

# MAJOR GENERAL SIR COLIN GUBBINS' PRACTICAL HANDBOOK

## MANUAL PRÁTICO DO MAJOR-GENERAL SIR COLIN GUBBINS

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**Abstract:** When the world prepared itself for what would be WWII, Colin Gubbins created a practical handbook in which he laid the foundations of guerrilla warfare as a methodology and an art largely contributing for the defeat of apparently stronger military forces employed by an attacking enemy on an apparently weaker force. Guerrilla, scientifically structured, is the equalizing tool that permits the initially weaker power to diminish the superiority of the stronger, thus allowing for a goal not just of a lighter defeat, but of a possible victory. This effectiveness of guerrilla warfare is most useful when the perspective of the attacked power is an existential one.

**Keywords:** Colin Gubbins, Guerrilla warfare, Guerrilla warfare as a method of incapacitating the enemy.

**Resumo:** Quando o mundo se preparava para o que viria a ser a Segunda Guerra Mundial, Colin Gubbins criou um manual prático em que lançou as fundações para a guerra de guerrilha como metodologia e arte que contribuiu grandemente para a derrota de forças militares aparentemente mais fortes empregues por um inimigo agressor sobre uma força aparentemente mais fraca. A guerrilha, cientificamente estruturada, é o instrumento que permite pôr em igualdade de circunstâncias tais inimigos, fazendo que o mais fraco diminua a superioridade do mais forte, proporcionando-lhe como fim não apenas uma derrota menos pesada, mas uma possível vitória. Esta efectividade da guerrilha é de maior utilidade quando a perspectiva da potência atacada é da ordem existencial.

**Palavras-Chave:** Colin Gubbins, Guerra de guerrilha, Guerra de guerrilha como método de incapacitar o inimigo.

## Who was Major General Sir Colin Gubbins?

Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, KCMG, DSO, MC,<sup>1</sup> was the man who commanded Special Operations Executive (SOE) at the height of the strife against Nazism and the Axis as a whole. His authorized biography has been written by Brian Lett,<sup>2</sup> recounting with sufficient detail the main aspects of the officer's existence.

Colin Gubbins was a very bright officer, a «doer» «by nature», in his grandson's Michael words,<sup>3</sup> with an intense dedication to all things to which he devoted himself. Having fought in the Great War and, afterwards, in other theatres of war, he gained a great expertise in many a kind of warfare. When the times were ripe, it was the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill himself who wanted him to develop a new form of war making, of formal warfare: secret, minimal in cost, maximum in effectiveness, ruthless, to be taken upon an enemy who had chosen to smash all the peoples who did not bow to his caprices.

At the time of the almost desperate Norwegian campaign, Churchill had had the knowledge of the action undertaken by the then Colonel Colin Gubbins: «In order to delay to the utmost the northward advance of the enemy towards Narvik, we were now sending special companies raised in what was afterwards called "Commando" style, under an enterprising officer, Colonel Gubbins, to Mosjoen, 120 miles farther the coast.»<sup>4</sup> The old soldier-Prime-Minister liked the way the «enterprising officer» acted and never gave up on him or let anyone else use him. Gubbins remained faithful to the old PM to the end of the war.

Gubbins helped to organize what would have been the ground resistance of irregular forces to the Nazi invasion of Britain would the latter have occurred. In fact, it did not, for a number of well-known reasons. Nevertheless, had it occurred, it would have encountered a great quantity of shrewd unconventional military surprises, prepared with almost nothing formal military available, but with a great number of ready to use not-too-formal materials and, of course, with many people

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<sup>1</sup> Major General Sir Colin Gubbins' decorations / British Decorations / *Military Cross, 1916* / *Distinguished Service Order, 1940* / *Commander of St Michael and St George, 1944* / *Knight Commander of St Michael and St George, 1944* / Foreign / Overseas Decorations / *Commander of the Legion of Merit (USA)* / *Officier de la Légion d'Honneur (France)* / *Order of St Stanislaus (Russia, 1919)* / *Grand Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold (Belgium)* / *Croix de Guerre (Belgium)* / *Member of the Order of Dannebrog, 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Denmark)* / *Member of the Order of St Olaf (Norway)* / *Grand Officier of the Order of Orange Nassau (Holland)* / *Order of Polonia Restituta (Poland)* / *Croix de Vaillance (Poland)* / *Commander of the Order of the White Lion (Czechoslovakia)*.

<sup>2</sup> LETT Brian, *SOE's mastermind. An authorized biography of Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, KCMG, DSO, MC*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, «Foreword», p. viii.

<sup>4</sup> CHURCHILL Winston Spencer, *The second world war. Volume I. The gathering storm*, New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, [1985], p. 581.

ready to sacrifice their lives manning a first line of *subversive obstacles* to the advance of the invading Nazi.

This rapid, almost precipitate, course of action, *inventing on the spot means and ways to hinder the progress of an enemy* immensely better equipped, trained and with vast numbers of professional soldiers, nevertheless, succeeded in producing a well thought and well – literally – put onto the terrain system of active informal military reaction, not only permitted to perceive that it was possible to do well, improvising, when nothing else was at hand, but also trained its creators in a new kind of action adapted to a new kind of political and military situation.

With all the previous formal military training and on-the-ground experience topped with his lightning manner of proceeding, Gubbins found himself not just at the centre of an unheard-of historical moment, but ended by being himself the centre of an important part of that crucial moment. The sum of the former rich formal military experience with the new acquisitions provoked by the imminence of the threat of German *Blitzkrieg* falling upon Britain, shaped initially the man who would, as the title of his biography announces, be the «mastermind» not behind, but within the marrow of SOE/Special Operations Executive.

The goal of the present article is neither to improve or even to dwell upon the fore mentioned biography, nor to ponder upon SOE, but to start the analysis of a document Colin Gubbins had already written before being called to serve Britain within the framework of SOE: «The art of guerrilla warfare». The total analysis of this short but extremely dense work would probably imply writing a whole book, therefore just its first paragraph – quite significant – will be under examination here.

#### **The handbook for guerrilla warfare: «The art of guerrilla warfare»**

This very short and very precise handbook, edited bearing a very small format that allowed for the user to hide it in a pocket or a sleeve, for instance, is aimed at giving a theoretical framework to possible actions put on the ground by very small, but extremely motivated and object-effective armed forces, both formal and informal. It is a true ‘bible’ for the underdog of wartime, fundamentally for those who are vastly outnumbered and outgunned on the field of battle, on the general field of military conflict.

Though being dedicated to a harsh military task, the booklet is constructed upon a fundamental, principal, principle, present within the whole of its body: its aim is to help those who have been attacked and are in dire necessity to defend themselves. It is not an instrument of aggression, for aggression; nevertheless, it may be used as an instrument of aggression, like any other weapon, for this booklet is in itself a weapon, a strategic one.

Left unopposed, the armed forces of great powers – at least greater compared to the forces of the opponent, generally a victim of greater States' hunger for power and land – swiftly obtain massive and definitive victories over their elected enemies. The infamous *Blitzkrieg* is not a German invention, even a modern invention, but the modern application, profiting of the theoretical contributions, mainly given by Captain Liddell-Hart, concerning the use of rapid mechanized and armoured forces serving as spearheads for infantry and with very close support of the latter. Swift and brutal, ruthlessly effective, this mode of warfare, including lightning attacks, has been in use since immemorial human conflict or human aggression days.

This kind of warfare enabled an unsurmountable power to be used by whoever managed to build such a war making structure. Indeed, unless met by a similar structure – similar in all aspects, not only material ones – or by a lesser structure, but, however, an effective one, the massive swift war structure put into action rapidly smashes its enemy. *Guerrilla warfare* is that possibly effective lesser and informal medium that is capable of, if not stopping, at least, hindering, diminishing, the action of the 'great power'. As the movement of humanity constructing what is known as history as shown, indeed – in deed –, this capacity has worked out fine on several occasions.

The aim of Colin Gubbins' guerrilla manual is<sup>5</sup> to incapacitate the enemy as deeply and profoundly as possible, «to such an extent that he is eventually incapable either of embarking on a war or continuing one that may already have commenced».<sup>6</sup> This concise, but very rich in accurate doctrine, handbook, both manifests and serves the urgency and the deadly seriousness of war from the perspective of the victim of an aggression or of a possible such victim, for it bears a very wise and unusually insightful aspect of fore-thought and fore-action: it is best for the underdog to bite seriously the upper one before the latter starts to bite at all. *A crippled enemy is always a preferable enemy*, for its actual effectiveness is that of a cripple. This is true even for vindictive ones (if ever there were non-vindictive ones).

The 'booklet handbook' assumes what every person caught in war,<sup>7</sup> in a war that is not that person's making, should know that *war is an objective action with just one goal, the annihilation of the*

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<sup>5</sup> The verb «to be» is used in the simple present and not in the simple past because the pertinence of the manual transcends its historical manufacturing situation and remains valid to this day, to the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, A. D., as it will remain perfectly pertinent for the future because it is dedicated to the perennial situation in which the violent will not stop trying to enslave the meek. This «handbook», this instrument is for the commonly meek to use when assaulted by the violent and the vile, when sheep have to rise as if they are bloodhounds defending themselves from other bloodhounds, the latter sometimes, too many times, disguised as meek sheep.

<sup>6</sup> All the quotations are from: GUBBINS MG Colin, *The art of guerrilla warfare*, [England], Amazon, [2021]; the text is part of Public Domain. This quotation is from p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> This fundamental ethical axis is easily found reading, right at the end of the handbook, these words: «In the modern world the time has now come when aggressor nations, to gain their ends, use every device and

enemy. Otherwise, the action at hand is not war. Nevertheless, if the action consists of an aggression which aim is the demise of someone, then, it is an act of war. Classical thought on warfare just applies this model to actions concerning masses of people. However, the paradigm is the same: *war is a violent act that aims at destroying someone*. The exact dimension of the ‘number of someone’ does not alter the essence of the paradigm of the act that consists on the violent action towards someone in order to render that someone null.

Therefore, the letter and the spirit of the manual is utmost severe, really ruthless, with no contemplation towards the enemy: the aggressor had no business attacking whoever it attacked. It is never for the attacked to be blamed or made responsible. There is no responsibility to be shared between the aggressor and the victim. If that was to be the case, both would be aggressors; therefore, given the case, what sense would there be in considering either of them victims?

This condition is objective and should not take into account whatever the objective aggressor says about its supposed reasons. The question of war is not a question of psychology, sociology or hearsay political analysis, but of objective action: for instance, the Belgians, the Dutch, the French, etc., *really* threatened Hitler? The Ukrainians *really* threatened Putin? Whatever Hitler and Putin said or ‘unsaid’ has no bearing in the analysis that supports the need for such a manual such as the Gubbins’ handbook.

The stern, merciless action, which active strategy the booklet informs, can be manifested by the means of an illustrative example: when considering possible traitors among the people with whom the Guerrilla is serving or who serve within the guerrilla framework, the instruction is diamantine – «the traitor must be killed without hesitation or delay».<sup>8</sup> One cannot be more concrete or harder. Nevertheless, this is the abject essence of war. All responsibility rests on whoever creates such an act of aggression, on whoever starts war. This includes the responsibility for the acts of reaction, *that would have never existed but for the aggression*. This evidence is honestly undeniable.

*There are no shared responsibilities in war*. This exonerates the responders/defenders from any responsibility, unless they themselves become aggressors, offenders, and not just *defenders*. As long as they act towards the mere annihilation of the ones who wanted to annihilate them, the responsibility lies exclusively on the latter. Such evidence helps to understand the harshness of the guidelines present in the handbook.

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ingenuity that their perverted wits can devise to break down the resistance of their intended victims both before and after the occupation [of] their territory», *ibidem*, §83, p. 40. This statement remains pertinent to the tragic end of the first quarter of the XXI century.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, § 40, p. 22.

Effectiveness and hardship inform the action theoretically supported by the guerrilla handbook. This conforms to the essence and substance of war. War is no joke, no game, no frivolous experiment. War is a disgraceful act of brutal violence, and, once started, *its own logic imposes itself*, annihilating everything until, through self-exhaustion or victory of the peaceful part, it ends. The aggressive part never promotes peace for its nature is dependent on war: without war, it cannot survive.

The following list shows the «Contents» of *The art of guerrilla warfare*:

1. Object / 2. Objectives of Guerrilla Warfare / 3. Methods and Principles / 4. Organization / 5. “The Chief”, or Military Mission or Guerrilla Bureau / 6. Arms and Equipment / 7. Information and Intelligence Service / 8. Intercommunication / 9. Training / 10. Enemy Counter Action / 11. Planning and Action / 12. Preparatory Planning / 12a. Friendly Population / 12b. Hostile Population / 12c. Neutral Countries / 13. Geographical / 14. Organization of Bands / 15. Conclusion.

#### **Brief comment on «The object» of the handbook *The art of guerrilla warfare***

The definition of the object of the handbook is so precise and, at the same time, vast and profound, that a full transcription is due here:

«The object of guerrilla warfare is to harass the enemy in every way possible within all the territory he holds to such an extent that he is eventually incapable either of embarking on a war or continuing one that may already have commenced. The sphere of action should include his home country, and also, in certain circumstances, such neutral countries as he uses as a source of supply. This object is achieved by compelling the enemy to disperse his forces in order to guard his flanks, his communications, his detachments, supply depots, etc., against the attacks of guerrillas, and thus so to weaken his main armies that the conduct of a campaign becomes impossible.».

The objective stated at «The object» is very clear: to weaken the enemy’s armed forces in order to render the conduct of the (any) military campaign impossible. There is no compromise, there is no mean scope, the endeavour is one of great magnitude, implying that the effective greatness of both the enemy – may it be a grand regular Army and Armada – and the guerrillas is similar. Otherwise, how could it logically be possible for one – the ‘lesser’ – to hinder the other – the ‘greater’?

Quite evidently, if Gubbins is right, it is not the formal or material dimensions of the armed forces in conflict that mainly matter, but *the quality* – in a great variety of items – *of the action*, the action undertaken by both sides.

If a small and nearly informal armed force is able to achieve the designated goal of weakening the might of the enemy’s armed forces to the point of rendering them ineffective, thus achieving a

somewhat non anticipated victory, then it is that makeshift military instrument that is the ‘best’, the ‘mightiest’. This is not a matter of opinion, but an objective reality, fruit of concrete action on the field of battle.

The goal of the guerrilla action could not be clearer: *to annihilate the enemy’s capacity to carry on military operations*. This implies that the main effectiveness of the action concerning the destruction of the enemy belongs to the guerrilla warfare, leaving for the regular military forces the role of concluding that movement of annihilation. Thus, the task committed to the guerrilla warfare is of no mean grandeur.

Perhaps this crucial point is still greatly far from being universally understood. Nevertheless, one wonders if it was not this clear and diamantine doctrine that allowed, per example, the North Vietnamese to undeniably win over the North American?

On the other hand, the letter and the spirit of the document are of a merciless nature. The whole handbook breathes this atmosphere that commences precisely informing the substance, military and political, of the first paragraph, presently under analysis.

Let us, then, reflect ponderously on the issues that constitute the substantial core of the said paragraph.

The final aim is to annihilate the enemy’s potentiality to wage war. It is not a matter of «winning» or «losing», as if the whole stage and drama of war were a game or a competition, but *an existential matter*, comprehending all aspects of existence. The ‘scenario’ is one of «total war»: without this logical axis of action, the handbook makes no sense.

Being existential, the matter immediately implies that, under the theoretical dome of «total war», the guerrilla operative is always and by all means fighting for his existence, for his life. Nevertheless, this existential fight is not an individual or personal business, but a collective one, for the action of the guerrilla fighter is not for the benefit – or sole benefit – of his person, but for the benefit of the whole society he belongs to. This is also a note of totality: the guerrilla does not serve the goals of one individual or of a specific class of individuals, but that of the whole people the guerrilla is part of.

Serving this existential and common goal, the guerrilla is to «harass the enemy in every way possible [...]». Again, the doctrine is crystal clear: act in such a way as to disable the enemy. One could establish a column of terms that display, showing minute detail of possibilities, what this «harassment» is. Exemplifying: one can act towards the enemy «disabling», «killing», «maiming», «blowing up» materiel but also the enemy himself, «starving» the enemy in multiple ways, and so forth, utilizing all the immense arsenal of acts destined to, faster or slower, annihilate «the enemy».

The main point one has to perceive as being paramount is the clear, straight, inflexible and diamond hard character of the action, of the concrete actions that apply such a strategic mode of thinking to the fight against the enemy.

Reading such texts as Sun Tzu's *Art of war*<sup>9</sup> or Plato's reflection upon the origin and substance/essence of war, *Politeia*, «Book II»,<sup>10</sup> one understands the indelible hard and ruthless character of war, without which the latter would not deserve its given name. War is no game, no 'scherzo', no 'essay', no extension of anything. It is a non-reducible reality, born from the want to violate and, ultimately, annihilate someone or some group of persons.

This constitution of war, this ontology of war, is so that there can be no war without violence – the people who start war live out of others' possibilities, robbing them –, and violence is always «hard» (subsuming this term all the above-mentioned illustrative terms). Therefore, war is violence, war is hardship, war is as perfect as war as it is perfect as «hard».

Major General Sir Colin Gubbins understood this substantial and essential being of war. Nevertheless, other war thinkers and war captains have understood the same; Hitler and Stalin are two evident examples of that. What makes Gubbins' thought different is *the goal of his thinking*: the task he undertook of reflecting upon war, under the concrete form of guerrilla warfare, had as its aim not possible *acts of aggression*, but a *defensive* stance, derived from a defence principle, informing defensive acts.

This defensive essence of action, however, had nothing to do with a passive or even coward attitude. Defence, as is obvious, negatively means, in a first instance, «non-offence». Therefore, a «defensive stance» negatively means a «non-offensive stance». The ones who defend and defend only, do not offend. Furthermore, when and by defending, they do not offend. The act of defence, though an act, is nothing more than a *defence in act*, a defence being carried on, *being put into being*. There is nothing offensive in it. Therefore, the offending part should not be offended if the offended defends himself/herself.

The offended, when offended, have a twofold possibility of action (in fact, of reaction): either to let themselves be offended without response, thus being killed or enslaved, for example; or to act in a defensive manner. This naming, «defensive», is not arbitrary or due to any kind of adjectival choice. Rather it is necessitated by the nature of the offense: if one is offended and therefore acts defensively, reacting, this reaction, this *reactive action*, is logically a «defence».

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<sup>9</sup> SUN TZŮ, *The art of war*, in *The art of war and other classics of eastern philosophy*, «Introduction» by Ken Mondschein, San Diego, Canterbury Classics, 2016, pp. 1-198.

<sup>10</sup> PLATO, *Republic*, Books 1-5, translation by Paul Shorey, Cambridge Massachusetts, London England, Harvard University Press, 2003, 373d-374d, pp. 163-167.



The denomination springs automatically from the act that provoked it, the offense. Therefore, all acts of defence, whatever character they may assume, are never offensive, for, logically they cannot be so. The so-called «proportion» in reaction is a complete absurdity, for the offended, defending himself, must eliminate the cause of the act of offense, and that cause is the human being who thus acts. Under no other circumstance rather than the annihilation of the offender can it be *guaranteed* that the offence will stop, or, initially stopped, that there will not be the fact that the offender will offend again.

The offended may use of mercy upon the offender. This use may end the offensive relation for ever, without annihilating the offending part. True, for it is possible. Nevertheless, there is no human power that can guarantee such a marvellous outcome. Mercy is 'divine', but in the case of non-deities it may be rewarded with the future annihilation of the merciful, which is not so divine a thing.

Mercy is not an act of war. It is, of course, an act of peace, that can be nothing more than an immediately forgotten beautiful event.

Unfortunately, it is possible that all the merciful persons present in a war be annihilated and, precisely through such an annihilation, the offending part be the victors, possibly eliminating all mercy from the face of the earth. This is self-evident and does not accept contradiction.

What Gubbins' thought stands upon is not a merciless world, but *a merciless act: war*.

Pondering: why would someone who initiates a war expect something like mercy? If mercy were anywhere within the horizon of such a person, would such a person initiate a war?

In order to initiate a war, one has to envisage the object of that war as an object for annihilation. Otherwise, how can there be war? War is no 'pick-pocketing', or 'name-calling'. War means the offending part wants (it is no mere desire, it is the actualization of a desire) to eliminate the part elected as «enemy». Any other movement means any other act but an act of war.

The hardness of war is necessitated by the goal that creates war: the annihilation of someone, of some people or peoples.<sup>11</sup> Thus, given the reality<sup>12</sup> of war, the act of defence can be made to follow the inner logic of such reality/ontology. Such is the ontology of acts that have as immediate or mediate goal the annihilation of the offending part, the aggressor, the one who initiated war, and, thus, by initiating it, awarded the offended the possibility of defending himself, even using the

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<sup>11</sup> It is no difficult task to understand that something as the enslavement of someone or a people is a form of human annihilation; annihilation does not have to be physical.

<sup>12</sup> This «reality», includes what one can, taking into account the details of such reality, differentiate as «nature», «essence», «substance», «character», «being», «act». Perhaps the best way to name such a reality would be through the term «ontology»: the ontology of war. This is the designation that shall be adopted henceforth.

means of annihilating on whoever wants to annihilate him. This is the awful and terrible hard logic of war. War knows no other logic.

It is within this *ontological frame of war* that the soldier Gubbins, serving the deign purpose of fighting against the annihilation of his people, constructed his handbook for guerrilla warfare.

One major difference, though, must be noted: the aim of the offending part is the annihilation of a person or a people – physical or in any other form –; the aim of the defence is to annihilate the enemy as such, that is, not the enemy as a person or as a people, but as an offender. For this purpose, i.e., the annihilation of the offending active part, may suffice, for instance, the annihilation of a small part of a people. Nevertheless, the limit is the whole of the enemy coinciding with the whole of a people, which means, unless the enemy makes himself not-enemy-anymore, that the whole offending people must be annihilated. Again, the reminder that this is the grim logic of war: no war, no such logic.

Within the logic framework of the ontology of war, and procuring to serve the struggling part that suffered the aggression, *The Art of Guerrilla Warfare* handbook, created by the knowledgeable soldier Colin Gubbins, is a – if not «the» – best weapon readily available, cheap and for immediate use, surprisingly strategic, capable of great achievements if well applied.

In the hands of able and decent – non-perverse – persons it is a most helpful instrument to fight against tyranny and aggression. In the wrong hands it is a terribly dangerous tool. Nevertheless, is there anything that cannot become dangerous in the hands of the evil?

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ANNEX

THE TEXT OF THE HANDBOOK *THE ART OF GUERRILLA WARFARE*

The Art of Guerrilla Warfare

General Principles

Object

1. The object of guerrilla warfare is to harass the enemy in every way possible within all the territory he holds to such an extent that he is eventually incapable either of embarking on a war or continuing one that may already have commenced. The sphere of action should include his home country, and also, in certain circumstances, such neutral countries as he uses as a source of supply. This object is achieved by compelling the enemy to disperse his forces in order to guard his flanks, his communications, his detachments, supply depots, etc., against the attacks of guerrillas, and thus so to weaken his main armies that the conduct of a campaign becomes impossible.

2. There are three main types of guerrilla warfare: ~

(a) The activities of individuals, or of small groups working by stealth on acts of sabotage.

(b) The action of larger groups working as a band under a nominated leader, and employing military tactics, weapons, etc., to assist in the achievement of their object, which is usually of a destructive nature.

(c) The operations of large guerrilla forces, whose strength necessitates a certain degree of military organization in order to secure their cohesion and to make and carry out effectively a plan of campaign.

3. The type of guerrilla warfare that can be carried out in any particular territory is dependent on the local conditions at the time, as explained later. The greater, however, should always include the less – i.e., where circumstances are favourable to the employment of large guerrilla forces, they will also permit the action of partisan bands and of saboteurs. Where conditions are unsuitable to large scale operations, the action of partisan bands should be supported by that of saboteurs.

4. The culminating stage of guerrilla warfare should always be to produce in the field large formations of guerrillas, well-armed and well-trained, which are able to take a direct part in the fighting by attacks on suitable hostile formations and objects in direct conjunction with the operations of the regular troops. It may well be, however, that, in the early days of the war, guerrilla activities must, owing to the enemy's strength and to lack of support of local population, be limited to acts of sabotage. As the war progresses, and as the enemy's hold begins to weaken owing to successful sabotage, to war weariness of the enemy's troops, and as inhabitants cease to be overawed, conditions will become ripe for the formation of partisan bands.

These bands, at the commencement, act singly or in small local concentrations. By their audacity and apparent immunity from hostile counter-measures, they must then fan the flame of revolt until circumstances become favourable for the organization of large groups of bands, working under central leadership on a semi-military basis, necessitating a considerable degree of co-ordination of military intelligence, etc.

5. There are two main points in this connection to bear in mind: ~

(a) To obtain the maximum effect from guerrilla warfare it is necessary to make use of all three types. Therefore, a careful study must be made as soon as possible of the territories concerned, so as to determine for what methods of warfare each territory is suited, and to make necessary preparations in advance. It is an extravagant waste of effort and opportunity if, for example, in an area suited for large scale guerrilla operations, activities are, for want of preparation and forethought, limited to the co-ordinated actions of partisan bands and saboteurs.

Further, it must be remembered that the enemy will institute counter-measures as soon as guerrilla activities against him commence. If these activities are on a small scale, it may be relatively easy for him not only to suppress them temporarily, but also, by that action, to prevent their resuscitation on either that or a larger scale. It has been shown countless time in history that where firm enemy action has been taken in time against small beginnings, such action has always met with success. To counter this, therefore, it is again important that the commencement of guerrilla operations should be on the highest and widest scale that the area concerned will permit.

The two arguments overwhelmingly support this policy.

(b) The second point to be noted is that the organization of guerrillas must not be of a higher degree than circumstances will, with reasonable safety, and a view to efficiency, permit.

The factor of "safety" concerns possible enemy counter-action; the closer and higher the organization, the more easily can it be broken up and become ineffective. It is valueless and dangerous prematurely to organize partisan bands, acting independently as they normally should into platoons, companies, squadrons, etc., and then into regiments and brigades, with nominated commanders, skeleton orders of battle, intelligence services, etc., such organization necessitates documents, written orders, files, etc., all or any of which, falling into the enemy's hands, may enable him to destroy the guerrilla movement at a blow.

In any case, such organization is unnecessary in the early stages. In these conditions, except for a central directing brain and a few trusted emissaries, partisan bands should be self-contained, acting under their own leader's initiative towards the ends directed by the controlling authority, obtaining their own information by the most direct and simplest

means (usually by word of mouth) and maintaining the loosest organization compatible with effective action.

6. The factor of efficiency concerns the inherent advantages that guerrillas enjoy through their superior mobility and their lack of communications. A premature tightening is directly inimical to these two advantages, so that an increase in the degree of organization over the bare minimum necessary must inevitably lead to decreased efficiency. It is obvious, however, that, in the culminating stages of guerrilla warfare, with large masses of guerrillas taking an open part, some degree of organization is necessary in order to establish a chain of command, to render administrative arrangements possible and to collect intelligence as a basis of plans, etc.

7. At any time, therefore, the correct degree of organization to be established must be a matter for the most serious consideration of the controlling authority; as conditions change, so will the degree. To meet changing circumstances, therefore, the controlling authority must plan in advance, so that closer organization can be instituted when the moment demands, or can be relaxed if enemy action temporarily necessitates.

#### **Objectives of Guerrilla Warfare**

8. The whole art of guerrilla warfare lies in striking the enemy where he least expects it, and yet where he is most vulnerable; this will produce the greatest effect in inducing, and even compelling, him to use up large numbers of troops guarding against such blows.

Modern, large-sized armies, entirely dependent as they are on the regular delivery of supplies, munitions, petrol, etc., for their operations, present a particularly favourable opportunity for guerrilla warfare, directed against their communications by road, rail or water, and against their system of internal postal and telegraph communications.

Further, the maintenance of these large armies necessitates the establishment of dumps and stocks of supplies, munitions, etc., at focal points, which offer most suitable targets for guerrilla action.

The guarding of these communications and dumps against attacks will, even before the threat is evident, necessitate the institution by the enemy of detachments and posts, more particularly at vital points on the communications and where the dumps of importance are located. These detachments themselves are a suitable object of attack.

The operations of guerrilla will usually be directed against the flanks of the armies, against their communications and against posts and detachments established by the enemy for the express purpose of protecting his important localities against such sporadic attempts.

#### **Methods and Principles**

9. The methods and principles of guerrilla warfare must be based on proper estimation of the relative advantages and disadvantages enjoyed by the enemy on one hand, and the guerrillas on the other, in armaments, mobility, numbers, information, morale, training, etc.

10. The enemy will almost invariably possess armament superior both in quantity and quality – i.e., he will have artillery, mortars, gas, armoured vehicles, et., in addition to the automatics and rifles with which the guerrillas will also be armed. In total strength the enemy will normally have the superiority as well, but the distribution of his forces will necessitate the use of detachments against which superior guerrilla forces can be brought.

11. It is in mobility, in information, and in morale that the guerrillas can secure the advantage, and those factors are the means by which the enemy's superior armament and numbers can best be combated. The superior mobility, however, is not absolute, but relative – i.e., to the type of country in which the activities are staged, to the detailed knowledge of that country by the guerrillas, etc. In absolute mobility, the enemy most always have the advantage – i.e., the use of railway systems, the possession of large numbers of motors, lorries, armoured cars, tanks, etc., of large forces of cavalry, etc. By the judicious selection of ground, however, and by moves in darkness to secure surprise, the guerrillas can enjoy relatively superior mobility for the period necessary for each operation.

12. The enemy will usually be in a country where the population is largely hostile, so that the people will actively co-operate in providing information for the guerrillas and withholding it for the enemy. The proper encouragement of this natural situation and the development of the system of obtaining information will ensure that the guerrillas are kept *au fait*<sup>13</sup> with the enemy's movements and intentions, whereas their own are hidden from him.

13. Morale, training, etc., are factors of importance in which first one side then the other may have the advantage. Where the enemy is constrained by demands on his forces to use reserve and second-line units for guarding communications etc., neither the morale nor training will be of a high standard. The morale of the guerrilla should always be high; fighting in his own country, among his own people, against a foreign foe who has invaded his land, the justice of his cause will inflame his embitterment. At the same time, the narrow limits of the training he requires, his natural dash and courage, and the careful, detailed rehearsal of projected coups should enable him, with the advantage of the initiative, to match even the best trained troops.

14. Guerrillas must obtain and make every effort to retain the initiative. To have the initiative confers the invaluable advantage of selecting the place of operations that most favour success as regards locality, ground, time, relative strengths, etc. The initiative can always be secured by remaining completely quiescent until the moment for the commencement of guerrilla activities arrives, and then suddenly launching out against an unsuspecting enemy. To retain the initiative conferring these advantages demands a ceaseless activity, so that the enemy is prevented from getting his blow by the constant recurring necessity of parrying those aimed at him.

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<sup>13</sup> Major-General Gubbins inserts the following footnote: **Au fait** – *Adj*, having a good or detailed knowledge of something.

15. Until the final and culminating stages of partisan warfare, where large bodies of guerrillas are co-operating with the regular forces, it must be the object of partisans to avoid prolonged engagements with their opponents, unless in such an overwhelming strength that success can be assured before the arrival of reinforcements. The object must be to strike hard and disappear before the enemy can recover and strike back. Therefore, the action of all partisan bands must be governed by the necessity of a secure line of retirement for use when the moment for calling off the action arrives. It must be borne in mind, too, that the immunity of partisans from enemy actions is a most valuable moral factor; to inflict damage and death on the enemy and to escape scot-free has an irritant and depressing effect on the enemy's spirit, and a correspondingly encouraging effect on the morale, not only of the guerrillas but of the local inhabitants, a matter of considerable moment; in this sphere of action nothing succeeds like success.

16. From the above review of the circumstances of guerrilla warfare, the aim of the guerrillas must be to develop their inherent advantages so as to nullify those of the enemy. The principles of this type of warfare are therefore: ~

- (a) Surprise first and foremost, by finding out the enemy's plans and concealing your own intentions and movements.
- (b) Never undertake an operation unless certain of success owing to careful planning and good information. Break off the action when it becomes too risky to continue.
- (c) Ensure that a secure line of retreat is always available.
- (d) Choose areas and localities for action where your mobility will be superior to that of the enemy, owing to better knowledge of the country, lighter equipment, etc.
- (e) Confine all movements as much as possible to the hours of darkness.
- (f) Never engage in a pitched battle unless in overwhelming strength and thus sure of success.
- (g) Avoid being pinned down in a battle by the enemy's superior forces or armament; break off the action before such a situation can develop.
- (h) Retain the initiative at all costs by redoubling activities when the enemy commences counter-measures.
- (i) When the time for action comes, act with the greatest boldness and audacity. The partisan's motto is "Valiant yet vigilant".

**These are the nine points of the guerrilla's creed.**

#### Organization

17. In guerrilla warfare it is the personality of the leader that counts; he it is who has to make decisions on his own responsibility and lead his men in each enterprise. He must



therefore be decisive and resourceful, bold in action and cool in council, of great mental and physical endurance, and of strong personality. These qualities alone will enable him to control his followers and win their unquestioning obedience without close constraint of military organization and discipline which are the antithesis of guerrilla action and a drag on its efficiency.

A background of military training is invaluable for a guerrilla leader, tempering his judgements and strengthening his decisions. The almost universal adoption of compulsory military training throughout Europe and the levees *en masse*<sup>14</sup> of the Great War will usually ensure that every leader will have had military experience of some sort or other. To this should be added by study and instruction, a realization of the influences of a mechanized age on the operations of large armies, both as a factor limiting and handicapping initiative and as a factor opening up new possibilities of mobility, of air action, of firepower, etc.

The selection of suitable leaders is therefore of paramount importance. The central authority must, and perforce will be, some man of prestige and weight who has been a leading personality in the territory in time of peace, as the leader either of some powerful association or league or minority. Leaders of local partisan bands will be selected from those of standing or mark in the locality who possesses the necessary attributes or personality.

18. It may, however, frequently be advantageous to appoint certain serving army officers for duty with guerrillas, either to serve directly as commanders, more particularly in the bigger spheres, or as specially qualified staff officers or assistants to guerrilla commanders. In such cases, it will often happen that the serving officer works hand and glove with the titular leader, the latter owing to his local connections, etc., ensuring the cohesion of his guerrillas, while the former supplies to the partnership the technical knowledge necessary for the most effective direction and co-ordination of the guerrillas' operations.

19. The wider the guerrilla movement spreads, and the closer that its organization must ultimately in that case become, the greater will be the need for a leaven of regular officers to carry out the basic work of simple staff duties, and to effect liaison with the regular forces. These officers must, however, clear their minds of all preconceived ideas regarding military procedure and apply their minds entirely and objectively to the success of the matter in hand. The very fact of their being regular officers may prejudice their position in the eyes of the partisans, and such prejudice can only be overcome by the proof they can give value to the guerrilla cause.

20. In the case where the guerrillas are a nation in arms, or part thereof, fighting for their freedom in alliance with or assisted and instigated by a third power which is willing and anxious to render all assistance to them, it will usually be advisable for that third power to be

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<sup>14</sup> Here the Author inserts the following footnote: «**Levees en Masse** - french, Conscription».

represented by a mission at the headquarters of the guerrilla movement. The duties of such a mission would be to provide expert advice, to ensure liaison, to arrange the supply of arms, ammunition, money, etc., and to provide leaders and assistants to leaders, if such were found to be necessary.

21. It is of great importance that the personnel of such missions be *au courant*<sup>15</sup> with the countries and territories where they are to work; the more detailed knowledge, personal liaison and reconnaissance that they have or can effect before operations are even envisaged, the greater is the chance of their success. They must study the languages, dialects, topography, etc.; they must know the ethnological, political, and religious groupings of the people, the history and aspirations of the country, its heroes of the present and martyrs of the past. They must in fact be prepared, at the risk of future regrets and disillusion, to identify themselves in every way with the peoples they are to serve.

22. As described in paragraph 5 (b), it is important that the degree of internal organization of the guerrillas should be suitable to the conditions in which they are operating; over-organization is more dangerous and detrimental to guerrilla operations than too loose an organization. The latter can be tightened as circumstances prescribe, whereas the relaxing of control that has once been established, even though necessitated by changing conditions, must at first lead to some embarrassment, confusion, and loss of direction.

23. The organization of partisans must usually commence with the formation of local bands, numbering no more than about 30 men each. It is not only simpler and more convenient to form them on a local basis, but also quicker. The men live in the neighbourhood, they know the country, they know each other, and their leaders, and can assemble rapidly when required, either for operations in their own area, if targets of attack exist, or for transfer to some area where conditions are more favourable. At the same time, there will be many areas where it will not be possible to form bands. Suitable and willing men in such areas must be given a rallying place, to which they will move under their own arrangements and there join existing bands.

24. Modern developments, particularly in aircraft, mechanized forces, and wireless, have profound influences on guerrilla warfare, enabling the enemy rapidly to concentrate in opposition to any moves of guerrillas that have been discovered. Concealment from aircraft, therefore, becomes one of the most important factors and inevitably curtails the possibilities of large forces of guerrillas moving at will throughout the country. In effect, such large forces, if they are to remain undiscovered, can only move by night and must conceal themselves by day or else move by routes – i.e., through thick forests, etc. – which afford concealment from reconnoitring aircraft; such moves, however themselves offer some difficulty to movement.

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<sup>15</sup> **Au courant** – *adj*, aware of what is going on; well informed (Author's footnote).

25. In addition, areas which offer good opportunities for concealment are usually just those areas where the maintenance and supply of large guerrilla forces becomes difficult. They are usually wild, with little cultivation or pasture land for carrying stock or feeding the guerrillas' animals and supplies would have to be brought in specially. At once the guerrillas would begin to be dependent on communications, a situation cramping their mobility and exactly opposed in the characteristic which constitutes their chief military value.

26. It must be clearly realized therefore that in most European countries, except for large areas in the east and south-east, conditions will rarely at the commencement of campaign be suitable for the employment of guerrillas in large masses. Even in Asiatic and North African countries, the presence of hostile aircraft will make this difficult.

27. It is therefore probable that in the early stages of a war, the scale of guerrilla warfare will not exceed the activities of partisan bands; even if it should never exceed this, however, a guerrilla campaign of this type directed with skill and executed with audacity and ceaseless activity will be a most potent factor in absorbing hostile forces and thus rendering a proper campaign by the enemy impossible. For this type of guerrilla war a loose organization is essential, and co-ordination and direction of effort must emanate in considerable detail from the central controlling authority known as "The Chief".

**"The Chief", or Military Mission or Guerrilla Bureau**

28. "The Chief" may be either an individual of the country concerned, located with his small staff in the area of guerrilla activities, or a section of the General Staff (Intelligence Branch) of the Army concerned, and located at its Central Headquarters, or even a military mission from a third party, located either at the General Headquarters of one of the armies in the field, or some other more suitable place. "The Chief" may thus be established in either friendly territory, or in territory occupied nominally by the enemy. The relative advantages of either course are as follows: ~

29. If located in enemy territory - i.e., in the area where guerrilla bands are to operate - contact and direction are easier, co-ordination of plans simplified, and "The Chief's" presence must have a stimulating effect on the partisans. In addition, intelligence and planning, which depends so much on local conditions at the moment, can be more thorough. On the other end, the nearness of the enemy and his activities will necessitate constant changes of locations, and the possibility of enemy raids will necessitate the reduction of documents, files, etc., to a minimum which may be incompatible with effective action.

30. Conversely, the installation of "The Chief" at the General Headquarters of an army, or even in friendly territory, brings in its train closer relations with the regular forces, wider sources of information, the possibility of complete documentation, greater security, and facilitates the provision of such supplies as the guerrillas may receive, i.e., arms, ammunition, etc. What is lost, however, is the close touch with the active agents of the guerrilla campaign,

and the inspiration which only the presence of “The Chief” in their midst can really arouse. This can however be counteracted by the appointment of a “Deputy Chief” specially chosen for his personality and characteristics, and granted plenipotentiary powers for use in emergency.

31. “The Chief” will direct his bands by emissaries or personal visits and will appoint regional assistant-chiefs to assist him. When a large operation is planned, he will frequently direct and lead it in person. As, however, the organization is purposely loose, it is important that “The Chief” should not be exposed to unnecessary danger. Much of his plans and intentions for future action, his knowledge of the country and of his assistant-chiefs will not have been committed to paper nor can be, but are stored in his brain; his loss might be irreparable.

32. Assistant-chiefs may again appoint sub-chiefs under them, according to the size of the regions for which they are responsible and the number of bands they contain.

#### **Arms and Equipment**

33. The provision and replenishment of arms and equipment for guerrillas is a problem that requires constant consideration. It is obvious that, if adequate supplies can be obtained before hostilities commence and can be suitably distributed, the problem is immensely simplified; further guerrilla operations can then be commenced without delay. The possibility of providing such peace stocks is governed almost entirely by political considerations, so that each country or district must be considered as a separate case; the attitude of the General Staff concerned is also of importance, more particularly in view of the pressure they can exert on their governments, a pressure which grows in weight on the approach of crisis.

34. The arms most suitable for guerrillas are those which do not hamper their mobility, but which are effective at close quarters. Guerrilla actions will usually take place at point blank range as the result of an ambush or raid, with the object of inflicting the maximum amount of damage in a short time then getting away. What is important therefore is a heavy volume of fire developed immediately, with the object of causing as many casualties and consequent confusion as possible at the onset of the action. Undoubtedly, therefore, the most effective weapon for the guerrilla is the sub-machine gun which can be fired either from a rest or a shoulder – i.e. a tommy-gun or gangster gun; in addition, this gun has the qualities of being short and comparatively light. Special efforts must therefore be made to equip each band with a percentage of these guns. Carbines are suitable, being shorter and lighter than rifles, and the long range of the rifle is not necessary. After carbines come revolvers and pistols for night work and for very close quarters, and then rifles. The more silencers that can be obtained for these weapons the better; a ‘silenced’ rifle or revolver not only impedes detection, but has a considerable moral effect on the sniping of sentries, etc. Telescopic sights are invaluable for snipers.

Bayonets are quite unsuitable for guerrillas; these are only for use in shock action which should be eschewed; a dagger is much more effective, and more easily concealed.

Bombs and devices of various kinds are of great use; when possible they should be specially made for the particular requirements of guerrilla warfare, but standard army equipment must frequently be made to serve.

35. Replenishment of stocks during a campaign, particularly of ammunition, must be a constant concern to all partisans. When operating behind the enemy's lines, the maintenance of supplies from outside will be a matter of the very greatest difficulty, frequently impossible; it is most important therefore that every opportunity to seize arms and ammunition from the enemy should be grasped. This is the only sure way of obtaining requirements. It will sometimes be necessary to organize raids whose primary object is the seizure of arms; every partisan must always have this matter uppermost in his mind, and be prepared to grasp any opportunity that offers.

#### **Information and Intelligence Service**

36. In their normally superior facilities for obtaining information guerrillas have a factor in their favour of which the fullest advantage must be taken in order to counteract the enemy's superior armament and equipment. Operating as they will be among a friendly populace, a system of obtaining information must be built up that, from the offensive aspect, the fullest information required can be obtained prior to any contemplated operation; and from the defensive aspect, no action which the enemy intends against the guerrillas will escape prior detection. Further, information must always be sought giving details of the enemy's moves, detachments, convoys, etc., which may lead to the initiation of a successful operation.

37. An enemy in occupation of territory is compelled to mix in varying degrees with the inhabitants. Troops must be billeted in houses; cafes and beer houses will be used for their recreation; working parties will be employed for unloading trains, repairing roads, etc. These circumstances are extremely favourable for the collection of information by the local populace acting as agents. In fact, every reliable man, woman and child of common sense and reliability should be encouraged and trained to keep his ears open for items of information, and, where conditions are suitable, to seek for it by questions, by purloining letters, etc. Among the most suitably placed to act as agents are barbers, waitresses, domestic servants, priests, doctors, telephone and telegraph operators, postmen, and camp followers generally.

38. The collection and collation of this information requires some consideration. As pointed out earlier, the seizure of documents by the enemy from guerrillas as the results of raids, interception of letters, etc., is of the greatest value to him in his efforts to crush the guerrilla warfare. Messages passed by agents therefore should be verbal as far as possible, and the degree of documentation by local partisan leaders must not exceed that which allows reasonable security. As and when the guerrilla organization grows tighter and closer, collation and

recording of intelligence will increase until the stage is reached that at the headquarters of the guerrilla forces in the field is a proper intelligence staff with files, maps, enemy order of battle, etc. To err on the side of over-organization, however, is to court disaster; hence the over-riding importance of the personality of the leaders. The leader alone it is who by his activity, his drive, his flair for guerrilla warfare, his intelligence and wit, directs his men to successful action without close organization necessary for regular forces.

39. When guerrilla operations commence, on whatever scale, the enemy will institute counter-measures, of which one important aspect will be intelligence. But he will be working usually amidst a hostile populace; without their co-operation his task will be more difficult and will require a larger number of his own men to carry it out.

40. The guerrillas must therefore impress on the people the vital necessity of withholding from the enemy all information about them however harmless it may seem; the people must be convinced that their refusal to co-operate with the enemy in this respect is one of the greatest importance for the redemption of their country from the enemy grasp, and for the safety of their friends and relatives. They must be warned never to discuss the activities of the guerrillas in any circumstances whatever.

In every community will be found certain individuals so debased that for greed or gain they will sell even their own countrymen. Against this contingency close watch must be set, and wherever proof is obtained of such perfidy, the traitor must be killed without hesitation or delay. By such justifiable ruthless actions others who might be tempted to follow suit will be finally deterred.

41. It will be necessary, in addition, to harass the enemy's intelligence service in every possible way. Agents that he may have imported must be tracked down and shot, his intelligence officers and staffs sought out and neutralized, and captured documents and plans destroyed after perusal.

42. Guerrillas themselves must be trained to give away no information if captured. The enemy intelligence officers will be adept in leading prisoners into indiscretions, in installing listening-sets and 'pigeons' in prisons, concentration camps, reading prisoners ingoing and outgoing mail, etc.

43. The advantage of superior information is the guerrillas' greatest asset; it must be used to the fullest extent possible.

#### **Intercommunication**

44. All means of communication that are open to interception by the enemy must be used with the greatest discretion – i.e., civil postal service, telephone and telegraphs, etc., as any code and cyphers used by guerrillas, must of necessity, be simple or only infrequently changed,

and their solution by the enemy will not be a difficult task. Such devices therefore only give a very relative security.

45. The passing of information verbally and direct is clearly the safest and in many ways the most reliable means. At the same time, however, opportunities for this will not always occur, and frequently messages must be written and conveyed by several hands before reaching their destination. For this purpose it is often better to use women and children who are less suspect and probably enjoy greater immunity from search.

46. It will be incumbent on leaders within their own areas to arrange adequate means for the collection of information, and their own ingenuity will produce many devices, such as messages left in clefts of trees, in stone walls, in culverts, etc. Pigeons are occasionally useful, but their limitations are obvious – i.e., ease of detection, uncertainty, etc., and the greatest care must be observed in their use.

47. For messages of operational importance between partisan bands and the scouts, and within groups of partisan bands, etc., wireless offers great possibilities. It can be used by scouts to inform their band that an enemy convoy is leaving by a certain route, offering a chance of ambush; it can be used within groups to co-ordinate attacks, to pass on information, etc. The smaller the transmitting set and the wider its range the more useful it becomes; ease of concealment is a very important factor.

Wireless should not be used except for matters of importance; sets are not easily replaced if discovered and should be guarded preciously. It may be advisable to fix certain hours only during which wireless may be used. ALL MESSAGES IN WIRELESS MUST BE IN CODE OR CYPHER.

#### **Training.**

48. Training in the full military sense is not applicable to guerrillas, but on the other hand any guerrilla who has a background of military training is *ipso facto* a better partisan. The object of military training is to make any recruit of whatever calibre into a reasonably good soldier, so that it is based on the lowest common denominator. Guerrillas on the contrary will usually be recruited from men who have a natural aptitude or a fondness for fighting, who are accustomed to the use of weapons, to hard sleep, to movement in the dark, etc.

Their training, therefore, should first be directed to the use of basic weapons, i.e., automatic rifles, carbines, pistols, etc., and to use of the various destructive devices such as bombs, road and rail mines, etc., which are of such a special and useful feature of guerrilla warfare.

49. For these devices knowledge of electrical equipment is of great value; leaders must therefore endeavour to include in their bands a few men with this experience; if they do not exist, suitable men must be trained. The actual placing of these devices, and even their firing,

can often be carried out in an emergency by untrained personnel, but the risks of inefficiency and failure are great and should not be run for want of a little time spent in training.

50. Localities for training must be carefully selected so that surprise is impossible; it is essential to post sentries far out where enemy movement can be seen in time.

51. Weapon training of guerrillas must be efficient, not only so that the men may have confidence in their weapons and shoot to kill, but also in order to save ammunition which is frequently an important factor in guerrilla warfare. A few rounds spent on perfecting shooting, and testing rifles, will be amply repaid.

52. Training in defensive action against modern weapons is of importance, more particularly in the following aspects: ~

(a) Aircraft:

Partisan leaders must impress on their men that the surest way of attaining success in their operations is by remaining undetected, and the detection will always be followed by enemy actions against them.

Concealment from aircraft is of the greatest importance, and men must be trained to take cover quickly, to lie face downwards, and to remain absolutely still until the aeroplane has passed.

(b) Tanks, Armoured Cars, etc.

These are very blind when forced by fire to close down their screens; both are susceptible to ground.

(c) Machine Guns, etc.

Smoke screens formed by smoke bombs are the best antidote.

For further details, see the Partisan Leader's Handbook.

### Enemy Counter Action

53. The first effect on the enemy of the institution of guerrilla warfare will be to compel him to strengthen all posts, guards, detachments, etc., and to carry out all movements in convoy, even if only of a routine nature. By this the guerrillas will have achieved a part of their object, i.e., more enemy troops will be absorbed in purely protective duties, and his forces for offensive actions correspondingly, reduced.

This reaction of the enemy is however purely defensive. As the scale of guerrilla warfare increases, and as successful attacks are carried out against these strengthened posts, convoys, etc., the enemy will undertake active offensive measures against the partisans with the object of finally crushing them.

54. Until the first stage has been reached, and this will not be long, i.e., moving in convoy, etc., members of partisan bands may well be able to remain living undetected in their own homes, and collecting by summons for particular operations. This however will soon be



rendered impossible by the searches, raids, etc., and issue of curfew, passport, and other regulations that the enemy will introduce. When the moment comes it will be necessary for the partisans to “go on the run”, i.e., to live as a band in some suitable area where the nature of the country enables them to be relatively secure.

55. The commencement of offensive action by the enemy will be marked by the institution of “flying columns” – detachments of from fifty to two or three hundred strong, mobile by means of horses, lorries, etc., and equipped with several days of supplies – which will be sent out to search the country, moving by circuitous and haphazard roads, employing scouts and advanced guards, and probably assisted by aircraft. The final stage, when this action is insufficient, will be the organization of “drives”, in which large forces of troops consisting of all arms will sweep through successive selected areas, and the accompanying intelligence officers, their staffs, informers, agents, etc., will interrogate every man falling into the net and arrest any to whom suspicion attaches. Aeroplanes are certain to co-operate.

56. Against flying columns, the guerrillas’ superior sources of information, knowledge of the country and individual mobility should be adequate protection; the object of the guerrillas in these circumstances is to avoid discovery, and not take military action against the flying columns unless overwhelming strength against any particular column can be combined with favourable circumstances in which to destroy it.

57. Against large scale drives the guerrillas must give way, and move off to some locality where the enemy is relatively inactive. It must be remembered that in countries of any large extent the numbers of troops required to carry out comprehensive drives simultaneously through every area subject to guerrilla warfare will usually be prohibitive. Should the enemy attempt such a policy, the object of this warfare will be even nearer to achievement, i.e., rendering the enemy incapable of carrying on an effective campaign.

58. The counters to such a policy are clear. If the enemy’s drives throughout the whole area are affected give no chance of eventual escape, the partisans must harry the advance as it proceeds, seek the weak spots in it, and break through back into their own country, either by infiltration, or by massing against a weak spot and busting through by sheer strength and force of arms. To men who know the country and can move freely in the dark, there is little risk of failure.

59. Against the various weapons that the enemy may employ, endowed as he will be with superior equipment of war, i.e., aeroplanes, tanks, armoured cars, etc., instructions are contained in the Partisan Leader’s Handbook.

Of all these means, the most dangerous to the partisans is the aeroplane; they must be taught always to move and take up their positions by night, to take immediate cover from aircraft of all descriptions, and never to open fire on them unless the aeroplanes themselves attack.

60. Against action by the enemy, other than of a military nature, every step must be taken to render it inoperative. Such action will include the institution of curfew hours, of a system of visas and *cartes d'identité*, or traffic regulations, of restriction on the use of motor transport, etc. In this field, it is the civilian population which can most assist the guerrilla; a policy of absolute non-co-operation leavened with enlightened stupidity will do much to render the enemy's control ineffective.

#### **Planning and action**

61. Just as in time of peace the study of the employment of its regular forces in the event of possible wars is one of the main problems of a country's General Staff, so must the employment of guerrilla forces and tactics in aid of the regular army be the object of equally close examination. Probable theatres of war and possible allies in various contingencies will lead this examination over a very wide field. Cases requiring particular study will be those in which either the home country or an ally must envisage in view of the enemy's greater strength, more complete preparation, or more rapid mobilization, a successful invasion of its territory in the early stages of the campaign, even if only to a limited depth.

62. The object of such study is to determine the possibilities of guerrilla warfare on the flanks of, but more particularly behind, the advancing hostile armies, and to make the necessary arrangements IN PEACE before the emergency arises. To delay study and preparation until a war has broken out will make the institution of a proper guerrilla campaign infinitely more difficult, and in the face of a strong and ruthless enemy, in all probability impossible.

The arrangements to be made include: ~

- (a) The nomination of local leaders.
  - (b) The provision of arms, ammunition, destructive devices, wireless sets, etc., and their concealment.
  - (c) Selection of "The Chief" and of the personnel of his staff.
  - (d) Provision of ensuring liaison between General Headquarters in the field and "The Chief" with his guerrillas.  
N. B. If "The Chief" is at General Headquarters, liaison is required between him and the deputy chief.
  - (e) The formation of a plan of campaign.
  - (f) The selection of vital points for destruction after hostile occupation, and their preparation to that end.
- ETC. ETC.

63. It may well be that among a group of two or more allied powers, one power by its wealth, its strategic position, its military experience, or its initiative is in a position to encourage and assist the others in these preparations. Such assistance may take the following forms: ~

- (a) The provision of special weapons and destructive devices for use by guerrillas.
- (b) The provision of technical experts in destructive devices specially trained to assist the leaders of partisan bands.
- (c) The establishment of a mission or bureau either at the allied General Headquarters, or in the field with the guerrillas, to direct operations in co-ordination with that General Headquarters, and to arrange for the further supply and distribution of money, arms, etc.
- (d) The provision of military experts in the field to assist and co-ordinate the activities of assistant leaders.

#### **Preparatory Planning.**

64. A complete survey of likely territories must be made with a view to determining for what type of guerrilla activities they will initially be suitable.

Politically, the field of action for guerrilla warfare be broadly divided into three distinct spheres: ~

- (a) Where the population, except numerically insignificant minorities, supports the hostile power. This territory usually comprises the enemy's home country and that of his allied and associate powers.
- (b) Where the population is, in varying degrees, hostile to the power in occupation.
- (c) Neutral countries.

#### **Friendly Population<sup>16</sup>**

65. Unless a war has been begun in opposition to the general weight of public opinion, the enemy's home country will at the outset have been brought to a high pitch of patriotism and jingoism. Such conditions offer no scope for the organization of armed intervention by guerrillas, and this type of warfare must therefore be limited to subterranean attacks by disaffected individuals and small groups against targets that will interrupt communications, interfere or damage supplies of food, munitions, etc., assist in diverting the enemy's armed forces and generally lower the morale of the people.

66. At the same time the people's will to war must be sapped and undermined in every other way, so as to induce a craving for peace and for a change in the regime of the country which will lead to it. The object must be to prepare a situation in which an increasing and vocal part of the population will be opposed to the government and its policy, and any alternative will seem to offer fairer prospects. At the right moment it will be desirable to focus public opinion on to an alternative leader or party.

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<sup>16</sup> Friendly to the enemy.

67. Such a campaign is to be carried on by “whispering”, by skilful propaganda through the press and wireless, by magnification of hardships, such as food restrictions, by the sabotaging of food supplies, communications, by publishing exaggerated casualty lists, etc., and many other means. Even in the final stages of such a campaign, however, there is no field for the employment of partisan bands; there representatives either of a foreign power or a disaffected minority, would only serve to exacerbate the patriotism of the general population. What is required is to divide the population of the enemy against itself; the means are endless – knowledge of the country and a fertile imagination will devise the methods.

#### **Hostile Population**

68. A population hostile to the enemy’s occupation offers immediately a sphere for the fullest development of guerrilla warfare in all its aspects, culminating in a general rising of the people against the enemy. The types of warfare to be employed at the onset must depend on the nature of the country; it is clear that in highly cultivated districts with few physical features the concentration of partisan bands into large formations is out of the question until such time as the enemy’s hold begins through weakness to relax. Then is the moment for a general *levée en masse* of the population with such arms as they have concealed or seized; the enemy’s defeat will not long be delayed.

69. In cases of this nature the provision of arms and ammunition and arrangements for replenishing stocks are of primary importance. Where the possibility of aggression by a hostile power and the occupation by it of foreign territory can be foreseen, such provision should invariably be made before the commencement of the hostilities. Not only can adequate stocks be more easily obtained and planted, but also more thorough precautions can be made for secrecy in delivery and in distribution and storage.

Where such provision cannot be made beforehand, an organization must be immediately created for the running of weapons and explosives from neutral and friendly countries and plans must be worked out and put in hand for the seizure of hostile stocks by local guerrillas.

70. In general, the action to be undertaken in areas where the people are hostile to the occupying power is to stimulate the morale of the inhabitants, to create a policy of complete non-co-operation, both active among those best fitted for it and passive by the whole of the remainder. It is necessary to convince the people that the hostile power is not *de facto* in control, that its writ does not run and that it will eventually be compelled to evacuate the territory, when those who have tacitly accepted its control will be punished, and those who have opposed it will be rewarded.

#### **Neutral Countries**

71. The institution of guerrilla activities in neutral territories from which the enemy draws supplies must depend to some extent on the political and other relations between the powers concerned. In certain cases it may be polite to ignore the assistance given to the enemy

by a particular neutral country in view of the even greater aid that is being received. When however, the supplies which the enemy is obtaining are vital to his conduct of the war it may be necessary actively to hinder this provision in spite of otherwise friendly relations with the country concerned, and to risk the rupture of such relations.

72. The risk, however, must be reduced to a minimum and postponed as long as possible. Its elimination depends primarily on the skill with which the campaign is carried out. The methods to be employed to hinder supply range from the purchase of supplies, over the head of the enemy, the organization of labour strikes at the vital points – i.e., factories, mines, docks, etc., to the sabotaging of ships, trains and machinery. The engagement of local firms of solicitors, not too scrupulous and at the same time experienced in neutrality and labour legislation, and in the procrastination of judicial procedure will be of the greatest assistance.

73. As in the case of guerrilla warfare proper, this [is] a subject which requires close study and preparation before hostilities commence, and the selection of suitable personnel, experienced in shipping and commerce generally, and maritime and neutrality laws of the countries concerned.

#### **Geographical**

74. The geographical study of a territory is concerned with two factors: ~

(a) Its suitability as an area for guerrilla warfare. The more broken and forested it is, the more suitable will it be.

(b) The potential targets for guerrilla action which it offers. These will usually be in the shape of road, rail and river communications which the enemy would have to employ for the maintenance of his armies in the field. Vulnerable points within the enemy's own territory must also be marked. The reconnaissance of territories should, whenever possible, be carried out in times of peace by selected officers who have been grounded in principles of guerrilla warfare. Their reports will be of greater assistance in formulating a plan.

#### **Organization of bands**

75. One of the principal reasons for insisting on the advantages of peace time preparation is that, failing such arrangements, the institution of guerrilla warfare BEHIND THE ENEMY LINES will be a matter of utmost difficulty. The ideal at which to aim is that when the enemy invasion takes place the men who are to become the partisans should remain in their homes with their arms conveniently concealed, and allow themselves to be over-run. They will then hold themselves in readiness to commence action under their leader the moment the order is given. Where the fronts covered by the main opposing armies are wide and broken, there will be opportunity for partisan bands to penetrate the hostile lines for operations in the enemy's rear, but when the fronts are continuous, as may frequently happen, there will be no such opportunity; without previous provision, therefore, guerrilla warfare on the enemy's lines

of communication, his most vulnerable and tender spot, could only be sporadic and half-hearted.

76. Most of the great powers include in their forces formations of para-military character such as Frontier Guards, Customs Guards, Frontier Gendarmerie, and Forest Guards, etc. These organizations, dealing as they do with the prevention of smuggling, illicit crossing of frontiers, poaching, etc., contain men with an intimate knowledge of frontier districts, trained to act by night, and to be self-dependent. As frontiers frequently rest on natural boundaries such as mountains, large rivers, etc., which form good area for guerrilla activities, such men will be of immense [importance?] as the nuclei of partisan bands.

77. From a consideration of the above factors it is apparent that the institution of guerrilla warfare to assist regular armies in the defeat of the enemy is a subject which must in all its aspects be considered and prepared in peace to the furthest extent possible. Such planning and action should include the following: ~

(a) A careful study of the territories concerned from the point of view of geography, communications, ethnology, racial and religious habits, historic associations, etc., and a decision as to possibilities.

(b) The supply and distribution of arms, ammunition, devices, pamphlets, etc., and the instruction of potential partisans in their use.

(c) The selection and training of regular army officers in the art of guerrilla warfare; these would be sent to organize and take charge of guerrilla operations in their respective areas, or to act as advisers to local leaders. Such training should include a period of residence in the territory concerned.

### Conclusion

78. The more the subject is considered the more apparent it becomes that in guerrilla warfare it is the personality of the leader which counts above everything. It is he who by his personality and steadfastness must hold the loosely organized partisans together, and by his courage, audacity and high intelligence successfully direct and lead their operations.

79. These operations range over an unlimited field according to local circumstances. Large forces of guerrillas can harry the flanks of an advancing or returning army, can raid his communications in force, destroying railways, burning supply dumps and capturing convoys, and then withdraw again to the security of their own lines. Small bands of partisans can live behind the enemy's lines, or filter through gaps in his front, and carry-on similar activities on a smaller scale. Individual guerrillas can be permanently located in the enemy's rear, where by sniping of guards, the destruction of military vehicles, buildings, etc., they can be a running sore in his flesh, draining his vitality and hampering his action.

80. Guerrillas obtain their advantage over the enemy by their greater knowledge of the country, their relatively greater knowledge of the country, their relatively greater mobility,

and their vastly superior sources of information. Those are the factors which, when properly exploited, enable them to engage with success an enemy who is better equipped, more closely disciplined, and usually in greater strength.

81. The main objects of guerrilla warfare are to inflict direct damage and loss to the enemy, to hamper his operations and movements by attacks on his communications, and to compel him to withdraw the maximum number of troops from the main front of battle so as to weaken his offensive power. Direct action of the types envisaged will bring the desired result about. It must always be remembered that guerrilla warfare is what regular armies have most to fear. When directed with skill and carried out with courage and whole-hearted endeavour, an effective campaign by the enemy becomes almost impossible.

82. Guerrilla warfare is much facilitated by the co-operation of the local inhabitants, but in the face of an uncompromising hostile occupation this will only become active as the result of successful action by the guerrillas. It is this alone that will awaken in the people the spirit of revolt, of audacity and of endurance, and make them foresee and assist towards the victory that will be theirs.

83. In the modern world the time has now come when aggressor nations, to gain their ends, use every device and ingenuity that their perverted wits can devise to break down the resistance of their intended victims both before and after the occupation [of] their territory. Given the leadership, the courage, the arms and preparation, however, there is one thing remaining that they cannot break, and that is the spirit of the people whose territory has been over-run, a spirit expressing itself in uncompromising and steadfast resistance to defeat and in ruthless and uncompromising warfare of partisans until the enemy is forced to cry "Halt!" and depart. In the long history of the world such deeds have been done, such causes won; and they can be won again, given the opportunity.

**FINIS**