Here the HBC Factor, William McLean, entered into negotiations with the band council. He later testified that during the discussions one chief told him; "We are pledged to Louis Riel to carry on what he got us to commence...to kill all the red coats and clean all the white people out of the country."[183] In spite of this ominous warning, McLean thought it better to accept the promises of other Cree leaders that they would guard the civilian population safe as hostages provided the NWMP abandoned the fort, than test the ability of the garrison to withstand an assault. The local NWMP commander, Inspector Dickens, agreed. By 17 April, the fort was in the hands of the First Nations, its civilian population hostages and the NWMP withdrawn toward Battleford. The fort was subsequently looted, after which the Cree moved back to the Frog Lake area although messengers from Riel attempted to convince them to do otherwise. Riel's agents had suggested that Big Bear's band should move south to Battleford and join with Poundmaker in order to seize the town. Following that they were to hurry to Batoche to assist the Métis under Riel against approaching government

---

[183] Ibid, 100.

forces under General Middleton. These influences were countered by McLean, who remained in the Big Bear camp as a hostage and continued to advise moderation.[184]

Even Battleford, the former capital of the district and largest town between Prince Albert and Edmonton was under threat. Already uneasy from the tension resulting from the council the previous summer, the area went into a frenzy of activity on hearing the news of Duck Lake. As nervous residents from the town and surrounding community moved into the fort between the Old and New Towns, the NWMP and a volunteer Home Guard worked hectically to improve defences. Poundmaker decided to use this opportunity to go to Battleford and press his demands for more government assistance. His arrival on 30 March sparked panic within the garrison and the local Indian Agent, John Rae, fearing for his life, refused to meet with him. As at Fort Pitt, it was an HBC representative, William MacKay, who stepped forward to meet with the Cree Chief. MacKay offered to provide food from the company's stores which went some way to placating the insurgents. Nevertheless, members of the band proceeded to loot the abandoned townships. What ensued was a state of semi-besiegement. The garrison was isolated, and looting along with harassing fire continued for some days. In spite of their ability to easily deny access to the local water supply or indeed overrun the defences of the garrison completely, the Cree did not do so.[185]

Insurgent forces in the North-West had experienced a series of successes in the opening days of the insurgency. As Desmond Morton described it, "The entire structure

---

[184] Ibid, 106.
[185] Desmond Morton and Reginald Roy, introduction to, *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885*, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1972, 114.

of civil government in the North-West, so proud and unchallenged, had collapsed in a couple of weeks."[186]

**Nature of the Insurgency**

In her thesis examining American and Canadian treaty policy, Jill St Germain noted the smugness with which Canadian officials in the 1870's viewed the relatively peaceful conduct of Canadian interaction with First Nations populations. As evidence, St Germain pointed to the Minister of the Interior's report in 1877, in which the successful conclusion of Treaty 7 was compared to the ongoing conflict between the United States Army and Sioux which resulted in the defeat of United States Army troops at the Little Big Horn. The report claimed this provided, "conclusive proof of the just policy of the Government of Canada towards the aboriginal population."[187] The reality, St Germain suggested, was that the government adopted an "indifferent and sluggish" approach to First Nations policy that was narrowly focused on extinguishing Indian land title at a minimum cost. For St Germain, "What the Americans saw as instruments of "civilization", Canadian officials viewed as unnecessary expenses."[188] Any attempts to broaden treaty terms beyond those required by strict necessity were resisted. Its apparent success, she argued, was more due to circumstances and external factors than vision or wisdom.[189]

---

[186] Ibid, xviii.
[187] Jill St Germain, "A Comparison of the Canadian and American Treaty-Making Policy with the Plains Indians, 1867-1877," (MA Thesis: School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1998), last accessed March 10, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape17/PQDD_0001/MQ32381.pdf, 223.
[188] Ibid, 227.
[189] Ibid, 226.

By way of circumstance, Canada was lucky that the rate of emigration into the North-West Territories was far slower than in the American west. For the Americans, the speed and volume of expansion required an immediate implementation of policy to create security and preserve economic development as White and First Nations populations collided. The solution included a demand to quickly 'civilize' the First Nations population through the forced imposition of reservations, school and change to an agricultural based economy. The result was resistance, as First Nations tribes recognized that they were in a fight against extinction by assimilation.[190]

Since the Red River crisis, every petition submitted by the Métis to the Canadian government expressed the need to settle outstanding land claims and titles. The centrality of this issue to the events in 1885, along with continuing contemporary legal battles over them, has fuelled historians to conduct extensive research on this issue and resulted in an "impressive historiographical debate".[191]

The theory of dispossession maintains that there was a deliberate 'conspiracy' on the part of the Canadian government to deprive the Métis of the land rights which had been secured under the Manitoba Act. It suggests that there was no intent on the part of the Canadian government to fulfill the legal obligations of the Manitoba Act and that they deliberately manipulated the bureaucratic and legal process to prevent the Métis from securing their entitled land rights. The intent behind this was to drive them out of the

---

[190] Ibid, 229.

[191] Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890," *Manitoba History*, Number 30, Autumn 1995, last accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/30/metislanddispersal.shtml 10 Nov 2012, 1 However, Carter warned that this "advocacy" history calls into question the potential objectivity of some of its findings. Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 111

Red River in favour of white settlers from the east.[192] In *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885*, Donald Sprague went so far as to suggest that in 1885, Prime Minister Macdonald deliberately ignored Métis land issues in order to provoke the Rebellion and thereby demonstrate the utility of the national railway so as to convince Parliament to approve its further funding.[193]

In contrast, others such as Thomas Flanagan, acknowledged that particularly by 1884, "all evidence points to the land question as being the most fundamental concern of the Métis at the time they send their delegation to Riel."[194] However, he contended that there was no deliberate effort to deprive the Métis of the land that the government had agreed to grant them. Rather, government inefficiency and error simply delayed the process. Flanagan contended that, in general, the Métis received fair value for any lands that they sold and that as a non-agrarian people many simply chose to migrate further west to pursue economic activity associated with the buffalo trade. Flanagan argued that this pattern of government action would persist up until the outbreak of the Rebellion in 1885. By 1885, Flanagan argued, the Canadian government was on the brink of resolving both the plot survey issue and the granting of land titles to the Métis with the appointment of a commission to address these issues in January 1885.[195] As such, the North-West Rebellion resulted from "a train of mistakes, misjudgements and

---

[192] Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890", 6.
[193] Donald Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885*, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), 176-177.
[194] Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 12.
[195] Ibid, 78.

misinterpretations on both sides...a story of missed opportunities for reconciliation rather than rebellion provoked by unrelenting oppression."[196]

It is evident that whether by circumstance, design or ineffectiveness the period between the Red River crisis and the outbreak of the Rebellion was one in which unresolved grievances between the Canadian government and both the Métis and First Nations led to conflict. But it is also evident that the nature of these grievances and the means chosen to resolve them among the two separate communities was different. The idea of a "Métis Indian conspiracy" during the Rebellion fails to fully articulate the complexity of the issue facing the Canadian government in the spring of 1885. Indeed, when examining the North-West Rebellion through the lens of insurgency and counterinsurgency theory and using the framework proposed by O'Neil in Chapter 1, we can illuminate the degree to which the Métis and First Nations insurgencies were distinct and only tenuously connected, and would required different solutions.

In terms of O'Neil's typology, evidence suggests that the Métis were most representative of a reformist insurgency that sought to re-order a distribution of political power and material resources perceived as discriminatory and illegitimate. Determination of land right entitlement and grants were the central issue that the Métis sought to resolve with the Canadian government. Since the Red River Rebellion, at the insistence of the British government, the Canadian government had agreed to resolve the issue of land ownership to the satisfaction of the Métis.[197] But this had been a slow and unsatisfactory process, creating Métis resentment and mistrust toward Ottawa. As further

---

[196] Ibid, 22.

[197] This was a condition set by the British in order to complete the transfer of Rupert's Land (North West Territories) from the Hudson's Bay Company to the GOC. See Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 242.

Canadian expansion into the North-West began to bring the pressure of fundamental economic political and social change, the Métis organized to confront the Canadian government and force a redefinition of their relationship. In contrast to its dealings with the First Nations, the Canadian government did not seek to sign any treaties with the Métis. Frustrated by the numerous failed attempts to gain an agreement, on March 5 1885, Riel and others formed a committee and pledged to "save our country from the wicked government by taking up arms if necessary."[198] The committee subsequently passed a ten point 'Revolutionary Bill of Rights' with a list of demands that in broad terms included: entry into Confederation under similar terms to those in the Manitoba Act; preservation of Métis land rights, and the preservation of Métis customs.[199] In other words, the Métis sought to reform the existing political order to create more favourable circumstances. Only when their efforts failed yet again, did the Métis declare a provisional government and seize hostages. Even at this point it seemed that had the Canadian government been willing to enter into negotiations, the crisis might have been resolved.

The overall approach of First Nations on the other hand was most representative of a preservationist insurgency aimed at maintaining the existing political order because of relative advantage gained within it. However, in the case of the First Nations bands, it may be more accurate to say that they sought to force the full implementation of the existing political order. When the Cree chiefs signed Treaty 6, they believed they had established a relationship with Canada based on an understanding that it was between two

---

[198] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 135.
[199] Ibid, 136.

equal parties and that both were to benefit.[200] In exchange for taking up the reservation, the First Nations bands would receive assistance in the form of tools and implements, as well as instruction in farming and an annual annuity from the Canadian government.

However, there was no consistent understanding or agreement between the Canadian government and some of the bands on the exact location of the reservation or when they were to be taken up.[201] Therefore, some of the bands refused to move onto the reservations until a suitable agreement was reached with regard to location and Canadian government assistance was provided. Second, as the buffalo herds declined more rapidly than anticipated and the First Nations began to face starvation, the need for effective assistance and the understanding and implementation of the "famine clause" became a critical point of contention. But the conditions under which assistance would be provided were vague and there was too much room for interpretation by the Queen's Agents. Even at the time of the treaty negotiations Chief Poundmaker was sceptical of the ability of the treaty to adequately provide for his people stating: "From what I can hear and see now, I cannot understand that I shall be able to clothe and feed my children and feed them as long as the sun shines and the water runs."[202] Now, when the assistance was desperately needed, it was not forthcoming owing to fiscal tightfistedness within the Indian Department and the Canadian government willingness to withhold assistance as a means of forcing those bands still holding out against establishing themselves on the

---

[200] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 28.
[201] Indeed, the GOC favored smaller, separated reservations while the Chiefs such as Pakan and Big Bear wanted larger, amalgamated reservations were the Cree would be able to apply more collective pressure to the Government. See Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 57.
[202] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 57.

reservation to do so.[203] In short, for the First Nations, the principal grievance was less the land issue than the immediate requirement for the Canadian government to fulfill its promises of aid under Treaty Six.

In addition to understanding the form of the insurgency, understanding the strategy used by each is also important. Here too O'Neil proposes several distinct approaches that insurgency may take. O'Neil admits that not all insurgencies will precisely fit within these defined approaches; nevertheless, they are useful in discerning the nature of each insurgent movement and further distinguishing between Métis and the First Nations strategy. Here the military-focused strategy and the popular support strategy are of particular relevance to the 1885 Rebellion.[204]

The Métis opted to pursue their aims through a military-focused strategy.[205] This strategy places military ahead of political action and assumes that military victory will result in popular support or government concessions to grievances. It normally requires that the opposing authority is weak, discredited or lacks the ability to respond with an effective military force of its own. In essence, it is most reflective of the foco theory of insurgency. Whether it was the initial intent of the Métis to pursue this approach after the

---

[203] Stanley points out that the Canadian economy has slipped into recession by 1882 and remained there until 1886. As a result, the Indian Department needed to reduce costs and therefore tightened its policy with regard to providing assistance to the Indian. Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 270. Also see Jim Wallace, *A Trying Time*, 8.

[204] In addition to the military and popular support strategies, O'Neil also proposes a conspiratorial and urban warfare strategy. The former uses a limited and swift use of force to remove ruling authority. The later uses urban density as a sanctuary to conduct terrorism and urban guerrilla warfare in order to undermine government authority. O'Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, 46-49 and 61-63.

[205] Bumsted states that the decision to pursue a defensive oriented military strategy was made democratically by the Provisional Government Council. Gabriel Dumont, the appointed Métis military leader, urged a more aggressive guerrilla type war that would be better suited to the Métis and their hope for the Indians to join as allies. While Bumsted contends that in neither case was it likely that the Métis would have gained victory; however, it might have produced the costly Indian war the government was trying to avoid. See Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 261.

declaration of the provisional government or whether it was forced upon them by events at Duck Lake remains unclear. Some authors, such as R.E. Lamb, have suggested that under Riel the Métis' original intent was to demonstrate and then negotiate; in essence to repeat the successful approach used during the Red River crisis.[206] Lamb suggests that at Duck Lake "the calculated risk of a forcible demonstration had misfired" and the Métis found themselves in open conflict with the Canadian government.[207]

In contrast to the Métis military-focused strategy, the First Nations strategy is best defined as a protracted popular approach. This strategy assumes that over time, the cause will attract ever-increasing numbers of supporters.[208] While the approach allows for a broad range of tactics, including terrorism and guerrilla war, it is the political activity that predominates. As early as 1878, Big Bear and Poundmaker had worked to construct a united front among the various Indian bands and tribes to gain the political strength needed to force the Canadian government to grant concessions to the Cree.[209] That said, given the existing fear among the government and population of an "Indian uprising", it was not beyond the First Nations to use low level acts of violence and intimidation to influence Canadian government policies and action. A combined and united Indian force in open conflict could have easily hindered Canadian expansion in the North-West. Nevertheless, the First Nations approach remained much as Big Bear had expressed it in

---

[206] Lamb, *Thunder in the North*, (New York: Pageant Press Inc, 1957), 129. Also see Howard, *Strange Empire*, 376 and Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 147.
[207] Lamb, *Thunder in the North*, 160.
[208] The doctrinal definition is largely focused on a classical Maoist approach with the three phases of strategic defence, strategic equilibrium and strategic offense. As the Indian insurgency in 1885 clearly predates this definition, it has been selected due to the prolonged nature and emphasis on the political activities over the military.
[209] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 60-61.

response to Riel's call for an armed conflict in 1880; "We should not fight the Queen with guns. We should fight her with her own words."[210]

**Conclusion**

Using the above framework, it can be established that the Métis and First Nation represented two distinct groups of insurgents with unique grievances and approaches to resolving them. How those approaches would fare against the Canadian government response will be examined in the next chapter.

---

[210] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 41.

## The Canadian Counterinsurgency Campaign

### Introduction

With the end of the Red River crisis and initial difficulties of acquiring the North-West Territories now seemingly behind it, the Canadian government turned its attention to expanding further west. In doing so, the government's approach reflected a strong inclination towards strict centralized control. Both their experience at Red River and the example of what had, and indeed continued, to occur in the United States expansion west reinforced this view.[211] A de-centralized approach risked further confrontation and potentially expensive warfare between the government and the indigenous population that the nation could ill afford.

In addition to settling the Red River issues with the signing of the Manitoba Act and Treaty One, the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1871 resolved most of the outstanding issues between the United States and Britain and thus reduced the potential threat of American expansion into the Canadian West. Nevertheless, the fact that Canada had not fully secured this vast territory continued to cause concern. The presence of American whiskey traders who aggravated the Canadian First Nations population, the movement of First Nations engaged in hostilities with the American government north into Canada to seek refuge from the United States Army, and the threat of American

---

[211] American Territories encouraged local initiative and autonomy and a rapid movement to statehood. This cost millions of dollars in Indian wars that the government was unable to afford. Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 27.

economic penetration in the form of potential railway branch lines from the United States into the north, were all continuing factors that caused anxiety over the North West.

**Government Instruments**

With the election of Sir John A Macdonald's Conservatives in 1878, the National Policy would become the foundation for western expansion. This policy advocated the creation of a strong national economy based on tariffs, a railway to connect the nation economically and politically and the opening of western settlement. These three inter-dependent features of the effort to control the move west were Canada's answer to American Manifest Destiny.[212] In order to be effective, however, the government would first have to create the tools to ensure the right conditions for expansion.

The Canadian government created three key instruments to facilitate its penetration into the North-West. In 1873, the North West Mounted Police force was raised to provide a safe and secure environment for settlement and the construction of the railway. That same year would see the creation of the Department of the Interior with responsibilities for First Nations affairs, mining, survey, and settlement in order to assist the Lieutenant Governor with the effective administration of the territory.[213] Finally, the Canadian Pacific Railway would be completed to extend the existing national rail system from Eastern Canada to the West coast.

Viewed within the framework of insurgency and the ability of the government authority to counter it, these were more than just the means for economic expansion and

---

[212] Hutchison, *The Struggle for the Border*, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1955), 406.
[213] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 27.

settlement. Given the definition of counterinsurgency as the range of measures employed to counter the efforts of an insurgency, these were tools to the task. When the Canadian government was faced with its next major crisis in the North West it would find itself with a much better state to confront it.

*North-West Mounted Police (NWMP).* In the initial aftermath of the Red River crisis, the government recognized the need for a means to enforce Canadian authority and moved quickly to create the first western police in Manitoba. Initially comprising a mounted force under the command of a former Army officer, this force helped to stabilize the uncertain environment that existed immediately following the assumption of Canadian responsibility.[214] However, pressure was being exerted from both Parliament and the Lieutenant Governor at Fort Garry for a force that could extend the reach of Canadian law and order into the vast expanse of the North-West.

In 1872, Colonel Robertson-Ross, commanding officer of the Canadian Militia, was dispatched to conduct a tour of the North-West to gain a better understanding of the existing conditions. His assessment of the security situation confirmed the concerns expressed by others; "...there is no kind of Government at present whatever, and no security for life or property beyond what people can do for themselves."[215] His recommendation was for a military force, "under its own military rules, in addition to, but distinct from any civil force..."[216] The force would establish security along the border and a series of garrisons across the prairies. In addition, Robertson-Ross noted the

---

[214] Ernest Chambers, *The North-West Mounted Police: A Corps History*, (Montreal: Mortimer Press, 1906), 9.
[215] Ibid, 13.
[216] Ibid, 12.

requirement for an Indian Commissioner to be established in Edmonton along with the need to work closely with the HBC during the initial phase of implementing government control.[217]

In the end, the NWMP were stood up as a paramilitary unit with military organization and characteristics but, with the powers of law enforcement officers. The bill for the creation of the force would be introduced by Prime Minister Macdonald and it would be under the authority of the Department of Justice, a portfolio which was also held by the Prime Minister.

In the early days of its existence, given its vast operating area and the limited communications back to Ottawa, the NWMP was essentially the government in the North-West. Not only did it enforce the law, it also policed the border, carried mail, took the census and acted as Indian Agents.[218] In these initial years of its existence, the NWMP would build strong relationships with First Nations leaders and communities. The force would remain under the Department of Justice until 1876, the same year as the signing of Treaty Six, when it was transferred to the Department of the Interior.

Both the early successes of the NWMP and its potential limitations were reflected in subsequent reports to the government. In 1875, Major General Selby Smith, commander of the Canadian Militia, was tasked to inspect conditions in the North-West and liaise with American authorities along the border on security issues. His report spoke highly of the NWMP police but remarked that without an additional military presence, and given their limited numbers, they would not be sufficient to quell a serious uprising.

---

[217] Ibid, 15.
[218] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 28.

That said, he noted, "There is sufficient military character about the police, and they have the advantage that every man is a limb of the law, whereas military cannot act without a magistrate or constable...Too much value cannot be attached to the North West police, too much attention cannot be paid to their efficiency."[219]

However, as the conditions of First Nations population began to deteriorate, the NWMP increasingly found themselves caught in the middle between an angry First Nations community and uncaring or incompetent officials. Jim Wallace noted that, particularly after their transfer from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Indian Affairs in 1883, "as their role in enforcing coercive policies increased, what remained of the mutual trust and respect between the force and the Indians was sharply reduced."[220]

*Department of the Interior.* In 1873, the increasing need to more effectively and holistically address the administrative challenges of expanding west resulted in the creation of the Department of the Interior. The Department would preside over the extinguishing of First Nations land title, the removal of the First Nations from the open prairie, the survey and allocation of land to settlers as laid out in the 1872 Dominion Lands Act, and the establishment of security through the NWMP. Moreover in 1875, the North-West Territories Act created a separate Lieutenant Governor for the North-West Territories. It also appointed a North-West Council as his advisory body. While overall control of First Nations issues rested at the federal level, the North-West Territories Lieutenant Governor performed the function of Commissioner of Indian Affairs within

---

[219] Chambers, *The North-West Mounted Police*, 37.
[220] Jim Wallace, *A Trying Time,* 10.

the Territories. In 1877, a small staff was created to assist him with these responsibilities.[221]

By 1879, the government was becoming increasingly aware of the difficulty in dealing with the consequences of the declining buffalo herds, combined with the continuing gap in First Nations ability to transition to agriculture. As such, an independent Indian Commissioner was established in that year. Responsible to the Minister of the Interior and given broad discretionary powers, he was to "ensure the carrying out of all treaty stipulations and covenants in good faith and to the letter."[222] The government appointed Edgar Dewdney as the first Commissioner. In the following year, the Indian Affairs section of the Department of the Interior was separated out as a Department in its own right but remained subordinate to the Department of the Interior. In 1881, Dewdney would be appointed Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories but would retain his position as Indian Commissioner. His direct superior would remain Prime Minister Macdonald who retained the position of Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

With a better administrative structure in place, the government now moved to open the west for settlement. This included ensuring security by getting the First Nations off the open prairie and reducing their dependence on government assistance in the process. In his annual report in 1878, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, VanKoughnet, noted the need for the government to take "early and energetic measures"

---

[221] Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada,* 191-192.
[222] Ibid, 228.

to prepare the First Nations in this regard.[223] As such, the government established a system of farming agencies that, in theory, would demonstrate and instruct First Nations on model 'home' farms. In addition to their responsibilities as instructors, assigned government workers were also tasked to distribute food aid from government supply depots when necessary. Unfortunately, this approach to assisting First Nations to transition to farming met with extremely limited success.

The Department found it difficult to retain honest and competent farm instructors and many of them lacked the inclination or patience to work with First Nations, instead preferring to work on nearby ranches for their own benefit.[224] In addition, while government supplied farms were well resourced, the same could not be said for what was given to would–be First Nations farmers. While officials were aware of these problems, they failed to take any action. Not surprisingly, the program came under attack in Parliament for its cost and ineffectiveness. In the end, both supply and home farms were abandoned, the land sold or leased and instructors moved directly onto the reservations.

In addition to dealing with First Nations issues, the Department of the Interior was also responsible for land survey and subsequent claims under the Dominion Lands Act. This process was yet another manifestation of the government's desire to exercise close centralized control over physical movement into the North-West. The Dominion Lands Act set the conditions under which the western lands could be settled and their natural resources developed. It established the provisions for granting free homestead land based on a system of establishing north/south meridian lines from which sub-divided quarter

---

[223] Ibid, 237.
[224] Titley, *The Frontier Life of Edgar Dewdney*, 50 and Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 35.

sections were marked out. While this grid style system was similar to the method used in the United States, as was the case at the Red River, it was at odds with the seigniorial style system or river lot system used by the pre-established Métis population. Because of its rigid nature and centralized administration, the provision of exceptions to the system were both time consuming and costly.[225] As such, requests for exceptions were rarely given.

Indeed, it is unlikely that the majority of the Métis considered the Dominion Lands Act and the glacial pace at which its process moved as a legitimate means to satisfy their land claims issues.[226] Within the Manitoba Act, the Canadian government had conceded the need to extinguish any land entitlement held by the Métis as a consequence of their First Nations heritage. This provision was further extended in an amendment to the Dominion Lands Act in 1879.[227] As such, the Métis view was that the Manitoba Act had exempted them from the bureaucratic necessities of the Dominion Lands Act. This view clashed with government officials who steadfastly insisted in following the laborious and time consuming process outlined in the Act. This difference of views led to increasing frustration between the Métis and the government.

*Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).* In Prime Minister Macdonald's eye, one of the keys to uniting the new Dominion was "an Imperial highway across the continent of America entirely on British soil."[228] In effect, this was the long sought Northwest Passage, only overland. With William van Horne engaged as its chief project manager,

---

[225] Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 28.
[226] Ibid, 30.
[227] Ibid, 64.
[228] Hutchinson, *The Struggle for the Border*, 408.

the CPR steadily spread itself across the North-West, but not without significant cost. To counter American spur lines penetrating north, Van Horne built the CPR hugging the international border as closely as possible. As Hutchison notes, "The struggle for the boundary was taking a new form. Its weapons were money, management, and imagination, but it was essentially the same old struggle...the struggle to grasp and direct the flow of wealth from the West."[229] But securing sufficient funding for such an undertaking was a constant struggle for those involved. In 1885 the completion of the railway was on the verge of collapse due to bankruptcy. Events along the South Saskatchewan River, however, quickly altered that situation. At the news of the rebellion's outbreak, Van Horne stepped forward and guaranteed to move troops from central Canada to Saskatchewan in eleven days over a distance greater than that travelled by the Wolseley's Expedition in approximately three months.[230] The railway was no longer just an instrument of economy but a projection of national power; this "steel lifeline of empire stabbed straight into the heart of the Métis nation and won Canada and the War for the West."[231] With the railway having proved its value, Parliament was now willing to vote for the additional funds for its completion.[232]

*Canadian Militia.* While the NWMP, the CPR and the Interior Department were the three in-place instruments aiding the government's expansion into the North-West, the deployment of the militia would, for a time, become the fourth. With Confederation in 1867 came self-government and with self-government came a need for self-defence.

---

[229] Ibid, 408.
[230] Ibid, 415.
[231] Howard, *Strange Empire*, 334.
[232] Hutchison, *The Struggle for the Border*, 415.

The Militia Act of 1868 provided for the creation of a national military force, a necessity given the withdrawal of all regular British forces from Canada by 1870. Subsequently in 1876, the Royal Military College (RMC) at Kingston was established in order to support the creation of a national officer corps. Nevertheless, British influence within the Canadian militia would remain strong, particularly at the top, where the commander of the militia would be selected from among senior British Army officers. In addition, officers in the technical corps of artillery and engineering were influenced by a Woolwich-dominated cadre of instructors and curriculum at RMC.[233] Canada had had little need to consider questions of a strategic nature prior to Confederation as most of these issues were decided by European powers, and indeed to a certain extent, were determined by events in Europe. Although the Canadian militia had a long history and tradition associated with what the French termed *la petite guerre* based on volunteer, small-scale warfare using irregular forces and tactics, British military thought dominated formal military thinking.

This is not to say that the British Army itself did not suffer a certain form of doctrinal schizophrenia during the 1880s. Within the British army there was much debate and difference of opinion between continentalists, those who were focused on ensuring that the army had learned the lessons from the Napoleonic wars, formalized in the writings of Clausewitz and Jomini, and imperialists, who had served in the numerous small wars fought for expansion and defence of the Empire. The former emphasized large formation battles and the use of improved technologies such as rifled weapons,

---

[233] R.H. Caldwell, Butcher or Bolt: Responses to Nineteenth Century War in the Canadian North West in 1885, MA Thesis: Royal Military College of Canada, 1987), 80.

railway transportation and the telegraph. The latter focused on the soldier and his ability to adapt to the unique and irregular requirements of small scale colonial wars where resources were often limited. But in the end, it was the continentalists that came to dominate the institutional army both in Britain and Canada. As such, "...war to the first generation of RMC Cadets was modern, middle class and scientific, with large formations locked in short but decisive battles where mass, railways and rifles, and concentrated artillery was applied to seek a Clausewitzian decision."[234]

In spite of this doctrinal dominance of continentalists, it was the Colonial Office, influenced by cabinet, which often set the objectives to be attained during expeditionary operations.[235] Always restrained by finance, there was a need to keep the occasions when military operations were required to a minimum and when they were necessary, to keep them small and short leading to the "butcher and bolt" approach, a rapid military defeat of the enemy by the army with other agencies to follow, cleaning up affairs after the fact.[236] The Army's heavy emphasis on this purely military approach characterized Callwell's attempt to codify the principles and practices in *Small Wars*. Major General Frederick Dobson Middleton, commander of the Canadian military forces during the Rebellion, himself would have had direct experience with this during his involvement in the British campaigns in India and New Zealand. Thus Middleton, aware of the advantages of modern technology and experienced in small wars, was well suited to command the North West Field Force (NWFF). In spite of this, he was entering an

---

[234] Caldwell, Butcher or Bolt, 81.
[235] Ibid, 46.
[236] Ibid, 47.

unknown area of operation and this particular campaign was not an expeditionary operation. It was, from a Canadian perspective, domestic.

**Government Reaction**

In spite of the sense of panic that was generated among citizens and officials in the North-West, as well as in the press, the House of Commons remained surprisingly calm. Conscious of the effect that the news of the insurgency could have on immigration to the North-West and on railway investors, they seemed unshaken by reports coming from the North-West.[237] Even upon hearing the news of Duck Lake, the government retained its composure and simply got on with the business of making arrangements for the movement of supply and troops. Prime Minister Macdonald, who had indicated to Dewdney his determination to "enforce the law and keep the peace" and had earlier given him authority to use the only battalion of militia in the North-West located in Winnipeg, now issued orders for Major-General Middleton, as commander of the Canadian militia, to assume command of the NWFF.[238] Middleton was to proceed to the South Saskatchewan River with the force and focus on suppressing the Métis insurgency under Riel. According to Macdonald, Middleton's first priority was to "localize the insurrection [and]...prevent the flame from spreading westwards".[239] On 24 March, two days before the skirmish at Duck Lake, Minister of the Militia, Adolphe Caron, had wired

---

[237] Desmond Morton, *Last War Drum: The North-West Campaign of 1885*, (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert Ltd, 1972), 33.
[238] Desmond Morton and Reginald Roy, *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885*, xxi.
[239] Judy Torrance, "Response of the Canadian Government to Violence", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, (Volume 10, Number 3, 1977), as accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3230818, 478.

the CPR to start organizing troop movement west. [240] While the militia in eastern Canada went into mobilization, in western communities, where no military units existed, efforts to form home guards reached frantic proportions.[241]

In Parliament, the Opposition was supportive of the government's determination to forcefully deal with the crisis and would remain so until after the fall of Batoche and the ensuing decision as to what to do with those arrested in the aftermath, particularly with Riel.[242] Initially, even in the press the onset of hostilities was viewed by some in a somewhat positive light: "...lifting us out of the narrow rut of our petty political and national and provincial littleness, and inspiring a wider and nobler sentiment of the devotion to our common country, Canada, in the presence of a common danger..."[243] As Desmond Morton states, "Whatever grumbling and reservations there might have been beneath the surface, Canada met her first great crisis as a united country."[244]

*Military Campaign.* Middleton's area of operations would be primarily focused around the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan River, a part of the Nelson River Basin which drains into Hudson's Bay. Landlocked, it consisted of rolling grassland and aspen parkland shouldered in the north by lakes and muskeg areas. With the potential for unrest ranging from east to west from Qu'Appelle to Calgary and from the north to south from Fort Saskatchewan to the international border, it was a vast area for the small force available to him. The NWFF would number approximately three

---

[240] Morton, *Last War Drum*, 33.
[241] Ibid, 22.
[242] R.E. Lamb, *Thunder in the North: Conflict Over the Riel Risings1870-1885*, (New York: Pageant Press inc, 1957), 194.
[243] But in the long run, however, the fall-out of North-West Rebellion, and particularly the execution of Riel, would prove to have a divisive effect on the national political landscape. Ibid, 191.
[244] Morton, *Last War Drum*, 37.

thousand troops at the commencement of major operations and reach approximately five thousand at its maximum strength.[245] On 31 March 1885, Middleton, *en route* to assume control of the NWFF, met at Qu'Appelle with Lieutenant Governor Dewdney and Police Superintendent Herchmer, the senior NWMP representative (with Commissioner Irvine deployed to Prince Albert). This was no doubt a highly useful meeting for Middleton, who had no knowledge of the geography, cultural or political landscape of the North-West. Middleton had received limited political guidance for the conduct of the campaign from Prime Minister Macdonald. As one author described it, he was told to "do everything at once – guard the railway, watch the frontier, arrange for the mounted police to organize local forces and, above all, to isolate the insurrection."[246] The meeting at Qu'Appelle allowed Middleton to get the local perspective from Dewdney and Herchmer as well as to liaise with the other two elements of government authority engaged in the campaign, the NWMP and, in Dewdney's capacity as Indian Commissioner, the Department of Indian Affairs. While command of all military forces and the NWMP had been granted to Middleton, Dewdney was still in charge of the political administration of the North-West Territory. The precise division of responsibility between Middleton and Dewdney was not well defined, but the overall situation roughly approximates Gwynn's second scenario, one in which civil authority

---

[245] Charles Lamarre, "Logistics in the North-West Rebellion of 1885", (Masters of Defence Studies Thesis: Canadian Forces College), last accessed March 11, 2013, http://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/288/286/lamarre.pdf, 20.
[246] Morton, *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885,* xl.

has collapsed, the military is required to restore it and in which responsibility is shared between the military and civil authority.[247]

During the meeting at Qu'Appelle, Dewdney told Middleton that he was convinced that the rebellion was a localized affair and dependent on Riel's leadership; nevertheless, it could easily spread, particularly to the First Nations bands.[248] As Middleton records, "On the whole Mr. Dewdney was of the opinion that affairs were in a very critical state, and if we were defeated, the consequences would be most dangerous to the country, as there would probably be a general rising of Indians."[249] Therefore the logical course of action was a quick and decisive defeat of the Métis forces under Riel before the rebellion could spread. This would directly counter the Métis military focus strategy. In broad terms, Middleton's plan was to rapidly move his column northwest from the terminus of the railway at Qu'Appelle, along the South Saskatchewan River to Batoche and confront the Métis directly. As Middleton would later describe it:

> (I would) move the principal column under my own command direct to Clarke's Crossing, a telegraph station and ferry on the South Saskatchewan about forty miles by trail from Batoche. A second column under Lieutenant-Colonel Otter, a capable officer belonging to the permanent Militia, who was coming up with reinforcements, to meet me there from Swift Current, a Canadian Pacific Railway station some 150 miles to the westward of Troy and a few miles from the south branch of the Saskatchewan, which I was recommended to use eventually as a line of communication, making Swift Current my main base. I was given to understand by an old scout that I might fall in with the enemy at or near Clarke's Crossing, and it seemed somewhat probable, but, if not, the two columns would then move, on each side of the river, and attack Batoche, which I understood had houses and Indian camps on both sides of the river, with a large ferry boat to connect them. After the capture, one

---

[247] Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 3-4.
[248] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 177.
[249] Frederick Dobson Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion n the North West Territories of Canada, 1885,* ed G.H, Needler, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), 8.

> column, if necessary, might march on to Prince Albert, the other pushing on to Battleford, whither I proposed sending at once a reinforcement of mounted police under Lieutenant-Colonel W. Herchmer, from Regina, the mounted police having been put under my command. A third column I proposed forming at Calgary, giving the command to Major-General Strange, late R.A., and commanding the Canadian Militia, who had placed his services at the disposal of the Government. This column, after over-awing the Indians in the district, would move on to Edmonton, and proceed down the North Saskatchewan to Fort Pitt, where I hoped to meet them after having disposed of Poundmaker and his band. We should then together follow up, and dispose of Big Bear, which would pretty well break the neck of the rebellion.[250]

Given the vastness of his operating area and lines of communication, effective sustainment of the force would be critical in executing Middleton's plan. Indeed, Charles Lamarre, in his thesis on logistics during the North-West campaign, argues that "It was the ability of the Canadian government to mobilize, transport, and sustain a large field force from eastern Canada to the field of operations, all within a few short weeks, which secured victory."[251] In this regard, Middleton was fortunate to be able to leverage non-governmental assets to assist him.

In order to provide effective communications Minister Caron arranged for the services of the Dominion Government Telegraph services, as well as Great North-West Telegraph Company, to ensure a telegraph link both within the force and back to Ottawa.[252] Having already turned to the CPR for the strategic lift required to deploy the force from eastern Canada, the government would also seek assistance from HBC, who

---

[250] Ibid, 8. The columns were comprised principally of infantry with accompanying mounted scouts and artillery. The main column under Middleton also included two Gatling guns.
[251] Lamarre, *Logistics in the North-West Rebellion* , 4.
[252] Morton, *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885* , xxix.

could provide a network of stores, as well as both overland and river transportation within the operating area, all at considerable financial cost.

But if logistics were Middleton's most critical enabler, they were also potentially his most critical vulnerability. In order to concentrate his forces against the insurgents, Middleton left his lines of communications lightly defended and chose not to provide supporting convoys with escorts. Writing after the campaign, Middleton would justify his decision based on his assessment that the Métis would remain fixed in their defensive posture around Batoche.[253] Comments in Major General Laurie's report on the campaign as commander of the lines of communication indicate that not everyone shared this view. Laurie notes several instances when teamsters or steamer crews refused to move without being accompanied by troops or at least armed for self-defence.[254] In one instance, it may only have been lucky circumstances that ensured that an un-escorted convoy of ammunition bound for Battleford was not intercepted by Cree under Poundmaker.[255]

As the campaign unfolded, the only alteration in Middleton's original plan was the diversion of Colonel Otter's column to Battleford. Upon news of the massacre at Frog Lake and the Cree siege of Fort Pitt, Middleton reluctantly ordered Otter to proceed to Swift Current and then directly north to Battleford to relieve the garrison.[256] In order to retain the ability to seal off the insurgents in Batoche during his attack, Middleton

---

[253] Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion*, 9.
[254] J. Wimburn Laurie, *Report of Major General Laurie Commanding Base and Lines of Communications, Upon Matters in Connection with the Suppression of the Rebellion in the North-West Territories in 1885*, (Ottawa: MacLean, Rogers and Co, 1887), 5-10.
[255] Ibid, 12.
[256] Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion*, xvii.

would split the remainder of his force and continue with the plan to advance on both sides of the South Saskatchewan River.

On 24 April, as Middleton moved north toward Batoche, he encountered a Métis force attempting to ambush his column at Fish Creek. Fortunately for Middleton, his scouts detected the Métis force before their plan could be fully put into effect. The resulting engagement would leave ten of Middleton's soldiers dead and forty-five wounded from a force of three-hundred and fifty.[257] More importantly, the engagement sapped Middleton's confidence and would result in a sixteen day delay force regrouped at Fish Creek before resuming its advance. Middleton would finally deliver his decisive military blow at the Battle of Batoche between 9 and 12 May. With the Métis immobile in a defensive position, Middleton was able to use his superior firepower and after three days of softening the Métis defences, made his final assault on the village. Riel's army was defeated and his subsequent surrender would effectively end the Métis resistance. However, concluding the conflict with the First Nations was another matter.

Seven days after Middleton's engagement at Fish Creek, Colonel Otter's column arrived to relieve Battleford. Having detected Otter's approach, the Cree withdrew from the area around Battleford to establish a camp at Cut Knife Hill. Having achieved the relief of Battleford without a fight, Otter was determined to make a practical demonstration of government power, or as indicated in a telegram to Dewdney, to "punish" Poundmaker.[258] Therefore, acting on Dewdney's authority, rather than Middleton's, Otter struck out west to launch an attack on the First Nations camp at Cut

---

[257] The Métis losses were comparatively light with only five killed and a number wounded. Morton, *Last War Drum*, 68.
[258] Ibid, 103

Knife. If Otter had hoped to impress the Cree with the martial prowess of his force, he must have been sadly disappointed. Forced to defend the encampment, the Cree responded with vigour, eventually surrounding Otter's force and causing it to withdraw. Otter was spared an even greater defeat by Poundmaker, who intervened to prevent the warriors from pursuing the broken Canadian forces.[259] Given his subsequent treatment, this significant act to minimize the conflict between the Cree and government forces seems to have been lost on the government.

As Desmond Morton notes, most white outsiders were "generally ill-informed about the nature of Indian democracy..."[260] With the arrival of Canadian troops at Battleford, the Cree began to move to a wartime footing and shift the leadership responsibility within the bands. Under these circumstances the more aggressive warrior societies and war chiefs assumed increased responsibility for the defence of the band, reducing the influence of the diplomats and peace chiefs such as Poundmaker in the decision-making process.[261] In this sense, military operations conducted against Poundmaker's Cree were counterproductive to ending the conflict as leadership would increasingly pass to the more militant leadership within the bands. Nevertheless, as the warriors began to mount their horses to pursue, Poundmaker intervened saying, "They come here to fight us and we have fought them; now let them go".[262] A massacre of Canadian troops would only have made it more difficult for the Cree to follow their

---

[259] Stonechild and Wasier, *Loyal Till Death*, 142.
[260] Morton, *Last War Drum*, 97.
[261] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 138.
[262] Ibid, 142.

protracted strategy with its focus on political action, reinforced by subversion, over the conduct of open war.

Fortunately, rumours of the Métis defeat at Batoche allowed Poundmaker to again exert his authority over the Cree bands.[263] On 19 May, Poundmaker dispatched a message to Middleton asking for confirmation of the events at Batoche: "I am met by news of the surrender of Riel...I cannot tell how far it is true...I and my people wish you to send us the terms of peace..."[264] Middleton's reply left no doubt with Poundmaker as to the fact that negotiations with the Canadian government on more favourable terms would not be forthcoming: "I have made no terms with them [Métis], neither will I make terms with you. I have men enough to destroy you and your people, or, at least to drive you away to starve..."[265]

General Strange's efforts to bring the Cree under Big Bear to battle fared no better than Otter's with Poundmaker. Although he achieved some marginal success in engagements at Frenchmen Butte and Loon Lake, in the end the bands following Big Bear scattered and the militia force spent over a month chasing Big Bear throughout the North West. Big Bear finally came in and surrendered to the NWMP at Fort Pitt on 2 July 1885.

In all, the North-West Rebellion consisted of five significant engagements between government forces and the insurgents. Two of these were offensive actions

---

[263] As the Cree moved away from Battleford toward Batoche the war chiefs were being influenced by Métis representatives from Riel. In the wake of the Métis defeat the prospects for joining the Métis in defence against the Militia vanished. Focus now turned on a diplomatic solution and back to Poundmaker. Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 165.
[264] Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion*, 59.
[265] Ibid, 59-60.

initiated by the Métis: Duck Lake and Fish Creek. Three were offensive actions initiated by the GOC forces; Batoche, Cut Knife and Frenchman Butte. The First Nations initiated no military offensive actions during the rebellion.

*Non-Military Efforts.* Middleton's approach to the insurgency was one that was very enemy-centric; perhaps overly so. By the standards laid out Chapter 1, this approach did little to promote overall stability throughout the area of operations or address the issue of seeking if not popular support, at least neutrality amongst the general population. Fortunately, the other instruments of government authority in the North-West, under the overall control of Dewdney, would address these requirements. In particular, the NWMP and the Department of Indian Affairs were critical in containing the spread of the insurgency among First Nations, and allowing Middleton's campaign to defeat the relatively small and poorly conducted Métis insurgency with its military focused strategy at Batoche.

Jim Wallace notes in *A Trying Time: The North-West Mounted Police in the 1885 Rebellion* that the NWMP role in the Rebellion has been characterized as minor and insignificant.[266] Middleton harshly, and in many respects unfairly, criticised NWMP actions that were not directly associated with operations where they were under direct military control. From the outset of the campaign, Middleton had been annoyed at the repeated requests to divert forces to assist the NWMP attempting to secure the communities across the North-West. In the case of Battleford, this constituted

---

[266] Wallace, *A Trying Time*, i.

disregarding "virtually a direct order" to relieve the besieged garrison.[267] It was not until Dewdney appealed directly to Ottawa for action that Middleton altered his plans and dispatched Otter's column.[268] In many respects this tension was later captured by Gywnn's observation on the conflict between the military desire to concentrate force for decisive action and the civil tendency to ensure wider stability.

The actions of Superintendent Crozier at Duck Lake and Commissioner Irvine's actions at Prince Albert drew particular criticism from Middleton. Crozier came under scrutiny for his decision to confront the Métis before being reinforced by Irvine's forces coming from Regina, and for subsequently allowing the Métis to achieve their first victory. In his official report, Crozier notes that in hindsight his decision may have been an error, for as he states, "I admit that I was deceived as to their strength."[269] However, in fairness to Crozier, he was attempting the same strategy as Middleton had taken; to confront and defuse the insurgency before it had a chance to spread. While on the surface a defeat, his actions did prevent a Métis attack on Fort Carlton and forced them back to Batoche to await Middleton's attack.

If Crozier was criticized for premature action, Irvine was criticised for not taking action. Having arrived in Prince Albert with reinforcements, he would remain there throughout most of conflict, with the exception of some reconnaissance conducted towards Batoche in the south. Middleton believed that Irvine should have moved to

---

[267] Morton and Roy, *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885,* xlii.
[268] Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion,* xiv.
[269] John Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893*, Volume II, (Ottawa: Kings Printer, 1950), 111.

assist him in taking Batoche.[270] But Irvine understood the importance of ensuring that Prince Albert did not fall to the insurgency and, like Middleton, realized that a defeat such as the loss of the town would encourage the insurgents and any potential recruits. By maintaining his position in Prince Albert, he posed a constant threat to the Métis position at Batoche. This was confirmed by their reluctance to leave Batoche and the return of forces under Riel during the Fish Creek encounter based on a rumour that the NWMP had come out of Prince Albert and were moving toward Batoche.

More broadly speaking, the task of securing the North-West during the rebellion was daunting for the small constabulary force. In addition to countering the insurgency, they remained responsible for the general enforcement of law throughout the territory. For example, Inspector Sam Steele had to contend with the disruption caused by a CPR worker's strike over pay before responding to assist in General Strange's column.[271] As indicated in the Prime Minister's guidance to Middleton, the organization of defences throughout the North-West fell to the NWMP. This included the supervision of construction of fortifications within the various communities and the raising of home defence companies. Middleton was reluctant, however, to respond to what he termed "pitiful requests" for support from various locations across the area and the NWMP received little support from the military.[272]

---

[270] There seemed to be considerable disagreement amongst the participants in the events as to whether Irvine was ordered by Middleton to come out of Prince Albert and assist him. As the telegraph in Prince Albert had been cut, messages between the two were passed by word of mouth through couriers. See Wallace, *A Trying Time*, 194-196.
[271] Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police, Vol II*, 151.
[272] Middleton, *Suppression of the Rebellion*, 12.

While most of the military effort was focused in the north, Superintendent John Cotton, from Fort Macleod, worked to effectively organize the southern flank. Having raised an auxiliary force and established a screening force along the border, Cotton worked with Father Lacombe, a Catholic priest who had great influence among the Blackfoot Confederacy, as well as Indian Agent Cecil Denny, to maintain contact with First Nations leaders and counter Métis propaganda designed to encourage the Blackfoot to enter into the conflict. Noting the importance of the information battle, Cotton informed Dewdney that he needed to have information on events to the north before First Nations leaders heard it from other sources.[273] The importance of the psychological aspect of the conflict was certainly not lost on Dewdney. Knowing that if the Blackfoot rose-up, the conflict would be further protracted and could extend beyond the ability of the government to control, he personally conducted meetings with Chief Crowfoot and other key First Nations leaders to reassure them of Canadian government intent and inform them of the real situation rather than the propaganda coming from the Métis.[274] In fact Dewdney, while having no control over the military campaign as such, was busy fighting the insurgency not only through informal direction to the NWMP, who had technically come under Middleton's command, but through the other key instrument in the Canadian effort, the Department of Indian Affairs.

More so than trying to address Métis grievances, Dewdney was occupied with trying to manage the First Nations problem which had constantly confronted him since his arrival in the North-West. In the aftermath of tension between the Department of

---

[273] Library and Archives Canada, Dewdney Papers, Volume 1, Cotton to Dewdney, 7 April 1885, 285.
[274] Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893, Vol II*, 164.

Indian Affairs in 1884, and particularly the Craig Incident, Dewdney began to re-examine the Canadian government's policy with regard to providing assistance to First Nations. In a letter to the Prime Minister, he indicated that, "The time often comes when this rule [work for ration] must be of an elastic nature."[275] Dewdney needed more flexibility at the local level to prevent tensions among the First Nations escalating into a full-out uprising. Ever since VanKoughnet's visit in 1883 and his subsequent proposals for changes to the Department, Dewdney was forced to repeatedly counter attempts by Ottawa to restrict his ability to manage the situation in the field; particularly the "Let them suffer" approach articulated by VanKoughnet. He had warned the government that the feeling among the First Nations was "such that they will not suffer without an effort to obtain what they feel is their right."[276]

When the insurgency broke out in 1885, Dewdney began to generously distribute rations to those bands not involved in hostilities in order to pacify the First Nations and prevent them from joining the insurgency. Dewdney actively toured the Treaty 4 bands to reassure them and confirm their neutrality. In order to ensure that the Blackfoot under Treaty 7 remained neutral, Dewdney hired Indian Agent Cecil Denny, who had resigned the previous year over the imposition of the strict regulations on the distribution of rations and cuts to his administrative staff. Well known and respected by the First Nations leaders, Denny was authorized to act "in any way which you may deem advisable."[277] Only in the Treaty 6 area had the Departments structure failed to

---

[275] Titley, *Frontier Life of Edgar Dewdney*, 60.
[276] Ibid, 54.
[277] Cecil Denny, *March of the Mounties*, (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd, 1972), 147.

effectively operate: at Battleford, J.M. Rae hid within the walls of the garrison; at Fort Pitt, Thomas Quinn had been killed at Frog Lake; and at Carlton, J.A Macrae had abandoned his post along with the NWMP after Duck Lake. Fortunately, in the case of Battleford and Fort Pitt, representatives of the HBC stepped forward and assumed the roles that should otherwise have fallen to the Indian Agents in an attempt to defuse tensions with First Nations.

**Campaign Analysis**

Middleton's plan in many respects reflects the enemy-centric methodology later articulated by Callwell. His direct military solution was to rapidly drive straight into the heart of the insurgent's base, deliver a decisive blow resulting in a clear demonstration of superiority of government forces that would be psychologically 'overawing' for both the Métis forces and any other potential insurgents. Middleton was "playing to win and not for safety" as Callwell would later write. His plan was to isolate the battlefield at Batoche by advancing up both sides of the South Saskatchewan River in order to ensure the destruction of the Métis force and the capture of Riel. This would remove the insurgency's leadership and deny the Métis the opportunity to turn the conflict into a protracted guerrilla war. Middleton's focus on the arrangement of his forces to deliver a decisive blow is reflective of the mechanistic approach of Jomini and the continentalist school of thought. Fortunately for Middleton, it seemed the Métis were all too willing to assist him in this approach by remaining in a defensive posture at Batoche with only a slight effort to sally forth and impede Middleton's advance at Fish Creek.

Tactically, the campaign was highly reflective of the lessons later articulated by Callwell. In fact in some cases, Middleton's tactics during the campaign were used as examples by Callwell.[278] Middleton's strong emphasis on intelligence and scouting, his preference for battle over manoeuvre in defeating Métis forces, his emphasis on minimizing the resources required to maintain supply and lines of communications, his enthusiasm for pursuit of Cree forces, and his reluctance after Fish Creek, and the initial assault on Batoche, to withdraw are all reflective of Callwell's tactical principles.

As suggested in the Canadian Army's current counterinsurgency manual, initial analysis of Middleton's military approach to the insurgency seems to be a case where military victory may have ended the insurgency. But in order to fully understand this apparent success, it is also necessary to examine the insurgent effectiveness and to consider those actions outside the purely military actions that may have contributed to overall success.

Like the adversary they faced, the Métis and First Nations had their own conceptual ideas about war. Those views were very different from the European, post-Napoleonic view of large scale, decisive battles and lacked a sense of needing to completely destroy the enemy army. Raids, demonstrations and a pattern of limited confrontation, usually followed by negotiation were often the form of conflict.[279] Prolonged rivalries, rather than victory of one tribe over another, were the norm.[280] Even when full scale tribal confrontations did occur, such as the war between the Blackfoot

---

[278] Callwell uses Middleton's feint at Batoche and his use of laager and zeriba systems as practical examples in *Small Wars*. This the construction of field fortifications using wagons to defend temporary encampments. Callwell, *Small Wars*, 236 and 281 respectively.
[279] Caldwell, *Butcher and Bolt*, 99.
[280] Ibid, 101.

and Plains Cree in 1870, defeat did not necessarily mean a failure to achieve objectives. In this conflict over the ability to hunt buffalo around the Cypress Hills area, subsequent negotiations gained the Cree access to the hunting grounds despite seeming defeat on the battlefield. For the Métis as well, when faced with the necessity of confronting a potential adversary, demonstration had often proven an effective approach. This was illustrated both under Riel's father during the Sayer Trial incident in 1849 and again under Riel himself at Red River in 1869.[281]

Whether or not pure demonstration through the seizure of hostages and proclamation of a provisional government had been Riel's intent in 1885, the opportunity to restrict his approach to this course of action was lost with the engagement of the NWMP at Duck Lake. Unlike the situation at Red River, the Canadian government had in place a force (NWMP) that was ready to challenge the Métis. Indeed, Riel would subsequently find that in addition to the NWMP, the government now possessed in the CPR the means to rapidly project further significant power into the west. Given these factors, it is surprising that the Métis failed to either immediately follow up the battle at Duck Lake with further offensive action or, either independently or in combination with that offensive action, exercise potentially their best strategic option in their confrontation with the government, a protracted guerrilla style war. Given the vulnerability of the NWFF lines of communication and the apparent impact of the ambush at Fish Creek on Canadian confidence, this seems in retrospect an obvious approach. The Métis certainly possessed the necessary field skills, knowledge of the land and the intelligence on

[281] The Sayer Trial refers to an incident during which a Métis, Guillaume Sayer, was placed on trial for illegal fur trading. Seeing the proceedings as illegitimate, a group of armed Métis demonstrated outside the court to influence a favourable outcome for Sayer.

Canadian movements to execute such a strategy.[282] George Woodcock suggests that Dumont, as the war chief, had favoured this approach but Riel prevented him from implementing it.[283] In his own account of the Rebellion, Dumont indicates that it was Riel's restraining influence that on multiple occasions, including at Duck Lake and Fish Creek, prevented him from pursuing a more aggressive strategy to harass and disrupt Canadian forces. [284]

Conditions immediately following Duck Lake certainly favoured the Métis adopting a more aggressive offensive. As Father André noted, Prince Albert was essentially defenceless and fear had so gripped the population that, "they would only have had to appear for us to surrender without resistance."[285] This would have gained the Métis needed supplies in ammunition and rations and possibly further impressed potential First Nations allies of their ability to overthrow government authority. As a member of the Métis council later observed, with success at Prince Albert, "the Rebellion, as they have named the affair, would not be over yet and could have lasted ten or twelve years, and the ending, I believe, would have been very different."[286]

Several historians have commented on the failure of Métis strategy. J.M. Bumsted has suggested that Dumont has influenced this view over time through his suggestion that his more aggressive approach was thwarted by Riel but that, in fact,

---

[282] The Métis had an extensive network of scouts and spies inside the Canadian force. Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*, 48.
[283] Ibid, 48.
[284] Gabriel Dumont, *Gabriel Dumont Speaks*, trans Michael Barnholden, (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993), 51, 59 and 61.
[285] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 225.
[286] Ibid, 225.

strategic decisions were collectively made by the provisional government as a whole.[287] He further suggests that "there is absolutely no evidence that Canada would ever have agreed to deal with the insurgents; too much national honour was at stake."[288] However, his view does not seem to account for the government's grave concern over the cost of a prolonged campaign.

Alternatively, using the Battle of Seven Oaks (1816) and Grand Coteau (1857) as examples, Beal and Macleod suggest that a tradition of successful defensive battles was a second major influence on Métis strategy.[289] Often outnumbered, the Métis prevailed through tactical innovation, in particular through the construction of defensive positions surrounded by rifle pits where their superior firepower could prevail against principally First Nations adversaries. This approach ignored the need for insurgent forces to remain active and to avoid giving a superior enemy force a target to attack. Placing itself on the defensive, the insurgency was forced to focus on its own preservation and as Thompson observed, thus move from expansion to contraction.[290]

In addition to restricting themselves to a defensive strategy, the Métis had failed to generate sufficient popular support. As already noted, Riel's increasingly violent approach and messianic tone had alienated support from the Church, the White population, and many of the Métis. In spite of a population base in the Fort Carlton area of approximately fifteen hundred, only two hundred and fifty would actively join in

---

[287] Bumsted, *Louis Riel v. Canada*, 260.
[288] Ibid, 261.
[289] It should be noted that while Grand Coteau clearly fits within this description, the Battle of Seven Oaks, while perhaps strategically a defensive effort, at the tactical level more closely resembles a meeting engagement between the Métis and HBC forces. Indeed, actions leading up to the battle more resemble an overall strategy of raiding and intimidation on the part of the Métis. Beal and MacLeod, *Prairie Fire*, 227.
[290] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 116.

Riel's insurgency.[291] As such, creating a consolidated effort with First Nations was critical. The Métis dispatched messengers throughout the First Nations communities announcing their success at Duck Lake, and calling on their First Nations "relatives" to take up arms against the government and "without delay, come this way, as many as possible. Send us news."[292]

In spite of initial Métis success, the First Nations remained determined to pursue their strategy of avoiding full-out conflict with government forces in favour of demonstration and intimidation to support their diplomatic strategy. News of Duck Lake, however, offered the opportunity for First Nations to leverage the general sense of fear and anxiety created by the initial demonstration of weakness in government authority. With shows of force at both Fort Pitt and Battleford, the Cree would once again press authorities for immediate assistance and relief and hoped to demonstrate to the government the error of their continuing repressive policy. As one farm instructor held captive in Poundmaker's camp noted, "...there was no organized attempt at besieging the barracks [Battleford]...The Indians were not sufficiently worked up to attempt offensive measures."[293] Unfortunately, the government perceived First Nations' actions as being supportive of the Métis effort. In particular, the massacre at Frog Lake reinforced this point of view and had completely shattered any prospect of Big Bear's leadership in a political process to achieve change.[294]

---

[291] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 148.
[292] Wallace, *A Trying Time*, 84.
[293] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 206.
[294] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 118.

Satisfied with having asserted themselves at both Battleford and Fort Pitt, the Cree bands associated with Poundmaker and Big Bear then withdrew to Frog Lake and Cut Knife Hill respectively. There was no further Cree offensive action in spite of continued agitation by Métis agents who appealed to the more radical and aggressive band leaders.[295] Instead, they would wait for other bands including the Blackfoot tribes to the south, to follow suit in taking back local control from government authorities.[296] While Middleton's defeat of the Métis at Batoche no doubt had the desired effect of reducing any such enthusiasm among undecided First Nations, it does not fully account for the prevention of the general 'Indian uprising' so feared by the government. For a more complete explanation, a broader view of the measures taken to defeat the insurgency is required.

Had it not been for the ability of the government to leverage non-governmental agencies such as the HBC, CPR and Great North-West Telegram Company for logistical support, as well as at Fort Pitt and Battleford to confront insurgents and in Jomini's words 'calm the popular passion', the task of defeating the insurgency would have been significantly more difficult. But even more important to the overall success of the campaign was the ability of the government to prevent what it perceived as the greatest danger, an "Indian Uprising". For this a separate, principally non-military, response was needed.

Certainly by 1884, the local instruments of government authority had begun to adapt to the perceived danger of a First Nations insurgency, both reinforcing the NWMP

---

[295] Stonechild and Waiser give a good account of the efforts made by Métis agents dispatched to Poundmaker's band. Ibid, 130.
[296] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 207.

and re-examining its policies so as to more effectively meet First Nations' expectations of promises made under Treaty 6. In the opening stages of the insurgency, the ability of the NWMP to promote a more stable and secure environment, as well as the Department of Indian Affairs increased provision of aid served as an adequate response to First Nations' demands and strategy. In fact, had the government undertaken a more militarily focused response it is possible that it could have further radicalized the insurgency by shifting band leadership to the more aggressive war chiefs. The result may well have been a shift in First Nations' strategy from that of popular support to a military approach that could have overwhelmed the government.

O'Neil notes that "Of all the variables that have a bearing on the progress and outcome of insurgencies, none is more important than government response."[297] In the introduction to her study on government responses to violent crises, political scientist Judy Torrance agrees "a clumsy government response – whether too much or too little or too late – will exacerbate the immediate situation and lay a store of trouble for the future."[298] Torrance typifies the Canadian government response to violence as: viewing participants as "non-political deviants"; seeking to separate the leadership from the general population who can then be shown the futility of violence as a means; and achieving these goals quickly before violence spreads.[299] More generally, the Canadian

---

[297] O'Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, 155.

[298] Torrance's study examines the Red River (1969), Northwest Rebellion (1885), Quebec City Riots (1918), Winnipeg General Strike (1919), and Regina Riot (1935). The analysis uses five dimensions to examine GOC response: 1) amount of attention given; 2) the way it characterises the violence; 3) its willingness to introduce change in response; 4) the extent to which it resorts to violence in response; and 5) deference it pays to public opinion when deciding its response. JudyTorrance, "The Response of the Canadian Government to Violence," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, (Volume 10, Number 3, 1977), last accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3230818, 473.

[299] Ibid, 495.

government tended to ignore the potential validity of grievances and stressed the need to enforce law and order. Indeed, responding to the Métis proclamation of a provisional government and the seizure of hostages, authorities in Ottawa quickly and decisively deployed an armed force to counter the insurgency. This approach was extended to the First Nations when it appeared to the government that they may have been following the Métis lead.

Throughout the North West Rebellion, the Canadian government used a wide range of capabilities to counter the insurgency conducted by the Métis and First Nations. These went beyond the use of pure military power and included the use of non-military actions conducted by the NWMP, the Department of Indian Affairs and a host of non-governmental agencies. Indeed, given the different aims, grievances and strategies of Métis and First Nations, the government's campaign to suppress the insurgency was appropriate to the threats posed, swift and effective. While this can be partly attributed to failures on the part of the insurgents, it nevertheless demonstrates a sound application of the principles of a successful counterinsurgency campaign.

## Conclusion

This study has taken as its definition of insurgency as a conflict, internal to a state, involving at least one actor that does not represent a sovereign state, using violence or the threat of violence against an established authority to achieve political ends. It has demonstrated that by 1885 the Canadian government had established its authority in the North-West Territory. Governing, administrative and law enforcement institutions had all been well established. However, in response to unsolved grievances that could be resolved inside of the established political process, two parties, the Métis and First Nations resorted to violence to achieve resolution of those grievances. Neither the Métis nor First Nations acted as sovereign states and initially appealed to their authority of the government to resolve their grievances. Nor did the conflict expand beyond the borders of Canada. Thus by the definition proposed, the North-West Rebellion does qualify as an insurgency. Where the Métis and First Nations diverge is in the form that their insurgency took and the strategy pursued to achieve it.

Using Bard O'Neil's framework for examining the nature and character of various forms of insurgency, the Métis were most representative of a reformist insurgency that used a military-focused strategy to achieve their desired aim. Specifically, having failed to have the determination of land right entitlement and grants confirmed by the Canadian government, they sought to re-order the existing distribution of political power and material resources that they deemed to be discriminatory or illegitimate. To achieve this, they pursued a military-focused strategy that placed military action ahead of political

action and assumed that military victory would create popular support or government concessions to grievances. By contrast, First Nations were most representative of a preservationist insurgency, seeking to maintain the existing political order because of their relative advantage within it. More precisely, in this case it may be more accurate to say that they sought to force the full implementation of the existing political order. Specifically, they sought the immediate fulfillment of Canadian government promises of aid under Treaty Six. In contrast to the Métis military-focused strategy, the First Nations strategy was to pursue a protracted popular approach. This is a strategy that assumes that over time, the cause would attract ever-increasing numbers of supporters. While they used low level violence, it was the political activity through negotiations that predominated. As such, the framework has demonstrated and clarified the unique aims and approach between the Métis and the First Nations.

In examining the Canadian government's approach to responding to the Métis and First Nations insurgency, this study established counterinsurgency as the range of measures employed to counter the efforts of an insurgency. In this regard, it has demonstrated that the Canadian government responded to the insurgency using the full range of national instruments at its disposal both military and civil. This included not only the more obvious military campaign by the NWFF under General Middleton but, a significant effort by the NWMP to conduct operations to create a secure environment and reduce the escalation of tension and those by the Department of Indian Affairs and other non-governmental agencies such as HBC to do the same.

In addition, this study has sought to examine the conduct of both the insurgents and counterinsurgents in this conflict in respect to some established principles for the

conduct of insurgency and counterinsurgency respectively. It has concluded that, after the Battle of Batoche, the momentum of the conflict between the insurgents and the Canadian government clearly shifted. What had appeared as a progressive string of successes for the insurgents was broken and the insurgency began to rapidly de-escalate. For the most part, the NWFF under Middleton followed the principles and practices identified to succeed at the tactical level in defeating an insurgency. They maintained an offensive focus, quickly drove into the insurgent's area of support to exert Canadian government authority and restore public confidence. Throughout, they had maintained good communications, intelligence and logistical support to the force. That said, it should be noted that they were greatly assisted by the fact that the Métis under Riel had for their part failed to apply the principles suggested for successful insurgents. They were tactically defensive and allowed the government military forces to advance unmolested with superior forces toward a single objective and to engage them in decisive open battle. The Métis had not attempted to protract the conflict or employ tactics that would have worn down Canadian government forces. Nor had they gained sufficient popular support, which was certainly not going to be forthcoming after their defeat at Batoche. Once decisively defeated at Batoche, they had no option other than to concede. Thus when viewed at this level, it appears that the military victory was decisive in ending the insurgency and achieving campaign success. When viewed from a high strategic level, it should be borne in mind that, from a government perspective, the defeat of Riel and the Métis was part of a wider approach to prevent what the government identified as the most significant threat, an "Indian up-rising".

While the defeat of Métis forces at Batoche no doubt had the desired psychological effect of dissuading some potential insurgents from joining in open hostilities, it does not fully explain the failure for a general uprising to have occurred among First Nations in conjunction with the Métis. The diplomatic approach favoured by key First Nations leaders such as Poundmaker and Big Bear also in part explains this failure. An over-reliance on a coercive military approach by the government toward the First Nations could have shifted their leadership, and therefore their approach, toward a more aggressive policy had it not been for other government action that served to mitigate that effect. Specifically, the measures taken by the Department of Indian Affairs to increase assistance and aid to First Nations communities, the security and stabilizing efforts of the NWMP and the engagement with key First Nations leaders to counter Métis influence or doubt in Canadian government authority were instrumental in preventing First Nations from pursuing a more aggressive strategy in dealing with the government.

Thus from a purely historical perspective, viewing the North West Rebellion through the lens of an insurgency framework is useful for two reasons. First, it helps to draw out the distinct nature of the two insurgent groups, the Métis and First Nations, both with regard to aims and strategy in order to refine our understanding of each party and the Rebellion as an event. Second, by looking at the specific events of the Rebellion against the suggested principles of conducting such a campaign, we can gain a greater understanding of how the Canadian government was able to so quickly defeat the insurgency before it could be expanded or protracted by the insurgents and increase their possibility of ultimate success.

In the context of Canadian Army doctrine, the use of the North West Rebellion as a means to study insurgency is certainly valid. The purpose of doctrine is to impart knowledge and provide authoritative guidance for the organization of combat power and the conduct of operations as part of the military art. It is based on the collective experience and lessons from the past operations and combines them with emerging concepts to produce a framework to think through problems. In the case of the Canadian Army and counterinsurgency operations, some authors have suggested that the more historical examples are largely lost to the institutional memory. [300] However, given the conclusions drawn from this study, it should include a fuller examination or expanded vignette. Contrary to the suggestion in B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counterinsurgency Operations that the insurgency was defeated through military means, a far more sophisticated explanation is required.

---

[300] Neil Chuka, Are We Reading From the Same Playbook: A Comparison of US, UK and Canadian Counterinsurgency Doctrine, (Kingston: Neil Chuka, 2007), 6.

# Bibliography

**Insurgency/Counter-Insurgency**


Beckett, Ian. *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency.* London: Blandford Press, 1988.

Berger, Martin. Engels, *Armies and Revolution: The Revolutionary Tactics of Classical Marxism.* Hamden Connecticut: Archon Books, 1977.

Beckett, F.W. *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerrilla Warfare 1900-1945.* New York: Blandford Press, 1988.

Chuka, Neil. *Are We Reading From the Same Playbook: A Comparison of US, UK and Canadian Counterinsurgency Doctrine.* Kingston: Neil Chuka, 2007.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War.* Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982.

Collier, Thomas and Shy, John. "Revolutionary War." In *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age.* Edited by Peter Paret, 815-862. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Department of Defense. *FM 3-24 US Army /USMC Counter-insurgency Field Manual.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Department of National Defence. *B-GL-323-004/FP-004 Counter-Insurgency Operations.* Kingston: Army Publishing Office, 2008.

Department of the Navy. *FMFRP 12-15 Small Wars Manual.* Washington, Government Publishing Office, 1990.

Callwell, C.E. *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practices.* 3th Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1996.

Caldwell, R.H. *Butcher or Bolt: Responses to Nineteenth Century War in Canadian North West in 1885.* M.A. Thesis: Royal Military College, 1987.

Childs, Matt. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's Foco Theory." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Volume 27, No 33, 1995: 593-624.

*Concise Oxford English Dictionary.* 11th ed, revised, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Echevarria, Antulio J II. "Fourth Generation War and Other Myths" Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, Carlisle PA, November 2005.

Ellis, John. *A Short History of Guerrilla Warfare.* London: Ian Allen Ltd, 1975.

Guevara, Ernesto Che. *Guerrilla Warfare.* New York: Ocean Press, 2006.

Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice.* Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006.

Griffin, Christopher. "A revolution in Colonial Military Affairs: Gallieni, Lyautey and the 'tache d'huile,'" paper submitted for British International Studies Association Conference, Leicester, December, 2009. Available from www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task=view_pu.

Gumz, Jonathan E. ``Reframing the Historical Problematic of Insurgency: How the Professional Military Literature Created a New History and Missed the Past``. *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 32, Number 4, August, 2009: 553-558.

Gottmann, Jean. "Burgeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare." In *The Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler.* Edited by Edward Mead Earle, 234-259. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Gwynn, Charles. *Imperial Policing.* 2nd Edition. London: MacMillian and Co,1939.

Joes, Anthony James. *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical, Biographical and Bibliographical Sourcebook.* London: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Joes, Anthony James. *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency.* Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004.

Jomini, Henri. *The Art of War.* Translated by G.H. Mendell and W.P. Craighill, reprinted by Greenwood Press, Westport. Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1862.

Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Kitson, Frank. *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping.* London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1971.

Laqueur, Walter. *Guerrila: A Historical and Critical Study.* London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977.

Lawrence, T.E. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph,* Sixth impression. London: University Press, 1935.

Lawrence, T.E. "The Evolution of a Revolt," reprinted from *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, October, 1920. Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1990. Lasted accessed March 10, 2013. http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/csipubs/lawrence.pdf .

Lenin, VI. *Collected Works, 4th English Edition.* Prepared for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966. Last accessed March 7, 2013. http://www.marx2mao.com/Lenin/Index.html.

Liddell Hart, B.H. *Strategy,* 2nd Revised Edition. New York: First Signet Printing, 1974.

Lynn, John. "Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, Volume 85. No 4, July/August 2005, p-22-27.

McCarthy, Dayton. "Big Books on "Small Wars': Milestones or Millstones in Counterinsurgency Thinking?" *Australian Army Journal*, Volume VII, Number 3, 2010: 77-96. Last accessed March 11, 2013. http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/DARA/Our-publications/Australian-Army-Journal/~/media/Files/Our%20future/DARA%20Publications/AAJ/2010Summer/AAJ_Vol7_No3_Summer2010.ashx.

McCuen, John. The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War. London: Faber and Faber, 1966.

Ministry of Defence. *Army Field Manual - Countering Insurgency Vol 1 Part.* London: Ministry of Defence, 2010.

Moran, Daniel. *Strategic Theory and the History of War.* Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School. Last accessed March 8, 2013.http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Moran-StrategicTheory.pdf#zoom=100.

Nagl, John. *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counter-Insurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

O'Neill, Bard. *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare.* Dulles: Brassey's Inc, 1990.

Paret, Peter. "Clausewitz." In *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Edited by Peter Paret, 186-213. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Porch, Douglas. "Burgeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare." In *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age.* Edited by Peter Paret, 376-407. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Rid, Thomas. "Razzia: A turning Point in Modern Strategy." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, 2009: 617-635. Last accessed March 3, 2013.http://thomasrid.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/rid-razzia1.pdf.

Rid, Thomas. "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 33, Number 5, October, 2010: 727-758. Last accessed March 10, 2013. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2010.498259.

Rollet, Jean-Philippe. "*Conqueror and Administrator: Civil and Military Actions of Marshall Louis-Gabriel Suchet in the Spanish Province of Aragon 1808-1813.*" M.A. Thesis, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2008. Last accessed March 3, 2013. www.dtic.mil/cgi-bn/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA491525.

Schneider, James. "T.E. Lawrence and the Mind of an Insurgent." *Army Magazine*, Volume 55, Issue 7, 2005: 31-37. Lasted accessed March 10, 2013. http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2005/7/Documents/Schneider_0705.pdf.

Shy, John. "Jomini." In *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age.* Edited by Peter Paret, 143-185. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1986.

Thompson, Robert. *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam.* London: Chatto and Windus Limited, 1974.

Tinker, Jerry. *Strategies of Revolutionary Warfare.* New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1969.

Trinquier, Roger. *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, 1964.

Trotsky, Leon. "How the Revolution Armed." *The Military Writings of Leon Trotsky, Volume 2*, 1918, transcribed for Internet by David Walters. Last accessed March 8, 2013. http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1919/military/ch95.htm.

Tse Tung, Mao. *Guerrilla Warfare.* New York: Praegar Publishers, 1961.

Tse-Tung, Mao. "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung.* Broken link. http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1-12.htm.

Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*, ed and trans by Ralph Sawyer. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1994.

Utley, Robert. *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian 1866-1891.* New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, 1973.

**Northwest Rebellion**

Beal, Bob, and Rod Macleod. *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion.* Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1984.

Bumsted, J.M. *Louis Riel v. Canada: The Making of a Rebel.* Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2000.

Braz, Albert Riamundo. "The False Traitor: Louis Riel in Canadian Literature." Doctoral Thesis: University of Toronto, 1999. Last accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape9/PQDD_0001/NQ41111.pdf.

Carter, Sarah. *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Chambers, Ernest. *The North-West Mounted Police: A Corps History.* Montreal: Mortimer Press, 1906.

Chodan, Tim and Asfar, Dan. *Gabriel Dumont: War Leader of the Métis.* Folklore Publishing Company, 2003.

Daugherty, Wayne. *Treaty Research Report Treaty One and Treaty Two (1871).* Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Research Branch, Corporate Policy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, 1983. Last accessed March 1, 2013. http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/tre1-2_1100100028661_eng.pdf.

Denny, Cecil. *March of the Mounties.* Surrey: Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd, 1972.

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. "Aboriginal Peoples and Communities," Government of Canada. Last accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1304467449155.

Dumont, Gabriel. *Gabriel Dumont Speaks.* Translated by Michael Barnholden. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993.

Flanagan, Thomas, editor. *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel, Volume 3*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985.

Flanagan, Thomas. *Louis 'David' Riel*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Flanagan, Thomas. *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered*, 2nd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

Haydon, A.L. *The Riders of the Plains: A Record of the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada 1873-1910*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973.

Howard, Joseph Kinsey. *Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1952.

Hutchison, Bruce. *The Struggle for the Border*. Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1955.

Hughes, Stuart. ed. *The Frog Lake ``Massacre``: Personal Perspectives on the Ethnic Conflict*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976.

Klancher, Donald. *The North-West Mounted Police and the North West Rebellion*. Kamloops: Goss Publishing, 1999.

Lamb, R.E. *Thunder in the North: Conflict Over the Riel Risings 1870-1885*. New York: Pageant Press Inc; 1957.

Lamarre, Charles. *Logistics in the North-West Rebellion of 1885*. Masters of Defence Studies Thesis: Canadian Forces Staff College, year unknown. Last accessed March 11, 2013.http://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/288/286/lamarre.pdf.

Laurie, J. Wimburn. *Report of Major General Laurie Commanding Base and Lines of Communications, Upon Matters in Connection with the Suppression of the Rebellion in the North-West Territories in 1885*. Ottawa: MacLean, Rogers and Co, 1887.

Linder, Douglas. "Famous Trials: Louis Riel Trial 1885," University of Missouri and Kansas City, 2004. Last accessed March 13, 2013. http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/riel/instructions.html.

MacLeod, R.C. ed. *Reminiscences of a Bungle by One of the Bunglers*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983.

Middleton, Frederick Dobson. *Suppression of the Rebellion n the North West Territories of Canada, 1885*. Edited by G.H, Needler. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.

Mika, Nich and Helma, eds. *The Riel Rebellion 1885.* Belleville: Mika Silk Screening Limited, 1972.

Milne, Brad. "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890." *Manitoba History*, Number 30, Autumn, 1995. Last accessed March 7, 2013. http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/30/metislanddispersal.shtml 10 Nov 2012.

Morton, Desmond. *The Last War Drum: The North-West Campaign of 1885.* Toronto: A.M. Hakkert Limited, 1972.

Morton, Desmond and Roy, Reginald, editors, introduction and notes. *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885.* Toronto: Robert Mac Lehose Ltd, 1972.

Saul, John Ralston. *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada.* Toronto: Penguin Group, 2009.

Siggins, Maggie. *Riel: A Life of Revolution.* Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994.

Sprague, Donald. *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885.* Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988.

Stanley, George. *Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Stanley, G. F. G. *Louis Riel.* Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963.

Steele, S.B. *Forty Years in Canada: Reminiscences of the Great North-West.* Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973.

St Germain, Jill. *"A Comparison of the Canadian and American Treaty-Making Policy with the Plains Indians, 1867-1877."* M.A. Thesis: School of Canadian Study, Carleton University, 1998. Last accessed March 10, 2013. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape17/PQDD_0001/MQ32381.pdf.

Stonechild, Blair and Waiser, Bill. *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion.* Calgary: Fifth House Ltd, 1997.

Titley, Brian. *The Frontier Life of Edgar Dewdney.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999.

Torrance, Judy. "The Response of the Canadian Government to Violence." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 10, Number 3, 1977:473-496. Last accessed March 7, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3230818.

Turner, John. *The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893*, Volume II. Ottawa: Kings Printer, 1950.

Wallace, Jim. A *Trying Time: The North-West Mounted Police in the 1885 Rebellion.* Winnipeg: Bunker to Bunker Books, 1998.

Woodcock, George. *Gabriel Dumont.* Don Mills: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1978.

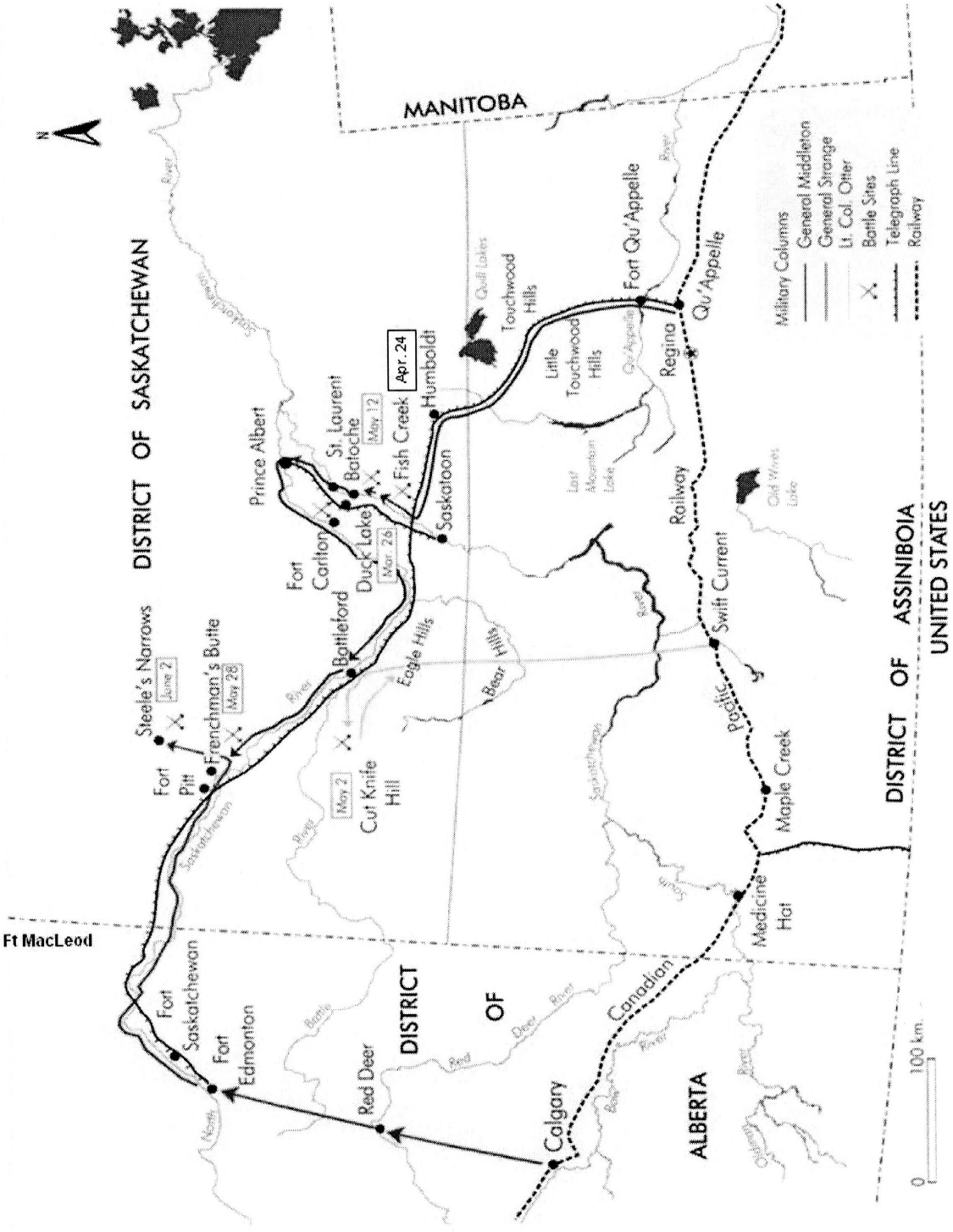
**Miscellaneous**

"Declaration of the Peoples of Rupert's Land," *Manitoba Pageant*, April 1964, Volume 9, Number 3. Available from http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/pageant/09/rupertslanddeclaration.shtml.

Manitoba Métis Federation Inc, et al v. Attorney General of Canada et al. Supreme Court of Canada Case 33880, Factums. Available from http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/case-dossier/cms-sgd/fac-mem-eng.aspx?cas=33880.

Library and Archives Canada, Dewdney Papers, Volume 1.

# Appendix A – North West Rebellion Campaign Map




Found at http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/north-west_resistance.html

# Curriculum Vitae

Candidate's full name: Richard Christoph Rankin

Universities attended (with dates and degrees obtained): University of New Brunswick, 1981-85, Bachelors of Arts.

Publications: "Army Transformation: What is a Tanker", *Armour Bulletin*, Volume 35, Number 1, 2003.