

In reply refer to Initials
and No.

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NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

July 10, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Via: Op-16-1
Op-16-1-B
Op-16-B

SUBJECT: Need For and Functions of Counter-Intelligence
in Active Theaters of Operation.

Enclosure: (A) FCC Transcript of German Radio Broadcast
by Lt. Gen. Dittmar Concerning Guerilla
Warfare on Russo-German Front.

1. Enclosure (A) is submitted as having a two-fold interest. It outlines the effectiveness of organized and directed guerilla activities at the immediate front of combat and in the rear of enemy lines, where considerable and effective force may be brought to bear on an attacking army, and, by extension of principle, a fleet advancing through an area in which numerous bases must be left on the flank or in the rear.

2. It is also of considerable interest in demonstrating the inherent danger existing when an advancing force, acting on the offensive, must perforce, pass through, and leave to the rear, areas which the enemy had previously occupied or controlled. Being in the words of the enemy and based on his own bitter experience, it is a powerful argument for the absolute necessity of having a well-planned, organized and trained, counter-intelligence activity accompanying the advancing force and establishing counter-intelligence centers in the immediate rear to combat espionage, subversion, and sabotage carried on against our own forces by enemy agents left behind for that specific purpose.

3. In the phase of the war through which we already have passed, the Counter-Intelligence task has been directed against the enemy espionage, sabotage and subversive organization

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principally within our own territory. By force of circumstances it has had little to do within actual theatres of operation. The shift to the offensive changes this completely and makes effective Counter-Intelligence in the actual theater of operations and within the areas of occupation by the Naval Forces not only desirable but mandatory for proper protection of these forces as dictated by the Counter-Intelligence mission.

4. It is inconceivable that the enemy in withdrawing from any of the areas now held and controlled will not leave thoroughly trained agents and operatives to conduct aggressive espionage and sabotage on the flanks and in the rear of our advancing forces. Our lines of communication as well as the personnel and material of our combat forces will be the target of such a program. Our personnel and the inhabitants of the areas of enemy withdrawal will be the target of subversive activities designed to disrupt morale and render the rear of the combat force all the more insecure, if, indeed, not in actual jeopardy.

5. As the advance of U.S. Naval forces continues nearer to the homeland and vulnerable strategic areas of our enemies the more desperate will be the need for every means to be exerted to stop or delay our advance. Enemy agents, along with enemy combat forces, will be engaged in the terrific battle of desperation, and "no holds will be barred". Every known, and many surprise, methods of espionage, sabotage and subversive action can be and must be expected and guarded against.

6. The tasks of Counter-Intelligence in the coming offensive warfare by our Naval Forces can be segregated into these general phases as follows:

- (a). Aggressive gathering, collation and dissemination of all available information about hostile, indifferent and friendly individuals, organizations or movements in the areas to be occupied by our Naval Forces before the actual offensive movement or occupation in order to assist the Force Commanders in preparing their plans.
- (b). Participation in the offensive movement or occupation in order to detect with the least possible delay the organization of agents left behind by the enemy for purposes of espionage, sabotage and subversion.

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- (c). Establishment of Counter-Intelligence units in the areas of occupation immediately behind the zone of combat to coordinate Counter-Intelligence activities and fulfill the Counter-Intelligence mission of thwarting enemy espionage, sabotage and subversive programs behind our advancing forces. This phase of Counter-Intelligence activity should be continued during occupation and Naval Government administration until permanent civil government can be restored or established.

7. In occupation of any non-United States territory, shades of feeling ranging from whole-hearted friendliness to determined and combative hostility will inevitably be found. Enemy agents must be expected to develop as high a degree of combative hostility among the natives as possible. In this range of feeling will be found those who will cooperate and support our Forces so long, and no longer, as the native group feels its interests and the interests of the United States coincide. The question of native pride and the native code of honor must be solved, so our Force Commanders will know whether native resistance can be reckoned as token resistance or hostile intent. Our Force Commanders must know as much as possible of the background, inclination, strengths and weaknesses of native leaders and the character and strength of the military and political power controlled by these leaders in order to utilize them and obtain the maximum of effort in support of the U.S. Naval Operation. This is an over-all characteristic of Counter-Intelligence work occurring throughout all three phases outlined in paragraph 6. In phases (b) and (c) Counter-Intelligence must be alert to detect changes of allegiance and loyalty among the native population, determine the cause, and if enemy inspired fully inform such U.S. action agencies as can take aggressive counter-measures. This phase is akin to, but apart from the basic mission. It cannot be safely ignored or made a separate activity from the pursuit of enemy espionage, sabotage and subversive agents and the thwarting of their attacks directly against the Naval Establishment.

Respectfully,

Wallace S. Wharton
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DITTMAR DESCRIBES GUERRILLA PROBLEMS

Lt. Gen. Kurt Dittmar, in a talk entitled "Fighting the Bands in the Rear of the Eastern Front", describes the difficulties of the "monster-phenomenon of the bands (which) grew to the proportions of a plague", stating that "it was no improvised kind of guerrilla warfare, first springing into being in the war, but one methodically thought out and put into shape (using) inadmissible fighting weapons". He goes on to state, however, that "German units, with the cooperation of the population, tired of terrorization by the Bolsheviks and longing for final peace of mind" have succeeded in mopping up most of these bands, but that "operations are still in progress". (Berlin, in German to North and Latin America, July 6, 6:30 p.m. EWT)

Quiet but not Inactivity--Berlin continues, quoting Dittmar: "The period of quiet which, seen as a whole, prevailed on the front in the East for a quarter of a year--we have already emphasized this here--was not a period of inactivity and stagnation. What was carried out in the course of the weeks and months of this spring and early summer, in addition to the recuperation of our Eastern Army for future aims and possibilities, was the stabilization of the front, so closely bound up with them.

Idea of a Front--"One should not adhere to a narrow interpretation of the idea of a 'front'. The 'front', in its broadest sense, is the entire country from which the resources for the conduct of the war are derived. The 'front' is also the places where supplies are provided in advance, without which the prolongation of the fighting span and life span of an army would be questionable. The front is above all, however, that deep territory in which the movements are carried out, which are bound up directly with the idea of the conduct of the war.

Prerequisites--"No detailed representation is necessary, however, of the decisive importance to be ascribed to all the facilities which serve these movements, such as railroads, highways, roads, and bridges, as well as the installations connected with them. For they are in the largest degree conditions and prerequisites for all operations, whether they be of an offensive or of a defensive character.

Essential Task--"Thus it is one of the most essential tasks, especially for him who wages war in enemy country, to do everything possible to take possession of the entire terrain between the rear, the fighting, front and the point where the safety of the homeland territory begins, and to control it at least to the extent that this is necessary to protect it, as well as to utilize its vitally important facilities and installations.

Difficulties--"In the wide areas of the Eastern territory occupied by us, this condition had until now not been attained by us. The swift advance in the summer and autumn of the first year of the war in the East had necessarily to leave more or less untouched extensive parts of the countryside, primarily those whose natural features, extensive forestation, often with much swampland, and with a lack of settlements and roads, made them difficult to penetrate.

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Enclosure (A)

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Soviet Nucleus--"Into these territories had fled numerous dispersed portions of the beaten Soviet armies. They were the nucleus of the bands now forming, insofar as--and this likewise happened--the Soviet leadership, deliberately and according to plan, had not left behind definite special detachments for this purpose in the portions of the country given up by it.

Compulsory Recruits--"By an influx not only from the population or from fugitive war prisoners, but also by compulsory recruiting in the territories controlled by the bands and placed under harsh terror, these gradually gained the strength of considerable numbers. In many cases it was also possible to reinforce them from the Soviet hinterland, either with units which rushed through to them through their, at first, loose, widely scattered fronts, or with those who were brought to them by air.

Direction--"Their day-to-day supply of military equipment of all kinds was also often brought to them by planes. The unified direction of their effort by the Soviet Command was effected partly by radio communication, partly by liaison men, often by the use of planes here too.

Powerful Enemy--"Thus, in the rear of the German fighting front, an altogether powerful enemy had intrenched himself, necessitating special countermeasures, some of them very extensive. Very particularly in the central sector, as in certain areas of the Northern front, where extensive forest and swamp areas are characteristic of the countryside, the monster phenomenon of the bands grew to the proportions of a plague, serious because it made considerably more difficult the supply of the fighting troops, as well as their facility of movement, while in the rear of the army areas, as well as in the definite parts of the Reich commissariat, the utilization of the militarily important resources of the country was made very problematical.

Not New--"One should not overlook the fact that the systematically conducted and fostered war by bands has always played a special part in the Soviet mind. Already in the war against Napoleon in the year 1812, the attacks by armed peasants against the units of the Grand Army rolling back in dissolution had a certain importance, even if it has been assiduously exaggerated by legend.

Part in Civil War--"The tradition of the Soviets themselves, however, attaches to the doubtless important part which the guerrilla warfare of local bands played during the revolutionary disorders of the years 1918-19 in the struggle against the counterrevolutionary forces of the Russian Generals. In these battles of Russian against Russian waged with every means and with the hatred known only to civil war, the Soviet partisans found a definite field of activity.

No Improvised Warfare--"The methods and experiences of that time have been a guide for the Soviets in the present war too, at the same time that they naturally placed in their service here too, as everywhere else, all the technical military advances of the 2½ decades since then. Thus it was no improvised kind of guerrilla warfare, first springing into being in the war,

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but one methodically thought out and put into shape that opposed us in the case of the bands.

Special Character--"What gives this kind of guerrilla warfare its special character is the fact that everything which in itself characterizes the Soviet methods--the form of fighting freed of all moral restraints and utilizing every means--is here pushed to the uttermost extreme.

War in the Dark--"It is fighting in which the written and unwritten laws of the conduct of war are very deliberately nullified by the enemy command, in official form and in full awareness of the resulting consequences. A war in the dark is waged here, in the figurative as well as also mostly in the literal sense; a war which at every step betrays its spiritual kinship with the mentality of a civil war, and which offers full possibilities of development to the many criminal elements which customarily join the bands.

Inadmissible Methods--"The wearing of civilian clothes or German uniforms, the carrying of concealed weapons, the constant transformation, according to need, from a soldier to a seemingly harmless inhabitant of the countryside and vice versa, the infesting of the population with hired or covered agents, spies, and informers--all these most inadmissible fighting weapons give rise to a state of lawlessness and caprice, the elimination of which demands and justifies the use of even the most Draconian means.

Their Tactics--"Let us describe the tactics of the bands briefly. From excellently camouflaged hiding places difficult of access, they sally forth to make surprise attacks on communication facilities, camps, shelters, marching columns, to return mostly by separate ways after the execution of their tasks.

Sabotage Groups--"Small sabotage groups, as a rule disguised as inhabitants of the countryside, are sent out against objectives whose destruction seems profitable. The placing of mines by night at places important for traffic, setting fires, and bringing concealed--are favorite methods, applied with all technical skill.

Aid of Terrain--"The extent of the area permits of the frequent moving of the war theater and of the activity. Everything is geared to the avoidance of engagements with strong opposing forces--a desire which is again abetted by the enormous distances and the features of the countryside. In addition, the number of bases is large enough to permit of changing them from time to time. Their camps, in swamp and bog, lead one to infer strong fortification and mining of the few approaches, and they protect them to a large extent against surprises and attacks.

Difficult Task--"Thus the battle against the bands has been an unusually difficult task. Under the existing circumstances, little could be accomplished with small means. The necessary stronger forces, however, were unavailable as long as the situation at the front imposed more pressing and more immediate tasks. Thus it was desirable here to limit oneself to the protection of the most essential objectives, combined with occasional punitive expeditions.

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Burden to Germany--"Nevertheless, already in the spring and summer of 1942, in connection with the battles waged to close up and straighten out the real fighting front, a certain localizing of the guerrilla areas also was attained. What remained was certainly important enough, it is true, to continue to be a serious burden on the German conduct of the war, especially as the focal point of the guerrilla warfare was in territories which, in view of the railway lines leading there, can be considered centers of the German defense.

Germans Informed--"To clean things up here finally was an urgent necessity. The German Nation has been kept informed, by the reports of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, of the course of the fighting, but also of its severity and the difficulties which had to be overcome by the participating troops of the Army and the police.

Mopping-up Operations--"Individually, every one of the many mopping-up operations bore the character of an encirclement drive starting from widely separated points and then gradually narrowing concentrically so that the bands were compressed into ever narrower areas, and then destroyed, often after the surrounded area had been split up into several partial encirclements.

Extent of Area--"Very obviously, it was extremely difficult to carry out this procedure, in itself seemingly so simple, in view of the impenetrability and inaccessibility of the terrain to be combed. What areas were involved will become apparent from the fact that the area of operations of each of the many bands, of about the strength of a company, always embraced several hundred square kilometers, that is, about the extent of a Prussian (rural) district.

Nazi Methods--"All depended on the first approach being effected without its being observed, because otherwise it was to be feared that the band which was to be encircled would withdraw. The fact that in most cases one succeeded in actually surrounding them, and in repeated cases even surprising them completely, is a proof of how well the units specially entrusted with the task of combating the bands acquainted themselves in the course of time with the peculiarities of this adversary and this kind of warfare.

Stiff Resistance--"That the resistance of the trapped bands was in every case very stiff can cause no surprise in view of this particularly great...of the enemy. Nor that, as a rule, the fighting ended with the complete annihilation of the encircled units.

Sweat and Blood--"But always it cost much more sweat--and often enough blood also--before this result, the only one which can put an end to the pest of guerrilla warfare, was achieved.

Special Feature--"A special feature of these battles must be kept in mind. Just as in the long run it was the voluntary or forced cooperation of the population which enabled the bands to wage war in the rear of the German Army, so also fighting the bands had to be strongly influenced by the attitude and activity of the population.

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Cooperation of Population--"If often the population, without...cooperated in fighting the bands, this proves at the very least that they were tired of terrorization by the Bolsheviks, and that they longed for final peace of mind. Strict instructions to their own participating units have seen to it, moreover, that a sharp distinction is made between real bandits and coerced camp followers, and also that the practice of denunciation, grown great under Bolshevism, could not spread.

Aid of Volunteers--"One must also mention here the participation of natives, that is, of units made up of volunteer Russians, Ukrainians, and so forth, on the German side. The particular suitability of these troop units for warfare under the conditions described is beyond any doubt, if only because they know the methods and practices of the enemy from their own observation. Their reliability has been specially recognized. It will be well to keep one's eyes upon the development started here.

War Against Bolshevism--"Every Russian or Ukrainian, just as every other volunteer from the many nationalities of the U.S.S.R. who fought loyally and bravely at our side, is a gain not only because he strengthens the German fighting strength, but because, at the same time, he emphasizes the intention, stressed by our leadership from the beginning, to wage this battle not against the people in the Soviet Union, but exclusively against their Bolshevik oppressors. For it is clear that whoever stands against the Soviet, arms in hand, by his own conviction, proves his Europeandom.

Effect of Volunteers--"Already now the number of native volunteers in our ranks is important. As this fact becomes more widely known on the other side of our front, in spite of all the Soviet attempts to hush it up, it will not fail of its effect there.

Stabilization of Position--"Let us return to our subject. If now, by numerous successfully concluded actions, it has been possible to clean up the wider terrain in the rear, this fact means very much, because a stabilization of our position in the spacious Russian area always had to remain incomplete without unambiguous conditions in the rear.

Value of Mopping-up--"Its mopping-up constitutes not only an unmistakably uttered "Je suis, je reste" ("Here I am, here I remain"), on the part of the German leadership, but it also enhances, in every other operational respect, the value of the basis created this spring from which yesterday, in the middle of the Eastern front, from a successful attacking operation of our own, heavy battles developed in the Belgorod sector on the ground and in the air, through strong Soviet counterattacks.

Still in Progress--"These battles have meanwhile been extended to the area of Kursk, and they have assumed ever greater violence. The operations are still in progress, so that a more detailed discussion of them today is rendered unnecessary."

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