

Defining Guerrilla Warfare

Abstract Over the course of history human societies have made use of both regular and irregular warfare. Under certain circumstances irregular combat developed into guerrilla warfare. By looking at historical instances of unconventional warfare, we can develop a concept of guerrilla tactics and guerrilla warfare that will enable us to analyze the true nature of Rafael Carrera's approach to war during the insurrection of 1837. The study of historical models of guerrilla war will show the strategic limitations of such an approach to combat and will explain why Carrera's hybrid approach offered an alternative for success.

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Commandos

In order to define “hybrid warfare” in the context of this work, we need to first define regular warfare, irregular warfare, and guerrilla warfare. All warfare was irregular until the advent of the state and the establishment of regular armies; namely, military forces with a clear chain of command whose role is to carry out the defensive and/or offensive aims of the state. Fighting is not necessarily war, and the first forms of organized fighting may have taken the form of encounters between champions and their followers.¹ Like most foundational blocks of civilization, the first armies, and consequently the first forms of regular warfare,

appeared in ancient Mesopotamia.² The Standard of Ur (dated to around 2600 B.C. and now located at the British Museum) portrays an army of Sumerian infantrymen wearing similar clothing and equipment (helmets, capes, axes, and spears). Heavy wooden chariots pulled by onagers carry a crew of two. The scene conveys a sense of rank, order, and uniformity. We can reasonably assume that the many dynastic and territorial conflicts among the Sumerian city-states were fought by armies like the one depicted in the standard, armies composed of men whose role in society was to fight and had been subjected to some sort of uniform training. In the “Stele of the Vultures” (a contemporary piece celebrating the victory of the city-state of Lagash over Umma circa 2500 B.C, now located at the Louvre) we see foot soldiers equipped with helmets, shields, and spears marching in a closed-rank formation reminiscent of the Greek phalanx. This type of formal warfare, however, was not the only type of combat in which the Sumerians engaged. Sumer was an island of civilization surrounded by a wilderness teeming with hostile tribes that lacked the military organization of their civilized neighbors.³ The desert nomads that intermittently attacked Sumer still practiced irregular warfare, both in terms of tactics and in terms of strategic aims. It took several centuries before a group of Semites, the Akkadians, could overwhelm the Sumerians, but by then the former were no longer nomads and no longer uncivilized. Sargon the Great, the founder of the Akkadian Empire, was likely a mercenary commander in the armies of the Sumerian city of Kish before he built the first territorial empire in history (extending from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean). After the death of Sargon his successors had to defend the land between the two rivers from the constant attacks of their neighbors, peoples like the Amorites, Elamites, Hurrians, and Gutians whose constant incursions eventually brought down the empire. The Third Dynasty of Ur, successor to the Akkadian state, tried to build a wall to keep the marauders out, but the project was not completed.⁴ Temporary stability arrived only when the Amorites acquired the trappings of civilization and became the rulers of central Mesopotamia, thus initiating an empire of their own. Over the course of two millennia a clear pattern was established. Sedentary peoples who had built cities and established states fought against each other over political, dynastic, territorial, or strategic issues through the use of trained, vertically commanded armies using what could be called formal methods of war, that is to say, full-scale, open confrontations on the battlefield; simultaneously, these states had to fight nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples who

lacked organized political leadership, formal command, long-term strategic objectives and fought using unconventional methods such as hit-and-run tactics, ambushes, pillaging raids, and harassment of garrison troops. This pattern can be clearly recognized across different historical periods and geographic locations. The Egyptians endured for over two centuries the depredations of the Sea Peoples, seaborne marauders without unified command or a singular ethnic identity and lacking clear strategic objectives.⁵ Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, was killed by the horse-mounted Massagetae while trying to pacify the northern frontier of the Persian Empire.⁶ Alexander the Great, while more successful than Cyrus, almost died fighting tribesmen utilizing hit-and-run tactics in the very same region.⁷ Over the course of many centuries the Persians (and later the Parthians and Sassanids) had to contend with the raids of the Scythians and other mounted tribes from Central Asia. On the other extreme of the Asian continent this dynamic (state versus nomadic marauders) was familiar to the generals of the Han dynasty, who had to fight the Xiongnu along the plains of Northwestern China.⁸ The great empires of antiquity, masters at conventional warfare, were constantly drawn into irregular warfare by their marauding neighbors. During the March of the Ten Thousand, the Greek mercenaries trying to make their way back home from Mesopotamia encountered mountain tribes that carried out hit-and-run tactics.⁹ Alexander, master of improvisation, was always ready to use unconventional tactics in the campaign. One remarkable example is the capture of the Sogdian Rock, an impregnable fortress that was taken by 300 men who scaled the almost-vertical face of the mountain, utilizing pegs and ropes.¹⁰ This operation is more akin to what we would categorize today as commando or special forces operations rather than guerrilla tactics.

It must be noted, however, that while guerrilla war always involves irregular tactics, not every instance of irregular warfare is guerrilla warfare. The raids and hit-and-run tactics of nomadic tribes (whether Scythian horsemen in the steppes of Central Asia, the Semites of the deserts of Arabia, or the Sioux in the prairies of North America) are an intrinsic element to their hunting-gathering or pastoralist way of life. Whenever groups like these confronted organized forces, their military response was not very different from the way they interacted with their traditional tribal enemies. Guerrilla warfare goes beyond irregular or unconventional tactics. Guerrilla warfare must be sustained over a significant period of time and must have specific medium or long-term

strategic and political goals, objectives beyond the immediate satisfaction of resource-based needs or fear of unwanted visitors. Guerrilla warfare must also be asymmetrical, and in more than one sense. In guerrilla warfare one of the opponents is small in numbers, poor in resources and training, and lacking in the support of a state apparatus; the other opponent is politically organized, rich in economic and military resources, and able to muster large numbers of troops (which implies the existence of a bureaucracy that facilitates such mobilization). The first instance of what could indeed be called guerrilla warfare may be the resistance of the Celtiberian tribes against the forces of the Roman Republic in ancient times. Following the defeat and dissolution of Carthaginian power in the Iberian Peninsula (ca. 207 B.C.), Roman occupation forces began a gradual process of consolidation of power, expansion, and pacification over most of the peninsula. Roman rule was different from that of the Carthaginians; unbearable tribute and the heavy handed policies of the Roman pro-consuls triggered fierce resistance from the Celtiberians.¹¹ While extremely courageous and lethal on the battlefield, the tribal armies of local chieftains and petty kings were no match for the discipline of the Roman forces and the diplomatic abilities of their generals. The full conquest of the territory took place over the course of 200 years, and during that period the natives, relentless in their resistance, came to define what we often view as guerrilla warfare.

The aim of the Iberians' struggle was, most of the time, quite clear: they wanted the Romans out of their land.¹² The Celtiberians were waging a war of liberation that we could confidently compare to anti-colonial wars in other historical periods.¹³ A defeated native people, confronted by oppression on the part of foreigners rose in spontaneous rebellion. Counting on limited economic and military means and lacking the structure of an organized state, the natives resorted to unconventional tactics. They set up bases in remote and inaccessible places (the mountains of Serra da Estrela) and avoided full-scale confrontation unless they were in a position of advantage. The Lusitanian warlord Viriatus became a master at evasion-and-ambush maneuvers. In 146 B.C., he feigned retreat only to lure a large Roman army into a massive ambushade that resulted in the death of 4000 legionnaires.¹⁴ Viriatus kept the Romans at bay for 8 years, costing them plenty of blood and treasure. The revolt waned only after the leader was assassinated by traitors seeking the reward offered by a Roman praetor.¹⁵ His leadership and military acumen were outstanding, but they could not overcome the relentless determination,

brutality, and resources of the Roman Republic. While there were some outstanding leaders and unifying figures among the Iberian resistance over the course of two centuries, there was never a unified command (even under Viriatus) since the interests of the different groups were diverse, which made alliances among the tribes unstable. Nonetheless, the local forces carried out prolonged campaigns that were a constant drain on Rome. Guerrilla wars are often wars of attrition, and Rome was always more resilient than its enemies.¹⁶

During the Roman civil wars of the first century general Sertorius attempted to set up an independent state in Hispania in defiance of the Roman Republic. While his enterprise failed, for several years he was able to maintain control over significant portions of territory. For 8 years (80 B.C. to 72 B.C.) Sertorius led an army that combined a core of Roman officers and soldiers with a vast force of native fighters. According to Plutarch, the Roman general arrived from Africa at the invitation of the Iberians, with 2600 Roman soldiers and 700 hundred North African horsemen.¹⁷ This professional force served as a magnet for the discontent Iberians who numbered 4000 infantry and 700 horsemen. This force had to confront a Roman army of over 100,000 men commanded by able generals.¹⁸ In order to avoid defeat, Sertorius adopted tactics that involved evading open fighting, climbing mountains, and flight-and-pursue maneuvers. Plutarch mentions that the Roman commander Metellus “suffered all the harm which visits men who are defeated,” even though he never engaged the enemy in full battle.¹⁹ This description reflects a strategy and tactics that could be described as guerrilla warfare. Because of his small number of combatants and taking advantage of his knowledge of the terrain and the support of the local population, Sertorius decided to wage a war of slow attrition against the massive Roman forces and to fight only when he had a clear advantage.²⁰ At the same time, Sertorius used his core of professional soldiers to train his Iberian allies into a disciplined force. As the conflict dragged on, Sertorius commanded larger forces and controlled greater territory, and this made him vulnerable to attack. Under the leadership of Pompey, the Romans took the initiative and inflicted a number of defeats upon Sertorius; however, the rebel general was always able to rapidly recover. Any advantage that the Romans may have gained from their battlefield victories was diminished by the sabotaging actions of Sertorius’ men. The Iberians constantly harassed the Roman troops and assailed their lines of communication.²¹ Indeed, one could say that Sertorius

was practicing a form of hybrid warfare, combining conventional and guerrilla tactics at the operational level but not as an overarching strategy. We can only speculate as to how effective his approach would have been since Sertorius was assassinated by one of his Roman associates.²² Following his death the revolt died down.

Some of the experiences of the Romans during the conquest and pacification of Hispania would be repeated in Gaul, in Britain, and other places over the course of the next three centuries. With the decline of Rome and the onset of the Germanic migrations warfare in the European West devolved into a less formal affair. During the course of the early Middle Ages the organization of armies and the execution of war reflected the organization of the comparatively primitive states that had replaced Rome. By the time of Charlemagne, however, we can once again see a clear distinction between formal armies and informal armies as the Frankish ruler begins to expand his territory into northern Spain, Germany and Central Europe. The attack on Charlemagne's rear as he retreated from Spain (immortalized in the *Chanson de Roland*) can be categorized as a guerrilla action on the part of the Basque *montagnards*.²³ We can also see the resistance tactics on the part of the Saxons to Carolingian rule as a form of guerrilla warfare.²⁴ Overall, however, as Walter Laqueur points out, "the Middle Ages are, on the whole, an unrewarding period for the student of guerrilla war."²⁵ In the early modern period aspects of the revolt of George Kastrioti Skanderbeg (1405–1468) against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans bear some characteristics of guerrilla warfare. While Kastrioti had a formal military training and experience in formal combat, during his long struggle against the Ottomans, he often scattered his forces and resorted to attacking convoys and constantly harassing the Turkish troops.²⁶ The terrain of Albania offered a perfect environment for this type of operations.

The modern understanding of what constitutes guerrilla warfare develops significantly in the seventeenth century when military theorists begin to write about "la petite guerre."²⁷ According to Laqueur, the output in military treatises related to the topic was motivated by the experiences in the 30 Years' War and other European conflicts where for a significant period commanders had to fight a war without fronts.²⁸ *La petite guerre* was conceptualized as a form of warfare carried out by small units within the context of a larger conventional war. In the mid-eighteenth century the concept of *la petite guerre* becomes associated with the tactics and operations of mobile units like the Pandurs and

Croats of the Austrian empire.²⁹ These units were composed of men who lived along the Ottoman frontier, an area that existed in a semi-permanent state of war, and became engaged in raids to isolated outposts or supply convoys.³⁰ In the *Traité de la petite guerre pour les compagnies franches* Armand de La Croix provides a general overview of irregular warfare carried out by units that operate independently from the main combat forces.³¹ De la Croix bases his advice on his own experience. What he calls *compagnies franches* are small units of mixed composition (cavalry and infantry) that can be deployed rapidly within a fixed radius (about 60 leagues) for purposes of reconnaissance and intelligence.³² However, as de La Croix attests, their use became gradually extended to dangerous missions that facilitated the advance of the main forces. The *compagnies franches* travel by night, avoiding the main roads and populated areas.³³ During the retreat of regular troops, the *compagnies franches* cover their rear by executing ambushes and delaying the enemy's advance.³⁴ De La Croix provides instructions on how to equip these types of troops, how to organize their command, how to select the members of the unit, and how to execute specific missions (night attacks or operations against superior forces, for instance). De La Croix envisions *la petite guerre* as an operational element of combat and not necessarily as a strategic one; he sees the "free companies" that he commanded during many campaigns as an essential part of every army and an element of support for conventional campaigns.

In *La Petite Guerre: ou Traité du Service des Troupes Légères en Campagne*, published in 1758, Thomas Auguste de Grandmaison, another French officer with long combat experience, provides comprehensive instructions on the use of light troops. He describes how light troops are essential in keeping the enemy on edge by harassing him day and night and depleting his resources by targeting convoys, foraging parties, and exposed isolated posts.³⁵ The light troops' mission is to disrupt the enemy's lines and provide cover for larger units. Like De La Croix, Grandmaison sees the actions of his light troops as support to the regular forces. Once again, *la petite guerre* takes place on an operational level. This seems to be the general view of other seventeenth-century military theoreticians who wrote on small operations during the period.³⁶

With the advent of the French Revolution we also see a reconceptualization of war in terms of class, national identity, and ideology. And it is during the French Revolution that we also see a new manifestation of irregular warfare. Between 1793 and 1796 the population

of the department of La Vendée in Western France rose against the republican regime. The conflict took the life of as many as 400,000 people including combatants and civilians.³⁷ During the conflict, irregular forces nominally loyal to the king fought against the armies of the Convention. As the conflict progressed, it became a struggle that involved class, religion, and rural-versus-urban elements. The armies of the state were the product of the Revolution, volunteers and (later conscripted) soldiers led by a new breed of able officers using new combat tactics but still trained for regular combat. The counter-revolutionary forces, on the other hand, were masses of discontented peasants led by local aristocrats and men of humble origin who emerged to positions of leadership through the force of circumstances.³⁸ During the open engagements of 1793 the rebels were able to mass forces of tens of thousands, but these disarrayed masses of soldiers were soon defeated by the better equipped and more ably led republican armies (even though at this stage the revolutionary armies were inexperienced and not well-trained).³⁹ Following several victories on the battlefield (all in 1793), the government troops carried out a brutal campaign of pacification (massacres and scorched-earth actions) that only served to fuel the resistance, now transformed into an amorphous force practicing non-conventional tactics.⁴⁰ The war in La Vendée, which then extended to neighboring departments, represents a clear example of what later would be called “guerrilla war.”

Among the most famous and effective leaders in the conflict were the Cottereau brothers,⁴¹ whose nickname, Chouan, later became the appellation to all the insurgents in the Brittany and Maine departments.⁴² According to contemporary accounts, the *Chouans* usually attacked in small groups or even as individual snipers using hit-and-run tactics. These combatants were not permanently on campaign but only mustered when summoned by their leaders, and they consistently dispersed after engaging in combat regardless of the result of the encounter.⁴³ The *Chouans* were part-time fighters, farmers by day and insurgents by night (or whenever they engaged the enemy), which has become a notable trait of guerrilla warfare in modern times. Each fighter provided his own food and often procured his own weapon. The *Chouans* engaged in a number of activities to undermine the authorities: they ambushed small detachments, destroyed or captured convoys, carried out acts of sabotage, held government soldiers and officials as hostages, assassinated government officials and collaborators, destroyed food supplies, and dressed in Republican uniforms to deceive the enemy.⁴⁴

With the emergence of this new type of combat also emerged counter-insurgency measures. The French government eventually put down the revolt by saturating the region with troops, engaging in brutal repressive tactics against the civilian population, and building a network of fortified points designed to intercept the movements of insurgent bands across the countryside.⁴⁵ Over the following years sporadic uprising would take place in the region but never again on the scale of the 1790s. Walter Lanqueur points out that unlike other insurgent movements of the period, such as the Russian partisans (made up of demobilized regular soldiers) or the Spanish insurgents (substantially supported tactically and materially by Wellington and politically loyal to a national government), the Chouans were, in a sense, the “purest” manifestation of a guerrilla force since their movement was the most spontaneous, it lacked political leadership, and it was geographically isolated.⁴⁶ While the scale of the casualties in the wars of La Vendée was massive, the scope of the conflict was limited and ultimately unsuccessful. Within a decade, however, the French army would have to face another unconventional enemy in a conflict that would mythologize the concept of guerrilla warfare.

The word *guerrilla* first appears in a Spanish dictionary in the year 1611 simply as the diminutive of the word *guerra* (war). By the mid-eighteenth century the term is defined as a “light armed encounter” in the dictionaries of the Real Academia de España, and the word is used to translate the term *petite guerre* in the 1780 Spanish edition of Grandmaison’s treatise.⁴⁷ The Napoleonic Wars, and in particular the Peninsular campaigns, would transform the notions of “small war” and would give birth to the concept we now associate with the term *guerrilla* as a unit, as a type of combatant, as an insurgent movement, and as a form of warfare. Between 1790 and 1815 Europe would become entangled in a war of unprecedented magnitude. The armies of the Napoleonic period were massive, and war took place in almost every European country. The fateful decision by Napoleon (1769–1821) to invade Portugal in 1807 would also lead to the occupation of Spain by French troops.⁴⁸ The occupation triggered popular discontent, and in the ensuing crisis Napoleon placed his brother Joseph on the throne (while forcing the king, Charles IV, and his son Ferdinand into custody in France). On May 2, 1808, the people of Madrid rose against the occupiers.⁴⁹ This action and the French reprisals that followed⁵⁰ mark the beginning of the Spanish War of Independence. Segments of the Spanish

Army opposed the occupation, and a governing Junta Central was established as the official and legitimate government of Spain and the coordinating body of the resistance against the French. The Junta constituted its authority in the name of the legitimate king of Spain, Ferdinand VII. Despite the lack of effective political leadership, shortage of resources, and a less-than-prepared army, the Spaniards were able to inflict a serious defeat upon the French at Bailén (July 16–19, 1808).⁵¹

Bailén was a great Spanish victory, but it was also an anomaly. In late 1808 the French, now led by Napoleon himself, crushingly defeated the Spanish armies in a series of formal operations. In the aftermath of these routs the Spanish troops mutinied and deserted en masse. With formal leadership collapsing, these men would eventually join the irregular forces fighting Napoleon.⁵² The French occupation of Spain proceeded swiftly. And as Napoleon's forces began to consolidate their position in the country, the resistance of the Spanish people grew. Over the next 6 years the Peninsular War became a laboratory of military warfare. Parallel to formal combat waged by conventional armies (French, British, Spanish, and Portuguese), the Spaniards developed their own peculiar brand of irregular warfare; in fact, the actions of the irregular forces during the Spanish War of Independence came to define many aspects of the modern concept of guerrilla warfare. Ronald Fraser points out that the Spanish War of Independence was not original in the use of guerrilla tactics but in the scale in which those tactics were utilized, involving the whole country and assuming a form of national resistance and liberation.⁵³ Indeed, the number of combatants, the geographic scope, the length of the conflict, and the strategic impact of the insurgent forces transformed guerrilla tactics into guerrilla warfare during the Spanish conflict.

An anonymous account of the conflict (published in 1812) claims that the guerrillas began to appear in the year 1809 throughout Spain.⁵⁴ Small bands grew in the lapse of 1 year into forces as big as 4000 men. Among the most prominent leaders was a commander known as El Empecinado, whose actions became the subject of popular lore. A book about his life was circulating as early as 1811, and his nickname, "empecinado," became synonymous with "guerrilla fighter."⁵⁵ These bands provided intelligence for the regular armies (both the remnants of the Spanish army and Wellington's expeditionary force), targeted French communications, ambushed small detachments, and sabotaged support operations. These groups could be found everywhere and emerged

within a short period of time immediately following the collapse of the regular forces. What is notable about these forces is how effective they were since the beginning, which raises the question: How can so many men become proficient in the use of weapons and the application of “small war” tactics over such short period of time? The answer can be found in the peculiar conditions of Spain on the eve of Napoleon’s invasion.

By the mid-eighteenth century Spain was a shadow of the great military power that it had been during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Under the leadership of King Charles III, the country carried out a series of political and administrative reforms inspired by the Enlightenment. Among the reforms was a reconstitution of the military. Given the successive failures during Napoleon’s occupation of the country, one must wonder as to the effectiveness of those reforms. However, one consequence of the reforms was the militarization of Spanish society.⁵⁶ During the late eighteenth century rural poverty and lack of law enforcement resources on the part of the authorities had led to widespread banditry throughout the country. The protectionist economic policies of the country had also led to the smuggling of goods, carried out by organized bands. The authorities responded to these problems by posting *resguardos* in troublesome areas; these were small forces raised locally. In other areas all males were required to be part of a home guard that would become the first line of defense against foreign invasion.⁵⁷ Ronald Fraser points out that, besides these formal and legally sanctioned forms of local armed vigilance, Spain had a long tradition of civilian defense against bandits, smugglers, and thieves.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Spanish peasants (65% of the active population according to the 1797 census) were in large measure owners of the land or had “virtual property over the use of the land,” which created a greater incentive to protect their region from bandits and, later, from French imperial forces.⁵⁹ It is important to note, however, that the guerrilla groups that emerged to confront the French occupation were not homogenous. Fraser distinguishes three groups: the *partisanos* were bands that emerged spontaneously and initially lacked authorization from what remained of the Spanish government; *corsarios* and *forajidos* were groups of former outlaws who were given official pardons by the Spanish authorities and were deputized to carry military actions against the forces of occupation; and the *cruzados religiosos* were groups formed under official sanction and led by clerics.⁶⁰ These forces coexisted, cooperated, and often coordinated

their actions with a large number regular Spanish, Portuguese, and British forces operating under formal military command.

Given the vast territorial scope of the conflict and the variety of forces involved, over the course of the War of Spanish Independence, guerrilla warfare manifested in different forms. For instance, a general named Francisco Ballesteros commanded a division of regular forces that operated following the principles of *la petite guerre*. Ballesteros led his large forces (never surpassing 5000 in number through the 1810–1812 period) through the mountains, outflanking and harassing superior French forces. When the French initiated pursuit, Ballesteros would march long distances drawing away substantial French contingents from the main force. Ballesteros would then engage his pursuers in combat without fully committing to battle, only to then disengage and continue his evasive march deep into territory unfamiliar to his pursuers.⁶¹ The effect of Ballesteros' actions was the delay of French operations, the diversion of vital resources, and the elongation of French lines of supply and communications. General Ballesteros and his forces were acting on an operational level, disrupting French plans over a relatively large geographic area. His tactics throughout this period consisted of “ruses, dawn attacks, surprises, night marches, petty combats, ambushes and the use of rough terrain.”⁶² Ballesteros operated in Andalucia, but he had counterparts in other regions of Spain.⁶³ This is something that would have been quite familiar to the theoreticians Grandmaison or De La Croix.

In other instances the *partidas* (smaller bands of insurgents) acted within a more limited scope. Julián Sánchez, nicknamed El Charro, was a cavalry officer of peasant origin and a member of the local militia who became a guerrilla commander by default. Sánchez and his detachment were left behind enemy lines when Ciudad Rodrigo fell in the hands of the French in June of 1810.⁶⁴ Over the following year El Charro lived off the land and conducted a series of actions against the French forces in the area aimed at disrupting their lines of communication, through raids and ambushes, and killing unfortunate French stragglers. His forces oscillated between 50 and 1000 men and were quite often given to plundering. Other examples of regular officers turned guerrilla leaders are Pedro Villacampa and Felipe Perena who operated in Aragon heading the remnants of regular forces “trapped” behind enemy lines.⁶⁵

Of all the guerrilla groups the *partidas* (which constituted about half of all the irregular forces throughout the war) epitomize the image

of true insurgents, popular bands of civilians who rose in revolt against the foreigner occupier in order to defend land, freedom and way of life. This image, however, is a romanticized version of reality shaped by the writings of nineteenth-century Spanish historians with Liberal tendencies.⁶⁶ The reality of these *partisanos* is far more complex. While some of these bands were composed of patriotic peasants fed up with the French occupation, many others were adventurers, deserters, and outlaws (former bandits and smugglers).⁶⁷ War changes the circumstances of normal life, and, under the brutal conditions of foreign occupation, former villains become freedom fighters. After all, who would make a better insurgent than a smuggler or highway bandit who knows the best place to ambush a convoy or find a fast route of escape? War also offers the opportunity for plundering, and the guerrilla bands often profited from the war.⁶⁸ Regardless of their motivation or their character, the guerrillas had an impact on the Peninsular War. Vittorio Scotti Douglas poses four questions with regard to role and effectiveness of the insurgent forces during the conflict. How many casualties were inflicted upon the French army by the guerrillas? To what extent were French communications disrupted? Did the guerrillas hinder the French forces' ability to obtain supplies? Did the guerrillas tie up enough troops to have an effect on their ability to fight the Allied forces in conventional combat?⁶⁹ In terms of casualties, in 1823 Jean Le Mièrre de Corvey, a French officer during the war, wrote in *Des Partisans et des Corps Irreguliers* that the Napoleonic forces lost over 500,000 soldiers to the guerrilla forces over the duration of the conflict.⁷⁰ These figures seem an exaggeration, but a reasonable estimate oscillates between 80,000 and 90,000.⁷¹ There is little doubt that the guerrillas disrupted French communications in a significant manner. In fact, the capture of couriers was one of the main tasks delegated to the *partidas* by the ruling Junta.⁷² The guerrillas were also exceptionally effective at intercepting or disrupting supply convoys. Feeding, equipping, and arming 300,000 troops was a Sisyphean task under normal circumstances; the persistent actions of the insurgents, made provisioning close to impossible. To this problem, we have to add King Joseph's inability to collect much needed fiscal revenue from a significant portion of the population kept out of official reach by insurgent activity.⁷³ Finally, garrisoning and counter-insurgency activities occupied large numbers of French forces. The French army suffered chronically from a shortage of troops during formal engagements with Allied armies. During the decisive battles of Talavera, Salamanca, and Vitoria

the Spanish and Anglo-Portuguese forces enjoyed numerical superiority because many of the French troops were engaged fighting the guerrillas.⁷⁴ It is undisputable that the final defeat of the Napoleonic forces in the Iberian Peninsula could not have been achieved without the participation of the irregular forces and that this conflict established the parameters that would define guerrilla warfare in the future.

One of the consequences of the French occupation of Spain and the subsequent war of liberation was the unraveling of the Spanish empire in the Americas. The dissolution of effective government in the Iberian Peninsula (particularly the dissolution of the Central Junta in 1810) triggered a series of events in the New World that led to independence of all the Spanish colonies in America (with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico) by the year 1825.⁷⁵ With the notable exception of Central America, the emancipation of Spanish colonies was achieved through the force of arms. While the forces involved in the conflict possessed different degrees of training and military proficiency and irregular forces abounded, the wars of independence were relatively conventional in terms of command, tactics, operations, and strategy. Throughout the continent the rebel forces constituted armies modeled after the Spanish forces; in fact, the initial encounters in places like Buenos Aires, Bogotá or Caracas took place between Spanish forces and local militias.⁷⁶ In the Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata (modern day Argentina) a ruling junta was constituted in 1810, and although its aims were not independence from Spain, almost immediately it engaged in combat with the royalist forces. After securing control of Buenos Aires, the Junta constituted armies that were sent to take control of surrounding regions, the Banda Oriental (Uruguay), Upper Peru (modern day Bolivia) and Paraguay.⁷⁷ While the patriot armies scored some minor victories, their offensive against royalist forces failed. By the year 1813, the insurgent armies were on the defensive in western Upper Peru and eventually dissolved into smaller decentralized irregular forces.⁷⁸ While these forces are often referred to as “guerrillas,” whenever they engaged the royalist armies, they adopted conventional tactics and formations.⁷⁹ In the meantime, the Royalist forces from Peru made repeated incursions into the northwestern provinces of Jujuy, Salta, and Tucumán. The defense of these areas fell to the bands of *gauchos*⁸⁰ commanded by the *caudillo* Martín Miguel de Güelmes (1785–1821).⁸¹ The actions carried out by these bands can be described as guerrilla tactics: attacking Spanish outposts, ambushing patrols, and disrupting communications. These operations extended over

of a period of 7 years. By 1816 the government of Buenos Aires declared independence from Spain and made the decision to secure the territories on the other side of the Andes. José de San Martín (1778–1850) was selected to assemble and led the expedition to liberate neighboring Chile. After crossing the Andes, in a manner reminiscent of Hannibal's or Napoleon's feats, San Martín conducted an arduous conventional campaign that culminated in the liberation of the country by 1818.⁸²

In the Viceroyalty of New Granada the path towards independence also started in 1810 when an autonomous junta was formed in Caracas.⁸³ Actions towards autonomy spread across what today are Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. Armies were formed, outfitted, and placed under the command of able officers like Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) and Antonio Nariño (1765–1824). Between 1810 and 1816 most of the combat can be categorized as conventional warfare. The armies of the independence movement engaged in formal battles with the enemy. At the Battle of La Victoria Francisco de Miranda (1750–1816), commanding 5000 men, confronted Spanish general Monteverde, with 3000 soldiers.⁸⁴ War was waged with the purpose of controlling territory and annihilating the enemy. It is only after the cascading collapse of the insurgent forces around 1814 and 1816 that we start to see a guerrilla strategy being adopted by the rebels. The royalist forces had resoundingly defeated the rebels (Miranda was captured) and Bolívar had escaped to Jamaica. José Antonio Páez (1790–1873) played a crucial role during this phase of the war. As the leader of the *llaneros*,⁸⁵ Páez made an alliance with the patriot forces, and his men started to carry out military actions against the Spaniards. With the collapse of the formal armies, irregular operations took the place of regular combat. In territories that were now in control of the Spanish army, independent bands of insurgents were formed. In the area of the Eastern Cordillera in New Granada bands of guerrillas outfitted and commanded by local landowners started to harass the Spanish troops.⁸⁶ Although these bands had limited operational capabilities (the one formed by the Almeyda landowning family comprised initially 300 men with 20 firearms), these groups saturated the countryside, and their collective activities depleted royalist resources.⁸⁷ Similar groups emerged in the Cauca valley, and area that was nominally under Spanish control until 1820.⁸⁸

In the Viceroyalty of New Spain (modern day Mexico) the movement of independence started as a popular uprising. On September 20, 1810, in the small and poor town of Dolores, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla

(1753–1811) initiated a popular uprising during an event that has come to be known as the “Grito de Dolores.” Hidalgo’s declaration was an act of defiance against the ruling junta in Mexico City and a declaration of loyalty towards Ferdinand VII.⁸⁹ However, the situation unraveled, and the angry demonstration in the small town of Dolores developed into an armed movement. Hidalgo’s movement gathered support as it went from town to town and eventually consisted of thousands. Of all the independence movements in Latin America, the Mexican revolt is perhaps the only one with the character of a mass popular uprising. The army of Hidalgo is described as a composed of *criollos*, *mesitzos*, *mulateos*, and Indians; his force included cowboys, peasants and deserters from the Spanish army still wearing their uniforms, and their weapons were an array of muskets, machetes, lances, clubs, and even slingshots.⁹⁰ As often happens with popular armed movements, after the initial spontaneous outburst of anger, the need for qualified military leadership emerges.⁹¹ The undisciplined mob that followed Hidalgo was no exception, and after initial incidents of wild behavior, their leader realized the need for organization and discipline. This task fell upon Ignacio Allende, an officer in Spanish army.⁹² From this point on the direction of the revolt took the form of a campaign designed to capture territory (specifically urban centers), hoping that these successes would lead to a general uprising across the Viceroyalty. Hidalgo’s forces were not well trained, and soon the strategy of taking cities and defending them from royalist forces proved fatal. For instance, the city of Guanajuato fell to the royalist forces to the cost of only 11 casualties while the rebels lost 1500 men.⁹³ Hidalgo and Allende were eventually captured and executed. The struggle continued under the priest José María Morelos (1765–1815),⁹⁴ but the strategy did not change. Morelos created a more efficient chain of command for his army and imposed discipline and training on his men.⁹⁵ His first campaign was successful and led to the control of most of the southern coast of Mexico by the end of 1811. His fortunes, however, turned in 1813. He lost all the territory he had conquered, and, like Hidalgo, he was captured, tried by the Inquisition, and executed in 1815.⁹⁶ The end of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the capture of Morelos enabled the Spanish government to take control of the situation. The rebellion had failed, but some commanders continued the struggle, now waging a guerrilla war of varied intensity in the remote areas of the country.⁹⁷ After the collapse of the large revolutionary forces in 1815 the forces of the insurrection fragmented into units that could

only function on the tactical and operational level. The armies of the independence movement became *partidas* whose target became to cut off the communications of the royalist troops and drain their resources through relentless hit and run attacks. The guerrilla approach had a debilitating effect on the loyalist forces, but it could not alter the strategic balance of the theater of operations. The government forces adapted to the new form of combat and adopted counterinsurgency tactics that had mixed results.⁹⁸ The most important accomplishment of the insurgent forces during this period is that they survived and maintained the idea of independence as a viable outcome. These irregular and fragmented forces became reactivated as large armies in 1820 when events in Spain (a liberal coup) created a crisis in New Spain. Within the space of a year the political and military situation had been transformed completely, and on February 24, 1821 Agustín de Iturbide (1783–1824), the *criollo* commander of the royalist forces, and Vicente Guerrero signed the Plan de Iguala, a treaty that sealed the independence of Mexico from Spain.⁹⁹ Guerrilla tactics enabled the rebel forces to survive during the critical period of 1816–1820; however, the conflict was primarily a conflict of large armies confronting each other on the open battlefield, defending strongholds, or laying siege to cities; it was a conventional war with an interlude of unconventional warfare.

Over the course of the nineteenth century there would be countless conflicts where unconventional warfare was involved. This is the period when European colonial power extended their dominion over Africa, Asia and Oceania, and in this process Western armies mostly encountered opponents who resorted to irregular forms of warfare. This type of colonial warfare also took place in the Americas after independence. The United States' western expansion falls into that category as well as the wars waged by Chile and Argentina against the native inhabitants of the Patagonia and Araucania. These conflicts were in general unconventional and often genocidal. In the American continent of the nineteenth century war was a feature of political conflict (often between Liberals and Conservatives, or Federalists and Unitarians) and a means of territorial expansion, but it must be noted that, as an extension of the West, the new nations (from the United States to Argentina) employed the conventional methods of war that had been developed and utilized by the Europeans during their conflicts in the previous century. The major conflicts that swept the American continent during the nineteenth century were, in a general sense, conventional wars fought by conventional

armies (although those armies might have often been poorly equipped, badly trained, and not led by professional officers). Within many of these major conflicts, however, there are important instances of unconventional tactics and operations. For example, during the French intervention in Mexico (1862–1865), the government of Benito Juárez (1806–1872) encouraged irregular forces to fight the French using guerrilla methods, but ultimately the intervention forces and their Conservative allies were defeated on the conventional battlefield.

During exactly the same period the United States was undergoing the ordeal of the Civil War. This conflict mobilized massive armies, and the conflagration is considered the first war of the industrial era. As the conventional forces of the Confederates started to falter, they began to engage in an intensive guerrilla campaign in an attempt to repel the invading Union forces. As soon as Northern armies occupied Confederate soil, spontaneous bands of partisans formed to resist the Yankee invader.¹⁰⁰ Over the course of the war bands of pro-Confederacy guerrilla fighters formed not only in the South but also in some of the Western territories like Colorado and California.¹⁰¹ The most intensive activity of the guerrillas took place in Missouri and northern Virginia, but there were also many active bands in Union states of Maryland and Kentucky.¹⁰² The Partisan Ranger Act of 1862 gave some of these bands official military status,¹⁰³ but these were mostly groups led by actual military officers that operated more or less in the classical sense of eighteenth century *petite guerre*.

The groups that conducted irregular warfare during the Civil War fall under many different categories. In Kentucky there were thousands of men involved in irregular combat, but according to James Martin, there was no pattern to the organization or actions of these groups.¹⁰⁴ Some groups were led and composed of “scoundrels and murderers” like the famous William Quantrill (1837–1865), who conducted a campaign of terror in Missouri and Kansas, while others were disciplined and focused like the band led by John S. Mosby (1833–1916), who was working under the sanction of the Confederate government.¹⁰⁵ The Confederate partisans operated mainly as mounted raiders that conducted hit-and-run operations, sometimes deep behind enemy lines. In the case of Kentucky, Confederate Colonel A.R. Johnson maintained an armed presence in significant portions of the state, which led to the abandonment of towns and surrounding countryside by the local inhabitants.¹⁰⁶ Johnson’s men operated as scattered bands throughout the territory, and since they

were operating in enemy territory, their role seems to be the opposite of that played traditionally by guerrilla forces, that is, to fight an alien force (a foreign army or unwanted governmental forces) in one's own territory.¹⁰⁷ We must remember, however, that most of the Civil War was fought in Confederate territory since the very beginning of the conflict, and this provided the secessionists the opportunity to wage a widespread guerrilla war combined with conventional combat in the fashion of the Peninsular War. At the beginning of the war in 1861 there were calls from many quarters to fight a war of national resistance, a people's war, using guerrilla tactics.¹⁰⁸ Over the course of the war a mixture of "commissioned" raiders and local defense forces fought the enemy with different degrees of success, mainly disrupting communications and supply lines. However, a generalized guerrilla conflict, a mass popular resistance movement against the Union troops, never materialized. The military leadership of the Confederacy, perhaps because of their theoretical training, always showed aversion to guerrilla warfare,¹⁰⁹ and to the end this form of combat never became an organic element of a grand strategy to win the war.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the Anglo-Boer wars provide an interesting example of a combination of conventional and unconventional warfare. The Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal (officially known as the South African Republic) were established by Dutch-speaking farmers trying to escape British control in the Cape Colony.¹¹⁰ The threat of British colonialism and native African tribes led to the creation of a system that compelled every man over 15 to provide military service and provide a weapon, a horse, a wagon, and his own supplies.¹¹¹ The men were organized into "commandos," units that were supposed to serve on a temporary basis; they elected their own officers and were highly independent. Service in these commandos was not codified until 1898.¹¹² It must also be noted that the Boers were profoundly religious, and their Christian (Calvinist) faith was a strong source of motivation and morale throughout their military struggles.¹¹³

The South African Republic was reabsorbed by the British in 1877, but only 4 years later the Boers in the Transvaal successfully revolted against imperial control.¹¹⁴ The two Boer republics thrived, and over the course of the next 15 years underwent fateful transformations that would lead to another, this time much greater, confrontation with the British.¹¹⁵ By the mid 1890s, with the prospect of another confrontation with the British Empire, the Transvaal president, Paul Kruger

(1825–1904), started to organize the army of the republic. In 1896, Kruger bought 25,000 German Mauser rifles and 10 million rounds of ammunition.¹¹⁶ The wide availability of firearms and the Boers' familiarity with them would make an impact later in the longevity and the nature of the conflict.¹¹⁷ The Second Anglo-Boer War started in 1899. Initially the South African forces fought a few successful large-scale, conventional battles. The British, who were initially shocked, responded with a massive influx of troops and resources into the area. The number of British troops went from 20,000 to 250,000 within a year.¹¹⁸ The main administrative centers of the Boer republics fell to British hands in rapid succession, and by 1900 it seemed that the end of the war was near.¹¹⁹ It was at this point that the conflict turned into a long, relentless, and brutal guerrilla struggle. Led by able commanders like Jan Smuts (1870–1950), Koos de la Rey (1847–1914), and Christian de Wet (1854–1922), the Boer forces were able to continue the struggle for two more years. The commandos that carried operations during this phase of the war oscillated between a few hundred and a few thousand troops. During one of his most successful operations De Wet was able to bring together 2000 men during an action that ended with 350 British casualties and 450 prisoners.¹²⁰ The key word here is “assemble” since the forces were usually scattered and only came together in large numbers when attacking a large significant (and often isolated) target. In 1901, Jan Smuts carried a long distance raid into the Cape Colony with the purpose of disrupting the British rear and igniting an uprising among the “Cape Boers.”¹²¹ His force started with only a few hundred especially selected men and eventually gathered close to 4000 troops.¹²² Smuts led his column deep into British controlled territory, crossing a mountain range 8000 ft high and surviving on meager rations. Over the course of a year he travelled 2000 miles attacking isolated British detachments and fighting retreat actions, very much like Xenophon and his Ten Thousand,¹²³ until his force reached the safety of a mountain stronghold in northwestern Cape colony. From there he launched raids against the British forces until the end of the conflict.¹²⁴ In 1902, Koos de la Rey, acting on intelligence collected by his scouts, mustered a force of 1100 men and set up a trap for an army of 1300 British troops commanded by Lieutenant General Lord Methuen.¹²⁵ De la Rey started the action by harassing the rear of Methuen's column with foot skirmishers while simultaneously launching a cavalry attack on the right flank of the column. Then he launched sustained skirmishing fire on the rear left followed by a cavalry attack

with Boers firing from the saddle. The swift attack caused first consternation and then panic among the British. The troops in the front fled, and the ones that were engaged were left to mount a disorganized defense against the Boers. By the end of the engagement the British had suffered 68 killed, 121 wounded, and 600 captured (including Methuen).¹²⁶

As spectacular as the previous actions may sound, most of the actions that took place during the guerrilla phase of the Second Anglo-Boer War were of a much smaller scale. The commandos' main activities involved ambushing supply convoys, ambushing isolated patrols, intimidating black communities that were supporting the British,¹²⁷ and sabotaging the rail tracks. According to contemporary reports, the rail tracks, the lifeline of the British troops in campaign, were cut somewhere along the route on a daily basis.¹²⁸ The relentless attacks of the Boers took a toll on the British forces, and they realized that they had to develop a new type response to these combat conditions. One approach to the problem was the building of blockhouses within approximately a mile from each other across long tracks of territory.¹²⁹ This system was similar to the one used in Cuba by the Spaniards against the insurgents fighting for independence. The small, fortified outposts were built of corrugated metal, and the spaces between them were filled with barbed wire. The blockhouses were built mainly along the rail tracks (which were constantly patrolled by armored trains with machine guns and search lights).¹³⁰ A total of 8000 were built, drastically reducing the mobility of the Boer commandos. At the same time, the British adopted a more drastic measure that would have devastating consequences among the civilian population. Over 150,000 Boer women and children were taken from their homes and placed in concentration camps while their farms were torched and their livestock was slaughtered.¹³¹ This was another idea that had been implemented in Cuba by the Spanish commander Valeriano Weyler in 1896–1897.¹³² The effect that this policy had on the Boer struggle was devastating. With the material support of the farms and a sympathetic population it became increasingly difficult for the guerrillas to survive. Furthermore, the genocidal neglect that existed in the concentration camps led to the death of 25,000 women and children.¹³³ This had a profound psychological impact on the combatants who were at this point being pursued by highly mobile counterinsurgency units employing the Boers' methods of fighting.¹³⁴

Byron Farwell accurately points out: "Guerrillas by themselves cannot win wars, not in the military sense. They can keep their enemies from

winning; they can hope that in time their strength can increase to the point where they can put out orthodox armies in the field to confront and defeat their enemies in conventional battles.”¹³⁵ There are two additional possible outcomes. The guerrillas can expect foreign intervention on their behalf, or they can obtain better terms from their enemy. In the case of the Boers the foreign intervention (presumably from Germany) never arrived, and it is questionable that their resistance got them better concessions at the negotiating table. It seems that ultimately the Boers had no endgame strategy. By 1902 there were still 20,000 commandos on the field, but they were no longer in effective fighting condition due to lack of ammunition, horses and provisions.¹³⁶ The war ended with the South Africans’ surrender. The death toll was 7000 Boers, 22,000 British, and over 25,000 non-combatants in the concentration camps.¹³⁷

The Anglo-Boer War presents an interesting paradigm of military engagement. Walter Laqueur even questions whether the conflict was indeed a guerrilla war.¹³⁸ In a sense, the South African conflict can be viewed as a form of asynchronous hybrid warfare combining conventional and non-conventional tactics. Unlike the Peninsular conflict, in which conventional combat coexisted simultaneously with guerrilla warfare, in the Boer War conventional fighting was replaced by unconventional combat in the late phases of the conflict. What is peculiar about the nature of the Boer forces is that while they were part of a formal militia system prior to the declaration of hostilities and became impressively successful in conventional engagements at the beginning of the war, their training, loose organizational structure, cultural temperament, and military traditions made them better suited for guerrilla war. The manner in which the Anglo-Boer War developed goes against the normal development of guerrilla conflicts. Guerrilla wars usually start with small bands resisting a superior power (invading army or government forces) and gradually develop into larger forces that eventually become proficient at conventional combat. Conversely, the remnants of conventional armies that collapse and disintegrate on the battlefield (simultaneously with a collapse in political leadership) often become the kernel of a guerrilla resistance movement that lingers long enough for the weakening of the enemy by external factors (one can think of Yugoslavia during WWII as an example of this phenomenon). However, in the case of the Boer forces, their strategic defeat in 1900 did not lead to their disintegration, collapse, or surrender (politically or militarily) but to an operational and tactical readjustment, to a reorientation of the aims

and manner of combat. The Anglo-Boer War contains a peculiar paradox: the Boer armies fighting in 1899 were, in a sense, irregular troops fighting in a conventional war; the Boer commandos after 1900 were, technically speaking, not guerrillas but regular troops fighting unconventionally. The ability of the Boers to transmute from one state of warfare to another is the key to understanding their operational and tactical success. Their flexibility and adaptability, however, were not enough to compensate for their precarious strategic position when facing the overwhelming military resources of the British Empire.

The twentieth century is truly the era of guerrilla warfare. It is only in this century that we see the application of guerrilla tactics as the main element of a successful military strategy, the elevation of irregular combat practices from the tactical and operational level to a strategic one. Insurgent armies like Mao's, the decolonization movements in Africa and Asia after World War II (Indochina, the Congo, Angola, Algeria, etc.), the leftist insurgent movements in Latin America (Castro, the Sandinistas, the Shining Path, etc.), and the Islamic/nationalist anti-occupation forces (Afghanistan and Iraq) embraced a philosophy that not only placed guerrilla warfare at the center of their military strategy but also made guerrilla war an ideological emblem of their struggles,¹³⁹ something we do not see in insurgent movements of the nineteenth century and before. While modern guerrilla warfare still possesses many of the organizational elements and practices that would be familiar to a Viriatus, the Chouans, or a leader of a Spanish *partida*, due to the development in the technology of weapons and communications, asymmetric warfare in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is qualitatively different from guerrilla conflicts in the pre-industrial past. What is evident from all the examples examined and cited so far is that prior to the twentieth century there are many instances of guerrilla forces, guerrilla tactics, and guerrilla operations, but there are only a few examples of guerrilla wars or guerrilla warfare as a main strategic approach. Prior to the twentieth century is difficult to find what we could call a "pure" guerrilla war or pure guerrilla warfare; guerrilla warfare was only successful when utilized in combination with conventional warfare.¹⁴⁰

We must then ask how Rafael Carrera's 1837 uprising and the subsequent 3-year campaign fit within the historical context of guerrilla warfare. In late 1838, the Liberal government of the State of Guatemala commissioned the historian Alejandro Marure to write a comparison of the insurrection in the region of Mita with the uprising of La Vendée

in 1790.¹⁴¹ The result of this commission was the *Memoria sobre la insurrección de Santa Rosa y Mataquescuintla en Centro-América* where Marure defines the type of war being waged by Carrera as *guerra de montaña* (mountain warfare) and places his insurrection within the context of a long history of guerrilla war:

The war of the mountain is of such nature that it has always falsified the known principles of military strategy, and it has been the stumbling block where the reputation of great captains has been wrecked. The martial Spartan was unable to dislodge the remnants of the Messenians from promontory at Tenaro where their descendants still live under the name of *Maniotas*. Servilius Caepio and the great Pompey were unable defeat Viriatus and Sertorius until the assassin's dagger rid them from these indomitable champions. The inhabitants of the country of Wales mocked for a long time the power of William II, and the *montagnards* from Asturias mocked the Mohamedan host. The talents of Klever and the intrepid character of Westerman were impotent at the Vendée. In Spain the maneuvers of Napoleon's marshals were equally powerless before the *guerrilleros* and the mobile *partidas*. In more recent times, the most powerful vizier in Greece could not subdue the Seleida until he took advantage of the darkest of treacheries. La Cerna has been forced to retreat with a fierce army in Buenos Aires before the undisciplined forces of the *gauchos*; and our illiterate peasants have already resisted once the efforts of the first caudillo of the Republic. From this we must infer that the war that currently we wage against our inaccessible mountains cannot be ended only with the power of arms, and its end should be the work of diplomacy and not terror.¹⁴²

Marure clearly views Carrera and his followers as part of a long line of irregular forces that fought formal armies in unconventional wars. To the Central American intellectual the "the war of the mountain" waged by the Guatemalan rebels in the district of Mita is not very different from the combat tactics of the guerrillas of the past. While he provides a concise summary and great insight into the history of guerrillas, we must remember that the aim of Marure's *Memorias* was not only to record history but also to provide an analysis that would be useful to the Liberal government in its fight against Carrera. We must look at Marure as a historian writing about the present (something that is always problematic) and someone who is ideologically committed to one of the sides in the conflict. A proud Liberal, Marure is unable to hide his bias when

he describes the inhabitants of La Vendée (the French counterparts of Carrera's men) as "ignorant, superstitious, credulous and at the same time suspicious towards anything that emanates from the State."¹⁴³ While the comparison of the insurrection of Mita to the revolt in La Vendée is an apt one, Carrera's uprising was just in its initial phase when Marure wrote his historical tract, and, consequently, no one could fully appreciate the precise nature of Carrera's approach to war. In late 1838, only a year and a half into the conflict against the insurgents, Marure and those who commissioned his comparative study were unable to perceive that the rebel leader was evolving as a commander and employing a type of warfare for which they were not prepared, a military approach that combined classical guerrilla tactics with conventional combat. The inability of the government forces to understand Carrera's hybrid form of warfare would eventually bring about the collapse of the Liberal government in Guatemala and ultimately an end to the experiment of the Central American Confederation.

NOTES

1. Joseph Schneider, "On the Beginnings of Warfare," *Social Forces* 31, 1 (1952), 74 (Schneider 1952).
2. The Sumerians provide the first conclusive evidence of the emergence of organized warfare. *Ibid.*, 73.
3. Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Armies from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 16.
4. *Ibid.*, 14–15.
5. Raffaele D'Amato & Andrea Salimbeti, *Sea Peoples of the Bronze Age Mediterranean, c. 1400BC–1000BC* (New York: Osprey, 2015), 4–6 (D'Amato and Slimbeti 2015).
6. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 17.
7. Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356–323 B.C.: A Historical Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 357–358 (Green 1991).
8. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 35.
9. See Xenophon's description of the harassment suffered by his troops at the hands of the Carduchians in Asia Minor. Xenophon, *Anabasis* (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1998), IV, 3 (Xenophon 1998).
10. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 368–369.

11. Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical Study* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 7–8 (Laqueur 1975).
12. Given the series of complex alliances, betrayals, and political realignments over the course of 200 years, it is difficult to define what the Iberians, Celtiberians and Cantabrians viewed as “their land.” Often the different enemies of Rome (small kingdoms, independent city states, tribal alliances, or mountain bands) simply wanted the Romans out of their own territory, but there were instances of generalized uprising (as during the revolts of Viriatus) when the locals wanted the Romans out of the Peninsula. It is important, however, not to mistake generalized uprising with a national revolt in the modern sense of the word. There is no evidence that the Iberian natives embraced a concept of common nation or common people. It was actually the Romans who named the whole region Hispania and saw it as a unit.
13. When looking at the objectives of the Celtiberian struggle one is reminded of Mao’s general aims of guerrilla warfare: “1. Arousing and organizing the people. 2. Achieving internal unification politically. 3. Establishing bases. 4. Equipping forces. 5. Recovering national strength. 6. Destroying enemy’s national strength. 7. Regaining lost territories.” Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Quantico: U.S. Marine Corps, 1989), 43.
14. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 22.
15. Ibid.
16. The notion that the Iberians waged a guerrilla war against Roman forces has been challenged by Fernando Quezada-Sanz. The Spanish historian points out that the sources make reference to 20 pitched battles between 210 B.C. and 133 B.C. and that the locals presented formal battle usually as a first instance. “Spanish” soldiers participated in Hannibal’s invasion of Italy and his defense of Carthage, and these soldiers were troops of the line, i.e., troops that fought in formation using conventional infantry tactics. Quezada-Sanz attributes the misconception of Iberian warfare to the work of archaeologist and historian Adolf Schulten (1870–1960), nationalist interest during the Franco era, and a general tendency to equate the Celtiberian struggle to the War of Spanish Independence against Napoleon in the nineteenth century. Quezada-Sanz points out that the Roman conquest and pacification of Hispania took place in four phases over the course of 2000 years and that the nature of the struggle in each of these phases was significantly different. See Fernando Quezada-Sanz, “*Guerrilleros* in Hispania? The Myth of Iberian Guerrillas against Rome,” *Ancient Warfare* 2 (2011), 46–52 (Quezada-Sanz 2011).

17. Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. by J. Dryden (New York: Modern Library, 1990), 684–685 (Plutarch 1990).
18. Ibid., 685.
19. Ibid., 686.
20. When Metellus besieged the city of the Langobritae, Sertorius sent 2000 skins filled with water through mountain paths to assist the besieged. He then ambushed six thousand foraging Romans, killing three thousand of them. Ibid.
21. Sertorius set up ambushes along the roads and even outfitted vessels to conduct piratical operations along the coast of Hispania. Ibid., 692.
22. Ibid., 696.
23. Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, trans. by Samuel E. Turner (New York: American Book Company, 1880), 30–31 (Einhard 1880).
24. Ibid., 25–29.
25. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 12 (Laqueur 1975).
26. Ibid., 15.
27. For a full discussion on the origins and implementation of the *la petite guerre* see Sandrine Picaud-Monnerat, *La Petite Guerre au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editrice Economica, 2010) (Picaud-Monnerat 2010).
28. Walter Laqueur, “The Origins of Guerrilla Doctrine,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 10:3 (1975), 341–382 (Laqueur 1998).
29. Ibid., 342.
30. Some theoreticians in the eighteenth century acknowledged the “Oriental” origins of the constitution and tactic of hussars and other light cavalry troops in Central and Western European armies. Others, however, see the precedents to this approach to warfare in the “Kommandirte” of Gustavus Adolphus during the 30 Years’ War. Picaud-Monnerat, *La Petite Guerre*, 80, 137–138.
31. Armand François de La Croix, *Traité de la petite guerre pour le compagnies franches* (Paris: Boudet, 1752) (De La Croix 1752).
32. Ibid., 4.
33. Ibid., 7.
34. Ibid., 13.
35. Thomas-Auguste Le Roy de Grandmaison, *La Petite Guerre: ou Traité du Service des Troupes Légères en Campagne* (Frankfurt/ Leipzig: Knoch Esslinger, 1758), 6 (Grandmaison 1758).
36. Among the most influential writers on the subject of “small war” during this period are Roche Aymon, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, L.M. de Jeney, A. Emmerich, J. von Ewald, Georg Wilhelm von Valentini. When elaborating their theories, Emmerich and Ewald took into consideration the lessons of the American Revolution. See Laqueur, “The Origins of Guerrilla Warfare,” 44–46.

37. Ian Beckett, *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 251 (Beckett 2001).
38. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 23.
39. Ibid., 24.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 25.
42. Technically, the conflict in the Brittany and Maine region is called “the Chouannerie” and is often regarded as separate from the War in La Vendée; however, the causes of the uprising and the nature of the combat once the field armies were defeated are quite similar.
43. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 26.
44. Ibid., 27–28.
45. Ibid., 28.
46. Ibid., 29.
47. Vittorio Scotti Douglas, “La Guérilla Espagnole dans la Guerre contre l’Armée Napoléonienne,” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 36 (2004), 92 (Douglass 2004).
48. After the defeat of Austria, Prussia, and Russia in 1807 Napoleon imposed an economic blockade on Britain. Portugal’s long-standing relationship with the British represented a weak spot in the French effort to isolate them. Napoleon signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1807 allowing the French army to march through Spain to invade Portugal; Spain would get a portion of their neighbor’s territory. Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War 1807–1814: Concise Military History* (Penguin Books: London, 1974), 45 (Glover 1974).
49. During the period of the French invasion of Portugal, Spain was undergoing a dynastic crisis, and the country’s ability to make important political decisions had been undermined by the King’s corrupt Prime Minister, Godoy. Napoleon regarded the Spanish regime as unreliable and made the decision to replace the weak and unpopular Spanish king with his own brother, Joseph. Charles IV and his heir, Prince Ferdinand, were lured into Bayonne where they became Emperor’s unwilling guests. Spain then became a French satellite state ruled by Napoleon’s brother. By virtue of the Treaty of Fontainebleau France was allowed to station and march troops through Spain. So when the decision to replace the Bourbons and occupy the whole country was made, a substantial number of troops were already inside the country, posted in strategic locations. Ibid., 47–50. By February of 1808 there were already 65,000 troops inside Spanish territory under the command of Marshal Murat and the Duke of Berg. See Carlos Canales Torres, *Breve Historia de la Guerra de la Independencia Española* (Ediciones Nowtilus: Madrid, 2006), 36 (Canales Torres 2006).

50. The uprising and the reprisals have been movingly memorialized in the works of painter Francisco de Goya.
51. A French army of 27,000 men under General Dupont (1765–1840) was surrounded and forced to surrender by the forces of Francisco Castaños (1758–1852) and Theodor von Reding (1755–1809). The French suffered over 2000 casualties, and 17,150 men were captured, including their commander. Canales, *Guerra de Independencia*, 55–64.
52. Ronald Fraser, “Identidades sociales desconocidas: Las guerrillas españolas en la Guerra de la Independencia, 1808–1814,” *Historia Social* 46 (2003), 6 (Fraser 2003).
53. *Ibid.*, 4.
54. The account, *Historia de la Revolución Española*, is quoted in Charles Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon: Guerillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808–1814* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 4 (Esdaile 2004).
55. *Ibid.*, 5.
56. The phenomenon, in the case of Latin America, has been well documented by historian Juan Marchena Fernández in *Ejército y Milicias en el Mundo Colonial Americano* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992) (Marchena Fernández 1992).
57. Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon*, 28–29.
58. Fraser, “Identidades sociales,” 4.
59. *Ibid.*, 6–7.
60. *Ibid.*, 9.
61. Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon*, 54–55.
62. *Ibid.*, 56.
63. Juan López Campillo in the province of Santander and Pablo Morillo in Extremadura conducted operations similar to those of Ballesteros. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, 58.
65. *Ibid.*, 59.
66. Douglas, “La guérilla espagnole,” 95.
67. Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon*, 130.
68. Aside from plundering, the guerrilla bands obtained money from the delivery of dispatches or French prisoners to the regular forces. *Ibid.*, 130.
69. Douglas, 95–96.
70. Quoted by Esdaile in *Fighting Napoleon*, 131 and by Douglas in “La guérilla espagnole,” 96.
71. These estimates are provided by the studies of Jean Serramon and Ronald Fraser respectively. If we accept Rory Muir’s conservative estimate of 300,000 total French losses, the casualties inflicted by the guerrillas amount to a significant 33% of that total. Douglas, 96–97.

72. Douglas points out that the official correspondence of Joseph Bonaparte's administration bears the stamp "duplicado" or "triplicado," and acknowledgment that dispatches were intercepted often intercepted by the enemy. *Ibid.*, 99.
73. *Ibid.*, 101–102.
74. *Ibid.*, 102–103.
75. A comprehensive summary and analysis of the Latin American wars of independence is provided in John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1825* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986) (Lynch 1986).
76. In the Buenos Aires a regiment of *Patricios* (the local *creole* militia) played a crucial role in May of 1810 when the ruling Junta was constituted. *Ibid.*, 55.
77. *Ibid.*, 58.
78. Eight small *republiquetas* (little republics were formed), each one with its own leader and irregular army. John Fletcher, *The Wars of Spanish American Independence, 1809–1829*, (New York: Osprey, 2012), 52. See also Lynch, *Spanish American Revolutions*, 195 (Fletcher 2012).
79. Fletcher, *Wars*, 52.
80. *Gauchos* were cowboys of the Rio de la Plata region (Argentina and Uruguay). They were usually of *mestizo* or *pardo* background and worked temporarily for local *estancias* (ranches). The *gauchos* were expert horsemen and excellent combatants.
81. Fletcher, *Wars*, 53.
82. *Ibid.*, 56–59.
83. Lynch, *Spanish American Revolutions*, 195.
84. Fletcher, *Wars*, 38.
85. The *llaneros* were the Venezuelan counterpart to the *gauchos*. These free roaming horsemen, led by the Spaniard José Boves, had been crucial to the victory of the royalist troops. However, after the death of Boves in 1814 the *llaneros* came under the leadership of Páez and shifted their support towards the independence movement.
86. Brian Hamnett, "Popular Insurrection and Royalist Reaction: Colombian Regions, 1810–1823," in *The Wars of Independence in Spanish America*, ed. Christon I. Archer (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000), 59 (Hamnett 2000).
87. *Ibid.*, 60.
88. *Ibid.*, 62–63.
89. Timothy Henderson, *The Mexican Wars of Independence* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010) (Henderson 2010).
90. *Ibid.*, 73.

91. One the biggest revolts against the Spanish authorities prior to the Wars of Independence was the rebellion of Tupac Amaru in Peru. This revolt, which had the elements of a class and caste war, mobilized tens of thousands of rebels from mostly Indian background. However, in his study of the revolt Leon G. Campbell has shown that Tupac Amaru “placed military command firmly in the hands of loyal creoles and mestizos rather than Indians.” Leon G. Campbell, “Social Structure of the Túpac Amaru Army in Cuzco, 1780–1781,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, 4 (1981), 685 (Campbell 1981).
92. Henderson, *Mexican Wars*, 73, 76.
93. *Ibid.*, 92.
94. *Ibid.*, 108.
95. *Ibid.*, 114.
96. *Ibid.*, 154.
97. Bands of rebels took refuge in the remote mountains of Veracruz, and Vicente Guerrero (a former Morelos commander) organized a force in the area of Acapulco on the Pacific coast. *Ibid.*, 167.
98. Christon Archer, “La Militarización de la Política Mexicana,” in *Soldados del Rey: El ejército borbónico en América colonial en vísperas de la Independencia*, eds. Allan J. Kuethe and Juan Marchena Fernández (Barcelona: Universitat Jaume I, 2005), 257–262 (Archer 2005).
99. *Ibid.*, 170–172.
100. Daniel Sutherland quotes several citizens who were urging the authorities to allow the establishment of what explicitly call “guerrilla” groups to fight the Union troops. Daniel Sutherland, “Guerrilla Warfare, Democracy, and the Fate of the Confederacy,” *The Journal of Southern History*, 68, 2 (2002), 262–263 (Sutherland 2002).
101. *Ibid.*, 262.
102. *Ibid.*, 263.
103. James B. Martin, “Black Flag over the Bluegrass: Guerrilla Warfare in Kentucky, 1863–1865,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 86, 4 (1988), 352 (Martin 1988).
104. *Ibid.*, 353.
105. *Ibid.*, 352–353.
106. *Ibid.*, 357.
107. Martin points out that these raider forces’ main purpose on the part of the Confederate government was simply to inflict some pain upon the civilian population of the Union states. *Ibid.*, 365.
108. Sutherland claims that the historical role of guerrillas during the American Revolution was mythologized in the collective memory of Americans, and the image of revolutionary leaders like Francis Marion,

- Thomas Sumter, and Daniel Morgan created the notion (a false one) among Southerners that they could fight a “popular,” irregular war against the North. Sutherland, “Guerrilla Warfare,” 265–268.
109. Ibid., 274–275.
 110. The Great Trek started in 1836 and over the following decades several mini-republics were established by the Boers. Eventually these little entities coalesced into the independent states of Orange Free State and the South African Republic by the mid-nineteenth century. Byron Farwell, *The Great Boer War*, (Barnsley, U.K.: Pen and Sword, 2009), 7 (Farwell 2009).
 111. Ibid., 8.
 112. I. Knight, *Boer Commando, 1876–1902* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2004), 8–9 (Knight 2004).
 113. Farwell, *The Great Boer War*, 9.
 114. Incidentally, the revolt of the Transvaal Boers started after the British authorities confiscated the oxcart of a Boer farmer who had refused to pay what he considered were unfair taxes. During the auction of the oxcart, a large group of farmers assaulted the British official in charge and took away the oxcart. The arrival of troops that were sent to bring order to the region exacerbated the situation and soon led to an open armed confrontation. Ibid., 13–14.
 115. Significant deposits of diamonds and gold were found in the Transvaal, and this attracted a large number of *uitlanders* (foreigners) whose presence threatened to change the homogeneous fabric of Boer society. With the discovery of these valuable resources, the British began to put pressure on the South African republics with the intention to incorporate them into the Cape colony.
 116. Knight, *Boer Commando*, 27.
 117. By the time the war started in 1899, the Boers had 49,000 Mausers, 43,000 Martini-Henrys, 6000 Guedes, 2500 Lee-Metfords, and 100 Krag-Jørgensens. In addition to these, the two republics also acquired a small assortment of field artillery, such as 120 mm Krupp howitzers, 155 mm Creusot guns, and 37 mm Vickers-Maxims. Farwell, *The Great Boer War*, 44. The light field artillery was particularly effective. Ibid.
 118. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 187 (Boot 2013).
 119. Ibid.
 120. Ibid., 189.
 121. There were about 250,000 Boers living in the Cape Colony obedient to British rule. With a few exceptions, these Boers did not join the cause of their brethren in the independent republics. Ibid.
 122. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 90.

123. Unlike most to the Boer fighters and guerrilla leaders, Smuts was an educated man, and he used to carry a copy of Xenophon's *Anabasis* in his saddlebag. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 189.
124. Ibid., 189–191.
125. Farwell, *The Boer War*, 389–390.
126. Ibid.
127. Knight, *Boer Commando*, 43–45.
128. The Boers developed simple but effective mines that would detonate with the pressure of the train on the tracks. The British were never able to eliminate this danger throughout the conflict and were unable to run trains at night. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 90–91.
129. Farwell, *The Boer War*, 351–352.
130. Ibid., 352–353.
131. The number of farms burned was estimated at 30,000, and approximately 3.6 million sheep were slaughtered. Ibid., 353.
132. The death toll of the Cuban *campos de reconcentración* was approximately 100,000. The deaths were caused mainly by disease and malnutrition. Ibid.
133. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 193.
134. The British created a Field Intelligence Department that began to employ black Africans and Boer deserters who functioned as trackers and scouts for the mounted counterinsurgency units. Ibid., 195–196.
135. Farwell, *The Boer War*, 324.
136. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 196.
137. The terms of surrender were remarkably generous, and by 1910 the Union of South Africa with Boers at the helm. Ibid., 197.
138. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 92.
139. By ideological emblem I mean that the mode of conducting war itself becomes part of the self-image the movement. The concept of guerrilla war becomes synonymous with a just struggle that pins the oppressed against the oppressor, and the identity of the combatants assumes an almost mythological character that is projected through propaganda as the personification of national or civic virtue. Guerrilla warfare becomes not only the means towards liberation from the colonialist or the capitalist foe but also the manifestation of the popular political will.
140. The most prominent example of a pure guerrilla war was the uprising in La Vendée, and the results were disastrous for the insurgents and the local population. On the other hand, Spanish insurgents were quite successful in fighting the French, but their success could not have been absolute with their coexistence with the conventional Spanish army and the Anglo-Portuguese forces of Wellington.

141. "Recibo de la Memoria redactada por el señor Alejandro Marure por recomendación del gobierno de Guatemala," AGCA, B95.1. exp.84635 leg 3618.
142. Alejandro Marure, *Memoria sobre la insurrección de Santa Rosa y Mataquescuintla en Centro-América, comparada con la que estalló en Francia, en el año 1790, en los departamentos de la Vendée, et. (Guatemala: 1839), 18 (Marure 1839).*
143. Ibid., 3.

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