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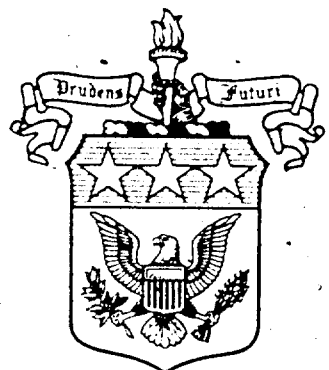
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# WINNING THE PEACE: THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF MILITARY CIVIC ACTION

Written and Edited by  
John W. De Pauw  
and  
George A. Luz

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Strategic Studies Institute  
U.S. Army War College

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# FOREWORD

Whatever the eventual outcome of the changing strategic situation in Europe, it is certain that the structure of the U.S. military will change. The challenge facing military leadership during the 1990s is to ensure that the changes are based on sound planning reflecting a clearly articulated national strategy. The authors of this book contribute to this planning by reviewing the utility of military civic action in achieving U.S. strategic objectives. The editors have selected the papers presented herein so that the reader can examine military civic action from many vantage points. Authors look at both the past and the future. Some are highly critical and others are enthusiastic. Some of the positions seem to be politically conservative and others liberal. In short, the editors have attempted to set the framework for a debate of the strategic importance of military civic action in the 1990s.

An important purpose of that debate is to explore a question which was first posed by our military intervention in Vietnam and which has remained unanswered to this day. Can a great power, especially if that great power has a national conscience and is influenced and inhibited by "world opinion," use its military forces to support democracy within a country where democracy is under threat? Because of the Vietnam experience, the United States has refused to even consider the question, and it was not until Grenada in 1983, and the intervention in Panama in 1989 that our country opened the question once more.

Another important theme of this book is the importance of civil-military relations. During the Vietnam years, ample evidence suggested poor civil-military relations at the highest levels in Washington. Our military leaders failed to get across the message that the U.S. strategy was not working and over time would probably fail to achieve stated U.S. objectives. With the formation of a new strategy during the 1990s, the United States has an unprecedented opportunity to build the kind of civil-military relations which are needed to avoid another Vietnam. The authors of this book go far in contributing to this effort.

They have done a thorough job of examining the strategic implications of military civic action. They have carefully analyzed, albeit from differing points of view, the governmental and non governmental impediments to undertaking military civic action in Third World countries. I commend this book as valuable reading for all interested in the development and implementation of the new U.S. geostrategy—military professional, government decision maker and academician.

Bruce Palmer, Jr.  
General, USA Retired

## FOREWORD

Our nation ended the 1980s with a dramatic victory in the cold war. This triumph of U.S. national strategy, sometimes called containment, for 40 years held against the threat of Soviet expansion. With the victory has come new challenges and responsibilities. Emerging democracies in Eastern Europe and in the Third World are but the symbols of victory for American post-war strategy. Consolidating that victory requires a continuing U.S. role and new strategies to strengthen democratic institutions. Military civic action can, in concert with other elements of U.S. strategy, be an effective means for achieving U.S. objectives around the globe.

The authors of this volume have examined in great detail the historical, tactical and strategic levels of military civic action. They have provided evidence that military civic action conducted by trained U.S. military personnel is of great value in providing the development necessary for achieving viable democracy in many Third World states.

Gabriel Marcella's and John Fishel's analyses, in particular, review some fundamental tenets of U.S. policy over the past decade and show, along with several other papers in this volume, that U.S. policy has changed from a dominant emphasis on human rights to linkage among democracy, development, defense and dialogue. The authors note that the link between U.S. policy for Third World countries, like those in Latin America, and the internal policies pursued by them, is political legitimacy. Without such legitimacy, government is vulnerable to challenge and cannot govern effectively.

This book's emphasis on Latin America reflects the greater opportunity for military civic action in the region covered by the U.S. Southern Command, due to its proximity to the United States and the potential low intensity conflict environment. The most remarkable development in Latin America during the economically "lost decade" of the 1980s is the region-wide process of redemocratization. Over 98 percent of the people of the region are ruled by civilian rather than military governments. Military civic action can be important in buttressing these new democracies against the pressures of economic depression. Not only can military civic action give underprivileged citizens confidence in their government, but it can also take advantage of the education, discipline and experience of its armed forces to build the infrastructure which these citizens need if they are to help themselves out of poverty. In the process, the armed forces have the opportunity to redefine themselves as an institution which is integral to the functioning of democracy. At the same time the military's role must be balanced carefully so that civilian institutions are not deprived of their legitimate functions and responsibilities.

The United States can best assist the process of redemocratization by standing firm on its own values and by being attentive to opportunities to assist. Because of the importance of the military within most Latin American countries, security assistance and military-to-military relations will remain among those opportunities. As funding for security assistance declines, U.S. efforts at influence must take new forms. The interaction between U.S. and Latin American military forces which takes place during military civic action is one of these forms. As Marcella emphasizes, civilian and military leaders, both in Latin America and the United States, need to find ways to incorporate military institutions as guardians of the nascent democracies.

In examining the strategic implications of military civic action, the authors have advanced our understanding of an important element of U.S. military strategy. This, in turn, should contribute to a greater sophistication in our approach to implementing our new geostrategy.

Fred F. Woerner, Jr.  
General, USA Retired

## PREFACE

Winning the right war as a concept evokes images of committing U.S. armed combat forces in massive numbers to fight for a just cause in a distant land. Yet, considering recent history and newly imposed congressional oversight, and the post-Vietnam reluctance to commit U.S. combat forces abroad, especially in Third World countries, direct combat intervention in countries like Panama may be an exceptional event. With this in mind, this book had its origins with the notion that civic action might have significant applicability for today's strategic environment. The authors of this volume are by no means in agreement that military civic action offers a panacea or is the only policy solution in troubled times. Nevertheless, their analysis is presented as a guide to the search for "winning the right war," which, in effect, is preserving the peace in a volatile, multipolar world. The object of this volume is to discuss the strategic implications of military civic action for today's U.S. Army to improve our collective understanding of what might be a key variable in supporting U.S. strategy for Third World conflict. All of the contributors are, or were, associated with the U.S. Army War College, or the U.S. Army, in one capacity or another. The views expressed in their respective contributions, however, are their own and do not represent an official policy or position of the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Government, or any of its agencies or departments.

It is important at the outset of this volume to thank the contributors for their varied insights and analyses of complex issues. I am also grateful to the U.S. Army War College and its Strategic Studies Institute for providing the collegial and rewarding professional environment in which issues of national security can be debated. Colonel John J. Hickey, Jr. and Dr. Gary L. Guertner in particular provided especially incisive comments. Special thanks are in order for Ms. Pat Bonneau and Ms. Shirley Shearer, who assisted in typing the manuscript, and Mrs. Marianne Cowling, who edited it, as well as Mrs. Barbara De Pauw, who spent countless hours assisting in the myriad of details associated with preparing this volume for publication.

John W. De Pauw  
George A. Luz

# CHAPTER 1

## UNDERSTANDING CIVIC ACTION

**John W. De Pauw**

The military has played a major role in the emergence of new nations that transcends combat missions and shapes the culture of the society of which it is a part.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the concept of "Military Civic Action" (MCA) is a formalized approach to what has gone on in an informal manner since the beginning of organized government. It is the process by which the military contributes to the social and economic development of a society.<sup>2</sup> As Kent Butts notes in Chapter 3 of this volume: "Greek and Roman soldiers had built roads, colonial armies had established public works, and in the U S , the Army Corps of Engineers helped to settle the frontier and maintain transport arteries; why shouldn't African militaries help build their countries?" The important point is that in the process of aiding civilians in any Third World country, the host country military can increase popular support and credibility for itself, as well as for the established government, and at the same time contribute in a significant way to the development of that country.

This volume is about military personnel working with civilians on projects which advance the nation. Most of the discussion centers around projects in which U.S. military assist host nation military in working with host nation civilians, but there is also some coverage of U.S. humanitarian assistance, "home front" MCA (U.S. military working with U.S. civilians), and unilateral MCA (U.S. military working directly with host nation civilians as in the case of Panama beginning in 1990).

Despite the title, this volume is not a paean to MCA. Certainly not all of the authors of this volume accept MCA without criticism. In the real world, MCA undertaken by U.S. forces is not without risks, as pointed out by Sutter in Chapter 9. For example, MCA can sometimes risk widening involvement and association with a regime that, in the end, does not deserve U.S. support. Activities such as building roads, digging water wells and treating the sick may relieve suffering and improve social conditions; indeed, such MCA activities may contribute to the popularity of the local government and the indigenous military forces. Yet, it is very possible that they may not contribute much to the very economic and political stability of the country or region that the United States seeks to promote. Short-term tactical success may be evident but the requisite strategic success necessary to achieve U.S. policy objectives may be uncertain. The battle may be won, but the war irretrievably lost.

If MCA is so risky, why bother with it? Why do we expect you, the reader, to waste your precious time to delve into this subject? Our answer is, "The time is right!" Not since the formal recognition of MCA as a tool in U.S. military strategy 30 years ago has there been such an opportunity for using MCA. In this volume, strategy is characterized as consisting of objectives, ways and means. Simply expressed, strategy equals ends (objectives towards which one strives) plus ways (courses of action) plus means (instruments by which some end can be achieved).<sup>3</sup>

MCA then, is used herein to denote one of the instruments for utilizing this nation's military might to further its military strategy.

Our nation ended the 1980s with a great triumph of national strategy—the dramatic victory in the cold war. But with victory in containing the threat of Soviet expansionism come new challenges and responsibilities. Emerging democracies in Eastern Europe and in the Third World are the symbols of victory for American post-war strategy. Consolidating that victory, however, requires a continuing U.S. role and new strategies to support U.S. interests in consolidating new and old democratic institutions. In concert with other elements of U.S. strategy, MCA can be an effective means for achieving U.S. objectives around the globe—in effect, a new Geostrategy.

## MCA AND THE NEW GEOSTRATEGY

At the same time, the U.S. victory in the cold war has raised questions about the continued role of military strategy as part of our national strategy. With such a heavy emphasis on the importance of Europe, many in the media and the Congress have decided that it is time to make dramatic cuts in military funding. In response to the proposed FY91 Defense Budget, these power centers threw down the gauntlet, challenging the President and Secretary of Defense to provide a strategic concept to back up future requests for funding. For example, John Glenn, a senator whose thought was forged as a career military officer, observed that there had been "no reference to strategy and no references to what the threat is."<sup>4</sup> Senator Glenn's concern with the dearth of strategic concepts was shared by Senator Nunn, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.<sup>5</sup> *The New York Times* echoed congressional concern when its editorialist warned "to avoid chopping haphazardly, its cuts will have to be guided by a new defense policy, one that reassesses threats for the 1990's and provides the forces needed to meet them."<sup>6</sup>

Within the Army, the challenge was not ignored. With the strong support of the Chief of Staff, General Vuono, Army planners started working on tailoring the force to support new strategic concepts. Doctrine issued in October 1989, "The U.S. Army: A Strategic Force for the 1990s and Beyond," called for a smaller force based primarily in the continental United States and centered around the XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg and III Corps at Fort Hood.<sup>7</sup> Such a force appeared to be designed to support the strategy endorsed by a number of U.S. strategic experts, including Zbigniew Brzezinski. In discussing America's new geostrategy, Brzezinski recommended that the United States,

rely to greater extent on a more flexible mix of nuclear and even nonnuclear strategic forces capable of executing more selective military missions. The central purpose of the strategy of discriminate deterrence is to heighten the credibility of American threats to respond to aggression by increasing the spectrum of effective responses to such aggression, short of the inherently improbable option of simply committing national suicide.<sup>8</sup>

Brzezinski's strategic thinking on low intensity conflict (LIC) further underscored the importance of the direction being taken by the Army.

The most probable threat stems from what are called low-intensity conflicts in areas where American forces are not permanently deployed. Thus, the United States must place less emphasis on

prepositioned forces in foreign bases and more on lighter forces, supported by enhanced air-and sea-lift capabilities, poised for a prompt long-distance response.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of highly mobile forces designed for selective military missions has great appeal. Recent applications of this concept, such as the bombing attack against Libya, the invasion of Grenada and the invasion of Panama, were not only strategically successful but also widely supported by the American public.

Yet this cannot be the entire picture. Each use of force leads to some negative strategic consequences in terms of world opinion, and with repeated use of the same strategic means, we can expect the negative consequences to outweigh the positive.<sup>10</sup> MCA, as it is described by the various authors in this volume, is one of the alternatives needed to mitigate and temper the negative consequences of the use of military force in a world where threats to U.S. interests have not vanished. To accomplish this, strategies for low intensity conflict (LIC) rely heavily on the supporting capabilities of MCA.

For purposes of this volume, LIC means any political-military confrontation between contending states, or groups, below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. LIC ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. As noted above, MCA can be one instrument for assisting friendly foreign countries to establish and maintain an adequate defense posture in LIC. Such conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications.<sup>11</sup> Among the dynamic forces that contribute to LIC are change, discontent, poverty, violence and instability. They interact to create an environment that spawns LIC.

## **FACTS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

LIC is a fact. How to fight LIC involves assumptions. LIC is the starting point for our interest in MCA. With the exception of Gaillard, all of the authors in this volume start with the assumption that MCA has a place in counterinsurgency, the broadest challenge under the LIC umbrella. Each author develops that assumption in a slightly different context. Nevertheless, a common working thesis of this volume is that the only lasting U.S. intervention in the affairs of another country is one that can be "owned" by both the citizens and the institutions of that country. As will be clear from the overview given in Chapter 2, there is a clear historical relationship between MCA and counterinsurgency. Two assumptions should be noted at the outset. The first is that insurgency results at least in part from the articulated dissatisfaction arising out of underdevelopment and unfulfilled expectations. If we assume this, then it follows that counterinsurgency must relate itself to economic development and fulfillment of expectations. The second assumption is that in many of the poorer Third World countries, social and economic development cannot proceed effectively without the productive nonmilitary use of military forces, that is, without military civic action. Thus, a successful counterinsurgency program depends, at least in part, on some form of aid to the indigenous military which may be manifested in part in military civic action. There is, in other



words, a direct relationship between social and economic development, military civic action and successful counterinsurgency.

These two assumptions are implicit in every chapter but two, those of Sutter and Gaillard. Each in their own way provide a counterpoint to the argument. Sutter challenges us to go beyond the simplistic assumption that economic deprivation is at the root of all insurgencies. The point of Sutter's chapter is not to deny the applicability of MCA, but to sharpen the planner's concept of when to use this tool. Sutter warns us to be prepared for the revolutionary aspect of MCA and possible unwanted results. Gaillard suggests that the history of civic action, especially in Latin America, with its linkage to Counterinsurgency and Low Intensity Conflict doctrine, has tarnished the idealistic qualities of the concept and has ultimately been counterproductive to fostering a future role for the Army in Latin America.

## **REPEATING PAST SUCCESSES AND AVOIDING PAST MISTAKES**

The chapters in this volume link the historical, tactical and strategic levels of MCA. The only common theme which unites them is "repeating past successes and avoiding past mistakes." Four of the chapters are primarily historical. These include the overview in Chapter 2, African civic action (Chapter 3), civic action by Reserve Components and Latin American military participation in the democratic process (Chapter 7), and medical civic action in Vietnam (Chapter 9). Laying out twelve criteria for successful MCA, De Pauw and Luz show that most were violated in the U.S. application of MCA in South Vietnam. They then show how the failure led to a repudiation of MCA in strategic planning.

Greenhut's documentation of medical MCA in Vietnam shows that the failure was not due to incompetence at the tactical level, thus reinforcing the thesis that the failure in Vietnam was strategic. Also reinforcing this thesis is the demonstration by Butts that the same degree of effort can be highly successful in a setting such as Africa. Similarly, Robertson and Luz provide evidence that MCA, conducted in the context of Reserve Component training exercises in Latin America, provides benefits to the host nation and training value to the Reserve Components. It is important to note that the successes described for Africa and Latin America are in countries with receptive military institutions and low levels of LIC. The fact that not all militaries are the same and that each functions in a different LIC environment is underscored by Marcella's analysis of Latin American military institutions.

Marcella's analysis of the respective militaries ties into the thesis of Fishel and Cowan. They maintain that "over the past decade, U.S. policy has evolved from a singular emphasis on human rights to the four D's—democracy, development, defense and dialogue. According to the authors, the end state suggested by the "four D's" policy includes:

- democratic governments freely elected by the people of those nations—national and local governments with financial and human resources and competitive elections.
- nations that are developing socioeconomic infrastructures.

- nations whose armed forces are capable and professional enough to deal effectively and humanely with insurrectional threats to their security.
- nations prepared to solve their internal and external problems at the conference table rather than by force of arms.

It follows that the link between U.S. policy for Third World countries, like those in Latin America, and the internal policies pursued by them, is the political legitimacy for the government suggested by the "four D's." A lack of such legitimacy, suggest Fishel and Cowan, is that "the government is extremely vulnerable to challenge because it cannot govern effectively." If it is corrupt within its own cultural context, it will have little popular support. Marcella's analysis, which represents an updating of an analysis originally written in 1986, underscores this point for the Panamanian Defense Forces.

Many of the points made by Fishel and Cowan are repeated by Barlow in his campaign planner's guide for the employment of civil affairs in Latin America. Included in his list of 10 conditions to achieve strategic goals are "an incorrupt and competent security force," provision of "justice and protection to the people," and "regional cooperation." Barlow's chapter differs from Fishel and Cowan's in placing more emphasis on tactics than strategy. Again, both chapters emphasize ways to avoid the errors which led to strategic failures in the past.

The emphasis on Latin America was not accidental, since the opportunity for MCA is greatest in the U.S. Southern Command, due to its proximity to the United States and the potential LIC environment. In his review of strategy in the 1990s, Brzezinski warns that "unless the United States can soon fashion a bipartisan and comprehensive response to the mushrooming Central American crisis, it is quite likely that in the years ahead the region will pose for the American public the most preoccupying challenge, diverting America from its other global concerns."<sup>12</sup> Gaillard's chapter documents the past failures to forge a bipartisan strategy for Latin America and underscores the importance of finding one in the future.

At the same time, Latin America is high on the list of new opportunities for MCA. Luz, in his chapter on MCA in the 1990s, discusses some of these opportunities, including U.S. strategic interest in preserving of the environment, and "home front" MCA in support of the national effort against drug use. Gaillard also notes in her chapter that civic assistance projects can advance the interests of the United States while assisting Third World countries teetering on bankruptcy. Moreover, Gaillard points out, these opportunities are opening at a time when civic action projects by the U.S. military are severely constrained by law and misunderstood by the general public.

The new opportunities suggested by Luz and Gaillard would require organizational changes. This need has been recognized by our authors as well as others. In particular, we advise our readers to examine an Army War College paper by Lundberg and Martin.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing that another reason for past failures of MCA has been a lack of an effective working relationship between the State Department and the Department of Defense, these authors, in their analysis of the engineer contribution, suggest an organizational structure. Their starting point is the Low Intensity Conflict Board. Although one can debate whether their proposed structure is the most suitable, it can serve as a "straw man" in exploring the best way to develop a unity of effort in

response to LIC. Unity of effort is one of the five imperatives for success in responding to LIC which have been highlighted by the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict.<sup>14</sup> The multidimensional (military, political, economic and social) reality of LIC requires an integrated national policy and strategy. Without such a policy, MCA loses its punch.

## INVITATION TO A STRATEGY

"Winning the peace," for purposes of this volume, implies the careful, discriminate use of U.S. forces toward a longer range military strategy in support of U.S. interests in the Third World. The armed forces in many underdeveloped regions of the world have an edge in accomplishing certain developmental tasks by virtue of their training and organization. Therefore, winning the peace means using small, trained, skilled U.S. units indirectly to complement U.S. security assistance. In the past, we have not had the personnel to do the job. Now, with the changing strategic emphasis, there is a golden opportunity for redeploying some personnel to support MCA.

"Winning the peace" means exploiting the potential of these trained U.S. units to help friendly forces help themselves and their country, particularly if engaged in countering an insurgency within the country. In this kind of struggle—for hearts and minds—the stealth of the wise and sensitive operator is more to be desired than the aggressive and arrogant attitude of the victor on the field of combat. This "new" battlefield in the developing Third World is not typically a place of clear and final victories upon which the colossus may stride at will, but rather a place in which the continuing political and economic interests of the United States may be secured by judicious action. Prominent on this battlefield, then, is the "weapon" or technique of military civic action. In the words of the father of MCA, Edward G. Lansdale, "with it [civic action] as an ally, a good soldier can attain military success. Ignoring it, he is headed for trouble."<sup>15</sup> Our hope is that you, our reader, carefully consider the arguments for MCA, and that we have assembled a sufficient number of those arguments for a rational invitation to a new strategy. If the next "war" is an economic one, the United States stands to benefit from stable Third World regimes, friendly to the United States and moving forward towards economic development. In the words of Joseph Nye, "We are bound to lead."<sup>16</sup>

## NOTES

1 For an excellent scholarly essay on this subject see Morris Janowitz, *Military in the Development of New Nations—An Essay in Comparative Analysis*, Chicago, IL. University of Chicago Press, 1964, also see John J. Johnson, *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press, 1963.

2 Major General William B. Rosson, "Understanding Civic Action," *Army*, July 1963, p. 46. This definition will be examined in detail in Chapter 2.

3 For more on this theme see Arthur F. Lykke, Jr., "Defining Military Strategy," in *Military Review*, May 1989, pp. 3-4.

4 John Glenn as quoted by William Matthews, "For the Military. A Growing Sense of Anxiety," *Army Times*, 1 January 1990, p. 8.

5. Charles W. Cordry, "Nunn Calls Defense Cuts Budgetary, Not Strategic," *The Baltimore Sun*, 26 November 1989, p. 3.

6. Editorial, "National Defense: Against What?", *The New York Times*, 8 January 1990, p. 23.

7. Carl E. Vuono, General, U.S. Army, Chief of Staff, "A Strategic Force. For the 1990s and Beyond," Washington, DC: Department of the Army, January 1990. See also, Peter Koch, "Will Strategy or Deficits Drive Budget," *Army Times*, 1 January 1990, p. 24.

8. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "America's New Geostrategy," in Ray C. Rist, ed., *Policy Issues for the 1990s, Policy Studies Review Annual*, Volume 9, Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989, p. 402.

9. *Ibid.*

10. For example, the invasion of Panama seriously damaged Latin American support for the U.S. military role in the interdiction of drugs, and the United States was left with the difficult task of rebuilding the government to the point that it can protect itself against the remnants of a corrupted military.

11. Department of the Army, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, FM 100-20 AFP 3-20*, Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force, December 1989.

12. Brzezinski, p. 409.

13. LTC Tommy A. Lundberg and LTC Robert N. Martin, *Third World Developmental Assistance. The Engineer Contribution*, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 17 March 1989.

14. "Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict," Report by the Regional Conflict Working Group submitted to the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1988.

15. Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale, "Civic Action Helps Counter the Guerrilla Threat," *Army Information Digest*, June 1962, p. 51.

16. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead. The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1990.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE ROLE OF THE TOTAL ARMY IN MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: A SYNOPSIS

John W. De Pauw and George A. Luz

Military civic action (MCA) is a component of military strategy perfected in the 1950s, misused in the 1960s, ignored in the 1970s, and revived in the 1980s. The purpose of this chapter is to give an historic overview of the shifting emphasis within MCA. More detailed views of MCA in specific areas of the world are provided in later chapters along with some predictions for the 1990s. An important focus of this chapter is a description of how lessons learned from the past 35 years bear on the ways Army planners articulate their civic action plans within the larger spheres of the Department of Defense's military strategy; the State Department's economic, political and sociopsychological strategy; the U.S. Congress' perception of national values; and, the Executive Branch's translation of those values into policy. The recognition of the delicate relations between these power centers will be essential if MCA is to become a meaningful strategic tool in the 1990s.

### DEFINITIONS

Much of the past confusion about the proper role of military civic action arose from a lack of definition. The only definition of MCA used in this chapter is the one described in *FM 41-10, Civil Affairs Operations* and defined in *JCS Pub 1*:

The use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation, and others contributing to economic and social development which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population.<sup>1</sup>

This definition distinguishes military civic action from the larger arena of civic action conducted by the Agency for International Development (AID). Whereas AID projects cover all of the same fields (and others as well), the indigenous persons employed in AID projects are almost always from other agencies of the national governments, from local governments, or from the populace itself.

It also differentiates military civic action from the humanitarian assistance conducted by preponderantly U.S. forces in response to earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters. Although disaster relief can fall within the category of "mitigating military civic action" as defined by Fishel and Cowan,<sup>2</sup> its inclusion depends on whether there is a major involvement by indigenous troops.

Similarly, this distinguishes military civic action from the humanitarian assistance conducted by preponderantly U.S. Forces to develop and restore the needed infrastructure and recurrent services for populations in developing countries. For example, the construction of a Vietnamese children's hospital by the Navy Seabees with equipment donated by U.S. charities and staffing through the Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP)<sup>3</sup> was a highly commendable form of humanitarian assistance which falls outside the definition. Although the goal of such an effort overlaps the goals of "developmental military civic action" as defined by Fishel and Cowan, the lack of indigenous troop participation excludes it from the definition. Our focus on the fine points of definition goes beyond the academic to one of the central points of this volume—that the only lasting U.S. intervention in the affairs of another country is one that can be "owned" both by the citizens and the institutions of that country.

## HISTORICAL ROOTS

The historical roots of the Army's experience with military civic action go back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Although the labels and definitions did not exist at that time, the process (indigenous troops working on nonmilitary projects) and outcome (nation building) were the same. As in today's military civic action in less developed countries (LDC), the major contributions were from the medical and engineering branches. Bridge builders and road developers such as John Fremont and pioneers in public health such as Walter Reed laid the foundation for the emergence of the United States as a world power in the 20th century.<sup>4</sup>

By the time of World War II, a propensity toward military civic action was already part of the fabric of the U.S. soldier. The first sustained and concerted U.S. military civic action plan, the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK), "provided a medium for coordinating the spontaneous generosity of troops with public assistance programing and furnished the Koreans more adequate means for helping themselves."<sup>5</sup> The emphasis of AFAK was on schools, hospitals, civic buildings, land reclamation, and improvement of public health and transportation facilities. This was a team effort in which Korean civic leaders stated the requirements, Korean agencies furnished local materials and labor, and the United States provided engineering skills, equipment, and supplies. By 1962, AFAK had completed 4,527 projects with a valuation of \$71,042,419. The U.S. investment needed to generate this value had been \$22,005,063.<sup>6</sup> The lesson learned in Korea was so impressive that the early Army proponents for military civic action in other developing countries spoke of "AFAK for other nations."<sup>7</sup>

The lesson of AFAK was not lost within the political establishment. Congress funded the Draper Committee to study the usefulness of military civic action.<sup>8</sup> Acting as secretary to this committee was one of the key military officers in AFAK, Colonel Robert Slover. The consensus between military and civilian leaders which emerged at that time is well-documented by Harry Walterhouse from speeches in 1961 by Secretary of the Army Stahr, General Collins, Lieutenant General Hamlett, and Major General Bogart, and in 1962 by Secretary of Defense McNamara, Secretary of the Army Vance, Army Chief of Staff General Wheeler, Vice Chief General Hamlett, and Commander-in-Chief Caribbean Command Lieutenant General O'Meara.<sup>9</sup> Contributing to the military-civilian consensus that military civic action was desirable was the Philippine experience of the special assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Colonel

Edward G. Lansdale, who, as Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence at Armed Forces Western Pacific, had "become brother, friend and dominant counselor to Ramon Magsaysay in the Philippines and Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam."<sup>10</sup> Magsaysay's successful effort against the Communist-funded Huks served as a textbook example of a military civic action originating from within a democratic country and funded by the United States.<sup>11</sup>

## MILITARY-CIVILIAN CONSENSUS

The military-civilian consensus began in the Executive Branch, but by the time of President Kennedy's assassination, Congress had joined the consensus. President Kennedy had stated: "The new generation of military leaders has shown an increasing awareness that armies cannot only defend their countries—they can help to build them."<sup>12</sup> In 1965, Congress backed this optimism by adding a fifth objective of military assistance to Section 505 of the Military Assistance Act of 1961. To prevent overlap with the relatively new Agency for International Development activated on November 4, 1961, Congress restricted the objectives to "the military forces of less developed countries or to the voluntary efforts of U.S. military personnel stationed in such countries" with participation "limited to the construction of public works and other activities helpful to economic development." The committee wanted "to make clear that civic action programs are to be neither extensive nor expensive," and they did so by ensuring that foreign indigenous military forces not be established solely for civic action, that civic action not detract from the primary defense mission, and that the programs be "coordinated with and form part of the total economic development effort of the country."<sup>13</sup> To ensure coordination, Congress recommended a formula in which the military assistance program funded the costs related to training with AID picking up costs for nonmilitary labor, permanent equipment and consumable supplies.

Even as the consensus became institutionalized in the amended Foreign Assistance Act, it began to unravel. In the minority report, critics complained of military assistance funds being used to buy a 225 ton-per-hour rock-crushing unit to build superhighways in Brazil. The minority pointed out that "the concept that civic action projects bring about better understanding between military personnel and the populace of villages, towns, and interior areas, while benefiting the area economically, is defeated by projects of this nature."<sup>14</sup> The U.S. military presence as a new player in the civic action arena also posed a threat to the new AID bureaucracy which was receiving approximately 0.8 percent of the Federal budget as compared to a much larger percentage devoted for national defense.<sup>15</sup> Finally, military civic action was failing to reverse the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam.<sup>16</sup>

## VIETNAM

As the 1960s began, a number of MCA projects were being conducted in southeast Asian countries. By the end of that decade, the successes in one of these countries, Thailand, had been overshadowed by the failures in the others, particularly South Vietnam. A detailed historical account of the medical MCA in Vietnam is provided by Greenhut in another chapter, and civil affairs in Vietnam during the period 1962-66 has been summarized elsewhere by De Pauw.<sup>17</sup>

Our purpose here is to review some of the problems which arose in the implementation of MCA in South Vietnam. To discuss these problems, we first will digress to provide a framework for the analysis. The framework for understanding the failure is a set of 12 requirements drawn from the writings of Lieutenant Colonel John T. Little in Laos as quoted by Brigadier General Edward Lansdale,<sup>18</sup> North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap,<sup>19</sup> Paul Braim's civic action guide for Vietnam,<sup>20</sup> Khuri's analysis of civic military relations in the Middle East,<sup>21</sup> and the authors of the other chapters. When the set of 12 criteria are compared with the history of MCA in Vietnam, there is failure on most points.<sup>22</sup> Where appropriate below, brief mention of pertinent illustrations from the Vietnam experience relevant to the 12 criteria will be made.

## CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL MCA

- A government willing to represent the interests of all citizens. Nations in which discrimination against one tribal, ethnic or religious group has been institutionalized within one or more parts of the government will continue to experience LIC.

The government of South Vietnam was not prepared to represent the interests of all citizens. Sheehan traces the failure of the United States to recognize this problem to Lansdale. "Lansdale thought the Catholic refugees from the North were Vietnamese patriots who had 'fought for their country's freedom from the French' until they discovered that they were being hoodwinked in a Communist conspiracy and so were fleeing south to create a new life of liberty there...He saw nothing inappropriate about having a Catholic as a president of what he perceived to be a Free Vietnam."<sup>23</sup> In fact, the Catholic minority were perceived by Vietnamese nationalists as the people who had helped the French enslave their country. The Catholic government's use of force to suppress the Cao Dai and Hoa Hoa sects, and then the Buddhist leadership, only served to reinforce the perception that the interests of all citizens were not represented, thereby guaranteeing continued unrest.<sup>24</sup>

- The existence of a military institution. If a nation's military consists of loosely-organized fortune hunters who happen to wear a common uniform, there is no point to instilling new values and relationships toward the indigenous population.

Sheehan concludes that the Vietnamese military did not exist as a distinct national institution. Among the institutional problems uncovered by John Paul Vann were absence of an unbroken chain of command and delegated authority from the civilian government through each layer of military command, a tendency to protect the political leadership rather than the nation, noncooperation between rival units, avoidance of combat to avert incurring losses, avoidance of training, a requirement for graft as a supplement to military wages, and disincentives for maintaining unit strength.<sup>25</sup>

- A military institution open to change. Although the military institution is a prerequisite, MCA will fail if that institution is not open to transformation into a democratic model. For example, a military institution which is dominated by members of an oligarchy would not likely be open to democratic models. In this case, MCA funds would probably be wasted.



This criterion did not apply in South Vietnam, since the institution was so fragmented as to not have a common identity and sense of purpose.

- A receptivity of the military to productive labor: The tension between military status and physical labor must be resolved differently in every military institution. Even within the U.S. Army, there are unwritten but understood norms about officers engaging in physical labor. However, if a military institution has developed this norm to such an extreme that physical labor is "looked down upon," then MCA will fail to build cohesion.
- Projects which fill perceived needs: A project not desired by the indigenous population will not aid national cohesion. According to Braim, the ideal project is one actively requested by the people.<sup>26</sup> Where popular knowledge is insufficient to make appropriate requests for civic assistance, the people should approve the project which is to be conducted in their area.

The problem with MCA in rural South Vietnam was not so much a failure to choose projects filling perceived needs as one of balance between perceived gains and losses. The economic benefits of MCA projects were overshadowed by the economic chaos resulting from the influx of U.S. troops. At all levels, military personnel failed to recognize that all of their actions were political actions. To a great degree, the U.S. forces were handicapped by their own cultural backgrounds in sorting out the differences between their own threadbare perceptions of South Vietnam's needs and the perceptions of the rural populace.

- Projects which can be completed within a designated time frame: Little urged practitioners to have all the materials on hand before beginning the project.<sup>27</sup> Finding projects to fit within a short time frame was not a real problem in South Vietnam. The problem was with the larger time frame of applying MCA in a LIC environment. At the same time that funding for MCA was being reduced, firepower was destroying rural agriculture. Thus, the "window of opportunity" for applying MCA was lost.
- Projects which can be maintained by the local populace or its military: Braim emphasized that a project should be able to be sustained, once initiated.<sup>28</sup> MCA projects were also marred by the failure to plan for their maintenance by the local populace. In the case of medical MCA, there was no structure on which to build medical maintenance. In another chapter of this volume, Greenhut notes, "There were problems with pharmaceuticals for children, and American medical officers, used to a richer and more advanced medical system, had trouble adjusting to a limited pharmacopeia and a generally primitive supporting Vietnamese medical system....Doctors were few and badly trained. and hospitals did not meet even rudimentary levels of plumbing and sanitation." Greenhut also notes that "in some areas, revisits were difficult and without revisits, the medical effectiveness of the visits was very limited." MEDCAP efforts were not directed at training Vietnamese paramedics until 1968-69. AID had the idea much earlier, starting in 1962. However, by the time the problems were worked out among the AID, Vietnamese and DOD bureaucracies, the battle for the hearts and minds of the people was already being lost.

- A willingness of the indigenous populace to sacrifice for the project: Little advised, "Always make the villagers share the workload. Let them know that all these projects are village projects, not U.S. help for the helpless. Once you do one project all by yourself, the villagers will forever expect this from your team."<sup>29</sup> Braim recommended the use of materials owned by the people.<sup>30</sup> The willingness of the local populace in Vietnam to sacrifice for completion of MCA projects was, in some instances, diminished by the lack of trust toward both the ARVN and the U.S. Forces. For most of the populace there was little reinforcement for collective sacrifice. In an anecdote about that era, Auletta described a village located in a marshy area whose inhabitants were queried by an Army representative about whether the people would like some fill to construct raised paths as walkways. When the fill was delivered, the villagers wanted the Americans to spread the fill. They didn't, and the pile remained in the same place for months.<sup>31</sup>
- Communication link between host government and the populace: If the populace comes directly to the U.S. Forces with their requests, national cohesion is not only unchanged but it may even be undermined. Braim emphasized, by way of example, that to establish good communication links all contact with the people of an area should be made through local agencies of the government and civic assistance should be conducted through and with the cooperation of local agencies.<sup>32</sup> In Vietnam, Hanning notes that the utility of MCA projects was undermined by the lack of a credible communication link between the local populace and the host government and that from the beginning of the war there were few indigenous local officials of even the humblest ranks.<sup>33</sup>
- Appropriate Publicity: Braim noted that appropriate publicity should be designed to give credit to the local government and to military and civil agencies participating in the project, with the U.S. Forces remaining in the background.<sup>34</sup> When the U.S. troops become too involved in a project there is no way to give credit to the host nation.
- Mutual respect and friendship between troops: If the relationship between the host nation and U.S. military personnel is not based on mutual respect, the host nation troops are likely to sabotage the process. In Vietnam, mutual respect and friendship between the U.S. and ARVN troops varied widely. In the early stages of the conflict, it was possible for the two forces to respect each other,<sup>35</sup> but as the conflict escalated, the bankruptcy of the ARVN officer corps led to a breach of trust, manipulation and counter-manipulation by both parties.
- U.S. patience and restraint: U.S. culture emphasizes speed. From our derogation of "Sunday drivers" to societal awards given to Type A personalities, we are compulsively driven by the clock. When frustrated by the slower pace of older cultures, we are prone to take over and do the task ourselves. In Vietnam, as the U.S. Forces became more committed to winning the hearts and minds of the people of South Vietnam, they became increasingly impatient with the inertia of the indigenous military. In a 1967 perspective of civic action in Vietnam, Glick observed "because Americans are impatient people, judging themselves and others by the ability to get quick results, there is great pressure on American military personnel working in civic action to do rather than to teach or advise. This is especially true in insurgency-devastated areas like South Vietnam."<sup>36</sup>

As the U.S. Forces took on more and more of the work, the nation-building efforts stopped being civic action and became unilateral humanitarian assistance in which there was no return on the investment (e.g., the tripling of return on investment in AFAK) and indefinite requirements.

By the way of summary, the short rise and fall of civic action in South Vietnam are mirrored by the funding data shown in Table 1. In part, these data reflect a congressional enthusiasm about civic action in FY 63 with a trailing off in FY 64 and beyond. By March 1964, U.S. policy makers knew that the insurgency problem required more far-reaching counterinsurgency techniques than military civic action.<sup>37</sup>

#### THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS PER FY

	<u>FY 62</u>	<u>FY 63</u>	<u>FY 64</u>	<u>FY 65</u>	<u>FY 66</u>
Total Funds	14,904	60,406	14,547	12,714	10,238
Vietnam Only	3,900	35,343	1,132	25	32
All Others	11,004	25,063	13,415	12,689	10,206

Source: Foreign Assistance Act of 1966, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 89th Cong., 2nd sess., on H.R. 12499 and H.R. 12450, May 10, 11, 12, and 17, 1966, Part VI, p. 6.

Table 1. Funding Trends in Military Civic Action: FY62 - FY66.

## MCA AND U.S. CONGRESS

By 1967, Congress had withdrawn from the consensus on the usefulness of military civic action. As the values in Table 1 demonstrate, funding was reduced for all MCA, not just in Vietnam. Because the MCA strategy had failed, it was perceived, perhaps correctly, as a vehicle for escalation. The distrust of MCA is underscored by the Congressional Record. Senator Fulbright, after hearing testimony on foreign assistance from U.S. religious leaders, commented,

I am not willing to continue on this basis. I am perfectly willing to give funds to the international organizations. It would disassociate the program from the kind of policies that finally end up in a war in Vietnam. Our involvement there started out as an aid program. It never occurred to me when I started supporting the aid program 10 or 15 years ago that I was going to finally be confronted with it as a kind of justification for our military involvement. That is what bothers me very much, because I certainly have been a party to it. I voted for aid year after year, believing that it would contribute to a more peaceful world, not to a crusade, an ideological crusade.<sup>38</sup>

Loss of the committee's historical memory about the benefits of military civic action was apparent from Senator Wayne Morse's questions to Secretary of Defense McNamara about the need for funding equipment for two Philippine Engineering Construction Battalions. After Secretary McNamara had explained the connection between Philippine military civic action and the containment of the Huk threat, Senator Morse retorted, "Whether good or bad, it seems to me

that it ought to be characterized as economic aid. This provides no military assistance to the Western defense, it seems to me."<sup>39</sup>

The antipathy shown by the Senate was mirrored by the House during its hearing on the 1967 Foreign Assistance Act. An exchange between Vice Admiral L. C. Heinz, Director of the Military Assistance Program, and Representative F. Bradford Morse (Massachusetts), illustrates the negative feedback being received by the U.S. military leadership.<sup>40</sup> In the exchange Mr. Morse asked Admiral Heinz about the purpose of the civic action program. In response to Admiral Heinz' explanation that it was "to have particular engineering forces expend their effort in a constructive manner which helps the country," Mr. Morse criticized the use of Federal funds "to strengthen a government in power, regardless of the nature of that government."

Representative Morse's comment that support for the existing government was not included in the design of other foreign aid suggests that the Armed Forces now had to "go it alone" in defending military civic action, since AID had disassociated itself from this goal. President Kennedy's concept that the State Department and DOD should work together to support a common national strategy came under attack. This change of heart is reflected in a 1971 exchange among Congressman Otto Passman; the State Department's Director for Military Assistance, Mr. Christian A. Chapman; and, the Defense Department's Assistant for Special Projects (International Security Affairs), Mr. Peter R. Knauer, over a military civic action project in Nigeria.<sup>41</sup>

Passman stated, "It is just absolutely frightening to think that we are letting the State Department get involved in military affairs and recommend that we arm these little nations that are still wet behind the ears." When Mr. Chapman and Mr. Knauer both explained that no weaponry was involved, Mr. Passman asked, "Why don't you leave the military out of it and train the civilians as to how to build roads, schools and deep wells?"

Had Mr. Chapman and Mr. Knauer been given the time to compose a comprehensive answer, there could have been many answers, such as the inadequacy of the existing civil government, the need to use the strongest institutions in nation building, the lower costs involved in using troops, and the desirability of keeping in touch with the military in strategically-important countries during periods of peace as insurance during times of war. In fact, these same arguments were being put forward by Hanning in the same year, but there was no audience in the United States. Hanning noted that "America's current view of civic action must be seen in the context of events in Vietnam. It could best be summed up by saying that she is not quite sure what to do about insurgency."<sup>42</sup>

## **MCA IN THE 1970s**

In face of such strong criticism, DOD attempted to objectively assess MCA.<sup>43</sup> There were, however, little data on which to base an evaluation. As one research team discovered, "other than in Korea and Vietnam, the U.S. resources for civic action are so small that they receive little or no attention in Washington."<sup>44</sup> Although in the mid-1970s the military literature still contained a few articles extolling the usefulness of MCA,<sup>45</sup> the subject all but disappeared for almost a decade. Articles which did discuss the concept of MCA raised doubts about its utility. In the

Army's *Military Review*, a 1978 article recommended that "transitional military elites should be exposed to Western training and ideas with caution, and that at least proportionate exposure should be available to their civilian colleagues."<sup>46</sup> After 5 more years of silence on the subject, *Military Review* published another negative article which viewed internal development (and the associated bureaucratic infighting between "military" and "developers") as a distraction from the central military objective of destruction of the guerrilla force.<sup>47</sup>

During the 1970s, military planners turned away from LIC and refocused on the protection of Western Europe. The aversion to an open discussion of counterinsurgency was underscored by the military sociologists, Janowitz and Stern, in 1978 when they predicted that "the likelihood of large-scale and overt military intervention and even small-scale military intervention in support of counterinsurgency operations by the United States can be expected to remain low."<sup>48</sup>

## **NEW BEGINNINGS IN THE 1980s**

As the 1980s began, Janowitz and Stern's predictions remained correct. The United States watched as the Nicaraguan government adopted a Marxist philosophy. Torn over the wisdom of supporting the Contras, the Executive and Legislative Branches failed to build a consensus on a national strategy on Nicaragua. Yet the revolution in Nicaragua and the political instability in El Salvador brought the attention of some military and strategic thinkers back to the Western hemisphere and to LIC. Mid-decade, Reserve and National Guard units began training in Latin America (documented in Robertson and Luz's chapter), and the Academy of Health Sciences (AHS) established a low-intensity conflict division in June 1984. In fact, the Commandant of the AHS, MG William P. Winkler, stated that "military medicine is the least controversial, most cost effective means of employing military forces in support of U.S. national interest in low-intensity conflict situations."<sup>49</sup>

The new advocates of MCA in the 1980s expressed more caution than the optimistic students of Lansdale had in the 1960s. Writing about medical MCA, Taylor integrated the lessons learned in the 1960s and 1970s by warning that "care must be taken to insure that commanders who demand immediate, measurable results do not supplant the AID's long-term nation-building efforts."<sup>50</sup> Similar cautions on lessons learned were given by Fishel and Cowan in their 1988 review of civil military operations in Latin America (also adapted as a chapter in this volume). They warned, "In all cases, projects require coordination with and participation by national and local civilian agencies...To be successful, the military cannot get too far ahead of their civilian counterparts." They stressed a lead-in-support role. "This means that military expertise and professionalism may well have to persuade civilian agencies to move in a particular direction because that is how the civilian agencies can best achieve their goals."<sup>51</sup> The theory and practice recommended in their 1988 review are comparable to that espoused by LTC John T. Little 26 years before.<sup>52</sup>

MCA in the 1980s, as documented in the next chapter of this volume, was successful in Africa, but receptivity to MCA as a strategic tool was strongest in the U.S. Southern Command (USOUTHCOM). In his April 28, 1987 statement to the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropria-

tions Committee, the CINCSOUTH, General John R. Galvin, listed his tools for carrying out his overall military strategy as:

. . . security assistance, forward deployed forces, training opportunities, intelligence sharing, humanitarian and civic action, peacetime PSYOPS, combined training exercises, and a variety of 'vehicles' for professional dialogue (staff visits, workshops, seminars and lectures, map exercises, unit and personnel exchange programs, instructor and subject matter exchanges, Panama Canal area military schools and the School of the Americas).<sup>53</sup>

The fact that CINCSOUTH considered military civic action to be among his strategic tools would be irrelevant without the support of the State Department, AID and Congress, for the revival of MCA in the 1980s was also characterized by congressional micromanagement. Intense scrutiny was given to miniscule budgets, and projects which were politically controversial were dropped. For example, in the FY 88 budget, the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs proposed a specific prohibition against assistance to Guatemala's "Poles of Development,"<sup>54</sup> a military civic action program which Cowan and Fishel considered an important effort which had received bad press.<sup>55</sup>

Congressional micromanagement can be frustrating to the military planner, since it requires the planner to also be an effective communicator. The planner's first task is to convince the CINC; the second task is to give the CINC the words to sell the plan to Congress and the American public. At the end of the 1980s, MCA funding remained miniscule, but the framework for a new civilian-military consensus was in place. Seven observations suggest that the time is right for building a new civilian-military consensus:

- The confrontational atmosphere which is apparent in the transcripts of the congressional hearings quoted earlier is not found in the most current hearings. Congress appears to be giving greater respect to the Armed Forces than it did in the late 1960s. Widespread public approval for the strategic use of the military in Grenada and Panama has helped erase the memory of strategic misuse in Vietnam.
- Congress made it very clear that it wants the military to plan for LIC by mandating the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in 1985.<sup>56</sup>
- In the 1988 hearings on House Appropriations, the Foreign Operations Committee shared a concern that some of the projects being proposed as military civic action resembled AID projects.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the House members were making a distinction between AID as a tool (ways) in national strategy and MCA as a tool in military strategy. The transcripts from congressional hearings in the early 1970's give evidence that Congress would not even consider MCA as a "ways" in military strategy.
- There was a consensus between the State and Defense Departments that the education of the foreign military by U.S. forces contributes to the building of democracy in Latin America. In its 1987 review of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, the State Department reported that the Latin American armed forces:

...have become less tied to economic elites and more professional. Despite ever-present rewards for strong, individual leadership, military leaders must deal with their fellow officers within an institutional framework. The road to command is now usually as much a function of technical competence, bureaucratic skill, and coalition building as it is of personal magnetism or direct troop command.<sup>58</sup>

- The State Department showed a willingness to back up its words with action when Elliott Abrams testified in favor of the politically unpopular idea that the United States should support International Military Education and Training (IMET) even in countries dominated by military authoritarian governments. In explaining how the United States is receiving positive support from Latin American officers who have been trained in the United States, Abrams said,

You're talking about people who know us and know how we feel about it, and we know them. In Chile, for example, we have a generation of officers we don't know. In a number of Latin American countries which went through long periods of dictatorship, there's a whole generation of officers who have no experience with our country, our culture, our system of civilian control of the military. And I think we lose because of that.<sup>59</sup>

- From testimony before Congress, the relationship between the representatives of AID and the Department of Defense appeared to be closer to a true working relationship than in the past.<sup>60</sup> It should be noted, however, that the working relationship at the field level was, in 1988, still lacking.
- There is a potential consensus between U.S. liberal and conservative thinkers in support of "grass roots" development efforts. For example, in a statement which was otherwise critical of AID, the president of the conservative Heritage Foundation, Edwin J. Feulner, stated, "AID's true developmental and humanitarian functions could be served by a streamlined division oriented toward small, grass roots style developmental projects."<sup>61</sup> The grass roots emphasis of military civic action fits easily into this framework.
- Congress lifted some of the restrictions on MCA imposed by the Stevens amendment to Title 10 of the U.S. Code. In 1986, Congress modified Title 10 to authorize humanitarian and civic assistance (H/CA) in conjunction with any U.S. military activity. Prior to this, civic action could only be conducted incidental to Joint Chiefs of Staff directed or coordinated exercises.<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVE

As the 1980s came to a close, military planning was thrown into disarray by the success of U.S. national strategy in Eastern Europe. The success implies that new strategic priorities will be formulated and funded during the 1990s. During the 1980s, funding patterns left MCA as a concept without adequate resourcing to achieve its strategic aims. In the new competition for funding, MCA has a great potential for growth. The key to success will be to advertise the successes of MCA (e.g., the chapters on current MCA in Africa and Reserve Component training in Latin America) while answering the criticisms voiced by those who consider all Third World

militaries to be obstacles to democracy. This is a difficult task, requiring not only a more comprehensive look at strategic ends, ways, and means, as discussed in Barlow's chapter on the employment of civil affairs in Latin America, but an examination of policy as discussed in Sutter's chapter on the strategic implications of MCA. We hope Sutter's warning that strategic planners pay careful attention to the revolutionary and destabilizing potential of MCA serves to counter-balance the enthusiastic speculations in the chapter on the potential for MCA in the 1990s

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## **CHAPTER 3**

# **THE AFRICA CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM**

**Kent H. Butts**

The Africa Civic Action (ACA) program of the United States was developed in the 1980s. Because of its late genesis, its objectives reflect a more mature view of international affairs than programs designed in earlier years. The ACA program is designed to meet African requirements, and is coming to fruition in a period of reduced Soviet military support to insurgent causes. It recognizes that the United States has a major interest in promoting political stability in Africa and that poverty is a chief cause of African political instability, and seeks to encourage military participation in social and economic development. This chapter examines the history, objectives and projects of the U.S. Africa Civic Action program, discusses lessons learned from its implementation and evaluates the program as a mechanism of economic development and nation building.

### **HISTORY**

Early efforts to colonize Africa resulted in political chaos and left the European powers at constant odds over territorial claims and counterclaims. The Berlin Conference of 1894 and 1895 attempted to bring order to the effective occupation of Africa and delineated the political boundaries that today determine the state borders of the continent. The Organization of African Unity subsequently elected to retain the boundaries in the post-colonial period. Unfortunately, the boundaries do not reflect the mosaic of human geography that characterizes the continent. Territories belonging to tribal nations were frequently dissected by the artificial state political borders established in Berlin, thus leaving states with multiethnic populations. Homogeneity of language and cultural beliefs were rare and ethnic based competition for resources and power remains a post-colonial constant of African political life and a chronic problem for governmental legitimacy.

### **ECONOMICS**

Intrastate ethnic division is not the only problem faced by African countries, however. The years following independence brought economic stagnation and towering foreign debt to most African countries. Contributing to these problems have been the exponential increase in the price of petroleum, falling real prices for other African commodity exports, the ill-conceived economic policies of new governments, and runaway population growth. The African population growth rate is the world's highest at approximately 3 percent. The continent's population has nearly doubled since 1960, while economic growth per capita has stagnated. Food production per person fell 15 percent in the 1970s and over 25 million Africans are facing famine. Forecasts by

the major lending institutions project negative GDP growth rates per capita into the foreseeable future. Traditional sources of economic assistance have dried up. Many industrialized governments, faced with budgetary problems at home, have severely reduced grant aid to the developing world. The major private lenders, having realized little or no return on investment for loans made to Africa, are unwilling to commit further funds. Africa's international debt rose from \$20 billion in 1975 to over \$150 billion by 1986.<sup>1</sup> There is little hope that this debt will ever be repaid. Thus, Africa faces major problems of economic development that pose a severe challenge to its government and its efforts to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

The combination of ethnically diverse populations and poor economic performance has toppled many African governments. A state's government is a political system that receives positive and negative feedback commensurate with its ability to satisfy the demand placed upon the system by the populace. Failure to satisfy systemic demands leads to a loss of legitimacy that may threaten the longevity of the regime. In many African countries, limited physical infrastructure and economic resources, and an overburdened or underqualified governmental bureaucracy, constitute sizeable barriers to the eradication of endemic poverty and the establishment of governmental legitimacy. At the same time, the armed forces, because of their relative advantage in training and organization, often are more efficient than comparable civil agencies and better suited to accomplish certain developmental tasks. While the military may be a resource, many armies have been reluctant to commit their forces to the accomplishment of nonmilitary objectives. Recognizing this fact, the U. S. Department of State (DOS) and Department of Defense (DOD) established an African civic action program designed to encourage African military organizations to undertake projects of direct benefit to the civilian populations of their countries. This effort to encourage the military's participation in the nation-building process takes advantage of existing infrastructure and the synergies of association with ongoing military and civilian aid programs.

## **THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY**

The use of the military as an agent of development in the emerging Third World is not without controversy. During the late 1950s, on the eve of the independence era in Africa, the military was largely viewed as the most capable agent of economic development in the new countries. Greek and Roman soldiers had built roads, colonial armies had established public works, and, in the United States, the Army Corps of Engineers helped to settle the frontier and maintain transport arteries; why shouldn't African militaries help build their countries? It was the period of Walt Rostow's then widely-accepted multistage theory of development, and strategists expected the relatively well-organized military to facilitate the developing countries' attaining the take-off stage of development.<sup>2</sup> This hypothesis assumed that the military was development oriented, decisive and capable of enforcing the potentially unpopular but necessary decisions required to effect development.<sup>3</sup> Reflecting these views, and the growing awareness of Soviet cold war interest in the less developed countries (LDCs), the Report of the President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program, the Draper Report of 1959, championed the use of the LDC military in the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP), and influenced the early 1960s LDC development programs of the DOS, DOD and AID.<sup>4</sup> Not everyone shared the view that the military was best suited to lead LDC development. Critics suggested that the use of the better developed

military would preclude the growth of public sector development institutions. Would it not, they suggested, be safer to separate the roles of the military and civil government? Would the military's development role rob the government of legitimacy in the eyes of its people? LDC political development in the early 1960s led political scientists to further question the Draper Report assumptions. When evidence mounted that the military had little interest in furthering the development of civilian political systems and favored the expansion of military resources over development schemes, efforts to involve the African armed forces in the development process waned.

The intervening years brought clarity to the focus on development in the LDCs. Rostow's theories of development, and many others based on phenomena in the history of the industrialized countries, had largely failed to explain or predict the unfolding events in the developing countries. Military regimes had proven unable to promote political stability or sustainable economic and social development. Much of the West's developmental aid to Africa had been committed on an ad hoc basis to counter the spread of Soviet influence, the fear of which had, at times, dominated the objectives of economic development and military assistance programs. Economic development schemes came to be fostered by civilian-oriented USAID programs and the funding of large financial institutions and private donors. In spite of the billions of dollars invested in Africa, poverty remained the chief cause of political instability, and governments had increasingly fewer resources to meet the economic and ethnic demands placed upon their fragile political systems. By 1979, the African military was increasingly ignored by Western developmental institutions.

While the idea of military regime superiority in leading economic development in the LDCs had proven untrue, the African military remained relatively better organized and trained than most civilian governmental institutions in many countries. Recognizing this fact, the designers of U S civic action plans formulated a new approach to civic action projects that drew upon the history of Africa's first two decades of independence, research on military assistance, and the rapidly changing East-West political environment. The new ACA program took advantage of certain general strengths among the African military. a bureaucratic organization retained from colonial parent institutions, a general multiethnic composition and sense of national purpose that transcended ethnic allegiance, operational efficiency greater than civil organizations; substantial overseas training and familiarity with Western technical procedures, military budgets, and thus capabilities, which were less affected by renewed fiscal austerity measures; and, for security reasons, the military often had logistical and support resources in distant regions where private contractors could not operate and where civil servants resisted being assigned. The program sought to incorporate these strengths in the implementation of guidance set forth in Section 505(B) of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 that read, "To the extent feasible with other purposes of this part, the use of military forces in less developed countries in the construction of public works and other activities helpful to economic development shall be encouraged."

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

The use of the military for nonmilitary purposes was not without potential problems. Military leaders were concerned that performing civic action projects would limit their ability to conduct military missions. A successful military construction program could undermine private companies,

hamper the growth of public sector development institutions, or conceivably accrue sufficient popular support to encourage a military coup. The ACA program took precautions to ensure that these potential problems never occurred.

The United States defined its program in a fashion that ensured its purpose would not be misunderstood.

Military civic action is the use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation and others contributing to economic and social development which would serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population.<sup>5</sup>

The objectives of the program were clear:

- to encourage the military establishments to take nonmilitary actions that would benefit the civilian population.
- enhance political stability.
- contribute to the country's cultural, social and economic development.
- reduce social discontent and promote the nation-building process.
- take advantage of existing U.S. and Allied development schemes to maximize the return on investment of ACA resources.
- enhance relations between the U.S. military and its African counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

These objectives incorporated key recommendations from the Draper Report. Civil action projects should not compromise the military's capacity to perform its primary military missions.

ACA should complement, and not detract from, the development of the private sector and civilian institutions. Projects should not benefit the African elites, or special interest groups. The program, then, was aimed at providing resources to the militaries that would allow them to participate in the economic development of their countries, and thereby enhance the perceived legitimacy of the national governments in the eyes of the populace.

## **HOW AFRICA CIVIC ACTION WORKS**

The ACA program is part of the larger U.S. Security Assistance (SA) program. The SA program is governed by two primary pieces of legislation, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) and the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) of 1975. These laws allow Congress to determine the dollar value and type of assistance provided to foreign countries.<sup>8</sup> The FAA also delegated the administration of the SA program to the Secretary of State. DOD participation in ACA is managed by the African Affairs Office of the Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA),

operational/programmatic aspects of ACA are handled by the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA).

Program engineering and technical assistance for all construction-type projects is provided by the Army Corps of Engineers. The source of funding for the ACA program is the Military Assistance Program budget line of the annual appropriation for foreign assistance. A point worth noting is that because ACA funds come from MAP/FMSF allocations, funds allocated to ACA projects directly reduce funds available for traditional MAP purchases such as military equipment.

Potential ACA projects are identified by the Ambassador's Country Team at the U.S. Embassy. After coordination with the host country military and political leadership, the projects are forwarded to the Headquarters of the Unified Commands, where they are reviewed for appropriateness and complementarity with ongoing U.S. and Allied SA programs, and prioritized. The unified commands then present their project lists to ISA and DOS where U.S. regional interests and policy factors, and congressional mandates are used to determine the projects to be funded for the fiscal year.

As it has been implemented in Africa, the U.S. civic action program is composed of three related subprograms: Military Civic Action (MCA), African Coastal Security (ACS), and Military Health Affairs (MHA). The military civic action program for Africa focuses directly on the nation-building process. Military forces are provided the materials and technical assistance required by their engineer units to build infrastructure in the areas of education, agriculture, transportation, public works, health, sanitation and communications, that directly benefit the civilian population. Typical projects include hospitals, medical clinics, bridges and roads. MCA guidelines require that all work be performed by the military; however, on occasion, assistance from civilian technical specialists is allowed. Projects may be dual use, benefiting the military as well, but must be designed for the primary benefit of the civilian population. Profit making projects that compete with the private sector are not allowed. Cooperating with allies on projects is strongly encouraged.<sup>9</sup>

The African Coastal Security (ACS) program is aimed at conserving the continent's fisheries primarily those along the west coast of Africa, and helping selected littoral states to establish control over their marine resources and coastal economic zones. The program identifies and attempts to improve weak areas in a country's coastal security. Technical assistance, training, repair of existing equipment and modest quantities of supplies are provided by the United States under ACS. Foreign vessels have been overfishing the fisheries off West Africa for over a decade. This fishing occurs well within the economic zones of the littoral states. For most countries, however, coastal security capabilities are insufficient to allow intervention or even the monitoring of take for the purpose of assessing levies. ACS was designed to curtail this poaching and allow the substantial fishery revenues to accrue to the littoral states. ACS benefits directly from the ongoing U.S. bilateral SA projects that have strengthened the navies of West African states.<sup>10</sup> Of the three ACA subprograms, ACS, by virtue of the value of fishery resources, has the greatest potential economic benefits to the recipient country.

Military health affairs, the newest ACA program, is designed to improve the medical capabilities of the host nation military. MHA can provide medical supplies, construction materials, and U.S.



military training teams (MTTs). Unlike MCA, there is no requirement that the assistance directly benefit the civilian population. However, in virtually all cases, indirect benefits to the populace, such as military participation in disaster relief, rural health screening and evaluation, and refugee health and sanitation assistance, clearly are present.<sup>11</sup>

## FUNDING

As previously noted, funding for the African civic action program comes from MAP monies appropriated under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Because Africa has a relatively small domestic constituency, the African MAP allocation is relatively small. In 1988, total MAP funding for all countries was \$4.7 billion. Of this amount, the African MAP program received only \$26 million. Maintaining even this level of funding may prove difficult.

Each year MAP funding is the subject of intense congressional-DOD-DOS debate. In time of fiscal austerity, the recurring question of the debate is whether to marginally cut the accounts of the major client states (e.g., Israel, Turkey, Egypt) and continue MAP funding for a host of developing countries, or to zero out the small countries completely and leave the major ones relatively intact. There is always the possibility that Africa MAP for the next fiscal year will not be funded. This lack of multiyear program funding and, hence, dependability is one of the major criticisms of the U.S. security assistance program. In 1985, funding for the African civic action program totaled \$4.95 million, in 1986, it was a similar \$4.8 million. The downward trend continued in 1987 as funding dropped to \$4.1 million, by 1988, available monies totaled \$3 million, and for 1989, the total ACA funding was \$1.8 million.<sup>12</sup> While it is true that in rural Africa the amount of development per dollar that can be effected is higher than in the industrialized countries, it is clear that the dramatic reduction in the already modest ACA funding levels threatens the objectives of the program.

Table 2 lists ACA projects that have been approved through 1989.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Int'l Assist</u>
Botswana	\$300K	Ambulance, disaster relief vehicle, med. supplies	Complete	
	100K	Med. supplies & equip.	Funded	
Central African Republic	95K	Road bridge	Construction ongoing	France
Djibouti	30K	Dam & irrigation scheme	Funded	France
	29K	Sanitary landfill	Complete	
Gambia	87K	ACS, naval building & pier construction	Complete	Britain
Ghana	412K	Hospital water system & surgical equip.	Complete	Britain
Guinea	50K	ACS, patrol boats, dry dock & communication equip.	Complete	

<u>Country</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Int'l Assist</u>
Guinea-Bissau	555K	ACS, plane, boats, navigation aids, radar	Complete	Britain
Cote D'Ivoire	628K	Medical center & equip.	Construction ongoing	France
		ACS, naval patrol radios & training	Complete	
Kenya	898K	Town water system	Construction ongoing	
	50K	MHA med. supplies	Procurement ongoing	
Madagascar	200K	Low cost housing	Construction ongoing	
Malawi	50K	Engineer equip.	Complete	
	464K	Medical hospital & supplies	Construction ongoing	Germany
Mali	700K	Hospital power station & med. supplies	Under design	
Mauritania	100K	ACS, navigation, safety & radar equip., & Coast Guard training	Complete	
	250K	Dispensary & school construction, school equip.	Complete	
	112K	Bridge to hospital	Complete	
Niger	3.2M	Civil relief airfield	Complete	France
Rwanda	650K	Pediatric med. clinic & engineer equip.	Construction ongoing	Belgium/ Germany
Sao Tome Principe	10K	Med. equip & supplies	Procurement ongoing	
Senegal	650K	Hospital renovation	Complete	
Sierre Leone	95K	Engineer unit upgrade	Project ongoing	Britain
	529K	School construction	Construction ongoing	Britain
Sudan	275K	Med. prosthetic lab. & bridge construction	On hold - Brooke Sanctions	
Tanzania	50K	MHA, med. supplies & equip.	Procurement ongoing	Germany
Togo	253K	Engineer equip. provided	Complete	Germany
	75K	Border road bridges construction	Funded	Germany
Uganda	50K	MHA, med. supplies & equip.	Under consideration	
Zaire	37K	Med. equip. & supplies/ joint exercise	Complete	

Table 2. Civic Action Project Summary.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation of the Africa civic action program has yielded much information on how to ensure that maximum benefits are achieved and how to avoid problems. Most potential problem areas are associated with MCA and concern project selection.

**The Military.** The country and its military must decide that they desire a project. The project must then be scrutinized to ensure that it meets MCA guidelines, which may be difficult. African militaries are strikingly similar to Western militaries regarding preferring the acquisition of large powerful weapons to performing civil works. Cultural norms may also mitigate against a "warrior" doing menial construction tasks, or the military may simply refuse to allocate resources for a project that does not benefit it primarily. The military may nominate good projects that it lacks the capabilities to accomplish. Projects have been delayed when military budgets were cut and/or fuel to transport supplies to distant construction sites could not be purchased. In Africa, military engineer resources, equipment and training are scarce. Construction projects are not allocated when there is no viable engineer unit, transport and maintenance assets are insufficient, and the project is too sophisticated for local capabilities. While these criteria appear obvious, often the military's capabilities are not. More than one country has asked for more than it can handle, and there is a natural reluctance to admit technical ignorance or lack of understanding.

**Benefits.** MCA should benefit the people, but which people? The potential for favoritism and discrimination is always present. Does the suggested road project connect isolated impoverished villages to commercial centers or lead to the agricultural estate of a highly-placed government or military leader? A government may request the construction of low income housing, with the hidden intent of housing students from elite families, or civil servants, not low income families. Will the hospital be constructed in a region populated exclusively by members of the dominant ethnic group? Great care must be taken to ensure that the benefits of any project accrue primarily to the civilian population. All projects have sociological implications that must be thoroughly evaluated at the embassy level before the project is nominated and funded.

**Supervision.** Even relatively inexpensive construction projects require substantial supervision, perhaps more than an embassy anticipated or can provide. Some projects have been too thinly supervised, with a single Defense Attache or an over-burdened ranking embassy employee primarily responsible for in-country project management. Problems can result when an enthusiastic ambassador requests the project, but his successor loses interest or fails to dedicate the necessary resources to push the project through. Small embassies can be overwhelmed by the myriad of complications associated with a major construction project. Projects should not be initiated if embassy supervisory resources are inadequate, or they should be reduced in scope to match existing capabilities.

**Externalities.** The United States benefits from the good will created by successful projects but will also be associated with any negative by-products of a failure. Should an MCA bridge collapse, or a project well become contaminated, or an irrigation scheme cause flooding and loss of life, the donor country, in this case the United States, could be held responsible. Externalities are an acceptable risk in the effort to achieve the goals of the MCA program. However, the

publicity associated with them could have catastrophic consequences for the ACA program. Vigilance against this occurrence is essential.

**Geography.** Africa's geography is formidable. Distances between frontiers and urban centers are imposing. Transportation networks are limited and often inoperable in the rainy season. Communication with geographically remote areas may take weeks. The MCA goal of nation building would suggest locating projects in remote areas where a governmental presence may be lacking. However, it has been found that remote construction projects should be discouraged in favor of MHA. Why? The advantages of agglomeration apply to MCA as well as economic activities. Locating a hospital reasonably close to an urban area will ensure that any specification changes are evaluated quickly by an available public works official and that regularly scheduled transport will be available for the Army engineer, allowing his frequent presence at the job site for proper supervision. In urban centers, construction equipment that breaks down may be easily repaired, "wrong" materials may be readily exchanged. After completion, sophisticated medical equipment can be better maintained at urban repair facilities and medical supplies are more constantly available. For remote areas, transport costs for construction materials, supplies, equipment and labor have proven astronomical. These costs delay construction and call into question the continuous and proper operation of the facility after its completion. Synergistic benefits from available government, U.S. and foreign development agencies in the larger urban centers preclude construction delays of up to 3 years, increase the likelihood of the project being completed "within budget," and ultimately allow the facility to benefit more people. Until budgetary funding for ACA is greatly increased, geographic constraints will remain a major factor in project selection.

**Disqualifiers.** Certain factors prevent consideration of projects. Alleged human rights abuses by government or military, such as those associated with the recent social unrest in Somalia, will cause the country's removal from ACA consideration. Lack of security or governmental control in a region makes it unsuitable for ACA projects. Because African ACA uses Foreign Military Sales (FMS) procedures, recipient countries must abide by the guidelines of the Brooke Amendment. Countries that are not current in their debt repayment, Sudan for example, cannot be considered for ACA regardless of the quality of their proposed projects. High follow-on maintenance costs may also serve as a disqualifier. Financial resources sufficient to continue facility operation and maintenance into the foreseeable future must be demonstrated for projects with substantial, post-construction funding requirements.

## EVALUATION

The U.S. civic action program for Africa was initiated at a fortuitous moment in African history. It is managed by well-qualified people, and while there are ways to improve the program, it has the future potential to provide sizeable benefits to U.S. strategic interests in Africa.

The timing of the U.S. ACA program could not have been better. The last half of the 1980s have witnessed a demilitarization of East/West competition in Africa. The promising trends of East Bloc troop withdrawal and deemphasis on large and inappropriate weapons systems, and political negotiations to settle chronic low intensity conflicts, have reduced the need for Western

arms shipments to the continent and allowed the major powers to focus on the chief cause of political instability in Africa, poverty. Because the U.S. ACA program is already in place, it has taken advantage of these historic phenomena and has the potential to become something of a "military Peace Corps." Moreover, Africans themselves are recognizing the importance, to political stability and economic development, of applying underutilized military resources to the cause of nation building. The new president of the 44th United Nations General Assembly, former Nigerian Major General Joseph Nanven Garba, is publicly arguing that military rule in Africa is the result of the failure of civilian governments to involve the armed forces in economic development, and that African armed forces should systematically participate in their countries' development efforts and become part of their "political structure."<sup>13</sup> The U.S. ACA program is in a position to take advantage of these events and, with proper funding, broaden U.S. influence in these strategically important states.

Taking advantage of such opportunities requires strong leadership and exceptional vision. The ACA community had a vision of civic action that transcended its role as a weapon in low intensity conflicts. They recognized that the African military was a latent resource that could be greatly valuable if dedicated to the objectives of nation building and development. Though visionary, their programs would not have succeeded had they not been managed by people who understand Africa. Africa does not respond to stimuli like the industrialized countries. Patience and an awareness of differences in cultural priorities are required if ACA is to achieve its objective. These traits have been consistently demonstrated, in particular by ISA. As a result, projects that could have been abandoned when they were beset with multiple problems have been completed. Moreover, this leadership has been flexible and adaptable. Projects that appeared desirable but proved difficult or unworkable were modified and mistakes have not been repeated.

Another strength of the ACA program is taking advantage of synergies of association with Allied and United States security assistance programs. Soldiers, trained in the United States under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, have returned to Africa and utilized equipment provided their countries by U.S. MAP grants to complete projects funded under MCA. The ongoing trend of colonial reinvolvement in Africa was recognized by ACA program designers. European allied participation in ACA projects is welcomed, and successful projects have been completed with the assistance of Germany, France, Britain and Belgium. Willingness to work with, rather than compete with, allies precludes militaries being forced to choose between donors and creates good will with European embassies that might be tempted to use neo-colonial ties to discourage host country participation in the U.S. CA program.

The portion of CA with the greatest potential for economic benefit to the host country is ACS. It is estimated that the annual illegal fish harvest in the northwest Africa fishery zone is upward to \$600 million per year.<sup>14</sup> The ACS program has assisted 10 African nations to strengthen their patrol forces. As a result, these nations have begun to aggressively enforce fishing agreements that collect levies and impose fines. Perhaps more important, ACS has encouraged regional cooperation between the littoral states and the political will to stand up for their national rights. In this critical issue, the United States has aligned itself with Africa against the illegal exploitation of African natural resources, largely by European vessels.

More than any other form of SA, civic action allows the benefits of security assistance to reach the people. The security of very few African nations is threatened by its neighbors, but virtually all require substantial development aid. One million dollars will add very little to a country's military capabilities, but the same amount could build and equip two hospitals that will help thousands of people for decades. The good will toward the United States engendered by such ACA projects cannot be quantified, but it is nonetheless tangible. It answers criticism of arms sales to the LDCs and promotes the image of the American military as a peacemaker. By virtue of its sharing the burden of projects with the host nation and other donors, ACA delivers U.S. aid at the lowest cost. And, it is not without military benefits. Development projects that improve transport infrastructure allow the military to reach distant territories and, thus, enhance national security. Medical projects and training provide a reservoir of casualty support in time of conflict or national emergency.

Current funding levels, however, limit the scope and benefit of ACA and create problems that undermine the goals of the program. Some projects become money-driven. The sudden availability of year-end funds or an unexpected opportunity to participate in an allied project may force the hurried adoption of projects that have not been fully evaluated to determine their appropriateness for host nation military or their sociological implications. If subsequent review or collapse of the funding source cancels the project, expectations are dashed and the reliability of the U.S. ACA program is questioned. Fund limitations constrain nation building by restricting project sites to nonremote geographic locations where support services are available. Funding also precludes follow-on funding of completed projects with high maintenance costs. If a U.S. project ceases to operate because the host nation military has no maintenance funds, and there can be no follow-on ACA funding, good will toward the United States may erode. Finally, funding is not available to conduct post-completion reviews of all ACA projects and to evaluate their relative contributions toward achieving ACA goals.

One way to stretch the value of ACA funding is to seek the assistance of other U.S. development agencies, such as USAID. No institution wants to see its own scarce resources diverted to another's projects. However, the synergies of association could benefit both programs. Assisting the host military with technical advice on a project would require few resources, but would allow a development agency to establish contacts with the local military that could, given the military's unusual influence in Africa, greatly benefit its own program. The development agency's institutional knowledge of the local contracting and construction system would be invaluable to an embassy wrestling with its first construction project, and could save as much as a year of construction time. On occasion such cooperation has occurred, but this reflects the individual willingness of a local administrator and not an institutionalized agreement at the leadership level. Efforts to make cooperation with USAID routine are ongoing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The African civic action program of the United States is designed to encourage the armed forces in a nontraditional course of action, the use of military resources for the civilian population in a manner that facilitates nation building, contributes to development, and thus enhances the government's perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Although modestly funded, the ACA program has made solid contributions to its objectives. Infrastructure that saves lives, promotes

economic and social development and provides enhanced foreign exchange to the governments is in place and operating. The military has seen the benefits to be gained by civic action and has had its engineer capabilities strengthened in the process. People from regions and ethnic groups that perceive themselves as "not favored" by the national government are now in hospitals and clinics built by the military arm of that government. Unlike the massive civic action program during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, ACA is not a direct tool in an antiguerrilla campaign or low intensity conflict. It is a genuine effort to promote humanitarian actions by the armed forces and political stability. Because of its emphasis on nation-building projects and development, it successfully addresses some of the major preconditions for insurgency and low intensity conflict development and may be viewed as playing an indirect role by reducing their likelihood.

## NOTES

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## CHAPTER 4

# CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS AND THE WAR FOR POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN LATIN AMERICA

**John T. Fishel and Edmund S. Cowan**

Over the past decade, U.S. policy toward Latin America has evolved from a singular emphasis on human rights to the "four D's"—democracy, development, defense and dialogue. The current U.S. policy clearly calls for politically legitimate nations in this hemisphere. Although there is an apparently consistent policy for the first time since the early Alliance for Progress, the goals embodied by the "four D's" do not clearly define the desired end-states. Thus, they provide little guidance for a strategy to achieve them.

Strategy focuses on ends, ways and means. The ends sought are identified as policy goals, refined as end states and planned as specific strategic objectives. The ways to achieve these objectives are complicated by the fact that at least two sovereign actors are involved—the host nation (HN) and its ally(ies) or the intervening power (IP).<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are a variety of other domestic and international actors.

What then is the end-state suggested by the "four D's" policy?

- A hemisphere of democratic governments freely elected by the people of those nations—national and local governments with financial and human resources and competitive elections.
- A hemisphere in which the nations are developing socioeconomic infrastructures.
- A hemisphere of nations whose armed forces are capable and professional enough to deal effectively and humanely with insurrectional threats to their security.
- A hemisphere of nations prepared to solve its internal and external problems at the conference table rather than by force of arms.<sup>2</sup>

If these define the end-state of U.S. policy for the hemisphere, then the end-state for the individual nations is one of political legitimacy for the government. A lack of such political legitimacy makes the government extremely vulnerable to challenge because it cannot govern effectively. It is corrupt within its own cultural context and has little popular support. Indeed, in the worst of circumstances it will provide no alternative to change other than political violence and will be an autocratic regime in an era where traditional autocracies are anachronisms.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Any U.S. and HN strategy to win a war for political legitimacy must have clearly defined objectives. One study<sup>3</sup> shows that the most powerful measures of political legitimacy are:

- The degree of popular support for the government.
- The perception of corruption (civil and military) within the government.
- The perception of the government's ability to govern.
- The existence of alternatives to political violence.

Rephrased, these four variables can become strategic objectives:

- Maintenance of a high degree of systemic support.
- Limiting culturally defined corruption in government.
- Government delivery of basic services—security, health, economic opportunity, education and so forth.
- Institutionalized competitive periodic elections at all levels of government.

As is easily seen, these four strategic objectives involve popular perceptions about reality. In fact, they depend upon the dynamic interaction of what the government does and how the people respond. It is important that none of these strategic objectives call for supporting a particular government or regime. Rather, they should be designed to build support for the system or process. It makes little difference in the long run whether a particular president in a given country personally succeeds or fails. What is important is that in achieving personal success or failure, he institutionalizes a politically legitimate system.

## CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS

The methods available to achieve the strategic objectives of the HN and IP in the war for political legitimacy are found primarily in the area of civil-military operations (CMOs). CMOs are a fundamental element in the U.S. military's doctrine of foreign internal defense. They encompass military civic action programs, civic assistance activities, population and resource control, civil defense (CD), public information and psychological operations (PSYOPS).

Civic action provides for the needs of a population that is in need of assistance. It also builds confidence among civilians in the HN's armed forces and government. Civic assistance activities provide governmental management skills to HN local and mid-level leaders. Population and resource control are those measures designed to isolate the population and resources from

insurgents and mobilize them for the counterinsurgency effort. CD (or self-defense) provides local security by training and arming the villagers. Finally, public information and PSYOPS provide information to the populace to mobilize support for a counterinsurgency.

CMOs seek to achieve the political, social, economic and psychological objectives of revolution. These, rather than military objectives, are principles for a successful counterinsurgency effort.

Of course, the application of combat power is important to breaking insurgent organizations and providing security for the people and the government. However, combat power only supports the achievement of the strategic objective or political legitimacy, it is not the principal method in the struggle. It does not resolve the basic structural weaknesses in society or the political-economic stress associated with development. Combat power, improperly applied, can contribute to losing a war in two ways:

- The application of combat power without regard to civilian sensibilities will alienate the populace, which alone has the power to provide the government victory in the war for political legitimacy.
- The failure to provide security to the government and the people incapacitates the government's ability to deliver basic services and weakens its political legitimacy.

The most important way to achieve the strategic objectives is through establishing and institutionalizing competitively elected civil governments at all levels. Many see this as some long-range goal, and some have argued that U.S. insistence on early and frequent elections in El Salvador diverts scarce resources from winning the war against the insurgents. Quite the contrary, only through the competitive electoral process can a viable alternative to continued political violence be established. Through competitive elections, societies hold their rulers accountable to the ruled. Regular competitive elections are vital to establishing the perception of legitimacy for the system among the populace rather than for a particular leader, party or regime.

The Salvadoran electoral model provides one way of establishing elected governments. Its first elections were for a constituent assembly to write a constitution as well as act as the legislature. The next step was to hold presidential elections, followed by concurrent congressional and municipal elections. An alternative approach would have been to start at the municipal level and work up. The precise form and order of establishing an electoral democracy is much less an issue than the fact that a competitive electoral process must be established and institutionalized.

Although installing competitive electoral democracies is primarily a civil function for the HN and IP, the HN's armed forces have an important apolitical role. As a minimum, they must guarantee the security of the elections. Depending on the situation, they may help organize and run elections as a first step in the transfer of power to elected civil leadership.

One way to achieve the second major legitimacy objective—delivery of basic services to the people—is through an effective program of military civic action in support of a foreign-assisted

national development effort. Two broad categories of civic action exist: mitigating and developmental.

In mitigating civic action, the military forces provide products and services. A cost benefit relationship is established in which the benefits produced by the military outweigh the costs associated with its operations. For example, we find in similar road-building-type projects, planners and engineers are often overly optimistic about completion times. Thus, as happened recently in Honduras, a village was informed a road would be built to it. Due to real engineering problems, this proved to be impossible and the completion date was backed up a year. The villagers, of course, were left with unrealized expectations. In such a situation, it is critical to bring some mitigating civic action to this village so it does not perceive itself as, once again, being let down by the government and the IP.

In conflict zones, mitigating civic action provides essential services to the populace until such time as the civilian government can assume these tasks. It also reduces the impact of war damage by repairing homes and community buildings, providing medical care and the emergency supply of food and clothing. Such mitigating civic action immediately demonstrates government goodwill and intent to alleviate conditions likely to lead to increased social and political stress.

Although mitigating civic action should, wherever possible, have a long-term developmental effect and complement long-term projects, that is not its principal purpose. Rather, it is designed to have a short-term psychological impact on the recipients so military activity does not result in the greater alienation of the people from their government.

Developmental civic action is the achievement of long-term positive payoffs. Programs range from major road-building projects, such as the combined Blazing Trails/Opening Roads exercises in Honduras and Ecuador, to long-term health care provided by naval forces on a regular basis by means of riverine patrols in Peru and Bolivia, to military support for local development projects such as market or school construction. In all cases, projects require coordination with and participation by national and local civilian government agencies.

In theory, all developmental civic action should support HN civilian agencies which, in turn, are supported by the USAID and other international development organizations. In practice, military civic action may well have a "lead-in-the-support" role. This means that military expertise and professionalism may well have to persuade civilian agencies to move in a particular direction because that is how the civilian agencies can best achieve their goals. This role demands a great deal of sophistication on the part of the military actors.

To be successful, the military cannot get too far ahead of their civilian counterparts. The operating words in this formula are "persuade" and "their goals." The military actors must remember that theirs is a support role, however active they may become. Only in this way does civic action strengthen the legitimacy of the civil governmental system.

In an insurgency, one of the more effective ways of defending HN political legitimacy is through an effective popular militia or CD force. CD forces, however, are only effective if they are linked to village-level, self-development programs, supported by civic action and backed by regular

military forces. One of the most successful CD programs is the Guatemalan Polos de Desarrollo (Development Center).<sup>4</sup> Here, resettlement projects include extensive civilian development efforts supported by military civic action teams living in the village. Each new village is trained to defend itself with a CD force involving nearly all the males of the village.

Although participation in CD is voluntary, peer and military pressure make service all but compulsory. As a result, the male population of the village is continuously accounted for—they are either working, sleeping or on patrol. In this manner, CD fosters population and resource control by denying access to the guerrilla and supporting the military through an economy of forces. For CD to be effective, it must be supported by an infrastructure development program. This will give villagers a reason to support the government and a greater stake in their own self-defense.

Security is a central facet of the war for political legitimacy. Such security can be provided effectively over the long term by the CD forces. However, if short-term security is essential to protect MCA projects, then U.S. forces in conjunction with their host nation counterparts need to provide it. Such security hinges on the careful orchestration of security with political development and economic development. Over the long term, lightly-armed, but well-trained, CD forces should be incorporated into any base or fixed-site defense plan. They should provide security and reconnaissance patrols in the vicinity of their villages. Most importantly, they should be the eyes and ears of the local villages and the regular forces operating in their area.

CD forces should be trained by the regular forces, but they are probably best led by their own people. An effective CD force demonstrates commitment to the system by the people, as well as to the people by the government. One of its greatest benefits is the trust it can generate. Out of such trust can come the special intelligence required by CMOs and the combat intelligence and counterintelligence required by the regular forces to attack the insurgents' security and defend their own.

To achieve political legitimacy using the national strategy outlined here, resources must be dedicated to CMOs. Resources, the means to carry out a legitimacy strategy, can ultimately be reduced to funding levels. There are two principal sources of funding CMOs in the war for political legitimacy. These are internal—the national treasury, private domestic loans and local taxes—and external—including USAID-sponsored programs and those of intergovernmental organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank. Both funding sources provide the money to purchase goods and services. Local taxation may differ on occasion, since it is often in the form of labor or materials. This taxation in kind translates directly into an applicable, but somewhat inflexible, resource. Still, it is one of enormous importance since most observers of rural Latin America have noted the tremendous capacity of villagers to sacrifice for what they believe will be good for their communities.<sup>5</sup>

Certain military resources or capabilities used by the HN in the legitimacy war are most useful in CMOs. Two of the most important are engineering and medical. Military engineers in Latin America are more than combat engineers. They require skills that are transferable to a civilian environment. Engineer units must be able to build roads and bridges, as well as conduct light vertical construction for markets, schools and other municipal buildings.

Engineering capabilities must focus on the ability to provide HN access to rural areas and develop the socio-economic infrastructure of the region. Countries experiencing an insurgency, for example El Salvador, must develop a strong military engineering capability. This asset can be used effectively as a combat multiplier not only to reinforce base security but also to assist in the execution of national development projects.

The second major military capability for CMOs is medical. This capability must range from the treatment of battle casualties to the control of diseases endemic to underdevelopment, such as tuberculosis, venereal disease and parasites. In insurgency situations the military medical capability must be designed to provide regular medical care (including dental and veterinary) to populations in remote areas which the civilian Ministry of Health cannot reach for logistical or security reasons. In the midst of an insurgency, the military medical programs for civilians must regularly reach out into the conflict zones. The key to success is regular medical care provided over time. To achieve this, medical units require high mobility, which implies sufficient four wheel drive vehicles, riverboats and helicopters. It should also include the imaginative use of traditional modes of transportation such as the horse and mule.

Despite their being at the forefront of civic action, neither engineers nor medical personnel are trained to plan and supervise the entire CMO effort. A command and control element staffed by highly trained CA personnel, who can interface effectively with tactical planners, local civilian leaders and mid- and high-level officials of government ministries, is required. This element must be sensitive to local customs as well as the nuances of HN and IP political and bureaucratic rivalry. Especially important is the element's CMO intelligence role.

Effective CMOs require good intelligence. First, the CMO chief must know what local leaders want as well as what the national government plans. Then, he must also understand the nexus between leadership-expressed desires and the goals of the population as a whole, which suggests a need for variety of data-collection methods ranging from survey research to informal interviewing to participant observation. The collection of this special intelligence presents the opportunity to gather operational and tactical intelligence and counterintelligence useful to regular and CD forces. Of particular interest and importance is attitudinal information about the people's perception of their relations with these forces. Indeed, the security of military base camps, as well as local communities and infrastructure installations, may well depend upon the intelligence collected by the CMO organization as it plans and conducts its operations. Such intelligence, properly exploited, can significantly better civil-military relationships through a combination of changed military behavior and appropriate PSYOP themes.

Another capability required to be resourced is public information. This is the external front in the war for political legitimacy. Its battles are fought at home and abroad. At home, public information must facilitate the activities of the international media. It should see that news stories are told with full regard for the truth, thereby avoiding the accusation of spreading government propaganda. Naturally, not every story will please the government in every detail, but government honesty and assistance to the media will be rewarded, over time, with respect. And with respect will come the opportunity to tell the government's side of any story. This has been the experience of El Salvador where the government has been winning the battle in the international media.

Abroad, especially in the United States and Europe, Latin American governments under insurgent challenge need to maintain the public information initiative with the host governments, political parties and news media. In the conduct of public information overseas, the same principles apply as at home. Honesty in reporting is fundamental. Facilitation of media and host government requests for information will pay dividends in the ability to tell one's own story—and sooner rather than later. The objective of public information actions is to gain support for the government in the international community and to foreclose that same support to the insurgent cause.

One aspect of the war of information often overlooked is "public diplomacy," the international distribution of information on the state of the insurgency. In Guatemala, public diplomacy was largely dominated by the propaganda of the insurgents and Communist countries supporting them. As a result, the Poles of Development were presented to the world as concentration camps, and the CD program as genocide against the Indians. Neither picture could be farther from the truth despite the coercive features of the Poles and CD.

Obviously, the government and the IP need to tell their story through the channels of public diplomacy, including the international press, radio and television. Public diplomacy is one arena in which the IP can, and should, play a strong supportive role. Assuming the United States is the IP, then the U.S. Information Service (USIS) has the capability of coordinating the effort and can be fully supported by U.S. military public affairs officers in country and at the unified command level. It is in the U.S. interest that its allies win the war of information.

That public diplomacy and PSYOPs are different activities conducted by separate agencies must be remembered. Further, USIS cannot direct information at the American public; but this public is only one of many international recipients of information, and it can be reached by other means such as the State Department's office of public diplomacy.

Guatemala has built CA units to be PSYOP heavy. The principal target audience is the civil populace of the villages. Themes are based solidly on the truth and stress that the Pole provides security and a better way of life. They also stress the partnership among the government, the armed forces and the people in building something worth defending. Finally, they focus on CD and local participation as the means to defend what has been built.

PSYOPs provide both an offensive and defensive capability in CMOs. They can be as simple as word-of-mouth campaigns or as sophisticated as radio broadcasts and video tapes. In the war for moral legitimacy, PSYOPs must tell the story of the government principally to the civil population. While they should also seek to reinforce the loyalty of friendly forces and turn enemy forces, the primary role of PSYOPs is to win support for the system from a largely uncommitted or only marginally supportive population. To succeed in this endeavor, PSYOPs require a "product" to sell that actually works. Too often government programs equate to empty promises.

PSYOPs must focus on those programs in which the government has delivered. Such programs would be based on successful civic action and development efforts, an effective CD program and the projects accomplished by locally elected governments. PSYOPs could then be expanded to focus on the threat to these accomplishments presented by the insurgents. Only

rarely, as in the case of El Salvador's counterinsurgency PSYOPs, will an anti-insurgent campaign stand alone without being supported by positive government actions.<sup>6</sup>

Effective PSYOPs clearly require the commitment of resources, but, as noted, these do not have to be sophisticated or expensive. Face-to-face communication is the most effective technique and requires the campaign to focus on key local communicators. These door-to-door communicators also provide a valuable intelligence collection resource. Leaflets and posters can be effective as well. Insurgents have used spray-paint graffiti skillfully, but there is no reason why the government should concede village (and city) walls to its enemies.

The government has a real advantage in the more sophisticated communications media such as radio and, with lower utility, television. Radio is a medium that reaches nearly every Latin American home via the AM transistor radio. Insurgent radios are usually FM with a more limited audience. Thus, the government message can be broadcast regularly on its own stations, as well as commercial stations, in the form of public service messages.

PSYOPs, like CA and CD, are both consumers and collectors of intelligence. PSYOPs conducted without a solid base of knowledge about the attitudes of the target audience are shooting in the dark. Effective campaigns are built around detailed knowledge of public opinion and strong programs of pre- and post-testing.

## **ASSISTANCE**

The capabilities discussed here are those the HN must have to win the war for political legitimacy. In Latin America, no HN has all of these capabilities, therefore the United States can assist in this area.

The country team is the focus of U.S. assistance. Especially important are USAID, USIS and the Central Intelligence Agency. On the military side is the Security Assistance Office (SAO), supported by the unified command providing military assistance to the HN armed forces. The SAO administers the standard activities of security assistance: foreign military sales (FMS), FMS credit, military assistance program (MAP), and international military education and training (IMET). Under the standard programs (particularly IMET), HN officers and soldiers can be trained in the United States or Panama in regular U.S. military courses in CA, PSYOPs, public information, engineering, medicine and so forth. Training in somewhat tailored courses is conducted in the Spanish language at the U.S. Army School of the Americas, Fort Benning, Georgia. Under various FMS or MAP programs, mobile training teams can train HN forces in their own countries and in their own language.

Security assistance is limited by budget size and certain legal restrictions.<sup>7</sup> To maximize U.S. support to regional allies, several nonstandard techniques are used. These include personnel exchange programs where U.S. personnel exchange places with HN personnel on a one-for-one basis; for example, students in a command and general staff course. Two other nonstandard approaches that assist allies, while enhancing U.S. forces' readiness, fall into the general category



of subject matter and interoperability exchanges, using combined exercises and seminars/subject matter expert exchanges (SMEE).

In combined exercises, interoperability training allows U.S. and HN forces to get used to working with each other's doctrine, tactics and equipment. Under the Stevens Amendment to Title 10 of the U.S. Code, civic action may be conducted incidental to Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed or coordinated exercises. Although the dictionary defines the term "incidental" in a relatively unrestricted way as "being of secondary importance," legal interpretation, based in part on the congressional markup of the bill, is restrictive. Thus, civic action conducted under the Stevens Amendment must be in the general vicinity of the exercise, must be reasonable in cost relative to total exercise costs, and must be within the capabilities of the troops involved in the training.

Within these restrictions, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) policy is that civic action will be conducted as an integral part of all JCS directed or coordinated exercises taking place in the theater. In all cases, civic action is a combined U.S. and HN effort from the initial area site survey to the actual execution of a project. The developing civic action doctrine of USSOUTHCOM seeks to make certain that projects associated with exercises are balanced between engineering and medical activity. Although projects fall into the mitigating category of civic action, CA planners seek to integrate projects into existing national development plans. Again, the developing doctrine calls for close coordination with USAID and the relevant HN ministries from the inception of civic action planning.

In 1986, Congress, at the urging of the Department of Defense and USSOUTHCOM, revised Title 10 of the U.S. Code to authorize humanitarian and civic assistance (H/CA) in conjunction with any U.S. military activity. The legal interpretation applied to this authorization is less restrictive than that applied to Stevens which also remains in effect. Thus, civic action activities can be authorized for any U.S. military action in Latin America to include deployments for training and other small-scale activities.

Civic action conducted under the H/CA sanction will receive specific funding authorization in the Defense Appropriations Act. Application of H/CA authority will be under the same developing doctrine used to conduct civic action in exercises—activities will be combined, and advance coordination will be effected with USAID and the relevant ministries of the HN.

The civic action seminar program calls for teams of three or four CA officers to organize a seminar in the HN, involving the relevant civilian and military HN and U.S. players, to exchange information and techniques for the conduct of civic action/CMOs. The concept calls for a series of three seminars focusing, in succession, on the field through the regional to the national level. The emphasis is on the process of developing a national civic action development plan from the ground up.

Civic action seminars have been held in Panama, Honduras, Ecuador and Bolivia, with others being planned. In practice, the seminars have deviated from the concept as a result of HN or U.S. country team desires. Thus, the two Bolivian seminars have focused on national-level planning and execution. The apparent result of the most recent seminar has been to institute a

system of information sharing, allowing all agencies involved in national development efforts to know what the other agencies are doing. Until the second Bolivian seminar, the various agencies and ministries did not realize that they did not know what the others were doing.

The SMEE program is primarily a U.S. Army initiative run by the Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) Office of International Programs. Using the Department of the Army's Latin American cooperative funds, TRADOC supports a series of SMEE in the United States and the HN on subjects of mutual interest.

Two recent SMEEs have been held with Peru. The first of these, held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, focused on PSYOPs; while the second, held in Lima, Peru, focused on counterinsurgency and had a heavy PSYOP component. The net result has been that the United States and Peru have a better understanding of how the other sees the use of PSYOPs in a counterinsurgency. A mutual transfer and development of doctrine has occurred.

Although other initiatives similar to these have been taken in the CMO area, these are the most institutionalized. They have proved to be effective. Yet, neither the CA seminars nor the TRADOC SMEE are part of a coordinated CMO plan for the region. This lack of coordinated planning in the region and in the individual countries represents a major weakness in the conduct of the war for political legitimacy—a weakness in what has been described as the unity-of-effort dimension.<sup>8</sup>

CMO is the area where proper actions, taken early, can prevent an insurgency from developing beyond its latent stage. Where an active insurgency exists, CMO is the principal means for achieving the strategic objective of ending the war in such a way as to preclude its resurgence. In an active insurgency, CMOs at the operational level provide critical support to the combat elements as part of an integrated effort to separate insurgents from their sources of support while at the same time protecting the security of the people and their government.

CMOs in a counterinsurgency are not a luxury nor are they undertaken as an afterthought. Rather, they are the central element for success in all aspects of the war for political legitimacy being fought today in Latin America.

## NOTES

1. Max G. Manwaring, *A Model for the Analysis of Insurgencies*, Monterey, CA: BDM Management Services Company, 1982.

2. This presupposes that conflicts are not over fundamental values, but neither are they over issues that, while important, do not challenge bedrock beliefs.

3. See Manwaring.

4. Ejercito de Guatemala (The Guatemalan Army), *Polos de Desarrollo*, Guatemala, 1985.

5. Mitchell, Seligson and John A. Booth, eds., *Political Participation in Latin America: Politics and the Poor*, Vol. 2, New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979.

6 For example, an El Salvador government poster was entitled "Victima inocente de minas del FMLN (Innocent Victims of the Mines of the FMLN), Farabundo Marti Nacional Liberation Front, 1986.

7 Congressionally voiced concerns, or actually imposed restrictions, limit economic and security assistance to countries that are in arrears on debt payments to the U.S. Government, have not taken sufficient steps to eradicate narcotics trafficking, or have not achieved an acceptable degree of democratization.

8. See Manwaring.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **CIVIC ACTION VERSUS COUNTERINSURGENCY AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT IN LATIN AMERICA: THE CASE FOR DELINKAGE**

**Regina Gaillard**

Military Civic Action (MCA) and Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (H/CA), still popularly called "civic action" by U.S. soldiers, are not normally topics that inflame hearts and minds, but they should. With tumultuous events presaging change in much of the world, and with shrinking U.S. military budgets, generic civic action and humanitarian and civic assistance by U.S. military personnel ideally hold the promise of meaningful training opportunities. Moreover, civic assistance projects can advance the interests of the United States while assisting Third World countries teetering on bankruptcy. These opportunities are opening at a time when civic action projects by the U.S. military are severely constrained by law and misunderstood by the public.

Cumulatively, the history of civic action, with its linkage to Counterinsurgency and Low Intensity Conflict doctrine, has tarnished the idealistic qualities of the concept and has ultimately been counterproductive to fostering a future role for the Army in Latin America. The removal of the U.S. Southern Command from Panama by the year 2000 offers a splendid opportunity for the U.S. Army to promote a joint service reorientation of U.S. doctrine and strategy, not only for Latin America but for most of the Third World as well. The thesis of this chapter is that such an effort, if it is to avoid the political and doctrinal pitfalls that have marked the history of the civic action concept, should be delinked from counterinsurgency (CI) and low intensity conflict (LIC) and should take the form of a new "U.S. Army Development Corps."<sup>1</sup> After an overview of how MCA and H/CA in Latin America acquired negative connotations, the concept of the Development Corps is outlined at the end of the chapter.

### **THE GOALS OF CIVIC ACTION**

Discussion surrounding the political, social, economic, developmental and military goals of military civic action as a U.S. policy for Latin America rose to the forefront in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Therefore, a majority of the literature and congressional hearings on military civic action is centered on that period, from which we might glean some lessons.

In their pathbreaking study on MCA published in 1966, Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning framed their discussion of U.S. MCA policy as a search for the resolution of the dilemma of security versus economic and social reform in Latin America.<sup>2</sup> Basing his dissertation on points made in the Barber and Ronning study, Robin Montgomery demonstrated that decisionmaking early in the Kennedy administration obscured any differences that might have existed between military civic

action as a developmental tool or preventative to insurgency, and MCA as a combat tool in military operations undertaken against an insurgency.<sup>3</sup> This differentiation of the role of MCA is extremely important in discussing the future utility of any type of civic action as a tool of U.S. policy as we enter the 1990s.

Even before President Kennedy definitively linked MCA to internal security and counterinsurgency, congressional debates showed that Congress voiced appreciation for the role civic action could play in development—as long as MCA was not linked overtly to "internal security" policies in Latin America. By 1957 the framework for future congressional debates on MCA and H/CA and their negative linkage with internal security doctrine in Latin America was being set.<sup>4</sup> Congressional discussion on aid to the U.S.-supported military regime in Guatemala in the aftermath of the 1954 overthrow of the Communist Arbenz government indicated that congressional interest in promoting developmental civic action by indigenous forces was linked to growing concern about Latin American economic conditions and their relationship to the possibilities of Communist expansion from within.<sup>5</sup> Until the threat of internal subversion rose to the fore, the U.S. rationale for military aid to Latin America was stated as the need for hemispheric defense against external aggression.<sup>6</sup> The external aggression rationale was to be maintained sporadically into the Kennedy administration because it avoided criticism in Congress that U.S. aid to Latin America militaries was being used to suppress popular opposition within Latin American countries.<sup>7</sup>

However, in line with Congress' more development-oriented thinking, economic aid to Bolivia was quintupled by 1956, and quickly followed by the proffering of military aid.<sup>8</sup> Both types of aid promoted military civic action programs by Bolivian troops that were deemed so successful by Senator Aiken in 1960 that he likened them to the U.S. Civilian Conservation Corps and recommended that these efforts be encouraged elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

## **CIVIC ACTION LINKED TO COUNTERINSURGENCY**

President Kennedy was responsible for organizing U.S. foreign affairs and national security agencies to guide and assist governments he considered threatened—most of Latin America—to resist the threat of Communist-inspired insurgency. "Cuba was in the forefront of the President's attention and was a symbol of the kind of troubles that would result from successful Communist guerrilla movements" throughout the Western Hemisphere.<sup>10</sup> The Special Group (Counterinsurgency), established by the President in 1962 provided the organizational framework for this effort and the doctrine of military civic action.

In an attempt to coordinate the economic assistance efforts of the Alliance for Progress with the military assistance efforts to counter insurgency, the Special Group prescribed the necessity for Internal Defense and Developmental Plans to be drawn up for each threatened country. The prescription was duly included in U.S. Counterinsurgency doctrine and, much later (1981), in Low Intensity Conflict doctrine. Military civic action, that "hybrid of economic and military assistance,"<sup>11</sup> already linked in speeches by the President to the U.S. counterinsurgency effort, was a key concept of the prescription and thus became firmly fixed in both practice and doctrine to

counterinsurgency. But when it was developed, the emphasis in Counterinsurgency doctrine and training was almost exclusively on the military aspects of unconventional warfare.<sup>12</sup>

"Although he (President Kennedy) repeatedly stated his affinity for the political, economic and social aims of MCA," circumstances, particularly the worsening situation in Vietnam and the failure of the Bay of Pigs, led to his seeking the advice of counselors "who advocated the primacy of military means embodied in the policy of counterinsurgency" rather than the more developmental means connoted by military civic action *per se*.<sup>13</sup>

However, the promotion of the idea of military civic action in Latin America remained an important tool of the Kennedy administration, at least "as a concomitant to internal security."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, MCA as part of counterinsurgency initially received a large share of resources—and even more publicity. Presumably this was because it was considered an attractive concept with appeal to the public and thus a decorative embellishment of an armed forces' public image.<sup>15</sup>

## THE SECURITY VERSUS DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT DILEMMA

Congressional debates and hearings by the mid-1960s illustrated that Congress was sympathetic to both the developmental and counterinsurgency goals of MCA while it simultaneously expressed doubts over the wisdom of increased involvement in Latin American internal security affairs. But ultimately Congress supported the administration policy and resolved the involvement dilemma by decreasing MAP (Military Aid Program) grant aid to Latin America, which included MCA, while permitting increased sales of military training and equipment for Latin American internal security purposes. The result was legislative restrictions on the use of MCA as a policy tool and the clear placement of MCA, by both the administration and Congress, as secondary to the necessity of maintaining the capability of the security forces of Latin American countries.<sup>16</sup>

There was no doubt by the mid-1970s that Latin American military and security forces, with their institutional monopoly on power within the threatened countries, had been the most effective instrument against insurgency and urban guerrillas.<sup>17</sup> By the advent of the Carter administration in 1977, each of these countries except Venezuela and Colombia had come to be ruled by authoritarian military regimes which had successfully eliminated the urban and rural opposition.

The continuation of repressive measures by many of the military governments which dominated the Latin American scene in the 1970s, coupled with popular dissatisfaction with our Vietnam policies, prompted Congress to cut off all economic and military aid to these countries after 1974. This broke the conundrum created by the clash of U.S. interests in security versus the promotion of democracy and development in Latin America. The Carter administration's Human Rights Policy, presented in 1977, further assisted the United States out of the ethical bind created by the clash of these strategic objectives. Utilizing U.S. ideals and moral influence, the new U.S. strategy promoted democratic development in Latin America through a campaign to limit illegal abuses of the population by both repressive governments *and* guerrilla operations.

## DEJA VU: MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND HUMANITARIAN AND CIVIC ASSISTANCE IN THE 1980s

By 1981, the increasing Marxism-Leninism of the Sandinistas and the threatening situation in El Salvador prompted the Reagan administration to become involved in Central America and gave impetus to a rebirth of interest in counterinsurgency and civic action. At the same time the U.S. military, under the rubric of "low intensity conflict," began to revise its doctrine on small wars and insurgency in the Third World. Such doctrine continued to emphasize counterinsurgency and maintain the linkage between counterinsurgency and military civic action.<sup>18</sup>

Similar to President Kennedy's administration some 20 years before, the Reagan administration became the organizing force which drove U.S. policy toward involvement in Central America as part of an activist version of the Containment policy which took a hard-line view of Central American revolution. Also, as in the 1960s, congressional support for military aid to Central American militaries was somewhat cautious. Military civic action as an item in the U.S. security assistance program for Latin America had long since been halted because of the human rights violations of many Latin American militaries and persistent congressional doubts about the political, social and economic benefits to be gained by enhancing the role of Latin American forces.

However, reminiscent of the Alliance for Progress, Congress approved a total "internal security" economic and military aid package for El Salvador, where the U.S. military attempted to promote military civic action by the El Salvadoran Armed Forces according to traditional counterinsurgency doctrine developed in the 1960s. But opposition to administration policy by Congress, particularly to U.S. military involvement in the El Salvadoran guerrilla war, limited the number of U.S. military advisers in El Salvador to 55.

Congress also cautiously supported the administration's Contra policy until it became apparent that the administration was overinvolved in implementing its anti-Sandinista agenda through the use of various Executive Branch agencies and departments without informing Congress. In view of reluctant congressional support, the Reagan administration made haste, as the Kennedy administration had done before it, to develop new venues through which to execute its Central American policy, particularly through "humanitarian assistance" to the Contras.

It seems likely that the concept of "humanitarian assistance" to a guerilla army introduced new confusions and may have further tarnished the image of "humanitarian and civic assistance." Presumably, humanitarian assistance to the Contras involved food and medical supplies, but, as the subsequent confusion played out and the North and Poindexter trials demonstrated, the funding process was quite murky. During the same period, the Reagan administration appointed a DOD Director for Humanitarian and Civic Assistance. This office was subsequently located in the Pentagon's Office for International Security Affairs which originated many of the ideas for Humanitarian and Civic Assistance as part of an active promotion of the Reagan Doctrine in Central America. Thus, the perceptual linkage between H/CA and support for the Contras was reinforced.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, the U.S. Southern Command in Panama implemented a "security development plan designed in part to renew emphasis on Humanitarian Assistance initiatives."<sup>20</sup> Rather

than emphasizing the traditional military civic action projects described in other chapters (e.g. Chapter 3 on Civic Action in Africa), the new projects supported operations conducted directly by U.S. troops and minimized the role of the indigenous military (cf. Chapter 6). Congress, at the behest of the administration, legalized these humanitarian and civic action activities performed by U.S. troops, but also severely restricted them. The Stevens Amendment, later expanded, permitted U.S. troops to perform civic actions—but only incidental to or in conjunction with approved military exercises overseas. This legislation has led to the persistent claim that National Guard and Reserve Component troops are in Central America because "we are there to train, nothing more."<sup>21</sup> This claim notwithstanding, humanitarian and civic assistance activities, described as "a mechanism by which U.S. military personnel and assets assist Third World populations" by improving their "quality of life," have been linked within Low Intensity Conflict doctrine under "U.S. Military Support to Counterinsurgency."<sup>22</sup>

As a result, some host nation politicians disowned any involvement with U.S. civic assistance projects. For example, an H/CA project to extend the Potosi airport in Bolivia created a considerable amount of political opposition.<sup>23</sup> As a result, the Bolivians limited the time that U.S. troops could spend on the airport project to 3 months a year. The troops, mostly Reserves and National Guard engineers with a permanent contingent from U.S. Southern Command in Panama, planned to bring in heavy equipment and return to finish the job the next year.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, when the U.S. Attorney General and the U.S. DEA Director visited Bolivia, they promised that "the U.S. would only send troops to Bolivia at the request of the government." The promise was publicized by the Bolivian press, but two weeks later "a campaigning Bolivian politician discovered U.S. soldiers handing out medicines in rural towns near the capital." Worse, "the soldiers' presence had not been publicly announced" and "the incident became an embarrassment for the government when the Health Ministry acknowledged it did not know what medicines were being distributed."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps that is why the Bolivian politicians have been suspicious of U.S. humanitarian and civic assistance.

## CONCLUSION

"The problem of Military Civic Action is that the objective remains strategic—it's never just 'do-goodism.'"<sup>26</sup> The Kennedy and Reagan administrations linked MCA, counterinsurgency, H/CA and LIC to internal security activities in Latin America. What was acceptable during the Kennedy administration was, during the Reagan administration, often perceived by Congress to be antidemocratic and associated with covert operations. This perception, when coupled with the legacy of opinions about the success or failure of MCA in Vietnam, led to severe legislative constraints. Presidential pressure in support of short-term policies, coupled with congressional vacillation, resulted in questionable low intensity conflict strategies, or no strategy, for Latin America and contributed to a lack of clarity in military doctrine. A recent RAND report suggests that "current (LIC) doctrine does not do a good job of distinguishing between such diverse activities as humanitarian assistance, nationbuilding, counterinsurgency, and civic action."<sup>27</sup>

MCA and H/CA have always been intertwined with the U.S. effort to counter subversion in Latin America. Some notable and recent exceptions for Africa were described earlier in Chapter



3. For Latin America, however, the social, developmental and humanitarian aspects of MCA, perceived in the 1950s as a preventative to insurgency, were subsumed under the military aspects of U.S. Counterinsurgency doctrine and the Latin American military doctrine of Internal Security. Even in the 1980s, the U.S. military continued to formalize the inclusion of MCA and the more recent H/CA in Counterinsurgency doctrine under the umbrella of LIC.

In the late 1960s, distracted by Vietnam and lack of economic and social reform in Latin America, DOD submitted minimum requests for Latin American MCA funds. At the same time, Congress marginally increased appropriations and sales of security assistance to the Latin American militaries.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the major policy decisions which preclude an active role for the United States in Latin American counterinsurgency efforts were made over 20 years ago. This fact leads to the conclusion that MCA and the more recent H/CA will continue to have little application in Latin America as long as they are linked to Counterinsurgency and Low Intensity Conflict doctrine which calls for direct U.S. military involvement. This would be especially true for Latin American governments undergoing the process of institutionalizing democracy and building civilian prestige. If MCA is linked to LIC doctrine, and there is no substantial U.S. role in LIC, how can MCA have a role?

An unprecedented emphasis on human rights, triggered by President Carter's policy of linking foreign aid to human rights abuses, has captured the popular imagination of Latin American citizens and has created what I call a "Second Revolution of Rising Expectations." Whether or not democracy works in Latin America, there is widespread acceptance of democratic ideals among Latin American masses and an expectation that democracy must eventually work for them. A strong sense of nationalism, even if only rhetorical, is a concomitant of this process. Non-democratic forms of government or at least nonelected governments are increasingly perceived as unacceptable. This political climate does not bode well for U.S. congressional or Latin American civilian receptivity to programs, even antidrug programs, that promise to enhance the stature of the military, particularly if the programs are perceived to strengthen the military's nondemocratic internal security capabilities as outlined in LIC-Counterinsurgency doctrine, of which MCA and H/CA are a part.

Challenged by the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s, President Bush has declared that we are "beyond containment."<sup>29</sup> If the MCA concept was based on a threat that no longer exists, or is changing, throughout Latin America, the Army must devise new concepts. Economic, social and criminal threats are increasingly ambiguous as to the application of military power in a democratizing Latin America. The U.S. military should keep in mind that U.S. policymakers and the U.S. Congress have consistently found the developmental aspects of civic action to be attractive concepts above reproach. Moreover, the humane aspects of these programs reflect American ideals which are well known and admired by Latin Americans and many other peoples in Third World countries. Therefore, any civic action plan proposed by the Army for Latin America must emphasize humanitarian development and deemphasize the employment of military teams solely to combat insurgencies. This is what "winning the peace" is all about.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

How can a civic action program be set up for the future that will support the developmental ideals of the concept, utilize the manpower and resources of the Army, and avoid many of the political pitfalls that have plagued civic action in the past? The following recommendations and justification for them offer an answer.

● Delink Humanitarian and Civic Assistance from LIC/Counterinsurgency—Include H/CA in a new separate "Peacekeeping" Doctrine.

Current Low Intensity Conflict doctrine includes four "operational categories":

1. Insurgency support and counterinsurgency (includes H/CA);
2. Combatting terrorism;
3. Peacekeeping operations (UN-type); and,
4. Peacetime contingency operations (like Panama).

The LIC categories represent every kind of possible operation except major war in Europe. Discrete doctrine should be formulated for each of the categories. In particular, the U.S. military should *include the nonwarfighting concept of Humanitarian and Civic Assistance under "peacekeeping operations" and separate them both from LIC.*<sup>30</sup>

● Broaden the new H/CA/Peacekeeping function—Organize it as a specialty in each service—promote joint DOD projects.

The H/CA/Peacekeeping specialty would be dedicated to development construction and medical, managerial and conservation civil assistance. Its rationale is simply humanitarian; a form of cheaper foreign aid as U.S. foreign assistance budgets shrink. It should enhance Department of Defense "jointness," with all services contributing to projects.

● Call the new H/CA/Peacekeeping function "The U.S. Army Development Corps"—Establish the Development Corps as a new Unified Military Command—Contract its services only to duly elected democratic governments.

Increasing the managerial and humanitarian competence of new democracies is an objective congruent with our national interests. The Army should develop a new command compatible with employment in duly elected democratic regimes. A development corps would avoid the legal constraints that have marked the history of the civic action concept. The U.S. Army Development Corps, working under contract only to democratic civilian governments, would be stationed in the United States and provide its recruits with vocational training to fulfill its mission. Morale is expected to be high, as it has been in units that have performed civic assistance in Honduras. Service in the Army Development Corps might be an attractive option for U.S. troops coming home from Europe and Korea.

## JUSTIFICATIONS

1. The Development Corps is cost effective. This mission would help retain force structure and facilities in the United States and contribute to the alleviation of joblessness and lack of skills both in Latin America, through training and example, and in the United States when those who have served in the Development Corps return to civilian life.

The U.S. Army Development Corps could prove, in terms of the U.S. budget, that the Army and other services involved in it are "paying their way." The institutional experience of the services makes the military the most capable organization for such a mission. Development work by the military is a form of foreign aid and therefore would save not only dollars paid to civilian contractors, but could realize additional cost savings by combining Army pay as foreign aid. The work would also be cheaper for the receiving country. As USAID and foreign assistance resources diminish, the Army Development Corps can help fill the gaps. USAID would negotiate the contracts in consultation with the Army Development Corps Commander.

2 Development for debt? Because of the crushing debt problems throughout Latin America which endanger the viability of the new democracies, the Development Corps Commander should urge the DOD and the Department of State to develop a program to enable Third World democratic governments to exchange portions of their international debt for "permitting" the U.S. Development Corps, under contract, to "train" in conducting its humanitarian development role. A "debt for development and training" program would require removal of congressional banking restrictions and passage of enabling legislations.

3. The Development Corps can serve as the nucleus for a new "CCC." With a decaying urban and rural infrastructure within the United States, ideas for new national service, including a plan from Senator Nunn, have been set forth. Most are based on the successful Army-run Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s which provided pride and jobs for thousands. The future U.S. Army Development Corps might also recruit for such a mission. This mission would help retain force structure and facilities in the United States and contribute to the alleviation of joblessness and lack of skills both in the Third World and in the United States.

4 The U.S. Army Development Corps can serve as a multilateral development multiplier. Supporting the argument that developmental and economic assistance should not be tied to security, "the U.S. has progressively increased its contributions to the multilateral developmental banks and the United Nations system...." Such aid "now accounts for more than one-third of the total."<sup>31</sup>

A continuing trend toward multilateral development assistance combined with the new H/CA/Peacekeeping doctrine would provide an additional opportunity for the Army to perform those tasks. The Development Corps would enable the Army and the other services to participate, as in the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, with other nations in development and humanitarian and civic assistance operations on a regular basis without the negative connotations that have restricted these activities since the 1950s.

## NOTES

1 The idea of a Development Corps led by the Army is not a new concept. For example, COL Wes Grosbeck, in a 1988 article in *Army*, points out that "currently there is no program within the Army which prepares a soldier to act effectively as an advisor to a foreign military force in the area of rural development..."(p. 63, "Training to Win Hearts and Minds") In the article, COL Grosbeck proposes an imaginative 36-hour block of instruction for an Army rural development training program structured along the lines proposed by this author.

2 Willard F Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power. Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America*, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966, p. 4.

3 Robin N Montgomery, *Military Civic Action and Counterinsurgency. The Birth of a Policy*, Dissertation, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, c. 1971, pp. 16, 196.

4 Michael J Francis, "Military Aid to Latin America in the U.S. Congress," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, July 1964, p. 400.

5 Frank R Pancake, *Military Assistance as an Element of U.S. Foreign Policy in Latin America, 1950-1968*, Thesis, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1969, pp. 50-51.

6. Francis, p. 394.

7. Pancake, pp. 61-131 *passim*.

8 Harold Molineu, *U S. Policy Toward Latin America. From Regionalism to Globalism*, Boulder, CO. Westview Press, 1986, pp. 218-220, and Pancake, p. 340.

9. Francis, pp. 397-398.

10 Douglas Blaufarb, *The Counter-Insurgency Era. U.S. Doctrine and Performance*, New York, NY. The Free Press, 1977, p. 54.

11. Francis, p. 403.

12 Sam C Sarkesian, "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict. The Formative Period," in *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict*, ed by David Charters and Maurice Tugwell, London. Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1989, p. 68.

13. Montgomery, p. 196.

14. Pancake, p. 170.

15 See Barber and Ronning, pp. 27-28, 197-198, 229. In addition, *JCS Pub 1. Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, June 1987, considers that MCA "would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population." P. 230.

16 Barber and Ronning, pp 239-243, Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 219; and, Pancake, p. 135.

17 Military operations, rather than application of counterinsurgency theory, ended guerrilla movements in Latin America in the 1960s For example, Che Guevara's unsuccessful "foco" concept made him a military target. In Peru, after unsuccessfully trying to bomb the guerrillas out, the Army finally succeeded in quelling the insurgency by sealing off all access and egress around the guerrilla area of operations. See also Blaufarb, p. 284 and Pancake, pp. 165-216.

18. *FM 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict*, Washington. U.S. Department of the Army, January 16, 1981.
19. Robert S. Greenberger, "Military's Return to Humanitarian Aid Business Raises Concerns About Using Food as a Weapon," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 1987, p. 66.
20. MAJ Bernard Eugene Harvey, "U.S. Military Civic Action in Honduras, 1982-1985. Tactical Success, Strategic Uncertainty," *CLIC Papers*, Langley Air Force Base, VA. Army Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict, October 1988, p. 9.
21. Lieutenant General Emmett H. Walker, Jr., "National Guard Training in Central America," *National Guard*, Vol. 40, No. 5, May 1986, p. 2.
22. *FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, Final Draft, Washington. U.S. Departments of the Army and Air Force, June 24, 1988, pp. 2-38.
23. Merrill Collett, "Leftists Challenge Airfield Project. U.S. Army Civic Action Projects Are Precursors of a Full Military Base in Bolivia, Critics Charge," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 31, 1989, p. 3.
24. Interview with COL Wayman "Del" Robertson, June 1989.
25. Quoted from Merrill Collett.
26. Interview with COL Lyman Chandler Duryea, June 1989, (former U.S. Military Attache in El Salvador).
27. Leslie Lewis, Morlie Hammer, and James Eddins, *The Army in Latin America. Leverage in a Constrained Environment*, Working Draft, Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, August 1988.
28. Barber and Ronning, pp. 239-243; Schoultz, p. 219; and, Pancake, P. 135.
29. "Transcript of Bush's Remarks on Transforming Soviet-American Relations," *The New York Times*, May 13, 1989, p. 6.
30. *FM 100-20*, June 24, 1988, pp. 1-10. A draft of new doctrine recently circulated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff has taken a giant step in this direction by placing peacekeeping on an "operational continuum" and separating it from low intensity conflict. Hopefully this is a preliminary move to do away with the confusing Low Intensity Conflict doctrine entirely. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, Test Pub, *JCS Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations*, Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1990.
31. John Wilhelm and Gerry Feinstein, eds., *U.S. Foreign Assistance. Investment or Folly?* New York, NY. Praeger Publishers, 1984, p. 8. See also, Patrick Demongeot, "U.N. System Development Assistance," p. 390.

## CHAPTER 6

# THE LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY, LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT, AND DEMOCRACY

Gabriel Marcella

There can be no expression of a desire to return to political power when experience tells us that the result is totally negative for our country and fundamentally so for the armed forces.<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

The most remarkable development in Latin America during the economically "lost decade" of the 1980s is the region-wide process of redemocratization. Close to 90 percent of the people of the region are ruled by civilian governments. The flowering of democratic, pluralistic, and participatory systems is still a noble aspiration, but it is radically different from the bleak political landscape of the 1960s and 1970s, when military governments prevailed. Nor is the appurtenance of civilian government equal to democracy. There is a large variety of civilian-military coalitions possible in a democratic setting. Moreover, as a senior Brazilian officer commented, it is not necessarily true that all civilian governments are of a democratic tendency and working for the common good, or that all military governments are driven by other interests. While the process of redemocratization is far from complete, a strong foundation has been established.

The turnaround is explained primarily by the working out of indigenous factors, and only secondarily by the influence of external factors, such as U.S. policy. The positive trend is part of a worldwide democratic renaissance and rejection of both authoritarian and totalitarian forms. That is, it is due to an increasingly universal yearning to hold the governors accountable to the governed. As redemocratization proceeds, the armed forces will have a decisive role to play in helping to nurture the institutional bases on which it rests. The thesis of this chapter is that democratization is compatible with professionally strong military establishments. Such compatibility is also consonant with U.S. strategic requirements. Professionally capable, self-confident, and politically responsible military institutions provide a better security shield for the survival of democracy than do poorly organized, insecure, and—at the extreme, such as the Panamanian Defense Forces under Manuel Antonio Noriega—corrupt institutions distanced from, and at times in conflict with, the larger civilian society. Such institutions are incapable of carrying out their professional responsibility of defeating external threats and provide little defense against—and, indeed, may facilitate the victory of—the new totalitarian revolutionaries.

During the past two decades and in one form or another, the Latin American militaries faced critical challenges to their institutions and to their nations, challenges which ranged from how to

integrate the national territory effectively to how to fight underdevelopment and/or Communist insurgencies (with or without foreign support). There were also episodes of violence against external enemies, the conflicts between El Salvador and Honduras (1969), Peru-Ecuador (1981), and Argentina-United Kingdom over the Falklands/Malvinas (1982), and the threatened—though peacefully resolved—confrontation (1978) between Chile and Argentina over the Beagle Channel. There have also been new challenges, the diffuse, unconventional threat posed by Sandinista subversion and the differentiated Soviet-Cuban strategy of alliance with the new revolutionaries of the 1970s and 1980s. Looming over all of these is the new warfare waged by the international drug traffickers against all aspects of the social fabric, moral, ethical, and economic.

Nonetheless, the militaries' coercive powers, their often superior administrative capabilities, esprit-de-corps, and deep patriotism were insufficient attributes for them to win both the internal and external wars and, at the same time, manage complex national economies and political systems. In a number of cases, the exercise of political power exerted a corrosive influence on professionalism, on institutional cohesion, and on civil-military relations. While the military institutions, whether in or out of national power, made important, lasting contributions to national development, they also contributed to antithetical conditions. Illegitimate and ineffective governments were capable neither of retaining popular support nor of making good on promises to meet the demands of the governed, for social change, for improved economic performance, for political participation. The militaries' penchant for orderly development within a corporatist context may also have stifled the efficacy and/or growth of other mediating institutions able to serve the national interest.

Consequences were twofold. The first was the political isolation of the institution—what Latin Americans call "desgaste" or "desprestigio"—in the context of growing political polarization, the second was the disengagement of U.S. security assistance under the rubric of its human rights policy, later resumed on a more limited, but fitful, basis during the 1980s. In 1987, U.S. security assistance to South America reached an all-time low of only \$5 million. In 1988, U.S. security assistance to the area, mirroring global trends, continued the long-term decline, to the point that only three countries—El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras—received funding, support that was directly related to defensive efforts against domestic insurgency and Sandinista expansion. In 1989, security assistance was refocused to target Colombian narco-traffickers. Finally, a new wave of revolutionary violence threatens to weaken not only the military institutions but also hopes for the democratic opening of society. In this context, Argentine Army Chief of Staff, General Hector Rios Erenu's comments at the beginning of this chapter are understandable.

In the same context, in June 1986, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs Elliott Abrams proposed a democratic vision of security to the graduating civilian and military officers from 16 hemispheric countries of the Inter American Defense College in Washington, DC.

Your generation must be a generation of pioneers. You are now the guardians of the new democracies. Your highest calling must be—not to replace failed regimes—but to protect successful democracies. You must succeed in the task of forging a new vision of security in which democracy is the cornerstone, not a luxury, where free and political competition is an ally, not an impediment to peace and development.

In this sense, the rise of democracy in the hemisphere satisfies the imperatives of comprehensive security policy. We will find security in the construction of open, inclusive, and democratic political order.<sup>2</sup>

Democracy has also been rediscovered by some of the armed forces of Latin America. This stems both from internal institutional developments and from the military's assessment that democracy may offer the best type of political organization to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Some of this thinking emerged at the November 1985 Conference of the American Armies, held in Santiago de Chile, on the theme of "The Role of the Army in a Democratic Society," at which a pluralism of views was revealed along with a grudging consensus that democracy is worth another try.<sup>3</sup> A subsequent Conference of the American Armies, held in the United States at Fort Benning, Georgia, in March 1987, pursued the follow-up theme of "How Military Training Enhances Democratic Growth." Exchanging views at this high a level enables communication to take place both across military institutions and throughout the Hemisphere. And, of course, the conferences nurture support for the core values of democracy. It remains to be seen whether such support will translate into what John S. Fitch, of the University of Colorado, calls a doctrine of "democratic military professionalism," to better civil-military relations and smoother transitions to democracy.

However, the military faces troubling dilemmas in promoting democracy. To understand them we will outline themes common to the region before making some observations about specific national situations. The dilemmas are not unique to the military alone; civilians face challenges of equal dimensions in promoting the institutional bases for democratic military professionalism. Moreover, civilian leaders have yet to develop an effective approach to integrate participation of military professionals into the national decisionmaking.

## **THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE CIVIL-MILITARY DIALOGUE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

In his classic work, *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington argued that a cooperative civil-military relationship is the principal institutional component of military security policy. There is increasing evidence that Latin Americans recognize this. Yet it is exceedingly difficult to communicate this concept, given the enormous gap between civilians and the military. One U.S. field commander who is intimately familiar with Latin America refers to the "no-man's land" that separates the civilian from the military world. Isolation is not uncommon to military institutions. There is always an element of tension between the civilian and military sectors of any society, but it reaches a particular, if not dangerous, intensity in Latin America. The lack of communication is particularly acute with respect to the mission of the military—national security—where few civilians engage in a pragmatic institutionalized dialogue with either military professionals or with the international network of strategic study organizations.

Over the last two decades, national security has taken on a negative connotation within civilian circles because of the excesses associated with military government in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The limited amount of dialogue that does take place does so within the environment of war colleges, where the military and civilians have institutionalized the joint study of national



security issues. Institutions of this type exist in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Absence of such dialogue weakens the militaries' claim to the legitimacy of their professional mission within a democracy. It also seriously diminishes civilians understanding of the legitimate concerns of the military profession. Sharing knowledge about national security is a form of democratic empowerment which is sorely needed in Latin America.

National security issues are not openly discussed in a sophisticated manner. Despite the flowering of such institutions as the Superior War College in Brazil and the Center for Advanced Military Studies in Peru, few civilians are serious students of national security. Budgetary constraints will inhibit such efforts in the future even more. National security has become a partisan symbol. As a code word for authoritarian/military government, civilian leaders have felt compelled to turn their backs on it. Because Latin America is a secondary theater in the global military balance, few civilians in Latin America—even fewer in the United States—are familiar with the language and the manner of thinking involved in (1) defense planning and (2) the professional concerns of Latin American military institutions.

Much of the voluminous writing on the Latin American military makes scarce reference to its primary professional mission of defense. Few are familiar with the seminal writings of Eduardo Mercado Jarrin on strategy, such as *Seguridad, Política, Estrategia* (Lima. Ministerio de Guerra, 1974) or with the planning documents (Manual Básico) that have influenced a generation of military officers in Brazil. The military and strategy journals, which are outlets for the expression of military views, have a meager readership. The statements of national objectives and strategies explicit in these writings attempt to develop the art of national and military planning and are compatible, if not convergent, with civilian concepts. They are: democracy, national integration, integrity of the national territory, social peace, progress, and sovereignty. They are to be achieved through a balanced application of the instruments of national power—political, economic, psychosocial, and military. These writings provide keys to understanding the operational code of the military professional: his world view, his political framework, his concept of civil-military relations, and the definition of his mission.

Some analysts state that such doctrines of national security inevitably involve the military in the very thing they ought to avoid, i.e., running governments. These critics argue that the mission of the military should focus upon external, rather than internal, security. It would be fair to say that few civilians are familiar with the intellectual formation of the Latin American military professional, in particular what he reads, whether in the form of texts on military strategy, military history, economic development, the nation's history, or on international relations. The study of military sociology or of the military as a social institution is practically nonexistent. Such academic sophistication as exists is confined to the political role of the military institution. Analysts who display an intellectual fascination with the military are either unaware of, or unwilling to recognize, its professional mission to defend the nation. There is a small intellectual movement among a few scholars—in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay—to study the new professional missions of the military.

Philosophical differences are one reflection of the deeply-rooted problems of communication between civilians and the military. Even though he had taught engineering at the Salvadoran Military Academy some years before, President José Napoleon Duarte admitted later that he

never took the time to study how the military thinks.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes military establishments have seen fit not to share military and political intelligence with civilian leaders on national problems. And, upon occasion, military intelligence organizations can be, and have been, exploited for partisan—even personal—political purposes at variance with the national interest, subverting the principle of civilian control. In some countries, the military intelligence organizations provide the only systems for national intelligence. Laws and practices vary from one country to another, yet centralizing national intelligence in the hands of the military, or of individuals autonomous within the institution and within society, is not conducive to accountability nor to effective government. Knowledge is power, and the dissemination of intelligence forms the basis for shared learning and shared decisionmaking in a healthy democracy. Abuse of this basic principle can compromise both the institutional interests of the military and the national interest.

Cultural distance, institutional resentments, and political excess in the name of safeguarding national security and democracy all play a part in widening the communication gap between the military and civilians, resulting in mutual paranoia and desire for revenge that can seriously diminish the prospects of pragmatic reconciliation necessary for a democratic community.

## **THE NEW CHALLENGES FACING THE LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY**

As Latin America approaches the year 2000, it faces enormous social, economic, and political problems. deep economic recession, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, rapidly expanding populations making increasing demands upon the political systems, austerity cutbacks on social expenditures and national defense, the decapitalization produced by the external debt problems (estimated at \$440 billion in late 1989), and the explosion of the narcotics traffic. In some countries, such as Peru and Colombia, central authority is being subverted by the twin scourges of insurgency and drugs. These alone are sufficient to place great strains on the national security of any political system, but particularly those of fragile democracies.

The outbreak of social violence in Caracas, Venezuela, on February 26, 1989, with a toll of 246 dead and 1,831 injured, bears witness to the political danger of imposing economic austerity. This event becomes even more compelling when one considers that Venezuela has been a robust democracy for three decades. There is, in addition, the new revolutionary warfare being waged against institutions, governments, and the armed forces. While much of our attention has been focused on insurgency violence in Central America, many Marxist and Marxist-Leninist insurgents are also active elsewhere in Latin America, as indicated in Figure 1.

The new revolutionaries have adopted a more sophisticated strategy than their predecessors of the 1960s. They have chosen a strategy of protracted warfare to take advantage of the vulnerabilities of Latin American societies and of the inconsistencies and discontinuities of the principal external support element, i.e., U.S. policy. Encouraged by the example set by the Sandinistas in 1979, of taking power with logistical support from Cuba, the Socialist bloc, and even non-Communist sources, these groups target beleaguered governments. By developing international political support systems, they attempt to isolate governments and the armed forces in order to weaken, and ultimately destroy, intermediate institutions. Their strategic objective is to destroy the sense of legitimacy and consensus which links the people, the government, and

the military—or "the triangle" as it has been called by General John R. Galvin, former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama, in a reference to Karl Von Clausewitz's counsel from his classic *On War*.<sup>5</sup> The military may inadvertently facilitate this strategy if it responds to violence with indiscriminate counterviolence of its own, an overreaction which may generate the conditions for its own destruction by eroding its legitimacy further, thus risking elimination of U.S. support to the government—and the military institution—so targeted.

GUATEMALA	Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms Revolutionary Armed Forces Guerrilla Army of the Poor Guatemalan Workers Party
EL SALVADOR	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (5 Groups): Revolutionary Party of the People, Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers, National Forces of Armed Resistance, Popular Liberation Forces, Armed Forces of Liberation.
HONDURAS	Chinchoneros Lorenzo Zelaya Popular Revolutionary Forces
COLOMBIA	Armed Forces of the Colombian Revolution M-19 Armed Forces of National Liberation Army of Popular Revolution
EDUCADOR	Alfaro Vive Carajo!
PERU	Sendero Luminoso Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
CHILE	Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front Movement of the Revolutionary Left

Figure 1. Insurgent Groups.

The new revolutionaries are quite clear about their objectives with respect to democracy and the role of the armed forces in the new political order, which is: to facilitate civilian control by merging the state, the revolutionary party, and the popular army—as occurs in Sandinista Nicaragua and in Cuba. No doubt, such fusion is anticipated by the FMLN and other Marxist Leninist groups in the region.

If the government and armed forces meet the insurgent violence with indiscriminate counter-violence of their own, an institutional crisis may ensue in which the government and/or the military

lose legitimacy. This will occur unless counterinsurgency measures are carried out with professionalism, restrained use of force, and respect for human rights. The democratic dilemma is that counterinsurgency is war, requiring mobilization of vision, decisiveness, and resources. More often than not this means, at least for the short term, strengthening both the size and political power of the military to defeat the insurgents and win the "hearts and minds" of the people. Mobilizing strategic vision, decisive authority, and resources ought to be a joint effort of both civilians and military. Where such cooperation is not effective, the military's political power will increase.

The challenge is intensified by economic crises, natural disasters—such as earthquakes and floods (Peru 1982, Chile and Colombia 1985, El Salvador 1986, and Ecuador 1987)—and the threat of drugs. Hopes for a democratic outcome can be frustrated within such a frustrating environment.<sup>6</sup> Under this kind of stress, the very conditions which induced the military to take political power in the first place may return. violence, economic mismanagement, and a renewal of insurgency. In these circumstances, some military officers and civilian supporters may be tempted to plot a coup, particularly those who perceive either the national security or their own institutional interests to be threatened, or those who may be held accountable for conducting a "dirty war" against insurgents. The degree of threat perceived may also be a function of its estimated impact upon the United States, particularly if the latter should opt to disengage from the region, as happened during the 1970s when the United States eliminated security assistance to many countries, weakening its military-to-military ties in the process. Coups by the military against their civilian governments may resolve a given security problem in the short run, but, at the same time, such actions may only intensify the crisis over the longer term by, among other things, increasing political polarization, thus eroding the legitimacy of the institution further. Another danger is that prolonged military government and its involvement in the civilian sectors of governments tends to deprive civilians of that important political administrative experience which would obviate military intervention in the first place. These dilemmas are understood by pragmatists among the civilian and military sectors of government alike, but mutual suspicion about the governing capacity and intentions of the other can make civil-military cooperation difficult. Some appreciation of how this works in practice can be gleaned from the following country situations.

## THE NEW CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The capacity of Latin American military institutions to surmount these challenges will help determine the future of democracy and the future of relations with the United States. This section addresses, albeit briefly, some contemporary issues in civil-military relations in the following countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. Although the challenges are similar in many ways, specific circumstances make each national situation different.

**Guatemala.** With the election of Vinicio Cerezo in 1985, the Guatemalan military formally exited from the political power it had held for over 30 years (1954-85). During that time, the military fought two generations of Marxist insurgents, ran the government, and attempted to bring about social and economic development. Finally, the human rights abuses. economic mismanagement,

political incompetence, and the international isolation of the government of General Romeo Lucas Garcia (1978-82) led to the young officers' revolt of 1982 that brought to power General Efraim Rios Montt. He and his successor, General Hector Mejia Victores, implemented a successful counterinsurgency strategy of "bullets and beans" to isolate the guerrillas as well as to absorb them.

Before turning the government over to Cerezo, who came to power through a clean election in 1985, the military granted itself an amnesty which reduced its accountability for former human rights violations. Cerezo has steered away from investigating the past involvement of the military in the human rights abuses and from moving too quickly to control the military. Other—potentially divisive—issues remain. These include controlling how the counterinsurgency is conducted and the austerity imposed on the military budget, as well as Guatemala's foreign policy in Central America. Both civilian and military leaders appear to have arrived at a common understanding to cooperate in order to return Guatemala to national dignity and economic development and to set it on a course of democratization. How this cooperation will work out remains to be seen. The military takes great pride in its political and military accomplishments, yet, at the same time, it is eager to see that the democratic alternative succeeds.

On the one hand, there appears to be a coincidence of interests between Cerezo and the military on some issues, on the other, there are tactical disagreements on how those interests should be pursued.<sup>7</sup> The senior leadership of the Army is attempting to institutionalize respect for democratic values.

**El Salvador.** On October 15, 1979, and in the midst of escalating violence, a bloodless coup took place which installed a new government in El Salvador made up of younger military officers and moderate civilians committed to reforming the country's antiquated economic, social and political structures. The government promised to end repression, create a democratic political system, and implement agrarian reform. Even though the coup resulted in the retirement of approximately 40 percent of the senior officer ranks, the so-called October Junta could not muster sufficient support from the generally conservative military and security forces to carry out its bold program. A new junta, which included José Napoleon Duarte and other Christian Democrats, was formed in January 1980 and soon announced sweeping banking and agrarian reforms. The new government was immediately confronted with a number of formidable challenges. To implement broad socio-economic reform, a strong government—based on either a widespread consensus or a monopolization of the means of violence or both—was needed. The junta had neither. Its reform programs were attacked from the Left as insufficient and by the Right as threatening. The polarization, and subsequent militarization, of society left the government in a position where it could neither control effectively the terrorism of the Right nor end the guerrilla activities and terrorism of the Left.

In the spring of 1980 it was feared that the fragile coalition could not survive these challenges. Some believed that a Marxist-Leninist takeover of El Salvador was imminent. Others thought the coalition would be toppled by the Right or overwhelmed by the combined efforts of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN). Neither happened. In January 1981, the insurgents launched their "final" offensive, the first of a number of strategic miscalculations on the likelihood of a popular uprising, which was defeated by government forces. This blunted Right-wing efforts for a coup.

In March 1982, almost 1.5 million Salvadorans went to the polls to elect a new constituent assembly charged with writing a constitution and setting up full presidential elections. Subsequent elections in 1984, 1985, and in 1988 have ratified the Salvadoran commitment to democratic evolution, and rejected a more violent path.

The Salvadoran Armed Forces have made remarkable progress in the counterinsurgency. They have improved their battlefield performance immeasurably due, in part, to U.S. support and training. The FMLN has been confined to a minor portion of the national territory and its numbers reduced to an effective core estimated at 5-7,000. While the military maintains the initiative, the FMLN has by no means been defeated. FMLN strategy now emphasizes prolonged warfare designed to cause maximum destruction to the economy and to wear down U.S. support. The guerrillas engage in mine warfare and are attempting to rebuild their urban infrastructure. The military has supported social and economic changes which have altered the character of the political power structure. Slow but steady progress has been made in agrarian reform, to the benefit of over 550,000 people. The armed forces have made some institutional changes in an attempt to eliminate human rights abuses and have adopted more humane tactics in their air and ground operations—in part at the insistence of civilian President Duarte and in part because such tactics make more sense in winning the war. The critical support of the United States hinges on such tactics.

Serious problems remain. progress in judicial reform has been slow along with that of the National Pacification Program, which has experienced serious setbacks in the form of (1) the October 1986 earthquake, (2) a shortage of resources, and (3) only weak cooperation between civilian ministries and the military. Potentially troublesome for the long term will be the balance between civil and military power once the fighting is over. Internal war has greatly expanded the military's reach in society. Expansion of the armed forces (from 12,000 in 1980 to 53,000 in 1988) and their professionalization have given them great resources and enhanced their political stature relative to civilian institutions. The need to reduce the size of the military and subordinate it fully to civilian authority once the insurgency is defeated will prove a challenge to Salvadoran democracy.

The military's commitment to democracy is expedient politically. Nevertheless, such expediency is not to be denigrated if it can lead to greater cooperation between the military and civilians. Democracy has its uses, not only to retain U.S. support but also to beat the insurgents. When considered in these terms, the military's uneasy alliance with the Christian Democrats and President Duarte is understandable.<sup>8</sup> The parliamentary victory of the Right-wing ARENA (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista) party in 1989 is an important test for democracy. At the same time, the military faces the internal problems of discipline and poor professional performance which remain unresolved.<sup>9</sup> The Salvadoran military has a poor record when it comes to removing incompetents and disciplining law breakers within its ranks. Moreover, along with other Central American militaries, it shares a distressing history of corruption. For democracy to take root, the Salvadoran military must find a way to make its institutional interest compatible with the national interest.

**Honduras.** Honduras is a key country for the U.S. policy of democratization in Central America. Because it is a major strategic ally in preventing Sandinista expansion, Honduran

civil-military relations are greatly affected by its pivotal role in regional defense and its importance to U.S. policy.

For the most part, relations between civilians and the military have remained relatively free of the kind of excesses found in polarized political societies, such as Guatemala and El Salvador. Honduras has thus far escaped such polarization due to a more egalitarian, less stratified social order and to the recent professionalization of its armed forces. Nevertheless, its civil-military accommodation is not so strong that it does not find the situation of its neighbors—consolidation of communism in Nicaragua and insurgency in El Salvador—threatening.

The Honduran military has exercised its power in a relatively benign fashion and supports civilian control for a variety of reasons: because of strategic imperatives, because it is in its institutional interest to do so, and because it is a critical requirement for obtaining U.S. economic and military support. Honduras is keenly aware of its security vulnerabilities. Until March 1988, when they raided Bocay and provoked the U.S. Army's "Golden Pheasant" retaliation, the Sandinista army had been able to conduct cross-border operations against elements of the Nicaraguan Resistance, located in Honduras, with relative impunity. In October 1986, a small insurgent group, trained by Havana and Managua, appeared in La Ceiba (on the Caribbean coast) where it was quickly disposed of by the armed forces.

However, factional disputes and rumors of corruption within the Honduran military remain a source of concern. Not only do these internal problems compromise the respect of civilians, they also diminish the professional readiness required to deal with threats to security, both internal and external (i.e., Sandinistas). When Army Commander Colonel Guillermo Thuman Cordon was replaced by General Humberto Regalado Hernandez, Tegucigalpa radio commented:

In Radio America, we are deeply concerned about what is taking place inside the military institution. Because it is an institution that must be worthy of the respect of all Hondurans, it must be a model of well reasoned and strictly professional conduct. We want the so-called absolute unity, which is mentioned by the press bulletin, to be a complete reality of the Armed Forces. We are not surprised when there are differences of opinion in the Armed Forces because this is to be expected in an organization comprised of human beings. The only thing that we are worried about is that as a result of these latest events, the Armed Forces might again play the lead in stormy situations that would have somber prospects for the country's peace—situations that we all believed were things of the past. These situations are only good for those who are on the side of totalitarian doctrine and who oppose the democratic process of the country.<sup>10</sup>

On the plus side, any weaknesses within the military are increasingly finding a counterbalance in the growing professionalism of its younger officers and the institutionalization of cooperative decisionmaking by civilian and military leaders on issues of national security. Relations between these two important components remain sensitive—as in Guatemala and El Salvador—to the evolving security balance in the rest of Central America. This balance will be seriously affected by the potential disbanding of the Contra forces if no corresponding democratization takes place in Nicaragua. It remains to be seen whether this balance will strengthen the insurgent Left, increase the insecurity of the Right, or weaken the political Center. One key to cooperative civil-military relations, particularly if regional conflict continues, is the extent to which the military can continue to count on U.S. security assistance in the future.

**Panama.** The Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) under the control of Manuel Antonio Noriega represented the ultimate corruption of military professionalism in Latin America. Under the leadership of General Omar Torrijos (1968-81) the then National Guard evolved from a small police force into a nation-building unit that, by virtue of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty, was admitted into (1) a bilateral defense relationship with the United States and (2) the promise of a new, and probably unrealistic, mission: unilateral defense of the Canal by the year 2000. Ever since 1968, Panama has been controlled by Torrijos (until his death in 1981), his successors, and the military. For the last two decades, the symbols of torrijismo, populism, and anticolonialism dominated the economic and political life of the country. Applying one of the most effective civic action programs in the Third World, the PDF penetrated into every niche of society, using its formidable intelligence system to co-opt and intimidate. As if tradition and practice were not enough, Law 20 of the 1983 Constitution granted "administrative autonomy" to the leadership of the armed forces, thereby codifying the subordination of civilian authority to that of the military. The National Assembly, the judiciary, the police and all the administrative elements of government were controlled by the military through the instrument of a government party and compliant sycophants. The extraordinary political control was enforced through economic cooperation, intimidation, and military control of the mass media, which subjects the small nation of 2.2 million people to a constant barrage of propaganda and misinformation. Noriega and many of his supporters, both civilian and military, profited immensely from numerous lucrative legal enterprises, as well as many that went beyond legality (money-laundering, drugs). From the late 1970s to 1987, U.S. military assistance—primarily equipment and training—was a key factor in increasing PDF professionalism and its domestic political base. The PDF exploited this military relationship with the United States to control the people of Panama.

This kind of manipulation plus corruption finally drove thousands of demonstrators into the streets demanding political change in the democratic stirrings of June, July, and August 1987. These efforts proved fruitless against the repressive force employed by Noriega and the military to crush the opposition. Two coup attempts (March 1988 and October 1989) failed to dislodge Noriega from power, nor did the elections of May 7, 1989, whose results were brutally annulled by Noriega in a naked display of power which shocked the world.

On December 20, 1989, the United States mounted a military operation designed to liberate the Panamanian people from the repression and viciousness of state terrorism. In the ensuing days, reconstruction, reconciliation, and the building of democracy began.

Creating a democracy will be a novel experience for Panamanians. In the wake of dictatorship, they must learn to live by rules of fair play and consensus making. Military domination, manipulative techniques of control, and official lawlessness has been deeply embedded in the political culture. The military so dominated political life after 1968 that the foundations of democratic community—such as free expression, honest elections, a representative legislature, an impartial judiciary, and a government administrative system at the service of the people—became subverted.

The government of Guillermo Endara (who was elected by an overwhelming majority on May 7, 1989) has taken the first (and, hopefully, decisive) step by dismantling the Panamanian Defense Forces, locus of both power and wealth for the past 21 years. Drugs, money-laundering, and



numerous illicit activities corrupted both people and institutions. The officer corps enriched itself immeasurably. Unconfirmed estimates of Noriega's personal wealth went as high as \$800 million while that of his subordinates was \$50 million or better. The PDF was contemptuous of democracy and indoctrinated its members to despise civilian authority. Loyalty to the commander-in-chief, not patriotism, was held to be the highest attribute of a soldier.

Old habits die hard, and it will take time to root out established patterns of corruption and authoritarian domination. The newly organized Panamanian Public Force (PPF) must be purged of such attitudes and practices. Whatever replaces the old military must be smaller and accountable to civilian control. Because the Endara government has no experience in control, it will need support of every kind. The type of multi-battalion organization planned by Noriega (reportedly to reach a size of 22,000 by the year 2000) fits neither strategic reality nor Panama's economic capability. The new military force must be imbued with respect for democracy and the role of civilian control. Latin American militaries who respect such values (in Venezuela, for example) can advise. Costa Rica, which disbanded its military in favor of a police force long ago, may serve as a useful model.

To bring what Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderon calls decency to public life, it is essential not only to tame the military but to reform a system that has filled the government's administrative network with political cronies and botellas (literally, empty bottles who draw pay for no work) and that has facilitated corruption (such as bank secrecy laws which have enabled drug traffickers to launder money).

**Peru.** President Alan Garcia Perez and the Peruvian armed forces face formidable, seemingly intractable problems. High external debt and economic recession have brought crushing austerity to the welfare and defense sectors of the economy. Slow growth in the world economy has caused serious economic and social dislocations. A suffocating bureaucracy stifles economic growth. These add to the frustrations caused by the inability of civilian ministries and the military to develop and implement an effective strategy to defeat the brutal Maoist Sendero Luminoso insurgency, a movement which rejects Western values, including democracy. Insurgents are active in at least 40 percent of the national territory and seriously threaten to eliminate the authority of the central government in that area. A smaller group, the urban-focused Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, poses a less serious threat. The narcotraffic adds to the general decline of internal order, since it diminishes the ability of government, police, and armed forces to control the Upper Huallaga Valley. Of great concern is the emergence of a tactical alliance between the traffickers and the Sendero Luminoso.

The Peruvian military came to power in 1967, under General Velasco Alvarado, committed to social, economic, and political reform only to exit, in the late 1970s, frustrated by the lack of social and economic progress and eager to relinquish power lest the prestige and internal cohesion of the institution be further compromised. However, Peru's return to civilian government—first under President Fernando Belaunde Terry and then Garcia Perez—has proved equally incapable of producing lasting solutions to critical national problems. Although the defense establishment was reorganized and various changes of cabinet ministers made, both the government and the military come under criticism for their inability to contain, much less eliminate, the guerrillas. Sendero Luminoso pursues a low-tech protracted warfare designed to deprive the government of space

and people, isolate cities, and provoke the armed forces into abusive acts which undermine their legitimacy. In June 1986, Sendero Luminoso prisoners were massacred at Lurigancho and Fronton prisons, raising anew the ethical question of how to deal with domestic terrorism.<sup>11</sup> Meantime, the defense budget is being cut in half, forcing the military to stretch its limited resources ever more thinly to combat this threat. Unfortunately, Peru's traditional defense strategy has been devised to meet the possibility of conventional border conflict with Chile and Ecuador, not counterinsurgency, hence its shift in focus has been inadequate at best.

In Peru, the democratic idea is being severely tested. Civilian government is attempting to eliminate terrorism within the context of the nation's laws and, at the same time, promote political and economic development. Meanwhile, the military is trying to find a way to strengthen both national security and its own commitment to democracy. From the perspective of Peru's highly professional military, there is little alternative to civilian government.<sup>12</sup> While desperate economic conditions make it unlikely that Peru can change its dependency on Soviet military equipment (and consequently, training), this fact has in no way lessened the Peruvian military's respect for democracy and support of the West.

**Chile.** In 1990, General Augusto Pinochet and the military will return political power to civilians. During 1988 and 1989, Chileans debated the specifics of this transition. When the military took over political power on September 11, 1973 (by overthrowing the Salvador Allende government), it did so with the support of the majority of the population, and in order to end violence and prevent a Communist takeover. In the mid-1980s, violence returned to the streets of Santiago and the Chilean Communist Party, no less strong and with considerable Cuban and Soviet support, espoused the violent road to power to make Chile ungovernable and thus vindicate its strategy. In 1985, Chile experienced the highest incidence of bombings in the world after Lebanon, and violence continued into 1986. Military government and violence was incongruent with Chile's political tradition, and threatened seriously to endanger the prospects for a democratic outcome.

That outcome rested upon the ability of Pinochet and his senior military leaders to work out an agreement with the civilian opposition. On October 5, 1988, a national plebiscite was held to determine whether or not the people wanted Pinochet to continue in power. His bid to do so was rejected. Patricio Aylwin was elected as Chile's civilian president in December 1989, taking office in March 1990. Yet to be worked out is how the balance of power will be distributed between civil government and the military and whether (and, if so, how) the military will be subordinated to civilian authority—through such instruments as the National Security Council, the military educational system, and the process of national defense planning.

Pinochet and the senior military distrust civilian politics. To protect democracy (or their conception of it), they drew up the Constitution of 1980 to protect it from—in their words—the irresponsibility of civil politicians and from those who espouse doctrines of class warfare, i.e., the Communists. The constitution proscribes totalitarian parties from political activity, a ruling which profoundly affects political life among Chile's traditionally ebullient political parties. At the same time, the constitution makes the military the guarantor of institutional order through control of the National Security Council and renders the military virtually free of civilian control. Pinochet's opposition wants to subordinate the armed forces to the civilian president, a concept anathema to military leaders desirous of maintaining constitutional provisions that safeguard the tutelary role

of the armed forces. Genaro Arriagada, a leading Christian Democratic intellectual, has argued, on the grounds of military professionalism, that these provisions should be reformed.

The role which the Constitution of 1980 assigns to the Armed Forces is damaging for the military institution, in particular, and unacceptable from the point of view of what a democratic political system is. It institutionalizes constant involvement and political activity by the three Commanders-in-Chief and the Director-General of the Carabineros through the National Security Council and the decisive role of this organization in the Constitutional Tribunal and the Senate. The National Security Council consecrates in an unmistakable manner a military tutelage over the autocratic political government. This destroys the principle of political domination of civil power over the military, which is the essence not only of democracy but also of a mature and stable political system, whether democratic or not. Moreover, permanent political activity by the military will likely have destructive effects on the military profession. Armies involved in politics degrade their military professionalism, diminish their military capacity, suffer the destruction of military values, and soon become divided.

The military is a tremendously complex profession, which must develop apart from undesirable political interference, and which has an ethical code and responsibility to its society. The military has the monopoly of arms and, therefore, there should not be any other armed group in society. Despite its monopoly, the military should never use its arms against the state and civilians.<sup>13</sup>

Most Chileans are fully committed to a democratic transition and signs are good that the more offensive authoritarian elements of the Constitution of 1980 will be amended. Chile's economic miracle of the 1980s provides a strong foundation for sustaining democratization into the future. A process of civil-military rapprochement is underway, assisted by an increasingly sophisticated dialogue on defense policy and the respective roles of civilians and military.

**Argentina.** Civil-military relations in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay have had a similar evolution over the last 15 years. In all three countries, the military intervened to preserve public order and prevent a perceived Marxist takeover. After entering politics to protect a democracy that "went wrong," so to speak, the military then found it exceedingly difficult to extricate itself with institutional unity intact and democracy secure. Clausewitz once warned that this was a characteristic of war: easy to get into, but difficult to get out of.

Argentina's military was unsuccessful on two fronts. It found itself increasingly unable to govern at home and it failed to win a war (the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands war). As a result, the military regime lost the confidence of the people and was faced with a rising demand for the return of civilian government—which culminated in the free elections of 1984 that brought Raul Alfonsín to the presidency. In May 1989, he was succeeded in office by Carlos Menem, another freely elected civilian, apparently consolidating Argentina's return to democracy. Subsequently, some of the military leaders—those responsible for the human rights abuses incurred during the internal "dirty war" of the 1970s as well as for incompetent leadership in the 1982 war—were tried in court and punished. Argentina's crushing defeat in the war exposed the weakness of the military in the exercise of their prime professional responsibility and *raison d'être* and, in so doing, of the institution itself. To remedy this situation, the Alfonsín government determined to reform and modernize the military establishment, both intellectually and operationally. The military's defeat in war also underscored the necessity for civil control of the institutional means of applying force. To carry this program forward, President Menem, in October 1989 pardoned over 280 military officers, along with Leftist subversives. *The New York Times* quoted Menem as declaring this step was necessary to heal the wounds left by the "dirty war" of the 1970s.

As the armed forces undergo reorganization, the military budget has been cut severely. Argentina is attempting to establish a modern military organization capable of joint operations, a major deficiency in the 1982 war. These changes have caused bitterness within the ranks of the military. A 1986 army report cited the following budgetary impact on defense:

- noncommissioned officers outnumbered conscripts by 28,000 to 25,000;
- the army's strength was at a ratio of 1:5 compared to Brazil and 1:3 to Chile;
- low pay has reduced the number of officers and NCOs by 35 percent since 1983;
- equipment could not be maintained; and
- students entering the noncommissioned officers' school dropped from 250 in 1985 to only 40 in 1986.<sup>14</sup>

Passage of the April 1988 Defense Law redefined the military's role in national security as responsibility for defense against external aggression, taking away its mission of internal security and intelligence gathering for internal political matters.

The political dilemma in Argentina is how to balance military requirements for institutional survival and modernization, professionalization of the armed forces against the political requirements of (1) economic austerity and (2) primacy of civilian control over the military within an effective democratic order. For Alfonsín and Menem, some sort of national reconciliation is basic to the establishment of a functioning democracy. In 1986, Alfonsín began promoting his "punto final" (full stop) strategy, i.e., setting a 3-year time limit, after the beginning of legal proceedings in 1983, for bringing charges against military officers for human rights violations.<sup>15</sup> The Chief of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces, Brigadier General Tedoro Waldner, reflected on the problems for the military in politics as follows:

...regardless of whether the handling of public affairs, something for which we are not trained, was correct or not, this led to the discredit of the Armed Forces, to its separation from the people, and to the inexorable loss of morale and discipline within the Armed Forces themselves.<sup>16</sup>

**Uruguay.** In 1973, the Uruguayan military came to power, taking pride in having successfully liquidated the Tupamaros (urban guerrillas) during 1967-72. Like the Chilean military, the Uruguayan military attempted to institutionalize a political role of "protecting" democracy from what it perceived to be civilian irresponsibility and the threat of totalitarian government. This effort, rejected by the profoundly democratic Uruguayan people, caused dispute even within the military. By 1984, the Naval Club agreement was worked out with the political parties, providing for a democratic transition. In November of that year, elections were held which brought Julio María Sanguinetti, a civilian, to the presidency. The military, having accomplished its mission of restoring order and democracy, was anxious to be relieved of the burden of government. But all was not smooth. Many members of the military were unwilling to relinquish economic perquisites and political influence acquired during the years of military rule, while avoiding recriminations (or retaliation) for human rights violations committed during the same period. This gave rise to

long-standing debate between the military and civilians over how to deal with mistakes of the past and prevent their future recurrence, and centered around a civilian-sponsored bill to resolve the emotional issue of amnesty. The debate took place within the context of economic recession, military concern over recurrence of political instability, general lack of confidence in civilian politicians, and cuts in the defense budget. The amnesty law:

- limited trials to 38 most serious cases;
- established prosecution of military officers in civilian courts in cases of homicide, grievous injury, "disappearances," or rape;
- excluded from human rights trials those violations committed during the campaign against the Tupamaros;
- granted the Supreme Court exclusive jurisdiction over human rights cases,
- established sanctions on any future attempts at a coup;
- exempted civilians from being tried in military courts; and,
- established torture as a crime.<sup>17</sup>

Though initially rejected by the Uruguayan Congress in October 1986, President Sanguinetti believed the bill provided a basis for national reconciliation between a military establishment which had ended, in 1973, Uruguay's democratic tradition with reluctance, and a public seeking to understand not only why democracy had failed in the past but also how to make it succeed in the future. Finally, and only after heated debate, the Congress approved, on December 22, 1986, a military amnesty bill which barred further prosecution of military and police officials accused of human rights violations occurring prior to March 1984.<sup>18</sup> On April 16, 1989, a referendum reconfirmed the amnesty law by a vote of 57 percent to 43 percent.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY AND DEMOCRATIC MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM**

A democratic vision of security makes sense in Latin America. It makes political sense because it offers an effective alternative to totalitarian doctrines and/or practices. It also makes sense in terms of U.S.-Latin American relations. Because democracy is a value prized by the U.S. Congress and public, appealing to this value expands the policy options available to the United States in dealing with Latin America. U.S. ideals and institutions are more likely to respond sympathetically to requests for economic and military cooperation when the value to be defended is democracy, making possible greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation and encouraging Latin Americans to realize a community of interests with the United States. U.S. public opinion and the Congress are reluctant to support causes perceived to be unjust and at variance with democratic values.

The security of Latin America and that of the United States are inextricably linked. Latin American military establishments, in particular, form an important part of that linkage, and they will bear a critical responsibility to ensure that democratization prospers. It may be, as numerous civilian and military leaders fear, the final opportunity that democrats have in these troubled times. Another round of coups and military government would only assist opponents of the very democratic values that the Inter-American security system was created to defend. A single coup not only assists the enemies of democratic values but is a success, in and of itself, for the anti-democrats of both Left and Right, although for different reasons.

The United States can best support redemocratization by holding fast to its own values and by being alert to opportunities for assistance. Democratic professionalism can be communicated through sophisticated military diplomacy, requiring sustained, skillful interaction via security assistance and military-to-military relations. As security assistance funding declines, the United States must seek out new forms of influence or lose effectiveness. Increased interaction between the military forces of the United States and countries in Latin America is one such form. While the United States can try to foster professionalism in its military-to-military dealings with Latin America, civilian and military leaders of the region must learn to work together to formulate a doctrine encompassing a role for the military in which it serves as guardian of the nascent democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Of what would such a doctrine consist? Following are some tentative working proposals:

- Definition of the security requirements of emerging democracy. Such a healthy reexamination is underway in Argentina, Uruguay, and Guatemala—and is required in El Salvador, Panama, Peru, and Chile. The task should be undertaken jointly by civilians and military. It entails a clearer, more precise delineation of the boundaries of military responsibility in national defense and intelligence gathering. This task will be the most difficult, for it involves both democratization of power and subordination to civilian authority. With the potential withering away of the East-West divide, national security strategies will have to adapt to more realistic assessments of threat.
- Modernization of military and civilian views of one another. While the old adage "se puede militarizar a un civil pero no se puede civilizar a un militar" (you can militarize a civilian but you can't civilize a military man) is useful at cocktail parties, it seriously misreads the need for more cooperative attitudes. Cooperation is in order, founded on the following concepts.
- Legitimizing national security and military studies in civilian universities and research centers. This would improve the climate for mutual dialogue on the most important issue of national security. National security and military affairs are too important to be left to the military alone.
- Expanding linkages and feedback mechanisms between the military and civilian society to reduce their isolation from one another. A military institution isolated from the larger society can be a serious threat to democracy and to itself. Civilian control of the military

implies establishing links for the exchange of professional expertise from one sector of society to the other.

- Recognition that the military, despite the troubles of recent history, will remain an actor in national affairs. Power-sharing is not incompatible with democracy. The legitimate role of the military in contemporary society is expanding into areas such as technological research and development, communications, search and rescue, fighting the narcotics traffic, countering terrorism, arms control, and peacekeeping. Properly understood, such an expansion of its role is to be welcomed rather than feared.
- Expanding opportunities for civilians and the military to share learning experiences through educational programs. Among other possibilities, this would mean requiring university education for advancement in the officer corps. It may require greater integration with the civilian educational system following graduation from the military academy. Increased university education is an imperative, given the expanded role of the militaries to deal with the complex challenges that their societies face. While the U.S. Army is quite a different institution from its Latin counterparts, it long ago understood the value of university education. The United States Military Academy authorized the bachelor degree in 1932. Out of 189 Army students in the U.S. Army War College Class of 1987, six held doctorates, 177 had master's degrees, three had law degrees, two had medical degrees, and one had completed some study at the university level. Today the contemporary military officer must be capable of greater technical proficiency than was formerly the case, as well as be able to interact successfully with civilian professionals.
- Capacity to learn from past successes/failures and incorporate such lessons through constructive, professional self-criticism. In the United States, both military and civilian leaders experienced the debacle of Vietnam. To understand what happened and why, military officers—such as General Bruce Palmer (1984) and Colonel Harry Summers (1982)—have written some of the most penetrating analyses of the mistakes that civilian and military leaders made. Such self-criticism is not to be confined to the classified environments of war colleges, but should be open to the national security and foreign policy dialogue of the entire society in order to inform responsible decisionmaking in a democracy.
- Civilians and military must cooperate to develop a counterinsurgency doctrine appropriate for a democracy. The new warfare facing Latin America requires mobilization of both civilian and military assets to develop a composite strategic vision and the decisive authority to implement that vision. Constraint in the use of force combined with and respect for human rights are critical for success. Absent such civil-military coordination, measures to counter insurgencies are apt to fail.

Implementing these proposals will be far from easy, but the key is to expand interaction between the civilian and military establishments. Such efforts will reduce the mutual paranoia and distrust which now divide and weaken the society; improving civil-military relations will lead to wider recognition of the legitimate role of the military in national security, development, and

democracy. No doubt, there will always be some tension between military and civilians, even where relations are well established, as in the United States where the military subordinates itself willingly to civilian rule. The challenge in Latin America today is to perceive some level of tension as natural, manageable, even desirable—given the alternatives.

## NOTES

1. *Latin American Weekly Report*, October 2, 1986, p. 9.

2. Elliot Abrams, "A Democratic Vision of Security," *Current Policy No. 844*, U.S. Department of State, p. 1.

2. At this meeting the various delegations, including the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, presented formal papers on the subject. These papers were discussed extensively by the working groups and distributed throughout the armies of the hemisphere. The documents presented by Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, and Colombia, among others, are especially eloquent statements of the democratic transition. They also constitute excellent primers on how the militaries define national security and how they approach the formulation of strategy in the context of the contemporary threats.

4. With respect to the "philosophy" of the military, Duarte states:

I came to the conclusions that if I were forced to choose between converting the Marxist guerrillas to my democratic philosophy and trying to convince the officers, I stood a better chance with the armed forces. If I had understood the armed forces better years ago, my work would have been easier. My prejudice against the military was deeply rooted in the history of El Salvador, and I regret not having learned how to analyze the philosophy of the military much earlier. It is hard to categorize officers. They move along the spectrum of political thought, responding to a particular issue or to whom they spoke to last. But it is this flexibility that has led to the changes that are now evident in the Salvadoran armed forces.

Jose Napoleon Duarte, *Duarte: My Own Story*, New York: G. H. Putnam's Sons, 1986, p. 106.

5. General John R. Galvin, "Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm," article adapted from the 1986 Kermit Roosevelt Lecture, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, p. 1.

6. An example of this frustration is to be found on the reflections of a retired Peruvian army major. Jose Fernandez Salvateci, *Terrorismo y Guerra Sucia en el Peru*, Lima: Punto Rojo, 1986.

7. Cerezo's principled pragmatism can be seen in the following interview:

Julio Miller: Mr. President: It seems that there is a sudden turn toward democracy in Latin America. However, military sectors remain as guardians, and in many countries, the civilian governments do not have the right aggressive attitude. In your opinion, what is the direction, the path, that democracy is taking in Latin America?

Vinicio Cerezo: It is true: There are certain places where doubts and distrust exist between the civilian government and the armies that continue—just as in all countries of the world—to play a predominant role in the country's political life. This is of special importance. Having weapons means having political power.

However I think that the direction being taken is one of consolidating civilian governments to the extent that the President of the Republic, as coordinator of the nation's effort, does not isolate the Army from the political and social processes.



I think that, historically, the error made by civilian governments was trying to isolate the military sector from the political and social process. The military officers must not belong to parties, but they must never be apolitical. They must share the responsibility of the country's economic and social development with the civilian governments.

The Army is not an institution that is detached from national problems. The military's had been [sic] traditional separation from the problems and detachment from its shared responsibility kept converting the military officers into judges who wanted to correct situations. Conservative groups kept pushing them, and this resulted in the traditional groups d'etat in Latin America.

However, if they share responsibility and join the social and political process in each country, they will also consolidate democracy instead of being on alert to interfere and interrupt democratic processes when they are provoked by certain groups.

Julio Miller: Cerezo is a clear example of the transition from a military to a civilian government. How has Cerezo achieved this while it has not been accomplished in certain countries?

Vinicio Cerezo: By discussing very clearly with the military officers their responsibility within the democratic process. We have not meant to cut them off or corrupt them and we have not refused to discuss the country's problems with them.

Panama City Circuito RPC Television, November 18, 1986, as reported in U.S. Department of State Telegram R190245, November 2, 1986.

8. For further information on developments in El Salvador, see U.S. Department of State, "The Situation in El Salvador," *Special Report No. 144*, April 1986. For the political-military lessons learned see: Max G. Manwaring and Court Prisk, *El Salvador at War. An Oral History*, Washington: National Defense University Press, 1988.

9. The following account speaks about the barriers to reform in El Salvador's small military officer corps. It was written by an American military attache who served in that country in the mid-1980's: COL Lyman Duryea, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Local Corruption." Conference sponsored by VECINOS and the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, March 4, 1986, pp. 7-8.

10. Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video, September 29, 1986, as reported in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Latin America*, September 30, 1986, p. 7. For the views of a senior Honduran Army officer on civil-military relations and the nation's defense policy see: LTC Jose L. Nunez-Bennett, "Honduras Defense Policy," Military Studies Program paper, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 22, 1986. Nunez-Bennett was an International Fellow at the War College for the Academic Year 1985-86.

11. On June 18, 1986, Sendero Luminoso prisoners held by the government in these prisons mutinied and took seven hostages. The following day government forces retook the prisons. In doing so, 244 prisoners were killed. Government losses included one policeman and three marine infantry. For a detailed report, see Senator Rolando Ames, *Informe al Congreso Sobre los Sucesos de los Penales*, Lima: Talleres y Grafica, 1988.

12. For the views of a senior Peruvian Army officer on the Sendero Luminoso and the strategy to deal with it, see: COL Victory R. Zubiaga, "Shining Path, Peruvian Peasants Rebellion," Military Studies Program Paper, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 1, 1985; see also LTC Vinicio Jarama, "Bases Para el Diseno y Planeamiento de una Estrategia Contrasubversiva," n.d.

13. "Los politicos y las Ferzas Armadas," *Que Pasa* No. 891, May 5, 1988, p. 34. Arriagada has written an excellent analysis of military politics, Pinochet, *The Politics of Power*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988 (Translation of *La Politica Militar de Pinochet* by Nancy Morris).

14. Riso Erenu in *Latin American Weekly Report*, October 2, 1986, p. 9.

15. "Alfonsin speech explains 'Full Stop' Proposal," in Buenos Aires Television Color Network, December 6, 1986, as reported in *FBIS, Latin America*, December 8, 1986, pp. B1-B5.

16. "General Waldner comments on 'Full Stop' Proposal," *Noticias Argentinas*, as reported in *FBIS, Latin America*, December 9, 1986, p. B2. The sentiments of Waldner and Rio Erenu remarkably echo the views expressed in September 1956 by General Luis Rodolfo Gonzalez in the aftermath of the overthrow of Juan Peron. The Gonzalez speech "Ideas Contrary to the Spirit of May and their Repercussion in Argentine Political Life. A Military Opinion at the Service of Definitive Pacification" is contained in the chapter entitled "The Military. A Handbook for Their Control" in Kalman H. Silver's classic *The Conflict Society. Reaction and Revolution in Latin America*, New York. Harper & Row, pp. 193-227.

17. "Congress Agrees on an Amnesty," *Latin American Weekly Report*, October 9, 1986, p. 9. For a perceptive analysis of Uruguayan civil-military relations and the views of the military on the crisis of the 1970s and the current democratic transition, see Juan Rial, *Las Fuerzas Armadas. Soldados Politicos o Garantes de la Democracia?* South Bend, IN: Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1986. On how the military perceives itself and democratization, see Carina Perelli, *Someter o Convencer. El Discurso militar en el Uruguay de la transicion y la redemocratizacion*, South Bend, IN: Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1986.

18. For additional information see "Uruguay Approves a Military Amnesty," *The New York Times*, December 23, 1986, p. A3. For some provocative speculation on the future of civil-military relations, see Carina Perelli, *Amnistia Si, Amnistia No, Amnistia Puede Ser...La Constitucion Historica de un Tema Politico en el Uruguay de la Postransicion*, South Bend, IN. University of Notre Dame, January 7, 1987. See also, "Military Social Institutions View Amnesty," Montevideo Radio Carve, October 3, 1986, as reported in *FBIS, Latin America*, October 6, 1986, p. K1.

19. The term "democratic military professionalism" is proposed by Professor John S. Fitch of the University of Colorado in numerous writings on the subject of civil-military relations in Latin America.

## CHAPTER 7

# RESERVE COMPONENTS' ROLE IN CIVIC AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

**Wayman D. Robertson and George A. Luz**

The increased tempo of Reserve Component (RC) overseas deployment training (ODT) since the early 1980s has increased RC activities in humanitarian and civic assistance (H/CA) to Third World countries, particularly in the Pacific and Latin American regions. The primary purpose of the ODT program is to support the CAPSTONE program and to enhance the RC ability to go to war, and, for this reason, ODT has been utilized in conjunction with Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) sponsored training/exercises. These exercises provide realistic training and are an excellent measure of the RC's capability to deploy to distant regions and in diverse climates. It should be emphasized, however, that such training is also intended to provide additional tangible benefits for the host nation, such as the construction of roads and the provision of health care. In many cases, H/CA and MCA have been side benefits of these exercises. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the general opinions from different RC units and leaders concerning recent H/CA and MCA projects conducted incidental to training. Although such opinions are not a substitute for a more objective measure of "success," they are the only measure available at this time. We also list seven points in answer to those critics who believe that ODT and its associated H/CA and MCA should be dropped.

The coupling of ODT and H/CA evolves from the type of units which need training. Within the Army, 67 percent of combat engineer, 64 percent of water supply, 77 percent of bridge company, 77 percent of hospitals and 64 percent of medical units are in the National Guard or Reserves.<sup>1</sup> These types of units are also the ones most likely to have the skills which are most needed in underdeveloped countries (e.g., minor construction, disease control, veterinary services, basic medical services, water system engineering.) As stated by Lieutenant General Emmett H. Walker, Jr., former chief, National Guard Bureau, "Bottom line—the facts are simple. We are there to train, nothing more."<sup>2</sup> Since the RC have global missions in event of mobilization, ODT becomes essential if overall operational readiness is to be improved.<sup>3</sup> If, in the process, the host country receives other benefits, there are also benefits to the Commander-in-Chief's (CINCs) mission of H/CA.

Before describing the benefits as perceived by members of the RC, we want to note that many voices, both within and outside the United States, disagree with the concept of ODT, especially in Latin America. In an important test of the role of the relation between State and Federal control of the National Guard, four governors attempted to stay the deployment of their troops on ODT in Central America.<sup>4</sup> The legal basis for the governors' case was that the "training" was actually a preparation for war. There have also been environmental concerns. For example, Ms. Sandoval, a Honduran citizen touring the United States with a disarmament program group, was quoted as saying, "We were once rich in woods. Now Honduras could become a desert as entire

forests are razed to make room for joint maneuvers, training exercises, air strips."<sup>5</sup> Other critics of Latin American H/CA include Dr. Philip Shepherd of Florida International University<sup>6</sup> and Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Director of that university's Latin American and Caribbean Center.<sup>7</sup> These critics basically fault U.S. military involvement in any form in the area.

A likely reason for the opposition to ODT in Central America is a recent shift from an emphasis exclusively on training to an explicit acknowledgment of the importance of H/CA. The mission statement from Task Force Bravo in Honduras for Fuertas Caminos '89 included a goal to "in conjunction with Honduran armed forces; plan, coordinate, and execute humanitarian/civic action (HCA) programs in the southwestern region of the Aguan Valley."<sup>8</sup> The Stevens amendment to Title 10 lifted some of the congressional limitations on providing H/CA to host nations. Now civic action projects may be conducted incidental to JCS exercises, but they are still restricted to the vicinity of the exercise, and must be within established cost limits and the capabilities of troops assigned to the exercise.<sup>9</sup> With the 1986 revision of Title 10, it is easier to plan and coordinate the H/CA activities to be conducted during the training exercise with the host nation. The result is greater tactical success, but, as suggested by the criticisms, strategic uncertainty.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the opposition, we argue in favor of both continued ODT and H/CA. First, it is important to recognize that the opposition to ODT and H/CA seems to focus not on the activities themselves, but on U.S. policy toward Latin America in general. While it is true that ODT in Central and South America has been conducted by National Guard units in increasing numbers since 1983 (over 70,000 members participating),<sup>11</sup> the National Guard is currently training in over 40 countries worldwide.<sup>12</sup> However, the remainder of this chapter will focus on activities taking place in Latin America. RC units/personnel train throughout the Pacific theater<sup>13</sup> and the Caribbean region<sup>14</sup> conducting readiness training in conjunction with H/CA projects.

Second, the degree of bureaucratic oversight is so great that all parties can be assured that H/CA will continue to take place within the training context. In reviewing DOD's MCA projects in Honduras, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) stated "we agree with SOUTHCOM that no funding violation results from bona fide training activities that result in a concurrent civic or humanitarian benefit," so long as activities of a "type and amount which fall within the scope of other appropriation categories" are paid for from those other sources.<sup>15</sup> Because ODT involves RC components, men and women from all over the United States, it is hardly an appropriate activity within which to secrete covert operations and unauthorized projects. If the contract is violated, assuredly the details will be made public.

Third, ODT cannot be duplicated within the United States. Overseas deployment training in remote, austere conditions allows RC units to exercise their support systems much as would be required in combat. Units train under tougher conditions than normally encountered during stateside annual training, boosting readiness and making them a credible force. According to one observer, the deployment alone is a great learning experience.<sup>16</sup>

According to Colonel Frank N. Sefton III, Task Force 1169, Abriendo Rutas '87, the training opportunities on an exercise of this type simply cannot be compared to those present in a normal CONUS annual training period. Everything is real. Nothing is canned; nothing can be taken for granted. It is truly the closest to real campaigning the troops will get short of war. Colonel Sefton

concluded that there should be no doubt that the series of engineer training exercises that have been done in Latin America have improved the ability of the total force to perform its many missions. The opportunity to plan and execute deployments and redeployments give the leadership of the units involved a feel for the problems they will encounter in a real mobilization. This kind of understanding cannot be gained any other way. Colonel Sefton summed up the value of the exercise when he said, "I wouldn't take all the money in the world for this operation."<sup>17</sup> Brigadier General Terrence D. Mulcahy, Task Force Commander, Blazing Trails '87, echoed the same opinion on the training conducted during exercises in Latin America, stating that this type of training could not be duplicated in the United States with the area available for training, and concluding that the experience makes for better soldiers and greatly improves their combat readiness.<sup>18</sup>

Road-building exercises in Panama, Honduras and Ecuador with accompanying medical training have been the bulk of RC training activity in Latin America. However, support units such as military police, supply, maintenance, transportation, communication, aviation and public affairs have also received invaluable training in these JCS-sponsored exercises. Also, armor and artillery units have conducted joint exercises with Honduran armed forces in the AHUAS TARA exercise.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, there is an on going program of stand-alone training deployments, involving MPs, engineers, medical and civil affairs units. These deployments have the same legislative constraints as the above programs.

Fourth, U.S. H/CA really does help people who need it. In the exercise areas, as Guardsmen see needs or are requested to assist local residents, repairing furnishings in schools and churches, etc , the Guardsmen and Reservists secure materials and supplies through donations from their hometown communities; then, during their free time from training, they will work in local communities assisting with humanitarian aid.<sup>20</sup> During Fuertes Caminos '88, the task force constructed three school houses, basketball courts and soccer fields, and painted and cleaned a church.<sup>21</sup>

The medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETS) conducted in Latin America have added a measure to the health care of many communities throughout the exercise areas. Although the training mission of these exercises is to expose military medical personnel to field tropical medicine, they have a lasting effect through the treatment provided and the preventive medicine classes given to local residents in the vicinity of exercise areas.<sup>22</sup> According to one qualified observer, the community benefits of such exercises in 1989 included providing medical assistance to 8,000 Hondurans, treating 8,000 animals and performing some 5,000 tooth extractions.<sup>23</sup>

Of all the assistance provided by RC troops, road-building and repair are the most valuable. New roads improve the transportation in rural areas, giving farmers a better means of getting their produce to markets and opening areas for more commerce. Most of the people see this as a benefit, but it also raises some concerns. For instance, as one local citizen in Panama close to the exercise "Costa Abajo '86" put it, "The road is good. We may have trouble. Everybody will be coming in. The first thing I'll have to do is get iron bars for the windows."<sup>24</sup>

Fifth, H/CA and MCA build esprit de corps within the RC units. The H/CA activities not only benefit the host nation but have a lasting effect on U.S. RC troops. From the programmed H/CA

activities to the self-initiated humanitarian assistance projects, individual Guard and Reserve personnel feel a sense of accomplishment in improving their skills and providing assistance to host nation citizens. As our nation moves into a period of decreasing perceptions of a Soviet threat, the esprit de corps gained through helping the less fortunate could become an important factor in recruitment and retention in the reserves—a matter of no small import.

The sixth point is the same as that made by Marcella in the previous chapter—H/CA and MCA allow RC personnel to be role models. The use of RC in exercises in democracies which are new and struggling, especially where they are evolving from a military-ruled society, provides an alternate model to that of a full-time professional soldier.<sup>25</sup> The cross-section of American society represented in the RC by the citizen-soldier gives the host nation's military a first-hand view of democracy working in the form of U.S. military carrying out the directions of the U.S. civilian-controlled government. Although our nation has been able to convey this message to foreign students through the training given in our various military institutions, the opportunity is limited to relatively few military personnel. Through ODT, we reach a broader cross-section of the host nation military. General Woerner (former CINCSOUTH) points out that "exercises and service-funded deployments for training (often engineer and medical units) are our primary means for achieving a constructive force presence throughout the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility. These JCS exercises and deployments for training are, at times, our only effective medium for working with host nation militaries."<sup>26</sup> General Woerner goes on to say that, "In view of scarce or absent security assistance, humanitarian and civic assistance can be a powerful supplement to our efforts."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, H/CA and MCA do contribute to the military mission in LIC. Using Reserve Component forces in low intensity conflicts is already a matter of fact—as they are currently being employed in many Third World countries in a military civic action role during JCS deployments. Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Gosnell states that:

U.S. Reserve forces operating in Latin America have received valuable, real-world training in often environmentally austere foreign environments under austere conditions emphasizing competence and self-reliance and leaving behind them tangible improvements in the daily lives of thousands of rural campesinos—just the kind of thing of which LIC victories are made. Each such deployment is a battlefield victory in the pseudo war of LIC to the south.<sup>28</sup>

It is generally accepted that RC forces can be employed and used in the counterinsurgency strategy of keeping the intensity of the conflict at the lowest level possible. RC forces are employed on a short-term basis eliminating the fear of the host country that they will be a long-term military presence with which they have to deal. Furthermore, a large portion of RC have units uniquely suited to military civic action. The Guard and Reserve soldiers possess skills from their civilian employment that give them an edge over their active component counterpart, and allow them to contribute to nation building in Third World countries much more as a civilian than as a soldier. The image of a highly professional but part-time soldier demonstrates a form of democracy few Latin Americans have experienced.<sup>29</sup>

Brigadier General Michael W. Davidson (TAG, KY), in discussing the significance of RC forces in furthering American national security through ODT in Latin America, has stated, "When we provide medical and dental care and the construction of schools and roads—the specific results

of Guard and Reserve training in Latin America—we are nation building."<sup>30</sup> This is not to mean that H/CA and MCA are panaceas for LIC. As one writer has underscored, "The results of both the Southeast Asian and Guatemalan MCA programs were inconclusive but demonstrate the U.S. Government and U.S. military did not then and do not yet have a reliable method for evaluating MCA."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, as is implied by Sutter in another chapter of this volume, the revolutionary nature of MCA makes the outcome both risky and unpredictable. Commenting on the medical MCA in Honduras, which Harvey had documented as a "tactical success, strategic uncertainty,"<sup>32</sup> Sandoval, the rural Honduran woman referenced earlier, told the governor of Colorado, "We do not want medical assistance as part of this package. It only serves to confuse our people—and most likely your people, too. Get the bases out, and then we may talk about aid."<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the "confusion" is a mark of success in fending off LIC.

As to the future, the National Guard plans to continue training units and personnel through exercises in Latin America. They have become an integral part of USSOUTHCOM forces that exert a U.S. military influence in the theater. The ARNG has become more than just a deployable force to meet U.S. national strategic interests. It is the on-ground force in a number of areas. In 1989 in Latin America, RC units conducted two road-building projects in Honduras. Plans for 1990 indicate a continuation of RC projects in Honduras and an engineer program in Bolivia, and in 1991 two more road-building projects are planned.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the engineer projects, field medical training is conducted throughout Latin America, primarily through two rotations of 45-man elements that trained in various Latin American countries during FY 89. Plans for out-years call for continuation of medical training in Latin America.<sup>35</sup> Deployment training for public affairs detachments, military police units, artillery batteries and infantry companies is also currently ongoing and planned in the future.

Although the seven points presented in this chapter argue for "full speed ahead" in delivering H/CA or MCA during ODT, future tactical and strategic success could be hindered if past criticisms are not addressed, five of which could be corrected through existing mechanisms:

**Coordination with AID.** According to Harvey,

State Department officials in Honduras were either critical of military medical civic action projects or mute, at least in writing. The common attitude of State toward DOD conduct of civic actions in Honduras reflected their philosophy about long-term health care development. They tended to see military health care programs as short-term, temporary, and, at times, obstructive to State's charter for long-term development of Honduras' health care system.<sup>36</sup>

Does this opinion come from objective data or merely from bureaucratic turf disputes? Without further data, there is no way to decide. In any case, RC task force commanders, along with project officers, have a management responsibility to ensure staff coordination, which is always difficult. The problem is compounded when the staffs are in different countries and within different bureaucracies. Nevertheless, AID and the RC are part of the same national strategy, and a Total Quality Management approach implies consensus on the MCA projects.<sup>37</sup>

**Coordination on the Environment.** With growing emphasis on protecting Third World ecosystems, criticisms such as Ms. Sandoval's "Honduras could become a desert as entire forests

are razed"<sup>38</sup> can undermine the strategic success of an engineering project. When training within CONUS, the question of environmental impact must be addressed during the planning stage. For example, a CONUS training unit cannot legally cut down trees, alter a stream or build a road without approval from the installation environmental office. Although trainers sometimes see such regulations as a hindrance, it provides them a protection which is not available to RC units operating within a host nation. By regulation, the RC units are already obliged to assess the environmental impacts of engineering projects abroad. Army Regulation 200-2 states: "In accordance with Executive Order 12114, DOD Directive 6050.7 and Chapter 8 of this regulation, an environmental planning and evaluation process will be incorporated into Army actions that may significantly affect environments of other nations, or any protected or ecological resource of global importance."<sup>39</sup> Having the necessary documentation prior to beginning the exercise will provide the RC task force commander with the ammunition he or she needs to counter critics. Staff responsibility for ensuring the proper documentation resides in the FORSCOM Environmental Office for Reserve units and the ARNG Environmental Office for National Guard units.

**Cultural and Language Training.** Major Harvey, referencing a conversation with Mr. Steve Johnson, a former Assistant Air Attache to Honduras during the early period of the U.S. military buildup, discussed troubles arising from the rapid increase in the size of the U.S. troop contingent. Mr. Johnson described cases of socially offensive behavior among U.S. soldiers, lack of proper respect for Honduran military personnel, and coordination problems between State and DOD agencies in Honduras. He emphasized MCA was absolutely essential in limiting the damage done by U.S. troops and government employees not sensitized to the Honduran culture.<sup>40</sup> While primarily an argument in favor of MCA, the issue of cultural sensitivity applies to future H/CA and MCA as well. One way of fostering cultural sensitivity would be an increased emphasis on language training beyond those personnel in Civil Affairs or other specialized units.

**Distancing HCA from Combat Operations.** MCA or H/CA projects which can be interpreted as augmenting the ability of U.S. troops to invade a host country should be avoided. Airfields and other facilities built in Honduras are examples of projects which are viewed with suspicion.<sup>41</sup>

**Expanded Press Coverage.** Americans feel good about helping others, and there is every reason for RC components to tell their fellow citizens about the good which they are doing during ODT. There is also a need to foster good press coverage within the host nation. Harvey quoted one State Department Desk Officer as emphasizing, "It's really, really important. We shouldn't be hiding our candle under a basket... We're always unwilling to commit ourselves to civic action because of the subject's political sensitivity in the U.S. This is disturbing to the Hondurans who very much want civic action."<sup>42</sup>

In summary, we see seven reasons for continued funding of ODT for RC with an emphasis on H/CA and MCA: Its developing nation applicability, the adequacy of bureaucratic oversight, the importance of training in unusual environments, the benefits for the host nation citizens, esprit de corps, the opportunity to serve as military role models, and successfully waging LIC. In addition, due regard is given to intergovernmental coordination of MCA and HCA activities, the environment, cultural/language differences, public distrust of cover. operations and good press coverage. There is every reason to believe that these efforts will make an increasing contribution to the strengthening of emerging democracies, and, in turn, to our national strategic goals.



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## CHAPTER 8

# A PLANNER'S GUIDE FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF CIVIL AFFAIRS IN LATIN AMERICA

Dennis C. Barlow

A free people ought not only to be armed but disciplined, to which end a uniform and well digested plan is requisite.

George Washington

### INTRODUCTION

Planning lies at the very heart of successful military operations. It alone can give breath to strategic vision and relevance to tactical proficiency. But by all accounts, this craft of the military practitioner has eluded the planner who would design a campaign for the most probable—let us say certain—type of conflict which will, in the foreseeable future, engage the United States. low intensity conflict.

This chapter attempts to "close the gap" between strategic goals and force capabilities by proposing a framework which will allow LIC planners to match mission "descriptors"<sup>1</sup> against military elements assigned and thus finally get on with the jobs of tasking and phasing the campaign. The chapter does not attempt to design a campaign plan. It is a template against which the planner can work to match tactical capabilities to strategy. It espouses a "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach which at best provides the artist a sketch of the desired masterpiece and one color with which to paint. If the planner can be given a way of divining mission elements (or descriptors) and evaluating any force's capabilities against those requirements, he and the theater CINC will have a valuable tool to aid in the murky world of LIC operational art.

In order to keep this model in the realm of reality, we will apply it to perhaps the most resource-austere and LIC-oriented unified command. United States Southern Command (US-SOUTHCOM). Using USSOUTHCOM as the area of responsibility (AOR) and accepting the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Pub 2 requirement for a campaign for operations short of war (a peacetime plan), we will apply the "top-down" analysis by: 1) analyzing the threat, 2) divining the military strategy, 3) defining the commander's vision in terms of the center of gravity, 4) determining the military conditions necessary for the fulfillment of that vision, and 5) divining key mission descriptors necessary to achieve each of the conditions.

Then we will address the "bottom-up" analysis by investigating the capabilities of one force type (in this case, Civil Affairs (CA) forces) available to the CINC. CA capabilities will then be placed in a matrix against the mission descriptors to arrive at possible applications within the overall strategic environment.

The final step of this model involves subjectively evaluating the force based on the model. What problems, concerns or frictions will arise as a result of a descriptor-capability match? What other possibilities present themselves as a result of such an analysis?

It is important to note that this same procedure would have to be followed for each of the force types apportioned to the CINC so that the planner could allocate complementary forces for each task, country, mission or phase within the operational scheme. Still, his job would not be done. But with the design of a matrix which could suggest proposed force mixtures for relevant theater actions, the planner would possess an invaluable tool for designing phases, assigning missions and monitoring tasks.

## **LIC STRATEGY IN USSOUTHCOM**

There is a tendency to forget that the most important social service a government can perform for its people is to keep them alive and free.

Sir John Slessor

Contemporary military thinkers are not agreed on the approach to be taken to LIC planning. Some think it is not within the scope of U.S. forces, others believe it is just too hard to do, yet most continue to search for a way to undo the Gordian knot of LIC operational art. The solution will not be quick, slick or simple.

LIC is an environment that does not lend itself exactly to the same kind of planning as conventional war. The seams between strategy, operations and tactics are less discernible, constraints are more complex, and planning horizons are extended by time, culture and distance.<sup>2</sup> Even the relationships among types of LIC—terrorism, subversion, insurgency and counterinsurgency—are often blurred.

These obstacles, however, do not obviate the need for a LIC campaign plan; rather, they emphasize it. The CINC and his planners must get deeply involved in strategy interpretation and formulation so that their specific interests and objectives become integral parts of the plan<sup>3</sup> that defines the military conditions necessary for strategic success. The beginning of such a definitive process is with a thorough analysis of the threat.

## **THE THREAT IN LATIN AMERICA**

The campaign planner enters the realm of USSOUTHCOM threat analysis feeling the way ancient cartographers did about charting peripheral regions. Both would be forgiven for annotating their documents with the words "Here be monsters!" and moving on.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the fog must be removed and the threat articulated.

The threat in Latin America is closely bound up with U.S. vital interests but defies simple analysis because of the multidimensionality and interrelated nature of its components.

**The National Command Authorities' (NCA) View of the Threat.** In his "National Security Strategy of the United States," President Reagan identified three threat sources in the region: social and economic unrest, Soviet expansionist policies, and, the drug menace. In so doing, he initiated a valuable precedent by stressing the interwoven threads of those threats to U.S. security.<sup>5</sup>

Former Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Carlucci further refined the analysis by reporting to Congress that the formidable task of threat assessment in Latin America included "...not only the problems posed by our enemies, but also the many problems plaguing the developing world."<sup>6</sup> Carlucci saw the dual threat of socioeconomic instability and Communist adventurism working together as an "...assault on our resolve to isolate the United States from its friends and allies."

**Socioeconomic Problems.** Latin American economic instability has given rise to inflation, unemployment, declining income levels, a staggering regional debt structure, and an erosion of outside investment initiatives. General Woerner, former CINC, USSOUTHCOM, was persuaded that the fragile democratic regimes in Latin America are at risk without the required stability which economic and social development could bring.<sup>8</sup> And while not responsible for the drug problem, the depressed economic situation plays right into the hands of drug producers and traffickers.

Insurgent guerrillas move into the equation by selling protection to narco-traffickers and using the profits to buy military equipment.<sup>9</sup> The economic instability and drug problem present the guerrillas with a triple opportunity: they can create inroads among the populace, discredit the government's competence and build a large cache of weapons.

**The Communist Challenge.** The primary objective of the Soviet Union has been to weaken its chief adversary in his own backyard. Despite recent relaxation of tensions, in the zero-sum game of international politics, if ties can be loosened between the United States and Latin America, Soviet influence will surge.<sup>10</sup> Soviet dedication to this concept can be gauged by the staggering amounts of money and military advisors sent to the region.<sup>11</sup> According to General Woerner, "Six nations now have active Marxist insurgencies, three more have incipient...or spillover effects...The 25 Marxist insurgency groups in Latin America are often supported by the Soviet block, Cuba and Nicaragua."<sup>12</sup>

Within the AOR the double helix of socioeconomic upheaval and Communist insurgency threaten the following U.S. interests: the Panama Canal, eliminating drug production, trafficking and importation into the United States, defending the Caribbean sea lines of communication (SLOC); preventing illegal refugee immigration into the United States, and, denying the acquisition of nuclear weapons by several Latin American countries.

**Military Strategy in Latin America.** The NCA's overarching strategy in Latin America is to coordinate the United States' "...exceptionally diverse array of instruments..."<sup>13</sup> to improve the ability of Latin American countries to resist aggression and subversion themselves. By promoting economic development and the growth of democratic political institutions, the United States would reduce the underlying causes of conflict. The key to the Reagan-Bush approach to LIC in Latin America has been to strengthen friendly nations early to discourage Soviet-inspired actions and to help preempt the need for illicit narcotics production and traffic.<sup>14</sup>

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has supported these goals by placing great emphasis on competitive strategies. The SECDEF's report to Congress asserted that the Department of Defense (DOD) could best stimulate long-term economic and political development by concentrating on the training of host nation forces.<sup>15</sup> One statement in former Secretary Carlucci's report to Congress seems to encapsulate his ideas and, to the planner, reads like a mission statement:

We must be prepared to provide the training, advice, technical support, intelligence and other assistance necessary to ensure that the host nation's military forces are well-trained, professional and able to support the broad political-military programs essential to defeating insurgent movements.<sup>16</sup>

Programs specifically cited to accomplish the foregoing were security assistance, humanitarian assistance projects, civic assistance projects, and technical training.

The NCA approach has been supported by the highly-publicized report "Discriminate Deterrence," which emphasized the importance of the role of noncombatant forces in LIC; the support of anti-Communist insurgencies; the crucial role of security assistance; the need for coordination and cooperation between involved government agencies, and, the use of technology (although not necessarily high tech) to enhance support efforts. The report also included the opinion that a preoccupation with global conflict planning has left the United States unprepared to deal with Third World struggles.<sup>17</sup>

**The Commander's Vision.** With an appreciation for the dynamics of the threats in Latin America and the NCA's philosophy for dealing with them, the campaign planner turns to his boss from whom he expects the final and authoritative focus for the campaign. General Woerner, in concert with NCA and JCS guidelines, produced a strategic vision which posited that U.S. core interests are fully engaged in Latin America; American policy is one of support of democracy and economic development; and, the resultant regional operations must develop a balance which can address multiple threats with a flexible yet constrained force mix.<sup>18</sup>

The former CINC had adopted a competitive strategy in which the strongest of American ideals—democracy—was the centerpiece in the war of ideas and should be sent confidently against forces which tout totalitarian ideologies. His statement that "Democratization in Latin America secures our Southern flank..."<sup>19</sup> seems to sum it all up.

Realizing that his force requirements were unique in the world, General Woerner developed a set of imperatives to be stressed within his AOR:

- Host nation forces must display a professionalism which legitimizes the democratic process.
- Military capabilities must be planned across the entire spectrum of conflict to counter terrorists, narco-guerrillas, insurgents and even the possibility of a nuclear exchange.

- At the lower end of the conflict spectrum, support activities should generally include: security assistance, combined training exercises, intelligence support, officer exchanges, civic action, psychological operations, engineer construction, medical exercises and infrastructure development.
- Keys to carrying out such activities are mobility, intelligence, humanitarian assistance, civic assistance, and civic action.<sup>20</sup>

By trying to address these imperatives at this point, the planner will experience extreme frustration. While he now has the all-important center of gravity (the peoples' perception of governmental legitimacy and stability) in sight, and strategic imperatives laid out before him, they are not of the concrete and doctrinal nature with which his conventional counterpart in the United States European Command (USEUCOM) is blessed. The USSOUTHCOM planner must go deeper "into the weeds" to segment strategic imperatives into more palatable military conditions which can then be weighed against force capabilities.

## LATIN AMERICA: LIC CONDITIONS AND DESCRIPTORS

New conditions require...new and imaginative methods. Wars are never won in the past.

General Douglas MacArthur

While considering the strategic goals transmitted to the theater staff, the USSOUTHCOM LIC planner has to deal with a weighty problem: how can those strategic goals be translated into something firm and workable when entwined in something as controversial and squishy as LIC doctrine? The first task, therefore, is to come to terms with LIC and its relation to the strategic situation.

Nothing engenders more verbal jousting than a discussion of the appropriateness and worth of LIC. Even the name is controversial, but one concludes that the intellectual parrying and thrusting has done little more than obfuscate an already nebulous concept and give some the convenient excuse to duck this rather forbidding challenge. As Dr. Olson (Director, LIC Organization in the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/LIC) puts it, "We have worked our way through a blizzard of synonyms...but we still search for the magic words, hoping in their incantatory powers!"<sup>21</sup> Perhaps we could preclude wasted energies by adopting General Woerner's appellation for LIC: "high-probability conflict."<sup>22</sup>

In spite of those who protect their comfort zones (perhaps their planning, programming and budget schedules?), we must approach LIC the way Senator Dirksen dealt with the issue of pornography, "I may not know how to define it, but I know it when I see it." LIC has become an option exercised by enemies of America precisely because it is "...neither straightforward nor unambiguous. Our enemies understand only too well the necessity of avoiding circumstances that will arouse the American people..."<sup>23</sup> and purposely exploit our self-doubts and propensity for quick, crisp solutions. Former Secretary Carlucci saw this as a direct assault on our national resolve.<sup>24</sup>



The first important point to grasp about LIC is that President Reagan declared it as a threat that can have "...both regional and global implications for our national security interests."<sup>25</sup> Former Secretary Carlucci added, "...[it] represent[s] the principal form of conflict in the world today, and will likely remain so..., our survival and well being could depend on how we comprehend the threat and respond to it."<sup>26</sup>

The Joint Chiefs of Staff define LIC as, "a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic or psychological objectives."<sup>27</sup> Breaking LIC down into its component parts, insurgency, counterinsurgency, attempts at subversion and terrorism, makes it easier to understand (if not deal with) as a whole.

The amazing dilemma that faces a planner confronting LIC is that while there is overwhelming disapproval of our doctrine and planning efforts to date,<sup>28</sup> there is almost unanimous agreement among experts about the concepts to be heeded if these vaporous conflicts are to be won.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it is valuable to devise a tool set of conditions, gleaned from the writings and speeches of military historians, commanders, and critics, which can logically describe and predict success in the LIC environment.

### **LIC Conditions to Achieve Strategy Goals.**

- The center of gravity is the people's perception of the legitimacy and stability of their government, without it, any insurgency or counterinsurgency is doomed. From Sun Tzu to Mao and to Che, the message has been clear. Insurgents can only live and function within the populace. Take away this support and they die like fish out of water. If the insurgent, however, discredits the government, the minds—as well as the resources—of the people will bolster the insurgent. Since both sides need the people to succeed in their purposes, they share the center of gravity and it becomes a zero-sum game, a symmetrical conflict.<sup>30</sup> Winning, then, becomes a factor of which adversary understands and controls the environment best. The conflict swirls not around soldiers, but around social groups.<sup>31</sup> In sharp distinction from previous U.S. wars, civilians are not obstacles to mission success<sup>32</sup> but the measure of it!
- LIC core actions are not exclusively military operations, but rather the swirling mixture of political, economic, psychological and military components and are controlled through the umbrella concept of Foreign Internal Defense (FID). Within the politico-social milieu, the governmental support that the people receive (or perceive!) will have a major effect on their behavior. To ignore the social and political dimensions of LIC is to equate it to limited war,<sup>33</sup> a dire consequence. President Reagan stated that in LIC situations, "...the most appropriate application of U.S. military power is usually indirect..."<sup>34</sup> The most valuable forces indeed may be noncombatant<sup>35</sup> units which variously support the four LIC pillars through logistics, training, and politico-military coordination. The Marine *Small Wars Manual* of 1940, drawing on the considerable experiences of that force in waging LIC in Latin America, even suggests estimating enemy and friendly strength in political and economic terms!<sup>36</sup>

- A properly designed direct action (DA) strike force is indispensable. No matter how rooted the conflict is in socio-economic causes, the function of a combat force will not disappear. It must be prepared to do the tedious and dirty work of the campaign, i.e., saturation patrolling, ambushes, night patrols, raids, and training. It will, however, take on a unique role in that the strike force may be in support and will have as its goals, not the attrition of an enemy force, but the destruction of the enemy infrastructure and the protection of the populace.<sup>37</sup> Great care must be taken in designing this force. The trick is to combine light, lethal and mobile attributes with local cultural knowledge and political savvy.
- The effectiveness of a LIC effort will in large part depend on the makeup and training relationship among the triad of the people, the host nation military, and the U.S. Forces present. The central effort in legitimizing the host nation military is training it to be not only competent but professional and empathetic. It is important that soldiers possess a working knowledge of both the character and culture of the populace<sup>38</sup> and that they work within the indigenous politico-military system.<sup>39</sup> Unit commanders will be faced with the necessity of training various government agency and department personnel. Genuine courtesy and friendship will be broadly rewarded; conversely, a smug cultural hubris or naive ethnocentrism will cause ruptures in the triad.
- An honest and competent security force is essential to winning the loyalty of the populace. In the midst of conflict people desire order and will support strong control measures when applied evenly and with justice.<sup>40</sup> To this end the composition and operations of police and military forces are paramount. Coordination among police, paramilitary and military forces is required, but the key ingredient is active participation by those forces within the community.<sup>41</sup> The SOP of passing out frisbees and Hershey bars—and then leaving—is degrading and counterproductive. Host nation civilians will only trust those who become viable players in the indigenous system and who will be around when trouble starts.
- Create effective ideological propaganda weapons for employment on the psychological battlefield. A major thrust in the war for the minds of the populace will involve the competition of ideas. Former Secretary Carlucci observed that, "In this struggle the war of words has become every bit as important as the force of arms."<sup>42</sup> It is not unlikely to design a campaign for operations short of war in which the main effort of military operations may be psychological.<sup>43</sup> The Marine experience in Latin America has led the Corps to the conclusion that the sapping of an enemy's strength by psychological means can be every bit as devastating as inflicting battlefield casualties.<sup>44</sup>
- The most effective way to establish a good intelligence net is to provide justice and protection for the people. Usable intelligence in a LIC environment is the lifeblood of operational planning<sup>45</sup> but neither technological gadgetry nor conventional agent recruitment will provide the constant and reliable information necessary to focus on the infrastructure of the insurgent or the loyalty of the population. The Marine Combined Action Platoon (CAP) during the Vietnam War<sup>46</sup> and the British civil control program in

Malaya are cases in point, where intelligence flowed freely from the people only when they trusted their security forces.

- The diverse elements in the LIC environment demand that a plan be smoothly coordinated and synchronized. Given the variety of missions and forces in a LIC scenario; the number of localities and host nation players; and the presence of other American agencies; the need for timing, phasing and coordinating will be crucial. Not only will operations jell, but the perceptions of legitimacy, competence and resolution will be enhanced. In such a circumstance, the focused, coordinated vision will mold efforts so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.<sup>47</sup>
- Regional cooperation is the greatest legitimizer. If the LIC campaign includes other countries in the geographical area whose leaders also see the threat and participate in a measured way as voluntary partners, public opinion: American, host nation and the world's, will tend to legitimize the undertaking.<sup>48</sup>
- The will of the American people must be considered when supporting a LIC campaign. It was discovered too late that the North Vietnamese had uncovered America's center of gravity, the will of the people, and had turned it masterfully to their own purposes. The lesson was not lost on President Reagan, who, nevertheless, had a difficult time selling his concept of counterinsurgency to the American public. His warning about LIC is still apt, "...in the last analysis the tools we have...are of little use without the support of the American people and their willingness to stay the course..."<sup>49</sup>

**Campaign Descriptors.** By culling through all of his guidance (NCA, JCS and CINC) and knowledge (LIC conditions, regional expertise and military experience), the planner should be able to produce a list of descriptors (key elements, attributes or capabilities necessary for task and mission accomplishment) which participating forces must possess to bring about the aforementioned conditions for success. The production of such a list will greatly facilitate creating realistic operational goals and phases while allowing for appropriate force mixes.

By reviewing the requirements for pursuing the LIC strategy in USSOUTHCOM, the planner will assemble a list of descriptors similar to the one shown in Table 3. Producing such a list should not be done offhandedly or in a vacuum; many sources are available to allow the planner to test his list. The danger actually lies in creating a list against a preconceived notion of force capabilities and availabilities. To be a valid tool and to show the real needs of the CINC, the descriptor list must be generated as a result of "zero-based" assessment without regard to the available forces.

At this point the planner must depart the heady world of ideas and requirements and enter the grittier world of force structure and capabilities. He thus transitions to the "bottom-up" assessment with the tedious but crucial task of examining each of the type forces apportioned to the CINC in light of its doctrinal and operational functions.

<u>TASK</u>		<u>CONCEPT (HOW)</u>
I.	Foreign Internal Defense/ Nation-Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Civic assistance</li> <li>2. Humanitarian assistance</li> <li>3. Medical exercises</li> <li>4. Engineer construction</li> <li>5. Disaster relief</li> <li>6. Civil defense coordination</li> </ol>
II.	Direct Action (Strike Force)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lethal, light mobile assault</li> <li>2. Discern insurrection infrastructure</li> <li>3. Insertion/extraction</li> <li>4. Rapid response</li> <li>5. Conduct training</li> <li>6. Cultural empathy</li> </ol>
III.	Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Security assistance</li> <li>2. Equipment training</li> <li>3. Technological applications</li> <li>4. Noncombatant nature</li> <li>5. Low-profile nature</li> <li>6. Civilian skills</li> <li>7. Politico-economic knowledge</li> </ol>
IV.	Security Forces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Train first-line civil defense</li> <li>2. Coordinate w/paramilitary and police</li> <li>3. Compatible w/indigenous infrastructure</li> </ol>
V.	Psychological Operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PSYOP skills; ideas as weapons</li> <li>2. AOR expertise; sensitivity</li> </ol>
VI.	Intelligence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Passive collection; low profile</li> <li>2. Trustable; nonthreatening</li> <li>3. Infrastructure compatible</li> </ol>
VII.	Synchronization, Coordination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. C2 for hybrid force mixes</li> <li>2. Coordinate host nation actions</li> <li>3. Coordinate w/regional officials</li> </ol>
VIII.	Regional Cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Liaison skills</li> <li>2. Regional sensitivities</li> </ol>
IX.	U.S. Public Opinion/Will	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public affairs/media relations</li> <li>2. NCA, JCS, congressional relations</li> </ol>

Table 3. USSOUTHCOM LIC Conditions and Descriptors.

## CIVIL AFFAIRS FORCE CAPABILITY

Let it be your pride...to show all men everywhere not only what good soldiers you are, but also what good men you are.

Woodrow Wilson

With the CINC's goals and vision firmly in mind, the campaign planner is seemingly ready to apply his craft. We have reached the point where the "top-down" approach can realistically do no more. The process, however, promises to be an exercise in frustration, for the requirements approach assumes optimum force availability to produce minimum risk.

USSOUTHCOM, in addition to addressing a uniquely complex AOR, however, faces remarkable force and resource constraints. General Woerner saw only 4 percent of U.S. worldwide security assistance come into his theater, commanded six-tenths of a percent of DOD manpower, and received only one-tenth of one percent of the DOD budget.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, he had to realistically tailor his operational objectives to the situation and force structure available. The planner faces one of his greatest challenges in trying to bridge the gap from the complex "top-down" descriptors to very limited "bottom-up" capabilities.

**Apportioned Civil Affairs Forces.** The planner can begin his analysis by finding out as much as he can about the forces apportioned to the CINC. In this case, USSOUTHCOM may plan for the use of part of the only active component (AC) Civil Affairs unit in the U.S. military, the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne). While this unit can be tasked by the CINC, it is not forward deployed and lacks the civilian functional specialties found more commonly in the reserve units. Nevertheless, the teams dispatched from Ft. Bragg display a firm grasp of the LIC environment and have experienced much operational training in theater.

The two CA units which provide the functional specialties and cultural expertise required in USSOUTHCOM are units in the United States Army Reserve (USAR). They train to tasks prioritized by the CINC and often perform in-theater training, but are precluded by civilian employment, their peacetime chains of command, and regulations from taking part in various theater operations.

**CA Doctrine.** Civil Affairs (CA) draws its character from *JCS Pub 2* which sets forth activities relating to U.S. military forces and civil authorities in a foreign country. The missions of CA are to assist military operations, fulfill international obligations and to further policies of the United States. While many agencies share in these responsibilities, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) acts as the executive agent for CA planning.

The Army CA units have been given four missions which span the entire spectrum of conflict.

- To support general purpose forces by minimizing civilian interference with military operations and identifying and coordinating the acquisition of local resources and facilities.

- To support Foreign Internal Defense (FID) by identifying CA activities that host nation military forces should support in order to mobilize civilian loyalty to the government and teaching the host nation military how to train for and conduct CA activities.
- To support unconventional warfare (UW) by training and deploying with other UW elements, analyzing the enemy's political, economic, social and psychological vulnerabilities and providing support to the civilian populace.
- When directed by the NCA, CA elements assist the government in establishing a civil administration in foreign territory. Such a temporary administration would maintain law and order and provide life-sustaining services until autonomy is restored to civil authorities.<sup>51</sup>

The goal of the CA unit is to train to the tasks of the theater combatant CINC while producing soldiers who possess the dual capabilities of knowledge of the countries of the AOR (language, culture, politics and economy) and a specific functional specialty which equates to a skill found more often in the civilian than military world. The functional specialties are:

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Civil Defense         | * Economics and Commerce      |
| * Labor                 | * Food and Agriculture        |
| * Legal                 | * Property Control            |
| * Public Administration | * Public Communications       |
| * Public Education      | * Transportation              |
| * Public Finance        | * Public Works                |
| * Public Health         | * Art, Monuments and Archives |
| * Public Safety         | * Civil Information           |
| * Public Welfare        | * Cultural Affairs            |
| * Civilian Supply       | * Dislocated Civilians        |

A major problem with planning for CA employment is the fact that the four missions require such diversity. After studying the LIC problem in April 1985, the Joint Low Intensity Conflict Project concluded that a premium should be placed on conducting civil-military operations at every echelon of conflict at the lower end of the spectrum.<sup>52</sup> Apparently, Secretary of Defense Weinberger agreed; in 1987, he assigned all Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units (AC and USAR) to the newly established Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) which has assumed oversight responsibility for training, doctrine and management of the force.

**Force Structure.** Because of the seeming dichotomy of mission types for which CA was being held responsible, the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) called for a redesigning of those units. Sensing the unique nature of such a force, members of CA units from around the country and CINCs' representatives met at TRADOC's invitation to help create the new unit designs. LIC missions were paramount in the 1986-87 meetings and, as a result, by the early 1990s there will be five CA units especially configured to accomplish FID, UW infrastructure development missions in Third World environments.

The 36 USAR CA units are very "rank heavy." Even the companies are predominantly senior-grade while the three general officer commands (GOCOMS) have a preponderance of soldiers who hold field-grade rank. The reason for this is that the purpose of the CA staff and teams is to allow for interface with high-ranking foreign military, diplomatic, and host-country personnel and to accommodate experienced, specialized functional specialties called for by doctrine.

Most CA units are organized into teams which train for a specific country or region. Unlike most reserve units, CA does not deploy for training as a unit but more often schedules "fragmented" annual training by which these light and easily deployable teams are often able to accomplish valuable in-country training.

## LIC AND THE CA FORCE

Shortly after the Vietnam conflict, when many people lost interest in the Third World and low intensity conflict, CA units retained the vision<sup>53</sup> and, even in the midst of deep unit structure losses, maintained the rightness of an indigenous population-oriented campaign. One of the great ironies of the Indo Chinese experience is that no USAR CA units were activated. Instead, the checkered path of civil affairs was overseen by various civilian-military hybrids which, in spite of heroic efforts, never did fire the imagination of U.S. field commanders who seemed determined to fight a war of attrition.

Today, however, many soldiers in CA units possess both extensive linguist credentials and a working knowledge of their AORs. They also are able to bring the civilian professional skills required of them to the LIC arena. This is especially so in the USSOUTHCOM units. Moreover, most of the unit members have been involved in some form of civic assistance and are assigned to teams concentrating on particular Latin American countries.

**Using the Descriptor/Force Capability Matrix.** After researching into the doctrine and force structure of apportioned forces, the planner should be ready to apply this "bottom-up" information to the set of descriptors which he developed as a result of his "zero-basis" analysis. But before doing so, one more advantage to this procedure should be pointed out

When the planner designed his conditions for strategic success and resultant descriptors, he could only hope he had determined all the ingredients. He, of course, could never be certain of discovering all descriptors to be considered. Others would present themselves while analyzing force capabilities, and that is what happened here. By evaluating CA missions, the planner could

have realized that the fourth mission, civil administration, though not stressed in his guidance, might well be a vehicle to be utilized in LIC situations, e.g., counterinsurgency termination, as a final stage in a violent Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) or simply as a way of bolstering a neighbor state in need of support. With any additionally listed descriptors, the planner must now make use of his research by matching force capabilities against key mission descriptors (Table 4).

DESCRIPTORS	CA ROLES		
	Direct	Support	Supplemental
1. Civic Assistance	X	X	
2. Humanitarian Assistance	X	X	
3. Civic Action	X	X	
4. Medical Exercises		X	X
5. Engineer/Construction		X	X
6. Disaster Relief	X	X	
7. Civil Defense Coordination	X	X	
8. Lethal, Light, Mobile Assault			
9. Discern Insurrection Infrs		X	X
10. Insertion/Extraction Strikes			
11. Rapid Response			
12. Conduct UW Training			X
13. Cultural Knowledge & Empathy		X	
14. Security Assistance		X	
15. Equipment Training		X	
16. Technological Applications			
17. Noncombatant (Indirect) Tng		X	
18. Host Nation High-Profile Tng		X	
19. Civilian Applied Tng Skills	X	X	
20. Politico-Socioeconomic Skills	X	X	
21. Train First-Line Civil Defense			X
22. Coord w/Paramilitary & Police	X		
23. Secur Compatible w/Indigenous		X	
24. PSYOP Skills; Ideas as Weapons			X
25. PSYOP AOR Expertise; Sensitivity		X	
26. Passive Intell Collection		X	
27. Nonthreatening Intell System			X
28. Indigenous Intell Net			X
29. Cmd and Control for Force Mix	X	X	
30. Coord Host Nation/U.S. Mil Opns	X	X	
31. Coord w/Regional Mil Reps	X	X	
32. Foreign Area Liaison Skills	X	X	
33. Regional Mil Sensitivities		X	
34. Public Affairs, Media Relations		X	X
35. NCA, JCS, Congressional Rel'tns		X	
36. Civil Administration	X	X	

Table 4. USSOUTHCOM Descriptors and Civil Affairs Capabilities.



## EVALUATING THE CA FORCE

When a country looks at its fighting force; it is looking in a mirror; if the mirror is a true one the face that it sees there will be its own.

General Sir John W. Hackett

A cursory examination of the LIC descriptors and CA roles matched in Table 4 leads one to the inescapable conclusion that civil affairs skills are absolutely central to the prosecution of a successful LIC campaign in Latin America. But it does more than that. The matrix points to ways in which CA can complement other forces' capabilities and suggests tasks which can be directly related to achieving conditions necessary for strategic success. In conjunction with the results of his templating the other assigned and apportioned forces, the campaign planner has the raw material for applying the skills of his craft.

Let us see what can be discerned by comparing campaign descriptors against researched CA capabilities:

- It is clear that almost any U.S. element given a mission in this campaign could be supported by a CA team which possessed regional knowledge and cultural sensitivities.
- The functional specialties of civil affairs soldiers can support or supplement many other kinds of training, security assistance and efforts coordinated between U.S. and the host nation military.
- One can also understand why it has recently been suggested that the CA Command headquarters is ideally suited to coordinate the combat, combat support, and combat service support elements of a LIC campaign.<sup>54</sup> The rank structure, staff organization, professional skills and regional knowledge found in that organization fall right into place for the "indirect application" of military power as espoused by a bipartisan group of leading U.S. senators<sup>55</sup> as well as the SECDEF.
- The CA Command could also be the hub of a synchronization effort that many experts feel is the Achilles' heel of American LIC efforts.<sup>56</sup>

It would seem that the idea of a triple threat force: one that can maintain its soldiering posture while applying regional expertise and technical-professional know-how to solve Latin American sociomilitary problems, would be an integral part of the LIC force package in USSOUTHCOM. But as Pogo was wont to say, "It ain't all beer and skittles."

**CA Inhibitors.** Before forging ahead with devising CA phases and branches of his peacetime LIC campaign, the planner must measure his paper solutions against the subjective cold light of reality.

The first question that our planner might ask is, "Can I depend on the CA Reservist being there when we need him?" Unfortunately, the answer is "No." The greatest inhibitor to the use of Reserve Component soldiers in a LIC environment is that conventional wisdom holds that

reservists, because of their USAR status, cannot contribute to a theater campaign. Reservist units must be mobilized to serve on extended active duty, and while the NCA has the authority to do that, it has been loathe to do so. Yet, there are ways that the CINC can utilize CA personnel in various statuses that allow for theater support. annual training, Active Guard and Reserve (the Army Reserve's full-time service members), and Active Duty for Special Work (ADSW). Nevertheless, the processes are time-consuming, complex and, on an exceptional basis, not the situation campaign planners covet.

A second problem that presents itself is that most CA units are configured for conventional support, such as civil military cooperation (CIMIC) as practiced in the Federal Republic of Germany. Many CA soldiers see this general support role as the real goal of the force and feel the FID/UW missions are mere aberrations of the core raison d'etre for civil affairs. This is not just an internal argument in the CA community but has fueled home heated top-level discussions about the inclusion of CA and PSYOP in the Special Operations Forces.

CA seems always to be wavering between two worlds. conventional vs special operations missions, a peacetime vs wartime chain of command, and active vs reserve component control. It has no champion, no sponsor, and therefore, in spite of its great potential, tends to be lumped together with the "ash and trash" units.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, a CA unit's finances and deployments are in the hands of peacetime headquarters, it will often see planned exercises or deployments for overseas training (to support the CINC) scuttled in the name of cost savings or a higher priority of the Continental U.S. (CONUS) Commander.

The planner must cope with these kinds of problems. In this case he is faced with several alternatives that he can present to the CINC. Should the staff work with the active component (AC) CA unit alone, try to produce a complementary AC/RC team, design plans with USAR CA deployments for training in mind, or simply accomplish civil affairs missions with other assigned units? Is it possible, in this day of constrained AC budgeting, to have the NCA or Congress modify its interpretation of Reserve Component activation to allow CA teams to deploy overseas for operations? These and other questions must be researched, refined and presented to the CINC.

## CONCLUSIONS

Peace hath her victories, no less renown'd than war.

John Milton

**The Role of the CINC.** The planning process outlined here can be arduous, tedious—and as pointed out—discouraging. While it allowed us to catch snatches of LIC success, it also seemed to dash many hopes of the campaign planner. We must not forget that the goal was to allow the ideal to bump up against reality. The key is to approach the process like any commander's estimate, that is, when obstacles arise, every thought must be taken to overcome them.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act has provided the combatant unified commanders considerable clout and input into the system. If the CINC and his staff have done a proper job of discerning

"top-down" requirements and have also done a conscientious job of designing concomitant strategic conditions and descriptors, the CINC has every right, nay, responsibility, to go back to service chiefs, JCS, the NCA and Congress to request the proper force to accomplish his task. Indeed, with the posturing and pontificating of so many public officials about the urgent need for LIC campaign plans<sup>58</sup> it would be only poetic justice to allow them to share in the great dilemma. Without being either naive or sarcastic, it can be said that the new authority lines do make it possible for the CINC to stimulate changes in the system through invigorated lines of input. Seldom has the operator been so close to Olympus.

**The Value of the Descriptor-Capabilities Approach.** In spite of the pedantic and sometimes pessimistic nature of this LIC planning process (It was selected because a difficult test is the best test.), we should not lose sight of the constructive products of the procedure:

- It provides sometimes confused planners with a focused view of the CINC's vision.
- It forces the planners to consider strategy when designing operations.
- It offers the CINC an opportunity to specify staff responsibilities for greater accountability and productivity.
- It assures that no mission—or assigned force—will go ignored.
- It creates a tangible tool against which tasks and milestones can be assigned.
- It allows problems and solutions to be visualized.
- It provides "evidence" for CINC-generated requirements.
- It creates an awareness of the "big picture" to action officers and staffers who sometimes forget that their "wrench-turning makes the car go."

History teaches us that many great campaigns in history were lost because a commander did not use all of his assets or used them unwisely. If that could happen to a Napoleon or a Lee with conventional forces, how much more can it happen to commanders pioneering new tactics in the foggy environment of low intensity conflict?

Devising mission descriptors and analyzing force capabilities are not panaceas to winning the great unheralded conflicts of our time; only professional dedication and smart soldiering will do that. But intelligent planning will allow for the right force to be tackling the right mission, and in LIC that is 80 percent of the battle.

## NOTES

1 Professors Henry Bartlett and G. Paul Jolman, Jr., in an article entitled "Strategy as a Guide to Force Planning," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 1988, have argued that strategies can be broken down into key elements, which they call "descriptors," to better evaluate alternative force choices. That process is utilized throughout this chapter as a core concept of strategy analysis.

- 2 Charles M. Ayers and Howard L. Dixon, "Operational Art in Low Intensity Conflict," *CLIC Papers*, Langley Air Force Base, VA: Army/Air Force Center for LIC, September 1987, p. 3.
3. Charles P. Mott, "Realistic LIC Strategy in Latin America," *Military Review*, May 1989, p. 19.
4. William J. Olson, "Civil Affairs and Low Intensity Conflict," Presentation, Civil Affairs Association, Charleston, SC, June 17, 1988.
- 5 Ronald Reagan, "National Security Strategy of the United States," Washington. The White House, 1988, pp. 25-26.
6. Frank C. Carlucci, Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress, Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1989, p. 59.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- 8 Fred F. Woerner, "The Strategic Imperative for the United States in Latin America," *Military Review*, February 1989, p. 25.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
10. William E. Aylsworth, "Assessing Latin America," *Military Review*, September 1988, p. 30.
11. Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, *Discriminate Deterrence*, 1988, p. 19.
12. Woerner, p. 20.
13. Reagan, p. 7.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
15. Carlucci, p. 61.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Discriminate Deterrence*, pp. 17-20.
18. Woerner, p. 19.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 20 *Ibid*, pp 22 and 27. For the subtle, yet important distinctions among the terms civic assistance, civic action and humanitarian assistance, see *JCS Pub 1*. For a tactical idea of how they are implemented, see Chapter 4 by LTC John T. Fishel, USAR, and MAJ Edmund S. Cowan, USA, and "Civil-Military Operations and the War for Moral Legitimacy in Latin America," *Military Review*, January 1988.
- 21 William J. Olson, "Low-Intensity Conflict. The Institutional Challenge," *Military Review*, February 1989, p. 14.
22. Woerner, p. 22.
23. John O. Marsh, "Comments on Low-Intensity Conflict," *Military Review*, February 1989, p. 4.
24. Carlucci, p. 58.
25. Reagan, p. 35.

26. Carlucci, pp. 24 and 63.
27. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JCS Pub 1: Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1987, p. 214.
28. *Discriminate Deterrence*, p. 14. See also, Richard M. Swain, "Removing Square Pegs from Round Holes; LIC in Army Doctrine," *Military Review*, December 1987, p. 5.
29. John D. McDowell and Richard H. Taylor, "Low-Intensity Campaigns," *Military Review*, March 1988, pp. 8-10.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
31. Robert M. Herrick and Max G. Manwaring, "A Threat-Oriented Strategy for Conflict Control," *Military Review*, July 1987, p. 6.
32. Rudolph C. Barnes, Jr., "Civil Affairs, A LIC Priority," *Military Review*, September 1988, p. 39.
33. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986, p. 37.
34. Reagan, p. 35.
35. *Discriminate Deterrence*, p. 17.
36. *Small Wars Manual, United States Marine Corps*, reprint ed., para. 2-3, Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1940.
37. Krepinevich, p. 5.
38. *Small Wars Manual*, para. 1-9.
39. Sam C. Sarkesian, "The Myth of U.S. Capability in Unconventional Conflicts," *Military Review*, December 1987, p. 5.
40. *Small Wars Manual*, para. 1-9.
41. Krepinevich, p. 173.
42. Carlucci, p. 59.
43. McDowell and Taylor, p. 9.
44. *Small Wars Manual*, para 1-11.
45. Herrick and Manwaring, p. 4.
46. Krepinevich, p. 173.
47. McDowell and Taylor, p. 11.
48. *Discriminate Deterrence*, p. 20.
49. Reagan, p. 35.
50. Mott, p. 18.

51. Department of the Army. *FM 41-10, Civil Affairs Operations*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 1985, pp. 1-4 and 1-5.

52. Raymond E. Bell, Jr., "To Be in Charge," *Military Review*, April 1988, p.13.

53. David A. Decker, "Civil Affairs: A Rebirth or Stillborn?" *Military Review*, November 1987, p. 61.

54. Bell, p. 1.

55. Benjamin F. Schemmer, "Senate Leaders Ask Scowcroft for New White House Focus on Low-Intensity Conflict," *Armed Forces Journal*, March 1989, p. 67.

56. McDowell and Taylor, p. 11. See also, *Discriminate Deterrence*, p. 14.

57. Almost all USAR units have been allowed to recruit to 110 percent or 125 percent of authorized strength. The only units which have been denied this authority have been those traditionally thought of as nondeployers in a major mobilization effort, e.g., bands, military history detachments, and Civil Affairs units. This longstanding inequity is only now being addressed.

58. Schemmer, pp. 66-67.

## CHAPTER 9

# MEDICAL CIVIC ACTION IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT: THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

Jeffrey Greenhut

Medical civic action seems, on the surface, as simply a way to assist the war effort in a low intensity conflict by helping to win the "hearts and minds" of the population upon whom the war is seen ultimately to depend. In fact, as the Vietnam experience shows, it is considerably more complex than that. The various programs of medical civic action that the United States put into place at various times in Vietnam did indeed play that role, but they were also used for other reasons. They were reactions to U.S. domestic political pressures, they helped keep bored, under-utilized medical personnel busy, and they fed the American desire for humanitarian assistance to peoples not as fortunate as themselves. Indeed, it is difficult to determine which reasons were paramount. Nonetheless, as it seems likely that any future low intensity conflict in which the United States is likely to become involved will use military medical personnel and facilities for purposes other than the direct provision of medical care to American service members. A survey of the programs in Vietnam may give some insight to what may be expected in such a conflict.

The Vietnam War was the first unconventional, or guerrilla war in which the United States had been involved since the Philippine insurrection over a half century before. Aware that the success of the war depended ultimately on the support of the people for the government, American counterinsurgency experts developed a number of programs designed to "win the hearts and minds" of the population. One tool was to use the provision of medical care as a way to increase the civilian population's support for both the Vietnamese government and the American forces fighting in the country.

The Americans generated a number of programs in their attempt to use medical resources to assist the war effort. The Medical Civic Action Program<sup>1</sup> (MEDCAP I) was a program whereby the Vietnamese armed forces gave medical care to Vietnamese civilians in an attempt to increase its popularity among its own population. In this effort, Americans played primarily an advisory role. After major American forces arrived, they started another medical civic action program, MEDCAP II, whereby U.S. military medical personnel provided care directly to Vietnamese civilians and helped the Vietnamese government expand its health capabilities. Lastly, in 1967, planning began for yet another medical assistance program, the Civilian War Casualty Program (CWCP), designed to give medical care to Vietnamese civilians hurt as a direct result of U.S. military activity.

## MEDCAP I

The war in Vietnam began many years before the insertion of American troops, and though the American military presence was massive, even at the height of the U.S. involvement, South Vietnamese forces outnumbered the Americans by nearly two to one. From the beginning, U.S. planners believed that the success of the war effort depended primarily on the effectiveness of the Vietnamese armed forces and on the support the Vietnamese government (GVN) could generate among its people. Therefore, the Americans spent much time, effort, and money on attempting to increase both, using medical assistance as a primary tool. In this endeavor, the Americans had to build upon Vietnamese medical assets, which were minimal. South Vietnam had only 1,400 physicians, 1,000 of whom were in the Army. This left only 400 to care for 16 million civilians. In some provinces there were no physicians at all, and in others, none practiced outside the district capital. Usually, only a health worker and a midwife, both with perhaps 6 months of training, could be found working in the countryside.<sup>2</sup>

When, in May 1961, the Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group Vietnam (MAAGV) requested help in assisting the Vietnamese government in establishing a civic action program for Vietnam, one of the two men sent to assist him was a public health officer. The next year, both the Embassy and the MAAGV's successor, the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), proposed a program of civic action in Vietnam. The objective of the program was to create a bond between the Vietnamese armed forces and government with the rural population. American personnel were to be used only until the Vietnamese proved capable of continuing on their own. DOD approved the concept in November 1962, and required the Army to provide 15 physicians, 4 Medical Service Corps officers, and 108 enlisted technicians. The Air Force and Navy provided additional personnel. In January 1963, the first men arrived for temporary duty with permanent duty personnel to follow the next month.<sup>3</sup>

Once in-country, the MACV Surgeon divided the men into teams, the number of which eventually reached 29, and assigned them to Vietnamese Army (ARVN) divisions, separate regiments, Regional Force/Popular force (RF/PF) units, and corps. The six corps teams had one physician and eight enlisted men, although these larger corps teams generally broke themselves down into smaller sections to increase their area of coverage. The other teams, such as the nine division teams of one doctor and three enlisted men, the nine teams assigned duty with paramilitary forces of three enlisted men each, and the single man regimental teams, usually operated as units.<sup>4</sup>

All did not go smoothly in the beginning. MEDCAP personnel arrived without adequate orientation on the environment, language, culture, and medical problems they would face. The GVN displayed a discouraging lack of responsiveness which delayed distribution of supplies. There were problems with pharmaceuticals for children, and American medical officers, used to a richer and more advanced medical system, had trouble adjusting to a limited pharmacopoeia and a generally primitive supporting Vietnamese medical system. Most medical resources in Vietnam to which patients could be referred did not meet American standards. Doctors were few and badly trained, and hospitals did not meet even rudimentary levels of plumbing or sanitation. Poor coordination resulted from the fact that the GVN Minister of Health and the Republic of



Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) Surgeon General were not on speaking terms, a situation that was resolved only by the coup against Diem and the replacement of the minister.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, the MEDCAP Teams persevered, operating in conjunction with the Special Forces and MACV medical advisors to provide support for "clear and hold" military operations through medical care to Vietnamese civilians in displaced persons encampments and in the new "strategic hamlets." The teams treated civilians in those areas where security considerations prohibited use of civilian health workers, trained and qualified additional village health workers, and assisted in the training of medical aid personnel for the paramilitary forces. The teams also provided care when necessary to ARVN military and paramilitary personnel and to U.S. advisors.<sup>6</sup>

Teams went to those villages where GVN armed forces could provide adequate security, and then set up in public buildings to treat people summoned by the village chief. A typical visiting group of medical workers consisted of six people of which from one to three were American. Where a village health worker was in residence, team members solicited his advice. Some teams stayed in an area for weeks and went to the same village more than once for follow-up care. Of course, in some areas, revisits were difficult, and without them, the medical effectiveness of the visits was very limited. For American health workers, this created tension in resolving the conflict between the twin goals of bringing effective medical care to people and the psychological warfare (PSYWAR) aspect of the MEDCAP program. Nonetheless, a team could provide a great deal of service over the months. Medical Civic Action Team 20, for example, operated from April to December near Da Nang. The team made 121 village visits and saw over 20,000 patients at an average of 184 patients per visit. Forty-five percent of those seen were children and almost 40 percent were women.<sup>7</sup>

Funding for MEDCAP I came from the AID except for the salaries of military personnel. Based on such funding, MACV requisitioned medical supplies and transferred them to the ARVN medical supply system. ARVN personnel could then draw them subject to the approval of U.S. team chiefs who used this check to prevent diversion of medical civic action materiel into non-MEDCAP channels. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese and American military supply systems were based on entirely different concepts. The wealth of the American Army made it more efficient to use and dispose of small items than to keep track of them. On the other hand, the poor and inefficient Vietnamese army believed it had to be much more thrifty, and controlled its medical items far more carefully. Thus, a Vietnamese aidman had to account for medical items that his American counterpart considered expendable. This sometimes resulted in a Vietnamese medic being unwilling to use a medical item because he might then be held accountable for its loss. Cases were reported where ARVN medics removed splints from patients prior to evacuation for fear of having to pay for them should they be unable to produce them when required. Fortunately, under U.S. tutelage and aid, this situation was soon set right and ARVN aidmen were relieved from accountability for small items.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the early teething pains, the MEDCAP I program continued to expand. In 1963, it provided over 914,000 treatments to Vietnamese civilians in villages and hamlets at a cost for supplies of \$538,000 or 22 cents per treatment. More importantly, Vietnamese government employees provided 70 to 80 percent of the care, and performance improved to the point that

MACV Headquarters phased out the six corps level teams. In 1964, the numbers improved to nearly 3 million treatments.<sup>9</sup>

To increase both the psychological and medical impact of the program, ground rules required that the giver of medical care be identified with the Vietnamese government, not the United States. Medical personnel dispensed pharmaceuticals in Vietnamese marked containers and in small doses to prevent diversion to the enemy. Administrators coordinated visits with the PSYWAR program, tried to schedule follow-up visits, and arranged for simple handouts and posters that helped educate the population in sanitation and first aid.<sup>10</sup>

By 1965, MACV Headquarters had phased out the American MEDCAP teams and limited U.S. personnel to advice and supervision. The MACV Surgeon felt that the program had been an undoubted success. Aside from whatever medical impact the treatments had had, he believed the visits had had a major positive impact in the PSYWAR campaign. They provided tangible evidence that the GVN cared about its citizens, and created a favorable impression of the Vietnamese armed forces. Additionally, as villagers invariably assembled for treatment, it provided an audience for dissemination of government information.<sup>11</sup>

## MEDCAP II

Although, unofficially, Army medical personnel had been providing medical care to Vietnamese civilians for some years, the introduction of large bodies of American troops into Vietnam in 1965 meant that many American medical personnel became available to provide care for the Vietnamese. The Army quickly took advantage of these new resources in a program labeled MEDCAP II.<sup>12</sup>

Like MEDCAP I, the MACV Surgeon had overall responsibility for technical direction of the program with senior MACV advisors, component commanders, and commanders of Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) responsible for planning and conducting programs within their areas of responsibility. Each U.S. unit of battalion size or larger had the option of conducting a MEDCAP II program provided the local Vietnamese provincial authority, the United States Overseas Mission (USOM) representative, and the MACV sector advisor approved. Each plan had to have provisions for medical civic action in conjunction with limited tactical operations, for coordination with district GVN health officials and the MACV district advisor, and for coordination with province medical chiefs for referral of patients to province hospitals, plans for logistical support; delineation of the specific areas covered and special projects assisted, such as orphanages, refugee camps, and church supported hospitals, and, finally, coordination with psychological warfare (PSYWAR) operations. MACV further directed that MEDCAP II would not be done in urban areas where civilian medical resources existed and would avoid competition with civilian medical activities.<sup>13</sup>

Line units quickly started MEDCAP programs. The 173rd Brigade, the first major Army unit to arrive in Vietnam, began such activities early. By 1966, its program had progressed from latrine building and sick calls into a well organized effort divided into two parts. One revolved around the base camp where each battalion and most of the separate companies had at least one MEDCAP program in Bien Hoa and the neighboring villages. Even when units went to the field,

activity continued on a reduced basis manned by rear area personnel. The other part of the program took place during combat operations. A team of one physician and three medics, attached to the Brigade S-5 section, conducted MEDCAP activities in towns and villages in the brigade area of operation. The PSYWAR officer assured coordination of both parts with psychological operations.<sup>14</sup>

The 1st Cavalry Division, which came into Vietnam shortly after the 173rd, also began a MEDCAP program. Its 2nd Brigade ran a dispensary that averaged some 1,400 visits per month ranging from dental problems to the delivery of babies. The 15th Medical Battalion, like the 173rd, ran a two-part MEDCAP operation, one in base camp and one in the field. In An Khe, the base for the division, the 15th sponsored the An Khe hospital and provided approximately 13 enlisted men, who lived in the hospital compound, and a physician who worked there during normal duty hours. In the field, the major effort was to aid war wounded and provide individual acts of assistance.<sup>15</sup>

Like line units, Army hospitals also held MEDCAP programs. For example, the 3rd Field Hospital held sick call two to three times per week with teams of three physicians, three nurses, three to four medics, a pharmacy technician, and a dental team of one dentist and one technician. Other medical units provided assistance outside the formal program by lending personnel to orphanages, church hospitals, and other needy facilities.<sup>16</sup>

Medical commanders generally supported such programs, for besides their PSYWAR and humanitarian aspects, the programs had the additional and substantial advantage of keeping their bored and underutilized medical personnel busy. This underutilization and the resultant strain on morale was due to the nature of medical care in an insurgency environment. While the general level of casualties was low, the medical system had to be large enough to handle the occasional major battle. However, as these occurred infrequently, most of the time the system operated at far below capacity, leaving medical personnel without meaningful work. As most were draftees, they did not accept the discomfort of Vietnam with equanimity anyway, and to have to put up with it without the justification of necessary work could not help but affect morale adversely. MEDCAP programs helped to give these highly intelligent and trained men some sense of purpose during the long periods of quiet.

Providing MEDCAP was not without difficulties. In some cases, it took additional personnel. Some units requested more medics and all needed interpreters. Additionally, until the Americans became accustomed to Vietnamese ways, friction could develop. Vietnamese civilian assistants insisted on a 2 to 3 hour siesta which would bring a MEDCAP clinic or visit to a halt. The impatience of American medical personnel, who may have traveled a great distance to help the Vietnamese, was understandable.<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, MEDCAP programs proliferated and became better organized. A MEDCAP team, sometimes including medics who had completed a short language course specifically designed for MEDCAP use, would enter a village or town, set up in a small building, often a one-room school, while an interpreter traveled the road in a loudspeaker-equipped jeep announcing the MEDCAP visit. The team brought footlockers of pills, lotions, bandages, ointments, and cough medicines. Ideally, the Vietnamese District Health Nurse would screen patients up for

treatments that dealt with skin and worm diseases, vitamin deficiencies, cuts, bruises, infections, torn muscles, arthritis, rheumatism, and respiratory trouble. The team evacuated more serious cases to medical facilities elsewhere. In 1968, the entire MEDCAP II program provided over 2 million outpatient treatments, 143,000 immunizations, and trained nearly 3,500 Vietnamese civilians as hamlet health workers.<sup>18</sup>

Besides medical care, the MEDCAP program also provided dental care, primarily tooth extractions and treatment of soft tissue infections. Veterinarians were also in demand. Formal veterinary civil action began in July 1966, when the 1st Infantry Division CA officer requested the 5th Medical Detachment provide veterinary support for 30 days in a civic action pacification program. The 4th assigned CPT Emmitt Smith and SP4 Richard Moore to the project. They first surveyed their two assigned villages and determined the major problem was the poor condition and early death of swine. Working with the province Animal Husbandry Chief, the two established a self-help program that concentrated on improving the condition of the animals. They even treated animals wounded by artillery fire.<sup>19</sup>

Veterinary civic action activity expanded quickly. During 1967, over 21,000 animals received rabies immunization and 2,250 animals were treated for disease. In 1968, the increase in numbers of veterinarians made it possible for the USARV Surgeon to extend what was called VETCAP. Setting as its major objective the immunization of domestic dogs against rabies, VETCAP immunized nearly 6,000 in the last 6 months of the year. Additionally, U.S. veterinarians treated many Vietnamese domestic farm animals and vaccinated nearly 3,000 cattle, over 2,000 chickens, and treated thousands of cattle, swine, and chickens, not to mention small numbers of ducks, goats, water buffalo, and horses. By the next year, the Veterinary Civic Action Committee held its first meeting with the MACV, USAID, 7th AF, and USARV veterinarians in attendance. Its goal was to aid the government of Vietnam in protein production and zoonosis control.<sup>20</sup>

The great expansion of all MEDCAP activities required closer control. In 1967, the Office of Civil Operations was replaced by Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) that placed the entire U.S. pacification and national development effort under the joint military command. Even this, however, did not result in sufficient coordination between USARV and Vietnamese health professionals. In December 1968, the USARV Surgeon directed that a single coordination body be established in his office for all medical civic action activities. The activities of the new Civilian Health Assistance Branch resulted in the reduction of reporting requirements, incorporated treatment of all medical disabilities into the Civilian War Casualty Program (CWCP) (see below), and established procedures designed to aid Vietnamese self sufficiency without depriving them of U.S. medical assistance. Nonetheless, coordination could not help but be a major problem considering the numbers and levels of officials involved.<sup>21</sup>

MEDCAP personnel procured needed medical supplies from U.S. Overseas Mission (USOM) funded material available through the Vietnamese armed forces medical depot system. Supplies requisitioned for MEDCAP activities had to be used solely for civilians. Supplies for MEDCAP I activities could be drawn from Vietnamese depots in Saigon, Can Tho, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Da Nang, Pleiku, and Hue. Personnel participating in a MEDCAP II program had to get their supplies from the 70th ARVN Medical Base Depot in Saigon. Vietnamese medical personnel were expected to requisition supplies for MEDCAP I programs, although if no Vietnamese military were

available in an area, U.S. personnel could do so. Despite U.S. assistance, the Vietnamese proved incapable of issuing supplies as quickly as needed to the point that MEDCAP operations suffered. In mid-1967, the United States shifted some 300 tons of medical material from the RVNAF 70th Medical Base Depot to the U.S. 32nd Medical Depot. This represented a 6 month stock of 125 items. Although the new system worked sufficiently in normal times, it proved inadequate during the Tet Offensive. Military activity by both sides wounded so many civilians that many American units issued supplies for their care despite regulations prohibiting such activity.<sup>22</sup>

After Tet, as the pacification program and MEDCAP activities assumed more prominence, the USARV Surgeon placed more stringent controls on procurement of MEDCAP supplies through U.S. channels because he felt that use of these channels subverted the development of the Vietnamese supply system, permitted diversion to the black market and the enemy, inflated U.S. stockage levels, and placed equipment that they were unprepared to maintain and support in the hands of the Vietnamese. However, he left a loophole since American supplies could be for "immediate use to save life or limb," although such use had to be reported and justified.<sup>23</sup>

One civic action activity that remained apart, particularly during the early and middle years of the war, was that of the Special Forces. The 5th Special Forces Group operated independently and USARV Headquarters made no attempt to control their MEDCAP activities. Special Forces medical care for the Vietnamese differed somewhat from the other MEDCAP programs. First, their civic action activity placed greater emphasis than did MEDCAP II on using medical care as a way to improve their intelligence gathering activities. However, an even greater difference was that their major effort went to provide direct medical care to the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) units composed of Montagnards, Nuongs, and Cambodians, all of whom the Vietnamese despised. In order that these men and their families receive medical care, the 5th established four CIDG hospitals and a number of dispensaries. Each of the four Special Forces companies supported 18 to 20 camps, each populated by 350 to 730 CIDG troops and their families. Some camp populations exceeded 1,500 people. The 5th established supporting CIDG hospitals at Bien Hoa (100 beds); Pleiku (100); Da Nang (100); and Ban Me Thout (50).<sup>24</sup> In 1968 and 1969 the Special Forces began to prepare for disengagement and to integrate the CIDG formations into the Vietnamese army. Steps taken included training paramedical personnel to take over from Americans and improving relations with American hospitals. The 29th and 93rd Evacuation Hospitals and the 3rd Surgical Hospital were among those that took responsibility for treatment of CIDG personnel as an interim step before the Vietnamese assumed full responsibility.<sup>25</sup> Americans in the other MEDCAP programs also began to prepare for the withdrawal of American medical personnel and the turnover of their functions to the Vietnamese. In 1969, the USARV Surgeon directed that units begin planning the shift in responsibility. Given the still rudimentary nature of Vietnamese medicine, this was a formidable task. Over the next few years, American soldiers instructed Vietnamese health workers in simple health procedures. They, in turn, taught villagers rudimentary health measures such as the regular use of soap and water and the most basic medical and dental health measures. Doctors, nurses, and technicians instructed Vietnamese medical personnel in more complicated procedures. At the Bien Hoa hospital, physicians and nurses from the 93rd Evacuation Hospital assisted in a training program for 22 nurse midwives, considerably improving the quality of care. At the 8th Field Hospital, personnel worked with the Vietnamese staff of the An Tuc dispensary to teach surgical and medical techniques. When the 8th moved to Tuy Hoa, it established an extensive liaison program with the Tuy Hoa

Hospital to upgrade skills there. Physicians from the American facility visited the province hospital throughout each week to teach general and orthopedic techniques. They were accompanied by nurses and technicians who tried to train their Vietnamese counterparts. Orthopedic surgeons helped the hospital establish a department of orthopedic surgery, and the 8th's physicians encouraged Vietnamese doctors to refer patients to the American facility for treatment. Occasionally, the Americans invited the Vietnamese doctors to assist in cases. In another instance of such work, the 91st Evacuation Hospital ran a training program for Vietnamese anesthetists.<sup>26</sup>

U.S. MEDCAP activities declined steadily while this effort was in progress. Treatments dropped to 1.3 million in 1970, a 30 percent decrease from 1969, and then to only 140,000 in 1971. By 1971, Vietnamese Ministry of Health personnel gave the majority of care to Vietnamese civilians. The formal end to the U.S. MEDCAP program came on June 30, 1972 when funding for the program ceased, although MACV Headquarters permitted U.S. and other allied forces to continue to participate within their capabilities until withdrawn.<sup>27</sup>

## **THE MILITARY PROVINCIAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

While both MEDCAP programs concentrated on spasmodic out-patient care, the Americans also attempted to improve the overall quality of health services throughout Vietnam via the Provincial Health Assistance Program (PHAP). The PHAP developed from an American government civilian effort of the early 1960s. In 1962, the AID sent surgical teams of American physicians, nurses, and technicians to Vietnamese provincial hospitals. The purpose of the program was to achieve an immediate increase in the capabilities of the Vietnamese government's provincial health service through provision of U.S. personnel and material on a temporary basis and to foster a permanent improvement through assistance to the government in planning and organization, personnel and material, management, in service training, and medical technical procedures. When, in an atmosphere of decreasing security and increasing civil strife, the AID teams proved unable to operate as effectively as hoped, U.S. officials began to look to the military to provide additional support.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, in mid-1965, despite AID objections, military personnel began extensive involvement in the program. Their part would be known as the Military Province Health Assistance Program (MILPHAP). The Department of Defense designated the Army as Executive Agent and directed it to furnish military mobile medical assistance teams for Vietnam. To provide the Army's share of physicians needed to staff the teams, the Surgeon General directed a 45-man increase in the doctor draft, and, by June 4th, intensive planning was underway, and the first team was already on standby status at Walter Reed. In order to keep up their morale, he ordered language training and periodic briefings while they waited.<sup>29</sup>

On September 1st, a meeting of military and AID officials decided to form six MILPHAP teams, three from the Army, two from the Air Force, and one from the Navy. Each team was to be composed of 3 physicians, 1 medical administrator, and 12 enlisted men. On the 3rd of the month, the Department of Defense ordered the medical administrators to Vietnam "soonest" to complete all logistical and administrative arrangements prior to the arrival of the remaining members of the teams. By October, equipment was being shipped, and some personnel from the teams were

already attending a 2-week orientation course at Fort Sam Houston. Military teams came to dominate the PHAP program, although it must be remembered that AID officers also drew teams from other U.S. nonmilitary organizations, and recruited contract personnel from non-U.S. sources. Additionally, the government of Vietnam used teams from other nations, some of which had secondary agreements with AID.<sup>30</sup>

The command relationships among the teams, the military chain of command, AID, and the Vietnamese could only have been designed by government bureaucrats. AID directed the program. It set policy in coordination with the Vietnamese government's Ministry of Health and then informed MACV headquarters. These policies prohibited the use of teams in support of military operations without the concurrence of MACV headquarters, and the fragmentation of teams to locations outside their assigned province and/or the change of primary location without the concurrence of both the U.S. Overseas Mission and MACV headquarters. AID further directed that teams would neither take over Vietnamese medical facilities nor build facilities of their own, and that Vietnamese nationals would retain full responsibility. Finally, the teams were not to perform MEDCAP activities. USAID's regional chief health officers retained operational control of the teams' activities which they exercised through the appointment of a Medical Officer in Charge. He, in turn, coordinated the teams' efforts with the Vietnamese Province Health Chief's program. The military services provided uniformed manpower although civilians might be attached as long as the Overseas Mission retained full responsibility, including all logistical and administrative support. MCV Headquarters provided all logistical and administrative support for the military members of the team by attaching each MILPHAP team to a sector advisory team that exercised command control less "matters which are operational in nature" and was responsible for providing the MILPHAP teams with quarters, rations, security, and administration. MACV also arranged the issue of medical expendables, such as drugs, through Vietnamese military medical depots, although these were funded by AID.<sup>31</sup>

Although the program began with only a small number of teams, the overall plan called eventually for one team for each of the 43 Vietnamese province hospitals. AID wanted 15 teams by the end of July, but the Army could send only 6. Nonetheless, it had organized the remaining nine and sent them to the Medical Field Service School for training and equipping prior to deployment. None of the services made an attempt to brief the men of these new teams. Arriving at the school, they had no knowledge of what the MILPHAP program was or into what they were venturing.<sup>32</sup>

PHAP programs had three phases. In Phase I, the team laid emphasis on developing a base for service in the provincial hospital. In Phase II, emphasis shifted to district health centers and on advisory activities and public health measures there with special attention to the development of a patient referral system to the provincial hospital where more specialized care was available. In the last phase, operational assistance was phased out as all services in the province were integrated down to hamlet level.<sup>33</sup>

By mid-1966, MILPHAP teams covered 18 provinces with 21 teams, of which 8 were Army. The table of organization for a MILPHAP team included 2 physicians, one as the major commanding and the other a captain, a captain as administrative officer, 11 enlisted medical technicians, and a clerk typist, all drawn from a single service. Although the table of organization

for all teams was the same, small variations inevitably occurred. The team at Pleiku, representative of many such teams, had 14 officers and enlisted men. A highly trained obstetrician served as commander with two general medical officers to assist, one of whom had limited preventive medicine training. The 140 bed province hospital at which they worked served a population of 160,000. The building had no screens or running water and limited electricity. It was dirty and the beds were boards with straw rugs. Families provided nursing care. In the medical ward, plague, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and malaria cases lay side by side. Surgery was done at the nearby Vietnamese military hospital. As one visitor put it, "It is astounding that anyone ever gets well." To compound the difficulties, this particular team did not receive the orientation training course, had never received the medical library on its table of organization, and had great problems getting medical supplies through AID channels. Surprisingly, morale was high.<sup>34</sup>

Although this and other teams regularly turned to U.S. medical supply channels when the Vietnamese system failed to deliver, the Medical Policy Coordinating Committee at USOM level discouraged such activity, concluding that unless the Vietnamese Ministry of Health supply channels were given a chance to work, its officials would never learn. In this, they clearly overestimated the ability of a Third World nation to learn modern methods.<sup>35</sup>

In 1968, a joint committee formed of members from the Vietnamese Ministry of Health, AID, and MACV Headquarters made a study of MILPHAP team composition. They recommended the reorganization of 9 of the then 27 teams in Vietnam, and a switch from the table of organization system to that of table of distribution and allowances since the latter made the tailoring of teams easier. Their recommendation was accepted and, by 1969, teams varied in strength from 2 to 15 men.<sup>36</sup>

By 1971, the program was in its last phase as the teams attempted to develop the surgical skills of Vietnamese physicians, train hospital staffs, and improve preventive health measures at district and village/hamlet level. Personnel spaces were steadily cut. By June 30th, 1972, the program terminated. MACV Headquarters felt that the MILPHAP program had been quite successful. The teams had upgraded both the quality and quantity of care at provincial hospitals, and district and hamlet dispensaries. They had initiated immunization and sanitation programs to control diseases. At higher levels, MILPHAP personnel had supervised construction of warehouses and instituted new supply, and accounting systems.<sup>37</sup>

The real test of the MILPHAP achievements would have been whether they continued after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Unfortunately, the fall of South Vietnam made such a test impossible. Therefore, all that can be said is that they helped some individuals that would have otherwise gone wanting for medical care. But that, in itself, is no small achievement.

## **THE CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTY PROGRAM (CWCP)**

The effects of the enormous firepower brought to the battlefield by a modern army cannot be restricted solely to soldiers. Unfortunately, civilians are often in the line of fire and suffer greatly. Vietnam was no exception. As early as 1965, the commander of the 15th Medical Battalion



reported that he had entire wards of Vietnamese civilian patients inadvertently hurt by U.S. military operations. In response, the USARV Surgeon established a policy permitting hospitalization of Vietnamese civilians in cases of emergency, the saving of life or limb, or when they had been wounded by "an instrumentality of the U.S. Armed Forces." Unfortunately, in late 1966, it became apparent that the tempo of the war had increased to the point where the Vietnamese hospital system could no longer cope with the increasing numbers of war wounded civilians. The rate of these had risen to an estimated 50,000 per year, double the capability of the Ministry of Health hospitals. The spillover flowed into American hospitals where American soldiers lay side by side with Vietnamese civilians, Vietnamese soldiers and wounded Viet Cong. By 1967, certain American politicians, particularly Senator Ted Kennedy, had adopted the cause of Vietnamese civilian wounded.<sup>38</sup>

In March 1967, President Johnson raised the issue of wounded civilians at the Guam meeting. After discussions involving the White House Staff and representatives of the Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense, the President decided to give responsibility for them to the Defense Department. On April 19, DOD assigned the mission to the Army.<sup>39</sup>

In May, representatives from AID, USARV, and MACV met on Guam and decided that there was a potential caseload of some 25,000 individuals per year who were not members of either an enemy or friendly armed force, who would sustain injury incident to, or resulting from, the military actions of either side. Of these, planners expected that approximately 35 percent would be adult males, 45 percent adult females, and 20 percent children of less than 13 years of age. The Vietnamese system simply could not handle these patients, could not absorb more aid, but did not want them evacuated out of the country. Based on these constraints and on an expected length of hospital stay of 14 days, which would permit necessary surgery, a short convalescence, and then transfer to a Vietnamese provincial hospital, they estimated a need of 1,400 additional beds, 700 in ICTZ (400 at Da Nang and 300 at Chu Lai), 400 at Can Tho in the Delta, 100 from the 36th Evacuation Hospital at Vung Tau, and 200 from the 91st Evacuation Hospital at Tuy Hoa. Of these, 1,100 would have to be new, established by the deployment of two 400-bed evacuation hospitals, and one surgical hospital augmented by a 300-bed clearing company. Also added would be a group headquarters, two air ambulance detachments, and a supply detachment.<sup>40</sup>

In August, the Secretary of Defense approved this plan but refused to provide the additional personnel spaces, directing that MACV Headquarters find the spaces from its own resources. The USARV Surgeon objected, stating that this decision reduced his ability to run his own hospitals. He suggested that the program's new beds be integrated into the already existing American system. This would ensure the most effective utilization of the men and women needed to staff the beds, reduce construction requirements by eliminating the duplication of hospital facilities, ensure that the beds would be available to receive American casualties if necessary, and provide maximum flexibility for support of overall military operations. However, at the CINCPAC Surgeon's Conference in October 1967, representatives from CINCPAC, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, and Department of the Army disagreed with the MACV Surgeon and made the decision to develop a separate system.<sup>41</sup>

Based on hospitals equal to American military facilities, construction experts estimated costs of over \$15 million. CINCPAC demanded that MACV reduce the amount to \$7.3 million. MACV

complied by shifting costs of supporting facilities such as dredging, cantonments, troop housing, chapels, and mess facilities to other accounts. Final designs called for three units, each austere by U.S. standards as they reduced air conditioning, lighting, electrical support, and walkways, and eliminated Red Cross and PX buildings. By the end of 1967, plans had progressed to the drawing board, land clearing stage for the 27th Surgical Hospital at Chu Lai, the 29th Evacuation Hospital at Can Tho, and the 95th Evacuation Hospital at Da Nang.<sup>42</sup>

Although higher Headquarters had demanded dedicated facilities for the program, they also insisted that arrangements be made to care for civilian casualties until they were completed. So, General Collins, the USARV Surgeon, and the commanding general of the 44th Medical Brigade, the senior medical organization in Vietnam, ordered that the 91st be designated "The First Civilian War Casualty Hospital operated by the 91st Evacuation Hospital," and the 36th Evacuation Hospital, begin the actual care of civilians under the program on September 15th. These two were followed shortly thereafter by the 8th Field Hospital. Collins gave these and other hospitals the authority to provide hospitalization, treatment, and evacuation through military channels for Vietnamese civilians injured as a result of war. The program called for the Vietnamese Province/Perfecture Health Service to refer patients through coordination with AID. However, as the program provided a loophole that permitted direct admission, hospitals generally ignored the Vietnamese and admitted most patients directly. This was to have serious detrimental effects.<sup>43</sup>

The separate system never really got off the ground. MACV Headquarters authorized joint utilization of facilities at Can Tho in anticipation of saving some \$2.7 million. The USARPAC's Surgeon's Office reluctantly agreed in spite of concern about the dangers of parasitic infection of U.S. patients, the compromise of security of the area, and competition for beds. The Tet Offensive led the Army to press for the abandonment of the entire concept of separate facilities for Vietnamese noncombatants. The great influx of civilians into Army hospitals demonstrated clearly the feasibility of joint occupancy. It reduced administrative requirements and, because there were so many more American hospitals than CWCP hospitals, reduced the need for air evacuation as well.<sup>44</sup>

Both in Washington and Vietnam, pressure grew to change the program to one of joint occupancy, as originally suggested by the USARV Surgeon. In early 1968, Washington asked General Collins about the feasibility of this approach, and the House Armed Services Committee "expressed the intent of Congress" that no U.S. medical facility be used solely for the treatment of civilians. In late April, the 44th Medical Brigade Commanders' Conference concluded that joint occupancy of all medical facilities of over 150 beds on a pro rata share of 20 percent for CWCP patients would have many advantages. The majority of patients would get earlier treatments, with fewer complications; hospital stays would be shorter and follow-up care would become possible as patients would be nearer their homes; evacuation time and distance from the patient's home would reduce the need for air evacuation and accompanying family members and escorts, local hospital teams could visit the provincial hospitals to screen patients for admission, and the morale of hospital personnel would improve as they would be able to treat at least some U.S. soldiers. All this fulminating proved unnecessary as 3 days before the conference, the Deputy Secretary of Defense had informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the program would now be one of joint occupancy. This decision made 1 Navy, 2 Marine, 1 Air Force, and 23 Army hospitals spread from Can Tho to Dong Hoa available to care for Vietnamese civilians.<sup>45</sup>

What then to do with the three CWCP hospitals under construction? Fortunately, MACV Headquarters had placed these where they wanted U.S. hospitals anyway, and it was a fairly simple matter to upgrade them to U.S. standards. By June 1968, all three were ready to accept patients and the use of portions of the 91st Evacuation Hospital as the First Civilian War Casualty Hospital had ceased.<sup>46</sup>

Problems with the program developed quickly. Vietnamese medical personnel used the program as a way to transfer non-acute, chronic orthopedic cases, rather than immediate war wounded. These patients came with few or no medical records to guide American physicians. Further, lack of telephone communication hampered coordination with provincial officials. Moreover, the patients themselves presented serious medical problems. Most of those admitted, some 70 to 80 percent, had orthopedic problems and virtually all of these arrived at the hospitals with gross infections of the wound sites that required far more than the 14-day length of stay that had been planned on. Most needed from 30 days to a year of concentrated therapy to clear their chronic osteomyelitis before definitive surgery could even be attempted. Such chronically debilitated patients could not stand the trauma of necessary operative procedures without prolonged hospitalization.<sup>47</sup>

Cultural differences also caused difficulties, especially when, as usually happened, family members escorted patients to the hospital. This custom, which guaranteed escorts for the elderly and the young, sometimes resulted in an entire family arriving with the patient. An injured mother might arrive with several children. Although, in Vietnamese hospitals, the adults were useful and provided "nursing care" for the family member, this approach was not compatible with U.S. methods. Further, relatives took up beds and resources that could have been used for other patients and their sanitary practices created a definite danger to patients. Hospitals also had to make special arrangements for Vietnamese food preferences. U.S. supply channels did not stock sufficient rice so unofficial channels had to be used to requisition rice and Vietnamese condiments and spices.<sup>48</sup>

American medical personnel admitted most patients directly into the American facilities, without the knowledge or approval of Vietnamese government authorities. Unfortunately, once the Americans had completed treatment, they found province chiefs reluctant to admit these patients to Vietnamese medical facilities for convalescent care and they and their "escorts" tended to stay in American hospitals past the period called for by the patients' medical conditions.<sup>49</sup>

A patient that died created an entirely different set of problems. If a hospital could not find a next of kin to accept the remains, medical personnel wanted intermediate handling by Graves Registration personnel but the Graves Registration and Transportation Management Authority refused to take responsibility for Vietnamese remains, citing various regulations and messages for justification. This was a sensitive problem involving religion, public opinion, and the U.S. image. Hospitals had no holding facilities nor authorization to requisition human remains bags for Vietnamese civilians. While Province Chiefs would take remains of patients they had referred, they would not accept any others, and the Vietnamese Ministry of Health lacked funds and authority to require province officials to accept the bodies. The Ministry and personal contacts that American physicians had with their Vietnamese colleagues finally resolved the problem. The Ministry provided funds to the Province Medical Chief for disposal of the dead and U.S. physicians

persuaded Vietnamese doctors to influence province medical chiefs to accept nonreferred patient remains and even refer Vietnamese patients to Army hospitals.<sup>50</sup>

Gradually, the program to treat civilian wounded got up steam. By January 1968, over 40 percent of the 616th Medical Company (Clearing) surgical procedures were for Vietnamese. The Vietnamese patient load at the 29th Evacuation Hospital rose from 420 in July to 830 in September. By the end of the year, the daily census of Vietnamese inpatients had risen from 61 to 285, and, in December, the USARV Surgeon expanded the program's scope to include all except chronic diseases.<sup>51</sup>

Clinical outcomes for Vietnamese patients were not as good as those for Americans despite the fact that they received identical care. The average U.S. mortality rate was 1.4 percent while that for Vietnamese was 4.7. Analysts attributed this difference to the large number of Vietnamese patients with severe burns, head wounds, or in poor condition because of illness and nutritional deficiencies. Delays in getting patients to the hospital and, in some instances, their extreme youth or old age also affected probability of recovery.<sup>52</sup>

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam brought another set of problems. The U.S. Mission Counsel was concerned that the reduction in total bed space would adversely affect care available for Vietnamese. As CWCP patients had occupied an average of 569 U.S. military hospital beds from January 1st through September 30th, 1969, MACV Headquarters directed that 600 beds be retained in-country over and above the number of beds needed to support U.S. forces until the Vietnamese government could provide adequate capacity to replace them. From April 1969 through December 1970, the number of Vietnamese patients in American hospitals decreased 26 percent, and, of those remaining, less than a quarter had war-related injuries. This trend continued in 1971. In July of that year, over 400 patients had nonwar-related injuries compared to less than 50 that were genuine CWCP admissions. This monthly rate remained steady through May 1972, when it dropped drastically to less than 100 when the withdrawal of U.S. hospitals made them less available.<sup>53</sup>

By 1971, it was clear that Vietnamese civilians occupied less than 20 percent of the authorized CWCP beds and of these, less than a fifth were civilians who had actually been wounded or injured by war activity of any kind. In response to this, the USARV Surgeon, COL Richard Ross, directed a reduction in beds set aside for CWCP patients to first 400 in September and then to 200 in November. Just before Christmas, he directed that hospitals enforce the rules of admission strictly to begin the "weaning" process so that the Vietnamese could stand on their own after the Americans left.<sup>54</sup>

During 1972, in spite of the Communist offensive of that year, the Vietnamese medical system demonstrated its capacity to handle the civilian war casualty patient load and CWCP admissions dropped to less than 10 per month. As a result, U.S. policy changed from maintaining a 200 bed set-aside to one of assistance on a case-by-case basis. Shortly thereafter, with the complete withdrawal of American medical units, the program ceased.<sup>55</sup>

Given the limited goals of the CWCP program to provide medical assistance to Vietnamese hurt by the war, it was a clear success. Nearly 24,000 Vietnamese civilian patients were admitted

to U.S. military hospitals under the CWCP program, and American medical expertise saved lives and limbs of many individuals who got in the path of the contending forces.<sup>56</sup>

The overall effectiveness of all four medical civilian assistance programs is difficult to measure. Medically, they could make no real impact on the general health of a population ignorant of basic health measures. However, they undoubtedly assisted many individuals whose medical conditions might have substantially worsened without intervention, and they trained and improved the medical skills of many Vietnamese health workers. Further, MEDCAP II, in particular, kept American medical personnel busy during slack periods and thus helped their morale. Nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that the primary purpose of all the programs was to assist in winning the "hearts and minds" of the population and, in this, no reliable measure of effectiveness exists. Certainly, those Americans who planned, operated, and participated in the programs felt they were extremely valuable, but then it is rare to find a program manager who will denigrate his own program. On the other hand, no effort of this size could have been expected to affect materially the outcome of the entire war. Perhaps the best that can be said is that the programs did no harm and at least some good.

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## CHAPTER 10

# THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF MILITARY CIVIC ACTION

Richard L. Sutter

Ponder and deliberate before you make a move. . . Such is the art of warfare.

Sun Tzu<sup>1</sup>

### THE ART OF WAR

The central thesis of the most profound work on the Vietnam War yet to come to my attention, Colonel Harry G. Summers' *On Strategy*, is that ". . . we failed to properly employ our armed forces so as to secure U.S. national objectives in Vietnam."<sup>2</sup> He continues. "Our strategy failed the ultimate test, for, as Clausewitz said, the ends of strategy, in the final analysis, are those objectives that will finally lead to peace."<sup>3</sup>

It is invariably the case that the simplest truth is the most difficult to understand. To understand this particular point, however, it is essential to comprehend war in all its variations, and such comprehension ought to be the object of the greatest possible effort among military professionals. Among these professionals, the strategic planner should be expected, above all others, to grasp the meaning of von Clausewitz' dictum, his prime task is to bridge the gap between combat and peace and to bring to fruition the new political order sought by the means of war. The real victory in war goes to him who defines in terms of his own choosing the political relationships of the postwar international order. The time for choosing such relationships, however, is prior to the making of strategic commitments, not at the conclusion of hostilities, for the character of any particular war will shape and limit the opportunities available to the victor. The interplay between political intent and the technology of war makes strategy a complicated subject. That complexity becomes even greater when the power of military technology grows exponentially and when political intentions become global and revolutionary.

In this complicated environment, the task of the modern strategist is to guide the tactical applications of the art of war to their intended political objectives by creating a plan of action which links military capabilities with national policy objectives. War undirected by such a linking—a war of pure military capabilities—is war characterized by irrationality and irrelevance. A war of pure strategy, on the other hand, war without clear policy objectives, is an endless war in which victory has no definition. Only by a careful linking of military capabilities and political objectives with an appropriate strategic plan can war serve any useful function in human affairs. Irrational wars and wars without clear objectives produce unwanted outcomes at an unbearable cost.

What, then, might be said of a kind of war in which political objectives are at best vague and shifting and at worst are not defined at all? What should be said of a kind of war where, topsy-turvy, strategy often follows military capabilities? And what is to be said of a kind of war where primacy is given to the textbook application of tactical methods which, in terms of their actual effects, are not well understood? Such a kind of war is the so-called "Low Intensity Conflict" (LIC). The object of this chapter is to put additional light on the foundations of the LIC problem in American strategic thinking by putting into a Clausewitzian perspective what must be the crown jewel in the LIC tactical arsenal—military civic action (MCA).

## MCA: WHAT IT ISN'T

Department of the Army *Field Manual 41-10, Civil Affairs Operations*, describes, rather than defines, "military civic action" by referring to its intended effects in a counterinsurgency:

The purpose of military civic action is to gain support of the population for the military forces and host government and to support developmental projects that benefit the populace. Military civic action primarily involves the participation of host nation military forces in projects that enhance economic and social development.<sup>4</sup>

Defining MCA in this way is like defining an automobile as "the means by which one arrives at Aunt Minnie's for Sunday dinner." We are not much enlightened as to what it actually is, though we understand what it is intended to do. This failure to define is central to the condition of ignorance which surrounds this complex technique of political warfare. It also produces enduring confusion in the application of the term, MCA, to various and sundry endeavors which have absolutely nothing to do with MCA.

MCA is often confused, for example, with "humanitarian assistance" and with actions or operations which are no more than measures in observance of U.S. treaty obligations, as in the respective cases of military assistance for disaster relief and the assistance provided to non-combatants caught in the wake of war's destruction. These activities may produce many benefits of military and political value. They may give U.S. troops and the viewing public at home warm feelings and they may produce popular support for U.S. and host government forces. They may even produce economic benefits to the populace. Nevertheless, they are not MCA. The U.S. medical teams we have sent to the furthest reaches of the world to make a cosmetic appearance may produce goodwill and may even have a measurable positive impact on public health (always a factor in a developing nation's economy), but these teams are not doing MCA. U.S. military engineers building roads in Central America may get good training at building roads under primitive and hostile conditions, but they are not practicing MCA regardless of how the roads may be utilized.

## SOME HELP FROM KARL MARX

To build a true definition of MCA, we must comprehend its internal principles as opposed to its assumed consequences. According to Harry F. Walterhouse, the notion of MCA derives from an insight on the relationship between political disorder and economic deprivation:

It is true that poverty and lack of opportunity have been the lot of the masses in most of the underdeveloped states for centuries past. The present difference lies in the fact that this poverty—flouted as a battle symbol in struggles for independence, used as political propaganda by domestic office-seekers and Communist propagandists alike, and brought more sharply into relief by the ever-widening gap between the haves and the have-nots—has become a nagging source of discontent.

Dissatisfaction, in turn, gives rise to varied symptoms of instability and disorder. Governments topple with alarming frequency. . . Strikes, riots, and clamorous protest movements flare up in cities and at institutions of learning. Violent revolutions explode and, in some cases, drag on for years of internecine blood-letting.<sup>5</sup>

MCA, according to Walterhouse, offers a means to defeat the harbingers of disorder by placing a hopeless history of deprivation and violence on a new track of progress:

The United States not only should adjust to these realities, but should take greater advantage of them. If national armies can be persuaded to orient their force structures, their training programs, and their operations more strongly toward positive support for internal progress, they can contribute to political stability and reduce factors which excuse and contribute to unrest. . .<sup>6</sup>

This kind of analysis, fundamental to the very notion of MCA, is undergirded by two major conceptual elements. The first is an essential agreement with the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism and the second is a conceptual melange of peculiarly American notions of progress and stability. The agreement with Marxism does not arise from a direct reading of Marx, but more likely from the teachings of modern social science. Modern social science is, in turn, the offspring of a marriage between the radical materialism of Marxist cosmology—sanitized of its political content—and the enthusiastic sentiments of Enlightenment Rationalism. The chief characteristic of the latter factor was an effort to discover a secular basis for Christian social values in an age which had rejected faith as a basis for the social order. This combination of perspectives produced what came to be called "social democracy" in Europe, and "liberalism" in America. The essence of the economic determinist-progressive model is the opinion that all human events, though they might seem to have various and circumstantial causes, are actually produced by the ubiquitous and unequal competition for wealth. In this view, political structures are the means for the authoritative distribution of wealth.

## A NECESSARY FALLACY

This style of thinking is not new in the Western tradition. Thales, the earliest known Greek natural philosopher, was troubled by the dualism of experience. How could the world contain so many varied and even contrary elements and still be continuous and whole? He solved this riddle by proposing that despite the appearance of differences among the parts of the world, these parts

were all made of the same material—water. Nowadays, such a claim will produce howls of laughter among any group of schoolboys. Yet, in Thales' day, this teaching was held in high regard because it greatly simplified the explanation of the universe, even though it somewhat complicated the explanation of the apparent differences between particular things, as, for example, between people and rocks.

Among those who would join in the derision of good old Thales are many who have no difficulty in accepting the doctrine of economic determinism, i.e., in accepting the idea that regardless of appearances, all human behavior is driven by economics. This would be a difficult notion to give up, for to do so would re-complicate social and political analysis just as giving up the "everything is water" thesis made the universe once again a puzzle to the old Greeks.

Unlike Thales' naively poetic assertion of a water-based reality, the modern temperament prefers—at least in its current iteration—an economics-based reality. If we apply this cosmological simplification to the subject of insurgency, or social disorder of any kind, we solve the riddle of human conflict very quickly as an expression of "economic deprivation." Likewise, we readily discover an instant cure—economic improvement. The power of this kind of analysis is that it covers all cases simultaneously while disposing of the troublesome problem of the "small details" arising from particular situations. The utility of the economic determinist model for strategic planners is also apparent; it permits the least informed and experienced of their number to provide ready solutions to all insurgency situations on a moment's notice. This is, perhaps, why these planners are so often drawn to the tactic of MCA. The ideology of economic determinism lies at the heart of what MCA is. Behind that ideology stands a view of mankind and of social relations which shapes and forms what MCA does when it is applied in tandem with force or with the threat of force to achieve some strategic purpose.

## A HOUSE DIVIDED

The second key element of the Walterhouse view of MCA is the peculiar dualism of progress and stability. A common sense definition of these two elements would seem to put them at conceptual odds as we would say that motion and rest are contrary states. Careful analysis both confirms and deepens this common sense conclusion.

"Progress," as it is applied in the context of MCA is a uniquely American idea. Its essence is captured in the famous phrase "the pursuit of happiness" in the American Declaration of Independence, where it expresses a profound reservation on the possibility of a solely secular salvation for man on earth. The idea is that it is man's lot to strive for happiness in a material world, but that the finite nature of matter and the infinite nature of human desire make it at best an only partially successful effort. This contrasts powerfully, and ironically in this context, to Marxist ideology which speaks in gnostic terms of a heaven on earth with all desires achieved and all wants satisfied through social action and material gratification. Jefferson tells us, in sober tones, that social action cannot promise "happiness" but only provide for the conditions under which it may be pursued as individual men and women will choose to pursue it.

This notion of "progress" is thus oddly tied to economic determinism in the MCA concept as the former derives from the perspective of a psychological view of human nature, while the latter derives from a materialist view. This contradiction produces the disparity between the rhetoric of Americans involved in counterinsurgency operations and their deeds. The absolutism of economic determinism tends to produce utopian and visionary statements of purpose reminiscent of totalitarian institutions, while the restraining influence of Jeffersonian reservations on social action tend to govern actual behavior—though not always.

"Stability," in this context, is likewise an American notion. What it means is social peace—a limiting of the means employed to pursue one's happiness to those fields of competition where the goal is only relative gain and loss. Thus, the American vision of social stability includes room for the rise and fall of personal fortunes, but does not countenance anyone's absolute demise or perpetual success. In America, so the notion goes, poverty and wealth are relative and temporary conditions. This species of approved and limited strife operates, however, within a fixed and inviolate social order under law. This American system is unique in the world and is tied to an ingenious social order with its twin principles of liberty and equality enshrined in the reverential awe of its subjects for the Constitution and the founding generation. In this very special historical context, progress and stability seem to play together pretty well.

But how do progress and stability play in a revolutionary context in the so-called Third World? How do they play to a social order in which the assumption is that absolute poverty and perpetual wealth are the principles on which law is founded? In such a context, Marx seems a better interpreter than Jefferson or Madison. Progress in such conditions can only mean radical change, for each loss and each gain are absolute. Stability can only mean the maintenance of the status quo. While the idea of progress necessarily alienates the few who hold the wealth, it also fails to persuade Walterhouse's "masses" [interestingly, a Marxist term], for "progress" requires restraint on social action to achieve justice. On the other hand, "stability" alienates the "masses," but also fails to persuade the traditional elites, for stability requires the opening of opportunity for competition for wealth. For the traditional elite, wealth is secured in law. For the "masses," law is a bar to wealth.

The principles of American domestic social life are not well applied in such a situation. The essence of the irony of the attempt to transfer American social institutions under the enthusiastic yoke of economic determinism to a revolutionary struggle between elites and masses was caught in the now classic observation of a young American soldier who had just set a rural Vietnamese village afire. He was "destroying the village in order to save it." By firing up the deprived masses with visions of material wealth and by undermining the claim to authority of traditional elites, we propose to achieve "stability."

## **MCA AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

The discussion has highlighted the working assumptions of MCA and has suggested that they derive from various sources which represent contrary interpretations of the intent of social and economic action. It has also been suggested that MCA is haunted by the problem of the irrelevance of its intentions in an insurgency environment. But this leaves us dissatisfied. We have yet to

discover the definition of MCA, the essential principle of its nature, for every military capability has some particular target as its object and the corollary assumptions of economic determinism and the American liberalism do not describe this target. A powerful clue as to the nature of this binding factor was provided in an evaluative study of MCA commissioned by the Department of Defense in 1971:

Military civic action is based on several key hypotheses that also underlie nonmilitary economic and social development. ...Both involve...purposeful intervention in the cultural patterns of communities primarily through efforts to promote higher standards of living.<sup>7</sup>

This way of understanding MCA turns the usual description of that LIC tactic upside down and inside out. It also reveals the decisive factor which distinguishes MCA from what we normally think of as economic development. "Purposeful intervention in cultural patterns" suggests a break with history (revolution) whereas "development" implies historical continuity (evolution). While economic development appeared to be the object of MCA in the Walterhouse view, this study sees it as a means to an end—the alteration of culture. The introduction of alterations in the fabric of economic life within a community necessitates adaptation by the community's various institutions to cope with the new economic factors. These changes, in turn, make possible yet further alterations in economic relationships driven by locally perceived economic advantage. At some point in this process, it is presumed, the alterations in cultural pattern begin to occur without outside intervention as the old culture gives way to a new culture driven by economic as opposed to religious, familial, or other values. A new relationship is discovered, so the notion goes, between social values and practices and economic considerations. This new relationship is one of subordination of the former to the latter. The permissible forms of culture are determined through a political process inspired by a doctrine of economic advantage. Eventually, all social values and practices must meet the test of economics. This is the essence, one may surmise, of what is meant by "progress"—cultural change dictated by economic factors.

From the viewpoint of what are disparagingly called "traditional" or "plateau" cultures by modern social scientists, this is the worst sort of fate for human beings—living with constant change and subordinating all of the important things in life to the frivolous and hopeless search for material pleasure and security. Necessarily, then, the perpetrator of MCA must, at least in a figurative sense, be prepared to "burn a village in order to save it", for if he practices the technique well, a way of life must be destroyed or set on the road to obsolescence. The strategist who employs MCA in this way must write off traditional lifestyle by creating an intentional break with the old culture which defined that lifestyle. He must also, however, find some new basis for the ordering of the society in which he intervenes. That effort inevitably forces the MCA advocate to adopt some version of cultural imperialism precisely because he has no other cultural referent than his own.

Let us think, for example, about the possible outcomes of "persuading a national army to orient its force structure, its training programs, and operations" to the purpose of "positive support of internal progress" in the context of a "traditional" culture built on strong religious grounds, subsistence agriculture, and leadership based upon a hierarchy of seniority. We are not speaking here of the direct intervention of U.S. forces; for while they could have enormous effects on the local population, their actions would not be predicated on the internalizing of "progress" conceived

in the use of indigenous forces stimulated by a persuasive foreign cadre. As the Marxist- Leninist revolutionaries long ago learned, the most effective revolutionary is a local man or woman, not a foreigner. We will assume that this army is guided to the development of a comprehensive plan of internal "improvements" such as roads, electrification, incorporation of modern communications media, extension of the money economy to all segments of the society, building of government schools using translated foreign texts, circuit and fixed medical treatment facilities and personnel, export of older students for foreign higher education, reorganization of agriculture and redistribution of land, and—add what you will. What happens as a consequence of these combined assaults on the society which we found in this quiet little land over which we promised to place a shield of defense against the onslaught of totalitarian communist revolution? Some possibilities might be.

- The army changes its allegiance from that of defender of the traditional law and custom to that of popular agency of political action. Military leadership is increasingly drawn from the general population and is hostile to the old political forms. The army becomes a revolutionary cadre.
- Old political leadership, achieved by traditional means, will find itself increasingly without the ability to effectively aggregate authority in the new environment, which it does not understand. Political stability will be lost.
- The independence of local communities and their social and political structures will be lost as the more powerful central regime and its soldiers assume increasing authority.
- Agricultural methods will change, giving emphasis to national export objectives instead of supporting community agricultural needs. This will have an enormous impact on local ecology and demography as modern agricultural efficiency is based on large, mechanized farms. It may lead to food import dependency, thus producing a need for increased government controls and authoritative distribution systems.
- Lifespan may increase, upsetting the social structure, producing an excess of young people who cannot find a place in the disrupted old community society and must, therefore, relocate to the cities. The elderly will tend to cease to be seen as a reservoir of cultural experience and will be seen as a drag on productivity.
- Modern education will undermine the authority of traditional elites at all levels by "liberating" the young from traditional beliefs. Traditional religion will be upset, but nothing will appear to replace it as an agent of restraint on behavior.
- The authority of the old will be destroyed as the young increasingly claim new theoretical and scientific knowledge, but such knowledge will be unleavened by experience.
- Extended families, or clans, will fall apart as being uneconomic structures. The care of the young, the elderly, and the incompetent will devolve upon society as a whole and will add yet another demand on government.

- On a personal level, ambition will tend to replace cooperation as the primary value of the community. The social restraint of community obligation will cease to be an effective counter to antisocial behavior, and crime will likely increase.
- Personal loyalties and ties will tend to be redirected away from the traditional community and toward the purposes of the central government as a form of exaggerated nationalism.

This list could undoubtedly be greatly expanded, but it will be sufficient as it stands to make my point: MCA is a powerful tool for the destruction and redesign of societies. It is a means of achieving social revolution by the undermining of old ways and the introduction of new ways among societies with vulnerable cultures. This is the full sense of the phrase "purposeful intervention in cultural patterns." *FM 41-10*, therefore, falls very short in its description of the effects of this interesting weapon system on the LIC battlefield. Few who have employed or have recommended the employment of this particular tactic have considered its total effect, rather like employing a nuclear weapon without considering the effects of radioactive fallout. In this sense, then, MCA produces unexpected consequences.

One such unexpected consequence is backlash. MCA doctrine tends to assume that the happy natives will immediately appreciate the beneficence and the opportunity for a better life which their new progressive army is bestowing upon them. Old cultures do not die easily, and when they do they leave behind them a silent legacy of conservative reaction. This reaction is not in the form of a return to the old culture—the pre-revolutionary way of life can never again be pursued—but it appears in the form of a romantic nationalism, calling up the images of the dead culture and employing them as rallying points for the new-found power of centralized political organization and the revolutionary mobilization of the population.

The appearance of hostile mobs in Tegucigalpa protesting the violation of their national sovereignty because of a too-close cooperation between their government and armed forces of the United States might be interpreted as a reaction to the deployment of elements of the Airborne Division and the 7th Infantry Division to make a "demonstration of resolve" against military incursions of the Sandinistas. The truth is otherwise. Their main complaint was the building of roads in rural areas by Honduran Army and U.S. ARNG/USAR engineers. "What good are these roads?" they asked. "The farmers in those areas farm for subsistence, they have nothing to export! We are just being used as a U.S. training facility." Civil-military operations planners were disappointed. Politicians were certain that these expressions were the work of leftist propagandists. Pentagon strategists shook their heads in disbelief. Despite its pretensions, however, MCA buys little in the way of genuine goodwill in the long run. It tends to release forces and produce outcomes which the theoretician who applies it does not understand or even recognize because these forces and outcomes do not fit the prejudices of his ideology. The smiling native who cooperates when soldiers show up with the intention of disturbing his countryside gives his assent for a rather different motive—fear. Fear, however, is invariably converted over time into a search for a redeemed self-esteem. In a revolutionary situation, where tribal and communal loyalties are broken, nationalism is the likely means of expression for this kind of reaction. As in the case of the bad dog, the hand first bitten by this new nationalism will inevitably be the one which feeds it.



## MCA, STRATEGY, AND NATIONAL POLICY

If MCA is a revolutionary tactic, what species of strategy does it properly support? What kind of national policy would such a strategy achieve? Harry Summers, quoting Norman Podhoretz, summarizes the essence of the strategy MCA was designed to support:

' . . . the new strategic doctrine of the Kennedy administration had been conceived precisely for the purpose of (not only containment in the conventional sense but) meeting . . . indirect, non-overt aggression, intimidation and subversion, and internal revolution.' The only dissent within the Kennedy administration to intervention in Vietnam 'came from those who argued that military measures would fail unless we also forced the South Vietnamese government to undertake programs of liberal reform.'<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the key "liberal reform" mechanism adopted by the Kennedy administration to support its strategy of counterrevolution was MCA, the use of indigenous military forces to disrupt and alter the "patterns" of an extant culture and to replace those "patterns" with new cultural standards conducive to the liberal notion of "internal progress." The implicit hypothesis behind this strategy is one which would be well understood by any good student of the Marxist dialectic. a process of social change may not be reversed in a revolutionary situation, but its results may be altered by the introduction of counterrevolutionary action. Counterrevolution is not a return to the past, though it may employ the symbols of the past. It is a new revolutionary factor. To put it simply, as one fights fire with fire, so one can best fight revolution with revolution. MCA serves well a strategy of counterrevolution, or in a "first strike" scenario, of preemptive revolution.

What national policy objectives might be achieved by a strategy of revolutionary or counter-revolutionary action? The simple answer might be the one advanced by Walterhouse. the reduction or elimination of wars, revolutions, strikes, riots, and protests—or at least of those over which we did not exercise the decisive restraining and directing control. This vision, of a world at peace through "managed conflict," of a world of infinite and eternal economic progress undisturbed by the divisions and hostilities of tradition, religion, local loyalties, and above all, of economic deprivation, a world in which all wants pursued, all desires sought after, a world where worker and merchant, consumer and producer are united in a common effort, derives from the utopian side of the American domestic political tradition as a kind of distorted version of the doctrines of James Madison as best expressed in *The Federalist Papers* (particularly Nos. 10 and 51). In this sense, it may be said that the national policy objective most supported by MCA would be a policy of the export of a particular version of the intentions of the American revolution.

But there is another side to traditional American political culture—its belief in political liberty founded on the natural equality of men as moral and social beings. No man, so the notion goes, is born with an innately superior claim to moral or intellectual virtue or with a natural right to rule over his fellows. In international relations, America has given expression to this ideal in the form of a policy of national self-determination. This is nothing more than saying that each nation must live out its own destiny undisturbed by external intervention, for there is no ground in justice for such intervention. Were all nations to accept this concept, the world would be at peace and international relations would be conducted on the basis of amity and mutual respect. The United States has fought four major wars in this century in support of this high national policy. This includes the Vietnam War. Even as that conflict was converted increasingly into a U.S. operation,

we continued to justify it as assistance to a people who only desired to decide their own destiny.<sup>3</sup> The difference between such justifications—in themselves widely accepted American views—and the reality of American intervention in the "patterns" of Vietnamese culture created in no small part the infamous "credibility gap" which undermined the war effort in America.

The national policy goals served by the MCA/Revolutionary Action combination also include the objective of universalizing the democratic form of government. This is based on the long-standing American belief that only tyrants and despots perceive war and conquest as positive goods. A democratic world would, therefore, be a world at peace. MCA and the strategy of revolutionary action are employed to convert monarchies, oligarchies, dictatorships, and other kinds of regimes into popular governments which mimic Western governmental styles. The scorecard of new democracies was a prime feature of the Reagan administration's self evaluation and was its equivalent of the "human rights" scorecard of the Carter regime. Both are examples of the extension of domestic American political imperatives into the arena of foreign policy action.

These great icons of national policy reach up to the most abstract dimensions. Cynics might say that they are convenient cover stories. There is no doubt that they are employed as elements of propaganda. In each case of real international action by the United States, however, they form the critical basis for the validation of such action as serving genuine American interests. All parties share in common the one undisputed American political objective of peace as a necessary condition of economic progress. Each of these abstract policy values, the elimination of the divisions among men, the principle of self-determination, and the universality of the democratic political order, serves that approved objective. When force is applied in any form, by the United States, it is justified by these icons. We have laid out, then, the basis for a logic of counterinsurgency. That logic links the abstractions of high national policy concepts built upon domestic political ideology with the low-intensity conflict technique, MCA, through a comprehensive strategy of counterrevolutionary struggle. It is my contention that this logic is unavoidable for proponents of MCA. Without the ability to tie these elements together in a consistent way, the entire structure falls and the civil military operator finds himself supporting policies and carrying out strategies which do not encompass the application of revolutionary techniques like MCA, or alternatively, conducting MCA in spite of such strategic and policy mismatches. In selecting the techniques he will employ, the civil-military operator must be prepared to understand from the outset what strategies are appropriate to support national policy, and what tactical means are appropriate to those strategies. A failure to do so will produce grief and disaster.

## **TO MCA OR NOT TO MCA?**

Military civic action, as a method of modern warfare, was created as a tool to be employed in revolutionary environments for the purpose of fostering American security. That security, in turn, was seen by the creators of MCA as being intimately linked to an ideological struggle between two revolutionary concepts: communism and liberalism. As such, MCA was developed in the spirit of the offensive, or at least the counteroffensive, against an encroaching alien threat. It was adopted, however, in the larger context of the strategic defensive posture of the West in the face of nuclear standoff between the superpowers. Those who love MCA most are those who wish to

move American policy over from the strategic defensive with its constant disadvantage of the loss of initiative.

Counterrevolutionary war, or LIC, appears to offer the advantage of allowing for the recovery of initiative without disturbing the nuclear balance. This may be a true conclusion, but the mixing of the notions of proactive counterrevolution and the strategic defensive produces a tension within national security policy which may weaken domestic understanding and support. American national leadership must find a sufficiently consistent conceptual ground for its policies—a conceptual ground which can be translated into comprehensible political rhetoric.

More significant, perhaps, is the error of judgment which, finding an apparent solution to the problem of initiative in the techniques of political warfare, adopts such techniques without careful thought as to the potential disadvantages the adoption may produce and without adequate preparation for dealing with those disadvantages. This enthusiastic urge to solve a problem without considering the consequences of the solution is part and parcel of the modern mind. It can justly be said of the modern age that it is energetic, but aimless, knowing not whither it tends. It may also be said that modernity has replaced prudence with hope. Soldiers, by their nature ancient in their perspectives, however, cannot indulge in aimless fancy. They must "ponder and deliberate" before making a move. Nowhere is this a greater necessity than in the contemplation of the conduct of political warfare. Critics of MCA have pointed out:

Civic Action is only part of a broad program of social improvement which must be orchestrated in a very delicate and esoteric manner—a program which the military is unable to fully appreciate and coordinate.<sup>10</sup>

The message is clear: the adoption of the tactics of revolutionary action enormously expands the responsibility of the military to guide revolutionary change, to take an active hand in the destabilization, the destruction, and the recreation of the cultural order of another people according to a coherent and detailed vision of the desired new political, social, economic, religious, and cultural order which is the ultimate object of such action, and to describe in historical terms how such action contributes to American political objectives and national security needs. In such a situation, one can no longer say, as does Paul F. Braim, that ". . . it appears that social and cultural upheaval are an unfortunate concomitant of war."<sup>11</sup> That observation may have been applicable to the naive wars of purely physical contest of the past, but it cannot apply to the field of political warfare where the very object of such warfare is "social and cultural upheaval" as a means to achieve revolutionary objectives. Military leaders, and civil-military operators in particular, must be clear on their responsibility in this regard. If not, they are irresponsible to meddle in the lives of another people because they are ignorant of the effects of such meddling and are not prepared to answer for them.

The question of whether to apply revolutionary techniques such as MCA to any particular LIC situation is, essentially, one of the logic of the situation. A checklist of key questions to be applied by the civil-military planner and/or operator to uncover the logic of a given situation might include these, inter alia:

- Does national policy require, or is it consistent with revolutionary or counterrevolutionary war as a means to achieve its ends?
- If yes, does such national policy rest on the ground of a firm and continuing national consensus to support the carrying out of protracted (decades/centuries) military and civil responsibility for revolutionary action?
- Have we a comprehensive and coherent plan for revolutionary action with a clear vision of the new society we intend to create? Are we confident that such action will lead to improved U.S. national security?
- Can we afford the strategy both fiscally and in terms of its effects on U.S. domestic life?

The imaginative mind that gave the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise, that famous starship of Star Trek fame, the "prime directive" of noninterference in the cultural development of the alien societies which it might visit, must have contemplated the dilemmas and doubts presented in the possible answers to questions such as these. These questions may be more than beyond military answer—they may be simply beyond answer. Only a modern Thales with his predigested and prefabricated ideology which simplifies human concerns until they are unrecognizable, i.e., only a Communist, could presume such power of knowledge and prediction. These questions, however, must be answered, along with many others, equally probing and difficult.

Still, one should not discount the species of political warfare implied by MCA. It remains an option, but only an option. The LIC strategist must take care not to repeat the error of those who disappeared in the bottomless rut of the "massive retaliation" strategy of the 1950s. We must not be so tied to a tactical technique that we have but one species of strategy to offer our national leadership. In particular, we must avoid offering only the most cataclysmic sort of strategy for dealing with Communist subversion. We must, rather, offer a kind of "flexible response" which can encompass a variety of means to support a variety of ends. We must discover new ways to oppose that living Leviathan which now proposes with clear intent, by specific plan, and with all its resources to convert the world to a single future, to blow out forever the flame of human reason and to destroy the diversity of life upon which reason depends. We must do so without becoming a Leviathan ourselves.

In a few short years, the last of the generation of soldiers who served in the Vietnam War will move into retirement and, in time, to their eternal rest, along with countless generations of sleeping warriors of this and other lands and times. They will take with them a million memories and a thousand hard-earned insights which will not be passed on to the new generations of guardians to follow. Such is the nature of things. Perhaps a few memories and lessons of the most essential kind can be left behind, however, so that the new warriors will be able to avoid making the same errors as their predecessors, but can concentrate on errors of their own design. One such lesson is incorporated in the words of the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Cao Ky:

Alongside the military war, fought with bombs and bullets, we had to fight another war—one to convince our own people that South Vietnam offered a way of life superior to that of the Communists. It was a war for the hearts and minds of the people.

It was not, as some thought, a matter of simple materialism, a philosophy that started with filling bellies. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker was hopelessly wrong when he told me on one occasion, 'People are drifting toward Communism because they are poor. If you give the people everything they want—television sets, automobiles, and so on—none of them will go over to Communism.

Poor Bunker! He was trying to impose American standards of life on people he did not understand, people who basically had no desire for the so-called good things of the American way of life.

Like so many well-meaning Americans, Bunker, when he came to Vietnam, was unable to grasp the fact that he had made an excursion into a culture as different from America's as an African Negro's is different from that of an Eskimo. No man could hope to span the differences in American and Vietnamese culture and heritage in the short time of his appointment in our land. How could I explain to Bunker's Western mind, for example, that while an American would be lost without a future to conquer, a Vietnamese is lost without the refuge of the past.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps civil-military operators should begin to rethink the conceptual foundations of their craft. Perhaps they should contemplate the adoption of new techniques and new strategies built upon the insight that the greatest power of resistance to totalitarian designs springs from the most ancient and seemingly fragile sources. Perhaps our true strategy lies in discovering how to conjoin the forces of human diversity to our purposes by making allies of alien cultures instead of calculating how to undermine them. Perhaps it is respect for the validity of a neighbor's cultural inheritance to parallel that of our respect for our own inheritance which will provide the inspiration for a policy not only consistent with the American spirit, but which can gain the universal assent and strength of our neighbor's own sense of self-esteem.

Learning how to support cultural diversity as a means to stave off totalitarianism does not promise to be a simple matter. The effort will not appeal to the mind which wants prefabricated answers. It will not appeal to the utopian temper which hopes for perpetual peace through imperial control on earth. The struggle between the human type which seeks to reduce the world and all that is in it to a single prototype of its own imagination, and the human type which takes the diversity and contradiction of the world as an inspiring witness to the power and glory of its Maker, is perpetual. In that thought, we may take a measure of reassurance.

## NOTES

- 1 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Lionel Giles, London. The British Museum, undated, p. 63.
- 2 Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy. The Vietnam War in Context*, Carlisle Barracks, PA. Strategic Studies Institute. U.S. Army War College 1981, p. 3
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Field Manual 41-10, Civil Affairs Operations*, Washington. Department of the Army, 1985, p. 3-2.
- 5 Harry F. Walterhouse, *A Time to Build*, [Subtitled, *Military Civic Action. Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform*], Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1964, p. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
7. Martin F. Massoglia, Philip S. McMullan, and Clarence N. Dillard, *Military Civic Action: Evaluation of Military Techniques*, Triangle Research Center, NC: Triangle Research Institute, 1971, p. VIII-1.
8. Summers, p. 105.
9. *Ibid.*, cf., pp. 104-105.
10. Paul F. Bram, *Military Civic Action*, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. National Defence College, undated [circa 1968], p. 7.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
12. Nguyen Cao Ky, *How We Lost the Vietnam War*, Briarcliff Manor, NY: Stein and Day, 1976, p. 135.

## CHAPTER 11

### MILITARY CIVIC ACTION IN THE 1990s: FORECAST

George A. Luz

Previous chapters have focused on the history, practice and theory of MCA. This chapter takes a leap into the future to speculate about MCA in the 1990s. With geopolitical changes occurring so rapidly and unexpectedly, the contents of this chapter may be obsolete by the time this volume is published. Nevertheless, MCA is such a potentially useful strategic tool that it is worth speculating about its future application.

Central to any speculation is an understanding of the will of the American people. As pointed out in the chapter by Barlow, the will of the American people must be considered when supporting a LIC campaign. National will was not behind the effort in Vietnam, and it has been ambivalent in regard to LIC in El Salvador.

As a result of the new Gorbachev leadership and the crumbling of communism in Eastern Europe, a dramatic shift in the perception of the threat from communism took place at the end of the 1980s. For example, the percentage of Americans who perceived the Soviet Union as posing a "serious threat" to the United States shifted from 60 percent in June 1988 to 43 percent in December 1988 to 40 percent in July 1989.<sup>1</sup> The implications for military appropriations are equally dramatic. In a January-February 1989 poll, the Gallup Organization presented respondents with 13 categories of Federal spending and divided 100 coins among the categories to show each one's share of the Federal budget. The respondents then made their own "budget cuts" by taking coins away from the various categories. When the exercise was over, roughly half the total amount cut came out of the military budget.<sup>2</sup>

As the threat of world communism faded within the perception of the average U.S. citizen, its place was taken by drugs. The percentage of persons viewing drug abuse as the most important problem facing the nation rose from 2 percent in 1985<sup>3</sup> to 22 percent in February 1989,<sup>4</sup> 38 percent in July 1989<sup>5</sup> and 43 percent in September 1989.<sup>6</sup> By October 1989, when *USA Today* published a poll, 53 percent of the respondents were willing to pay \$100 in taxes to fight the drug war and 20 percent would pay at least \$300.<sup>7</sup>

The change in public perception has been so rapid that military planners have not had time to respond. In November 1989, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said in an interview that he had seen no sign yet of any new administration defense strategy for dealing with the new situation in Europe and recasting military forces accordingly. In a statement which failed to acknowledge the inflexibility of a budgetary planning process based on a 5-year cycle, Senator Nunn labeled the cuts which had been advertised from within the administration as "predictable and inevitable."<sup>8</sup>

The change in perceptions has posed a particularly difficult problem for Army planners, since almost all of *FM 100 5* is directed toward armor and mechanized forces fighting in a nuclear, biological and chemical environment in Europe.<sup>9</sup> At the end of 1989, it was becoming difficult to find a U.S. citizen who accepted that scenario. Many analysts were predicting that "the United States would scale back the large and costly land armies it has maintained in Europe since the onset of the Cold War."<sup>10</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* labeled the potential savings as "enormous," estimating that 60 percent of the nation's \$300 billion military budget is devoted to defending Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with the loss of its major strategic mission, Army leadership has responded proactively. The Chief of Staff, General Carl Vuono, informed a group of defense reporters that the U.S. military force of the future will have to be versatile, trained to operate in Third World hotspots and "able to be forwardly deployed, albeit in small numbers."<sup>12</sup> In the closing weeks of 1989, CINC, SOUTHCOM gave the country an example of what the Chief of Staff was talking about in the form of a well-executed operation in Panama.

## STRATEGIC INTERESTS, OBJECTIVES AND CONCEPTS

Strategic concepts are broad courses of action or ways military power might be employed to achieve an objective. In spite of the changes in public perception of the Soviet threat, U.S. strategic interests have not changed. What can be expected to change are the strategic concepts (and, to a lesser degree, objectives). Four strategic interests can be expected to remain through the 1990s: protection of democracy in Europe, protection of democracy in Asia, assurance of stability and free trade in the Middle East, and protection of democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

**Europe.** In regard to NATO, the Commander in Chief has, in effect, told the world "to read his lips" in his statements following his Malta meeting with President Gorbachev when he said, "We must remain constant with NATO's traditional security mission. I pledge today that the United States will maintain significant military forces in Europe as long as our allies desire our presence as part of a common defense effort. The United States will remain a European power, and that means that the United States will stay engaged in the future of Europe and in our common defense...."<sup>13</sup> Thus, the interest and objective of U.S. support to NATO are unchanged. The question for military planners is to develop a new strategic concept. The danger in mutual troop withdrawal is that it confers a significant advantage on the USSR. Soviet troops would pull back 300 miles and U.S. troops 3,000 miles.<sup>14</sup> The logical answer to this problem is to leave the equipment in place and bring the combat troops back to the United States. Some members of Congress have begun considering this strategic concept. Senator Ted Stevens, the senior Republican on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, stated that money can be saved by shortening overseas tours and keeping dependents at home. Representative G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery contended that reductions in active-duty troops should be balanced by increases in National Guard and Reserve forces to maintain a strong defense while saving money.<sup>15</sup> Anticipating the change in strategic concept, General Motors Corporation's Hughes Aircraft Company unit began moving into the field-training and simulation business on the assumption that fewer troops will have to be better prepared.<sup>16</sup>



Implementation of the strategic concept has different implications for the three services. For the Navy, the concept implies business as usual. For the Air Force, there would have to be an increased ability to transport troops, a function that can be handled most cost-effectively through an increased number of Reserve transport pilots along with the continued right of the Federal Government to use the commercial airline fleet in times of emergency. Although some reduction of Air Force personnel could be expected, it would be difficult to separate a combat pilot from his aircraft. For the Army, the separation of man and machine would be easier. An armor crew is not needed to give a tank a run around the track in Europe to check its combat readiness, as long as that crew can train within the United States with comparable tanks and with simulators.

Implementation of the new strategic concept would have at least three implications for MCA. The first is that there would be more money available for MCA. The second is that the reduction of the number of military families would be followed by a reduction in the number of active duty medical personnel, transfer of these personnel to the Reserve Components, and their greater availability for medical MCA. The third is the freeing of engineer resources.

**Asia.** A second continuing strategic interest is the protection of democracy in Asia. The largest troop concentration is in Korea. There is every reason to expect that eventually the United States will be encouraged to reduce its troop presence in that country in the same way as in Europe. The same strategic concept as is being suggested for Europe would logically follow and be the most politically acceptable concept. Again, the implication is the freeing of medical and engineering resources for MCA.

**Middle East.** Assurance of free trade and stability in the Middle East has little implication for MCA, since there has been relatively little interest in MCA in that area of the world. Instability in the Middle East does not fit the simple economic model of "haves" and "have nots" implicit in LIC doctrine. Rather, the sources of instability are racism and religion. In that context, the impact of MCA is revolutionary and unpredictable, and the cautions listed earlier in Sutter's chapter are in full force.

**Western Hemisphere.** The strategic interest in protecting democracy within the Western Hemisphere is one which can only grow in importance during the 1990s, which may very well prove to be the Decade of SOUTHCOM. Although the "average woman and man on the street" are relatively unconcerned about whether any particular country in Latin America is communist, oligarchic or democratic, they are concerned with three issues: stopping the flow of drugs from South America; stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the United States; and, stopping the destruction of the Amazon rain forest.

**Drug Problem.** Of these three common concerns, MCA has the least role in stopping the flow of drugs. The idea that cocaine-growing peasants would turn to other crops if they were provided with an alternative cash crop is naive. According to a June 1989 report by AID, coca's annual contribution to Peru's Huallaga Valley gross domestic product is between \$700 million and \$850 million. "In contrast, legitimate agriculture brings in less than \$50 million, accounting for no more than 13 percent of the valley's agricultural GDP," it said. On the average, the 26,000 coca workers earn about \$3,600 a year, which is up to eight times what laborers earn working other crops. The estimated 14,000 coca field owners gross about \$3,900 a year per 2.5 acres,

"which is three to 11 times more than the value of other crops."<sup>17</sup> Although it is conceivable that intellectuals such as former Secretary of State George Schulz, William F. Buckley, Jr., the economist Milton Friedman, Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke and Federal Judge Robert Sweet are wrong in their assertion that interdiction of the cocaine supply system is beyond the resources of the U.S. Government,<sup>18</sup> success would still leave the Huallaga Valley firmly in the control of the Shining Path and in an advanced stage of LIC.<sup>19</sup> If there are opportunities for MCA in the drug war, they would exist in Bolivia, the source of about half of the cocaine reaching the United States.<sup>20</sup> Based on the experience of at least one National Guard unit, the Bolivian military is receptive to medical MCA,<sup>21</sup> and building roads would allow farmers to transport crops if the price of coca dropped enough to make these crops competitive. However, it would still be questionable whether the MCA would have any effect on changing the motivation of the populace to engage in the drug trade.

More than half a million Bolivians live off the profits of coca and cocaine production. Tens of thousands of peasant cultivators are tightly organized into militant unions with powerful links to national worker organizations. Their road blocks, mass demonstrations, strikes and other nonviolent tactics have paralyzed government efforts to eradicate coca planting.<sup>22</sup>

***Flow of Illegal Aliens.*** A more productive role for MCA is in alleviating the conditions leading to the flow of illegal aliens to the United States. There are two reasons for this flow, economic deprivation and political persecution. Although MCA can certainly contribute to the alleviation of economic deprivation, the primary player remains the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In order to take full advantage of the utility of MCA in alleviating economic deprivation, SOUTHCOM must place a strong emphasis on coordination. Coordination between DOD and the State Department has been an ongoing problem noted by Maechling in 1984,<sup>23</sup> confirmed by Irons through interviews in 1986,<sup>24</sup> and still apparent in interviews conducted in several Latin American countries by Gaillard in 1988.<sup>25</sup> Although there appears to be coordination among the State Department, AID and the Defense Department in Washington, coordination at the Embassy level is exacerbated by AID's policy of decentralization. AID has gone through a 72 percent reduction in its work force between 1968 and 1986. This reduction was achieved at a time when the budget rose from \$2 billion in 1968 to \$7 billion in 1986.<sup>26</sup> The cut was achieved by reducing middle management in Washington while leaving the field offices fully staffed. Because of this decentralization, it is unreasonable to expect effective coordination from the top. Irons recommended that coordination be achieved by collocating a regional diplomatic center with each unified command to include members of International Development for Civic Action (IDCA) and AID, as well as the Department of State. Irons' recommendations deserve consideration by the respective Secretaries. However, the addition of a new layer of control would run counter to AID's policy of decentralization. The Office of Humanitarian Assistance has taken an important step toward improving coordination by requiring that H/CA justifications include the name and telephone number of the AID official who coordinated the project.<sup>27</sup> In any case, coordination between U.S. employees is absolutely necessary before coordination is attempted with host nation agencies.

Where MCA does have a primary role is in helping to alleviate the political persecution which is also prompting the flow of illegal aliens. In general, Latin American military institutions have emerged from the "caudillo" tradition in which the head of the military was also the head of the state.<sup>28</sup> Recent examples have been Pinochet in Chile and Noriega in Panama. Although Marcella,

in Chapter 6, shows that the pure "caudillo" is a dying species, he also shows that there is still room for change within some Latin American militaries. Along with IMET, MCA allows the opportunity for members of other militaries to pattern their own institution after a democratic military institution. In theory, MCA should not only build loyalty of the populace toward its government but loyalty of the armed force toward its populace, thereby advancing the process of democratization.

In coordinating MCA with AID, military planners have a distinct advantage in being able to offer unique capabilities. Taylor<sup>29</sup> listed ten priorities of medical need in LIC. These are: providing potable water to the population at large, human waste disposal, vector control (both insect and rodent), garbage disposal, immunizations, safe use of pesticides, personal hygiene (to include sanitation and basic health education), training for primary care health providers, development of a medical logistics and evacuation system, and family planning. With the exception of family planning these are areas in which the U.S. military has particular expertise. All of the services have had to develop expertise in medical logistics, evacuation, and training health care providers. Similarly, immunizations against exotic diseases around the world have been a concern of all services. Specialized expertise in the remaining priorities can be found within the worldwide preventive medicine mission of the Army Environmental Hygiene Agency at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Military engineers can also offer unique skills in the rapid construction of bridges, roads, wells and buildings. For example, the Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory in Champaign, Illinois, has conducted research on how to rapidly construct igloos by spraying polyurethane foam over inflatable frames. Although the reason for conducting such research was as a contingency in case of rapid mobilization, the same technology can provide homes to the homeless or emergency shelter during disaster relief.

***Protection of the Environment.*** The third common concern, environmental protection, has rarely been associated with the military. Yet in the United States, this function has evolved within the Army Corps of Engineers as a consequence of its role in natural resource development. "Water policy remained under quasi-military supervision because it constituted a policy area of sufficient technical complexity to require the expertise of skilled 'extra-governmental' specialists during a period when the national government was severely limited in its power to promote a centralized economy."<sup>30</sup> The situation facing the U.S. Government when it turned to the Army engineers to assist on water policy is comparable to the situation facing Latin American governments in regard to environmental protection. The environment is an important international issue with strategic implications as documented in AID's report on its priorities for worldwide environmental protection.<sup>31</sup> With primary environmental concern centered on Brazil, the former President of that country announced, in 1988, a series of steps aimed at slowing the rapid destruction of the Amazon rain forest.<sup>32</sup> Yet, Brazil is a country "littered with uncompleted projects and deteriorating services."<sup>33</sup> Environmental protection is the least of its priorities. In Brazil and other Latin American countries with an absence of knowledgeable administrative organizations able to impose their will upon regulated groups, the military can offer the technical skills, the vitality, and quality leadership needed to accomplish the task. The advantages, coupled with the favorable balance of power created by integrating a highly professionalized officer corps into the larger society, argue strongly for including environmental protection within the scope of military civic

action.<sup>34</sup> This could be accomplished not only through specific in-country projects but by extending the IMET program to include fellowships at some of the Army Corps of Engineers laboratories or at the Army Environmental Hygiene Agency.

## MCA ON THE HOME FRONT

The most speculative question is whether MCA will have a role within the United States. Some experts have likened the conditions within the inner cities as comparable to the Third World conditions which AID is trying to address.<sup>35</sup> The United Kingdom has an active program of MCA at home, so why not the United States?<sup>36</sup>

The possibility of home front MCA in the 1990s depends heavily on the success or failure of the current strategic concepts in the "war on drugs." The probability that the threat of drugs will be eliminated by their legalization is extremely low. In spite of the economic arguments supporting that strategic concept, the emotional arguments against it will prevail. The common mind dictates that the individual does not have the right to reject "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Those who do so are either "sick" or "evil," and, in any case, they must be incarcerated in some form or another. The idea that the individual has the right to self-destructive behavior is a libertarian concept, and American libertarians are almost as hard to find as American Communists. Public opinion rejects legalization by a margin of 5 to 1.<sup>37</sup>

The public's perception on the drug issue poses a problem for the military planner, for the common mind wants the Armed Forces to actively participate in the solution. In September 1989, Americans believed, by a 50 to 34 percent margin, that the United States should send troops to help eliminate the production of illegal drugs in Columbia if the government there requests them.<sup>38</sup> Juxtaposed against this expression of national will was the experience of the military leadership which recognized the operational problems with such a strategic concept.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, politics did prevail. After two Secretaries of Defense who avoided a commitment to fighting narcotics traffic, Secretary of Defense Cheney imposed an October 15, 1989, deadline on field commanders to develop operational plans.<sup>40</sup> General Colin Powell, as CINC, FORSCOM, ordered his staff to scrutinize units for transport, intelligence and other support for law-enforcement officials along the Mexican border and, as prospective Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he pledged that he would fully support a greater engagement of the Armed Forces in stopping drug smuggling.<sup>41</sup> Although both Secretary Cheney and General Powell ruled out combat operations such as shooting down suspected aircraft, civil arrests or search-and-seizure raids, they both endorsed sending troops to drug-producing countries to assist host nation troops in planning their operations. On December 28, 1989, President Bush assigned an aircraft carrier to patrol the waters around Columbia with a mission of detecting, reporting and accompanying suspected drug aircraft to their destination.

Clearly, the decade began with primary reliance on the strategic concept of interdiction. The psychosocial strategic concept of working with drug users to help them redirect their behavior was honored with words but essentially was unfunded.<sup>42</sup>

At the time of this writing, there is no way of predicting whether or not the strategic concept of interdiction will be successful. Will the price of cocaine be unchanged, be driven so high that users will have no choice but to quit their addiction, or driven so high that the manufacturers of "ice" will take over the market? If interdiction fails, will the political leadership decide to fund a psychosocial strategy?

If interdiction fails and the national will opts for a psychosocial strategy, then there could be an emerging role for home front MCA. A hint of that role was provided in an article by Samuel Routson, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Reserve Affairs, Mobilization and Drug Interdiction).<sup>43</sup> Posing the question, "Could the community-oriented volunteer nature of our Naval and Marine Corps Reserves be tapped to provide the personnel and be the example for an educational effort," Mr. Routson described a pilot test program divided among Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserve sites in which uniformed personnel provided a 50-minute presentation to approximately 3,000 fifth and sixth-grade students. It is worth noting that Mr. Routson is also LTC Routson, Reservist, in the 4th Civil Affairs Group of the Marine Corps, the service which the British MCA expert, Hanning, has described as the most "clear-headed!"<sup>44</sup>

The essence of the Sea Services' effort is to serve as a role model. Another way in which military personnel could serve as role models would be through the staffing of "boot camps" for borderline offenders. The theory, which proceeds out of civilian initiatives in the late 1980s, is that many inner city drug offenders are the victims of circumstance. Because they grew up in disorganized families and societies, they lack the ego strength to resist the drug culture. The belief is that if these offenders are sentenced to camps patterned after military style training, they can return to their old environment and resist the chaos around them.

With a declared DOD policy of using military bases as temporary housing for prisoners when federal, state and local authorities need more jail space,<sup>45</sup> military personnel would be in an excellent position to further test the concept of the "boot camp." There might even be some benefits. For example, most installations are short the funds needed to maintain buildings and grounds as a contingency for mobilization. As in the case of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the depression, there are also worthwhile projects in support of the environment. It might even be possible to recruit these young people into a reserve of personnel to be tapped for MCA projects in the Third World. In this scenario, Reserve Components would set up maintenance groups back in the neighborhood to which the trainees would be returned. Youth coming from Hispanic backgrounds could be trained to be knowledgeable in the geography, history and culture of one particular Latin American country, maintaining and improving upon this knowledge by being assigned to a maintenance group with activities centered around that country. Similarly, Afro-Americans could be trained in a specific African language, preparing them for projecting a U.S. presence if the need should arise in the future. Obviously, one couldn't expect young people to participate for free, but the funding needed to pay for their participation would be minimal compared to the cost of society's abandonment. For example, the Government Accounting Office estimates the cost of new Federal prisons to be \$51,340 per bed.<sup>46</sup>

There may even be a role for medical MCA in the inner-city neighborhoods. Preventive medicine is sorely lacking, including immunization against childhood diseases. Overall medical services are deficient, and, in some cases, the inner-city represents a unique training opportunity.

Recognizing this coincidence of interests, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has expanded the role of military physicians at county-run hospitals. Victims of Los Angeles gang warfare are providing training for U.S. Army surgeons, who learn skills useful in combat by tending to gunshot victims at a hospital that has one of the busiest emergency rooms in the country. Outside actual combat, young surgeons rarely see the kinds of gaping, multiple wounds caused by automatic gunfire.<sup>47</sup>

## FRINGE BENEFITS

In considering MCA, whether at home or abroad, the military planner should not lose sight of the true purpose. If MCA does not serve to improve readiness by providing an opportunity for training, strengthening internal security or strengthening democracy abroad, it is a waste of military strategic means. At the same time, it is worth noting some nonstrategic benefits which could accrue in the 1990s.

- MCA could be useful in the selection of future military leadership. During the years of the cold war, the spacing of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict provided a military leadership with combat experience. If peace really does break out, it is conceivable that there would be a generation of leaders who have little experience in the actual practice of war. A similar situation faced the country upon entry into World War II. Faced with little challenge, military leadership stagnated. Training in other countries and accompanying MCA may provide some hard data on which to choose the best leaders.
- MCA could serve as a justification for continued funding and staffing of military positions and funding of training for Reserve Components. Again, it will be important to avoid a situation such as between World Wars I and II when military budgets were slashed because the public believed that "the world was safe for democracy." History continues to confirm that "the cost of liberty is eternal vigilance."
- MCA could serve as an incentive in recruiting young people into the Armed Forces. Although recruitment into the All Volunteer Force did not prove to be the problem that naysayers had predicted, the United States is an aging population. Military recruiters need to remain competitive within the free market. It is possible that the 1990s will mark a return to the altruism of the 1960s. For example, the Army was flooded with offers from volunteers who wanted to go to Panama to help restore battered public services. "It's unbelievable," said MAJ Henry Fitts, a spokesman at the U.S. Army Reserve Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg. "Call it patriotism, call it boredom, call it what you will, but we've had to set up a 24-hour operation just to screen the volunteers."<sup>48</sup> Although young people do not support the proposals for a national service, many young people have expressed a desire to help the less fortunate in their community. In a poll of 15-to-24 year olds, the majority favored requiring all high school students to perform some community service before they can graduate.<sup>49</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As we look toward this decade, let us hope that national will, national objectives and national strategy are brought together into a coherent framework. If that happens, there will certainly be a place for military civic action.

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## CHAPTER 12

### WINNING THE PEACE

John W. De Pauw

We chose the title for this volume, "Winning the Peace," to emphasize the essence of MCA as a strategic tool in today's tumultuous and rapidly changing times. Although MCA is useful at all stages of LIC, it is particularly useful during times of apparent peace, times when conflict is so insignificant that the U.S. public is generally unaware of its existence. In those times, when reports of conflict can only be found buried in the back pages of newspapers, the opportunities for using MCA to further U.S. national strategic interests are at their zenith. Even today, as this is being written, there are 15 wars being conducted in the world which, as of July 1989, had resulted in about 300,000 deaths for the first 6 months of the year.<sup>1</sup>

"Winning the peace" in the arena of LIC implies a new way of doing business. By documenting past failures, highlighting past successes and recommending future changes, our authors have shown how MCA can fit into the new way of doing business in the 1990s. For many years, MCA has existed in the backwaters of operational plans, a "nice to have" which has not been very important. This lack of interest was documented in Chapter 2 where it was shown to be related to the general lack of interest in LIC. Chapter 2 offered some hope that LIC doctrine is coming out of its eclipse, and if so, MCA can be expected to come out of the shadows as well. One piece of evidence that LIC is becoming recognized within the Army community was the January 1988 decision of *Military Review* to publish at least one issue annually on LIC and military operations short of war.<sup>2</sup> For the first time in years, mid-career officers are being exposed to the idea that there is more to military tactics than fighting Soviet tank-heavy forces in Central Europe.

There are many points to be made about LIC, and each writer's "laundry list" of do's and don'ts and general prescriptions is somewhat different.<sup>3</sup> Our list emphasizes the role of MCA in "winning the peace." Collectively, our authors have formed a list of seven points bearing on the relationship between MCA and LIC:

☉ Success in LIC requires an emphasis on the social, economic and political elements of power. MCA is one of the tools that fills the gap. The concept that the U.S. military cannot defeat an insurgency simply through force of arms is extremely difficult to convey to military planners.

Too often U.S. planners focus on the introduction of military hardware or training combat forces for the battlefield to the near exclusion of the other instruments of power. Emphasis is placed on immediate highly visible results, which implicitly can only be achieved by combat. One reason for this is that U.S. planning is largely reactive, responding to events rather than shaping events.<sup>4</sup>

A critic of LIC policy during the Reagan years, Richard Schultz points out that U.S. advisory groups and Military Training Teams often train Third World armed forces facing insurgency to conduct an American-style conventional war.<sup>5</sup> Not only are the U.S. weapons systems too

expensive and too complicated for many forces fighting insurgency, but their use also plays into the tactical plan set by the insurgents. For example, the 1989 offensive by the FMLN in El Salvador, a force which learned from the Vietnamese experience to conduct war at the three levels of political, military and diplomatic,<sup>7</sup> was conducted in residential neighborhoods where the government's use of U.S. weaponry wreaked maximum death and injury on the populace. If handled properly, MCA, with proper orchestration of security, can prove to be a positive step in the government's efforts to counter the guerilla opposition. This is one of the points in Robertson and Luz's chapter on Reserve Component civic action. Barlow, in his chapter on planning CA in Latin America, recommended that the strike force has "as its goals, not the attrition of the enemy force, but the destruction of the enemy infrastructure and the protection of the populace."

● "Winning the peace" requires an accurate identification of the threat. During the Reagan administration, "LIC was synonymous with assistance to anti-Communist guerrillas fighting against Soviet-backed regimes in the Third World."<sup>8</sup> Although this is generally true, as evidenced by Marcella's list of Latin American insurgencies, it invites the strategist to gloss over other non-Communist threats to U.S. strategic interests. For example, will the Islamic government to be established by the anti-Communist freedom fighters in Afghanistan be any more open to our national objective of "the growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world" than the one it replaces?<sup>9</sup> U.S. actions in 1989 in Panama give evidence that strategic planners have moved beyond the simple "Communist = black hat/anti-Communist = white hat" dichotomy. Although the failure of SOUTHCOM to support the military coup against Noriega received wide criticism in Congress and the media, the decision to do nothing was consistent with an identification of the threat as the Panamanian military institution. The proof of this point is the difficulty which the Panamanian government has had in reconstituting its defense force. The possibility that the threat to U.S. strategic interests can be a military institution is emphasized by Luz, who recommends that MCA combined with IMET are the only ways which the United States has to assist in the transformation of militaries toward democratic models. The need to distinguish between militaries is touched upon in Robertson and Luz's chapter, where they note the difference in the success of MCA in Honduras as compared to Guatemala. Marcella's chapter takes the analysis further, providing data for the planner on the various Latin American military institutions. Butts shows how the military institution is considered in planning and funding African MCA, and Barlow emphasizes the importance of "an incorrupt and competent security force." Fishel and Cowan identify the need for "a hemisphere of nations whose armed forces are capable and professional enough to deal effectively and humanely with insurrectional threats to their security."

Lest the reader become too enthusiastic about defining the threat to U.S. interest as a "military institution," Sutter warns us that change in one institution may lead to unanticipated and unwanted results. Sutter gives examples of how a change in civil-military relationships can create instability. His challenge is for the planner to take a "systems approach" to a society. Tinkering with one part of the system without recognizing the impact on other parts of the system may be worse than no action.

In a departure from the historic emphasis on MCA as a tool in counterinsurgency, Luz invites strategic planners to consider MCA for two other strategic threats. environmental degradation and drug use. Luz notes that in countries where the destruction of the environment is a result of

disorganization, "the military can offer the technical skills, the vitality, and quality leadership needed to accomplish the task." Since the staff responsibility for environmental protection within the U.S. military resides in the military engineer, a proposal by Lundberg and Martin to place military engineers and District Corps in the service of embassy teams would provide an excellent mechanism for accomplishing this type of MCA.<sup>10</sup> Luz's other idea, that "home front" MCA, could be useful in the drug war is an interesting seminal concept which goes beyond the scope of this volume.

● Successful counterinsurgency requires a different type of military intelligence. In LIC, satellite photos, infrared photography and side-looking radar have much less usefulness than in the AirLand Battle. While the purpose of MCA is not, and should not be, the gathering of military intelligence, the experience with working in a different culture gives U.S. forces the opportunity to become sensitive to that culture. By being sensitive to the culture, our military personnel can come to recognize the subtle clues needed to understand the best way to counter insurgency in that culture. The problems arising from an insensitivity to Vietnamese culture are repeatedly noted in De Pauw and Luz's synopsis, and also touched upon in Greenhut's analysis of medical CA. Sutter goes much further by inviting us to examine the cultural blinders created by our national values of "progress" and "stability."

Two of the chapters emphasize a "systems approach" to gathering intelligence. Sutter as noted earlier, Fishel and Cowan who emphasize the use of intelligence to "significantly better civil-military relationships through a combination of changed military behavior." They call upon the CMO chief to integrate knowledge of local leaders' wants with national government plans and the goals of the population as a whole. To achieve this, they suggest a "variety of data-collection methods ranging from survey research to informal interviewing to participant observation." Marcella helps the Latin American strategist with that goal by listing the Spanish language sources of information on the militaries. To increase cultural sensitivity, Robertson and Luz urge an increase in language training in other military specialties besides those personnel in civil affairs units.

● MCA in support of counterinsurgency requires a unity of effort. Unity of effort is one of five imperatives highlighted by the Army Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict. "The multidimensional (military, political, economic, and social) reality of LIC requires an integrated national policy and strategy."<sup>11</sup> This point is emphasized by most of our authors. The importance of a new national military strategy is recognized in Chapter 1, and the breakdown of unity of effort during the Vietnam experience is discussed in Chapter 2. In discussing African CA, Butts notes "the unwillingness of other U.S. development agencies, such as USAID, to provide support to CA has limited what CA can achieve." Fishel and Cowan recommend a tactful way of dealing with the reluctance of AID in regard to MCA by suggesting that "military civic action may well have a 'lead-in-the-support' role." Robertson and Luz, recognizing the logistical difficulties in coordination between the staff of RC task forces and the embassy, still remind us that AID and the RC are part of the same national strategy, and a Total Quality Management approach implies a consensus on the MCA projects. Similarly, Barlow advises the CA planner how "the diverse elements in the LIC environment demand that a plan be smoothly coordinated and synchronized."

Interestingly, unity of effort is also emphasized by AID. In AID's 1989 strategy document, unity of effort is described as follows:

As the world enters the 21st Century, the traditional U.S. reliance on project-oriented programs will be irrelevant. To be effective in the 1990's and beyond, American development policy must:

be catalytic, leveraging funds and resources from private sources and international financial institutions, as well as other bilateral assistance budgets;

aim at country specific targets of opportunity where returns are likely to be high, instead of attempting to meet an immense array of global 'needs' beyond the capability of any one nation or group of nations; and

coordinate all U.S. Government policies—trade, investment, debt, and others—that affect development.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, mention of the Department of Defense is conspicuously absent from the AID publication. For example, the list of U.S. Government agencies which play a major role in policies that affect developing countries included the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Treasury and State along with the National Technical Information Service and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, without mentioning DOD.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the discussion of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance mentions the PVOs (private volunteer organizations) and "other governmental and nongovernmental participants in disaster relief" without mentioning the important role of DOD in humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup>

A very different picture of DOD/AID unity of effort was reflected by DOD in the Annual Report to Congress published at about the same time.

Disaster assistance, primarily the airlift of relief supplies to such disaster-stricken areas as Bangladesh, Jamaica, and Central America is an ongoing contribution made by the Department of Defense under Agency for International Development (AID) auspices. Our excess property donations have, since March 1986, been channeled to 13 countries and numerous private voluntary organizations....Our Humanitarian/Civic Assistance projects are carried out in all regional unified commands by U.S. forces working closely with Third World host country military personnel. These projects are closely coordinated with the State Department and AID, and include health, dental, and veterinary care, road construction and repair, well drilling, and construction and repair of public facilities. The goodwill generated and the contribution made to the nationbuilding process through these efforts are highly cost-effective ways of promoting U.S. interests. Finally, our Denton Amendment space-available transportation program continues assisting generous American humanitarian donors and thousands of Third World recipients. Since this program's inception in FY 1985, DOD has transported over four-and-a-half million pounds of private sector humanitarian cargo to 26 Third World countries.<sup>15</sup>

The contrast between the two documents suggests that AID is reluctant to recognize the need to participate with DOD in formulation of a national strategy! Attitudes may need changing. However, the problem goes beyond attitude to the structure of Security Assistance Offices (SAOs). Achieving unity of effort is hampered because "laws and DOD policy are precisely the inverse of what they ought to be. They currently operate to pare SAO manning in Third World countries threatened by low intensity conflict, and to limit the ability of SAOs to participate in host-nation planning."<sup>16</sup> The Regional Conflict Working Group has recommended that DOD

"revamp its methods of fielding trainers and technicians in the Third World to provide better for teamwork and continuity."<sup>17</sup> More than ever, there is a need for some agency to be in charge of uniting our national effort, articulating the purpose of the U.S. aid to underdeveloped countries in terms of a national strategy.

● Fighting insurgencies costs money. It is interesting that most of our authors did not address the problem of resources. Fishel and Cowan do note that "resources, the means to carry out a legitimacy strategy, can ultimately be reduced to funding levels," but Barlow seems more concerned with the shortage of personnel than funding. The greatest concern is voiced by Butts for whom "it is clear that the dramatic reduction in the already modest CA funding levels threatens the objectives of the program." Perhaps the lack of concern about funding reflects our authors' conviction that MCA is the most cost-effective way to prevent LIC. The economy of MCA conducted incident to training is an emphasis in Robertson and Luz, and their opinion is shared by the Regional Conflict Working Group. "Combined U.S./host nation military exercises are a cheap and effective way to provide economic, humanitarian, and military assistance to Third World allies and friends. At the same time, such exercises afford U.S. participants valuable, virtually irreplaceable training."<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that it is difficult to obtain reliable funding for fighting Phase I insurgency. For readers unfamiliar with the terms Phase I, II and III insurgency, a short digression is in order, other readers may wish to skip over the next four paragraphs, as these terms are part of the standard vocabulary of LIC.

In a Phase I insurgency, Military Civic Action can be organized along functional lines supporting and working under the general direction of civil authorities. A Phase I insurgency is latent or incipient subversive activity during which subversive incidents occur with frequency in an organized pattern, however, it involves no major outbreak of violence which cannot be controlled by the host country.<sup>19</sup> Programs include a wide range of functional assistance covering all aspects of Civil Military Operations. In Phase I, the primary objective of Military Civic Action is to provide lasting general improvements to the social, economic, and political environment. At this stage, the primary role of Military Civic Action is to secure increased support of the population by providing tangible benefits which the population can associate with the established government.<sup>20</sup>

Phase II insurgency is reached when the subversive movement has gained sufficient local or external support so that it can initiate organized guerrilla warfare or related forms of violence against established authority. Phase III occurs when the insurgency becomes primarily a war movement between organized forces of the insurgents and those of the established authority.<sup>21</sup>

Military Civic Action in Phase II and III insurgencies is characterized by shorter term programs carried out in a briefer period, and designed to benefit the citizens without being of value to the insurgents. The benefits from programs during Phases II and III are more likely to be successful if they have been preceded by successful Phase I programs. Even though this seems counterintuitive, it makes sense if one recognizes that the beneficial effects of such programs are cumulative, and that the body of supporters such a program attracts can be expanded over time even though insurgent operations appear to be of increasing effectiveness.

During Phases II and III, there are likely to be areas in which the government cannot provide physical control. In such circumstances, projects that contribute to personal or intellectual needs are likely to be more effective than those that provide capital assets. Structures, for example, could fall into the insurgent's hands. However, medical aid, education, training, and food provide benefits that have minimum risk of diversion to insurgent use. What little benefit they might provide to insurgents is more than offset by the gains they provide in terms of the public support they generate. The support is likely to last even if the government loses control of an area temporarily.<sup>22</sup>

In government funding, it is too often true that "the squeaking wheel gets the grease." Consequently, counterinsurgency gets a very small piece of the pie. Shultz noted that in 1986, 86 percent of the security assistance budget went to Egypt, Israel, Greece, Turkey and Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, funding for Latin America is austere. In the FY 1988 budget, all of the Latin American countries together did not receive as much military assistance funding as any of these five countries.<sup>24</sup> In commenting on funding for counterinsurgency in Latin America, Brzezinski wrote, "The sad fact is that for the last 15 years the United States has been attempting to respond to the region's simultaneously nationalist and socialist revolution, and to the Soviet-communist exploitation of it, by partial measures and through proxies. It has sought solutions on the cheap."<sup>25</sup> This concern was also voiced by the Regional Conflict Working Group which recommended, "Congress should appropriate more funds for foreign aid, and reallocate funds among aid claimants to provide more for developing nations threatened by low intensity conflict. Congress should recategorize such nations so that they may be treated in budget actions separately from Israel, Egypt, and the 'base rights' countries."<sup>26</sup>

Another funding problem hampering MCA is congressional reluctance to fund multiyear projects. This issue was raised by Lundberg and Martin who point out that informing a recipient country that "the roads were approved but we didn't get money for the bridges" or "the 1990 appropriations were not approved, we'll be back in 1991 if Congress approves next year's money is more damaging to U.S. interests than doing nothing at all."<sup>27</sup> The need for multiyear funding was also endorsed by the Regional Conflict Working Group.<sup>28</sup>

● In view of the increasing competition for a shrinking military budget noted in Chapter 1, successful pursuit of MCA as part of counterinsurgency requires an active promotion of the concept within the Defense establishment. As pointed out in Chapter 2, DOD representatives have been criticized for their proponentcy in the past. In the present, however, the authors see MCA as offering an important consensus for liberals and conservatives, who seem to agree on the importance of grass roots, self-help projects. The emphasis on grass roots economic development is also reflected in AID's current strategic doctrine, and AID also recognizes the problem of building consensus during 1990s. "In the absence of an overarching Congressional consensus on aid and development based on national interest, the strategy has become one of building enough specific interests together to keep an even more unencumbered and untargeted program alive."<sup>29</sup>

Our authors recognize that "bad press" can lead politicians to abandon the consensus. Fishel and Cowan recognize the importance of seeing "that news stories are told with full regard for the truth, thereby avoiding the accusations of spreading government propaganda." Robertson and Luz call for expanded press coverage for Reserve Component training. For Barlow, "the will of

the American people must be considered when supporting a LIC campaign." Luz delves into the will of the people by exploring how some recent surveys on the public perception of the strategic threat bears on eliciting public approval for future MCA.

● Successful counterinsurgency requires long-range planning, and the MCA element of the plan needs to be included in the long-range plan. This was a central point in Chapter 1, and it was underscored in Chapter 2 through the use of 12 criteria to analyze the failure of MCA in Vietnam. The description of the African civic action program is distinguished by the care in planning each project. Fishel and Cowan call for long-range planning to be under the command and control of highly trained civil affairs personnel "who can interface effectively with tactical planners, local civilian leaders and mid- and high-level officials of government ministries." These authors also distinguish between short-term "mitigating civic action" and long-term "developmental civic action," a distinction which needs to be maintained by the planner. Long-range planning is the major emphasis of Barlow's chapter, and Sutter's gives a language and perspective for examining the hidden (and possibly dangerous) assumptions of a plan for employing MCA.

## **PRESCRIPTION FOR MILITARY CIVIC ACTION**

In addition to the seven points our authors' contribute to the collective understanding of the relationship between MCA and LIC, there are several issues bearing on MCA by itself, which are implied by the authors of our volume.

**U.S. Personnel Should be Seen as Supportive of Local Civilian and Military Leaders.** The role of U.S. personnel in Military Civic Action can overshadow the action itself if American personnel do not take care to maintain a low profile. MCA should always be seen as a program conducted primarily by host country civilian and military forces. Such a policy minimizes friction between the indigenous forces and the U.S. Forces, and strengthens associations between the individual citizens and their own government. Even a low profile will generally assure that the population will embrace the efforts of U.S. forces as they embrace their own forces. If, however, animosity is created between indigenous forces and U.S. Forces, efforts are likely to be frustrated. In any Military Civic Action, the following potential concerns must be considered and addressed.

First, Americans have a tendency to accept enthusiastically a single oversimplified answer to large complex problems. According to Sutter, the tendency to explain the problems of emerging nations solely in terms of economics and material progress is a danger in applying MCA. At the same time, De Pauw and Luz document how MCA has been rejected in the past by the popular opinion that "all Third World armies are the same." As Marcella shows for Latin American armies and Butts for African armies, there are important differences between different Third World military institutions. MCA is one of a number of approaches to addressing complex national or transnational problems. It must work in tandem with local forces and institutions. Similarly, Military Civic Action programs have sometimes ignored and even undermined local institutions, thus accomplishing the goal of providing humanitarian aid, but damaging the institutions that needed to be strengthened in the process. It is essential to work with and through established local institutions, and to respect cultural norms if the goals of MCA are to be productive.



Second, when large numbers of U.S. Forces are present in a host country over a period of time, cross-cultural problems may be created by their mere presence. Several examples of such problems during the buildup in Vietnam were given in Chapter 2. These problems can even be magnified by maintenance of a high profile in the civil action process. By carrying out civic action projects through indigenous agents, popular reaction to U.S. Forces can be improved, but to improve the reaction it is essential to have the support of the local institutional establishment and to build the prestige of that establishment in the process.<sup>30</sup>

Third, even with a low profile, there will be extensive contact with the local population. It is essential that U.S. Forces be indoctrinated to avoid any outward appearance of dominance by U.S. advisors, and to ensure that a sense of U.S. superiority is not unintentionally conveyed to those we are trying to help.<sup>31</sup> The use of reserve and National Guard personnel, whose unique advantages for civil action are discussed by Robertson and Luz, can help keep the U.S. military profile low.

**Unique Cultural Characteristics Which Can be Impediments to Civil Military Operations Must be Finessed.** All people adapt their activities in large part to available resources and technology. In selecting actions for Civil Military projects, the proposals must be consistent with the culture in which the operations are being carried out if they are to succeed. As documented by Butts, sensitivity to these unique cultural characteristics is one reason for the success of MCA in Africa. For example, projects dealing with irrigation and flood control will be well received in a culture that has a tradition of large-scale agricultural efforts that involve harnessing water. In a commercial or handicraft society, people may benefit considerably from introduction of techniques that increase productivity, expand output, and enhance or expand the skills they already have. It is extremely difficult, however, to shift an agricultural group to light industry, and probably counterproductive to attempt to shift a handicraft economy to agriculture. As a general rule, these unique cultural characteristics will have already been studied and described by AID, Peace Corps workers, or PVO (Private Volunteer Organization) workers. Tapping these resources is part of the "coordination and cooperation between involved government agencies" and "the use of technology (although not necessarily high tech) to enhance support efforts" mentioned by Barlow. There are four ways in which the unique cultural characteristics must be taken into consideration.

**Project Selection.** Projects should be chosen in light of cultural values assigned to existing occupational practices and the basis that such practices stimulate realistic growth and development. For example, if a particular breed of animal has special significance to a society, improving the breed may provide greater benefit than trying to shift the society to a different type of breed or animal with which the society has neither experience nor sympathy. Judgments of this type, however, must be made on a case by case basis and we would expect these decisions to be made by AID. MCA can reinforce AID's decisions both by providing unique skills and by strengthening the cohesion of the society. In the case of the hypothetical improved breed, military veterinarians, who are especially skilled in practicing under primitive field conditions, can assist the host nation counterparts in protecting the health of the animals. At the same time, the focusing of military attention on the contribution of the peasant to the economic well-being of the nation can counter any tendency of the host nation military to look down upon this part of their national culture.

When projects are suggested from the outside, there will always be some resistance to the unfamiliar. This is why so many practitioners recommend that MCA projects be initiated by the leaders of the indigenous population. Even then there may not be agreement between the military and population. Some resistances to the unfamiliar may be more superficial than others. There is a hierarchy of cultural behavior, ranging from formal to technical to informal.<sup>32</sup>

At the top of the hierarchy is the formal level of cultural behavior which is inculcated by example and formal training, and that is so thoroughly and unquestionably accepted that violating its rules is unthinkable for most members of the culture. Serving pork to a Moslem is an example. Technical behavior is taught and learned in schools or through other semiformal means. Military training is an example. This type of training carries the least emotional or cultural attachment and can be most easily changed. Informal cultural behavior is associated with considerations which, while not central to existence in the society, still have strong cultural values attached.

Typically, such values are learned by imitation of elders, or by trial and error. The pride associated with having mastered the practices is stronger than that which is simply learned. As stated earlier by Barlow, "the central effort in legitimizing the host nation military training is to be not only competent but professional and emphatic. It is important that soldiers possess a working knowledge of both the character and the culture of the populace and that they work within the indigenous politico-military system." Obtaining this working knowledge is so important that CA units are essential for the planning.

The higher on the hierarchy a proposed Military Civic Action program falls, the more difficult it will be to have it accepted, and the more likely it will prove to be counterproductive. Thus, it is relatively easy to introduce new herding techniques if the old ones took on the mantle of informal cultural activities. It would be almost impossible to convince Moslems to raise pigs for food on grounds the food supply would be expanded. Several examples of problems arising from proposals being made too high on the hierarchy are documented in Greenhut's history of medical MCA in Vietnam (e.g., ARVN medics removing splints from patients prior to evacuation for fear of having to pay for them.)

The important cultural considerations for project selection include consideration of the needs of the society; however, more must also be considered. The cultural foundations needed for an organized effort must be present (or at least there should be no strong cultural basis for opposition) if the project is to succeed. Cultural resistance to occupational changes or changed ways of doing things is likely to impair the success of a project. Thus such projects should either be avoided, or be modified to conform with the culture into which they are being introduced to an extent that minimizes clashes, with strongly held informal cultural norms.

**Project Implementation.** Once projects have been selected, the success or failure of their implementation can be affected by the way U.S. proponents interact with the host government, military forces, and population. As stated earlier by Barlow, "the effectiveness of a LIC effort will in large part depend on the makeup and training among the triad of the people, the host nation military and the U.S. forces present." The problem of avoiding political conflict has already been discussed. Aside from problems of status or taking credit for improvements, however, there is the problem of introducing and carrying out the projects in a culturally acceptable manner.

Formulating the approach to project implementation requires consideration of a broad range of social, cultural and political considerations in addition to the standard economic and developmental characteristics usually considered. For a project to be successful in the cultural and political sense, it must be designed and carried out in a context consistent with the cultural characteristics of the community involved. Projects must be developed in a manner that preserves respect for institutions and individuals, and deference to those whose opinions must be influenced. Those in political and military power obviously fall into these categories. Less obviously, but equally important, the general population who are helped, and whose allegiance and support are sought must also be won over. Civic action should be conducted in an environment sensitive to the local ways of securing approval and agreement. Even in societies which are not formally "democratic," there is a process for achieving consensus.

If basic indigenous protocol is followed to the extent possible, one can build up a sufficient reservoir of understanding so that errors can be made without posing serious problems. To build up that reservoir and keep errors within acceptable limits, U.S. personnel must operate within cultural and social norms and remain alert to cultural differences.<sup>33</sup>

**Societal Patterns and Military Civic Action.** The social structure can be examined from the perspective of the authority structure, patterns of dependence within the culture, integration of groups and institutions, and the interpersonal comfort or "crowding" factor. The nature of authority in different societies varies. Even within a given area of the world, authority may run from a custom of doing nothing until unanimity is reached to hierarchical authority systems such as those common in much (but not all) of the Near East and Far East where a highly centralized authority structure exists.

In the first type of situation, consensus building throughout the entire population may be an essential prerequisite to starting any project. In a centralized authoritarian system, approval by the senior members of the community is all that is required. In either case, the projects implemented should be intrinsically desirable to the vast majority of the population, but in one case a broad-based effort for approval is necessary, while in the other, a more limited scope of approval is all that is needed. One of Sutter's points was that the traditional social structure may be undermined in the process of securing approval and implementing a project. In extremely broad-based consensus groups, advance may bring more leadership and delegation of decision-making. In feudal hierarchical systems, it is quite likely, and perhaps desirable, that the authority of the feudal rulers be reduced relative to the authority of the rest of society. Sudden change for the sake of change should not be undertaken, and stability may require that efforts be made to prevent excessive change in the authority structure. In particular, where major institutions are highly authoritarian, unintentional introduction of highly democratic procedures of decisionmaking risks channeling frustration and antagonism into these new opportunities for expression. Thus, while a by-product of Military Civic Action may be a shift toward a form of decisionmaking more in keeping with U.S. traditions, the speed and direction of change must be slow and deliberate to prevent disruption or political violence.<sup>34</sup>

**Population Density and Military Civic Action.** Societies vary in degree of population density or isolation of the different groups that make up a political entity. Military Civic Action projects can be easily carried out in smaller isolated areas, such as Sub-Saharan Africa. However, to

achieve a given result, more discrete projects must be undertaken when subcultures are isolated. In an integrated society, a larger project covering more scope can be implemented. Although more difficult to introduce and operate than the smaller projects, the return on a given investment of effort and resources is potentially far greater than is possible when opponents of the society are smaller and more isolated. Thus, it may be possible to take advantage of advanced internal development in cities to introduce larger programs, but the degree of administration and commitment must be large. On the other hand, relatively discrete construction of basic facilities that could be accomplished with on-site military resources may be of major political benefit in separate rural areas, and may be carried out with far less preparation, resources, and commitment. To the extent that the rural areas are at least committed to the goals supported by the United States, small rural programs may provide more civil affairs benefits than committing the same resources to urban projects. In addition, the military resources may be more effectively used in a rural setting where the troops have to be in any event, and where they can provide Military Civic Action functions with little in the way of resources beyond those needed for their purely military functions.<sup>35</sup>

The requirements of providing Military Civic Action in urban environments is likely to require more coordination with, and working through, city and national governments than are projects in rural areas. The projects are also more risky in the sense that the population being assisted is more diverse and has more conflicting interests than those of a typical rural community.<sup>36</sup>

Urban projects can potentially provide for relief of unemployment, lack of food, lack of sanitation, and the development of reserve forces for the host military. More ambitious projects such as constructing housing can be undertaken, but only with extensive political support from the central government, increased planning, and neutralization of opposition from existing slum landlords whose position would be weakened by such an improvement.

## **CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF THE ARMY IN MCA**

The Army as a military organization confronts one of the most subtle challenges it has ever faced. The changing domestic policy and political environment are creating a new basis of strategic assumptions upon which the Army must project future roles and missions. American national policy and strategy for low-intensity conflict (LIC) are now to be selectively applied, from the lowest visibility posture feasible, in areas where the United States has important national interests.<sup>37</sup> In spite of what critics of American foreign defense policy have claimed, America has never really tried to be "Policeman to the World." But today, there are explicit needs and requirements for American military policy to avoid this image. Increasingly, the American military presence in foreign societies will be guided by the need to initiate and facilitate the process of social change, in order to build stable nations with stable institutions which can withstand the complex military-political thrust of revolutionary subversion.

Despite the apparent decline of the Soviet Empire, low-intensity conflict still constitutes a major threat to our political and economic interests and moral values, and will doubtlessly continue to do so well into the 21st century.<sup>38</sup> It involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies and ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. Of importance for the U.S.

Army, and this study of MCA, is that while the national policy and strategy for LIC may dictate that we deter and defend against this type of aggression, the underlying causes must also be simultaneously addressed. Specifically, threatened nations have to be helped to help themselves. MCA, as has been pointed out in this volume, is one way this can be accomplished.

The emerging role of the Army in nationbuilding is not merely a response to a changing set of strategic assumptions or imagined domestic political realities. More importantly, the Army is recognizing that the most effective strategy for blocking and defeating insurgency in foreign countries is to assist those countries in building the social bases for institutions which can then be used not only to stem revolutionary insurgency but also to maintain a viable, independent national life. In this evolving strategy, the most critical contribution of the American Army will be to collaborate with host civilians, government officials, and military counterparts in initiating and managing those processes of social change which can build the institutional base for viable nationhood.

This developing U.S. role creates urgent new demands and strains on the role of being an American military officer in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Those selected for new overseas security officer, civil affairs, and related military advisory and assistance assignments must be skilled at managing several potentially conflicting roles. They must be able not only to understand social change, but also to pick critical points where, in sympathetic collaboration with host country individuals, they can take steps to begin it. Often, they will face simultaneous requirements to organize military security, assist in applying military resources to meet particular military as well as civilian needs, and create a sense of responsible military professionalism among the host country military. Military skills will sometimes reinforce skills at initiating and managing social change, but the application of skills needed to understand social change will sometimes conflict with the application of skills needed to perform purely military missions. Furthermore, the American military officer and senior NCO who are deeply immersed in a foreign culture will need to be deeply sensitive to the fact that within a given country, a number of paths may be available within the culture of that society for achieving American foreign internal defense objectives. Paths of social change must be chosen which will yield results that achieve American objectives, and also find political acceptance within the host country.

The conclusions of this volume are not significantly different from those drawn by a number of proponents of MCA, 20 years ago, such as Lansdale, Hanning and Glick. The difference is in the experience of the United States. Twenty years ago, most military leaders believed that the best approach to counterinsurgency was a war of attrition. Today, very few would agree with such a statement. Perhaps the time has come when the majority can hear the words of the father of contemporary MCA, MG Edward Lansdale, and truly give their affirmation to his conclusion:

Our greatest strength lies in our belief in precepts that 'we the people cherish.' Surely it is time to make fuller use of this strength. In so doing, we can lead the way to a true people's peace, not war.<sup>39</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ruth Leger Sivaro, *World Military and Social Expenditures*, 13th ed., Washington. World Priorities, Inc., 1990, p. 23.

2. COL Phillip W. Childress, "From the Editor," *Military Review*, Vol. 70, January 1990, p. 1.

3 For example, CPT William H. Burgess III and LTC Peter F. Bahnsen, "Twelve Rules for Obtaining U.S. Support," *Military Review*, Vol. 70, January 1990, p. 61, have a list which overlaps those of our authors. Their application is for situations "where the revolutionary struggle is protracted and the overall likelihood of armed U.S. intervention is extremely small."

4 LTC Donald B Vought and MAJ Michael A. Babb, "Support for Insurgencies. Nike or Nemesis," *Military Review*, Vol. 70, January 1990, p. 22.

5 Richard H Shultz, Jr., "Low-Intensity Conflict: Future Challenges and Lessons from the Reagan Years," *Survival*, July-August 1989, p. 362.

6. Burgess and Bahnsen, p. 68.

7 MAJ Victor M. Rosello, "Vietnam's Support to El Salvador's FMLN. Successful Tactics in Central America," *Military Review*, Vol. 70, January 1990, pp. 71-78.

8. Shultz, p. 364.

9 This phrasing of a national objective was taken from the list of five objectives in "Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict," Report by the Regional Conflict Working Group submitted to the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, June 1988, p. 17.

10 We urge the reader to examine the structure for integrating military engineers and Engineer District Corps into national strategy proposed by LTC Tommy A. Lundberg and LTC Robert N. Martin in a U.S. Army War College Military Studies Program Paper, "Third World Developmental Assistance. The Engineer Contribution," March 17, 1989.

11 The five imperatives are listed in "Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict," p. 21. The other four are the primacy of politics, adaptability, the legitimacy of our interest and our efforts and patience.

12 "Development and the National Interest. U.S. Economic Assistance into the 21st Century," a report by the Administrator, Agency for International Development, February 1989, p. 113.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

15 *Report of the Secretary of Defense, Frank C. Carlucci, to the Congress on the FY 1990/FY 1991 Biennial Budget and FY 1990-94 Defense Programs*, January 17, 1989, U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1989, p. 61.

16. "Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict," p. 30.

17. *Op cit.*

18. *Ibid.*

19 U S Army, *FM 31-72, Advisor Handbook for Stability Operations*, Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, October 1967, p. 8.

20 Ralph Swisher, *et. al.*, *The Role of Military Civic Action in Internal Defense and Development. Criterion Formulation*, Vol. 1, Kensington, MD: American Institutes for Research, 1972, pp. 33-34.

21. *Op. cit.*
22. *Ibid.*
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development necessary for achieving viable democracy in many Third World states. The United States can best assist the process of democratization by standing firm on its own values and by being attentive to opportunities to assist.