

1972

Toward a Concept of Military Domestic Action

William R. Corson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Corson, William R. (1972) "Toward a Concept of Military Domestic Action," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 25 : No. 4 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol25/iss4/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

While domestic action is not a new concept for the American Armed Forces, recent experience in working with local communities both here and abroad suggests that perhaps the Department of Defense's resources are not as readily adaptable to domestic action tasks as some would believe. Undoubtedly the struggle to overcome America's social problems will be long and costly. The military can and should play a role in this enterprise, but its contribution should only be made after thoroughly studying the socio-political problems to be confronted as well as frankly appraising both the assets and the liabilities inherent in military participation in local community self-help efforts.

TOWARD A CONCEPT OF MILITARY DOMESTIC ACTION

An article prepared
by
Dr. William R. Corson

These are not happy times for the American Military Establishment. Vietnam Veterans Against the War are in the streets. Wars are unfashionable. There have been serious racial and drug abuse problems in each of the services, antiwar dissent in the ranks, a weakening of the chain of command, and, finally, a serious questioning within the officer corps of the premises and values on which its professional life is based—the concepts of duty, honor, and country. Some have reacted to all this with bitterness and self-pity. However, the Department of Defense has rejected these symptoms of anomie and, in its statement of Human Goals,¹ has chosen to reemphasize the role of the military in its contributions to the improvement of our society through domestic action.

This is a heady idea. The cynical might contend it is one born out of the

political necessity to change the military's image rather than one based on a genuine concern in the military with the social problems and conditions in America. Regardless of individual points of view, all agree that something must be done to erase the crisis of confidence in America's military occasioned by the bleeding, "no-win" war in Vietnam, the shame of the mad minutes at My Lai, colossal mismanagement of defense contracts, the inglorious *Pueblo* episode, and the public disaffection of the intellectual community and the upper middle class with the judgment displayed by America's military and political leaders in recent years. The outcome of the present drift in public attitudes and the attitudes of those in the military services, if unchecked, is unthinkable, namely, a Nation incapable or unwilling to defend itself. "Today,"

Brig. Gen. Theodore Mataxis wrote in one of the military journals, "the services are facing the signs of disruption of discipline which could lead to anarchy and defeat on the battlefield." Whether the adoption of a domestic action mission will lead to a new role or a revitalization of the military services in the seventies and thereby reverse the signs described by General Mataxis is not certain; however, what is certain is that the military services must act in a positive manner to convince the American public that it is and will remain an extension of civilian society. Domestic action is a way, although not the only way, to accomplish the "Americanization" of our Nation's military forces, and more importantly, it may prove to be an effective means in the difficult, costly battle to solve America's social problems.

The idea of using the military within the United States in nation building or domestic action tasks is not a new notion. Historically the military services have long played a significant, but largely unpublicized, role in implementing domestic policies and improving our society. In addition to fighting the Indian wars, the U.S. Army played a valuable role in opening the frontier by helping local communities plant and harvest their crops and managing three out of the four western railroads built by 1900. Military medical efforts provide an even more impressive testimonial to the constructive potential of the armed services, as opposed to their rather more publicized traditional destructive capacity. In 1900 there were 350,000 cases of typhoid fever in the United States, of which 35,000 resulted in death. An Army Medical Board team headed by Maj. Walter Reed eliminated this health problem, and other teams led by other less well-known Army officers developed methods for controlling yellow fever, beri-beri, and malaria.

The economic development of the United States was promoted by the

work of the Army's Corps of Engineers which, in addition to their well-publicized flood and disaster relief work, has completed 3,600 major engineering and/or construction projects, built or improved more than 300 harbors, and constructed and maintained more than 30,000 miles of coastal and inland waterways.

In more recent times the military's ability to carry out domestic action projects was evidenced by the role played by the Army in the organization and administration of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC, as one of the New Deal welfare "workfare" programs, was organized in 1933 to provide employment in the field of conservation for 250,000 single men between the ages of 18 and 25. Initially, responsibility for the CCC was to be shared between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. Spokesmen from these departments were particularly opposed to giving the Army a role in the CCC program. Many in the Army itself did not want such a role. However, shortly after the legislation establishing the CCC was passed, it became obvious to those concerned that Interior and Agriculture were incapable of running the program. As a result, the Chief Forester, who had been one of the most vocal opponents to Army participation in the CCC program, formally requested the Army to take over the major responsibility for administering and setting up the program. The Chief Forester's request was honored, and Congress subsequently amended the CCC legislation to give the Army almost complete responsibility for the CCC. The results speak for themselves: within 80 days after the Army was given the responsibility for the CCC, 1,315 conservation camps were in operation staffed by 3,640 Regular and 1,774 Reserve officers. In less than 8 years 3,500,000 young men had participated successfully in the program, many million acres of denuded land had been reforested, and a

major social tragedy had possibly been averted.

Nonetheless, in spite of these historical precedents, the case supporting the use of America's military forces in a domestic/civic action role² to help solve current domestic social problems remains essentially unproven. There are those, both in and out of the military, who argue that efforts spent on domestic action programs would detract from military preparedness. This is certainly a valid consideration; however, it is not equally applicable in each of the military services at all times. For instance, there is no way a Polaris submarine crew on patrol could undertake and carry out a domestic action task. Yet, in certain other situations, military commitments can be restructured in such a way that those commitments are matched against social and domestic action priorities without any diminution in a unit's combat readiness or state of preparedness. Further in this regard, one might contend that a unit's actual combat readiness may be enhanced because of the diversity of experience gained in carrying out a domestic action task. For example, time spent in aiding local authorities to initiate and carry out a drug abuse education and treatment program may help commanders at all levels to understand more about the problem of drug abuse in their own units; the point being, of course, that many of America's social problems are not and cannot be confined to any sector of civilian society. There is no way to immunize the military against the process of rapid social change underway in America. But old ideas die hard, particularly the one that combat readiness is a precise finite function of strictly defined "military" variables, including time spent on ceremonial functions as well as on the rifle range. To wit: for a division to be stamped and certified as combat ready it must conduct a division-sized parade, an activity which consumes some 135,000 man-

hours. Aside from the fact that combat readiness requires a broader view to be a useful concept now and in the future, however, there is no assurance that it will be enhanced by a domestic action program.

There are those who argue that the individual soldier, sailor, airman, or marine's morale is improved as a result of his participation in domestic action projects and, therefore, they are, in turn more amenable to pursuing their military requirements with greater interest. There is some evidence in support of this view. Nevertheless, the results to date from domestic action programs indicate that such activities court disaster if less than the best-trained, motivated, and prideful men are used to carry out the effort.

Project Nation Building, which began in January 1971, is a good case in point. It was a very tentative experiment, essentially a pilot project, conceived by Lt. Gen. John J. Tolson to use the civic action skills of Special Forces teams in two extremely poor North Carolina counties adjacent to Fort Bragg. The counties were Hoke and Anson. The Special Forces teams sent to these counties worked at a variety of different tasks—clearing out clogged drainage ditches, repairing public buildings, and teaching physical fitness in the local schools. In addition, the medics in each of the teams assisted the Public Health nurses in taking and reading blood tests, immunizations, urinalyses, and paperwork. Dr. Riley Jordan, one Hoke County's two private physicians, in commenting on the value of the Special Forces in such a role said, "They are serving a tremendous local need. A lot of people are being seen who wouldn't otherwise be seen."³ The Special Forces efforts in Hoke and Anson Counties as well as those in Glenn Springs, S.C., and at Lane Deer on the Tongue River Indian Reservation, home of the Northern Cheyenne, in Montana, clearly demonstrated that organization's

capacity to carry out military domestic action projects. However, their performance does not guarantee similar results could be achieved by other Army units, let alone the other military services. At the present time Department of Defense opinion is divided over whether the experimental efforts of the Special Forces in military domestic action should be expanded to a nationwide program with participation by each of the military services or not. Admittedly much of the concern of those opposed to such a move is based upon the unpredictable reaction of special interest groups such as the American Medical Association, labor unions, and other existing centers of political power, to the military doing what they have either failed to do or have done badly.

Aside from these considerations, the issue involved in giving the military an expanded domestic action mission should also properly take account of the possible negative feedback on the military such a mission might engender. That is, the military might alleviate one problem and be blamed for the two created in its place. Further in this regard, the fundamental problem relative to using the military in a domestic action role is whether its inputs can predictably influence events. As a corollary to this problem, can the military design a methodology for solving problems which could be effectively transposed and replicated in the local environment, and can the local authorities—officials—leaders be encouraged to understand and implement the design effectively and efficiently? A basic consideration in this context is the recognition that the military itself does not initiate or conduct domestic action on its own; it only supports local activities. *This often overlooked gap between conceiving a program and then having someone else do it as you envisage is critical to the ultimate effectiveness of military domestic action.* Approaches

conceived in the Department of Defense, or in similar levels in the executive branch of the Government, may not be administratively feasible in what may be called America's poverty structure and its underlying value system. This is likely to be the greatest single handicap to the military in carrying out an expanded domestic action program; that is, determining what is really relevant and what really can be made to work.

Proponents for an expanded domestic action mission for the military also tend to justify such a mission in terms of America's history of cooperation with other nations to help solve their domestic problems. They ask, "If U.S. military forces can be used to assist foreign populations, why cannot a similar effort by our military services be directed at helping disadvantaged people in this Nation?" Without attempting to evaluate either the quantity or the quality of assistance our military has provided the *plain people* of other nations, there is an important barrier to effective domestic action which parallels our experience abroad. Namely, the basic problem standing in the way of the successful application of external (nonlocal) assistance is the inability of the status quo powers to deal pragmatically with the political issues and bring about the changes needed to encourage local development.

In light of the vast array of social problems confronting us, clearly it is inappropriate to speak of "a" military domestic role. Rather, we must think in terms of many Federal Government domestic action roles. For the military the refinement of these roles further relates to the broader considerations of national policy which, of course, identifies the overall purpose or objectives in carrying out a domestic action program. It should be borne in mind that the military enjoys certain capacities that constitute special areas of competence or strength in relation to carrying out an integrated program of domestic action.

For example, the Department of Defense operates the largest educational establishment in the world, controls the largest pool of specialists in the Nation, and buys more goods and services than any other public or private organization in the United States. By virtue of its size alone, the Department of Defense can make a more rapid and profound impact on American society than any other single institution. It has been calculated that if each member of the Department of Defense spent 1 hour a month on a socially productive project, this amount of time would exceed that provided by all volunteer welfare agencies in 1 year. Too much should not be made from such statistics. The size and strengths of the military are, of course, useful in a military sense, but those listed below have particular relevance to the problem of domestic action. These strengths represent flexibility and should exert a strong guiding influence over determining the logical and appropriate military domestic action role. They include the military's:

- Planning capacity—integrated programming, comprehensive view
- Resources capacity—materials, equipment, and funds
- Evaluation capacity—monitoring, assessment, and reporting on development processes
- Technical expertise—industrial, military, and administrative.

Other considerations should be noted. Not all military domestic action roles in support of a local community will be logical or fully rational. For example, Department of Defense policy decisions may simply result in a determination to aid community X regardless of what any careful preassessment of the conditions might reveal and prescribe as a logical military domestic action role. Such a Department decision could be in response to important political factors, a threatened breakdown in social services, or an imminent disaster. Further, it is readily apparent from

America's recent history of domestic turbulence that most local governments are unable to undertake the realignments or reforms that are desirable or necessary to remove the social-political causes of their problems; nor are they going to conceptualize domestic action in the same light or perspective that the military will view it. Thus, the political exigencies, both at the national and local level, are likely to be the primary determinants of the overall military domestic action role. Such a politicization of the military is not without hazard. Nevertheless, if military domestic action is adopted as a national policy, the individual military commander will be required to do the best possible with the means available to him. It is important, therefore, that the military commander charged with a domestic action mission be equipped properly to do the things he can do well. In order to do this the military commander must be able to measure each domestic action program or sub-program against criteria which will ascertain its relevance and potential effectiveness in helping the local community to solve a specific problem.

These criteria include:

- Analysis of the problem's causes(s)
- Analysis of the anatomy and nature of the problem
- Analysis of the degree and extent of the problem
- Establishment of policy objectives or milestones for rendering new or more assistance
- The nature of support options that exist within the policy framework
- The local environment and particularly the social and political context in which the military assistance will be given
- Analyses of resources and operational capacities of the local government
- Examination of the local government's conceptualization of the problem

- Department of Defense and/or national administration and local political determinants

- Department of Defense and/or national administration interest, limitations, and available tools

- Analysis of the local opposition's strategy

Using the above criteria, the military domestic action role can evolve in two ways: (1) it can be the outcome of a careful preassessment resulting in an integrated program design indicating what the military can or cannot do in a given situation; or (2) it can be the result of a policy decision to simply render assistance to a local community regardless of what such a preassessment might determine. In either case, it will be the role of the military commander to render the best possible assistance from the inputs decided upon. This is the point where the conceptualization of social problems and domestic action is so important. It is important because the task after the decision has been made to render assistance is primarily a matter of skillfully applying the various military domestic action tools within the framework of the local government's approach to social problems, that is, within the given environment. Let us look at the tools and see how and where they can be used effectively in the local government framework.

First, what are the military domestic action tools? Let us establish these clearly in mind before describing their areas of applicability and limitations. They are:

- Personnel—advisory, operational, supportive, and instructional

- Materiel—equipment, installations, raw materials, food, et cetera

- Funds—appropriated and non-appropriated

- Training—of local government officials in military facilities or in the local environment

- Analysis—evaluation of performance

These tools can be applied in the form of programs. The most important factor relating to these tools is their relevance in application, i.e., in directing their unique capacities towards specific objectives. It is appropriate, for example, for a military domestic action program to provide medical assistance tools if the objective is to get results in the health area. An example of improper tool relevance, however, would be to provide medical tools and assistance on the assumption that they can address or relate to the resolution of a problem such as job discrimination due to a person's race. This illustrates the importance of a proper conceptualization of the capacities of the various tools that can be used. Proper conceptualization becomes absolutely critical, for it is the only means by which perspective can be maintained between and among problems and which can relate various tools to their precise area of appropriate applicability and maximum effectiveness. Further, it must be recognized that, notwithstanding the political aspects of a domestic action program, the military, by the very act of rendering support to a local government, is, by definition, taking part in a social-change process in the area. This makes the use of military domestic action tools an even more delicate matter—to ensure that they are properly conceived and appropriately integrated into the local government's overall effort, as well as with those items or programs carried out by other elements of the Federal Government.

As indicated earlier, the military's domestic action tools are often assumed to be useful because they have generally been useful, or at least reasonably well accepted, in the foreign assistance environment. Still we must ask: Are they truly relevant to America's poverty culture and its value system? Are they even useful in a local government's social-political environment? It may be well to question their use in any form.

Advisers, for example, are considered to be an effective domestic action tool; however, there is ample evidence to question whether their presence at certain administrative levels is either needed or useful. Our foreign assistance experience with advisers, as well as the results from the so-called "War on Poverty," indicates that expertise *per se* is not enough. Too often the adviser dampens local initiative and short circuits or tends to circumvent the existing local administrative structure. In the case of domestic action, it should be remembered that the military adviser, as opposed to supportive and operational personnel, is a unique individual with certain qualities which are assets in a military environment, but these same qualities may become deficiencies or handicaps to the outsider when he is injected into the environment of local government officials and employees who are not necessarily "mission oriented" or impressed with the chain of command. If advisers are to be made a part of an expanded military domestic action program, there is the added requirement that they guard against holding the view that whatever they offer in the way of ideas is valuable since it derives from a more "efficient" system that gets more "results." In this sense, even if the adviser curbs his natural hubris—an assumption of superiority combined with arrogance and ego—and practices humility and works to develop empathy with local officials and employees as well as the plain people, there is a danger to the domestic action program if those in charge of the adviser fail to recognize that the primary role of an adviser is very undramatic and colorless. That is, advisers in a military domestic action program cannot be evaluated in normal efficiency report terms such as force, command presence, courage, et cetera. They must be rewarded, or at least not be dammed with faint praise, for their performance in helping a local official

to see the need to undertake or alter a given course of action. This is a slow drab process which may vitiate the use of military advisers in a domestic action program at the local level. Also, the view held by those who support an expanded military domestic action program that almost any reasonably well-educated soldier, sailor, marine, or airman who is recruited for the task and given ample preparation can effect social change in a local environment overlooks the differences in values and requirements between the military and local environment. These considerations signal the necessity to go slow.

As the role of the adviser in a domestic action mission can be questioned, so also can the other tools—materials, funds, training, and evaluation. Are materials and equipment provided by a military domestic action program, without an appropriate local government to absorb and maintain them, relevant and effective as support inputs? Is the provision of funds by the military, either directly from their appropriations or indirectly from other Federal agencies, a relevant and effective act if it precludes the need for the local government to implement tax reforms? Does the military even have the proper understanding of local American social-political-economic problems to provide training that will truly assist local government officials and employees in dealing with their situation? Does the military have the understanding to monitor, assess, or evaluate a social problem in a local American environment? The answer to these questions at the present time, with the exception of specially organized and specially selected personnel, is invariably no. In plain terms the U.S. military has more problems of a social nature than solutions to those problems within its own house. Yet, in spite of this condition, there is considerable truth and value in the contention that by applying existing military resources

and skills to help solve America's social problems, the military might acquire the compassion and understanding required to solve its own internal problems. However, for our purposes, the answer to these questions in the future should depend less on the military's current spate of troubles and more on the military's ability to use specific domestic action tools in specific situations. These questions are only raised here in response to those who simplistically advocate an expanded domestic action role for the military, automatically assuming its tools have relevancy in the local social problem environment and that the military's conceptualization of those problems will be accurate and adequate.

Now this is not to reject out of hand the idea of an expanded domestic action mission, but rather to set forth some of the real, practical, and conceptual difficulties which must be faced before such a mission is adopted. Failure to deal objectively with these difficulties, for any reason, is inexcusable. America's military men and the people they may set out to help cannot and must not be allowed to become anyone's or any group's political guinea pig or stalking horse. Quite obviously, pressures are bound to mount to use the power, sheer size, and capacity of the military for more than nonproductive repetitive training and flag showing. As we have suggested, the problem of restructuring military activities, with the goal in mind of developing the capacity to address social ills while maintaining combat readiness, is well within the realm of current feasibility in many cases. For example, without interfering in the activities of committed active contingent units, a Naval Reserve Construction Battalion (Seabees) of approximately 1,000 men could be directed to spend its annual 2 weeks of active duty in constructing and refurbishing schools, hospitals, and living quarters on an Indian reservation. The same is true for

a Reserve Army Field Hospital Unit which could be ordered to a hard-core poverty area in Appalachia to provide needed medical and dental assistance to the people. The point is, of course, that not only can these kinds of activities be done by the military, and done exceedingly well, but also that they are likely to remain undone if left strictly to other agencies of the Federal Government and local government bodies. While no one will deny the merit of these kinds of activities, however, they are far from being apolitical in nature. There is a political reality to domestic action, and the difficulties described above are *real* and must be surmounted if counterproductive disruptive end results are to be avoided.

The fact, promise, and hazard of military domestic action are well illustrated by the Special Forces experience in Anson County in early 1971. In his after-action report,⁴ the Commanding Officer of the 5th Special Forces, Col. Jay B. Durst, noted:

The Command and Control (C & C) Headquarters in Wadesboro, provided the central focus for consolidation and reconciling project planning and execution. The rapport established between the C&C element and the elected officials and influential citizens of Anson County largely contributed to the success of the operation. The experience received by the members of this headquarters element was undoubtedly the closest peacetime training vehicle for stability operations training. This exposure provided the officers and senior NCOs of the command section with a sobering example of the complexity of communications with local power and interest groups, even when there is no language barrier. The C&C Group rapidly learned that caution, tact, and sophistication are more than more generalized

concepts. The rapid adjustment and resultant ability of the C&C to influence local action, through the medium of the local government and social structure, speaks for itself. The training given to the young soldier, from the time of pre-deployment orientation to post-Anson County brief backs, was excellently received and near perfectly executed. The opportunity for the young soldier to contribute to solving the problems of underprivileged citizens provided strong motivation and enhanced morale. The training for stability operations and implementation of the "Nixon Doctrine" of people helping people help themselves cannot be better achieved in a peacetime environment. Well over half of the troops involved in Anson County volunteered for additional similar field exercises. This type of mission has appeal to the young, idealistic, intelligent soldier occupying the Special Forces ranks today.

Colonel Durst does not overstate what his men were able to do and learn; however, their performance does not justify a massive servicewide commitment to domestic action projects. Both Colonel Durst and the men directly involved and selected for duty in Anson County were, and are, exceptional by any standards. Certainly they should be able to carry out such a mission, but before less skilled and experienced units and leaders are given such a responsibility, the military in general needs to understand much more about the process of domestic action.

Care must be taken to recognize that domestic action is not a formula process. What we have suggested herein is that for a military domestic action program to have a reasonable chance for success the problem under attack must be continually reassessed, and the program methods themselves must be

sufficiently flexible in order to keep abreast of changing conditions as well as emerging new problems. That is, although military domestic action may be directed at what appears to be intransigent longstanding social, physical, or environmental problems, the process of application is necessarily fluid. An indirect approach may be the best. The planning and evaluation criteria we set forth above are applicable at any time, but the overall domestic action framework and the military's efforts to cope with social problems in a local indigenous situation require a set of basic principles—a benchmark—on which a sound program can be built.

The following are essentially a "first cut" at the set of basic principles that should guide local officials, local government employees, and civilian volunteers in initiating, carrying out, or deciding upon domestic action programs which require or rely upon military assistance. They may also serve as a tentative guide for military personnel and their organizations in providing human and organizational resources in such assistance programs. The listing is fairly comprehensive, but should not be considered exhaustive of all guiding principles—or an attempt to cast a unified field theory for military intervention in domestic social conflict.

For local government officials, employees, and civilian volunteers:

1. The local government should have a definable political objective that is attuned to the traditional value systems of the population.

2. The local government should establish an organizational mechanism for maintaining focus on the problem selected for action and for planning local and military inputs. The organizational mechanism must balance all of the local area's interests in considering their response to the problem.

3. The local government must assess with great care the causes of the

problem, the nature of the problem, and other key related elements in order to determine if military assistance will be relevant to help resolve it or to determine if the problem primarily constitutes an institutional-resource contest, i.e., one not resolvable by remedial military domestic action and/or assistance. As a corollary to this principle we note that the causes of social problems are fluid and must be constantly assessed to determine if changes have taken place which can alter the nature of the problem and hence the tools that can be used to combat it.

4. The local government should establish, or reestablish, an effective communication channel with the objects of the domestic action program (the people of the community afflicted with the problem) in order to exploit possibilities of compromise within its program. That is, all things are not possible at once, or simultaneously. Priority ordering, to be effective, requires political give and take between the people and their government.

5. The local government should maintain its organization and managerial integrity. Special or bypassing systems that prevent their structure from functioning in a normal way while simultaneously handling the program should be avoided lest the effort collapse once the military contribution is terminated.

6. The local government can approach resolving the recognized problem through either the causal route (social change) or through the resource route (mobilization-stabilization). Inequities and/or lack of appropriate resources comprise the two basic elements of any social problem, and by not approaching resolution through these two channels, government action condemns itself to merely dealing with the effects of a problem.

7. The local government must recognize the separate strategic areas of national policy (regional redevelopment, successive "wars on poverty," Federal

manpower training programs, et cetera) as involving an attempt to achieve broad social change and realignments of power, wealth, and opportunity. Under the broad national policy a range of options or compromise possibilities exist which can be used to help address social problems and their causes in their local areas. That is, regardless of a local area's racial bias or orientation, programs such as preventive first aid or improved hygiene may be received as plus for all citizens.

8. In the same vein, local government should recognize that their sub-strategies may be structured in such a way as to represent specific and selective fragments of sector and/or regional activities that can contribute to overall national efforts or policy and, as such, may enable the local government to qualify for Federal assistance they otherwise would be ineligible to receive.

9. The local government should recognize that the key to the solution of any social problem is the reaction of the people affected by that problem, indirectly and directly. Thus, popular cooperation with the government in identifying and pursuing goals is paramount.

10. The local government should organize a public information and education effort that is able to combine features of its domestic action objectives with those of private, fraternal, and social organizations in order to elicit the widest possible support for its objectives.

For military personnel and their organizations:

1. The military personnel responsible for planning and executing domestic action programs must first assess the social problems in the specific local area to determine their precise nature. Based on this information, the military personnel are then in a position to best utilize their organization in its proper support role. The first assessment should be

conducted consistent with the criteria described previously and be in accord with overall national policy. Such an assessment should include an examination of the possible tools that can be provided and their suitability in the local environment.

2. The military domestic action inputs should be selected so that they help the local organization energize its local governmental structure as well as supplement performance requirements.

3. The military domestic action inputs should be divorced as much as possible from identification with local political parties. They should be devised so as to contribute to the long-term interests of the people and not alone represent short-term aid to sustain one political group or another in power.

4. As a corollary to the above point, the military domestic action inputs should not stand in the way of natural local forces that can bring about needed changes in the socio-political environment. This is probably the most difficult principle of all to apply because, by its very nature, the participation of the military is likely to inhibit—at least temporarily—those persons seeking social change who are outside the existing power structure.

5. The military domestic action assistance efforts should be geared to allow institutions to develop within the local area which are responsive to local patterns of behavior, to the particular needs and values of the people, and not be prescribed in the abstract by persons at the national level.

6. Military domestic action should be orchestrated under a central “coordinator” who can harmonize the contributions of each military service in a unified effort.

7. In a local environment, military domestic action assistance must be organized so that the design of the central “coordinator” (national policy) is consistently preserved and implemented by individual military commanders and

their organizations.

8. Military domestic action inputs should be kept in proportion and perspective to maintain the fact that not only must the local government actually strive to implement those inputs, but the activities carried out must be geared to the future resource base that the local government can maintain on its own. The military inputs should avoid sophistication that is not consistent with the local government’s managerial, resource, and maintenance capability.

9. Military domestic action inputs should generally be supportive in nature, except in those rare cases when the President determines that a social problem (not a natural disaster or riot) directly threatens the national interest and therefore directs the military to assume an active operational role.

10. The military should recognize the inherent limitations of some of its tools for domestic action purposes—

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



William R. Corson has received the B.B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees and has held fellowships and scholarships at the University of Chicago, the University of Miami, and the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Corson is a retired Marine lieutenant colonel who was head of the Marines’ “Combined Action” pacification program in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967 and whose book on the Vietnam war, *The Betrayal*, was published in July 1968 at the time of his retirement after 25 years of service. Subsequent to his retirement, he has served as a Professorial Lecturer in Economics at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and as vice-president and director of the Urban Systems Division of Operations Research Inc. in Silver Springs, Md. He recently published a book entitled *Promise or Peril*, an analysis of the problems of the black college student in America, and is currently completing work on a book entitled *Consequences of Failure*.

personnel, materials, funds, and training capacity/ability—and work to modify these tools to overcome their limitations.

This paper, of course, is not offered as the final word on military domestic action. The best assembled findings and data would be open to discussion and modification as time goes on and additional experience is gained by the mili-

tary services. This paper, however, does provide a more logical, practical way of examining and evaluating an expanded domestic action program by developing a new conceptual scheme. It provides a nucleus of the fundamentals required to understand the subject in current situations and environments and to develop genuine expertise in the activity. It is a beginning.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Commander's Digest*, 1 November 1969. "to contribute to the improvement of our society, including its disadvantaged members, by greater utilization of our human and physical resources while maintaining full effectiveness in the performance of our primary mission."

2. U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive 5030.37* of April 1971 defines these terms in the following manner: *Domestic Action*—Military civic action and community relations activities designed to assist the civilian leadership in solving their community problems; *Civic Action*—Military civic action is the use of military forces in cooperation with civil authorities, agencies or groups, on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, public works, health, sanitation, and others contributing to the economic and social development which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population; *Community Relations*—The relationship between military and civilian communities, including such actions as cooperation with local government officials and community leaders; participation of military personnel and dependents in activities of local schools, churches, fraternal, social, and civic organizations; sports and recreation programs; conducting tours and "open houses"; participation in public events; liaison and cooperation with local associations and organizations; people-to-people programs; and humanitarian acts.

3. "Nation-Mending at Home," *Time Magazine*, 21 June 1971.

4. 6th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, "After Action Report-Anson County (ORBIT WINGS VII)," Fort Bragg, N.C., April 1971.



You cannot do the things that need to be done, as I call it to wage the peace, merely with arms. You have got to have the human understanding of human wants, and you have got to make it possible to achieve something in satisfying those wants if we are going to wage peace successfully.

*Dwight D. Eisenhower, News Conference, 23 January 1957;
Public Papers . . . Eisenhower, 1957*