



Bernard Fall and Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare in Indochina

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ABSTRACT

This article assesses Bernard Fall's concept of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare in Indochina between 1953 and 1958. It also investigates differences in the conceptualization of Revolutionary Warfare between Fall and proponents of French military doctrine known as *la guerre révolutionnaire*. The last component of the article considers limits of Fall's influence on counterinsurgency doctrine.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 9 November 2016; Accepted 7 August 2017

KEYWORDS Revolutionary and irregular war; Vietnam; French Indochina; political violence; subversion; social media

Whoever of your correspondents overheard me, overheard me somewhat incompletely. My exact words were that U.S. fire-power had made the Vietnam war "militarily unlosable."

Britain achieved a similar situation in Cyprus; France achieved it in Algeria, and the U.S. still holds Guantanamo. The political benefits derived from these three 'unlosabilities' are here for everyone to see.

I have never claimed for myself the place of 'the No. 1 pessimist' about Vietnam – but if a place of 'No. 1 realist' is available, I'll be glad to stake out a claim for it.'

Bernard Fall, Howard University

Letter to the Editor

Newsweek, October 11, 1965¹

Introduction

It looks just like one big garden, with all (the) little villages very neatly surrounded by trees and shrubbery, and French military roads showing their regular tracings against the erratic boundaries of the fields. As we lowered through the overcast for the landing, you began to see the scars and the marks of the watchtowers, gun emplacements.²

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This is how Bernard Fall described Vietnam as he descended upon Hanoi on Saturday 16 May 1953. In addition to the advice of his John Hopkins' Professor, Amry Vandensbosch, an expert on Indonesia who helped Bernard Fall initiate his expertise on Indochina, Fall also had a personal connection among those fighting for France in Vietnam.³

In a letter to Fall from an old friend from the French Maquis during the Second World War, Remy Malot wrote:

We are fighting against the Vietnamese regulars, perfectly equipped and armed *a l'américaine* (that is, with American arms captured in Korea), supported by the Chinese Communists. We didn't come out if unscathed and in the final analysis ... I believe that Indochina will only be pacified after a third world war ... or she will be completely lost for us.⁴

As an Austrian-born French citizen, a former member of the Maquis in Haut-Savoie, a non-commissioned officer in Free French Forces, and as a son whose mother was murdered in Auschwitz and whose Father was murdered by the Gestapo in France, Fall's traumatic wartime experience shaped his understanding of conflict in Indochina. As his research and prolific analyses of Indochina reveals, Fall identified a form of Revolutionary Warfare in Vietnam that reverberated with components of conflict he previously identified in the Second World War through visceral experiences in the French Resistance. Importantly, Fall's conception of Revolutionary Warfare differed sharply from proponents of what became known as *la guerre révolutionnaire*.

Unlike proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, Fall integrated sustained scholastically based expertise on Indochina in his analysis of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare, a skill-set his contemporaries who advocated doctrines of *la guerre révolutionnaire* did not, despite the fact that they personally fought in South-East Asia. Fall also differed in his analysis when compared to other scholars. In contrast with Paul Mus, a contemporary scholar respected by Fall, Bernard Fall presented a singular vision of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare which reflected the complexity of Vietnamese society.⁵ Unlike Mus, however, Fall recognized revolutionary warfare in Vietnam as a process of political and social struggle with a historical legacy whereas Mus perceived conflict as a result, largely, of cultural incomprehension between Vietnamese and French. Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare, for Bernard Fall, was a struggle for liberation against French neocolonialism; it was not a struggle for a mythical 'Mandate of Heaven' which had nothing to do with the history and development of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare.

In terms of French thought on counterrevolutionary warfare, Bernard Fall did not seek to export his vision of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare into other contexts; this was a key difference between Fall and other French military thinkers, such as Roger Trinquier and David Galula. What was problematic about exportation of tactics from one theatre of conflict to another was that the United States military later appropriated Galula's ideas in particular as a

guide for its counterinsurgency doctrine in Iraq and Afghanistan, an appropriation that did not succeed in either country. This article explores key facets of Bernard Fall's conception of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare and critical differences between Fall and proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*. It argues that coin doctrine used in contemporary conflicts was based upon insufficient and historically maligned principles of *la guerre révolutionnaire* instead of the more appropriate, context dependent and culturally nuanced understanding of Revolutionary Warfare advocated by Fall. The fundamental question I consider is this: How did Bernard Fall construe Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare and what distinguished his explications of it from others? Were there consequences of his early scholarship upon later thought on Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare? If so, what were they and did Bernard Fall's work on the subject and outcomes of his work matter?

To clarify the use of Revolutionary Warfare in the case of Indochina, this term describes the subversion of the French colonist enterprise by a unified, independent Vietnamese State, led by Ho Chi Minh's Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi. This organization was the Vietnamese Independence League, commonly known as the Viet-Minh in the context of the First Indochina War.⁶ It is important to note that this article focuses on the early formation of Fall's thoughts on Revolutionary Warfare developed during the denouement of French control in Indochina in 1953 and 1954. His thinking evolved as conflict between the Viet-Minh led State, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the South Vietnamese Republic of Vietnam (RVN) ensued after 1956 and during the late 1950s. In this latter period, communist-led, Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare metastasized and took on different dimensions through the work of the National Liberation Front.⁷ This paper does not examine this later development but, instead, focuses on the formative period of 1953–1958, during which Bernard Fall identified Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare as a 'result of the application of guerrilla methods to the furtherance of an ideology or a political system.'⁸ Regarding the practice of Revolutionary Warfare, whatever the tactical methods and whether they are partisan, guerrilla, conventional or other, Fall emphasized, 'Political action is the difference' in which the end goal is 'to establish a competitive system of control over the population.'⁹ It was through this process that the Viet-Minh would undermine French colonial forces, and eventually defeat the United States.

This article is organized into the following structure: first, Fall's background and the initial development of his thinking on Revolutionary Warfare is considered. Second, the paper addresses conceptions of Revolutionary Warfare as advocated by proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*. Last, Fall's influence, or lack thereof, on later counterinsurgency doctrine in the United States is provided and key differences between Fall and other French proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* are contrasted.

Bernard Fall and revolutionary warfare

Bernard Fall, through personal experience of conflict and academic training, was formidably equipped to offer cogent analysis of irregular warfare in the Post-Second World War environment. While a teenager, Fall's father was arrested and executed by the Gestapo as an alleged member of the French Resistance, and his mother was deported by Vichy authorities from Cannes to Auschwitz. Fall's orphaning prompted him to join a number of resistance efforts including Zionist groups, *Mouvement de la Jeunesse Sioniste* (MJS), and *Armee Juive* before joining the second Bureau of *Forces Francais de la Interieur*, more informally known as the Maquis in Haut-Savoie. In late June 1944, Fall participated in combat in Chindrieux before joining the fourth Moroccan Infantry Division as a platoon leader in late 1944 through V-E day.¹⁰ Further, as an Austrian born, Jewish émigré to Vichy France, Fall's French citizenship contributed to a complex and conflicted French identity which struggled with contradictions within the French State's foreign policies and domestic treatment of its Jewish population. Fall was anti-pathetic to French imperialism and colonialism masked as liberalism but valued national principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Fall was proud of his service in the French military during Second World War but later meticulously dissected its failings in Indochina with spirited exasperation but also without remorse.¹¹

After Second World War, Fall served as a research analyst for the Office of the United States Chief of Counsel from February 1947 to November 1948 during the Nuremberg Trials. In this role, he investigated Alfred Krupp and the Krupp Corporation's complicity as a munitions manufacturer utilizing prison labour, particularly Czech women and children, to support the Nazi Regime.¹² After completion of university degrees in France and Munich, Fall came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar, studied at Johns Hopkins University and in 1955, earned a Ph.D. in International Relations at Syracuse University. With his move to the United States, Fall initiated a personal and professional scholastic course of action that led him to an articulation of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare as a political and ideological struggle with correlations to what he experienced while fighting in the French Maquis. It also caused him to question the paradox of pronounced values of liberalism among Frenchmen seeking to re-impose imperialism upon Indochina: how could a society champion freedom in one case and exploit the freedoms of others elsewhere? In later work conducted in the United States, Fall's struggles centred on working through contradictions of civil inequality and interventionist foreign policies by an American Government which, in many respects, hypocritically privileged and publicized its position as a champion of liberalism. While Fall was, in Christopher Goscha's estimate, a 'liberal anti-communist', he was remarkably sympathetic towards the Vietnamese people and the country of Vietnam, and he highly respected the nationalist drive for liberation amongst Vietnamese leadership of the DRV.¹³

Fall's employment as professor of International Relations at Howard University in Washington D.C. between 1956 and 1967 provided an important vantage point on the tumultuous civil rights era in the United States and, especially, the struggles his students endured facing domestic segregation and racial inequality. Through conflict and debate over civil liberty, in addition to social rupture exacted by the Vietnam War, Fall witnessed and perhaps contributed to the evolving disintegration of long-held American visions of exceptionalism. For example, Fall routinely criticized the contradictions of Jim Crow throughout the Civil Rights era in his position as a professor of intellectually formidable students at Howard University. Notably, these included Stokely Carmichael, among the many other students Fall taught during his tenure as a professor of International Relations at Howard between 1961 and 1967.

As an acknowledged expert on Indochina at the time, Fall not only influenced this diverse group of individuals at Howard. Fall quipped, 'Nous fabriquons de futurs révolutionnaires' which underscored his condemnation of racial inequality in American society and his advocacy of civil rights as a moral backbone to support wiser foreign policy formulation, particularly in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.¹⁴ In addition to the inculcation of the value of liberation movements in Carmichael's outlook, Fall's role as a co-editor of *The Vietnamese Reader* – a virtual handbook for teach-ins and the anti-war new left of the 1960s – provided him with a broad audience which questioned the legitimacy of American interventions abroad.¹⁵ Fall was not an ideologue, but he did appear to his students and others as a supporter of liberation movements, provided they were non-communist and that they helped improve the welfare of liberated individuals.¹⁶ It is worth considering Carmichael's assessment of Fall's perspective on liberation movements and, perhaps the reason why Fall taught at Howard, a prestigious and traditionally 'black' university in Washington D.C. In Carmichael's words, due to either 'extreme racism abroad and right-wing excess at home', Howard had a small number of

excellent white scholars ... and two of this group stand out in my memory. The first, David Hammond, was an excellent botanist, the other was in fact a Frenchman, a political scientist who published the earliest clear analysis of the looming disaster being fueled by American arrogance and ignorance in Vietnam. His name was Bernard Fall.¹⁷

Fall also shaped an important policy-maker's perception of the United States' role in Indochina, specifically, J. William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Fulbright acknowledged Fall's work as a source which helped him conclude in 1965 that the United States' prosecution of the Vietnam War was misguided.¹⁸ To this end, Fall testified before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 4 February 1966, at the invitation of Fulbright. In the broad range of individuals with whom Fall was in contact, it is worthwhile to consider how Fall personally connected with figures as divergent as Carmichael and Fulbright. In this ironic association, intellectual tension, represented in the

meeting of the minds between Carmichael and Fulbright' perspectives, converged in the work of Bernard Fall. While it is outside the scope of this article, Carmichael and Fulbright constructed very different views but they shared anti-colonial, and anti-war outlooks which Fall assisted in creating and which he synthesized in his analysis.

In a correlation, Fall's interaction with soldiers in the field demonstrated a sympathy, empathy really, between those service personnel who executed policy and how their lives connected, or did not connect, with policy formation by American and Vietnamese leaders. Indeed, his willingness and capacity to rough it with GIs and Marines in the field advanced his ability to interact with average soldiers while conducting research and this endeared him to personnel he accompanied on missions. In a broader sense, these skills positioned Fall to formulate analysis of American policy in South-East Asia from the vantage point of a military service member while also operationalizing his academic training and seasoned objectivity. This confluence of ground truth and intellectual scrutiny provided him with a point of observation regarding how policy succeeded or failed in the field that many others, including other journalists, did not possess. This was a tacit point made by David Halberstam with regard to Fall's influence upon him and other significant journalists.¹⁹ Additionally, Fall brought a sensitivity and understanding of Vietnamese culture to his analysis which increased the scope, legitimacy and depth of his knowledge. His prolific, published writing enabled him to share what he learned widely, at least with those willing to listen.

Augmented by scholastic standing as an authority on Vietnam and his perceived objectivity, Fall achieved direct engagement with high-level officials in Vietnam. These individuals ranged from North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong and DRV President Ho Chi Minh to US military leaders in the United States such as US Army Lieutenant General William Yarborough, who led Special Forces training at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, in addition to Senator Fulbright. However, Fall's open-minded views were neither shared by conservatives in the French military, such as Roger Trinquier, nor were they shared by American officials such as John Foster Dulles who later blocked Fall's employment to the Royal Institute in Phnom Penh, due to Fall's outspoken criticism of Ngo Dinh Diem, in 1958. More specifically, Fall's anti-imperialism was not a political orientation among military officers of the former Vichy Government, which included Trinquier, and initially, General Raoul Salan.²⁰

The failure to understand Fall's critique of the United States as an imperialist-minded power – demonstrated through interventions abroad and its support of questionable leaders – is a lapse in the work of the few critics who have assessed Fall's work. In a review of a biography on Bernard Fall by his spouse, Dorothy Fall, Christian Parenti criticized Fall's 'curious reluctance to condemn French and American imperialism in Vietnam' and that this failure demonstrated how Fall was 'politically coy, even timid'. Parenti suggested, 'For

all his physical courage, he was politically cautious, deeply wary of offending the great interests that are the magnetic North, by which all institutions – including magazines, publishers, and universities – set their course!²¹ Archival documents undermine Parenti's claim. Instead of a tepid anti-imperialism, Fall provided a trenchant critique of French and American interventions in Vietnam in 1955:

One last mention must be made of American policy in the area. The most charitable thing that can be said for it is that it was based on an entirely unrealistic reading of the local situation. More than in any other area in Asia, the situation in Viet-Nam has made it clear that anti-Communism alone – no matter how ardent and sincere – is not an adequate substitute for the lack of a coherent policy. Half-hearted aid for Ho Chi Minh was followed by an equally half-hearted attempt to eliminate the French, which, in turn, was followed by a belated and half-hearted support of the French when they turned into anti-Communist "crusaders". Crusades, above everything, requires faith, faith in one's cause and in one's deeds. In Viet-Nam, the West has shown a lack of both.²²

Considering the date of Fall's contention, as well as his increased efforts to educate others regarding Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare between 1955 and 1967, Fall's *documented* lack of conviction in the American imperialist project deconstruct Parenti's unfounded claims.

In addition to differences on the subject of imperialism, Fall differed with French proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* on the utilization of military force in the context of Revolutionary War. In many respects, the evolution of Fall's thought on the utility of military force eventually created an intellectual divide between Fall and proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, a subject taken up in the following part of this article. In terms of Vietnamese revolution, while Fall disagreed with communist political orientations, he understood its rationale, its context in relation to Vietnamese history, and that a monolithic communist international did not exist in the sense perceived by American cold war warriors such as John Foster Dulles. He built upon first-hand research through personally questioning communist Vietnamese prisoners on topics ranging from French colonial practices before 1954 to the later divisive Sino-Soviet split and the perceived illegitimacy of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in the Republic of Vietnam. In this regard, Fall prefigured extensive studies conducted by the RAND Corporation by a decade, particularly the 'Viet-Cong Motivation and Morale Project' initiated in 1964.²³ Fall's compulsion to understand belligerents and their motivations was fundamental: he sought to create impartial analysis through conscientious effort based in academic rigour supported by research gained first-hand.

Bernard Fall was not the only one writing about Vietnam in the early 1950s but he was, possibly, the most competent analyst of Indochina writing in English. While French scholars and officers, Philippe Devillers, Jean Chesneau, Paul Mus and Jean Sainteny described their experiences in Indochina, Bernard Fall's analysis relied upon research gathered from primary sources detailing the DRV's administrative formation.²⁴ The most significant source in his early scholarship was *La Décentralisation Administrative au Viet-Nam* by Dr Vu Quoc

Thong, a former professor at the Administrative School of North Vietnam and a member of the Law Department faculty at the University of Hanoi. An additional, important source was the official journal of the DRV entitled *Viet-Nam Dan-Quoc Cong-Bao*, published in November, 1945.²⁵ For translations and commentary, Fall again relied on the assistance of Dr Vu Quoc Thong, who later became the Minister of Public Health and Social Action in the Republic of Vietnam in 1955. This scholarship, according to Lauriston Sharp who directed the South-East Asian Studies Program at Cornell University and oversaw Fall's first publication as editor, positioned Fall as among the first to identify and organize such 'data into a systematic account of the structure and functioning of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.'²⁶

What key factors distinguished Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare for Fall? First, Revolutionary Warfare invariably challenged larger, more powerful forces through low-intensity conflict advocated in Maoist strategic thought. Second, ensuring internal security was paramount and isolating 'counter-revolutionary' forces through elimination of potential collaborators and competitors remained integral to achieving survival in the pursuit of revolutionary political goals, such as replacement of the French regime. Fall identified the importance of these two factors in a 1966 lecture at Yale University and he explained how guerrilla-based tactics utilizing terrorism shaped his experience in the French Maquis during the Second World War.

At first, they (the Maquis) tried to kill German sentries, German soldiers. It seemed terribly heroic in the beginning. But the Germans would take fifty hostages and execute them for each killed German soldier, which was unproductive in terms of kill ratios. The French population was tired of bearing the brunt of their guerrilla activities. That worked against the guerrilla. So finally, in 1943, by trial and error, they switched to killing French collaborationists. There was a triple advantage to that: (a) the French collaborationist would not be armed, which helped, (b) the French Vichy rarely would take hostages in reprisal for the killing of a collaborationist, (c) for every collaborationist killed, there would be another five thousand Frenchmen who wouldn't give the time of day to the German Army henceforth.²⁷

The importance of results associated through the elimination of collaborationists – versus targeting stronger German occupation forces – was clear to Fall. In the context of resistance against German military forces, he recognized the value of local support through achieving legitimacy although this, he conceded, often relied upon coercive techniques.

Now, there was the kind of deterrent effect we were actually looking for, the kind that would isolate the German troops from the population, in fact insulate them. There would be complete loss of contact with the population without creating any kind of adverse reaction toward us. This is precisely the secret of the guerrilla operator in this particular field. Terrorism in this particular sense becomes a strategic weapon and not a tactical weapon.²⁸

While Bernard Fall had only recently initiated his comprehensive delineation of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare, by 1954 he had achieved significant

progress in gaining a formidable conception of it. Perhaps most important, this early grounding in Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare provided him with a baseline against which later assessments could be evaluated through time. In this regard, Fall approached his subject methodically but with eyes open to the cultural manifestations of his subject as well. This was significant because Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare would evolve between his initial field research conducted in Vietnam during 1953 and subsequent research completed in 1957 and 1958. Although still inchoate during Fall's first visit to Indochina in 1953, he sensed that the Viet-Minh way of war was different and that it was a form of warfare the French could not successfully defeat through military operations. Additionally, Fall's concerns predated the intuition of individuals such as Edward Lansdale who, in many perspectives, was widely and rightly regarded as an authority on Vietnam.

Lansdale, an American officer who retired as an Air Force Major General, served in the Office of Strategic Services in South-East Asia during the Second World War. He was particularly successful in his post-Second World War collaboration with Ramon Magsaysay during the Hukbalahap Insurgency in the Philippines which ended in 1954. Later, CIA Director Allen Dulles and US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles tasked Lansdale to replicate his work with Magsaysay with Republic of Vietnam leader, Ngo Dinh Diem in the much different context of a divided post-1954 Geneva Conference Vietnam. Lansdale was an important supporter of Diem and, despite Fall's antipathy towards Diem and his regime, Fall deeply respected Lansdale and corresponded with him.²⁹

A comparative effort to understand Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare between Fall and Lansdale, on Lansdale's part at least, was revealed in a 3 January 1955 memorandum from Lansdale to the US Special Representative of the United States to the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon, Lawton Collins. Lansdale acknowledged that the Viet Minh were poised, if not yet fully capable, to provide the Vietnamese with a representative government. Through the DRV's declaration of independence, Lansdale claimed 'the Vietminh have beaten us at this basic national principle of ours (proof again of the skill of the Vietminh enemy) and even rubbed our noses in the beating by generous use of verbiage from the U.S. Constitution.'³⁰

Fall shared Lansdale's view on the matter and continued to build his understanding of Vietnamese Revolutionary War after concluding initial research in Vietnam in late 1953. Earlier that year, Fall revealed his intuition of what was at stake in Vietnam in a letter to his wife, Dorothy, written two years before Lansdale's 1955 missive to Lawton Collins. In it, Fall delineated what would become a consuming purpose for the next 14 years of his life: 'From the general point of view, this place is a hotbed and a more likely spot to start a general war than ten Koreas. Any knowledge we get out of it soon might help a few bigger people that you and I keep things on an even keel, and I happen to be one of the guys trained to present such knowledge intelligibly.'³¹

French doctrines of counterrevolutionary warfare

In 1963, President Dwight D. Eisenhower reviewed the chaos in Indochina between 1946 and the conclusion of his presidency in 1961 by posing a series of questions. At the top of his list, an enduring enigma animated his conception of the First Indochina War. First, Ike wondered, 'Why, with the superiority in manpower and resources available were the French unable to win?' and secondly, 'Why was the very considerable amount of material American aid not more effective in helping the French?'³² Eisenhower concluded that 'the French could not win the war because the internal political situation in Vietnam, weak and confused, badly weakened their military position' and that 'the mass of the population supported the enemy'.³³

In a similar line of questions posed nine years earlier, Colonel Charles Lacheroy, a French commander in Bien Hoa, Cochinchina also speculated as to why the French, with its material and numerical superiority in military forces, failed to conclusively defeat the Viet-Minh. After all, the United States' financial assistance for France's operations in Indochina exceeded the United States' assistance to *all* of continental France through the duration of aid provided by the Marshall Plan.³⁴ Aid data demonstrate that France diverted a majority of American-supplied economic aid between 1948 and 1954 to support its operations in Indochina because it knew American leaders sought to prevent potential communist subversion in France. According to Irwin Wall, 'Marshall Plan aid proper to France from 1948 to 1951 was \$2.75 billion, while the Indochina war for that entire period cost only marginally less: an estimated \$2.5 billion or 900 billion francs'.³⁵ Wall's numbers, notably, do not include the 1951–1954 period. Additional archival data also corroborate how aid for French operations in Indochina exceeded Marshall Plan Aid to France in documents authorized by John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State during this period.³⁶

Why were such massive financial outlays still insufficient to overcome, after 1949, the Chinese-supported insurgency in Indochina? Concerning aid for French forces in Indochina between 1946 and 1954, Eisenhower later affirmed that the United States had no choice but to provide such massive financial support, 'The decision to give this aid was almost compulsory. The United States had no real alternative unless we were to abandon Southeast Asia'. Nor would the French have an alternative for supporting self-determination in South-East Asia due to the 'serious effects in other portions of the French Empire, including Algeria'.³⁷ As the French grip over its colony Cochinchina and its protectorates in Tonkin and Annam loosened, elements of the French military appropriated operational tactics from the Viet-Minh that successfully worked against them in Indochina for use in North Africa. These French officers formulated these tactics into operational planning and doctrine known as *la guerre révolutionnaire*.

Theorists and practitioners of this doctrine included Charles Lacheroy, Roger Trinquier, and others such as Jean Nemo and Jean Hogard. In contrast, David

Galula, often considered in context of this cohort, was an obscure officer who offered no meaningful contribution to theoretical premises of *la guerre révolutionnaire* during its formative stages.³⁸ Ironically, for later efforts by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, Galula would serve as a guiding thinker despite his inconsequential role among theoreticians of *la guerre révolutionnaire*. One premise of *la guerre révolutionnaire* included the advocacy of a totalitarian approach to countering Revolutionary Warfare that entailed an entire mobilization of counter-revolutionary forces.

These thinkers often failed to appreciate the legitimacy of underlying, historical grievances that fuelled the impetus and conduct of social transformation. These changes not only included grievances against French colonialism, but also grievances against a Confucianist-based world order that failed to offer sufficient modernization for important components of Vietnamese society, particularly intellectuals which included nationalists and communists. It was these broader changes in society, along with the spark ignited by extensive and long-simmering grievances with French imperialism that Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare manipulated and cyclically generated in Indochina. In an important sense, it was impossible for France to hold back the social dynamic of transformation taking place and neither France nor the United States possessed enough perspective to recognize this phenomenon. Furthermore, as Etienne Durand explained, for proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, 'Their wars were taking place after the 1940 trauma and in a decolonization context: it was therefore very difficult for them to accept another defeat or to acknowledge the fact that the locals had legitimate grievances'. This resulted in French failure in Indochina because they were 'unable to prevail in terms of legitimacy'. In sum, French advocates of *la guerre révolutionnaire* did not seek to organize a 'competition in governance', but instead underestimated the importance of governance as a fundamental component in modern warfare.³⁹

It is on this central point of governing legitimacy where Bernard Fall diverged from contemporary French officers who promoted *la guerre révolutionnaire*. Critically, accepting the ways through which Vietnamese society accepted, condoned or sanctioned legitimacy required understanding Vietnamese culture and history. This was a cultural-dependent knowledge base Fall emphasized whereas proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* looked to military-related and familiar French administrative capacities instead. Further, Fall stressed this during an era of cultural and political conservatism which may explain why Fall's perspective, and other progressive views similar to those he held, were marginalized by government authorities in Europe and the United States.

Fall's intellectual understanding of nationalist wars of liberation – a predilection select students at Howard University cultivated along with liberal journalists such as I.F. Stone – became integrated with his critical social and cultural analysis of political legitimacy in Vietnam. Cumulatively, this pointed towards a better way to challenge or more realistically reach an accommodation with the

communist insurgency in Vietnam.⁴⁰ Fall's position, however, was not infallible; negotiation with the DRV and, later, the National Liberation Front, remained controversial. As one critic observed during the United States' efforts in Vietnam, Fall failed to recognize the unwillingness, or inability perhaps, of the National Liberation Front to potentially split away from its North Vietnamese sponsors, the DRV.⁴¹ In the historical context of the time, however, even administrators such as J. William Fulbright pursued recognition of, and negotiation with, the National Liberation Front as a method through which to resolve the Second Indochina War.⁴²

The divergence between Fall and theorists of *la guerre révolutionnaire* centred not only on the importance of legitimacy of governance among Vietnamese, but also the moral responsibilities in conducting war according to rules articulated by Geneva conventions. These two differences formed a fundamental component of Fall's conception of Revolutionary Warfare in Indochina and marked a divergence between Fall and Roger Trinquier, in particular. Not surprisingly, perhaps, interest in *la guerre révolutionnaire* deserves reassessment in contemporary scholarship. Analysis of French officers' ideas, particularly David Galula and Roger Trinquier, provides a recalibration of these individuals' actual contributions to both *la guerre révolutionnaire* and counterinsurgency, particularly as developed and implemented by the United States in the early twenty-first century.⁴³ More directly, increased understanding of David Galula's peripheral contributions to counterinsurgency doctrine is valuable because it enables historians and military officers to reconsider the shaky foundation of counterinsurgency doctrine used by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan and how Galula's relevance to either *la guerre révolutionnaire* in the 1950s or counterinsurgency in the 1960s was misunderstood.

The United States' counterinsurgency doctrine's many weaknesses in the early twenty-first century were based, in part, in its failures to understand the historical and social components of insurgency, particularly in a revolutionary context when a regime is replaced by another, weaker administration. Failures to understand this problem sufficiently render counterinsurgency very difficult if not impossible and history is a challenge to comb through for applicable lessons due to widely varying and complex natures of revolution and insurgency. Additionally, Galula's overstated importance as a theorist of Revolutionary Warfare contributed, in part, to a misconstruction of counterinsurgency doctrine represented in Field Manual 3-24. This was problematic in the window of time available between roughly 2004 and 2008 in Iraq, for instance. In the case of Iraq, the social fabric of Iraqi society was upended due to Sunni-Shia sectarianism, disbanding the Iraqi Army and removing Baathist elements from the Iraqi government and military, among other factors. In a correlation with Vietnamese society's transformation, Iraq's society was transformed in a manner counterinsurgency could not succeed in correcting. Failure to recognize this in time led to an insurgency that was formidable and almost impossible to contain

once unleashed because it involved *social* phenomena the United States was unprepared to confront outside of *military* means. In the case of the United States' adaptation of principles of *la guerre révolutionnaire* for its counterinsurgency doctrine, appropriating it additionally demonstrated a misunderstanding of the context in which *la guerre révolutionnaire* originated. In other words, the tenets of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, which the United States sought to utilize in Iraq and Afghanistan, were based in misappropriated tactics from Indochina for use in Algeria. In both cases, they did not succeed: they were non-transferable.

Rethinking Galula's intellectual influence pertaining to counterinsurgency doctrine development is, therefore, a much-needed intervention and this will take more than simply not citing his work in future editions of US Field Manuals on the subject. Revelations of *la guerre révolutionnaire* and counterinsurgency's weaknesses, however, are not entirely new: military officers in the United States questioned the validity of this French doctrine's effectiveness as early as 1992.⁴⁴ Still, recent reassessments of Galula demonstrate that contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine coalesced around inaccurate readings of what French theories of Revolutionary Warfare actually contributed to understanding of modern conflict.⁴⁵ It is worth emphasizing that *la guerre révolutionnaire* effectively contributes to counterterrorism efforts – although its moral components remain controversial – but not the type of counterinsurgency the United States sought to conduct in the Vietnam War, or that it pursued in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Arguably, Bernard Fall's analysis of Revolutionary War articulated principles of the Viet-Minh's capabilities more accurately and without the ulterior motives of French theorists who sought to appropriate successful Viet-Minh tactics from Indochina for its efforts against the FLN in Algeria. This suggests that Galula's assessments, which contributed to contemporary formulations of US counterinsurgency doctrine employed in Iraq and Afghanistan, pivoted upon insufficient understandings of Viet-Minh practices in Indochina. French proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* did not understand the origins of the conflict from which it stemmed in Indochina, but rather, they intended to 'get results' and apply tactics gained in Indochina for other theatres within the French Empire. Bernard Fall, in contrast, sought to understand Revolutionary Warfare on its own terms and in the context of the Viet-Minh's utilization of Revolutionary Warfare in Vietnam. Successful Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare depended on unique cultural and political considerations within Vietnamese societies unwisely exported to other conflicts. Failing to observe this, the French developed and promoted its doctrine of *la guerre révolutionnaire* which failed in Algeria. Regrettably, the United States did not look to Bernard Fall's analysis of Revolutionary Warfare but to a French doctrine defeated in Algeria.

Fall did not investigate conflict in Indochina so that, like proponents such as Trinquier and others, tactics gained in South-East Asia could be assimilated for use in other contexts. Instead, he assessed the contextually unique foundations of conflict in Indochina and conveyed his findings so that the United States

might better achieve strategic goals in South-East Asia. This argument concerning Bernard Fall and counterinsurgency raises a counterfactual: had Bernard Fall, instead of David Galula, provided the guiding force for modern counterinsurgency theory in the United States, could there have been a more positive alternative to the outcomes counterinsurgency elicited in Afghanistan and Iraq? What does this potential counterfactual point say about Revolutionary Warfare and the ability to challenge it through counterrevolution or counterinsurgency?

In the context of the First Indochina War, what made the Viet-Minh's tactics and techniques successful? For Charles Lacheroy, a primary architect of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, the underlying theoretical basis for the Viet-Minh Revolutionary Warfare success centred on his conclusion that a network of 'parallel hierarchies' in Vietnamese society provided an answer.⁴⁶ For French forces and thinkers countering Revolutionary War in Indochina, the term conveyed communist techniques and methods or organization. According to a 1962 Special Operations Research Office publication, these techniques, according to the French, were 'supplemented by constructive techniques to win over the masses and include propaganda, training, agitation, and the organization of "parallel hierarchies"'.⁴⁷ In addition to these alternative governing bodies, other internal security organizations and mutual-aid organizations helped retain control over the population through social-based pressure or persuasion.

Parallel hierarchies did not consist of paramilitary or governing authorities only. Other groups constituting parallel hierarchies included farmers' and trade unions, female and male youth groups, and even specialized groups such as a flute players' association.⁴⁸ For that matter, even the colonial prisons in which 'subversives' were jailed served to transcend social and class divisions among Vietnamese and additionally produced an aura of legitimacy among Viet-Minh leaders incarcerated by the French.⁴⁹ Fall also perceived the effectiveness of parallel hierarchies and reflected on this phenomena in a letter to his wife: 'Funny when you think that every Vietnamese around you, that grimy beggar, the flower girl, the vagabond salesman of odds and ends, they may all be part of the fanatical group that does more to keep the Viet-Minh alive as a political force than any of the Chinese-delivered Soviet (and US)-made guns ever could'.⁵⁰ In this broader conceptualization of social unity achieved through communist-directed administrations, parallel hierarchies encompassed *processes* of social-formation and cohesion, rather than just clearly defined or directed *states* of unit organization of cells or networks.⁵¹ Altogether, the form of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare Bernard Fall came to recognize was not just warfare. It was social transformation with roots preceding First World War, and it evolved into a competition among different visions of modernization that precipitated the essence and rice-roots reality of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare.

What is significant is not necessarily who identified parallel hierarchies first. Rather, in contrast to Lacheroy and other proponents of French doctrine, the most critical difference was that Fall thought that the French military's

deficiencies during the First Indochina War were not a set of problems that could be tailored to just better address subversive warfare in other contexts such as Algeria. Indeed, Fall appeared to agree with Lacheroy's conclusions about parallel hierarchies in Vietnam; it was transferring the concept with insufficient social information to other contexts that was the problem. Thus, the French military's deficiencies stemmed from failures to understand, or sufficiently acknowledge, Vietnamese grievances with colonialism and the sophisticated cultural and social transformations of Vietnamese society taking place after the Second World War. The historical and social transformations occurring within these many and diverse factions of Vietnamese society, in all respects, were the components that intensely shaped the competition for Vietnam's future among the Vietnamese. This was a phenomenon the French military, and later the American Government and military, failed to recognize whereas Bernard Fall appeared to perceive these social transformations taking place in Vietnam.

Fall's analysis of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare, in contrast to Lacheroy's work, reflected a depth of understanding of Vietnam that proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* failed to match. It is true that practitioners of this doctrine reflected on failures in Indochina, but they demonstrated an unwillingness to adapt to the political and social circumstances of conflict in not only South-East Asia, but also Algeria.⁵² As Peter Paret explained, theorists of *la guerre révolutionnaire* were not interested in 'understanding the complex origins of the Indochinese War' but rather developed their theories to gain 'insights that could be turned to operational use in other contexts.'⁵³ On this matter, Fall differed significantly from proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*. As suggested, Bernard Fall did not seek to appropriate Viet-Minh forms of Revolutionary Warfare for other contexts. Instead, Fall sought to understand how Vietnamese history and complex cultural factors of its societies interacted to form the unique political context of Revolutionary War in Vietnam. At this point, it is useful to provide more comparative details between Fall and French theorists of his time.

Fall's central argument concerning Revolutionary Warfare centred on how Revolutionary Warfare relied upon the legitimacy of governance, rather than merely countering parallel hierarchies through draconian military-based operations, such as Lacheroy's *action psychologique* (information and propaganda) et *guerre psychologique* (infiltration, torture, and disinformation).⁵⁴ In a critical sense, Fall perceived French military efforts in the First Indochina War as over-reliant on military power to overwhelm what could only be resolved through political solutions. He understood and viscerally experienced how later American power utilized military-based approaches which attempted to overwhelm Vietnamese belligerents. In contrast to Fall's position, proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* believed that the 'crowd was not influential, but rather existed to be influenced', and as Michael P.M. Finch crucially observed, the 'socio logical, economic, and political study of a host population was secondary to the

attention given to techniques and methods advocated in French conceptions of modern warfare.⁵⁵

For Fall, these 'secondary' factors deserved primacy as the best means to resolve grievances and the conflict in Vietnam. Conversely, proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* did not seriously organize a 'competition in governance', but instead, 'regarded governance as a technical issue.'⁵⁶ This failure would echo in American intervention in Vietnam, which inadequately accounted for the unique political economy of Vietnam, opting instead to rely upon military power that the United States could control and dispense at will. In this regard, the failed political-military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2003 and 2011 mirrored previous historical aspects of inadequate political planning initiated for intervention in Vietnam.

While there were attributes that constituted legitimacy for the DRV, including its anti-colonialist goals to achieve self-determination, its internal security apparatus performed a critical function to ensure legitimacy, stifle dissent and eliminate competitors when possible. Due to the Viet-Minh's position of weakness, in relation to the French military, competing Vietnamese Nationalist Groups, and the State of Vietnam founded in 1948, the Viet-Minh focused efforts on ensuring support among the Vietnamese population.⁵⁷ A critical secondary component of this was the eradication of opponents the DRV viewed as traitors or as collaborators with the French colonial state. Assassination campaigns, entitled Tru Gian (Kill Traitors), set precedents for later campaigns by the National Liberation Front after 1961.⁵⁸ Additionally, social and mutual-aid organizations such as the Vietnamese Youth League, mandated rules regarding internal punishments that often required that the transgressor's sponsors or relatives mete out punishments, including execution of traitors. According to Hue Tam Ho Tai, 'This grim regulation served as a screening device, and was also supposed to reinforce party loyalty over personal considerations.'⁵⁹

As a member of the French Maquis, Fall's prior experience with this phenomenon of strategic terrorism contributed to his recognition of similar subversive campaigns in Vietnam. In contrast, it is notable that many proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* tended towards the political conservatism, if not outright membership in, the Vichy government during the Second World War and some constituted a core of the Organisation armée secrète (OAS).⁶⁰ In Fall's view, subversion in Vietnam contributed to the Viet-Minh's internal security forces' networks of political administrations of parallel hierarchies which undermined French authority.⁶¹ Additionally, for Fall, the DRV was a 'Garrison State', and its major success 'lay not in the creation on paper of a central government, but in the effective control of much of the countryside – *despite its occupation by a large Western army* – through the establishment of small but efficient administrative units that duplicated the Franco-Vietnamese administration.'⁶² This particular formulation of a 'Garrison State' was advanced by University of Chicago Political Scientist Harold Lasswell. In a possible and intriguing intellectual genealogy of

ideas, Lasswell instructed Fall's teacher at Johns Hopkins, Amry Vandenbosch during Vandenbosch's doctoral studies at Chicago in the 1920s. Essentially, Lasswell's 'Garrison State' was a 'developmental construct' in which society was dominated by specialists in control through violence.⁶³ This was essentially an evolving form of totalitarianism that Lasswell correctly perceived as dominating significant parts of Europe and Asia in 1941.

Along with the incorporation of Lacheroy's idea of parallel hierarchies, Fall assimilated Lasswell's conception of political subversion as a potent instrument for internal control of the garrison state.⁶⁴ As a result, these ideas figured prominently in Fall's perception of the Viet-Minh's intent and capacity to eliminate competitors to ensure their control over the Vietnamese population. Indeed, the compulsory aspects of Viet-Minh social power, and the multiplicity of methods through which it established control and legitimacy, also contributed largely to the formation of Fall's core conceptualization of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare. Legitimacy achieved either through free-will or through compulsion, did not matter as long as it was assured.

To ensure internal dominance within parallel hierarchies, the Viet-Minh utilized internal security services that included three key organizations, the *Trinh-Sat*, *Cong-An*, and the *Dich-Van*. These groups were foundational components in the organization of the Viet-Minh during its competition with Vietnamese Nationalists. Later, they contributed to the reemergence of the Viet-Minh in 1957 after the failed elections scheduled for 1956, as mandated by the Geneva Conference that resolved the First Indochina War. This period of superficial political equilibrium was disrupted, according to George Herring, by the Viet-Minh's resumption of a 'vigorous campaign of political agitation in the villages' where 'as a result of (RVN President) Diem's misguided policies, they (the Vietminh) found a receptive audience – the peasants which were like a mound of straw ready to be ignited'.⁶⁵ As an integral component of this agitation, the Viet-Minh's internal security apparatus contributed to the subversion of the South Vietnamese Republic of Vietnam. These groups, the *Trinh-Sat*, *Cong-An* and the *Dich-Van*, embodied and practised what William Roseberry described as a 'hegemonic process' to achieve social and political control. In this conception of political groups in conflict, 'a problematic, contested, political process of domination and struggle' ensued among the Vietnamese rural population.⁶⁶

The Vietminh's internal security apparatus

In order to wield influence internally among the Vietnamese population, the Viet-Minh's intelligence and security infrastructure included the *Cong-An*, *Trinh-Sat* and the *Dich-Van*. A brief description of these groups is helpful: the *Dich-Van* was a direct-action unit that employed terrorism to control perception and actions of Vietnamese villagers.⁶⁷ Such actions were necessary to eliminate dissent and ensure compliance with Indochinese Communist party rule. The

Dich-Van, especially, exemplified Fall's conception of competitive control since it enacted key principles of Revolutionary Warfare through the development and support of parallel hierarchies.⁶⁸

In the context of post-Second World War Vietnam, the DRV state's efforts to eliminate Vietnamese nationalist groups formed the basis for alternative power structures, of parallel hierarchies, which grew as the DRV confronted the return of French forces in late 1946. Specifically, the period of occupation after the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 framed the dominance of the Viet-Minh over domestic rivals, particularly in the north. More generally, the re-establishment of French control in late 1946 forced increased Viet-Minh efforts to form parallel hierarchies as the DRV attempted to survive and consolidate its strength against challenges posed by French power. In a sense, groups such as the *Dich-Van* sought to eliminate internal Vietnamese opposition, French collaborationists, as well as to facilitate subversion of French control wherever possible.⁶⁹

The Viet-Minh, furthermore, sought to gain control of Vietnamese national identity, as a tool of social cohesion and legitimacy. This occurred in terms of real power but also in symbolic forms that included assimilating the legacy of the Nguyen Dynasty represented by Emperor Bao Dai. Although they rejected the monarchy, according to Barbara Pelley, they understood the importance of imperial power. This was demonstrated by the Viet-Minh historian, Tran Huy Lieu's travel to the 'Nguyen capital in Hue to claim the imperial seal and imperial regalia from the ex-emperor'.⁷⁰ It was in this way that the Viet-Minh, literally and figuratively, tore the Vietnamese mandate of heaven from its dynastic forebears. Historians such as Paul Mus and Francis Fitzgerald overemphasized these actions as a 'transfer of power' instead of a social transformation over a long duration that undermined the credibility of a Confucianist-led monarchy that no longer adequately provided a means of modernization or leadership for the Vietnamese people. At the rice-roots level, it is worthwhile to consider how socio-political-military oriented control sought to achieve domestic control over Vietnam. On this point, it is worthwhile to sequentially examine the Viet-Minh's internal organizations in greater detail beginning with the *Cong-An*.

Bernard Fall described the *Cong-An* as a civilian secret police similar to the Sûreté in France.⁷¹ It was not a prototypical local policing or military entity since its control was centralized and originated with the DRV government in February, 1946. At that time, the *Cong-An* comprised a merger between the DRV security service and various police units, initially led by Lê Gian, the security service deputy director.⁷² Notably, the *Cong-An* conspired with the military structure of the DRV, especially when seeking out and overthrowing Vietnamese competitors to the DRV, such as factions of various Nationalist groups.

Trinh-Sat were secret investigation units similar to the Vietnamese Sûreté known as *Liem Phong*.⁷³ In contrast to the *Cong-An*, the *Trinh-Sat* functioned as an intelligence component of the military, and it was task-organized as an attachment to conventional DRV troops from company to division echelons of

command. According to Fall, they operated as a type of politico-military sappers in Vietnamese society where military operations were conducted. As a form of vanguard unit, 'Infiltrators of the *Trinh-Sat* precede every movement of the Vietnamese Peoples' Army (VPA) regular unit, often by months.'⁷⁴ *Trinh-Sat*, however, is a contested designation among historians and analysts.⁷⁵ Generally, *Trinh-Sat* performed a reconnaissance function which diverged from conventional military intelligence capabilities involved with tasking other units – such as Special Forces – to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance. In contrast, military intelligence officers of Western armies typically task intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) assets to collect intelligence instead of collecting the intelligence themselves. Thus, *Trinh-Sat* merged and streamlined the duties of a military intelligence unit with Special Operation roles such as reconnaissance and direct action to increase the ability to act on intelligence for more effective lethal and non-lethal targeting. In contrast, Western militaries collect intelligence to answer 'Prioritized Intelligence Requirements' (PIR) which, according to the US Army Field Manual, 34-2, *Collection Management and Synchronized Planning*, 'are intelligence requirements which are critical to accomplishing a military mission.'⁷⁶ Compared to *Trinh-Sat*, collecting and acting upon intelligence according to PIR in Western militaries is cumbersome, although it potentially provides greater coordination of effort in conventional military operations.

Dich-Van units, in contrast to *Trinh-Sat*, are depicted with greater clarity by historians. The *Dich-Van* often crossed the line from guerrilla-oriented operations towards tactics with strategic implications appropriately characterized as terrorism. While *Dich-Van* units also collected intelligence, the group was typically tasked with targeting an individual, capability or resource, and they were not considered as military intelligence assets in the same manner by Bernard Fall as *Trinh-Sat*.⁷⁷ In the case of *Dich-Van* units, they were significantly enhanced by emphasis on psychological operations capabilities which maximized politically motivated violence and terrorism for public consumption in order to coerce Viet-Minh support or generate fear.

Other thinkers have examined this subject in a manner which mirrors Fall's analysis of Revolutionary Warfare. Jeremy Weinstein, for example, delineates how control of populations by insurgent groups depends on a manipulation of multiple mechanisms to achieve control. Weinstein explains that 'violence can be an effective strategy because it is both persuasive and selective but the strategic use of violence requires effective organization.'⁷⁸ The leadership and cadre of intelligence units such as *Cong-An*, *Trinh Sat*, and *Dich-Van* were critical components of Viet-Minh organization in gaining and coordinating control over the Vietnamese civilian population through selective and strategic violence. Importantly, their work at the local populations' level augmented and was facilitated by the domination of political cadres over military commanders' authority at tactical and operational levels within the Vietnamese Peoples' Army.

On this subject, it is important to delineate two key components which distinguished the Vietnamese military, and its associated internal intelligence and security apparatus, from Western counterparts at the time. The first of these differences consisted of a system of political commissars who worked within and led military forces. At the platoon level, according to Bernard Fall's analysis conducted in 1954, a political cadre superseded the platoon leader's command. At battalion levels and above, a cadre of political commissars (*Chinh Uy*) also retained overall command and control and a specifically tasked police and security unit (*Cong Cuc Chinh Tri*) further supported operations at the Brigade and Inter-zone levels. Why did this matter? According to a DRV decree which Fall obtained – DRV decree number 32 dated March 4, 1950 – two articles laid out the command structure of the Vietnamese Peoples' Army (VPA):

Article 2: The Front Command Committee is composed of: a political commissar; a military commander; a deputy military commander.

Article 3: In the case of divergence of views, the Political Commissar shall have the power of final decision.⁷⁹

An equivalent command relationship among Western militaries did (and does) not exist as such structure violates a military principle of 'unity of command' among Western governments where civil-military delineations are carefully observed and enforced. This issue, among many others, currently differentiates the Chinese military from that of the United States.⁸⁰ A similar contrast with Western militaries exists for the forces of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) military. In the case of a brigade within the United States Army in the mid-1950s, a unit typically composed of three to four battalions, political advisors were few in number and they advised commanders: they did not command in a manner similar to Vietnamese political commissars.

A second, important component of the Vietnamese Army included its civilian-based logistical transportation corps (known more appropriately as 'porters'). The transportation/supply system critically supported Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare because it contributed to operational battles with significant strategic importance, such as Dien Bien Phu in April and May 1954. Fall knew of this logistical capacity in 1953, as indicated through his interview with a detained Viet Minh quartermaster colonel. In the interview, Fall was told that two Vietnamese infantry divisions, approximately totaling 12,000 soldiers, had 'an aggregate supply column of 95,000 porters' and that, as Fall wrote at the time, 'similar figures were frequently cited by both friend and foe, and may even be considered as conservative'.⁸¹

These workers industriously compensated for lack of materials. In another interview conducted in 1953, Fall recounted how a former Viet-Minh construction worker and his unit were tasked with building twenty supply buildings in five days. Fall recorded that 'Lacking tools, they had the initiative to cut tree trunks into flat slivers for use as spades to dig into the ground'.⁸² As noted, these porters directly contributed to the Vietnamese siege of French forces at Dien

Bien Phu and at the time, French Legionnaires were aware of Viet Minh ingenuity but underestimated their use of tens of thousands of 'coolies' to carry disassembled arms and their ability to reassemble them to engage French forces.⁸³

The command and control of such massive numbers originated in a long process of control obtained in local contexts and successively built upon to the massive capacity demonstrated at Dien Bien Phu. At the local level at which this process began, and in terms of the persuasive power of *Dich-Van* units in Vietnamese villages, Fall observed that 'they operated in small teams, their job is the psychological preparation of the enemy unit or territory through means ranging from friendly persuasion to murder with especially deterrent effects.'⁸⁴ More explicitly, 'it will be a *Dich-Van* group that will capture the mayor of a recalcitrant village and cut his body to ribbons or leave his head dangling from a bamboo pole in the middle of the village (with a note attached to it warning that anyone who takes it down will suffer the same fate).'⁸⁵

Dich-Van units, and their later Viet-Cong correlate the *An-Ninh*, embodied the establishment of competitive control over populations to develop and institute administrative parallel hierarchies. While contemporary analysts could argue that *Dich-Van* operations constituted terrorism, *Dich-Van* methodologies exemplified elements of rational actor theory in that terrorism achieved specific political goals directed towards achieving Vietnamese unification and national independence. In sum, the Viet-Minh's efforts against the French authorities, such as assassination campaigns, were coordinated as actions that 'served as a bloody warning that the French, despite martial trappings, did not control the area and that anyone impeding the fight for Vietnamese independence by trafficking with the French could and would be summarily dealt with.'⁸⁶

Through these processes of conflict, parallel hierarchies provided a type of de-centralized administration. It was, at its core, a substructure based in Vietnamese village autonomy but controlled through Viet-Minh direction filtered through tactical to strategic echelons of command. As Fall noted, when the edicts, decrees and other administrative bodies, such as local judiciaries, reached the village level, it had a profound effect: 'The arrival of the young revolutionary elements of the Viet-Minh in the villages had the effect of the proverbial stone in the village pond.'⁸⁷ Even if Vietnamese peasants failed to understand tenets of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, their silence, sympathy and support were required. As one French Legionnaire concluded, 'they had no choice but to support, financially and materially, the Viet Minh who were knocking on their doors. To resist them would have been suicide.'⁸⁸ In one case, Fall referred to a village-level tribunal that the official radio station of the DRV broadcast on 15 September 1953. Apparently, Fall considered it as a typical example of how decisions by local 'resistance committees' were formed:

The trial began animatedly. More than thirty persons rose from the ranks to denounce the crimes of the cruel and reactionary landowner Phu Thanh Y: dishonest ruses ... gouging ... ill treatment and murders ... Besides these crimes,

the comrades and farmers accused Y of having shown himself hostile to the Government and to have slandered the Party and the Government ... Y's face was pale, his body shook; Y sat down on the ground and remained silent with terror for several minutes ... One could see that he was mastered.⁸⁹

Court decisions such as these were enforced by the internal security apparatus described earlier. This included the network of elements ranging from *Dich-Van* units to the *Cong-An*, which was directed centrally by the State Secretariat, to the Ministry of the Interior. Ultimately, this system of networks, according to Fall, 'reached down to the tiniest village and hamlet.'⁹⁰ In addition to police duties, such as public safety and protecting government agencies and property, Viet-Minh security forces possessed a sweeping third power which included repressing 'any act of a nature likely to be harmful to the interests of the State' and they ensured that the completion of tasks included a 'section for the repression of traitors which was composed of most of the local party or government officials.'⁹¹ As organizational components, these groups were critical due to their local knowledge and without them, according to Weinstein, high-level leaders would be 'hard-pressed to use violence selectively in support of the long-term goals of the movement.'⁹²

Like their French counterparts, leaders in the United States were aware of these organizational aspects of the Viet-Minh, if not the synergy their networked capacities produced. Notably, it was this 'synergy' that formed the core of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare Fall identified. In an April 1954 study prepared for special US Representative to Vietnam, former US Army General Lawton J. Collins, the rural south 'continued to be held by guerrilla elements controlled by the 'Executive Committee of Nambo,' the southern (or Cochinchinese) area of the DRV regime in Hanoi.'⁹³ The extent and complexity of the Viet-Minh system of competitive control, or Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare however, did not appear in the study prepared for Collins to the degree assessed in Fall's analysis. The power of this system, identified by Bernard Fall in 1953, and later confirmed in the words of Douglas Pike in 1966 as 'a form of aggression useful in nations characterized by people without communication, isolated by terrain, psychology, or politics' in which 'not military but socio-psychological considerations took precedence. Military activities and other forms of violence were conceived as means of contributing to the sociopolitical struggle.'⁹⁴ On this last subject, proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* failed to adequately account for such socio-psychological considerations unique to Vietnam, and the context-specific networked synergies of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare, whereas Fall did not.

Missed opportunities – Fall's inconsequential influence

Fall's efforts to understand the Viet-Minh in 1953 and 1954, and his experience in undertaking the logistics of such study, was not surprisingly ignored by policy-makers in the Eisenhower Administration and in later administrations

with few, notable exceptions. These exceptions included US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, J. William Fulbright and US Army Lieutenant General William Yarborough. Yarborough led US Special Forces in the early 1960s and actively sought Fall's expertise despite opposition from the US State Department, particularly John Foster Dulles, who Fall angered through outspoken criticism of US policy in Indochina in 1958.⁹⁵ On this point, archivist Robert Fahs, highlighted the emergence of government documentation indicating that the State Department blocked Fall's employment at the Royal Institute in Phenom Penh, despite the fact that Fall had worked for the United States Government as early as 1947 during the Nuremburg Trials.⁹⁶ What is surprising, however, is that Fall's work was not solicited by other organizations such as the RAND Corporation as it developed reports on counterinsurgency and other substantive studies of conflict in Vietnam after 1961. With the exception of a lecture Fall provided RAND Staff in 1965, Fall's absence from early RAND studies on counterinsurgency and meetings on the subject is remarkable.⁹⁷

For later US counterinsurgency doctrine development, it is intriguing that an influential symposium on counterinsurgency, held by RAND in 1962, included David Galula who perpetuated the legacy of *la guerre révolutionnaire's* utility in the context of counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Notably, Fall was not included in the RAND symposium.⁹⁸ Instead of an academically trained analyst with experience like Fall, Galula served as an intellectual forebear for the development of the United States' counterinsurgency doctrine through the Vietnam War period and, more prominently, in the later, literal re-writing of the United States' counterinsurgency field manual (Field Manual 3-24) which guided operations for Iraq and Afghanistan after 2006.⁹⁹ Galula's attendance and prominence at the symposium instead, arguably contributed to the infusion of *la guerre révolutionnaire* into military thinking concerning Vietnam. At least, it is worth questioning why RAND invited Galula whose alleged expertise was based in a doctrine of defeat that did not account for the historical, social and cultural nuances of Vietnam advocated by RAND researchers, such as Gerald Hickey or others?

The implications of this question should reverberate in debates over appropriate tactics and strategies in contemporary conflict, and for the doctrines which guide them. In contentious arguments about intervention, incarceration of prisoners, torture and the unending nature of ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is likely that much of *la guerre révolutionnaire* led to a continuation of similar types of contemporary problems which historically plagued French operations in not only Indochina, but also Algeria. Arguably, a correlation exists in the troubled efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan during the early twenty-first century in which the United States modelled a significant amount of counterinsurgency thought, laid out in Field Manual 3-24, on French precedents, especially the guidance of David Galula. With the exception of work by Marie-Monique Robin, less widely known is French influence on counterinsurgency efforts in theatres dominated by American training and support, particularly in Latin America.

French doctrine significantly informed the conduct of counterrevolutionary operations in Latin America after 1950 and it influenced training directed by the US Army's 'School of Americas' at Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰⁰ On this point, however, a 2004 study on the School of Americas at Fort Benning does not even reference the role *la guerre révolutionnaire* contributed to draconian counterinsurgent methods in Chile, Argentina and Guatemala. Despite the lack of reference, Lesley Gill's 2004 study focused on military operations in Central and South America that entailed widespread destruction, murder and complicity with disappearances and torture of individuals challenging or even disagreeing with dictatorships supported by Western interests and the United States.¹⁰¹ As Gill records, the controversy of morally questionable actions and interventions has long challenged the United States' legitimacy as a proponent of liberal internationalism acting within the mandates of Geneva conventions. As an expert on the subject, Gill's lack of acknowledgement of the role *la guerre révolutionnaire* contributed to interventions in the western hemisphere indicates a gap for further research.

On one hand, the United States' incapacity, or its unwillingness, to extricate itself from intervention abroad is problematic. Additionally, the United States' inability to develop viable strategic planning in the post-cold war context also resonates in current debates.¹⁰² On the other hand, the United States overcame challenges associated with a 'sunk-cost fallacy' mentality by withdrawing military forces from Iraq whereas this problem profoundly complicated de-escalation in Vietnam. As Fredrik Logevall observed in the debate concerning withdrawal from Vietnam, this concept plagued the Lyndon Johnson administration, and it involved staying the course and even escalating military operations despite the fact that nothing appeared to work.¹⁰³ The conundrum for ongoing conflict in Iraq is that the withdrawal of US forces without sustainable political resolution to conflict in 2011, did not lead to a mitigation of conflict. Violence, instead, grew significantly as crises in the region ensued due to Iraqi political instability, but also the metastasizing of conflict in the region stemming from the Syrian Civil War and the reemergence of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in the form of the Islamic State.

In terms of Vietnam, Fall began to warn that the United States' identity would be negatively reconstructed as a result of its increased militarized effort. In a 1965 *Ramparts* article entitled, 'This isn't Munich, It's Spain', Fall explained, 'But what I really fear most, if this sort of situation drags on indefinitely, is the creation of a new ethics to match new warfare'. For Bernard Fall, the failure to calculate moral and ethical considerations into the practice of warfare would result in contradicting and corroding the promises of American democratic principles. In terms of utilizing military might to achieve American strategic goals, he explained his position by noting, 'I cannot say that I have found anyone who seems to have a clear idea of the end – of the 'war aims' – and if the end is not clearly defined, are we justified to use any means to attain it?'¹⁰⁴ In contrast,

proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, notably Roger Trinquier, argued that any means, including torture, were justified. This demonstrated Trinquier's questionable and well-known advocacy for the employment of an array of coercive techniques and his position that the unconditional support of a civilian population 'must be secured by every possible means, the most effective of which is *terrorism*' (emphasis in original).¹⁰⁵

The United States' intervention in Indochina in the name of anti-communism relied upon notions of exceptionalism, arguably a simulacrum of the Imperial-era civilizing mission. If supporting self-determination free from communist dominance provided a legitimate basis for intervention, then American efforts to provide a superior system had to compete with communism by providing more for the Vietnamese people. For Fall, laying out the contradictions and hypocrisy in such efforts was a goal. Indeed, in 1965, he pointed out that 'What America should want to prove in Viet-Nam is that the Free World is 'better,' *not* that it can kill people more efficiently. If we would induce 100,000 Viet Cong to surrender to our side because our offers of social reform are better than those of the other side's, *that* would be victory. Hence, even a total military or technological defeat of the Viet Cong is going to be a partial defeat of our own purposes – a defeat of ourselves, by ourselves, as it were.'¹⁰⁶

Trinquier, in contrast, failed to offer much of anything that would achieve positive results outside of a colonizing mindset relying upon force. Fall assessed Trinquier's methodology in the latter's book *Modern Warfare* by noting, 'Trinquier makes a solid argument for the use of torture and other dirty tricks but French actions in Algeria show clearly how one can win a war and lose a country nonetheless.'¹⁰⁷ In short, Fall observed that if the United States followed Trinquier's model, it would lead to increased militarization of conflict along lines pursued by earlier French efforts which failed. Alarming for Fall, an excessive show of military force was already in place in Vietnam by 1965.¹⁰⁸ To the extent that Trinquier provided a model for US efforts, the fact that US National Security Council member Michael Forrestal encouraged military leaders to read Trinquier's work during the early period of US escalation in Vietnam is not without consequence as to why a militarized solution was adopted for a political problem.¹⁰⁹

On the point of foreign intervention revealing contradictions within notions of liberalism, even in the name of anti-communism, Fall also informed the thought of Senate Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright. In 1966, close to six months after initially meeting with Fall in November 1965, Fulbright advocated his vision of the United States as a global force but with greater circumspection regarding cooperation with other countries. In a 17 May 1966 statement, Fulbright explained:

If America has a service to perform in the world – and I believe it has – it is in large part the service of its own example. In our excessive involvement in the affairs of other countries, we are not only living off our assets and denying our own people

the proper enjoyment of their resources: we are also denying the world the example of a free society enjoying its freedom to the fullest.¹¹⁰

In Fulbright's perspective, the war in Vietnam was not only destroying Vietnam and large portions of former Indochina, it was destabilizing America and undermining the potential of any legitimate claims to exceptionalism. However, exceptionalism was arguably a concept Fulbright found disturbing and a form of utopianism anyway. As Randall Woods explains, 'Vietnam was the mirror that would reflect the perversion of America's values and traditional policies, and Fulbright was determined to hold it before the nation's face.'¹¹¹ In this regard, Fall provided Fulbright with information to achieve this task.

Ironically, in one critic's perspective concerning this 'moral' component of difference between Fall and *la guerre révolutionnaire*, Fall was criticized for failing to adequately condemn civilian casualties. According to Christian Parenti, 'From Fall's perspective the killing of civilians by Western armies in the heart of Southeast Asia was a tactical error rather than a war crime or imperial atrocity that inadvertently revealed the war's true logic'. Similarly, Parenti suggests that Fall 'assiduously avoided discussing the war in terms of justice or larger material interests.'¹¹² Parenti's view is incorrect: Fall hardly missed opportunities to critique the moral components of war in Vietnam. Fall was not a pacifist, but he clarified his position on the morality of warfare in an unpublished and undated documentary, 'I fought four years against the Germans and don't regret it one damn bit, so I can't stand here and say I condemn war as such. But I condemn the hurting of innocent and disabled people.'¹¹³

An additional difference between Fall and Trinquier concerns Fall's emphasis on the importance of understanding the history, religion and culture of Indochina in which military operations occurred. This is demonstrated by the prolific historical and social analyses of Indochina, which Fall initiated as early as 1953 and built upon throughout his career.¹¹⁴ This supports the view that Fall considered Vietnamese motivations and goals as an important component of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare. This is not to suggest that Fall offered a form of 'military orientalism' or an anthropological model for co-option by military authorities.¹¹⁵ Rather, Fall sought to understand the diversity of Vietnamese societies rather than focus on the appropriation of Vietnamese tactics, techniques and procedures to use against them, or for use in other theatres of conflict, as Trinquier and proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire* advocated.

Fall also devoted much research to environmental realities of Vietnam. These included analysis of Vietnam's agriculture, geography, its natural resources, and how Vietnamese identity grew out of the rural, quotidian life of farming versus it contributing to a monolithic communist internationalism. Fall's emphasis on understanding Vietnamese agrarian society is yet another key difference between his thought and those who propagated doctrines of *la guerre révolutionnaire*. In contrast, as Michael P.M. Finch succinctly concluded regarding this French doctrine's lack of transferability, 'The most untidy fact was that the

conceptualization of war they had created did not correspond to the reality of the conflict in Algeria.¹¹⁶ Nor would the United States' later conceptualizations of how to prosecute its war in Indochina after 1965 correspond to the realities of Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare and the unique context of Vietnam, despite Fall's warning of previous French failures.

It is useful to address why Fall did not more profoundly affect thinking on Revolutionary Warfare as the United States escalated its intervention in Vietnam. To accomplish this, a few comments on Fall's research, in context with the efforts of the RAND Corporation, are useful. This is particularly relevant because RAND specifically documented the motivations involved with Vietnamese fighting on behalf of communism.

In the one known case of Bernard Fall's recorded interaction at RAND, Fall received a positive reception after a lecture for the organization's social science department in 1965. According to David Mazingo, an expert on China, 'Fall gave a 'magnificent performance,' during which he expressed his conviction that the United States would not do any better than the French had in Vietnam and that 'the (United States) would find it impossible to win the war because the situation had metastasized and was already going in the other direction, and there was nothing short of destroying the whole country that was going to change it.'¹¹⁷ As far as it is currently known, this was the extent of Fall's interaction with the RAND Corporation, despite the massive amount of research RAND conducted on the Vietnam War and South-East Asia during the 1960s and 1970s.

Among other organizations, Fall's expertise with irregular warfare also increased his relevance and appeal for military leaders such as US Army Lieutenant General William Yarborough. Yarborough, an officer with experience in Second World War as an infantryman, led the United States Army's Special Forces and advocated a nuanced approach to military operations in Vietnam versus conventional approaches. As early as 1961, Fall contributed to US Special Operations training through lectures, serving as a technical advisor for course manuals, and through providing case studies for study among the Special Operations community.¹¹⁸ Ironically, the United States' Special Operations community did not utilize Galula as a source during the Vietnam War. Instead, Galula's work surfaced as a result of counterinsurgency doctrine development for use in Iraq and Afghanistan. Why?

In the few cases where David Galula mentions Vietnam in his work, *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice*, it is only in superficial and universalistic terms and Galula drew a majority of his lessons from experience of Chinese Communist practices. Galula admitted his ambiguous and broad treatment of counterinsurgency and his 'one-size-fits-all' type of approach enabled the operationalizing of his work as a *perceived* source of doctrinal utility applicable to wherever insurgency could occur. For instance, Galula noted in an unwieldy fashion that, while tactical problems in counterinsurgency are difficult to describe in general terms, he was committed to 'dealing with the abstract', and that he

was 'more concerned with principles than with actual recipes'.¹¹⁹ In assessing insurgency doctrine, Galula observed, 'it must be understood that (insurgent patterns) are given only as patterns built on generalizations. While they substantially fit the actual events in their broad lines, they may be partially at variance with the history of specific insurgencies'.¹²⁰ In other words, Galula spoke in generalities which facilitated the use of his thought and work in other contexts. It did not adhere to unique factors of specific insurgencies and their historical context. Fall, in contrast, was 'context specific:' his fundamental concerns on warfare emphasized the particular historical and social contexts of insurgency.

In an ironic twist, Galula derived empirical data on the Viet-Minh's military capacity – in the small amount of attention given to the Viet-Minh – from the work of Bernard Fall. This data were collected from Fall's extensive research on the DRV in 1953, 11 years before Galula wrote *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice*.¹²¹ Galula's citation of Fall's research stemmed from Fall's 1961 study entitled *Le Viet-Minh*. This work was a revised analysis on the DRV, rewritten by Fall in French, and originally published in 1954.¹²² In contrast, Galula's *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice* was not translated from English into his native French until 2008.¹²³ This suggests the book's utility appeared minimal until the United States military adopted his work for counterinsurgency doctrine in operations conducted by NATO forces.

Had Fall been afforded inclusion in RAND's research, or at its 1962 'Symposium on Counterinsurgency' at which Galula provided his views, is it possible that Fall's analysis of Vietnam might have contributed to more effective prosecution of US efforts in Vietnam? Is it possible that Fall offered more as an authority on counterinsurgency than David Galula? If so, US counterinsurgency doctrine formulated in Field Manual (FM) 3-24, might have benefitted by looking to Fall as a foundational source instead of Galula.

Fall, unlike proponents of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, sought to understand Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare within contexts meaningful to Vietnamese. It was not a revolution through military means alone but a revolution in terms of increased technological access, economic change and a substantively transfigured understanding of Vietnamese identity along multiple cultural, social and political trajectories. As David Biggs observed, supporting the revolution functioned on multiple levels. (It) 'was not only economic or military but cultural, offering the means for them to gain literacy, participate in local government, and define their places within a broad-based social and military movement'.¹²⁴ Importantly, Fall observed how regional distinctions between north and south contributed to divisions in Vietnam and how ethnic differences among majority Vietnamese (Kinh) and minority ethnicities divided, and in other cases, united Vietnamese. Furthermore, he was aware of challenges in the religious sphere of influence, particularly Catholicism, but also syncretic religions such as the Cao Dai, in a country with a Buddhist majority.¹²⁵ These problems of factionalism were also evident in the complicated formation of Vietnamese history

which DRV historians struggled to reconcile after reunification in 1975. In North Vietnam, for example, the transformation of Vietnam from the 1940s to the post-Vietnam War period formed intensely contested debates with regard to the formation of how Vietnamese recorded their past and 'what' entered the historical record.¹²⁶

In late 1953, Fall concluded his initial investigation in Vietnam. In addition to research on the Viet-Minh and the DRV, Fall spent considerable time researching different ethnicities in the Central Highlands of Indochina and the political-religious organizations of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai: these studies enriched his understanding of internal conflicts and regional differences among Vietnamese and others. This academic and personal interest demonstrated a nuanced and ethno-oriented understanding of Indochina's diversity on the rural, village level that many of his French contemporaries in the military, who advocated doctrines of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, did not share. This wide range of research would additionally form the basis for Fall's doctoral dissertation at Syracuse University in 1955, a dissertation that would eventually form three volumes and extend to over a thousand pages in length.

At the time of his planned departure from Vietnam, Fall noted a dispute with authorities at the US consulate in Hanoi. This was only the first of a long-simmering feud with components of the US State Department that eventually led to tacit conflict with Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles in 1958. In his first altercation with the State Department, according to his wife, Bernard Fall 'antagonized the vice consul over lunch by telling how he and many Frenchmen felt about the execution of Julius and Ethyl Rosenberg, the alleged atomic spies, two weeks earlier'. Apparently, Fall's comments were not well received and he noted that, in seeking a visa to return to the United States, that he should look to another State Department facility by remarking, 'Better apply for my re-entrance visa to the US from another consulate now, I guess.'¹²⁷

Conclusion

Vietnamese Revolutionary Warfare and tactics of groups such as the Viet-Minh's *Dich-Van* units are striking but not surprising. Brutalization among gang members, the mafia, criminal groups and insurgent groups are common practices. The most recent and contemporary reiteration of draconian internal dynamics may be found among the Islamic State. These groups, out of necessity, share a violent and complex web of in-out group behaviour that locks individuals into membership while simultaneously controlling their behaviour.

Unlike the ideology of the Viet-Minh in Indochina, a widely recognized weakness of the Islamic State is its poverty of ideas. Some critics contend that if criticism of Islamic State ideology by Muslim authorities became more widespread among its membership and potential recruits, the Islamic State would quickly wither from within, an ongoing and growing process.¹²⁸ In the effort to

eliminate the Islamic State, as current efforts in Mosul and Raqqa seek to accomplish, facilitating awareness of its ideological weaknesses is perhaps the most realistic, long-term approach to confronting the organization and its growth in other areas.

While the Islamic State's widely publicized violence sought, and still seeks, to lure outside intervention into Syria and Iraq, it also serves as an internal organizational regulating mechanism to ensure control over members. In contrast, while the Viet-Minh meted out punishment to control its members and targeted populations to gain control of Vietnamese society, it did not do so to invite outside intervention. In fact, it appears clear that American intervention is precisely what leaders in the DRV sought to avoid. Still, internal coercive control is of fundamental importance in the prosecution of Revolutionary Warfare. It is certainly a phenomenon in the nihilism advocated by the Islamic State.

America confronted Revolutionary Warfare in Vietnam and it continues to confront its inadequacy to understand Revolutionary Warfare in other contexts. The use of misunderstood history and the adaptation of tenets of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, which the United States chose to guide in its formulations of counterinsurgency doctrine in Iraq and Afghanistan, contributes to this historical and ongoing political-military problem. Out of fairness, it is impossible to know whether Bernard Fall's thought, or anyone else's might have made a positive difference in a war President Lyndon Johnson chose to pursue despite well-known misgivings. Better foreign policy options offered by critical voices, whether inside or outside an administration as Bruce Kuklick observed, were consistently ignored by American leaders through much of the twentieth century when those positions conflicted with already chosen political courses of action.¹²⁹

Still, unilateral intervention, and the notion that the United States is capable of all things as some form of exceptional nation, deserves continued and sustained analysis and critique. With relevance to international relations in 2017, Bernard Fall offered a perceptive observation in 1965 as the United States escalated its intervention in Vietnam. 'In this world of nuclear weapons, irrational men, frightened nations, rampant technology, and permanent revolution, it is the foolish nation indeed which attempts to arrogate to itself the role of world policeman or moral arbiter without recourse to what others think, do, want or need.'¹³⁰

Notes

1. Bernard B. Fall, Letter to the Editor, *Newsweek*, November 11, 1965, Box F-1, Series 1.1., *Bernard B. Fall Papers*, JFK Presidential Library, Columbia Point, Boston, Massachusetts.
2. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 61.
3. Dr Amry Vandebosch was a political scientist at the University of Kentucky who took on a number of short, academic assignments outside of Lexington, to

include Johns Hopkins where he met and worked with Bernard Fall. Vandenbosch was an expert on Indonesia, served as General Pershing's French translator during World War I, and served on the US State Department's Subcommittee on Territorial Problems which studied post World War II Southeast Asia. In addition to Vandenbosch, the committee included Kenneth P. Landon and Melvin K. Knight. It formed the focus group which investigated the viability of a 'trusteeship' led by the United States for post-war Indochina. See Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America*, 81, 82.

4. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 56.
5. See Chandler, "Paul Mus (1902–1969)," 149–91.
6. Ho Chi Minh, "Appeal Made on the Occasion of the Founding of the Communist Party in Indochina," 127–9.
7. See Berman, *Revolutionary Organization*.
8. Fall, *Last Reflections on a War*, 210.
9. Ibid.
10. Bernard B. Fall, 'Curriculum Vitae of Bernard B. Fall.' Working paper, photocopy, page one, Box F-1, Series 1.1, *Bernard B. Fall Papers*, JFK Presidential Library, Boston, Massachusetts.
11. Fall, *Street Without Joy*. See especially pages 292–4.
12. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 38.
13. Robin, *Escadrons de la mort, l'école française*, 247.
14. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 141.
15. Raskin and Fall, *The Viet-Nam Reader*.
16. Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution*, 596, 597.
17. Ibid., 130, 131.
18. Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, 112–5.
19. See David Halberstam's comments about Fall in his introduction to Fall, *Bernard Fall*.
20. Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, xiv; Krebs, "Raoul Salan Dies; Led Algerian Plot."
21. Parenti, "Empire Fall."
22. Bernard B. Fall, 'Political Development of Viet-Nam, V-J Day to the Geneva Ceasefire: International Aspects of the Viet-Nam Problem, Vol. III,' p. 1001, PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1955, Box B-1, Series 1.2., *Bernard B. Fall Papers*, JFK Presidential Library, Columbia Point, Boston, Massachusetts.
23. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 86. For a detailed history of RAND's 'Viet-Cong Motivation and Morale' study, see Elliot, *RAND in Southeast Asia*.
24. Devillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam*; Chesneaux, *Contribution à l'Histoire de la Nation Vietnamenne*; Mus, *Le Viet Nam Chez Lui*, and Sainteny, *Histoire d'une Paix Manquée*. These are among the most well-known French authors on Indochina who were contemporary to Fall's first scholarship.
25. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 37.
26. Lauriston Sharp, Foreword to The First Edition, Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, vii.
27. Bernard B. Fall, 'Liberation vs. Pacification,' lecture, Yale University, March 3, 1966, quoted in Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 75.
28. Ibid.
29. For more on Lansdale, see Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars* and Nashel, *Edward Lansdale's Cold War*. For correspondence between Fall and Lansdale, see 'Letter: Fall to Lansdale, May 22, 1965,' Box 67, Folder 916, *Lansdale Papers*, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

30. Edward G. Lansdale to J. Lawton Collins, 'Memorandum,' 3 January 1955. *J. Lawton Collins Papers, 1896–1975*, Subseries D., Box 28, Lansdale Folder (2), Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.
31. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 75.
32. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 372.
33. *Ibid.*
34. This number is reported in Allan B. Cole, ed. *Conflict in Indo-China and International Repercussion: A Documentary History, 1945–1955* (Ithaca: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University and the Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University Press, 1956), 259.
35. Wall, "The Marshall Plan and French Politics," 167, 177.
36. According to records in the *John Foster Dulles Papers*, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas, the total financial support for French operations in Indochina was cited as \$2,426,300.00 and included Military Assistance, Economic and Technical Assistance and Special Financial Support for French and Associated States forces in Indochina between Fiscal Years 1950 and 1954. This amount represented 'a U.S. contribution of about one-fourth of the total cost of the 7½ – year war in Indochina and that with the greatly increased tempo of U.S. assistance in the fiscal year 1954, United States assistance came to represent about two-thirds of the current material and financial burden of the war'. See 'U.S. Assistance for Indochina,' *John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951–59*, Subject Series C, International Subseries, Box 9, Indochina. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas. See also Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: European and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 285.
37. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 373, 336.
38. Manea, "Reflections on the French School of Counter-rebellion," 2.
39. *Ibid.*
40. See I. F. Stone, 'Lost Chances for Peace in Indochina,' in I. F. Stone, *In a Time of Torment, 1961–1967* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967), 179–88.
41. Chanoff, "A Casualty of War and Then of Love."
42. Woods, *J. William Fulbright, Vietnam, and the Search for a Cold War Foreign Policy*, 125, 126.
43. For recent examples, see Peterson, "Myth-busting French Counterinsurgency"; Finch, "A Total War of the Mind"; and Masellis, "Counterinsurgency Theoretical and Practical Principles."
44. Schwarz, "Doctrines of Defeat."
45. See Peterson, "Myth-busting French Counterinsurgency."
46. Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria*, 55.
47. United States Army Special Operations Command, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare*, 7.
48. *Ibid.*, 44.
49. See Zinoman, *The Colonial Bastille*.
50. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 75.
51. Goscha, "A 'Total War' of Decolonization?" 138.
52. Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria*.
53. *Ibid.*, 7.
54. Manea, "Reflections on the French School of Counter-rebellion," 2.
55. Finch, "A Total War of the Mind."
56. Manea, "Reflections on the French School of Counter-rebellion," 2.

57. 'Indochina Phase – Background Paper: Chronological History of Events in Indochina Since 1940,' April 1, 1954. 'Part I, Summary of Events in Indochina Since 1940.' *J. Lawton Collins Papers, 1896–1975*, Subseries A. Briefing Book, Box 24, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.
58. Pike, *Viet-Cong*, 101–102.
59. Hue-Tam Ho, Tai, *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 220.
60. Krebs, "Raoul Salan Dies; Led Algerian Plot."
61. The concept of Parallel Hierarchies established by Lacheroy is a fundamental issue for Fall. See 'The Garrison State,' in Fall, *The Two-Vietnams*.
62. Fall, *The Two-Vietnams*, 130–68.
63. Lasswell, "The Garrison State", 455, 459.
64. *Ibid.*, 459.
65. Herring, *America's Longest War*, 66.
66. Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 358.
67. Boaz Ganor's perspective on problems of defining terrorism and insurgent goals and aims is notable in the case of the Viet-Minh. See Ganor, "Defining Terrorism."
68. Fall, *Last Reflections on a War*, 210.
69. Goscha et al., "The Creation of a Vietnamese Intelligence Service, 1945–1950," 105.
70. Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam*, 236, 237.
71. Fall, *The Two-Vietnams*, 137.
72. Marr, *Vietnam*, 402.
73. *Ibid.*, 388.
74. Fall, *The Two-Vietnams*, 137.
75. Marr, *Vietnam*, 389.
76. Field Manual 34-2, *Collection Management and Synchronization Planning*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, Publish 8 March, 1994, <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm34-2/Appd.htm>, accessed 14 December, 2016.
77. Fall, *The Two-Vietnams*, 137.
78. Weinstein, "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment," 622.
79. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 81, 95.
80. Blasko, "Ten Reasons China Will Have Trouble Fighting a Modern War."
81. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 86.
82. *Ibid.*, 84.
83. Kaponya, *The French Foreign Legion and Indochina*, 111.
84. Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 137.
85. *Ibid.*, 137.
86. Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 496.
87. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 24.
88. Kaponya, *The French Foreign Legion and Indochina*, 55.
89. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*, 35–8.
90. *Ibid.*, 38.
91. *Ibid.*, 35.
92. Weinstein, "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment," 622.
93. 'Summary of Events in Indochina Since 1940,' *J. Lawton Collins Papers, 1896–1975*, Subseries A, Briefing Book, Box 24, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.
94. Pike, *Viet-Cong*, 32.
95. Fahs, "Back to a Forgotten Street."
96. *Ibid.*

97. Elliot, *RAND in Southeast Asia*, 139.
98. Hosmer and Crane, *Counterinsurgency*.
99. *The U.S. Army, Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), xvii.
100. Marie-Monique Robin, *Escadrons De La Mort: L'Ecole Française* (Arte Editions, 2003), DVD.
101. Gill, *The School of the Americas*.
102. Cassidy and Tame, "The Wages of War Without Strategy, Part I."
103. See Logevall, *Embers of War*.
104. Bernard B. Fall, 'This isn't Munich, It's Spain,' *Ramparts*, 1965, quoted in Fall, *Last Reflections on a War*, 236.
105. Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 6. On the subject of torture during interrogation, see page 19.
106. Bernard B. Fall, 'This isn't Munich, It's Spain,' *Ramparts*, 1965, quoted in Fall, *Last Reflections on a War*, 234.
107. Bernard Fall, 'Original Pieces for 'Last Reflections on a War,' Box B-08, Folder 3, Series 1.2., *Bernard B. Fall Papers*, JFK Presidential Library, Columbia Point, Boston, Massachusetts.
108. Bernard B. Fall, 'This isn't Munich, It's Spain,' *Ramparts*, 1965, quoted in Fall, *Last Reflections on a War*, 231.
109. Preston, *The War Council*, 135.
110. Congressional Record, Senate, May 17, 1966, 10808, quoted in Woods, *J. William Fulbright, Vietnam, and the Search for a Cold War Foreign Policy*, 128.
111. Woods, *J. William Fulbright, Vietnam, and the Search for a Cold War Foreign Policy*, 148.
112. Parenti, "Empire Fall."
113. Bernard Fall, 'The Way It Is – Last Reflections on a War,' Produced and Directed by Beryl Fox, Edited by Luke Bennet, Photography by Robert Elfstrom, Box B-08, Series 1.2., *Bernard B. Fall Papers*, JFK Presidential Library, Columbia Point, Boston, Massachusetts.
114. For example, see Fall, "The Political-religious Sects of Viet-Nam," 235–53.
115. On this concept, see Porter, *Military Orientalism*.
116. Finch, "A Total War of the Mind."
117. Elliot, *RAND in Southeast Asia*, 139.
118. *Alan Grant Jr. Papers*, Box 10, Courses and Seminars, United States Army Special Warfare Center. The *Alan Grant Jr. Papers* are held at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.
119. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 75.
120. *Ibid.*, 30.
121. *Ibid.*, 28.
122. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime*. The French study to which Galula referred was Bernard Fall, *Le Viet-Minh* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1960) which condensed components of Fall's 1955 Dissertation of which *The Viet-Minh Regime: Government and Administration in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam* formed the first volume of three.
123. Galula, *Contre-insurrection*. Similarly, Galula's *Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958*, originally published in 1963, was not republished until 2006 by RAND. See also Peterson, "Myth-busting French Counterinsurgency."
124. Biggs, *Quagmire*, x.
125. See Keith, *Catholic Vietnam*.

126. See Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam*.
127. Fall, *Bernard Fall*, 70.
128. Shroder, "What if the Islamic State Won?"
129. See Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*.
130. Raskin and Fall, *The Viet-Nam Reader*, xv.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr Richard Fogarty, Dr Ryan Irwin, Dr Mitch Aso and Dr Brian Nussbaum, all of the State University of New York at Albany, for guidance and to Dr Michael P.M. Finch of King's College, London for permission to read and quote material from his article, 'A Total War of the Mind: The French Theory of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, 1954–1958' prior to its publication in *War and Society*. Additionally, thanks for Dr Paul Rich for editorial suggestions to improve this article and to the input of Dr Andrew Preston, Dr Mario Del Pero and my fellow colleagues at the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) Summer Institute held at Clare College, Cambridge University in early July 2017. In particular, I am grateful to Dr Michael Graziano of the University of Northern Iowa for sharing documentation of correspondence between Bernard Fall and Edward Lansdale. Research for portions of this article was funded through the generous support of the Eisenhower Foundation in Abilene, Kansas to facilitate work at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and to the Marjorie Blum Kovler Research Fellowship which provided generous support for research at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, Massachusetts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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