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THE UNITED STATES AND GUERRILLA WARFARE

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## INTRODUCTION

The first thought that enters the mind of the reader when he samples this work is that the author is an incurable pessimist. If this is true then the millions of practical Americans who daily fill the coffers of the many Life Insurance companies are also pessimists.

The author has no axe to grind; nothing to sell. This research is designed to bring to the attention of the American people certain basic facts as they exist with respect to the future defense of the United States. These facts are concrete. They are the figures which appear on that page of the Balance Sheet of Our National Defense which has, in large measure, heretofore gone unnoticed.

Since 1812 no foreign enemy, as such, has set foot on our soil. We carry the moral leadership of the Western World and even our scoffing ideological enemies eloquently acknowledge this leadership by the considerable effort they exert in attempting to snatch this sceptre from our grasp.

Success is its own best salesman. The recent activities of guerrilla movements in China, the Phillippines, Russia, France, Malaya, and Greece are the best evidence that partisan activity is not confined to the realm of fantasy novels.

Whether the United States is ever to be doomed to the tragedy of a foreign invasion and the accompanying horrors of guerrilla warfare is conjecture. What you read here is insurance that, should these events occur, the United States will not be weighed and found wanting.

The material contained herein is not the product of lengthy translation of treatises discovered in ancient archives. Nor does

it consist of facts which require the use of those intricate mechanical brains which help modern scientists instantaneously turn out technical developments with machine-gun-like rapidity. Indeed, the average layman who has lived through the years 1930 to 1952, armed with a grade school geography, his common sense, and the all-important element of time, could arrive at the same results.

Our task therefore is to survey this land of ours and thus to take inventory of our potential for conducting successful guerrilla action against any invader who might take advantage of inequality in the world's power balance and attempt to physically possess this portion of the globe.

Throughout, consider the material in the light of the answers to the following questions:

1. Can a highly civilized country like the United States adapt itself to guerrilla warfare in the event of invasion?
2. What advance preparations might (or must) be taken to so ready our nation?

## DISCUSSION

### PART I

The ultimate objective in any war is "to compel our adversary to do our will".<sup>1</sup> It has become universally accepted that the primary step in accomplishing this objective is to destroy the enemy's armed forces in battle. This can be done in some titanic "master-battle" such as characterized Napoleon's campaigns. It can also be done by a less sensational method in which the enemy is bled to death by thousands of small, dispersed but costly encounters. Or, finally, it can be accomplished by a combination of the two, the second, underground warfare, so weakening the enemy's means and will to fight as to make the first method relatively simple and inexpensive.

Underground warfare is one of the oldest types of tactical warfare. It is "Peoples' War" and has been since the Cave Man era. Prior to the 19th Century isolated cases appeared in history where one nation's army was apparently defeated but the nation itself continued the struggle even to final victory. Until the dawn of the past century such instances were rare and classified as phenomena, while the classical concept of warfare consisted of two armies butting heads until finally one or the other, exhausted, fled in panic.

However, after the 1800's the number of cases where people, not just armies, helped directly decide the outcome of a conflict became too numerous to pass off as phenomena. Underground warfare at that point came into its own.

Experts on the subject agree favorably that four primary circumstances played a part in bringing underground warfare to the

(1) Clausewitz, Karl von, "On War", p. 3, Infantry Journal Press, Washington, D.C., 1950, TIS Library.

modern battlefield.<sup>2</sup> These are:

1. Developments in military strategy and tactics.
2. The absolute dependence of modern armies on industrial and economic bases in their rear, and on lines of transport.
3. Development of airlift and radio technique.
4. The ideological nature of modern war.

Underground movements operate in four different ways.<sup>3</sup> These include the less active fields of Intelligence and Propaganda and the two more virile areas, Sabotage and Guerrilla Warfare. To clarify, simple sabotage consists of strikes, pilferage, and other acts of passive resistance carried on for its delaying or nuisance effect on the enemy. Guerrilla warfare is sabotage by violence and leads to open conflict. In our discussion we will concern ourselves with this last and most active means of resistance.

To fully understand the problem we should note that guerrilla warfare is characterized by:

1. THE TACTICAL OFFENSIVE - Guerrillas avoid the defensive and defend only by attacking.<sup>4</sup>
  2. A PEOPLES' MOVEMENT - Guerrillas must be drawn from and aggressively, fanatically, and tenaciously supported by the local populace.
  3. DEPENDENCE ON TERRAIN - Guerrillas must have sufficient space in which to operate and must be minutely familiar with this terrain.
  4. MOBILITY AND FLUIDITY - This follows from the dispersion of activity and constant offensive action of guerrillas.
- (2) Miksche, F.O., "Secret Forces", p. 35, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, TIS Library.
- (3) Miksche, F.O., "Secret Forces", p. 111, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, TIS Library.
- (4) Snow, Edgar, "Red Star Over China", p. 178, Random House, N.Y., 1944, TIS Library.

5. INDECISION - Unassisted by a regular force or an outside power, guerrillas will seldom win a major battle or achieve complete victory.<sup>5</sup>

Granted the proper human elements are available, guerrilla movements, like little Topsy from "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "jes grow". They can be spearheaded by units of the regular forces left behind for this purpose or they can begin by small isolated groups of the more stouthearted civilians. Whatever the origin, the growth of guerrilla forces normally passes through three phases:<sup>6</sup>

PHASE I: Individuals band together under local leadership.

Weapons are collected locally and activities are generally limited to propaganda, sabotage, and small scale attacks.

PHASE II: Size of units increase and units consolidate.

Command and leadership improve and attempts are made to contact other resistance units. Efforts produce widespread sabotage, raids, and ambushes.

PHASE III: Unified command is now established over certain areas. Units expand and attempt more difficult operations. Contact is established with other areas and extensive counterintelligence, service, training, and security measures are developed.

The time required to pass through the first two phases will depend on the topography of the country, the enemy situation, and the political and administrative policies of the country. In

- (5) Lt. Col. E.A. Raymond, "People's War", Combat Forces Journal, Dec 1952, p. 12, TIS Library.  
(6) FM 31-20, "Operations Against Guerrilla Forces", p. 28, Feb 1951 TIS Library. 6

Phase III we see guerrilla warfare in its most efficient stage and it was at this point in the guerrilla activities of World War II that the "Redoubt" achieved a status of importance.

The creation of redoubts is the most important method of supporting guerrilla activities.<sup>7</sup> These redoubts are terrain areas controlled by guerrillas and usually adjoin lines or areas of strategic importance to the enemy. Usually located in mountains, jungles, or heavily forested regions, these redoubts serve as rallying points, resupply and training areas, and bases from which guerrillas can destroy enemy depots, communications, airfields, bridges, etc. Redoubts are strongly outposted but are defended only by widespread diversionary attacks forcing the enemy to relax his efforts to eliminate resistance in the area. Attempts to defend redoubts against regular forces usually result in the annihilation of the guerrillas.<sup>8</sup>

A summary of typical targets of guerrilla attack would list closeup rear areas of enemy combat forces, communication centers, rail lines and roads (particularly where these pass through defiles), power plants, docks, warehouses, war plants, airports, and even populations.

## PART II

In the past 8 years sufficient material has been produced on the subject of guerrilla warfare to stock a fair-sized library. The vices and virtues of the guerrilla, marauder, partisan, and maqui have been enumerated in detail. But even a very exacting search will reveal that thus far little has been noted on the capability of the United States to develop and maintain a successful guerrilla movement in the event of an invasion of our soil.

(7) Miksche, F.O., "Secret Forces", p. 151, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, TIS Library.

(8) Miksche, F.O., "Secret Forces", p. 63, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, TIS Library.

Consider an aggressor having by some means attacked our northwest areas and seized that portion of the United States north and west of the line San Francisco - Salt Lake City - Helena. The enemy has a large number of troops but is operating at the end of an extended supply line and intends to exploit local sources of supply, services, and equipment to the fullest. Our forces, outnumbered and in need of time for regrouping and reinforcement, call on any and all help available. Enter: The American Guerrilla.

With the exception of those scholars who have devoted their energy to a careful examination of the campaigns of the Civil War, few of us have considered it a valid expenditure of effort to analyze the terrain of this country to determine its ability to sustain combat operations of any sort, much less those of a guerrilla nature. Indeed, by inference, some self-styled experts have maintained that the more highly developed a country (the United States) is, the less the possibility for underground activity becomes.<sup>9</sup> Others, who analyze more systematically, find that, although the more civilized a nation becomes the less warlike are its instincts, as civilization progresses the riper will the guerrilla objectives in an area become.<sup>10</sup>

Operating on the principle that foresight is better than hindsight let us look at the components that make up our nation and see for ourselves. To proceed in a logical fashion we first construct a basic map of the terrain of the United States and then, in order, superimpose on this first map overlays which will, in general, indicate the locations of those installations in which

(9) Gene Z. Hanrahan, "The Chinese Red Army and Guerrilla Warfare", Combat Forces Journal, Feb 1951, p. 10, TIS Library.

(10) Miksche, F.O., "Secret Forces", p. 70 and p. 85, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, TIS Library.

a guerrilla group might find interest.

Geographically the United States is split into two halves by the Mississippi River system.<sup>11</sup> Each half thus formed has a mountain spine, the Rockies in the western half and the Alleghany system in the eastern counterpart. Since, as we have seen, guerrilla activity is most prolific in desolate areas such as mountains, jungles, swamps, etc., we can indicate on a map all such areas which might potentially become a guerrilla redoubt. A cursory glance at our map then reveals a number of such areas.

With our basic map complete let us now turn to a population survey.<sup>12</sup> While the number of people inhabiting an area may not, of itself, be of importance, it is axiomatic that where populations are large, communications, industry, and utilities also generally are available to an increased degree thus making these urban areas of increased importance. It is important to note that in the western part of our nation the population centers are relatively isolated whereas in the eastern sections this isolation is not evident. Yet these eastern portions, while populous, actually have, as integral parts, "islands" of rough and sparsely settled terrain as any comparison with the basic map will indicate.

We have mentioned that all means of physical communication are of importance to guerrillas. Greatly simplified, the major railway lines and roads can be shown on other overlays.<sup>13</sup> Certainly it must be admitted that in the United States, with its 227,000 miles of railroads and over 3 million miles of surfaced roads, no area can be isolated by the demolition of one railway bridge or tunnel. In spite of this grand net of rail and road no

(11) See Map A, Appendix, p. 18

(12) See Map Overlay B, Appendix, p. 19

(13) See Map Overlays C and D, Appendix, p. 20, 21

one can forget the truck which caught fire several years ago in the Holland Tunnel and thereby stopped traffic in our largest metropolis for many hours.

Any mention of communication from one part of our country to another would be incomplete without a mention of airways, seaports, and waterways.<sup>14</sup> The airlines today carry a tremendous tonnage of passengers and freight daily; our seaports (though concerned largely with extra-continental trade) are among the world's greatest; and our inland waterways, while not as vital as they were a century ago, still play quite a part in our industrial and commercial life.

Finally let us mention certain other critical installations which an enemy will surely seek to control and which, in view of their apparent value to the enemy, will be ripe plums for the guerrilla's plucking. In our list we will include power dams and atomic research centers.<sup>15</sup>

Having now established the terrain backdrop for the American guerrilla's activities and also enumerated what installations or facilities we will definitely wish to prevent the enemy from using, we can bring the loose ends together. By superimposing the various overlays we come to certain conclusions:

1. Numerous terrain facilities exist in these United States which are almost ideally suited for use as guerrilla redoubts.
2. In spite of the relatively advanced state of our civilization, these potential redoubt areas are in almost every instance conveniently close to

(14) See Map Overlay E, Appendix, p. 22

(15) See Map Overlay F, Appendix, p. 23

installations which would be considered critical to either ourselves or an enemy invasion force.

3. Especially in the western part of the United States large areas might be isolated by effective guerrilla action.

What then must our deductions be? The answer in everyday English is that we should hereby be convinced that guerrilla warfare is not something restricted to Greece, China, Yugoslavia, or the other nations now renowned for this activity; that America, in an inventory of all means available to stem a Communist bid for world domination, cannot afford to consider only the way to defend against underground fighting but must also be ready to utilize the great offensive potential of guerrilla warfare, particularly to gain precious time in the event of enemy invasion; that no matter how highly developed and plentiful our communications are, their overall efficiency can be reduced to nearly zero by the proper application of guerrilla tactics, tactics that can be successful here just as they were successful in other countries of the globe.

Returning to the situation postulated earlier wherein an enemy invasion force has seized the northwestern portion of the United States, consider that American guerrillas operating out of a redoubt located in the Cascade Mountain region some forty miles east of Seattle might easily wreak havoc with enemy supply lines and communications. From this same locality bands might also harass the Tacoma-Portland line of communications and, in fact, do this from terrain which from a guerrilla standpoint is little less than ideal.

Nor is the far northwest the only part of the country which gives this picture of guerrilla operations.

To name some outstanding areas both well suited by nature for this type of warfare and strategically located with regard to vital lines of communications, supply, and critical installations note the Adirondack region of northern New York state from whence the Albany-Buffalo artery, the St. Lawrence waterway, and much of the Hudson River traffic could be razed. Then too there is the southern Sierra Nevada terrain from which traffic to and from San Francisco eastward might be controlled, the bayou country of southern Louisiana which can "cork" the mouth of the Mississippi River, and the southern Alleghany Mountain region which is notably near to the Tennessee Valley power station, Oak Ridge Laboratories, and other important installations.

To dismiss these and other potential redoubt areas for reasons such as distance which they lay from targets or because the redoubt areas do contain some population is to err greatly. Major Robert B. Rigg, with considerable experience of guerrilla activity, in estimation of the striking distance of guerrillas suggests that one "measure their capabilities in your own longest daily distances on foot - then add twenty-five percent and hope you haven't underestimated".<sup>16</sup> And, too, populations in a redoubt area (or nearby), if not too large, can be of great assistance to guerrillas serving as outposts, counterintelligence stations, hideouts, resupply points, and even espionage "drops" and aid stations. The presumption of course is that the local populace will support the underground movement.

(16) Major Robert B. Rigg, "Get Guerrilla-Wise", Combat Forces Journal, Sep 1950, p. 7, TIS Library.

Most readers agree to the fact that the terrain of the United States of itself is satisfactory for guerrilla operations but pose certain other problems. These can be explained in order.

First, one asks, can the average American with his comfortable living be transformed into an effective guerrilla? To examine each individual to determine an answer to this question would be an absurd undertaking, but an evaluation of an "average" American reveals certain facts that will help produce a concrete answer.

The typical American is softened by his high standard of living and is considerably dependent on transport. He is less inclined to take his politics with the same fanatic sincerity as his foreign counterpart. However, Mr. American, possibly because of his participation in various sports from early age, can harden quickly if pressed. Though he is never really converted to the fanaticism normally found in a guerrilla, the American has other characteristics which admirably suit him for this recommended occupation. Mr. USA lives in a country in which the possession of firearms has never been curtailed to any extent and thus weapons should be on hand in most communities. Also, Americans possess a considerable supply of better than average ingenuity and initiative, qualities which are indispensable to widely dispersed guerrilla tactics. Finally, there is reason to believe that in defense of his own city, town, farm, or home, the American of the Twentieth Century would be just as fanatical a foe as the Minuteman of 1775. On his own soil, from a country in which the possession of firearms is relatively unrestricted, the American guerrilla could be a formidable customer.

Another reader asks, "If the results of guerrilla warfare are indecisive, why not concentrate our efforts on warfare of a type that is decisive?" And still another ponders, "If the guerrilla depends on outside aid and if our present potential enemies do ever invade our shores, who is there outside left to help us?"

These questions are appropriate and logical and they can be answered together. American planning should and could not envision guerrilla activities in lieu of regular defense forces but rather as an addition thereto, employable for the purpose of gaining time and softening up an invader until such time as our regular forces can organize and launch a counteroffensive.<sup>17</sup> Support of the guerrillas would come from the "outside" but, in this case, from our own regular forces.

Finally, the question comes, "How could we now prepare for such guerrilla activity? Do we stockpile arms and ammunition, cache explosives, etc.?"

In answer to this question we must consider certain basic points -

1. A guerrilla's existence depends on his ability to move and attack swiftly, not primarily on his possession and defense of terrain. Caching of supplies means he must either retransfer these constantly to widely scattered points or stay and defend the main cache. To do the first is to make a fighter into a packhorse, while to do the second is to invite disaster.

(17) Officer's Call, "Antiguerrilla Operations", p. 2  
TIS Library.

2. Large scale stockpiling of arms in an area is no guarantee that the supplies will get into the right hands and be put to the intended purpose. Numerous cases of misappropriation of supplies and equipment were noted during World War II in France, Greece, China, and Yugoslavia.
3. Caching of supplies is wasteful. Unless our intelligence is almost perfect we would have to stockpile homogeneously in all areas to assure adequate coverage. If this is done, the control and maintenance problems would take more manpower than could be spared.

## CONCLUSION

The only paying solution lies in planning and in training both the regular forces and the civilian components in the offensive aspects of guerrilla warfare, of its value and use during an invasion, and of the part that each individual or group can play in this "homemade" type of warfare.

Students at our service schools learn how to defend against guerrilla bands. They learn how effectively the Communists have employed this method of fighting, as indeed some few by experience in Greece, France, and China have learned. They learn how to employ every other known means of defeating our potential enemies. But they learn little or nothing of the organizing, planning, or carrying into being guerrilla activities of our own.

Today Nationalist guerrilla bands on the China mainland are tying up many Red Chinese troops that might otherwise be facing our regular forces in Korea.<sup>18</sup>

Today one of our most strategic areas, Alaska, is both invitingly close to the Soviet Union, and ideally suited for just such an American guerrilla enterprise. Are there plans for such an undertaking?

Summarizing, we can safely conclude that our country, its population and terrain, will conveniently lend itself to guerrilla activities. The value of the American partisan to gain time for mobilization and/or reorganization of regular forces is apparent. The need for more adequate training along these lines can be seen. Such training is an insurance plan which has no "War Clause" and will pay immense dividends if and when a Red "D-Day" ever comes.

(18) Newsweek, December 22, 1952, p. 10, TIS Library.

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