

Campaign Planning for Operations Other Than War

by Col Gary W. Anderson

Effectiveness in operations at the lower end of the warfare spectrum can be greatly enhanced by well-thought-out preliminary steps.

Operations other than war (OOTW) is not a popular term, but it seems to be the best we can do in the area of putting a label on what the Marine Corps used to call small wars. OOTW, low-intensity conflict, small wars, or contingency operations are names we have used for activities that fall outside of the normal category of major regional conflicts (MRCs). MRCs are holdovers from the Cold War. Many still envision them as conflicts between the United States and its allies and regional bad guys, who look and act like miniature versions of the former Soviet Union. They are reasonably easy to plan for, as our operational plans for such conflicts are smaller versions of our old counter-Soviet plans. Our challenge is to deploy U.S. forces rapidly to reinforce our allies and to maintain U.S. forces in place to deter an attack before a conflict occurs or to win by proper employment once a conflict begins. In such situations, deliberate planning and campaign planning in the classic definition of those terms remains operative. However, MRCs are increasingly the least likely case, particularly for Marines. While we must be ready to fight in MRCs and contribute effectively as we did in Operation DESERT STORM, the most likely role for Marines is OOTW. This article will argue that while deliberate planning

in OOTW is more difficult than in MRCs, it can be done and should be done if the Marine Corps is to continue to be the tip of the spear in OOTW response.

What Has Changed?

Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen a variety of scenarios for the use of U.S. military forces in different ways than the traditional MRC. Although several of these OOTW scenarios such as evacuations of noncombatants

view holds an acceptable answer. While it is true that we can do most OOTW with the forces and equipment on hand, success in OOTW requires mental flexibility and the ability to react in an innovative manner to new and complex situations. The Marine Corps would not be wise to ignore the special requirements of OOTW or to degrade radically its capability to participate fully in MRCs. We should remember that during Operation DESERT STORM, we had to reinvent several capabilities such as self-propelled artillery and truck companies that we no longer thought we would need after the Cold War ended. America can't afford a Marine Corps that "doesn't do windows."

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(NEOs) and disaster relief are familiar to Marines, some OOTW operations such as peacekeeping and peace enforcement are new for the majority of Marine Corps personnel. Figure 1 is a representation of what has changed as OOTW becomes the most likely use of military forces.

Some Marines and others in military planning circles look on OOTW as a “lesser included case” and argue that if we are prepared to do MRCs, we can do anything. Some other theorists have argued that the Marine Corps should concentrate on OOTW and amphibious operations as its niche and leave conventional conflict to the Army. Neither

Understanding the New Challenges

We generally know how to do NEOs, nation-building, counterinsurgency, and several other peripheral operations associated with OOTW. Likewise, standard peacekeeping, that is providing a confidence-building force interposed between two adversaries who have agreed to stop fighting, is something that does not require a major retooling or retraining effort. Senior Marines are generally wary of getting involved in conventional peacekeeping on a large scale because of fears that it will atrophy combat readiness skills. This fear is not entirely unjustified. If Army experience in the Sinai and Macedonia is any indicator, a returning infantry battalion takes approximately 6 months after a peacekeeping operation to regain standards that are comparable to those of the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System.

The most likely areas for Marine Corps involvement are humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts and complex peacekeeping efforts where

Cold War & MRC

- Structured coalition environment
- End state fairly well defined
- U.S. entry criteria fixed
- U.S. exit criteria tied to end state
- Command relationships stable

Post-Cold War (OOTW)

- Ad hoc coalitions
- End state may be what drives mission statement
- U.S. entry criteria unclear “do something”
- U.S. exit criteria and end state often tied to entry criteria
- Command relationships flexible and likely created on the fly

Figure 1. Planning: What Has Changed?

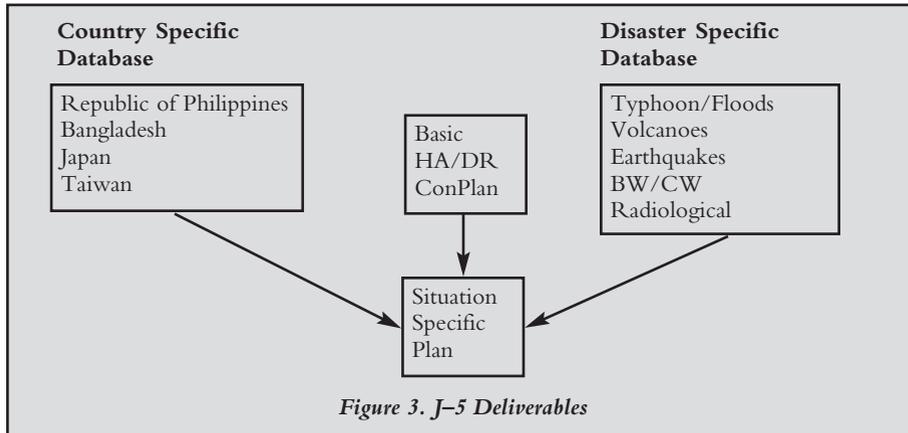
Noncomplex HA/DR

- Typhoons, earthquakes, etc.
- Usually affects small area
- Few displaced persons
- Permissive environment
- Functioning government
- Relief common goal
- Work for embassy
- Provides/transport relief
- Example: Bangladesh

Complex HA/DR

- Civil strife, conflict
- Usually affects large area
- Many DPs and refugees
- Uncertain/non-permissive
- “Failed State”
- Food/relief as weapon/tool
- Work with U.N.
- Protect/transport relief
- Example: Somalia

Figure 2: Two Distinct Situations



General Assessment Team

- JTF Commander
- Aide

- J-2
- J-3
- J-4
- J-5
- J-6
- Staff Sec

	<u>officers/enlisted</u>
	1/3
	5/5
2/2 plus 2 contractors	3/3
	3/6
	1/1

Figure 4

some degree of compulsion is required to enforce humanitarian assistance, as was the case in Somalia. Figure 2 is a comparison of these operational models. No two will be the same, and we cannot build templates or school solutions. We can expect, however, our forward deployed, expeditionary nature to get us involved when one or the other occurs because the demand will be to do something and do it quickly.

What the Navy-Marine Team Brings to the Table

When a natural disaster or man-made catastrophe threatens death on a large scale to such an extent that U.S. help is requested and agreed to, three things that naval

forces possess come to the fore immediately—(1) the ability to react quickly with forward-deployed forces, (2) the ability to seabase logistics to avoid further overburdening of the infrastructure ashore as well as to keep supply lines protected from insurgents or factions, and (3) the ability to provide the expeditionary nucleus for a joint task force (JTF) headquarters very rapidly. One or all of these capabilities has been used in virtually every OOTW since 1989 to include Operations PROVIDE COMFORT, SEA ANGEL, FIERY VIGIL, RESTORE HOPE, and UNITED SHIELD; this list should also include sea-based NEOs in Somalia, Liberia, and Rwanda as well as disaster relief in the United States and its possessions.

Can We Plan Ahead?

One popular myth regarding OOTW is that, because OOTW are pop-up type operations, deliberate planning cannot be done in advance and each one will be ad hoc. This is not true. We may not know which house will catch on fire, but we can learn a lot about the neighborhood. There is quite a bit that can and should be done in anticipation of an OOTW event.

Planning for Noncomplex HA/DR. In each CinC's theater of operations, there are nations that are leading candidates for disasters. These may be hurricane targets (called typhoons in WestPac and cyclones in the Indian Ocean), volcano risks, or nations prone to earthquakes. Each of these disasters has a profile. If we intervene, we will take different capability and skill sets to assist in dealing with each one. This means that much of the planning can be modularized.

Cultural intelligence is important in OOTW. It is good to know how the locals might react to ROWPU-produced water or how they will view the involvement of U.S. forces in disposing of indigenous bodies. It is also good to know how well prepared the host-nation government and nongovernmental relief organizations (NGOs) working in the area are in dealing with disasters. If they already have large quantities of relief supplies but lack the ability to transport them to the disaster site, we have a good idea of where to start in force planning. The answers to these questions are out there. The trick for the planners is to find the data and put it into a proper format that will be useful to the commander. The wargamers at Quantico have become adept at putting together cultural-political intelligence seminars that ask the right questions of the right people, about particular countries. They contact people who have walked the ground and dealt with the population and government. These include former diplomats, businessmen, reporters, and NGOs.

Figure 3 represents the three elements of a modularized HA/DR planning process. The standing generic contingency plan should include the most likely considerations for such operations as well as preformatted messages and crisis action procedures that can be followed. It may well include a basic table of organization for an assessment team/JTF forward headquarters group (Figure 4) as well as a modularized mount-out kit that can be modified as the nature of the situation becomes better known. Databases on disaster profiles as well as the profiles

COMPLEX PEACEKEEPING PLANNING MATRIX

FACTIONAL OPTIONS	JTF RESPONSE						
	OPS	PSYOPS	PA	NON-LETHAL	LEGAL/ ROG	LOGISTICS IMPLICATIONS	NGO IMPLICATION
FACTION # 1							
OPTION A							
OPTION B							
ETC							
FACTION # 2							
OPTIONS							
FACTION # 3							
OPTIONS							

Figure 5

of nations and locations most prone to disasters can also be maintained. In developing databases for candidate countries, the rule of thumb is to look first at those most prone to disasters and that will likely ask for assistance. Once the actual location, nature, and general extent of the disaster are known, the basic modules can be put together into a location-specific package that can be expanded as the crisis action cell works the unfolding events.

Deliberate Planning for Complex HA/DR. Since most of these operations take place in the context of a failed or failing state, the problem differs from that in states where we are in support of a friendly government. In this case, we may have to temporarily assume functions normally associated with local governments. In addition, the possibility of making the transition from an in extremis U.S./coalition intervention to a long-term U.N. or regional solution should be a consideration from the beginning.

Unlike HA/DR operations in a natural disaster, complex HA/DR operations should not come as a total surprise. Nations do not fail overnight, and we should be able to identify these operations far enough in advance of a required intervention to begin planning. In planning for Operation UNITED SHIELD, there was time to conduct a cultural-political seminar on Somalia that included a Red Team war game that examined the options that each faction would have open to it based on the presumed mission of the JTF. That information was given to the planners who built their game plan, branches, and sequels in a

“playbook” format as outlined in Figure 5. It should be noted that the planning group is as heavy on psychological operations, legal, less-lethal, and media skills at it is in the more traditional military staff specialties. However, it should be noted that the methodology is not new. The wargaming/planning approach would be familiar to the German General Staff of 1940 or the U.S. Rainbow Planners of the 1930s; only the presence of lawyers and media specialists might raise eyebrows among the interwar planners.

The Value of Planning

Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower once said

“Nations do not fail overnight, and we should be able to identify these operations far enough in advance of a required intervention to begin planning.”

that, “much of the value in planning is in planning itself.” By this he meant that thinking through a problem helps us to become intuitively familiar with it; and the more familiar we become, the more likely we are to find insights. This is true in OOTW planning as well. Deliberate planning for OOTW should not detract from normal MRC/theater war planning; it can contribute to such planning. For example, many nations with which the United States has bilateral agreements in a theater will not normally exercise with some other nations in a conventional context. However, they might join in a multilateral HA/DR exercise. The coordination training and procedures gained in the exercise could still be

useful if an ad hoc warfighting coalition needs to be formed at short notice. Other useful things can be done in the course of normal planning meetings that enhance OOTW planning. For example, when going to a planning conference with an ally for an exercise or for other reasons, some extra time should be scheduled to talk about HA/DR issues with the following:

- U.S. Embassy
- USAID representatives and host nation relief officials as appropriately coordinated through USAID and the Embassy.
- Major NGO and private volunteer organization representatives.

- Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance representative in the theater.

Experience in HA/DR operations shows that it is much easier to get through the first days of an assessment effort and to get the U.S. military portion of these operations moving quickly if JTF officers arriving on scene know their counterparts in advance. In addition, the information gained on these visits can be an invaluable update to the database on the country in order to keep the plan for that nation current and relevant.

In summary, deliberate planning can and should be accomplished for OOTW, and it should not detract from deliberate planning for conventional operations. If done well, it can be a facilitator for conventional planning.



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