Korean prisoners of war, Koje (Geoje) Island, Korea, 1953 (U.S. Army/Donald K. Grovom)

Detention Operations as a Strategic Consideration

By John F. Hussey

In major conflicts dating back to World War II and continuing through recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, military planners have not conducted the necessary planning and logistical support with regard to enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) and detainee operations (DO). Many current military and political leaders believe that the United States did not conduct detention operations correctly in Afghanistan, Iraq, and at Guantánamo Bay. This has resulted in tactical-level failures that have had significant operational- and strategic-level impacts on the conduct of military operations. It is time to change this paradigm and no longer treat EPW operations and DO as an afterthought.

The U.S. military continues to make errors in the vitally important mission of DO and has reduced its ability to achieve national objectives and, in some cases, created international embarrassments. If we do not place significant emphasis on this critical aspect of planning, the same mistakes will be repeated, and the U.S. military will lose its credibility, both domestically and internationally. Moreover, if these mistakes are not rectified, the Nation could fail in the other phases of combat operations. This article thus conveys historical examples of insufficient and ineffective planning for DO and how these deficiencies have tarnished the joint force. The article also provides recommendations to future planners that may reduce errors in DO, thus avoiding awkwardness and assisting in achieving both military and national objectives.

Major General John F. Hussey, USAR, is the Commanding General of the 200th Military Police Command, U.S. Army Reserve.

Let us begin by defining who a *detainee* actually is. It can be any person captured, detained, or otherwise under the control of Department of Defense (DOD) personnel. An EPW is categorized as a *belligerent*, which is defined as a person who is engaged in hostilities against the United States or its multinational partners during an armed conflict.[1] A belligerent is classified under the umbrella term of detainee.

Presently, the National Defense Strategy outlines an approach that names Russia and China, North Korea and Iran, and violent extremist organizations (the so-called 2+2+1 strategy) as potential engagements that the U.S. military may confront in the near future. We will likely face a complex global security environment involving near-peer competition that includes massive combat formation unparalleled since World War II or the Korean War. We can also expect that these conflicts may devolve into a hybrid type warfare with any of the nations noted, which means that American forces will be dealing with some form of insurgency. Despite clear guidance provided by the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in various strategy documents, how much thought and planning have combatant command (CCMD) staffs given to DO in the area of operations that we may engage in?

Background

The Korean War is perhaps most emblematic of the devastating effects that may result due to inattention to the DO part of an overall plan. The Korean War EPW plan highlights many of the errors that the United States made in this operation and failed to learn in subsequent operations. Initially, the Army identified Pusan, a port city on the southeast portion of the Korean Peninsula, as the holding area for captured North Korean forces. By August 1950, the United States and its allies had captured approximately 1,900 prisoners. General Douglas MacArthur conducted his famous Inchon landing on September 15, 1950. The landing at Inchon cut the North Korean lines of communication and routed the North Korean military. Consequently, over half a million North Korean forces were caught between MacArthur's landing force and the U.S. 8th Army that had been pushed to the southern tip of the peninsula. As the fighting mounted, coalition forces were left with over 176,000 North Korean EPWs by the end of October 1950.[2] While this may have been good news for the land component commander, there was also a dark side in that there was simply no plan to handle so many prisoners. EPW operations were an afterthought. In the end, the EPW camp on Geoje Island was "born of expediency."[3]

Unlike previous wars, the North Koreans mounted a strategic-level campaign to continue the war within the camp. Several North Korean senior leaders allowed themselves to be caught with the sole intent of going into the EPW camps, rallying the forces, and causing strategic-level embarrassment for U.S. and South Korean forces. For instance, Colonel Lee Hak Ku surrendered on his own volition. He left his unit in the mountains and approached the American lines at night with the sole purpose of being captured.[4] Lee played a prominent role as a senior leader within the camps and was the EPW spokesman in the riot and hostage-taking that occurred there. The highest leaders within the Communist Party of North Korea candidly admitted that they planned for the covert infiltration of agents into the prison camp at Geoje-do for the express purposes of "masterminding incidents within the United Nations Command [UNC] prisoners of war camps."[5]

As part of the North Korean strategic plan, prisoners rioted in Geoje-do in May of 1952. This rioting created a dilemma for the guards and senior leaders of the camp. In response, Brigadier General Francis T. Dodd decided to enter the camp in an effort to mitigate the disturbances. Shortly thereafter, Dodd was taken hostage and held for approximately 80 hours. During this arduous time, Brigadier General Charles Colson was in charge of camp operations. In his haste to secure the release of a fellow general officer, he signed documents prepared by the Chinese and North Korean EPWs. Dodd also signed the same documents titled "Korean-Chinese Prisoners' Grievances to the World" and "UNC POW [prisoner of war] Camp Affidavits."[6] These documents, in essence, gave the impression to the international community that the U.S. military was not treating EPWs humanely and thus resulted in the United States losing legitimacy on the international stage.

Based on American actions within the operation, and including what many deemed to be unnecessary violence, the United States received condemnation in the British and American media. An editor from a magazine in Moscow compared Geoje Island to Maidenek and Dachau, both Nazi death camps.[7] Over the period of 3 years, there had been a total of at least 14 leaders, and the camp became known as "the graveyard of commanders."[8] Both Dodd and Colson were relieved from their duties at Geoje-do and reduced in rank to colonel.

The following comments were made by senior military and political leaders describing DO during the Korean War.[9] They demonstrate that DO has been problematic for the U.S. military for an extended period of time. More concerning is the fact that military planners have failed to appreciate the gravity and depth of the DO mission and have also failed to study the lessons of past conflicts and the importance of proper planning for this strategic mission.

- UN Commander General Mark Clark, USA, referred to the situation in which Dodd was taken hostage at Geoje-do as "the biggest flap of the war."[10]
- Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr., chastised Colson for making "misleading and embarrassing" concessions to the POWs to secure Dodd's release. These same signed confessions were used by the enemy against the United States in the media and at the peace settlement talks.[11]
- Senator Styles Bridges made a press statement describing Dodd's performance during the hostage incident as "stupidity" and threatened an immediate Armed Services subcommittee investigation.[12]

- Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, senior UN delegate to the truce talks at Panmunjom, stated, "I'm certainly going to take a beating over this at the conference table."[13] He was referring to his continued dialogue with the North Koreans and Chinese during peace settlement talks to end the war.

The failure to plan for and conduct DO correctly in Iraq is similar to the failures at Geoje Island. I spoke to a fellow officer who was assigned to the Military Police (MP) brigade responsible for theater-level DO during the initial invasion. I asked him a simple but pointed question regarding DO: "What really went wrong?" He told me that there was no DO plan and that when he pressed higher headquarters for answers on what to do, he was told to "Figure it out, major." A major can figure out where to put the sally port on a detention facility or what time meals should be served. However, a major does not have the authority and, therefore, cannot order certain assets such as an Engineering brigade to construct and set up more camps in theater. A major cannot requisition additional MP brigades and MP battalions into theater, nor can he figure out a method to replace Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers who were wounded or went home based on their orders terminating in accordance with their mobilization time. These are decision at a much more senior level and should be part of a well-coordinated DO plan.

So what really did happen at Abu Ghraib? There was a failure to plan for DO at all levels. At the operational level of war, the proper command and control (C2) element was never considered. This failure resulted in facilities not being properly resourced, maintained, and manned. Perhaps just as important was the fact that the MP units assigned to the DO mission were not a high priority. Therefore, they were not placed high on the time-phased force deployment data list (TPFDL) and, as a result, arrived in theater late, and in many cases their personnel and equipment arrived scattered.[14] The failure to provide an overall commander of DO with C2 authorities over all detention facilities allowed for the MP and Military Intelligence (MI) missions to cross barriers and come into conflict, thereby creating ambiguity, most particularly in who was actually in charge.

Marine with Combined Anti-Armor Team 1, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, escort enemy prisoner of war away for questioning after discovering illegal drugs and improvised explosive device–making material, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, October 19, 2009 (U.S. Marine Corps/John McCall)

At the tactical level, Soldiers were not trained properly at mobilization platforms, and there were no standard operating procedures within the camp. There was a mix of uniformed personnel interacting with contractors, and little oversight of either. The Geneva Conventions were routinely violated, and much of the day-to-day care and custody of the prisoners was abdicated to MI personnel and contractors. All these issues were contributing factors that led to the abuse. Many of these issues could have been avoided if the DO plan had been appropriately staffed and a proper C2 element planned and resourced. The failures at Abu Ghraib also resulted in the loss of U.S. credibility at home and on the international stage.[15]

The American DO plan for Afghanistan suffered flawed planning as well. There were no trained DO units in theater at the onset of the war. While this is understandable based on the various aspects of the plan, nevertheless it had consequences. Over 3,500 Taliban surrendered in the Kunduz area and were under the control of the Northern Alliance at a prison in Mazar-e-Sharif. Riots ensued in which detainees overpowered untrained guards. The prison had to be retaken by force, resulting in the death and injury of U.S. and allied personnel. Additionally, over 500 detainees were killed.[16] There were allegations

Jordan Armed Forces–Arab Army Quick Reaction Force Female Engagement Team member practices physical search procedures on U.S. Marine with 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit Female Engagement Team during detainee operations in Jordan, August 5, 2019 (U.S. Army/Shaiyla B. Hakeem)

that the Northern Alliance abused detainees and that maltreatment resulted in unnecessary death. Some tried to link this debacle to the U.S. military.

U.S. policy dictated that captured al Qaeda prisoners were not covered by the Geneva Conventions and were referred to as "detainees." Although afforded many of the same rights and privileges as EPWs, the treatment they received in Afghanistan and at Guantánamo Bay—and the reported cases of abuse—has resulted in increased international scrutiny. Questions began to surface regarding the treatment standards of detainees, and much of the debate centered on the appropriate classification of captured Taliban and al Qaeda fighters and what, if any, legal status they held.[17] Planners never considered the legal authority to detain individuals captured on the battlefield, nor did they discuss the standard of treatment that a detainee should receive.

The failure to successfully conduct DO in the Korean War led to the relief of senior officers involved. Not surprisingly, the same results occurred in Iraq. The calamity at Abu Ghraib resulted in the end of two general officers' careers. Consider that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld found that Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez had been derelict in overseeing detention in Iraq. Many speculate that the mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib resulted in Sanchez not being nominated for his fourth star.[18] Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, who oversaw DO at Abu Ghraib, was reprimanded, relieved of her command, and demoted to colonel.[19] Presently, the detainee situation from the war in Afghanistan remains unresolved, with some 40 detainees remaining in custody at Guantánamo Bay.

Crunching the Numbers

The historical examples cited should motivate planners to give DO the necessary consideration that any aspect of an operational plan deserves. DO simply cannot be a "hand-wave," that is, a non-issue deemed as unimportant and glossed over. The following provides staffs with various considerations when planning for theater-level DO.

Initially, staffs need to ask the right questions when wargaming for DO. They must plan to avoid many of the pitfalls that have been detrimental to commanders and senior leaders in past conflicts. According to a RAND study, the U.S. military does not plan well for DO, and as a result it has been hampered by failures in this part of the campaign planning.[20] It is time to reevaluate the concept of operations and the DO portion of a plan. More than likely, in the past, some lead mid-grade officer sat in a room, drew up a plan either individually or with a small group of personnel operating in a vacuum with no oversight or staff input, and never synchronized the

Table 1. Detainee Operations Projections in a 2+2+1 Strategy

Country	Number of active-duty troops	Number of reserve troops	Total troop strength
China	2,183,000	510,000	2,693,000
Russia	1,013,628	2,572,500	3,586,128
North Korea	945,000	5,500,000	6,445,000
Iran	534,000	400,000	934,000
Estimated number of active Salafi-Jihadist fighters	100,000–230,000	Not applicable	100,000–230,000

(The number of troops used for the projections was provided by Global Firepower.[1] The projections for Salafi-Jihadist Fighters was provided by a report from Dr. Jones.)

Notes
[1] Global Firepower, available at <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>.
[2] Seth G. Jones et al., *The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadist Threat: Current and Future Challenges from the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Other Groups* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018), available at <www.csis.org/analysis/evolution-salafi-jihadist-threat>.

plan with other staff members. It is time to lay the plan out, set aside the time for the staff to review it, and actually put it to some type of exercise.

Before an exercise is scheduled, we must ask whether the courses of action are adequate, feasible, and acceptable. The plan needs to be staffed and vetted and, if possible, exercised through some form of a simulation to test its effectiveness. Important questions need to be asked, such as what is the actual movement plan for detainees. Suppose the concept of moving detainees is by ground or air. If the number is 75,000 detainees, for example, how many vehicles or airplanes will that require? How much fuel will be consumed? How much crew rest will be involved for movements? While the MP mid-grade officer will have this concept all planned out, does the Joint Forces Air Component Commander or Joint Forces Land Component Commander (JFLCC) know his or her assets are part of a DO plan? Much of this will occur during Phase III operations, when combat is expected to be at its most brutal state. This is not the time to discover that air assets, vehicle assets, and main supply routes are unavailable for the movement of detainees.

In addition, if detainees are not moved back to the rear, combat arms personnel will be obligated to guard detainees and thus cannot exploit enemy weaknesses and vulnerabilities. This will limit U.S. and allied forces' ability to advance, and consolidated gains in large-scale contingency operations may be vulnerable to an enemy counterattack or acts of insurgency by hybrid type operatives.

Perhaps the most important question that a staff must contemplate when planning for DO is how many troops does each of the potential U.S. opponents actually have. Table 1 depicts the potential adversaries troop numbers in the 2+2+1 strategy.

During World War I, the number of EPWs as a percentage of the total force mobilized was 9.8. Of their total force mobilized, the Allies experienced a capture rate of 8.5 percent, while the Central Powers experienced a 12 percent rate of capture of total mobilized forces. During World War II, the number of EPWs as a percentage of the total force mobilized was 29.[21] The Allies had approximately 23 percent of their forces captured, while the Axis had approximately 37 percent of their forces captured. In terms of raw numbers, German EPWs were approximately 11,094,000.[22] Planners underestimated the number of prisoners the Allies would take and the speed at which they would take them. By June 1945, the United States held more than 425,000 POWs who lived in camps throughout the Nation. After the Normandy invasion, the United States was receiving 30,000 POWs per month, and during the last months of World War II, the numbers soared to 60,000 per month.[23] During the Korean War, the allies captured up to 200,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners. During Operation *Desert Storm*, the 800th MP Brigade processed and interned 69,822.[24] In Iraq, over 160,000 detainees were processed through U.S. DO camps.[25]

It is extremely difficult to predict how many EPWs will be taken during any conflict. With more lethality in warfare, these numbers may trend downward; however, staffs must plan for a worst-case scenario. The numbers above reflect historical data from various wars that the United States has been engaged in. Considering the 2+2+1 strategy, the percentages of EPWs captured was based on 5 percent and 10 percent, just to provide military planners a figure to demonstrate the vast number of EPWs who may inhabit a camp. This should immediately draw the attention of various staff members regarding screening, transport, interrogation, feeding, preventive medication and care, and custody. Table 2 depicts the concept of the 2+2+1 strategy as it relates to EPWs, with projected capture rates of 5 percent and 10 percent.

The combatant commander (CCDR) and JFLCC must also be concerned about the quantity and quality of tactical-level personnel involved in the DO mission. Both in Korea and DO post-9/11, the U.S. military was faced with a variety of challenges, including a lack of qualified personnel, personnel who had not planned properly, officers who did not forecast and plan for the massive numbers of prisoners, and the inability to correctly identify the detainee populations. One of the first considerations is numbers. Doctrinally speaking, an MP detention battalion is typically organized to support, safeguard, account for, guard,

Table 2. The 2+2+1 Strategy as It Relates to EPW

Country	Number of active-duty troops	Number of reserve troops	Total troop strength	Number of total estimated EPWs based on 5 percent	Number of total estimated EPWs based on 10 percent
China	2,183,000	510,000	2,693,000	134,650	269,300
Russia	1,013,628	2,572,500	3,586,128	179,306	358,612
North Korea	945,000	5,500,000	6,445,000	322,250	644,500
Iran	534,000	400,000	934,000	46,700	93,400
Estimated number of active Salafi-Jihadist fighters	100,000–230,000	Not applicable	100,000–230,000	5,000–11,500	10,000–23,000

and provide humane treatment for up to 4,000 detainees; however, certain missions may require additional resources and manning.[26] The requirements regarding personnel, materiel, and logistical issues are immense.

The U.S. military may be engaged in a conflict for an extended period of time and will not have the capacity to rotate formations and still meet the requirements. In Iraq, the MP corps had to take Soldiers from other military occupational skills and train them to be the guard force within its camps. On occasion, other Services provided troops to serve as guards in DO facilities. Lastly, consider that many of these assets reside in the National Guard and Army Reserve and have not had training to prepare for the care, custody, and control of 4,000 detainees. The number of potential EPWs will, in turn, require greater attention from the CCDR and JFLCC as to the quality and quantity of tactical-level personnel. This may also require that National Guard and Army Reserve DO planners are involved in the planning prior to battle and it may require an adjustment to the TPFDL to ensure the correct DO assets to support the plan are in theater prior to the start of Phase III operations.

Moreover, the U.S. military lacks sufficient language skills capacity to cover the 2+2+1 scenario. Each of the nations listed in table 2 has numerous dialects that planners must account for. For example, there are seven Chinese dialect groups, with the predominant being Mandarin from the north/southwest areas of the country. This dialect comprises approximately 72 percent of the population. Although Russia is vast in geographical landscape, it basically has three groups of dialects: northern, southern, and central, with the latter heavily influenced by the other two. The official language of Iran is Persian (Farsi); however, seven more languages are recognized as regional languages. In North Korea, U.S. forces can expect three different dialects spoken by forces there. Two are spoken by residents of Pyongyang, thus indicating a potential for being in the inner circle of North Korean politics. This is extremely important for the interrogators who may be targeting these individuals as high-value detainees and for the housing of North Korean detainees. Regarding various terrorists who may be captured, there are an array of languages that these individuals may speak. U.S. military interpreters are divided into categories based on citizenship and clearances.While it is important to have these individuals to conduct DO, there will be a need for MI to have interpreters of similar language capabilities present to conduct interrogations and exploit captured materials, including computer hard drives that will be in a foreign language. Does the DO plan account for this? Are contracts identified and payment ready to proceed in the event of ground conflict? How fast can and will these interpreters arrive in theater? How will they be cleared and how long will that take to do so?

Additional Tactical Considerations for Staff Planning

Prior to the processing of detainees, commanders and their staffs have a variety of issues and conditions to think about. One consideration is the actual location of the camps that will be used throughout the area of operations. Camp location and construction are of significant importance. In Iraq, the camps were large enclosures surrounded by wire. This was similar to Geoje-do. The MP guard force could not enter the camp with great ease and, therefore, they often avoided entering the camps at all. This ceded control of the camps to the detainees. The detainees used rocks found in the camps as weapons to throw at guards. In some instances, the end result was lethal force being used against detainees. In both Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib, detainees took advantage of the inability of the guard force to penetrate into the compounds and began to tunnel out. This may be addressed by reversing an expeditionary mindset and building a structure that can prevent such problems.

The prison complex in Afghanistan cost a great deal more money than other ones; however, there were fewer riots. With the right construction and efficiencies built in, the guard force can be reduced because it had control of the facility. Although U.S. forces may be expeditionary, these camps are functioning for several years, so they are not really expeditionary. Small camp compounds provide better guard force control. Construction should include concrete pads to prevent tunneling and improvised weapons availability to detainees. Divide camp areas into smaller communal cells. Provide individual segregation cells for high-value detainees who are being interviewed by military intelligence, investigators, and other assets. The segregation cells will also serve to house those detainees not in compliance with camp rules. The forward edge of combat areas

is subject to change; the chief of staff at each CCMD should ensure that camp locations can adapt to geographical limitations that may affect flow of detainees, materials, and personnel in support of camp operations. The camp locations and detainee flow must be compatible with the overall plan and ensure that there are ample air and land assets available to move detainees without affecting Phase III operations.

The plan must also include provisions for appropriate medical care within the camp. The overall footprint of the camp should be considered because detainees will have to be moved both to interrogations and to medical appointments. In addition, they may have to be transported to civilian courts. If the camp is large, movements will be complex and often require multiple simultaneous movements resulting in a larger guard force requirement. Is the camp near an airfield if air operations are part of the overall plan? What is the road structure in and around the potential camp location? If the location is near an urban area, it may offer enemy forces surrounding higher terrain that will allow for observation and enemy attacks on the facility. Will the location of the camp be compatible with the necessary access to support both Secret Internet Protocol Router Network and Nonclassified Internet Protocol Router Network? Does the environment support a camp structure—that is, will it flood during the rainy season or will the metal facilities rust prematurely based on environmental impacts? Engineer assets must be robust to repair infrastructure destroyed by detainees who will keep the "war" going on within the camp. They will also be needed for routine maintenance, normal wear and tear on infrastructure, and expanding structures within the camp or building new structures based on new requirements.

Geoje-do had approximately 138,000 EPWs. Logistics considerations included feeding a large population three times daily, and sanitation facilities must be a contributing factor to camp design. The culture of the detainees must also be taken into consideration during the design of a DO camp. In *Desert Storm* the U.S. military built wooden commodes for the EPWs to use. In the Middle East, they do not defecate by sitting on a commode; rather, they squat over a hole in the ground. The EPWs literally stood on the commode and defecated on the wall behind them, thus raising sanitation concerns. Even the color of prison garments must be considered. In Geoje-do, each prisoner was issued a summer uniform of bright red, thus delighting the Chinese communists who believed that red symbolized good luck and health. Conversely, the uniform selection angered the Koreans, both communist and noncommunist, who associated the red uniform with the Japanese occupiers of World War II. The Japanese issued red uniforms to those prisoners condemned to death. Orange jumpsuits seemed to anger many of the militant leaders in the Middle East. This was the same jumpsuit used by American forces who housed detainees at Guantánamo Bay. Terrorist organizations in Iraq, as well as the so-called Islamic State, placed individuals into orange jumps suits prior to their beheadings.

The DO plan must take into consideration the political or religious ideologies of those being detained by U.S. military forces. The inability to predict insurrection within the confines of the prison will lead to continued violence and injuries among the detainee population as well as the guard force. The failure to observe and interpret detainee behavior through subjective indicators such as will, motivation, morale, health, and welfare are all elements that will affect the atmospherics within the camp and directly correlate into the size of the guard force and the housing of particular detainees.

Many have suggested that detention facilities in both Iraq and Afghanistan served as recruiting and training grounds for insurgents and terrorists.[27] It is widely accepted that high-value detainees should not be housed with "common criminals." A threat assessment must be developed for each detainee that considers the variances in radicalization, seniority within the military or political structure, and experience and standing among those labeled as a high-value detainees. Planners must consider how to assess the nature of incoming detainees and tailor detention experiences accordingly. More specifically, when and where practical, captured unit information and available intelligence data should be used to broadly classify detainees on a limited number of characteristics, perhaps including political indoctrination, radicalization, seniority, experience, and education and/or work skills.

Once classified, the detainees should be placed in a facility that has been adequately configured to segregate those considered to be less radicalized. Segregating and housing detainees on the lower end of any of these trait scales with those on the higher end risks facilitating substantial indoctrination and training in a detention facility. This would also hold true for nations that have an authoritarian type structure. It would be best not to house common soldiers with senior leaders within the military who are also part of the political establishment that we may be in conflict with. Remember, the Eastern way of war is far different from the Western way of war, and that also holds true in DO. Finally, it is imperative to have the correct number of screened and trained linguists identified and ready to perform the mission. In many instances, U.S. personnel are uneducated on the culture of the detainee populations, and therefore a cultural advisor is essential. Psychological operations personnel should be augmenting DO personnel. The purpose of psychological operations is to help the commander change behavior. The after-action report from the 800th MP Brigade in Operation *Desert Storm* notes that much of the credit for smooth operations rests with the work of psychological operations personnel.[28]

Establishing a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force Headquarters

Joint Task Force (JTF) 134 was established after the Abu Ghraib scandal. Its responsibility was the proper care and custody of the detainees throughout the Iraqi area of operations. Included in the custody of the detainees was the mission command of MP operations, MI operations, and the medical commands that

were responsible for detainee medical care.[29] The same type of mission command structure was established in Afghanistan around the same time. In 2009, the commander of U.S. Central Command, General David Petraeus, initiated a comprehensive review of U.S. detention operations in Afghanistan. The resulting 700-page report highlighted both the very poor conditions inside Afghan prisons and the potential for radicalization of detainees, and recommended the establishment of a dedicated detentions command in Afghanistan. Based on that assessment, in July of 2009 General Stanley McChrystal, the commander in Afghanistan, requested approval to establish JTF 435 to centralize all detentions, interrogations, medical care, and rule of law functions in Afghanistan.[30]

The CCDR, in accordance with joint doctrine, is authorized and should immediately establish a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force (CJITF) or Joint Interagency Task Force (JITF) to conduct mission command for DO. This is the most logical conclusion that should be drawn for future operations in which large numbers of detainees are expected. These headquarters need to include staff judge advocates, public affairs personnel, and MP planners. Each day, senior American commanders wake up with the best of intentions. Unfortunately, many of the errors that have occurred in DO have involved the leadership responsible for DO. These failures include ambiguity in the chain of command, poor leadership, a lack of discipline and training, and vague rules of engagement.[31] Thus, it is important to have a general officer/flag officer (GO/FO) as the commander and deputy commander of this task force. The immediate appointment of a GO/FO will allow the commander to conduct mission analysis and mission command with a functional staff and plan for DO appropriately.

The commander and deputy commander will have an obligation to interact with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), international media, and key host-nation government officials. Lastly, the CJITF/JITF commander will be responsible for the disposition of those detainees who are held in the custody of the U.S. military. Planners familiar with the Powell Doctrine should be familiar with the premise that requires there be a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement. In DO, this translates into a plan to turn over detainees at the conclusion of hostilities. In the Korean War, the repatriation of prisoners became the primary disputed issue during armistice negotiations. This sticking point in the negotiations prolonged the war by a year and a half and resulted in many more casualties.[32]

At the conclusion of *Desert Storm*, the 800th MP Brigade and its advisory teams were involved in the transfer of Iraqi EPWs to the Saudi Arabian ministry of defense. Initially, senior members of the brigade were not invited to meet with the Saudi officials, which caused problems because those who did the initial planning had little knowledge of the Geneva Conventions; requirements for processing, transfer, and support of EPWs; or Saudi camp capacities. Many of the Iraqi prisoners did not want to go back to Iraq, resulting in approximately 13,418 prisoners wanting to remain in Saudi custody.[33]

In Afghanistan, U.S. forces were up against a mandated timeline in which their authority to hold detainees would expire on December 31, 2014. There was a lack of clear guidance as to what to do with the remaining detainees, and at the tactical level it proved problematic. Issues of this nature must be worked out well in advance.

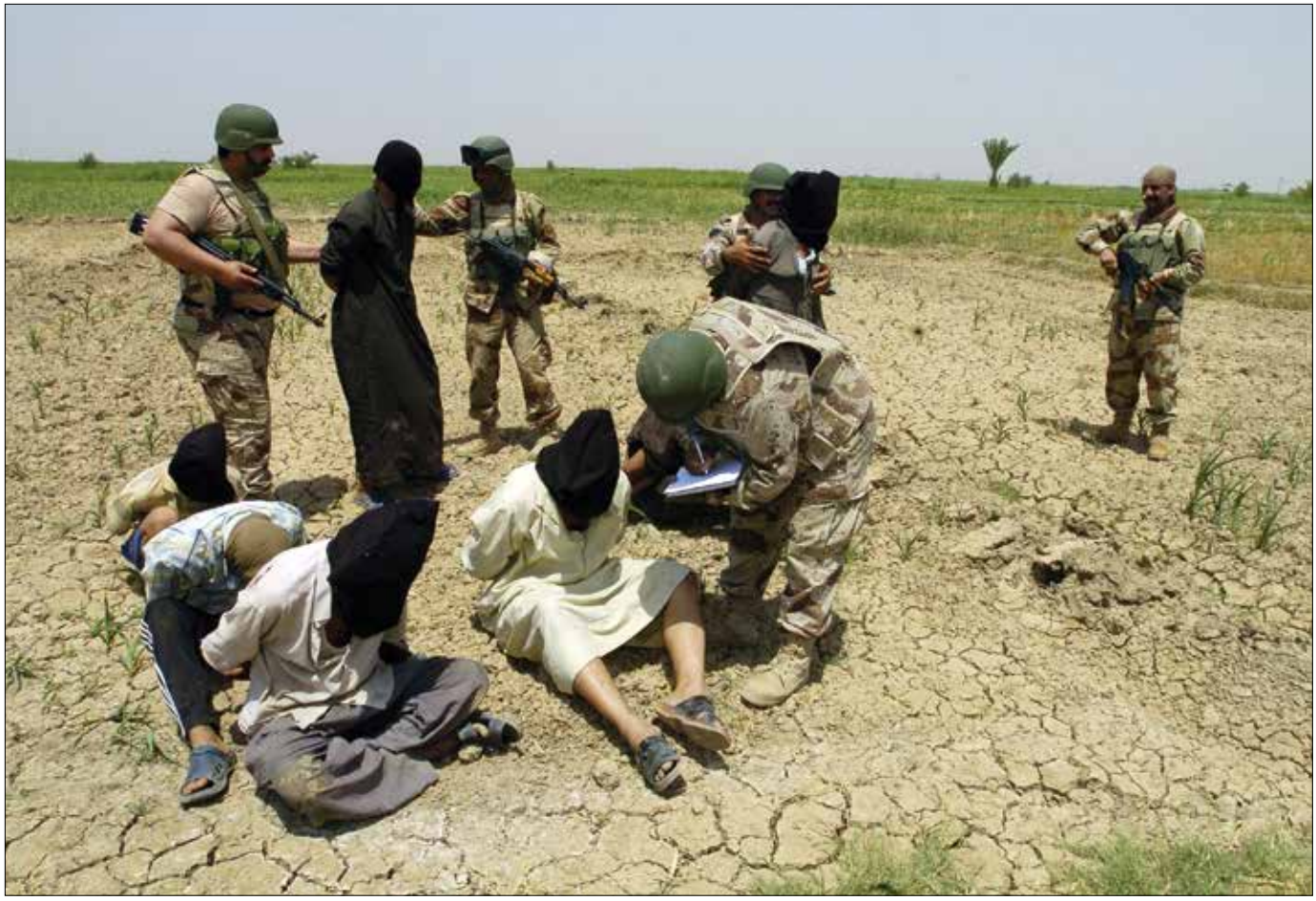
Lastly, current laws are outdated and have not been reevaluated to consider that we are not always going to be involved in conflicts with nation-states. Both U.S. statutes and international law must be revamped to reflect the fact that the world has changed and nations may be in conflict with terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and lone terrorist cells (or individual terrorists), all of which make DO even more complex. These individuals may come from a failed or fragile state without an effective government or laws. There may be no functioning government or government willing to take them back. This is now a problem in the Middle East with the defeat of the so-called Islamic State in Syria.

Once detained, what if any training or reentry programs should be considered for detainees upon repatriation? How will that work with the international community and the host nation to ensure released detainees are not a continued threat on the battlefield and to the national security of the United States and its allies?

Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Considerations

According to the Geneva Conventions, the detaining power is responsible for the treatment provided. Within that responsibility, it is specified that the detaining nation will provide safe, humane, and legal custody of all detainees in their custody. Detainees must be fed, sheltered, and provided medical care. Most U.S. commanders are committed to upholding policies and international law that support human rights based on our values and because of the order/safety that humane treatment brings to a facility or camp. To ensure these mandates are met, those responsible for the care, custody, and control of detainees can expect to be visited by the ICRC. The mission statement of the ICRC calls for an impartial, neutral, and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide detainees with assistance. Detainees are protected by the Geneva Conventions, which also give the ICRC the right to visit them. The main ICRC concern is that detainees are treated according to international humanitarian law.

Camps and the process/methodology of DO will be under scrutiny from external sources such as the ICRC and potentially allied nations that entrust the United States to conduct theater-level DO. A commander can also expect the national and international media to be very interested in reporting on DO. Regardless of how well a nation's military is trained and resourced, there are going to be difficult times, and the media will



Iraqi soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi army, question apprehended insurgents at detainee collection point during Operation *Peninsula*, in Wasit Provence, Iraq, May 20, 2005 (U.S. Army/Arthur Hamilton)

be there to exploit and report on the errors of this operation, thus exposing potential incompetence or detainee mistreatment to the international community. Detainees will ensure there are mistakes and errors made by the guard force as a means of continued resistance. This mission will also draw the interest of various entities within the Department of Defense, and the DO camp commander will be inspected by various U.S. military entities to ensure compliance with appropriate rules and regulations.

If senior leaders are still concerned about "blowing things up," they are at the tactical level of war and need to get out of that mindset. GO/FOs responsible for the strategic/operational plans need to conceptualize the battlefield and how the campaign will progress and plan both strategically and operationally. In both the Korean War and the war on terror (including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay), the planning, if done at all, was not staffed or tested. Senior leaders must consider the friction of war as described by Carl von Clausewitz. Friction is caused mainly by the dangers of war, its demanding physical efforts, and the presence of unclear information—that is, the "fog of war." Additionally, one must always consider that everything in war is simple; however, even the simplest thing can be difficult. Lastly, especially regarding DO, remember the old adage that the enemy will always get a vote and "Murphy" will always be present. The failure to consider and plan for DO will create media sensations, public discourse, and continued legal battles over detention procedures that have the potential to jeopardize the mission.

Conclusion

There may be great reasons why planners in previous engagements did not devote the time and manpower to DO planning. Some may argue that it was not a major concern, while others might suggest it just was not what warfighters do. Combat operations are hard, and American Forces are subject to death. There is no one that can disagree with that reasoning. However, the United States can ill-afford to win certain phases while losing others, particularly one that has captured the attention of the international media and various human rights groups. The inability to properly plan and resource DO has resulted in unnecessary injury and death for American and allied warfighters. It has also resulted in increased scrutiny and embarrassment for the U.S. military, in particular senior leadership. Elected officials have also come under inquiry based on this aspect of the plan.

Based on the foregoing discussion, no one can dispute the fact that tactical-level

DO can have strategic implications in the international arena. Based on that logic, would it not make more sense to ensure the plan is intact while we are at peace, rather than try to create a plan, or improve on an unstaffed plan, during actual conflict? If the latter choice is made, then truly more Americans will be subjected to the brutalities of combat based on a changing or untested plan. This article should serve as a notice to GO/FO and planners on CCMD staffs as to what they can expect in this difficult but important mission. The U.S. military can no longer muddle its way into this aspect of the plan and then hope for success. Historically, that has proved ineffective and costly. JFQ

Notes

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