

“Those Who Live by The Littorals, Could Easily Die by The Littorals.”

The Emerging Role of The United States Marine Corps

In

Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations

For Operations Other Than War©

By

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“Not To Promote War, But To Preserve Peace – A Century of Educating Strategic Leadership”²

The above quote is the motto of the U.S. Army War College, and home of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; where they have been doing an outstanding job of “Educating the Strategic Leadership,” of the Army for well over a century. However, the overwhelming void in the education of military, and civilian, leadership in “Operations Other Than War” (OOTW) is not on the strategic level; but rather on the tactical level where the Junior Field, and Company Grade, Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers meet the civilian community up close and personal. That overwhelming void just got greater on 29 May, 2002, when the United States Army announced the permanent closure of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute. This closure, plus the earlier elimination of civil-military operation training rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, has completely ended any meaningful training for OOTW within the U.S. Army.

In December of 2001, several articles in the “Washington Post” pointed out that the Pentagon's decision to deploy 1,200 Marines to Afghanistan touched off a new round of deliberations among some Army officers who think the Army is unable to quickly deploy combat-ready forces in distant countries. These articles pointed out that lessons

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from the war in Afghanistan are sure to further support Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's effort to restructure the U.S. military. Defense analysts say the deployment of Marines shows the utility of sea-based assault forces that do not need foreign bases of operation.” A long proven concept, first generated in the 1992 Navy White Paper “From The Sea,” then tested as General Krulak’s “Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS),” and now perfected as Commandant James L. Jones's new operational concept, "Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare,” is truly a concept whose time has finally come and which is proving itself extremely effective.

The Washington Post article closed with this quote from Retired Army Lt. Col. Ralph Peters, a career intelligence officer who now works as an analyst and author, LTC Peters said "The bottom line is, the Marines are better prepared," Peters said. "The Marines are showing right now that they can sustain themselves far from their home Port. Because they've been thinking about mobility for a long time, they're able to get there. Of all the services, they were thinking most honestly about the future and its challenges." As I pointed out in an Editorial letter published, in the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, in February, 1998, the United States Marine Corps has been living, and perfecting, their version of JV 2010 since almost the day that it went on paper; while the U.S. Army is still planning for draft implementations of theirs.

"Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare,” as did “Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS)” before it, places unprecedented emphasis on the littorals and demands greater cohesiveness between naval warfare and maneuver warfare. A key element of both concepts is sea basing the command and control, logistics and the preponderance of fire support functions in order to maintain the use of the sea as maneuver space, while at the same time enhancing the mobility, and reducing the vulnerability, of ground forces ashore. Sea basing thus allows putting the “teeth” ashore while leaving the logistics “tail” afloat, significantly enhancing the joint task force commander’s ability to maneuver combat forces seamlessly from the sea to decisive objectives ashore.”³

The key phrase here is “unprecedented emphasis on the littorals. “The littoral, or brown-water strategy, called for improving the Navy’s ability to operate in narrow sea

³ Stephen E. Henthorne, FRUSI, MInstF, Operational Maneuver From The Sea, , Editorial Letter, RUSI Journal, February, 1998

3. Dr. Scott Bowden, “Forward Presence, Power Projection and the Navy’s Littoral Strategy” IRIS Corporation, July, 1997

lanes close to the shore and to project power inland to support Marine expeditionary forces and other joint operations. The littoral, or near land areas of the world, is any land or ocean within 650 miles (1046 km) of the coastline, which is equivalent to the furthest striking range of naval forces. From the sea, the littoral is the area from the open ocean to the shore that must be controlled to support operations ashore. From the land, the littoral is the area inland from the shore that can be supported and defended directly from the sea. Navy estimates suggest that 70 percent of the world's population lives within 200 miles of a coastline. The littoral thus has the potential to contain numerous future hotspots around the globe."⁴ According to the late Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the littoral is "where our national interests and potential foes most often collide."

To sustain littoral operations the Navy and the Marine Corps recognized the need for upgrades, modifications, and new weapons systems. As a result they have budgeted wisely and prepared for every possible littoral contingency, save one; that being how to deal with that 70 percent of the world's population the Navy has estimated to live within 200 miles of a coastline. A population more condensed, and more immediately effected by combat operations than populations dispersed and living farther inland. A population that will require the immediate attention of those Marines landing on that beach from the moment the ramp drops. A population with needs that can't wait for traditional U.S. Army "follow on" troops to deal with them tomorrow; primarily because, tomorrow, there may not be a sufficient quantity of U.S. Army troops with which to follow on.

Over the past year I've been actively engaged here at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute with the "Operation Enduring Freedom Research Project," an in depth study of Joint, Combined and Interagency Civil-Military Relations. That project has recently concluded with the return of our final field team from Afghanistan. While the full results of our research have yet to be published, The preliminary results indicate, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that traditional U.S. Army Civil Affairs (CA) and

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) assets were poorly mobilized, and seriously misused throughout much of our time in Afghanistan; worsening the plight of the civilian population, and increasing mission creep delays for the U.S. Military; in many instances clearly demonstrating that if it hadn't been for our Canadian and British allies there would have been no effective Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) outreach at all in most of the first eighteen months of operations in Afghanistan.

While things have gradually improved with each new rotation of troops into the country, Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) seem to remain the neglected step child. The view from above seems to be that the deployment of large numbers of Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) assets equates to supporting "nation building," something that the U.S. Department of Defense has absolutely no interest in. If that situation presents a possibly serious hindrance for future U.S. Army deployments, the U.S. Armed Force that holds the bulk of our military's Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) assets, the potential negative effect on the U.S. Marine's CA/PSYOP assets could prove to be the straw that breaks the Bulldog's back.

Granted, each of the military services has at least some Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) capabilities. It is undisputed that the center of the strategic U.S. Military CA and PSYOP resources resides within the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPSYOPC) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. However, this command includes only one active duty CA Unit, the 96th. CA Btn., and only one PSYOP "Group," approximately a Brigade in total size. Most CA and PSYOP personnel are in the Reserve Forces. Active Duty CA personnel tend to be lower ranking and generalists, well suited for immediate assessments and for setting up a Civil-Military Operations Center CMOC at the outset of an operation. Reserve CA units are generally composed of field grade officers who are subject matter experts, structured more toward making strategic assessments, nation building, running distressed governments, etc. These units are often not routinely deployed on a tactical basis.

From my experience, having observed Civil-Military Operations, over many years, from the civilian side, I can clearly see the painful irony of it all. The Army currently has the bulk of the strategic Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations

(PSYOP) assets; designed and trained for reaching a broader population base, with less density. The Marine Corps, on the other hand, is very short in even tactical CA & PSYOP assets, with which to deal with a population base of far greater density, and potentially far more immediate needs. However, the Army and the Marine Corps share several things in common; both treat their CA & PSYOP assets with benign neglect. The Army often misuses them. The Marine Corps either doesn't use what they have, or drag their heels at expanding their CA & PSYOP assets to meet the future demands of littoral operations. Obviously, the Marine Corps believes that it will never truly need the quantity of CA & PSYOP assets currently held by the Army, as they believe the strategic need isn't there, nor does it match the primary mission of the Marine Corps, but The Marine Corps could greatly benefit from upgrading and expanding the quality of the CA & PSYOP assets they now have for the tactical needs that an increase in littoral operations will most certainly produce. As well, the Marine Corps could equally benefit from an increase in CA/PSYOP liaison with their Army counter parts.

The ultimate irony is that the United States Marine Corps was the first to truly understand and point out that "The U.S. Military/NGO relationship is a fundamental trait of our present and the era into which we are entering. Its proclamation is twofold: (1.) interagency/multinational coordination will only increase; and (2.) the role of civilians in military operations, no matter how pure the "battlefield," will also only increase."⁵

To return to the 2001 Washington Post Article Army Maj. Donald Vandergriff, who writes on military reform issues, said "the Army is in danger of "becoming irrelevant" because top Army officers have not swiftly implemented the transformation plan laid out by their own chief of staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki. .Had Gen. Shinseki's vision for developing more capable rapid-deployment forces been followed, Vandergriff said, Gen. Franks would have had more than just the Marine Expeditionary Units to choose from when deploying conventional forces in Afghanistan."

The point here is that the U.S. Marine Corps, as the emerging Rapid Reaction Force of Choice, is seriously facing some expanded challenges that they've never had to face before. One of those challenges is the expansion, and optimum tactical use, of their Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations assets in Operations Other Than War

⁵ Captain Chris Seiple, USMC, "[The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship In Humanitarian Intervention](#)": CSL,USAWC, 1996

(OOTWs) in the Littorals; possibly on a grander tactical scale than even the Army, who with the Lion's share of CA/PSYOPS assets, may ever face. **Let's look at the** figures with which Marines on the beach just might have to deal with. Dr. Bowden, in his paper "Forward Presence, Power Projection and the Navy's Littoral Strategy: Foundations, Problems, and Prospects," points out that "official and unofficial observers have made several claims concerning the significance of the littoral:

- ▶ A majority of the world's population and major cities are located within 100 miles of the coast
- ▶ Four out of five world capitals are less than 300 miles from the coast
- ▶ 70 percent of the world's population lives within 200 miles of the coast
- ▶ Roughly three-quarters of the world's population lives within 100 miles of the coast
- ▶ The littoral is home to nearly all of the primary marketplaces for international trade."

A cross-check of the data used in this project with unclassified data on Iraq obtained from *Jane's* and the CIA reveals almost no discrepancies between focusing on cities and infrastructure and focusing on military nodes alone. Major cities may be the site of an increasing number of military operations in the future as we move into an era of resource scarcity, overpopulation, urbanization, and operations other than war (OOTW). Glancing at nodes in the database from Pakistan (Rawalpindi, New Mirpur, Jhelum, Gujrat, Sialkot, and Gujranwala) may mean nothing to the typical observer today. However, the same could also have been said six years ago for a similar list of nodes from Yugoslavia (Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica, Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Dubrovnik), yet these names are now permanently etched in the minds of soldiers and analysts. In the future, the U.S. military is just as likely to undertake peace support operations in the Mogadishus of the world as it is either to battle the forces of a regional hegemon in the desert or to bomb the weapons facility of an aspiring nuclear power," and undertaking peace support operations means dealing with people, massive numbers of people, and at present the Marines Corps simply does not even begin to get close to having adequate numbers of CA/PSYOP assets to deal with massive numbers of people that they will encounter in Littoral operations; and with the U.S. Army's reluctance to effectively

deploy and utilize their Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) assets, this will place an even heavier burden on Marine troops on the beach.

These thoughts are not mind alone. I wish I could take credit for them, but they were better written by Adam B. Siegel, for the Center for Naval Analyses (CAN), first in 1995 in CRM 94-74, and then in 1996 in CAB 95.85.10; respectively entitled “Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations – Insights From Seven Case Studies,” and The Role of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations in Humanitarian Assistance Operations.” When I went back to these documents myself, and blew the dust off of them, the words literally flew off the pages at me. The Bibliography and Related CAN Studies contained some of the best reference material, on CA/PSYOP, that I’ve ever been guilty of ignoring; and I know if I so easily ignored them, perhaps because they were always associated with U.S. operations in Haiti, then I can imagine how easy it must have been for the Marine Corps to ignore them. Looking at these publications now, with fresh insight, and some history to look back on, these are some of the most golden words of wisdom I’ve ever read, and definitely words that could only serve to enhance future Marine Corps Littoral operations in the future. In fact, there are some very good CA/PSYOP points in this material that the Army could profit from as well.

I had originally intended to conclude this article by highlighting the main points in the two publications mentioned in the last paragraph, but those points are there for the free reading. Rather, I will close with some stark reality. A new mantle is about to fall on the United State Marine Corps. I believe that because of some extremely good planning, back in 1992, combined with a history of building victory out of almost nothing at all, and by implementing, and working through “Operational Maneuver From The Sea” (OMFTS), and into “Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare,” the Marine Corps will be the core of this nation’s military rapid reaction response. The Marines have beaten out the Army based on self contained high mobility and, most important to the U.S. Congress, cost effectiveness. The Marines just give the best rapid reaction bang for the buck.

To return one last time to the 2001 Washington Post article, “A report by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, issued last month on the Army's plan for deploying its own expeditionary troops concluded that delays in developing new, lighter armored vehicles have already slowed efforts for fielding the first six to eight "interim brigade combat teams." Those units are designed to project a fighting force anywhere in the world in four days. The GAO concluded that Army light infantry forces "can deploy rapidly but lack combat power, tactical mobility, and capability for sustained operations. Conversely, its heavy forces that rely more on tanks and other armored vehicles have unmatched combat Power, tactical mobility, and capability for sustained operations but require too much time to deploy." The honest truth was that the “interim brigade combat teams” were too slow, too late and many dollars too expensive.

The United State Marine Corps “have historically been inventors, innovators, and improvisers. This has often been out of necessity, because in peacetime the U.S. Marine Corps has also been seriously under-funded.”⁶ However, in the area of Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) the Marine Corps has neither been inventive nor innovative and this lapse of foresight could seriously hurt them in future operations.

The United States Marine Corps has long coveted its relationship with the British Royal Marines, in fact in the November, 2002 edition of “Seapower,” there is an excellent article on the Royal Marines that I would respectfully urge both the outgoing and incoming Commandants of the United States Marine Corps to read.

In the “Seapower” article entitled “Land, Survive, and Fight To Win,” it is pointed out that “the principal operational element of the Royal Marines is 3 Commando Brigade, and that 3 Commando Brigade has three main capabilities,” and that number three in that list of capabilities is that “3 Commando Brigade has the inherent flexibility to conduct operations other than war (e.g., humanitarian and peacekeeping support).” The article closes by saying that the “U.K. defence policy has radically shifted and is now focused on the armed services capabilities for power projection and expeditionary missions with a global scope as a *Force for Good.*”

⁶ Timothy O. Fanning, “The Forward Edge of Freedom,” Seapower, November, 2002

If 3 Commando Brigade, consisting of three light battalions, some 6,500 regulars, and 1,000 reservists, has that stated flexibility in it's mission statement, then why can't the United States Marine Corps strengthen their operational capability in operations other than war by strengthening their Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) capabilities?

The United States Marine Corps has definitely distinguished themselves in Afghanistan. They have led the way. However, the victorious Roman generals always use to have a slave remind them daily, "all glory is fleeting," and the "lean, green, Marine Corps fighting machine" could be brought to a screeching halt the first time it's met on the beach by masses of humanity that have been displaced, starving, injured and killed by either naval gun fire or from months, if not years, of aggressive assaults and neglect by their own countrymen.

The Marine Corps truly lacks today, just as it did in 1996, the CA/PSYOP assets necessary to grease the wheels, and even begin to deal with the masses of humanity that they will likely meet in the ever growing number of Humanitarian Aid Operations awaiting them. It would be the ultimate irony for the Marine Corps to have so diligently prepared for their new role, only to see that new role dashed on the Littoral shores for want of a relatively small and inexpensive component-----adequate Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations assets. There is not even a consistent Marine Corp plug and play capability in place between themselves and the Army USACAPOC to deal with the reality that 70% of the world's population does live in the Littorals. So it could truly be said that.

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(3,237 Words)

