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William F. Long Jr.
U.S. Army

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URBAN INSURGENCY WAR GAME

An article by
Colonel William F. Long, Jr., U.S. Army
U.S. Army Adviser
to the President, Naval War College

Social and political discontent is facilitated by the press of people on people in the packing boxes of the city. Manifestations of disorder range from riots in the urban environment to full-blown war in cities--from riots in Watts, Washington, Baltimore, Chicago, Tokyo, Berlin, London, through the May 1968 revolt in Paris to combat in Hue and Saigon in the 1968 Tet offensive. So the urban aspects of insurgency are very much on the minds of military men. This includes the faculty and staff of the Naval War College.

In the search to find better means of education in this nagging area of concern, a potential vehicle was suggested by Capt. Coleman Smith, Director of the War Gaming Department and an ardent advocate of using his Naval Electronic Warfare Simulator (NEWS) facility to apply principles and test doctrine.

In November 1968 a major naval command was engaged in a war game that exercised a contingency plan involving amphibious operations under appropriate U.N. regional authority.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Col. William F. Long, Jr., U.S. Army, did his undergraduate work at Otterbein College in political science and holds a master's degree in International Affairs from The George Washington University. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School and of the U.S. Naval War College. He has served in China, in Korea, in Vietnam as an adviser, and as Commander of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division. Colonel Long is currently the U.S. Army Adviser to the President, Naval War College.

The objective of the event was the protection of lives and property in a foreign city reduced to chaos by insurgency. This game focused upon the purely amphibious aspects of the situation; however, the plan did visualize a stability phase, which was not to be gamed. Captain Smith suggested that the unplayed phase of this game could be developed into an urban insurgency

war game for Naval War College educational purposes.

In early December 1968, Major General Cunningham (USAF) of the Directorate of Civil Disturbance Operations and Planning, Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, visited the Naval War College, and the idea of developing an urban insurgency war game was discussed with him. As a result of this discussion and the potentiality of the NEWS as an arena for an urban insurgency war game, the President of the Naval War College, Vice Admiral Colhert, directed the development of a pilot model of an experimental game using Naval War College students as players.

Accommodating to the twin difficulties of the heavy student educational load and the crowded curriculum NEWS schedule, the period 24-27 January 1969 was selected as game time, and participants were to be volunteers from the faculty and student body. During the following few weeks, selected faculty members designed an urban insurgency war game with these characteristics.

Objectives. Two primary objectives were stated. The first was to test the feasibility of simulating an urban insurgency environment using the NEWS facility. The second was to evaluate such a game as an educational device to expose Naval War College students to the unique restraints and trials facing decisionmakers in an urban insurgency situation

Type and tempo of Game. For simplicity and economy of players, a one-sided, continuous game played at a tempo of no more than 2 to 1 was selected. This combination offered ample opportunities for realism and player initiative, along with maximum control and flexibility of management for the game director.

Game Scenario. The scenario and operation plan of the previously played

fleet amphibious war game was selected as the basic framework. This capitalized upon naval expertise and existing background documentation. Further, the overseas setting was particularly compatible with the political-military portion of the curriculum. Three levels of command were established: a politico-military level, involving an embassy and Marine expeditionary brigade; an operational control level (battalion); and units in contact (company). The control group was selected to represent commands and agencies above and below player level. Also, it was recognized that only the top level of command was clearly appropriate for the level of a senior service educational institution. This was a price which was accepted, under the spur of time, in order to gain the background experience and documentation accumulated from the previous war game. In addition, every effort was made to simplify the game structure and reduce player and control requirements.

Game Situation and Events. After considerable discussion, a start situation of 0800, D+1 was established for the game. This located maneuver battalions ashore with virtually all initial combat objectives secured and ready to enter the "stability operations" phase of the plan. The selection of this start situation permitted the game to focus primarily on the law enforcement and civil affairs aspects of urban insurgency. To achieve this focus, the most difficult and time-consuming task was that of developing realistic game events and of devising a system for timely insertion of the events in order to drive the game at a challenging pace but in a realistic fashion. Therefore, a detailed control plan was necessary to maintain the momentum and to manage the direction of the game.

This task was accomplished by reviewing books, periodicals, reports, and documents written on the subject of

urban insurgency and extracting "type events." In the process, reports on the recent riots in Washington, Baltimore, and Detroit and historical studies on the Dominican Republic experience served as excellent source documents. The type events derived from this research were then arranged by category into a game events shopping list for later use.

The second step involved drawing up a general scheme of the way the game was to develop in each battalion area for the first 24 hours of game play. Each general scheme was then subdivided into three equal time periods and eight specific game events were prepared for each rifle company for each time period. Appropriate events to support each general scheme were selected from the shopping list. The final product was a game events matrix for each period with rifle companies appearing along the x axis and game events appearing along the y axis.

Basically, the same technique was used in preparing game events for insertion at the embassy/Marine expeditionary brigade level. Since battalions would be reacting to directions from higher headquarters and situations passed up from units in contact, no special management program was visualized for this command level.

Observer-Participants. Observer-participants were solicited from other schools and agencies which might have an interest in, and be able to make a contribution to, this kind of a game. Two responses deserve recognition: The U.S. Army Civil Affairs School, Fort Gordon, Ga., was represented by Lt. Col. Lawrence A. Stevens, whose assistance in the civil affairs area was continuous and invaluable; and Lt. Col. Walter R. Meade, USAF, from the Directorate of Civil Disturbance Operations and Planning, Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, made a similar contribution to planning and playing

game events in the law enforcement area.

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After an orientation and rehearsal period on the 24th of January, the game was divided into three periods, and play was initiated on 25 January. Toward the end of the first 4-hour period, as the game was in a transition situation from combat to the initiation and stability operations, it became apparent that civil affairs considerations and physical assets (such as fire trucks, food, et cetera, from the Logistic Support Group and Engineer Group) were creating an anomalous situation. Players had not been provided in these areas. Therefore, when control inserted situations demanding use of these assets, players would then pass requirements back to control. This circular message drill was overworking and irritating higher level players and controllers and was the first weakness exposed by game play. The problem was discussed by the game director and his staff during the luncheon break, and tentative plans were made to rearrange player personnel. Player and control group personnel at company level and below experienced no difficulty in keeping pace with the problem during this period of play.

After the first hour of play in the second 4-hour period, it was evident that the difficulties experienced during the morning session were persisting, and the adjustments discussed during lunch should be tried. At this point, game play was halted temporarily, and player personnel were shifted to cover areas previously neglected. One player was taken from each of the six company command centers and used to create two new player groups--a Logistical and Engineer Support Command Center and a Civil Affairs-Military Intelligence Psychological Operation Command Center. The creation of these two new player groups permitted player personnel to fill more meaningful positions and supported the

change in attitudes and techniques as the game entered the transition period from emphasis upon combat to pacification. Game play was improved significantly as a result of these changes.

Following the second period of play, the Ambassador and brigade commander, the battalion commanders, and key members of their staffs met briefly in three locations and conducted independent critiques of the game for periods I and II. They were asked specifically to make recommendations concerning organizational and procedural changes that might result in improved game play. Their remarks were recorded on tape and were reviewed by the game director on 26 January. Based upon the results of reviewing these tapes, it was decided to eliminate company player positions and to assume company level input functions at control modules.

The first 30 minutes of the final game period were devoted to describing to all concerned the organizational and procedural changes resulting from critique recommendations. Specifically, these changes were:

Company level of play was eliminated completely and the six company players were redistributed, one each, to the six higher level player command groups, and the control group assumed the responsibility for all company level activity. The necessary communications adjustments were made in NEWS.

Game play was resumed at 0900 hours and continued without interruption until game termination at 1200 hours. Once again game play was improved significantly as a result of timely changes. The afternoon of 27 January was devoted to a plenary session critique of the entire game. The results of this critique and an analysis of individual comments by all concerned made these points:

This experimental effort proved that an urban insurgency situation can

be war gamed realistically using NEWS facilities. It also established the fact that such a game is an effective educational experience. However, the game director, the faculty, the NEWS staff, and the students made an exceptional effort to avoid the "identification syndrome," i.e., we did it, and it is good for everyone. It was the consensus that, with changes in level and other relatively minor adjustments, the game could be developed into an altogether appropriate Naval War College curriculum item. However, the size of the student body and the limitations of the NEWS facility would require the game to be conducted at least five times during an academic year. This is considered unacceptable both from a scheduling and interest point of view. For these reasons, it has been recommended that the game only be utilized as an extracurricular volunteer activity or integrated into the Naval War College President's concept of a large "politicomilitary/strategic/tactical war game" designed as a graduation exercise for all resident courses.

There is a need for changes in planning documents and operation orders. It became apparent as the game progressed that standard delineation of the units in existing planning documents and operation order formats is inadequate when dealing with highly specialized and relatively esoteric units. This is particularly true with civil affairs and psychological operation assets and certain types of logical support units, particularly those originating from a service other than that of the commander. Both planning and operations will be facilitated if documents and operation orders clearly list particular personnel competency and physical assets for these types of units. As the transition is made from combat to stability operations, an immediate and absolute evaluation of available noncombat assets is essential to decisionmaking at all levels. This conviction is being trans-

lated into Naval War College instruction and education at appropriate levels.

Political impatience and press pressure are facts of operational life in this environment. Thanks to the experience and imagination of Mr. Howard Simpson--the resident USIA Consultant--political impatience of local leaders, U.S. high levels of military and political command and of the regional organization representatives became a realistic aspect of the educational process involved in the game. This impatience demands the highest order of discipline, restraint, and moral courage on the part of the military and political leaders actively engaged. For this purpose the realistic environment developed in the NEWS through game events introduced by Mr. Simpson were uniquely beneficial. The same is true of pressures of the press and other media. During the game, commanders were hampered and sometimes hindered in their operations by requirements to deal with both accredited and adventurous freelance media men. Aside from real life, there is no other arena for conveying this message so effectively as a war game conducted in a scaled-in environment.

Fire will always be a factor. Inherent in any urban insurgency situation is the need to deal with fires resulting from combat operations, insurgent arsonists, or those caused by civilian carelessness. This game educated all participants to the overriding requirement to plan for this fact and make timely provision to supply equipment and military firefighters, while attempting to assemble, use, and protect the firefighting capability of the target city. Proper sensitivity to this phenomenon also includes requirements for detailed knowledge of water supply, electrical

powerlines, and utility carriers such as gas lines, et cetera.

Based upon the need to delineate assets and to be prepared to cope with inherent disasters such as fire, one of the major lessons of this game was that logistics planners for an amphibious operation under these circumstances must go beyond the normal back-step planning which starts by visualizing forces having seized combat objectives. In a situation where urban insurgency is a factor, planners must visualize the requirements for coping with fires, re-assembling civilian control personnel, reestablishing the utilities upon which the life of the city depends, providing for reestablishing food supplies, et cetera, as the terminal situation. This will emphasize the need to study the requirements for civil affairs personnel and physical assets. It may also change details such as loading plans and will certainly sensitize all levels of command and staff to the value of units and personnel frequently overlooked and neglected in the planning stage but desperately needed (and generally in larger numbers than can be immediately provided) once the operation reaches the stability phase.

One of the most valuable aspects of the game was the leadership, imagination, and enthusiasm of the players. One significant comment was made by Mr. Paul Stanke, State Department, and a student in the School of Naval Warfare. He played the role of U.S. Ambassador and remarked during the critique that he was surprised and pleased with the exceptional degree of responsibility toward law and order, the regard for civilian lives, and the acceptance of almost illogical restraints on combat operations by his military colleagues. This is both a goal and an accolade.