SOLDIERS IN CITIES: MILITARY OPERATIONS ON URBAN TERRAIN

Edited by

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October 2001

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FOREWORD

This compendium is the result of a conference on "Military Operations in an Urban Environment" cosponsored by the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce in conjunction with the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, the U.S. Army War College, and the Association of the United States Army. At the time of the conference, the concept of homeland defense was emerging as an increasingly important mission for the U.S. military. Now this mission has catapulted to prominence with the attacks of September 11 and the appointment of a Director of Homeland Defense—a Cabinet-level position.

The authors of the chapters examine the ongoing doctrinal thinking, draw historical comparisons, and discuss the thoughts of those attending the conference—experts from the military, government civilian agencies, academia, think tanks, and the defense industry—regarding unconventional warfare. Collectively, they provide a comprehensive report on critical factors that the U.S. military soon may face.

The Strategic Studies Institute commends this collection to all who share a concern about military operations in urban terrain.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute

PREFACE

Soldiers in Cities is required reading for military professionals and others interested in defense policy and issues. In the past half-century, the classic military conflict of armies maneuvering in the field has been replaced by conflicts that center on, rather than avoid, heavily populated areas. Modern military conflict more frequently is not just a fight to control villages or cities, but a variation on the timeless wish to control populations and the hearts of nations. The hardware and mass orientation of the *levée en masse* and industrial-age armies is being replaced by sophisticated terrorists, information warfare, and the politics of mass persuasion. This is reshaping the face of warfare.

America's own military history demonstrates the soldier's dilemma in fighting among populations. The U.S. Army's experience is extensive but often forgotten. First called on to defend settlements against Indian attacks, it later laid siege to or captured cities in Mexico and during the American Civil War. During World War II, the Army liberated or seized thousands of towns and hundreds of cities on the European continent. Fighting in or around village hamlets or cities was a frequent occurrence in Southeast Asia operations. Strangely, our doctrine and cultural focus have remained preoccupied with the classic "fight in the woods" or the seizure of high ground. Urban operations or operations among a foreign populace were always considered "possible" but were not formally incorporated into regular annual training for most combat units. That trend is ending.

The required change has been a long time coming. During the 1970s the classic defense issues of the European General Defense Plan became more and more affected by the "urban sprawl" that changed the face of Europe. As post-Cold War planners surveyed contingencies, it became apparent that the growing urbanization of man affected not just developed but also underdeveloped nations. True maneuver possibilities sought by our technology-rich Army remained only in deserts. The emerging future would be different. The battlefield would most likely be a populated area. Modern military forces may

fight sophisticated armies and air forces, but cities and populations will no longer be innocent bystanders. The complex terrain of urban centers will be critical in any modern operation, and their populations will become involved.

Our national policy to promote, defend, and, if need be in some circumstances, install democracy demands a multitasked force that will provide stability and peace to populations in the battle area. As the armed forces become more involved in stability operations, and with the increasing likelihood that possible opponents will seek shelter in urban areas, it is imperative that our soldiers be skilled in a wide array of urban-centered operations ranging from forced entry to peacekeeping. As such, our armed forces must be expert in the tactics and techniques of urban operations throughout the spectrum of peace and war missions.

Soldiers in Cities clearly delineates the problems facing modern armed forces entering an urban environment. That we will enter that environment during future contingencies is a given. That we are ready to adapt our techniques, technology, and training to that day is a decision we have already made in the positive.

The Association of the United States Army is proud to have been a co-sponsor of the conference that produced this fine work and confidently recommends it to defense professionals.

General Gordon A. Sullivan
U.S. Army (Retired)
President
Association of the U.S. Army

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume, and the conference that preceded it, were made possible through the participation and generosity of a number of individuals. Brigadier General (Retired) James Shane, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, first conceived of the idea of a national symposium, provided much of the financial support for it, and played a key role in getting high-level Army officers to participate in it. Lieutenant General (Retired) Theodore Stroup of the Association of the U.S. Army assisted us both financially and in helping us secure high-level participation from the retired Army community. Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Pappini of the U.S. Army War College also provided very important financial and logistical support. Dr. John D. Stempel, the Director of the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky, put the School's intellectual and organizational resources behind this project.

We are grateful to our hosts at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Major General B. B. Bell, USA; Brigadier General Terry L. Tucker, USA; and Colonel John Antal, USA, for their hospitality. We also want to thank Major General John LeMoyne, USA; Colonel Matthew Smith, USA; Colonel Robert E. Schmidle, USMC; Captain Dan Kostecka, USAF; Major General Mike Davidson, ARNG; and Brigadier General John R. Batiste, USA, for superb briefings on current Army, Marine, Joint Civil Support Task Force, and Joint MOUT doctrine. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Ralph Peters and General John N. Abrams gave very enlightening keynote speeches at the conference.

Dr. Michael Desch gratefully acknowledges the support of the Smith Richardson Foundation in the writing of his chapter.

CHAPTER 1

WHY MOUT NOW?

Michael C. Desch

> For sieges are long and costly; assaults of doubtful issue and risky; and conspiracies are unreliable. [The Romans] also realized that, if the enemy's army was routed, they acquired a kingdom in a day; whereas, if they besieged an obstinate city, it might take years to get it.
>
> Niccólo Machiavelli
> *The Discourses*, II, 32.

Introduction.

Despite ambivalence about military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) among some senior military officers and high-level civilian policymakers, there is a growing recognition that urban operations will be an important mission for the U.S. military in the future.[1] One retired Army officer reminded his colleagues that

> one way or another, we will go. Deployments often will be unpredictable, often surprising. And we frequently will be unprepared for the mission, partly because of the sudden force of circumstance but also because our military is determined to be unprepared for missions it does not want, as if the lack of preparedness might prevent our going. We are like children who refuse to get dressed for school.[2]

Other articles in military professional journals such as *Parameters* and *Military Review* have cited the need for more realistic training and planning for urban warfare, pointing to the experience of the Russian army in Chechnya and Task Force Ranger's fight in Somalia.[3] Outside critics have also chided the U.S. Army for having to play catch up in this area.[4] The armed forces' ability to fight in urban combat has also come under scrutiny by the popular press. A recent *Newsweek* story noted that Marines are training for

urban operations in abandoned buildings at Fort Ord, California. In a story in the same issue covering the second bloody battle for the Chechen capital, a Defense Department official told a reporter, "I am not so sure we'd do a lot better than the Russians."[5]

What explains the renaissance in interest in military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) within the American military? The conventional wisdom emphasizes two factors. First, current world demographic trends suggest that increasingly the population of the world will be urban. Thus, the likelihood of any military operation being conducted in urban areas is also likely to increase. Second, a number of recent catastrophic failures in MOUT—the costly U.S. fight in the Bakara market place in Mogudishu, Somalia, in 1993, and the Russian defeat in the first battle for Grozny, Chechnya, in 1994-95—have refocused attention on the challenges of MOUT operations in general.

I agree that these two factors play an important role in renewed interest in MOUT within the U.S. military. I suggest, however, that there is another factor that is also prompting the U.S. military to think hard about MOUT. This factor is the dramatically different international and domestic security environment the United States faces now that the Cold War is over. There are three particular aspects to this new security environment that make MOUT a relatively more important mission today for the U.S. military than it was in the past.[6]

First, the fact of U.S. primacy—there is no single nation or even likely coalition of nations that can challenge the United States in conventional or nuclear combat—means that future challengers will seek to wage asymmetric warfare against us. As the following chapters will make clear, fighting in urban areas has been, and will continue to be, a great equalizer and will likely be one of the asymmetric strategies of choice for future U.S. adversaries.

Second, with the end of the Cold War, the United States finds itself facing a host of potential situations which will

require it to conduct military operations other than war (MOOTW). These can include stability and support operations (SASO) such as humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping/peace enforcement as well as antiterrorist operations, narcotics interdiction, and noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO). Many of these MOOTW are likely to take place in urban areas.

Finally, coincident with the end of the Cold War, the likelihood of U.S. military operations in the continental United States itself has also increased. To be sure, the U.S. military has always had important domestic missions such as disaster relief and support for civilian law enforcement during major social unrest. However, there is a growing concern among civilian policymakers that the threat of terrorism—especially involving weapons of mass effects (WME)—will require active component, reserve and National Guard support for civilian authorities in the case of a potential or actual WME event. Indeed, the new national strategy of Homeland Defense mandates an important role for the military in these areas. Most scenarios for a major natural disaster, widespread social unrest, or WME consequence management focus, in whole or in part, on urban areas.

My bottom line is that, while demographic trends and recent failures explain part of the renewed interest in MOUT, the extremely complex international and domestic post-Cold War security environments are also an important factor in today's resurgence of interest in urban operations by all branches of the U.S. military.

MOUT and Demography.

Asked why he continually robbed banks, Willy Sutton said, "That's where the money is." One could answer the question of "why fight in cities?" with the equivalent answer: "That's where the people are!" It is widely estimated that by the year 2010, nearly 75 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas.[7] This

pattern of increasing global urbanization is a function of three dynamics: (1) "Natural increase" among urban dwellers; (2) increased migration into urban areas; and (3) the urbanization of rural areas.[8] In the developed world, urbanization rates are already at this level.[9]

While it is true that people have been living in cities for nearly 5,000 years, current trends in urbanization represent two fundamental changes: (1) the proportion of the total population living in cities is unprecedented, and (2) the size of these urban areas far exceeds anything ever seen in the past.[10] As Kingsley Davis observes, prior to 1900 only one country—the United Kingdom—had a larger urban than rural population. Today, nearly the entire industrialized world does. Indeed, it was the Industrial Revolution that really brought about the Urban Revolution.[11]

Most demographers agree that we are seeing the peak levels of urbanization in the developed countries (DCs) today. Some, in fact, suggest that future technological and economic trends may result in some population "deconcentration" in the developed world.[12] However, few suggest that such deconcentration will lead to anything other than suburban sprawl. Trends among other regions vary somewhat, but the aggregate trend for less developed countries (LDCs) remains toward the same levels of urbanization as the DCs. Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, are already there. Asia, in contrast, is likely to have some of the world's largest cities but will still have a larger rural population. Africa is also urbanizing at a significant rate, but much of that is occurring in small and mid-sized urban areas.[13]

While urbanization was a net benefit for the economic development of the developed countries, there are good reasons for thinking that among LDCs this urban boom will not contribute to economic development or political stability. The pace of urbanization in the LDCs is far exceeding that of the DCs. Another key difference between

DC and LDC urbanization is that for the former, economic growth drew people from rural areas, while for the latter, economic misery is driving people from rural to urban areas.[14]

Urbanization is both a geographical and a social phenomenon. Urbanization changes the physical geography of an area by increasing the density of settlement and producing built-up areas of closely spaced buildings and tight networks of roads and rail lines. Urbanization also changes human beings socially, psychologically, and behaviorally.[15] Urbanization is therefore a double-edged sword. On the one hand, at least in the developed world, urban areas have become the economic and political centers of most countries. The same is likely to be true among the LDCs. On the other hand, urbanization poses a number of serious problems for political leaders. These include untrammeled growth, overcrowding, pressures on urban services, the growth of slums and other poor areas, transportation bottle-necks, atomization of society, unemployment, racial and/or ethnic conflict, pollution, loss of agricultural areas, and increased adverse consequences of natural or man-made disasters.[16] The fact of increasing global urbanization, along with the many problems associated with it, have certainly focused much attention on MOUT.

Recent MOUT Failures.

In addition to the indisputable fact of the increasing urbanization of the planet, another important cause for renewed interest in MOUT is a series of high-profile failures in urban operations. To be sure, urban operations have traditionally been regarded by professionals as among the most difficult of military operations. As military officers who study urban warfare conclude, urban warfare multiplies the number of possible dimensions of combat, increases the density of terrain, disperses forces, reduces the distance between combatants and noncombatants,

increases the demands for manpower, places a premium on low-technology warfare, increases the likelihood of casualties, complicates the military's rules of engagement, and challenges traditional indices of success and failure.[17]

For these and other reasons, very few militaries have been satisfied with their combat performance in urban areas. It is true that some MOUT operations such as in Panama have gone fairly smoothly.[18] However, other "successes" such as the French in Algeria in 1958 or the Russians in Grozny in 2000 do not really provide templates that the U.S. military would want to adopt. The French won the Battle of Algiers through ruthless violation of the rights of captured suspects and noncombatants.[19] The Russians succeeded in capturing Grozny with enormous casualties and only after literally depopulating and destroying it.[20] The historical record, overall, suggests that MOUT operations are very hard to conduct successfully.

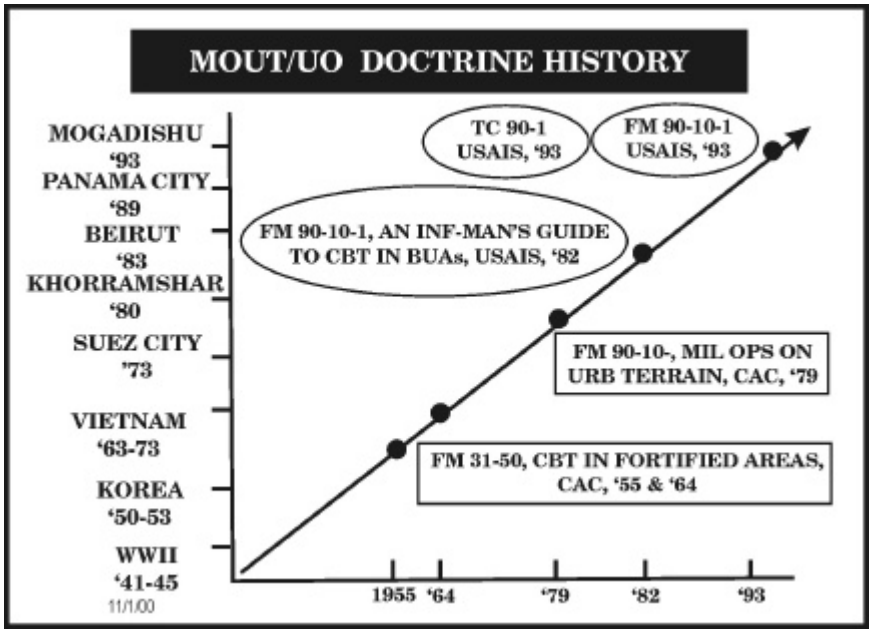
Two recent events have reinforced this lesson. First, on October 3, 1993, an American Special Operations force—Task Force Ranger—found itself in a running street battle with thousands of Somali militiamen after an unsuccessful raid to capture two key aids to Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid. In the ensuing street fighting in Mogudishu's Bakara market place, the United States lost 19 soldiers killed, and nearly 90 wounded. While Somali losses were undoubtedly much higher, the outcome of this battle represented a major political defeat for the United States, spelling the beginning of the end of U.S. efforts to stabilize the situation in Somalia.[21]

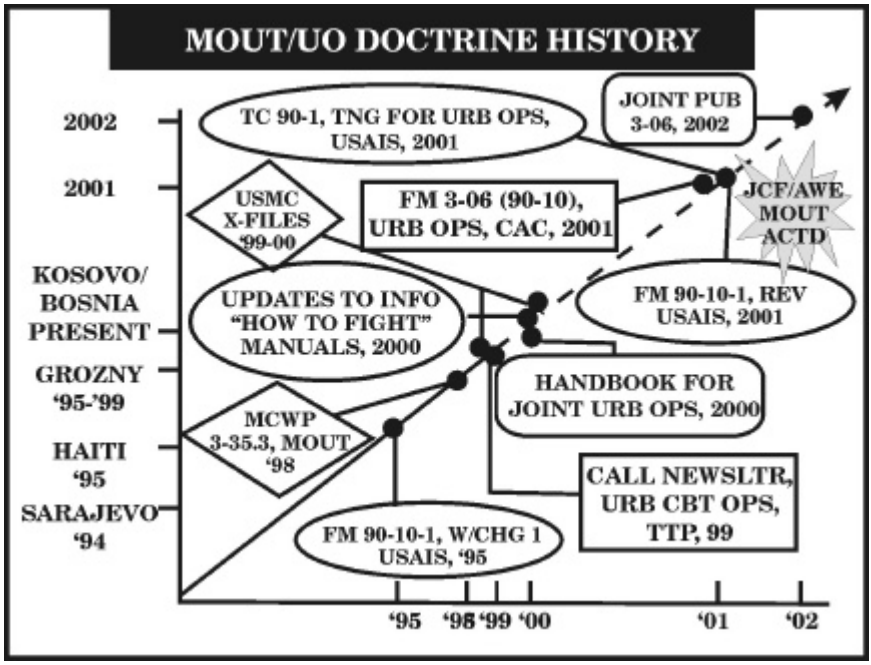
Second, in December 1994, after failing to topple the anti-Russian regime in Chechnya through covert means, the Russians launched a major conventional effort to oust Djokar Dudayev, the renegade former Soviet Air Force officer who headed that separatist movement. While the Russians initially had some success driving the Chechens from the open areas of northern Chechnya, when they tried to drive armored forces to the center of Grozny in order to

capture the city's key administrative centers, the same tactics that seemed to have worked for them in Kabul in 1979 and Baku in 1990 failed catastrophically. The Russians suffered thousands of casualties and were forced to withdraw. The U.S. debacle in Somalia and the Russian catastrophe in Chechnya have led to much soul-searching in the U.S. military over MOUT.

The New Security Environment and MOUT.

In addition to the demographic and operational incentives for thinking anew about MOUT, the post-Cold War security environment has also played an important role in sparking renewed interest in urban operations. As the following two sequential charts make clear, U.S. military thinking about MOUT has significantly accelerated since the end of the Cold War.[22]





Three particular aspects of this new security environment are key.

MOUT as Asymmetric Warfare. First, the most salient characteristic of the post-Cold War world is the fact of U.S. primacy.[23] The United States won the Cold War and now stands alone as perhaps the most dominant global hegemon since ancient Rome. Ironically, while the United States faces few, if any, conventional military threats to its security, the very fact of its overwhelming military power will lead potential challengers to try to counter it asymmetrically.[24] Terrorism certainly offers one means of asymmetric warfare; forcing the United States to conduct operations on urban terrain represents another. In fact, the two may be employed together by future U.S. adversaries to try to negate U.S. preponderance.

MOUT and MOOTW. Second, the period since the end of the Cold War has seen the emergence of a very complicated international security environment. Genocide, widespread

famine, and intractable political conflict have led the United States to use its armed forces 39 times since 1990. Aside from the Gulf War, all of these were MOOTW. In contrast, over the 46 years of the Cold War, the United States conducted 48 military operations, many of which were traditional warfighting missions.[25]

Robert Kaplan's influential book, *The Coming Anarchy*, starkly captured for many the chaos and uncertainty of this new international situation.[26] The Clinton administration confronted these new challenges by sending the American military into conflicts around the globe. Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright famously quipped, "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[27] The end of the Cold War made possible this greater level of MOOTW for two reasons. First, it provided opportunity: the end of the Cold War unleashed dozens of tribal and ethnic conflicts previously held in check by the two rival superpowers. Second, it removed a powerful incentive for U.S. restraint: without the overarching Soviet threat, the United States was relatively free to engage in such operations. Many of the uses to which the Clinton administration put the military involved operations other than war in urban areas from the villages of Bosnia and Kosovo to the streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

MOUT Homeland and Defense.[28] Since the end of the Cold War, American defense officials have increasingly become concerned that nuclear, biological, chemical, and large conventional weapons(WME)—once the strategic monopoly of the superpowers—have now become more widely available. Third World countries such as India and Pakistan have them. Many rogue nations such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea are making concentrated efforts to obtain or develop them. To make matters more complicated, there are also a handful of nonstate actors (foreign and domestic terrorist organizations like the World Trade Center bombers and religious cults like Aum Shinrikyo), as well as deranged individuals (e.g., Timothy McVeigh), who have demonstrated the ability to develop and employ WME to

commit acts of terror. Most of their targets have been, and will continue to be, in urban areas.

One of the primary MOUT components of "Homeland Defense" will be the staffing and support of the 54 new National Guard WME Civil-Support Teams (CST).[29] Their mission is to offer "early assessment, initial detection, and technical advice to the incident commander" during a WME event. CST personnel also help to identify and coordinate other Department of Defense (DoD) unit needs. These CSTs are composed of experts who have been highly trained in a variety of disciplines and functional areas. The CSTs are the first military responders, and their goal is to be able to respond in 4 hours to the scene of a WME event to support the civilian first responders (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), firefighters, police, etc.). Given its rapid response and assessment mission, the CSTs are designed to assist civilian incident commanders with the initial detection and assessment of the nature of the emergency. They then inform the local, state, and federal response units of their assessment; recommend what equipment is needed; and then facilitate deployment of state military units in support of civilian authorities. As with the other highly trained units of this nature, a CST can also be used as part of a federal response force to support National Military Strategy (NMS) requirements.

In sum, the changing international and domestic security environments have pushed MOUT operations into the forefront of U.S. military doctrine and planning. Future challengers are likely to try to force the United States to fight in urban areas as a means of equalizing U.S. preponderance; increasing numbers of MOOTW are also forcing the U.S. military to conduct those sorts of operations in urban areas; and concerns about the vulnerability of urban areas in the United States itself to a WME event have led the U.S. military to think seriously about MOUT on American soil.

This Project.

The Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce—in conjunction with the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, the U.S. Army War College, and the Association of the U.S. Army— organized a national symposium on "Military Operations in an Urban Environment." The symposium was held at Fort Knox, Kentucky, during the period September 14-17, 2000, in the heralded Patton Museum of Armor.

The rationale for this symposium was that military operations in cities and other urban concentrations have become one of the hot issues for the American military in the next century. Already, the U.S. Army (at Fort Benning and Fort Knox), the U.S. Marine Corps, the Joint Staff, and the National Guard Bureau are working to formulate doctrines for how to operate in cities and other densely populated and built-up areas. What makes this mission even more complex is the growing realization that such operations will not only involve combat but also humanitarian support and peacekeeping/enforcement operations. These operations may have to be undertaken simultaneously. Finally, the new national strategy of Homeland Defense gives the U.S. military a number of potential missions in cities and other urban areas within the United States itself. Much of this doctrinal thinking is still in progress and will benefit from historical comparisons and discussion of current thoughts by experts not only in the military but also in other civilian agencies of government, academia, think tanks, and the defense industry.

The symposium focused on identifying the lessons of previous military operations—from combat to humanitarian operations—which will be of use to the U.S. military in the future in conducting operations in urban areas abroad and at home. It had three parts.

Part 1 looked at current doctrinal thinking about operations in an urban environment of the U.S. Army, the

U.S. Marines, the National Guard, and the Joint Staff. Representatives of each delivered briefings based on the current state of doctrine in their respective services. These briefings are summarized in a separate Rapporteur's Report by Daniel Kostecka.[30]

Part 2 involved discussion of historical case studies chronicling the experiences of different militaries undertaking a wide variety of military operations in urban areas. Cases included, among others, German and Soviet operations in Stalingrad and Berlin during World War II (Gerhard Weinberg); U.S. operations in Hue during the Vietnam War (James Wirtz); British operations in Belfast since 1969 (David Pearson); Israeli operations in Beirut in 1982 (Brigadier General Dov Tamari); U.S. Marine operations in Beirut in 1982 (Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor); U.S. Marine and National Guard operations in Los Angeles in 1992 (Major General James Delk); and Russian operations in Grozny in 1995 (Anatol Lieven). There were also three analytical presentations covering (1) an urban political specialist's view of MOUT (Max Nieman); (2) new technologies and MOUT (Gerald Yonas and Timothy Moy); and (3) a general assessment of the briefings and cases (Barry Posen). Each of the memoranda commissioned for these cases assesses the effectiveness of military operations from a tactical and a doctrinal perspective. Each author also tells us what lessons we should draw from these cases for current U.S. doctrine and training. The objective is to frame the discussion of developing MOUT doctrine in the light of the lessons of the historical case studies and current technological and demographic developments. These memoranda form the bulk of this anthology.

Part 3 of the conference was an orientation visit for conference participants to the new Mounted Urban Combat Training (MUCT) site at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The Zussman Village MUCT site is a state-of-the-art facility designed to train U.S. Army forces in all manner of urban environments. The site includes a wide variety of actual

buildings and other urban features including an extensive sewer system, a U.S. embassy building, a large school, houses, apartments, a gas station, and a railroad assembly yard. Operations in this training environment are made more realistic through a state-of-the-art special effects package based on technology utilized at Universal Studios in California. Zussman Village is a national resource for training active, reserve, and civilian first responders for the MOUT challenges they may face in the coming years both abroad and at home.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. Robert H. Scales, Jr., "The Indirect Approach: How U.S. Military Forces Can Avoid the Pitfalls of Future Urban Warfare," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1998, pp. 68-74. The Report of the last Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) completed in May 1997 dealt lightly with the threat of urban warfare, specifically mentioning only the Marines' Urban Warfare program. *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, May 1997, Chapter VII, p. 16. The National Defense Panel assessment of the May 1997 QDR also failed to deal directly with the question. *The National Defense Panel: Assessment of the May 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review*, December 1, 1997. The General Accounting Office recently released its report titled "Focused Attention Needed to Prepare U.S. Forces for Combat in Urban Areas" to Congress, citing the need for better training facilities. The U.S. Commission on National Security, co-chaired by former Senators Hart and Rudman in October 2000, expressed an ominous view of the threats to the United States and criticized DOD for its failure to take sufficient note that the battlefield had changed, and that so must doctrine and training, especially in the area of MOUT.

2. Ralph Peters, "Heavy Peace," *Parameters*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring 1999, pp. 71-79.

3. One of the more influential articles in the Army's professional literature advocating serious thinking about MOUT was Ralph Peters, "Our Soldiers, Their Cities," *Parameters*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 43-50.

4. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., "W(H)ither the Army?" *Backgrounder*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, January 18, 2000.

5. *Newsweek*, February 13, 2000; *Newsweek*, February 21, 2000, p. 36; Roy Jonkers, "The Battle of Grozny," *AFIO@his.com*, January 14, 2000. The foregoing paragraph draws heavily upon Patterson School National Security Research Group, "Fort Knox's Mounted Urban Combat Training Site: A Comparative Assessment With

Recommendations, ”a report prepared for The Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, April 2000.

6. To be sure, MOUT has always been a concern to the U.S. military in both low-intensity conflict and major conventional war. On the former, see Samuel P. Huntington, “The Bases of Accommodation,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 4, July 1968, pp. 642-656, for discussion of the role of the concentration of the South Vietnamese population in cities during the Vietnam War. For discussion of the potential role of urban areas in a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, see Paul Bracken, “Urban Sprawl and NATO Defense,” *Survival*, Vol 18, No. 6, November/December 1976, pp. 254-267; and C. N. Donnelly, “Soviet Techniques for Combat in Built-up Areas,” *Military Review*, Vol. 57, No. 11, November 1977, pp. 37-48.

7. Major General John LeMoyne, Briefing on “Military Operations in an Urban Environment,” Fort Knox, KY, September 15, 2000, Slide 3, available at *ftp://moutftp:out99tfp@192.153.150.25/moutftp*.

8. United Nations, *World Economic and Social Survey, 1996*, New York: United Nations, 1996, p. 218.

9. United Nations, p. 221.

10. Kingsley Davis, “The Urbanization of the Human Population,” *Scientific American*, Vol. 213, No. 3, September 1965, p. 41.

11. Williams and Brunn, p. 11.

12. United Nations, p. 221; and Jack F. Williams and Stanley D. Brunn, “World Urban Development” in Brunn and Williams, eds., *Cities of the World* (2nd ed.), New York: HarperCollins, 1993, p. 1.

13. United Nations, pp. 223-233.

14. Davis, pp. 41, 49, 52.

15. Williams and Brunn, p. 3.

16. This list comes largely from Williams and Brunn.

17. Peters, “Our Soldiers, Their Cities,” pp. 43-50; and Lieutenant Colonel T. R. Milton, “Urban Operations: Future War,” *Military Review*, Vol. 74, No. 2, February 1994, pp. 37-46.

18. On Panama, see Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991, pp. 156-196.

19. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria: 1954-1962*, Harmondsworth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1985.

20. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Timothy L. Thomas, "Grozny 2000: Urban Combat Lessons Learned," *Military Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4, July/August 2000, p. 50-59, available at *http://www-cgsc.army.mil/milrev/English/JulAug00/thomas.htm*.

21. The best book on the battle itself is Mark Bowden's *Blackhawk Down: A Story of Modern War*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999. For a good discussion of lessons learned from this by the American military, see Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*, Fort McNair: National Defense University Press, January 1995.

22. Both of these charts are from LeMoyne, Slides 6 and 7.

23. Christopher Layne "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993, pp. 5-51; Robert Jervis, "International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?" *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993, pp. 52-67; and Samuel P. Huntington, "Why International Primacy Matters," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993, pp. 68-83.

24. Wesley Clark, "How to Fight An Asymmetric War, *Time*, October 23, 2000, p. 40; and Michael R. Gordon, "Military Analysis: Superpower Suddenly Finds Itself Threatened by Sophisticated Terrorists," *New York Times*, October 14, 2000, at *http://www.nytimes.com/2000/ 10/14/world/14STRA.html*.

25. See Federation of American Scientists, "United States Military Operations," *http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/index.html#post*.

26. Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, New York: Random House, 2000.

27. Quoted in Colin Powell with Joseph Persico, *My American Journey*, New York: Random House, 1995, p. 576.

28. This section draws upon The Patterson School National Security Research Group, "Weapons of Mass Destruction, Domestic Preparedness, and the Kentucky National Guard," a report prepared for The Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, April 1999.

29. For a skeptical view of the threat and this program, see Judith Miller, "Threat of Unconventional Terrorism Is Overstated, Study Says," as reported in *New York Times*, October 26, 2000, p. A20.

CHAPTER 2

STALINGRAD AND BERLIN: FIGHTING IN URBAN TERRAIN

Gerhard L. Weinberg

From August 1942 into February 1943, German and Soviet forces fought for, in, and around Stalingrad; from February to early May 1945 they fought for, in, and around Berlin. One aspect of these battles is not likely to be repeated in any situation that the forces of the United States and its allies are likely to be involved in: the factor of strategic choice. In the case of Stalingrad, the German attempt to seize the city (as opposed to the Red Army's retaking of whatever the Germans controlled) was the product of a deliberate choice. At both the political and military levels, the Germans had decided to try to take the city by assault rather than to bypass it or seize it by surrounding it and then starving it out. Their choice led to a grinding high-intensity urban fight causing immense casualties for both sides.

In 1945, the political and military leadership of the Soviet Union made a similar choice about Berlin. Rather than bypass or envelop it with a subsequent siege from a relatively short distance, they chose to drive into the city (in addition to surrounding it). In this case, lengthy and bloody urban combat with high casualties for both sides also was the predictable result. This is not the place to examine the reasons for and the wisdom of the choices made by the Germans and the Soviets;the point needing to be made is that the United States and any allies it has are most unlikely to make such a choice in the future. If and when American forces are ever engaged in high-intensity urban warfare, it is almost certainly going to be because the political and military leadership see no other choice.

Certain features of the battles for Stalingrad and Berlin are, however, likely to be equally characteristic of any urban warfare in the foreseeable future, and it is to these that attention must be directed. In both cases, it is quite obvious that the conduct of operations rested on very small groups of fighting men. Squads, and even smaller groups, rarely led by an officer but more frequently by a noncommissioned officer or even an enlisted soldier, struggled for houses, rooms, cellars, and unidentifiable piles of rubble. Direction and control above the company level were extremely difficult and sometimes completely irrelevant. Furthermore, the intensity of combat, the unpredictability of developments, the multidimensional sources of danger, and the enormous difficulties of supply and relief all combined to make this kind of fighting terribly draining on those in it. The war on the Eastern Front was certainly no form of vacation for either side when combat occurred in the swamps and forests of the northern portion or the open terrain of the southern portion of the theater of operations, but all the evidence indicates that fighting in large heavily built-up urban areas was more draining and even more terrifying than the alternation of waiting, moving, and fighting on the broader expanses of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1942-43 and inside Germany in 1945.

The prospects for any military force engaged in the sort of urban fighting that is recalled by the names of Stalingrad and Berlin will depend above all on the training and morale of those individual soldiers engaged in it. There is here a basic shift in warfare that has a historical analogy only in the shift from close-order fighting in the 18th century to the open-order fighting of the 20th. As fighting shifts from the landscape to the cityscape, stamina, morale, leadership, and initiative move from the company to the squad and to smaller groups of fighters.

The morale problem becomes critical. The soldiers not only have to know what they are fighting for or against and what their direction has to be, they must also see signs of

support in their lonely terror. It is here that the Germans and the Soviets received a mixed message about the role of air power. On the one hand, as the Western Allies discovered in Cassino, Caen, Aachen, and elsewhere, dropping lots of bombs has the effect, among other things, of creating lovely rubble piles for the defenders to utilize for their positions. Subsequent bombing, as the Germans discovered in Stalingrad, makes the rubble bounce but has little practical effect on the course of the fighting. There is, however, another side to this. The presence of the German air force in strength over Stalingrad at repeated intervals during the early part of the fighting and into November, clearly had a significant effect on the morale of very stressed troops. Conversely, the ability of the Red Air Force to obtain control of the skies over Stalingrad in December 1942 and January 1943 not only had the practical effect of interfering with the already hopelessly inadequate German air supply effort, but it also served to discourage the German and encourage the Red Army soldiers as they struggled in the ruined city.

A somewhat similar scenario was enacted over Berlin in 1945. There most of the bombing had been done by the Western Allies as part of their general air offensive, not as a part of a ground assault on the city. The physical effect, of course, was essentially similar to that of the German bombing of Stalingrad: lots of rubble for defenders to utilize. However, it was important that, for essentially the whole period of fighting for and in Berlin, the Red Air Force dominated the skies over the city. While this did not prevent a few German planes from landing and taking off, utilizing wide streets rather than airfields, the morale impact appears to have been considerable. The Red Army soldiers knew that the planes they could hear overhead were “theirs,” while the German defenders were discouraged by the knowledge that the noise was made by the planes of the enemy and that they risked being machine gunned from the air as well as by the advancing Red Army.

Connecting the two themes of the key role of very small groups of fighters and morale under enormous stress is the critical role of forward artillery, which was dramatically illustrated in both urban battles. For the Germans in trying to move forward in Stalingrad and for the Red Army in moving to retake the city and later to take Berlin, it was absolutely essential to have self-propelled artillery—and to have it in large numbers. The Germans mainly utilized what they called the "Sturmgeschütz" or assault gun. This was essentially a 75mm, later l05mm, howitzer fitted onto a Mark III medium tank instead of a standard turret. It was in many ways an ideal weapon for urban fighting since it was narrow enough to move through the streets (a subject to be taken up subsequently), carried a weapon of substantial power, and could be moved in direct support of advancing soldiers in an urban area. Direct fire from it was of obvious utility in the struggle from house to house, and its conspicuous presence gave German soldiers a real sense of having something of great practical effect on their side under trying circumstances.

The problem for the Germans was that they never had enough of these very useful weapons. This was not a matter of the usual cry for "more." The Germans had diverted and continued throughout World War II to divert vast resources to artillery projects that belong in the category of lunacy. The German army's investment of artillery resources in such projects as the "Dora" super heavy-super heavy, needing double sets of railway tracks and hundreds of men and having the capability of firing only a few dozen shells; the V-1 project; and the V-3 super cannon to shell London, all diverted resources in a constrained war economy away from practical weapons like the assault gun.

The Red Army had a basically similar experience in urban fighting. Increasingly during the war they relied on self-propelled guns, and these were used especially effectively in the battle of Berlin. Both rocket and shell-firing self-propelled guns proved essential. In this connection, something has to be said about one aspect of the

films of German and of Soviet origin about World War II that are frequently shown. In these films, the horses are what might be called camera-shy; that is, they rarely appear. In general, this is a deliberately misleading technique designed to obscure from the viewer the fact that both armies relied overwhelmingly on horse transport in the war. Both armies relied quite literally on millions of horses. The absence of the horses from those scenes that deal with the fighting in Stalingrad and Berlin, however, is not a deception at all but reflects reality. The Red Army, in spite of its infusion with vast numbers of American trucks, still depended heavily on horses in 1945, but these were hauling supplies, dragging ammunition and guns, and carrying soldiers and wounded behind the lines. In Berlin itself, the Red Army relied on its self-propelled guns and rocket launchers to provide direct and immediate support to the soldiers dashing from house to house and block to block.

The enormous importance of self-propelled artillery providing direct fire support for troops in urban combat raises an important issue for both artillery and tanks, an issue to be discussed presently. If there is even the slightest interest in preserving anything of the urban environment itself for reconstruction when the fighting is over, the self-propelled artillery and the other armored fighting vehicles must be able to maneuver in a city's streets and alleys, including those that are fairly narrow. Here, ironically, the Germans had an advantage in World War II as a by-product of their prewar plans. They had anticipated a short and easy war against Czechoslovakia, a hard war against France and Britain, and a quick and easy war against the Soviet Union. They also expected an easy war against the United States, but one that required weapons systems to handle the distance to the United States and cope with the American navy. They therefore concentrated in their rearmament program in the early and mid-1930s on weapons for the war in the West, and that meant relatively small and narrow tanks for the roads and cities of Western Europe. No new weapons systems were thought needed for

the war against the Soviet Union (the Germans only initiated development of those *after* June 1941), and therefore they turned to designing and producing the weapons systems for war against the United States in 1937, once the ones for the West were under way.

With this as background, it will be easier to understand why the use of the Mark III tank chassis as a basis for the assault gun proved to be such an asset for the Germans once they became involved in high-intensity urban warfare. In any city in Europe (or elsewhere), a self-propelled gun on a low-profile, relatively narrow, medium tank is exactly what is needed for close and direct support for sorely-tried infantry. Furthermore, such a vehicle can be configured to carry a flame thrower or a bank of rockets. This point is not to ignore other forms of self-propelled artillery utilized by the Germans during the war—there were more than a dozen types—but to call attention to a major issue that is likely to be considered important for U.S. forces in the future. When the Red Army moved into Berlin in 1945, on the other hand, concern about the future rebuilding of life in the captured city was certainly the last thing on their minds. In their view, self-propelled artillery and heavy tanks were rather wide and therefore crushed additional buildings, the Germans should have thought about that before attacking their dear Soviet friends.

The issue of tank-infantry teams is closely related to the discussion of self-propelled artillery. Such operations are difficult and require careful training under any circumstances. In a close urban environment, such combat procedures are even harder to carry out. Both the Germans and the Soviets on occasion tried to do this, the latter more frequently than the former. The critical issue here turns out to be that of communications. It is always difficult for infantry to coordinate with artillery and armor in combined arms fighting, but these difficulties are especially great in an urban environment This is one area where the technology available to both sides in World War II was not particularly useful and where post-war and current

technological development can be expected to provide some assistance. In the utilization of tanks in urban warfare, there is also a certain similarity to the morale impact of self-propelled artillery. It certainly proved encouraging for the soldiers trying to move forward to see their side's tanks helping them and, in the Soviet case, often carrying them into battle. It goes without saying that the tanks provide an additional form of self-propelled artillery, but their use in the fighting in Stalingrad and Berlin raised communication problems that were not easily solved with the technology of the time.

One of the most difficult combat environments that both German and Soviet soldiers encountered in Stalingrad and Berlin was the sewer system. In both cities, as in most large urban areas, there was an extensive system of underground sewers as well as utility tunnels. In addition, Berlin had a very extensive system of underground tunnels for urban mass transit and railways. Fighting underground generally proved even more harrowing than fighting in the streets and buildings. Furthermore, the sewers in particular offered opportunities, on the one hand, for trapped groups of soldiers to escape to their own lines, and, on the other hand, for inserting soldiers behind what appeared to be the enemy's front lines. One of the reasons that urban fighting turned out both to be very costly in casualties and to require a far larger commitment of troops than had been anticipated was the extra dimension that the subterranean combat zone provided. This issue is closely related to another one that has to be examined next.

Urban combat requires maps. Obviously maps are needed for open-field fighting, but the urban environment carries with it some special mapping issues. There is at least some evidence to suggest that the Red Army was simply not prepared for the very extensive bodies of water present in greater Berlin. This was hardly a novel feature of the city; the lakes, ponds, and streams had been there for a long time. The point is that effective execution of any warfare in an urban area depends on accurate maps, to include depiction

of bodies of surface water as well as underground tunnels of all sorts. Here is a possible task for technological advances: to what extent can satellite imagery provide subterranean sensing?

The Germans had for years sent special reconnaissance planes, the squadron named after its leader, Theodor Rowehl, over portions of the Soviet Union, and such activities were, of course, continued by the Germans to the extent of their capacity after June 1941. But there were major limitations to their range, frequency, and technical capabilities. However good some of the products of this aerial photography actually were—and whatever benefits the United States derived from capturing much of it at the end of World War II—the imaging technology of the time gave few clues to underground sewers, utility tunnels, etc. Here was an additional difficulty for the Germans and potential help for the Red Army in its defense of Stalingrad. The situation was to some extent reversed when the Soviets advanced into Berlin.

One of the most conspicuous features of the fighting in Stalingrad and Berlin was the high level of casualties on both sides. Even if the enormous forces engaged on both sides in those battles may never be seen in high-intensity urban battles again, the large numbers of killed and wounded underline the basic fact that such conflict is extremely lethal. Unfortunately, there are not even remotely reliable figures available for German casualties in the actual fighting in the two battles. (The best German study, *Stalingrad* by Manfred Kehrig [Stuttgart, 1974], does not provide any summary figures for German casualties.) Also, questions can be raised about the accuracy of the Soviet losses as tabulated in Krivosheev's book, *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1997), but the figures provided there, rounded off here, can be accepted as the baseline minimums. For the defensive phase of the Stalingrad battle, he shows 324,000 dead or irrecoverably lost, and 320,000 wounded and sick, producing an average of 5,100 casualties per day. For the

Soviet Stalingrad offensive, he shows 155,000 dead or lost and 330,000 wounded and sick, for an average of 6,400 per day, though many of these casualties were incurred in the breakthrough operations north and south of the city, not in the city itself. For the Berlin operation, which Krivosheev limits to the phase from April 16 to May 8, 1945, he shows 78,000 dead or lost and 274,000 wounded and sick, for an average of 15,300 per day. It will be evident to anyone familiar with the losses suffered by the United States in World War II that these 1,481,000 casualties are substantially more numerous than the 1,100,000 American losses in the entire war in all theaters combined. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that German casualties in these battles were below a million. The percentage of casualties among the units engaged was by all accounts substantially higher than it was for both sides in other operations of equal duration but outside urban areas.

Fighting in cities, furthermore, proved enormously costly for both sides in terms of supplies. There do not appear to be any serious studies of this subject, but all the evidence suggests an unmistakable pattern: the expenditure of ammunition of all sorts, the loss of equipment of all kinds, and the wearing out of whatever equipment is deployed tend to be at a consistently more rapid rate in urban fighting than in other terrain. It is certainly true that artillery barrages before conventional offensive thrusts invariably consumed enormous quantities of ammunition in a short period of time. The distinguishing characteristic of the battles at Stalingrad and Berlin was the unremitting nature of the very high levels of required firing throughout and the terrible handicap imposed on any units not adequately supplied with ammunition.

An issue certain to be of major importance in any future urban conflict is that of collateral material damage and civilian casualties. The Germans were not the least bit interested in these matters. Major Soviet cities, according to German planning, were to be levelled in any case, and from 30 to 40 million people were to be starved to death. In the

context of such planning, most of it predating the invasion, the more civilians killed and the more physical destruction accomplished, the better in the eyes of those at the top. This is not to suggest that German soldiers intentionally killed civilians in the fighting just to kill them; it is to point out that this was simply not an issue for them. Similarly, the Red Army was not particularly interested in or concerned about civilian casualties. The assumption of the Soviet leadership that after the war there would be a Germany or part of Germany refashioned on the Soviet model meant that there was no special interest in killing as many German civilians as possible, but there was on the other hand no particular concern about holding down civilian casualties. That they were not even higher in Berlin was due to the evacuation of large numbers of people, especially children, beforehand, a measure undertaken primarily in order to escape the bombing campaign of the Western Allies.

In the future, this conundrum will confront the United States and any allies fighting alongside American forces. The corresponding post facto debates in the United States about the fire bombing of enemy cities will in the future come a few days, not years, after the fighting, and may very well begin even while the fighting is actually still going on. What at no time concerned the Germans or the Soviets is quite likely to become a major issue for the United States. The likelihood that anyone in the future will develop aerial bombs, infantry rounds, or artillery projectiles that distinguish between combatants and noncombatants is, in this writer's opinion, very small.

While certain problems of urban warfare may well lend themselves to technological remedies or at least some amelioration, the experience of Stalingrad and Berlin also points up the great danger of succumbing to the temptation of technology when it comes to the area of command and control. Here the evidence currently available is far better for the German side than the Soviet. Almost all higher-ranking German officers in World War II had participated in World War I. The dramatic improvements in

technical means of communication—radio, teleprinter, telephones with scramblers, etc.—in the interwar years suggested to most higher German commanders that battle could now be controlled from a distance. Corps, army, army group, and even general headquarters in East Prussia all too often imagined that control over military operations at the tactical level could be exercised from afar with the new means of communication. This proved to be a seriously mistaken view. In urban warfare, both the Germans and the Red Army discovered, at times to their grief, the illusory nature of the idea that street fighting could be controlled and directed from a substantial distance. General directions can certainly be given by division and higher headquarters, but once battle is engaged, it turned out that no one above the battalion level—and sometimes not even there—could issue useful directives.

The current and future development of science-based solutions is quite likely to heighten the temptation of technologists in this regard. Those looking at computer screens with all sorts of technologically gathered and collated details could easily imagine themselves in a position to control events from a distance. But the reality on the ground—and under it—is likely to make such attempts useless and possibly even harmful. Moving from one floor of a building to another is not readily subject to control from afar. The urban environment, as both the Germans and the Soviets discovered, is certainly one where technological developments helped them, but the training and experience of the individuals in combat proved decisive. Technological advances will certainly assist forces in the fighting itself, but they are not likely to make it much easier to control that fighting from a distance in space or rank.

The reality of fighting in a large city is to a considerable extent visible in two commercial cinemas. The section on street fighting in Stalingrad in the German movie by that name appears to be reasonably close to what it must have been like even if the last third of the film is nonsensical. Similarly, the footage of the fighting in Berlin in the Soviet

movie, *Battle of Berlin*, provides a good introduction to what that must have been like, even if much of the rest of the film is similarly on the silly side. What one can see in both is the extent to which such fighting makes incredibly stressful demands on the participants and requires enormous courage honed by training and experience.

CHAPTER 3

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: THE CASE OF LEBANON, 1982

Dov Tamari

INTRODUCTION: THE "NEW WARS"

Any discussion of military operations in urban environments necessitates preliminary clarifications and distinctions regarding wars of the present era. There is no point in traveling back in time to the city of Suez in 1973. We should instead examine military operations in urban environments in the context of wars that differ from anything we have encountered in the past. The phenomenon of urban operations should be reviewed through a description, however generalized, of today's wars—and possibly future wars as well. These would include the wars that have taken place after the Vietnam War such as the October War of 1973 and the Gulf War of 1991. Moreover, it is appropriate to begin with the strategic and operational aspects rather than the tactical.

Some people refer to the post-Vietnam wars as "low-intensity" as opposed to "high-intensity." Another distinction regarding recent wars around the globe is that they are often referred to as "asymmetrical wars." In my view, neither characterization is satisfactory, as they lean toward a quantitative approach. I would, therefore, like to propose additional destinctions that lean more toward the qualitative dimensions, as outlined below.

• War is not an armed conflict of a state against a state, but a conflict where a state such as the United States, Israel, or some other country confronts the *regime* of another state, an opposing leader, the ruling faction, or a secessionist

faction. The conflict is characterized by involvement and intervention in a civil war taking place in a remote country. According to this definition, the primary characteristic of the conflict is that it is not a war in which the other country is engaged as a whole. Rather, it involves only a partial element out of the total entity known as a state and its society. Consequently, a war effort must avoid engaging anyone and anything other than the specific opponent.

• The strength—or magnitude—of the intervention is determined, to a considerable extent, by the challenge presented by the opponent. This challenge may be regarded as a threat to world peace, to regional order, or to the stability of a country that has become the scene of oppression, bloodshed, or a risk to neighboring countries.

• The magnitude and "quality" of the threat are not determined solely by the direct damage it inflicts, but also according to such qualitative criteria as humanitarian norms, human rights, the basic negation of and struggle against dictatorial regimes, etc. These criteria are normally the outcome of Western political and social culture. One cannot ignore the view maintaining that the norms and criteria associated with intervention are subject to "dictatorship by democracy," namely, that "the social order right for me should be right for you as well." The term "stability" also derives from the Western political/social order. It is doubtful whether this term is relevant to the rest of the world, where many societies still possess nomadic cultural norms and are constantly and inherently on the move, though not necessarily in the physical sense.

• Yet another characteristic of the "new wars" is the lack of clarity as to the question of who the aggressor is and who the victim really is. It is unclear—at the outset of such a war as well as during the fighting—who the "good guys" and the "bad guys" are. When one country's forces cross the borders of another country and invade its territory, then shoot, bombard, shell, and demolish its cities and villages, leaving behind mass destruction—even when this is done in the

name of allegedly good and noble causes—the aggressor may easily become, or appear to be, the victim. In this state of ambiguity, the "swing effect" takes place: yesterday's oppressed become, through our help, tomorrow's oppressors.

• Such wars inevitably raise the question of the extent of the military involvement one is willing to engage in. This question was inconceivable during both world wars, or even during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and past Middle Eastern wars. Today, it is no longer our wish to drag the entire nation into a war, and we know in advance that public opinion at home will determine to a considerable extent the magnitude and scope of our intervention. Moreover, public opinion must be massaged in advance to support the intervention. This kind of support must not be taken for granted. For this reason, we seek external support in the form of coalitions with friendly countries, United Nations backing, and international legitimacy.

• Interventions by superpowers or major countries in conflicts that do not threaten them directly do not necessarily make that determination based on the geographical remoteness of the conflict, but also consider its cultural and mental remoteness. Bloody wars and atrocities in Africa or a bloodbath in Indonesia are not particularly interesting for the countries of North America or Europe. The prevalent approach is to allow these wars to "burn themselves out."

• In the context of the "new wars," achieving a military (operational) decision in the style of World War I and World War II, or even in the manner of the regional wars that took place as late as the 1970s, is very rare indeed. As these wars are not conflicts between similar entities, such as state against state, a new political order should be established at the end of the war—and this is extremely hard to accomplish. Consequently, an ongoing presence in the theater of operations is required as contributory to the gradual settlement of conflict. Examples are the U.S. aerial

presence over Iraq, the Israeli presence in Lebanon between 1982 and 2000, and the presence of peacekeeping forces and similar elements.

• Various types of combat elements are normally involved in the "new wars." These may range from regular military organizations, through paramilitary and subversive groups that employ evasive terrorism and guerrilla tactics, to armed civilians, who are almost impossible to distinguish from the innocent civilian population.

THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE "NEW WARS"

In the context of the "new wars," the urban environment attains a crucial degree of importance for a number of excellent reasons.

• If the opponent does not consist of a "whole" country—the leader/leadership, the regime, the military, and the entire society—then an entity that could be a part of the regime, or even an adversary of that regime, will have to be confronted. As far as the adversary entity is concerned, the most convenient environment will be an urban one. A central regime, or its adversary entity, will find excellent camouflage and shelter in an urban environment behind the civilian population, where it is very difficult to distinguish who is who, and where spotting and identifying legitimate combat targets are practically impossible.

• The urban environment is likely to attract the attention of the international community, since the use of force there could damage or destroy cultural assets and historic landmarks and inflict casualties on the innocent. In such an eventuality, the aggressor will emerge as the victim.

• It is very convenient for the political and military leadership to hide in a big city and operate freely there, even if the city is encircled or occupied by opposing forces. Unrestricted and indiscriminate use of firepower of all

types, as was the norm in past wars, would be inconceivable in such cases.

For the purpose of this chapter, I have reviewed the state of knowledge regarding urban operations in the Israel Defense Force (IDF) in connection with the series of wars between Israel and her Arab neighbors between 1948 and 1982. From this review, it became clear that almost the entire written records of the experience focus on the tactical field of knowledge. Almost nothing is available regarding operations or strategy.

For this reason, I have chosen the campaign conducted by the IDF in Lebanon in 1982 as a vehicle for discussing the operational and strategic aspects of military operations in urban environments.

Operational Objectives Formulated by the Government in 1981-1982.

For more than a year in the early 1980s, the Israeli government, or more specifically the minister of defense and prime minister, sought ways to change the existing order in Lebanon. In their view, that order had allowed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its armed branches to maintain in Lebanon a "state within a state" which enjoyed a relatively safe base of operations as well as political and military freedom to operate against Israel. For this reason, the Israeli leaders strove to establish a new order in Lebanon by means of a military operation.

The minister of defense outlined the new order to the IDF general staff using terminology derived from the realm of military concepts that was familiar to all. The objectives were as follows:

• To annihilate the PLO fighters, or terrorists, as he referred to them, and destroy the infrastructure of the terrorist organizations.

• To distance these fighters from the Israel-Lebanon border to a range that would deny them the option of threatening Israeli settlements with the artillery available to them.

• To establish a “new political order” in Lebanon, where the Maronite Christians, one of the many factions making up the heterogeneous mosaic of the Lebanese population, would become the dominant element in the Lebanese regime, provide the new president, and man all key positions in the Lebanese government and military. The new order necessitated an actual presence at the government centers in the capital, Beirut (this was never explicitely stated, but implied quite clearly).

• To accomplish the above objectives by launching a quick, decisive military operation that was to last only a few days. To that end, massive force was to be employed, so as to ensure that the outcome of the operation would be decided as quickly as possible. This was because the minister of defense was rather apprehensive about international intervention that would enforce a premature cease-fire before the objectives outlined above could be accomplished.

• To remain inside the Lebanese territory captured during the operation, so as to enable the Maronite Christian faction to assume control over the government and power centers of Lebanon. This was a matter of some controversy: Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin thought that a lengthy stay in Lebanon would not be necessary, while the minister of defense believed that the IDF would have to remain there for several months, perhaps even longer.

The presence of the IDF in Lebanon would enforce the cessation of the struggle among the political, ethnic, and religious factions in that country (a struggle that had deteriorated into severe violence fairly often), thereby implementing the new order through the domination of the Maronite Christian faction.

The entire operation was to involve a minimum number of casualties on the Israeli side.

The Concepts Used by the IDF to Interpret and Understand the Reality in Lebanon and the Operation Assigned to Them.

Since the operation in Lebanon (which subsequently evolved into a campaign) had been deliberated in the IDF (the General Headquarters [GHQ], Northern Command, and the field formations) for more than a year, it is possible to follow the development of the concepts used by the IDF to interpret, understand, and plan this action. It should be noted that intensive discussions regarding the war in Lebanon had taken place in the cabinet. The chief of the IDF general staff and the senior GHQ officers appeared before these forums and participated in the discussions. Discussions were also conducted among the minister of defense, the GHQ, the commanders of the service branches, and the divisions assigned to take part in the operation. This was the first time in Israeli history that such intensive discussions and deliberations had been undertaken in preparation for a war. The conclusions were as follows:

• It was understood that the actual implementation of the objectives formulated by the minister of defense and prime minister would require the IDF to enter the urban centers of Lebanon, because this was where most of the Palestinian fighters, as well as the centers of the Lebanese government, were concentrated. This was a radical departure from the combat doctrine for urban environments—cities or major towns—as it had been formulated following the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Until then, the guidelines for such operations had been, in general, based on two fundamental principles learned from bitter experience in the town of Suez close to the end of the Yom Kippur War. First, entering cities should be avoided, as this offered no benefits whatsoever. Thus cities and population centers should be bypassed. Second, in a total, high-intensity war, the ultimate operational decision may

require that the IDF advance to an area located very close to an Arab capital and “threaten it,” as outlined in the operational plans and mission orders. The concept of “threatening" an Arab capital had never been fully elucidated. It was very clear how to advance to the vicinity of such capitals as Damascus, Amman, or Beirut, but how were they to be threatened? Were they to be engaged with artillery fire? Should they be attacked from the air? Why should an Arab government and her military be overpowered by such a threat? These and other such matters remained obscure. Prior to the war in Lebanon, which had been intended to establish a new political order in that country, the IDF was familiar with the concept of “threatening Beirut,” and plans were prepared accordingly.

• There were 20,000 Palestinian combatants in Lebanon. They were equipped with approximately 100 T-34 tanks, 100 artillery tubes of various types, and 60 rocket-launcher trucks as well as infantry weapons in quantities three times larger that anything the armed branches of the PLO could utilize or operate. They were organized into territorial commands, brigades, and battalions with military command posts, communications, and so forth. It was no wonder, then, that the IDF had perceived the PLO as a military organization to all intents and purposes and that the operational planning in preparation for June 1982 had been undertaken much like that for operations against regular military forces.

• Whereas the directive issued by the minister of defense was to annihilate the Palestinian organizations in Lebanon, the IDF interpreted this as an order to “destroy the terrorists’ infrastructure.” This concept had a profound effect on the military operations, as the term “terrorists’ infrastructure” had been interpreted in its physical sense, namely, personnel, military camps, command posts, Palestinian refugee camps, tanks, artillery tubes, ammunition dumps, etc. In reality, it turned out that the “infrastructure” concept, as the IDF had interpreted it, was completely erroneous. Consequently, the concept of

“overpowering the PLO in Lebanon” was also perceived in the physical sense, as was the norm with regard to high-intensity wars.

• The majority of the Palestinian combatants and the bulk of their “infrastructure” were located in the urban area along the coastal strip, from the Israeli border to concentrations located to the north of Beirut itself, in the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Damur and the smaller towns in between. It was understood, therefore, that the operation would take place inside urban environments, including the capital of Beirut, with its population of about one million. It would not be possible to bypass the coastal cities, as that was where the majority of the Palestinian combatants and the bulk of the Palestinian population were concentrated.

• In those days, the combat doctrine of the IDF was based on four broad concepts. First, time is of the essence during operations and combat, as there is always the threat of international intervention or the intervention of a superpower such as the United States that would lead to a cease-fire before the war objectives have been accomplished. Consequently, the actual fighting must be conducted very quickly. This is achieved by a rapid breakthrough into the depth of the enemy defense layouts through the massive employment of firepower of all types from the ground, air, and sea. Second, in order to achieve speed, forces should be landed in the rear of the enemy’s territory from air and sea. These forces should then isolate the theater of operations and prevent the enemy forces from conducting effective defensive operations. Third, should it become necessary to pass cities en route to the interior of enemy territory, they should be bypassed or traversed as quickly as possible, using massive firepower, but not engaging in mopping-up the entire city or parts thereof, which is totally undesirable and should be avoided. Fourth, if the operational objectives are located in the cities, these cities should be encircled before anything else.

• The “depth” concept, vital in any military operation, had been interpreted in the operational plans of 1982 as the rapid takeover of the urban coastal strip along the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon. This was to be accomplished through a rapid offensive operation launched from different directions, including the landing of a light infantry division between Sidon and Beirut, which was to advance promptly to the north in the direction of the capital.

• Two directives, emphasized as vital, were added to the combat doctrine outlined above. The first was to avoid, insofar as possible, casualties among the civilian population in Lebanon, be they Christian, Muslim, Druze, or Palestinian, since a bloodbath would be detrimental to the establishment of a new political order in that country. Second, casualties among the IDF personnel should be prevented at all costs, as Israeli society was still reeling from the traumatic losses of the 1973 war.

The operational concept was understood by the IDF as it had been understood in previous wars between the IDF and Arab military forces, namely, the physical overpowering of the opponent in both the military and political sense. As the minister of defense told the chief of the IDF general staff, the objective was “to annihilate the terrorist organizations as a political or military element that possesses a quiet, safe base of operations in Lebanon.”

All of these principles were to be augmented by an additional, highly influential doctrinal layer: the land formations of the IDF in those days were organized in a manner that perfectly suited the concepts of a high-intensity war, and the bulk of the land power consisted of armored formations.

During this period, several Syrian army formations were deployed in Lebanon: one armored division plus a commando group were in the Lebanon Valley, defended by a massive layout of surface-to-air missiles, and one Syrian tank brigade and one infantry brigade were in Beirut. The question that had hovered in the air between early 1982

until the beginning of the operation and even during the first few days of the actual fighting was whether it would be desirable and/or necessary to attack these units. Beyond the political considerations of the Israeli government, the minister of defense, and the chief of the IDF general staff, one may point to the prevailing understanding among the senior officer cadre of the IDF: prompt penetration into the depth of the Lebanese territory all the way to Beirut, and cutting off the main highway between Beirut and Damascus by the armored formations, would result in a Syrian military response anyway. Consequently, the Syrian forces deployed in Lebanon should be attacked before they had the opportunity to attack the Israeli forces—and the sooner, the better.

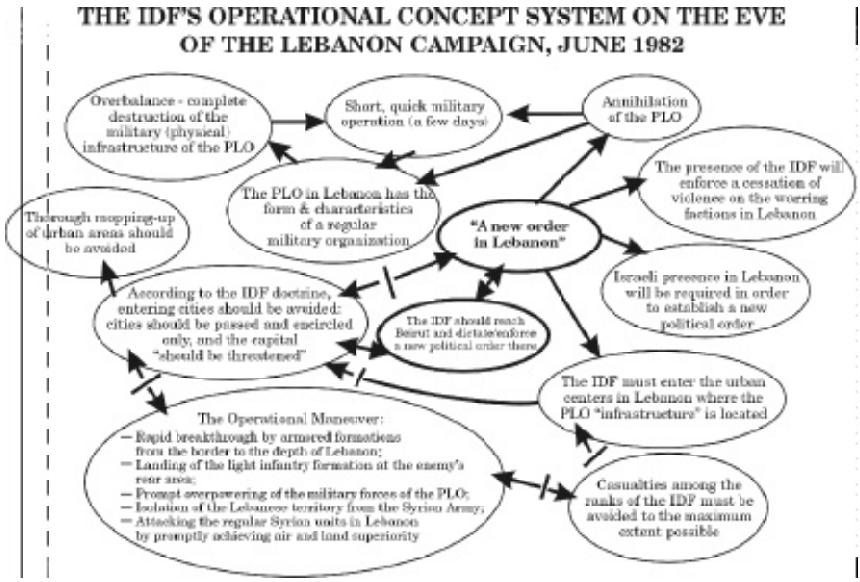


Figure 1.

A close examination of the conceptual system of the IDF as described above can point to rather complex tensions between the concepts, even before they were actually implemented in the combat zones (both open and urban). These tensions will be elucidated in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

As far as the Palestinian paramilitary organizations in Lebanon were concerned, four concepts that had shaped their consciousness and activities in 1982, prior to the war, should be noted.

• The Palestinian paramilitary organizations had been assembled and organized, in part, like a regular military organization. They did, however, maintain a subversive, militant character at all times, with a form of organization that was rather amorphous, that could blend into the civilian population in no time, and that could continue to operate out of this population in a subversive, evasive, terrorist manner, thereby avoiding a direct encounter with an immeasurably superior regular army.

• The metamorphosis from a regular military organization into a subversive underground unit could be accomplished very promptly at both the local and regional levels. The Palestinian terrorist organizations considered urban areas to be the most suitable locations for this metamorphosis.

• The PLO, being a state-within-a-state in Lebanon, did not feel in any way responsible for the Lebanese of any other faction, nor did it feel committed in any way to any government regime there. Its only responsibility was for the Palestinian population in Lebanon, those in the refugee camps and those that had blended into Lebanese society.

• Long before June 1982, the PLO had ascertained that an all-out offensive by the IDF into Lebanon should be expected. Consequently, the PLO had prepared for such an offensive with eight objectives in mind:

1. To inflict on the IDF the heaviest possible casualties in view of the high degree of sensitivity to casualties among the Israeli public.

2. To evade a military decision by assimilating the organizations and combatants in urban areas, once the IDF had employed its massive power in Lebanon.

3. To change the regular military organization into an amorphous, subversive, and evasive structure in the cities and towns.

4. To recruit the potential for the subsequent struggle/combat effort from the Palestinian population in the cities and the refugee camps in those cities.

5. To attempt to drag Israel into a military confrontation with Syria, thereby alleviating the pressure exerted on the PLO.

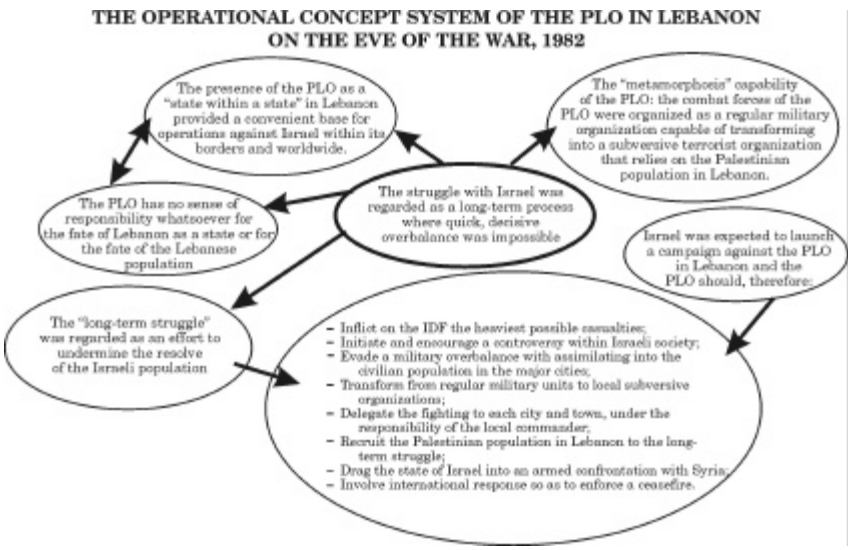


Figure 2.

6. To invoke a response from the international community and the U.N. so as to press for a cease-fire at the earliest possible time.

7. To initiate and encourage a dispute within Israeli society itself by dragging out the struggle endlessly and inflicting as many casualties as possible on the Israeli forces.

8. To delegate the responsibility for the actual fighting among the commanders of the cities, towns, and regions, each man to the best of his abilities.

The Concepts and Collapse of the Lebanon Campaign.

Having reviewed the conceptual systems of both main players on the eve of the operation in Lebanon, let us now examine how these systems were reflected and implemented in reality and what the practical results were.

• The IDF had no real difficulty in overpowering the regular forces of the PLO. The relative strength was clearly and overwhelmingly in favor of the IDF. The regular Palestinian units disappeared, however, only to be replaced by a pattern of subversive, terrorist activity, particularly in the major cities, with the Palestinian combatants assimilated into the civilian population. As the IDF remained stationed in Lebanon, the social infrastructure and class structure in Lebanon gradually changed. Paramilitary organizations that had enthusiastically welcomed the IDF troops when they entered Lebanon in June 1982 now became openly hostile and began to attack the IDF as well as other elements. Car bombs began to explode near military installations, and even the embassies of the United States and France did not escape some fatal blows. The IDF had no effective solution for this phenomenon.

• The "infrastructure" concept turned out to be a fallacy, as it was a concept involving physical military implications. In reality, it came to be understood that the terrorists'

infrastructure was located elsewhere—in the Palestinian welfare organizations throughout Lebanon and in the refugee camps, their schools, their employment agencies, the health services they had established, their mutual financial support organization, and their mosques. This was a social infrastructure, a welfare infrastructure, out of which the combatants had grown and on which their families relied. How do you "annihilate" an infrastructure of this type, most of which was located in the major cities?

• The fighting along the urban coastal strip was necessary, despite the fact that traditional combat doctrine had maintained that entering cities should be avoided and that such populated centers should be bypassed. The cities of Tyre and Sidon were captured, Beirut was encircled on all sides, and the threat on the capital was clearly imposed. The Lebanese government, nonetheless, continued to operate in the capital, almost without any evident changes. Government services carried on, public transport services operated, and even the port remained active. In Lebanon—a country long accustomed to civil wars—economic, political, and social life went on even with battles raging nearby, and with the capital under siege and clearly threatened. After all, the Lebanese government understood that Israel sought to settle a score with Arafat and his organization, the PLO. Their approach, therefore, was to straddle the fence and see how the situation would develop.

• The concept of "urban warfare depth," which had been realized during the first day of the war through the landing (from the air and sea) of an IDF light infantry division between Sidon and Beirut, turned out to be unsatisfactory as far as the urban environment of Lebanon was concerned. "Depth," in this case, was the ability of the Palestinian organizations to change their shape and transform themselves from a regular military organization into a subversive, amorphous terrorist group operating inside the major cities and smaller towns.

• The directive calling for the lives of IDF servicemen to be preserved at all costs led, as early as during the first hours of the operation, to an intensive employment of firepower, from both the ground and air. A major part of this firepower was delivered, as expected, on the built-up areas of the Lebanese cities, where the Palestinian military organizations operated much more effectively than they did in the open areas. The immediate result was that casualties among the civilian population were more extensive than among the Palestinian combatants. Eventually, all of the various elements of the Lebanese population grew angry and frustrated about the damage and destruction caused by the IDF fire and about the number of killed and wounded among the population that had not been involved in the conflict to begin with.

Since the 1920s, and more acutely since 1975, the human environment in Lebanon has abounded with contrasts, disputes, antagonisms, and severe tensions. This environment consists of a complex religious and ethnic mosaic characterized by extreme social and economic polarization. Struggles for political domination among the various communities and factions have been fairly common, with each faction maintaining its own paramilitary organization. Several subversive organizations conforming to extreme political beliefs operated in Lebanon, and above all these warring factions loomed the massive Palestinian political and military presence, which began to intensify in September 1970, when the Palestinian military organizations had been driven out of Jordan by force of arms.

When the IDF attacked Lebanon on June 6, 1982, the mosaic described above was not particularly evident during the first week of massive fighting. Following the capture of almost half of Lebanon's territory, installation of the siege of Beirut, and the attempt to mop up PLO combatants from the coastal cities, however, it became apparent that the simmering cauldron of Lebanon was beginning to erupt against the IDF. This was not a coordinated, concerted

effort, but a fairly annoying and troublesome phenomenon nevertheless. In an environment of this type, even the best intelligence organization would have found it difficult to understand who is acting against whom and why. A prompt political and intelligence reorganization, both civil and military, was required in order to gain an understanding of the internal Lebanese chaos and function within this environment in order to accomplish the political objectives of the operation.

It was soon realized that this kind of effort takes time and lags behind the military operations taking place on the ground. This phenomenon was evident throughout Lebanon, but was particularly acute in the coastal cities and Beirut.

• During the first week of the operation, the IDF captured thousands of Palestinian men in Tyre and Sidon—and subsequently in the Beirut area—who were suspected of belonging to Palestinian military organizations. These men were taken to temporary prisoner of war (POW) concentration camps, interrogated briefly, and then sent to a central POW camp established in southern Lebanon. There they were sorted out, interrogated, and kept imprisoned for many months, under humane conditions, as was the norm for prisoners of war. Over time, it was realized that internal social dynamics developed among the Palestinian prisoners in this central POW camp that led to a profound process of social integration and subsequently to a solid social, political, and military coherence. In short, anyone wishing to view the "products" or the "alumni" of the Ansar Prison Camp (as it was called) will find them as the hard core of today's military organizations of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip, Judea, and Samaria. If I may, I will allow myself to take credit for the statement that was made public through the news media in late 1982: "At Ansar, we established the military of the future Palestinian state."

• The structure and organization of the IDF and whether they were compatible, or possibly incompatible, with operations in urban environments were another matter of concern. The IDF of 1982 was optimally structured and organized to engage in conventional warfare against Arab military forces in the Middle East. This was the result of the power buildup and improvements that had been implemented since the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The IDF was excellent at operations involving armored formations, combined with and supported by aerial and naval elements. These combat units possessed extensive armored mobility and massive firepower, even as confined within the assaulting echelon itself. The IDF of those days was excellent at fighting within the environment and boundaries of a state apparatus, opposite regular military organizations employed by indisputable "state apparatuses." This was a military organization that was perfectly suited to the old world of war—it was certainly capable of taking on the regular Syrian Army units deployed in the Lebanon Valley as well as the Syrian Air Force. The IDF of those days, however, was not structured and organized for a kind of warfare where evasiveness, lack of a physical presence, and absence of a clear physical form were the main characteristics of the opponent, and where this amorphous opponent had primarily established itself in the cities.

Moreover, the abundance of amorphous political, military, and organizational apparatuses in Lebanon did not "match" the combat methods and norms of a modern regular military. It would seem that the maneuvering modes of the IDF, more than anything else, determined the manner of fighting and the nature of the campaign in Lebanon, which did not match the Lebanese phenomena where a clearly defined state apparatus did not exist and where the old rules of war did not apply. In this state of affairs, each incident, whether combat or operational, attained its own significance, without any logic or regulating order.

• As for the meaning of the "operational decision" concept with regard to the incursion into Lebanon, the "decision" concept was acceptable and essential in Israel's past wars—the War of Independence, the Sinai operation of 1956, the Six-Day War of 1967, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. But the "decision" in those wars was a military/operational rather than a political one, as the military outcome did not lead to an end of the conflict between Israel and her neighbors. The question here involves the meaning of "decision" in a limited-scale, low-intensity war, such as the Lebanon campaign of 1982. It came to be understood that the military achievements against the Palestinian organizations and Syrian Army units in Lebanon apparently resulted in a military decision (a decisive military victory), but failed to resolve anything concerned with the Lebanese entanglement, as this entanglement could not be settled by capturing territory, annihilating military forces, making military decisions, and establishing a new political order. The urban territory and the task of overpowering the enemy forces deployed there turned out to be problematic in the context of this new type of war. This was in contrast to the capturing of a city during World War II, or even during the wars of the 1950s and 1960s, where destruction was an effective measure and siege toppled governments. In the past, if a decisively superior strength could be amassed, it could achieve a decisive military victory—an operational decision. In the Lebanese reality of 1982, even when the IDF had achieved an overwhelming superiority of strength, the enemy still had the option of evading a decisive confrontation, thereby avoiding an operational decision.

• Finally, and this is possibly the most important observation, the IDF had planned to conduct the shortest possible operation in Lebanon, following which the "new order" would be implemented. In reality, several operations were conducted. The first was the operation against the PLO, in the course of which IDF troops reached Beirut and attempted to hand over control to the Maronite Christian

militia. The second, conducted at the same time as the first, was the operation against the Syrian Army in the Lebanon Valley. The third operation involved the fighting in and around Beirut until the PLO was expelled, including the tragic massacre at the Palestinian refugee camps on the outskirts of Beirut. The fourth involved the preparation of the IDF for a long-term stay to the south of Beirut, with no clear objective. The last operation, which lasted until May 2000—17 years—involved the deployment of the IDF in southern Lebanon. From a single, short-term military operation, the situation became a full-scale campaign, but was it really a campaign? A campaign is a logical sequence of operations, each one evolving out of the previous one and paving the way for the accomplishment of war objectives on the basis of previous achievements. In Lebanon, since 1982, the situation has been an "unregulated sequence of operations" or "an operation dragged into several operations that were not sufficiently clarified." Thus, as Figure 3 makes clear, it was not a campaign in the logical or true sense of the word.

CONCLUSION

Pursuant to this fairly trenchant criticism, we should attempt to draw up a scheme of how issues associated with urban operations should be approached. We must do this based on our understanding of the phenomena of the wars of today and tomorrow. If we find ourselves engaged in an all-out war in the style of 30, 40, or 50 years ago, we may once again destroy entire cities like we did then. This form of urban warfare is difficult but ultimately tractable.

However, limited-scale, low-intensity conflicts have come to characterize our reality over the last few years, and possibly in the foreseeable future as well. Unfortunately, as far as operations in urban environments are concerned, it would seem that our interpretive conceptual systems are still rooted in the realm of high-intensity conflicts, and that they are unsuitable for low-intensity conflicts where

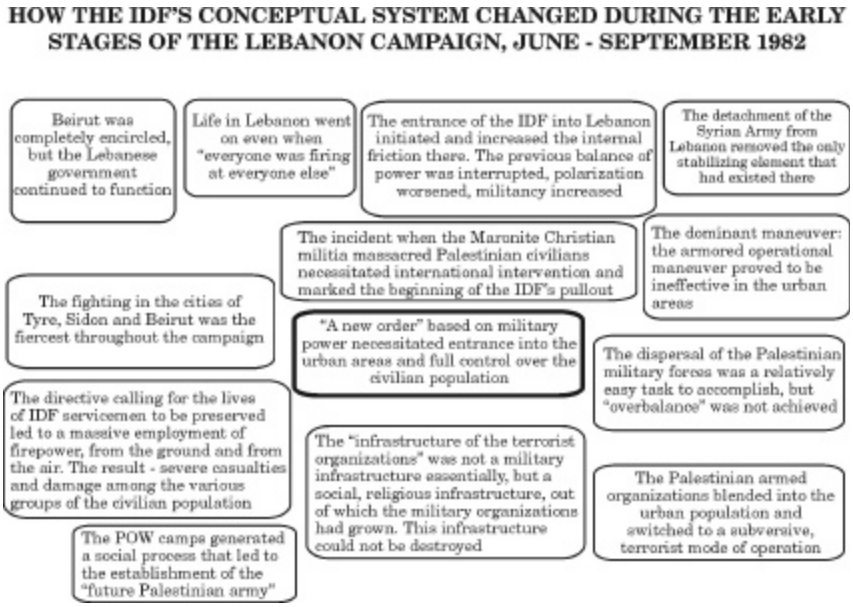


Figure 3.

operations are conducted in urban environments. We need new conceptual systems, and the question is where—in what fields of knowledge—we should seek these new systems.

I believe that the tactical field of knowledge does not have much to offer. I do not think that we can develop a new kind of tank warfare or attack helicopter tactics for urban operations that would give us any substantial advantages when we are once again compelled to engage in combat in built-up areas. Likewise, even if we provided the infantry and/or other combat or support service branches with improved, more effective equipment, this would still fail to provide an adequate solution to the problem at hand. Even the concept—based on solid, successful experience—of

hitting targets located in built-up areas by means of precision-guided munitions, in the manner of a surgeon's scalpel, would not advance solutions to or resolve the problems associated with operations in urban environments in the context of limited-scale, low-intensity wars.

Instead, we must develop new concepts in the operational and strategic fields. Once we have done that, we may be enlightened regarding the structure and organization of the forces we would have to employ in urban environments. I believe that we have not made much progress in these areas. We may be clinging to the realm of tactical concepts. This is because they are more tangible, and we possess extensive experience in this realm. The question here is whether these concepts are relevant.

At this point, then, I would like to present some preliminary ideas regarding the required concepts.

• We should attempt to free ourselves from the interpretive conceptual systems that have characterized wars of the past. Most of these wars were high-intensity wars between one sovereign state and another. It must be understood that crossing the border of a country, of an adversary entity, with massive military forces carries a clear and undisputable mark of aggression that will be difficult to remove even with the most justifiable cause. We may fare better by adopting the "power projection" approach, i.e., projecting power on the opponent leader, on his regime, and on the ruling faction and centers of power in the most direct way. Efforts in this regard should be focused not only directly on the government organs, but also on their interests, upon which they consolidate their rule both economically and politically.

• A sympathetic—or neutral—population is an asset in any case of intervention. Efforts to win the support of this population, to please it, or to keep it neutral are just as vital as the main military effort. Moreover, the planning and actual conduct of the military operation must be profoundly

influenced by these efforts to maintain and perpetuate the sympathy of the population.

• If the majority of the population or all of it identifies with the opponent, then exerting massive pressure on it should be avoided, due to the negative results this would yield in the long run.

• In the past, it was customary to think and operate in a "sequential" manner. First, we intervened using military force, did our best to quell any relevant military opposition, and only then attempted to establish a civilian regime and reinstate stability. The damage we caused by our military operation was very difficult to repair or make up for during the next phase. It is imperative that we distinguish, to the maximum extent possible, the opponent—be it the regime, the military leadership, or the military forces—from the civilian population. This process of separation must be initiated as soon as the first aggressive military moves are launched. I believe that medical forces, medical supplies, medical personnel, and medicines should be available for the civilian population just as they are for one's own forces. Convoys carrying food and aid for the civilian population may have to advance along with those carrying ammunition and fuel for the combat elements, so that, at the very earliest moment, we are able to prevent a shortage of vital food and supplies among the civilian population.

• Any military operation should be accompanied by immediate negotiations, rather than sticking with the traditional aim of "achieving a military decision first, then engaging in negotiations." Even if there is no definite negotiating partner in sight, a real effort should be initiated in order to find such partner.

• We must assign the highest degree of importance and priority to the task of isolating the opponent regime, the adversary leadership, and military forces from the civilian population, from the outside world, and even from one another. We should shut down and neutralize all internal and external communications, including even those news

media that are sympathetic to our cause. Internal and external isolation are very beneficial, and only carefully selected information should be released for publication (in this regard, we may follow the example of how the news media campaign was managed by U.S. forces and their allies during the Gulf War). In all probability, technology may offer an extensive range of capabilities to help us accomplish this task.

• On numerous occasions, we attacked and destroyed physical infrastructure elements within the area of influence in order to exert pressure on the opponent and his interests. Such infrastructure elements included bridges, transportation, power stations, etc. In the short term, this course of action may have been beneficial. In the long run, however, its benefits are doubtful, as the purpose of our intervention was to make peace and restore stability—and it is very difficult to accomplish this in a country or an area whose infrastructure we have destroyed.

• Intervention in a remote country where a crisis is under way such as Lebanon, Bosnia, or Kosovo tempts us to examine whether we may be assisted and supported by a faction of the local population, a faction that resists the regime, the government, and the leader, or that is the adversary of some or most of the population. Supplying arms to a faction of this type, as well as the establishment of a new militia, integrating it in our operational effort, and providing it with freedom of operation, may be beneficial during the initial stages of intervention. In the long run, however, this course of action is likely to lead to atrocities (as was the case in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in the outskirts of Beirut in September 1982, as well as in Kosovo). Moreover, we will leave the country eventually, but only after having generated a strong sense of hostility among the civilian population—hostility that may well be worse than that we had come to pacify. The worst failure of the IDF in Lebanon was the massacre by the Maronite Christian militia in the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. These atrocities led to the loss of legitimacy of the

entire campaign, to direct intervention by the United States and the U.N., and to the beginning of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The major lesson that may be learned from this affair is this: in urban operations in the context of low-intensity conflicts, beware of your friends just as you would of your enemies.

• Much has been said and done about the employment of Special Forces in urban operations. These forces normally consist of first-rate military units, possessing combat skills of the highest order. The question is, do we need Special Forces of a different type, in addition to those we are familiar with and used to? I believe we should seriously consider the employment of Special Forces capable of assimilating into or mixing with the local population, either overtly or covertly. These elements should be able to speak the local language and know the local culture and customs. They should serve as barometers regarding the attitudinal trends among the civilian population, moving in ahead of the regular combat elements and sometimes behind them. They should provide advance warning of imminent mutual atrocities among the local population and identify the practical options for drawing the local population nearer to our cause.

In urban operations, as attackers, we must be constantly on the move. This refers not only to the tactical, physical movement toward our objective or to the movement initiated in order to hit the targets, whatever they may be, but also to other types of movements—political and social, in other words, constant political and social propulsion throughout the space where the opponent does not constitute a tangible, definite, homogeneous entity. Political and social maneuvering are just as important as tactical and operative maneuvering. Any break in this continuous movement and propulsion process will enable the opponent to consolidate his defenses and stage an effective resistance, and could lead to an increase in international pressures, if such pressures exist in the first place.

If the opponent enjoys the ability to change form and shape, thereby evading a decisive encounter and the traditional “decision,” should we not acquire a capability (a different one, admittedly) to change form and shape, in both the military and political sense? Can only regular military forces, fighter aircraft, helicopters, and artillery accomplish the task at hand? It is possible, and it is about time, to adopt a new way of thinking regarding forces that are more suitable for urban operations and that do not appear to be “regular” in nature.

Finally, possibly the most important conclusion deals with the question of the state of our urban operations doctrine and how our troops should be trained for this task. I have already noted that the main problem involves the mapping of the state of our knowledge, followed by the development of this knowledge. This applies in particular to the operative and strategic fields of knowledge that are more vital than the tactical and/or technological fields. The main problem with the phenomenon of limited-scale or low-intensity wars is the fact that each is singular and unique. It is doubtful whether a conflict that may break out in the future and in which we may be involved will be similar to any of our past conflicts. This phenomenon casts serious doubt on present urban operations doctrines. On the other hand, we must have a doctrine, as otherwise we will be left with nothing and will not be able to educate and train commanders and troops for combat operations in urban environments.

The doctrine we develop will almost always be devoid of, or detached from, a specific context. The context will be revealed and understood only when the crisis has become imminent or has actually taken place. There must be tension among the doctrine, the context, and the future reality. While we may find it difficult to clarify this future reality, we are currently experiencing this tension.

The national supreme command, the general staffs, and the services must understand that, once we have reached a

crisis situation and have intervened in that crisis, we will most likely realize that our doctrine may be totally unsuitable, and that no all-embracing theory in the field of urban operations will help. When the next crisis occurs, we will need a different set of concepts and a completely revised process of conceptualization in which the commanders and senior staff officers will be constantly engaged. This state of affairs and a process of this type may better prepare us for whatever the future may hold.

CHAPTER 4

LESSONS OF THE WAR IN CHECHNYA, 1994-96

Anatol Lieven

In this chapter, I shall examine certain less well-known aspects of the Chechnyan war, especially from a political, social, and cultural perspective. And there are indeed good reasons for such an approach. For it has been generally recognized that for the foreseeable future urban battles involving the United States and her allies are very unlikely to be of the traditional military type such as Stalingrad in 1942-43 or Manila in 1945, where the task at hand was the straightforward capture of an urban area from the organized military forces of a clearly defined national enemy.

Instead, future urban operations are much more likely to be against local forces including a strong element of the partisan force (as in Mogadishu), strongly-rooted in the local population, and often practically indistinguishable from the "civilians." Far from being simply military in nature, such wars will therefore have an important and complicated political element. In the past, we have often been bad indeed at appreciating this aspect of military endeavor, and the future holds some real risks for us. For despite globalization, societies around the world still differ enormously and so in consequence do the kinds of popular military struggle they are capable of generating. This places severe limits on the usefulness of any general doctrine of urban warfare, beyond the narrowly military one of how to capture a house on a city block.

In Grozny in 1994, the Russians initially used the same tactics they had used in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 1990, where they were cut to pieces mainly because the Chechens and

Azeris are such utterly different peoples when it comes to their capacity for armed resistance. The U.S. military was drawn into a much smaller debacle in Somalia partly because U.S. planners had failed to understand the workings of Somali clan society. If the United States ever (God forbid!) tried to use the same tactics against the Chechens it had used successfully in Panama, it too would have suffered severe reverses.

Of course, militaries are capable of learning as they go along, but after fighting commences, it may be a bit late, especially in operations where the willingness of the U.S. public to tolerate casualties is limited. When I made some of these comparisons 2 years ago to a friend who had formerly served with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Vietnam, he brushed them aside: "You're exaggerating our ignorance of Vietnam. By 1966, we knew perfectly well that the Viet Cong were about Vietnamese nationalism as well as communism."

This leads me to a provocative point. The very best teachers of U.S. soldiers concerning urban warfare are not always journalists or academics, or even other U.S. soldiers. They are people who can teach from within the mentality and tactics of the kind of forces against which the United States may be fighting in future. For a suitable fee, former Viet Cong, Somali, and Chechen fighters would be more than happy to impart to the American Army their knowledge and skill—which they learned the hard way!

Planning and Numbers.

The first thing to recognize about the Russian invasion of Chechnya in December 1994 is that it was not the preferred Russian solution to the Chechnyan problem. According to documents I have seen and interviewees whom I trust, this option was examined in the summer of 1994 and then rejected because of the vehement opposition of the General Staff, the command of the North Caucasus Military District, and Russian military intelligence. They all argued that a

Russian invasion would face fierce opposition and would demand numbers of Russian troops which were simply not available. Instead, a strategy was adopted of removing the anti-Russian Chechen regime by supporting the "clan-based" Chechen opposition, which had been in arms against President Dudayev during the previous year (I shall show later that this strategy rested upon an apparently sophisticated, but in fact largely mistaken analysis of Chechen society).

What happened then was essentially that the Yeltsin administration, and in particular a group of senior officials, got their fingers caught in a wringer. The opposition was supplied with arms and advisers, tried to capture Grozny, and failed miserably. Instead of pulling back, Moscow increased the supply of arms and also sent several dozen "volunteer" soldiers from the Russian armored forces to operate the opposition's armor and fire their guns. The opposition tried again on November 26, 1994, and were soundly beaten. Several of the Russian "volunteers" were captured and confessed that they had been ordered to Chechnya not by their own commanders, but by senior Defense Ministry officials.

At this point, the Yeltsin regime, and more importantly the officials directly responsible for the debacle (including Defense Minister Pavel Grachev), were faced with the choice either of pulling back and accepting their humiliation (with dire consequences for their own careers and Russia's prestige) or of escalating Russia's intervention into a full-scale invasion. They chose the latter, which in consequence was "planned" (or rather botched) in the fortnight after November 26. Because of their objections, the General Staff and the North Caucasus were largely excluded from the planning process.

A supreme commander for the operation (General Eduard Vorobyev) was appointed only 2 days after it had actually began. He refused the command, precisely because—as he later publicly stated—when he arrived in

Chechnya, he found that there was no plan for the operation, and the numbers of troops available were utterly inadequate. He and several other generals were dismissed from the service for their opposition.

This debacle, of course, reflects the utter irresponsibility and incompetence of senior figures in the Yeltsin regime. However, it is also a reminder to soldiers of their duty to oppose foolish and irresponsible military decisions by political leaders, even when necessary at the price of their own careers. The awareness among Russian soldiers that their own commanders did not support the war but also had not opposed it was a contributory factor in the disastrous state of Russian morale throughout the war, which, in turn, was the greatest single reason for the Russian defeat.

The lack of a plan for the operation led the Russians to adopt the same strategy they had in Baku in 1990 or Kabul in 1979 (though without the use of airborne forces): drive an armored column into the center of town and capture the main administrative buildings, on the assumption that serious resistance would then cease. The resulting military disaster has become a classic case study of the folly of using massed armor without close infantry support in an urban setting.

One aspect of both the lack of planning and the general state of the Russian army was lack of numbers. This is an aspect we would do well to pay close attention to, given the small numbers of Western infantry. The initial Russian force that invaded Chechnya was around 20,000 men, hopelessly inadequate for the task. Even when the figure rose to 50,000 or so in the following weeks, the Russians never had enough troops to isolate and besiege Grozny, a sprawling city built for 400,000 people covering almost 100 square miles. As a result, the Chechen fighters, after fighting a long, heroic defense of the city, were able to withdraw to continue the battle in the mountains. And Grozny is not a big city by contemporary world standards. A

megalopolis like Karachi could swallow the entire U.S. Army.

Equally important, lack of numbers meant that the Russians did not have the troops to hold Grozny after they had finally captured it. Indeed, one could almost say that as soon as they won the city, they began to lose it. The relatively good troops who had captured the city in the end were either rotated back to Russia to recover or sent south to the fighting in the mountains. Grozny was left garrisoned by inadequate numbers of second-rank troops, mainly from the Interior Ministry.

These troops tended to huddle in their compounds behind barbed wire and concrete, to such an extent that it became difficult to decide who was besieging whom. At night they would rarely venture out except for brief raids, and the town largely reverted to the control of the Chechen fighters. The Russians were repeatedly sniped at, to which they replied with massive volleys which only killed local civilians and alienated still further the local population. This de facto loss of control of the city allowed the Chechens to launch a massive raid on the Russian positions in March 1996, and finally to recapture the whole of the city in August, capturing or killing hundreds of Russian troops.

The lack of numbers needed to capture and control a major urban area in the face of massive hostility from its population is a Western dilemma for which I can see no easy solution, given the constraints on our own numbers. Technology provides certain substitutes for numbers, but is as yet nowhere near the point that it could compensate for actual soldiers, above all in policing operations.

The Russian experience in Grozny raises two other uncomfortable issues. The first is whether politically-mandated cease-fires during the occupation of a city are necessarily always a good thing from a military point of view. The cease-fire that lasted from July to December 1995, and for 2 months in the early summer of 1996, contributed to the demoralization of the Russian

forces in Grozny. On the one hand, they were spared the prospect of imminent mass attack, and their watchfulness declined in consequence. On the other, they could not really rest, because they were kept continually on edge by sniping and small-scale raids to which they were not allowed to respond with massive force.

Finally, there is the question of civilian casualties. A frequently given figure for dead in the war of 1994-96 is 100,000. This, in turn, is based on a figure of 25,000 civilian dead for the capture of Grozny in December 1994 to February 1995, a figure originally proclaimed by Russian human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalyov. These figures are nonsense. During the battle for Grozny, hospitals in the city had obviously closed, but those to the south of the city were in operation, receiving wounded from the city. The doctors were still keeping orderly records of all those they treated. I visited those hospitals, and on the basis of the standard ratio of two or three wounded for every one dead, I cannot find any basis for more than a fraction of the figures given by Kovalyov. I later counted 812 bodies in mass graves in Grozny. Even assuming that many wounded never reached the hospitals, and that many of the dead were buried in the ruins, as few as 5,000 would be a high estimate for the number of civilian dead in Grozny during this period.

How can such a relatively small figure be accurate, given the massive destruction of the center of the city? The reason of course is that by the time the Russian assault and truly massive bombardment began on December 21, only a tiny fraction of the city's population remained in Grozny. A large part of the population had been Russian, and most of these left in 1991-94 to escape Chechen harassment. Then the great majority of the Chechen population left because of the sporadic Russian bombing in December, which killed or wounded several hundred Chechens and was accompanied by leaflets warning the population to flee. I was in Grozny in late December and early January, and I can say that at the very most, one-tenth of the city's previous population remained. This is why such a high proportion of the

casualties were Russian pensioners, because unlike the Chechens they had no local relatives with whom they could seek refuge.

Such considerations, of course, raise an acutely difficult moral issue. For if the mass of the population as of early December 1994 had remained in the city, without question the civilian death toll would have been vastly higher. But would leaflets and radio broadcasts on their own have been enough to persuade the others to flee? Or did the bombings in December indirectly and unintentionally help to save many lives? This is a desperately uncomfortable question, but one we cannot afford to duck if we assume that at some stage we ourselves may have to fight really serious battles in cities. For as retired Marine Lieutenant General Bernard L. Trainor has warned, and as the example of Mogadishu makes clear, the use of massive firepower in the middle of a civilian population will inevitably have horrendous results. On the other hand, to forego firepower on humanitarian grounds may well lead to the annihilation or surrender of your own forces, which is also not an acceptable option. The obvious answer is not to fight in cities at all, but our enemies may not give us that option.

Despise Not Your Enemy.

In judging the fighting capacity of the Chechens before the Russian invasion of 1994, I made an absolutely critical mistake, a type that has been characteristic of many professional Western military analyses in the past and has led to many disasters for Western forces. Outwardly, the Chechen fighters looked like a scruffy bunch of civilians armed only with kalashnikovs, light machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades. They had no formal military discipline or hierarchy, and I knew for a fact that several of the groups and their commanders doubled as criminal gangs.

I had seen such groups before, fighting on the Georgian and Azeri sides of wars in the southern Caucasus, and I had

seen how they had broken and run in the face of vastly less firepower than the Russians would be able to bring to bear in Chechnya. Finally, I had seen how in the low-level civil war in Chechnya in 1993-94 between the supporters and opponents of President Dudayev, the two sides had been reluctant to get to serious grips with each other. On the basis of such factors, I expected the Chechens to put up a weak and above all disorganized, undisciplined resistance.

I was, of course, completely wrong (and so, more importantly, was Russian intelligence). Our mistake reflected our own cultural prejudices and ignorance, which led the Russians to make the fatal mistake of underestimating their enemy. This is also a continuous risk for Western military analysts, leading us into disaster after disaster over the years, with Vietnam the most obvious example and Somalia the most recent. This tendency is, of course, a very old one. A favorite British cartoon of mine from 1879 shows a feathered Zulu warrior standing before a blackboard, with John Bull as a schoolboy sitting on a stool. The Zulu is writing on the blackboard with his spear, "Despise Not Your Enemy." This cartoon was published just after a British column armed with rifles, cannon, and rockets had been wiped out by Zulus armed only with spears at Isandhlwana.

In my case, this mistake occurred despite or even because of the fact that I had spent long periods in other parts of the Caucasus. For Chechens are not Azeris, though they live within 200 miles of each other and though both are Muslim peoples who spent 70 years under Soviet rule. Just because fighters have no uniforms or modern military structures does not mean that they cannot fight with brilliant effectiveness on their own soil; discipline can come as well from deeply rooted social patterns and cultural traditions as from formal military rules or hierarchies. Moreover, all wars are not the same, even when they take place on the same soil.

Concerning the Chechen civil war prior to the Russian invasion, the point to be drawn from the unwillingness and restraint shown in the struggle was an unwillingness to kill *other Chechens*. For reasons both historical and anthropological (the blood feud) there are extremely deep inhibitions against Chechen killing Chechen. In the words of Professor A. Vachargayev in September 1994, "Neither side wants to fire first, because whichever is the first to shed Chechen blood will lose prestige and support."[1] The reaction to invasion by the hated Russians was, of course, completely different.

On the surprising military capacity of comparatively primitive and anarchic peoples, there have been numerous anthropological studies, some of them written by Western colonial officers, for example the Frenchman Robert Montagne, who wrote as follows on the Berber tribal alliances of Morocco:

> Even if the confederation has, strictly speaking, no specific institutions other than a uniform body of customary law by which all members are bound, its solidarity is assured by the strength of the powerful feelings of unity and mutual obligation which emerge in times of conflict. Our [i.e., the French] military officers in the Middle Atlas have recognized this for a long time past. "When you wish to pacify them," Maurice Le Glay makes one of his heroes say in a novel, "You will find before you a scatter of humanity. You have to chase after each tent in order to talk to the head of each small family, and to establish any sort of control over them takes years. If you face them in battle though they fall upon you all at once and in vast numbers, and you wonder how you can possibly extricate yourself.[2]

The Russian anthropologist Sergei Arutiunov has something similar to say about the Chechens:

> Chechnya was and is a society of military democracy. Chechnya never had any kings, emirs, princes, or barons. Unlike other Caucasian nations, there was never feudalism in Chechnya. Traditionally, it was governed by a council of elders on the basis of consensus, but like all military democracies—like the Iroquois in America or the Zulu in southern Africa—Chechens retain the institution of military chief. In peacetime, they recognize no sovereign authority and may be fragmented into a hundred rival clans. However, in time of danger, when faced with

aggression, the rival clans unite and elect a military leader. This leader may be known to everyone as an unpleasant personality, but is elected nonetheless for being a good general. While the war is on, this leader is obeyed.[3]

Know Your Enemy's Society.

An awareness of the need to understand the workings of different societies is now widely present in Western militaries. However, all too often this comes down in practice to a series of stereotypes which can be almost as dangerous as sheer ignorance. The approach of Russian intelligence to Chechnya is a classic example. The Russians saw correctly that Chechnya is not a modern society, that it is highly divided internally, and that traditional clans (in Chechen, *teip*) play an important social role. From this, however, they deduced that clan loyalty is the most important element in Chechen political behavior, something which does indeed appear to be the case in large parts of Central Asia and Africa, including Somalia. On the basis of this, they assumed that they could easily play a game of divide and rule, setting up a pro-Russian alliance of clans excluded from power by the Dudayev regime.

This plan was based on a whole set of mistakes. In the first place, as already noted, apparently deeply divided societies have a way of uniting against alien interventions, especially by a power against whom the people have deep historical grievances. The United States, too, should remember this before intervening anywhere in the Muslim world. Secondly, thanks to the effects of Soviet rule and especially the deportation of 1944-57, Chechen traditional society was greatly shaken, and the role of the clans much reduced.

It must be noted, too, that even in the traditional Chechen order, the dominance of the *teip* as a focus of hereditary allegiance was qualified by other loyalties: to the *tukum*, or territorial grouping of several different *teips*, to the extended family, to the lineage group, and to the Sufi

brotherhood or *vird*, itself an increasingly hereditary institution. In the time of Shamil, his religious war and the military institutions it generated (the first state or quasi-state structures Chechnya had ever known) united Chechens across *teip* lines, as nationalism does today. In the words of Professor Vachargayev, "You can't reduce Chechen society to the *teips* or any other simple formula, whatever some so-called 'experts' in Moscow may think." Even at its height, therefore, the *teip* may never have enjoyed the unqualified loyalty owed (at least according to legend) to a Scottish clan, for example. The extended family has been of particular importance as an alternative, and in some cases a rival, source of identity and focus of loyalty. For several centuries at least, Chechen *teip* members have mostly married outside their own *tieps*.

Broadly speaking, the present situation appears to be as follows: as a matter of personal identity and family tradition, the *teip* has a varying degree of importance for Chechens, depending on the degree of their "modernization," urbanization, education, place of habitation (the mountains being much more traditionalist in this regard than the plains), and, indeed, ideological nationalism or religious commitment. I have heard a few Chechen nationalists, especially ones of a religious cast, declare that the *teip* tradition should really be done away with because all that matters is the nation and God. *Teips* are at best a distraction in this view, at worst a source of division. In the words of a Chechen religious elder:

> The *teip* is much too large a unit, and much too dispersed, to exercise any direct control over individuals any more. What matters is the family group, including the mother's family. That is the unit which is going to decide whether a youth goes to fight or not, unless he's already decided for himself, of course. If his father, or the most respected adult in the wider family, says fight, the young men will fight. And if he says "Don't fight," they will at least listen attentively.[4]

But while the *teip* may be to a great extent politically moribund, the clan, in a much looser political sense, continues to characterize Chechen politics as it does that of much of the world. Closely linked to this has been the role of

clan connections in forming a basis for particular Chechen criminal groups. Several months before the war began, a Chechen mafia leader in Moscow gave me some insights into how Chechen society works today. I asked him if Chechen mafia groups were recruited on the basis of particular *teips* or *virds*. He replied that the system is not so formal:

> What matters is that someone has to be recommended to us by people whom we know and respect. They may be our relatives, or they may be connected to us in some other way. We Chechens are a small people—we all know each other, we know who is respected and who isn't. The point is that when someone joins us, then his family and his backers, the men who recommended him, are also responsible for his behavior. If he were to betray us or let us down—and that happens very rarely—then they would be ashamed, they would lose respect. They themselves would bring him to task, and make him apologize or make things good in some way. We wouldn't have to do anything. That is why you very rarely find Chechens killing each other, unlike the Russians and other groups. We don't need to. We have our traditions, and they are very strong.[5]

What the Russian experience in Chechnya brings out is that even a largely pre-modern society may, in fact, be extremely complex. The equivalent of Anthropology 101 is not an adequate basis for drawing up a political-military strategy for dealing with such societies. Simplistic formulas like "clan loyalties" may be actively misleading, pointing the way to faulty and even dangerous strategies. The only help in these circumstances is really detailed local knowledge. Since it is impossible for the U.S. military to have in-house information about many different parts of the world, it should be prepared to obtain such help from outside when required: obviously from the State Department and the CIA, but also from the worlds of academia and journalism. The U.S. commanders in Somalia could have done with more anthropologists and less artillery; and U.S. commanders in Vietnam would have done better to listen to the French-American soldier, journalist, and historian Bernard Fall, author of *Street Without Joy*, than to read endless papers by analysts with no serious experience of the country.

Local Allies: The Necessary Nightmare.

The issue of understanding the society in which you are operating leads me to my final point, the vexed question of local allies and auxiliaries. These are vital from two points of view. The first is intelligence. The difficulties can be formidable. For just as U.S. scouts would have difficulty blending into the population of Burundi, Russian scouts in Grozny were similarly spotted, and in consequence had a way of returning to their units in two neatly separated pieces, which had a discouraging effect on their comrades. Moreover, on at least one occasion, when a scouting party got into difficulty, the attempt to rescue it led to a major battle of a kind the Russians particularly did not want to fight. Obviously, a vastly preferable alternative is to use local scouts with local knowledge, who can blend into the local population. Such scouts may simply be mercenaries, but much more likely they will be some form of local political and/or ethnic ally.

The second reason for employing local allies is, of course, that they provide political cover. They give protection against the accusation, whether from foreign countries or the domestic news media, that the intervening force is in some form "colonial" or "imperialist," imposing its will on a nation united in opposition. Indeed, it may well be that this local opposition force is the reason why you got involved in a place to start with.

So local allies are necessary, but they can best be described as a necessary evil. This matter can be summed up in the observation that they tend to be either too enthusiastic or not nearly enthusiastic enough. If they come from a local ethnic or ethno-religious group with its own agenda, they may use the umbrella provided by your military protection to massacre and expel their local ethnic rivals, deeply embarrassing and compromising you in the process. The Israelis experienced this to their cost with the Lebanese Christian militia, and we are learning the same lesson with the Kosovar Albanians.

On the other hand, if you are operating in an ethnically homogenous environment (like Chechnya), you will never be entirely sure that your supposed allies are not in fact working for the other side. The United States had this experience again and again in Vietnam, and the French in both Vietnam and Algeria. This may not be because your "allies" are ideologically committed to the enemy. They may be intimidated, or blood links may win out over other allegiances. Again and again in Chechnya, I heard of cases where the families of leading pro-Russian figures gave shelter and protection to relatives who were fighting on the other side.

Finally, in many societies, you may find that a key aspect of your battle with the enemy takes place in the criminal world, and your allies are drawn from local criminal groups with all the political and moral problems this brings in its wake. A classic example of this was the French battle to keep control of Algiers, where the most effective terrorist leader on the side of the Algerian rebels, Ali La Pointe (Ali the Knife), was a leading pimp and enforcer, who battled with the leading pro-French informer and hoodlum, Safy Le Pur (Safy the Clean).

The morally and politically complicated world into which Western forces can be drawn is summed up in a passage by Jacques Dalloz about the French war in Indochina:

> The Hoa Hao broke their uneasy alliance with the Viet Minh in April 1947, after the Mad Bonze had been lured into a trap and liquidated. The principal military leader of the sect, Nam Lua, was an illiterate former bus driver whose wife, a former ticket collector, had formed a corps of fearsome amazons. The French made this colorful character Commander in Chief of the Hoa Hao army, and gave him the rank of general and a decoration. He was allowed to reap the benefits of their patronage and to become very rich. The allegiance of Nam Lua did not however entail the allegiance of the whole sect. The agents of the Deuxieme Bureau had to deal with the complex rivalries of these petty warlords. Some liquidated their rivals, using the arms and military advisers they had received from the French, and then went off to fight on their own account. Making a record number of recantations, one of them, Ba Cut, signed an oath of allegiance five times….

> Originally members of the Viet Minh front, the Binh Xuyen were also persuaded to change sides in 1948. The organization could best be termed a gang rather than a sect. Its leader, Bai Vien, had escaped from prison .... [He] made a sort of pact with the colonial authorities in which he guaranteed the security of metropolitan Saigon in return for financial advantages. The Binh Xuyen dealt in opium and prostitution and so on, and they soon ousted the Chinese and took control of the underworld.[6]

As Dalloz remarks with delicious understatement, "Handling all these sects was hardly an easy task."[7]

In Chechnya, this facet of urban partisan warfare is summed up in the figure of the Russian ally Bislan Gantemirov. He started as a police officer, minor hood, and dealer in stolen cars in Moscow (in Russia—and elsewhere!—a very useful combination of day and night jobs). He rose to be a second-rank Chechen mafia leader, and in 1990-91 he and his men returned to Chechnya. Like other criminal groups, they played a part in the national revolution which overthrew Communist rule. When I first met him at the start of 1992, he was heading the "Islamic Renaissance Party" of Chechnya. And so help me, I took this title seriously and interviewed him solemnly about the spread of Islamic politics to the Caucasus, when what his presence really demonstrated was an expansion of the used-car market.

Gantemirov became mayor of Grozny, but broke with General Dudayev and his supporters in 1993. Allegedly, a key reason for this was a dispute over the proceeds of various criminal operations in Russia. He joined the armed Chechen opposition, and in 1994 sided with the Russian invaders, who restored him to the mayoralty of Grozny. Then in early 1996, a very remarkable thing happened—remarkable for Yeltsin's Russia as a whole, let alone Chechnya. So outrageous and damaging was Gantemirov's corruption (he embezzled the greater part of the Russian funds for the reconstruction of Grozny) that he was actually dismissed and imprisoned (an additional reason for this may have been the hostility of Russia's main

ally in Chechnya, former Communist Party boss Doku Zavgayev).

Gantemirov spent several years in jail before being pardoned and released in 1999 when the Russians decided on a renewed intervention in Chechnya. Once again, Gantemirov was given a senior post on the Russian side, and his men became an auxiliary police force fighting for Russia. And since then, Gantemirov has given really major help to Russia on a number of occasions.

On the other hand, he is also a major headache. In the first place, the presence of this notorious criminal on the Russian side undermines Russian claims to be fighting for law and order and against banditry in Chechnya. Secondly, Gantemirov is bitterly at odds with the Russians' main local ally in Chechnya, the religious leader and provisional head of government, Akhmed Kadyrov. On a number of occasions, their men have come to the edge of serious armed conflict, forcing the Russians to offer bribe after bribe to keep the peace.

Finally, Gantemirov and his men have deep criminal links with leading figures on the side of the Chechen armed resistance. In part, this is precisely what makes Gantemirov useful to the Russians; he can use his contacts both to penetrate enemy groups, and to persuade their leaders to cut a deal and surrender. This ability was demonstrated in his brokerage of the peaceful surrender of Chechnya's third biggest city, Urus Martan, in November 1999.

This was a major coup for the Russians, and saved many lives. On the other hand, it appears to have included a safe passage out of Urus Martan, and possibly a guarantee of future immunity, for leading gangsters/guerrilla commanders on the Chechen side—some of whom promptly launched attacks on Russian forces elsewhere in Chechnya. These men appear to include some of the leaders of the very worst kidnapping gangs, whose attacks on Russian and Western citizens between 1996 and 1999 helped bring about

the present war. The arrangement at Urus Martan comes on top of several years of murky dealings between the Russian security forces and the Chechen gangs, both for political reasons and to procure the release of Russian military and official hostages.

Such deals have allowed anti-war (or at least anti-Putin) sections of the Russian news media to claim that the Russian security forces themselves are involved in the kidnapping trade and have been taking rake-offs from the kidnappers in return for granting immunity from arrest. Such allegations are then worked into a baroque conspiracy theory of the kind beloved by Russians (and all too many Western journalists, alas) whereby the war is being artificially continued by the Russian authorities in order to profit senior Russian officials, and that this—not Russian incompetence, Chechen skill, or local geography—explains the failure so far to capture the main Chechen and radical Islamist resistance leaders. During the war of 1994-96, this kind of conspiracy theory was very widely believed by Russian soldiers, having a disastrous effect on their morale.

I do not know the exact nature of the dealings between the different Russian security services and the kidnapping gangs. Probably, given the murky nature of that world, nobody has a complete picture. This borderline between criminality and secret service activity is often a blurred one, and the possibilities of corruption are immense, above all in a place as corrupt and demoralized as Russia. Of course, even if the Russian security services had employed the straightest arrows in the world, men motivated purely by patriotism and a desire for victory at the least cost in blood, they might well have ended with much the same result. We know this is so, because in Indochina and elsewhere, our forces started with the straightest arrows in the world—and ended with much the same result.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. Interview with the author, September 23, 1994.

2. Robert Montague, *The Berbers: Their Political and Social Organization*, David Seldon, trans., London: Frank Cass, 1973, p. 35.

3. Sergei Arutiunov, "Ethnicity and Conflict in the Caucasus," in *Ethnic Conflict and Russian Intervention in the Caucasus*, Fred Wehling, ed., San Diego: Institute for the Study of Global Conflict and Cooperation, University of California, p. 17.

4. Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 345.

5. *Ibid*.

6. Jacques Dalloz, *The War In Indochina, 1945-54*, Josephine Bacon, trans., New York: Macmillan, 1987, p. 110.

7. *Ibid*.

CHAPTER 5

THE BATTLES FOR SAIGON AND HUE: TET 1968

James J. Wirtz

On January 30-31, 1968, the Viet Cong (VC) and their North Vietnamese allies launched a series of attacks against dozens of cities and villages throughout South Vietnam. Timed to coincide with the celebration of the Chinese lunar New Year, the Tet Offensive was intended to spark a "general offensive-general uprising," leading to the disintegration of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and a revolt against the Saigon government. Hanoi also ordered its forces to engage isolated U.S. military units stationed along the Demilitarized Zone (especially at Khe Sanh) and units operating in the Central Highlands to keep up the pressure as rebellion and mutiny swept urban areas. The Tet Offensive was an effort to re-create the past success against the French at Diem Bien Phu by delivering a devastating military and political setback to the United States and its allies. The collapse of ARVN and open revolt in southern cities would create the appropriate context for negotiations that would lead to U.S. withdrawal from Indochina and unification of Vietnam under Communist rule.[1]

Vietnamese communists remain proud of the "general offensive-general uprising." They view the effort to create a "spontaneous" urban rebellion, combined with an all-out offensive using every military and diplomatic resource at hand, as a major innovation in the Chinese strategy of People's War. Urban warfare constituted the culminating point of the Vietnamese concept of People's War, allowing their armed politicians (i.e., soldiers) to undertake direct "action among the enemy."[2] For the VC and their allies in Hanoi, urban warfare was politics, which made the battles

of Saigon and Hue the most important battles of Tet. Fighting in Saigon, the seat of government power, and Hue, the old imperial capital and an ancient symbol of authority for the Vietnamese, sent a clear message to southerners about the communists' political aspirations. Thirty years later, there is even more reason to treat urban operations as the ultimate expression of Clausewitz's dictum that war is a continuation of politics by other means.

Today's joint doctrine recognizes that cities often are both the symbolic and substantive center of a nation, a situation that military operations can exploit to produce significant political consequences.[3] Yet, joint doctrine has little to say about a paradox produced by urban fighting during the Tet Offensive. Even though urban operations against the VC in Saigon and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) in Hue were militarily successful, they still produced negative political consequences for the United States and its allies. What produced this paradox and what other lessons do the battles of Saigon and Hue have to offer today's warfighter and planner?

To answer these questions, this chapter briefly describes the battles of Hue and Saigon. It identifies several lessons from these two urban battles that might again be relevant on future urban battlefields. It then concludes by suggesting that the quest for military victory alone should not govern the conduct of urban operations.

Getting Down to Cases.

Although the motives behind Hanoi's plan to attack and gain control of Saigon and Hue were similar, the course of the battles differed significantly from one another. The VC inflicted many casualties and caused great disruption in Saigon, but they never really threatened to gain control of the capital. The battle for Saigon is best characterized as a simultaneous eruption of scores of small-unit actions in an urban setting. In Hue, a division-sized PAVN force actually gained control of the city before U.S. and ARVN units could

respond. Allied forces had the military situation in Saigon under control by about February 5. By contrast, the effort to retake Hue deteriorated into an urban siege that destroyed Vietnam's old imperial capital over a period of weeks.

Saigon. The battle for Saigon actually started well before the Tet attacks. In the weeks leading up to the offensive, the VC had moved supplies and small bands of sappers into Saigon, relying on a network of covert cadre in the city to provide shelter and intelligence. Because large numbers of South Vietnamese had access to even the most important U.S. facilities, VC commanders often had the opportunity to conduct a personal reconnaissance of the targets they would strike during Tet. Colonel Nam Truyen, the commander of the 9th VC Division who planned the attack on the U.S. airbase at Tan Son Nhut, actually entered the airbase during the 1967 Christmas cease-fire using forged identity papers.[4] Intelligence about the urban battlefield was critical to VC commanders because they generally operated in the countryside. Local guides were employed to lead VC units through Saigon and the nearby city of Cholon, which was populated mostly by ethnic Chinese. By the start of Tet, the communists had massed the equivalent of about 35 battalions around the capital and about 4,000 sappers within Saigon for the attack. The 716th Military Police Battalion, the 527th Military Police Company, a company from the 52nd Infantry, and the 90th Military Police Detachment were the only organized U.S. forces within the city. Although they were on alert, they expected only isolated terrorist attacks.[5]

Starting at about 0300 on the morning of January 31, 1968, the VC units attacked in and around Saigon. The VC conducted three types of operations. First, they carried out a series of commando (sapper) attacks against the U.S. Embassy, Independence Palace, the Vietnamese Joint Staff compound, Bachelor Officer Quarters, the Vietnamese Naval Headquarters, the Saigon radio station, the National Police Headquarters, and other government and military facilities in the heart of Saigon. A report drawn from the

command J-2 log describes the chaos that reigned in Saigon in the first days of the attack:

> Embassy Hotel in SAIGON near [Republic of Korea] Embassy has an estimated VC company using it as a strong point. Have machine guns on roof. Approximately 20 U.S. and local police and ROK MPs pinned down by enemy. Doubt that they can hold out after dark. RACE TRACK AREA: Capital Military District forces driving VC in direction of PX warehouse. Warehouse lightly held by civilians and unarmed American personnel. 1 platoon (U.S.) on way to warehouse for reinforcement. [Bachelor Officer Quarters] #3: U.S. relief force still fighting a company size enemy force, enemy holding out in houses near BOQ. Wounded (U.S.) removed from street. Dead in street. Town situation not getting better. Sporadic shooting all over city.[6]

In terms of military operations, the attacks were significant because they greatly disrupted allied command and control. Instead of directing the overall response to the attacks, headquarters personnel became embroiled in the defense of various installations and billets.

Second, VC units attacked U.S. military facilities at Tan Son Nhut Airport (headquarters for the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam [MACV], was a tenant at the base), Bien Hoa air base, and U.S. command and logistics facilities at Long Binh. For awhile, the situation at all of these facilities was in doubt as VC sappers penetrated defense perimeters, blew up aircraft in revetments, and detonated the ammo dump at Long Binh. General Frederick Weyand, Commander of II Field Forces, Vietnam, who directed the defense of Saigon from his headquarters at Long Binh, was only meters away from the defense perimeter at Long Binh.[7]

Third, when VC units were able to gain control of neighborhoods in Saigon and its suburbs, they often conducted political operations to win over the “hearts and minds” of their fellow Vietnamese. According to Victoria Pohle, the techniques they employed closely resembled the tactics employed by VC armed propaganda teams that operated in the countryside: (1) underming confidence in the government by creating fear of the VC; (2) eliminating

government officials and police; and (3) identifying and eliminating government supporters.[8] The VC were especially intent on killing, kidnapping, and arresting government officials and soldiers, often going door to door looking for individuals or evidence that family members were in ARVN or employed by the government. An inhabitant of Saigon's 6th district gave this description of a VC sweep:

> It was on the third day of Tet when the VC came to our area. They guarded the street, checked houses and ID cards, and forbade us to leave. [ARVN] soldiers on leave were arrested and shot on the spot . . . they would search the people, and they would shoot at any secret police, capture any [Government of Vietnam] soldiers. Ordinary people weren't arrested, but weren't allowed to leave the area. Veterans and disabled veterans were tied up and kept prisoners.[9]

Because the VC controlled portions of Saigon for only a brief time, their reign of terror was short-lived. Government officials caught inside Hue would not be so lucky.

Saigon itself was saved by the quick response of U.S. units that had been moved closer to the capital in the weeks leading up to the offensive.[10] The sappers that attacked various government installations within Saigon were slowly surrounded and isolated. They could not hold their positions without reinforcements from outside the city. But VC reinforcements would never reach cadre and sappers now heavily engaged inside Saigon. Mechanized units sent to relieve the beleaguered defenders of U.S. bases on the outskirts of Saigon in effect served to block follow-on attacks against Saigon. For example, Troop C of the 3rd Squadron 4th Calvary sent to relieve the defenders of Tan Son Nhut ran through the VC 271st Main Force Regiment that was attacking the base, apparently cutting off the VC inside the base from reinforcements. Troop C suffered heavily in a VC ambush, but it served as a first important barrier to enemy movement toward Saigon. Assisted by additional cavalry troops throughout the day, those conducting the battle for Tan Son Nhut helped to create a mobile defense of the

northwestern approaches to Saigon itself. Similarly, mechanized units sent to help in the defense of Long Binh soon began to sweep the northeast approaches to Saigon, preventing VC reinforcements from entering the capital.[11]

The good-news defeat of the VC assaults against major American bases, however, paled in significance when compared to the bad-news public uproar generated by the sapper attacks that occurred in downtown Saigon, especially the VC assault against the American embassy. For most journalists, the opportunity to witness combat was a rare event; even with assistance from MACV, reporters often arrived at the scene too late to witness much of significance. The international press corps, however, had a ringside seat at the Tet attacks in Saigon, with the battle at the U.S. Embassy being the main event. After Embassy security personnel succeeded in killing the last of the 13 VC sappers that had penetrated the Embassy grounds, General William C. Westmoreland, Commander of MACV, arrived on the scene and held an impromptu press conference. To reporters, already aghast at the Embassy scene and the firefights raging across the city, Westmoreland's assurances that allied forces would go on to victory and that the Embassy attack was a publicity stunt appeared out of touch with current events. The reports they would eventually file focused not only on the fighting, but on the unwillingness of senior officers to admit that the Tet offensive represented an important failure of intelligence or command.[12]

Hue. At the heart of Hue stood the Citadel, the center of Vietnamese culture. Patterned after the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Citadel contained the old Imperial Palace, the Palace of Perfect Peace, and other historic structures. The walls of the Citadel were surrounded on three sides by a moat and on the south side by the Perfume River, which cut across the heart of Hue City. Hue had been virtually untouched by the war until the Tet offensive.[13]

The defense of Hue was largely the responsibility of the 1st ARVN Division, commanded by Brigadier General Ngo Quang Truong, who was highly respected by his American allies. Truong had responded to indications that an enemy attack was imminent by placing his division on alert and by positioning his units to repel an NVA effort to cut Highway 1 south of Hue. General Truong, whose headquarters was located inside the Citadel, did not expect that Hue itself would be the enemy's objective.[14]

During the early morning hours of January 31, elements of the 4th and 6th PAVN regiments, the 810th PAVN Battalion, and two sapper companies infiltrated Hue virtually undetected. By the time local commanders realized what had happened, only a few installations in the city remained in Allied hands, these being the 1st ARVN Headquarters in the north corner of the Citadel; the MACV compound across the Perfume river in Hue City; the Tay Loc airfield; and an armory guarded by the U.S. Army's 81st Ordnance Company. On February 1, PAVN units armed about 500 VC cadre released from the Hue jail and began a systematic search of the city in an effort to round up Catholics, ARVN troops on holiday leave, American personnel, or anyone having anything to do with the South Vietnamese government. "At dawn," a French correspondent reported,

> the new masters of the city went through the streets in groups of ten. In each group, there was a leader who spoke to the people through a bullhorn. . . . The other members of the team . . . knocked on doors and passed out pamphlets and leaflets. Joking and laughing, the soldiers walk in the streets and gardens without showing any fear.[15]

The discovery of about 3,000 bodies in mass graves outside Hue suggests that the solders' mission was no joking matter.[16]

The North Vietnamese also were digging in, preparing to use a walled fortress as the center of their defensive position. North Vietnamese defenses were fundamentally weakened, however, when a sapper company failed to

destroy the An Cuu bridge south of Hue, thus allowing U.S. forces to move up Highway 1 to relieve the Hue defenders. Marine Alpha Company 1/1, which had picked up a few Marine tanks on its way to Hue, reached the MACV compound on January 31 and prevented it from being overrun by the North Vietnamese. The Marines also seized a boat dock and helicopter-landing pad on the Perfume river and the approach to the Nguyen Hoang bridge which led directly across the Perfume River to the Citadel. [17]

In contrast to the battle of Saigon, where U.S. mechanized units quickly stopped reinforcements from reaching heavily engaged units inside the city, it took a good deal of time for allied units to isolate Hue. As a result, the PAVN was able to move additional units from the 324 B Division and supplies from its operating bases in the A Shau Valley into the city. By about February 10, Marine units had secured the city south of the Perfume River while elements of the 1st Air Calvary Division in Operation JEB STUART slowly cut off PAVN's resupply routes from the A Shau Valley.

The PAVN defenses were generally oriented to defend against an external assault, but allied forces made use of the enclaves within Hue (e.g., the ARVN HQ compound and Tay Loc airfield) to launch counterattacks. Initially, the effort to retake Hue was intended to fall on ARVN's shoulders, but after several days of intense fighting, in which bad weather prevented the use of artillery or air support, the Marines were called in to retake the Citadel on February 13. In bitter house-to-house fighting the Marines, with the aid of airstrikes, artillery, and fire support from Navy destroyers, finally regained control of Hue on February 23. The costs of the siege, however, were high.[18]

Toward the Future.

Although there is much about the Tet attacks against Saigon and Hue that is indeed unique, the battles offer several lessons that planners and warfighters should

consider in thinking about future Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT). A clear lesson is that MOUT vary in intensity. Everything from crowd control to small-unit actions to high-intensity conventional combat can occur in an urban setting. Planners should thus make an effort to ensure that planning and training reflect these variations in urban operations. Armored units that practice urban assaults using all of the firepower at their disposal, for instance, should recognize that their training is appropriate to only one form of urban warfare. Using heavy weapons to dislodge a small guerrilla unit that has seized an installation might work, but it would also prove to be politically counterproductive. But as the Battle for Hue demonstrates, if a large or well-armed enemy unit intends to use a city as a field fortification, urban warfare quickly degenerates into siege warfare, involving heavy weapons and enormous casualties and destruction.

Cities that are descending into chaos quickly must be isolated from the surrounding countryside. Whatever the source of urban turmoil—insurrection, terrorist attacks, or simple anarchy—outside reinforcements, supplies, or sympathizers must be prevented from reaching the centers of urban disturbances. If reinforcements can be kept from urban centers, units eventually will run out of ammunition, supplies, and personnel as security forces systematically isolate and neutralize pockets of resistance. In Saigon, sappers and cadre enjoyed some initial success, but were quickly killed or rounded up when their planned reinforcements were prevented from entering the city to capitalize on the turmoil they had created or the footholds they had gained. By contrast, PAVN in Hue had several days to resupply, build defenses, and carry out their house-to-house search for government officials. PAVN, however, made the mistake of not eliminating pockets of allied resistance in Hue, which allowed Allied units to mount simultaneous assaults on PAVN positions from both inside and outside Hue.

Additionally, the Tet attacks suggest that, almost by definition, urban warfare can emerge as a surprise to local inhabitants and friendly forces alike. Initially, the battles for Saigon and Hue were fought by military and base police, headquarters personnel, and logistic troops who never thought they would be called upon to defend their installations in cities that were considered relatively secure, even in the midst of a guerrilla war and insurgency. Clearly, the mood in urban areas can change quickly. Even cities considered friendly to U.S. forces could burst into violence sparked by some external event, local incident, or opposition cadre. In other words, it is difficult to predict when latent hostility towards U.S. policy or a military presence will produce attacks on isolated American units or installations. This raises an important question. Should planners expect to have regular infantry or mechanized units positioned to respond to urban unrest? Or will armored and infantry units—which are in increasingly short supply—be confronting similar units "at the front"? Will commanders be willing or able to task their most capable units (measured in terms of their organic firepower) to guard against street disturbances?

Finally, the Tet attacks demonstrate that urban warfare is fought before an extremely attentive audience, namely, the inhabitants of the city under attack. Indeed, the decision to undertake urban operations is grave in itself: even desperate opponents are unlikely to threaten civilians and the centers and symbols of national authority unless they believe the potential political gains outweigh the risks. The way U.S. forces respond to urban disturbances is crucial, because their operations will send a political message to all concerned about the credibility of American commitments and the nature of American policy toward a specific conflict, issue, or area. In other words, it might be possible that U.S. forces could win an urban engagement, but lose political support for American objectives because of negative public perceptions concerning the conduct of U.S. military operations. Today, given the density of communication

networks in urban areas, U.S. commanders must realize that MOUT will be conducted before a global audience able to observe events in real time. Given the prospects for global news coverage, urban operations will have widespread and immediate political ramifications.

Conclusion.

The battles of Saigon and Hue validate today's doctrine for MOUT. Isolating urban disturbances from outside support is a key factor in determining the course and outcome of urban turmoil and combat. Indeed, if PAVN had further reinforced its occupation of Hue with one of its 10,000-man divisions that were moving toward Khe Sanh, the siege could have lasted months.[19] In contemplating MOUT doctrine, planners might consider holding heavy infantry and mechanized units in reserve to seal off urban areas experiencing disturbances. Of course, this raises a question about which units will be available to respond to the scene of urban disturbances or attacks, a question likely to be more difficult to answer as U.S. forces increasingly rely on technology as a force multiplier.

Although allied forces won the battles of Saigon and Tet, military victory did not translate into political advantage. The shock of the urban attacks against Hue and especially Saigon, reported to the American public and members of the Johnson administration by news media that lacked real-time and interactive communication, changed the course of the Vietnam War. In that sense, the urban attacks during Tet constituted a watershed event because they produced an immediate response in U.S. domestic politics and policy. Today, with modern communications likely to be found in cities everywhere, a global audience will witness images of urban warfare. Tet leaves this final lesson for U.S. officers and policymakers. As they contemplate urban operations, planners and warfighters should not only keep the enemy, but also their audience, in mind.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. On the origins and course of the offensive, see James J. Wirtz, *The Tet Offensive: Intelligence Failure in War*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991; and Don Oberdorfer, *Tet!* Garden City: Doubleday, 1971.

2. Douglas Pike, *PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam*, Novato: Presidio Press, 1986, pp. 218-219; and William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, Boulder: Westview, 1981.

3. *Handbook for Joint Urban Operations*, Washington, DC: Joint Staff, May 17, 2000, pp. I-5 to I-7.

4. Keith William Nolan, *The Battle for Saigon: Tet 1968*, New York: Pocket Books, 1996, pp. 20-21.

5. The 716th Military Police Battalion History Page, *http://www.campbell.army.mil/716mp/716history.htm*.

6. Item 87 1445 3q January 1968, *Daily Journal*, Files, MACV J-2 Command Center, Record Group 334, accession number 70A0738, box number S1-2 of 11. National Records Center, Suitland, MD. Some of the item's abbreviation has been removed.

7. Nolan, *The Battle for Saigon*, p. 206.

8. In the 5th and 6th Saigon districts, VC cadre also encouraged local residents to join in the uprising, but these exhortations met with little success. See Victoria Pohle, *The Viet Cong in Saigon: Tactics and Objectives During the Tet Offensive,* Memorandum RM-5799-ISA/ARPA, Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, January 1969, p. 10.

9. *Ibid*., pp. 13-14.

10. General Weyand and his staff detected the movement of Viet Cong and PAVN units toward Saigon in the first weeks of January 1968 and had prepositioned units to strengthen the defense of the capital. These could not stop VC sappers and cadre, disguised as holiday travelers, from entering Saigon. See Wirtz, *Tet Offensive*, p. 200.

11. Donn A. Starry, *Armored Combat in Vietnam*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1980, pp. 116-127.

12. William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War*, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998, pp. 109-125.

13. For spectacular "before and after" pictures of Hue clearly depicting its destruction, see Richard L. Brown, *Palace Gate Under Siege in Hue City: TET January 1968*, Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 1995.

14. Keith William Nolan, *Battle For Hue: Tet 1968*, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983, p. 3. Even though it was placed on alert, the ARVN 1st Division was at 50 percent strength due to Tet holiday leaves.

15. *Le Monde* dispatch, February 2, 1968, quoted in Marvin E. Gettleman, *et al*., *Vietnam And America*, New York: Grove Press, 1995, p. 366.

16. Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, p. 184.

17. John Prados, *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1995, pp. 155-160; and Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, pp. 10-14. Sappers eventually destroyed the bridge on February 6.

18. According to Prados, *The Hidden History*, pp. 163-164,

> Figures used for determining relief payments for Hue residents list 4,456 housing units destroyed, another 3,360 as more than 50 percent damaged, and 2,757 additional homes as damaged to some degree. Some 116,000 refugees were left from the former population, while ARVN estimated that 944 civilians had been killed and 784 wounded as a result of military action in the battle. American marine losses were 147 killed and 857 wounded; army casualties included 74 dead and 507 wounded. South Vietnamese losses totaled 384 killed and 1,830 wounded. Claimed North Vietnamese casualties were 5,113 dead, and there were 89 prisoners.

19. When asked about this possibility in January 1969, General Creighton Abrams told a reporter that if one of these large PAVN divisons had moved into Hue, "We'd still be fighting there." Quoted in Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, p. 29.

CHAPTER 6

THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS OF 1992

James D. Delk

Late at night the soldiers advanced slowly, carefully, in a tactical squad column, with the squad leader only a couple of short paces behind the point. The pucker factor was high as they moved up the street. It was dark, there being no electricity in the area, with the only illumination furnished by fires flickering in some spots and burning fiercely in others. Even though the temperature was comfortable for a spring night, they could feel themselves sweat. Typical of soldiers everywhere, they preferred to blame that on the flak vests and combat gear rather than stress. The scene was surreal as they observed dark shadows of figures dashing between houses and into alleys as they advanced. They heard the occasional beat of helicopter blades overhead and sirens on the streets. Shots, both single and automatic, were heard mostly in the distance, but occasionally too close for comfort. The temptation was strong to ready their weapons for action, but the squad leader quietly urged, "Easy, take it easy!"

This was South Central Los Angeles in the spring of 1992, shortly after the troops were called in to control rioting in the streets. Los Angeles had been ripe for civil unrest since the 1965 Watts riots. There had been little or no improvement in the area over the years, with very few larger commercial firms choosing that area to rebuild or establish new businesses. Unemployment was high, poverty was spreading, school truancy was rampant, crime rates were exploding, and traditional family values were waning.

Lacking supermarkets in their area, many people relied on "Mom and Pop" stores in their neighborhoods. These

were often owned by Koreans who lived elsewhere, a fact adding to the antipathy felt by locals. In addition, tensions were higher than normal because a judge had recently given a Korean shopkeeper what was perceived as a slap on the wrist after she shot a young African-American girl in her store.

The tension was heightened by three unrelated accidental killings of babies by gangs in drive-by shootings that spring. There followed a series of meetings by rival gang leaders in churches and celebrities' homes, anyplace that could be considered neutral territory. Representatives of both the Crips and the Bloods discussed a truce to stop the killing of their babies. More ominous were a series of meetings that occurred during the last week in April. Again involving gangs with longstanding feuds, the meetings were intended to establish a truce so gang members could direct their efforts towards "killing a police officer."

The atmosphere was highly charged, and all it needed was a spark. That spark was provided following the trial of four police officers accused of brutally beating Rodney King, an unemployed construction worker on parole for armed robbery, after a lengthy high-speed chase through the freeways and streets of Los Angeles. There was great interest in the trial, which had been moved to the mostly-white community of Simi Valley after a change-of-venue motion following heavy pretrial publicity. Tension had risen to a fever pitch after repeated TV airings of an amateur videoclip that clearly showed the beating.

Though it is easy in retrospect to say trouble should have been expected in the event of a "not guilty" verdict, many (perhaps most) community leaders felt otherwise. While church leaders and others believed there would be no violence, even those who anticipated violence believed that law enforcement agencies in the county could handle it. In spite of such confidence, the judge in Simi Valley notified law enforcement officials well in advance of the verdict. This was wasted effort, as much of the Los Angeles Police

Department (LAPD) leadership was out of the county at a training seminar.

The jury found the defendants not guilty on all counts except in the case of Officer Laurence Powell, in behalf of whom a mistrial was declared on the single charge of using excessive force "under color of authority." Reaction was not long in coming. Violence was localized at first, involving what turned out to be Crips, reportedly from the Eight Tray (or Trey) Gangsters.

Most agree that the genesis of the riots occurred at the intersection of Florence and Normandie. An altercation unrelated to the trial took place near that intersection, with the police responding. A crowd gathered, and more LAPD units responded. As the crowd grew and the situation became more threatening, the LAPD lieutenant on the scene decided to call off the police, who quickly left with lights flashing and sirens blaring. The void they left quickly escalated into serious violence. Any driver entering that intersection who was not African-American was subject to beating. Helicopters overhead captured scenes on television of people pulled from their cars and trucks and savagely beaten. Some scenes, such as those involving the beating of truck driver Reginald Denny, and the preacher standing protectively over an unconscious Fidel Lopez (who had his face and genitals sprayed black and one ear partially cut off), will be seared in some people's memories forever.

As light started to fade, the mayor was heard on the radio describing the police defendants as "renegade cops" who should be fired; "I do not seek to explain the jury's decision," he declared, "because frankly no explanation makes sense." It was thus no coincidence that incidents of violence then quickly spread throughout the county.

Law enforcement reaction to the violence was painfully slow in coming. The Mutual Aid system bringing in law enforcement reinforcements from nearby communities was not immediately implemented. In fact, as late as midnight, law enforcement officials were discussing the "Mardi Gras

atmosphere" even as violence and burning of buildings was spreading over the city. Law enforcement's intelligence system had clearly broken down.

The next day both the California Highway Patrol and the National Guard were deployed. This followed a meeting that ended at about 3:00 p.m., at which the division of responsibilities and flow of taskings were finally (almost 24 hours after the verdict was announced) agreed to. Even as that meeting was still in session, some platoons of the 40th Infantry Division's Military Police Company were deployed into South Central Los Angeles under control of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office (LASO).

The National Guardsmen had good reason to be apprehensive, as many of them were from the Los Angeles metropolitan area and knew just how dangerous some parts of the city could be. How dangerous was it? In the one calendar year prior to the riots, there were 771 deaths directly attributed to gang members. This was approximately half of the homicides in the county in 1991, where death by gunfire per 100,000 inhabitants was more than triple the national average. The streets are still so dangerous, in fact, that for many years there have been no "beat cops" patrolling the sidewalks of Los Angeles. There is gunfire every night of the year in some parts of Los Angeles county, most of it initiated by gang members.

In their briefing, the troops had been told that they faced about 102,000 gang members. Unfortunately, the gangs in Los Angeles had grown more violent over the years. During the Vietnam-related riots in the 1960s, gangs tended to settle their differences with bats, bottles, rocks, and, occasionally, knives. By the 1990s, gangs retaliated with gunfire, often spraying bullets indiscriminately while endangering innocent bystanders. Already armed with sophisticated firearms, no sooner had the riots erupted than the gangs broke into gun stores and warehouses, stealing more weapons and ammunition.

The gangs were widely scattered throughout the county, but were particularly dangerous in such areas of the city as Watts and in the adjoining city of Compton. The three public housing projects, Imperial Courts, Jordan Downs, and Nickerson Gardens, were notoriously dangerous centers of gang activity. The troops knew this, and most normally avoided those areas when they could. Now, however, they had no choice. Their mission was to assist law enforcement in restoring and maintaining peace. This required them to enter those areas controlled by the gangs.

The 40th Infantry Division was fortunate in still having senior officers and noncommissioned officers who remembered the lessons of the Watts riots of 1965. One of the most vivid memories of those riots was the “free fire” atmosphere, including the use of machine guns, and the resultant killing of innocent people. There was a serious commitment in 1992 that this would not be allowed to happen again. As a consequence, restraint was the watchword, with the rules of engagement and arming orders carefully prepared and disseminated. Such instructions were terse and to the point, so soldiers could quickly grasp the full intent and rehearse their use. Rounds of ammunition were counted out while it was made clear that expenditure of those rounds would be accountable.

The troops were deployed in formations ranging from platoon through battalion in strength to help the police and sheriff’s deputies wrest control from the gangs. As control was established, the deployments were thinned out to maintain that control over a huge area that ended up totaling over 100 square miles. In many parts of the city, troops were deployed two by two, with two soldiers at each intersection. Some shopping centers were manned by formations as small as a squad fire team, with five soldiers assuming responsibility for maintaining security on a 24-hour-a-day basis.

Soldiers had to quickly acclimatize themselves to gang culture in Los Angeles. Their noncommissioned officers,

many of whom were police in civilian life, briefed them on what to expect. They described how gang members engage in “mad-dogging,” the taunting practice including staring contests that too often could result in killings. The troops were told how to avoid that, and how to drive defensively so as to keep from being penned in with no escape route. They were told about the gang practice of “car trains,” whereby a short convoy of cars loaded with gang members slowly follow each other bumper-to-bumper through their neighborhood to demonstrate strength and thumb their noses at the law. Most disconcerting was the practice of gang members (usually four) driving by in a car and then, on signal, all simultaneously raising their weapons up so they could be seen. Troops were told that such activity was routine and to ignore it. On the other hand, as one first sergeant told his troops, if they aim their weapons at you, “cancel their Christmas.”

During the first day and night on the streets, the troops were shot at over two dozen times, according to LASO records, and that did not include those troops assigned to LAPD. From that point on, the troops carefully kept track of such incidents. Gang members usually shot at the troops from a distance, either from buildings off in the distance or from freeway overpasses as they sped off. In such instances, troops were unable to return fire for fear of endangering private citizens. Rocks and bottles were thrown, but this was usually not particularly disturbing to the troops. An exception was the occasion a large rock was dropped from a freeway overpass and severely damaged a truck, fortunately without personnel injuries.

The two incidents in which civilians were shot by troops involved vehicular assaults. One of these assaults continued until the driver, a Playboy Gangster, was shot and killed when he refused to stop, trying to run over troopers even when his tires were shot out. The other individual, a felon on probation (from Florida) for vehicular manslaughter, was wounded after he ran over a police officer and tried the same with two soldiers.

The riots ended within 2 days. A total of 22 rounds had been fired during the time the troops were deployed. The restraint was obvious, receiving favorabe comment by all observers. Federal troops were called in and deployed after the riots ended. Some of them found it hard to believe they were just "maintaining law and order" when they heard the gunfire each night. However, as previously noted, such gunfire describes parts of Los Angeles county every night of the year.

After the streets quieted down, it was difficult to get permission to remove the troops. They had been warmly welcomed by the people of Los Angeles. They blew their horns at troop convoys, and gave the soldiers "thumbs up" as they went by. They fed the troops in many ways. This ranged from free meals at restaurants to people giving soldiers everything from pies to "pogey bait" (snacks). When the crime rate decreased from riots to normal to much lower than normal, the whole atmosphere changed. People let their children play in the streets, and some older folks felt for the first time in years that it was safe enough to walk to the store. It was understandable why people applied pressure on their elected officials to keep the troops deployed.

When the dust settled, it was obvious that the riots were the most deadly in our history. After careful analysis to screen out deaths not connected to the rioting, 53 people were confirmed dead as a consequence of the riots, although the originally reported figure was much higher. In addition, 2,302 were injured seriously enough to require emergency treatment. There were 71 police officers injured, and 10 firemen. Fortunately, the only military casualty was a young soldier who accidentally injured himself (not seriously) when clearing his pistol. There were 5,383 fires attributed to the riots, causing many hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. Arrests totaled 18,807, primarily Latin-Americans (many of whom were illegal immigrants), including 2,628 for felonies. The jails and prisons were

over-taxed, so many lawbreakers who would normally have been retained under arrest were set free.

What were the lessons learned? Both law enforcement and the military write contingency plans for the future based on past experience. Unfortunately, these riots were the first in decades that continued both night and day. Previously, riots were exclusively nighttime phenomena wherein both rioters and law enforcement/military personnel rested during daylight hours. Based on such experience, both law enforcement backup on the first day, and the military to follow, were told they would not have to report until just prior to dark. But daylight rioting was already well under way by that time. Other specific lessons learned:

• *Communications*. Military radios did not net with law enforcement radios. This required extensive liaison with counterparts to maintain communications, command, and control. In addition, military radios work poorly in an urban setting, requiring widespread use of repeaters. Many commands used cell phones extensively. Fortunately, the Los Angeles area is well covered with cellular phone nodes that are hardened to prevent damage from earthquakes. The other serious communications issue was the difference in interpretation of terms used by law enforcement and the military. The term "platoon" can mean anything from about 20 individuals to as many as 60, depending on who is talking. Some differences in interpretation of terms can be much more significant. For instance, to law enforcement and Army troops, "Cover me!" was interpreted the same—be prepared to shoot if needed. To the Marines, however, it meant immediately lay down a heavy base of fire to provide cover. When the Compton police officer issued that command when responding to a domestic abuse complaint, the base of fire provided by an accompanying squad of Marines narrowly missed children in a home. Those young Marines were merely responding exactly as trained. Words *are* important.

• *Training*. Typical riot control training requiring practice in formations, use of riot batons and face shields, and use of tear gas has merit when facing students or poorly armed citizens. It is not only useless but can be dangerous when facing an opponent who shoots at you. In situations such as those faced in the 1992 Los Angeles riots, it is more important to have troops who are well-trained in normal soldier skills and knowledgeable in individual protection techniques. The most important attribute is strong discipline. We were thankful that rigid discipline had been enforced in the division for some years prior to the riots.

• *Equipment*. As indicated above, face shields and riot batons are a detriment in action against a well-armed opponent. They tend to get in the way, and the face shields reflect light at night. Besides, thrown rocks were rarely hazardous to the troops. Gas was on hand but never used and has not been used in California since shifting winds blew gas into a hospital during the Berkeley riots many years ago. Night vision devices were especially valuable and extensively used. Maps are a special consideration in urban terrain. Military maps just don't provide the required detail. In many American cities, law enforcement agencies use Thomas Guides which we procured in great quantity so that all were speaking the same language as to locations.

• *Logistics*. Logisticians are particularly challenged by urban terrain. Troops were widely scattered, equipment and supply needs differed from those for open terrain, and transportation was a particular challenge. The 40th Division, as a mechanized organization, moves on tracks. We wanted to appear citizen-friendly, an image that would have suffered had we rolled into the city with our tanks and armored personnel carriers, which would have caused considerable damage to the streets. Logisticians solved this problem by contracting for buses.

• *Medical*. We anticipated and successfully handled the normal medical requirements of a large body of troops operating in a high-tempo environment. But what had been

anticipated by our medical support but not by tactical commanders was the requirement for psychiatric services. Soldiers required by circumstances to fire at (and sometimes kill) citizens of their own country face different psychiatric stresses than those normally anticipated in high-intensity military operations in urban terrain (MOUT). Having the appropriate teams at hand to quickly counsel affected troops prevented serious problems later.

• *Legal*. For those incidents with possible legal consequences, like application of deadly force, we had our own 170th Criminal Investigation Detachment conduct collateral investigations along with the normal law enforcement investigators. This gave senior leadership the facts rather than conjecture, and provided such facts much faster than would normally have been expected. I'm not sure that it was absolutely necessary to do collateral investigations, but we didn't have any legal issues surface at the time or later. Certainly it was good training for our military investigators to work closely with highly experienced police investigators.

• *Rules of Engagement/Arming Orders*. These were as clear and concise as possible, and the troops were given time to rehearse them in various scenarios. They were published in a convenient format to fit the soldier's battle dress uniform (BDU) pocket, and are now stockpiled in that format. They are also specially printed on Kimdura Poly Olefin plasticized stock to resist water and hold up under repeated handling. Noteworthy was the gradation of the arming orders issued. Military leaders at all levels relied on their law enforcement counterparts' recommendations as to which level of arming order was appropriate. They recognized that the local police officer knew best what the level of risk was in a particular area.

• *Deployment Strategies*. The 40th Division, augmented by elements of the 49th Military Police Brigade, used a controversial deployment strategy. The safest strategy is to deploy troops in larger formations with commissioned

leadership. Obviously, larger formations plus higher rank and greater experience on the part of commanders make it safer for the troops involved. But that is not how we approached the problem. After a careful risk analysis of the necessity to take the streets back from gang members, we blanketed the target area by placing pairs of soldiers on street corners after the area had been pacified. The two-soldier teams were widely scattered, but never out of sight of other soldiers "wearing the patch." Some smaller shopping centers had as few as a fire team of five soldiers, while larger shopping centers had one or more companies. It was necessary to scatter the troops more thinly than some felt prudent in order to provide the coverage needed over the vast geography involved.

• *Public Affairs*. Public Affairs was poorly handled. There was too much talk in the news media about soldiers being deployed without ammunition, even though that never occurred. Such reportage encouraged some gang members to be more aggressive than they might have been otherwise, thus putting soldiers unnecessarily at risk. The riots were quickly and thoroughly covered by the electronic media, with helicopters overhead capturing the situation as it deteriorated. It was obvious during the initial hours that people could riot and loot with impunity. Even normally law-abiding people were impacted by the intense emotion of the situation and took to the streets to get their share of the loot before it was all gone. When an amnesty was declared later, many of those people sheepishly returned their ill-gotten gains.

• *Planning and Execution*. There were many similarities between the situation faced by deployed soldiers in Los Angeles and that faced during traditional MOUT. Obvious was the centralized planning and decentralized execution so typical of MOUT. Troops were so widely scattered that leadership devolved most often down to the noncommissioned officer level. Senior commanders issued their guidance and then had to rely on sergeants and corporals to make it happen.

• *Discipline*. Discipline was, and always will be, extremely important in decentralized operations, especially in the presence of noncombatants. The division had been emphasizing discipline for years, everything from proper wear of protective headgear to enforcement of a no-liquor policy in the field. This paid huge dividends during the riots.

• *Information Operations*. Information operations were a challenge. This included everything from radio operations to public affairs, both of which have been discussed previously. With the equipment we are presently issued, information operations are always a challenge in built-up areas. Public Affairs has a direct impact on the situation faced by the troops, and can either improve or worsen the operational environment.

• *Stress Management*. Finally, stress management is an important ingredient during MOUT operations and faces every commander in similar situations. The Los Angeles riots of 1992 can hardly be compared to high-intensity MOUT, but the impact of soldiers shooting at United States citizens added unique psychological stresses that must be anticipated.

The foregoing survey is not all-inclusive, but it serves to illustrate some of the many similarities between high-intensity MOUT and some domestic support operations. There are some key differences, however, that also must be considered.

Though restraint is nearly always an important consideration, it becomes an all-encompassing issue during domestic manifestations of MOUT. Rules of engagement and arming orders are always carefully crafted and disseminated. We like to think that restraint is all-important any time we place innocent people in harm's way. Implementation of urban operations is never more important than when our own women and children are at risk. True, National Guard men and women must put on their uniforms and make the metamorphosis from civilian to soldier, but they need not make the complete

metamorphosis to trained “killer.” On the other hand, federal troops are expected to maintain a combat edge, always ready to meet the enemy in deadly combat. The difference between the two tendencies can be crucial.

Legal considerations differed. Most MOUT situations are fought under the legal umbrella of the Rules of Land Warfare, based on the Geneva Conventions. In Los Angeles, however, soldiers were guided by civil ordinances and posse comitatus. The differences are significant, particularly in the limitations placed upon federal troops in any domestic policing situation and must be understood by all those involved.

Often MOUT involves coalition warfare and working with allies. In Los Angeles there were subtle but very important differences from that concept. We were subordinate to and in support of civilian law enforcement agencies. We established our military boundaries to coincide with law enforcement jurisdictions, and took our missions from them. It was not an equal partnership, even though the law enforcement agencies always treated the military with respect. We were clearly in support of them, not vice versa, as it should have been.

The “enemy,” in our case the gangs, were hardly equivalent to professional soldiers or well-trained militia. Their marksmanship thankfully was very poor. In addition, their tactics were poorly planned and predictable.

Finally, the military was not seen as the primary enemy of the gangs, looters, and other lawbreakers in Los Angeles, the police were. It was only the occasional gang member who wanted to take on the military. The proof is in the final results, with 71 police officers injured versus none of the military.

The California National Guard was extraordinarily successful in combating the Los Angeles riots. If there was a secret to that success, many senior officers who served there will tell you that the secret lay in the strength of our

noncommissioned officers. We had been decentralizing for years in an effort to improve battle focus and redundancy, a requirement implemented without domestic support operations in mind. When mobilized for the Los Angeles riots of 1992, the urban setting and scattered deployment forced us to rely on our sergeants and corporals. They didn't let us down.

CHAPTER 7

LOW-INTENSITY OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

David Pearson

It might be argued that the British response to terrorism in Northern Ireland from 1969 to the present, which involved the introduction of reforms and the making of concessions to disaffected groups, could be seen as giving in to violence—an attempt to "win" by actually "losing." Tim Pat Coogan describes this strategy as "letting the air out of the tyres gently."[1] But while it is true that continuing political change and adjustment attempt to alleviate minority grievance and concern, this argument misses the essential characteristic of the British response to violence in the Province, namely, that of flexibility. This flexibility was manifested in British attempts to adapt to and capitalize on new ideas and conditions, reinvent and apply old ideas, tactics, and lessons, and absorb and channel pressures for change in a desired direction. The result in Northern Ireland, in both urban and rural areas, has been a successful counterinsurgency strategy that moved the Provisional Irish Republic Army (PIRA) from a tradition of employing terror and military force to a willingness to adopt a purely political solution to the perceived problems.

In August 1969, Catholic civil rights movements and anti-establishment protests and demonstrations coalesced in Northern Ireland to challenge the legitimacy of the Protestant-dominated home rule Parliament sitting at Stormont. As tension escalated, civilian rioting resulted in, among others, the major cities of Londonderry (producing the battle of the Bogside) and Belfast, prompting the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to deploy Shorland armored cars onto the city streets. Equipped with .30 caliber Browning machine guns, these vehicles proved lethal in the

confusion of the riots, killing at least three demonstrably innocent bystanders but failing to restore order. Incapable of firing single shots, the Browning was hardly a suitable weapon for crowd control. As the rioting intensified and barricades went up, the RUC lost control of the situation and requested military assistance, which was granted by British Home Secretary James Callaghan, following consultations with Prime Minister Harold Wilson. There was no exit strategy planned, and all sides recognized potential long-term political and military implications of deploying soldiers onto the city streets, namely, the probable demise of the Stormont government and likely confrontation with resurgent Republican gunmen.[2] Indeed, Callaghan realized that it would be much easier to get the army in than get it out.[3] Nevertheless, there was no choice if civil war between Protestants and Catholics on the streets of Northern Ireland was to be avoided.

In preventing outright civil war, the infantry soldiers of General Ian Freeland's 39th Infantry Brigade were remarkably successful. Unaware of the deep religious divides running through Belfast and Londonderry—a sectarianism imported from rural Ulster as the cities expanded in the 19th century under the impact of industrialization—the soldiers relied on their conventional military training, orders to use minimum force, and strict discipline to calm the immediate situation.[4] They simply lined themselves up on the main streets, which allowed isolated and burned out Catholic and Protestant families to safely relocate themselves back to their own communities, thus resulting in some semblance of normality.

Although the army was initially welcomed by the Catholic community in Northern Ireland as an indication of the Westminster parliament's determination to right the injustices of the majority Unionist Stormont government, it soon became crystal clear that the deep-seated antagonisms within Ulster could not be solved merely by the presence of soldiers on the streets. General Freeland presciently warned that "the honeymoon period cannot obviously

continue forever . . . but unless there is a solution or some hope for the future—and this is where the politicians have got to come in—the soldiers are not going to be welcomed on the streets forever."[5] The politicians did come in, but other than stressing the need for reform and that "every citizen of Northern Ireland is entitled to the same equality of treatment and freedom from discrimination as obtains in the rest of the United Kingdom irrespective of political views or religion,"[6] there was no apparent political solution in the near term. The Hunt Committee investigated the organization and structure of the RUC, the Scarman Committee scrutinized the recent disorders necessitating the deployment of troops, and Westminster relearned Irish history, while the existing political power structure in the Province was left intact, with the army "piggy in the middle." The inevitable result for the army was that, "standing, both literally and metaphorically in no-man's land, it was only a matter of time before the troops became the object of both sides' frustrations while trying to uphold a status quo which failed to reassure Loyalists or offer the chance of reform to Catholics."[7]

By 1970, the strategy of a resurgent PIRA had moved seamlessly forward from defense to retaliation toward armed struggle aimed at the full "national demand"—British withdrawal from Ireland. The British army now found itself in a new low-intensity counterinsurgency campaign in which the majority of the people lived in urban areas. The British response built upon experience in previous struggles, principally Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus. Britain discovered the need for specialized training in a small professional army, and it undertook as well an updating of doctrine, here quoted in part:

> The response [to the threat of insurgency] should be based on clear aims supported by a range of social, economic, legal, and administrative measures as well as military activity. This is usually in support of or combined with police action. The task of developing the response and coordinating its supporting overall plan will be complex. Military

> measures should only form part of the plan since by themselves they are unlikely to defeat insurgency. The military contribution therefore will be designed to defeat violent activity and provide security so that the political process can take place.[8]

This is not to argue that the British knew exactly what to do in Northern Ireland because clearly every conflict has its own unique characteristics and conditions, and there is always going to be a learning curve. There was, however, an awareness from the beginning of the need for minimum force in accordance with the rule of law, close cooperation at every level between all branches of the civil administration, military, and police, and the adoption of area deployment all under a clear political aim.

This is much easier said than done, however. Identification of root causes of unrest, and appropriate responses can take a long time, and governments should plan for a long struggle rather than a quick-fix solution. Politicians, especially in democratic countries with lively and unfettered news media, will inevitably be under pressure to show early results but must be alert for and resist ill-conceived schemes, which might compromise the overall long-term aim. Large cordon and sweep operations with grandiose titles may give the impression of decisive action but often prove counterproductive by alienating the civilian population whose cooperation is necessary for government success. The July 1970 searches of the Catholic Falls Road in Belfast are a case in point. The army uncovered numerous terrorist weapons, but the wrecking of homes by overzealous young soldiers with no formal search training, together with the use of tear gas, had a particularly radicalizing effect on the community. A curfew compounded this effect by evoking greater tribal solidarity. After five civilian fatalities in the ensuing riot, one run over by an armored personnel carrier, Gerry Adams summed up the result: "Thousands of people who had never been republicans now gave their active support to the IRA; others who had never had any time for physical force now accepted it as a practical necessity."[9] Undertaken against army

advice and aimed primarily at the republican community, internment of suspects without trial in August 1971 (Operation DEMETRIUS) was similarly disastrous.[10] Adding to difficulties, details of deep interrogation methods against some internees leaked out, resulting in the British government being found guilty of inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners in the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights, despite a majority report under Sir Edmund Compton exonerating security force methods.[11] Brigadier Frank Kitson, then commanding the 39th Infantry Brigade with responsibility for Belfast, believed internment was done in the wrong way, at the wrong time, and for the wrong reasons.[12] Intelligence simply was not up to the job. Frank Steel, an MI6 operative seconded to the United Kingdom Representatives Office, summed up the situation on arrival in the Province in October 1971:

> The place was a shambles. Areas like Belfast and Derry were almost in a state of anarchy and civil war. There were sometimes around a thousand security incidents of one sort or another each month. The army hadn't learned how to cope with civil unrest in the UK and how to use minimum and not maximum force. Many nationalists believed that HMG [Her Majesty's Government] had lent the British army to the unionist government to keep them in power and keep the nationalists under control. There was very little coordination of whatever intelligence was being produced by the RUC, the army, and MI5. Internment had been a disaster. It had barely damaged the IRA's command structure and led to a flood of recruits, money, and weapons. . . . The unionist government seemed to be just soldiering on and incapable of solving the problems facing Northern Ireland.[13]

Further mistakes followed, the worst when soldiers of the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, claiming to have come under nail bomb and sniper fire, shot dead 13 catholic men during an arrest operation against the Young Derry Hooligan Element of an illegal civil rights march in Londonderry on January 30, 1972, in what came to be called "Bloody Sunday." The findings of a subsequent public inquiry under Lord Chief Justice Widgery proved inconclusive but suggested that some of the soldiers had fired recklessly, while none of those killed and wounded

were proven to be handling weapons and bombs.[14] The consequences and emotions generated by the events of that day testify to the adverse impact individual soldiers can have on proceedings, an impact that reverberates around the province for years. Bloody Sunday led ultimately to the royal suspension of the Stormont Parliament and direct rule from London on March 24, 1972. This cleared up many command and control ambiguities and opened up the possibility of a political solution based on the concept of power-sharing, of which the Sunningdale Agreement, later Anglo-Irish talks, ultimatly all-party talks, and a Mitchell-brokered agreement were the result. Simultaneously, industrial investment and diversification attempted to make Ulster economically viable, raise living standards, and improve job opportunities—thus getting youths off street corners, which was always an army objective.

From a standing start, this initial "defensive" phase saw mistakes by both politicians and young soldiers but was nevertheless essential in building up knowledge, developing organizations, and deciding and implementing policies, whether military, economic, social, or political. The subsequent enormous Operation MOTORMAN on July 31, 1972, validated the learning process as long armored columns of troops entered and cleared the "No-Go" areas in Belfast, Londonderry, Lurgan, Armagh, Newry, and Coalisland that PIRA had been allowed to develop unmolested during government attempts at negotiation and consensus-building. Linked to a public relations campaign that warned of the operation and coming after the failure of talks and a particularly callous PIRA bombing spree on July 21—"Bloody Friday"—the operation went smoothly. PIRA withdrew rather than face overwhelming numbers of soldiers. The army thus began to reestablish government writ. With the construction of permanent fortified bases manned by the same units throughout their tour of duty, city streets and blocks assumed anti- or pro-security force characteristics as saturation patrolling

collected masses of low-grade, but nevertheless vital, information through daily contact with the people. Starting in Belfast, this area deployment spread like ink on blotting paper from the cities to the countryside throughout British Ulster.

While it was initially necessary for the security forces, and the army in particular, to take the lead in Northern Ireland while the British government experimented with a variety of political initiatives, once a comprehensive political agenda developed, it became possible to establish greater balance between the military and civilian effort, with increasing coordination in all fields. The need for such coordination was necessary for the establishment of priorities; coordination of intelligence and security; coordination between operational and civil affairs activities; joint consultation and, as far as security permitted, joint planning; joint direction of operations; arrangements for public safety and protection of public installations; scientific advice; and direction of information and counterpropaganda policy—both within the Province and throughout the world where governments or individuals might be persuaded to give moral or material support to the enemy.

Like other principles, that of coordination is extremely easy to enunciate, but difficult to put into practice. In a complex society like Northern Ireland, the difficulty lay in securing all-party acceptance because of the political cost of elaborate and close control. More specifically, legal complications, interdepartmental rivalries, pride, mutual distrust, fear of loss of status, and simple dislike of change stood in the way of cooperation. In Northern Ireland the practical solution was compromise. Despite some reorganization—for instance, the provision of joint secretariats necessary for the increased bureaucracy, joint decisionmaking, and rapid implementation of ideas—maximum use was made of existing administrative structures, which saved resources, ensured a degree of continuity, and thereby reduced institutional resistance to

change. Other important steps included matching military operating boundaries to those of the police and establishing joint headquarters and operations rooms at each level of command in order to provide an interface between the various government organizations serving as a central information point, a meeting place for the various military, police, and civil officials, and a means of disseminating information and orders which had wide application.

The result of growing coordination at all administrative levels was a committee approach to decisionmaking in which planning and command remained the prerogative of the appropriate military, police, or civil official who was required to consult his colleagues before undertaking any actions that involved departure from previously-agreed plans or policy. This approach helped prevent disputes and accidental engagements between components of the security forces, built mutual confidence, and ensured that the actual conduct of operations could draw on all available civilian and military resources in the implementation of government policy. At the top in Northern Ireland is the Province Executive Committee (PEC), chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, with the Commander Land Forces representing the General Officer Commanding, that decides strategic operational direction supported by the Security Policy Meeting Committee and the Security Coordinating Meeting Committee. PEC policy is then disseminated through a series of committees down to Divisional Action Committees (DACs). Started in Belfast in 1973 by Brigadier Kitson, the purpose of the DACs is to "meet once a week and . . . bring together the military, police, and intelligence to achieve unified planning and central control."[15] This is the level at which government impinges directly on the population, and the effectiveness of government strategy is judged. However good the plans and intentions at national and district level, if they fail to be accepted and work at street level, the entire government strategy is likely to fail. Conversely, if successful—and

provided there is adequate security—more people are likely to side openly with government policy.

Together with a political aim and coordinating machinery, a government must also ensure that all its deployed agencies act within the rule of law. This is not to say that government forces must work within exactly the same set of laws during an insurgency as existed beforehand, because it is the function of government to make new laws when necessary. The 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Temporary Provisions Act (PTA) gave the British government considerable latitude in dealing with PIRA terrorism, including the exclusion of terrorist suspects from the mainland and the holding of suspects for 48 hours without charge or up to 7 days on higher authority.[16] The Home Secretary at the time, Roy Jenkins, described the PTA thus: "These powers are draconian. In combination, they are unprecedented in peacetime. I believe they are fully justified to meet the clear and present dangers."[17]

The PTA was revised and expanded in 1975, 1978, 1987, 1989, and 1991.[18] Similarly, the way in which the law is administered should be modified if it is considered necessary for the well-being of the people. Lord Diplock's adjustment of Northern Ireland's legal procedures was designed to prevent witness and jury intimidation while preserving the rights of those accused of terrorist offenses. The law ought not to be viewed as too cumbersome and an impediment to effective counterinsurgency, but an integral part of the process. There should be no reason or temptation to step outside the law. To do so would provide a major propaganda coup to the enemy, suggest government discord, and raise the question of government legitimacy. In such circumstances, there would be the real danger of a conflict assuming the character of a civil war, thus imputing guerrilla status to dissidents rather than the status of insurgents acting against the legitimate and rightful authority of government.

Part of acting within the law is minimum force and self-restraint by individual soldiers. The agents of government policy must be careful not to destroy, by over-reacting, the very institutions and kind of society they seek to protect. The Yellow Card rules of engagement issued to every soldier in Northern Ireland are explicit as to the circumstances when a soldier can legitimately open fire. Government representatives cannot be seen as out of control or as a danger to the civil population. The military role in counterinsurgency is essentially the selective application of force to a political situation. In a correctly orchestrated campaign, innocents need not hide in fear at the approach of government troops or the sight of government aircraft. In part, civilian control is a safeguard in this respect, but ultimately it remains the duty of all commanders to ensure that they are not required or asked to undertake operations which are incompatible with existing law. Soldiers must take particular care that when they deploy, they never use more force than is necessary and reasonable to achieve the immediate military aim. As the Duke of Wellington remarked just prior to the Battle of Waterloo while pointing at a soldier in a Brussels park, "It all depends on that article."[19] Man was, is, and always will be the crucial element in war, but especially so in low-intensity operations.

A critical component in ensuring that military operations do meet the principle of minimum force is, not surprisingly, reliance on accurate intelligence. Establishing an effective intelligence organization is a matter of the first importance. Not only is the right sort of information needed at a high level to enable the government to work out a sensible policy for countering the insurgents, but at a lower level operational commanders need reliable and detailed intelligence from which to plan precise and selective operations. This will minimize the chances of alienating the local population. Indeed, in Northern Ireland, in contrast to conventional operations, the search for and the exploitation of intelligence often drove the operational plan, rather than

the other way round. This necessitates a single centralized and integrated intelligence organization whose main objective is to prevent the proliferation of agencies owing allegiance to different organizations, departments, or masters. Before the creation of the intelligence board known as the "Department" by Sir Maurice Oldfield, such proliferation obtained in Northern Ireland with the army, RUC, MI5, and MI6 conducting their own independent intelligence operations with little trust or coordination. The start made by Oldfield was continued by his successor, Sir Brooks Richards, former Cabinet Office intelligence coordinator.[20] By the mid-1980s military and police intelligence agencies were not only sharing information but also running some agents jointly. Eventually, intelligence coordination was extended to include both the Province and the United Kingdom mainland under MI5 leadership.[21]

A practical method for centralized control is through the establishment of intelligence committees in parallel with the other government committees. Each intelligence committee owes allegiance to the next higher level, while those at the higher levels are responsible for the effectiveness and activities of those below. Information and intelligence pass both ways, with a Director of Intelligence at the top of the intelligence committee pyramid. All committees should have, with due regard to security, the power to co-opt local experts in any particular department, such as Forestry, Posts and Telegraphs, or Inland Waterways, should the need arise. The functions of the committees are to keep the next higher intelligence committee and the parallel operations committee informed of relevant intelligence and security matters; to provide intelligence on which to base operational planning; to allocate tasks, targets, and priorities to the intelligence organization; to establish common intelligence and security staff procedures; and to ensure maximum cooperation between intelligence and security agencies. As a check on possible abuse, especially in a democratic country, the intelligence committees should not have executive

command over the intelligence organization itself or over the detailed direction of activities, once the tasks and priorities have been decided in committee.

The actual composition of the intelligence organization should be designed to meet the needs arising from the local situation. Individuals may well come from a range of intelligence organizations including civilian, police, and army, but support staff will normally be drawn from the army's own Intelligence Corps. Once the intelligence organization is established, its actions will follow the normal intelligence cycle. Commanders will provide direction through intelligence requirements. A search of available information will follow in order to identify what additional information, if any, is necessary to meet the commander's requirement. Once the information requirement is clearly defined, a collection plan will be made, and sources and agencies tasked. Sources in Northern Ireland included conventional military surveillance, the local population, informers and agents, Special Forces, prisoner interrogations, and open sources such as insurgent pamphlets or broadcasts that may indicate trends and intentions. When Gerry Adams was appointed Vice President of PIRA's political arm, Provisional Sinn Fein, in the autumn of 1978, it was clear to those watching that politics had assumed a new importance within Sinn Fein's strategy. Sure enough, in October 1981 at the Provisional Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference), the organization's publicity officer, Danny Morrison, outlined a "new" double strategy: "Who here really believes that we can win the war through the ballot box? But will anyone here object if with the ballot box in this hand and an Armalite in this hand, we take power in Ireland?"[22]

Information once gained is then processed and converted into intelligence. This process involves collation—the routine office work of registering and recording all incoming information; evaluation—determining the reliability of the source and credibility of the information; analysis—identifying significant facts, comparing them

with existing data, and drawing conclusions from them; integration—putting all the analyzed information together to form a pattern of events or to build up a picture of the subject being studied; and interpretation—deciding what the collated, evaluated, analyzed, and integrated information means in terms of what is likely to happen in the future. Finally, the intelligence will be disseminated in an appropriate form and by suitable means to those who need it.

Disseminated intelligence does not normally mean that regular army units deployed on the ground are being provided with the pinpoint information required to place them in a position to engage and kill or capture the insurgents. The necessity of protecting sources may make it difficult for the intelligence organization to act by means other than through the deployment of Special Forces, often at short notice, such as the ambush at Loughgall, County Armagh, on May 8, 1987, when, following a bomb attack on the RUC station, a Special Air Service team killed eight heavily armed terrorists from PIRA's East Tyrone active service unit (ASU). Even then, this type of operation is infrequent. While the army should almost certainly be warned if information becomes available indicating an attack on them, the only way for regular soldiers to take the battle to the insurgents is for commanders at all levels, but particularly battalion and company, to obtain and develop contact information as part of their own operational program. The tactical commander first analyzes all the information he can obtain from the intelligence organization at his level and discusses the problem with anyone who can help, for example collocated local police. He then mounts offensive patrols to acquire more information and develop his own intelligence picture. This process is repeated until the commander is confident that he has enough information to place his troops in areas of likely enemy activity.

This process of turning background information into contact intelligence has worked extremely well in the area

deployment of units in Northern Ireland. Once they are allocated individual tactical areas of operational responsibility (TAOR), commanders can "farm their patch," whether urban or rural, for a sustained period of time. The dispersal of the South Armagh Roulement Battalion (ARB) into company patrol bases in the towns of Forkill, Newtownhamiliton, and Crossmaglen, with battalion headquarters at Bessbrook Mill, is a prime example of this approach. With some units in the Province rotating every 6 months, the intelligence continuity is maintained by selected personnel, normally Intelligence Corps NCOs, remaining in one TAOR for up to 2 years.

As army tactics evolved in Northern Ireland, so too did recognition of the need for thorough and appropriate training. In the 1960s counterinsurgency was viewed as a specialist subject outside the scope of regimental soldiery. As late as 1971, training was still far from adequate.[23] Indeed, Brigadier Peter Morton states that, as a company commander in 1973, some of the deaths of his men could have been avoided through better training, and that they arrived in Ulster with "little idea of what to expect."[24] By 1976, his men were receiving 3 months of training for a 4-month tour. In a small professional army, soldiers could not simply be thrown at the problem to learn on the job—a view reinforced by the need to train a variety of units from engineers to artillery, given the shortage of infantry battalions and recognition of the power of the news media to intrude into every aspect of operations in the province and report instantly any mistakes. First established in England and the British Army of the Rhine, the Northern Ireland Training Advisory Teams (NITAT) were designed to fuse together counterinsurgency principles, operational experience and research, and basic infantry skills in a Northern Ireland context before units deployed to the Province. Units were instructed on how to patrol in mutually supporting small teams; deal with "aggro," a full-blown riot, sniper attack, or bomb explosion; avoid a "come-on" or ambush, cordon, and search an area; and stop

and check vehicles. The structural organization of the various paramilitaries was covered, as were rules for opening fire and the Yellow Card. Specific information pertinent to where a unit was going in the Province was passed more often than not by officers and soldiers of the unit to be relieved. All this culminated in company and battalion test exercises, based on either an urban or rural setting as appropriate.

With experience and self-evaluation, the training package has continued to improve. It became longer and more comprehensive, to include better facilities featuring whole training villages populated by servicemen and women role-playing gunmen and the civil population in which soldiers can practice dealing with any type of incident. Throughout, minimum force was emphasized as was community relations. Reinforced by official publications developed during the troubles that range down from Standing Instructions for Northern Ireland to the pocket aide memoire of a commander, this concept of pre-deployment training is a vital component of British success in Ireland and has now become accepted army practice for any sustained theater of operations. Indeed, the Northern Ireland training package format provided the foundation for training undertaken by British soldiers deploying to Bosnia in the former Yugoslavia as part of the first United Nations Protection Force and later the NATO-led Implementation Force.

The British response in Northern Ireland clearly evolved over time going through a number of distinct phases. The initial defensive stage (1969-1972) attempted to contain the problem while the government organized its response. The subsequent build-up phase (1972-1979), spreading out from the cities, put those measures decided earlier into practice and forced PIRA to restructure into small ASUs and acknowledge that military victory for them was not possible. This resulted in Sinn Fein elevating the political approach to parity with the physical force tradition. The consolidation phase (1979-1990) saw a continuation of

earlier policies and ironing out of identified problems as government influence returned throughout the Province. The final attrition phase started in 1990 and is ongoing. All the elements of British strategy are in place, working effectively, and with controlled rotation of personnel, capable of continuing indefinitely. In the words of a 1994 briefing to politicians:

> We face groups of terrorists, who to a greater or lesser degree are expert, highly effective, and capable of atrocities right across the spectrum of violence. They provide an enormous challenge to our soldiers who have to operate within the law in support of the RUC, working amongst a community, the vast majority of whom want peace and to be able to get on with their lives. Increased force levels, better coordination and direction, more effective exploitation of intelligence and a training system properly tuned to the task, provide us with the tools we need to do the job.[25]

Self-evidently, warfare is too complex an issue for the British approach to low-intensity operations in the urban (and rural) areas of Northern Ireland to be viewed as a static template. Nevertheless, it should be apparent from the foregoing discussion that the principle of minimum force in accordance with the rule of law; close cooperation at every level between all branches of the civil administration, military, and police; and the use of area deployment and small unit operations based on accurate intelligence, all encompassed under a clear political aim, can be adapted to meet a variety of circumstances, providing the uniqueness of each conflict is taken into account. It should also be clear that there are no off-the-shelf solutions, and that an effective counterinsurgency campaign in an urban environment takes time and patience to develop and see through to a successful conclusion.

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CHAPTER 8

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT: BEIRUT, 1982-84

Bernard E. Trainor

The U.S. Marine experience in Beirut from 1982 to 1984 is more appropriately a case of military operations in a suburban environment. By choice the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) opted to keep the Marines out of downtown Beirut and locate them in the vicinity of the Beirut International Airport, just south of the city. This decision was made for both political and logistical reasons. Politically, the Chiefs did not want the Marines tied down in the contested environment of downtown Beirut. Additionally, the occupying Israelis wanted the Americans, and not the French or Italian members of the intervention force, to be contiguous to their positions. Logistically, the airport and landing beaches facilitated support of the Marine landing force. From a tactical point of view, however, the location was about the worst imaginable. The airport was on low ground in a potentially hostile environment dominated by the Chouf Mountains.

But the story does not begin with the encampment of the Marines. Throughout the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union eschewed "peacekeeping" missions. There were too many chances that uncontrolled events could lead to confrontation between the two superpowers; better that peacekeeping be done under the aegis of the United Nations by smaller and nominally unaligned nations (e.g., Ireland, Pakistan, Fiji). The exception to the rule occurred in August 1982 when, at Israeli insistence, Americans were included in a multinational force (along with French and Italian) requested by the Lebanese government to supervise the evacuation of the Palestine

Liberation Organizatin (PLO) “fighters” from Beirut, where they had been battling the Israelis.

The Secretary of Defense and JCS were unhappy about the White House’s agreement to do so, but carried out the president’s wishes. The intervention force landed in Beirut on August 25 and completed the evacuation without serious incident on September 10. The Marines of the 32d Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) then set sail for Italian ports of call, only to be ordered back to Lebanon before they could reach them. Two fatal events had taken place. Lebanon’s president-elect, Bashir Gemayel, was assassinated, and the dependents of the PLO fighters were massacred 2 days later in the west Beirut shanty towns of Sabra and Shatilla. The Marines relanded in Lebanon where they would remain in a failed peacekeeping mission until February 1984. The French, Italians, and later the British also put forces ashore at Beirut.

One of the first problems faced in this unusual mission arose from the object of the exercise itself. At best it could be described as a mission of “presence,” which was interpreted to mean providing a stabilizing force, a security blanket for the locals, like a cop on the beat. But that was a vague mission. This made simple and coherent rules of engagement difficult to articulate. Essentially, Marines were prohibited from using their weapons without command authorization except in extreme situations of self-defense, after allowing a hostile party to fire first. The problem was further exacerbated by the multisectarian composition of the population, all of whom were fighting one another. In addition to stay-behind PLOs and the Israeli military force, there were the indigenous Moslems, Druze, and Christians who had been fighting a civil war for years. The Lebanese government was one in name only and, while professing to be multisectarian, was, in fact, an instrument of the Christian Phalange Party. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), also ostensibly multisectarian, was totally ineffective and had remained in barracks throughout the civil war.

The Marines also interpreted their role as keeping the contending factions from attacking each other and of imputing legitimacy to the titular government. If all sides acknowledged the Good Samaritan role, the exposed tactical disposition of the Marines was irrelevant. But if the Marines became involved in the fighting, or were perceived as taking sides in support of one of the sectarian sides, their encampment on the low ground around the airport was vulnerable.

Initially, the locals of all persuasions as well as the Israelis welcomed the American and allied presence and the stability it brought. For a short period of time, goodwill was widespread. During the unusually harsh winter of 1992-93, the Marines endeared themselves to the Lebanese when they undertook aid and rescue missions in the mountain villages cut off and isolated by heavy snows. Marine patrols freely trekked the souks and warrens of the surrounding neighborhoods without loaded weapons. The populace smiled and offered them tea. The children crowded around them. If there was any problem, it was with the Israelis, who constantly tested the forbearance of the Marines while simultaneously trying to create the illusion that the U.S. and IDF forces were coordinating their activities and cooperating with one another. The Marines successfully discredited the ploy, and when a Marine officer armed with only a pistol prevented an Israeli armor column from going into an unauthorized Lebanese occupied area, the Marines immediately became heroes to all Lebanese.

On-scene and national intelligence focused on the tactical situation with great success, primarily through dedicated signals intelligence (SIGINT) assets. Political intelligence, however, was poor. The Marines depended upon the U.S. Embassy, the Lebanese government, and the French (who were credited with having excellent sources). All proved inadequate, misleading, or downright deceiving. It was this lack of knowledge about the nature and cultural aspects of the Lebanese melange which led to fatal mistakes on the part of both the Marines and the U.S. Government.

The most egregious error was to mistake the LAF as a multisectarian entity respected by all factions. The JCS, ever anxious to untangle the U.S. forces from Lebanon and a peacekeeping role, reasoned that, if the central government was ineffective, perhaps the LAF could become an accepted symbol and instrument of national unity and sovereignty for all Lebanese. Hopefully, the people of all sectarian groups would rally round their army, allowing it to do three things: (1) stabilize the nation, thus providing the foundation for a functioning multisectarian government; (2) provide the necessary guarantees to permit the Israeli army to withdraw to its own borders; and (3) prevent the Syrians from exercising undue influence over internal Lebanese matters. Ultimately, it was hoped that a reinvigorated LAF would emerge as Lebanon's savior, allowing the early withdrawal of the multinational intervention force. All concerned recognized that this was a bit of wishful thinking, but at the time it appeared to be the best (if not the only) way to untangle the web. As it turned out, it produced disaster.

Marines began to train the LAF in weaponry, *offensive* and defensive tactics, with attendant local and national publicity. The Department of Defense (DoD) began a crash program of providing large quantities of light and heavy weapons and other significant military equipment and military advisors to the LAF. The LAF and the Lebanese government were most grateful. The U.S. Government was delighted with the prospects of early solution to what had been an intractable political problem, securing an Israeli agreement to withdraw, and keeping the Syrians from meddling in Lebanese affairs.

But all this was a chimera. The antigovernment forces suspected that the Americans were preparing the LAF for offensive operations against them. The Lebanese government and the LAF were multisectarian in name only. In fact, they were basically Phalangist and seen as such by Moslems and Druze. Additionally, anti-Israeli Middle East factions outside Lebanon believed the United States was in cahoots with the Israelis and was forcing the Lebanese

government to recognize Israel as the price of an IDF withdrawal. By the spring of 1983, strange and hostile faces began to appear on the streets now well-known to Marine patrols. Children no longer marched beside the troops, and the formerly friendly neighbors avoided the eyes of the Marines and no longer offered tea. Tension was in the air. Then anti-American graffiti and posters of the Ayatollah Khomeni began to appear on the walls. In March 1983, a grenade was thrown at a Marine patrol and at an Italian checkpoint. The Americans were assured by the Lebanese government that the attacks were aberrations. Reconstitution of the LAF proceeded apace as hostility to the multinational force was clearly mounting. Convoys to downtown Beirut were targets of ambush attempts. In April 1983, a terrorist with an explosive-laden van blew himself up along with part of the American Embassy, killing 63 occupants.

It was clear that the peacekeepers had become enemies to all but the Phalangists. Antiterrorist warnings were issued and security measures were implemented, though severely circumscribed so as not to endanger civilians. While tactical intelligence on military factions in and around Beirut remained good, intelligence on terrorist groups was abysmal. It was with dismay that Marine commanders learned that the French, who had a long relationship with Lebanon, knew as little as they did. Periodic sniping attacks began against the dug-in Marine positions around the airfield. Rules of Engagement (ROEs) were modified, giving greater freedom of action to the beleaguered troops, but the rules always seemed to lag behind current circumstances. Marines were authorized to use lethal force against snipers, but only when they could positively identify the source of the sniping and only with weapons of like caliber, only for as long as the hostile fire persisted, and only in such a way that innocent civilians would not be hit by any return fire.

The Marines were facing an increasingly dangerous situation. Open warfare was breaking out between

sectarian groups and against the LAF, which was now out of barracks but proving to be singularly ineffective resource consumers. Ill-positioned for active operations, the Marines were vulnerable to anyone who wished to shoot at them. It was almost impossible to distinguish friend from foe, and terrorist attacks on patrols and convoys were a constant threat. Yet for all of this, there was still no redefinition of the Marines' mission. The fiction of a benign "presence" force was maintained in the face of a situation that was devolving into armed chaos.

The Marine command in Beirut received very little help and guidance from either their military or civilian masters. The convoluted command arrangements in Beirut were not only grossly inadequate to the task, but were detrimental. On the civilian side, the American ambassador as head of the country team was ostensibly the principal decisionmaker on site, but he had to check with the State Department on just about every move, and additionally he also was receiving directions from the National Security Council (NSC). Moreover, a State Department special envoy, authorized to deal not only with Lebanon but also Syria and Israel, complicated the ambassador's exercise of authority. On top of all that, he was applying a political-diplomatic template to a situation which had already erupted into open warfare.

On the military side, the command line was equally confusing. On an organization chart it looked logical. The MAU was an element of the Sixth Fleet, belonging to Commander in Chief Europe (CINCEUR) in Stuttgart, Germany, who in turn answered only to the Secretary of Defense, but in practice went through the JCS. There was also a naval componency command line through the Navy headquarters in Naples, Italy, and the Commander in Chief Navy Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) in London. Additionally, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) exercised informal authority over deployed naval forces (including embarked Marines). On top of this, the Chairman of the JCS had dispatched a "trusted agent" to Lebanon to oversee

activities (primarily relating to LAF support) and to recommend courses of action. Back in the Washington, there was also a running dispute among the Defense Secretary, the JCS (who never wanted to be in Beirut in the first place), and the White House National Security Adviser, who was determined to make the intervention a success. This only added to the perception that the Marines were supporting Israel and the Phalange.

Needless to say, the spaghetti-like command arrangements led to countermanding directions, confused tasks, lack of timeliness, and contradictory policies. The hapless victim of these arrangements was the Marine colonel, the commander on the scene faced with life-and-death demands regarding a mission that by the summer of 1983 bore no resemblance to objective reality. From his point of view, everybody was either giving advice or telling him what to do, but nobody seemed to be in charge or providing much help.

Early in May of 1983, fighting among Christian militias, the Phalangists, Moslems, and Druze erupted with some artillery and rocket fire landing inside the Marine perimeter. Things then quieted down until July, when the Druze in the Chouf began to pound LAF positions adjacent to the Marines. Concurrently Marine patrols were harassed, and small arms fire was increasingly aimed at Marine positions. By mid-July all-out war had broken out among the sectarian groups and the LAF, while the multinational forces found themselves in the middle of things. By August some battles were lasting for almost a week. Artillery and rocket fire increased on the Marine position, and there were indications that some of it came from the LAF, presumably to involve the Americans in the fighting. At long last the ROEs caught up with the situation on the ground, and the Marines began to respond vigorously to both sniper incoming fire with mortars, artillery, and naval gunfire. It had a beneficial effect but made the American force a participant in the conflict.

On September 4 the IDF suddenly pulled out, leaving the Chouf to be contested among the Druze, Phalange militia, and the LAF. The fat was now in the fire. By the middle of the month, a LAF attempt to oust the Druze from the Chouf was a disaster, and it appeared to the JCS Chairman's trusted agent on the scene that the LAF were about to be overun. He requested naval gunfire support for the government forces. The MAU commander vigorously objected to the assessment and the idea of taking sides in the war. His recommendations were ignored in the White House. After all, the administration had based its Lebanese policy on the viability of the LAF. On September 19, four U.S. warships opened devastating fire on the Druze and broke up their attack. Unfortunately, when the rounds left the naval guns, the perception of American neutrality went with them.

The Marines were now viewed as enemies by the antigovernment forces. Hunkered down in their trenches and bunkers under the guns of all the combatants, the Marines did their best to protect themselves. Support personnel had earlier been moved into the Lebanese aviation agency building adjacent to the airport terminal. It was a huge steel-reinforced concrete building, which had withstood direct tank and artillery fire in 1982 when the Israelis were battling for control of Beirut. The move made sense as protection against artillery, but it made a tempting terrorist target. However, at this point the Marines were less worried about terrorists than they were about the war raging about them. They had unintentionally become one of the belligerents. The Marine commander remained uninstructed as diplomats made a futile attempt to end the fighting. A cease-fire of sorts took place at the end of the month, only to have fighting break out again in October.

On October 23, a suicidal terrorist behind the wheel of an explosive-laden truck drove from the air terminal parking lot into the atrium of the Marine barracks. It made its fateful journey unhindered by Marine sentries facing the parking lot. Their orders had been modified to prohibit

rounds in their weapons out of fear that an accidental discharge might hit an innocent civilian in the vicinity of the airport. When the smoke of the ensuing explosion cleared, the building was in ruins, and 241 American servicemen lay dead in the debris.

Thus ended America's first modern peacekeeping intervention. The administration's Lebanese policy had been knocked into a cocked hat. While Marines and the other peacekeepers of the multinational force hung on, defied the combatants, and continued to support the LAF, for all practical purposes, they were taken out of the game. The Marines remained in Beirut, hunkered down behind massive obstacles, until the following February when the MAU withdrew and reembarked aboard amphibious ships standing off the coast. Throughout the intervening period, between the suicide bombing and the MAU's withdrawal, it was primarily concerned with "force protection."

Beirut was a sobering and expensive experience for both the Marine Corps and the nation. Failure to understand the nature of the civil war and the cultural imperatives at work, and failure to develop plans and intelligence based on these factors left the Marines vulnerable from the start. There was clearly a need for a more clearly defined mission. The vague purpose of the intervention and the consequent unrealistic rules of engagement contributed to the tragedy, as did failure to heed the warnings and admonitions from the on-scene commander. The abysmally confused civilian and military chain of command and authority, which can at best be described as pious well-intentioned meddling, also led to the catastrophe of October 23, 1983. As for the Marines, they took their eye off the ball. Sensitive to the terrorist threat at the outset of their commitment, over time this concern was replaced by the immediate concerns of active combat. They failed to provide adequate security for the building housing their support personnel, notwithstanding the commander's commendable purpose of preventing unintentional civilian casualties at Beirut's air terminal. The principle of an all-around defense against all

threats was violated to their peril. Experience is a harsh teacher. In light of the Khobar Tower bombing aimed at American airmen in Saudi Arabia and the recent successful terrorist attack against the USS Cole in Yemen, one wonders whether the American military has been an attentive student.

CHAPTER 9

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND MILITARY OPERATIONS IN URBAN TERRAIN

Gerald Yonas and Timothy Moy

Operating in a potentially hostile city is every soldier's nightmare. The staggering complexity of the urban environment means that deadly threats—or noncombatants—may lurk behind every corner, doorway, or window. Urban operations present an almost unparalleled challenge to the modern professional military. The complexity of urban operations is further amplified by the diversity of missions that the military will be called upon to conduct in urban terrain. Peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, urban raids to seize airports or weapons of mass destruction (WMD) sites or to rescue hostages, and extended urban combat operations all present different sorts of challenges for planners and troops on the ground.

Technology almost never serves as a magic bullet, and past predictions of technological miracles pile high on the ash heap of history. At the same time, it is a vital element of planning in the modern age to consider and, if possible, take advantage of emerging technologies. We believe that technologies can assist military operations in urbanized terrain (MOUT) in three primary areas: precision information, smart robots, and nonlethal weapons and restraints. Let's discuss each in turn.

Precision Information.

The intricacy of the urban environment couples with the complexity of urban operations (especially operations other than war) to create an enormous demand for precision awareness. This exquisitely high level of situational

awareness will be necessary on several levels. Operational success may hinge upon knowing the precise location and disposition of time-critical targets (like WMD stores for example), or upon having an extremely detailed map of friendly forces, hostile forces, and noncombatants in a given city block.

In almost all of these cases, we can enhance the precision of our situational awareness through the use of electronic sensors. Acoustic, seismic, electro-magnetic, and video sensors are now small and sufficiently rugged that they can be deployed by various methods in large numbers and operate for extended periods with no human maintenance. The Steel Rattler, for example, is a hand-emplaced acoustic-seismic sensor with a thermal imager that can detect, classify, and identify time-critical mobile targets by their acoustic-seismic-thermal signatures. Steel Eagle is an air-dropped version of the same package, and has already been fitted for deployment by the F-15, F-16, and F/A-18. Multifunction sensor packages of this sort could provide MOUT planners with precise data on the movement of forces and materiel, even in an environment as complex as a modern city.

Further precision is on the horizon. Sandia National Laboratories conducted a multi-year initiative to develop a micro “chemlab on a chip.” By applying a combination of detection methods in a single electronics package, Sandia has built a fully self-contained, pocket-sized device that could be useful in MOUT for detecting explosives or other substances that have identifiable chemical signatures (see Figure 1). Similar devices for local-area detection of biological weapons are in development, though this is a harder technical challenge; nevertheless, hand-held bio-weapon detectors should be available in the next 5 years. Eventually, MOUT forces will be able to take advantage of sensor fusion: the large-scale combination of varying sensor inputs to produce a single, coherent, and precise picture of the operational environment (see Figure 2).

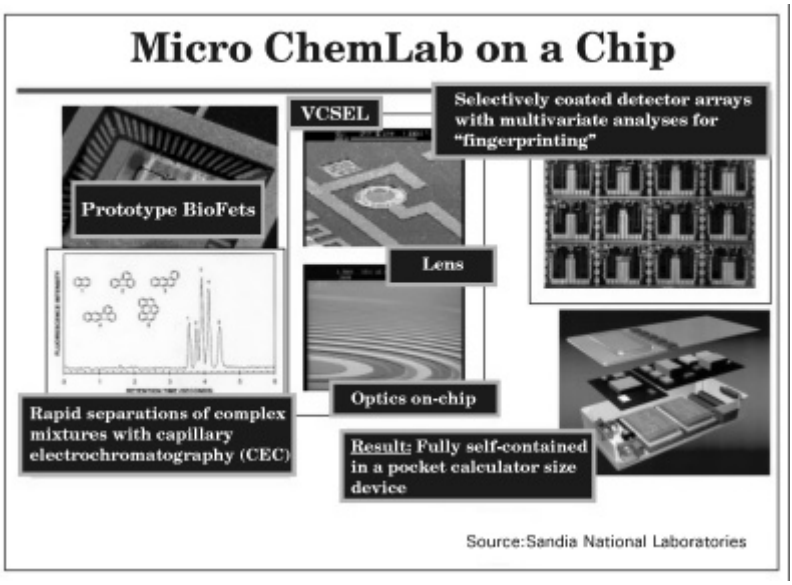

Figure 1.

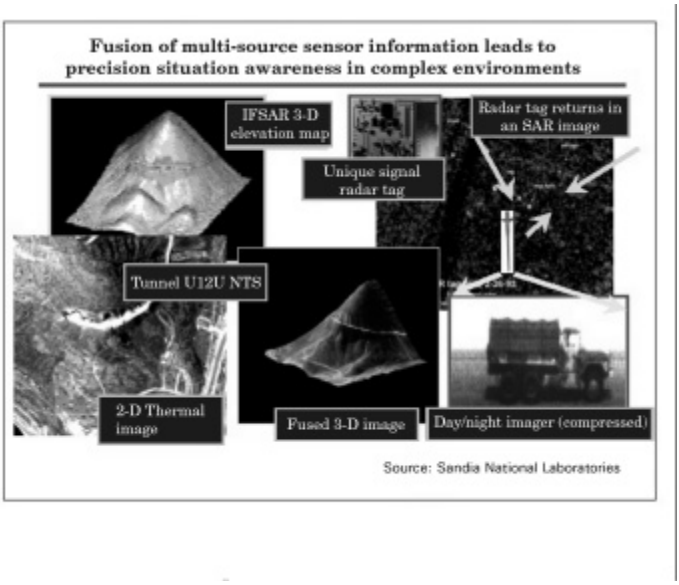

Figure 2.

One important technical challenge to precision awareness still remains. Complex sensor suites can acquire a large amount of precise data, but data is not the same thing as knowledge. MOUT planners will benefit little from these sensor packages if they are not accompanied by improved techniques for processing the large amounts of data. This is a difficult problem, but one that we are also trying to address. Technology and techniques for transforming data into useful knowledge span the spectrum from analyzing complex models of human decisionmaking to designing relatively simple graphic interfaces that will allow human operators to interpret data more quickly and accurately.

Smart Robots.

One further twist on sensor technology leads into the second area of technological application: mobile sensors. The sensor suites described above could be combined with a global positioning system (GPS) locator or radar tag, and then air-dropped or otherwise deployed in large numbers to roam and reconnoiter an urban environment.

By this point, however, we are essentially talking about robots. Sandia has developed an array of mobile robots that can perform a variety of functions, many of which would be useful in urban operations. Relatively small and inexpensive robots can already carry sensor packages or even weapons. As these machines inexorably become smaller and less expensive, it will be possible to employ them in large numbers for clandestine reconnaissance and other operations in urban facilities (see Figure 3). This could be a particularly useful alternative to endangering personnel in high-risk situations, like scouting a possible chemical/biological weapons release site.

The prospect of smaller, cheaper, and increasingly multifunction mobile robots raises yet another possibility that may be useful for MOUT planning. Computer simulations employing so-called genetic algorithms and

agent-based modeling demonstrate that relatively simple machines can be engineered to learn from their experiences and evolve a surprisingly complex set of behaviors.

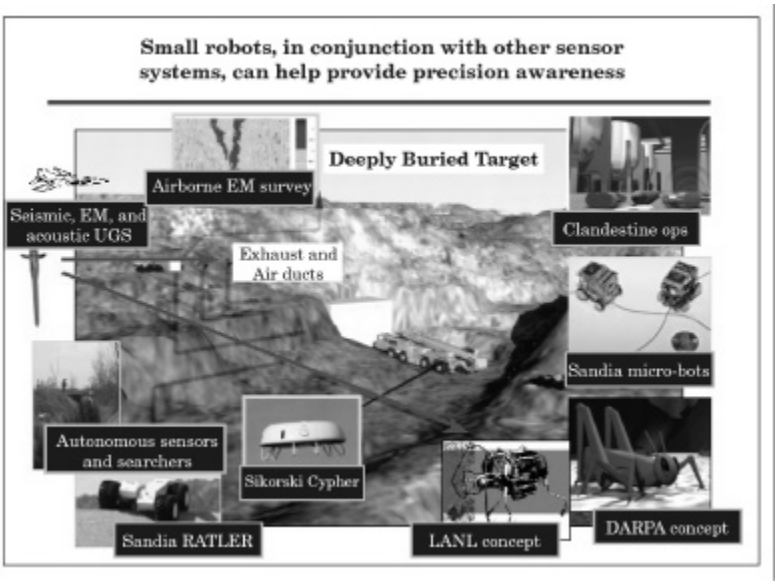

Figure 3.

For example, researchers at Sandia have found that if very simple, virtual machines are programmed to perform a simple task (like, for example, finding an object in a room) and are also given some ability to alter their own programming, they will eventually begin cooperating and learning from each other even though they have not been programmed to do so. Large numbers of such virtual machines will thus exhibit something akin to swarming behavior, in which one machine's knowledge is quickly transmitted to and used by others in the group.

Consequently, it will almost certainly be possible to engineer large numbers of mobile robots to exhibit swarming behavior. This opens up a host of operational possibilities, the most obvious being for MOUT reconnaissance; large numbers of swarming robots could scout an area and sniff out a chemical weapons source, for

example. As swarming intelligence improves, it may even be possible for robot swarms to identify positions and possible targets with little or no human intervention. This is clearly a technology still in development, but one that is worth considering for future MOUT doctrine.

Nonlethal Weapons and Restraints.

Just about all discussions of MOUT doctrine and procedures seem to turn eventually to the issue of noncombatant casualties. The conventional wisdom is that significant numbers of noncombatant casualties can have severe and deleterious consequences for American public support of a military campaign—an assessment that seems very plausible. While it will not serve as a panacea, emerging technologies may help address this problem as well.

Nonlethal weapons technologies are an obvious answer. Currently, many sublethal systems suffer from the fact that a weapon that is not lethal for a healthy adult male may be quite lethal for an older person or a child. Sandia has been experimenting for many years with technologies that should not be lethal under any circumstances—"sticky foams," for example, that can immobilize machines or people without causing injury. In the near future, it will very likely be possible to design radio, acoustic, or optical weapons that incapacitate without injury (see Figure 4). Such technologies may not even require line-of-sight to target, and could thus be very useful for clearing rooms, buildings, and, eventually, entire city blocks. If it were deemed appropriate, such technologies could also be robot-deployed.

One difficulty with nonlethal technologies is that they must obviously conform to the international treaties and conventions to which the United States subscribes. These conventions strictly regulate the use of nonconventional weapons and conduct regarding noncombatants. Paradoxically, nonlethal technologies, even ones specifically

designed and employed to reduce noncombatant casualties, may be restricted under these conventions.

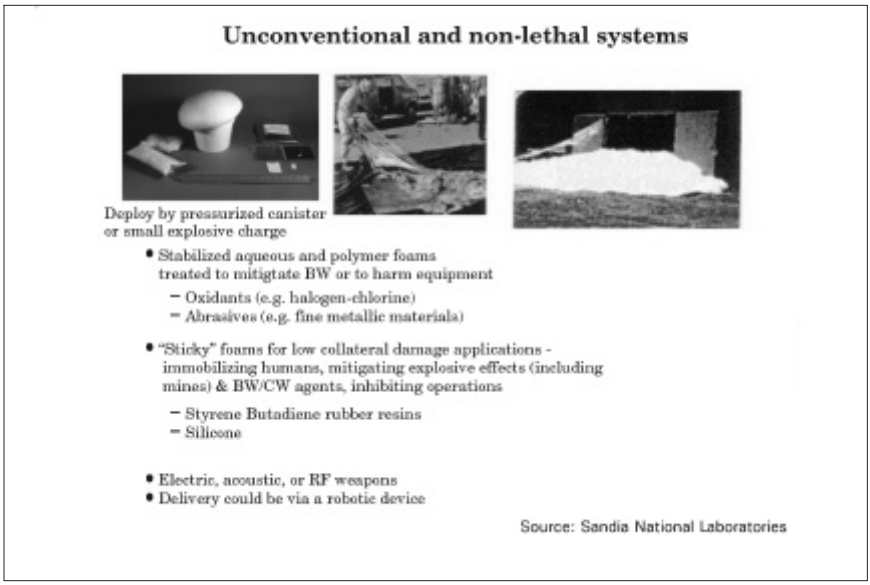

Figure 4.

General.

Whether or not the three areas of technological development discussed above turn out to be of use in MOUT planning and execution, they highlight three overarching points that relate to technology, doctrine, and planning. First, it will always be important to tailor the application of technology to specific missions by keeping the full spectrum of technological possibilities in mind. Differing mission parameters, rules of engagement, target sets, and so on will require the application of different sorts of technological systems. In this sense, there will be no single set of technologies for MOUT. Rather, there will be a host of technological systems that can be selectively tailored to various sorts of MOUT missions.

Second, our experience indicates that we should examine ways to streamline the pathway from development

to deployment. Several of the technologies discussed in this chapter were evaluated and approved for deployment several years ago, but have apparently not been employed in situations where they might have been extremely useful. For example, our video clip of a mobile robot anti-tank weapon has received considerable enthusiastic feedback from defense and military audiences, but this is a technology that has been available for some time. As the temporal window of technological superiority grows ever smaller, it will be increasingly important to bring emerging technologies to deployment as efficiently as possible.

Finally, while we need to guard against uncritical technological enthusiasm, we also need to be aware of the potentially revolutionary effects of new technologies. It is rare, but every once in a while a technology emerges that not only allows us to do better what we used to do, but also enables us to do things we formerly could not do at all. If operational doctrine is modified only with an eye toward revising previous doctrine, there will be times, almost by definition, when our forces will not be benefiting as fully as possible from the transforming capabilities of some technologies. Technology alone can never guarantee victory, but it can sometimes change the rules of the game. We should be ready to change along with it.

CHAPTER 10

URBAN OPERATIONS: SOCIAL MEANING, THE URBAN BUILT FORM, AND ECONOMIC FUNCTION

Max Neiman

Military operations in urban terrain are an increasingly important focus in discussions regarding the nature of contemporary military doctrine. The explanations for this growing concern can be quickly summarized as follows. First, increasing proportions of the world are found in such settings, with approximately 50 percent of the world's people residing in urban places presently, and with the proportion reaching perhaps 70 percent in the next 20 years. Second, key national administrative, economic, technological, and coordinating assets are often concentrated in urban places, especially in third world nations. Third, opponents and potential adversaries of the United States are likely to retreat to urban settings in order to minimize the apparently overwhelming superiority of U.S. military forces in every phase of "heavy" or conventional warfare.

It is not likely that a single or even small set of models can embrace all of the challenges that urban combat is likely to pose in the urban contexts of today's world, because the range of differing urban environments is so varied. As a consequence, it is equally unclear what range of skills and resources are required to implement successfully the panoply of operations that might be required both across urban settings and within given cities.

Thus the problem of military planning, from the point of view of an urbanist, has its analogue in the field of mainstream urban policymaking and policy analysis. It is similar, for example, to the burdens associated with the

high cost of maintaining service infrastructure in areas that pose high cost, fairly daunting worst-case scenarios (fire control, flood control, tornado/hurricane management, traffic congestion, public disorder, lethal epidemics). Governments, particularly states and localities in the United States, are charged with ensuring public health, safety, and welfare, and this obligation must be carried out in a world in which threats to well-being are often unpredictable and potentially extraordinarily damaging.

The worst-case fire, cataclysmic hurricane, titanic traffic jam, large-scale riot, deadly epidemic, or major energy supply disruption are, thankfully, relatively rare within the United States. Nevertheless, despite their uncommonness, the public fully expects that the resources, the infrastructure, and the necessary skilled and trained personnel will be available to deal with these episodic threats when they occur. For example, even though most fires in cities require fairly simple equipment, there is the occasional conflagration involving hazardous materials, high-rise buildings, or other highly complex and difficult environments. In such instances the fire-fighting equipment is much more expensive and the skills required much more demanding. As a result, governments are required to maintain expensive and specialized equipment and to train individuals to use it, even though equipment and personnel might be used only rarely. Similarly, for most hours of the day, streets and transportation equipment must manage only off-peak traffic, but yet have the infrastructure necessary to manage the massive flows during rush hours. Moreover, while for much of the time, energy and power demand by homes and businesses are below capacity, the energy distribution system must be able to handle the episodic peak demand levels. Although for most periods energy demand might remain considerably below peak demand, the system must secure and support additional but more expensive marginal supplies in order to satisfy anticipated maximum demands.

In short, the kinds of calamitous circumstances in urban places are many and varied, but the fundamental problem is the same: *to be prepared for the maximum demand for services or the most dangerous scenario, even while most of the time things are fairly quiescent*. This must be done, even if it is impossible to know always when the severest challenges might occur. Even on the domestic level, then, it is often absolutely necessary to have the capability to manage quite different, extreme, or even unusual situations. The burdens of supporting such capabilities can, and usually do, drive up substantially the costs of local services. It might not always be apparent to citizens that these costs are necessary if public health, safety, and welfare are to be ensured.

This aspect of domestic policy has its analogue in military planning. Developing appropriate strategies or supporting a military capability that can successfully implement any kind of military operation in urban terrain is not conceptually different from the challenge of confronting the different kinds of threats that can undermine public health and safety at the domestic level. It is not greatly different from deciding what potential fire threat, traffic congestion, domestic disturbance, or natural disasters need to be considered in trying to plan for the protection of the public's general welfare and safety.

Obviously we cannot hope to manage every conceivable sort of urban military operation anywhere on the planet at any time. It is also true that military doctrine will not be able, perhaps should not try, to encompass every kind of urban or city setting that the security analysts might imagine. Indeed, the levels of uncertainty always remain high, and having a doctrine for every contingency might engender a sense of preparedness that is unwarranted and that might even incite interventions when the risk of unanticipated adverse consequences is high.

In the world of military operations in urban terrain, one must think in terms of the categories and variables to assist

in decisions regarding the sorts of challenges that are most likely. For example, what kinds of variables produce different urban contexts that, in turn, affect the conduct of military operations? Each of these challenges and where they are more or less likely to occur will require assessments of their relationship to national objectives and interests, followed by appraisals of what we can do about these challenges and the associated costs of meeting them.

Urban terrain has both social and physical dimensions, which by their interaction give form to urban places. The mix of these dimensions and the specific components that are important within the social and physical profile of an urban area will often dictate the sort of threat that is likely to occur and the manner and probability of intervening to deal with such a threat. In the most abstract way, then, an urban terrain has a pattern of social relationships and networks that can be described and which have effects. The social dimension is an expression of the presence, characteristics, and interaction of human beings, for example, the size, density, and heterogeneity of the population within some specified area, the cohesion or conflict among various social groups (e.g., religious, ethnic, economic, and racial), the degree of territorial clustering/segregation of the population, the level of education prevailing in the population, critical features of the legal system, the power structure, and the political system, as well as the relationships of these factors to other components of a given urban area's socio-political environment.

The physical dimension of cities includes topographical, geographical, and geological factors that are manifested in such things as the location of the urban terrain, climate, and such traits as mountains, rivers, precipitation levels, or contiguity to large bodies of water. The interaction of physical and social factors also shapes such matters as the built form of urban terrain, which includes not only the area's buildings and other structures, but also utility

distribution elements such as sewers, transport systems, communications, and economic facilities.

Gathering relevant information about all cities and urban places throughout the planet is neither possible nor desirable. The assumption here is that the most difficult military operations in urban terrain are *less likely* in advanced, large, complex urban centers. The more likely challenge will be among larger *third world* urban areas. Some data can be gathered for the full range of urban places, advanced or third world, including information such as descriptions of streets, highways, and other transportation arteries and resources (e.g., airports and railroad stations). For the "most likely" military operations in third world urban terrain, however, the data must be exhaustive and include a wider range of variables, since it is in such places that urban military threats are likely to arise.

As indicated above, it is critical that we be systematic in the framework used to organize the data-gathering effort and to ensure that we are appropriately sensitive to the critical variables that need to be described. In the discussion below, I describe the specific categories found to be important regarding urban places and for which data on cities should be systematically gathered for as many of the more likely sites at which military operations in urban terrain are likely to occur. The categories believed to be critical in describing urban places are (1) social meaning; (2) built form; and (3) economic role.

The *social meaning* of urban places refers to those cultural features of cities and urban places that reflect the values, social perceptions, and interactions of inhabitants with regard both to the city and to one another. Urban places that hold special religious or historical meaning are likely to affect combatants in ways that cities without such intensely held symbolic or nationalistic implications are not. Additionally, the levels of social harmony or discord with respect to class conflict, ethnic antagonisms, or religious strife can affect the unity and capacity of

inhabitants to work together effectively. Just as importantly, these characteristics might greatly complicate the post-combat, pacification, and occupation periods. Beirut, Belfast, and the cities in Bosnia or Kosovo are examples of how these issues can affect combat missions in unique ways.

Related to the factor of social harmony is the perception of inhabitants of what is referred to as "the natural areas" of the city. These are often neighborhood dimensions and boundaries that are defined socially, although there is usually a street, bridge, river, or other "border" that defines these areas. These natural areas might delimit areas based on religious, ethnic, or social class. Knowledge of such key areas in places where there are sharp divisions along social lines is very helpful, even critical, in many places. The dividing lines of Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods in Belfast or the differentiation of clans by areas in Mogadishu are examples of places where natural areas play important roles in current and previous combat operations.

The urban *built form* refers to the housing stock and other structures that mark an urban landscape. The topography and natural surroundings (rivers, mountains, or beaches, for example) are included in the built form of individual cities and urban settings since they establish the contours on which and within which structural forms occur. The utility systems, including water and power distribution, waste management, transportation nodes, and communications networks are also critical features of the built form. Where these are located and how advanced or primitive they are might determine the nature of hardships imposed on the local population by combat. Urban areas with large "squatter" settlements might pose unique social and physical challenges in military operations, and knowing their location and magnitude would be important information in planning combat operations. For example, it might be the case that people residing in places with more primitive built forms are, ironically, less affected by combat damage, at least in terms of having a disruption in services.

It is not being suggested, of course, that third world populations are less sensitive to the horrors of war or suffer less when they are situated in the midst of combat. It is only that third world populations might be less likely to feel a sense of added deprivation for services that they do not receive in any case. As for U.S. troops involved in combat operations in urban terrain within less developed nations, they might find that combat in these areas pose unique health hazards, even in the earliest stages of combat, due to already poor quality in the area's utility infrastructure.

The urban built form in advanced societies is more likely to be varied and complex. The densities of structures, the quality of building materials, the elaborate systems of sewers, bridges, subways, etc., are likely to make the nature of combat operations far more complicated from the operational and cost points of view.

Finally, the built form also includes the range and scope of the urban footprint, in terms of extent of urban settlement, total population, and population density. One might be particularly interested in the movement of people and the densities of circulating people and other traffic at particular times (e.g., the rush hours or market settings). The planning of military operations might benefit from knowledge about the "timing" of population and vehicular movements within a given urban area. The rhythms of urban places vary, however, and must be described place by place.

The *economic role* of urban places includes questions regarding the centrality of a particular area to the nation or region. Will occupation of a city or urban area be decisive or will it merely shift combat to another area? How self-contained with respect to goods and services is a city? Will the city be able to sustain itself for an extended period, or is it a place that is likely to be out of critical resources, services, or goods within a short time? Finally, is the growth of the city or urban area due to recent economic transformations in the nation? Has growth occurred very

rapidly? Has economic activity produced large clusters of newly urbanized peasants who have been pushed from the countryside? Indeed, the economic development of a region is likely to accentuate the difficulties that are posed by the social discord issues raised earlier.

The variety of cities makes the development of a single, grand urban warfare doctrine problematic. The varying natures of the city or urban terrain are likely to call for different kinds of combat tactics. These tactics may very well demand different rules of engagement, unique deployments of troops, and a bewildering array of arms and personal combat gear. It is possible, even likely, that different combinations among the factors discussed above will affect military operations in urban terrain in a variety of ways. It seems that more systematic thinking is required to enumerate what those effects and relationships are.

A particular mix or interaction among these various "urban" components can complicate, impede, or facilitate military operations. Indeed, the nature of the military problem can vary as a consequence of the interaction among these social and physical factors. Whether the military problem requires a heavy and sustained military operation (such as might be required by an opponent with widespread support in the population), or some intermediate category of military activity (such as restoring civil order and/or assisting in the case of a severe natural calamity), or lighter, quicker actions (such as rescues or retaliations), can be dictated by how the elements of social meaning, built form, and economic function interact.

Military operations in Mogadishu and in Beirut clearly were affected by the interactions among the physical and social structure of the respective regions. The kinds of military operations dictated by each setting produced very different challenges. A number of times, for example, we have heard about the need to decentralize military operations within the context of an urban terrain environment. There is considerable appeal to implementing

an operational structure that emphasizes flexibility, decentralization, and creative innovation at the street level by small teams of soldiers, connected to one another by high-tech means in a variety of different connective networks.

But the nature of this devolution to small clusters of troops might also be shaped, for example, by how critical certain key areas are, since these are more likely to be defended energetically by larger numbers of enemy. Advanced, populous, and industrialized localities are more likely than urban areas in less developed nations to have concentrated key facilities. In turn, the quick destruction or seizure of control of such facilities might require larger numbers of combat units than are anticipated by advocates of decentralization. Assuming that there is success in given urban military operations, defending the successes might also produce new challenges that require some analysis.

The kind of analysis discussed here requires ongoing and repeated work to update data over time, and this might even entail utilization of civilian specialists to produce the data for the categories of variables that have been discussed above. These descriptions should be managed in ways that also permit an examination of the interplay between urban form and structure and how such linkages are associated with particular sorts of urban military operations. Naturally, there will always be the risk of terrorist attacks and hostage-taking nearly anywhere on the planet. The precise circumstances associated with each of these terrorist acts are nearly impossible to anticipate and thus, it would seem, require individually tailored responses.

Let us summarize the issues surrounding the analysis of social meaning, built form, and economic function. First, there should be a concerted effort to develop a list of cities and urban areas that are likely to involve major military operations. Second, using the categories discussed above, data-gathering for this list of cities and urban places is initiated. Each of these categories has a host of variables,

and there needs to be some assessment of which set of factors can be feasibly described in systematic fashion. Third, it might be possible, using the information gathered, to develop meaningful categories of city/urban places (e.g., the application of statistical tools such as cluster and factor analysis). Fourth, examine the relationship between types of urban places and the needs required respecting language skills, combat training, equipment, arms, tactics, communications, and field organization. Fifth, the data-gathering must be ongoing, since the dynamics of urban growth, especially in the third world, change rapidly.

The result of such data-gathering and analysis should contribute to more cost-effective judgments about the areas where military challenges in urban places are likely to occur. That, in turn, should permit at least more disciplined decisions about the kinds of preparatory investments in equipment and training that will be required, as well as provide some outlines of the boundaries to our doctrine governing military operations in urban terrain.

CHAPTER 11

URBAN OPERTIONS: TACTICAL REALITIES AND STRATEGIC AMBIGUITIES

Barry R. Posen

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army have become much more interested than previously in the problem of operations in urban areas; hence the occasion for this book. The chapters herein speak to two broad sets of issues. They speak directly to the fundamental tactical problems of combat in urban areas, tactical problems that must be understood not only by the soldiers who must solve them, but by civilian policymakers and policy advocates who might choose missions that require the military to confront these problems. These chapters also speak, if sometimes obliquely, to a second set of issues, namely, the strategic questions. What are the main political missions in urban environments that should influence the size, structure, and training of the military forces that one would deploy? How do these missions differ one from the other, and how would the forces necessary to their success differ? The strategic issues, while not absent from recent discussions of urban warfare, have not been squarely faced.

WHY TACTICS FIRST?

Most military analysts would begin a discussion of U.S. military preparedness with the strategic questions. What is our national strategy, what are the key threats to our basic security, what are our key interests overseas, what missions do we need to perform to have any chance of success in implementing that strategy. In recent years, the U.S. Government and the Pentagon have offered formal statements on these matters. But the mantra of “two major

theater wars," some number of "small scale contingencies," and "shape, respond, prepare" provides insufficient guidance to force planners on the relative priority of possible missions (as this book goes to press, it appears that the Bush administration will discard the two-major-wars principle). These strategic statements have been very general, reflecting compromises among political constituencies too numerous to list. U.S. force levels and force structure have more often in recent years reflected the political compromises of the diverse views of the services and their various warfare communities rather than clear choices guided by strategic priorities. The United States can currently afford the luxury of strategic indolence, because in the near term it faces no significant threats to its basic security or to its overseas interests. Moreover, the government's coffers are relatively full. Threats there are, but they pale in comparison to those faced during the Cold War or during the World War II. Practically speaking, however, the military may not receive clearer strategic guidance anytime soon.

Current U.S. national strategy provides little guidance for how much and what kind of preparations the U.S. military should make for operations in urban areas. It offers little advice on how high a priority should be assigned to the urban combat problem. The United States has, of course, engaged in military operations in urban areas of various types during the last decade: Panama, Somalia, and Haiti. And we have viewed on our TV screens even more terrible military operations by others in the cities of Grozny and Sarajevo. Military documents on urban operations usually begin from the facts of these recent experiences and the general observation that population trends the world over point to more people in more cities, which will be larger and more difficult environments than in the past.

Because the United States is currently very strong and secure, it has been in a position to undertake military operations that are not essential to U.S. security or to the preservation of its power. The easy assumption of U.S.

military superiority has made politicians somewhat less guarded about the commitment of force than they may have been in past years. While American military forces are certainly the most capable in the world, they do best what they have practiced longest: the defeat of conventional forces in open combat. Unspoken assumptions of decisive U.S. military superiority are unwarranted in the urban combat environment. As the previous chapters attest, this environment is the great equalizer. But U.S. experience, both actual and vicarious, has not yet produced a widespread familiarity with the great difficulties of military activity in urban areas, especially urban combat. The military is somewhat ahead of the civilian policymakers in remedying this deficiency, but we all suffer from it. Some strategic objectives in the "nice to have" category may appear less interesting if policymakers first understand something about costs and difficulties.

TACTICAL REALITIES

Urban environments are very favorable to the defender. Buildings provide high levels of protection and concealment for infantry soldiers. Multi-storied buildings, with basements, permit defenders to maneuver in a third dimension. Modern cities also have elaborate sewer systems, and often have underground tunnels for transit systems. Thus defenders may maneuver laterally, entirely out of sight of the attacker. Buildings provide significant obstacles to the movement of heavy equipment, limiting the ability of advanced militaries to exploit fully their superiority in armored warfare. Long fields of fire are scarce, so technological advantages in accurate long-range fire are neutralized. The majority of engagements take place at very close range. Indeed, gun battles often occur at such close range that rifle bullets still retain sufficient energy to penetrate flak jackets. Multi-story buildings may also permit defenders to shoot antitank weapons at angles that permit light antitank rounds to penetrate the generally thinner top armor of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles.

Urban roads channel heavy mechanized forces into known avenues of approach; they often are not wide unobstructed boulevards, but include underpasses, overpasses, and center-dividers, which make even local maneuvers difficult. Open space is scarce, so defenders may even have a good idea where an advanced attacker might attempt a helicopter landing.

Another advantage accruing to the defender is information. In general, it can be predicted that the local actor will enjoy superior knowledge of the local environment. This superior knowledge has both a macro and a micro quality. At the macro level, the defender will have a better understanding of the city or town than will the outsider. Such knowledge has traditionally benefited the tactical defender. In open warfare, this traditional advantage has been somewhat attenuated by technological developments. Overhead reconnaissance assets can provide excellent maps, as well as real-time situational awareness. Global positioning systems (GPS) may permit strangers to be as well oriented in the terrain as the local defender. But it is not clear that modern technology offers this kind of leverage in urban situations.

Max Neiman, in his chapter, suggests some ways by which Western powers might endeavor to overcome the local actors' home court advantage. Essentially, he recommends that Western intelligence agencies prepare detailed social-economic-geographic studies of most major cities where operations might occur. He points out that an urban environment can be truly understood only through such detailed studies. Given the kinds of projections of urban growth that have driven the new interest in urban military operations, we are talking about a lot of cities, and, given the projected rate of urbanization and consequent growth rates, the studies will, of necessity, require regular updating. This seems a rather tall order. It would be less tall if the military and the intelligence services had some guidance about which cities were the most critical, a task for strategy. Even if such studies can be done, given Neiman's

rich description of the complex urban environment, it is not clear that military organizations can effectively assimilate and exploit this information were it collected.

At the micro level, the fact that combat occurs at very low levels of aggregation among elusive infantry forces and in a terrifically complex physical environment, may simply present more intelligence problems than technology can solve. As noted above, the urban environment provides many types of cover and concealment. Simply looking at city streets and allies from above will not likely give the attacker the information he needs. Gerald Yonas and Timothy Moy suggest some possible new technologies that might allow an attacker to seed an area with sensors of various types, or to dispatch robots into places where one would not wish to send a man. But these solutions will have their own problems. The sheer volume of space to be surveilled is quite daunting. Moderately clever adversaries will surely find ways to disable or trick such distributed sensors. A defender rich in manpower can afford to allocate large numbers of people to this task. And our opponents very likely will be rich in manpower.

For all of the reasons discussed above, urban combat is the domain of old-fashioned infantry. But it is not a happy domain. Though current technology can allow modern infantry to be trained to a peak of efficiency and can give the foot soldier an edge in the ability to see and communicate, and even to shoot small arms, it has yet to provide advanced armies with anything like the tactical leverage that they enjoy when facing older generation armored forces, such as those of Iraq. Historical experience suggests that a rifle company (100-200 individuals) can take a defended city block in about 12 hours, with 30-45 percent casualties. Recent simulated attacks with highly trained and well-prepared U.S. units apparently produce similar outcomes. Those who survive the fight are usually exhausted, physically and emotionally (see also the chapters by Gerhard Weinberg and James Wirtz in this book). Given that Western armies usually do not attack

without a significant superiority in combat power, it may be assumed that defending forces one-half or even one-third the size of the attacking force can produce these heavy losses. Historically, losses of 30-45 percent are considered disproportionately damaging to the combat power of an infantry unit. Because this level of casualties breaks down the cohesion and integrity of trained infantry teams, it is plausible to argue that the rifle company loses nearly all of its offensive potential.[1] A short period of rest and reorganization may permit recovery, but the unit will not likely regain its full combat power. A second engagement at these casualty levels will probably leave the unit damaged beyond short-term repair. Given that virtually all Western armies have abandoned conscription, no pipeline of infantry replacements exists to replenish these units in any case.

Overall, though successful attackers require highly trained infantry, this infantry will need to employ combined arms tactics with a very high level of skill if it is to control its own losses. Both Weinberg's chapter on Stalingrad and Berlin and Wirtz's analysis of the Battle of Hue show clearly what armies on the offense have had to do to try to overcome the advantages enjoyed by the tactical defender. These two chapters provide the "worst case" depiction of pure urban combat—committed, well-trained, well-equipped, mainly conventional forces fighting full tilt in an urban environment without regard to collateral damage. Essentially, they employ massive firepower. The Russians and Germans often dragged heavy artillery forward and employed it in a direct-fire mode to batter whole buildings to pieces.

Even this is not a perfect solution, since turning an urban area into rubble can create new obstacles for the attacker and new assets for the defense. Attackers and defenders will try to bring armor into the city in spite of the difficulties noted above in order to provide heavy fire support. But to maneuver that armor, close cooperation with engineers is essential, and still more explosives may be necessary to facilitate the movement of tanks. This problem

of bringing armor into cities is exacerbated today, since tanks are nearly twice as heavy as they were in World War II. But antitank weapons, even shoulder-fired ones, are more capable now than then, so a heavy tank may be necessary nevertheless.

The infantry companies necessary for sustained urban combat are scarce and precious assets in the U.S. military. In total, the active Army today has only perhaps 180 rifle companies; the Marines may add another 60-70. An Army or Marine infantry division has 27 rifle companies; an Army mechanized division, a dozen. Urban combat against a determined, well-armed foe would quickly erode the strength of deployed forces.

Potential opponents around the world are unlikely to find it difficult to muster significant numbers of infantrymen. Though their training and armaments will obviously vary, they will likely find the necessary weaponry. It is worth noting that the Serb ground force in Kosovo alone had perhaps 40 organized, well-armed, regular, infantry companies, plus miscellaneous "auxiliaries." The three Iraqi Republican Guard Infantry divisions that escaped the theater largely undamaged before the U.S. Army could close with them may have had over 80 infantry companies. The fact that Western militaries did not have to fight in the villages of Kosovo, or in Pristina, Kuwait City, Basra, or Baghdad seems quite fortuitous in light of these numbers and the realities of urban combat.

In many parts of the world where the United States might find itself involved in urban operations, there will likely be a surplus of young men available for military recruitment by the enemy. It is sobering to note that there are many more North Vietnamese young people now than there were in the 1960s, when their fathers gave the United States such a difficult time. Given current projections of global population growth, the "infantry problem" will continue to grow.

Finally, there is no reason to believe that weaponry will be in short supply for those who wish to fight Western forces. Anyone who has looked at photographs of the Chechen war cannot help noticing how well-armed the Chechen guerrillas are. Brigadier General (IDF Ret.) Dov Tamari notes in his chapter that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon had "infantry weapons stores in quantities that were three times larger than anything the armed branches of the PLO could utilize or operate." At least 50 divisions have fallen out of the Russian army's order of battle since the early 1990s. Much of the military equipment associated with these units (especially the rifles, machine guns, antitank weapons, and mortars) has surely found its way onto the international market, or will. Meanwhile, factories the world over continue to crank out new equipment.

STRATEGIC AMBIGUITIES

Let us turn now to strategic considerations in contemplating urban warfare, particularly those where indications are contradictory and signals are mixed. We find such ambiguity most frequently in evaluating the occasions for military operations in urban terrain (MOUT). Many discussions of urban military operations suffer from a lack of definition of the occasion for the operation. Much recent interest in urban combat arises from recent low-intensity contingencies, but it is important to remember the Clausewitzian dictum that the political purposes of a war influence almost every aspect of its conduct. Urban military operations may be divided into three categories: full-scale urban warfare, counterinsurgency or peace enforcement in an urban environment, and military operations to assist the civil power.[2]

Full-scale Urban Warfare: An Unavoidable Means to a Strategic End?

In the past, armies have found themselves engaged in full-scale urban warfare for strategic reasons. The Soviets and Germans converged at a battle at Stalingrad in part because the leaders of both countries believed that success there would have important effects on the other's national morale or their own. These ideas were probably stupid, but the decision to engage in battle was made at the highest political levels. Similarly, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong decided to take and hold Hue, while the United States and its South Vietnamese allies decided they had to take it back quickly for high-level political reasons. Again, these reasons may seem stupid in retrospect, but a repetition of such thinking is not impossible. The Soviet attack on Berlin was also mounted for strategic reasons; it had to be done to elicit unconditional German surrender. When urban battles occur for high-level strategic reasons, whether those ideas are right or wrong, they are very likely to take on the maximalist character demonstrated in these case studies.

Could the United States find itself in such battles again? This cannot be ruled out, though the tactical realities of urban fighting recommend that they be avoided. U.S. policymakers often identify particular regimes as the source of an adversary country's threat to our interests. One can imagine that under extreme pressure such regimes would take refuge anywhere they think they have their best chance of survival. If there are jungles and mountains, that is where they may go. But large cities may prove equally attractive. War termination, or at least speedy war termination, may be impossible without a bitter city fight, for national armed forces incapable of standing against U.S. forces in open country may take refuge in cities. Though the option of starving out such defenders may be preferred, this could prove time-consuming and perhaps even costly. If the adversary army in question has pre-stocked cities with food, fuel, and munitions, it may take a very long while to root them out. Moreover, they are clever, and they may be able to

use the city as a base from which to find ways to inflict persistent casualties on besieging American forces.

As the U.S. Marine Corps likes to point out, more prosaic reasons may also force some urban operations upon the United States. It has global interests; it fights abroad. U.S. forces need to get into the theater of operations, so they need ports and airfields. These are usually close to urban areas. Some urban fighting may be necessary to seize and hold these assets. That said, the tactical description of urban combat developed above suggests that one ought to be very careful about the choice of port of entry. A strategic "indirect approach" commends itself. An inferior port or airfield, away from a large urban environment, which can be taken and held with moderate casualties, and improved with engineering, may be preferable to theoretically better facilities that can be had only through hard fighting, and which would be badly damaged by such fighting in any case. The effort by U.S. forces in August-September 1944 to capture the Brittany ports was probably not worth it. Scarce U.S. forces and munitions were drawn into brutal close combat. The ports were not quickly seized, and the combination of tremendous allied firepower and German demolitions rendered them unusable. Allied forces managed, albeit with some difficulty, to continue to supply themselves reasonably well across the Normandy beaches, even as they raced across France.

Urban Counterinsurgency, Urban Peace Enforcement.

Three chapters in this book address what may best be called "counterinsurgency in an urban environment." Tamari describes the Israeli operation in Lebanon in 1982; Anatol Lieven recounts the Russian operation in Grozny; and David Pearson discusses British counterterror operations in Northern Ireland (the discussion of the Grozny battle spans the category of full-scale warfare and counterinsurgency). Lieutenant General (USMC, Ret.) Bernard Trainor discusses the U.S. Marine operations in

Lebanon, 1982-84, which probably deserve classification as "urban peace enforcement." The recent increase in U.S. military attention to operations in urban areas is probably driven mostly by the problem of urban peace enforcement.[3] Nevertheless, urban peace enforcement has much in common with urban counterinsurgency in terms of its multifaceted, political-military character. Prospective U.S. peace enforcers can learn much from the experience of those who have been involved in urban counterinsurgency.

Urban counterinsurgency (COIN) and urban peace enforcement differ in the expected probability and intensity of combat. Under COIN conditions, the deployed regular military force knows from the outset that it is the enemy of the insurgent military force. Even if the COIN force does not go looking for the insurgents, the insurgents will surely come looking for the COIN force. The intervening force expects combat from the outset, and may even seek it out. Whether its posture is offensive or defensive, it expects that contact with the insurgents will be deadly. In urban peace enforcement, several mutually hostile armed factions are present, any one of which could become hostile to the peace enforcers, but which nevertheless are presumed to be cooperative until they demonstrate otherwise (literal peacekeeping missions seem unlikely for U.S. forces insofar as they assume a relatively benign environment, which seems unlikely to elicit a commitment of U.S. troops). Peace enforcers do not go looking to engage an elusive enemy; their mission is more defensive. They must be present in force, in close proximity to warring factions. But their purpose is to dissuade. Actual combat will more often be reactive than proactive, rules of engagement will likely be strict, and combat will often be accompanied by intensive efforts to deescalate the fighting.

As the four chapters just alluded to demonstrate, a key requirement for success in either mission is good intelligence. Some of this intelligence can be gleaned with technical assets. As Trainor points out, U.S. communication intelligence provided a very good picture of the local

combatants in Beirut. But intelligence on the attitudes of the local factions to one another and to the outside force, and more precise information on their intentions, probably cannot come entirely, if at all, from technical means. This intelligence can only come from sources in the local population. If the mission is in a country that has not figured prominently in U.S. defense planning in the past, then basic background information on the local factions will be poor, as will understanding of the local culture. Linguistic skills will be in short supply. If the outside force is in any way heavy-handed, and, in particular, if it uses firepower indiscriminately, or in a peace enforcement mission seems to tilt to one side or the other, the local population will clam up. It is even worse if the loyalty of the local population to the insurgents, or to a local faction, intensifies. The population then becomes the intelligence network of the insurgents or the local belligerents.

The intelligence problem dictates that practitioners of both urban COIN and urban peace enforcement must develop great political sensitivity. This sensitivity must go down to the lowest-level troops, as these will be the principal contacts with the local population and thus key sources of important intelligence. Similarly, the intelligence problem dictates that firepower should be used in a discriminate fashion in both cases. The indiscriminate use of firepower can make open-minded people think that the outside force is the real enemy. Even in a counterinsurgency situation where the local population is considered to be broadly unfriendly, it is wisest to view their political commitment to the guerrillas as contestable. It has long been a central tenet of counterinsurgency that the population's loyalty is the principal military objective. Winning the loyalty of some or all of the local population depends not only on atmospherics, however. The military force will need to coordinate its activities with political and economic actors who have the core competencies necessary to win the loyalty, or at least the neutrality, of the local population. These same actors also become a key source of political intelligence.

Military Operations to Assist the Civil Power.

The U.S. military has often been called upon to assist the civil power, though under strict legal constraints. In recent years, the military, both active and reserve, has assisted in the interdiction of drug smugglers, in disaster relief, and, in the case of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, in an effort to restore calm and order to the streets.

Major General (ARNG Ret.) James Delk's case study illustrates one striking similarity between assistance to law enforcement and urban peace enforcement and counterinsurgency operations. The great restraint exercised in the actual use of weaponry by the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division in Los Angeles tracks nicely with the advice provided in the other chapters for mid-intensity scenarios. This restraint was by no means preordained; firepower was used rather liberally during the Guard's participation in the suppression of the 1965 Los Angeles riots, but senior Guard veterans of that exercise, mindful that innocent people—American citizens—had been inadvertently killed, resolved to exercise far greater care. While we cannot know how important this restraint was in the level of public support that Guard units in Los Angeles ultimately received, it does nevertheless seem important. That said, the Guard units could probably afford the very strict rules of engagement under which they operated. Though the criminal elements of the city possessed many firearms and regularly used them to commit murder, unlike urban counterinsurgency or peace enforcement, these elements were not organized or individually prepared for a stand-up fight with military units and seem to have understood it. This level of restraint would be difficult to sustain against a more competent and combative adversary.

One difference between typical urban combat situations and the Los Angeles riots helps hammer home a key urban warfare problem. In Los Angeles the criminal elements did not quite have the home court advantage that one would

usually expect in urban conflicts overseas. The Guard's mission was to work very closely with the local police. Local law enforcement had plenty of detailed knowledge about the normal practices and customs of the criminal elements of the city. They also knew their way around. Many Guard personnel were from the Los Angeles area, and some were in law enforcement. This local knowledge probably allowed the Guard to avoid many pitfalls, in particular over-reaction to certain typical, provocative, but largely symbolic gang practices that could easily have elicited a burst from an M-16. Local knowledge also permitted the Guard to control its vulnerability.

Occasions for the employment of the U.S. military to deal with large-scale criminal violence have been few, and we all hope that our society can keep it that way. As Delk suggests, however, well-trained and stable Guard units comprised of citizen soldiers from the local area seem the ideal military units for this mission, so long as their leaders have thought through the unique situation they confront.

CONCLUSIONS

As the chapters in this book show, combat of any kind in an urban environment is very difficult. A skilled, reasonably well armed, adversary with a few thousand good and committed infantry can probably impose very significant costs on even a very competent Western military force. Military operations in urban areas should thus be avoided to the extent possible.

Both full-scale military operations and urban counterinsurgency or peace enforcement are difficult projects, but they are very different projects and require different skills and organization (assistance to domestic law enforcement agencies is even more peculiar). Good regular military units can be trained up for full-scale urban warfare in several weeks. They may not possess exactly the right equipment mix, but combined arms teams, more or less appropriate to the task at hand, can probably be formed out

of available assets. Mission orders can be simple, and units accustomed to using plenty of firepower to solve battlefield problems can continue to do so. That said, a strong adversary in a big city can probably impose very serious costs on this kind of force. The United States should not enter into this kind of combat if any alternative presents itself. And it seems likely that creative minds can find such alternatives.

Urban COIN and urban peace enforcement are, however, a very different kind of project. At any given moment, the tactical situation can produce typically hellish patterns of urban combat. The military units in this situation require quite a bit more training before they can have much hope of success in these missions. Standard responses such as the use of a lot of firepower probably need to be avoided. David Pearson's discussion of Northern Ireland tells the tale. By 1976, regular British army units "were receiving 3 months training for a 4-month tour." This is extraordinary, but it seems about right. It is obvious that U.S. military units designed primarily for high-intensity combat will not be training for their primary business during such a period. Moreover, skills and attitudes appropriate to their primary business, for all intents and purposes, will need to be trained out of them. This is patently absurd unless one is pretty sure they will not be needed in the short term for the primary mission that justifies their high cost to the taxpayer.

Instead, the appropriate technical answer is to organize and train standing units for these types of missions. Such units have to be accustomed to employing limited firepower. They need to be trained to fight accordingly. They will require more conventional infantry than one would expect to find in heavy units. They need extra training and indoctrination on relations with local populations, relations with civilian institutions, and relations with the news media. Intelligence units need to gather a very different type of intelligence from the normal battlefield, and the entire organization needs to be involved in that effort. Units

need to operate in a dispersed fashion; NCOs will have ever greater responsibilities, including quasi-diplomatic responsibilities. In the event that the United States finds itself in a situation where it must commit these specialized troops to high-intensity warfare, then they must be reoriented to that mission with a brief retraining program, not the reverse. The U.S. Army seems to be organizing such forces with the new interim brigade combat teams. The notion of permanent, dedicated forces for the kinds of interventions associated with peace enforcement is so politically controversial that the Army has rhetorically attached these units to its larger project of transforming the entire Army to a more strategically mobile force for high-intensity warfare. But that transition lies well into the future, and the structure, training, and armament of the interim brigades suggests peace enforcement missions.[4]

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

As noted at the outset of this chapter, the strategic rationale for turning the U.S. military to a new emphasis on military operations in urban terrain, especially peace enforcement operations, has not been fully developed. Though it is certainly consistent with the diffuse notion of shaping the international environment, the strategic priority that intervention in civil conflicts should enjoy in U.S. defense planning is far from clear. The military's interest in these issues seems driven more by the fact that the United States has done these kinds of missions, albeit on a small scale, over the last decade, than by any firm guidance to prepare for them on a large scale in the future. Full-scale urban combat is very costly in terms of lives lost under the best of circumstances. Yet the United States would pay those costs to achieve important intermediate or ultimate objectives.

Peace enforcement is also costly. The occasional combat that can arise in urban peace enforcement, or the frequent but small-scale combat that can arise in urban

counterinsurgency, can cause short sharp spikes in U.S. casualties. These may be organizationally sustainable, but it is not clear that they are politically sustainable. Standing regular units, appropriately equipped, structured, and permanently ready for these complex missions are costly. The retraining of heavy units, though clearly doable, is also costly. Given the scarcity of defense resources, the Pentagon needs to be very explicit about why it is building these forces.

Finally, it is critically important to retain the analytic distinction between full-scale urban combat and urban peace enforcement, or counterinsurgency. Blurring of these distinctions may lead to some very tragic errors of under-reaction or over-reaction. The new interim brigades list urban warfare as one of their key missions. But it is patently obvious that they are under-equipped for high-intensity, full-scale urban combat. This is appropriate, given what I believe to be their real mission. Political decisionmakers and senior commanders must understand the actual limitations of these units. Similarly, those who argue that any competent professional unit can do peace enforcement, while correct, need to finish the sentence: ". . . with significant additional training, and at considerable cost to preparedness for their primary mission."

The U.S. military's current interest in urban military operations is understandable. This interest will produce a better understanding of the problem and, ultimately, units better trained for combat in urban environments. But when progress reports are made to Pentagon bureaucrats, congressmen, and senators, great care must be taken to remind them that urban operations of any kind are unusually difficult, complex, and risky.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 11

1. I speak in general terms on this matter, because there are no hard and fast rules. Actual graphs depicting the probability that a unit would "break," depending on casualty rate, once appeared in army war gaming manuals. See, for example,

Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Maneuver Control," *Field Manual 105-5*, December 1973, pp. D16-D20, which has probability curves for entire divisions, and which were meant to be employed in assessing the results of war games. See also James G. Taylor, *Force-on-Force Attrition Modelling*, Military Operations Research Society, January 1980, pp. 63-69: ". . . most military planners in the United States assume that a ground-combat unit will break off an engagement and try to disengage from the enemy when it has suffered a certain percentage of casualties (e.g., 30 percent casualties for a company-sized unit in the attack and 50 percent in the defense," pp. 63-64).

2. For a similar categorization, see Daryl G. Press, "Urban Warfare: Options, Problems, and the Future," Conference Summary, MIT Security Studies Program, January 1999. Press divides the operations into "Policing, Raids, and Sustained Urban Combat." He provides a useful first order "strategic" analysis of the difficulty of each type of mission, and possible alternative ways of achieving goals while avoiding actual urban fighting.

3. *Handbook for Joint Urban Operations*, Washington, DC: Joint Staff, May 17, 2000. This is a very useful and comprehensive discussion, but its overarching context is not full-scale urban warfare. For example, Lieutenant General C. W. Fulford, Director of the Joint Staff, introduces the document by noting that "joint urban operations involve a variety of unique operational considerations such as extensive man-made construction, large noncombatant populations, and complex sociological, political, economic, and cultural interaction within those populations." This does not sound much like the Battle of Hue. The rest of the document is dominated by discussions of the "complex" interactions.

4. See Scott Gourley, "US Army Refines Urban Combat Training," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* Vol. 34, No. 21, November 22, 2000, pp. 27-28.

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