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ZEGRA, Kosovo, June 23 [1999]. Local Serbs in civilian clothes opened fire tonight on a checkpoint run by United States Marines here, provoking a firefight that left one Serb dead and two others wounded, one severely, American officials here said . . . [Commander of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, COL Kenneth Glueck] said he believed that one or more Serbs had escaped. *"They faded into the crowd,"* he said.

—*The New York Times*, emphasis added

DJAKOVICA, Kosovo, June 27 [1999]. "It's exaggerated," a former senior allied official, who spoke to top European leaders in recent days, said of NATO's damage estimates. *"NATO hit a lot of dummy and deception targets.* It's an old Soviet ploy. Officials in Europe are very subdued. No one's pounding their chest over this." . . . Careful reviews of cockpit video footage showed that some of the targets hit were not tanks or artillery batteries, but rather clever decoys made by the Serbs to fool pilots flying three or four miles up in the sky.

—*The New York Times*, emphasis added

## **THE PROBLEM**

The urban environment has unique characteristics, making operations difficult and dangerous. Cities possess great numbers of non-combatants, are dense with vital infrastructures and important sociopolitical institutions, and are usually cluttered three-dimensional spaces that pose significant logistical and navigational challenges. It suffices to say that these and other characteristics conspire to create a daunting environment for U.S. forces. The World War II–

era urban combat policy for U.S. forces involved clearing and holding urban areas on a room-by-room and building-by-building basis. This tends to be a bloody, expensive, disorienting, time-consuming, and manpower-intensive business—one that is increasingly deficient in the complex post-Cold War world. U.S. and allied forces are called on today to perform a range of missions in urban environments, for example in stability and support missions. Some missions are amenable to the WWII urban combat policy, but many others are not. Moreover, most of these missions are on foreign soil, presenting U.S. forces with the prospect of operating amid alien and perhaps unfriendly noncombatants in unfamiliar and complex terrain. This raises a trenchant point: the possibility that an overmatched adversary confronting the United States will invite battle in their own urban environment as part of an *asymmetric strategy*. Such a strategy seeks to apply one's strength to an adversary's perceived weaknesses, knowing that a strength-on-strength approach would be less profitable. Putting a strong opponent into unfamiliar and complex territory, blunting his edges in information gathering and command and control, and setting him among an unfriendly population are all tactics that embody asymmetric thinking.

A brief demonstration of the asymmetric approach to warfighting might be useful. Per the Biblical parable, consider some hypothetical options available to David in facing Goliath:

1. Hand-to-hand combat in open ground
2. Hand-to-hand combat in dense woods, where Goliath has difficulty maneuvering
3. David employs a missile weapon, while Goliath employs a hand-to-hand weapon
4. David sneaks up on Goliath while the latter is sleeping and stabs him

Option 1 would be a symmetric approach: David's strength versus Goliath's strength. Options 2–4 would be examples of asymmetric approaches. In Option 2, Goliath's advantages are offset to some degree by hindering terrain. In Options 3 and 4, David avoids Goliath's strengths altogether and strikes at his weaknesses.

The widely analyzed, canonical example of the asymmetric approach in high-intensity conflict is the battle for Stalingrad in 1942, where Soviet forces reduced German advantages in air power and artillery and forced a brutal fight in urban terrain well known to the Soviets. Low-intensity urban campaigns are even more common but less well studied. At present, the United States is a force-projection power and thus far more likely to face adversaries on their home ground than the reverse. Furthermore, the United States is arguably the foremost military power in the world, driving opponents to seek asymmetric strategies should they need to contend with the United States. As noted above, inviting battle on friendly urban terrain is one possible asymmetric approach to warfighting. It is no surprise, therefore, that the U.S. armed forces have selected a doctrine of “urban avoidance” in the post–World War II world.

Unfortunately, “urban avoidance” (or its kin, “siege warfare”) may be less tenable than the U.S. armed forces have come to expect. Global trends and national security imperatives converge on the urban battlefields of the future. It seems certain that U.S. joint forces will participate in future urban operations, whether unilaterally or in coalition—for example, in humanitarian relief or, at the other end of the spectrum, in full-scale warfighting. Recent operations in Panama, Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia amply illustrate the point. It is also worth noting that, with exceptions like the employment of troops in Detroit in 1965 and Los Angeles in 1992, most instances of urban operations for U.S. forces since World War II involved force projection, and all have had restrictive rules of engagement (ROE) for noncombatants and their infrastructure to some degree or another. While much is being done to improve the auspices for future urban operations, there remain significant shortcomings in doctrine, training, and technologies to ensure mission accomplishment and force protection in such engagements. The need for U.S. forces to operate outside of the continental United States (CONUS), the presence of restrictive ROE, and the perceived intolerance of the U.S. public to casualties necessitate the development of better means and methods for operating in urban terrain.

## THE GOALS OF THIS REPORT

This analysis focuses upon a single area of great importance in urban operations: deception. Consider again the asymmetrically minded strategist. One method of neutralizing an opponent's strengths (in say, air power and artillery) is to do battle in friendly urban terrain. Another is *to cause the opponent to misapply his strengths*. Deception offers the best method for achieving this effect. Deception used by adversaries represents a potent and enduring challenge to U.S. forces, as the recent Balkan air war ably demonstrates. But why should opponents possess exclusive rights to clever asymmetric strategies? Deception used by friendly forces represents a very effective force multiplier.

This monograph is therefore concerned with two primary points: first, how and to what effect future adversaries might attempt to deceive U.S. forces during urban operations, and second, how and to what effect U.S. forces might employ deception to accomplish their objectives in those same urban operations. It is *not* our contention that the use of deception is automatically decisive, or that it is cost or risk free. However, an examination of relevant history and a careful consideration of the nature of the urban environment reveals this to be fertile ground if properly cultivated, and our adversaries will certainly reap such a harvest if we do not. This analysis will concentrate on the relationship between military deception and the singular nature of the urban environment, formulating hypotheses on how they interact (and appropriating examples from the historical record where illustrative). Our hypotheses shall serve as a foundation for any prescriptions we may make, whether in experimentation, design, training, technological improvement, or the like.

Is current U.S. doctrine for urban operations fully leveraging deception for operational and tactical advantage? We seek here to provoke consideration of deception as a potent and underappreciated instrument, and to spark debate as to whether current considerations of deception are sufficient. We wish to assess the utility of deception in U.S. and allied urban operations, and also to do the same for adversaries in those same arenas. Moreover, our prescriptions here should set the stage for the creation of a "toolbox" of deceptions and methods for employing them in future urban operations.

Succinctly put, the goals of this monograph are twofold: to heighten awareness of the important role deception can play *for both friendly and hostile forces* in urban operations, and to create a solid analytical foundation for modification of current doctrine, training, and technology requirements.

## THE METHODOLOGY

We approach this topic in three sections.

First, we turn our attention to the urban environment, examining its key characteristics and how operations are conducted within built-up areas. The outcome of this examination should be a profile of the challenges and pitfalls of urban operations, as distinct from those of other environments.

Second, we define deception and how it is employed, describing its goals, process, means, and hazards. An important answer should emerge from this discussion: whether and which of the prerequisites and facilitators of deception are found in the urban operations milieu.

Finally, we study the interrelationship of deception and urban operations, considering whether and how urban terrain affects deception, making use of historical examples where relevant and illuminating.

This analysis is concerned exclusively with deception, and it will touch only briefly on other important components of information operations (e.g., psychological operations). While these topics are no less important, they will be discussed only where directly relevant to this analysis.

## THE SOURCE MATERIALS

We make use of both formal pronouncements of U.S. doctrine (joint and service publications) as well as less official settings for doctrinal discussion (working groups and the like). We have also made extensive use of historical accounts and lessons learned from a variety of recent military engagements, where apt. These include many of the

well-documented high-intensity urban operations in the past fifty years, such as

- Stalingrad, Ortona, Aachen, Berlin, Manila (1942–1945)
- Seoul (1950)
- Hue (1968)
- Suez City (1973)
- Panama City (1989)
- Mogadishu (1993)
- Grozny (1995)

In addition, where possible we have drawn from more marginal (but equally important) primary sources: writings and interviews of terrorists, insurgents, criminals, and the like. Many of these individuals have directly participated in urban conflicts (often in opposition to U.S. or allied forces) and have written or spoken of their experiences. While not exhaustive, the list of sources includes

- Irgun (Israel, 1946–1948)
- Provisional Irish Republican Army (United Kingdom, 1916–1999)
- Front de Libération Nationale (Algeria, 1956–1962)
- Sendero Luminoso (Peru, 1980–1999)
- 2nd-of-June and Red Army Faction (Germany, 1968–1972)

Detailed historical case studies are beyond the scope of this report; for those interested we include a complete bibliography.