
LESSON 1

PROLOGUE TO OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

Introduction

Purpose This lesson introduces operations other than war (OOTW). It provides information based on past, present, and future unconventional scenarios and shows the need for vision in preparing an OOTW military infrastructure.

Why Study Prologue to Operations Other Than War? While the demise of the Soviet Union has lessened the threat of conventional and nuclear confrontation between the superpowers, overall global stability has not improved. Rather, threats to the national security are more diverse and more numerous. Famine, regional conflicts, drug wars, and ethnic struggles threaten international stability and national security.

As a major player in national security strategy, the military must meet these complex challenges through joint and multinational operations, particularly in Third World settings.

U.S. forces will be called upon to respond to crises not easily identified with national interests. Future involvement could include U.N. peacekeeping, civic action, counternarcotics, noncombatant evacuation operations (NEOs), and hostage rescue missions. Debate over U.S. participation in unconventional scenarios like Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia underscores the evolution of the OOTW concept and the need for continuing flexibility and vision in military planning.

Relationship to Other Instruction This lesson establishes a background for further discussion of unconventional warfare and provides a focus for the overall course.

Study Time This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 3 hours of study.

Educational Objectives

Differences in Strategy and Tactics Determine the differences between the strategy and tactics of unconventional warfare and those of conventional warfare. [JPME Areas 3(b) and 3(e)]

Conventional Doctrine and Force Structure Illustrate the successes and failures of western conventional doctrine and force structure in selected guerrilla wars. [JPME Areas 1(e) and 3(d)]

Guerrilla Strategies and Tactics Evaluate guerrilla strategies and tactics with special emphasis on the concepts of legitimacy, mobilization of the population, intelligence, time, and space. [JPME Areas 3(d) and 5(b)]

**JPME Areas/
Objectives/Hours
(accounting data)** 1/e/0.3
3/b/0.2
3/d/0.5
3/e/0.2
5/b/0.3

Discussion

History

Although unconventional warfare is not new in the annals of American history, conventional conflicts such as the Civil War and World Wars I and II have overwhelmingly influenced U.S. strategy and doctrine.

Lessons learned from Francis Marion, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Poncho Villa and the Seminole and Banana Wars were either ignored or forgotten as the U.S. military traditionally focused on worst-case conventional conflicts.

While that strategy worked in Europe, Korea, and Iraq, it often ignored the more likely scenarios such as Vietnam, Lebanon, and (more recently) Somalia and Haiti.

Conventional Doctrine

The emphasis that conventional doctrine places on high technology warfare is not always appropriate in low-level conflicts. In OOTW, firepower, air superiority, and artillery support are no substitute for sound, imaginative infantry tactics.

This principle applies to all military planners, as conventional Russian forces, fighting Chechen insurgents, recently discovered. Beirut, Mogadishu, and Dhahran Airbase remain as sad reminders of the real and ever-present threat to U.S. forces in unconventional scenarios.

Required Readings

Operations Other Than War (OOTW) Readings wKarnow, Stanley. "An Interview with General Giap," *N. Y. Times Magazine*, (Jan. 1979), Volume I, pp. 2-12. Find this reading in the *Operations Other Than War (OOTW) Readings*, Annex A, pp. A- to A-. Karnow conducted a personnel interview with General Giap. He covered the two wars with Vietnam (the French and the U.S) which in many respects were phases of the same war. Karnow covered the first war indirectly from Paris and the second as a correspondent in Vietnam.

wGuevara, Che. "Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War." Edited by Gerard Chailiand. *Guerrilla Strategies* (1982), Volume I, pp. 29-41. Find this reading in the *Operations Other Than War Readings (OOTW)*, Annex A, pp. A- to A-. Che Guevara reflects on his experiences as a member of the ill-equipped band of rebels fighting in the Cuban revolutionary war.

For Further Study

Supplemental Readings

The readings listed are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

wMac Donald, Peter. *Giap: The Victor in Vietnam*. New York: W. T. Norton & Co., 1993.

wChailiand, Gerard, ed. *Guerrilla Strategies*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.

wJoint Pub 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*.

Issues For Consideration

Precepts of Sun Tzu	What precepts of Sun Tzu did Mao Tse-tung's guerrilla forces follow while fighting Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Army?
The People in Arms	What did Clausewitz write about "the people in arms"? How is the center of gravity and the concept of the decisive battle different in this type of warfare?
General Giap's Strategy	Explain General Giap's strategy against the United States. What did he see as the center of gravity? What was his objective at Khe Sahn, and why did he consider Tet a victory? What did he say about the effectiveness of western firepower in a "peoples' war"?
Che Guevara	What did Che Guevara say about Batista's officers who were trained at military academies? What advantages did Castro's guerrillas have over the conventional forces? Where did they obtain most of their logistical support?
