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Human Factors in the Operation of U.S. Military Units Augmented With Indigenous Troops

by

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Prefatory Note

This paper was presented at the 13th Annual U.S. Army Human Factors Research and Development Conference at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, 25-27 October 1967, as a part of Session IV, "Improvement of Human Performance in Overseas Operations."

The research reported in Dr. McCrary's paper was performed by Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training), Human Resources Research Office, Alexandria, Virginia. The paper is based on interim analyses of information obtained from field and questionnaire surveys conducted in the Republic of Korea as part of HumRRO Technical Advisory Service and Exploratory Study 40, Troop Orientation in the Program of Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army.

Dr. Charles Nelson Spinks and LTC Donald Stanley Marshall served as Co-Chairmen of Session IV. After the papers were presented Dr. Robert Suggs furnished a commentary. In addition to Dr. McCrary's paper published herewith, the following is a list of papers prepared for Session IV of the Conference:

"Interrelated Factors and Systems That Affect Nation-Building" by LTC Donald Stanley Marshall

"Improving Indigenous Military Performance Through the Advisory System" by Mr. Richard P. Joyce and BG Robert H. Williams (USMC Ret.)

"Military Assistance: Cargo or Concept" by Mr. William K. Carr

"Criteria for Improvement of Human Performance in Psychological Operations" by Dr. James Dodson and Dr. M. Dean Havron

HUMAN FACTORS IN THE OPERATION OF U.S. MILITARY UNITS AUGMENTED WITH INDIGENOUS TROOPS

John W. McCrary

INTRODUCTION

The Korean Augmentation to the United States Army, the KATUSA Program, has been in operation for 17 years. It provides a concrete and contemporary example of the closest type of international cooperation between military forces. At the same time, it represents a long-term experiment in international partnership at the most personal level, involving large numbers of American and Korean troops who work together in close and daily contact within their U.S. Army units. I would like to outline the concept of this program, mention some studies of it conducted by the Human Resources Research Office, and discuss a few themes that help summarize some of the findings and that may have implications for the operation of binationally composed military units in other countries.

THE KATUSA PROGRAM

By means of the KATUSA Program, Korean Army enlisted personnel are assigned to units of the Eighth United States Army and are to be fully assimilated. They are intended to share the performance of duties, the billeting, messing, and all other unit facilities with U.S. Army personnel. The basic intent is that they be incorporated into the units as if they were American enlisted replacements. Their standard period of service in the KATUSA assignment is 18 months and their total period of required military service is 32 to 34 months. There are about 11,000 of these KATUSA personnel, who are known as "KATUSAs".

The KATUSA Program has a two-fold mission:

- (1) To increase the operational capability of Eighth United States Army units by augmenting the U.S. personnel in order to bring the units up to full strength.

- (2) To provide training to the KATUSAs and thus increase the number of trained and technically skilled personnel available to the Korean Army and to the manpower reserves of Korea.

The importance of this two-fold mission, the economies that result from the program, and its endurance suggest that it is a success. However, the program has not been without problems and critics, as well as having its accomplishments and proponents.

STUDIES OF THE KATUSA PROGRAM

The dissatisfactions of the KATUSAs have been, on rare occasions, expressed in ways sufficiently prominent as to be publicized in the

Korean press. Because information was desired concerning the conditions giving rise to these dissatisfactions, exploratory studies of the KATUSA program were conducted by HumRRO at the request of the Eighth United States Army.

The first was a survey and description of the operation of the program based on a study of policies and regulations, field observations, and interviews with American and Korean personnel.

The apparent importance of, and the lack of, reliable information about intergroup and interpersonal factors led to the second of the two studies. It may be characterized as an attitudinal-informational study using questionnaires designed to obtain reports from the KATUSA and American enlisted personnel concerning their expectations of the program, their attitudes and opinions about various conditions within the program, and their associations with and attitudes toward one another. Over 400 KATUSAs were asked over 250 questions, and over 400 Americans were asked over 200 questions.

This paper is based upon incomplete analyses and tentative interpretations of a part of the data, and on intermediate impressions formed while joining personal, more informal observations with the responses to some of the questionnaire items. I have selected a few overlapping *themes* that help summarize some tentative interpretations and that emphasize those "most human" of the human factors likely to characterize any augmentation program.

THEMATIC SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Created Differences

Certainly in a program of this sort, there will be differences contributed by the manpower resources available for selection. The personnel can be expected to bring with them differences in language, skills, socioculturally determined norms and behaviors, and physical size and appearance.

While these differences can be very important, I want to call particular attention to *created differences*, that is, those differences brought about by the implementation of agreements and decisions concerning administrative and disciplinary matters (from pay and promotion to court-martial jurisdiction), concerning support and recreation matters (from billeting and messing, clothing and laundry, medical and dental, to unit and special services activities, army theaters and exchange facilities) and duties (including job assignments and assignment to details).

There can be an almost unlimited number of these differences, but my informal observations and interviews lead me to conclude that where there is any difference, it is a potential source of discontent, complaint, and dissatisfaction.

The low pay of the KATUSAs (as of early 1967, a corporal was getting about \$1.33 a month) is a basic problem with many implications. It *does* cause the KATUSA to be especially dependent on arrangements for his support and tends to magnify otherwise not-so-important differences.

Additionally, the KATUSA's most obvious and immediate frame of reference and comparison is what an American is provided (or is able to provide for himself) rather than what he would have had if he had served with a Korean unit. Thus, exercising the greatest care to provide for the essential needs of the KATUSA does not necessarily result in his complete satisfaction. Despite having been given three meals a day, the KATUSA may feel that additional support is needed if he is watching his American co-worker enjoy a hamburger and "shake" sent over from the snack bar. On the other hand, he may be less impressed by getting into the Army theater free of charge, than by having to wait outside until all paying customers have been seated.

These limited illustrations emphasize the difficulty of anticipating and satisfactorily resolving dissatisfactions created by differences. Nonetheless, wherever there is a difference between whatever is provided for the two groups, it is likely to be responded to and may form the basis for discontent and complaints.

ATTITUDES AS BY-PRODUCTS

There are *attitudinal by-products* to be expected in an augmentation program. These result from the interpersonal and intergroup interactions of participants.

For example, offered choices ranging from extreme liking to extreme dislike, about 56 percent of all the KATUSAs indicated some degree or extent of like for the American soldiers while 44 percent expressed some degree of dislike. Thus, for the KATUSAs as a group, a simple majority does indicate liking the American soldiers, but these expressions fall considerably short of unanimity. This lack of unanimity helps us to understand why opinions and impressions of the KATUSAs' attitude about Americans often tended to be conflicting.

In comparison, 84 percent of them reported some degree of liking and 16 percent some degree of dislike for their fellow KATUSAs. Thus, while more KATUSAs reported liking than reported dislike for the Americans, more of them expressed liking for their fellow KATUSAs.

TIME AND ATTITUDES

There is evidence that these attitudes change over time. If we sort out the KATUSAs on the basis of the number of months they have served as KATUSAs, we observe significant differences in the *average* extents of favorability or liking of Americans that are reported. The attitudes of the Koreans who have been KATUSAs for about a month or less are the most favorable while the attitudes of the KATUSAs who have been in the program for six months to one year are the least favorable. Those who have served as KATUSAs for a year or more show more favorable attitudes than those in the middle ranges of their tours, but still respond less favorably than those who are beginning their tours. The relationship between attitudes toward Americans and length of service as a KATUSA is, thus, somewhat bowl-shaped, but the bowl is tilted and the net effect is, thus, a loss in favorability.

There are many conjectures to be offered for the way in which the attitudes toward Americans undergo overall decline and yet vary in this bowl-shaped fashion. The disappointment of early expectations, the difficulties in interacting with Americans, and then working out a way of getting along with them without so many problems, may all be meaningful ways of looking at the phenomenon. The attitudes of the KATUSAs toward the Americans are not fixed and static, but undergo changes that may be reflecting disappointment of original expectations of the program and disappointing experiences with Americans.

Units and Attitudes

There is considerable variability from unit to unit in the attitudes of the KATUSAs toward the Americans, even when we compare seemingly similar units. Let me select one example; Units A and B are "sister" battalions of the same organization with similar missions, organizations, job structures, and low proportions of KATUSAs. However, significantly larger proportions of the KATUSAs in Unit A, compared to Unit B, report that they like the American soldiers (74% vs. 39%), that they like their fellow KATUSAs (97% vs. 65%), and that they are proud to be members of their unit (74% vs. 45%). Clearly, the attitudes of KATUSAs are influenced by circumstances within the unit.

The Favorability Gap

Let me turn now to a consideration of the attitudes of the Americans and introduce a complex phenomenon which I will refer to as the *favorability gap*.

Asked how they felt about the KATUSAs, and offered answers ranging from extreme dislike to extreme liking, about 60 percent of the Americans reported some extent of liking and about 40 percent some extent of dislike. Asked how they felt about their fellow-American soldiers, 94 percent of them reported some extent of liking and only 6 percent some extent of dislike.

Comparison of these responses shows that, while the Americans as a group indicated liking for the KATUSAs somewhat more often than disliking, they much more often expressed liking, and greater degrees of liking, for their fellow-American soldiers. The difference is large enough to merit special attention and interpretation. It can be suggested that the much greater probability that the American will report liking, and a greater extent of liking, for his fellow-American soldiers reflects a *relative* or *comparative* dislike of the KATUSA. The American is more likely to evaluate favorably his fellow-American soldiers, hence, we may speak of a *favorability gap*.

There is no reason to doubt the American who says he likes KATUSAs, but there is good reason to *compare* how he feels about Americans and to consider what he may *do* when confronted with decisions and choices involving Americans and KATUSAs. While it is important to have some idea about what the KATUSA will *hear*, it may be even more important to have some idea about what he will *see*. It is quite possible that the *favorability gap* becomes very apparent to the KATUSAs after some experience in interacting with the Americans in his unit.

It is interesting to note that smaller American favorability gaps tend to be found in those units with smaller percentages of KATUSAs (15-20%) and larger gaps tend to be found in those units with larger percentages of KATUSAs (50% or more). This finding is in keeping with the hypothesis that in the higher KATUSA density units (units with large percentages of KATUSAs) greater competition for the available facilities (particularly recreational) would tend to affect interpersonal attitudes. There is the somewhat more conjectural, but perhaps more meaningful, possibility that where KATUSAs are present in larger proportions they will not only be more prominent because of their numbers, but that they will also "act even less like Americans." They may be controlled more by each other and act more in accordance with Korean norms than they would in a unit with smaller percentages of KATUSAs. Thus, the larger favorability gaps may reflect reactions not merely to numbers but also to a KATUSA who behaves in ways that differ from his counterparts in low KATUSA density units.

At the same time, the KATUSAs in these units are faced with Americans whose evaluations of KATUSAs compared to Americans differ from the evaluations faced by their counterparts in low KATUSA density units. To the extent that the Americans' favorability gap is apparent to the KATUSA or influences decisions that involve him, we find a possible chain of circumstances and events capable of accentuating intergroup problems in the high KATUSA density units.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

We have considered a few themes that help summarize portions of the data from studies of the KATUSA program. What do they tell us about the establishment of programs of this type in other areas?

The institution of an augmentation program that creates binational U.S. Army units involves, first of all, decisions about many matters ranging through selection and assignment, administration and discipline, command and supervision, training, and a wide variety of support problems, such as billeting and messing, clothing and laundry, medical and dental, recreation and morale, and so forth.

While decisions about many of these matters can be simple and straightforward depending on particular local conditions, others may have to be in the form of compromises because of complex and possibly conflicting requirements, resources, and conditions. It would seem very obvious, yet it would be a most lengthy task, to point out the human factor elements that enter into virtually each and every one of these decisions.

Determining the *essential* needs of the other national personnel and then taking care of these needs may, however, be insufficient. What may be important is any difference between what the two national groups are provided.

Additionally, since augmentation programs may bring sizable groups from differing sociocultural backgrounds into important, close, and daily contact with each other, they can be expected to generate

interpersonal and intergroup relationships and attitudes that are important because

- (1) Most generally, they may constitute an important part of the local nationals' assessments of Americans and American ways of reacting to other people, and
- (2) Most specifically, they have important implications for the effective operation of augmented units.

There *will* be attitudinal by-products of the program. The by-products will be importantly influenced by experience with the Americans and conditions within the units. The most common reason given by KATUSAs for wanting to be a KATUSA was "to meet and learn about Americans." Those concerned with implementing augmentation programs might well try to take such motivation into account and keep in mind the question, "What are these people learning about Americans?"

The implications of an American favorability gap may also be considered. While the *average* American in such a program may accept (at least somewhat) and like (at least somewhat) the other national soldiers, the chances are that he will be much more "accepting" and favorable toward his fellow-American soldiers. Thus, we have not only another kind of *difference* to which the other national may be sensitive, but we have a potential *source* of *additional* differences that may range from who is invited to join the crowd to who is invited to clean the grease trap on KP.

The implications that have been suggested may seem discouraging; however, the intent has been to show them as challenges. Aware of the challenges, the Eighth United States Army has been engaged in continued staff efforts and has placed important command emphasis on the leadership at all levels to improve the operation of the KATUSA program.

Recent measures have included a number of changes designed to reduce to the lowest practicable level several of the important differences in the areas of logistic support, recreation, and welfare. New staff positions have been created in Eighth Army Headquarters with responsibility for making staff visits, assisting units in conducting the program, and supervising recently instituted programs of orientation and attitudinal change designed to insure constructive relations between KATUSAs and Americans.

The KATUSA program has been characterized as a long-term experiment in the closest kind of international and intergroup cooperation. Studying the KATUSA program can suggest some of the challenges posed by human factors in the operation of augmentation programs. There is a Korean expression, "Even a jewel becomes brighter with polishing." An important ingredient in the success of augmentation programs may be the attitude reflected in the Eighth Army's continued determination to make a good thing better.

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13. ABSTRACT The program of Korean augmentation to the U.S. Army (KATUSA) is outlined. Portions of the findings based on interim analyses of data from Human Resources Research Office's studies of the program are summarized by using selected themes. The implications these themes have for establishing similar programs in countries other than Korea are examined.		

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