



C-WASP

Applying Lessons Learned from the War on Drugs to Win the War on Terror

Introduction – understanding the War on Drugs

The unquestionable winners of the War on Drugs are drugs and their suppliers. Despite every attempt to stamp out the supply chains and political power structures which have arisen through the trade in illegal narcotics, the actual street supply of illegal substances has not been reduced in 40 years of concerted effort by the Federal Government. Drug runners have won the war on drugs.

To learn the militarily relevant lessons from the War on Drugs, we have to ask the winners.

The drug gangs which won the war on drugs have successfully taken, held and profitably operated large territories within the urban landscape once governed by the Federal Government. Where the police are outnumbered and outgunned, the gangs reign. All over America we talk about areas being controlled by drug gangs, without understanding that this constitutes a significant military achievement in the face of constant pressure from an overwhelmingly powerful adversary which also wishes to lay claim to these territories. With negligible budgets these supply-chain oriented enterprunerial grass-roots warriors have learned to win in the urban environment, an area where orthodox military doctrine and practice are at their weakest.

It is possible that to overcome the urban combat deficit, we must learn *the Crip way of war*.

The Crips – modern huns, or a generation of Great Americans?

The Crips were started by two men in 1970. In 40 years they have grown to 30,000 active service members with differing degrees of engagement, and have built a global cultural brand including a substantial body of art, mostly music, and a recognizable cultural identity which attracts primary loyalty and youth aspiration all over the world. The fact that young men want to be *gangstas* is cultural engineering to enable recruitment by what amounts to an urban paramilitary organization who's core values likely represent a corruption of the original dreams of the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam. The ideological and cultural territory staked out by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King fell into chaos and anarchy as black solidarity became a criminal rather than a political enterprise. Black territoriality, once expressed by black separatist movements, has turned into police no-go zones. Drugs have financed what amount to defacto separatist movements, uninterested in attaining political power or de jure sovereignty, in favor of simply abrogating Federal authority in law enforcement. These are military achievements in the service of political dreams shattered by the destruction of a viable political path for black power. Lacking coherent goals and focus, the military potential of black american culture – not of individual black Americans, but of the wider culture – has been scattered and wasted.

We are now in a critical cultural period which may enable us to reintegrate black military culture – the gangs – into the mainstream American war effort.

Understanding the potential

The US Army stands at around 600,000 members, not counting reservists. 13% of Americans identify as black. A direct proportional representation of black people within the US Army would be around 78,000. The 30,000 active Crips represent 40% of this number: a substantial fighting force, specialized in urban warfare, and most particularly in take-and-hold urban conflict where long term economic operation of captured territory, including recruitment of troops from conquered lands, is the modus operandi. To have built this military machine on US soil under constant attack requires substantial military genius: the Crip way of war is an evolution in urban military operations in support of broader political goals. All the other gangs in America, taken together, would more than double the size of the Crip force, approximating the rough size of proportional black representation within the US Army. As many black Americans are in gangs as are in uniform, roughly speaking. They gangs are self-motivated warriors, willing to live, die and kill for their goals, but not ours.

A uniter, not a divider

President Obama represents a political re-enfranchisement of the black population of America. As only Nixon could go to China, only Obama can approach the Crips, the Bloods, the Gangsa Disciples and all the various other black-dominated ethnic street gangs in America, and beyond, and extend the olive branch: *“We are no longer at war with the system, we are the system, and it's time to start making a contribution to our collective success. Teach us what you know about fighting in the city.”*

Special forces culture is largely rooted in hunting fieldcraft taken into the domain of war. There has always been a mismatch between the rural and urban warrior mindsets. Applying the lessons learned from 40 years of urban warfare in the US to urban warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan is going to require cultural bridge building between the crack Crip combat tacticians and current special forces and other military practice. Nothing less than the full support of the president could bring this plan to fruition.

Next steps

We would suggest a two step program for unlocking the military potential of the Crips.

The Serve-or-Serve (SOS) program offers incarcerated Crips, bloods and similar gang affiliates an opportunity to serve their sentences by serving their country. The unique feature of this program is that it is *self-financing* by defrayed incarceration costs. Housing a maximum security inmate costs approximately \$100,000 USD per year. A 22 year old man serving a life sentence can expect to cost the US Government over \$2,000,000. Suppose this money is treated as a fund for rehabilitation, training and re-deployment of this combat-experienced veteran of the War on Drugs as a soldier in the War on Terror? Such a scheme could be piloted with small numbers of promising Crip tacticians, and even with a substantial failure rate, may substantially lower the cost of acquiring military talent with urban warfare experience. From the roughly 2 million Americans in jail, surely we can find a few good men. Preferably the heirs of 40 years of victory in urban warfare on US soil. It may be necessary to structure these limited pardons as one-way tickets off US soil, but given the likely duration of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, that may not represent a substantial problem.

If it becomes necessary to employ private enterprise in this effort, a Crip-run Private Military Company, a counterpart to Blackwater, could be formed. This “Whitewater” (an unfortunate name) could outbid the regular drug trade for the services of the urban combat elite within Crip society.

C-WASP is the logical conclusion of the reintegration of the Crips into the US war machine. C-WASP (*“Crips With Air Support Program”*) is a simple testbed for the urban combat performance of *the Crip way of war* in current theaters. It could start with something as simple as giving a small town in rural Afghanistan or Iraq to the Crips to run, and then perhaps expand over time into the wholesale franchising of Crip-control to entire nations. After all, if the Crips are capable of economically productive take-and-hold operations in US cities for 40 years, neither the Taliban nor any faction in Iraq is going to present much of a problem. The only way to stop the Crips would be to legalize drugs (using the Portugal model) and god knows that's never going to happen. The CIA has clearly lost its touch in funding illegal operations selling drugs: the Crips clearly have not.

Bring the Crips into the fold, and send them forth to war.

And consider this: does not the prospect of heavily-armed well-trained Crips with heavy weapons, modern logistics and close air support running amok in Afghanistan and Iraq strike terror into your heart? So then for our opponents. We fear the Crips, they fear the Crips, so let us send the Crips!

Vinay Gupta & Lucy Wills, April 1, 2011 (backdated)