G5: The mission of the Civil Affairs Division, 1959 November

Strom Thurmond

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THE MISSION OF THE CIVIL AFFAIRS DIVISION

(From ARMY Magazine, November, 1959. Copyright ©, Association U. S. Army.)
IT is true today even to a greater extent than it was in Clausewitz's time that "War is an act of force and to the application of that force there is no limit." However, since the real objective of any war is to impose our will upon the enemy, is it not sensible to exploit all means, in addition to the force of arms of which Clausewitz spoke, in attaining that objective? Armed conflict—or force—usually will be required in the end to crush the enemy's resistance; however, the proper handling of military-civilian relations can also be a potent weapon in itself. This fact is not generally recognized by the United States and that "weapon" has not been used to the fullest extent by this country in the past.

In Clausewitz's day, commanders in the field had little concern with civilians on the battlefield. Certainly the examples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki testify that this is no longer the case. Yet, of all the phenomena of warfare, that facet which is least understood is the factor of civilian populations and the tremendous problems they impose on the commander in areas of military operations.

Why is this so? How do civilians affect the commander's actions in his day-to-day operations? What is the commander's responsibility? What has been done, and is being done, at all levels to assist him?

As the scope of warfare broadens with the employment of weapons of increasing destructiveness, the magnitude of the commander's civil affairs operational responsibilities becomes correspondingly intensified. Modern warfare, even if destruction is measured and is limited to the actual requirements of the hour, will create tremendous problems. Let us examine some of the problems which will inescapably confront a commander.

Civilians, in numbers greater than ever before, will suffer personal loss, injury, deprivation and lack of the barest essentials of life. They will not have the accustomed guidance of their former agencies of local government. Continuing damages may contribute to mass hysteria, and tend to convert a previously normal populace into an uncontrollable mob—a multitude of hungry, frightened, injured, diseased and disrupted people who seek only to flee further injury with whatever personal possessions they can carry, and obtain, by any means possible, what is necessary to survive.

How can the problems posed by these civilians adversely affect a commander's combat operations? Noncombatants can clutter the roads, and interfere with or prevent the essential movement of troops and supplies. They can compel a diversion of combat troops to protect lines of communications and supply installations. They can require a similar diversion of troops to neutralize guerrilla actions fomented by undetected enemy agents among them. Enemy civilians can spread contagious diseases among our troops. They can furnish intelligence to the enemy. More, they can seriously disrupt what might otherwise have been a successful operation. Proper measures must be taken to estimate troop and supply requirements, and plans and preparations must be made in advance for necessary civil affairs measures.

Thus we can readily see that a commander's civil affairs operations are dictated fully as much by military necessity, as by the customs of war and the principles of humanity which have always guided our armed forces.

Now, what must the commander do, and what must

Brigadier General Strom Thurmond, USAR, is the junior U. S. Senator from South Carolina, Past National President of the Reserve Officers Association and of the Military Government Association, and a member of AUSA's Advisory Board of Directors. During World War II he served in both the Pacific and European theaters, participating in the Normandy campaign with the 82d Airborne Division. His mobilization assignment is Deputy Chief, Office of Civil Affairs.
he know, to insure that civilian problems will not pre-
vent, or seriously hamper, his military operations? There
is no magic formula, but the task is not an impossible
one. As is true of everything that occurs or may occur
in his unit, the commander must remember that he alone
is responsible for civil affairs operations. This responsi-
bility can not be delegated, nor can it be shirked. The
attention his staff displays in this phase of his duties
will be a reflection of his own interest. Therefore, he
must strive to gain an understanding of civil affairs
objectives and techniques, both from a staff and a unit
standpoint, in order to enable him to employ his civil
affairs units with the same skill as he does his combat
arms.

**Estimate of civilian situation**

The commander’s decisions as to his future courses
of action have long been based on estimates of his
own and the enemy’s capabilities, the weather, the ter-
rain, and so on. Little consideration has been given
to the effect of civilians in his area, or how their sup-
port, or lack of it, will influence his operations. Thus
his estimates, in many instances, have not been com-
plete. The commander must carefully weigh civil af-
fairs factors such as the number of persons in the area,
the status of the local government, health problems,
economic conditions, food supplies, medical stockpiles,
number and condition of hospitals and other public
institutions, religion and social customs of the people.
The estimate which considers these factors should be
weighed as carefully as estimates by his staff. If the
commander doesn’t do this, he is not taking maximum
advantage of all the tools available to him.

Not only must the commander’s estimate of the
situation reflect civil affairs thinking, the orders he
issues must put this thinking into action. Staffs must
check as diligently to insure that this phase of the
operation is performed as skillfully and with the same
care as any other.

The Assistant Chief of Staff, G5, is responsible for
all matters pertaining to the local population, govern-
ment, economy, and such institutions as schools and
hospitals in areas occupied by United States armed
forces. He must insure that civil affairs planning is con-
stant, continuous, and fully coordinated with all other
planning in order that civil affairs operations may best
contribute to the commander’s over-all mission.

As we look ahead to a possible nuclear warfare age,
we see in the combat commander’s mission intensified
civil affairs operations derived from the vast numbers
of human beings who will be affected by the extent
and destruction of such a war.

Meeting such conditions demands the development
and employment of the most efficient civil affairs or-
ganizations which can be devised. Current civil affairs
dctrine is adaptable to the requirements of the atomic-
age battlefield. It is not old; it has emerged since World
War II, and is derived from the lessons of military
history.

As a result, all the civil affairs units are tailor-made
to meet the requirements: first, of the area of the world
in which they may be deployed; second, to support any
size of tactical unit; and third, of any type of transporta-
tion, to include airborne operations. These units range
from the area headquarters A and B units, which
normally support a theater headquarters, to the civil
affairs groups at field armies, civil affairs companies at
corps, down to the small civil affairs platoons which
support the Army divisions.

We have dwelt extensively on the functions of the
commander in the civil affairs field. What is being done
for him that he is unable to do for himself?

**The civil affairs structure**

The Office of the Chief of Civil Affairs has been
established in recent years on a General Staff level at De-
partment of the Army under the direct supervision of the
Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations and the
Chief of Staff of the Army. The Chief of CA advises
Department of the Army agencies on, and exercises
staff supervision over, all matters pertaining to relation-
ships, derived from implied or explicit intergovern-
mental agreements, between the U. S. armed forces
and the government and people of countries in which
our forces are or may be employed. He advises Depart-
ment of the Army agencies on the assumption of author-
ity in areas occupied by U. S. armed forces; and also
on the planning, training and readiness measures of
our STRAC and USAR units requisite to the Army’s
conduct of civil affairs operations.

Presently, for the first time between wars, civil af-
fairs units and personnel are being trained. A civil af-
fairs group and two civil affairs companies (all an in-
tegral part of the STRAC family) are being trained
at Fort Gordon, Georgia; a U. S. Army Civil Affairs
School also is operating at Fort Gordon for training
G5 staff officers and personnel of civil affairs units;
extension courses and material for USAR Civil Affairs
schools are provided for those reserve officers unable
to attend courses at the Civil Affairs School; a Civil
Affairs branch has been established and is flourishing
in the Army Reserve; civil affairs staff sections and units
are participating in ZI army maneuvers and exercises
on a greater scale than ever before; CA-USAR units
have been activated to meet foreseeable contingencies;
TOE have been provided for G5 staff sections on an
augmentation basis for headquarters of field armies and
below; and, more important, civil affairs doctrine and
functions are being taught officers attending the various
Army service schools.

We are inclined to give more attention to civil affairs
operations in times of a “hot war,” when our troops
are actively engaged in a foreign land. This should not
necessarily be so.

The increased importance of military participation
in U. S. foreign policy clearly indicates that the solu-
tion of political problems cannot be governed by purely
political considerations. The varied methods of Communist aggression being employed in the current so-called "cold war," require that the defensive posture of any country be ready to meet any method by which this aggression may occur. In many countries, greater danger now exists from internal subversion of civilian populations than from external aggression.

Future capabilities

The various foreign military forces, particularly those with whom we have Military Assistance Advisory Groups, have a unique capability of combating this Communist subversion. Therefore, it is becoming vitally important for personnel of Military Assistance Advisory Groups to become aware of the need to advise local military forces as to specific means of combating this Communist approach from within.

A primary objective of our Military Assistance Program is to save the countries concerned from falling under Communist domination. This includes not only building up their military forces, but also strengthening those nations' political, economic, and social structures. Most of the major activities of this nature are in the civil affairs field and will require as advisors officers trained in civil affairs. This capability is just beginning to be utilized. There is unlimited room for expansion.

In conclusion, we must not overlook or disregard the future domestic capabilities of civil affairs. We must not overlook the possibility that an enemy might attack the United States. In view of this, we must not fail to consider the fact that civil affairs combat support may be required in an area where the local population is not foreign but American.

In time of disaster, the military services have always been called upon to provide a reservoir of strength, aid and comfort for American communities. If this has been true in lesser calamities, then certainly the armed forces will be called upon to assist in civil defense measures in the event of a nuclear, chemical or biological attack.

Against this contingency, it is vitally important to our nation's defense to have a civil affairs capability, alive and working; to have trained, and immediately available, civil affairs personnel capable of providing the skills and leadership that such times of crisis demand.

In present-day warfare, the civil population, and the extent of the damage in areas where the military commander will be operating, will require primary consideration. Regardless of whether he is operating on our own soil or in a foreign area, the first consideration will be survival. This will be true whether it is a city, our national survival, or the survival even of mankind. Upon the shoulders of the military commander, upon his realization of the complexities involved, and upon his handling of this problem of survival, may well rest our future as a nation and the future of mankind. We can only hope that our nation, in a period of relative quiet, is doing what it can to facilitate the accomplishment of this awesome mission.