Future role of civil affairs by Major General J. Strom Thurmond, US Army Reserve, 1960

Strom Thurmond

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"THE FUTURE ROLE OF CIVIL AFFAIRS"

by

Major General J. Strom Thurmond, USAR

In my comments today I shall cover several aspects of Civil Affairs operations to include some of the current developments. I will discuss first the future role of Civil Affairs in combat; mention briefly Civil Affairs in the cold war; indicate our interest in Civil Defense; and, I hope, point out to you that the military-civil relationship function (i.e., Civil Affairs) is of such importance as to warrant proper recognition on a commander's staff.

First, let me remind you that the term "Civil Affairs" should be defined and understood to embrace the entire range of relationships between a military force and the government administrative officials and the general public of friendly and enemy areas affected by the presence and operations of such force. It is indeed unfortunate that some people persist in the erroneous belief that Civil Affairs is merely a sugar-coated term now used to identify 'military government', or in other words only preparation for the exercising of legislative, judicial, and executive powers over an occupied area after the war has passed on.

Whatever the mission of an armed force, the proper discharge of Civil Affairs operations in support thereof is usually vital if the accomplishment of that mission is to produce optimum benefit to our national interests.

The nature, scope, magnitude, and complexity of Civil Affairs requires close General Staff coordination for maximum results. Its importance in comparison to other aspects of an operation will vary within wide limits, depending on the nature of the assigned mission and the political, economic, and psychological conditions under which this mission must be executed. When we
consider these conditions, we realize that the occasion will be rare, indeed, when Civil Affairs considerations may be completely ignored, even for a limited time, on the theory that they fail to bear on the combat mission. At the other end of the spectrum there may be times when the whole campaign becomes virtually a Civil Affairs operation. This was the case in Lebanon in 1958. Doctrine, training, staff organization, force composition, operations plans, and operational procedures must recognize these facts and be so sound, comprehensive and flexible as to meet the requirements of any of these situations in timely fashion. We must never forget that, other things being equal, timing becomes the essential factor in operational success. And - timing demands not only the presence of the necessary means but also facility in the use of these means.

The key to proper evaluation, planning and execution of Civil Affairs operations lies in the position and functions of the Civil Affairs element of the staff with respect to the other elements of the staff. Larger units or task forces and large commands require a G-5 or commensurate General Staff type entity in a joint or combined headquarters. The Civil Affairs staff element has a coordinating function. For example, it includes the General Staff direction and coordination of such activities as public information and psychological operations directed at the civil government and population in the area of operations. Small tactical unit staffs may not require a specially designated Civil Affairs staff section, because the Commander, with the help of his Executive Officer, can see that the Civil Affairs responsibilities of the various staff elements are properly planned, coordinated, and executed in the combat zone, and since a Civil Affairs unit will doubtless be providing direct support.

The Commander will modify staff organization and will assign functions to fit the mission and the circumstances of his operation. In situations which necessarily emphasize Civil Affairs functions, the small unit commander may
create an S-5 Section, using such personnel as he may find available at the time. If he is fortunate, he will receive a trained augmentation. Otherwise, he may temporarily shift staff duties to accommodate to the situation at hand. In operations which are fundamentally Civil Affairs in nature, the Chief of Staff or a Deputy of a large unit or force may function as the principal Civil Affairs advisor. In such a case the G-5 would become the leading staff planner just as G-3 does in a combat situation. The point is that, in such a situation, a principal function of every staff section becomes support of the Civil Affairs mission. I repeat - the G-5 rather than the G-3 has the leading role in operational planning in such circumstances.

An efficient and effective mechanism for liaison with U.S. and allied diplomatic agencies and local governmental agencies is required for optimum execution of Civil Affairs operations. In operations which are predominately Civil Affairs in nature, as in Lebanon, the establishment of a strong military-civilian liaison group is essential. Its size, functions, organization, and procedures will vary according to the nature, scope, magnitude and complexity of the Civil Affairs mission to be performed. If time permits, an alternative operational plan would be prepared to meet the sort of contingency which arose in Lebanon. Such a plan would prescribe the size and functions of the liaison group.

Although many Civil Affairs duties require technically trained specialists, the ability to direct and supervise Civil Affairs operations in all situations is a requirement for all commanders and chiefs of staff. Our officer training should reflect this fact. Programs of instruction of Army and joint schools should develop this ability to the degree and in the aspects appropriate to its courses and levels of instruction. STRAC has pioneered in this field of training. I trust that our service schools are making good use of STRAC's field-exercise-tested procedures.
The numbers and types of Civil Affairs units required for the conduct of operations will vary according to the mission of the command and the circumstances in which it must be carried out. The Civil Affairs unit requirement in war will be fairly uniform, and is reflected in the composition of our mobilization troop base, which is of course subject to modification in light of the circumstances of specific operations but which furnishes a planning guide at higher levels of command. In operations short of war a greater Civil Affairs strength may be included in the initial troop list. In some non-combat situations, Civil Affairs units may not be required. However, the Civil Affairs functions will still be present and the commander will look to his staff for support in handling them. Staff officers of senior commands should have, for their use in planning, several combinations of type Civil Affairs units which would serve as guides for planning operations under these varying situations.

We all agree that corps, division, and even smaller units, in any future war must be capable of operating with substantial gaps between them on a battlefield of ever-increasing width and depth. We also agree that this war may well be fought against an enemy capable of employing nuclear weapons of unlimited size, CBR warfare, employing airborne and airlanded troops, infiltrators and guerrillas. Therefore, all combat organizations must be able to maintain an all-around defense and to establish defensive areas in great depth. In order for tactical units successfully to accomplish any assigned mission under these adverse conditions, adequate Civil Affairs support will be absolutely essential. Let me assure you that Civil Affairs support goes far beyond the control of refugees and the discharge of occupation duties.

In fact, this Civil Affairs support falls into nineteen broad fields.

SLIDE 1 ON

Illustrative of this Civil Affairs support, let me comment briefly on a few of what I consider the most important fields during combat situations:
DISPLACED PERSONS - Civilians in a future war of any magnitude will suffer hardships and create problems of a magnitude never known before. As an example, even though the Korean War was considered a limited one, it was demonstrated there that refugees, when left unchecked, clog main supply routes, interfere with the movements of troops; they interfere with the establishment of defensive positions, and in addition create security risks. Preventing such situations and handling them if they do develop is not an entirely impossible task if it is done by well integrated Civil Affairs units and staff sections. These people are trained to carry out the commander's responsibilities under the terms of international law or agreements for the control of refugees and displaced persons. Under Civil Affairs supervision, such persons may be gotten off the roads, out of strategic areas and most important, where possible, out of the zone of responsibility of the combat commander. Let no one deceive himself by brushing this off lightly as just another MP job. The Military Police can and should make a magnificent contribution especially in the forward areas, but let there be no mistake. This is a Civil Affairs job to be handled by Civil Affairs people in such a way as to free the military forces for the military job.

LABOR - Civil Affairs units are instrumental in the provision of civilian labor as required by the military -- possibly the next most important support role. Building, repairing, and maintaining highway, railroads and airfields have been tremendous tasks in the past and will be an even greater one in the future. So will the handling of enormous tonnages of supplies, keeping vehicles and locomotives rolling and repairing other equipment. These are but a few of the tasks that civilian labor can accomplish for the commander and thus permit him to better utilize his operational forces for fighting. At least, he can if he has trained Civil Affairs personnel to assist him in locating,
obtaining, and maintaining this labor force under proper and uniform labor policies - available to his engineers when, where and as needed.

**PUBLIC SAFETY** - Public Safety Functions are important to the combat commander. Civil Affairs teams establish, or reestablish, auxiliary civilian police, town patrols, circulation limits, and curfews to keep order. Civilian check-points are established. Proclamations and ordinances are posted to inform the public of what is expected of them. Military units will rarely have to be diverted to those purposes when Civil Affairs is on the job.

**PUBLIC HEALTH** - Public Health functions go beyond those items we think of as normally falling into this field. Civil Affairs personnel concern themselves with measures to preserve or restore the state of public health, thus protecting the health of our own troops. Due to the destructiveness of modern war, the provisions of the Geneva Civilian Convention of 1949 require belligerents to protect the civilians. Provisions for the protection of food and water supplies must be taken--and, with the added problem of fallout, this has become a tremendous task. We must make provisions for the treatment of the wounded and sick. How will an insignificant number of small teams accomplish this? They do it by the promulgation of local orders, directing that civilians observe necessary medical and sanitation measures, and by supervising or working with civilian public health officials in the enforcement of these orders and in the performance of other public health services, thus keeping the load off of the military medical units.

**SLIDE 2 OFF**

One can go on and on. Civil Affairs units will assist in restoring communications, obtaining housing for troops, locating stone quarries, sawmills, and building materials. Information media must be alerted to keep the civilian population informed of civil defense measures and of the policies and purposes of the U.S. effort. The preservation of arts, monuments, and archives; insuring
civilian supply, public transportation, and public utilities at a minimum essential level; in short, public welfare generally cannot remain a matter of unconcern to the military commander if he is to establish and maintain an optimum environment for the fighting of his battles. These monumental tasks cannot be accomplished, however, with untrained personnel, staffs, and units. What's more, the rest of our military organization must become accustomed to working with and considering them.

The battlefield of the future and its environment are most difficult to envision and even more difficult objectively to define. In various studies and staff papers which have evolved of recent years, many divergent conclusions have been reached. Some would have us picture the future battlefield with an administrative support base and a wide expanse of hinterland between that base and the combat elements. Others would have us picture it as a hand with fingers--lines of communication--stretching off through the hinterland with the tips of the fingers in contact with the enemy.

No one has suggested that the future battlefield will be that narrow zone between belligerents in which the fighting of past wars has taken place.

In reality, no one really knows what that future battlefield will be like, and for the purpose of our discussion today, it is of no great importance. Because, irrespective of the shape of that battlefield, there will be more civilians on it, more destruction, more dependence by those civilians on the military and for that matter, more dependence by the military on the civilian than has ever been true before.

This all adds up to the fact that the commander in the field, who is held responsible for the conduct of the battle, must also be responsible for Civil Affairs operations.

I have outlined for you some of the functions of Civil Affairs. The question is--how will these functions be implemented?
In looking to the future as it may be affected by the great unknown, nuclear warfare, the function of the Civil Affairs staff officer (the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5) and the mission of the Civil Affairs unit probably will remain substantially unchanged. Their problems, however, will be magnified in proportion to the intensity of the nuclear exchange.

The new element introduced, however, is the vast number of human beings likely to be affected. This element, in itself, will demand the development and training of the most efficient Civil Affairs organization which can be devised. Here, I would like to point out that more than the development and training of Civil Affairs units is necessary. There is a need for Civil Affairs staff members at all echelons of command to insure optimum employment of such units and in their absence to assist the commander to insure that adequate attention is paid to that multitude of Civil Affairs matters which will either impede or facilitate his operations, in direct proportion to the effort expended upon them. Who is to say what would have happened in Russia in World War II had the Germans observed proper Civil Affairs principles during their campaigns in the UKRAINE? It is important, too, that other staff personnel become familiar with this Civil Affairs staff function and be accustomed to dealing with a G-5 staff element on such problems.

Some of the proposed means for meeting this requirement are:

a. To include G-5 staff sections and a proper ratio of Civil Affairs units in all force structures.

b. To give due consideration to Civil Affairs capabilities in the preparation of all contingency plans, to insure that these plans make adequate provision for Civil Affairs support.

c. To indoctrinate military personnel in all the services in Civil Affairs principles.

d. To insure that the operational nature of Civil Affairs, not just the administrative or military government phase, is reflected throughout
military doctrine.

To maintain a close working relationship between the Department of Defense and the other governmental agencies concerned with our national policy.

Now, what are some other new developments of importance to Civil Affairs with which we should be familiar? One development has to do with serious re-examination of Civil Affairs doctrine. The Department of the Army, USCONARC, and the service schools are constantly reviewing doctrine and searching for ways to improve it and the techniques involved in Civil Affairs operations. Doctrine and techniques of operation must fit the new concepts of hot war and, equally important, the current concept of peace.

I should also like to invite your attention to a study in progress which should help us to place the future in perspective as we refine our techniques of operation and doctrine. The study is one under contract with the Operations Research Office (ORO) of Johns Hopkins University. It has been under preparation for three years and is entitled "Optimum CAMG Organization and Functioning after 1960" (U). This study considers the Civil Affairs aspects of cold as well as hot war.

Another development has to do with the role of Civil Affairs in meeting the threats of Communist subversion in under-developed friendly countries. The cold war is presenting Civil Affairs with new challenges, not only in Southeast Asia but in this hemisphere as well. The communists believe that the under-developed, have-not, countries represent the Achilles heel of the Free World.

The most dangerous form of Communist aggression in the Cold War is a Fifth Column constituted internally as a local Communist Party or externally by nationals who make up the nucleus of the Party to be formed and used when the occasion arises. This organization is the enemy. The target of this enemy is the people.
They are the real stakes in the cold war. Although Southeast Asia has only six per cent of the world's total area, it has 660 million people, about one-fourth of the world's population.

A cold-war operational doctrine has evolved among these small nations which offers considerable prospect of success. This doctrine is based upon the use of the nations' armed forces as a civic support agency. Sometimes the military forms the only dynamic and cohesive force for preserving sovereignty in a country and is the most stable element of the government. Its units are stationed throughout the country with uniforms that clearly identify its members as government people. The military communication net may be the only really efficient communications system in the country. The Armed Forces may be the only agency upon which the government can place full reliance. Thus, the national sovereign of necessity turns to the armed forces for national duties far beyond the traditional role of the military. Their main purpose deals with army-people relationship for winning the full support of the country-side for the armed forces and thus for the government. Civil Affairs activities become a primary weapon in this war to convince the people that their ultimate salvation lies with the non-communist world.

One method employed in Southeast Asia for improving the civilian-military relations for which we have great hope is what we call "Civic Action." Civic Action is a project of a self-help nature undertaken by armed forces, in conjunction with the local population, for the benefit and well-being of civilians or civilian communities, generally in fields of public welfare, public works, public health, education, and other such areas of civilian concern. A number of countries where we have Military Assistance Advisory Groups are conducting some activities in the civic action field. This follows closely suggestions made by the Draper Committee which recently completed an exhaustive survey of our military aid program.
A new DOD Directive states: "Military assistance programs should, where feasible, encourage the use of indigenous military and para-military forces in under-developed countries in the construction of public works and other activities helpful to economic development, provided that such participation does not significantly detract from the capability of the forces to perform essential military missions."

Much needs to be accomplished to integrate an effective Civil Affairs operation into the total indigenous military effort. An indigenous Civil Affairs capability is required. The development of this capability is facilitated by Civil Affairs advisors in the MAAG; by U.S. Army Mobile Civil Affairs training teams and by offering training for foreign officers at the U.S. Army Civil Affairs School.

The development of Civil Affairs techniques in the Cold War is a two-way street.

We are learning much from the Southeast Asian officers. Their ideas on the role Civil Affairs plays in their national security are realistically based upon necessity. If half of the United States were occupied by the enemy and the people in the remaining half were not fully confident of the ability of our government, we would be just as realistic. The U.S. Army Civil Affairs School presently teaches the development of a good basic Civil Affairs capability which is most useful in operations in a hot war. This was the mission of the school when originally established. Within this limit some recognition is given to the Cold War aspects of Civil Affairs. However, this is not sufficient to meet the increasing requirements to train foreign officers and the MAAG advisors for the areas where the war is being pressed by our Communist enemy. The demand is not limited to Southeast Asia. South America is an area of similar concern. Our courses at the School must be revised to meet this requirement or a new course must be developed for the purpose.
A third and last development which I should like to discuss today, although by no means the least, has to do with Civil Defense.

Recently General Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated that "fast moving events of current history are bringing into clear focus the inter-relationship between civil defense and military strength--both of which are essential elements of our national security posture." He further indicated that the Army is ready and able, not only to assist in civil defense should that become necessary, but to plan now concerning the form such assistance should take. He believes that the benefits would be vast in proportion to the amount of time, effort and expense involved in the planning. It must also be remembered, that only the absence of a military mission, together with the presence of an important and pressing civil defense objective, justifies diverting military units from their combatant role. Therefore, it is impossible to earmark military units for a specific civil defense role. Major elements of the military will always be required for purely military operations. While civil defense and military defense are inseparably linked, civil defense must, nevertheless, remain primarily a civilian responsibility.

However, the Army is responsible for coordinating both the planning for and the rendering of military support by all of the Services in civil defense emergencies. CONARC has been given this mission throughout the ZI. Close coordination is effected with civil defense authorities at National, regional, State, and local levels in planning for support of civil defense emergency operations. Thus, the military can minimize post-attack diversion of military resources for emergency assistance to civil authorities by helping these authorities to increase civil defense readiness. General Lemnitzer has said that the Army will assist in efforts to improve civil defense preparedness during the pre-attack period to the extent permitted by budgetary and other resource limitations and the requirement to maintain its army's combat readiness.
In brief, military assistance in civil defense emergencies shall be rendered when such assistance is requested or directed in accordance with appropriate Public Laws and Executive Orders. The active and reserve components of the services will be prepared to support the maintenance of and/or the re-establishment of law and order in areas critical to national survival, in the event civil control or leadership is destroyed or overwhelmed. Military assistance and/or control will be withdrawn when civil control is re-established.

Our reserve Civil Affairs units can assist the ZI Armies in this civil defense role. They are fashioned to function amid civilians in the crisis, confusion and danger of combat and are, therefore, ideally suited for such a mission. They are organized to offer assistance and advice in the conduct of the essential governmental functions at all levels of government. They are trained to cope with military-civilian relationships under the most extreme circumstances. In fact, during combat operations part of their responsibility entails the actual advice or supervision, where required, of local civil defense.

The pertinent question for us is—what is the task of Civil Affairs and particularly the Civil Affairs Reserve units in the military role in our domestic Civil Defense? I believe we have the answer. It is the same sort of Civil Affairs support that we envisage for units in combat. The Reserve Civil Affairs units can provide valuable assistance to commanders—particularly in the preparation of plans for military assistance in the pre-attack phase. As you know this type of assistance is being rendered already in some army areas. Civil Affairs units in the Second Army Area have been assigned planning missions covering some thirteen target complexes. First Army is following the same procedure. I feel that we should make full use of the not inconsiderable talents of our Civil Affairs units in all continental army areas. This sort of utilization provides excellent and purposeful training for the Civil Affairs units as well as valuable assistance to the ZI Army commanders.
It is not necessary to dwell on the assistance Civil Affairs units can render if called upon in the wake of a thermonuclear attack on the United States. It is clear that, in the initial phases, our national recovery effort of necessity would be decentralized. Any local commander required to assist in the recovery of his neighboring community would handle his vital responsibility for the military-civilian relations more effectively and more rapidly if he could employ a trained Civil Affairs unit to assist him. Should the commander be faced with the temporary assumption of civilian control in the absence of local authority he would have an even greater need for such a unit. Thus, reserve Civil Affairs units should be required to perform a two-fold mission in support of civil defense operations; pre-planning to improve readiness to weather an atomic attack, and post-attack operations. Realistic pre-attack planning and well-conceived post-attack training will contribute directly to National Security. It will also contribute by improving national confidence. Confidence derived from the knowledge that the Army is ready, able and willing to help. Confidence in the ability of this nation to survive and prevail even against a thermonuclear disaster.

To recapitulate. In the atomic world Civil Affairs assumes a critical role in military operations. With the broadening and deepening of the battle zone to include whole nations military-civil matters have become more complex and greater in magnitude than any experienced heretofore. Their planning, direction, and coordination demands a state of readiness, a capability to react without parallel in history. This condition of readiness demands a Civil Affairs capability extending from the national level through each command echelon down to the Battle Group. Civil Affairs is an inescapable and increasingly important function of command that requires direction, coordination and control at the General Staff level.
A year or so ago, based on General Bruce Clarke's recommendation, the term "Military Government" was dropped from the title of this function. This was a measure of prime importance. It is a long step towards correcting the fallacious and dangerous thinking which erroneously designates Civil Affairs as an accompaniment solely of the occupation of conquered territory. Time moves on, gentlemen; let us move with it; let us once and for all dispel the concept that Civil Affairs operations commence after conflict has ended; let us eliminate the reactionary thinking that blinds many of our people to the major contribution that Civil Affairs can and must make to our success in war, hot or cold. We must instill the doctrine that commanders require a General Staff focal point for coordinating all matters of the military-civilian relationship. Let us reflect well on the fact that the Army is the executive agency for the Department of Defense in Civil Affairs.

The Army cannot withdraw into its training shell, concerned only with developing weapons and tactical readiness for its next battlefield. There is more to war than hardware and tactics. War is a struggle for control of people. Other services primarily conduct their operations in the air and on and under the sea. The Army operates on the land and among the people. This is the army's environment, which it must master as completely as the sailor masters the sea and the flyer the air.

Civil Affairs is moving ahead on many fronts. Trends depart from traditional concepts. Commanders and staff officers of the future must have an open mind. They must have vision, imagination, and daring. They must meet the change and adjust to the challenge. They must master their environment. This, I believe you, as future commanders and staff officers, will do.
CIVIL AFFAIRS FUNCTIONS

1 - LEGAL
2 - PUBLIC SAFETY
3 - PUBLIC HEALTH
4 - PUBLIC WELFARE
5 - PUBLIC FINANCE
6 - PUBLIC EDUCATION
7 - LABOR
8 - ECONOMICS
9 - COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
10 - FOOD & AGRICULTURE
11 - PRICE CONTROL & RATIONING
12 - PROPERTY CONTROL
13 - CIVILIAN SUPPLY
14 - PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES
15 - PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
16 - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
17 - CIVIL INFORMATION
18 - DISPLACED PERSONS
19 - ARTS, MONUMENTS & ARCHIVES
IMPORTANT CIVIL AFFAIRS FIELDS

1 - DISPLACED PERSONS
2 - LABOR
3 - PUBLIC SAFETY
4 - PUBLIC HEALTH