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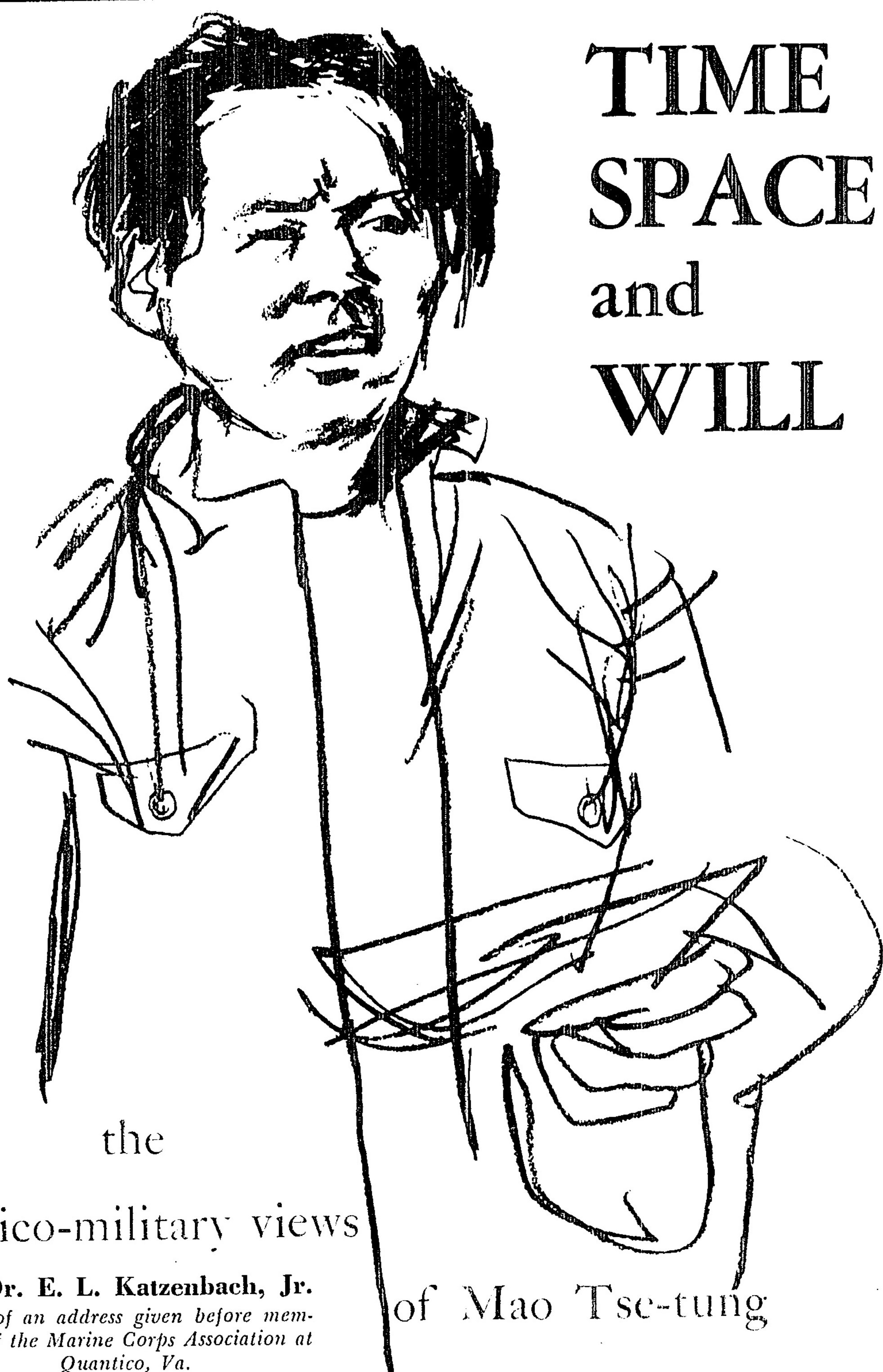
鬥爭的主要手段就是戰爭



TIME SPACE and WILL

the politico-military views of Mao Tse-tung

By Dr. E. L. Katzenbach, Jr.

Text of an address given before members of the Marine Corps Association at Quantico, Va.

"... THE MAIN FORM OF STRUGGLE is war, the main form of organization is the army," Mao Tse-tung, the dictator of Red China, once observed. He elaborated his *dictum* this way: "... without armed struggle there would be no place for the proletariat, there will be no place for the people, there will be no Communist Party, and there will be no victory in revolution."

This philosophy, which relates war and revolution so closely, is the end product of more than a quarter-century's first-hand experience with military matters. It is not a strip of intellectual tinsel which Mao had picked up from the classics of Communism. It represents his own most intimate view of and approach to the problem of revolution.

To be sure, his revolutionary forebears had a far greater interest in military affairs, particularly in military theory, than have other revolutionaries at other times. The articles which Karl Marx and his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels wrote on the Crimean War for the old *New York Tribune* were attributed to Gen Winfield Scott—then running for the Presidency of these United States, incidentally. Nor is there any doubt that the best contemporary writing on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 was that done

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by Engels in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The French Socialist, Jean Jaures, wrote *L'Armee Nouvelle,* which still must be regarded as a classic of military literature. The Russian Lenin read and commented on Clausewitz, and Stalin has commented on Lenin and Clausewitz. More recently Khrushchev has leveled criticism at the military insights of Stalin—he said that Stalin did not even know how to read a military map—and this would seem to indicate that in his own lights Khrushchev considers himself a competent military critic. In short, whereas the citizenry of the Western World has had few students of military affairs among its responsible political figures—Alexander Hamilton and "Teddy" Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill are perhaps the most prominent of those exceptions which prove the rule—the intellectuals and the politicians of the Communist world, translating their basic concept of class war into meaningful action, have given what in another society might be called prayerful consideration to the study of military policy. Mao is the most distinguished of Communists who have given military theory their concentrated and continuous attention.

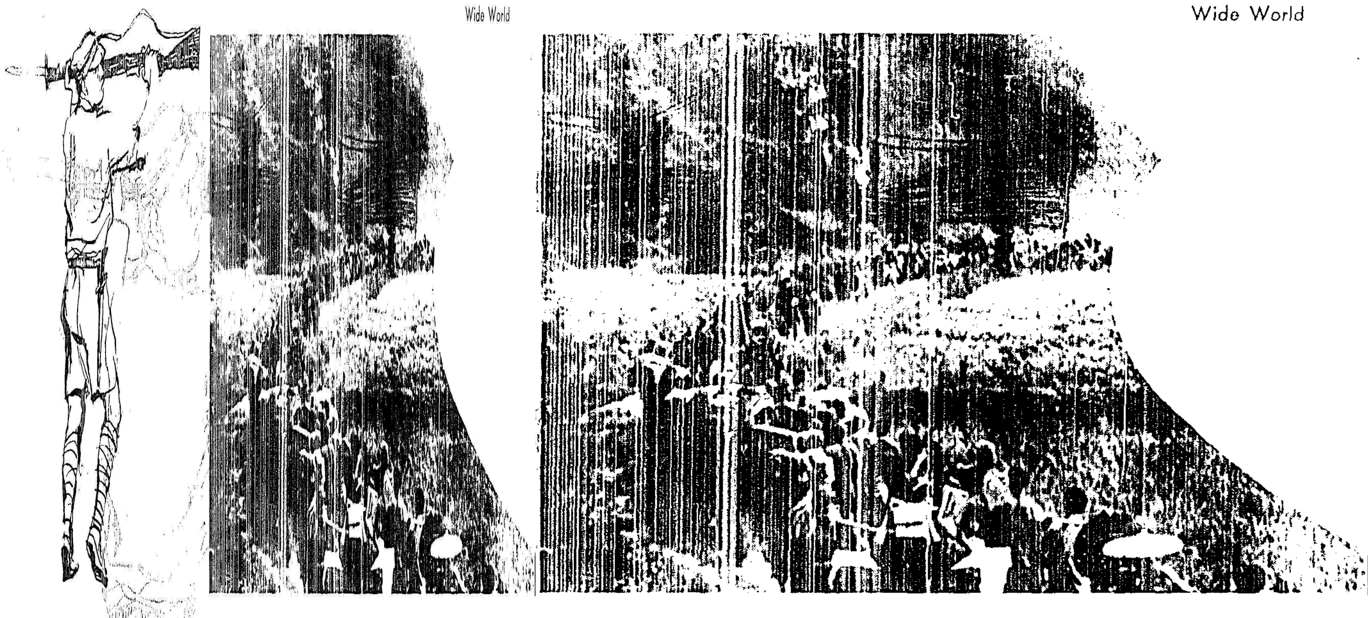
Mao's military thinking is not part of a party line. To be sure, he quotes from various Communist gospels. But he also quotes from Chinese military classics, particularly the work of Sun Tzu, with which he is thoroughly familiar. And from Clausewitz, whom he studied in Chinese translation as early as 1928, he borrows the usually quoted catch phrases. But essentially his theories of war are generalized from his own experiences as a revolutionary. The day-to-day crisis formed the foundation of a doctrine which presently purports to be generally applicable and absolutely timeless. Thus, his first important military piece, *The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains* (1928), deals with specific problems and hence is dated. *On the Protracted War,* which he wrote a decade later, deals with generalities, lays down a set of "immutable" laws and thereby presumably seeks to take the "if" out of warfare, and to make a science of an art.

THERE ARE fancier definitions, but basically military theory, unlike most others, has to do with making the best use of the available. In broad terms, military doctrine would seem to have some 6 components, 3 of which are tangible and 3 of which are not.

Of the tangibles there is, first, the weapons system: the long bow, the Swiss Pike, the A-bomb, items on that long list of the instruments of war which have given a sole possessor a moment of military supremacy. Second, there is the supply system, logistics in the broadest sense. Perhaps this is the area in which US military genius has best expressed itself. Even such US contributions as amphibious techniques have contributed no more than, for example, the fleet train, the Red Ball Express, the depot system—those techniques by which we helped fight and win a war on the outside lines of communications. And third, there is manpower.

And then there are 3 intangibles: *space,* which is defined here as square mileage plus obstacles, minus a workable communications network, *time* and *will.* It is to these 3; *space* and *time* and *will,* that the industrial Western World has given least thought, and that Mao has given most. The reason is simple enough, for these 3 factors plus manpower added up to the totality of his exploitable military potential. Weapons and supplies were narrowly restricted. His was a military force born in the most abject poverty. The problem towards which he directed his attention, therefore, was this: how can a nation which is not industrialized defeat a nation which is? In stating his conclusions, he said nothing which had not been stated in one way or another before, but he did rerank military necessities. He and his followers have achieved a degree of success, unfortunately, which forces as relatively ill-equipped as these had not achieved during the whole of the 19th Century when Western arms carried Western culture into the far corners of the world.

Among the Communist Viet Minh in Indochina, among the Huks in the Philippines and the insurgents in Malaya, Mao's writings are gospel. What Lenin did on the subject of imperialism and Marx on capitalism, Mao has done for anti-industrial warfare. That is why an understanding of Mao's military philosophy may be of rather more than casual interest.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❦ Although Mao never states it quite this way, his is, nevertheless, a theory the basic premise of which is that political mobilization may be substituted for industrial mobilization with a successful military outcome. That is to say, his fundamental belief is that only those who will admit defeat can be defeated. So if the totality of a population can be made to resist surrender, this resistance can be turned into a war of attrition which will eventually and inevitably be victorious. Or, conversely, when the populace admits defeat, the forces in the field might just as well surrender or withdraw.

Political mobilization, Mao wrote, "is the most fundamental condition for winning the war." He explained his thinking in the form of a simile: "The people are like water and the army is like fish." "With the common people of the whole country mobilized, we shall create a vast sea of humanity and drown the enemy in it. . .." Mao holds that military salvation flows from political conversion. But note: conversion takes time.

So Mao's military problem was how to organize *space* so that it could be made to yield *time.* His political problem was how to organize *time* so that it could be made to yield *will,* that quality which makes the willingness to sacrifice the order of the day, and the ability to bear suffering cheerfully, the highest social virtue. So Mao's real military problem is not that of getting the war over with, the question to which Western military thinkers have directed the greater part of their at- was it that the French had such difficulties with the Riffs in the 1930s, were so frequently defeated in Indochina in the late 1940s and early 1950s? Specifically, with respect to the Abyssinian War, and by deduction with respect to the others, the answer which Mao gives is that the success or lack of it varies directly with the degree to which the native forces fought with inferior weapons against modernized forces on the terms of the latter. By and large, it would seem true that what made the machinery of European troops so successful was that native troops saw fit to die, with glory, with honor, *en masse* and in vain.

So the first problem to which Mao bent his mind was how to avoid a military decision. This he knew he had to do, and this, he thought, was something his enemy, whether Nationalists, or Japanese, or others, could never withstand.

"The 10 years' revolutionary war we have fought may be surprising to other countries," Mao wrote in 1936, "but for us it is only like the presentation, amplification and preliminary exposition of the theme in an . . . essay with many exciting paragraphs yet to follow." Time and again throughout his works on war he returns to this same theme: "Our War of Resistance cannot be quickly won and can only be a protracted war." Again, "as 'a distant journey tests the strength of a horse and a long task proves the character of a man,' (so) guerilla warfare will demonstrate its enormous power in the course of a long and ruthless war. . . ."

Moreover, note that when Mao

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can there be any questions as to his views on means. In Chinese history there was a nobleman who in courtly fashion turned over the initiative to the enemy. Of him Mao remarks, "We are not Duke Hsiang of Sung and have no use for his stupid scruples about benevolence, righteousness and morality in war."

Has this now aging revolutionary, who now directs the lives of more men than any other in the whole world, changed his mind? Has success dimmed his view of a world which is Communist controlled from pole to pole, of a war which must of necessity continue until his sort of world is a present reality?

❦ War, given *space, time* and the revolutionary *will* to exploit them, has not only a clear and certain outcome, but clearly definable stages as well in Mao's military theology. Protracted war, he notes, *must* (and this is a point which he makes dogmatically) pass through three stages. In the first Mao is on what he calls the "strategic defensive." The second is a period of stalemate, a period of preparation for the third, in which a shift to the offensive takes place. The first period is that about which Mao is most concerned.

What is a military objective? A hill, an industrial center, a rail line,

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sirability of retreat. "Is it not self-contradictory to fight heroically first and abandon territory afterwards?" he asks rhetorically. Then rhetorically he answers with yet another question: "One eats first and then relieves oneself; does one eat in vain?"

But while defeats frequently make heroes, they do not encourage the spirit of resistance. Only victory, however small, can do this. The successful small action, the raid. the ambush, the assassination, this is the material from which militant enthusiasm is woven. But continuous victory at this level of military activity is not a matter of gallantry and glory, but of caution and self-restraint. Mao recognizes that during the strategic defensive, the very price of survival is caution.

Again and again he inveighs against the dangers of desperadoism, the process by which one gains glory by losing one's shirt. Again and again he insists on the necessity of local superiority, 5 and even 10 against one is his formula. Combining dispersion with concentration of force, the secret of victory in detail, this is the concept which he is trying to put at the forefront of the minds of those whom he seeks to teach what he calls the "laws" of war.

Mao makes the point implicitly in his writings that while guerilla operations are the cosmic trap of military strategy, the muck, the quicksand in which a technologically superior military machine bogs down in time-consuming futility, they cannot in and of themselves win wars. Like mud they can stave off defeat, but, like mud, they cannot bring victory.

Therefore he insists that during this first period of war, the period which encompasses the strategic defensive, the army must, as it must in all stages of war, take an active political role. For according to Mao the army is not an instrument of the state, but the essence of it, its spirit, its life and its hope:

When the Red Army fights, it fights not merely for the sake of fighting, but to agitate the masses, to organize them, and to help them establish revolutionary political power; apart from such objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army the reason for its existence.

The army is then to rout out the dissidents, to equip itself with mimeograph machines, and with "chalk cans and big brushes" for cartoon warfare. The army is therefore to be of itself a single huge, coordinated propaganda machine, the torch of revolution.

THE FIRST STAGE of war slips into the second because, as Mao himself remarks, the Communists have "retreated in space but advanced in time." The period of stalemate begins.

What according to Mao's theory has been happening? In the first place, the "inevitability" of defeat has been wiped from the minds of the defeatists by the very fact that the war has been continued. Despair has given way to hope, the will to resist has been strengthened, and the will to win is beginning to dawn. Guerrilla units are turning into mobile units strengthened by the capture of enemy materiel, and the coordination between forces is being more skillfully managed. A series of local actions, even though each separate one results in the retirement of the attacking irregular forces, can be regarded as a strategic gain by the irregulars; provided that they preserve their ability to take the field again. By regularly disturbing the peace they are destroying the local legitimacy of the established order. Inevitably the distracted villagers will begin making contributions to the irregulars as insurance for their flocks and harvests. The irregulars will then have begun to collect taxes and will have taken the first steps towards becoming a respectable government. And the Communists' enemy has been given pause to wonder whether or not his own victory is certain, despite the unending capture of objective after objective.

Fundamental to all else, Mao says, is the belief that countries with legislative bodies simply cannot take a war of attrition, either financially or, over the long run, psychologically. Indeed the very fact of a multiparty structure makes the commitment to a long war so politically suicidal as to be quite impossible. When the lines of the Communists' enemy are drawn out like strings of chewing gum, weak and sagging, when the financial burden increases from month to month, the outcry against the war will of itself weaken the ability of the troops in the field to fight. The war which Mao's theory contemplates is the cheapest for him and the most expensive for the enemy.

Take one example, and one which is chosen specifically to illustrate his theory under the circumstances most favorable to it, the raid which the Communist Viet Minh made on the state of Laos in Indochina in 1953.

The raid on Laos, like the war in Indochina itself, presented a farrago of paradoxes. It was a foot-soldiers' *blitzkrieg* against immobilized, mechanized forces. Those countries which were most immediately threatened by it—Burma and Thailand, which border Laos on the west —were less disturbed by it than those which were far distant, i. e. France, the United Kingdom and particularly the United States. No pitched battle was fought, little material damage was done, and little blood was spilled. Yet the results of this action, whether the whole of the intended result was achieved or not, were as far-raching as if a major victory had been won. Seldom has so much been accomplished with so little.

Perhaps in the cold light of afterthought the most curious aspect of the whole action was that from the beginning it made a mockery of the old saying: "Nothing risked; noth-

Dr. Edward L. Katzenbach, Director of the Defense Studies Program of Harvard University's School of Public Administration, presents an evaluation of a military theory which he feels is of some importance today. One of the foremost writers and lecturers on the geopolitics of Southeast Asia, Europe and the US, Dr. Katzenbach is a frequent lecturer at the Naval and Air War Colleges. He has written for many of the learned journals and some of the more popular publications on various aspects of the political military problems of the world today.

He served with the Marine Corps during WW II and again during the Korean war. He was CO of the 4th Mar Div Recon Co at Roi-Namur, Eniwetok and Saipan, where he was wounded and returned to the States. From 1950 to 1952 he was on the FMF Pac staff. He is now a Reserve lieutenant colonel

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ing gained." Whatever the gain, no military investment of sizeable proportions was risked. This was quite as safe a venture, in a word, as the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

Yet after a 3 weeks invasion, this is what the Communists had accomplished: 1) they had thrown terror into the French (military and civil authorities alike) in both Indochina and metropolitan France; 2) they had spread French defending forces in Indochina even thinner than they had previously been; 3) they had produced renewed demands for a larger measure of political autonomy in both Laos and nearby Cambodia; 4) they had created a situation in which French spending in the area was raised by some 60 million dollars; and 5), they had cost the United States some 460 millions of extra dollars by way of foreign aid. This was in short the kind of action which Mao Tse-tung had advocated with such redundance in his writings—although, to be sure, it was doubtless more successful than anything he had imagined. It was one of those raids which would turn phase 2 of a protracted war into phase 3.

The third phase of a protracted war is undistinguished except in one respect. In all of his writings Mao never loses sight of the fact that guerrilla action can not win wars. The fact, he realizes, must never be forgotten. Only by combining units into larger units, by creating an organization, by inculcating discipline, in a word, by turning groups into armies, can the necessary avalanche of military force be built.

But what if there is no progression? Suppose someone bungles, suppose hatred overcomes wisdom and decisions are lost, what then?

The military philosophy of Mao Tse-tung is much more than it at first seems to be. His is an enormously persuasive piece of propaganda, for it all comes down to this proposition: if the leadership is capable, a war, as differentiated from an action, cannot be lost.

Although Mao makes the point that one must go through 3 phases in a prolonged war, he points out that there is not necessarily constant and inevitable progress. Indeed, it is the doctrine that retrogression is possible, that a war may slip back a stage, as well as that it will slip forward, that gives it the shimmer of infallibility which is its greatest attraction. Given patience and will, the doctrine of Mao holds out victory as inevitable. Therein lies its cunning and its appeal.

Faith that the Communists have a monopoly on patience is what has made Mao's the iniquitous Communist law that it is. In Malaya the Communists argue that the "anti-British national revolutionary war will be protracted, uphill and violent," and that Mao Tse-tung's "concepts . . . are imperatives in the course of the struggle." In the Philippines, the Huk leaders recently reported that "the war continues in revolutionary stages and cannot be counted by the day or month." For the partially defeated, there could scarcely be a more comforting analysis.

To what extent is such a faith justified? The answer is difficult. Mao never really states how important the rear base is to any operations. It is the presence of China at Indochina's door which has certainly counted in good measure for the success of Communist operations there as differentiated from those in the Philippines and in Malaya. And the hills of Western China spelled for him the difference between defeat and the survival of that small spark from which victory has flamed.

Furthermore, the doctrine is applicable only to areas in which there is more than ample space. It would seem to me that, for Mao, Korea was the very worst spot in which to fight, and it would also seem to me that he knew it. He learned much about positional warfare there, however, and, being a man who throughout his works stresses the necessity of being extremely flexible, he doubtless made the most of the opportunity to learn a new mode of warfare.

But on the other hand, his own war in China, no matter how one modifies the fact in terms of all sorts of fortuitous events, did follow his precepts, and he did himself call the turn of all phases. Furthermore, the war which the Viet Minh have fought in northern Indochina has followed his teachings phase by phase despite the claims of Viet Minh leaders that they improved on the doctrines. It was a war of ideas in a very real sense and the fact that the French leaders never seemed to understand the nature of the war which they were fighting cut down enormously their capacity to deal with it.

And finally, there is no gainsaying that in a good part of Southeast Asia there is still space, and that for many Mao remains the great hero.

That Mao has taken so scornful a view of the power of weapons and particularly of air power, that he has proved himself so willing in the past to give up those targets which modern technology is best equipped to destroy, and that he has proved so daring in the challenges, as at Dienbienphu, which he has laid down, would seem to indicate that he is still an adventurer; a cautious man, but an adventurer nevertheless. And this in turn would seem to indicate that the United States still needs those troops which will hold the ground on the ground.

Western strategic thought has considered the third stage of war, and the third stage only. We have fought wars of urban and industrial interdiction, while our own Asiatic opponents and the African opponents of our allies have patiently pursued a process of rural consolidation which has in effect given them an inviolable sanctuary from which they can attack and withdraw at will. What, therefore, would seem to be needed is a military instrument capable of invading and controlling this sanctuary, one which can maintain both law and order in rural villages and market areas.

Therefore, we not only need troops which can strike on the peripheries of the Free World, but also troops which can be sent not only to fight but also to maintain order. We need not only useful troops but useable troops—that is to say, ones which are politically expendable, the kind of troops who can do the job as it is needed without too great a political outcry in a nation like our own which so abhors war. The kind of troops whom a man like President Coolidge was willing to send to the Caribbean, to Nicaragua and Haiti, would seem to be the kind which would fulfill this requirement. US MC

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