Environmental Stewardship in the Global War on Terrorism

Subject Area Topical Issues

EWS 2006

Contemporary Issues Paper
Environmental Stewardship in the Global War on Terrorism
Submitted by Capt JD Jowers
To Maj CJ Nussberger
7 February, 2006

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
07 FEB 2006		**00-00-2006 to 00-00-2006**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Environmental Stewardship in the Global War on Terrorism	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street,Quantico,VA,22134-5068	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
unclassified	**unclassified**	**unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**12**	

After the Cold War, the Congress of the United States passed sweeping legislative reforms that obligated the military services to take a lead in cleaning up and preserving the environment.[1] Unfortunately, the events of 9/11 and the subsequent Global War on Terrorism are taxing the nation's resources to the extent that the military must cut non-war related expenditures. However, despite these resource constraints, the Department of Defense (DoD) must continue to promote stewardship of the environment by marketing its environmental successes to the people of the United States and by recognizing the importance of environmental management as a significant diplomatic tool. Failure to do so will impede the attainment of the nation's security objectives, and lead to larger expenditures.

Marketing

In any information operations (IO) campaign, the goal is to create a message that defines the battle space and to broadcast it to the populace before the enemy defines it. In fact, the environmentalists have used this strategy to define the military as hostile to the environment, as

1 Kent Hughes Butts, *Environmental Security: What is DoD's Role?* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1993),i

reflected in this quotation, published in 2002 by the Ecological Society of America's public affairs office:

> The military is rarely on the same side as environmentalists in political battles....Since 2002, the Pentagon has asked Congress to exempt the military from various environmental laws or grant it delays in meeting regulatory requirements.[2]

The inference is that the military searches for ways around its responsibility to protect the environment.

Unfortunately, military leaders often make statements that reinforce this belief. For example, in September of 2005, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld warned, "procedures designed to protect the environment can sometimes jeopardize U.S. troops and should be balanced against military needs." [3] The moment these words left the Defense Secretary's mouth, environmental protection group blogs reacted. According to the preponderance of these blogs, Secretary Rumsfeld's statement reinforced the perception that the military was weak on the environment. Consequently, it is no wonder that the American people distrust the military on its record of environmental stewardship.

---

2 Policy news from ESA's Public Affairs Office. September 02, 2005 "Rumsfeld says Military-Environment balance needed," http://www.esa.org/pao/PolicyNewsUpdate/pn2005/09022005.php

3 "Rumsfeld: "Military Trumps Environment,' " September 06, 2005, http://www.iema.net

However, the story not being told is one of positive environmental impacts with which the DoD can be credited.[4] For example, because the military uses buffer zones between its military activities and the community that surrounds the base, the only island of pristine environment in many urbanized regions of the country is the U.S. military installation. This makes the base the only safe haven remaining for many species.[5]

Additionally, the very nature of military activities often enhances the environment. In Hawaii, one of the last refuges for seventeen native plants and animals is a bombing range in the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA). Because vehicular and foot traffic is prohibited in many areas of PTA due to the danger of unexploded ordnance, these native plants and animals have survived. In fact, three of these species would be extinct but for their existence on the bombing ranges of PTA.[6]

Many other examples of military environmental stewardship exist, from the Chesapeake Bay project to the assistance given to local environmental managers throughout the country. Kent Hughes Butts pointed this out while he

4 Butts, *Environmental Security: What is DoD's Role?*, 12
5 Butts, *Environmental Security: What is DoD's Role?*, x
6 Beth Miura, *Training and Environment mix in Hawaii*, (Engineer Update, 2001) http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/aug01/story17.htm

was a student at the US Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute:

> One of the primary benefits of DOD being actively involved in environmental work is that it brings national level resources to bear on state and local environmental problems. DOD offers a breadth of experience and...possible solutions to local environmental managers. No other organizations or associations of organizations have the regional presence, management, expertise, or resources to execute these environmental missions with the same success as DOD. [7]

The military must ensure that these positive environmental achievements are a part of an aggressive domestic IO campaign that showcases these efforts to the American public. Such efforts will reassure the people of the United States that the DoD is a good steward of the assets entrusted to it.

Diplomacy

The United States military has both improved and harmed relationships between the U.S. and other countries by its environmental stewardship or lack thereof. Just as good stewardship can assist in achieving national security strategies abroad, the cost of poor stewardship can be crippling. Additionally, the United States has a national

7 Butts, *Environmental Security: What is DoD's Role?*, ix

security interest in assisting other nations with critical environmental problems.

Environmental Assistance

Despite the fact that anti-Taliban and anti-Al Qaeda operations have strained the United States' relationship with the general populace in the Kashmir region of Pakistan/India, the humanitarian and environmental assistance the United States military has provided to victims of the recent earthquake contributed significantly to easing tensions.

Environmental efforts also allow the DoD to interact with countries, many of which do not have stable governments, in ways that are not otherwise possible. For example, providing training and arms to an unstable state is counter productive if the friendly government is overthrown in a military coup. However, environmental aid is one way of maintaining military contact with states without giving them military aid. In his writing for the Army's Strategic Studies Institute, Kent Hughes Butts confirms the benefit of such contact:

> "DOD programs are...supporting the concept of biodiversity and conservation in the developing world. ...For example, Congress made available $15 million

> under the Foreign Assistance Act to help the militaries of African countries protect and maintain wildlife habitats and institute sound wildlife management, fishery, and conservation programs. ...DoD's participation in these environmental roles enables the United States to maintain the military-to-military contact essential for base access and over-flight agreements and communication with politically important militaries and military governments.[8]

Base Clean-Up

However, the United States Military has not always been on the positive side of this issue. During the U.S. withdrawal from the Philippines, Americans left large amounts of toxic waste behind at Clark Airbase. After the eruption of Pinatubo in 1992, reporters on the scene exposed the extent of this unremediated contamination:

> The Pinatubo refugees moved to a camp established by the Philippine government at Clark. Hundreds of tents were erected and shallow wells dug to provide the families with drinking water. Unbeknownst to the Philippine government, the site was a former motor pool and vehicle maintenance center, identified in internal Department of Defense documents as potentially contaminated. Those documents were not released to the Philippine government until 1994.[9]

The Gulf War also left its share of contamination. Unknown amounts of depleted uranium and other potentially harmful materials were left behind. Empirical evidence

8 Butts, *Environmental Security: What is DoD's Role?*, 12
9 Jorge Emmanuel and Aimee Suzara, *The US Must Clean up its Toxic Tail*, 2001, http://www.sfgate.com

suggests that these materials may have contributed to an increase in the incidents of chronic disease within the Iraqi population.[10]

Such examples of poor stewardship of foreign areas have elicited international disdain for the U.S. military. From Viequez to Okinawa, the environmental track record of the US military has not always been positive. Because the bases are considered sovereign U.S. soil, the military is under no international legal obligation to the foreign government to clean up after itself. Also, because U.S. environmental laws do not apply to these areas, the U.S. military is under no domestic obligation to ensure that the land is restored to its original state.[11] Unfortunately, the effects of environmental degradation are lasting. Further, military leaders must be ever mindful of the potential for affected people to support terrorist networks in retaliation for the perceived or real hardships suffered as a result of poor stewardship.

10 International Relations Center, Foreign Policy in Focus http://www.fpif.org/briefs/vol9/v9n03latammil.html
11 International Relations Center, Foreign Policy in Focus http://www.fpif.org/briefs/vol9/v9n03latammil.html

Global Responsibility

After the fall of communism, Congress demanded that the U.S. military begin dedicating assets and expertise to addressing global environmental crises. As a result of disarmament treaties, Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union had stockpiles of nuclear waste. Because of the Soviet Union's lack of environmental laws, and because the fall of the Communist block happened so quickly, Russia and many other former Soviet states had radioactive landfills and no money to clean them up. This situation created a dilemma not only in Eastern Europe, but also for the rest of the world. Clean up of nuclear material in an area of the world where the government was unwilling or unable to find a solution fell to other countries. It was in the interest of the U.S. and other western powers to keep nuclear materials from falling into the hands of rogue states or terrorists.

A report from the United Nations, published two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, foresaw these military responsibilities:

> A new range of unexplored possibilities has been opened by the recent trends in the international situation, that is, political *détente*, military de-escalation, and the growing recognition that many

> environmental challenges are global in nature… The challenge of environmental protection may become an opportunity for the military.[12]

Without a willingness on the part of the United States and other nations to secure this nuclear waste, there is no way to guarantee that the hazardous wastes from the manufacture of weapons and the production of nuclear energy will not fall into the hands of rogue states and terrorists. Similarly, without assistance from the west, environmental effects such as polluted ground water and food sources, have the potential to degrade the quality of life and to become a destabilizing force.

Conclusion

The United States military must embrace the local and global political environments in which it operates. By ignoring the public's perception of the military's environmental contributions, the DoD alienates its base of support. Further, degrading the land on which foreign bases operate, the military loses opportunities to further U.S. national interests. By ignoring the problems of other failed states in cleaning up and securing their nuclear waste, the United States ultimately puts its own populace

12 United Nations, Potential Uses of Military-Related Resources for Protection of the Environment, 1993 (New York, NY, 1993), 21

in danger. Maintaining the moral high ground in all areas, the U.S. military will create the synergistic relationships with other nations necessary to fight the Global War on Terror.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Butts, Kent Hughes, *Environmental Security: What is DOD's Role?* Strategic Studies Institute U. S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1993

Emmanuel, Jorge and Aimee Suzara. *The US Must Clean up its Toxic Tail*, 2001, http://www.sfgate.com

IEMA. Rumsfeld: "*Military Trumps Environment.*" September 06, 2005. http://www.iema.net

International Relations Center, *Foreign Policy in Focus*. http://www.fpif.org/briefs/vol9/v9n03latammil.html

Miura, Beth, *Training and Environment mix in Hawaii*. Engineer Update, 2001. http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/aug01/story17.htm

Policy news from ESA's Public Affairs Office. "Rumsfeld says Military-Environment balance needed." September 02, 2005. http://www.esa.org/pao/PolicyNewsUpdate/pn2005/09022005.php

United Nations. *Potential Uses of Military-Related Resources for Protection of the Environment,* United Nations, New York, 1993