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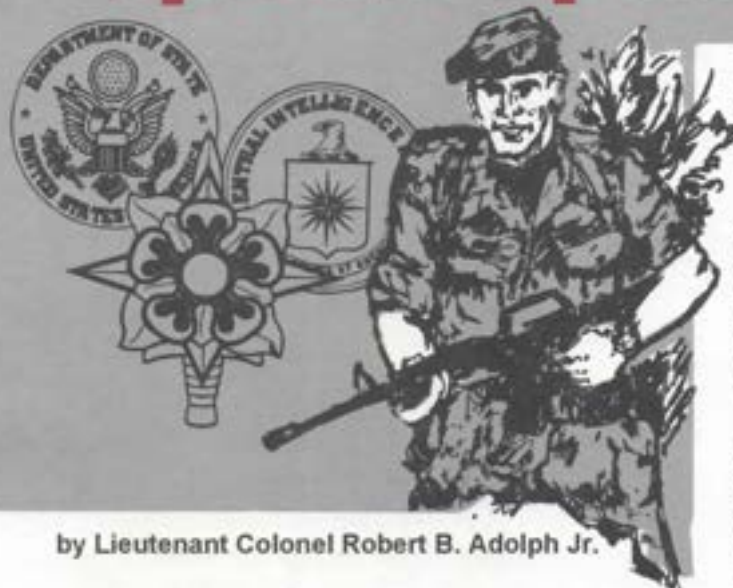
JANUARY-MARCH 1994
PB 34-94-1



**INTELLIGENCE
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VIEWPOINT: "Peacetime Engagement" and Special Operations Forces



by Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Adolph Jr.

For over a decade, the debate over possible American responses to Operations Other Than War (OOTW) in the Third World has continued. Unfortunately, the U.S. has not developed a strategy for addressing the problem. One official in government has attempted to articulate a concept. James R. Locher III, the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, has developed a strategy known as "Peacetime Engagement."

Mr. Locher's concept for Peacetime Engagement in the Third World calls for the proactive use of the military, along with other organs of government. The purpose is to promote democracy in the Third World and to defeat low-intensity conflict threats. The strategy has two phases:

- ☐ To Counteract Violence.
- ☐ To Conduct Nation-Building.

Such a policy, if fully implemented, would create unique challenges for the intelligence community. Currently, the Army Intelligence force structure correctly concentrates most of its assets, personnel, and equipment on potential conventional warfare. These issues should be reviewed and discussed.

Peacetime Engagement has great potential, but may never become a reality. OOTW requires decidedly unconventional responses—something the U.S. has never done well.

The U.S. is the only remaining global power since the demise of the Soviet Union. Never in our collective history has there been a similar situation. "What next?" is not only a troublesome question of American foreign policy but it is also a unique op-

portunity for the U.S. to occupy the moral high ground—a position America always desires.

The Moral High Ground

This high ground is in concert with the American belief that "liberty and justice for all" means a great deal more than just words recited during the Pledge of Allegiance. In a new strategic environment, the U.S. is the world's moral leader, possibly by default. American diplomatic decisions in the new century will shape what is now called the new world order.

During the Cold War period, the U.S. often failed to put its best foot forward in the Third World. America sometimes supported dictators such as Somoza in Nicaragua, because successive presidential administrations believed communism was the greatest evil. American presidents, and congresses, knew that Somoza was a dictator, but looked the other way because he claimed to be anticommunist. In fact, it was normal to associate with anticommunist dictators, especially in Latin America. Thus, U.S. policy in Latin America and other regions made enemies. Too often, high sounding American ideals did not match our actions.

Peoples in the Third World did not like to see themselves as pawns in the larger bipolar struggle between America and the Soviet Union. Their concerns were, and continue to be, predominantly internal and regional. While America and her allies dealt with the greater evil of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, smaller evils multiplied and prospered. Idi Amin ruled in Uganda, Pol Pot in Cambodia, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, as well as other dictators throughout the world. America could not simultaneously address these dictators and maintain its enormous commitment to NATO. Consequently, most Third World dictators have gone unchecked up until now.

I do not mean to suggest that America immediately embark on an international military campaign to eradicate the world of its dictators. However, fostering democracy continues to be a cornerstone of U.S. policy, and the military is one component of national power. Diplomacy and economic sanctions failed to convince Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait so military power was used against him.

A Strategy

How would Assistant Secretary Locher's Peacetime Engagement strategy halt aggression and foster democracy in the Third World? How would our

nation's intelligence organizations change to support this policy? Should intelligence focus on HUMINT now that there is no major conventional military threat? Unfortunately, national collection systems often fail to meet the needs of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and provide the kinds of intelligence required.

National, operational, and tactical intelligence collection systems and personnel are usually unable to answer questions dealing with the intentions of potential antagonists. Cultural and regional data, which are essential to successful SOF operations, are often missing. Specific and detailed information about military capabilities of smaller Third World nations, where SOF commonly deploy, is inadequate. We need to undertake a major effort to refocus our intelligence assets to provide this information. Expanding our HUMINT capabilities appears to make sense.

The potential for Peacetime Engagement, properly supported by our intelligence community, may be significant. Although the concept was born in the defense establishment, I believe it should grow to embrace not only DOD but also the State Department. The Lead Agency Concept places the State Department squarely at the head of any American effort to foster democracy and security in the Third World. All branches of the armed services are potential players.

The importance of SOF in this environment is a given to many who study OOTW. SOF provide a capability that primarily applies to unconventional environments. Congress' creation of the U.S. Special Operations Command is proof of the spread of this concept. Unfortunately, Congress only addressed half of the problem.

The 1986 Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project, sponsored by the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command, stated this concerning America's handling of OOTW:

Second only to our lack of understanding is our lack of unity in responding to the threats to our interests.... Therefore, we must counter ideas with ideas, force with force, diplomacy with diplomacy, and all must flow from a strategy implemented through a strong national unity of effort...at the national level and on a regional basis, unity is lacking. Without national direction it is futile to expect unity of effort.... A strong, synchronized civil-military effort is essential. The debilitating results of its absence are far reaching.... A comprehensive civil-military strategy must be developed to defend our interests threatened by the series of low-intensity conflicts around the globe.... It (the strategy) must

integrate all the national resources at our disposal, military and nonmilitary, lethal and nonlethal.

Successful operations and activities have been conducted by the United States in various low-intensity conflicts. However, these limited successes are primarily the result of dedicated individuals and organizations achieving success not because of, but in spite of, the absence of a clearly defined low-intensity conflict strategy.

If the project's report is correct, the problem may be worse now than when this report was written. Then, America had a very real threat, the Soviet Union. It has been seven years since the report, and the U.S. still has no comprehensive strategy for addressing OOTW; and no strategy is on the horizon. Based on my research, Peacetime Engagement is the only governmental attempt to put forth a strategy for dealing with OOTW threats.

The Military Role

Peacetime Engagement suggests a possible answer. Why the emphasis on SOF when other elements of national military power are available? SOF are the only American military forces trained to habitually operate in OOTW. SOF are best equipped to execute Peacetime Engagement because of language and cross-cultural training; extensive experience in hazardous regions; their skill as trainers; and their comparative seniority in rank, maturity, and experience.

Another question is: Why does Peacetime Engagement put emphasis on military operations as opposed to the many civilian agencies under the direction of the State Department? A quick look at the governments of the Third World shows that a majority are either directly controlled or inordinately influenced by their militaries. The military in the Third World is often the power broker.

A preponderance of Third World national leaders at one time wore uniforms. Many still prefer to wear their uniforms. Military-to-military contact is potentially the best way to influence a militaristic national government moving towards establishing a democracy.

Additionally, foreign service officers at the State Department are sometimes unable to successfully deal with military-led or influenced governments because of lack of training and experience. Often security problems, such as terrorism or insurgency, cause Third World governments to seek American military advice and assistance. These kinds of security problems are usually low-technology and human resource intensive, both of which are SOF strengths. The sale of a squadron of F-16's cannot solve the problems that led to an insurgency; how-

One only needs to glance at newspaper headlines to realize that the former Soviet Union is in serious trouble. National impulses and ethnic animosities, suppressed for years by Soviet arms, have come to life with a vengeance. Based on current U.S. policies concerning the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Clinton Administration is attempting to stabilize President Yeltsin's regime. No one knows what will happen there. The possibility exists that should the former Soviet Republics fragment further or civil war ensues, the U.S. could become involved militarily.

In Summary

I believe the goals of a national Peacetime Engagement strategy would benefit the U.S. Despite my focus on the role of SOF in OOTW and the importance of intelligence, we must remember that all the organs of U.S. foreign policy must be synchronized. It will require a national strategy to counteract violence and instability in the Third World. It is also important to note that in a multipolar world, America cannot act alone. Our allies will have to play major roles.

The second phase of Peacetime Engagement—Nation-Building—is a task which should be left to economists, diplomats, and politicians. The military's predominant role here is in the attempt to maintain a stable security environment—to counteract violence. Even though the civilian elements of national power possess the undisputed lead in this phase, the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations communities could play a significant supporting role.

The word is out! Third World dictators do not want to become the next Saddam Hussein. The experts agree, OOTW is a part of the future. Containment worked because it was a long-range, coherent national strategy. Peacetime Engagement, supported by SOF and the intelligence community, holds a similar promise. American morality, a victim of the Cold War, will hopefully become preeminent. Former Assistant Secretary Locher's Peacetime Engagement strategy provides an answer. The question now is: "Can a highly pluralistic and democratic country make it a reality?"

LTC Adolph, Special Forces, is a former MI officer. He holds a masters' degrees in international affairs and national security studies and strategy. Adolph recently returned from U.N. duty in Cambodia. He currently serves with the Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, NC.

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