

PROFESSIONAL FORUM



One Place, Three Wars: Part 2

MAJOR GENERAL BERNARD LOEFFKE

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second article of a two-part series. Part 1 appeared in INFANTRY's May-June 1991 issue.

My experiences at West Point, at the Army schools, and the three tours in combat stressed for me the importance of devising a strategy that could be used to fight small conflicts. The three wars in Southeast Asia produced tactical lessons at the foxhole level. (These experiences contributed to the development of the strategy I call the Ten Ds. These can be applied to any area of the world.)

In Latin America, we are also fighting three different types of wars. We call them the war of subversion, the war on drugs, and the war on information.

As Americans we are interested mainly in what is happening to us. Unfortunately, a significant majority of the world is different from us, and we must understand those differences. There are lessons we can learn from our neighbors. Perceptions are important, and we must learn to walk in their shoes.

As an example, in Vietnam, we considered the Vietnamese dirty because they blew their noses without using

handkerchiefs. They considered us dirty because we blew our noses into handkerchiefs and then carried the dirty handkerchiefs in our pockets.

Similarly, Latin American officers are not happy with what the U.S. Army has labeled low intensity conflict. To them, the wars they are fighting are not low intensity but high intensity. El Salvador, with a population of six million, suffered more than 1,600 casualties in its armed forces in just the last 45 days of 1989. In November and December of 1990 the Salvadoran Army again suffered more than 1,700 casualties. For a small nation, more than 3,000 casualties in a three-month period is high intensity.

Our colleagues call their conflicts wars of subversion. In reality, a war is a war, and to be successful in combat, one must adhere to the nine basic principles of war — objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity. It has been said that if we violate three of the nine in any battle, we stand a good chance of losing.

In combating subversives, however, I have used not the nine principles of war but the Ten Ds — democracy, development, defense, detection, deception, delay, decision, deployment, destruction, and dialogue. And it can be said that

if we fail to consider several of these Ds, we stand a good chance of losing to the subversives.

We have found that for subversion to occur, several ingredients are usually present. One of them is the dissatisfaction of the people with their government. This may be due to the illegality of the government. It may be because the government cannot provide the economic well-being that the people demand. It may be because the subversives, as is the case in El Salvador, have had a great deal of external support from neighboring countries. We have found that stability is improved by a democratic government and a serious effort aimed at developing the country's economy.

THE 10 Ds

Democracy. When people have freely chosen their government, subversives have difficulty claiming that the government does not represent the popular vote. When I think of democracy, I think of the four freedoms — Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Fear, and Freedom from Want. (The last is the most difficult to attain.)

Development. The economic well-being of a nation is critical for the happiness of the individual. No one likes

to be a recipient of aid. We all want individual jobs that will permit us to provide for our families and sustain our self-esteem. In Latin America, a majority of the people equate development with the three Ts: *Trabajo* (work), *Techo* (housing), and *Tortillas* (food). Democracy and development are basic to establishing a healthy environment.

Defense. Governments have a duty to protect their citizens. When we talk of defense, we include the security forces that provide the safety that is needed to live peacefully in our homes. Security of the individual is a basic duty that a government must provide. Today we find that terrorism can paralyze governments. Accordingly, the consolidation of all security forces may be necessary to combat subversion effectively.

The first three Ds are interrelated, and a nation has to use its resources wisely and in some order of priority. A historical example of one nation's priorities may prove useful. Interestingly, the example is a communist one:

The leader of the Peoples Republic of China, Mr. Deng Xiao Ping, provided four objectives to the Chinese nation in the following priority: agriculture, science and technology, industry, and defense. The Chinese generals were not happy that defense was placed last. Deng Xiao Ping convinced them that he really had placed them first. His logic was this: Agriculture was the most important objective, because hungry people are unhappy people. Hungry people have a good reason to take up arms and become guerrillas. If we don't satisfy the basic requirements of food to our population, we will have riots. And the Defense Forces will be constantly fighting Chinese when they should be protecting our borders.

The second and third priorities, the development of science and technology and industry, can be translated into providing jobs and heightening the standard of living for the members of our society. He explained that if a large portion of the population is unemployed, a large portion of the population will be dissatisfied. These people will then be receptive to ideas that offer a change of status. He explained that he was

placing defense last because it was necessary for the security of the nation to have the first three priorities well developed.

In the Western world, we list democracy as our first priority. We believe that a government elected by popular vote is one of the best means by which we can insure tranquility. It is obvious that not all countries or peoples agree with this concept. There are some nations that want to experiment with different systems. Nevertheless, the legality of a government, whatever its social structure, is a strong weapon against subversion.

An effective defense has many ingredients. I have singled out detection, deception, delay, decision, deployment, destruction, and dialogue as pertinent to the wars in Latin America.

Detection. Effective intelligence is essential, and outstanding officers must be encouraged to seek intelligence assignments. In a war of subversion, the human source is very important. It has been said that a war of subversion is 90 percent intelligence and 10 percent operational. Detection procedures at times need to be used on friendly units. In El Salvador, brigade units use polygraphs (lie detectors). It is estimated that at least one percent of the soldiers are insurgent sympathizers. Detection by these machines is feared. When a test is announced for the next day, several soldiers will disappear.

Deception. History shows that effective deception techniques such as dummy traffic, weapons, vehicles, and antennas have diverted the enemy away from critical areas and at times forced him into ambushes. The Chinese consider deception so important that a general fails a unit if he does not detect some form of deception.

Winston Churchill remarked that in war truth is so precious that it must be guarded by a thousand lies. Deception is the business of the general as well as of the individual soldier.

In Panama, we required soldiers securing an ammunition dump to construct a dummy soldier from a target silhouette. The dummy would stand guard and would be moved every 15 minutes or so.

In several instances, snipers fired in the dummy's general direction.

The enemy must be diverted by effective camouflage and the use of deceptive techniques to make our targets difficult to destroy. Chinese commanders are given higher marks for camouflage and deception techniques than for the correctness of their fighting positions. In fighting subversion, we must emphasize the importance of keeping the subversives off balance by deception.

Delay. If the enemy has been detected and we have attempted to deceive him but he has penetrated our perimeter anyway, we then must construct effective obstacles to delay and channel him as he approaches his target. These delays take many forms — obstacles, patrols, and again, deception techniques designed to confuse the enemy.

Decision. Communications must be in place to provide the decision makers with the means of communicating commands quickly to the reaction units. The tools must be available to allow the decision maker to issue timely decisions over reliable and secure communications.

Deployment. Reaction forces must have the mobility to reach the endangered position quickly. I am reminded of the techniques used by the government of Vietnam in 1964 to provide confidence to the outposts all over the country. The rule was that if any outpost could hold for 24 hours after it initially reported being hit by the enemy, that outpost would have reinforcements. The government employed the parachute units as the strategic reserve and initially tried to relieve an ambushed unit by ground means, but this often led to another ambush.

I was in El Salvador in the late 1980s when a patrol was ambushed, the company sent to relieve that ambush was ambushed, and the battalion sent to relieve that company was also ambushed. In all, the enemy soldiers conducted three separate ambushes and kept up their fire continuously for seven hours. It was only after the Air Force and air movement of forces that the ambushes were neutralized.

In Vietnam, the paratroopers had marked on their maps the locations of

those posts that had been under attack for more than 17 hours. They knew they would have to jump into those places. The two combat jumps I made were into outposts that had been under attack for more than 15 hours. These outposts were glad to see parachutes overhead. Fresh paratroopers with air support were usually enough to cause the enemy to withdraw.

It is important to assure the population that the government will be able to react to help them in a fight. If it cannot provide that security, cooperation with the army will be difficult. A Venezuelan colonel stated, "It is not enough to have the people on the side of the Army; the government has to mobilize the people to actively support the Army."

Without security, the population cannot be expected to be responsive to the government. The first question villagers ask is, "How long will the Army be with us?" If the answer is weeks or months, the villagers will not be as willing as if the answer were "two years."

Destruction. The word "destruction" needs clarification. It is more effective to destroy a movement by having its members leave it than by killing them.

If we convince the subversives to leave their units, this is a greater victory than destroying them. We must realize that in the guerrilla ranks there are those who are not there of their own free will. The greatest threat to a guerrilla movement is from those who have left it. A strong psychological operations campaign and the proper conduct of the Army in an area of operations can help make this happen.

Dialogue. Negotiations are needed. We must provide opportunities for the opposition to talk to the government. At the height of the Cold War, the U.S. continued to talk with the Soviets. We call it detente, which means simply the relaxation of tensions. If two archers who are on opposing sides are 10 meters away from each other with their bows taut, and there should be a misunderstanding and one lets go of the bow, the other will do the same and the arrows will kill both archers. But if the bows are relaxed and there are then disagreements, both archers will need time to start bringing tension to their bows. Hopefully, through dialogue we can keep those arrows from being fired. It is much easier to avoid battles when tensions are low.

Even more important than the dia-

logue we have with the opposition is the dialogue we have with our neighbors. To be successful against subversion, we need to be united. Looking for ways to let us grow closer should be a priority task.

The role of a leader is simply to keep hope alive. We are better off today than we have ever been. Communism is not the threat of the past. In fact, today communists are fighting communists — Soviets against Chinese, Chinese against Vietnamese, Vietnamese against Cambodians. All communists. What is important is the national interests of the nations. Our national interests in this hemisphere are for democracies that provide freedom to and respect of the individual. We in the military services have the role of keeping hope alive in this hemisphere, and we do this by living the motto of the School of the Americas, "One for all and all for one." We need to make that motto a reality.

Major General Bernard Loeffke is chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board in Washington, D.C. He previously served as XVIII Airborne Corps chief of staff, as commander, U.S. Army South, and as commander of a joint task force in Panama.

Brigade S-1's PSS Matrix

MAJOR WALTER A. SCHREPEL

A brigade S-1's responsibilities for coordinating tactical personnel service support (PSS) can sometimes be wide-ranging. In the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), for example, a division ready brigade deployment can require the S-1, temporarily, to plan and manage a full range of services in the absence of a division G-1 cell. A PSS matrix can ease this burden by enabling

him to better manage his responsibilities.

At the root of his problem is the tension between mission essential tasks and mission specific tasks that he may have to manage at the same time.

The tasks on the mission essential task list (METL) for a functioning S-1 staff operation for combat are complex and time-consuming but also of major significance in sustaining the

brigade's operations. Our official manuals and the authors of articles that appear in our service journals naturally concentrate on these tasks. But Appendix A of Field Manual 101-5 also depicts the full range of tasks that might be on the S-1's mission specific task list (MSTL), either in combat or in some lesser form of conflict such as peace-keeping or peacetime contingency