

W. Harley RCP
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PSYCHOLOGICAL

W A R F A R E

TRIM - ORIENTATION CONFERENCE

Mission:

The mission of Psychological Warfare is to gain military objectives by non-violent means. As such Psywar must be subordinated to and coordinated with the overall military effort.

Definition:

Psychological warfare is as varied in form and execution as the situations it is called upon to solve. Standard US Psywar is the planned use of propaganda against a given enemy group, military or civilian. In the past, US Psywar has generally used mass communication media (radio, leaflets, newsheets, loudspeakers) in large scale operations, both tactical and strategic in nature. Psywar in Southeast Asia varies from standard US Psywar in that it is called upon to solve problems quite different and more complex than those encountered during World War II and the Korean Conflict. This is particularly true for Vietnam, where Psywar -- in addition to its combat mission -- must counteract enemy propaganda within the friendly forces and population and must gain the active support of the civilian population to make possible the conduct of military operations. On the other hand, mass Psywar is unsuited to this area, where Psywar must be conducted on a small unit level through personal action rather than through mass communication media.

Role and objectives

Psywar is a weapon and part of the military arsenal. It is carried out by military personnel. In the course of Psywar orientation lectures to FAVN officers the military nature of Psywar was emphasized with help of an introductory practical problem showing a hypothetical situation and military mission, the difficulties in solving it by conventional military means, and the practical application of Psywar to accomplish the mission. Cf. Appendix I hereto.

As shown in the practical problem, the objectives of Psywar are

1. Friendly troops and their morale
2. Gain active support of friendly population
3. Demoralize and gain enemy population
4. Demoralize and gain enemy troops.

Operations:

Psywar must be directed against a specific and well defined target group (a company; all the officers or NCOs in a regiment; a village or group of villages; a mountain tribe; the Chinese population in a city). It must exploit existing vulnerabilities (hatred, hope, fear, hunger, etc.), and it must overcome psychological resistances (group solidarity, military honor, etc.). Some vulnerabilities can be created by special operations -- of a combat or psywar nature --: fear, dissensions, hunger.

The need of proceeding against a specific group and of exploiting existing vulnerabilities presupposes complete and up-to-date intelligence. It also calls for quick and often improvised action. This is particularly true in Vietnam, where small unit operations are and will be more frequent than in a World War II or Korean type situation.

On the other hand, effective Psywar demands a minimum of coordination and system in its operations. The following phases should be observed:

1. Preparation: Collect Intelligence, indoctrinate friendly troops, procure equipment and materiel for rec help; planning; preliminary operations.
2. Execution
3. Consolidation: terminate action, hold promises, effect transfer to replacing unit or civilian authority.

Propaganda

Regardless of the media employed, propaganda itself presupposes careful planning and preparation. Before transmitting a propaganda message it is necessary to gain the target group's attention, and to have its confidence (credibility). Special psywar operations may be necessary for this purpose (objective news broadcasts, music, etc.).

Propaganda -- whether directed at a civilian or at a military target -- should never be destructive only. Constructive propaganda should replace what has been destroyed.

Media and techniques

must be chosen to fit particular situation and specific target group. Many of the media employed by conventional US Psywar are unsuited in this area (radio, mass-leaflet drops). Some of the more successful Psywar media: spoken word (discussion, rumor); broadcasts (loudspeaker, radio); printed media (leaflets -- printed, mimeographed, handwritten --, pamphlets, newsheets, books); direct assistance (food, salt, aid in reconstruction, farming, road construction & repair). Unlike standard US Psywar, Psywar in Vietnam must be carried out with very little equipment: its effectiveness presupposes personal action and individualized communication.

Personnel

USArmy: Special Psywar units under Office, Chief of Psychological Warfare. FAVN: Psywar is directed jointly by 5th Bureau (Chief of General Staff) and Direction de la Guerre Psychologique (Ministry of Defense). 5th Bureaus at Region, Division, Regt. level -- Moral Action officers. 3 Propaganda Companies. Limited amount of Psywar personnel allowed by present TO & E is in reality supplemented by personnel selected by the various Region and Unit Commanders (especially in IIInd and IVth Mil. Regions).

In addition to specialized Psywar personnel, which is charged with research, planning and execution through special media, non-specialized military personnel plays a very important role in the execution of Psywar operations. This is particularly true in Vietnam.

Particular operations:

Intelligence: G-2/S-2 channels; intelligence companies; Psywar organic intelligence arm. Psywar intelligence is of a very specialized nature and demands detailed information concerning the target group, its vulnerabilities and resistance: language, customs, beliefs, social structure, needs and complaints, internal tensions, enemy propaganda are some of the topics of Psywar intelligence.

Friendly Troop Morale (in VN: Moral Action, TDAT) is one of the principal objectives of Psywar within FAVN. This includes TI&E and PRO. Purpose is to counter communist propaganda and infiltration, to improve military efficiency of troops and to indoctrinate them in view of special Psywar activities. Troop morale is as much responsibility of CO ~~than~~ as of G-5 officer. Some techniques: troop information program, education, indoctrination for special missions. Solve personal problems (food, dependent housing, pay). Establish code of conduct and enforce strict discipline. Competitive programs.

Psywar directed at Civilian Population (in VN: DAN VAN). It is imperative that FAVN gain support of friendly and of enemy population: purposes: direct help (intelligence, liaison, housing, food, etc.), indirect help (isolate enemy, moral support). Propaganda is one way of gaining support of population: better yet, support can be gained by soldier's correct and disciplined behaviour, by direct assistance (medical help, food relief program, distribution of articles of first necessity) reconstruction road building, etc.). Special problems with ~~the~~ ~~enemy~~ population (protection of friendly elements passive population, ethnic minorities (mountain tribes on High Plateau)).

It is not sufficient to discredit the enemy with the civilian population. Latter must be gained and actively mobilized.

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Combat Psywar (in VN: DICH VAN). Purpose is to reduce military effectiveness of enemy soldier and to cause surrender and capitulation. Several steps can be taken:

- (a) Demoralization Psywar: cause and exploit fear (inaccustomed milieu, night operations, sabotage, superior numbers or armament.) Fear can be instilled by rumor, by special operations, harassment or intimidation appeals (loudspeaker or leaflet); dissensions (split enemy by causing or exploiting dissent among ethnic groups, officers and enlisted men or between units); nostalgia; confusion.
- (b) Establish credibility and gain enemy's confidence. Special psywar operations: information and recreation. Good treatment of POW.
- (c) Surrender appeals, capitulation. Surrender Psychology (group solidarity, military honor are resistances which must be overcome). Surrender appeals must be specific and give practical instructions. Rewards and prizes as incentives.
- (d) Cause sabotage, mutinies, insubordination

Note: before specific action (surrender, mutiny) or inaction (lack of resistance) can be demanded from an enemy group it is generally necessary to demoralize it and to gain its confidence.

Conclusion:

Psywar is a military weapon. It is every staff officer's and unit commander's responsibility to know its capabilities and to utilize Psywar to attain military objectives. Psywar has saved lives and materiel and it will continue to do so, especially in this area.

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PRACTICAL PROBLEM

hypothetical situation

MAPS: Pleiku, An Khe, Binh Dinh, Rte 19.

I. GENERAL SITUATION

Vietminh have launched two-pronged attack on S. Vietnam. Main force has crossed 17th Parallel and has been stopped N of Tou-rane. Secondary attack through Laos.

a. The enemy:

(i) Vietminh occupy the towns & provinces of KONTUM and Pleiku.

(ii) A Vietminh force, consisting of the TRANG VONG Battalion reinforced by 2 Btr. of mountain artillery from the North, has occupied SALA DAK XA VONG, AH CU, AN QUI, AN KHE, the DEO MANG Pass and is presently in AN PHUONG. It threatens the BINH DINH area and the Coastal Road (Rte No.1). Vietminh infiltration by active cadres is reported from the villages of PHU PHONG, TRUNG, KON BARR and PL. MAM.

(iii) The TRANG VONG Battalion consists of mountaineer EM and some NCOs (Bahnar and Rhade) native to the region. The officers are Vietnamese communists. After the armistice the battalion had been dissolved and the local elements returned to their homes. Battalion was reconstituted after Vietminh attack.

(iv) The BAHNAR mountain tribe has been under Vietminh influence for a number of years. It is presently hostile to the FAVN. We know, however, that Vietminh have employed highhanded methods in several villages to requisition food and to draft soldiers, and that at the time of the armistice several Vietminh cadre, who had married local girls, deserted them and their children to return North.

(v) Vietnamese population in AN KHE, AH CU and AN PHUONG had been under Vietminh rule prior to armistice, and has since been the target of intensive propaganda by Vietminh cadres. It fears FAVN, but remembers Vietminh rule by several bad harvests due to Vietminh requisition of manpower. There is at present an acute rice shortage in the area.

(vi) Rhade and Djarai are indifferent.

b. Friendly forces

(i) Elements of the 16th Light Division in the BINH DINH area: 2 regular companies, 1 company of recruits recently drafted in QUANG NGAI-QUI NHON area and officered by division veterans. 1 platoon of an intelligence company.

(ii) Elements of the 16th Light Division: 1 company, formerly stationed at AN KHE, now holding position in BINH KHE. Losses in this unit have been heavy, and there is an acute shortage of food and ammunition.

(iii) 1 Btry of the NUNG division, recently arrived from Nhatrang.

(iv) HRE and SØDÆNG tribes in the North, and the villages of KON GO, KAN NAK, X. VINH THO, VINH TINH and PL. DJUN are opposed to the Vietminh, but their attitude towards FAVN is unknown.

II. YOUR MISSION

- a. Stop enemy advance along Rte 19
- b. Cut enemy's line of retreat and communications on Rte 19.
- c. Wipe out enemy force.

III. SOLUTION

Several obstacles make it difficult of impossible to accomplish your mission by conventional military means with the forces at your disposal. Some of these difficulties:

- a. Low morale among your troops
 - draftees are not up to their task
 - morale in the 12th Light Div. unit is low
 - your force is pieced together from various units which do not know each other.
- b. Mountain population, (especially Bahnar), is hostile or indifferent (Rhade, Djarai). Vietnamese population is hostile.
- c. Vietminh infiltration behind your lines
- d. You lack intelligence on Vietminh deployment and commanding terrain.
- e. Enemy has the advantage of familiar terrain.

IV. THIS IS WHAT PSYWAR CAN DO:

- a. Improve morale of your troops, give them confidence and esprit de corps to make better soldiers out of them.
- b. Win civilian population (mountaineers and Vietnamese) in order to obtain
 - intelligence
 - scouts, agents, liaison, direct assistance
 - isolate enemy units and stop infiltration behind your lines.
- c. Demoralize the enemy force, cause tensions, mutinies, surrender and capitulation of units you succeed in encircling.

Psywar may thus enable you to carry out your mission with a minimum of losses.