

CHAPTER 4

Counter guerrilla Operations in Conventional Conflicts

Section I. General

4-1. Rear areas.

The conditions of conventional conflicts differ greatly from an insurgency. This chapter discusses factors the commander must consider when planning counter guerrilla operations during a conventional conflict. The nature of the threat and tactics suitable to counter the threat are discussed. The material in this chapter is general and refers only to countering guerrilla activities in the rear areas of friendly forces engaged in conventional conflicts (Figure 4-1).

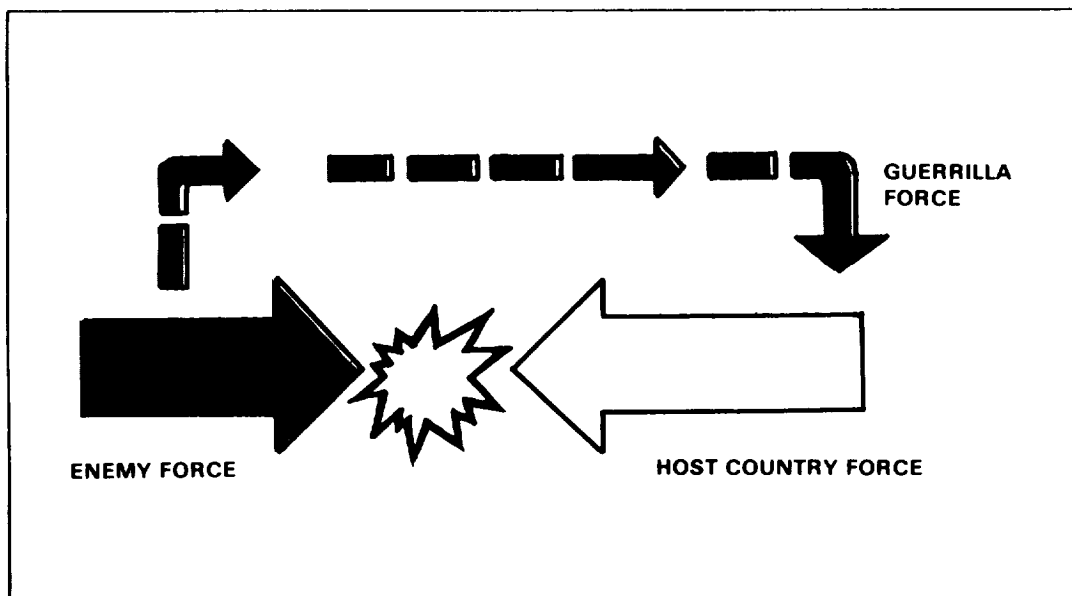


Figure 4-1. Guerrilla rear action.

4-2. Threat.

A guerrilla threat may not exist in these situations. However, if it does exist, it normally occurs in support of enemy forces engaged in conventional combat with friendly forces and occurs in the friendly force rear areas. (For further information on rear area operations, see FM 90-14.)

Section II. Considerations

4-3. Guerrilla support.

- a. Since a major goal of participants in a conventional conflict is to gain control of territory through the use of regular armed forces, the forms of guerrilla activity change. Guerrilla operations in this case support the main effort of the enemy force by disrupting command, control, communications, and logistical operations of friendly forces. The guerrilla force also serves to cause commitment of friendly forces, best used in the close battle, to the rear battle.
- b. The ability of the guerrilla force to operate successfully does not rely on the attainment of popular support. Rather, the guerrilla force relies more on its ability to cause confusion in rear areas.

4-4. Guerrilla objectives.

- a. The objectives of a guerrilla force in a conventional conflict are:
 - (1) **Disruption.** The guerrilla force seeks to disrupt command, control, communications, and logistics operations and facilities. He may accomplish this by attacking key installations such as headquarters, communications sites, supply depots, maintenance facilities, and airfields. The guerrilla force also seeks to cut lines of communication and supply by interdicting supply columns, bridges, highways, and communications lines.
 - (2) **Confusion.** By destroying key facilities and interdicting lines of communication and supply, the guerrilla force causes confusion within the friendly force rear areas. The greater the amount of confusion created, the greater the ability of the main enemy force to discover and exploit weaknesses of the friendly force.
 - (3) **Harassment.** The guerrilla force remains a source of harassment as long as it operates in the rear area. It may not have to conduct continuous operations to achieve its goal. The mere knowledge that the guerrilla exists within the rear area, even though undetected, may be enough.
 - (4) **Support.** By disrupting, confusing, and harassing vital areas, the guerrilla supports the main enemy force by tying up friendly combat units in countering the threat.
- b. The guerrilla force may possess weapons, communications, and technology equal to or superior to the rear battle forces. It must be anticipated that nuclear, chemical, and biological, as well as conventional weapons and tactics may be utilized to achieve guerrilla goals.

4-5. Factors affecting operations.

When considering the environment that the participants will be involved in, the commander's plans for counter guerrilla operations must consider terrain and climate, as well as political, sociological, economic, and psychological factors.

- a. **Terrain.** Terrain affects men, equipment, trafficability, visibility, and the employment of NBC weapons. The terrain aspects of each area of operations must be evaluated to determine the impact on both guerrilla and counter guerrilla forces. Generally, guerrillas favor rough, inaccessible terrain with cover and concealment, affording them routes of escape and withdrawal if confronted or detected by counter guerrilla forces. Rolling, open terrain with less cover and concealment usually favors counter guerrilla forces in detecting and pursuing a guerrilla force.
- b. **Climate.** Each geographic area is analyzed to determine the effects of climate since no two areas have identical climates. Generally, a mild climate favors the guerrilla force since it induces less physical hardship, and may provide year-round vegetation for subsistence, cover, and concealment. The climate is also analyzed to determine the effect it will have on guerrilla operations as regards trafficability, visibility, and equipment. A cold climate usually favors the counter guerrilla force and hampers guerrilla operations since it increases the logistics required to support the guerrilla. The commander must also consider that the effect of seasonal variations can either increase or decrease his ability to conduct operations.
- c. **Political factors.** Political considerations are reduced. Generally, the relationship between the counter guerrilla force and the civilian population is governed by restrictions and agreements that the US has with the government(s) of the country (or countries) in which the conflict takes place. In the event that the conflict takes place in enemy territory that is occupied, then the policies concerning interaction the the civilian populace will be formulated at theater level in consonance with guidance from the US government. It must be recognized that, in some situations, the political system of the area will be sympathetic to the guerrillas.
- d. **Sociological factors.** As with political factors, social factors are considered, but their impact is usually reduced. Usually, when US forces operate in friendly territory or liberate previously captured friendly territory, the sociological factors generally favor the counter guerrilla force. When US forces operate in captured enemy territory, then the sociological factors may favor the guerrilla force. In this situation, the guerrilla force may be receiving some support from the populace.

- e. **Economic factors.** Generally, the counter guerrilla force plans its operations to minimize damage to the economic structure of an area. The standard of living must be recognized as a contributing factor to the psychological climate within the area. If the counter guerrilla force damages civilian property and economic structures, then it may have an adverse psychological impact. Usually, a poor economic climate will favor the counter guerrilla force since it will reduce the resources available to the guerrilla. The counter guerrilla force, on the other hand, is usually not dependent on the economy for its logistics. A strong economic climate usually does not favor either force.
- f. **Psychological factors.** A population that actively supports the counter guerrilla force greatly enhances the capability to detect guerrilla forces. Usually, this type of population is found when US forces operate in friendly territory or liberate areas opposed to the goals of the enemy force. Population support for the goals of the enemy force usually favors the guerrilla. That situation may occur when US forces operate in captured enemy territory. In most cases, however, the military objective of destroying the guerrilla force takes precedence over other considerations as long as operations are planned to minimize damage to civilian property. US forces must, in all cases, treat the civilian populace in a fair and just manner whether the people support the US presence or not. Inhumane treatment and criminal acts (murder, rape, or theft, even under stress of combat and with provocation) are serious and punishable violations under international law, the law of land warfare, and the US Uniform Code of Military Justice.

4-6. Applying METT-T.

- a. The commander of a counter guerrilla force in a conventional conflict plans his operations by analyzing the factors of METT-T. An understanding of the goals of a guerrilla force operating in rear areas and a general analysis of the environment of the area of operations provide a framework for planning. An analysis of the factors of METT-T will provide the specific information and indications to complete operational plans.
- b. Some of the major considerations of METT-T are:
 - (1) Mission.
 - (a) All aspects of the mission must be analyzed. In this analysis, the commander and his staff determine all specified and implied tasks:
 - Is the mission offensive?
 - Is the mission defensive?
 - Is the mission a combination of offense and defense?

- (b) The authority a commander can exert within his area of operations is critical. If the command and support relationships are not clearly delineated in the initial order, then the commander must ensure that he receives that guidance prior to commencement of operations. The restrictions, limitations, and rules of engagement that the counter guerrilla force adheres to must be defined. These may include specific limitations regarding the use of firepower and types of weapons, or they may be general regarding the relationship of the counter guerrilla force with the civilian population.

(2) Enemy.

- (a) Since the general goals of the enemy are known, specific information is gathered to produce a more complete picture. The capabilities of the enemy are examined. Some of the questions that should be answered are:
- Can the guerrilla strike at will?
 - What is the size(s) of his unit(s)?
 - What type of weapons does he possess?
 - Is this a true guerrilla force consisting mainly of locally recruited indigenous personnel, or is this an enemy regular military unit specially trained and using guerrilla tactics?
 - Does he have fire or air support?
 - Does he have an offensive NBC capability?
 - How long can he operate in the area?
- (b) The commander examines not only guerrilla capabilities but also his vulnerable aspects, which include logistics and ability to remain undetected. Usually, guerrillas operating in a rear area then acquire logistical support from external sources, from captured equipment and supplies, and from the civilian populace.
- (c) External support by the enemy main force may occur through clandestine parachute drop or through waterborne, surface, or subsurface infiltration. If the guerrilla's only source of resupply is external, then interdiction of his supply lines can decrease or halt operations as the guerrilla's supplies are exhausted.
- (d) If the counter guerrilla force prevents the capture of friendly equipment and supplies, then again the

guerrilla must decrease and finally halt operations because of lack of supplies.

- (e) Reliance by the guerrilla on the civilian populace for support may occur more often in occupied enemy territory or in territories where the population favors the enemy force. Effective use of populace and resources control operations and psychological operations can reduce the logistical support received through the populace.
 - (f) Because the guerrilla operates in rear areas, the difficulty of maintaining his lines of resupply usually keeps the size of his force at a relatively static level. If the counter guerrilla force can detect the guerrilla force, then it is only a matter of time until the guerrillas are fixed and engaged. The commander utilizes all available human intelligence (HUMINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), and signal intelligence (SIGINT). In addition, the counter guerrilla force maximizes all information that can be gained from tactical operations to locate the guerrilla force.
 - (g) Probable courses of enemy action are identified. What may be the least likely course of action for a conventional force may be the most likely for the guerrilla force. Often, the guerrilla strikes in this manner to gain the advantage of surprise. The counter guerrilla force identifies likely targets and takes measures to protect them. In addition, facilities and operations that may not seem likely targets may in fact be guerrilla targets solely because of their vulnerability. The counter guerrilla force commander must realize that destruction of numerous insignificant targets may cause more damage and confusion than the destruction or damage of one important target.
- (3) **Terrain.** The terrain consideration also includes consideration of weather. The weather is analyzed to determine its effect on both the guerrilla and the counter guerrilla force. It is analyzed in terms of its effect on men and equipment, trafficability, and visibility. Since the guerrilla force may have the capability to use NBC, the effect of weather on NBC and smoke is also addressed. The terrain is studied in relation to the factors of OCOKA: Observation and fields of fire, Cover and concealment, Obstacles, Key terrain (to include likely guerrilla targets and base camps), and Avenues of approach or escape. The effect of those factors on the guerrilla and counter guerrilla forces is estimated, then the counter guerrilla force commander uses his estimate in

formulating his plan to attack the guerrilla weaknesses while protecting his own vulnerable areas.

- (4) **Troops available.** The counterguerrilla force commander may or may not have control over all forces in the rear area for employment in rear battle operations. Forces he may have might include combat, combat support, and combat service support units. In addition, the commander may have allied regular, paramilitary, and irregular forces under his control in certain situations. The counterguerrilla force commander will be provided guidelines and directives on the current joint and combined procedures for establishing an effective rear defense. He will effect liaison with all forces operating in his area of responsibility, fix specific responsibilities, and exercise overall control of defensive operations in response to a guerrilla threat.
- (5) **Time available.** The time available for planning must be wisely utilized. In most cases, the one-third rule may be applied. The commander uses one third of the available time for planning and leaves two thirds for subordinate planning and preparation. However, reaction to intelligence may require an immediate response. Operational planning is conducted as early as possible.

Section III. The Threat

4-7. Type forces.

- a. The guerrilla action supports the enemy's main forces by causing disruption, confusion, and harassment. These actions may be conducted by conventional or unconventional forces utilizing guerrilla warfare tactics.
- b. Conventional forces that may conduct guerrilla warfare include forces that have been cut off or that intentionally stay behind as their main force withdraws or retreats. These forces generally possess the weapons and equipment of the main enemy force. Their combat power may suffer from killed and wounded personnel and lost or damaged equipment, and they may have logistical difficulties. Another type of force may be an armored and/or mechanized unit with a mission to penetrate friendly rear areas and cause disruption, confusion, and harassment. Only if this force uses guerrilla warfare tactics is it considered a guerrilla force. If it continues to operate within the area that can be influenced by the main enemy forces, or if it utilizes conventional tactics, then it is not considered a guerrilla force. Airborne, heliborne, or waterborne light infantry forces may also compose a

guerrilla force if inserted to conduct guerrilla warfare operations (disruption, harassment, or confusion).

- c. In all cases where conventional enemy forces are using guerrilla warfare tactics, the counterguerrilla force commander must expect their degree of training, equipment, and sophistication to match that found in the main enemy force.

4-8. Special units.

- a. Unconventional warfare forces that may conduct guerrilla warfare consist of special units trained specifically for guerrilla warfare and indigenous guerrilla forces sponsored by the main enemy force. Special units trained for guerrilla warfare usually have a primary mission to conduct guerrilla warfare operations against targets of opportunity with a follow-on mission to train an indigenous guerrilla force.
- b. Initially, these units may possess weapons and equipment equal to, or greater in sophistication than, US forces. The longer these units operate, the more they expend their assets. If they stay in the operational area for a prolonged period with no external resupply, then their level of efficiency decreases until US forces possess an equal capability. Their level of training is usually high, and these units are skilled in weapons, demolitions, communications, medicine, operations, and the ability to improvise when needed. These special units may enter a friendly area through the use of high altitude, low opening (HALO); high altitude, high opening (HAHO); or low level parachute techniques. They ~~also~~ be skilled in and use overland and waterborne (both surface and subsurface) techniques to enter the area.
- c. In many cases, the indigenous guerrilla unit may be trained by special units inserted by the enemy force. Usually, the indigenous guerrilla force must rely on external support for its logistics requirements. In some cases, if the guerrilla force is not too large, then it may rely on captured or improvised equipment and materiel.
- d. The tactics used by both conventional and unconventional guerrilla forces remain the same. They are characterized by elusiveness, surprise, and brief, violent action. The techniques used by these forces usually consist of raids and ambushes. Depending on the composition of the guerrilla force, it may have aviation and fire support assets available to it.
- e. The counterguerrilla force commander must be aware that the guerrilla force may have NBC weapons available to it. Because of the capability of NBC weapons to cause a maximum amount of confusion with a limited amount of personnel, their use must be considered as a method that the guerrilla may employ.

Section IV. Tactics and Operations

4-9. Rear battle.

Rear battle (FM 90-14) is defined as those actions, including area damage control, taken by all units singly or in a combined effort to secure the force, neutralize or defeat enemy operations in the rear area, and ensure freedom of action in the deep and close-in battles. The basic philosophy of rear battle doctrine is to maximize the capability of combat support and combat service support elements to defend themselves and render mutual support without requiring assistance from tactical combat forces. If a tactical combat force is assigned to the rear battle, it will be placed under the operational control (OPCON) of the rear battle officer. Once it completes the tactical mission and notifies the rear area operations center, it will be released to its parent unit.

4-10. Concepts.

- a. The concepts discussed in this chapter are geared to the needs of the tactical commander but can be used by the rear battle officer as well. In all instances, it is imperative that the principle of unity of command be maintained to minimize confusion and indecision that will occur if there is an inability to determine who is in command.
- b. The techniques used in rear battle operations are dependent upon METT-T. Some of these factors include the force composition, aviation assets, fire support assets, mobility, equipment, and size of the counter guerrilla force. These same factors must be examined regarding the guerrilla force. Generally, these techniques can be classified as either *offensive* or *defensive*.
 - (1) Offensive techniques are used to locate, fix, and engage guerrilla forces. These operation include reconnaissance patrols, ambushes, attacks, encirclements, and movements to contact.
 - (2) Defensive techniques are used to prevent disruption, harassment, or confusion. They are also used to minimize damage to a target if it is attacked. Preventive defensive techniques include movement security, security patrolling, and combat patrolling, among others. Examples of techniques designed to minimize damage once an action starts include base defense, counterambush, and reaction forces.
- c. The distinctions between offensive and defensive techniques are sometimes difficult to discern. Many offensive techniques can be used as a type of defensive technique and vice versa. (Offensive and defensive techniques are discussed in Chapter 3.)