



JFQ

Joint Force Quarterly

Issue 86, 3rd Quarter 2017

On Strategy Itself

An Interview with Kurt W. Tidd

Where Rumsfeld Got It Right

Joint Force Quarterly

Founded in 1993 • Vol. 86, 3rd Quarter 2017
<http://ndupress.ndu.edu>

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Printed in St. Louis, Missouri, by  UNIVERSAL
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Cover 2 images (top to bottom): Logistics Specialist 1st Class Amber Wilson reacts to being selected as 2016 CNO Shore Sailor of the Year after Vice Chief of Naval Operations makes announcement, April 20, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Taylor N. Stinson); Lithuanian girl holds rocket launcher at static display in Visaginas, as militaries from several countries taking part in Exercise Iron Sword 16, including the United States, interacted with and demonstrated their gear to locals and visitors, November 26, 2016 (U.S. Marine Corps/Kirstin Merrimarhajara); Soldiers celebrate third-period goal during 3rd annual Army vs. Air Force hockey game, which Army won in overtime, January 9, 2017 (U.S. Army/John Pennell)



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Airman secures outside of hardened facility after neutralizing opposing force during Battlefield Leaders Assaulter Course, Integrated Combat Essentials, on Ramstein Air Base, Germany, May 30, 2015 (U.S. Air Force/Ryan Crane)

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Joint Force Quarterly is published by the National Defense University Press for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *JFQ* is the Chairman's flagship joint military and security studies journal designed to inform members of the U.S. Armed Forces, allies, and other partners on joint and integrated operations; national security policy and strategy; efforts to combat terrorism; homeland security; and developments in training and joint professional military education to transform America's military and security apparatus to meet tomorrow's challenges better while protecting freedom today. All published articles have been vetted through a peer-review process and cleared by the Defense Office of Prepublication and Security Review.

NDU Press is the National Defense University's cross-component, professional military and academic publishing house.

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Editor, *Joint Force Quarterly*

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JFQ online: www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jfq/jfq.htm

3rd Quarter, July 2017
ISSN 1070-0692



General Dunford and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman, Sergeant Major John W. Troxell, meet with crew of Boeing B-52H to observe Air Force Nuclear Triad operations and talk to Airmen, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, November 2, 2016. (DOD/Dominique A. Pineiro)

Maintaining a Boxer's Stance

Any coach will tell you that the first step in training a fighter is developing a “boxer’s stance,” the foundational posture from which all offensive and defensive movements flow. A good boxer’s stance conserves energy while keeping the fighter balanced, protected, and ready to throw quick, powerful punches. Between fights or between rounds, any assessment of a fighter’s performance must begin with the stance.

While the Joint Force remains the most capable military in the world today, adversary investments, a decade and a half of continuous combat operations, and years of budgetary instability have eroded our competitive advantage and reduced our ability to project power where and when needed. As a nation that thinks and

acts globally, the United States does not have the luxury of choosing between a force that can fight nonstate actors, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al Qaeda, and one that can deter and defeat adversaries possessing a full array of military capabilities. We also cannot afford to choose between meeting today’s operational requirements and making the investments necessary for tomorrow. Because we do not know when, where, or under what conditions the next fight will occur, the U.S. military must maintain a boxer’s stance—with the strength, agility, and resilience required to fight and win against any potential adversary. Maintaining this stance requires us to develop and advance the capabilities, posture, operating concepts, and human capital necessary to assure our allies and

partners, deter adversaries, compete on a day-to-day basis, and, when necessary, respond across the spectrum of conflict.

The first element of an effective boxer’s stance requires us to develop and maintain a balanced inventory of joint capabilities and capacities. As a result of sustained high operational tempo and an unpredictable fiscal environment over the last several years, we now face readiness shortfalls and a bow wave of modernization requirements across the Services. This challenge is particularly acute within the nuclear enterprise, which is why we are actively recapitalizing platforms in each leg of the nuclear triad to ensure that our deterrent remains safe, secure, reliable, and effective. Continued investments in space and cyberspace capabilities allow us to deny adversary

objectives, impose costs on those who conduct attacks, and ensure resiliency across all domains. We are also investing in power projection capabilities that allow us to deliver the right force at the right time. These capabilities are essential to overcoming an increasingly lethal array of integrated air defense systems, ballistic and cruise missiles, unmanned aerial and subsurface vehicles, and advanced aircraft, all of which are enabled by adversary electronic warfare capabilities. Other shortfalls and modernization requirements can be found across the Joint Force and getting the right balance of capabilities remains one of our most pressing non-operational challenges.

Second, an agile and resilient stance requires us to prioritize and allocate resources geographically to effectively manage the risks posed by our five priority strategic challenges: Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and violent extremism, which includes organizations such as ISIS and al Qaeda. Setting the globe correctly not only balances risk, but it also assures our allies and partners, optimizes our ability to respond to crisis, and improves our resilience across domains and warfighting functions.

The third element underpinning our boxer's stance is the family of joint concepts that propose new approaches to address compelling operational challenges. Informed by national strategy, joint concepts articulate a vision for deploying, employing, and sustaining the force in the years ahead—in short, they guide how we will fight on tomorrow's battlefields. By offering educated judgments about future military challenges, joint concepts play a significant role in defining future requirements and addressing gaps in our existing approaches and capabilities. As such, they guide our priorities for capability development and innovation.

Two interdependent activities, exercises and experimentation, help to bring joint concepts to life. Throughout history, military exercises have served to reduce uncertainty, increase readiness, and refine and test new concepts. Recognizing the complexity of today's strategic landscape, we are reenergizing



Airmen assigned to 22nd Special Tactics Squadron participate in U.S. Special Operations Command Exercise Emerald Warrior 17, during which joint special operations forces train to respond to various threats across spectrum of conflict, Eglin Range, Florida, March 4, 2017 (U.S. Air Force/Nicholas Dutton)

and reorienting the joint exercise program to develop a shared understanding about the array of threats we face, collectively assess our preparedness to respond to contingencies, and uncover vulnerabilities in our operational plans and concepts. We are complementing and reinforcing this effort through joint experimentation. Experimentation done in concert with exercises, wargames, or simulations can yield significant military capabilities, as demonstrated by the U.S. Navy's experimentation with aircraft carriers in the 1920s and U.S. Army air-mobile exercises leading up to Vietnam. This kind of innovation—in both our concepts and our material capabilities—is what will allow us to identify and leverage fundamentally new ways to counter tomorrow's threats.

Finally, we understand that human capital is the ultimate hedge against future uncertainty and that the men and women of the Joint Force are the foundation upon which our boxer's stance is built. While war will always be chaotic and violent, its character is changing rapidly. Consequently, we must invest in adaptive, innovative, and critically thinking leaders who can thrive at the speed of war in the 21st century; it is no longer enough for leaders to simply be experts in a particular functional area. Given the complexities of today's fights, leaders must also be wise enough to recognize

when short-term tactical and operational gains may be at odds with long-term strategic imperatives. Accordingly, we are refocusing on how to best select, train, and educate the Servicemembers who will lead tomorrow's Joint Force.

By the time this article goes to print, many of you will have seen the Service chiefs, combatant commanders, and me offer our annual testimony before Congress. While senior leaders help guide the force, it is up to every Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman, and Coastguardsman to think through the challenges of tomorrow. The Joint Force's true competitive advantage comes from the quality of men and women we have in the force today. Maintaining our advantage and ensuring that we never send Americans into a fair fight is our shared obligation. Consequently, your ideas matter, and I am counting on you to contribute to this dialogue. JFQ

GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff





Airman listens as cadres critique results of humanitarian training mission, November 10, 2010, at Camp Bullis, Texas (U.S. Air Force/Jonathan Snyder)

Executive Summary

One of the most important questions we ask students of national and international security is “What is war?” Many will provide a solid response citing one of the great

war “thinkers” like Thucydides or Carl von Clausewitz. An equally important set of questions flows from these responses. When should a country like the United States become involved?

Why should the United States risk our “blood and treasure” in this war? What instruments of national power should be used and to what measure? What will the end of the war look like? How will we know our side is winning? Who will fight with us? How are we to fight and when should we expect to be done? Issues of strategy, operational art, tactics, and forces of the military instrument of national power come into view along with the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments. The civilian-military relationship that is at the heart of our national security structure ultimately shapes the outcome in victory, stalemate, or defeat.

But what are we to think of war in the 21st century? While we have learned that history does not repeat, it often rhymes, but in ways we cannot fully predict or anticipate. The Italian airpower theorist Giulio Douhet, an Italian artillery officer, is quoted as stating, “Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the change in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.” So, in 2017, how is that working out for the joint force and our coalition partners around the world? Are we anticipating the changes in the character of war, or are we just trying to get back to where we knew we were successful? Is military power sufficient? No, but having the best military is certainly useful in a crisis as is having capable and reliable partners. What can we learn from the conflicts of the past, especially those of the past 15 years? What do you think we should do to complete the business at hand while preparing for war in the future? The future will be here before you think it will. Both your troops and your leadership want to know what you think war will look like and how to deal with it. When you have a lock on that view, write it down and send it to us here at your *Joint Force Quarterly*.

JFQ last featured the U.S. Southern Command over a decade ago. Much has changed in that region and the world since then as you will learn from my interview, in *Forum*, with USSOUTHCOM Commander Admiral Kurt W. Tidd. What I was most

impressed about his candid answers is how all the combatant commanders are united in their view of the requirement to share assets as they view their security concerns as globally connected vice an older paradigm of each making a regional case. The threats today are global in connectivity and so should be our joint force. In an accompanying article, one of a series we anticipate from that region over the next few issues, Admiral Tidd and Tyler W. Morton discuss how the command is adapting to better integrate with the other combatant commands while addressing regional and global issues. Strategic competition is at the heart of many challenges for the United States and our partners as Daniel Burkhart and Alison Woody offer their perspective of working in the space between peace and war. One of the enduring aspects of strategic competition vexing many countries today, as Scott Englund contends, is how to contain individuals and groups engaging in jihad of one kind or another. In another important contribution on assessing war and strategy, returning author Lukas Milevski helps us understand the concept of strategic agency.

Our JPME Today section features three important articles related to leading at the top levels of the military. One of the long-debated but seemingly intractable problems of staffing our staff and war colleges with military instructors of the highest caliber (read promotion to general/flag rank is still very possible) is addressed by Douglas Orsi in a way that would meet the former Chairman's intent for these critical positions. Next, from the Army War College faculty and one of our *JFQ* alumni authors, Charles D. Allen discusses how senior officers in the military should relate to civilian leadership, a subject that seems obvious but is not always. Mark Schmidt and Ryan Slaughter offer an interesting take on how to change the culture of an organization while in the leadership chair.

Commentary features three topics that tackle big issues from defense planning and retirement reform in the Defense Department to global health engagement. Many will remember the significant change to how DOD does its



Marines with Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division provide security during CH-53 day-battle drill in support of Weapons and Tactics Instructors course 2-17 at Fire Base Burt, California, April 8, 2017 (U.S. Marine Corps/Clare J. Shaffer)

war planning as instituted by Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over 15 years ago. Anthony Dunkin thinks that the In-Progress Reviews that became standard for the Secretary to gauge planning efforts are still worth the effort. Laura J. Junor, Samantha Clark, and Mark Ramsay provide an insider's view of recent efforts to reform military retirement, one of the largest portions of DOD's bill that must be paid. Extending our conversation on how we can get to a better prewar environment in troubled areas of the world, Kyle N. Remick and Eric A. Elster suggest sharing methods of performing trauma care will enable more successful health support, which in turn lessens strife around the world. Finding ways to slow the growth of the U.S. defense budget in the future has long been an elusive quarry for our government.

A great set of unfinished problems appears in Features. Brian K. Hall asks us to understand the complexity behind autonomous weapons as they become an increasing part of our tactical means to carry out missions in support of strategy. It is not just a fire-and-forget world anymore, it seems. As General Goldfein, the Air Force Chief of Staff, discussed in my interview with him in our last issue, command and control is evolving rapidly. Andrew Hill and Heath Niemi have identified important concerns in execution of mission command principles

while maintaining effective command and control. Preventing war or working to restore security in a conflict zone have placed capacity-building center stage, but Stephen E. Webber and Donald E. Vandergriff have identified a gap in these efforts that they believe must be closed to achieve success.

We return to the Cold War in Recall this issue with an interesting article by Kevin D. Stringer that discusses how Switzerland prepared to resist a Soviet attack. After three excellent book reviews, our Joint Doctrine section has two interesting pieces to consider. Gregory E. Browder and Marcus J. Lewis offer us a look at "adaptive doctrine" as a concept to adjust for the ever-changing character of war. Rick Rowlett then brings us his summary of the recently revised Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*. And, of course, we leave you with important publication information in our Joint Doctrine Update.

We hope these articles have given you some good ideas both to think and to write about, especially concerning war in the 21st century and how the joint force will respond. The best ideas for how that will be done have a home here at *Joint Force Quarterly*. A global audience is waiting to hear from you. JFQ

WILLIAM T. ELIASON
Editor in Chief



Admiral Kurt W. Tidd is the Commander of U.S. Southern Command (DOD)

An Interview with Kurt W. Tidd

JFQ: *We last featured U.S. Southern Command [USSOUTHCOM] in 2006, and it seems that a number of issues remain the same, although others have emerged. How does USSOUTHCOM fit into the new National Military Strategy?*

Admiral Kurt W. Tidd: The new National Military Strategy exists as a result of some fundamental changes in the geopolitical landscape. Leaving the Joint Staff and going to USSOUTHCOM, I had the benefit of spending several years listening as both General [Martin E.] Dempsey and then General [Joseph F.]

Dunford began to develop this strategy, particularly General Dunford. The National Military Strategy focuses on multidomain security challenges that are now *global* security challenges. It provides a useful intellectual organizing construct by going to a regional geographic command and thinking through the role of a geographic combatant command as a member of an enterprise.

That gave us a useful way at USSOUTHCOM to move away from stovepiping regionally and instead considering what is going on around the world in *relation to* the region. As we thought about it, it became apparent that if Russia is worth paying attention to, we must not just pay attention to their actions in the Middle East, Europe, and Ukraine; we should pay attention to them globally. The reality is that Russia is active all across the USSOUTHCOM region, as is China, as is Iran . . . and evidently so are the violent extremist organizations, so the plus one. I don't want to overstretch the intellectual model, and so I think that periodically we do see some weapons proliferators on some North Korean-flagged merchant vessels, but they are not a big player in this theater. So, we've got three-plus-one instead of the four-plus-one scenario.

When you think about USSOUTHCOM, you immediately think drugs. Nobody doubts that illicit drug-trafficking coming largely from this region is a scourge on American society. But when you try to think from a military perspective, and then from a national security perspective, you realize there are multitudes of illicit commodities trafficked. The one that we pay attention to right now in the United States happens to be cocaine because of the sheer volume and dollar amounts involved, thus the ability for criminals to generate significant finances. But when we look at the security situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, for instance, it's not the commodity that is responsible for the insecurity. Instead, it's a manifestation of the insecurity, it's a source, it's a generator of income, but it is by no means the only one. Then we simply follow that logic: If we could wave our hand and cocaine

disappeared overnight, we would still have security challenges in this part of the world. Why is that? It's because of threat networks—transnational transregional threat networks—that are the real underlying security challenge in these areas.

We then begin to look at the spectrum of threat networks and note that they run from purely economically motivated criminal networks to purely ideologically motivated terrorist networks. And the more we study them, the more we realize that there is this intermingling and interweaving of the two, and so they are not pristine; that is, neither exclusively criminal nor exclusively terrorist. We've got plenty of examples. Hizballah is the classic case-in-point of a terrorist network that routinely engages in criminal activity to raise funds for its terrorist activities in another part of the world. We are well aware of instances where we've had criminal networks that may be wittingly or unwittingly supporting terrorist networks either to move or to generate income or to do other sorts of things. So, we find that like all networks, if we take a network-view of these problem, we find lots of overlaps, lots of intermingling, lots of nodes where they occupy the same space, and it runs the spectrum of corrupt government officials; it may be money-launderers or traffickers in forged documents. From a strategic perspective of a theater commander, if we take a look at it through this network lens, I think that provides a much clearer view of what they're doing and how they threaten security. We find, too often, that before we thought these networks were a product of the insecurity, but in reality, they are responsible for much of the insecurity in the way that they both prey on society, undermine and suborn governance, and corrupt officials.

The proper role of our national security enterprise should be to focus on these threat networks. As we look at the lexicon of networks that we developed in our counterterrorism campaigns, it included "find-fix-finish." We also spoke in terms of "detect, illuminate, and disrupt." In the USSOUTHCOM area of operations, that disruption piece, that endstate piece, is almost always going to be partner-nation

law enforcement, partner-nation military supporting partner-nation law enforcement, or U.S. Federal law enforcement officials who have the appropriate authorities. In the past, we have gotten ourselves cross-threaded because we focused on the counter-drug mission, so there was a lot of friction on the military side. Is the counter-drug business a legitimate military mission? Moreover, on the law enforcement side, there was a little bit of mistrust—for instance, law enforcement felt that their mission space was being encroached on, and so rather than working together cohesively, I think that the military and law enforcement worked at cross purposes.

When we start talking counter-threat networks, we find our U.S. partners—law enforcement partners—rapidly recognize that there is a real trust, particularly when we focus on those areas where we have expertise and capacity in support of law enforcement entities. We focus on the detection and illumination piece and develop that picture. Then the people who have the authorities to conduct the disruption piece are able to work together. With some painstaking trust-building, we find that there may be opportunities for us to knit together a more cohesive team. Not under DOD [Department of Defense] leadership, we are just a supporting element within this overarching construct. Similarly, working with our partner-nation military contacts, we find that they absolutely understand a counter-threat network approach, and they view that as a valid military mission, and so again, we do not find ourselves working at cross-purposes.

It also gives the logical underpinnings for other activities that we traditionally conducted, such as building partner capacity. The troubling question was that we needed to build partner capacity, but in order to do what? When we look at this particular construct in the counter-threat network approach, it becomes clear: We build the capacity of partner-nation law enforcement working hand-in-hand with U.S. State Department programs and we build partner capacity with our partner-nation's military to conduct an effective,

efficient endstate in order to conduct the disruption piece. Now we've got the sort of logical underpinnings that make for a more cohesive network that we can then place on top of these threat networks and work together. We are still in the theoretical development of that construct and then in the communication of that construct in a way that does not breed mistrust because that is a big challenge, but I think that DOD wants to be viewed as a partner, as a trusted and supporting partner in this enterprise, and that should lead to even greater success.

JFQ: What was the catalyst in undertaking a sea change in your reframing of USSOUTHCOM's operational requirement and your approach to it? Some might cite the reasons of relative stability, lack of state conflict, growing middle class, demographic trends as indicators of progress. Was there the perception that the old way of doing business was inadequate?

Admiral Tidd: Having worked this challenge from the perspective of, first, the vice J3 on the Joint Staff and then, subsequently, as the J3 on the Joint Staff, I found that one of the responsibilities is the management of the global force allocation process. Not making the ultimate decision—that's for the Secretary of Defense—but I did try to match up stated policy priorities with available military resources. For years, USSOUTHCOM has been chronically under-resourced, and so going to the command, I asked myself why is it that no one doubts the scourge on society that drugs produce, but it has been almost impossible to make the case that resources are desperately needed. It kind of led to this intellectual journey—trying to find a way to reframe this strategic challenge in a way that might, at least, make a more compelling case. At the same time that we are trying to better understand if there is a better way to go after the security challenges that we face, and the counter-threat model provides a much more useful and compelling argument.

The new National Military Strategy was also being developed. Recognizing



Dominican Republic air force A-29 Super Tucano participates in initiative between U.S., Colombian, and Dominican Republic air forces on procedures to detect, track, and intercept illegal drugs (U.S. Air Force/Justin Brockhoff)

that we've got this crossroads of activities by three of the four global security challenges, it became critical that headquarters, instead of being inwardly focused, be outwardly focused. It also became critical to find the means, connections, and linkages to plug in with our [U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Africa Command] partners. We always had a longstanding, solid relationship with our U.S. Northern Command partners, but again, this provided the underpinning rationale to be able to do it much more than the narrow commodities-based perspective of the counter-drug mission, and I think that opened the optic to look at human-, weapons-, and gold-trafficking as well as these rivers of people that head from south to north, and to understand how that provides a potential threat vector of people who have a nefarious intent to use that as an avenue to enter the United States.

The sea change also created opportunities for a richer series of connections and thus a great understanding across the joint force of exactly what the security concerns are in this part of the world. But I think it also created a new understanding of opportunities. For instance, in our South American partners, we have some tremendously capable, professional partners that have aspirations of their own, that view themselves not exclusively as South American or Latin American; they have global interests and global aspirations. It allows us to work closely with Pacific-facing nations—Colombia, Peru, and Chile—who have interest in working with U.S. Pacific Command in the broader U.S. Pacific security arena.

JFQ: How will these adaptations in your strategy and approach affect USSOUTHCOM's downstream activities?

Will they cause you to reexamine how and where you are investing and engaging with regional partners?

Admiral Tidd: It gives us a more strategic focus for communications, so—as opposed to coming in and talking about a counter-drug mission, which almost always tends to be a tactical-level discussion—it allows us to come in and talk much more broadly, on a theater security perspective, and to take a strategic approach to that and to understand how linkages of activities occurring in the Middle East can directly affect these partners at home. The phenomenon of rapid radicalization that occurs via the Internet has led to concerns among our regional partners. In the past, there was a tendency to believe that we are isolated from it; that it is part of the Middle East, and we don't have a terrorism problem in our country. That was a

widespread and strongly held belief not only in the United States but also on the part of many of our partners in the USSOUTHCOM area of operations.

But when we saw self-radicalized individuals in Europe as well as the United States, I think that led to a change in thinking. Countries that previously believed they did not have a terrorism problem began to realize that there were small pockets of individuals within their countries that were susceptible to radicalization. We needed to do a much better job sharing information, exchanging ideas, as well as understanding the routes of self-radicalization and steps that might be taken to head it off before it takes firm root. We needed to share best practices across all of our regional partners, and I think that gave us a compelling reason to talk to each other as opposed to sometimes almost telling them how to do their security business in the counter-drug mission. Too often, partners would rightfully turn to us and state, “Hold on a second. The only reason that I am having these security problems is because of the insatiable American demand for drugs.” That is absolutely true. That is a piece of the equation that we always had a difficult time addressing in the military sphere. Now when we talk about threat networks, it gives us a much more equal basis to sit at the table as equal partners and to share ideas on how we can solve some of the problems.

JFQ: You have been talking about expanding USSOUTHCOM’s aperture to focus on transregional and transnational threat networks and not simply the commodities they traffic. How can a geographic combatant command markedly affect these networks?

Admiral Tidd: Much of it comes from building our own friendly network, and understanding all the partners and players who are in that friendly network. Many times, those activities are confined within U.S. country teams within U.S. Embassies within individual sovereign states. How can we develop the means to link together these various activities?

Because as a geographic combatant command, we have a regional perspective and an opportunity, so we can now work with each of our partners within the individual country teams to stitch together these various effects. Much of it is by building the best possible picture, sharing that picture within each individual country team, and then achieving “unity of command.” But obviously, there is no such thing as unity of command in this instance because these partners are individual nation-states, sovereign territories, and our representation is rightfully our chief of mission within each of those states.

How can we stitch together each of these effects? In our military lexicon, we always hope for unity of command, but that doesn’t happen in the interagency community, ever. Unity of purpose we sometimes are able to achieve, but really what we are hoping to achieve in this case is unity of *effects*. Self-supporting, self-synchronizing effects occur because we are all orienting on a common operating picture, and we do the best job we can of building that picture, receiving information from as many partners as we can, kind of putting all of those individual tiles together into a mosaic and then sharing it with our interagency partners.

JFQ: What role does domestic and international demand for narcotics and other illicitly trafficked goods play in fueling the profits reaching these threat networks? You mentioned a little bit of this before. How does USSOUTHCOM engage outside of its area of responsibility to address that end of the system?

Admiral Tidd: One of the challenges is that we don’t have a military mission in the demand-reduction piece of it. To the extent that we are able to apply broad pressure across the length and breadth of these networks, it will challenge the ability of the networks to be able to move that commodity. There is the other piece of the problem; we look at illicit flows in the case of human-trafficking and movement of people. We also look at what are the push factors that cause people to leave. It is primarily generated

by insecurity in the individual countries, so we work together with our interagency partners, largely led by the State Department and [the U.S. Agency for International Development], to try to address the local level, and expanding beyond the local level, these areas of insecurity. We support the efforts of the Department of Justice to help countries develop a judicial system capable of effectively administering justice so that a conviction can be achieved. Then there’s got to be effective governance that produces an incarceration system so that an individual who has been convicted doesn’t find a safer, more secure place to conduct his illicit business inside of a prison. It’s the full ecosystem, if you will, of the justice circle. The military has to work its piece of the larger picture and help our fellow partners come together to address the entire circle; otherwise, we are trying to empty a sinking boat with a thimble, and we’re never going to make a whole lot of progress.

JFQ: Can you discuss your military imperatives and why they are important? How do you gain traction with concepts that may not resonate with the culture and beliefs of foreign societies governed by security forces?

Admiral Tidd: That’s the challenge, isn’t it? Ultimately, because we have longstanding, positive military-to-military relationships with many of the countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, we work together well, and one of the questions that I think we all are interested in is how can we not only effectively become better military organizations, but also ultimately contribute to the security of our nations and work together. For a number of years, we’ve had a number of different programs that addressed individual issues, and it seemed that what was needed was an overarching organizing construct to pull these together to explain why is it that we do these things. In the end, if it’s about becoming a modern, effective 21st-century military, what are some of the attributes of those militaries? I try to pull together

these threads into a tapestry—each one is important in its own right, but ultimately all the threads are interdependent, so to advance them requires them to work together.

Probably the most obvious and longstanding example is the work that USSOUTHCOM has done in advancing is that respect for human rights has to be a foundational attribute of a modern military. We've had difficulty in the past because often we were viewed as preaching and beating up some of our partners over this topic of human rights. We've got to find a way of understanding why it is important to have a foundational respect for human rights. It's not because it's a superficial or nice-to-do thing. It's what allows the security forces to derive their legitimacy. It's what underpins their purpose for being, where the military, police, or security forces is viewed by the population at large—not just the elites, not just the government—as protectors and not as predators. USSOUTHCOM is getting ready to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its human rights office, and that is something we are exceptionally proud of.

Another example is a longstanding program that has been going on, largely centered within the office of USSOUTHCOM's command sergeant-major. We have long recognized in the U.S. military that its backbone is a capable, professional senior NCO [noncommissioned officer] corps. We have told people that's the secret sauce that makes the military as effective as it is. Officers may dictate what the standard is, but it's the NCO corps that enforces it and makes sure that it pervades the entire organization. It is the living, breathing ethos of the organization. Whatever the NCO corps accepts, that is the maintained standard. Let's think about that. If it's important, if respect for human rights is important, you have to make sure that your NCO corps understands that, believes it, espouses it, and lives it. The two are interdependent.

The next one we took a look at is recognizing how we can take advantage of the human capital to solve critically different problems. If we want to be

a more effective military, we've got to find the right way to incorporate fully qualified women into all the branches of the Armed Forces. Again, it's not because it is social engineering or some sort of social experiment; it's because we learned by being pragmatic. Consider our special operations forces in Afghanistan and then Iraq. They were unable to approach half of the human terrain because they could not speak with any of the women, and yet women are enormous sources of information and understanding of what's going on. If we are going to be successful, we need to understand that. So, they successfully incorporated women into their forces.

The challenge we've got to overcome are cultural ones. I need people who look at problems from different perspectives, have different ways to get to a solution, and, no great surprise, it turns out that women solve problems differently than men. Why would we not want to incorporate that creativity into the deck of cards that we've got available to us as we are solving problems? We've got to find a way to adjust to that. Unfortunately, in some circles, we have reduced whether people can be effective team members to how many push-ups they can do, how many sit-ups, how fast can they run a mile-and-a-half, two miles, three miles. That is a simplistic way of looking at this problem. Yes, those are important abilities, and don't get me wrong, I don't mean for one second to undervalue that one has to be a fit individual to succeed on the modern battlefield. But that's not the only attribute that we need. As we have discovered, we need to measure for tenacity, willingness to execute the mission regardless of how difficult or challenging it is, and creativity—coming at problems from different perspectives—so that I can have a competitive advantage against my adversary. How do we measure those things? We still are struggling with providing a holistic look at what attributes we value most.

But this won't happen overnight, just as a 6-, or 8-, or 10-year-old boy imagines himself as a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman, Coastguardsman, as he imagines himself serving and taking the steps to

prepare himself. Similarly, a young girl at that same age, if she sees the commander of a geographic combatant command who happens to be a woman, who is also supremely qualified, if she sees a woman who has successfully completed the ranger program, if she sees women who are fighter pilots and captains of ships leading Marines and she recognizes that those individuals are valued for who they are, she will also develop the skills she needs to successfully compete and achieve to get to that point. So that's the third imperative.

The fourth one is this concept of jointness, which *Joint Force Quarterly* helps support. We've been on this path toward jointness for well over 30 years. We are still struggling, but the one piece that I would take from having our joint force engage in combat operations as full joint force partners, now for a decade and a half, is that there is nobody in today's leadership who questions the value of jointness and the understanding that we will never fight as separate Services. We can help our regional partners gain that understanding. They are at various stages along this same journey because, ultimately, none of them has the resources, none of us has the resources to be able to solve problems individually. I would say that the time is now to extend that further. It is not just military. If you were going to be an effective joint officer, you've got to understand the role that you play as part of a security team that includes the military, Intelligence Community, law enforcement, diplomatic community, NGO [nongovernmental organization] community, as well as and understand the roles and contributions that they can make. You can't just state, "I'm only going to do NCO development and jointness." It is an interdependent mix. I think that working jointly has made us stronger. We're not there yet, it's a path, it's a journey that we are on with mixed results. Ultimately, it's cultural change, and I think that we can help our regional officers. JFQ

Members of U.S. Southern Command–directed team Joint Task Force–Matthew provide humanitarian and disaster relief assistance to victims of Hurricane Matthew, Jeremie, Haiti, October 8, 2016 (U.S. Marine Corps, South/Adwin Esters)



U.S. Southern Command

Evolving to Meet 21st-Century Challenges

By Kurt W. Tidd and Tyler W. Morton

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region most closely connected to our own stability, security, and economic prosperity. This is important despite the fact other regions often figure more prominently

in U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. Given our shared values, culture, geography, heritage, and history, security challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean often become security challenges for the

United States. Previously, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) efforts were heavily devoted to one of these challenges: narcotics smuggling into the United States. While USSOUTHCOM—along with our interagency and regional partners—continues to be invested in the counterdrug mission, the threats in our region continue to evolve and so must we. Today’s challenges are much more likely to be transregional, multidomain, and

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Navy and Coast Guard personnel assigned to guided-missile frigate USS *Elrod* signal toward narcotics bales, April 21, 2012, during recovery operations in Caribbean Sea (U.S. Army/Andy Barrera)

multifunctional. This new era calls for increased cooperation across the U.S. Government and, more importantly for USSOUTHCOM, increased cooperation with U.S. allies and partners.

In the USSOUTHCOM area of focus, transregional and transnational threat networks (T3Ns) increasingly challenge the sovereignty of states across the region. Through the exploitation of the permissive environments they deliberately seek to create, these illicit networks carve out geographical areas of impunity in which they can operate without fear of law enforcement interference. Characterized by fragile rule of law, porous borders, and weak governance, these open zones are riddled with illicit pathways that T3Ns use to move anything and anyone across borders for great profit. Driven by the insatiable demand for their products, this lucrative business provides T3Ns with vast resources that they subsequently use to further erode

the efficacy of law enforcement agencies. Through endemic corruption and, at times, the outright co-opting of governmental services and agencies, T3Ns have the ability to destabilize societies, exacerbating the lawlessness that often creates the conditions that prompt mass migration.¹ This destabilizing effect represents a direct threat to the U.S. homeland and a national security risk. The USSOUTHCOM region also faces a threat from violent extremist organizations. While not a major area of extremist activity, the same permissive environment, created and taken advantage of by the T3Ns, allows these organizations to operate with relative impunity.

In addition to the threat posed by T3Ns and extremist organizations, Latin America and the Caribbean are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. Uneven prevention, management, and response capabilities in the region—coupled with

underlying challenges such as poverty and weak governance—amplify the impact of disasters, extend human suffering, and exacerbate existing developmental challenges. Additionally, while overall the region is politically stable, the aforementioned gap between public expectations and governmental performance frequently manifests itself in social protest. Though generally peaceful, the potential exists for violent demonstrations; a downward turn in the most at-risk countries has the potential to compel a regional response and requests for U.S. engagement or support.

While threat networks and potential crises pose the nearest and most pressing danger, the United States also faces direct competition in the region from several external state actors (ESAs). Latin America and the Caribbean present strategic opportunities for Russia, China, and Iran to achieve their respective long-term objectives and advance their global

interests, which are often incompatible with ours and those of our partners in the region. The influence of these external actors presents a transregional problem set that connects our region to the rest of the world. To counteract this evolved global challenge requires close synchronization of effort across the affected geographic combatant commands (GCCs). As such, USSOUTHCOM is diligently working with many of the other commands to ensure unity of effort. Additionally, the expanding presence—and influence—of ESAs in the region is concerning, particularly in the sphere of human rights and the promotion of regional peace and stability. Keep in mind, none of these ESAs have the Leahy Law,² restrictions on security assistance, or any independent domestic media to scrutinize their external activities. Their arms sales are not tied to international protocols, and they are not subject to human rights vetting. Additionally, the loans they provide often do not come with requirements to follow anti-corruption standards or even clear repayment terms and conditions. These occasionally unscrupulous business practices and disregard for transparent rule of law facilitate corruption and pose challenges to the shared norms and values that have brought prosperity and security to millions of people across the hemisphere.

As outlined above, the threats to the region are complex and often go overlooked given the increasingly crowded national security agenda. To better confront them, USSOUTHCOM is currently undergoing a sea change in the way we think about, analyze, and address these national security concerns. Beginning in summer 2016, the command established a series of cross-functional teams to dissect the problems we face and forge new ways to confront and overcome the challenges. These teams were focused on three areas that comprise the bulk of our main efforts: countering T3Ns (C-T3Ns), rapid response, and building relationships. After extensive work, the teams produced a series of actions that will drive the tasks, initiatives, and strategic planning as we move forward.

Countering Transnational and Transregional Threat Networks

To keep pace with the challenges posed by T3Ns, we must do more than simply target the illicit commodities they move.³ Though we are not walking away from our statutorily mandated support to the counterdrug mission, to truly degrade the T3Ns requires a shift away from isolated efforts aimed at stopping the commodities they traffic and a refocus on dismantling the networks themselves. This shift in thinking has been the biggest change at USSOUTHCOM. By employing a networked approach that integrates the command's capabilities with those of U.S. allies and partners across the region, we hope to stop the threats—whatever they may be—as far away from the U.S. homeland as possible. To that end, we are working ever more closely with our interagency and regional partners to affect the networks that control the pathways in the region. While we have always cooperated with teams from across the region, what has changed is *how* we are now working as a team to maximize effects.

Building a Joint, Interagency Team.

To better enable efforts to disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and, ultimately, defeat the T3Ns, we have created multiple communities of interest (COIs) that bring together various U.S. Government stakeholders. The members of these COIs meet weekly to share information and intelligence; expand understanding and awareness about the networks and our activities to counter them; and guide our efforts to ensure maximum disruption of T3N activities. In 2016, information-sharing and support to tactical operations generated by our Central America COI (CENTAM COI), which is hosted by our Joint Task Force–Bravo (JTF-Bravo) and includes over 700 participants from various U.S. Government agencies, helped dismantle several T3N nodes and subnetworks. By sharing information in the CENTAM COI, interagency participants are better prepared to apply pressure at points that force the T3Ns to modify their operations and change their tactics; this shift exposes, or illuminates, the network and makes

them vulnerable. The CENTAM COI continues to grow and recently expanded to include representatives from U.S. Northern Command. This collaboration between the two commands charged with defending the U.S. homeland has already yielded results and strengthened the seams along the commands' boundaries.

Building on the CENTAM COI success, we have also established a counter-T3N cross-directorate team at the command's headquarters in Doral, Florida. This team is a group of dedicated analysts and operators who work directly with our interagency partners to improve the fusion of intelligence analysis and operations. Through network mapping and enhanced collaboration, this team will lead the command's C-T3N efforts. Though the initial focus of the team will be to stem the flow of special interest aliens (SIAs) and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), we expect their roles to expand as the team's capability matures.⁴ Additionally, we have partnered with the greater Intelligence Community to pursue innovative approaches to integrate unclassified open source, social media, and publically available information into our shared knowledge base. By doing so, we will better characterize the regional security environment and facilitate increased information and intelligence exchanges with regional and interagency partners.

To complement these efforts and fill a requirement identified in the National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016, we have greatly expanded our support to the Department of Homeland Security effort to counter the migration of SIAs.⁵ In 2016, in a combined effort with U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Special Operations Command, we dedicated analysts and resources to Homeland Security Investigation's Operation *Citadel*—a multiyear, multiagency effort to dismantle human-smuggling networks and identify migrants who may present security threats. In fiscal year 2017, our increased planning support, intelligence capabilities, and airlift will significantly enhance Homeland Security Investigation's ability to prevent persons of interest from transiting the region,

reaching the U.S. border, and potentially gaining entry into the United States.

Further C-T3N efforts include broadening the detection and monitoring mission of the USSOUTHCOM-subordinate Joint Interagency Task Force–South (JIATF-S) in Key West, Florida. Often recognized as the model for interagency cooperation, JIATF-S was countering threat networks long before the term became vogue.⁶ While its core detection and monitoring mission will continue to support interagency law enforcement efforts to stem the ever-increasing flow of drugs, JIATF-S is also broadening its scope by targeting global money laundering, bulk cash smuggling, and other facilitator-based illicit activities that enable narcotics trafficking.

Teaming with Partner Nations. We have also worked diligently with our allies and partners to increase the entire region's ability to counter threat networks. Though the Colombian government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) recently signed a peace agreement ending over 50 years of armed conflict, our cooperation with Colombia remains vital as powerful, illegally armed groups will undoubtedly seek to fill the power vacuum created by the FARC's agreement to abandon the drug trade.⁷ With coca cultivation and production in the Andean region increasing almost 40 percent in 2016 alone, these networks could complicate Colombia's post-FARC transitional period.⁸ To preempt this, USSOUTHCOM is leveraging our unique relationship with Colombia to synchronize the delivery of counter-T3N capability-building efforts with our continued training and equipping of key units across the Colombian armed forces and law enforcement.⁹ We believe these efforts will continue to help Colombia as it transitions into the post-FARC era.

Elsewhere, USSOUTHCOM joined other Defense Department and U.S. Government agencies to team with Brazil during the 2016 Rio Olympics. This successful partnership provided new opportunities to work with Brazil in the areas of C-T3Ns, counter-weapons of mass destruction, cyber, space, and information-sharing. In the Caribbean,

we work bilaterally and multilaterally with partners such as the Caribbean Community's Implementing Agency for Crime and Security and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Center to facilitate greater information-sharing and to close our capability gaps in addressing illicit flows of drugs, SIAs, and FTFs. We also support the Caribbean Community as it develops a regional counterterrorism strategy and work with key partners such as Trinidad and Tobago to illuminate and degrade extremist networks with global ties to the so-called Islamic State and other dangerous groups.¹⁰

Working with our allies and partners, USSOUTHCOM counternarcotic programs (including train and equip, infrastructure, and building partner-nation capacity and capability) play an important role in stabilizing the region from the effects of T3Ns. Central American partners are increasingly capable, playing a role in nearly 50 percent of JIATF-South's maritime interdiction operations and conducting operations on their own, and with each other. USSOUTHCOM has also helped enhance land interdiction capabilities across the region by providing training, infrastructure, and communication equipment. As a result, there has been significant improvement across Central American security and military forces. Guatemala's Interagency Task Forces combine the best of military and law enforcement authorities and capabilities; these organizations unite at the task forces to reduce the flow of drugs, people, and other illicit goods. Honduras has also made a concerted effort to dismantle threat networks, expedite suspected drug traffickers to the United States, and eliminate corruption.¹¹ Panamanian efforts to counter a wide spectrum of threats showcase them as an increasingly capable partner that is positioned at a critical geographic chokepoint.¹² In 2017, USSOUTHCOM will expand its support to Panama and Costa Rica to help dissuade T3Ns from moving into the southern portion of Central America's isthmus.

Building Public-Private Collaboration. Finally, as T3Ns exploit socioeconomic vulnerabilities in the

region, USSOUTHCOM is integrating the efforts and expertise of the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society to mitigate the conditions that contribute to the social service vacuum. The command routinely conducts community support activities in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean where we work alongside our partners in civil society to expand the skills necessary to demonstrate state presence and reduce the malign influence of T3Ns.

Enabling Rapid Response. While countering threat networks receives the preponderance of our effort, USSOUTHCOM faces other challenges. Given the inevitability of natural disasters in the Caribbean and Latin America, we continually work with our allies and partners to improve the region's collective preparedness and response capabilities. Within the USSOUTHCOM enterprise, we are focused on institutionalizing our own capabilities to provide agile and effective support to our interagency and regional partners. In the region, we are strengthening our linkages to the very network of militaries, civilian agencies, and experts with whom we will cooperate during a crisis.

Strengthening Interagency Partnerships. Cooperation starts with trust; it is the linchpin of USSOUTHCOM's ability to rapidly respond and work seamlessly with our allies and partners. We build this trust during routine exercises and deepen it during crisis response operations. This was most apparent during our response to Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. By leveraging forward-deployed forces, Joint Task Force–Matthew (JTF-Matthew) provided a tailored rapid response that was critical during the early stages of relief operations. Utilizing our presence at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras and the U.S. Naval Station–Guantánamo Bay, the command moved elements from JTF-Bravo and a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) to Haiti within 24 hours of notification from the lead Federal agency, in this case, the U.S. Agency for International Development. JTF-Bravo and the



Servicemember from Barbados participates in Exercise Tradewinds 2016, at Twickenham Park Gallery Range, Jamaica, June 24, 2016 (U.S. Marine Corps/ Justin T. Updegraff)

SPMAGTF team—which had previously been conducting security cooperation activities in Central America—provided unique U.S. military capabilities that significantly aided the delivery of humanitarian supplies and alleviated the suffering of tens of thousands of Haitians.

Additionally, the rapid deployment of elements from the U.S. Transportation Command’s Joint Enabling Capabilities Command was critical to the success of JTF-Matthew. U.S. forces deployed aboard the USS *Mesa Verde* and USS *Iwo Jima* provided robust relief from the sea as they moved hundreds of tons of supplies to the hardest hit areas. During the relief mission, we also coordinated with our U.S. Coast Guard partners to deter potential migration in the aftermath of the hurricane and supported the Department of State’s outreach to regional partners seeking to contribute to the response effort.

Working with Allies and Partner Nations. Exercises like Panamax, Integrated Advance, Tradewinds, and

Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarias test multinational responses to diverse scenarios such as the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, terrorist acts, and natural disasters. Multinational exercises are the most important way we train with our partner nations’ military forces, law enforcement agencies, and civil society aid organizations. These exercises improve our interoperability, institutionalize preparedness and response measures, and build confidence in the United States as a reliable partner. The trust built during these exercises helps reduce the scope and duration of a crisis and increases the likelihood our partners can respond to crises on their own if necessary.

Regionally, the command’s health and medical readiness engagements build partner-nation capacity and capability to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks. USSOUTHCOM does this through a series of in-country engagements. Taking the spotlight this year is Continuing Promise 2017 (CP-17), a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored

humanitarian aid mission that will bring medical, dental, and veterinary assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia. During CP-17, U.S. personnel work hand-in-hand with their host-nation counterparts, local government officials, health professionals, nongovernmental organizations, and private volunteer organizations to respond to the medical needs of the local populations. Additionally, at the early stages of the Zika outbreak, the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 6 based in Lima, Peru, established research sites in partnership with Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Peru to actively support partner-nation response efforts. This quick reaction was critical to slowing the spread of Zika in Central and South America.

Many of these building partner-nation capacity and capability efforts would not be possible without the dedication of our Total Force partners from the National Guard and Reserves. The National Guard’s State Partnership Program has

been especially valuable to building trust and cooperation in the region as illustrated by the following examples. In 2016, the relationship between the Florida National Guard and Barbados strengthened the Barbadian government's ability to respond to national disasters with a focus on critical infrastructure and interagency collaboration.¹³ Additionally, the Massachusetts National Guard's partnership with Paraguay has allowed for the training of over 2,000 Paraguayan military personnel as peacekeepers and observers. Now, Paraguay supports United Nations missions in Africa, Haiti, Cyprus, and Colombia.¹⁴ This commitment further highlights the desire of many of the region's nations to contribute globally to the common good.

Collaborating with Civil Society. In addition to collaborating with our interagency and regional partners, we seek to build a culture of crisis management and trust across our network of nongovernmental partners. During the lead-up to the Rio Olympics, we teamed with international cruise lines and law enforcement agencies to share information about potential threats and ensure security protocols were in place. We are beginning work with the College of William & Mary's Violent International Political Conflict and Terrorism laboratory to help predict violence in partner nations, assess deterrence option effectiveness, and forecast tactical successes. We also regularly join chaplains in our partner-nation militaries to engage religious leaders in the region about their role in disaster recovery and potential opportunities to work together when crisis hits.

Led by U.S. Army South and U.S. Air Forces Southern, the Beyond the Horizon and New Horizons humanitarian and civic assistance exercises incorporated more than 2,000 U.S., partner-nation, and public/private participants from seven nations. This network treated nearly 30,000 patients, conducted 242 surgeries, and constructed schools and clinics in remote areas. Similarly, our training missions such as JTF-Bravo's medical engagements and CP-17 bring together U.S. military personnel, partner-nation forces, and civilian volunteers

to treat tens of thousands of the region's citizens. We are also building basic infrastructure like schools, medical clinics, and emergency operations centers and warehouses for relief supplies. These activities provide training opportunities for our own personnel, while also improving the ability of our partners to provide essential services to their citizens and meet their humanitarian needs during a disaster or emergency response.

Building Relationships to Meet Global Challenges

Whether we are remaining vigilant against the activities of ESAs, fostering greater regional and multinational cooperation against shared challenges, or reinforcing the rules-based international order, security partnerships are the foundation of everything we do. These relationships—based on shared values, mutual respect, and principled U.S. and regional leadership—ensure our Hemisphere remains a beacon of peace and prosperity.

Solidifying Interagency Partnerships.

Over the past year, we have expanded our collaboration with the interagency community, our allies and partners, and fellow GCCs to address the global challenges posed by ESAs. We work with the Intelligence Community to build a better shared understanding of ESA intentions and how their activities in Latin America and the Caribbean advance their respective global strategies. We routinely share information with U.S. European Command, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Special Operations Command on issues of mutual interest and concern. In 2017, USSOUTHCOM and USPACOM will cohost a meeting with our allies and partners in Southeast Asia and South America to share information on Asia-Pacific security and T3Ns.

Increasing Partner Capacity and Capability. While our capacity- and capability-building efforts help partner nations address immediate threats, over time we seek to encourage a network of willing partners who contribute to international security and advance shared principles like good governance and

human rights. Chile is a regular participant in USPACOM's annual Rim of the Pacific exercise and will assume a greater exercise leadership role in the future. Colombia is leading an effort to integrate a block of Pacific alliance nations into the Western Pacific Naval Symposium and is expanding defense cooperation with South Korea, Japan, and potentially Vietnam. Brazil is deepening its maritime security cooperation with West Africa and focusing on countering illicit trade between the South American and African continents. These nations join many other regional leaders in supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world, including the mission in Haiti.

Military Imperatives. The institutionalization of jointness, respect for human rights, development of professional noncommissioned officer (NCO) corps, and integration of gender perspectives are interconnected and interdependent characteristics of capable, modern defense forces.¹⁵ These characteristics are military imperatives for national defense forces that seek to maintain legitimacy and gain the trust of those they exist to serve. Militaries that fail to advance in these areas risk finding themselves at a distinct competitive disadvantage in the modern security arena.

Integrating Gender Perspectives. At USSOUTHCOM, we recognize that, as an inter-American defense community, we can attain a competitive, and even asymmetric, advantage by unlocking the full potential of our security and defense workforce. To be the most effective team we can be, we simply cannot afford to cut ourselves off from 50 percent of our population, 50 percent of our talent, and 50 percent of our capabilities. Gender integration is much more than simply numbers, however. The quest for gender integration is about finding the right teammates; those people—both men and women—with the irresistible drive to contribute to mission success, who have the right team ethos, and who possess a diverse way of looking at problems. Effective gender integration is really part of a larger question: how do we attract, develop, and retain the best



Colombian naval infantrymen explain their water purification and jungle survival techniques to U.S. Marines during Amphibious-Southern Partnership Station near Turbo, Colombia, October 10, 2011 (U.S. Army/Juancarlos Paz)

people, with the right skill sets, to meet the ever-accelerating demands of military operations in the 21st century? Gender integration needs to evolve from beyond a simple argument of whether women can meet standards to a full acceptance that female military professionals want to be judged on the basis of their grit, their determination, and their tenacity. Women want the opportunity to compete, just like their male counterparts. At USSOUTHCOM, we are committed to instilling this way of thinking throughout our partner-nation military forces and law enforcement organizations. To ensure maximum integration of gender perspectives, we have included several objectives in our strategic planning documents and country-specific strategies that commit our staff to assisting our partners in incorporating fully qualified women into their defense sectors, countering trafficking in persons, and protecting vulnerable populations during military operations.

USSOUTHCOM has also hired a full-time Gender Advisor, a U.S. Navy master chief petty officer with combat experience in Iraq, to work with and advise our partners. These initiatives have already yielded results: from exchanging best practices with Paraguay regarding women in peacekeeping operations to hosting a visit by Argentinean leaders to discuss ways to integrate women into operational military units, the region's militaries are steadily capitalizing on diversity and moving forward as one integrated team.

Institutionalizing and Achieving Enhanced Jointness. Operating jointly is fundamental to our ability to confront challenges in today's complex world. Conflict now happens in a transregional, multidomain, multifunctional environment that is evolving daily. For militaries to keep pace, they must incorporate the unique capabilities that each service brings to the fight. The USSOUTHCOM approach to jointness

includes learning about and leveraging complementary service-specific capabilities and subsequently exchanging lessons learned with our various partners across the region. We truly embrace the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) principles in our approach as we integrate the capabilities of allies and partners from across the region.¹⁶ This was evidenced in our response to Hurricane Matthew as forces from the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and Jamaica all contributed aid. Their contributions were critical to success in Haiti and were a direct reflection of the jointness, or JIIM, mindset.

Human Rights. One of USSOUTHCOM's highest priorities is the promotion of respect for human rights, a mission it has integrated into its activities and engagements since the 1990s. The Latin American region has made great strides in democracy and

human rights in recent decades, and today our hemisphere is interconnected by shared democratic principles. Respect for human rights is a critical military imperative in order for defense and security operations to be successful. Without it, we lose our legitimacy, the trust and confidence of the people we aim to protect, and the effectiveness of the security missions entrusted to us. To date, USSOUTHCOM remains the only combatant command with a dedicated Human Rights Office, which has both an internal and external focus. This means that we ensure our own personnel are properly trained and educated on this military imperative while supporting our partners' efforts to build strong human rights programs within the armed forces. The USSOUTHCOM-sponsored Human Rights Initiative (HRI) is a fundamental tool that drives this imperative. HRI brings together representatives of military, security forces, civilian government, and civil society to develop a model human rights program for military forces focused in four areas: doctrine, education and training, internal control systems, and cooperation with civilian authorities. Currently, USSOUTHCOM supports the efforts of 11 nations in the USSOUTHCOM area of operations and 1 regional organization that have formally committed to implementing HRI within their militaries. HRI also creates a network of partner nation militaries formally committed to respecting human rights.

Development of Professional NCO Corps. Long referred to as the “backbone of the Army,” the NCO remains exactly that and much more.¹⁷ Today’s NCOs play critical roles in the institutional advancement and operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. Understanding this, USSOUTHCOM has partnered with regional defense institutions to improve NCO development and education across the Hemisphere. Our Noncommissioned Officer Development Partnership Program (NCO DP) assists our partner nations as they develop their NCO corps and professionalize their militaries. The NCO DP integrates unique capabilities and perspectives from across the U.S. joint force and delivers those to

partner nations through NCO exchanges, exercises, and hands-on training. NCOs from the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and from across the National Guard work directly with NCOs from the partner nations to train, execute, and build the capability of their NCO corps. This investment in partner-nation enlisted leadership yields improved readiness and field forces capable of exporting security in support of regional and global security operations. To date, the NCO DP has interacted with 16 hemispheric partners and has been involved in more than 50 events. Highlighting the impact of the program, during the last 24 months, USSOUTHCOM NCOs have been directly involved in the creation and/or support of an NCO Corps and Senior NCO Course in the Dominican Republic; the first designated Sergeant Major of the Army for Brazil and Chile; and the first Joint Senior Enlisted meetings in Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic.

These four imperatives are hallmarks of modern professional militaries. While each has a separate meaning, we must remember that they are interdependent and interconnected—without any one of the four, a military’s competence is incomplete. All four must function simultaneously as each supports, facilitates, and ensures the success of the other three. As we train, exercise, and conduct operations with our partners, USSOUTHCOM seeks to inculcate the imperatives into the culture of each partner military. Sometimes quite challenging, we believe embracing the imperatives is critical for each nation’s legitimacy and ultimate success.

Conclusion

From interconnected, ruthless threat networks to the malign influence of ESAs, the national security threats we face in the Western Hemisphere are vast. Add the inevitability of natural disasters across the region and the result is a complex, diverse mixture of challenges that requires USSOUTHCOM, our allies, and our partners to be ready to react at a moment’s notice. With

our nation’s priorities oriented to more prominent global challenges, maximizing the limited resources we have and working hand-in-hand with our allies and partners are absolutely essential to our success. We do this through a networked approach that focuses on optimizing what each contributor can supply to the overall task. This was most recently apparent in the response to Hurricane Matthew, where many of our interagency, allied, and partner nations contributed everything from food and building supplies to medical care. The result was a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational solution that provided care and services across the affected parts of Haiti. Moving forward, we expect the response to Hurricane Matthew to become the norm, regardless of the nature of the challenge. Whether we are confronting the threat posed by T3Ns or reacting to another natural disaster, our first response will always be to rally a coalition of contributing partners.

Fortunately, USSOUTHCOM has created a legacy of trust. Our way forward is to use that trust to enhance the relationships we have and to help us build new ones. Together we will move past simple synchronization and coordination to a truly integrated, collaborative effort. We have been charged with defending our nation’s southern approaches; only by working together will we be able to unite our efforts to produce a faster, flatter, and more agile network of diplomatic, law enforcement, Intelligence Community, and military teammates. Here at USSOUTHCOM, we are doing just that. JFQ

Notes

¹ Kenneth Rapoza, “Immigrants Fleeing Increasingly Violent Latin America, Study Suggests,” *Forbes Magazine*, January 28, 2016, available at <www.forbes.com/sites/ken-rapoza/2016/01/28/immigrants-fleeing-increasingly-violent-latin-america-study-suggests/#1194a5d64ba7>.

² The Leahy Law is a U.S. human rights law that prohibits the Department of State and Department of Defense from providing military assistance to foreign military units that

violate human rights. For further information on the Leahy Law, see the “Leahy Fact Sheet,” available at <www.humanrights.gov/dyn/03/leahy-fact-sheet/>.

³ Joint Publication 3-25, *Countering Threat Networks* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, December 21, 2016), GL-4, defines *countering threat networks* as “the aggregation of activities across the Department of Defense and United States Government departments and agencies that identifies and neutralizes, degrades, disrupts, or defeats designated threat networks.”

⁴ The Department of Homeland Security defines *special interest aliens* (SIAs) as “aliens from specially designated Countries that have shown a tendency to promote, produce, or protect terrorist organizations or their members.” See Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, “Supervision of Aliens Commensurate with Risk,” December 23, 2011, 5, available at <www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_11-81_Decl1.pdf>. The United Nations (UN) defines *foreign terrorist fighters* as “terrorist fighters, namely individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict.” See UN Security Council Resolution 2178, September 24, 2014, available at <www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf>.

⁵ The National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016 directs U.S. Government agencies to identify and address security vulnerabilities in the U.S. defense against terrorist travel. See House Resolution 4408, *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel Act of 2016*, February 24, 2016, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., available at <www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr4408/BILLS-114hr4408rfs.pdf>.

⁶ For background information on JI-ATF-South’s long history of excellence, see Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force-South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*, INSS Strategic Perspectives 5 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, June 2011).

⁷ Rogerio Jelmayer, Kejal Vyas, and Samantha Pearson, “Brazilian Gang Enlists FARC Rebels for Drug Trade,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2017, available at <www.wsj.com/articles/brazilian-gang-enlists-farc-rebels-for-drug-trade-1485858609>.

⁸ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2015,” July 2016, 11.

⁹ For additional information on the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation, see “Joint Press Release on the United States-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation,” media note, Washington, DC, April 15, 2012, available at <<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/187928.htm>>.

¹⁰ Former U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago John Estrada estimates that 100 to 130 Trinidadians have traveled to Syria to join the so-called Islamic State; that number represents the highest number per capita of all Western Hemisphere nations. Frances Robles, “Trying to Stanch Trinidad’s Flow of Young Recruits to ISIS,” *New York Times*, February 21, 2017.

¹¹ As testament to Honduras’s commitment to C-T3Ns, they will reportedly extradite Atlantic Cartel head Wilter Blanco to the United States to face trial on drug trafficking and racketeering charges. See Mike LaSusa, “Alleged Honduras Kingpin Wanted by U.S. Captured in Costa Rica,” *Insight Crime*, November 23, 2016, available at <www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/alleged-honduras-kingpin-wanted-by-us-captured-in-costa-rica>.

¹² As law enforcement has increasingly clamped down on traditional south-north migration routes, Panama’s Darién Gap has become a pathway of choice for the majority of the SIAs traveling north from South America. See Sara Schaefer Muñoz, “Global Migrants Brave Panama’s Vipers, Bats, Bandits to Reach U.S.,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2015.

¹³ For further information, see *The State Partnership Program: FY 2015 Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 26, 2016), available at <www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/FY15%20SPP%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

¹⁴ Marta Escurra, “The United States Ratifies Military Cooperation with Paraguay,” *Diálogo Digital Military Magazine*, July 19, 2016, available at <<https://dialogo-amicas.com/en/articles/united-states-ratifies-military-cooperation-paraguay>>.

¹⁵ As part of enhanced jointness, we encourage our partners to embrace joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) mindsets.

¹⁶ For further information on the JIIM principles, see Matthew Wade Markel et al., *Developing U.S. Army Officers’ Capabilities for Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Environments*, RAND Research Brief (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, December 6, 2011), available at <www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/2011/RAND_RB9631.pdf>.

¹⁷ The English poet Rudyard Kipling made the first reference to the noncommissioned officer (NCO) being the backbone of the army in his famous poem “The eathen,” which was his ode to British NCOs, available at <www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/eathen.html>.

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CV-22 Osprey from 8th Special Operations Squadron flies members of deployed aircraft ground response element over Hurlburt Field, Florida, during Emerald Warrior, DOD's only irregular warfare exercise, May 2, 2014 (U.S. Air Force/Jasmonet Jackson)

Strategic Competition Beyond Peace and War

By Daniel Burkhart and Alison Woody

The struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience. . . . International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power.

—HANS MORGENTHAU, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*

Major Daniel Burkhart, USA, is a Strategist (FA-59) with operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. Alison Woody was an intern with the Army Capabilities Integration Center at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

The struggle Morgenthau describes results in an evolving international distribution of power. After World War II, the majority of global power was divided between two poles until the fall of the Soviet Union gave rise to a unipolar system. The transformation of the international order continues today as rising powers join established powers, such as the United States, Japan, and the European Union, on the international stage.¹ Although a more balanced distribution of power may have economic and humanitarian benefits, political and military tensions frequently accompany major transitions in the international order.² Beyond the strains inherent as rising powers clash with those more established, the lack of globally dominant hegemons in a system of distributed power creates opportunities for revisionist state and nonstate actors to pursue their own, sometimes perilous, ambitions.³

As the global balance of power shifts, the United States will face several complex challenges requiring innovative responses, and indeed, is already facing rivals that it cannot optimally engage. Referred to by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph F. Dunford as the “four-plus-one challenges” (Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and the so-called Islamic State), these rival actors are evading U.S. strength by competing at a level below the threshold of a coercive U.S. or allied military response.⁴ These revisionist state and nonstate actors are working to contest the rules and norms established in the post–World War II order to create a system more sympathetic to their interests.

Although strategic competition is not a new phenomenon, planning and resource processes and current U.S. military doctrine are tailored to a paradigm in which the United States views its relations with other strategic actors as binary, within a context of either peace or war. In this view, military power is most applicable during hostilities, and certain actions are only permissible during a time of war.⁵ This restricted view leaves space for rivals to achieve their strategic objectives in conditions that do not constitute armed conflict. By operating in ways that do not evoke a military response, they are able to exploit U.S. processes.⁶ Consequently, the current *modus operandi* does not fully account for the utility of the U.S. military in conditions outside of armed conflict.

Recently, some security professionals have referred to these in-between activities as taking place in the *gray zone*. This term refers to an approach characterized by activities such as irregular warfare, low-intensity conflict, and gradual operations. As the term suggests, the gray zone is a form of competition accompanied by ambiguity concerning the actors involved, the nature of the conflict, and the relevant policy and legal frameworks.⁷ Revisionist actors are engaging in gray zone activities to increase their relative power in the global system.

While the idea of a gray zone contributes to our understanding of the operating environment given the

challenge of contested norms, the joint force would benefit from a more comprehensive approach. This article introduces a way to view the operating environment using a model comprised of three conditions: cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. These conditions account for both war and peace as well as the gray zone in between. In addition to delineating competition as the gap between peace and war, the “conditions-based model” identifies an active role for the joint force within cooperation and details a unique understanding of armed conflict. The model also provides organization and context to enable decisionmakers to consider and offer guidance for the role of the military instrument of power in all conditions.

This article begins by charting a framework for the conditions-based model, clarifying the mechanisms of this model, and presenting a theoretical rationale for its adoption. The following sections describe the three conditions by providing definitions, outline typical activities and a historical example reflecting each condition, and briefly illuminate ways in which the joint force could operate in the context of this model.

Conditions-Based Model

The international system is a vastly complex and densely populated network comprised of actors with interests and relationships that are overlapping to various degrees and, at times, conflicting. To understand the dynamics within this intricate system, one must necessarily simplify or generalize aspects of it. A model provides a framework for organizing ideas wherein some aspects of reality are abstracted to produce insight regarding something of special importance. While simplification is necessary in a model, it must also be nuanced enough to resemble reality. The conditions-based model attempts to reflect dynamics that already exist in the operating environment while providing a framework for thinking about and organizing relationships in the international system. Rather than being predictive, this model is a guide to understanding interactions

between actors of strategic importance. Additionally, it assumes *rational actors*, defined as states having situational awareness of their external environment and behaving logically to achieve their own goals.⁸ While a historical examination of state relations on a case-by-case basis would generate fewer exceptions than model-based understanding, models have great use for delineating overarching frameworks. Moreover, this model is limited in scope to those actors in the operating environment viewed by the implementer of the model as strategically important, whether they be state or nonstate actors.

In the conditions-based model, the term *condition* describes the way in which two strategic actors are associated in the international system. The three conditions used to categorize relationships are cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. The model pertains to the state or nonstate actor as a whole and concerns all its instruments of strategic power: diplomacy, information, military, and economics (DIME). The three possible conditions result from the interaction of interests, the importance of those interests, and the capabilities available to advance them. Since rational actors behave according to their interests, the activities they employ are indicative of the condition at hand. For each strategic relationship, the actor using the model must identify the current condition and the desired condition, the latter being that which the actor hopes to bring about based on internal interests and ambitions. The way in which the user of the model perceives the intersection of both actors’ interests and intentions results in a categorization of the current condition. To provide clarity of explanation, this section refers to Red and Blue, two imaginary strategic actors in the international system.

Although a single actor may engage in various activities reflecting different intentions, classifications of conditions are mutually exclusive. For instance, while Red and Blue may cooperate economically and compete militarily, all activities in their relationship are component elements of the underlying condition.⁹ Additionally,



At Brookings Institution, February 23, 2017, General Dunford assessed risk posed by Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and violent extremism (DOD/D. Myles Cullen)

while the model does not imply that the three conditions follow a linear progression, there is an implied hierarchy of coercive measures employed. The lowest level condition is cooperation, since actors primarily use cooperative activities to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships. Coercion is more central to the condition of competition below armed conflict, while armed conflict involves the highest intensity of coercive force. Since a rational actor will not engage in activities that reflect a higher level of coercive intensity than their interests dictate, the highest level activity is indicative of the current condition between two actors.

Actors will always have multiple interests, which will vary in importance, priority, and feasibility. An actor employing the conditions-based model will conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine the level of priority of a given interest. For instance, Red may strongly

disagree with Blue's environmental policy. Blue's policy inflicts some cost on Red, but this cost does not significantly impinge on Red's high priority interests. Should Red choose to take military action to counter this policy, Red would be inciting a war over a relatively low-priority interest. Instead, Red would more likely seek to counter this policy through sanctions or negotiations.

In addition to the relative importance of an interest, available capabilities are a limiting factor in an actor's determination to pursue an interest. Perhaps the Blue government is kidnapping and killing Red citizens, and the Red government is unable to resolve the situation through any means short of war. However, in this case, Red is a nonstate actor with limited power and scope, negligible military might, and meager financial resources. Red may indeed attempt to take military action despite its relative weakness, but

this enterprise is likely to result in the annihilation of Red as an actor on the international stage. A more prudent option for Red would be to undermine Blue's violence through other means or make concessions.

Instead of attempting to make predictions about state behavior, this model provides insight and context for decisionmaking. Policymakers may more accurately understand and respond to actions of other actors, while military professionals are enabled to provide best military advice and convey intent. Taking a simplistic view of this model, an interest will be either high or low priority and the actor will have either high or low capability for acting on that interest. Of course, this is an intentionally reductionist view and, in reality, interests will fall on a scale of greater complexity and nuance.

Actors' intentions and interests determine conditions, but perception

is also important in this model for two reasons. The first is the problem of imperfect information: one actor cannot know another's intentions with certainty (for example, Red may think that Blue is cooperating, when Blue is actually competing). Second, there is an alignment problem: two actors' intentions regarding each other may differ (for example, Red may compete with Blue, while Blue is cooperating with Red).¹⁰ Therefore, some amount of interpretation and speculation is necessary to categorize relationships. Reality and perception may not always align, but any actor seeking to classify a relationship according to this model must work diligently to limit the gap between truth and its interpretation.

Returning now to our fictional actors, Red chooses to employ the conditions-based model and begins by examining several factors about the actor in question, including Blue's behavior, capabilities, ideology, experience, and statements. This examination informs Red's perception of Blue's interests and intentions. In addition, Red must account for the reality of its own interests regarding Blue, and consider Blue's perception of Red's interests and intentions. After Red cultivates an understanding of these elements, Red decisionmakers can make a determination regarding relations with Blue according to one of the three conditions: cooperation, competition below armed conflict, or armed conflict. Once Red identifies the current condition it is in vis-à-vis Blue, it must decide whether it is advantageous to remain in this condition or to try to change the nature of relations to reflect the desired condition.

Thinking about strategic relationships in terms of these three conditions provides several advantages. Compared to a limited peace/war model, the conditions-based model is more descriptive in its portrayal of reality through its accounting of activities below the threshold of armed conflict. It addresses perception biases, identifies conditions resulting from interests, and outlines possibilities for influencing conditions. This all-encompassing approach to categorizing relations with an actor, in lieu

of piecemeal responses to each individual action, provides a greater context for decisionmakers to set policy aims. In addition, the model enables policymakers to maintain continuity of perspective and articulate condition-based guidance for interacting with any given actor. It offers a useful way of organizing perceptions, interests, and intentions in order to think more clearly and plan effectively. The following sections describe the three conditions in more depth, provide examples reflecting each condition, and briefly illustrate the role of the joint force in the context of this model.

Cooperation

The peace/war paradigm lends a passive connotation to actors not in conflict, even though various instruments of national power are required to actively maintain and strengthen peace. Mutually beneficial relationships between actors with similar or compatible high-priority interests are the basis for the condition of cooperation. In the global context, cooperation occurs in a variety of forms and across a range of issues, including, for example, security, nuclear nonproliferation, environmental issues, and economics. Actors may cooperate over the long term or they can cooperate on a specific issue in an isolated instance. Activities within a condition use various instruments of power. Cooperative activities across DIME instruments could include friendly diplomatic actions, training exercises to increase interoperability, security cooperation, and economic partnerships.

One example of bilateral cooperation is the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. According to this agreement, Japan acts as a host nation to U.S. forces, and the United States is committed to defending Japan and essentially responsible for Japanese security.¹¹ Since 1960, the United States and Japan have perpetuated a symbiotic security relationship, and the longevity of this alliance is evidence that the two countries' interests are more compatible than incompatible.¹² In the context of the Cold War, the alliance allowed Japan to concentrate its efforts

on rebuilding its economy while the United States was able to maintain a forward presence in East Asia and extend its nuclear umbrella. This forward strategy allowed the United States to observe Soviet maritime movement in the region.¹³ Today, both countries are invested in maintaining the status quo power balance in the Far East. Over time, the United States and Japan have negotiated the terms of the alliance and adjusted them to meet the changing needs of both actors. Security cooperation has been enhanced by an increase in military-to-military engagement, benefiting force and intelligence interoperability.¹⁴

Cooperation is strategically important for the United States. It underpins the current international order, enhances collective security, helps to ensure access to global commons, enables burden-sharing, and deters conflict.¹⁵ Military power supports and enables cooperation in many ways. Joint force participation in military engagement builds trust and enables information-sharing with U.S. partners.¹⁶ Joint actions such as nation assistance and foreign humanitarian assistance bolster friendly relations and cooperation efforts.¹⁷ Show of force and enforcement of sanction missions augment deterrence and assure partners of U.S. resolve. Assurance is also vital for enabling nations to maintain military forces at levels unlikely to trigger arms races.

Competition Below Armed Conflict

The condition of competition below armed conflict exists when two actors in the international system have incompatible high-priority interests and one or both actors engage in or intend to engage in behavior that will be detrimental to the other's interests. The incompatible interest is either too low a priority or too difficult to attain given actor capabilities to rise to the level of open armed conflict. To be an act of competition, the behavior must negatively affect another actor's vital interests or suggest that future activities are likely to do so. Competitive intentions may become apparent over time, as in the case of coercive gradualism,



HH-60 Pave Hawks from 33rd Rescue Squadron, 943rd Rescue Group, and Japan Air Self-Defense Force fly in formation behind MC-130J from 17th Special Operations Squadron during exercise Keen Sword 17, November 7, 2016, near Okinawa, Japan (U.S. Air Force/Stephen G. Eigel)

where an aggregate of seemingly benign actions could over time change the environment in a manner contrary to the interests of another actor.¹⁸

Regarding the instruments of power, diplomatic acts of competition could include espionage and sabotage. Information operations range from deception and disinformation techniques to propaganda. The military aspect of power can be employed through proxy warfare, guerrilla tactics, covert operations, or a mix of covert and overt operations. Economic activities in competition can take the form of sanctions, trade barriers, or tariffs. Competitive behavior is often asymmetric and can include criminal action employed for political gain, terrorism, and annexation of foreign territory. Competitive behavior is normally covert, ambiguous, gradual, indirect, or some mixture thereof.

Conditions are perspective-dependent. For instance, the Ukrainian

government perceived Russia's annexation of Crimea and the ensuing disorder in 2014 as armed conflict, but from the point of view of the United States, it reflected a condition of competition below armed conflict. Russia's behavior was consistent with the Kremlin's interest in geostrategic expansion to former Soviet territories.¹⁹ By preparing the "battlefield," President Vladimir Putin was able to create an opportunity to accomplish his goals without engaging the West in armed conflict. Preparations included a robust information operations offensive, consisting of a heavy barrage of propaganda targeting Russian-speaking viewers of state-run media in the near abroad.²⁰ As the expansion unfolded, Russian tactics included espionage and both covert and overt military action.²¹ Even though Putin engaged the military instrument of power, he did not consider the behavior as constituting war, and he neither declared war nor stated an intention to seize

Crimea.²² Repeated denials of Russian involvement from the Kremlin also contributed to widespread confusion about the actors involved in the crisis. The international community did not take military action in the conflict, most likely because analysis revealed the cost of intervention would outweigh any resultant benefits. As the risk of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization military backlash subsided, Russian forces gradually transitioned to more overt uses of force.²³

Proxy warfare is another manifestation of competition below armed conflict when considered from the perspective of actors employing the proxies, since the parties in question are not using their own forces for overt coercive military action. Consider, for example, the Houthi insurgency currently unfolding in Yemen. Analyzing this situation from multiple points of view demonstrates how the conditions-based model, using binary interactions as a building block, can be

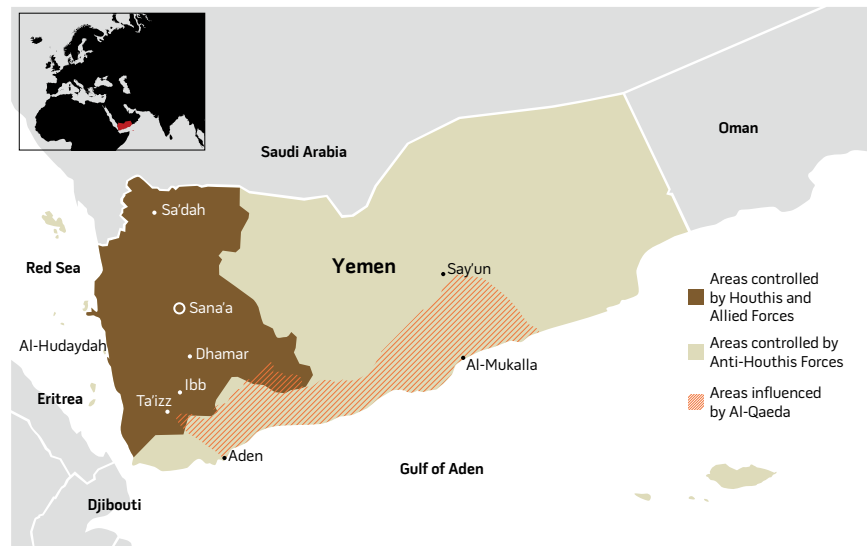
applied to complicated situations involving multiple state and nonstate actors.

Yemen is composed of a diverse population with a fractured political system plagued by sectarian fighting and economic crises.²⁴ Alliances there shift frequently; actors must constantly evaluate their relations with others to determine the current condition. In 2011, the previous centrality of power dissolved when President Ali Abdullah Saleh resigned following youth-led uprisings and was replaced by then-Vice President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.²⁵ The government remained weak, thus allowing various groups such as the Harak southern separatists, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Houthi rebels to control most of the country.²⁶ After a gradual consolidation of power and transformation into a militia, the Houthis fought their way to the capital and, in January 2015, removed Hadi from power.²⁷

At the local level, these events reflect a power struggle between various tribal and sectarian alliances, domestic political parties, and the military. From a regional perspective, the crisis in Yemen has become indicative of the geopolitical competition for influence between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The former perceives Yemen as a border-state vulnerable to Iranian influence that requires its careful attention, as illustrated by Saudi financial contributions to Yemeni domestic political actors.²⁸ Saudi Arabia has opposed the Houthis through both direct military and economic action, reflecting a condition of armed conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis.²⁹ Iran is cooperating with the Houthi rebels by providing financial and material support.³⁰ Saudi Arabia and Iran are engaged in a broad competition, not armed conflict, since Iranian forces are not openly fighting Saudi Arabian forces.

U.S. activities in the condition of competition below armed conflict can aim at either directly accomplishing U.S. goals or countering the advancement of adversaries. U.S. military activities are a critical component of achieving and maintaining national security interests within the condition of competition. Joint actions to counter rival actors

Figure. Yemen's Frontlines



Sources: Central Intelligence Agency; Zachary Laub, "Yemen in Crisis," Council on Foreign Relations, April 19, 2016, available at <www.cfr.org/background/yemen-crisis>; Marco Marchegiani, Government Publishing Office, Creative Services Division.

include security force assistance, building partner capacity to improve collective deterrence, show of force, counterterrorism, and foreign internal defense.³¹

Armed Conflict

When one or both actors have extremely incompatible high-priority interests and sufficient capabilities to pursue these interests, they are likely to enter into a condition of armed conflict.³² The value of the interest is such that the actor is unable to continue operating according to the status quo and becomes willing to risk crossing the threshold into open armed conflict. Armed conflict is not ubiquitous, and the intensity ranges from limited warfare to traditional great power warfare and even to total war with nuclear weapons. Activities reflecting the condition of armed conflict are hostile in nature and employ the overt use of coercive military power against another actor in the international system.³³ This use of force can target civilian or military citizens, infrastructure, or resources, and may result in adversary retaliation. Once one actor escalates the condition to armed conflict, the other must decide whether to engage the opponent's military forces and continue to operate in

armed conflict or use other means in an attempt to depart from armed conflict.³⁴ Whether the activity triggers a military response depends on a variety of factors, including the value of the object in view, the scale of the attack, the actor's available capabilities, and the desired condition from the point of view of the target actor.

Activities reflecting the condition of armed conflict involve coercive use of DIME instruments of power. One role of diplomacy in this condition is to communicate the conditions of war termination directly or through the cessation of diplomatic interaction. Information operations can include cyber attacks to impede or destroy the opponent's capabilities. Military action in the condition of armed conflict can aim to either contain, defeat, or destroy an enemy. Economic activities reflecting the condition of armed conflict can include embargo, sanctions more severe than those used in competition, and the use of naval, air, and/or ground forces to cut the adversary off from resources.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the ensuing conflict between Japan and the United States is an example of two great powers crossing the threshold of armed conflict and engaging in



Soldiers begin loading supplies on UH-60 A+ Black Hawk, February 22, 2012, as part of task force to provide humanitarian assistance at request of government of Montenegro after heavy snowfall (U.S. Army/Edwin Bridges)

traditional warfare. Given the magnitude of U.S. power at the time, many have contemplated and studied Japan's reasons for what appeared to be "national suicide."³⁵ While it is beyond the scope of this article to dissect the substantial literature surrounding causes of war, this model asserts that armed conflict occurs when high-priority interests are not reconcilable through measures short of coercive force.³⁶ Analyses of the attack on Pearl Harbor present varying arguments about the direct causes of war, but it is evident that Japan and the United States had directly incompatible interests at the time: Japan sought expansion into Southeast Asia and U.S. interests prioritized the prevention of this expansion.³⁷ Although neither government desired war with the other, a series of events resulted in misperception

and miscalculation and led the Japanese government to conclude that it had no acceptable alternative.

Although the destructive nature of war makes it an undesirable option, strategic actors may view armed conflict as the best available means to achieve their political ends. The high level of coercion implicit in armed conflict aims to affect another actor's cost-benefit analysis so that the other believes the costs to his own entity will outweigh the benefits of pursuing whatever interest is in question. As Clausewitz stated, "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."³⁸ The military is the instrument of power most capable of incurring costs on the adversary. The joint force must be prepared to prevail in open armed conflict. The military instrument of power has utility both for offensive coercive

purposes and for defending against the threat of external coercion. Thus, the primary purpose of the U.S. military is to fight and win the Nation's wars.³⁹

The uncertainties of the future and the realities of the present require a paradigm shift in the way the joint force views the operating environment. Even as the joint force must be prepared to prevail in war, it has significant utility for conditions outside of armed conflict. The conditions-based model is a comprehensive approach to understanding strategic relationships in an increasingly complex world. Categorizing relationships in terms of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict equips joint leaders with an improved lexicon for providing best military advice and conveying intent. Furthermore, the

model has utility beyond the joint force, offering a basis for all instruments of national power to achieve policy aims with a consistent view of U.S. strategic relationships. JFQ

Notes

¹ Examples of rising powers include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

² Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 212–233.

³ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 341: “Power asymmetries among the great powers are more commonplace in multipolarity than bipolarity, and the strong become hard to deter when power is unbalanced, because they have increased capability to win wars.” See also John J. Mearsheimer, “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War,” in *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, ed. Richard K. Betts, 4th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2012), 18–34; Thomas H. Henriksen, “The Coming Great Powers Competition,” *World Affairs* 158, no. 2 (Fall 1995), 63–69.

⁴ See Colin Clark, “CJCS Dunford Calls for Strategic Shifts: ‘At Peace or at War is Insufficient,’” *Breaking Defense*, September 21, 2016, available at <<http://breakingdefense.com/2016/09/cjcs-dunford-calls-for-strategic-shifts-at-peace-or-at-war-is-insufficient/>>.

⁵ In this instance, “war” can be either declared or part of an active contingency plan.

⁶ Christopher Paul, “Confessions of a Hybrid Warfare Skeptic,” *Small Wars Journal* (March 3, 2016), available at <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/confessions-of-a-hybrid-warfare-skeptic/>>.

⁷ U.S. Special Operations Command, *The Gray Zone*, white paper, September 9, 2015.

⁸ States may exhibit behavior that appears irrational due to imperfect information. See John J. Mearsheimer, “Reckless States and Realism,” *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (June 2009), 241–256.

⁹ Competition in this model reflected by economic activities is distinct from economic competition. In the field of economics broadly, competition is understood to be a necessary and beneficial characteristic of open economies. In this model, competitive economic activities should be understood as activities undertaken when one actor intends to strategically compete for its vital interests. These activities are coercive and would likely include embargoes, tariffs, sanctions, among others.

¹⁰ “The true state of the military balance can be determined only by war; states’ intentions may be impossible to determine, even after the fact and with all the relevant records open for inspection.” See Robert Jervis, “War and Misperception,” *Journal of Interdisciplin-*

ary History 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988), 675–700.

¹¹ Yukio Okamoto, “Japan and the United States: The Essential Alliance,” *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2002), 59–72.

¹² George R. Packard, “The United States–Japan Security Treaty at 50: Still a Grand Bargain?” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 2 (March–April 2010), 92–103.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Patrick M. Cronin, Mira Rapp-Hooper, and Harry Krejsa, *Dynamic Balance: An Alliance Requirements Roadmap for the Asia-Pacific Region* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2016), available at <www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNASReport-AllianceRoadmap-Final.pdf>.

¹⁶ Joint Publication (JP) 1-0, *Doctrine for the United States Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2013).

¹⁷ JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2011).

¹⁸ For example, China has expanded gradually into the South China Sea by constructing artificial islands, thereby expanding its territorial control and regional influence. Combined with other individual actions, such as its naval defense investment and issuance of an Air Defense Identification Zone, China’s behavior could eventually culminate in a permanent change in territorial holdings and dominance over the South China Sea.

¹⁹ Timothy Thomas, “Russia’s Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric—and Putin-Led,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28 (2015), 445–461.

²⁰ “Russian Propaganda: 1984 in 2014,” *The Economist*, March 29, 2014, 52, available at <www.economist.com/news/europe/21599829-new-propaganda-war-underpins-kremlins-clash-west-1984-2014>; “Putin’s Gambit: Russia and the Ukraine,” *The Economist*, May 10, 2014, 49, available at <www.economist.com/news/europe/21601899-russian-presidents-unexpected-concessions-ukraine-reflect-fact-he-has-already-got>; Andrei Aliaksandrau, “Brave New War: The Information War Between Russia and Ukraine,” *Index on Censorship* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 2014), 54.

²¹ Philip Shishkin, “How Russian Spy Games Are Sabotaging Ukraine’s Intelligence Agency,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2015, available at <www.wsj.com/articles/how-spy-games-are-sabotaging-ukraines-intelligence-agency-1426127401?tesla=y>; Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, “Crimea and Russia’s Strategic Overhaul,” *Parameters* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 2014), 81–90, available at <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b867/9eead998ce52a-9602b7385042e060e6d0941.pdf>>; Dan Peleschuk, “Russia Today vs. Ukraine Tomorrow,” *Maclean’s*, March 16, 2015, available at <www.macleans.ca/news/world/russia-today-vs-ukraine-tomorrow/>.

²² Ven Bruusgaard, 81–90.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Laura Kasinof, “How the Houthis Did It,” *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2015.

²⁵ Eric Schmitt and Robert F. Worth, “With Arms for Yemen Rebels, Iran Seeks Wider Middle East Role,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2012; Silvana Toska, “Shifting Balances of Power in Yemen’s Crisis,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 2014.

²⁶ Schmitt and Worth.

²⁷ Kasinof.

²⁸ Frederic Wehrey, “The Authoritarian Resurgence: Saudi Arabia’s Anxious Autocrats,” *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 2 (April 2015), 71–85; Peter Salisbury, *Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian ‘Cold War’* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015).

²⁹ Wehrey, 71–85; Mona El-Naggar, “Shifting Alliances Play Out Behind Closed Doors in Yemen,” *New York Times*, January 25, 2015.

³⁰ Salisbury, 1–13; Wehrey, 71–85; Schmitt and Worth; Kasinof.

³¹ JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*.

³² This model assumes that actors are rational.

³³ The conditions-based model is designed for actors in the international system. Overt use of coercive force internal to one actor is beyond the scope of this model (including civil wars where none of the participants constitute a significant distinct nonstate actor or military force used against a country’s own citizens).

³⁴ This action can take the form of concessions, surrender, negotiations, treaty, among others.

³⁵ Scott D. Sagan, “The Origins of the Pacific War,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988), 893–922.

³⁶ Causes of war studies parse the various reasons why interests may not be reconcilable short of war.

³⁷ Sagan, 895.

³⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75.

³⁹ “Coercion generates effects through the application of force (to include the threat of force) to compel an adversary or prevent our being compelled.” See JP 1-0, I-13.

Army M109A6 Paladin conducts fire mission at Qayyarah West, Iraq, in support of Iraqi security forces' push toward Mosul, October 17, 2016, to defeat so-called Islamic State (U.S. Army/Christopher Brecht)



Black Is the New Red

Containing Jihad

By Scott Englund

A diverse battlefield runs from nightclubs in Florida and Paris, along the Mediterranean coast of France, through the Bosphorus Strait and among the shadowy discourses of online propagandists. It continues in the sieges of Iraqi and Syrian towns, through the ruins of Afghanistan, and deep in the jungles of the Philippines. While this varied topography presents a challenge, similar threats have been confronted before. Pundits,

politicians, academics, and journalists frequently remind whoever may be listening that the United States and its allies face an enemy that is rigidly committed to a radical ideology in which the old political orders of liberalism, democracy, and a system of sovereign states will be torn down and replaced.¹ This description, however, could apply equally to the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Cold War 70 years ago and to the present global

phenomenon of Salafi jihadism, the ideology that motivates terrorist organizations such as the so-called Islamic State, al Qaeda, and associated groups. Examining the West's understanding and response to the ideology of communism and the Soviet Union and comparing them to the threat posed by Salafi Jihadism provides a lens that can help shape a practical and credible response to current threats. This article applies the strategy of containment at the beginning of the Cold War to the current threat of Salafi jihadism.

Just as containment was successfully deployed against the threat of Soviet-style

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communism in the Cold War, it may serve as an effective strategy against the present ideological struggle against jihadist terror organizations. Published anonymously as “X” in a 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article, George Kennan described a strategy for the ideological battle of his day that later came to be known as containment.² Applying Kennan’s prescription to Salafi jihadism means persistent, patient pressure and unified resolve to counter perceived Salafist expansionism. In containing an idea, what Kennan called “superfluous gestures” and “outward histrionics” are counterproductive. Such political restraint, however, proved difficult to come by in a super-charged U.S. Presidential campaign. Promises by some candidates to quickly eradicate groups like the Islamic State through large-scale military action may make headlines, but these promises are disingenuous, misleading, and perhaps reveal a misunderstanding of the threat posed by groups like the Islamic State. Even after their inevitable military defeat, jihadi terror groups will still pose a threat to security in the Middle East and elsewhere. This article first reviews Kennan’s containment strategy, then turns to compare Salafi jihadism to the Soviet system that inspired Kennan’s 1947 analysis, noting some critical differences, and then applies containment to the jihadist threat.

Kennan’s Containment

Though jihadi groups represent a challenge to the peace and security of the Middle East and threaten terrorist violence abroad, one cannot conclude that this is either wholly unique and unprecedented or that the challenge they present is insurmountable. Their absolutist ideology and unwavering hostility to liberal political institutions is also nothing new. In 1947, George Kennan wrote of the Soviet Union:

*subjectively these men [Soviet leaders] probably did not seek absolutism for its own sake. They doubtlessly believed—and found it easy to believe—that they alone knew what was good for society and that they would accomplish that good once their power was secure and unchallengeable.*³

Kennan drew parallels between the Kremlin under Joseph Stalin and a religious order, operating in a world where the forces of good (the Soviets) would, through the inevitable progress of history, overcome the forces of evil (the global capitalist order):

*The leadership of the Communist Party is therefore always right. . . . On the principle of infallibility there rests the iron discipline of the Communist Party. . . . Like the Church, it is dealing in ideological concepts which are of long-term validity, and it can afford to be patient.*⁴

In confronting an uncompromising ideological opponent, one should expect that challenges to their motivating ideology would be either disregarded or subsumed into the narrative of a decaying, corrupt governing political order. Kennan observed:

*Now it lies in the nature of the mental world of the Soviet leaders, as well as in the character of their ideology, that no opposition to them can be officially recognized as having any merit or justification whatsoever. Such opposition can flow, in theory, only from the hostile and incorrigible forces of dying capitalism.*⁵

According to Kennan, Soviet leaders believed themselves to be absolutely powerful at home and infallible in their interpretation and application of their ideology; they could rest assured of their inevitable victory, and could not be criticized from without. The Soviets were a formidable ideological opponent; the political-ideological dimension of the challenge the Soviet Union posed immediately after World War II was greater than the threat they posed to the physical security of people beyond its immediate influence.

Kennan’s prescription for foreign policy under such circumstances is now well known: “a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” He cautioned that “such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of

outward ‘toughness.’”⁶ He suggested that the United States create in the world an image of consistency, harmony, and peaceful prosperity:

*It is rather a question of the degree to which the United States can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time.*⁷

He cautioned that disunity is a balm to one’s opponents in an ideological battle: “by the same token, exhibition of indecision, disunity and internal disintegration within this country have an exhilarating effect.”⁸

Kennan’s prescription for patiently squeezing the Soviets was sometimes criticized as being not aggressive enough. It was, after all, a strategy for containing and eventually strangling the Soviet Union, not abruptly destroying it. Applying containment to the present struggle against jihadism may be similarly criticized as not doing enough, but of critical importance are persistence, patience, and consistency along multiple vectors of action (some of which are clandestine), and coordinated efforts with allied states. In a political contest, opponents attempt to create differing visions of a political reality and then try to convince people that the vision they create is preferable. The United States and its allies were arguably better than their Soviet opponents at this kind of competition during the Cold War. In its present conflict with jihadist terror organizations, the United States has been notably less successful.

Since 1947, Kennan’s blueprint for containment has evolved as successive administrations were confronted by the Soviet challenge. For example, Fareed Zakaria argued in 1990 that Ronald Reagan’s administration thought of itself as implementing containment, “but one quite different from any previous version of containment.” He concluded that in spite of its high-risk tendencies, Reagan’s

version of containment was successful.⁹ In a Cold War postmortem, Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry argued that over 50 years, with small changes occasionally, “the basic thrust of Western policy toward the [Soviet Union] remained remarkably consistent.”¹⁰ They concluded that though containment must have played an important role in the ultimate demise of the Soviet system, it cannot be the sole cause. Writing in 1989, Paul Kreisberg laid out how changes in Soviet economic and military behavior in the late 1980s meant that containment was on its “last gasp” and innovation in U.S. foreign policy was overdue.¹¹ The sudden and unpredicted collapse of the Soviet Union cannot be attributed to a single cause. However, as a pillar of U.S. foreign policy for six successive administrations, containment served to provide a stabilizing force that contributed to the implosion of the Soviet system.

Kennan later regretted the extent to which his prescription for containing the Soviet threat became dominated by military means at the expense of other avenues. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1987, Kennan sought to contextualize his containment prescription and apply it to the political realities of the late 1980s. When the article was first written as a memo for the new Secretary of Defense in December of 1946, Kennan admitted, “there was no way that Russia could appear to me as a military threat.” What he did see was an “ideological-political threat.”¹² The populations of Europe and Asia had been traumatized by World War II and the infrastructure of their societies had been devastated; this made them vulnerable to the political vision of Soviet propagandists. Military conquest was not necessary where people willingly accepted communist promises of a near-to-hand utopia, as was almost the case in Greece and Turkey in 1946.

Kennan’s views on what motivated Soviet aggression changed some over the years. In the final decade of the Soviet system, Kennan was suggesting that an essential element in confronting the Soviets was to seek to understand their perspective and the environment in which

they operate.¹³ Writing in the last years of the 1980s, Kennan suggested, “what most needs to be contained, as I see it, is not so much the Soviet Union as the weapons race itself.”¹⁴ Furthermore, “the first thing we Americans need to learn to contain is, in some ways, ourselves; our own environmental destructiveness, our tendency to live beyond our means and to borrow ourselves into disaster.”¹⁵ Of course, war is sometimes necessary—Kennan was no pacifist. What Thomas Schelling called the “diplomacy of violence” is a legitimate means of achieving a political outcome in some cases.¹⁶ Properly accomplished, containment keeps the widest array of policy options open to ultimately defeat jihadism.

Black Is the New Red

No analogy is perfect, but this does not limit the utility of comparison. In this section, Salafi jihadism is compared to the Soviet ideology Kennan confronted in 1946. First, and perhaps most obviously, communism is a distinct political ideology borne of an economic theory, while Salafi jihadism is a religious interpretation of sacred texts. This important distinction does not render comparison useless, however. In both cases, a core belief system drives and constrains behavior. Importantly, both the communists of the past and the jihadists of the present wage a battle they believe will shape the future of the world. Both belief systems assure their adherents of inevitable success. For the communists, their victory would be a result of the forces of history, and for Salafi jihadists, their victory is divine destiny.

In both cases, local political considerations shaped the manner in which their beliefs were adopted and adapted. Vladimir Lenin’s Russia was different from Mao Zedong’s China, which was different from Abimael Guzmán’s Shining Path in Peru; each had distinct features that differed across place and time, each had unique political and social forces that drove different applications of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Similarly, local sociopolitical conditions shape how the dominant Salafi ideology is manifested through the constellation

of terrorist organizations that assert its religious superiority. In spite of some differences in application, a core belief system that inalterably divides the world into two oppositional camps remains.

Other important differences should be noted: no jihadist terror organization possesses the massive industrial complex and economy the Soviets did; though the Islamic State has successfully seized modern military equipment, nothing they have compares to the massive Soviet Red Army. Secondly, though eventually the Soviet nuclear force actually posed an existential threat to the United States and its allies, presently no terror group poses such a threat—in spite of claims made by some political leaders. Thirdly, the Soviets had a rigid, centralized structure for interpreting Marxism-Leninism and possessed the power to demand loyalty to that interpretation—not that schisms did not exist, notably the break between Soviet and Maoist systems. Presently, no single jihadist group can legitimately claim to dictate its interpretation of orthodoxy to others, though many rivals have attempted to do so. In fact, the declaration of a caliphate by the Islamic State was denounced by al Qaeda leadership and organizations affiliated with al Qaeda.¹⁷

However, similarities between Salafi jihadist organizations and the Soviets deserve some attention and can help policymaking. Just as Marxism-Leninism sought the establishment of global socialism and the ascendance of the proletariat through revolution, Salafi jihadism expects to spread its authority through violence in order to replace a corrupt, decadent order.¹⁸ Like the Soviets 70 years ago, jihadist terrorist organizations capitalize on upended political orders, the chaos that accompanies and follows open warfare, and public anxiety: “[Whole nations] had just been seriously destabilized, socially, spiritually and politically, by the experiences of the recent war. Their populations were dazed, shell-shocked, uncertain of themselves, fearful of the future, highly vulnerable.”¹⁹ Written by Kennan to describe Europe and Asia after World War II, it could just as easily describe much of the Middle East and



Onboard warship during Crimean conferences at Yalta, Russia, February 4 to 11, 1945, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill is closely observed by Marshal Joseph Stalin (U.S Navy/U.S. National Archives and Records Administration/Released March 22, 2016)

North Africa now, as well as Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the southern reaches of the Arabian Peninsula.

As was argued by Robert Hutchings in *Foreign Policy* 12 years ago, the phenomena of al Qaeda and Soviet communism were born of political circumstance and sustained by a commitment to a particular ideology.²⁰ For Salafi jihadists and the communists in the Kremlin, the correct application of ideology is key to correcting political imbalance and restoring political Islam and Russia, respectively, to their rightful place of leadership in the global order. The ideological dimension of jihadi groups is often discussed, but too often considered separately from the more tangible dimensions of the threat of violence they pose, the mayhem they cause in the territories where they operate, or funding and supply-chain logistical issues. Properly understood, ideology is central to the existence of any of the jihadist terror groups, justifying and explaining both means and end. It has been argued that

al Qaeda is more than an organization, but is representative of a myth and an ideology, which is being immortalized as Nazism and Marxism-Leninism was in the 20th century.²¹

Salafi jihadism claims to represent an ideological purification and correction, and repentance from prior errors; ultimate victory over the present decadent and decaying order is only a matter of time and piety. Salafism is a relatively modern interpretation, being traced to the 19th-century Iranian scholar Jamal al din al Afghani. It is revivalist, seeking to interpret contemporary events through original Islamic principles. Afghani sought to understand how Islam, which had been dominant for so long and produced so much wealth, could have fallen behind and was now subject to Western imperial projects.²² Both the Islamic State and al Qaeda embrace Wahhabi-Salafism, which focuses on the elimination of idolatry (*shirk*) and affirming the oneness (*tawhid*) of God. Its adherents view themselves to be the only “true” Muslims

and they engage in the practice of *takfir*, or declaring other Muslims to be unbelievers.²³

A schism has developed between al Qaeda and the Islamic State, although they both agree on the central principles of Salafi jihadism; their differences center on long-term strategy and local tactics. Al Qaeda takes a long view of restoring the caliphate; the Islamic State is committed to its tactics of hyper-violence, even against fellow Muslims, and sees benefits to its high-risk, incendiary style. Al Qaeda sought to attack and disrupt what it viewed as the “far enemy,” the West, and to chase it from Muslim lands. The Islamic State chose to attack the “near enemy” in order to quickly establish its caliphate.²⁴

Political, temporal victory is integral to spiritual revival and ascendancy. An Islamic State spokesperson made its political objectives clear:

We inform the Muslims that, with the announcement of the caliphate, it has become

*obligatory for all Muslims to give bay'a and support to Caliph Ibrahim. Void is the legitimacy of all emirates, groups, administrations, and organizations to which his [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's] authority extends and his army comes.*²⁵

Violence is inherent to their ideology, as interpreted by al-Baghdadi who, in May of 2015, declared:

*O Muslims, Islam was never for a day the religion of peace. Islam is the religion of war. Your Prophet (peace be upon him) was dispatched with the sword as a mercy to the creation. . . . He fought both the Arabs and non-Arabs in all their various colors. He himself left to fight and took part in dozens of battles. He never for a day grew tired of war.*²⁶

Salafi jihadism, therefore, combines the puritanical strains of the Wahhabi tradition with a commitment to violence in pursuit of political ascendancy. Violence is necessary to create utopia; in some cases, as with the leaders of the Islamic State, religious warfare provides the opening notes of the apocalypse.²⁷

Applying Containment

Kennan's 70-year-old advice can be fruitfully applied to the present ideological conflict. The intervening years have suggested that Kennan's read of Soviet conduct exaggerated their expansionist strategy, but given the Kremlin's inscrutability and open hostility at the time he wrote, his urgency may be forgiven. It may not be possible to deter an organization like the jihadi terror groups the same way that the Soviet Union and Stalin—a realist with an instinct for institutional survival—were deterred. However, Kennan's principal stricture was patient resolve in containing and squeezing the perceived threat from international communism. Swagger, grand gestures, fruitless engagements were contraindicated. Kennan understood that in open warfare the Soviet Union could not be defeated without great cost, and skirmishes would likewise harden their resolve. Instead, persistent containment through positive

example, negative consequences for bad behavior, and above all, unified action and harmony, were advised. Political competition is natural in liberal democratic societies, but the current level of discord in the United States and Europe must comfort jihadi ideologues in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

Just as it took 44 years from when Kennan's "X" article was published before the Soviet Union ceased to exist, the Islamic State, al Qaeda, and their ilk will likely present challenges for many years. The important question is how well the threat they pose can be managed and reduced in the interim. Its fight against radical terrorist groups has forced U.S. military planners to rethink what "winning" looks like as it confronts the challenges posed by terror groups spread across the globe, and notably active in Syria and Iraq.²⁸

To differing degrees, the Islamic State and al Qaeda play a three-level game: first, a clandestine transnational effort to infiltrate Western states and commit terrorist acts; second, a propaganda program designed to win support in areas where they assert some level of influence; and finally, a military campaign to take and hold territory. During the Cold War, the Soviets (and arguably, the United States) followed a similar multilevel effort to undermine opposition governments with acceptable levels of deniability, win hearts and minds openly where it could, and engage in military action only where necessary, through proxies if available. Containing Salafi jihadism requires a similar strategy: first, intelligence-driven efforts to detect, disrupt, and destroy jihadi terror operations; second, laying bare jihadi groups' own hypocrisy, contradictions, and immorality both to undermine their ideological authority and to drive a wedge between it and potential supporters; and finally, fighting it in the open only where absolutely necessary, killing jihadi leaders and destroying terrorist financial and material infrastructure.

First, detect and disrupt clandestine plots to carry out terrorist attacks outside "hot" battlefields through an intelligence-driven effort, relying on well-placed human intelligence assets,

appropriately tasked technical assets, and disciplined, rigorous analysis. Today's Intelligence Community was designed and built to contain the Soviet threat. During the Cold War, intelligence activities flourished in a classic head-to-head contest with the Soviet Union. Assets were recruited over cocktails, microfilm was left in dead-drops, spy planes flew overhead, covert operations changed the political map abroad, while back home there was little oversight, and the American people knew almost nothing of what was happening. An instructor with the Office of Strategic Services, the World War II predecessor to today's Central Intelligence Agency, is famously supposed to have said that their ideal candidate was a "Ph.D. who can win a bar fight," and the same is true today. In today's fight, recruits will likely need to have spent considerable time living and working abroad in dangerous places; they might not have a spotless record or have the smoothest path to security clearance adjudication. The difficult, disciplined, and quiet work of intelligence is just as important now as it was in the Cold War, and requires patient investment and cultivation.

Presently, intelligence is a very public topic, and the people (and Congress) want results. Much of intelligence still needs to be done quietly, however, and "serving in silence" remains the ideal. In today's fight against jihadism, the same principles will apply, though the settings may look different. Clandestine service officers need to be recruited and trained, human assets need months of development, analysts with rigorous methodological skills must be employed. Gone are the days of Embassy parties; today's intelligence needs to be done in tents, on horseback, with dangerous people. Analysts, formerly confined to cubicles in a headquarters building, need to be deployed to the field. Intelligence collection at home is perhaps just as important as collecting abroad, as recent "homegrown" jihadist attacks have proved. Surveillance in aid of detecting the potential radicalization of individuals will push the legal limits of a liberal democratic society.



Sailors direct F/A-18C Hornet assigned to "Rampagers" of Strike Fighter Squadron 83, on flight deck of aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman*, deployed in support of Operation *Inherent Resolve*, Arabian Gulf, February 2, 2016 (U.S. Navy/Lindsay A. Preston)

Secondly, deploy an effective counter-propaganda operation and lay bare jihadi contradictions, exaggerations, and hypocrisy. The varied sociopolitical geography of Salafi jihadism will require a finely tuned approach. Any message originating in the United States will be immediately discredited. Therefore, overt U.S. Government projects should not be considered. Covert counter-information operations will need to be given priority.²⁹ This effort will lean heavily on intelligence gathered in the field. The people who produce such messages need to know the local language, the local idioms and slang, the jokes, the history, and the taboos. The right message, delivered in the right way, to the right people requires much effort—and mistakes will be made. Attention needs to be turned home, as well as abroad. The most cost-effective means of carrying out a terror attack in the United States is to convince a disaffected young

person to use his own resources to wreak havoc at home. Even if defeated militarily, the online presence of jihadist groups may persist; eliminating or neutralizing the radicalizing effects of these groups may prove to be the most challenging.

Part of this effort will be to avoid giving too much credit to jihadist groups that will inspire attacks against civilian targets in the United States and allied countries. Because terrorism at its core relies on an emotional response on the part of the witnesses to violence, the best counterterrorism policies necessarily require two distinguishable, but related tasks: first, actually reducing the risk of an attack, and secondly, making people *feel* more secure. Underlining and reinforcing radical linkages between an individual who acts in the name of a Salafi jihadist organization does little but unrealistically amplify that organization's operational effectiveness. An act of violence that both

inflicts harm and raises the profile of the group that inspired the violence is a double-win for the terrorist organization. An effective domestic communication plan, therefore, includes elements directed toward preventing people from choosing to commit acts of violence while resisting the urge to over-hype the combat effectiveness of an organization that may inspire violence.

Finally, fight openly only when absolutely necessary, limiting exposure, and relying on proxies wherever possible. Using drones to kill jihadi leadership and technical experts (especially those responsible for media operations) are important tactical victories, but they do not, on their own, constitute a counterterrorism strategy. In containing the Soviets, only twice (on the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam) was a corps-size force deployed to combat, and never in direct contact with the Red Army. Much smaller, detached units of

advisors or special operations forces units were sparingly deployed. Routine naval and air patrols were far more likely to make contact with their Soviet counterparts, but were never required to engage. Nuclear deterrence, and an approach to open warfare that was inculcated by the destruction wrought by World War II, meant military engagement was restrained, indirect, and respectfully cautious.

In the 15 years since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States has deployed two force-size armies to two different theaters of operation and has maintained deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan up to the present day. According to a RAND study, as of 2011, to support Operations *Iraqi Freedom* (and follow-on operations) and *Enduring Freedom*, the U.S. Army alone supplied over 1.5 million Soldier-years (that is, one Soldier deployed for 1 year, or 2 Soldiers deployed for 6 months, each). The total Soldier-years of all Services exceed 2.3 million. The same RAND report assessed that only 4 percent (or 20,000) of the Active component of the U.S. Army has not deployed and are available to do so.³⁰ As of September 2016, in support of Operation *Inherent Resolve*, over 6,000 U.S. military personnel are deployed to Iraq, and according to the Defense Department, it spends on average \$12.3 million every day on the combined joint task force.³¹ This is unsustainable. Smaller is better in the present fight. The complexity of the battlefield in Syria is a prime example of how U.S. forces can be dragged into settling scores among long-feuding local factions. Success against Salafi jihadism requires policymakers to lean on intelligence, deploy conventional forces only when absolutely necessary, and respect the long-term commitment of military action when it is employed.

Conclusion

Important, though admittedly less exciting, debates will need to happen about precisely when and where the United States absolutely must fight, or what is and is not legal or ethical in collecting the intelligence it needs. The real work of counterterrorism is often quiet, behind-the-scenes, and away from the

public's eye. Open warfare in Iraq and Syria may achieve one goal: the disintegration of the Islamic State's leadership and its ability to wage an insurgency, but it will not contain the transnational threat remnant jihadi groups may pose. Clear-eyed and unafraid, the work of defeating jihadi terror will mean careful analysis of threats, assessments of countermeasure effectiveness, then the application of the appropriate tools to a well-defined threat.

Like Stalin's Kremlin in 1947, the leaders of Salafist jihadist groups around the globe believe themselves to be locked in a world-altering battle in which they will inevitably be victorious. As Kennan advised, the longer the rest of the world can deny them any semblance of victory and lay bare their own hypocrisy and contradictions, then the end of this particular challenge is achievable through patient, thoughtful opposition and defense. "Surely, there was never a fairer test of national quality than this," concluded Kennan.³² JFQ

Notes

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B-52G Stratofortress aircraft take off in formation as part of operational readiness inspection by Strategic Air Command Inspector General team, December 1, 1986 (DOD/Phil Schmitt)

Respecting Strategic Agency

On the Categorization of War in Strategy

By Lukas Milevski

Many—perhaps most—strategists prefer to think about past, present, and future war in terms of categories. Whether in retrospect, in contemporary experience, or in anticipation, they define war by its generalized character. These strategists arguably include Carl von Clausewitz himself, who suggested that “every age had its own kind of war, its own lim-

iting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period, therefore, would have held to its own theory of war.”¹ Due to this tendency of thinking in categories, strategic studies is often washed by recurring tides of jargon. The current fad in terminology is *gray zone wars*. Often, these faddish terms actually serve to label and relabel the same observed phenomenon.

Simply put, categories are ways of dividing up any particular set of phenomena into distinguishable groups based on some consistent commonality of attributes. There are many categories of

war and warfare: conventional or regular, unconventional or irregular, Martin van Creveld’s trinitarian and non-trinitarian, symmetric, asymmetric, insurgency, hybrid, gray zone, Mary Kaldor’s new wars, and so forth. Some categories naturally fit into dichotomies, such as conventional versus unconventional and symmetric versus asymmetric. Others do not, such as hybrid warfare or gray zone wars, which merely allow observers to distinguish between like and unlike.

Categories of war such as these are cognitive shortcuts for describing in relatively simple and bite-sized ways the

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complex interactions between wartime adversaries. This practice has repeatedly proved to be a double-edged sword. The reduction of complexity in description often results in the reduction of applicability of analysis, as the complexity behind simplified categories is lost and they consequently become less fit for purpose. According to Antulio Echevarria:

While the original aim of such labeling or relabeling may have been to draw the attention of busy policymakers to emerging security issues, it has evolved into something of a culture of replication in which the labels are repeated more out of habit than reflection. As a result, we have an increase in claims about what contemporary wars are (or are not), but little in the way of strategic analysis to support those claims.²

Due to its persistence, the pursuit of categorization may have become an indelible part of American strategic culture. Echevarria states that “in all, the penchant for theorizing about war and warfare is relatively consistent in American military history. The number of sound theories may, however, be a minority compared to those which are not.”³ This stems at least to the birth of modern strategic studies as an academic and practical discipline in the wake of the use of atomic weapons by the United States against Japan. With this change in strategic affairs, there were suddenly clearly two types of wars: nuclear and nonnuclear. The distinctions have only grown finer, although arguably the numerical climax of categorization did not occur, as one might think, in recent years, with the parade of asymmetry, new, or non-trinitarian wars, but rather in 1965. This was when Herman Kahn posited his notion of the ladder of escalation, a concept of progress in strategic interaction involving 44 rungs in 7 broad categories ranging from “subcrisis maneuvering” all the way to “civilian central wars.”⁴ Even the categories were being categorized.

Unfortunately, reliance on categories may take on a life of its own, gaining inertia from habit and lack of reflection. Some have suggested that due to the potential dangers and weaknesses,

thinking in categories of war is a flawed exercise. All categories must necessarily derive from the more fluid actual practice and interaction of adversarial strategies; therefore, it is usually more rewarding to focus on the strategies themselves and their potential mutual interactions.⁵ As the Soviet strategic theorist Aleksandr Svechin similarly argued:

[A] particular strategic policy must be devised for every war, each war is a special case, which requires its own particular logic rather than any kind of stereotype or pattern, no matter how splendid it might be. . . . A narrow doctrine would probably confuse us more than guide us. And we must not forget that only maneuvers are one-sided, while wars are always two-sided. We must be able to get a grasp of war as it is perceived by the opposing side and clarify the other side's desires and goals.⁶

Emphasizing the uniqueness of every war may serve in commentary, and it may be reasonably applicable in the immediate context of war, where the feedback derived from strategic performance is relatively direct. However, in peacetime a focus on specific strategies and their mutual adversarial interaction is far more difficult to achieve. This article considers the utility and pitfalls of categories of war in the differing contexts of war and peace.

On Categorization in Peace and War

Categories are usually a product of peace that are typically, but not always, formed in the absence of a concrete enemy. The lack of such an enemy introduces various types of uncertainty into defense planning, including threat and operational unknowns. The former “reflects a lack of necessary knowledge about both the goals and capabilities of potential adversaries, and about the time when threats will arise,” whereas the latter “describes a lack of necessary knowledge about the type of conflict to prepare for.”⁷ If strategists cannot gain the necessary knowledge about the enemy's goals and capabilities and how he may use the latter to achieve the former—if strategists do not even know

who the future enemy may be—they may be inclined to construct a threat for policy, political, and planning purposes. In the absence of a politically determined adversary during the interwar period, for instance, the U.S. military planned for war against a range of foes from Cuba and Mexico to Japan, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

The current proliferation of categories of war inundating strategic studies stems from the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet threat. During the Cold War itself, the one great threat was identified early on and remained central to all considerations of strategy for 40 years. It was obvious what kind of war might break out; therefore, which category seemed best to describe the anticipated war was not important compared to the particular tactics and strategies required to actually conduct it in extremis. Although some analysts sought to apply categories to the anticipated central war between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, such as Henry Kissinger did when he tried to imagine waging a limited nuclear war in Europe, these categories rarely survived long.

Beyond the European theater, alternative categories of war were rarely popular and often required politically powerful advocates even to be considered. The U.S. Air Force preferred focusing on its Strategic Air Command and its mission of massive nuclear attack against the Soviet Union, to the detriment of its performance in other missions in the lesser conflicts that actually characterized much of the Cold War. Although discussion of limited war became widespread among academic strategists after the Korean War, the Army only considered counterinsurgency seriously under presidential pressure, particularly after President John F. Kennedy endorsed such a focus. This latter emphasis did not long endure. The singular traumatic instance of the Vietnam War sufficed subsequently to redirect much of the U.S. military back to its comfort zone in central Europe and to engender the doctrine espoused by Caspar Weinberger (and later by Weinberger and Colin



Sailor briefs group of distinguished international strategists about various watch stations on navigation bridge aboard Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington*, Yokosuka, Japan, February 5, 2013 (U.S. Navy/Justin E. Yarborough)

Powell), which explicitly sought to limit U.S. military involvement in messy limited wars. With the end of the Cold War, the condition of certainty, presented by the need to fend off the Soviet threat in Europe, crumbled.

Habits of strategic thinking had to shift to accommodate the new uncertainty. It was more difficult to focus on strategies because uncertainty about the potential threat or its operational conditions precluded knowledge of the necessary details to anticipate potential strategic interaction, given its contingent and reciprocal nature. The practice of strategy in war depends on vital details of and in the theater of operations, including terrain and weather; the enemy's forces, plans, and objectives; and myriad other factors that cannot be precisely anticipated in a world bereft of concrete foes. Strategists needed these details to perform effectively but no longer had

steady access to them, simply due to new geopolitical circumstances.

Categories of war therefore became popular among strategic analysts and academics. Categories act as cognitive guides or standard templates to mimic and replace as many of the missing details as possible to minimize the uncertainty with which planning must cope. Categories both emphasize and generalize tactical and operational details, which are not only among the most relevant details for strategic analysts but are also the least certain prior to war itself. After all, strategy is carried out with, and as, tactics—if the tactics do not work, then the strategy itself may fail as a consequence.

Strategists tend to ground these tactical and operational categories in history to identify precedents and to establish potential causal relationships between tactical and operational categories and consequential strategic and political

effects. Tactics as such are not a necessarily inappropriate aspect to consider, given their salience to the successful future practice of strategy. Yet to categorize on the basis of tactics is to generalize about potential operating environments, tactical and operational challenges, and some chains of tactical and strategic cause and effect—even if many political and some strategic effects are truly beyond anticipation. The prominence of these considerations is appropriate because they constitute, ultimately, strategy itself.

Nevertheless, this approach of generalizing about tactics from historically diverse wars does have its dangers. As M.L.R. Smith has argued, “All wars are unique to their time and place. They all have distinctive origins and directions. Because they are multifarious they defy categorization and cannot be reduced and subsumed under general labels like guerrilla war or low intensity conflict.”⁸



MV-22B Osprey assigned to Ridge Runners of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 operates in Indo-Asia-Pacific region to enhance amphibious capability with regional partners and serves as ready-response force for any type of contingency, South China Sea, April 4, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Devin M. Langer)

An emphasis on tactical categories may obscure political variability of both the would-be insurgent and the counterinsurgent. Politics and resultant policies are contingent upon cultural, economic, and other types of beliefs of the day and on the specific responsible decisionmakers. For example, the relatively successful ancient Roman or modern Russian ways of counterinsurgency do not appeal to the liberal West, despite their arguably greater success when compared to the West's unenviable record of the past few decades. The liberal West is politically unwilling to generate strategic and political effect out of the counterinsurgent tactics prevalent at other times or in other places, even if the cost of this reluctance may be policy failure, as has frequently been the case. Cultural and political distance, stemming from physical geography as from changes wrought over time, implies variations in cause and effect, the very subject in whose anticipation strategists employ categories.

Strategy is often nonlinear. The independence, intelligence, and activity of the enemy mean that tactical cause does not necessarily lead to the desired strategic or political effect. Defeat causes

some belligerents to buckle and others to buckle down. Victory may induce either hubris or caution. One may learn the wrong lessons about strategy in war from battle and so foreclose upon a successful strategy or persist with a failing strategy. According to Colin Gray, "The trouble is that there is a radical difference in nature, in kind, between violence and political consequence . . . [and] this dilemma of currency conversion is central to the difficulty of strategy."⁹ When war is categorized, this adversarial interaction with nonlinear cause and effect, which is always historically unique, is generalized among multiple cases such that the non-linearity is lost.

Another vital issue concerning categories is that of *anticipation*. Anticipation is the reverse aspect of the question of historical uniqueness. Western countries have often played catch-up, identifying new categories only after they apparently emerge in reality and have already done damage to Western interests. This question of catch-up most recently surfaced in March 2014, when suddenly hybrid warfare became popular as a category to describe Russian strategy in Crimea and

the Donbas. Strategists and politicians in the West were taken by surprise by both the content of Russian policy and the form of its strategy, and a new—or renewed—category was immediately codified. Usually labeled hybrid warfare in the West, it is sometimes also called full-spectrum conflict or new generation warfare. Regardless of the label, a new category appeared for the blindsided politicians and strategists to explain what Russia was doing and how it was doing it.

Anticipation is hard, as one is trying to predict a historically unique event. Anticipation is especially difficult once one is forced to leave the confines of one's own cultural context. According to Ken Booth, "Strategists as a body are remarkably incurious about the character of their enemies and allies. Ethnocentrism is one way in which individuals and groups consciously and subconsciously evade reality."¹⁰ A litany of Western cultural and political blunders indicates the lack of interest in the politics, policies, and perspectives of potential adversaries, and consequent lack of insight about how they might seek—through the use of force if necessary—to achieve their

political goals, especially if these goals are counter to the West's own aggregate interests.

Ethnomorphism further hampers the assessment of others' policies and potential strategies. *Ethnomorphism* "is the conceptualization of the characteristics of another group in terms of one's own. . . . the mistake of assuming that the development of [one's] own particular group was a prototype for the development of all groups."¹¹ The West has difficulty accepting that the rest of the world is not necessarily interested in its model of political development or its political cultures, ideas, and ideologies. Therefore, it has difficulty believing that others would want to change the status quo in the world to the detriment of the West and fails to anticipate the strategies potential adversaries employ to change the status quo through force; Russia's adventure in Crimea came as a surprise, and the idea that Russia may still seek to challenge NATO is often met with skepticism because ethnomorphism makes it hard to imagine what Russia would gain from such a policy. Because the strategic imagination or empathy required to anticipate others' strategies or the policies those strategies serve is lacking, a new strategy comes as a surprise, is then immediately codified as a new category of war, and so continues the ossification of strategic analysis.

The flaws of categories in peace become the flaws of categories in war. Yet categorization also has dangers particular to war. Because categories are cognitive shortcuts, they can have an easily understood sound-bite quality that begins to carry weight in domestic politics. Thus, the possibility that a war may fall under a particular category and not another becomes politically charged and reflects on the higher political and strategic direction of the war—specifically because categories are ultimately shorthand descriptions of adversarial strategic interactions. Among the most recent major examples of the political weight of categories occurred in 2003–2005 when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld forbade the term *insurgency* to describe ongoing events in Iraq. If the violence that wracked Iraq had

been characterized as an insurgency, it would have invalidated all the neoconservative political assumptions and rhetoric about postwar Iraq that underpinned the U.S. invasion in 2003. In such circumstances, strategy is beholden to a political debate about labels and is prevented from serving the desired policy. Use of a label becomes of greater concern than pursuit of success in the war.

In Iraq, the political refusal to accept a category sent strategy awry and negatively impacted U.S. strategic performance for years because it forbade candid appreciation of the emerging threat. Not only was the category "insurgency" more apt than whatever description Rumsfeld preferred at the time, but also the refusal to consider insurgency prevented the United States from objectively analyzing actual relevant details in theater. Categories in war thus inhibit strategy-making because their use may prevent accurate assessment of engagements in theater and because their misuse or disuse can similarly prevent accurate evaluations. In either case, strategy suffers because strategists are forbidden from either properly examining the conflict or providing apt direction to defeat the enemy.

Categories, as cognitive shortcuts, may also obscure important tactical and strategic details during war because those details do not fit the favored category. This extends also to the retrospective analysis of war. Vietnam is an excellent case in point, the historiography of which remains divisive to this day. The primary historiographic schism relates to the particular character of the war. One side believes it to have been primarily an insurgency, with particular unflattering conclusions about U.S. tactical and strategic conduct as Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, simply did not understand the war it faced. The other side believes it to have been primarily a conventional war against another country, with particular unflattering conclusions about U.S. political leadership and the domestic political scene, as the home front and politicians did not recognize the character of the war and prevented the military from winning the war as it should have done.

Yet the United States did not confront a particular category of war in Vietnam, but rather a fluid and effective North Vietnamese and Vietcong strategy, which sought relative advantage through either guerrilla or overt, large-scale tactics as necessary. Through a generally superior strategy, the North Vietnamese held greater and more effective control over the war relative to the United States and its South Vietnamese ally. Superior North Vietnamese strategy has led to the appearance of the Vietnam War having been merely presented to U.S. decisionmakers as a particular category, rather than as an interaction in which the United States was an independent and occasionally effective strategic actor.

In considering categories of war, strategists too often forget to respect strategic agency—not only that of the enemy, but their own as well. On the former, just because one categorizes the enemy or the war in a particular way does not oblige the enemy to act or react in accordance with the categorical rules one sets out. On the latter, the West often forgets that it too influences the character of any war in which it participates. The character of any particular war is controlled more by the belligerent with a good (enough) strategy and less by the one with a strategy that is not working. As one commentator observed in the wake of World War II, albeit employing the term *grand strategy* rather than *character of war*:

in all the great wars of modern times the aggressor dictated grand strategy in the pursuit of political objectives as long as he had liberty of decision and action. Once he lost liberty of decision and action the aggressor was thrown back on the defensive, and his ability to determine grand strategy passed to adversaries. From that time on the original aggressor could only counter the strategy of opponents who frequently were satisfied to merely thwart his political designs.¹²

Is Categorization a Lost Cause?

Categorization is unavoidable; it is one of the prime purposes of theory.¹³ War itself is a category concerning a certain section of human interactions, just

as peace is a category encompassing another section of human interaction. War exists as a category because, as Michael Howard has rightly noted, “after all allowances have been made for historical differences, wars still resemble each other more than they resemble any other human activity.”¹⁴ Among all wars there is sufficient mutual commonality for war to be a meaningful category. We must think in categories; otherwise, we cannot distinguish among various phenomena. Where does that leave the utility of categories regarding the two major challenges mentioned—of deriving conceptual generality from historical specificity and of anticipating future historical specificities through the application of conceptual generalities?

First, we must understand what it is that we should actually be categorizing. Should we categorize war and warfare, or should we categorize strategy and strategies? To categorize the former is to compress the interaction of two opposing sets of strategic intent, actions, and performances into a single generalized label. Conventional war, for instance, implies that both sides are operating with regular armies on large operations and so forth. Unconventional war implies that one side—and probably not our side—is acting in a strategically unconventional manner. Yet there is always an implicit sense of special pleading in these categories. First, it “assumes there is only one truth and model for warfare, and that we alone have it.”¹⁵ Second, there is also a sense of unfair play. As British general Rupert Smith wrote of asymmetric warfare, “[I]labelling wars as asymmetric is to me something of a euphemism to avoid acknowledging that my opponent is not playing to my strengths and I am not winning.”¹⁶ Categorizing war itself is heir to all the challenges already mentioned.

To categorize strategy and strategies, however, is to seek to understand an individual belligerent’s strategic intent. Many of these categories have been familiar terms for a long time—for example, annihilation, exhaustion, and attrition. In terms of nuclear strategy, one might identify countervalue, counterforce, and countervailing, among others. Behind

each of these words is a set of assumptions about the value of military force applied in the appropriate manner combined with a theory of victory, a theory of why this particular set of means and measures would be sufficient to break the strategic and political will of the enemy. It is more productive because it gets to the core perceptions of cause and effect with which strategists enter into conflict. As Antulio Echevarria writes of gray zone wars, “One way to approach the problem of gray-zone wars is to reduce the hostile actions undertaken in Ukraine and the South China Sea to their core dynamic—which is a combination of coercion and deterrence.”¹⁷ That is, one should reduce the category of gray zone war to the strategies chosen by the primary aggressive actors, Russia in Ukraine and China in the South China Sea.

To think of strategy and strategies rather than thinking in terms of the whole interaction of competing strategies alleviates the challenges to categorizing wars at the cost of being more difficult. Rather than requiring a sufficient level of historical continuity in patterns of historically unique cases of interactive cause and effect (wars), it would only require continuity in patterns of perceived and anticipated cause and effect among individual actors (strategies). Furthermore, as long as we are specifically thinking about other strategic actors, due to this deeper level of study and understanding, we stand a better chance of anticipating their future strategies.

If strategists need to boil down categories of war to the actual strategies in action to understand how the enemy is attempting to achieve effect anyway, they should simply skip the categories of war to think just about strategy. To think about strategy is to think about strategic agency—our own, and that of our enemy. To think about war is to think about how these two independent sets of strategic agency interact in an adversarial manner as each side seeks to achieve its political goals and deny its enemy strategic fulfillment. The former enables a historically unique reaction to a similarly unique adversary’s strategy, whereas the latter already posits a conceptual straitjacket

about mutually adversarial interactions. One must first think about strategy and possible mutually interacting strategies before one may think productively about the interactivity of war. JFQ

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French army instructor teaches squad movements to U.S. Soldiers attending French Jungle Warfare School as part of annual, combined, joint military exercise Central Accord 2016 (U.S. Army/Henrique Luiz de Holleben)

Professional Military Education and Broadening Assignments

A Model for the Future

By Douglas Orsi

I was fortunate in serving three years at the Army War College, 1937–1940, one year as a student and two as an instructor.

—J. LAWTON COLLINS,
Lightning Joe: An Autobiography

In today's Army culture, professional military education (PME) is a critical factor for promotions and advancement.¹ For future Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) General J. Lawton Collins, attending the Army Industrial College and Army War College, and subsequently instructing at the latter, broadened his horizons and prepared him for future assignments and responsibilities.² The Army is at a point in its history where it is inconceivable for an officer to attain high rank without attending formal PME, as was the exceptional case with former CSA General William Westmoreland.³ By design, the Army selects its top performers to attend resident intermediate and senior PME. Currently, selection rates are 52 percent

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Marines and Sailors with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, and 12th Marines attached to Alpha Battery, 3D Battalion, make final preparations before heading to field in Hijudai Maneuver Area, Japan, February 24, 2017 (U.S. Marine Corps/Christian J. Robertson)

for intermediate and 40 percent for senior-level education.

Yet a faculty assignment in those same PME institutions is seen as sidelining an officer's career or, even worse, putting him or her at risk for nonselection for command or identification for Selective Early Retirement.⁴ This trend has gradually developed since the end of World War II thanks to a generation of leaders who deployed to war as junior officers, came home senior in rank, and neither attended nor saw the need for PME.⁵ However, having top-tier officers attending PME institutions and instructing other officers benefits the military profession as a whole. This article argues that instructing at intermediate and senior PME institutions improves officer development and the ability to operate at the strategic level of leadership. By examining how the Army addressed PME between the world wars, this article offers a framework that improves leadership

development within the current officer ranks. Accordingly, changing the current PME and broadening assignment paradigm face significant difficulties. To prepare for future challenges, the Army must change its culture and prioritize commonsense guidelines to train and educate versatile leaders for tomorrow's force.

PME and the Value of Teaching

According to Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, PME expands knowledge, skills, and attributes required of a leader to accomplish current and future military missions. PME is "progressive and sequential" across an officer's career and, linked with civilian education, develops the leader attributes of "character, presence, and intellect."⁶ Officers can progress through five levels of military education

during their career. These begin with precommissioning before transitioning to Primary (for lieutenant through captain). Majors learn at the intermediate level, also known as intermediate level education (ILE). The Army conducts this primarily at Fort Leavenworth's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) or other Service-equivalent schools. Senior PME is for lieutenant colonels and colonels and taught largely by the senior Service colleges (SSCs).⁷ The Army War College conducts this course along with other military Service colleges and the National Defense University for joint PME.⁸ The final PME is for general/flag officer level and has recently been restructured under the Army War College–led Army Strategic Education Program.

Retired Lieutenant General Richard Trefry noted that a part of being a professional, or a "great soldier," is being a "great teacher."⁹ Defining the

difference between training and education is essential: according to Trefry, teaching *how* is “training”; teaching *why* is “education.”¹⁰ Likewise, when the Army rebuilt itself after the Vietnam War, General William DePuy, commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, focused on “teaching the Army how to fight” while simultaneously, his subordinate at CGSC, Major General John Cushman, directed “teaching Army officers how to think about fighting.”¹¹ The Army trains Soldiers entering the military, then educates them to progress in rank and responsibility. In the period between the world wars, the Army saw PME and broadening assignments, such as instructor duty at Service schools, as an important means to develop leaders. As a result, those officers who rose to high command during World War II not only attended PME but also served as instructors or faculty.

The Interwar Army PME and Instructor Paradigm

Reviewing the PME and assignments of future general officers before World War II reveals leaders serving in a fiscally constrained period, strikingly similar to the present day. On November 11, 1918, at the end of fighting in Europe, the Army contained almost 5 million Soldiers. Within a year, Active-duty strength numbered 224,000. The National Defense Act of 1920 further reduced the Army to 135,000 by 1925, leading General George C. Marshall to remark, “The cuts, and cuts and cuts came.”¹² The Crash of 1929 and ensuing Great Depression led to further slashing of the military budget, thus guaranteeing the Army would not purchase new equipment and weapons but instead would have to rely on its vast stores of World War I surplus.¹³ Between 1932 and 1933, the Army hit its low point in force structure, readiness, and preparedness. According to the Army’s official history, the Service was “unbalanced, insufficiently equipped, and insufficiently trained.”¹⁴ The Nation faced military expansion in the South China Sea concurrent with conflict and instability in Eastern

Joseph Lawton Collins, a New Orleans native, entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1913 after spending 1 year at Louisiana State University. He graduated and commissioned in the infantry in 1917. Assigned to the 22nd Infantry Regiment in New York, Collins commanded a company and battalion but did not deploy prior to war’s end. Collins reported to France in 1919 as a temporary major and replacement officer. On occupation duty, Collins commanded the First Infantry Division’s 3rd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, and finally served as Assistant G3, American Forces in Germany.¹

Between the wars, Captain Collins (having reverted to his permanent rank) served as a West Point chemistry instructor from 1921 to 1925. He then attended the Infantry School in 1926, followed by the Artillery School in 1927. Upon completion, Collins transferred to the Infantry School as an instructor from 1927 to 1931, where he worked under the Assistant Commandant, Colonel George C. Marshall.² Collins then attended the Command and General Staff College’s 2-year course in 1931 and graduated in 1933; during this period, he was promoted to major. Although asked to remain as an instructor upon

graduation, Collins sought an operational assignment.³

Collins departed for the Philippines in 1933, serving as the 23rd Infantry Brigade’s executive officer and as the General Staff’s G2/G3.⁴ In 1936, Major Clarence Huebner, infantry personnel officer, assigned Collins to Washington, DC, to attend the Army Industrial College. The following year, Collins attended the Army War College and was asked to return as an instructor from 1938 through 1940.⁵ Collins’s professional military education and operational assignments in the interwar years developed and successfully prepared him to command the 25th Infantry Division in the Pacific and VII Corps in Europe during World War II. He retired in 1956, having served as Army Chief of Staff, U.S. Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Special Representative of the United States in Vietnam with Ambassadorial rank.⁶ JFQ

¹ Joseph Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 1–21, 25–34.

² *Ibid.*, 42, 44, 46–47.

³ *Ibid.*, 42, 44, 46–47, 55–57.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 62–63.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 86, 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 376–383, 412.

Europe, eerily similar to today. Only the onset of a global war in Europe finally resulted in more funding to the Army and increased preparedness by the late 1930s.¹⁵ Despite this resource-constrained environment, the Army sustained its PME to ensure the professional development of its officers.

Officers such as Marshall, Collins, and Dwight D. Eisenhower not only attended PME but also served assignments as faculty at those institutions.¹⁶ Dr. Robert Berlin studied the careers of 34 officers who commanded Army corps during World War II. The study shows that all but one officer attended the

Command and General Staff School,¹⁷ and 14 (41 percent) later served on the faculty. Twenty-nine also graduated from the Army War College; one, Collins, served on the faculty.¹⁸ Berlin’s research found that within this cohort, all those in the Regular Army “served as instructors somewhere in the army educational system” prior to World War II, including 11 officers at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and 15 in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs.¹⁹

During this period, low manning levels of operational regiments led large numbers of officers to serve as PME faculty. Additionally, units were dispersed



Senior Enlisted Advisor for U.S. Naval War College performs service dress white uniform inspection of enlisted personnel in Newport, Rhode Island, April 19, 2016 (U.S. Navy/James E. Foehl)

to small posts and camps (typically at the battalion or company level), resulting in a lack of available operational command and staff positions. Thus, Service schools developed officers while serving in staff and faculty positions.²⁰ For the officers who attained corps command during the war, PME and assignments as instructors and faculty were a common thread in their overall leader development. Instructor duty served as a means to open their minds to new ideas, questioning the status quo, and working in an environment (such as the Infantry School at Fort Benning under Marshall) that encouraged “open and free discussion” for instructors and students alike.²¹ To maintain PME, the Army should follow this effective and relatively inexpensive model used between the world wars. During that extended period of fiscal constraint, the Army developed its leaders through PME and sent its best performers *back to instruct in those same schools*.²² Many

of these officers later commanded at the corps level; as PME instructors, they educated a generation of officers who led the Army to victory in World War II.

The Current PME and Instructor Paradigm

As mentioned earlier, the trend for rising officers’ careers to include tours as PME instructors declined after World War II. A recent review conducted by this author evaluated the PME and broadening assignments of 36 officers who served as corps commanders since 2001, a period of continuous war for the Army. While the World War II cohort had 97 percent CGSC and 85 percent SSC graduates, the current group was 100 percent for intermediate and senior level PME.²³ These officers, whose careers span the end of the Vietnam War to the present, reveal a different picture than their World War II predecessors when it comes to broad-

ening assignments. While the previous group of corps commanders, 44 percent of whom taught at CGSC and SSC, were all experienced instructors in the Army’s educational system, in the post-2001 group only 16 officers (44 percent) served as PME instructors, with the majority (9, or 26 percent) teaching cadets at either West Point or ROTC. While the majority served as instructors of cadets, only a few served at intermediate and senior PME levels. Just one officer served as a seminar leader at the School for Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army CGSC, one as a doctrine author at CGSC, and one as a professor of joint military operations at the Naval War College.²⁴

The differences are stark. Whereas 15 of the previous officers had served as faculty at CGSC and the Army War College, the current group has 1. Seven of the officers served as instructors and faculty as captains and majors at West

Point prior to attending CGSC, and four had some instructor duty as captains at a branch or specialty school.²⁵ Only two taught in Army ROTC programs, one as a professor of military science.²⁶ Based on this current information, it may be easily deduced that assignments as instructors in intermediate- and senior-level PME institutions were not common in the career paths of Army corps commanders and, subsequently, the senior leadership of the Army. What has changed, and why is attendance at PME sacrosanct while assignments instructing at CGSC and the Army War College are not? If it is so beneficial to have officers attend PME during a resource-constrained environment, how does the Army make assignments as instructors and faculty at these same institutions career-enhancing? How does the Army implement this now?

PME Instructor Talent Management versus Army Culture

Mixing diverse assignments and sending officers with the potential to become senior leaders as faculty in PME institutions will improve leader development of the officer corps. Experienced officers will serve as role models for the next generation of leaders and shape the generals of tomorrow. Anecdotally, officers who serve as PME instructors or small group leaders attest to learning and growing as much as students do during the teaching, coaching, and mentoring process. In *The Generals*, Thomas Ricks describes the need for senior military officers to improve critical thinking and writing skills.²⁷ Senior officers also recognize that instructing in the PME environment makes better leaders. General Robert B. Brown, former commandant of the Command and General Staff College, listed the benefits of serving on PME faculty: “Improved communication, critical thinking, and research skills.”²⁸ Brown’s assignments included serving as an Educational Technologist and later Assistant Director for Performance Enhancement Program at West Point. These are the same skills needed by senior leaders to operate at the strategic level. So how

Clarence Ralph Huebner, a Kansas native, enlisted in the Army in 1910 and subsequently received a commission in the infantry in 1916. After attending the Infantry Service School at Fort Leavenworth, Huebner went off to World War I in 1917 as a captain, where he served with distinction in the First Infantry Division’s 28th Infantry Regiment. As a company, battalion, and regimental commander, Huebner earned two Distinguished Service Crosses, Distinguished Service Medal, and multiple Purple Hearts for his combat leadership in France.¹

Between the wars, Captain Huebner served as an instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School from 1920 to 1922. He then attended the Infantry School from 1922 to 1923 and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in 1924, graduating sixth out of a class of 258 in 1925.² His follow-on assignment from 1925 to 1928 was as an instructor at the Infantry School (where, beginning in 1927, the new assistant commandant was Colonel George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army during World War II).³ Huebner, promoted to major in 1927, attended the Army War College in 1928 and upon graduation served on the faculty of CGSC until 1933.⁴

Huebner also served within the Army Staff and on operational assignments, most notably with the Office of the Chief of Infantry from 1934 to 1938 and with the 19th Infantry

Regiment from 1939 to 1940.⁵ As an assignments officer, Huebner was instrumental in J. Lawton Collins’s assignment to the Army Industrial College and Army War College.⁶ Huebner’s broadening assignments and professional military education in the interwar years professionally developed and successfully prepared him to command the First Infantry Division and V Corps in Europe during World War II. Lieutenant General Huebner retired in 1950 as Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Europe.⁷ JFQ

¹ Martin Blumenson and James L. Stokesbury, *Masters of the Art of Command* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 165–167; R.J. Rogers, *A Study of the Leadership in the First Infantry Division During World War II: Terry De La Mesa Allen and Clarence Ralph Huebner*, Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1965, 54–55; Steven Flaig, *Clarence R. Huebner: An American Military Story of Achievement* (Denton: University of North Texas, May 2016), 13.

² Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 11.

³ Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Detroit: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 55.

⁴ Berlin, 11; “Clarence Ralph Huebner,” Arlington National Cemetery Web site, available at <www.arlingtoncemetery.net/crhuebner.htm>.

⁵ Blumenson and Stokesbury, 170–171.

⁶ Joseph Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 86, 88.

⁷ Blumenson and Stokesbury, 171–172; “Clarence Ralph Huebner”; Berlin, 12.

difficult would it be to implement this cultural change to the Army’s talent management system? Extremely.

Since the announcement of budget cuts in 2011, the Army has shown a commitment to sustain PME across the force.²⁹ As demonstrated by the Army in the interwar years of the 20th century, PME should be the last line item cut when resources become tight. The next order of business that the Army’s

leadership must address is the deep-seated culture that regards faculty assignments in PME schools as a career inhibitor or a path to nonselection for command and/or promotion. To change the Army’s culture, the institution must implement sustainable and realistic change into the Service, ensuring irreversible momentum behind all initiatives so that changes do not languish.³⁰



At head of table, General John E. Hyten, commander, U.S. Strategic Command, listens to students of Air University's Air War College, Blue Horizons, and School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, May 5, 2017, at Maxwell Air Force Base (U.S. Air Force/Melanie Rodgers Cox)

As in all institutions and bureaucracies, Army culture is strong and tends to be extremely resilient and resistant to change. It will take years to modify the mindset of midgrade and senior leaders. According to John Kotter, implementing change for a company takes from “three to ten years.”³¹ It could take a generation before the Army changes certain aspects of its culture. Senior leaders frequently fall into the trap of believing there is nothing wrong with the current assignment path of successful officers who attain high rank. If the current promotion system selected them due to their career path and performance, it must be good for everyone else. How can a system be flawed that selected them for such high rank and position? This post–World War II tendency to discount PME instructor-broadening assignments is not new. In a 1998 article in *Joint Force Quarterly*, Leonard Holder and Williamson Murray stated, “The low priority attached to teaching and the tendency of promotion and command selection boards to ignore or even penalize teaching experience mean that few officers seek such [PME] assignments. This indifference does not

preclude some talented people from serving on faculties, but it does not reward them.”³² Again, cultural resistance to change persists.

In June 2006, the Army’s Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders Task Force addressed this aspect of Army culture and assignments. The task force report found that “officers aspire to the highest positions of responsibility by selecting narrow career paths at the expense of development in the skills needed in the non-kinetic spectrum.”³³ This lack of broadening assignments in the career path of senior officers, to include CSAs, and lack of strategic thought and vision have come under criticism by numerous authors.³⁴ If the Army wants high-quality officers with the potential for promotion to serve as PME instructors, this mindset must change.

The Army must also change the paradigm of post–Central Selection List (CSL) command positions. Presently, the Army assigns officers who complete CSL billets, such as battalion- or brigade-level command or key staff officers, to specific positions after completing their 2- or 3-year tour. Current guidance in

DA PAM 600-3 states that those officers will be “assigned to positions designated as requiring the skills of former battalion commanders.”³⁵ Additionally the CSA designates those positions for former brigade level commanders.³⁶ Who better to teach, coach, and mentor junior field grade officers who aspire one day to command a battalion or brigade than a former commander?

Including faculty instructors at ILE institutions and SSCs as post-CSL positions will begin this process and “seed” those institutions with former commanders and key leaders. This is similar to a proposal made by Richard Kohn recommending that instructing at a PME institution be required for promotion to flag rank. He believes that “teaching a subject or discipline to college and graduate-level officers provides time for reflection, sharpens critical thinking and rigorous, precise writing,” which are skills critical at the flag rank.³⁷ Likewise, retired Major General Robert Scales, former commandant of the U.S. Army War College, suggests that “no officer can be selected for flag rank without first serving a two-year tour as an instructor at

a service school.”³⁸ This forcing function is an initial step that raises the importance of PME and has those selected for flag and general officer educate the future leaders of their Services.

Some may argue that the current Army promotion schedule will not allow for this “insertion” of time to serve as instructors and faculty at ILE schools and SSCs. If the Army now has time to place officers in high-visibility positions after command while awaiting the next promotion board, why not place them where they can influence the next generation of senior officers? By simply sending officers selected to attend intermediate- and senior-level PME earlier in their careers, the Army would allow them to serve as faculty and still have the opportunity to command at the battalion and brigade level without affecting career timelines. This also addresses a cultural issue within the officer corps: “improving tactically” rather than “improving strategically,” and serving in a PME environment where reading and writing for professional journals are encouraged.³⁹ The PME environment provides time to think and collaboratively address issues dealing with national security policy, strategic leadership, joint and combined operations, and larger defense enterprise.

As these changes take root, multiplying opportunities for post-CSL tours to sister ILE schools and SSCs would further enrich the professional development of future senior leaders and reinforce the importance of faculty membership at these institutions. The Army is making headway in changing the culture of instructor and small group leader duty. Currently, DA PAM 600-3 states that “PME instructor positions are critically important as developmental experiences that shape individual career success, and effectively disseminate shared operational experience.”⁴⁰ Who better to impart operational experience than former commanders and key leaders from operational units? The pamphlet professes, “Positions as platform instructors, small group leaders, doctrine writers or other positions in the institutional Army are critical broadening opportunities for our officers that will enhance an officer’s standing in

competition for command, key billet or senior executive-level positions.”⁴¹ This guidance will only bear fruit if promotion rates for officers who serve in these positions are consistent with those serving in other, more traditional post-command broadening assignments.

Supporting this second point is paramount, but it requires the Secretary of the Army to give guidance to promotion and CSL boards. Faculty instructor or small group leader positions must be on par with more traditional post-command assignments. These include lieutenant colonels assigned as deputy brigade commanders, division G-3, or key staff positions. The same must hold true for post-CSL colonels serving as chiefs of staff or G-3s for a major command or corps. This recommendation must synchronize with any proposed changes to the Goldwater-Nichols Act concerning post-CSL personnel filling joint duty assignments. Additionally, this guidance must go out to the Human Resource Command and Senior Leader Division offices that manage the Army’s majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels.

Board guidance from the Secretary of the Army and CSA and an update of DA PAM 600-3 to show these PME broadening positions as billets for former battalion and brigade commanders will also be necessary. Similarly, proportional promotion rates and selection for higher command at the same rates as their peers who took the former traditional positions will serve as cues for junior officers. The Army must reinforce the idea that serving as an instructor or faculty at PME institutions is part of the roadmap to promotion and advancement. The Army must monitor promotion levels and selection for higher command for those officers who fill these intermediate and senior PME faculty positions. Additionally, the Army must continue to assign Active-duty officers to serve as faculty at PME institutions. The reason is twofold: first providing officers who have relevant knowledge in operational warfare,⁴² then providing successful senior leaders to teach, coach, and mentor future Army leaders. Major General Scales also recommends that Active-duty officers continue

to serve as faculty at Service PME institutions.⁴³ Making these officers serve as instructors is necessary, but also having officers who volunteered with a clear path to success will entice them to serve in these crucial positions.

When the U.S. Air Force approached the problem of talent management of PME instructors in the mid-1990s, it followed an approach similar to that taken by the Army in the interwar period. The Air Force offered officers on track to attend SSCs to serve as faculty members at the Air Command and Staff College prior to attending the Air War College. Promotion rates rose for faculty at ILE institutions, and instructor quality increased as word spread. This approach benefited not only the PME institution but also the officer corps.⁴⁴ The Army also has a program for enticing recent SSC graduates to attend doctoral programs and return to serve that institution as permanent faculty.⁴⁵ Additionally, the Army War College manages a Faculty Tenure Program to keep qualified and talented military faculty on staff.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Reduced and uncertain defense budgets have influenced the Army over the last 5 years, and while the election of Donald Trump may alter the fiscal defense landscape in the near term, the Army must stay the course and aggressively promote PME for its officers. Standards must be set and expectations must include fostering an environment that brings former battalion- and brigade-level commanders and key leaders back into the PME system to instruct and develop future leaders. One of the simple and inexpensive ways to improve leader development is to make service within the PME system valued and career-enhancing, improving the overall professionalism across the force. By bringing former CSL commanders and key leaders back into its PME institutions, the Army will enhance the education of future leaders. The Nation will expand or contract its military due to a world crisis or an economic downturn, but the Army must have leaders who are trained and educated, ever waiting for the call to serve.

Finally, the most important aspect of bringing back former commanders and key leaders to serve as faculty at CGSC and the Army War College is mentorship. Senior leaders must encourage and guide those officers who will be the future battalion- and brigade-level commanders and key leaders to seek out instructor positions at intermediate- and senior-level PME institutions. At the critical juncture in an officer's career, senior mentors must tell these up-and-coming officers to "do as I say and not as I did." If not, the Army will continue to struggle with narrow career paths to general officer, which do not include instructing and educating our future leaders. JFQ

Notes

¹ Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, December 3, 2014), 37.

² Joseph Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 86–87. The Army Industrial College is now the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

³ Thomas Ricks, *The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 235. Westmoreland never attended Command and General Staff College or the Senior Service College.

⁴ Thomas A. Kearney, "The War Colleges and Joint Education," in *The United States in Military Education: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Gregory C. Kennedy and Keith Neilson (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 151.

⁵ Leonard D. Holder and Williamson Murray, "Prospects for Military Education," *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1998), 83. The U.S. Army War College closed in 1940 due to personnel shortages in the war effort and reopened in 1950.

⁶ DA PAM 600-3, 5–6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7, 22.

⁸ The other Service war colleges are the Air War College, Naval War College, Marine Corps War College, and National Defense University, which comprises the National War College and Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

⁹ Richard G. Trefry, "Soldiers and Warriors; Warriors and Soldiers," in *American Warrior*, ed. Chris Morris and Janet Morris (New York: Curtis Brown Ltd., 1992), 50–51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹ Ricks, 337–343.

¹² Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1968), 357–361.

¹³ During the 1920s and 1930s, defense spending was between 1 and 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and is currently 4.5 percent of GDP; see <www.usgovernmentspending.com/defense_spending>. Also see Charles E. Kirkpatrick, "Orthodox Soldiers: U.S. Army Formal Schools and Junior Officers between the Wars," in *Forging the Sword: Selecting, Educating, and Training Cadets and Junior Officers*, ed. Elliot V. Converse III (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1998), 99.

¹⁴ Mark Skinner Watson, *United States Army in World War II, Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, United States Army, 1950), 3–5, 15–17, 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4; Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *U.S. Army in World War II, China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, United States Army 1953), 4–6.

¹⁶ Robert H. Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 12; Jason Warren, "The Centurion Mindset," *Parameters* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2015), 36.

¹⁷ Known as the Command and General Staff School, this course has changed names over the years to include Command and General Staff Officer Course and now back as the Command and General Staff School as part of the overall Command and General Staff College.

¹⁸ Collins, 90–91.

¹⁹ Berlin, 12.

²⁰ Kirkpatrick, 99, 106.

²¹ Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General* (New York: Viking, 1963), 256.

²² Coffman, 361; Berlin, 9–12.

²³ Berlin, 10–12.

²⁴ The author reviewed the military biographies of the 34 officers who commanded or served as acting commanders of I, III, V, and XVIII corps from 2001 to 2016 via "Resumes," U.S. Army General Officer Management Office, available at <www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/MasterPrint.aspx>.

²⁵ *Ibid.* This included Ranger, Recondo, and the Infantry School.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Ricks, 458.

²⁸ Robert B. Brown, "The Army University: Educating Leaders to Win in a Complex World," *Military Review* (July–August 2015), 25.

²⁹ Andrew Feickert, *Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress*, R42493 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2013), 1–3.

³⁰ Jason Sherman, "Momentum, Mo'

Money," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 2000, 46.

³¹ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press, 1996), 13.

³² Holder and Murray, 89.

³³ *The United States Army Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders Task Force Officer Team Report*, June 16, 2006, 7.

³⁴ Ricks, 236; Warren, 36; Andrew J. Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2016), 196–197; Senate Committee on Armed Services, "Global Challenges, U.S. National Security Strategy, and Defense Organization," 113th Cong., October 22, 2015.

³⁵ DA PAM 600-3, 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁷ Richard H. Kohn, "Beyond Sequester: Improving National Defense in an Age of Austerity," *Joint Force Quarterly* 70 (3rd Quarter 2013), 52–53.

³⁸ Robert H. Scales, "Too Busy to Learn," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 123, no. 2 (February 2010), 1284.

³⁹ Ricks, 450, 458.

⁴⁰ DA PAM 600-3, 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Joan Johnson-Freese, "The Reform of Military Education: Twenty-Five Years Later," *Orbis* (Winter 2012), 151.

⁴³ Scales, 1284.

⁴⁴ James W. Forsyth, Jr., and Richard R. Muller, "We Were Deans Once . . . and Young," *Air & Space Power Journal* (Fall 2011), 93. The Air Command and Staff College and Air War College are collocated in Montgomery, AL.

⁴⁵ U.S. Army War College Regulation No. 621-1, "Professor, U.S. Army War College (PUSAWC) Program," October 20, 2014.

⁴⁶ Carlisle Barracks Memorandum 351-6, August 16, 2004, "U.S. Army War College Military Faculty Tenure Program."



On May 19, 2009, President Barack Obama met with new U.S. Commander for Afghanistan Lieutenant General Stanley A. McChrystal in Oval Office (White House/Pete Souza)

Civil-Military Relations in Transitions

Behavior of Senior Military Officers

By Charles D. Allen

On Inauguration Day 2017, President Donald Trump inherited from President Barack Obama's administration the current cohort of uniformed military leaders at the most senior levels across the Department of

Defense (DOD). Over the previous 2 years, President Obama had selected an impressive group of military officers. This process included the emplacement of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and of the Vice Chairman by the end of fiscal year 2015, and of each of the Service chiefs by October 2016.¹ Over the course of President Obama's second term, these senior officers engaged with both executive

and legislative branches of the U.S. Government in the exercise of civil-military relations (CMR). At times, the relationship was contentious as the President formulated policies and strategies for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Likewise, military leaders advocated for relief from sequestration measures based on the Budget Control Act of 2011.²

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There have been continuing challenges to two aspects of CMR—providing best military advice and presenting dissenting opinions—in the 21st century. Such challenges support historian Richard Kohn’s list of myths regarding CMR:

- “Everything is fine in the relationship.”
- “Civil-military control is safe, sound, and inviolate—No coup, no problem.”
- “There exists a clear bright line between military and civilian responsibilities.”
- “The military is non-partisan and apolitical”; “The military is political and politicized.”
- “There is a covenant between the military and the American people.”
- “Civilian control is understood by both sides in the relationship and the American people.”³

Current civil-military relations are challenged by the strategic uncertainty and fiscal austerity that affect the national military strategy and complicate its execution in such areas as readiness, force structure, and modernization of the joint force. The current cohort of senior officers must now continue to ensure the Nation’s security in a time of divisive domestic politics and dutifully serve a new administration.

This article examines the behavior of our most senior military officers and reviews their impacts on CMR as they transitioned out of their senior leadership positions. It examines this behavior in a historical perspective. It describes how formerly privileged and private conversations may have become stridently public. It then considers how this more public role may affect CMR. This analysis is based on congressional testimony, press conferences, and media engagements, as well as news reports and journalist accounts of senior military leaders’ statements.

U.S. History of Civil-Military Tensions

From the inception of this nation, our military has struggled to find the proper balance of CMR. As commander of the

fledgling U.S. Army, General George Washington addressed his officers in Newburgh, New York, to quell the Newburgh Conspiracy.⁴ When the Congress of the Confederation considered rescinding its commitment for back pay and pensions, officers threatened to disobey orders to disband the standing Continental Army. Some proposed a mutinous march on the capital to demand their due. Washington’s March 1783 speech at the New Windsor Cantonment reminded these disgruntled officers of their professional obligation to the civilian leaders of the Nation. Seven months later, in his final speech as the military commander in chief, Washington reinforced the principle of the military’s subordination to the new government and its Congress. He modeled this principled behavior by resigning his military commission in December 1783.⁵

At the onset of the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln wrestled with two problems. First, he needed a strategy to defeat the Southern secessionists (he refused to acknowledge “the Confederacy”) in order to preserve the Union. Second, he needed to find the general who would execute such strategy and defeat the secessionist forces. For a time, that officer was General George B. McClellan, who had served as the General-in-Chief for the Union Army and then commanded the Army of the Potomac. After President Lincoln had devised a strategy, McClellan did not agree with it and failed to aggressively engage the enemy. Upon his relief from command, McClellan actively challenged the President while in uniform. He then became Lincoln’s Democratic political rival in the election campaign of 1864, pledging to end the war through negotiations with the Confederate States of America.

Arguably, General George C. Marshall serves as the exemplar of proper military behavior in CMR. As Chief of Staff of the Army at the start of World War II until its conclusion, he established a relationship built on confidence and trust with Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman—as well as with Congress. While candidly blunt in his

advice to civilian leaders,⁶ Marshall clearly understood and respected their constitutional authority.⁷ As historian Mark Stoler’s book title asserts, Marshall was the “Soldier-Statesman for the American Century,” having continued his postwar service to the Nation as Secretary of State and then Secretary of Defense. Even with his formidable reputation, Marshall’s professional advice was overruled by U.S. Presidents on at least three important issues: advocating for a cross-Channel invasion of Europe in 1942–1943, shifting the U.S. war effort to the Pacific rather than “Germany first,” and, as Secretary of State, opposing the recognition of the state of Israel in favor of establishing a United Nations trusteeship.

If Marshall is the exemplar, then General Douglas MacArthur, also a former Army Chief of Staff, provides the counter-example of inappropriate civil-military behavior. As a national hero and savior of the Pacific theater in World War II, MacArthur was called upon to reverse the 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea as the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command, and Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Feeling constrained by President Truman on his strategy and operations, MacArthur chided “temporary occupants of the White House,”⁸ who, he claimed, ignored his military savvy. MacArthur violated direct guidance from the President by speaking out to the press and threatening offensive operations against Chinese forces. In his diary, Truman wrote, “This looks like the last straw. Rank insubordination,” culminating the series of confrontations over the 5-year relationship with MacArthur.⁹ After his relief from command and forced retirement, MacArthur addressed a rare joint session of Congress to deliver his farewell address in which he set forth the risks of political indecision and Presidential restraints in the Korean campaign, which he claimed prevented decisive military operations.¹⁰ Like McClellan in the prior century, MacArthur was insubordinate toward his commander in chief and entertained presidential aspirations. He certainly did not intend to “just fade away.”¹¹



Supreme Allied Commander General Douglas MacArthur signs Instrument of Surrender on board USS *Missouri*, Tokyo Bay, September 2, 1945 (U.S. Army Signal Corps)

Evolution of Theory

For military officers, the detailed analysis of military campaigns and the performance of the generals and admirals who lead them is part of their professional studies. The cases of the four generals—Washington, McClellan, Marshall, and MacArthur—are familiar to Army officers. Perhaps more important for their education in the profession of arms is the study of civil-military relations. World War II and the Korean War have provided the context for theories and prescriptive models of civil-military relations proffered by Samuel Huntington¹² and Morris Janowitz.¹³ While military leaders seem to embrace Huntington’s

“principle of objective civilian control,” civilian leaders rarely simply assign missions, provide resources to the military, and then defer planning and execution to military professionals. Implicit in this principle is loyalty to the commander in chief and Secretary of Defense, exemplified by military leaders who “stay on message.”

Huntington, however, asks a question that continues to complicate CMR: “What is the proper course of professional behavior when called before a congressional committee and invited to criticize the President’s recommendations?”¹⁴ Equally challenging is Janowitz’s call for military leaders to

become political agents who exert their outsized influence on the national policy formulation and strategic decisionmaking. He boldly asserts that military leaders “must make the management of an effective military force compatible with participation in political and administrative schemes.”¹⁵

Contemporary political scientists have tended to challenge the precepts of the earlier predominant theories. Eliot Cohen argues that, in practice for democracies, there is subjective control of the military aligned with the principle of civilian control—what he calls “an unequal dialogue” between the head of state and the most senior uniformed military leader.¹⁶ Peter

Feaver reframes CMR as a principal-agent relationship in which principal civilian leaders have limited knowledge and expertise on the employment of military power and thus must engage with and manage their uniformed military agents.¹⁷ This management requires monitoring and taking action to ensure the behaviors of military leaders support goals of civilian political leaders rather than pursue their parochial military interests. In the 21st century, the theories of Cohen and Feaver are more pragmatic for U.S. CMR. Indeed, the actions of civilian leaders performing as principals have recently led to the forced retirements and firing of several senior military officers.¹⁸ Two of the most prominent cases were General David McKiernan and General Stanley McChrystal, who both served as commanding generals of U.S. forces in Afghanistan for an operational theater of war.¹⁹

Patricia Shields recently approached CMR theory from a public administration perspective. She focuses on three areas that are informative for military professionals, political scientists, and military sociologists. Specifically, Shields examines “(1) the relationship between civilian elites and military leaders; (2) military leaders and their profession; [and] (3) military institution and society.”²⁰ In this analysis, civilian elites are those executive branch leaders who are the civilian Service secretaries and the Presidents’ Secretaries of Defense.

DOD civil-military relations are enabled by dialogue, debate, and eventual consensus that conveys the best military advice of its senior leaders—the Secretary of Defense and CJCS—to the Nation’s commander in chief and chief executive, the President of the United States. The interactions among executive branch leaders and uniformed senior officers are only two legs of the CMR trinity. Embedded in our constitutional form of a democratic government is the tension between the commander in chief’s charge to lead the Armed Forces and the congressional responsibility to provide funds to resource our military. Additionally, Congress has the constitutional responsibility to provide legislative oversight of the military.

Roles and Functions

The President, of course, is the commander in chief of the U.S. military. Accordingly, the military leaders are the chiefs of the Armed Services, including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Chairman, who serves as the principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense. Another powerful group of civilian elites is comprised of Members of Congress, especially those from committees that provide oversight—the Senate Armed Services Committee and House Armed Services Committee (SASC and HASC, respectively)—along with those Members who are responsible for resourcing decisions through their respective congressional defense appropriations committees.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) have substantially different roles from warfighting commanders.²¹ Combatant commanders are charged with developing and executing military strategies to support national policy and security strategy in their assigned regions and functions. Accordingly, they develop short-term plans to address defense issues; they also design theater campaign plans to support national security interests. They, however, have no direct roles in developing military budgets. In contrast, Service chiefs assist Service secretaries in fulfilling their responsibilities for the Title 10 U.S. Code functions of the Armed Forces. Among other responsibilities, they must man, train, and equip forces provided to the combatant commanders. In effect, they are responsible for the long-term health and well-being of their respective Services. While the JCS support the short-term needs of combatant commanders, they must remain focused on mid- and long-term capabilities of U.S. military forces. The four roles specified in Title 10 require the Chairman, as the senior member of the Joint Staff, to assess, advise, direct, and execute national defense policies and plans. Service chiefs have parallel roles for their military organizations.

The military leaders of the JCS have a formidable depth and breadth of

experience. Through three decades of uniformed service, they have commanded successfully at every level in both operational and institutional settings. Many have served as commanders of either combatant or subunified commands during the war on terror. They have served as leaders of key organizations within their Services and in powerful staff positions in the Pentagon. Their past performances are scrutinized for Presidential appointment and congressional confirmation before they become members of the Joint Staff. An explicit consideration in their vetting is assurance that they will not only provide best military advice to the chief executive but also convey their candid assessments to Congress, even when not in accord with the other Joint Chiefs and, importantly, when their counsel is different from the President’s inclination.

U.S. Civil-Military Tensions

Considerable evidence currently supports Kohn’s challenges to CMR myths, especially “Everything is fine in the relationship.” In February 2003, Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, under direct questioning by Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) of the SASC, responded that “several hundred thousand soldiers” would be needed to provide security following major combat operations in Iraq.²² This statement suggested flaws in the strategy endorsed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Though Shinseki completed his full term as Army chief, he was effectively marginalized by Secretary Rumsfeld as punishment for being off message. At the end of his tenure, Shinseki provided the Secretary a “Personal For” memorandum that explained the intent behind his response to Senator Levin and the SASC.²³ The Secretary was noticeably absent from Shinseki’s retirement ceremony. Had Rumsfeld attended, he would have heard Shinseki’s farewell caution to “beware the 12-division strategy for a 10-division force Army,”²⁴ which pointed out the Secretary’s strategy-resource mismatch.

Service chiefs provide manned, equipped, and trained forces to the combatant commanders. Accordingly,



From left, former Service chiefs General Raymond T. Odierno, USA, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, USN, General Mark A. Welsh III, USAF, and General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. (USMC), testified before Senate Armed Services Committee on effect of Budget Control Act of 2011 and sequestration on national security, January 28, 2015 (U.S. Navy/Julianne F. Metzger)

Shinseki was responsible for supporting multiple theaters during his tenure, especially for that of General Tommy Franks. For the major combat operations of the 21st century, General Franks headed U.S. Central Command for the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. As a combatant commander leading the main warfighting headquarters, Franks became frustrated with his Pentagon-based colleagues and derided the Service chiefs as “Title 10 Rear Echelon M**F**s.”²⁵ Regarded as a hero following the speedy takedown of the Taliban and the Saddam Hussein regime, Franks retired in July 2003. During the 2004 Presidential campaign, he actively endorsed President George W. Bush at the Republican National Convention.²⁶

Although not a Service chief, General David McKiernan was well respected as an Army leader. He had served as the land component commander for the 2003

invasion of Iraq, then as the commanding general of United States Army Europe. From that position, he was selected to lead the U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization effort as the Commander, International Security Assistance Forces, and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. When the U.S. war strategy in Afghanistan changed under the Obama administration, McKiernan disagreed with its implementation. When challenged and asked to retire quietly, McKiernan reportedly replied, “You’re going to have to fire me.”²⁷ So he became the first U.S. general officer fired from an active theater of war since MacArthur in Korea. In his retirement ceremony, McKiernan’s message to his military profession claimed that “What counts the most are reputation and . . . decisions based on missions and taking care of troops and their families.” His farewell speech clearly acknowledged Huntington’s principle of civilian control:

“I’m a soldier and I live in a democracy and I work for political leaders. And when my political leaders tell me it’s time to go, I must go.”²⁸

As military leaders seek to provide the capability and capacity to perform explicitly assigned missions, a strategy-to-resource mismatch has persisted. Accordingly, defense officials have sought to gain sufficient resources to conduct the spectrum of assigned missions or to be relieved of specific missions in order to have sufficient resources to fulfill their responsibilities. Presently, defense leaders are persistently struggling to satisfy the requirements of the Budget Control Act of 2011, which threatens cuts to defense spending by enforcing budget caps if national debt reduction measures are not taken.²⁹ Faced with the very real prospects of budgetary sequestrations in 2013, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent a memorandum to Congress urging it to

Table. Previous Joint Chiefs of Staff Positions and Assignments

Officer	Position	Key Assignments
General Martin E. Dempsey, USA	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (October 2011–September 2015)	Army Chief of Staff U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
Admiral James A. Winnefeld, Jr., USN	Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (August 2011–July 2015)	U.S. Northern Command Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (Joint Staff)
General Raymond T. Odierno, USA	Chief of Staff, Army (September 2011–August 2015)	U.S. Joint Forces Command U.S. Forces–Iraq Assistant to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC	Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps (October 2014–October 2015)	Commander, International Security Assistance Forces U.S. Forces–Afghanistan Assistant Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, USN	Chief of Naval Operations (September 2011–September 2015)	Vice Chief of Naval Operations U.S. Fleet Forces Command U.S. Pacific Command
General Mark A. Welsh III, USAF	Chief of Staff, Air Force (August 2012–June 2016)	U.S. Air Forces Europe Associate Director, Central Intelligence Agency
General Frank J. Grass, USA	Chief of National Guard Bureau (September 2012–August 2016)	Deputy Commander, U.S. Northern Command Deputy Director, National Guard Bureau

pass a budget rather than emplace temporary spending measures through another continuing resolution.³⁰ When sequestration was enacted for a period in 2013, Congress subsequently passed Bipartisan Budget Acts in 2013 and 2015 to delay defense cuts in 2-year increments. JCS members advised congressional leaders to allow military professionals to determine how defense cuts would be applied, rather than applying them by arbitrary and indiscriminate legislation.

Forums to Observe Behavior

As Joint Chiefs transition out of their positions, CMR can be influenced not only by these leaders' accomplishments but also by their conduct immediately upon retirement. Several forums provide an opportunity to observe CMR during senior military officer and Presidential transitions. Pentagon press briefings and issued statements are routine communications; they are now used with greater frequency to inform the U.S. public about military activities. They also provide real-time updates on existing crises or emerging concerns of political or international interest involving the U.S. military. DOD officials also engage with think tanks on policies and strategies still under development.³¹ These sessions are used to inform civilian elites who are outside of government and active contributors to

the national security debate and policy development.

Other important forums are the Service-related professional meetings and symposiums used by senior officers to advocate on the behalf of the military. Service secretaries and chiefs of the Armed Forces provide keynote speeches at such gatherings to connect with and garner support from myriad stakeholders who wield great influence with U.S. Government representatives on defense issues and with the American people.³² Graduation speeches at Service academies and senior-level colleges also provide opportunities for senior military leaders to set expectations of newly commissioned officers, to affirm institutional values with members of the profession of arms, and to announce policy initiatives.³³

Likewise, DOD communicates with selected audiences through official publications such as *Joint Force Quarterly* (under the auspices of CJCS and the National Defense University) and Service-related magazines such as *ARMY*. Other publications include influential scholarly journals such as *Orbis* and *Foreign Policy*. Similarly, newspapers such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* garner immediate attention from a diverse and informed readership.

The more formal and official civil-military venue is congressional testimony, whether for the annual budget

or oversight hearings. These routine, legally mandated senior military leader testimonies generally reflect the military's compliance with Presidential priorities as presented in the defense portion of the Federal budget request. Similar to the budgetary hearings are readiness hearings from the force providers and updates on current activities from the combatant commanders. Oversight hearings address functional concerns (that is, acquisition programs) or items of special interest to Congress (such as the effectiveness of operational strategies in a regional theater).

While each forum is available and used frequently, of special interest and potential controversy are the farewell addresses of senior military leaders as they transition out of their prominent positions into retirement. The purpose of such statements may be to reinforce current policies, strategies, and priorities; to inform and heighten awareness and compel action on an unresolved issue; to provide a glide path to the successor; or to "clear the deck" of contentious issues for the next Service chief or Chairman. The aforementioned historical farewell addresses by Generals George Washington, Douglas MacArthur, Eric Shinseki, and David McKiernan provide such examples.

The following discussion of the behavior of transitioning senior leaders is based on materials available

approximately 1 year prior to the leaders' nominal release from Active-duty service at the end of the fiscal year in September. It traces a sequence of key events and reflects a consistent battle rhythm. In August, JCS members submit their Service budget requests for 1 year later. In October, Service chiefs begin the new fiscal year in engagements with their Service associations' annual meetings. For the following months, Services and the Joint Staff work the defense planning, programming, and budgeting processes within the executive branch, which then becomes part of the President's budget submission to Congress in early February. From March through June, senior defense officials and military officers appear in hearings before congressional committees. Senior military leader transitions are completed with changes of responsibility and retirement ceremonies in the summer months, which may include graduation speeches, final press and media interviews, and publication of senior military leaders' essays.

Contemporary Issues for Civil-Military Relations

Throughout the second Obama administration, several defense issues persisted and remained subject to the advice of the senior military leaders of JCS. The table lists the last cohort, their positions, and key assignments that serve as the foundation for their expertise. Among the enduring defense requirements are developing an effective National Defense Strategy supported by National Military Strategy to protect and advance U.S. national security interests.³⁴ Development of such strategic documents has influenced the conduct of ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, especially after the declared end of combat operations in those theaters. The resurgence of the Taliban and al Qaeda as well as the emergence of the so-called Islamic State (IS)³⁵ have complicated the U.S. desire to rebalance its military forces to the Pacific as outlined in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance.³⁶ Likewise, these policy documents have influenced the U.S. response to the messy aftermath

of the promising Arab Spring and the resulting lack of effective governance and security in the Middle East region. The complexity of the strategic environment challenges the Nation's ability to counter threats effectively and to develop strategies with identified risks.

The current venue of choice for transitioning senior military leaders to go "on the record" appears to be published articles and interviews. General Martin Dempsey chose *Joint Force Quarterly* to convey his parting message.³⁷ In a final interview, he sought to educate and inform members of the profession of arms about the inevitability of friction within civil-military relations—friction that complicates national security decisionmaking for strategic-level issues.³⁸ Dempsey embraced his role to provide the President with information and best advice on issues that may extend beyond the military domain. As the senior military advisor, he sought to make a compelling case for senior military leaders' role in the assessment of threats. He advised military leaders to work effectively with other elements of the executive branch in employing the instruments of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic—to protect U.S. national security interests. In doing so, he would recommend prioritization and specify resourcing requirements for defense capabilities.

In an August 2015 interview with *Defense News* prior to his September retirement, Admiral Greenert focused on two main points.³⁹ First, he noted that congressional difficulties with passing budgets and the resulting use of continuing resolutions are having an adverse impact on naval readiness. Accordingly, the uncertainty of funding for training and maintenance as well as investments for modernization would affect not only current capacities but also future capabilities. Second, while acknowledging the security challenges of potential acts of terrorism by ISIL and al Qaeda, Greenert expressed concern about the potential threats of Russia and China that would require strong U.S. naval capabilities to counter.

Perhaps the most contentious recent civil-military issue arose among the

executive and legislative branches and Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno. In August 2015, his declaration that "this is no time to cut the U.S. Army" appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*.⁴⁰ Consistent with his previous statements, Odierno identified global missions that require Army capabilities and the resourcing challenges that "have brought the nation to an important inflection point."⁴¹ An adamant advocate for Army force structure and sufficient force manning levels to accomplish missions of the national military strategy, Odierno contended that "[d]ecisions made in Washington . . . must be based on the world as it is, and not the world as we wish it to be."⁴² Those Washington decisions on policy and military strategies are made within the executive branch, and decisions on resourcing and oversight rules reside within the legislative branch. Odierno had frequent interactions with both. After Odierno's retirement, Army Secretary John McHugh was more direct in criticizing Congress at the October 2015 convention of the Association of the U.S. Army. He addressed the Army's need to get "beyond budget caps, continuing resolutions, and the uncertainty they foster."⁴³

In the last month of his tenure as Air Force Chief of Staff, *Defense News* interviewed General Mark Welsh.⁴⁴ Like Admiral Greenert, he expressed concern about the dim prospects of a timely defense budget and the ensuing impact of the Budget Control Act on modernization programs that would provide future capabilities to the Air Force. While pessimistic about the stability of the Federal budget process, Welsh stated that the majority of Air Force interactions with Congress were "very positive" and that "we don't have to agree."⁴⁵ Moreover, like General Dempsey, he noted that "our job is to provide the best military advice we can give. . . . I have no issue with debate and disagreement with Congress. That is part of the system."⁴⁶

The most nuanced transitional remarks came from Marine Corps Commandant General Joseph F. Dunford. He had been nominated to succeed General Dempsey as Chairman



President Abraham Lincoln and General George B. McClellan at Antietam, Maryland, October 3, 1862 (LOC/Alexander Gardner)

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Perhaps the most striking test of civil-military relations occurs when civilian policy decisions appear to challenge a military Service's core identity and directly affect the Service's mission readiness. Such was the assessment of General Dunford in his report to Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus in the Marine leader's recommendation to exclude women from some combat positions within the Marine Corps.⁴⁷ Dunford's best military advice was presented with full knowledge that Mabus would not seek an exemption for the Marine Corps and that Secretary of Defense Ash Carter had made public his support for full gender integration of the military. When Secretary Carter announced the decision in December 2015, freshly appointed CJCS Dunford

accepted his new responsibility: "As the senior military advisor and the senior uniformed member, it's my job now to assist the secretary with full implementation to make sure that we do it in a way that maintains our combat effectiveness, maintains the health and welfare of our troops and takes advantage of the talent of all the men and women that we have in uniform. So we are getting after that now."⁴⁸ As he transitioned to the role of CJCS, Dunford embraced Carter's decision after rendering professional advice to the contrary

In these senior leaders' transitional statements, four themes have emerged: requirements for military preparedness, capabilities to execute contingency operations, the covenant to sustain the all-volunteer force, and obligation for stewardship of the military profession.

Understandably, points of friction are inherent in civil-military relations. Friction is evident in formal statements and unofficial leaks across agencies of the executive branch. Friction may arise when senior military leaders' assessments of threats and risks are different from those of civilian leaders. It may be the case that the "best military advice" is considered but not accepted by their civilian leaders. In such cases, military leaders may speak out to provide pushback on current policies and strategies. They may seek to influence and potentially shape the discourse on emerging policies and strategies. Or, in the absence of clear policy guidance, they may press for decisions. In any event, they must advocate for resources commensurate with missions and established priorities of their civilian leaders.

Public and scholarly discourse commonly cite the tensions in civil-military relations, which often involve issues of authority, autonomy, and accountability. Authority is established in legal documents such as the Constitution of the United States; Title 10, U.S. Code; and policy directives within the executive branch. As leaders in the profession of arms in accordance with the Huntingtonian constructs of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness, senior military leaders expect autonomy in their conduct of military operations. However, senior military leaders' authority and autonomy must come with accountability to the American people and their elected officials. Accordingly, trust and confidence are essential elements for developing effective and healthy CMR.

Implications for U.S. Civil-Military Relations

This article traces the evolution of civil-military relations through selected cases in U.S. history that have served as the foundation of several theories and frameworks (for example, Huntington, Janowitz, Cohen, and Feaver). It has examined transitional behavior of the cohort of senior military leaders in the final term of the Obama administration. This review has illustrated aspects of civil-military relations and provided themes for consideration. In view of current tensions and the consequences of inappropriate behavior of some senior uniformed leaders, continuing education is essential to ensure senior military leaders do not unduly complicate and impair U.S. CMR.

The JCS members noted here have progressed through careers shaped greatly by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Accordingly, they have served in diverse joint assignments, have spent time in the Pentagon observing the interaction between senior civilian and uniformed defense leaders, and have participated in professional development programs that include analysis of civil-military relations. Perhaps most important, they have witnessed contentious and problematic civil-military relations behavior in the 21st

century as documented in the works of journalist Bob Woodward and of former Defense Secretaries such as Rumsfeld, Robert Gates, and Leon Panetta.⁴⁹

The current JCS membership is the second complete cohort of senior uniformed officers in the 8 years of the Obama administration. They have observed the successes and challenges of CMR over periods of stress and turmoil with deliberations on the surge in Afghanistan, the declared end of combat operations in two theaters of war, and the shifting of strategic priorities. Arguably, JCS leaders have taken those lessons to heart. An assessment of CMR expectations from the Ronald Reagan era still seems applicable, even 30 years since passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act: "In keeping with their military culture, the Joint Chiefs preferred clearly defined organizational roles and lines of authority. What they often got . . . were vague directives, lax assignments of authority, and contradictory behavior from the President and his subordinates."⁵⁰

Through it all, these officers gained the credibility and trust of President Obama based on their past performances and established effective working relationships with civilian leaders. While anecdotal reports of strained relations between the White House and the Pentagon surfaced, the behavior of this cohort of senior military officials was appropriate. Vigorous discussions and exchanges enabled them to provide the best military advice to civilian leaders as they determined policy objectives and approved plans as well as evaluated specific courses of action to address strategic issues. President Obama selected and nominated each of these officers, and their appointments were confirmed by the Senate. As such, their prior performance and reputation established a baseline of trust and confidence with the civilian masters in the executive and legislative branches of our governments. An example of such Presidential trust was offered by General Dempsey: "As it came around to me, I would say, 'I am here as your military advisor, and that is not a military issue.' And the President would say, 'Yes. But you are here and I want

your view on the strategic issue that has national security implications."⁵¹

The greatest area of contention in civil-military relations may be the interaction between Congress in its resourcing and oversight roles and the Pentagon as it seeks autonomy to act within the expertise and jurisdictions allotted to the military profession.⁵² While military leaders have protected communications with their commander in chief, exchanges with Congress are generally public and "on the record." These are inherently political—and potentially partisan. So direct evidence of military dissent with Presidential decisions and policies in congressional engagements is not readily available.

Congressional hearings may in some cases challenge Presidential policies rather than assess the effectiveness of military operations. This kind of partisanship has also led to delays in considering Presidential appointees, impacting civilian appointees more than military ones. For example, former Under Secretary of the Army Brad Carson withdrew from consideration as Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness after waiting a year for Senate approval. Additionally, the approval of Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning took 6 months, as the Senate delayed to consider presidential remarks on an unrelated subject.⁵³

Military leaders continue to call for congressional action to pass a timely Federal budget in order to avoid the Budget Control Act of 2011 sequestration cuts and preclude reliance on temporary spending measures of a continuing resolution. They also seek authorization and appropriations for defense programs for weapons system acquisitions; they likewise rely on the Base Realignment and Closure process to deal with excess infrastructure and to use Federal funding more effectively. Although some scholars express concern about apparent conflicts between Congress and Pentagon leaders, General Dempsey offers a valuable perspective: "Our entire system is built on the premise that we require friction to move [forward]. . . . I would advise future leaders that friction and disagreement in

decisionmaking is not a negative. . . . In general the person at the table with the most persuasive arguments tends to prevail in those environments.”⁵⁴

Historian Steven Rearden asserts that the most important task of the CJCS is to manage CMR through the transition of civilian leadership.⁵⁵ Transitions almost always include appointments of new Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of the Armed Services, and changes in leadership within Congress. Following congressional elections, majority leadership for the SASC and HASC often shifts. Notably, Presidential appointees to senior defense positions and those elected to Congress (currently fewer than one in five) have limited military experience and thereby rely on the assessments provided by their military advisors. Arguably, trust and confidence may be extended initially to senior military leaders, but they are continually tested throughout the CMR.

On Election Day 2016, Lieutenant General Dave Barno, USA (Ret.), and Dr. Nora Bensahel offered sage advice to military leaders for the then-pending transition period of a new Presidential administration: “Don’t assume the new team will continue the processes, policies, and strategies of the last four, eight, or even 12 years.”⁵⁶ Education on CMR for administration officials of President Donald Trump is critical and essential as they transition into positions of solemn responsibility for our national security. This is a period when civil-military gaps may be greatest. Former defense and state department official Rosa Brooks astutely identifies the “more pernicious gap between elite civilian political leaders and elite military leaders: a gap of knowledge, and a gap of trust.”⁵⁷

Civil-military relations are nominally included in the joint and Service professional military education programs. For the Army, civil-military relations are an important part the curriculum at the U.S. Army War College. Under the direction of Generals Dempsey and Odierno during their successive tenures as Army Chief of Staff, CMR sessions were led by scholars such as Feaver, Cohen, and Kohn in the Senior Leader Seminar and Army Strategic Education Program. It is

equally important for civilian officials to learn about CMR. These officials develop policies, craft laws, and ultimately make decisions involving the use of military force. Accordingly, CMR education should be provided to Presidential appointees, the National Security Council Staff, and to members of selected congressional committees. By their very nature, CMR are necessarily dynamic and messy; they should be constantly monitored.

The legacy of the last cohort of JCS members has provided a foundation for their successors. The current cohort, in turn, will, according to their own predilections, shape the future of CMR through engagements with the new Presidential administration. Over the coming years, President Trump will select his own senior military officers for the Joint Staff. They may espouse the unequal dialogue with civilians who are unchallenged in their authority and control of America’s military. Senior military leaders must demonstrate the experience, expertise, and judgment that should be provided with candor to inform the decisions of our national policymakers. An exchange relationship is inherent in such discourse in which senior military officers are the agents who act on the behalf of civilian principals. This relationship must be based on trust and confidence. Trust is necessary to “ensure the responsible use of force in the public interest . . . to prevent arbitrariness, ensure accountability, and safeguard human rights and the rule of law.”⁵⁸ In our democracy, the exchange involves three parties: the chief executive, Members of Congress, and military leaders who serve the Nation. Despite the inevitable tension, balance that facilitates proper CMR is possible. JFQ

Notes

¹ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, “The New Chiefs in Town,” *War on the Rocks*, June 30, 2015, available at <<http://warontherocks.com/2015/06/the-new-chiefs-in-town/>>.

² Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, Pub.L. 112-25, S. 365, 125 Stat. 240, enacted August 2, 2011.

³ See video, “Richard Kohn on Civil-

Military Relations,” posted September 16, 2013, available at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8MDZCOCatw>.

⁴ Richard H. Kohn, “The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy: America and the Coup d’Etat,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (April 1970), 187–220.

⁵ The officers of the Continental Army sent a letter to Congress March 20, 1783, detailing their concerns. See “Washington’s Resignation Speech (Final Draft),” December 23, 1873, Annapolis, MD, available at <<http://maryland-statehouse.blogspot.com/2012/07/george-washington-resigns-speech-returns.html>>.

⁶ Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman for the American Century* (Woodbridge, CT: Twayne, 1989).

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³³ Senior-level colleges are the Army War College, Naval War College, Air War College, Marine Corps War College, National War College, and Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (the latter two

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Vice Admiral Thomas Rowden, commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, speaks to Sailors assigned to *Arleigh Burke*-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Shoup* during his visit to Naval Station Everett, November 1, 2016 (U.S. Navy/Joseph Montemarano)



A Strategic Leader's Guide to Transforming Culture in Large Organizations

By Mark Schmidt and Ryan Slaughter

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As the Department of Defense (DOD) transitions to a new administration, it will be accompanied by numerous editorials advocating for equipment modernization and changing our theater-specific postures. Many of these discussions will call for altering DOD's current strategy. In essence, they will reiterate a dogmatic logic among the department's leadership: the best way to solve a problem is to develop a new strategy. To succeed, we must realize that focusing mainly on strategy will cause us to overlook our greatest advantage—organizational culture.

Patrick Lencioni relates the importance of organizational health (culture) this way: "The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organization health. Yet it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free, and available to anyone who wants it."¹ Prior to

overhauls of our current strategy, the new administration should ask DOD strategic leaders—the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Service chiefs, and combatant and component commanders—to focus on creating or fostering a healthy culture. These top-tier military leaders are uniquely responsible and positioned to forge a culture that will increase engagement, innovation, and empowerment, yielding a military that promotes and retains its best practices and warfighters. This article presents a brief overview of organizational culture followed by a three-part construct that enables strategic leaders to assess, benchmark, and positively transform DOD culture. As part of the leadership transition, incoming strategic leaders should first assess the culture of the entire organization and benchmark the assessment across the DOD and against private sectors. Once DOD culture is benchmarked, an informed plan based on the findings should be implemented to promote and retain the most talented workers.

Organizational Culture

Three decades ago, Edgar Schein introduced us to embedding mechanisms, which serve as the conscious and subconscious ways of forming organizational culture. Schein defines *organizational culture* as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”² He identifies six primary and six secondary embedding mechanisms as a way leaders measure success, react to crises, teach their values, reward performance, and preserve talent within their organization.³ These mechanisms are used by strategic leaders to instill their convictions and form a shared belief system by substituting continuous organizational oversight with guidance on how to perceive, think, feel, and behave.⁴ At the tactical level, a leader can develop and manage culture through charisma

and personal interactions.⁵ Because of the size of DOD, strategic leaders rely mostly on embedding mechanisms, which serve as more formal and procedural mechanisms that support and reinforce the primary messages.⁶ It is important for leaders to understand which embedding mechanisms are in place that foster or impede positive culture change. When embedding mechanisms misalign with a leader’s vision, culture suffers because subordinates are confused by what the boss values. We focus on 3 of Schein’s 12 embedding mechanisms, 2 primary and 1 secondary, to show where potential exists to transform culture in the Defense Department. The three-step process is as follows:

- assess and benchmark organizational culture
- embrace feedback
- transform the culture.

Assess and Benchmark Organizational Culture

*Embedding Mechanism 1: What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.*⁷ If you ask a combatant commander or Service chief the location of organizational assets and their readiness, the leader could quickly generate plenty of readiness statistics, asset facts, and preparedness measurements. This collection of highly valuable metrics is critical in making informed decisions, and no strategic leader would commit to action without them. However, it is our assessment that if we ask the same leaders, “How’s your culture?” you will likely get less precise responses. Interestingly, readiness and some of the biggest challenges in DOD are culture-based (for example, sexual assault, suicide, and retention). It is likely that strategic leaders are less prepared to assess organizational culture because it is considered not essential for organizational effectiveness or too hard to measure.

Currently, DOD has no standardized metric that benchmarks all the Service cultures. While working at Gallup, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman introduced a short survey that measures

culture in their book, *First, Break All the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently*. Gallup has studied and measured human behavior and organizational culture for over 80 years. After decades of employee surveys that included 100 to 200 questions, broad audiences, and little effect, they identified five tenets necessary for an effective survey instrument. When measuring the strength of an organization’s culture, surveys must be focused, measure what’s important, be comparable, reinforce local accountability, and emphasize the process rather than specific events. From Gallup’s study emerged the Q¹² survey of employee engagement. The Q¹² has been administered to millions of employees representing thousands of organizations and demonstrates how measuring engagement is a key factor in high performing teams. The survey asks employees to assess their workplace experience by scoring their level of agreement with 12 statements (see table), typically on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”⁸ The responses are scored individually and as an aggregate.

DOD should consider the Gallup Q¹² as an ideal commercial off-the-shelf program and coordinate its administration to all Services and civilian sectors in DOD. The Q¹² contains the core elements needed to attract, focus, and keep the most talented employees.⁹ This cost-effective, proven, and brief metric will avoid survey fatigue experienced by today’s warfighter, while offering a unique glimpse into organizational culture. This new perspective will highlight where successes and failures can be expected and turn the key to lasting cultural improvement. Once implemented, the Secretary of Defense could ask a Service chief or combatant commander, “How’s the culture in your organization?” and expect a clear and standardized indicator of that organization’s level of employee engagement and readiness. Also, benchmarking the results against other agencies and companies allows the strategic leader to assess how engaged, innovative, and empowered its culture is by comparing both public and private sectors.

Table. Gallup Q¹²: Items That Drive Performance

I know what is expected of me at work.
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
There is someone at work who encourages my development.
At work, my opinions seem to count.
The mission or purpose of my company (organization) makes me feel my job is important.
My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
I have a best friend at work.
In the last 6 months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Source: Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 28.

It is likely that strategic leaders will be tempted to create a different or tailored survey measuring culture. Schein emphasizes the ultimate challenge of the strategic leader “is the ability to step outside the culture that created the leader and to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive. This ability to perceive the limitations of one’s own culture and to develop the culture adaptively is the essence and ultimate challenge of leadership.”¹⁰ Cognitive bias and blind spots, which are inherent in all organizations, will likely create a survey that measures what “the boss” wants to measure. Also, leaders need to be aware of survey fatigue caused by overloading warfighters with surveys. Using the Q¹² survey will allow our strategic leaders to step outside of the culture that created them and build an accurate picture of the culture within the organization.

By using a standard measurement in assessing organizational culture that is short and consistent, strategic leaders will create an embedding mechanism that will help generate a more engaged, innovative, and empowered culture. The feedback from the assessment is a call to action for strategic leaders and the organizations they lead.

Embrace Feedback

Embedding Mechanism 2: Leader reactions to critical incidents and organi-

*zational crises.*¹¹ Once the culture is measured, the challenge for the strategic leader is how to process and orchestrate change that creates a positive outcome. A survey of this size and scope will help identify critical characteristics that have the potential to lead to an organizational crisis. The potential crisis would serve as an impetus to initiate necessary cultural changes within DOD. For DOD to transform its culture, its strategic leaders should emphasize and demonstrate an organizational ability to receive, process, and respond to feedback.

Strategic leaders have the responsibility of modeling a feedback-receptive culture. Rather than contemplating ways to reword a message for unreceptive audiences, our strategic leaders should evaluate what embedding mechanisms are in place that create a culture that is adversely affecting their organizational effectiveness. If strategic leaders personally demonstrate the acceptance of feedback and implement change by altering embedding mechanisms that are negatively affecting culture, they will create a culture that is more receptive to feedback. The feedback-receptive leader will be the catalyst for creating a more engaged, innovative, and empowered culture.¹²

It is essential for strategic leaders to influence and shape organizational culture through embedding mechanisms

because they do not have tactical control of units within the organization. If a measurement reveals the values of an organization are not in alignment with its culture, it is likely that embedding mechanisms in the strategic leader’s organization are partially, if not solely, responsible for the unhealthy culture. If strategic leaders find cultures within their organization that negatively affect engagement, innovation, and empowerment, they should first evaluate which embedding mechanisms are in place that are enabling toxic cultures.

By treating feedback as a call to action to change embedding mechanisms, strategic leaders create an environment of trust and learning. Nothing affects the learning culture of an organization more than the skill with which its executive team receives feedback.¹³ A strategic leader who models how to receive and process feedback creates an environment that models how to react to critical incidents. The trust built by the strategic leader who demonstrates ownership of feedback without retribution fosters organizational value alignment and invites positive change.

Transform the Culture

*Embedding Mechanism 3: Changing organizational systems and procedures.*¹⁴ Although using embedding mechanisms that focus on a process are important in transforming organizational culture, the goal is to create an environment conducive to behavior change. Behavior change happens in highly successful situations when leaders speak to people’s feelings.¹⁵ As the workforce continues to diversify, greater mental agility is required when seeking to relate to people, change behavior, and transform culture.

The following model depicts how strategic leaders can harness the power of feedback and deliberately create engaged, innovative, and empowered organizations. Ultimately, the model seeks to foster healthy relationships necessary for a feedback-receptive culture. There are four steps to ensure a feedback receptive culture is created and sustained:



Retired Soldier and member of Statewide Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce speaks to Seaman after suicide prevention seminar on Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam, September 24, 2013 (U.S. Navy/Diana Quinlan)

- Leadership buy-in to subordinates
- Subordinate gives permission to be taught
- Leader and subordinates become vulnerable (creating the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses)
- Proper administration of feedback.

Step 1: Leadership buy-in to subordinates. First, strategic leaders must demonstrate to subordinates that they have bought into their potential for growth and development. All of us have experienced the feeling when a teacher, coach, or leader has recognized our unseen potential. A bought-in leader sees unrecognized potential and abilities of the people in the organization. The bought-in strategic leader understands and communicates how important each warfighter is to mission success. She expects to release the potential of individuals within the organization, and her subordinates are aware of it. All of

us can recognize a coach, instructor, or leader who believes in our ability and sees unrealized potential because “human beings have hard-wired systems exquisitely designed to let us know where we stand with others.”¹⁶ Strategic leaders with buy-in use verbs such as “need,” “believe,” “trust,” “proud,” and, dare we say, “love,” to communicate how to accomplish the mission. Working in organizations where leaders regularly display buy-in, subordinates understand the high expectations levied upon them.

The bought-in leader defends against inferior expectations for individuals within the organization. For example, some managers believe today’s millennials have an unreasonable sense of entitlement that renders them unable to perform at high levels.¹⁷ This claim lacks merit for the bought-in leader; the bought-in leader views the Millennial workforce as less willing to tolerate stagnant development or poor leadership for

the sake of “having a good job.”¹⁸ For the bought-in leader, generational or cultural differences are not treated as hindrances, but welcomed as characteristics of a thriving workplace environment. In a culture created by the bought-in leader, subordinates understand that their place within the organization is meaningful and relevant and refuse to accept lowered expectations.

Step 2: Subordinate gives permission to be taught. Once the strategic leader communicates buy-in to the warfighter, workers within the organization will start opening up and eventually give permission to be led. Permission to be directed and taught means the warfighter trusts the leader. After establishing trust in the relationship, the leader has the precious opportunity to identify the subordinate’s weaknesses and strengths in a meaningful and longstanding way.

Permission to lead and teach subordinates cannot be assumed or taken for



Marines and Sailors aboard amphibious assault ship USS *Makin Island* run Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month 5K on flight deck, April 21, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Clark Lane)

granted by leaders. If the leader fails to garner permission, they are inevitably frustrated when well-intended feedback goes unheeded. Conversely, with permission granted, the leader and subordinate find even the slightest observation an actionable priority to improve individual performance and better the organization.

Step 3: Leader and subordinates become vulnerable. The opportunity to identify weaknesses and correct behavior means people become vulnerable to feedback. Great leaders create an environment allowing openness and vulnerability because workers know their vulnerability is handled with care and good intentions. A failure to do so will cause warfighters to withdraw and build barriers to productive feedback. Conversely, the welcoming of vulnerability in the leader-follower relationship opens the communication channels for feedback, which will improve the individual and benefit the organization. A leader's willingness to engage with vulnerability "determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose."¹⁹

Step 4: Proper administration of feedback. Finally, the strategic leader who demonstrates buy-in, earning permission to coach and lead, and who then correctly handles vulnerability will create an environment where subordinates are open to feedback. In Doug Stone and Sheila Heen's book *Thanks for the Feedback*, they point out that handling feedback is difficult because it puts two fundamental human desires against each other. The first desire is being accepted and respected in the current state and the second desire is wanting to learn and grow.²⁰ Understanding the conflicting nature of feedback demonstrates that feedback must be formulated properly, but not softened. Stone and Heen compartmentalize feedback into three categories: appreciation, coaching, and evaluation.²¹

We believe military leaders get feedback wrong because they mix the different types of feedback. Stone and Heen point out that because evaluation is the most emotionally loud, it drowns out coaching, the most productive form

of feedback for improvement. Therefore, leaders need to separate coaching and evaluation when giving feedback.²² An example of how leadership incorrectly uses feedback is in quarterly and annual awards. At the tactical and operational levels, some leaders believe quarterly and annual awards show appreciation for performance, but subordinates view awards as a form of evaluation. We are not arguing against awards, but leaders need to understand that subordinates perceive awards as evaluation among peers and not appreciation. This is just one example of where leaders mix evaluation with coaching and appreciation leading to evaluation drowning out the other forms of feedback. Commanders will improve the culture if they understand the differences between appreciation, coaching, and evaluating, and make every effort to teach and coach while being selective of the moments to rank or score (evaluate) performance. Leadership that understands the three types of feedback and how to employ them will create an embedding

mechanism of organizational systems and procedures that properly handles feedback. The result will be an organizational culture that understands feedback by realizing the good intentions and merits of both the message and the messenger.

Promoting individual growth and development through feedback is critical for organizational advancement. The challenge for strategic leaders is harnessing the power of feedback to create an environment that encourages engagement and transforms culture. Perhaps the worst indictment of any feedback process is a perception that nothing is going to change within the organization.

Embedding mechanisms of organizational systems and procedures that enhance feedback have the ability to reach every worker in DOD. Because feedback affects everyone, understanding and improving the way leaders receive and send feedback is an organizational procedure that has great potential in transforming DOD culture. As Stone and Heen point out, it is important to standardize data collection, “but you can’t ‘metric’ your way around the fact that feedback is a relationship-based, judgment-based process.”²³ A leader who understands how to communicate buy-in to subordinates and then grow and develop the team with sound feedback loops between sender and receiver will create a more engaged, innovative, and empowered organization.

Summary

Some would argue that DOD and its all-volunteer force do not need another survey and feedback model to improve organizational performance by transforming culture. Or trying to measure and transform culture will waste time and money in an organization that is busy accomplishing the mission. If the survey and model are implemented, it will be an imperfect plan executed by imperfect people leading to sometimes-less-than stellar results. But strategic leaders need to understand that a majority of DOD employees are not frustrated with the “strategy” of an organization; rather, most warfighters’ frustration stems from cultures that do not promote the values that create an engaged, inno-

vative, and empowered culture. After all, if “culture eats strategy for breakfast,” measuring and transforming the culture of DOD has the greatest potential in creating an organization that promotes engagement and innovation through an empowered workforce.²⁴

Without delay, DOD’s strategic leaders should employ a simple, thorough, and brief Q¹² survey to measure its organizational culture. The survey’s findings will serve as an indicator of employee engagement and organizational culture. The culture assessment and benchmarking will create insight and reveal the appropriate reorientation needed to generate the force of the future. Changes must be embraced and modeled at the highest levels of leadership, offering subordinate leaders a clear and actionable method to affect change within their organizations that will not be undercut by misaligned embedding mechanisms. The result will be mission and values alignment for the current force as it transitions to the force of the future.

In the 21st century, the Department of Defense finds itself in increasing competition with industry to recruit and retain the best warfighters. Continued reliance on recruiting and retention methods that focus on changing a strategy will not be as effective as transforming organizational culture. Transforming organizational culture in the military by changing embedding mechanisms will create long-term positive results that will empower young leaders to create new and innovative strategies. DOD methodology should start with transforming culture, which will create better strategists. DOD should assess and benchmark culture across the entire organization, take ownership of the results, and transform the aspects which are misaligned with the organization’s vision. JFQ

Notes

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² Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 12.

³ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 236. The expanded list of Schein’s six primary embedding mechanisms is: What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis; Leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; How leaders allocate resources; Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by leaders; How leaders allocate rewards and status; and How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate.

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²² *Ibid.*, 43–44.

²³ *Ibid.*, 294.

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Soldiers assigned to Task Force 1-35 Armor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, make their way down road as canal burns in Tahwillia, Iraq, July 30, 2008 (U.S. Army/David J. Marshall)

Where Rumsfeld Got It Right

Making a Case for In-Progress Reviews

By Anthony Dunkin

Combatant commanders (CCDRs) are responsible for the development of campaign and contingency plans as directed by the Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF) and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP). Together, these documents translate national strategic direction and guidance from the President to CCDRs via the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, respectively. CCDRs

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exercise combatant command (CCMD) authority, which provides the full legal authority to perform functions of command over all assigned forces. Inherent in CCMD is the authority to designate objectives and direction over all aspects of military operations.¹ Furthermore, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, states, “[the] supported CCDR has primary responsibility for all aspects of a task assigned by the GEF, the JSCP, or other joint operation planning directives.”² These legal and doctrinal mandates place the CCDR within an extraordinary position of authority and responsibility

to craft plans that meet the policy endstates of the Nation. Accordingly, CCDRs and their staffs must build plans through a structured and predictable process that remains flexible and responsive while also integrating inter-agency and multinational capabilities.

The Adaptive Planning and Execution (APEX) process is the current mandated framework that CCDRs use to translate strategic guidance into operational plans.³ Secretary Donald Rumsfeld created APEX in 2005 as a response to a poorly crafted Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF) invasion plan labeled Operation Plan (OPLAN) 1003. The plan was the product of a

flawed system, hereafter referred to as closed-circuit planning. The closed-circuit model earned a reputation for generating stale, inflexible, and ineffective plans with inadequately linked tactical actions and strategic ends. Furthermore, closed-circuit planning consistently lacked sufficient integration of interagency and coalition partners. Consequently, in his Adaptive Planning Roadmap, Secretary Rumsfeld deemed In-Progress Reviews (IPRs) as critical to the efficacy of the APEX.⁴ IPRs provided the collaborative environment Rumsfeld envisioned to create relevant and executable plans that ensured strategic alignment. IPRs were intended to afford CCDRs deliberate interaction with the SecDef throughout the formulation of a plan.⁵

However, an inspection of strategic planning documents from 2008 to 2015 revealed that this vision has gone unrealized. Specifically, the documents exposed a trend of increasing numbers of directed plans requiring an IPR and corresponding growing levels of detail in those plans. Concurrently, strategic guidance successively reduced the amount of SecDef participation in those same reviews. In other words, the overall numbers of required IPRs were increasing, and the level of detail for plans requiring an IPR was increasing. Simultaneously, the SecDef chaired fewer and fewer of the collaborative sessions.⁶ IPRs grew more numerous than in previous years, yet their utility was decreasing in parallel with the level of supervision therein. The unsettling trend was completely reversed in January 2016, when CCDRs were directed to continue planning without a single IPR.⁷ IPRs had grown so numerous and had so little real value that they were eliminated altogether.

Presently, CCDRs face the overreaction to these described trends: a return to the antiquated, closed-circuit system. In this system, CCMD staffs are producing end-to-end plans without input or comment from the SecDef, preventing them from aligning their actions with strategic guidance. Moreover, interagency collaboration is perceived as a burden to staffs and is on a glide path to being ignored altogether. These trends represent

a regression in the U.S. military's ability to plan, shape, and respond to events around the world. The contemporary global operating environment is showing no sign of becoming less complex. The increasing capabilities of our adversaries, the current transnational threats, and the rising occurrences of cyber attacks suggest that collaborative planning is more essential than ever.⁸ The need to produce more relevant and adaptive plans to respond to the growing number of campaign activities and their related contingencies has never been more critical. The SecDef is in the unique position to inform and shape operational planning with strategic guidance. Thus, the Secretary should personally reinvigorate the IPR process, specifically mandating an IPR for all top priority plans. Through this reinvigoration, the SecDef will ensure military plans are appropriate for the contemporary environment, are strategically aligned, and incorporate interagency capabilities.

Current Global Environment

APEX was created to reduce planning timelines and produce better plans. Nevertheless, former and present military planners note "available time" as the primary limiting factor to producing a broad range of plans with branches and sequels under both the closed-circuit and APEX processes.⁹ In fact, by 2015, personnel in the system noted that they were more overwhelmed than ever. They pointed to the IPRs as a primary consumer of their time. Careful analysis of classified U.S. strategic planning documents reinforces anecdotal staff officer concerns. For example, since 2011, GEF-directed campaign objectives have increased by 81 percent.¹⁰ Likewise, between 2008 and 2015, the JSCPs reflect an increasing number and level of detail of SecDef-directed IPRs. During a 3-year period, the number of level 4 plans to be briefed in a SecDef IPR increased by 50 percent, and the number of 3T plans increased by 267 percent.¹¹ Furthermore, the lower priority plans that require an IPR to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy increased

by 263 percent.¹² These statistics show an insatiable demand for civilian leadership to have more options in greater detail. Then, the 2015 JSCP altogether removed the section that directed CCDRs toward specific plans that required an IPR. The document gave no indication that there would be a decrease in total IPRs but inexplicably removed the mechanism for directing which ones should be briefed to whom and to what level of detail. The omission invited ambiguity into an already embattled process. Planners were left to wonder which of their plans was the priority. The situation became increasingly untenable, and as of 2016, CCDRs had received further guidance to continue planning without a single IPR. The JSCP data, taken together with the updated guidance, quite naturally uncover a process that ignores current doctrine and policy, a condition problematic in itself. More importantly, one struggles to identify the opportunities for adaptation and collaboration by eliminating the IPRs from the process.

A synthesis of the data and statements from current and former staff members revealed that the growing number of directed plans (and the IPRs that accompanied them) overwhelmed not only their capabilities but also those of the SecDef and other senior leaders in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). CCDRs and the Joint Planning and Execution Community found themselves without a clear solution to maximizing their available time.¹³ Decisionmakers elected a misguided approach of eliminating IPRs to balance time constraints. Yet without IPRs, plans are essentially being built under the old closed-circuit model, one that has repeatedly been shown to be similarly time-consuming and ineffective. When IPRs became too time-consuming, the response was to eliminate them entirely, an approach that is too drastic and fails to adequately address the problem. The increases reflected in the GEF and JSCP indeed suggest that IPRs had become too frequent and were, in fact, slowing down the overall process. However, IPRs were once seen as a great success of adaptive planning. As Douglas



Paratroopers with 6th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Engineer Brigade, pull security after exiting UH-60 Black Hawk during exercise Arctic Pegasus near Deadhorse, Alaska, May 2, 2014 (DOD/Edward Eagerton)

Clark found through an adaptive planning (AP) survey conducted in 2008, one respondent noted, “[the] biggest improvement to planning provided by AP is that combatant commands are following a tighter orchestration of IPRs, which gets plans in front of the SecDef quicker and within shorter intervals.”¹⁴ Throughout its evolution, members of the joint planning community supported the use of IPRs. In fact, those in the Joint Planning and Execution Community currently see IPRs as value added to the APEX process.

At the 2015 Joint Faculty Education Conference, presenters reiterated that IPRs for contingency plans “improved integrated planning, increased civil-military dialogue, and accomplished resource-informed planning and assessment.”¹⁵ These assessments showed that IPRs not only improved upon the closed-circuit model but also lie at the heart of APEX successes. Oddly, current practices have removed the heart; the process cannot be expected to survive. The solution lies not in elimination, but in a modification of the original IPR structure. IPRs should endure as a means to assess the strategic environment, address guidance issues, confirm assumptions, discuss the range of options to be explored, address policy or resource issues, address matters that require interagency coordination, discuss executable timelines,

and determine risk levels and their mitigating factors. This dialogue is the linchpin to successful planning. Without this input from strategic decisionmakers, plans are incomplete and irrelevant.

Strategic Alignment

Those who argue for a return to closed-circuit planning hold that the United States was somehow more dominant in the previous era due to this approach to military planning. All the variables to why the United States was perhaps more or less dominant in any given era are beyond the scope of this article; however, it will address the erroneous perception that closed-circuit planning somehow adds an advantage in the contemporary environment as well as provide evidence that it was similarly unsuited for the contingencies of the past.

A glaring example is the case of OPLAN 1003, the invasion plan for OIF in 2003, and the inspiration for APEX. OPLAN 1003 was developed through the process predating APEX, the Joint Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES). JOPES, as a closed-circuit system, failed to address the common problems inherent in contingency planning that have existed throughout history. Most notably, the closed-circuit system produced time-consuming contingency plans, bound by their original

assumptions and unresponsive to changes in the strategic environment or shifting policy goals. The plan lacked sufficient time- or risk-based options and included outdated intelligence and assumptions. Additionally, a rewrite of the contingency plan would have taken months; hence, the invasion was executed despite using a highly flawed plan.¹⁶ Clearly, the dialogue between senior civilian leadership and operational military commanders was insufficient during the development of 1003. In this case, as with other closed-circuit plans, the design was too static and lacked any attempt to update assumptions or strategic guidance upon initiation. The exact breakdown of the closed-circuit model lies with the process itself. Closed-circuit models such as JOPES lacked any mandatory function to force preliminary and recurring discussion between senior civilian and military leadership during plan development.¹⁷

APEX addressed the problem through the use of IPRs, specifically, one scheduled for the completion of mission analysis and before course of action development. At this point in the process, CCDRs took their operational vision and initial assessments of the GEF-directed problem sets into a discussion with the SecDef for approval. The initial IPR represented a critical step early in the process, before the staff began concept

and plan development in earnest. Gaining feedback during the initial IPR provided the flexibility and adaptability envisioned by Secretary Rumsfeld and was the clear distinction from its predecessors. Additionally, it provided the civilian leaders a forum to discuss the multiple options available to them.

Contrast this model with closed-circuit precursors, where civilian leadership did not enter the process until completion of the plan. APEX formalized and mandated civilian influence resulting in a more aligned plan. Plans developed under closed-circuit models often bound civilian leaders to a single option and limited their time to negotiate or apply other elements of national power, as evident during the planning for OIF. Conversely, IPRs facilitated the collaboration necessary to produce campaign and contingency plans with valid political/policy assumptions and explore the range of options sought by civilian leadership. Removing the IPR(s) takes the “adaptive” out of APEX and is simply closed-circuit planning by another name.

Perhaps most importantly, the IPR provided a forum for CCDRs to push back on directed objectives. Specifically, the IPR presented a CCDR with a direct line to the SecDef to share the resource shortcomings and risk of a given plan. The SecDef uses the GEF to assign campaign objectives and contingencies to CCDRs based on an initial set of assumptions and directed resources. By removing the IPR, there is no formal conversation where the CCDR can provide candid feedback about potential disconnects in the acceptable levels of risk or resourcing for the accomplishment of a stated objective. The IPR offers the CCDR the ability to confront strategic misalignment and potentially unrealistic parameters set by civilian leadership. CCDRs who identify that they cannot accomplish their directed objective, given the currently acceptable level of risk, should state it clearly no later than their initial IPR. Additionally, the level of acceptable risk to forces, the ability to respond to simultaneous contingencies, and other global responsibilities directly impact the range of options. CCDRs and

their staffs can produce precise, executable plans once the SecDef validates the CCDR’s balance of risk and objective. So, too, CCDRs can preserve staff hours by not having to rework a plan based on misaligned interpretations of acceptable risk. Moreover, engaging in subsequent IPRs can rapidly modify the plan as the national level of acceptable risk changes over time in a given theater or in response to an emerging problem set.

Then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey’s 2013 letter on Syria to the Senate Armed Services Committee is an applicable example. In his letter, General Dempsey addressed tactical and strategic risk, resource constraints, and interagency coordination. He also provided military options to a given problem set.¹⁸ General Dempsey’s comments represent a model for similar IPR discussions between a CCDR and the SecDef. In no uncertain terms, General Dempsey was pointing out strategic misalignment; IPRs offer the chance for CCDRs to do the same. Without the IPR, CCDRs and their staffs are left to create plans that cannot achieve strategic endstates or, worse, cannot be executed at all.

The Interagency Community

The early integration of interagency planners is equally critical to the development of a strategically aligned plan. Prudent CCDRs formulate their campaign plans, accounting for all the instruments of national power. Correspondingly, sound operational design pursues accomplishment of intermediate military objectives while creating an environment conducive to conflict resolution and is likewise oriented on the desired endstate. IPRs confirm that planners are tracking this intent by gaining interagency guidance from top-level leadership, a principle made clear in JP 5-0:

[IPRs enable] *clarification of the problem, strategic and military end states, military objectives . . . identification and removal of planning obstacles, required supporting and supported activities, guidance on coordination with the interagency and multinational communities, and*

*the resolution of conflicts. Further, IPRs facilitate planning by ensuring that the plan addresses the most current strategic assessments and needs.*¹⁹

Assuredly, CCDRs who internalize this doctrinal tenet are more successful in environments with shifting strategic conditions and potentially fluid national strategic objectives. IPRs provided the mechanism to ensure internalization was occurring and to the appropriate degree. Conversely, interagency involvement was largely ignored or treated as an afterthought in the closed-circuit model and thus often failed to craft an adaptive plan inclusive of all elements of national power.

The necessity to integrate planners across all agencies and departments is again made clear by the OIF example. When the United States invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003, the strategic objectives were to “disarm Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), end Saddam Hussein’s support of terrorism, and free the Iraqi people.”²⁰ A mere 2 months later, President George W. Bush announced major combat operations were over, signifying a new phase of the operation. Hence, the strategic objectives shifted to “maintain stability, search for WMDs, find Saddam, rebuild the government . . . and de-Baathify/dissolve the Iraqi Army.”²¹ Over the course of the following year, facing a growing insurgency and rising U.S. casualties, General George Casey took command of Multi-National Force–Iraq. He issued a new campaign plan seeking to support the Iraqi government by conducting “full spectrum counter-insurgency operations to isolate and neutralize former regime extremists and foreign terrorists, and organize, train and equip [the] Iraqi security forces.”²² In 2005, the U.S. National Strategy for Victory again sought to update the strategic endstates by offering the following: “An Iraq that is peaceful, united, stable, democratic, and secure, where Iraqis have the institutions and resources they need to govern themselves justly and provide security for their country.”²³

This dizzying account clearly illuminates how, within a given theater

of operations, strategic endstates can change significantly in a relatively short time. Furthermore, the diversity of the endstates demanded a requirement to leverage interagency arms to achieve success. The strategic objectives remained fluid, going through no less than four major revisions in a mere 2 years—a point more salient when considering it took 24 months to craft plans in the old closed-circuit system.²⁴ The CCDR is responsible for the execution of military objectives in support of desired endstates and thus has an obligation to involve those agency planners. A process for rapidly procuring feedback from all agencies and departments is a prerequisite for success to ensure stated objectives are achievable at the outset and to react as objectives change in a time-restricted environment.

CCDRs can begin to address natural frictions between military and interagency planners during their initial IPR with the SecDef. The CCDR should detail his desired level of interagency input and allow potential conflicts to be resolved by agency principals. The likely result is a collaborative process between interagency planners and CCMD staffs that provide a shared understanding of the strategic endstates at the start of a plan and cultivates a lasting relationship capable of surviving plan execution.

Counterargument and Rebuttal

At the far end of the spectrum are those who argue for a tectonic shift in how the military thinks about strategic planning. Proponents such as Lieutenant Colonel John Price, USAF, argue for strategic thought superseding strategic planning as the U.S. military's "primary discipline."²⁵ In his 2012 article, Price condemned APEX as a failure to revolutionize military planning. He noted APEX's primary shortfall as the assumption that improvement depended on slight changes in the process rather than a wholesale adoption of strategic thought. He proposed elevating strategic thinking above strategic planning as the military's primary discipline. Critical to his argument is the premise that APEX itself is inflexible and thus

incapable of simplifying the strategic planning process to meet the rapid, flexible demands of the environment.²⁶ Price was right to point out the inflexibility of APEX, as it existed from 2008 to 2012, as a potential reason for an inability to produce better plans more quickly. However, that reality was more a result of institutional bloat than of a flawed model. In fact, APEX retained flexibility in its original form and with appropriately tailored IPRs. He championed strategic thinking as being able to "generate insight into the present and foresight regarding the future," a condition, he posits, as unattainable due to APEX's reliance on a process.²⁷ However, APEX IPRs were intended to capture that very spirit of creative and collaborative thought and have proved to result in more viable plans. Price himself acknowledges that "in-progress reviews between combatant commanders and the secretary of defense has [*sic*] enhanced the flow and frequency of plan reviews."²⁸

While strategic thinking may result in deeper understanding of problem sets, it is insufficient for delivering feedback to civilian decisionmakers. The strategic thinking approach can aid planning staffs in creatively identifying potential avenues to achieving intermediate military objectives, yet it falls short of providing civilian leadership with the range of options they desire. Ultimately, strategic thoughts must eventually translate into executable plans; there is no shortcut to a detailed plan with options. Of course, the world does not stop while planning occurs but at some point, the staff must enter into a deliberate approach to producing a detailed plan. Incorporating IPRs is the forcing function that keeps those plans relevant. Proponents of the strategic thinking approach add value to the discussion by increasing the creative and critical thought throughout the development of a plan; however, such thought is most valuable at the beginning stages of a plan and is updated accordingly when a significant change occurs.

Similarly, APEX has a wider range of critics. Detractors note that APEX IPRs are too time-consuming for SecDef

and CCMD staffs responsible for the planning effort. Condemnations go further by indicating that the few IPRs conducted miss the mark as intended by Secretary Rumsfeld.²⁹ IPRs have expanded from streamlined discussions to presentations of ever-increasing numbers of slides. Staffs who prepare these IPR briefs are overburdened and lose time from actual plan development.³⁰ Similarly, formal IPRs have invited a growing number of predecisional boards, reviewers, and panels that all have input before the discussion with the SecDef. A once-formal discussion between the CCDR and SecDef now requires a series of "socialization" meetings, IPR prebriefs, and Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Tanks. Additionally, the requisite read-ahead for those engagements further prolongs and complicates the process.³¹ There are also those in favor of off-the-shelf plans. They argue for a formal return to closed-circuit planning and for abandoning APEX altogether.³² Admittedly, criticisms of APEX and IPRs are not entirely without merit; in fact, the very reality that IPRs are currently not executed in accordance with the joint doctrine and policy is in itself evidence that there is a fault in the method.³³ However, abandoning IPRs altogether would be an error of great consequence. IPRs remain a critical tool for CCDRs to produce relevant, adaptive plans capable of achieving the Nation's desired political endstates.

Recommendations

The SecDef could address many of APEX's limitations by tailoring IPRs in frequency, scope, and audience. Every top priority plan should have a single IPR (IPR A). IPR A should be conducted at the conclusion of strategic assessment/guidance before concept development, as presented in JP 5-0.³⁴ Reducing the number of IPRs per plan from four to one would likewise decrease the overall number of IPRs by 75 percent. Such reduction would facilitate adequate dialogue and maintain the vision and intent of APEX while keeping schedules manageable for CCDRs, staffs, and the SecDef.



General Ray Odierno, commanding general, Multi-National Forces–Iraq, and Lieutenant Colonel Joseph McGee, commander of 2-327 Infantry Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, walk through streets of Samarra on October 29, 2008 (U.S. Army/Kani Ronningen)

In addition to the frequency of IPRs, the IPR format should be addressed. IPR A should be stripped down to its initial purpose with a focus on ensuring correct interpretation of strategic direction, validating assumptions, addressing interagency coordination, and allocating intelligence and resources for a given range of military options. The process should avoid expansive, prepared briefs to the SecDef. The format should be roughly 10 minutes of brief/update to the SecDef, followed by 30 minutes of discussion. The CCMD staffs would provide minimal products (7–10 slides) to aid in the visualization of the issues to be discussed. The SecDef needs to reinforce this vision so as not to allow ambitious staffs to bloat the process. All necessary follow-ups for issues or guidance should be conducted informally between the CCDR and SecDef. The intent is fewer overall IPRs that have to be scheduled and synced with the plan development calendar and thus a reduced amount of read-ahead material and products. This model gives time back to the staffs for

actual plan development and, likewise, provides the SecDef more time to attend his countless obligations.

IPR A should be formalized between the CCDR and SecDef with all other participants to include the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vice Chairman, and any other Joint Staff members or OSD-designated representatives who would participate in a strictly “monitor” capacity. Their presence, whether in person or virtual, would be to ensure SecDef’s guidance to the CCDR is heard and applied to their plans and offices. The conversation should center exclusively on the CCDR and SecDef. Furthermore, while IPRs should be prioritized, they should not be delegated. With the reduction in overall IPRs per plan, direct SecDef influence into those plans should be mandatory. Subsequently, the GEF and JSCP should reflect the need for SecDef influence on those IPRs.

Finally, the need for predecisional briefs should be left at the discretion of

the CCDR. Overreliance on socializations, prebriefs, and JCS Tanks risks the clarity and fidelity of guidance transmitted from the SecDef to the CCDR. If the CCDR requires assistance gaining the full coordination of the Services or across other commands, he could request a JCS Tank. In the event the CCDR wishes to further develop common perspective, review concepts, or incorporate recommendations, a socialization or prebrief is appropriate.

Conclusion

APEX without IPRs reverses the vision proposed in 2005 and represents a pendulum swing back toward closed-circuit planning. Closed-circuit planning largely failed to adequately produce plans for recent operations and likewise cannot produce plans tailored to the contemporary environment. APEX, in its original form, sought to meet today’s planning challenges through extensive collaboration and senior leader influence. Perhaps in practice, the complete vision of APEX was unsustainable and unable to meet the specific planning

needs of today's civilian and military leaders. However, the joint planning community has accommodated an overreaction back to the closed-circuit model. The essence of APEX lies with the IPR. The frank, two-way conversation between CDRs and SecDef provides the necessary collaboration and guidance required for adaptive plans. Strategic planning is the commander's business and, as such, should remain between senior and subordinate. IPRs can only be useful if kept at the appropriate level, appropriate frequency, and appropriate scope. IPRs allow for strategic alignment and interagency collaboration—qualities not found in the century-old closed-circuit system—in the rapidly developing contemporary environment. The SecDef has the power to reinvigorate the IPR process and should do so in accordance with the recommendations contained herein. Consequently, the U.S. military will regain the spirit of APEX, address the concerns of the planning community, and retain the ability to be the world leader in strategic planning. JFQ

Notes

¹ Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2013), V-2.

² JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2011), II-12.

³ Michael McGauvran, *A Primer for: The JSPS, GEF, JSCP, APEX, and GFM* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2015), 11.

⁴ *Adaptive Planning Roadmap 2005* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2005).

⁵ Michael A. Santacrose, *Joint Strategic and Operational Planning: Planning for Planners* (Lakeland, FL: The Lightning Press, 2014).

⁶ *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* (JSCP) (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2008, 2011, 2015). Close analysis of the JSCPs from 2008 to 2015 reveals clear trends in numbers of plans requiring In-Progress Reviews (IPRs) across all functional and geographic combatant commands. The trends apply across all levels of detail; however, the author chooses to focus only on the higher level detailed plans as they are the most significant and time consuming.

⁷ McGauvran, 15.

⁸ "Administration Cybersecurity Efforts 2015," White House Fact Sheet (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015).

⁹ McGauvran, 12.

¹⁰ *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015). This statistic represents an aggregate increase across a 5-year period. The number of campaign objectives assigned to geographic combatant commanders has increased. Likewise, the number of posture planning priorities has increased. The campaign objective statistic is a primary driver for developing campaign plans and contingency plans; however, posture guidance priorities also add to the planning effort and are a consideration when balancing the factor of time.

¹¹ Plans are categorized by levels of detail from 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest level of detail. *Level 3* is a base plan with selected annexes; *3T* is the same but includes Time Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD). *Level 4* is a complete plan with all annexes and a detailed TPFDD. These increases are substantial and noteworthy because level 3T and above are far more time consuming to produce. Furthermore, TPFDDs have a short shelf life and require constant updating.

¹² JSCP.

¹³ The Joint Planning and Execution Community consists of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, combatant commands (CCMDs), Services, National Guard Bureau, all Joint Staff directorates, and DOD Combat Support Agencies.

¹⁴ Douglas K. Clark, "The Path to Finally Realizing the Adaptive Planning Vision of Defense Secretaries Rumsfeld and Gates," Master's thesis, Joint Advanced Warfighting School, 2009, 30, available at <www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a530068.pdf>.

¹⁵ Carl A. Young, "Update to Adaptive Planning, JP 5-0, and an Update on the Plans Review Process," lecture, Joint Faculty Education Conference, Washington, DC, July 1, 2015, slide 5. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Instruction 1800.01D, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)," requires the Joint Staff J7 Joint Education Branch to host a Joint Faculty Education Conference (JFEC) every year. The conference's purpose is to "present emerging concepts and other material relevant to maintaining curricula currency to the faculties of the [professional military education] and [joint professional military education] colleges and schools." The JFEC convenes each summer; the Joint Staff J7 invites representatives of the professional military education community. Defense Department representatives' presentations not only focus on the evolving professional body of knowledge but also provide insight into the strategic environment.

¹⁶ Robert M. Klein, "Adaptive Planning: Not Your Great-Grandfather's Schlieffen Plan," *Joint Force Quarterly* 45 (2nd Quarter 2007), 85, available at <<http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-45.pdf>>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁸ Martin E. Dempsey, letter to Senator Carl Levin on the U.S. Military and the Syrian Conflict, July 19, 2013, available at <www.cfr.org/syria/general-dempseys-letter-senator-levin-us-military-syrian-conflict-july-2013/p31198>.

¹⁹ JP 5-0, I-3-I-4.

²⁰ Clark, 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²² Donald Wright and Timothy Reese, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, June 2008), 177.

²³ George W. Bush, "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq," November 2005, available at <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_strategy_nov2005.html#part1>.

²⁴ At the time, the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System was the planning process of record and advertised a 24-month timeline to produce plans.

²⁵ John F. Price, Jr., "The Downfall of Adaptive Planning: Finding a New Approach after a Failed Revolution," *Air & Space Power Journal* 26, no. 2 (March–April 2012), 118–131, available at <www.au.af.mil/au/afri/aspj/article.asp?id=68>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 118–131.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 123–124.

²⁹ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 36. This passage is key in understanding Donald Rumsfeld's demand for short and pointed discussion with his commanders, a likely driver of the IPR concept.

³⁰ Interview with former Joint Staff Plans officer, April 22, 2016.

³¹ JSCP, 2015. The following is extracted from unclassified portions of the JSCP: "Socializations are formal meetings with the Joint Staff and OSD providing CCMDs the opportunity to socialize plans and develop common perspective regarding the review process. JCS Tanks are held by the CJCS in advance of scheduled SecDef IPRs. The intent of a JCS Tank is to ensure full coordination across the CCMDs and Services and enable the Chairman's compliance with Title X requirements; they are supplemented by Operations Deputies (OpsDepts) Tanks and, 'Paper Tanks.' CDRs conduct pre-briefs with the Services, Joint Staff, and OSD planners IOT review concepts, discuss ideas, and incorporate recommendations. For plans requiring SecDef IPR, socializations and pre-briefs must take place one month before the IPR."

³² Interview with former Joint Staff Plans officer, April 22, 2016.

³³ There is a range of doctrinal and policy documents that direct the use of APEX in the joint operational planning process, including JP 5-0 and CJCS Memoranda 3130.03, 3130.01, and 3130.06.

³⁴ JP 5-0, II-14.

Chief Builder Keith Genereux, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, renders final salute while passing through sideboys at his retirement ceremony, Port Hueneme, California, May 4, 2012 (U.S. Navy/Ace Rheume)



Military Retirement Reform

A Case Study in Successful Public Sector Change

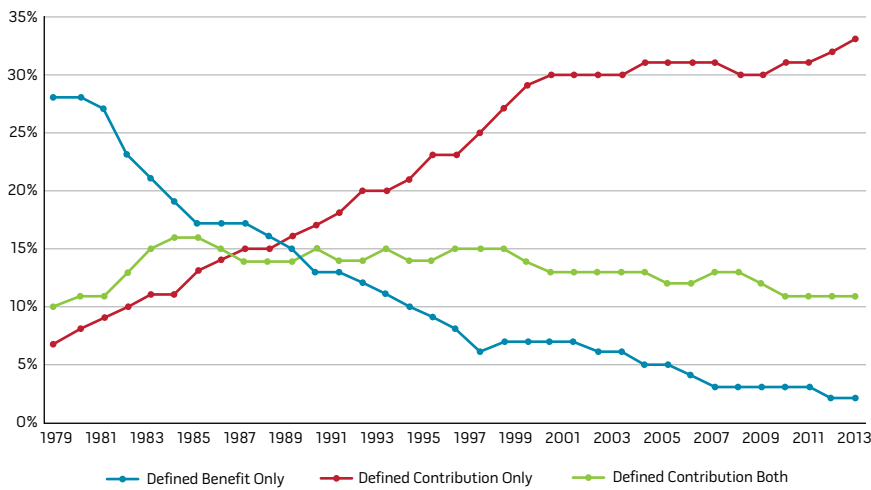
By Laura J. Junor, Samantha Clark, and Mark Ramsay

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An old proverb states that success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan. That idea immediately resonates with most of us because we have seen that taking credit for success is much easier than taking responsibility for failure. However, in the public sector, this proverb resonates

particularly well because major reforms based on the integration of diverse skills and perspectives, as well as the alignment of competing interests, are more likely to succeed. The successful reform of the military's retirement benefit from the longstanding pension-based system to a blended system certainly fits that argument.¹ Simply put, this reform would not have been possible without the (mostly) complementary efforts and driving forces of Congress, the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, and the Department of Defense (DOD). We believe it provides a useful and rare case study for achieving significant, consequential change in the public sector. This article documents a process where government at a variety of levels worked well and acknowledges lessons that should be passed along for those reforms yet to come.

Figure 1. Percentage of All Private-Sector Workers Enrolled in Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution Plans, 1979–2013



Source: U.S. Department of Labor Form 5500 Summaries 1979–1998, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

A Brief History of Military Retirement

The basic elements of the current military pension-based retirement system were first signed into law between 1945 and 1947. Since then, there have been changes in the defined benefit that include changes in the basis for the annuity payment and the 1986 establishment of the REDUX option allowing members to essentially trade a near-term lump-sum payment for a long-term reduction to their annuity. Since the 1980s, the vast majority of private-sector employers shifted from a defined benefit annuity to a defined contribution 401(k)-type plan (see figure 1). The basis of this shift was likely the result of several factors. The first was employer-borne cost; defined contribution plans are a less expensive benefit for employers. The second was a booming economy over significant portions of this period; many investment funds performed well, especially throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. The third factor was the changing dynamic of the labor force that favored career mobility. Throughout this period, employees were increasingly less likely to work for the same employer for decades, making a portable defined contribution plan a critical benefit.²

In the face of such an overwhelming trend, the question of whether the military retirement system should somehow follow suit was logical. In particular, both the 10th and 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) in 2008 and 2012 recommended major changes to the DOD retirement system.³ The mobility-enhancing aspect of a defined-contribution benefit was part of the reason the military never seriously contemplated a blended plan. The vast majority of military skills and expertise cannot be hired from the civilian labor market; they must be grown from within the Services through education and experience. This means that DOD must maintain a powerful incentive for enough of the best of its workforce to remain despite the seemingly more lucrative experiences of their friends and relatives in the private sector. A retirement benefit that requires a 20-year commitment provides such a powerful retention incentive, while a portable retirement benefit does not. As the economy entered a major recession in 2008, the traditional DOD retirement annuity seemed even more important as it was largely immune from economic downturn.

During this recession, the military beneficiaries, DOD, and Congress did not aggressively pursue reform, probably

because they perceived the risks vastly outweighed the rewards. That perception persisted until a confluence of events occurred that included military end-strength reductions after over a decade of sustained conflict, successive years of trillion-dollar Federal deficits, and major cuts to defense spending under the Budget Control Act. All the while, the labor market was adapting to the changing preferences of a constantly evolving labor force.

Under the current military retirement system, only about 17 percent of Servicemembers serve the full 20 years required to receive the retirement annuity. Under the defined annuity benefit, which has been in effect for decades, members serving fewer than 20 years receive no government-funded retirement benefit regardless of how well they performed.⁴ By 2011, it became clear that thousands of members who served admirably supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other contingencies and operations, would be forced to leave military service well before they met the 20-year requirement to receive a pension. In addition, real concerns about the Federal deficit were driving successively lower defense budgets and subsequent reductions in the size of the force. During this same period, DOD was also grappling with how to fit essential investments in defense technology and readiness recovery into a declining defense budget that was increasingly dominated by discussions on compensation costs.⁵

In response to these circumstances, the Defense Business Board (DBB) proposed eliminating the defined benefit annuity and shifting military retirement completely to a defined contribution system.⁶ By September of 2011, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) convened a Retirement Reform Review working group that considered the DBB proposal as part of a broader pay and compensation efficiencies review.⁷ While this review recommended a blended retirement benefit that was conceptually similar to the benefit ultimately passed into law in 2015, beneficiaries, advocacy groups, and congressional members were

concerned that the internally led DOD task force did not adequately consider a comprehensive review of pay and compensation and its impact on the viability of our all-volunteer force. That meant the probability of widespread opposition was high. To avoid this outcome and increase the chances of success, an outside review comprised of leading subject matter experts was necessary to validate and improve concepts for military retirement reform.⁸

The Path to Reform

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) was assembled by an act of Congress as sections 671–680 of the fiscal year (FY) 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).⁹ Congress established the MCRMC to ensure the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, enable a high quality of life for military families, and modernize and achieve fiscal sustainability of the compensation and retirement systems.¹⁰ The commission was comprised of experts on military retirement and compensation systems, including former Senators, Representatives, executive appointees, and congressional defense committee staff. Together, these experts held numerous town halls at military bases and communities far and wide to gather input from Servicemembers, their families, retirees, and advocacy groups. With this research, the MCRMC built a sound case for retirement system reform that was backed by thorough research and analysis.

Typically, these “blue ribbon commissions” result in recommendations that present reform as either prohibitively complex or involving insurmountable political risk. An issue as complex, consequential, and politically risky as a fundamental change to military retirement on the heels of the longest conflicts in the Nation’s history could have easily resulted in such an outcome. The product of this commission was different, largely because congressional leadership directly and consistently oversaw the MCRMC’s work. By 2015, there was new leadership in both the Senate and

House defense authorization committees and personnel subcommittees.¹¹ These Members, some of whom have established military careers themselves, clearly understood the imperative of responsible compensation reform and set that expectation for the MCRMC. While fiscal concerns presented unforgiving pressure on compensation issues, writings and testimonies of congressional leaders clearly conveyed their concern about maintaining a ready, healthy all-volunteer force that was capable of competing for the country’s best and brightest personnel. They were looking for a retirement solution that was affordable, attracted new enlistees looking for military experience (rather than a 20-year career), and provided the means for these individuals to begin establishing a portable and secure retirement future. Armed Services Committee leadership set up regular hearings and informational meetings between the committee Members and their staffs and the commissioners in order to ensure that MCRMC members understood their tasking and had the support they needed to produce useful recommendations.

The most critical aspect of Congress’s active involvement may have been the signal that it sent outside of the MCRMC (for example, to DOD, beneficiaries, and advocacy groups) that Congress was serious about implementing responsible military retirement reform. The reduction in the cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Servicemembers’ annuity benefits passed in the Bipartisan Budget Act in 2013 already signaled that they were willing to make big changes in this space during times of heightened fiscal austerity.¹² In the case of the COLA reduction, however, reform was the product of closed-door budget negotiations rather than of comprehensive analyses, and ultimately most elements were largely rolled back in subsequent legislation. Since Congress designed the MCRMC to avoid that shortcoming, the likelihood of meaningful legislation this time was very credible.

The MCRMC indeed fulfilled its mandate and provided a well-considered, viable retirement plan. The second

column in the table details the elements of the blended retirement plan. Once the final report was delivered officially on January 29, 2015, President Barack Obama was given 60 days to review the plan and convey his recommendations to Congress.¹³ President Obama asked the Secretary of Defense to consider the MCRMC’s reforms for implementation.

Breaking the Status Quo Bias

Based on the recent experience of Congress with reducing the COLA annuity adjustment for working-age retirees, the high likelihood of congressional advocacy would not be enough to guarantee a reformed retirement plan. For that, current Servicemembers, retirees, and their advocacy groups would have to support reform, or at least not mount a strong opposition. That meant that these groups would need the time to fully review the details of the changes and their expected consequences.

The time allotted for this review was extremely challenging, but it did force immediate and focused attention on retirement reform. The Secretary of Defense had to send his recommendations to the President by March 13, 2015, in order for Mr. Obama to meet the legislated timeline; that allowed only about 6 weeks for DOD to review all 15 MCRMC recommendations.¹⁴ At that time, Secretary Carter indicated that DOD leadership was prepared to accept three recommendations immediately and anticipated that following further work with the commission, they could support another seven recommendations by the end of April 2015. While DOD indicated that it agreed with the commission’s objectives regarding the remaining recommendations, it might disagree on how best to achieve those objectives.¹⁵ In any event, DOD indicated that it would need more time to assess the remaining recommendations but promised to complete this work in time for the preparation of the FY 2017 budget.

While many within DOD had advocated for a blended retirement system for years, there were many others who were concerned that the risk to the recruiting, retention, and management of an

Table. Retirement Plans

Attribute	Current	MCRMC	DOD	Final (2016 NDAA)
Defined Benefit (DB) Vesting	20 Years of Service (YOS)	20 YOS	20 YOS	20 YOS
DB Multiplier	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
DB Working-Age Annuity	Full annuity	Full annuity; with lump-sum option	Full annuity; no lump-sum option	Full annuity with lump-sum option
DB Retirement Age	NA Active Component (AC); 60 Reserve Component (RC)	NA AC; 60 RC	NA AC; 60 RC	NA AC; 60 RC
DB COLA	COLA-1%*		Full (COLA-1% repeal)	Full (COLA-1% repeal)
DB Disability Retirement Pay	Disability rating (Min 30%) capped at 75%, or 2.5% multiplier	Disability rating remove 75% cap, or 2.0% multiplier	Disability rating (Min 30%) capped at 75%, or 2.5% multiplier	Disability rating (Min 30%) capped at 75%, or 2.0% multiplier
Defined Contribution (DC) DOD Contribution Rate	NA	1% automatic; plus up to 5% matching (Max = 6%)	1% automatic; plus up to 5% matching (Max = 6%)	1% automatic; plus up to 4% matching (Max = 5%)
DC DOD Contribution Years of Service	NA	1% at entry until 20 YOS; Matching: After completion of 2 YOS until 20 YOS	1% at entry until end of service; Matching: After completion of 4 YOS until end of service	1% at entry until 20 YOS; Matching: After completion of 2 YOS until 20 YOS
DC Enrollment	NA	Automatic at entry, automatic reenrollment	Automatic at entry, no automatic reenrollment**	Automatic at entry, automatic reenrollment
DC Default Contribution Rate	NA	3% automatic enrollment at entry	3% automatic enrollment at entry***	3% automatic enrollment at entry
DC Vesting of DOD Contributions	NA	Start of 3 YOS	Start of 3 YOS	Start of 3 YOS
Continuation Pay (CP) Multiplier	NA	Min 2.5 for AC. 0.5 RC; max varies	Varies at Service discretion	Min 2.5 for AC. 0.5 RC; max varies
CP YOS / Additional Obligation	NA	For everyone at 12 YOS, minimum 4-year obligation. Basic CP: AC 2.5 times basic pay, RC 0.5	Services determine whom to target between 8 to 16 YOS at Service discretion; min 1-year obligation	For everyone at 12 YOS, minimum 4-year obligation. Basic CP: AC 2.5 times basic pay, RC 0.5
Effective Date	NA		1-Jan-18	1-Jan-18
% of Force Receiving Benefit	19	85	85	85

* FY 15 NDAA moved the effective date for COLA-1% to January 1, 2016, for new entrants

** Can opt-out after financial literacy training at 1st permanent duty station; no auto-reenrollment

***Default investment is ROTH L-fund

all-volunteer force was not worth the benefit of proposed reforms. In April 2015, Secretary Ashton Carter pledged to the President that he would continue to review the MCRMC's retirement proposals.¹⁶ In fact, civilian and military analysts within DOD had been meeting with the MCRMC members, outside experts, and representatives from the White House, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Office of Management and Budget constantly since January 2015. More specifically, DOD's review was conducted by more than 150 internal subject matter experts and supported by three Federally funded research and development centers (RAND, Institute for

Defense Analyses, and Center for Naval Analyses). In addition, DOD included experts from the Labor, Agriculture, Commerce, Education, and Veterans Affairs Departments, as well as the Office of Management and Budget and Office of Personnel Management, throughout this 6-week effort to ensure a holistic review. Finally, the review included two sessions with leaders from the military and veterans' organizations. Senior leaders at every level of DOD reviewed the work on a weekly basis and provided critical input.

The internal DOD MCRMC response team was led by OSD Personnel and Readiness (P&R) on behalf of the

Secretary and included individuals with requisite policy and analytic skill-sets from the Joint Staff, OSD Comptroller, and OSD Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) office. Sub-teams conducted the analysis and response that informed the Secretary's recommendations to the President. DOD leaders understood that Congress was determined to evolve these benefits and that the White House was similarly disposed. While there was never a mandate to accept these recommendations, DOD leaders knew that they had to genuinely consider each of the MCRMC recommendations if they hoped to have a positive influence on the final outcome. Therefore, the DOD

Figure 2. DOD Retirement Simulation of Annual Lifetime Income under Varying Scenarios

Scenario for this illustration:

Enlisted Servicemember
20-year career

Defined contribution (TSP):

- At entry: Auto-enrolled in TSP at 3% of basic pay
- 1% automatic DOD contributions until End of Service (EOS)
- From 3 years of service until EOS, member contributes 4% to TSP and DOD matches 4%
- TSP has 7.3% nominal annual returns
- Member draws benefit at age of 67

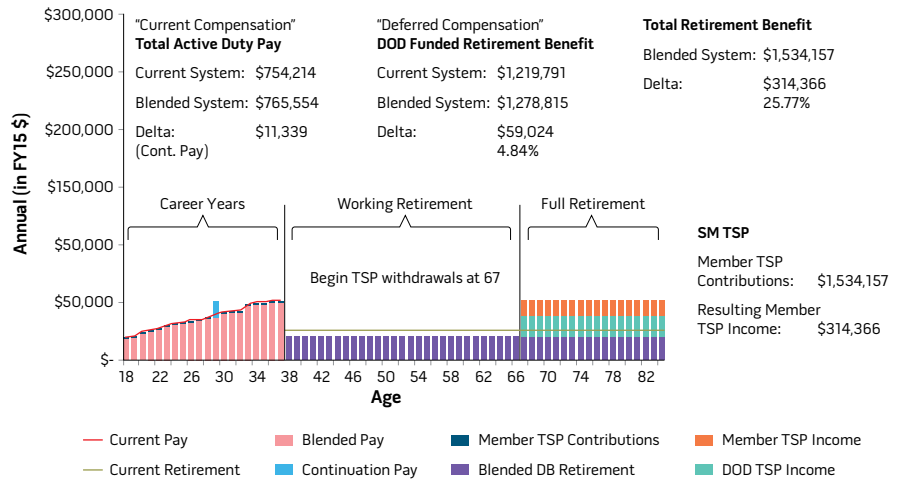
Defined benefit: Multiplier of 2.0

Continuation pay: 3.37x monthly basic pay

Assumptions:

- Income is adjusted for inflation (constant FY15 \$)
- SM retires after 20 years of service as an E7 and lives until age 85
- Continuation pay (3.37x monthly basic pay) added to Active-duty blended pay but not counted in retirement benefit
- At entry: SM auto-enrolled in TSP at 3% of basic pay & DOD automatically contributes 1% through EoS
- Starting Year of Service (YOS) 3 – EOS: SM contributes 4% to TSP
- Starting YOS 3 – EOS: DOD matches 4% contribution
- TSP account annuitized at age 67
- TSP has 7.3% nominal annual returns (L2040/L2050 fund class)

Enlisted SM, 20yr Career



recommendations to the Secretary, and ultimately the President, had to be based in reproducible logic and could not blindly reject the commission's recommendations in favor of the status quo. Given the timeline and a strong status quo bias, failure here was possible.

To combat that likelihood, and before the sub-team leads were chosen, the response team created an approach that forced a broader consideration of each of the 15 recommendations. Each sub-team had to deliver a structured narrative response for each recommendation that began with an explanation of the purpose of the benefit linked to that recommendation irrespective of either the status quo policy or the MCRMC's recommended change. In other words, it had to address and answer such questions as why DOD provides this benefit and what were the benefit's intended goals. That led to a description of specific policy attributes that would meet this goal—or, phrased differently, what "right" looks like when it comes to a policy shaped to meet the goals of the benefit. The next step was to discuss the MCRMC's recommendation in the context of whether it met the stated objectives of the benefit. Only then would sub-team analysts extend this logic to draft a final recommendation. While the status quo could be raised as a better alternative to the MCRMC recommendation, it only survived as such after

a comprehensive discussion and evaluation of each MCRMC recommendation. Based on this approach, DOD generally found that MCRMC's objectives were consistent with its own, and any differences that existed largely concerned the best means of achieving those objectives. Simply put, DOD agreed in whole or in part with the majority of the MCRMC's recommendations based on defensible criteria and thorough analysis.

The process outlined above identified three objectives of a military retirement plan:

- do no harm to the all-volunteer force in terms of recruiting, retention, and workforce management
- provide the opportunity to yield a benefit that is equivalent to the traditional defined annuity benefit
- provide a transportable retirement benefit to a larger percentage of the force.

It also set up the empirics to explore the attributes of a retirement plan that met those objectives, including analysis of recruiting and retention consequences of various defined benefit, defined contribution, and continuation pay options.

Building Support

Congress included legislation for a modernized military retirement system in the FY 2016 NDAA. Both the

House and Senate versions contained detailed sections on military retirement modernization that were placed in the Chairman's marks by the subcommittees on personnel and passed on the floors of both bodies of Congress.¹⁷ Both versions reformed the currently defined benefit retirement system into a modernized hybrid contributory and defined benefit system that contained many common elements.¹⁸ The main policy dispute was whether to include an element in the Senate version, known as a lump-sum payment, for those electing to take a portion of their retirement benefit early and defer collection on the rest until they reach Social Security retirement age.¹⁹ As the basic structural reform was contained in both versions of the FY 2016 NDAA, a version of this reform was all but certain to remain in the final conferenced version of the bill. This triggered efforts within DOD to begin building consensus and recommendations for modifying the legislation contained in the House and Senate versions of the FY 2016 NDAA.

Support Within the Department of Defense. Two factors made retirement reform more difficult than most others. First, military retirement is an intensely critical and personal issue for military leaders. In part, it is an issue of keeping faith with fellow Servicemembers who are willing to sacrifice enormously for

their country. There is also a real concern that any change could irrevocably harm the success of the current professional all-volunteer force. Finally, retirement benefits are notoriously difficult to understand.²⁰ It was clear to the working team that efforts to fairly weigh the pros and cons of a blended retirement benefit would have to provide the means to simply, and without bias, let decisionmakers see and compare the different aspects of a blended retirement system.

In response to the first issue, the OSD-led response team overwhelmingly agreed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Senior Enlisted Advisors (SEs) were the most appropriate group to help design and propose a reformed retirement plan for Servicemembers. OSD leaders understood that sometimes the best leadership decision is to know when to step aside; this was one of those times. For past and present military personnel to accept a radically different retirement benefit, they had to see that it was designed from within their military community. OSD P&R, Comptroller, and CAPE had already done a great deal of work evaluating alternative plan attributes during the working group process. They continued this work by actively supporting the Joint Staff-led subgroup both in preparing material and analyses and in attending decisionmaking forums. The process remained transparent and inclusive, just with a different lead.

In response to the second issue, the Joint Staff developed a simple compound interest simulation to illustrate the consequence of different blended plan attributes on the out-of-pocket expense and forecasted retirement benefit of an individual Servicemember (see figure 2). The model was designed for Active and Reserve, enlisted and officer Servicemembers. This simulation tool enabled open and frank senior leader discussions based on sound facts that clearly showed the range of possible blended retirement system outcomes for individual members. More specifically, it allowed the Joint Chiefs and the SEs to view what happens when they varied values associated with the DOD matching percentage to the Thrift Savings Plan

(TSP), likely individual TSP contribution rates, likely age at fund withdrawal, and average fund performance over the life of a Servicemember. It also allowed them to understand the scenarios that were most likely to yield a retirement benefit at least as good as the current defined annuity benefit. When combined with the years of research on recruiting and retention that had already been assembled, the Joint Chiefs and SEs had the information they needed to make informed choices that met the three principles outlined above.

The Joint Chiefs and SEs designed their optimal blended retirement plan after multiple meetings where they worked through the history and attributes of the current plan and many variants of a blended plan illustrated through the simulation tool shown in figure 2. The Chairman sent the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs and SEs to the Secretary of Defense on May 19, 2015. After consulting with the deputy secretary and Service secretaries, Secretary Carter accepted the Chairman's recommendation and, in turn, recommended it to President Obama on June 8, 2015. Finally, the President accepted Secretary Carter's recommendation. (The attributes of the blended plan are listed in column 3 of the table.)

Support from Military Advocacy Groups. A motivated Congress and a united DOD position would not be enough to ensure a successfully reformed retirement benefit. Both Congress and DOD knew they needed to get some level of support from the various veterans' and Servicemembers' support organizations, which were not predisposed to favoring major changes in long-term benefits. While Congress held hearings and hosted meetings with the Armed Services Committee Members and staff, Secretary Carter hosted a roundtable of nearly 30 representatives from the larger support organizations. This allowed the OSD and Joint Staff team to brief the DOD findings on each of the MCRMC recommendations and walk through the implications of the retirement plan in detail. Once again, the simple simulation tool was instrumental in illustrating the most likely effects of

plan attributes on individual members. At the very least, it seemed to allay some of their fears. While many of these support organizations remained concerned about the idea of having any portion of the retirement benefit in the uncertain hands of Servicemembers who might not be financially savvy or at the mercy of volatile financial markets, they did appreciate the real value of providing many more young Servicemembers with a portable retirement benefit. In the end, they did not aggressively oppose the recommended plan.

Congressional Action. Once DOD's preferred proposal cleared the White House, the process of reforming retirement was back where it started over a year earlier: Congress. While the President's plan (as recommended by DOD) was fairly well received by Members and professional staff, the two institutions differed in some of the specific attributes of a blended plan. These differences were about when TSP matching contributions would begin, how long matching would last, whether a lump-sum option would be allowed, and the total amount of matching. These differences highlighted one failure of the internal DOD process: for all the efforts to be transparent and inclusive across the executive branch, DOD failed to include some key staff members in its deliberative process. Whether that would have changed the outcome is unclear, but it would have better informed the deliberations between Congress and DOD earlier in the overall process.

That said, the collaboration was extremely effective on the issue of the COLA minus 1 percent (COLA-1) annuity reduction. DOD demonstrated that maintaining the COLA-1 adjustment would jeopardize the ability of a blended retirement plan to provide for a viable retirement benefit since it would essentially add to the reduction in working-age retirement income.²¹ Since the revisions in the law largely reduced the savings associated with the COLA-1 reduction, DOD argued that the objectively low savings were not worth invoking likely opposition to any version of a blended plan. The savings from a blended plan were also



Former CNO Admiral Jonathan Greenert speaks with Servicemembers, civilians, and their families about U.S. rebalance to Pacific, shorter deployments, and potential upcoming changes to military compensation and retirement benefits, Pearl Harbor, February 6, 2015 (U.S. Navy/Brennan D. Knaresboro)

likely higher and more immediate than those associated with COLA-1. Congress supported the DOD analysis and allowed full COLA adjustments as part of the proposed blended retirement plan.

Ultimately, Congress passed the blended retirement reform as part of the FY 2016 NDAA, which was signed into law on November 25, 2015.

The attributes of the modernized military retirement plan contained in the FY 2016 NDAA legislation are listed in the right column of the table. Note that the final outcome written into law by Congress does not entirely match the solution submitted to it. However, there are obvious similarities across all three versions created by Congress, the MCRMC, and DOD. In the year following the passage of the FY 2016 NDAA, Congress and DOD have continued to work closely on technical and conforming changes to the law. Congress set the

implementation date for the blended retirement system for January 1, 2018, to ensure that a robust financial education process is in place for a smooth transition. The FY 2017 NDAA contains further technical and clarifying amendments on the modernized retirement system as a result of this ongoing process.²²

Final Thoughts

Retirement reform, in the context of the larger compensation efforts of the MCRMC, was a first major step in evolving how DOD manages the all-volunteer force. The challenge in maintaining this force is that DOD must grow the majority of its own labor force from within because military skills, especially at the middle and senior grades, cannot be hired from the civilian labor market. That means that DOD must not only attract qualified applicants, but also train and retain the best of these

individuals for decades—far longer than the typical applicant ever plans on spending in any job. As the labor market becomes more competitive and the technical skills required of military members grow, this challenge becomes even more acute. For these reasons, DOD must continue to evolve how military personnel are recruited, compensated, promoted, and managed to make sure that the Services are able to maintain a professional workforce now and well into the future. The reform of the retirement benefit was a sound step.

As we look at other broad and key personnel issues, reform of the military healthcare system is also necessary in order to decrease growing costs and better ensure high-quality, safe, and accessible health care. In addition, the civilian national security workforce requires changes in how it approaches identifying, training, and retaining highly

skilled personnel. Each of these reforms is at least as controversial and complex as retirement reform and, if they are to succeed, require the same level of transparent analyses and coordination within and among the executive and legislative branches, military and veteran advocacy organizations, and think tanks.

Retirement reform deservedly and necessarily had many mothers and fathers. It is an example of government collaboration at its best. This was a highly orchestrated process of analytic-based consensus-building that was never one individual or even one institution's reform. It is unlikely that it would have ever succeeded as such. As new reforms begin to take shape, those charged with designing and implementing them should consider the lessons this case study offers. JFQ

Notes

¹ National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112-239; 126 Stat. 1632), § 675.

² Defined benefit plans from private-sector employers also carried an element of risk in that the annuity was contingent on the solvency of the employer. If the employer suffered critical losses or folded completely, retirement annuities could be severely compromised.

³ Kristy N. Kamarck, *Military Retirement: Background and Recent Developments*, RL34751 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, September 12, 2016), 14. The 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) was published in 2008, and the 11th was published in 2012.

⁴ If Servicemembers volunteered to invest in the Federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), they can maintain those assets regardless of how long they serve. Under the defined benefit program, the TSP investments are not really a retirement benefit in the sense that there are no government/employer contributions. Servicemembers invest their own money into these funds.

⁵ Phillip Carter and Katherine Kidder, *Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization: A Primer* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, January 2015), available at <www.dillonconsult.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Military-Compensation-policy-brief_0.pdf>; Mackenzie Eaglen, *Trends in Military Compensation: A Chartbook* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, July 2014), available at <www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/eaglentrendsinmilitarycompensationju2014chartbook_141227584026.pdf>;

Matthew Goldberg, *Costs of Military Pay and Benefits in the Defense Budget* (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, November 14, 2012), available at <www.cbo.gov/publication/43574>.

⁶ Defense Business Board, *Modernizing the Military Retirement System Task Group* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, July 21, 2011).

⁷ *Concepts for Modernizing Military Retirement* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, March 2014) was sent to the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission by Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Christine Fox, March 2014.

⁸ Note that the Office of the Secretary of Defense also supported and even advocated for an outside review for the same reasons.

⁹ FY 2013 NDAA.

¹⁰ Conference Report Accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (House Rept. 112-705).

¹¹ In 2015, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) became chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Representative Mac Thornberry (R-TX) became chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. At the same time, the personnel subcommittee chairmen in both chambers changed to Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) in the Senate and Representative Joe Heck (R-NV) in the House. Both Senator Graham and Representative Heck were serving members of the Air Force and Army Reserves, respectively (Mr. Graham as a judge advocate and Dr. Heck as a medical commander).

¹² Section 403 of the Bi-Partisan Budget Act of 2013 changed the cost of living (COLA) formula for military retired pay during a Servicemember's "working age" years (under the age of 62) from full COLA to COLA minus 1 percent (COLA-1). At age 62, retired pay would be recalculated as if full COLA had been in effect during the working age period, and increased by full COLA each year thereafter. This change applied to all military retirees. Within a month of enactment, and after vocal concerns from Servicemembers, retirees, and groups that advocate for them, Congress passed legislation to water down the effects of COLA-1 by exempting disability retirees and their survivors and survivors of members who die on Active duty. Eventually they also grandfathered all current retirees and members who entered military service prior to January 1, 2014, and delayed implementation by 1 year.

¹³ FY 2013 NDAA. Note that the MCRMC's final report listed 15 recommendations. One of these was for a blended retirement system.

¹⁴ The MCRMC shared highlights of their recommendations with the Department of Defense (DOD) on January 15, 2015, 2 weeks prior to their official release, in order to allow DOD more review time.

¹⁵ These five recommendations were Reserve component statuses, exceptional family

members' support, commissary and exchange consolidation, the health benefit program, and the blended retirement system.

¹⁶ Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to President Barack Obama on the Department of Defense Review of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission Recommendations, April 27, 2015.

¹⁷ S.1376, FY 2016 NDAA, introduced by Senator McCain (May 19, 2015); H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, introduced by Representative Thornberry (April 13, 2015).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ S.1376, FY 2016 NDAA, § 633.

²⁰ Two economists point out that even the most lauded economists at the University of Chicago almost never make any changes to their retirement account and, among those that started their 401k while single, still listed their mothers as their beneficiary. See Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²¹ All versions of the blended retirement reform reduced the value of the annuity from a multiple of 2.5 times basic pay to a multiple of 2.0. Since retirees cannot draw on the TSP income until they reach 59½ years old (in most cases), the annuity is their only retirement income during the years between their military retirement and allowable TSP withdrawal ages. If COLA-1 had remained in law, it would have further reduced the value of this annuity over the working age period of a Servicemember's life.

²² Sections 631-634 of S. 2943, FY 2017 NDAA, contain provisions with conforming and technical changes to the modernized retirement system that were coordinated with DOD as part of the implementation process.



Senior Airman provides dental care as member of 59th Dental Support Squadron, providing high-performance health system dedicated to excellence in global dental care and education, Base San Antonio–Lackland, Texas, January 26, 2016 (U.S. Air Force/Keith James)

Trauma Care in Support of Global Military Operations

By Kyle N. Remick and Eric A. Elster

The Department of Defense (DOD) Joint Trauma System (JTS) revolutionized combat casualty care by creating a trauma system for the battlefield. Over the past 30 years, U.S. civilian trauma systems have decreased mortality from trauma

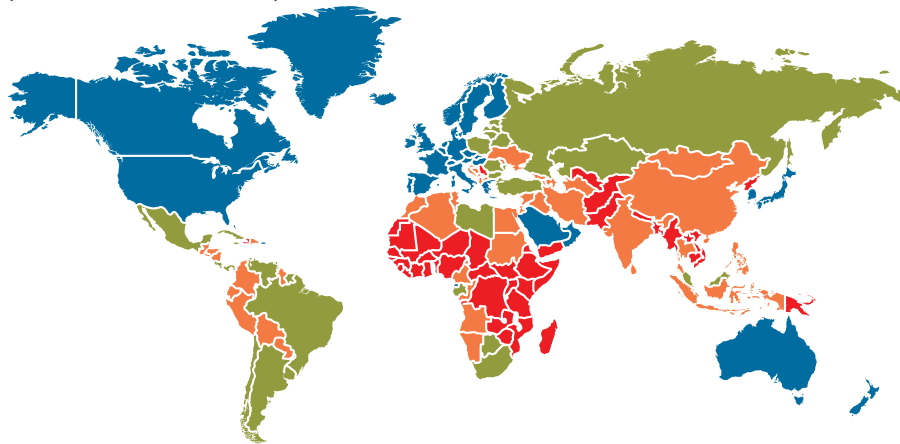
by 15 to 20 percent.¹ In 2006, senior military and civilian medical leaders partnered to translate this civilian model to the battlefield. The deployed components of the JTS provided real-time data collection and analysis, research to guide rapid implementation

of knowledge and material products, clinical guidelines for optimal care, and direct guidance to commanders as a key components of a continuously learning trauma system in two theaters of operation, directly saving lives on the battlefield.²

The JTS must now adapt to similarly support new challenges posed by dispersed and globally remote operations outside of formal combat zones and with fewer dedicated medical resources. In this context, developing regionally

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Figure. Country Income Groups
(World Bank Classification)



World Bank country income groups (2008)
Gross National Income per capita 2007 (current USD)

■ High income \$11,500 or more ■ Middle, upper \$3,700–11,500 ■ Middle, lower \$900–3,700 ■ Low income \$900 or less

relevant trauma care system strategies has the potential to decrease mortality from injury for this new global operational environment. The creation of this global trauma care system strategy requires the synergy of four trauma-oriented pillars of effort. These are global trauma care, medical interoperability, medical stability operations, and health diplomacy. Their importance and unique contribution to an overall global strategy of trauma care is described.

Global Trauma Care

From a trauma systems and medical operational perspective, the term *global trauma care* implies the scenario distinct from combat operations in a mature theater of war in which all roles of care and extensive military resources are not necessarily available. With numerous, small scale, and globally dispersed operations currently ongoing and over the horizon, a plan of action to provide trauma care for serious injuries is of paramount importance.

DOD seeks to support all missions with U.S. military trauma resources as close to a 1-hour window as possible as survival from trauma is time sensitive. Where this is not possible, an alternative is to leverage trusted or previously validated partner-nation (PN) military trauma resources. Unfortunately, the reality is that we will not always have

the ability to dedicate our own or PN military trauma resources to support all operations.

Thus, DOD will need to leverage the trauma capabilities of geographically relevant PNs. This strategy presents several challenges. First, these operational environments are likely to be in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Second, these military operations in need of trauma support are likely to be in remote locations. Lastly, the civilian trauma centers and trauma systems in these countries, if they exist, may not deliver care to an acceptable standard for use by Servicemembers. Using the medical care in LMICs as part of our global strategy for trauma care without prior planning would be disastrous and would potentially increase morbidity and mortality.

There is already tangible proof for the need to develop PN trauma capabilities. In December 2013, South Sudan, the world's newest nation, experienced a rekindling of internal strife in the form of armed conflict between the military of the legitimate president and rebels in support of the former vice president. On December 21, four Servicemembers were injured during an attempt to evacuate American citizens from the town of Bor in the state of Jonglei, approximately 125 miles from the nation's capital of Juba. Ospreys were damaged in the attempt, but fortunately the aircraft were still able

to reach Entebbe, Uganda. The injured U.S. personnel were then transferred to a C17 and transported to a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.³ After receiving care in Nairobi, the Servicemembers were then evacuated through Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany to the United States.

South Sudan is a low-income country, and its medical infrastructure, to include trauma care, is far below what we would accept for our Servicemembers. Thus, neither the civilian nor the military hospitals in South Sudan would have been an acceptable option for care.⁴ The Servicemembers were taken to a hospital in Nairobi, which is approximately 745 miles away. This took around 3 hours including the transfer of the wounded in Uganda from the Osprey to the C17. The pre-hospital time was far longer than the now commonly accepted and expected "golden hour" guideline to reach initial surgical care. Furthermore, the Servicemembers were injured on the same aircraft that served as the evacuation platform, so they did not have to wait for a separate medical evacuation, which would have added significantly to the pre-hospital time. The conclusion is the distance to acceptable trauma care was prohibitive. Remote sites with prolonged evacuation times are a challenge for contingency planning, thus supporting the need to develop regionalized PN trauma centers.

The next politically charged question is whether the quality of trauma care in Nairobi is acceptable for our Servicemembers and, more broadly, whether the quality of trauma care provided in *any* LMIC is acceptable. In general, the answer is no. Thus, multiple options to provide optimal injury care include placing U.S. trauma resources within 1 hour of every military operation, forward-staging air evacuation assets to cover all military operations within 1 hour, or identifying regional PNs and develop their trauma care to a level acceptable for our use. Each of these options has a role in short-term planning to close this gap in trauma care, but the most feasible long-term solution is the third option.



Lieutenant Commander Justin Dye, right, and Dr. Minh Hoaug Vo operate on patient's spine during Pacific Partnership 2017 in Da Nang, Vietnam, May 2017 (U.S. Navy/Madailein Abbott)

The harsh reality is that we operate in many remote areas of the globe considered to be LMICs (see figure), but with a dedicated, long-term commitment to these LMIC PNs, the care provided could be improved to an acceptable level for our Servicemembers to mitigate risk of death and disability from injury.

Again, this will be a large effort requiring a long-term commitment, but we anticipate this as a major gap in trauma care that will take a combined effort between DOD, Department of State, and other U.S. agencies to resolve over the next several decades. With the assistance of the medical leadership from the U.S. regional military commands, a joint and unified geographic trauma system plan could be developed for each area of responsibility. Strategically located PN civilian or military trauma centers could be identified for development.

Medical Interoperability

The U.S. military may more often partner with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations and others in support of future combat and noncombat operations. In the context of providing trauma care, it is essential to enable resource interoperability between nations to ensure a baseline. Interoperability leverages trauma care as a force multiplier for future limited-resource operational environments. This will be a military-to-military partnership with other nations that will require DOD and Military Health System support for success. The U.S. military has already begun to build relationships with the medical corps of other nations, and there are several examples regarding the benefits of interoperability from recent conflicts from Afghanistan. These examples highlight that successful collaboration relies heavily on predeployment preparation.

Example 1: UK Role 3 Hospital at Camp Bastion. Probably the best example of interoperability within NATO was the United Kingdom (UK) Role 3 Hospital in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, in support of the British Operation *Herrick*. Beginning in June 2009, the U.S. Navy was asked to contribute personnel to this facility. This transitioned to the U.S. Army in 2012 prior to closure of Camp Bastion in September 2014. The UK Role 3 Hospital at the camp was rightfully the shining star of the UK Medical Corps and a model for success in medical interoperability.

Early on, the UK established a thorough predeployment training and validation model. This model fully incorporated U.S. medical personnel deploying with British medical personnel in support of the Role 3 Hospital. As with any multinational military endeavor, there are always differences in tactics,



Tactical critical care evacuation team nurse (forefront) assigned to Army's 3rd Platoon, C Company, 2-149 General Support Aviation Battalion Medical Evacuation, prepares for patient transfer mission, May 13, 2013, at Forward Operating Base Orgun East, Afghanistan (U.S. Air Force/Marleah Miller)

techniques, and procedures (TTP). In this case, there were distinct differences in medical TTPs within the hospital command and control procedures and in the practice of trauma care between the United States and UK. In the vast majority of cases, these differences were not better or worse—just different. These differences in roles and responsibilities and in clinical medical practice were clarified in advance of deployment to ensure trust, cooperation, and smooth interoperability among international colleagues.

The UK military medical field exercise Hospex served to facilitate interoperability. The exercise was as the culmination of a successful predeployment training and validation model. Inside a warehouse on a small UK base in the quiet town of Strensall, near York, England, stood an exact replica of the Bastion Role 3 Hospital. A fully experienced and trained staff hosted a week-long validation exercise covering all aspects of Role 3 command and control procedures, patient care in the emergency department,

operating room, intensive care unit, and patient ward; management of multi-casualty and mass casualty scenarios; patient evacuation procedures; and detained personnel procedures. After a thorough testing period, the UK military hospital team was validated for Operation *Herrick*. This predeployment medical field exercise also served as predeployment interoperability training between the UK and the United States. This successful example is a model that we should replicate for future operations.

Example 2: Spanish Role 2 Hospital in Herat. Spain and Italy supported combat operations in western Afghanistan for a decade. Spanish Role 2 was the largest trauma facility in Regional Command–West. Beginning in January 2010, the U.S. military placed surgeons at this facility. Although not as deliberately planned, this partnership was a good example of a NATO partner assuming primary responsibility for trauma care in a specific region of a combat zone. The presence of American military

surgical teams in this Spanish facility serves as another example of the need for interoperability.

Example 3: Italian Role 1 in Conjunction with Surgical Team Support of Special Operations. In 2008, a U.S. military surgical team was tasked to support a special operations mission at an Italian base in Afghanistan. The Italian military had an existing Role 1 facility with a primary care physician and medics to provide initial trauma care. The mission of the U.S. Role 2 surgical team was to augment the Italian team's capability for a short time period while American forces were in the area conducting operations. The U.S. Role 2 successfully supported this brief special operations mission, but prior combined training with the Italians would have yielded a stronger unity of effort.

With the potential for numerous, dispersed operations throughout the world, placement of U.S. military trauma assets in all locations simultaneously may not always be possible. Our goal should be to

collaborate and develop interoperability with all of our NATO Allies in order to share the responsibility of providing care. In addition, we should seek out opportunities to collaborate with medical units from less-developed partner nations.

Medical Stability Operations

Partnering to improve host-nation trauma care in support of its security forces is a component of medical stability operations. For success, this effort involves military-to-military, military-to-civilian, and civilian-to-civilian partnerships involving DOD, Military Health System, civilian university and hospital institutions, and Department of State.

In support of stability and security operations and counterinsurgency operations, DOD often supports infrastructure development in key PNs. As an important component of this greater strategy, our military trauma system leadership should collaborate with PN medical leadership in order to develop their trauma system infrastructure. The purpose of this collaboration and development is not specifically for the purpose of caring for injured U.S. Servicemembers but for improving host-nation trauma care in support of its security forces. JTS, as the DOD enterprise responsible for military trauma care, can achieve this through leadership, guidance, and direct development of the host-nation's trauma infrastructure and capability. This effort has the potential to bolster the host nation's will to fight and convey a significant psychological advantage to security and counterinsurgency forces in direct support of the overall National Security Strategy.⁵

This pillar truly overlaps with national global health engagement (GHE) efforts. This uniquely leverages JTS for GHE in operations other than war. A coherent plan for trauma system development for the host-nation security forces should be integrated into the overall plan when conducting operations. The application of JTS to GHE for medical stability operations leverages U.S. military trauma expertise to augment the other means of U.S. power (that is, diplomatic, informational, and economic).

Health Diplomacy

Health diplomacy can represent a variety of activities from formal treaties to multiple stakeholder agreements to informal collaborations.⁶ Thus, health diplomacy conducted on an informal level by individual DOD organizations must first serve U.S. national interests. Regarding strategic efforts for global trauma system development as part of health diplomacy, it is expected that regional commands would guide these efforts to locations of the military and national security interests. Concurrently, DOD investment in global trauma system development, as a component of GHE, has the potential to provide a measureable benefit to an overall strategy.

As the United States moves forward in GHE, we must be sure that we can measure the effects of our actions. Health diplomacy must not only serve national interests but also provide a measureable benefit to the target of GHE. Furthermore, trauma system development is not mutually exclusive of the other important pillars already discussed. This pillar builds on the previous two involving the JTS role in trauma system advisory and development in LMICs of importance to national security interests.

Conclusion

We stand ready for a changing world that will require revolutionary change in how we wield combat power and how we measure military success. Military success may be measured as much by its finesse as a tool for national security as by its strength. To succeed in this new operational environment, our military medical support must be adaptive, innovative, and exploit the initiative to leverage our recent trauma experience and expertise to enhance direct support to warfighters and augment diplomacy.

Regional combatant commanders will drive the need for a global strategy for trauma care. Their theater security plans will be essential to identify partner nations with the greatest potential to institute sustainable trauma system development. We recommend that the Joint Staff and Services support and

encourage this strategy to provide an optimal system for casualty care in support of a globally responsive and regionally relevant joint force. JFQ

Notes

¹ Ellen J. MacKenzie et al., "A National Evaluation of the Effect of Trauma-Center Care on Mortality," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 354 (January 26, 2006), 366–378; Avery B. Nathens et al., "A Resource-Based Assessment of Trauma Care in the United States," *Journal of Trauma: Injury Infection, and Critical Care* 56, no. 1 (January 2004), 173–178; N. Clay Mann et al., "Systematic Review of Published Evidence Regarding Trauma System Effectiveness," *Journal of Trauma: Injury Infection, and Critical Care* 47, no. 3 (September 1999 supp.), S25–S33; Gregory J. Jurkovich and Charles Mock, "Systematic Review of Trauma System Effectiveness Based on Registry Comparisons," *Journal of Trauma: Injury Infection, and Critical Care* 47, no. 3 (September 1999 supp.), S46–S55.

² Brian J. Eastridge et al., "Trauma System Development in a Theater of War: Experiences from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom," *Journal of Trauma: Injury Infection, and Critical Care* 61, no. 6 (December 2006), 1,366–1,373; Brian J. Eastridge et al., "Utilizing a Trauma Systems Approach to Benchmark and Improve Combat Casualty Care," *Journal of Trauma: Injury Infection, and Critical Care* 69, no. 1 (July 2010 supp.), S5–S9.

³ Craig Whitlock and Sudarsan Raghavan, "Four U.S. Troops Injured During Evacuation Mission in Strife-Torn South Sudan," *Washington Post*, December 21, 2013.

⁴ Kyle N. Remick et al., "Development of a Novel Global Trauma System Evaluation Tool and Initial Results of Implementation in the Republic of South Sudan," *Injury* 45, no. 11 (November 2014), 1,731–1,735.

⁵ Ramey L. Wilson, "Building Partner Capacity and Strengthening Security Through Medical Security Force Assistance" (Ph.D. diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2013).

⁶ Rebecca Katz et al., "Defining Health Diplomacy: Changing Demands in the Era of Globalization," *The Milbank Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (September 2011), 503–523.

Phalanx close-in weapons system aboard *Ticonderoga*-class guided-missile cruiser USS *Cowpens* fires at missile decoy, September 10, 2012 (U.S. Navy/Paul Kelly)



Autonomous Weapons Systems Safety

By Brian K. Hall

If we continue to develop our technology without wisdom or prudence, our servant may prove to be our executioner.

—GENERAL OMAR BRADLEY

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Looking to the future to identify strategic trends, continuities, and projected policy, as well as planning and force development strengths and deficiencies, the joint force must contend with the rapid diffusion of advanced technology economically and commercially available to non-superpower militaries and the profusion of nonstate actors. To contend with this problem set, we must reassert our national lead in safely developing military capabilities to withstand a future security environment that is likely to be more unpredictable, complex, and potentially dangerous than today.

One way to deal with such an operational challenge is to design and field force options comprising a mix of capabilities that proportionately includes greater integration of autonomous systems. What will influence our ability to direct such a strategic shift is policy

guidance and oversight for the development and employment of autonomous systems—particularly weapons systems—with lethal capability.

Available technology and unforeseen world events will make it increasingly difficult to apply the law of armed conflict and international law relating to the use of force via autonomous weapons systems in a consistent manner that adheres to U.S. policy.

Many nations, including the United States, will place limits on the use of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) to avoid the risk of collateral damage and to comply with international humanitarian law. However, potential adversaries might not be bound by these constraints. The joint force may confront adversaries who are willing to deploy fully autonomous weapons systems to deliver lethal force and more completely automate their kill chains to achieve an advantage. The potential exists that in such a situation the United States and like-minded nations will be more willing to enter conflict or use lethal force given the lower potential of loss of their own combatants through the use of either autonomous or semi-autonomous weapons systems.

Ultimately, commanders and operators will exercise appropriate human judgment over the suitable use of this force.

This article furthers the technical issue discussions supporting the emerging U.S. position to the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on LAWS. It also addresses the current U.S. military joint weapons review practices that lead to weapons safety assurance and endorsement for any weapons system—manned, autonomous, or semi-autonomous. The article emphasizes safety and trust by determining operational necessity, averting risk, and applying engineering design reliability. This practice is consistent with current U.S. defense policy cited in Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 3000.09, “Autonomy in Weapons Systems.” Readers should better understand the precautions taken to prevent unintended machine action and function of a lethal nature.

State of Autonomy

Autonomy is often misunderstood as providing independent thought and action. For weapons systems, it most often suggests self-awareness and self-governance.

Autonomy is better understood as a technologically advanced capability or capabilities that enables the larger human-machine system to accomplish a given mission by the performance of key actions—with or without human intervention.

In this instance, autonomy is not exclusively about the intelligence of the machine but rather its human interface.

The degree of autonomy in a single human-machine or machine-machine system may vary over time as it goes in and out of contact with operators. The dynamic relationship between technical needs and capability benefits demonstrates that the level of autonomy of a system is not a goal in and of itself. Rather, autonomy is a capability driver that DOD can design into military systems in conjunction with human roles to produce a more effective and affordable force. Autonomous systems will reliably perform highly survivable, self-organizing, adaptive mission capabilities that cannot be easily defeated either by killing individual platforms and sensors or providing capabilities to do things that would be otherwise unaffordable or result in impractical manning.

The 2015 Office of Technical Intelligence report, *Technical Assessment: Autonomy*, illustrates control diversification between man and machine from an engineering *coupling* approach:

Viewing the capabilities of autonomous systems within the context of human-machine systems recognizes a critical role for humans coupling the advantages of both allowing for operational application previously non-existent. In order to better capitalize upon the relative strengths of humans and machines, autonomous systems will operate on a spectrum from tightly coupled to loosely coupled. Where human performance provides benefits relative to machine perception, cognition, or action and where safety and risk to warfighters

is acceptable, autonomous systems will benefit from being more tightly coupled with humans. Often, tightly coupled systems will feed information directly to humans, such as automatically cueing a warfighter to a threat or analyzing large amounts of electronic emissions and presenting exploitation options to human analysts and planners. For missions where humans are less effective or which are too dangerous and remote control is not feasible, more loosely coupled systems will operate with less input from human operators. These more closely fit the traditional conception of autonomous systems—those that operate while out of touch with humans, such as a strike platform in a communications-degraded or denied environment.

Some of the greatest advantages of autonomy will come from augmenting human decisionmaking, not replacing it. In this way, the role of humans will aggregate at the higher cognitive processes such as operational planning and analysis. As such, human-machine interaction is a key technology area supporting autonomy.

Increased automation or autonomy can have many advantages, including increased safety and reliability, improved reaction time and performance, reduced personnel burden with associated cost savings, and the ability to continue operations in communications-degraded or -denied environments.

This article recommends a sound U.S. weapons review practice that will, with minor modification following autonomous technology sector growth, enable balanced autonomous system capabilities to be advantageously included in future operations. This discussion does not attempt to directly address future policy or legal changes that may be required to ensure inclusion of an advanced unmanned capability into force development, posture, and employment. Doing so would be premature; how the confluence of autonomous weapons system policy with legal and technical factors will impact the conduct of future warfare is not yet known. What could be done is help shape what it could be. The international community is watching how the United



Researchers with U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development, and Engineering Center are testing Prox Dynamics PD-100 Black Hornet Personal Reconnaissance System to provide squad-size units with organic aerial ISR capability in challenging ground environments (Courtesy UK Ministry of Defence)

States contends with these emergent technologies and integrates them into force design, development, and employment. Doing so has far-reaching global strategic security implications.

Advances in science and technology—such as artificial and collective intelligence, miniaturized sensors, multi-vehicle control systems, and particularly human-machine interaction—are laying the foundation for giving autonomous weapons the ability to perform at levels currently difficult to predict. Weapons review, appropriately applied, ensures safety of such capability across the range of operations, both civil and military. Autonomous systems will become part of the social landscape, and as autonomy and computational intelligence grow, these systems will continually raise difficult questions about the role of safety and effective integration with humans. As weapons systems, particularly those with greater autonomous capability, are studied and understood, society will face challenging policy and regulatory issues surrounding how much autonomy these systems should be granted based upon acceptable levels of risk. Ultimately, the path of these technologies is dependent

upon rational human judgment when delegating mission capability to autonomous systems.

Diversification and Operational Risk

DOD has diversified and invested in considerable numbers of unmanned vehicles over the last several decades. Today, the inventory stands at well over 20,000 unmanned vehicles spanning all domains, at a fiscal year 2017 budgeted funding level of \$4.5 billion.¹ Projections estimate that by 2018, annual global spending on military robotics will exceed \$7.5 billion.² These vehicles are integrated elements of varying degree of larger robotic and autonomous systems used for a variety of missions, including persistent surveillance, firefighting, time-critical strike, force protection, counter-improvised explosive devices, route clearance, and close air support. Conceivable tasks for future autonomous systems of all domains span the full range of military operations.

The diversification is not unprecedented, and such endeavors should be undertaken with cautious optimism. The United States explored various

technologies during the Cold War-era to define the emerging nuclear-space age. For example, in a determined move to diversify its defense business base in the 1950s, General Motors scaled tank and gun production favoring new markets in military electronics.³ Others followed a similar strategy to include Lockheed, Northrop, Martin, and Douglas Aviation. This diversification spread through the defense sector, spawning advances in the missile and electronics fields that became the technological keystone of the DOD First Offset Strategy. The United States and its mission partners find themselves in a similar revolution in military technology brought on by innumerable robotic and autonomous technologies that are shaping the character of future warfare. Innovative concepts of operations and wargaming are just now revealing the previously unrealized human-machine teaming potential of these robotic and autonomous systems.

The technologies that enable autonomous systems are evolving rapidly. As computer processing power and sensors improve, autonomous systems will be capable of increasingly complex decisions and actions. The ability to operate

in fast-paced, contested, nonpermissive, force-on-force engagements, particularly under conditions of degraded communications, will drive the need for increased autonomy. The United States already has autonomous force protection systems that defend bases and ships against air and missile attack (for example, Counter Rocket, Artillery, and Mortar; and Phalanx). Which decisions are appropriate for delegation to autonomous systems and which must be retained under human control will be important considerations for defense policymakers. The fact that the U.S. military has had defensive systems that autonomously use lethal force for decades complicates the issue on the use of force. The track record of these systems suggests that safeguards are required in order to minimize the probability of civilian casualties, premature application of force, fratricide, or unintentional escalation.

Autonomous systems are vulnerable to an array of potential failures, including situations common to any software-dependent system, as well as additional failures due to their scalable complexity. As the complexity of a system increases, so does inherent operational risk. Verification (the ability to meet system requirements) and validation (the ability to operate as intended) of software to ensure trustworthy, reliable operation become imperative. Currently, it is increasingly difficult for operators to predict with a high degree of probability how a system might actually perform against an adaptive adversary, potentially eroding trust in the system while asserting operational risk. To avert risk and instill trust, it becomes increasingly important to invest in autonomous weapons system modeling, simulation, and experimentation to explore the fast-paced, complex, unstructured environments that autonomous systems may face in future scenarios. Also requisite to achieving assured autonomy are rigorous test and evaluation to develop a deep learning database of successful actions and problem-solving computation and recall.

It is widely recognized that systems relying on software are vulnerable to cyber attack from many vectors. A

successful cyber attack could conceivably allow an enemy to disable mission-critical operation or, in a worst-case scenario, usurp control of an autonomous weapon. Today, autonomous systems, to varying degree, are vulnerable to spoofing, hacking, and intrusive deception measures in ways that humans are not because artificial mechanical systems lack self-awareness, common sense, and a general frame of reference against which to measure faulty data. Safeguards and fail-safes are needed to minimize the probability and impact of compromise or failures that could lead to unintended consequences resulting in damage to persons or things that were not deliberately targeted.

DOD currently depends on policy guidance in autonomy, human control, and the use of force that informs military tactics, techniques, and procedures; doctrine; minimizing collateral damage; rules of engagement; or future system design to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place. Next-generation unmanned vehicles (for example, carrier-based aerial refueling systems) and autonomous munitions (such as long-range antiship missiles) currently in development have the potential for autonomous characteristics, function, and even behavior. Current guidance is derived from many sources, as autonomy has both national defense and civil implications. Direction comes predominantly from DOD Directive 3000.09 and the department's unmanned system roadmaps and strategic plans. Other organizations within DOD and across mission partners are addressing challenges with respect to autonomous sense and avoid technologies, loss of communications procedures, static and onboard defense of manned installations and platforms, and other issues. DOD and the Department of State have a unified effort to assess current policy guidance on autonomous force application—current policy remains relevant and authoritative. But without determined guidance review to accommodate game-changing technologies forecast to reach advanced readiness levels over the next 5 years, the Nation risks obsolescence that could cede advantage to potential adversaries, permit inadequate safeguards

leading to systems with the potential for unintended engagements, or both.

Operational Trust

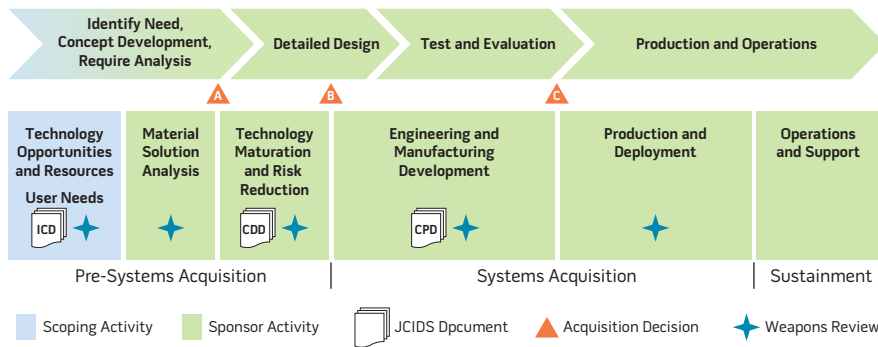
A prominent issue—potentially the greatest at home and abroad—with military employment of fully autonomous capabilities is one of trust that an autonomous weapons system will do what it is supposed to do when it is supposed to do it. If it does not, then forces in the field relying on shared task performance to assure mission success will not use the system due to lack of trust, with safety compromised. There is more likely to be trust in robotic and autonomous systems supporting these sorts of missions if they are most of the time at least partially controlled by a human or have demonstrated assured, fully autonomous mission capability during force development and training.

Part of the trust issue is that autonomous weapons systems may suffer from cyber vulnerabilities where information systems, system security procedures, or internal controls are exploited. At issue is whether an autonomous weapons system is either not functioning as it is supposed to because its algorithms have been compromised by cyber attack or system programming has been taken over to the point where it is acting against its own forces.

A related and far-reaching issue is the concern of autonomous systems properly following the orders of manned systems. There are multiple ways for issues to arise, including preplanned program malfunction and adversary jamming of sub-system intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance sensors and associated command, control, and communications links. The issue becomes whether there will be enough sensor precision and assured data exchange in contested and unstructured environments to allow autonomous systems to sense what they need to either take action on their own or report the information to their human operators. These are important points to consider now as we shape strategy, force design, and operational planning for the future.

Autonomy is not the sole solution to any requirement. The utility of any

Figure. Capability Requirement and Acquisition Integrated Periodic Weapon System Safety Review



autonomous capability is a function of the mission design requirements, operational environment of employment, and operational context describing how the capability will be used.⁴ The prevalence of autonomy in game-changing technologies presents opportunities to expand mission capability. The emergence of these technologies challenges both capability and material developers and users by introducing distinct differences in action and function between automated (robot-like) and autonomous (cognitive-capable) systems.⁵ More than likely, development of new autonomous systems will be deliberate and incremental; so too will be development of norms about acceptable system design, acquisition, and use.

Current Practice—Safety Assurance

The approach and procedures effectively institutionalized in the DOD Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) provide initial system safety oversight and guidance to minimize the probability and consequences of catastrophic failure or critical mishap that could lead to unintended autonomous weapons system engagement.⁶ Before any new capability can enter the development process related to reviewing and validating its requirement, the originating sponsor organization must first identify autonomous or semi-autonomous weapons system capability requirements related to its functions, roles, mission integration, and operations. Then, it must determine if

pursuit of such capability presents an unacceptable level of risk and hazard as compared to qualified benefit. At this point, the weapons system concept of employment is assessed against policy and both national and international law.

Initial weapons systems safety assurance should be complete before the acquisition, engineering, and manufacturing development (EMD) phase. But it begins as early as entry-level material solution analysis (see figure) of the acquisition process—the nexus of JCIDS and the Defense Acquisition System.

In compliance with Joint Requirements Oversight Council Memorandum 102-05, “Safe Weapons in Joint Warfighting Environments,” all munitions or associated systems capable of being used by any U.S. military Service in joint operations are considered joint weapons and require a joint weapons safety review in accordance with JCIDS and under Joint Service Weapon and Laser System Safety Review processes.⁷ Mission capability system attributes and performance parameters must be addressed as the basis for the Weapon Safety Endorsement.⁸ This includes identification of everything necessary to provide for safe weapon storage, handling, transportation, or use by joint forces throughout the weapon life cycle, to include performance and descriptive qualitative and quantitative attributes. This is important, as baseline performance measurement and system safety attributes will be integral to systems engineering—particularly test and evaluation.

In particular, compulsory assessments and reviews are captured in Capability Development Document (CDD) as part of overall weapons safety assurance required for continued acquisition decision and entry into EMD phase.⁹ For example, the CDD addresses system safety in accordance with current DOD guidance,¹⁰ confirming the establishment of a system safety program for the life cycle of the weapons system in accordance with the Defense Acquisition System.¹¹ This program conforms and complies with treaties, international agreements, Federal regulations, and laws. Additionally, DOD instruction provides further risk acceptance criteria.¹² This cascades into operational planning and employment decisions to include autonomous weapons system aspects in rules of engagement development and ultimately the commander’s assignment of tactical mission tasks.

Furthermore, acquisition and procurement of DOD weapons systems shall be consistent and compliant with all applicable arms control agreements, customary domestic and international law, and the law of armed conflict.¹³ DOD-authorized counsel shall conduct the legal review of the intended acquisition of weapons or weapons systems.¹⁴

Autonomous weapons system reviews, particularly of a lethal nature, are consistent with established United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons associated arms control protocols. It is premature to classify LAWS as inhuman or otherwise as the large-scale operational implications of employing such technology are just now being studied and analyzed across many defense sectors.

Rethinking Joint Function and Performance

Conventional ways to classify capabilities and their associated characteristics to accommodate the unique key system attributes of autonomy may be inadequate and require adjustment. The purpose and method behind doing so come from the realization that traditional means of command as a solely human endeavor, mechanisms for control, communications in denied



MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned aircraft system from “Magicians” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 35 prepares for flight operations aboard littoral combat ship USS *Fort Worth* (U.S. Navy/Antonio P. Turretto Ramos)

environments, and data computation and dissemination will be insufficient to satisfy future truly symbiotic human-machine system integration requirements.

Advances in machine cognition technology as well as greater understanding of human intelligence require rethinking current joint functions, particularly command and control (C2). This comes with the acceptance that machine cognition will remain rudimentary in the foreseeable future with respect to traditional warfighter-identified C2 attributes such as understanding, timeliness, relevance, robustness, and simplicity. The level of autonomy should enable the flexibility and assuredness of the commander to exert control. Autonomous control system interoperability is still nascent, particularly in the area of standardized data interfaces and information exchange models.

The fundamental method to understand and distinguish between joint functions is the way capability Key System Attributes (KSAs), or characteristics of a system—manned, robotic, or autonomous—are considered essential to achieving a balanced capability requirement solution. The number of KSAs, as identified by a capability sponsor,

should maintain flexibility and take into consideration reliability, safety, and trust. Notional examples of KSAs include persistence, protection, survivability, interoperability, endurance, security, sustainability, and cognition.

While KSAs are more qualitative by design, Key Performance Parameters (KPPs) are quantifiable (see the table for notional examples of autonomous weapons system KSAs and associated performance measurement). KPPs are considered critical to the development of an effective autonomous or semi-autonomous capability. The number and character of performance parameters should allow for program flexibility and, in the case of autonomous capabilities, assure human safety. Failure of a system to meet a validated KPP safety threshold will impact overall development viability by either rescinding the validation or bringing the military utility of the associated system into question. This may result in a reevaluation of the program or the associated system, leading to modification of production increments.¹⁵

Safety performance metrics are codified in KPPs derived from KSAs. Both are cited in the acquisition program baseline. They are measurable,

testable, and verifiable in a practical and timely manner to support follow-on decisionmaking. For this discussion, the threshold value for an attribute is the maximum acceptable value considered achievable within the available technology at low to medium risk. Performance below the threshold value is not operationally effective or suitable and may not provide an improvement over current capabilities.

The following KPPs should be considered mandatory in assuring autonomous weapons system safety. Organizations assessing joint weapons system safety conformance will provide the lead joint multidisciplinary functional capabilities boards with an endorsement of the KPP in order to receive the weapons system safety endorsement.

The *force protection* KPP is applicable to all manned semi-autonomous or autonomous systems designed to enhance personnel survivability. Force protection attributes are those that contribute to the protection of personnel by preventing or mitigating hostile actions against friendly personnel, military and civilian. This KPP emphasis is on protecting system occupants or other personnel rather than protecting the system itself.

Table. Notional Performance Measurement

System Attribute: Persistence	Key Performance Parameter	Threshold	Objective
Sensor Tracking	Mission: Tracking and locating (finding, fixing, finishing) subject of interest (SOI)		
	Measure: Timely actionable dissemination of acquisition data for SOI	2 minutes	Near real time
	Conditions: Decision quality data to the tracking entity	Area denial of SOI activities	SOI tracked, disabled
System Attribute: Interoperability	Key Performance Parameter	Threshold	Objective
Data Dissemination and Relay Between Dissimilar Systems	Information Element: Target data		
	Measure: Dissemination of SOI biographic and physical data	10 seconds	5 seconds
	Measure: Receipt of SOI data	Line of sight (LOS)	Beyond LOS
	Measure: Latency of data	5 seconds	2 seconds
	Conditions: Tactical/geographical	Permissive environment	Nonpermissive environment

The *system survivability* KPP is applicable to manned systems and may be applicable to robotic and autonomous systems. The intent of the KPP includes reducing a system’s likelihood of being engaged by kinetic or nonkinetic fires. Survivability attributes include speed, maneuverability, situational awareness, and countermeasures; reducing the system’s hardening and redundancy of critical components; and allowing the system to survive an operation in a predictable, safe manner.¹⁶

The *net-ready* KPP is applicable to all information systems used in the control, exchange, and display of DOD data or information. The intent of the KPP is to ensure a new system’s information design fits into the existing military architectures and infrastructure to the maximum extent practicable. It is applicable to many potential autonomous weapons system KSAs, particularly interoperability, modularity, and assured autonomy.

The team to secure autonomous weapons system safety comprises capability and materiel developers, testers, and operators throughout the full system life cycle to assure technical performance and operational value. Autonomous weapons system safety requirements not only in the EMD phase but also throughout the life cycle for any system enable the identification and management of hazards and associated risks during system development, testing, and sustaining engineering activities.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion illuminates the depth of autonomous weapons system safety mechanisms currently in place while giving consideration to the future. The current review processes, already laudable for inherent safety checks and balances, will continue to serve as models as both manned and autonomous systems evolve. The strategic and programmatic implications of these game-changing technologies are the emerging cornerstones of the DOD Third Offset Strategy, particularly the shift from manned to human-machine symbiosis. Other noteworthy technology informed strategy and operational planning factors are the transitions from remote to onboard cognitive control capabilities and from program-enabled to cognitive-enabled systems.

Implications to military Service investment portfolios are significant in light of institutionalizing human-machine teaming and the complexity of autonomous system development. In recent years, unmanned aircraft systems were considered more complex and thus more expensive platforms than unmanned ground vehicles.¹⁷ Today, and for the near future, the opposite might be true. For example, U.S. Army unmanned ground systems projected to operate with a high degree of autonomy are seen to be more complex than their unmanned aircraft system counterparts. Furthermore, advanced unmanned ground vehicles for combat

operations have been developmentally more challenging since they operate in a far less structured environment. As a result, more research, development, test, and evaluation are needed to assess the impact of advanced human-machine teaming design and operation.¹⁸ This may have broad implications for planning, doctrine, and policy, particularly in autonomous weapons system legal and safety reviews supporting current and future policy for the appropriate role of autonomy and human control in the use of force.

The ultimate purpose is to ensure military utility, avert risk, preserve life, and instill safety assurance that employment of such capability will remain clearly in the hands of human control using the judgment of military commanders, consistent with defense and national policy and relevant international convention. Even though automation will be a general feature across operating environments and weapons systems, genuine autonomy in weapons will remain rare for the foreseeable future and be driven by special factors such as mission capability requirements and the tempo of particular kinds of operations.

Current lethal autonomous weapons systems present few new legal or policy issues. Many of the most frequently voiced criticisms of these systems are actually criticisms of the policy decisions and legal questions relating to projected use. The future strategic advantage of autonomous weapons systems is still conjecture.



iRobot 510 PackBot searches for explosive devices under vehicle in Djibouti (U.S. Air Force/Maria Bowman)

Although technological progress can reduce costs, increase efficiency, and create new capabilities, we should not become infatuated with new technological devices or overconfident in the ability of new technologies to solve complex problems. Most important, we must ensure that future requirements-informed policy and strategy drive technological development and that alluring new technologies do not do the opposite. JFQ

Notes

¹ “Department of Defense Releases Fiscal Year 2017 President’s Budget Proposal,” press release, February 9, 2016.

² Michael C. Horowitz, “The Looming Robotics Gap,” *ForeignPolicy.com*, May 5, 2014, available at <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/the-looming-robotics-gap/>>.

³ Philip Shiman, *Forging the Sword: Defense Production during the Cold War* (Champaign, IL: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, July 1997), 53–54, 64–66.

⁴ Defense Science Board, 21.

⁵ *Joint Concept for Robotic and Autonomous Systems* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, October 19, 2016), 2.

⁶ These safeguards are explained in detail in JCIDS, *Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems*, February 14, 2015, D-58.

⁷ The Joint Requirements Oversight Council is the statutory council to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) in his responsibility to advise the Secretary of Defense on the priorities of the requirements identified by the combatant commanders, and the extent to which the program recommendations and budget proposals of the military Services, combatant commands, and other DOD components conform to the priorities established in strategic plans and with the combatant command priorities. CJCS Instruction 5123.01G, “Charter of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council,” February 12, 2015, 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, A-12–14.

⁹ The Capability Development Document (CDD) proposes the development of a specific materiel capability solution intended to wholly or partially satisfy validated capability requirements and close or mitigate associated capability gaps. The CDD provides development Key Performance Parameters, Key System Attributes, and additional performance attributes to guide the development of one or more increments of a specific system. Each increment described by a CDD must provide a safe, operationally effective, suitable, and useful capability solution in the intended environment. See JCIDS, *Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems*.

¹⁰ DOD Instruction 5000.69, “DOD Joint Services Weapon and Laser System Safety Review Processes,” November 9, 2011, 8, available at <www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/500069p.pdf>.

¹¹ DOD Directive 5000.01, “The Defense Acquisition System,” November 20, 2007, available at <www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/500001p.pdf>; and Military Standard (MIL-STD) 882E, “Department of Defense Standard Practice: System Safety,” May 11, 2012, 9, available at <www.system-safety.org/Documents/MIL-STD-882E.pdf>.

¹² MIL-STD 882E.

¹³ DOD Directive 2060.1, “Implementation of, and Compliance with, Arms Control Agreements,” January 9, 2001, 2, available at <www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/206001p.pdf>.

¹⁴ DOD Directive 5000.01, 7.

¹⁵ JCIDS, *Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems*, D-A-5–11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, D-A-2.

¹⁷ John Gordon IV et al., *Comparing U.S. Army Systems with Foreign Counterparts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015), 102, available at <www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR716.html>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*



F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to Gunslingers of Strike Fighter Squadron 105 prepares to make arrested landing on flight deck of aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, April 9, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Anderson W. Branch)

The Trouble with Mission Command

Flexive Command and the Future of Command and Control

By Andrew Hill and Heath Niemi

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The U.S. military is having the wrong conversation about command. The current emphasis on “mission command” as an end in itself misses a crucial point about the nature of command—namely, that situational *understanding* is the rarest of all command characteristics.

Mission command begins with a bias to decentralized decisionmaking, and then fails to equip officers with tools for understanding how to determine where control should reside. Mission command is presented as a premise of effective command—“Given that I am decentralizing control as much as possible (that is, exercising mission command), how should I command?”—when it is in fact just one of many possible answers to the question of control, and not always the right one. This conceptual failure exposes the military to significant risk as the context of war undergoes one of history’s great revolutions with the entry of lethal, fully autonomous systems. We need a command philosophy that acknowledges the historical constraints of warfare but also leaves room to exploit the emerging capabilities of modern technology. The right question to ask is: “Given the tactical, operational, and strategic context, how should I command?”

In this essay, we present *flexive command* as a more appropriate way to think about command and control. Flexive command prompts us to identify where the greatest situational understanding resides at a given decision point and encourages us to devise ways to connect that understanding to the decision itself. Under flexive command, mission command (as delegation of increased decision authority) becomes one of many command approaches to a problem, and therefore is an element (a “way”) of command.

Command is a military principle that exists to use military forces effectively in achieving tactical, operational, or strategic objectives. The *ends* of command are simple: military operations that support the political objectives of war, at the lowest cost to future organizational effectiveness.

Of the *means* of command, there are four resources necessary to effectiveness: authority, communication, situational awareness, and situational understanding. Authority is the power to compel subordinate elements to act. Communication is the ability to convey information to and receive information from subordinate elements. Situational awareness (SA) is a knowledge of the current facts of a situation. It answers the question, “What is happening?” Situational understanding (SU) is a higher level of insight that describes the ability to link the current facts to the past, present, and future of the operational environment. It answers the questions, “Why is it happening, and what should we do about it?”

The *ways* of command, too numerous to list here, refer to the various uses and combinations of the means of command. How specific are orders? How frequent is communication? How does the commander delegate authority, risk, and responsibility? How are SA and SU shared? The list goes on.

There is confusion surrounding the term *mission command* due to two distinct ways that it is used. In Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, mission command means a way to command by delegating authority and empowering subordinates to “carry out last

mission orders.”¹ In this context, it is a subordinate element of broader discussions of command and control (C2), and an appropriate way of command in a communications-denied environment, where subordinate units are cut off from higher oversight. In this sense, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey’s 2012 “Mission Command White Paper” was a directive to train the force in mission command so that when subordinate commanders find themselves isolated from superiors, they are prepared to adapt and act without direct guidance in achieving mission success.²

In joint doctrine, the term *mission command* (MC) clearly refers to a way of command—the “conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission-type orders”; these orders convey “commander’s intent” and focus on “the purpose of the operation rather than on the details of how to perform assigned tasks.”³ Thus, MC is one of many ways of command. It requires a clear communication of overall purpose and delegates as much subsequent decisionmaking as possible to subordinates. This view is reflected in the early doctrinal work of the Marine Corps, the U.S. military organization that pioneered formal thinking about mission command. While reflecting a bias to decentralization of control, the 1996 Marine Corps publication *Command and Control* acknowledges that commanders must choose the appropriate level of control based on circumstances:

*No commander will rely entirely on either purely detailed or purely mission methods. Exactly what type of command and control we use in a particular situation will depend on a variety of factors, such as the nature of the action or task, the nature and capabilities of the enemy, and, perhaps most of all, the qualities of our people.*⁴

However, recent explanations of mission command have advanced a second, more problematic use of the concept, portraying it as *the* preeminent way of command. This is an error. The Army, for example, describes it as an entire

command philosophy, encompassing the art and science of C2, whereas the other Services abide by the joint definition.⁵ The mixture of the two views of mission command creates confusion about what it really means. Worse still, however, is that the interpretation of MC-as-philosophy-of-command forecloses a needed discussion of enduring principles of C2 to the potential detriment of the force.

Mission command is a legacy type of command derived from the Prussian *Auftragstaktik*, when communications were limited by the technology of the time and explicit orders throughout a battle were unrealistic.⁶ In the current and future multispectrum warfare, the Services must be prepared to fight in a denied environment, but to always command through delegation is impractical. This view of MC is faulty both as historical analysis (induction) and as deductive logic.

The inductive argument for MC asserts that military organizations with decentralized decisionmaking outperform those with centralized control. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*, states that “the nature of operations and the patterns of military history point to the advantages of mission command.”⁷ This is a misleading simplification. Although technological change has rewarded decentralized control in recent military history, a longer view shows that the relationship between technology and the optimal control level is more complicated. The historical performance of different approaches to levels of control has rested not only on their tendencies to centralize or delegate authority, but also on the technological and operational context, and (crucially) on the decisions of adversaries. The two greatest empires of the classical world were built on innovations in military organization that pulled significant control *up* in the organizational hierarchy. Neither the Macedonian phalanx nor the Roman maniple could function effectively if independent decisions were made within these units because formational integrity was essential to their performance. They did not and could not work with sub-commands within those ranks. Similarly, the powerful innovations in



The Distributed Common Ground System—Army provides timely, relevant, and accurate targetable data to warfighters and will be fully interoperable with Army's Unified Mission Command System, providing access to information and intelligence to support battlefield visualization and ISR management (U.S. Army)

training and organization of Maurice of Orange and Gustavus Adolphus created greater uniformity of action to exploit massed musket fire and brought tactical formations under higher levels of operational control during battle, often with decisive success. The best we can say about the tension between central and dispersed control is that history has shown that both can work, and that their effectiveness depends on the technological and operational context. Technology may reward greater decentralization. But it also may reward greater control and organization.

What about the deductive argument for MC? It rests on three major premises. First, war involves competitive actors whose behavior is adaptive and therefore unpredictable.⁸ Second, decision speed in warfare is itself an axis of competition. Drawing on the work of Colonel John Boyd, the Mission Command White

Paper states, “the key to victory . . . [is] the ability to create situations wherein one can make appropriate decisions more quickly than one’s opponent.”⁹ Third, war is complex and its conditions and circumstances are “wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser certainty,”¹⁰ and “no C2 technology has ever successfully overcome the fog of war.”¹¹ From these three premises, advocates of MC derive the following conclusions:

- Complexity and competition make all war plans provisional, and effective adaptation is therefore required.
- The decision-speed requirements of modern warfare make both the quality and the speed of decisions crucial to successful adaptation.
- SA is inevitably (and often drastically) reduced from the tactical to the strategic level, and prevents sufficient local understanding at higher levels.

- Mission command is therefore necessary to focus and delegate commander thinking and guidance.

Therefore, controlling for the *speed* of decisions, the SA reduction through each level of a hierarchy diminishes the quality of adaptations decided by higher echelons (since their information is more incomplete than that of lower echelons). Controlling for the *quality* of decisions, the SA reduction reduces the timeliness of adaptations decided by higher echelons, since higher levels must expend precious time replicating the situational awareness held by lower levels.

The deductive argument for MC, like the historical (inductive) argument, contains some truth but makes unjustifiable conclusions based on that truth. The logic that war is competitive and therefore requires adaptation is valid and sound. The other three conclusions are more problematic.

The argument that decision speed is a crucial basis of competition is incomplete and simplistic, fetishizing rapid decisionmaking and grossly undervaluing situational understanding. General George Patton said, “A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week.” We may focus so much on the “violently executed now” part of that maxim that we overlook the “good plan” requirement. General George Custer exercised mission command at the Greasy Grass. Speedy decisionmaking is good only when it is accompanied by good choices. An even greater problem with the emphasis on decision speed is that it ignores the ability of actors in war to affect the tempo of operations, getting inside the loop (to use Boyd’s term) of an adversary not by increasing the speed of their own choices, but by slowing the speed at which adversaries are making decisions, or by making those choices irrelevant to the outcome. In recent years, for example, special operations teams have learned the value of seizing control of tempo during raids in which targets can be isolated. Quintus Fabius Maximus (nicknamed “Cunctator,” or “Lingerer”) saved Rome from Hannibal’s invasion because he protracted the campaign, avoiding decisive engagements with Hannibal’s army. America’s adversaries in Vietnam and Afghanistan pursued similar “Fabian” strategies. Not everything has to be done quickly to be done well.

What about modern, high-intensity conflict, on a battlefield teeming with autonomous systems, where high tactical and operational speed is essential? Curiously, even here the delegation of authority to lower levels may slow down operations and degrade decision quality, depending on the technological context. At what echelons will we likely see the first fully automated systems? Various factors point to the tactical levels. Given the expected ability of advanced artificial intelligence to distribute itself across multiple, dispersed robots, the most effective tactical autonomous platforms are likely to be those used in systems. These systems would act and decide at machine speed, in a highly coordinated manner.

For a tactical decisionmaker to intervene effectively at that level and prompt an effective adjustment, he would need to process information more rapidly than the system and deliver the information to the system without disrupting its coordination. This is highly unlikely. Just as early innovations in musketry favored massed effects with limited opportunities for lower level improvisation, systemic automation of tactical units will drive meaningful control up in echelons.

MC supporters go so far as to say that mission command “enables decentralized and distributed formations to perform as if they were centrally coordinated.” This is an odd argument that draws on the concept of “emergence,” or spontaneous organization. Given a simple set of rules, large groups of otherwise stupid actors (think of a hive of bees or a flock of birds) can achieve highly coordinated and robust organizational behavior. Bees swarm against a threat to the hive. Starlings fly in massive, undulating formations that protect individuals from predators. But the keys to such coordination are the simplicity of the decision rules and the common capability in following those rules. The rules for decisionmaking in warfare are not simple, and the capability of human beings to decide how to behave according to those rules varies. Emergence is more likely to occur when decision rules are simple, factual interpretation is constrained, and the options are limited. Examples include stock market bubbles and crashes and battlefield panics. This is clear evidence of *shared understanding*, a crucial term in mission command. When a war produces these conditions, mission command supports emergent coordination in human systems. However, amid significant ambiguity and situational complexity, we should expect that shared understanding will be much more difficult to achieve. Higher levels of decentralization will therefore undermine systemic coordination, leading to *divergence* in behaviors and greater *diversity* of action. Sometimes that is very useful, such as when existing approaches are unsuited to the objectives of war and the system needs to learn and change. In summary, when facing

significant limits to shared understanding, we should either increase central control to achieve coordinated action, or decrease central control to achieve greater diversity of action. Our preference will depend on the conditions of the conflict.

Let us now turn to the equally problematic “fog of war” argument for mission command. This view sets aside a stroke centuries of technological innovation that have changed the informational context of war and can be used to foreclose necessary exploration of the amazing potential of new technologies that will transform the way that war is fought.

The fog of war is real. It affects situational awareness at all levels. Historically, the limited means of gathering and transmitting information meant that the farther someone was from the context of battle, the less complete and accurate the information and the greater the delay in communication. SA was valuable, and (usually) only local commanders possessed enough of it to derive sufficient SU to make good choices. What happens when technology changes that equation? History is not destiny.

Recall the “Mission Command White Paper” assertion that “No C2 technology has ever successfully overcome the fog of war.” Missing from this statement is the word “yet.” That word makes a big difference because it alerts us to the possibility that what we have not observed may still be out there to discover—the “black swan” of command and control. The path of technological innovation has been one of constant progress in increasing the fidelity and completeness of information, and in transmitting that information faster.

Situational awareness is becoming increasingly commoditized—that is, widely available and therefore less decisive in its effects. We speak of the sensing environment in warfare as if it were affected by metaphysical forces. We even have a word for it: *Fingerspitzengefühl*. In reality, however, humans have just five senses, and technology is becoming increasingly adept not only at projecting those senses with great accuracy and over immense distances, but also at *augmenting* those senses with additional dimensions of



Two E-2C Hawkeyes from “Black Eagles” of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 113 fly by aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* during change-of-command ceremony, Pacific Ocean, February 9, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Zackary Alan Landers)

understanding. A Roman commander at a battle could see, hear, smell, and feel the conflict. A modern commander far removed from battle can see it and hear it but cannot (yet) feel it or smell it. However, he can also see electromagnetic signatures and information flows. Cyber and information operations are of increasing relevance to warfare. Given domains of warfare that cannot be perceived by unaided human senses, SA at the tactical level may in many cases be inferior to that of higher echelons. This trend is toward what we (with tongue slightly in cheek) call “O3”: omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence.¹² Omnipresence is the result of advanced communications capabilities. Omniscience is the result of advanced information-gathering capabilities (situational awareness). Omnipotence is the result of advanced precision-strike capabilities. This is hyperbole, but such exaggerations have their uses. Indeed,

technology has consistently extended and projected presence, awareness, and strike, and we should expect that it will continue to do so. The trend is therefore an increasing *perception* of “O3” on the part of senior commanders, based on *actual* improvements in all three areas.

With the commoditization of SA, *situational understanding* should be the decisive factor in guiding a military’s approach to command and control. What is the ideal approach to command and control? It is one in which the person with the best situational understanding is matched to a decision opportunity and given authorities such that a good choice is made and communicated in time to achieve success. That superior situational understanding may be found in a battalion commander at the front, but it may also be found in a staff officer far from battle.

We now get to an uncomfortable fact. Why do we remember brilliant

commanders such as Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Wellington, and Rommel? It is because such genius is rare. Furthermore, military brilliance exists not as an absolute, but only in its *relative* superiority. That is, it does not matter that a commander is brilliant; it only matters that he or she is more brilliant than an adversary. The ancient historian Polybius observed:

Now as to the battles which the Romans fought with Hannibal and the defeats which they sustained in them. . . . It was not owing to their arms or their tactics, but to the skill and genius of Hannibal that they met with those defeats . . . for as soon as the Romans got a general of ability comparable with that of Hannibal, victory was not long in following their banners.¹³

We may wish to believe that if we just empower lower-level commanders,



C-17 Globemaster IIIs deploy flares December 6, 2014, while flying over Nevada Test and Training Range during U.S. Air Force Weapons School's Joint Forcible Entry Exercise 14B (U.S. Air Force/Thomas Spangler)

communicating intent and creating shared understanding, subordinate commanders will act exactly as their superiors would if they had the same information and great things will happen. This belies the competitive reality of military brilliance. It is *rare*. Most officers are neither remarkably good nor bad in their strategic intelligence. Some officers are brilliant. Some are fools. Most muddle through. Recent American experiences in war bear this out. Given this variance in cognitive ability and competence, we should expect that MC-empowered commanders at the tactical level will *vary* in their understanding, and therefore diverge in their behaviors. Sometimes such variance is exactly what we want (for example, in developing solutions for an unexpected and difficult-to-comprehend obstacle). We return to this below.

When asked why he invested in Wrigley at a time when dot-com

companies were achieving astounding returns, Warren Buffett pithily observed, “The Internet does not change the way we chew gum.” In the same spirit, we can observe that technology does not make situational understanding more abundant. It *does*, however, open the possibility of projecting brilliance when it is found. An unthinking commitment to mission command stands in the way of this projection.

Flexive command is an alternative framework for thinking about the factors that lead commanders to pull control up or push it down along a continuum of control. In broad terms, factors that pull control up include strategic risk, problem complexity, high learning costs, and small numbers of total operations. Pushing control down are adaptation requirements, decision speed, situational complexity (that is, the large quantity and high relevance of information that is

not captured in existing communications means), communications constraints, and large numbers of current operations. Flexive command seeks to build a command culture and structure that is better able to solve the matching problem of command. Decisions should be made by the person who can make the best choice in time for it to affect the outcome. More simply, command decisions are made at the level that balances opposing tensions and reduces risk.

Flexive command focuses on four questions:

- What is the nature of the decision cycle?
- How complex are the problems?
- How costly are communications?
- What are the strategic and political implications of failure?

All four questions pertain to military risk, which increases with the speed of

decisions, the complexity of problems, the costliness of communications, and the implications of failure.

Decision cycles in military operations vary. Some are more controllable than others, meaning that we can affect their speed and character. Some cycles are by nature fast, while others are slow. Decisions cycles may be discrete, involving decision “moves” (for example, American football, with play resetting after a whistle) or continuous (for example, soccer). Cycles are also affected by competing demands for decisionmakers’ attention and resources. For example, decentralization of control is more valuable when cycles are not controllable, rapid, continuous, and in the context of high decision demands on higher echelons.

Problem complexity varies. Tactical units are less likely to possess the resources to solve problems that are difficult and novel. That is, the probability that the expertise of someone in the unit matches the problem is low. More to the point, it is more likely that the problem can be addressed by the combined intelligence of decisionmakers supporting operations. During the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s failed Apollo 13 moon mission, the astronauts had to create a carbon filter that would allow them to oxygenate air in the lunar landing module. They could not do this themselves and called on engineers at mission control for support. This is an example of “Linus’s Law,” coined by the technologist Eric Raymond: “Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow.”¹⁴ If you want to solve a sticky problem, get a lot of people to interact with it and give them the freedom to depart from standard procedures. The modification of Sherman tanks with “rhino” nose-plates to burst through the hedgerows of Normandy is a poignant example of the power of variant approaches to adaptation. One Soldier had the idea; his local commander agreed to let him try it. It worked, and General Omar Bradley found out about it. The modification soon became standard. Linus’s Law is in fact a powerful argument both for and against mission command. It depends on the nature of operating environment (number of units engaged), the resources

available to those units, and the ability of supporting elements to interact with and solve a problem.

Communications costs vary. *Fidelity* of communications refers to the accuracy with which a given fact is represented to the receiver of a message. A message that says “yes” when the sender said “no” has low fidelity. *Granularity* of communications refers to the amount of relevant and necessary detail captured in a message. A radio broadcast of a baseball game has less granularity than a television broadcast. *Timeliness* of communications refers to their composition and delivery within a timeframe that affects the outcome. The costliness of the communications environment clearly affects the optimal level of control for commanders.

Finally, military operations have varying strategic implications. It is naive and unreasonable for local commanders to expect a laissez-faire approach from higher echelons when, for example, nuclear war may result from a bad decision (think of the naval blockade during the Cuban missile crisis). Compounding this difficulty is the way in which social media appears to be increasing the strategic relevance of tactical decisions. Strategic implications will inevitably draw higher echelons into decisionmaking. The trick is to develop officers who understand how to engage in those discussions in a mature and productive way.

Flexive command is a nascent concept and, as such, it makes few simple prescriptions. We suggest it not because it provides the right answers but because it asks the right questions. We stand at the beginning of the robotics revolution in warfare. For the U.S. military to continue to innovate in how it organizes and fights amid this technological disruption, it must recognize the essential character of outstanding strategic insight and create mechanisms for extending that insight as widely as possible.

Before concluding, we must address a final argument used in favor of mission command: that it is good for the morale of officers who otherwise resent micromanagement from higher echelons. To this we say that defeat and death are even worse for morale. Mission command

focuses on how to command, as if the choice regarding delegation of authority, a *way* of command, were its own end. Yet command is not made for officers. Officers are made for command. It is essential that we build a command culture in which officers seek out the counsel of others who provide superior situational understanding. JFQ

Notes

¹ Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), II-2.

² Martin E. Dempsey, “Mission Command White Paper,” April 3, 2012, available at <www.jcs.mil/content/files/2012-04/042312114128_CJCS_Mission_Command_White_Paper_2012_a.pdf>.

³ Joint Publication 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, March 25, 2013), V-15.

⁴ Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 6-0, *Command and Control* (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, October 4, 1996), 80.

⁵ James W. Harvard, “Airmen and Mission Command,” *Air & Space Power Journal* 28, no. 2 (March–April 2013), 138.

⁶ Eitan Shamir, “The Long and Winding Road: The U.S. Army Managerial Approach to Command and the Adoption of Mission Command (Auftragstaktik),” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (October 2010), 647.

⁷ Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, March 12, 2014).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Dempsey.

¹⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), book 1, chapter 3.

¹¹ Dempsey.

¹² Heath J. Niemi, *Did the Radio Kill Auftragstaktik?* Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 1, 2015).

¹³ Polybius, *Histories*, trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (New York: Macmillan, 1889, reprint Bloomington, 1962), book 18, available at <www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234%3Abook%3D18%3Achapter%3D1>.

¹⁴ Eric S. Raymond, *The Cathedral and the Bazaar: Musings on Linux and Open Source by an Accidental Revolutionary* (Sebastopol, CA: O’Reilly Media, Inc., 1999), available at <www.catb.org/~esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/cathedral-bazaar/>.

Security force team member for PRT Farah, whose mission is to train, advise, and assist Afghan government leaders at municipal, district, and provincial levels in Farah Province, Afghanistan, maintains security during key leader meeting at provincial governor's residence in Farah City (U.S. Navy/Josh Ives)



Learning to Fish in Murky Waters

The Missing Link in Capacity-Building

By Stephen E. Webber and Donald E. Vandergriff

Building partner capacity has been recently recognized as a key mission set of the U.S. Armed Forces. It has received a great deal of verbal and written attention from military leaders and policymakers due

to its centrality to ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The recent political and strategic direction has emphasized military, diplomatic, and civil coordination with other nations worldwide.¹ A full explanation of U.S. diplomatic, development, and military approaches to capacity-building, and the evolution of the military's current role and conceptualization of these operations, would undoubtedly be relevant and useful, but remains beyond the scope of this article. Instead, we examine one critical component of

this broad mission set: the building of institutional capacity in host-nation ministries. Then we offer a scientifically and historically sound methodology for military advisors working at the ministerial level. By improving how we plan and execute our train, advise, and assist missions, and rethinking the role of the military advisor, we can more effectively enable our partners around the world.

The missing link in capacity-building is education. It is not the education of our personnel or counterparts exclusively; it is the role of mutual learning in advisory

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Combat medic (right) with Charlie Company, 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, teaches Iraqi soldiers how to splint broken leg at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Diyala Province, Iraq, October 5, 2010 (DOD/Brandon D. Bolick)

engagements and an understanding of the importance of the education discipline to the capacity-building mission. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) use the term *train, advise, and assist* (TAA) as a catchall that encompasses virtually all our interactions with host-nation forces. Rarely do we stop to consider the fact that this is a three-word phrase, and not a single verb (for example, “We’re going to TAA our Afghan partners in institutional reform today”). But what form should this training take? Toward what end do we advise our partners, and what sort of assistance should we be offering them? All too often, our advisors focus on conducting “engagements,” sitting down for lengthy meetings with host-nation counterparts. Meetings with key leaders are necessary to develop a common operating picture and to establish goals, just as time with counterparts can start to build the trusting relationships upon which all else hinges.

Unfortunately, this falls short. Except for the small talk and pleasantries required in many cultures, meetings remain highly structured and rigid. An American (or NATO) officer often sits across from his counterpart and proceeds through a script of “to-dos” and a review of manufactured milestones. As advisory assistance is almost always linked to financial and materiel support, the host-nation counterpart offers little pushback to the advisor’s assertions. Both parties leave the engagement at best satisfied with the status quo and at worst disillusioned with one another and the possibility of progress. The advisor’s chain of command and higher headquarters remain unsure of how to quantify progress. They focus reflexively on shallow metrics such as the number of engagements conducted per week or the submission of boilerplate reports. Despite sending men and women from across the joint force to advise foreign forces on complex issues, the U.S. military has yet to produce a strong body

of work on *how* we advise.² The joint force has scratched the surface by producing guidance on the basics of advising: helping troops build the communication, interpersonal, and cultural skills to interact with their counterparts. This may be doing more harm than good because we risk creating checklists and artificial scripts that oversimplify the task at hand.

Now we must consider the advisor mission in context and understand how the interaction between advisors and host-nation counterparts could be used to achieve our broader goals. To use familiar terms, what advising tactics do we employ, and how do we structure train, advise, and assist operations to achieve our strategic outcome of building capacity in host-nation institutions? In response to these vital questions, we offer an approach to capacity-building based on human interaction and learning. First, we consider the importance of institutional capacity from the standpoint of a system of human interaction. Second, we explain how

our view of the strategic goal affects the planning and execution of advisory operations, and lastly, we provide a real-world example of innovative advising tactics recently employed in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The Strategic Goal: Developing Institutional Capacity

Only recently has the U.S. military placed a proper emphasis on institutional capacity. In the initial approaches to stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, NATO called for the rapid creation of military and police forces to protect the populace and fight the enemy. The mixed bag of successes and failures achieved by the international community in raising the Afghan and Iraqi security forces is well documented and discussed at length by many scholars.³ U.S. military doctrine reflects learning on the part of the military to embrace stability operations and enabling civil authority (Phases IV and V of a joint campaign) as critical to strategic success.⁴

Afghanistan in particular provides a good example. To put things simply, no matter how many Afghans stepped forward to defend their country, how well international forces trained them, or how much money and material poured into the country, the nation is unable to manage the resources at its disposal.⁵ While Afghanistan, with its historic lack of governance and central authority, is a glaring case, the importance of developing the capacity to lead and manage applies to every case of security assistance or joint military training. The United States is currently working with police and military forces around the world to counter the threat of global terrorism.⁶ Even in the absence of kinetic action, if U.S. advisors conduct combined tactical training in a foreign country, the relationships built and the skills communicated will not be maintained and carried on if the host nation lacks the institutions to retain them. If the United States grants a large sum of money to another nation to man, train, and equip its armed forces, these funds will not provide optimal capability if the country lacks a bureaucracy to manage a large budget, logistics, and human

resources. Recent years have illustrated the fact that paying for a nation's military or teaching valuable skills to its troops is not nearly enough to enable a partner nation's military. Advising within a country's governmental organizations is critical to any man, train, and equip effort.

The United States and NATO are currently placing military, government, and contracted advisors among the upper echelons of host-nation forces and within government departments. Prior to the deployment of advisors, we as a force must first consider the political and strategic outcomes for these institutions and how to measure success. If it is decided that advisory missions are an effective way of achieving our desired endstate, we must first consider how we intend to shape conditions. Ideally, this discussion would occur prior to the decision to deploy advisors. As we are already employing advisor efforts, we must take a step back and reconsider how they fit into the bigger picture, while changing the way we conduct them.

Our train, advise, and assist efforts at the ministerial level should shape systems that will accomplish our near-term goals of enabling host-nation partners against dynamic threats while becoming self-perpetuating in order to continue to strengthen institutions with time, ideally well after the detachment of advisors from their counterparts. Institutional capacity is a system, and systems emerge through repeated human interaction. Theories of education, management, and especially international relations tell us that human interaction causes learning, which in turn shapes the nature of repeated interaction.⁷ The way people and organizations interact with one another over time creates institutions, or the rules that govern interaction.⁸ We all understand this seemingly complex concept intuitively; in the United States, we refer to the "democratic institutions of our government." As military professionals, we talk a lot about "command climate and Service culture" that we can influence by the policies we enact, how we lead, and how we interact with our people.

Consider our goals for ministerial development within partner nations. We

want our partners to manage their own military forces, which requires everything from rule of law, to fiscal responsibility, to administrative effectiveness.⁹ How do we even begin to consider these broad concepts? By thinking of them in terms of systems with an outward focus, not on processes with an inward focus (getting bogged down in shallow metrics, cultural constraints, control, disregard of the intangibles). We are trying to shape patterns of interaction between people so that they create the outcome we want.¹⁰ This is far from simple, but the importance of learning and educational theory is plain to see. It must be mentioned that this learning cannot occur in a vacuum—the small part of capacity-building we address in this article is only of value if it is part of a comprehensive policy and strategic approach. Our broader diplomatic, military, and development efforts toward a certain problem-set must complement and reinforce one another in achieving the desired endstate if a train, advise, and assist effort is going to be successful. It is critical, however, to devise our train, advise, and assist operations based on an understanding of the mission that addresses the importance of learning.

Train, Advise, and Assist Operations

How do you create a system? Systems are shaped by people and how they do things. To put it simply, people + processes = systems. As stated, we cannot create a system as we wish and implement it; it must emerge over time through repeated interaction. The two parts of the equation that we can influence are people and processes. A train, advise, and assist effort must look to achieve an effect on people and an effect of processes that will without a doubt influence the systems at play. We do not, nor will we ever, have complete control of how a system develops or all of the outcomes of our actions to influence others.¹¹ What we can control is our approach to the people we work with and the processes we devise with them to manage their organizations.

People must come first in everything that we do. Carl von Clausewitz reminds

us never to underestimate the “human factor” in war,¹² and if we trace our strategic goals back to our national purpose, we realize that the ultimate purpose of our military efforts is the preservation of human life and human freedom. Joint special operations doctrine defines *irregular conflict* (within which many of our advisor missions fall) as a “struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations.”¹³ We cannot coerce or bribe capacity into a host nation. Moral and ethical considerations aside, what we fund or force on a group of people will only be as effective as they are. Also, there is no exit strategy with this line of thought. The only way to influence an individual or group in the long term is through education.

Education is a vital part of an advisor’s mission, and any train, advise, and assist operation should consider how we will educate our host-nation partners. Education is too often thought of as the conveying of knowledge from a teacher (who knows something) to a student (who knows nothing). This is not education (or effective training); it is simply communication between a leader and subordinate. Decades of progress in the education field have shown that this misunderstanding of education is completely ineffective in any context. To have any chance of success, the advisor must completely abandon any inclination toward this approach, as it is grounded in out-of-date learning models refuted by scholars and educators such as Dr. Robert Bjork, distinguished research professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Psychology.¹⁴

People learn through interaction and experience. Simply conveying information as we have in our training courses since the industrial age will never be as effective as empowering people to understand something on their own. The advisor is both a teacher who has entered a situation with goals and desired outcomes for his counterparts, but more importantly, a facilitator who allows students to apply what they already know, receiving new information and understanding it in their own way. A

tactical concept, such as marksmanship or patrolling, is best understood if students practice on their own, being allowed to make mistakes and adapt their technique. The same is true for administrative procedures or operational concepts. Anyone can learn to recite a definition, but there is no way to effectively convey how to manage a defense budget or plan a military campaign. People always learn best when they understand things in their own way, describe them in their own terms, and interact with others to inform their understanding.

In our approach to train, advise, and assist, the advisor is as much a student of his counterpart as the counterpart is of the advisor. To achieve success, advisors must proceed with abject humility knowing that they enter a host nation knowing little of how things work. An advisor may or may not have a strong background in his subject matter from previous service, but there is no better way to learn than to teach. Also, the way one person understands something will always differ in some way from how another understands it. This is true for members of the same immediate family, let alone people from different places who have been educated in different cultures. An advisor has as much (if not more) to learn from his counterpart as he does from his advisor.

It goes without saying that a foreigner who arrives among a host-nation military force will be instantly rejected if he proceeds with arrogance, trying to “teach” his ways to another group of people who have good reasons for what they do and a lifetime of learning behind them. At the very best, the advisor might receive a polite nod from a group of students who will revert to their original ways as soon as advisors leave the room. Formal meetings and key leader engagements will, without a doubt, be part of any advisor operation. During these engagements, in which international advisors and host-nation partners communicate intent, review progress, and make important decisions, the advisor should keep in mind that mutual learning is occurring. Every meeting is an opportunity to influence a counterpart, as much as it is an opportunity to learn something new about the

counterpart as an individual, his organization, and the systems currently at work within the host nation. Education with right teaching methodology, whether field exercises at the tactical level or joint working groups at the operational/strategic level, presents an opportunity for mutual learning. Here, advisors should not only know the key points that they intend to communicate, but also be careful to listen to their counterparts, allowing all participants to learn from one another. It is important to view oneself as a facilitator of learning. Frankly, an advisor is present in each country because local nationals do not know something that the advisor needs them to know. At the same time, local nationals know and understand things that their advisors could never hope to, and often intuitively know and understand the information that an advisor is trying to convey, but in their own way.¹⁵

The conclusion that advising techniques must change is grounded in learning theory and modern educational methods. Recent insight into the human mind demands a shift from “competency-based” learning to “outcomes-based” and “discovery” learning.¹⁶ Competency-based learning is the norm for many Americans, as it has long been prevalent in the U.S. education system at all levels. The U.S. military has institutionalized a competency approach to learning based on the education and management philosophies of the early 20th century.¹⁷ Based on the research of psychologists and educators such as Dr. Bjork, innovators have worked to reform education in all contexts. Whether teaching math to children in a public school or advanced tactics to Soldiers, teachers are most effective when they act as facilitators, and students learn more when they are encouraged to take ownership of the learning.¹⁸ This blurs the traditional line between teacher and student. A new approach to military advising that properly emphasizes the importance of mutual learning requires a shift from the influence of competency-based education to engagements focused on discovery and outcomes.

Processes must be implemented in order to create systems and build

capacity. A group of individuals can learn something, and perhaps pass this knowledge on to some extent in a “train the trainer” model, but advisor engagements must focus on shaping processes nearly as much as they focus on educating individuals. In a sense, processes are the product of learning within an organization. A process is a framework for *how* things are done. The U.S. military understands process well; so much of our work and even our lives are governed by instructions on how things are to be done. Where the U.S. military is absent is in not explaining the “why” behind a process. Education explains the “why.” If a system is going to become self-perpetuating, people must be given a framework for the training and education, one that will give shape and direction to their repeated interaction.

The advisor often begins her work with a process in mind. With varying degrees of success, we often seek to impose blueprints on foreign forces based on what has worked for our organizations. This is neither all good nor all bad; after all, our counterparts lack the ability to do something, and we are providing a way of doing it from our own experience. At the same time, this approach can be disastrous. People shape processes, and processes shape people as they guide their interaction. This is how a complex, adaptive system works. How and why things are done in a host nation is influenced by a myriad of factors, most of which we have no control over. Introducing a process developed by the U.S. military and expecting that it will be successfully adopted by a host nation without modification is a recipe for failure. A military force may already have processes in place that an advisor is unaware of, individuals come from different cultures and have entirely different perspectives, and our processes are often built over time and partner nations are often incapable of implementing them as they are right away.¹⁹

Instead, advisors must understand what processes are already in place within a host nation. How do people do things, and why? This comes with understanding the whole system and how it has developed. Is there an ineffective process in place that must be changed, an effective

process that can be improved, or is the lack of a codified process what is preventing the development of capacity? Before trying to influence the rules of someone else’s game, we must first learn his rules. Sometimes, published guidance is in place that the advisor can obtain, study, and use as a starting point for engagements with counterparts. Often, no such guidance exists and an advisor must learn how things are done from counterparts as they train and learn together. As training is conducted, what is learned can start to form a base from which codified doctrine can be developed. An effective advisor seeks to understand her operating environment and gently shape conditions toward the desired endstate. Ideally, the advisors will leave their counterparts with formal guidance that is somewhere between how things were done prior to their arrival and how things are done by the advisor’s home country.

Case Study: Kabul, Afghanistan

Our theory of train, advise, and assist operations was shaped by real-world experience with the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), particularly the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which oversees the Afghan National Police (ANP). We sought to apply these concepts as we learned them by implementing adaptive learning as part of our train, advise, and assist operations. For our theory to be truly tested and proven, it must be given time. Also, similar methods must be applied across a range of cases and data collected. Unfortunately, capacity-building takes time and hard metrics are often scarce when it comes to irregular warfare. This case, however, is instructive because it realized qualitative results at the tactical level and has helped us to understand how similar efforts may be designed and implemented in the future.

As part of Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan’s (CSTC–A’s) Capabilities Development Directorate (CDD), our team was tasked to train, advise, and assist the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and MOI in all aspects of force management. It was our mission to help the Afghans manage their force

structure: delivering the right combat and policing capability to a dynamic battlespace while developing the capacity to manage their own forces in the long term. Force management is an important discipline, as it encompasses virtually all aspects of how an organization structures itself to achieve its mission. Force management is a useful example of a critical capacity as the ability to effectively determine force structure has both immediate impact and great importance to the long-term growth and development of the organization. We were essentially helping our Afghan partners define the capabilities that are needed to defend both their people and their nation, develop their own solutions to resolve gaps in their police and military capabilities, and determine their requirements based on this analysis. The close linkage to fiscal/budget capacity and human resources systems is impossible to miss. We collaborated closely with our CSTC–A and Operation *Resolute Support* teammates advising on budget and force generation, while we focused on “spaces, not faces,” that is, the authorizations for personnel and equipment, and how to determine them.²⁰

Force management capacity serves as a useful starting point for a discussion of ministerial capacity, as it exemplifies a system that must endure for the Afghan MOI to effectively manage its police forces. Like many systems at the ministerial level, force management is complex, involving codified administrative processes as much as careful analysis and creative thinking on the part of groups and individuals. It is critical that Afghan force managers can properly document personnel and equipment authorizations with the help of their coalition advisors. This important task relates directly to the resources that the international community is using to resource the ANP. It also allows all components of the nation’s police forces to effectively, man, train, and equip themselves.

As importantly, Afghan ministries must begin to take the lead in managing their force structure and determining future requirements. This requires far more than administrative procedure; Afghan leaders must possess the skills to analyze

their military and policing capabilities. Not only do Afghan ministries require analytical capacity, but also those tasked to lead and manage them must be critical and creative thinkers. In developing Afghan force management capacity, we are trying to build people as much as we were working to build processes.²¹

As our military and civilian advisors were working hard to bring order to the disparate records that documented the Afghan force structure, our team took its first steps toward educating Afghan force managers with an 8-week course for our counterparts titled “Force Management: The Basics.” Course objectives were built on material that force management advisors had used for their counterparts, and included U.S. Army force management doctrine. Our advisors then applied adaptive learning to shape the course based on an Adaptive Course Model (ACM), a revolutionary model that has achieved success when applied to U.S. Army training. This “discovery-based” learning model is grounded in Adaptive Soldier Leader Training and Education methodology (ASLTE), designed to instill adaptability within students at all levels by engaging them as active participants in learning. Under ASLTE, ACM emphasizes outcomes over metrics by using discussion, open-ended problem-solving, wargames, and free play exercises to push students mentally and physically. These methods proved effective in the U.S. Army Reconnaissance course, and were adapted to a new context of advising at the ministerial level.²²

Previous course slides were stripped down and used to make hardcopy handouts, leaving key points and broad concepts, discarding specific doctrinal terms and restrictive, step-by-step processes. Our host-nation interpreters, whom our team and leadership have elected to refer to as the technical advisor team, reviewed and actively contributed to the class materials. Not only did the technical advisors translate and edit, but they also reviewed course outcomes and improved the content to make it useful and relevant to their countrymen. During the course, there was no distinction between coalition advisors and

host-nation translators; both were equal facilitators of learning.

ANP and ANA officers selected for the first course were distinguished in their profession, and, except for two junior officers, the majority were colonels, along with several lieutenant colonels and majors. Follow-on courses included members of mid-level and junior officers and some senior noncommissioned officers. Each session would begin with an introduction by either an Afghan or coalition general officer (key leader engagements with our counterparts and meetings with our chain of command were critical to organizing these efforts), and then our contracted advisors would begin to facilitate discussion. Class usually began with a problem, or an open-ended question: “How do I build a brigade?” Students would then work in groups to think creatively about the given problem. After collaborating, groups were asked to brief their solution to the class. This generated further discussion, during which our counterparts, many of whom had spent their whole lives at war, began to think critically and practice the cognitive skills of senior leaders and managers. Rather than using our handouts to drive the learning, we let the class drive itself, connecting students’ ideas and assertions with key force management concepts as understood by the U.S. military.²³

Student enthusiasm for the course was remarkable. These were seasoned veterans who may have begun their officer development under Russian advisors, or in the mountains opposing them. Some had been formally educated in Western schools. Others had little formal schooling. Every one of the students in surveys stated they had not experienced this type of learning, where they were involved in every aspect of the course, and not just briefed endlessly with PowerPoint slides. Students were eager to contribute, asking questions, connecting course material to their everyday experiences and challenges as officers, and respectfully challenging one another in vigorous debate. Advisors, who were optimistic about the course, had their moderate expectations far exceeded by the climate of the classes. The reason for this was clear, as one senior

Afghan officer confided to his advisors: the students did not feel “talked down to” or “talked at.” They were not bombarded with foreign concepts, or lectured by others on “the right way”; they led the way and learned from each other.²⁴

The success of the first joint MOD-MOI class demanded the facilitation of a second course, this time for junior ANP officers only. Based on a careful after action review of the first class, CDD advisors decided to keep this class smaller and to focus on rising leaders. Now that their leadership, often set in their ways, had been exposed to adaptive learning and more advanced force management concepts, it was safe to train their subordinates who now had a better chance to apply their learning on the job with the approval of their chain of command. These students, mostly junior officers, had more formal schooling than their superiors and were even more open to improving their problem-solving skills and learning new concepts from each other and our advisor team. Group problems and exercises such as the “build a brigade” exercise generated endless discussion. At one point, a young lieutenant lectured the class on the importance of thinking strategically and holistically about problem-sets before determining solutions. His comments would not have been out of place in a U.S. War College seminar.

As these classes, supported by our coalition chain of command and our Afghan general-officer principals continued, our advisor team persisted in its day-to-day work. We still worked with advisor organizations across *Resolute Support* to facilitate the approval of new requirements, ran the funding approval process for capability enhancements, and engaged our Afghan counterparts in formal meetings. After two successful classes, much of our time became devoted to the documentation and validation of force structure authorizations, an important task for the success of our directorate and our Afghan counterparts. These conditions enabled a critical evolution in our methodology. Working together, we found ways to continue learning from our counterparts and training them. We devised ways to



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody (center) attends Afghan air force senior enlisted seminar at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Afghanistan, April 6, 2016 (U.S. Air Force/Nicholas Rau)

combine educational efforts with formal workshops and engagements, using them to drive our understanding of an effective ANP force structure while empowering our counterparts to lead the process and learn from it. We began to work together to determine the requirements for the police force, while simultaneously setting conditions for our counterparts to institutionalize this knowledge.

Our coalition military and civilian advisors worked together and with other advisory organizations to analyze the task at hand and requirements for the ANP. Before communicating our thoughts to our counterparts, we allowed them to inform our understanding and tackled the problem-set together. We began to teach classes “guerrilla style,” embracing the chaos and fluidity of the environment. As we were always collaborating among ourselves, we had something to discuss with our counterparts. Classes were almost spontaneous: if we could gather only a few of our counterparts together, we would set up our white board and get to work. As in the more formal classes, we would often begin by introducing

a question or problem-set related to a real-world challenge. We would then brainstorm with our counterparts, writing all their input, whether it seemed immediately useful or relevant to us, on the whiteboard. As each workshop included at least one interpreter or liaison, language barriers were not an issue. It was important, however, that students saw their input captured, validated, and used to generate further discussion.

The climate of these engagements would be foreign to most U.S. military officers. There was no program of instruction, no list of enabling objectives, no PowerPoint, and no “foot-stomping, check the block” mentality. When we began a session, we realized that we were out on a limb: with a general idea of an outcome based on problems we were trying to solve as an organization, we would let our students lead the way. Often, classes would depart from our initial concept and take an entirely different route. These “rabbit holes” were often productive, teaching us more about our counterparts and their world. A formal military course or even most classes in the

American public education system would not have enabled this kind of learning. Sometimes, it would take us three classes to accomplish what we had intended in one class (determining a specific equipping scheme, for example), but we realized that this was not only acceptable given the environment, but also necessary.

It has only been a short time since these efforts began, and they continue to evolve. A scientific evaluation of our approach is impossible now. However, the response we received from our counterparts, and the increase in our ability to perform our core functions in support of ANDSF force management, indicated that we had struck gold. It is important to note that our training activities were enabled by our culture as a team and approach to advising. Prior to and throughout these initiatives, we made it a priority to bond with our counterparts. The U.S. military has come to understand the importance of building rapport; our team embraced this philosophy and took it a step further.²⁵ We built professional working relationships, and often true friendships with our hosts. Prior to

and after formal engagements with general officers, we spent time in the offices of their staffs, drinking tea, practicing one another's languages, discussing family, our homes, and perhaps more than anything else, telling jokes. At times, we could gently guide these conversations to force management, at others we just appreciated them for what they were: an opportunity to meet new friends and connect with those who had readily welcomed us into their homeland.

The advisor must understand the importance of human connections and trusting relationships in enabling everything from military training to formal negotiations. Still, we must treat our relationships with counterparts as ends in themselves. Just as we bond with our fellow Servicemembers, we must bond with host-nation personnel. Like our brothers and sisters wearing the uniform of the United States, they are serving alongside us. By putting on their uniform, they risk everything to defend their homeland and their families. Only by embracing our hosts, becoming a part of their world, and fully immersing ourselves in the operating environment can we conduct effective train, advise, and assist operations.

Moving Forward

The U.S. military and our allies will continue to engage partner forces around the world in pursuit of our strategic interests. When the decision is made to build capacity within a foreign institution, we must take a methodical approach to the situation while enabling those at the operational and tactical level with the freedom to make decisions and adapt to their surroundings. Our understanding of capacity-building must be informed by the education discipline and learning theory. After considering to what end we intend to influence a foreign institution and how, we must apply the principals of learning and an effective educational methodology to our advising operations and tactics. Without a means to effectively engage counterparts, our broader strategic goals will not be realized. Engagements, even at the highest levels of command and host-nation government-

tal institutions, are the "tactical level" of capacity-building. The methods with which we engage our counterparts will determine whether train, advise, and assist methods are effective in building partner capacity. JFQ

Notes

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² This issue has received some attention from the military and has been the subject of excellent scholarship that remains to be operationalized. See also Terrence Kelly, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011); Austin Long, *Building Special Operations Partnerships in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015); Todd Helmus, *Advising the Command: Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015).

³ T.X. Hammes, "Raising and Mentoring Security Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq," in *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War*, ed. Richard D. Hooker, Jr., and Joseph J. Collins (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2015); Obaid Younossi, *The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009); Leslie Payne, *Leveraging Observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for Global Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013).

⁴ Lauren Fish, "Painting by Numbers: A History of the U.S. Military's Phasing Construct," *War on the Rocks*, November 1, 2016, available at <<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/painting-by-numbers-a-history-of-the-u-s-militarys-phasing-construct/>>.

⁵ Joseph J. Collins, *Understanding War in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2011), 75–78.

⁶ Gates, 2–6.

⁷ Jonathan Raskin, "The Evolution of Constructivism," *The Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2008), 16–24; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (April 1992), 391–425.

⁸ Gary Shiffman and James Jochum, *Economic Instruments of Security Policy: Influencing Choices of Leaders* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 14–15.

⁹ Hammes, 279, 283.

¹⁰ See also David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press,

2013). Kilcullen applies a "systems logic" approach to problems of development and conflict that shaped the authors' thinking on these matters.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 255–260.

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²³ See also Stephen E. Webber, "Afghan Leaders Celebrate Achievement in Force Management Course," *Operation Resolute Support*, July 2016, available at <www.rs.nato.int/article/news/afghan-leaders-celebrate-achievement-in-force-management-course.html>.

²⁴ Dan Grazier, "Military Reform Through Education," *Straus Military Reform Project*, (Washington, DC: Project of Government Oversight, October 18, 2015), available at <www.pogo.org/straus/issues/military-people-and-ideas/2015/military-reform-through-education.html>. Captain Dan Grazier, USMC (Ret.), now a fellow at the Straus Military Reform Project, participated in one of Donald E. Vandergriff's courses at Fort Benning, GA, and wrote this article about it.

²⁵ Kelly; Long; Helmus.



Building a Stay-Behind Resistance Organization

The Case of Cold War Switzerland Against the Soviet Union

By Kevin D. Stringer

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Russia's revanchism toward its neighbors and its strong desire to extend power into traditional spheres of influence have major security implications for a number of post-Soviet states. This policy is magnified by Vladimir Putin's "Russian World" ideology, which implies that any former Soviet republic with either an ethnic Russian population or an unresolved territorial or security dispute with Russia faces a potential national security threat ranging from internal subversion to outright territorial invasion by Russian forces. The Russian occupation of Crimea in March 2014 and the Kremlin's intervention in eastern Ukraine between February and September 2014 demonstrate this risk to bordering states and overall European stability.¹ In particular, Russian use of hybrid warfare amplifies the threat.

Hybrid warfare is an effective mix of military and nonmilitary activities with



In spirit of Swiss direct democracy, the 2008 official photograph of Swiss Federal Council depicted them as everymen (Courtesy Swiss Federal Chancellery)

conventional and irregular components ranging from diplomatic and legal campaigns to clandestine transfers of armed personnel and weapons. These activities fall short of actual armed conflict and can destabilize and subvert a target nation's stability and sovereignty but not trigger North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or bilateral treaty commitments.² To mitigate this risk, a targeted state's society must be ready to conduct resistance should all or parts of its territory be occupied or subverted by a foreign invader or its proxies. This requirement implies looking back to the Cold War concept of "Total Defense" for some applicable models to evaluate and implement. The Cold War-era case of Switzerland, a small, neutral state that prepared for resistance against the Soviet Union, provides valuable inputs to the creation of stay-behind resistance organizations in the modern context and informs U.S. interagency and special

operations forces (SOF) considerations in supporting such efforts.

A Review of Total Defense

The goal of the Cold War Total Defense model was whole-of-society involvement in defense matters. The concept was to have the entire country involved in national security—not only the military, but also the private sector, local government, and nongovernmental organizations. During the Cold War, small states prepared a large array of tools such as total mobilization, guerrilla warfare, civil resistance networks, and clandestine organizations to achieve national security objectives and deter Warsaw Pact aggressors.³

Switzerland is an example of a state that practiced this doctrine during the Cold War. Its defense went far beyond the armed forces and included the economic and psychological mobilization of the population. The entire populace was

subject to call-up for both military and nonmilitary functions, and the national infrastructure and industrial production base were co-opted and tooled for possible defense usage. With extensive civil defense frameworks and wide civic integration into security plans, this democratic and neutral state achieved a high level of societal resilience during the Cold War period.⁴

Total Defense and Resistance

Swiss defense preparations during the Cold War are instructive for small countries at the strategic level for Total Defense and at the operational level for unconventional warfare and resistance missions. *Unconventional warfare* is defined as those activities "conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow an occupying power or government."⁵

These arrangements are also politically relevant, since as a neutral country

during the Cold War, Switzerland had to be self-reliant for defense and could not count upon allies or other states for support or intervention. This same situation could arise for neutral states such as Finland or Sweden today, or even Eastern European countries whose fellow alliance members might hesitate to intervene in an action that might be short of war or in the gray space of hybrid warfare.

At the strategic level, the Swiss viewed the military as only one element of national power to achieve their security objectives. In the early 1960s, the Swiss Federal Council postulated a shift from the concept of National Defense to Total Defense, which incorporated the diplomatic, informational, economic, and social elements of national power into a traditionally military domain.⁶ Swiss foreign policy oriented on the strategy of armed neutrality, while maintaining sufficient access to external markets for inbound and outbound trade. Social policy was designed to buttress the physical and psychological resilience of the nation.⁷ For example, to lower vulnerability to foreign propaganda, Switzerland maintained an objective national news service, promoted education among the populace, and engendered national pride in Swiss institutions.⁸ Economic policy was designed on the principle of autarky, with reserve food supplies and materials maintained at national, local, and individual levels. Civil defense became a cornerstone of population protection to ensure the survival of the nation in the event of nuclear, chemical, or biological warfare.⁹ In essence, the strategic objective was to make the society resilient to any form of outside aggression, physical or otherwise, through a holistic Total Defense methodology. This same objective is relevant today for those former Soviet states that find themselves targets of Russian hybrid operations and subversion.

A general principle guiding Swiss defense efforts was dissuasion, a form of psychological deterrence. This concept—when combined with powerful conventional forces, guerrilla resistance, and the self-destruction of Switzerland's industrial, communications, and transportation networks to deny their usage to

an enemy—would signal to an aggressor that the only gain in attacking Switzerland would be the occupation of a hostile area, denuded of economic or transportation value, with continued resistance by a determined and armed population.¹⁰ The objective of Total Defense was to make Switzerland an indigestible and costly to consume “hedgehog” to potential adversaries—in this case, the Soviet Union or its Warsaw Pact allies.

A critical component of Total Defense was the ability to conduct resistance operations in enemy-occupied Swiss territory. Despite its neutral status, Switzerland feared an invasion of the Red Army in the post-World War II period and conducted extensive research and analysis on resistance movements and irregular warfare. One popular misconception about Swiss preparations for resistance is that the Swiss military establishment followed the writings of Major Hans von Dach. In *Total Resistance*, his seven-volume series on unconventional warfare, von Dach propagated a concept of resistance conducted by the entire population, which he termed *partisan warfare*.¹¹ The Swiss General Staff rejected this approach amid concerns over the law of land warfare and the maintenance of governance over a population of partisans, and chose instead a conventional doctrine with an integrated resistance plan.¹² The Swiss military's other major concern was that an overemphasis on von Dach's partisan warfare would neglect other important components of Total Defense.¹³

The government's 1973 *Swiss Security Policy Report* explicitly stressed the need for resistance in occupied regions—hence, the national defense requirement for the classical stay-behind unconventional warfare mission and an organization to carry it out. Section 426 of the report stated, “The occupation of the country must not mean that all resistance has ended. Even in this case, an enemy shall meet not only with the population's antipathy, but also active resistance.”¹⁴ Section 717 of the same publication highlighted, “Guerrilla warfare and non-violent resistance in occupied areas are being prepared within the limits of international law, and will, if

necessary, be carried out.”¹⁵ This official position of the Swiss government to conduct resistance in enemy-occupied Swiss territory remained unchanged until the end of the Cold War.

Yet these resistance operations were to be well integrated with the operations of a robust, conventional force. Under the organizing concept of the so-called Swiss Army 61, the military consisted of three field army corps designed to protect the heartland, and one mountain army corps for the alpine regions. These 4 army corps were organized into 12 divisions—3 field, 3 mechanized, 3 mountain, and 3 border—supplemented by a mix of 14 border, fortress, and redoubt brigades.¹⁶ At its peak, Swiss Army 61, with its recruitment based upon a militia concept of universal conscription, encompassed 625,000 personnel.¹⁷ This number stands in relation to a 1962 population of 5.5 million.¹⁸ The main battle doctrine revolved around a defense-in-depth with static units to channel Soviet forces into destruction zones, and mobile units for counterattacks.¹⁹ An integral part of this plan was resistance in occupied Swiss territory, should regular defense fail. After the operative collapse of regular military units, the remnants of these formations would continue the fight in the occupied regions as guerrillas and partisans. In parallel, the civil population in these areas would practice nonviolent resistance within the parameters of international law. A preestablished resistance cadre organization would support and bring coherence to these efforts. The potential risk of repression and counterviolence was noted, and the government called upon the populace to prepare itself for such eventualities.²⁰

Resistance Organization

Like other threatened Western countries, Switzerland set up covert organizations tasked with the conduct of resistance in the event of a full or partial Soviet occupation. The Swiss Federal Council also established a government-in-exile location in Ireland for such an eventuality.²¹ As a result of its research, the Swiss government at first designated the so-called Special Service to organize popular resis-

tance to the enemy and supply the government-in-exile with intelligence. The Special Service was made up of three hierarchical levels, with the top level consisting of a small group of directing officers, members of the regular military who always dressed in their military uniforms and who were responsible for the administration and training of the secret army. The second level was made up of “trusted persons” who spread across Switzerland and were responsible for the recruitment of resistance fighters and supporters who formed the third level in their respective parts of the country. The persons recruited by the second level could themselves recruit a number of new members to join the resistance organization.

In 1979, the Swiss government transformed and redesignated the initial set-up into the P-26 organization, a designation derived from the 26 Swiss cantons.²² Defense planners conceived of P-26 as a top-down, cadre-led structure rather than a broad, decentralized civilian resistance movement envisioned and advocated by von Dach. Like the Special Service, the P-26 organized into three levels. The P-26 command staff consisted mainly of senior military officials on civilian contracts or secondment. On the second and core level, the cadre organization formed the secretive and well-trained nucleus of the resistance underground. This formation possessed a decentralized organizational model based upon the development of distributed clandestine cells. The third level would only have been recruited by the cadre organization if Switzerland had come under foreign occupation. The government tasked P-26 with recruiting and training core personnel who could continue the fight after an occupation. P-26 executed this by setting up stay-behind arms caches, storing specialized equipment that would be required by the resistance movement, and organizing the necessary infrastructure for the coordinated command of the resistance from unoccupied parts of Swiss territory or from a potential exile base.²³ In essence, P-26 provided the framework for the creation of both an underground and partial auxiliary. The underground

is understood as a “clandestine cellular organization within the resistance movement that has the ability to conduct operations in areas that are inaccessible to guerrillas, such as urban areas under the control of the local security forces,” and a partial auxiliary is “that portion of the population that is providing active support to the guerrilla force or the underground.”²⁴

Operationally, the P-26 concept offers four areas for contemporary consideration on how to set up a clandestine organization for the conduct of resistance in the case of occupation. First, the group prepared for four possible and plausible operational scenarios:

- a foreign military transiting Switzerland and occupying only a portion of territory without the goal of full occupation
- a foreign power attacking Switzerland and occupying a portion of territory with the ultimate goal of full conquest and occupation
- full conquest and occupation by a foreign army
- the overthrow of the Swiss government by external forces resulting in the occupation of Switzerland.²⁵

Second, the Swiss government placed the organization outside of the traditional military and government bureaucracy to protect its members from discovery in the event of occupation and to preclude its surrender as part of an overall capitulation agreement. Its military leader was hired under a private-sector contract, and personnel signed an employment convention via a front company delineating rights and obligations, with members paid and insured discreetly by the federal government. During peacetime, P-26 fell under the direction of the Swiss Chief of the General Staff.²⁶

Third, for recruitment, P-26 sought members who were balanced, independent, stress-resistant, and trustworthy, but with a low profile from both character and societal dimensions. They were to have regular jobs that would provide cover for periodic training absences. Many had no military service records, and there were also a minority of females.

Professions included a school principal, nurse, hospital administrator, medical doctors, engineers, and academics.²⁷ Recruitment occurred slowly, with a careful vetting and selection process. Once enrolled, the members were trained and allocated to one of the approximately 80 resistance regions spread across the country. The manning for P-26 was set at 800 personnel, about half of which had been recruited by the time of its deactivation in 1990. The 6-to-10 person units found in the 80 resistance regions were autonomous, and each had an active and sleeper cell assigned, with the active cell having no knowledge of the existence of the sleeper cell.²⁸ A typical cell had an operational chief, communicator, courier, and demolitions/engineering specialist.²⁹ Finally, the degree of planning, detail, training, secrecy, and operational security conducted by P-26 within the context of a democratic society lends itself to further study and research for the operationalization of resistance plans during peacetime.

Conclusions for Contemporary Planning

Given the specter of Russian irredentism in Eastern Europe, threatened countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Georgia, and even Kazakhstan must reevaluate their national defense strategies for their ability to conduct resistance or unconventional warfare on all or parts of their sovereign territory. Historical analysis can inform this process. Unsurprisingly, the Russian military draws upon its historical experience in the Russian Civil War and Soviet Cold War for the components of its hybrid warfare model. Similarly, at-risk states can review the Cold War period and, through the careful study and analysis of appropriate historical resistance and unconventional warfare cases, can assess previously used concepts for possible adaptation, application, and integration into a national resistance strategy. Although not actually tested by war and Soviet occupation, the Swiss example illustrates a pragmatic approach for a small European state in preparing for resistance in the event of full or partial occupation of its national



Swiss army infantry squad conduct building search demonstration, October 27, 2006, in Thun (Courtesy TheBernFiles)

territory by threat forces. The Swiss case study also provides reflections for U.S. interagency or SOF support to allies considering resistance as an integral element of national defense. Several lessons for evaluation come to the forefront.

First, the Swiss profile as a small country with limited resources has relevance for its equally small European cousins. While a RAND report on Swiss unconventional warfare highlighted the mountainous topography and homogenous nature of Swiss society as major differences with the Baltic countries, this assertion is incorrect.³⁰ On the contrary, the Swiss P-26 resistance organization would have conducted its operations in the rather flat Swiss *Mittelland*, which encompasses most of the population centers as well as the industrial engines of the economy. This pre-alpine region is also not much different than the topography found in the Baltics. Additionally, the Swiss population is highly heterogeneous, having German, French, Italian, and Rhaeto-Romanic regions. The Swiss have successfully meshed these diverse cultural and ethnic groups into a single

Swiss identity that provides an important foundation for societal resilience and resistance to foreign occupiers. This prerequisite is an important lesson for the Baltic nations and the integration of their Russian and Polish minorities.

Second, articulating the Total Defense concept and resistance mission in official national security documents provided clear and essential policy guidance for a whole-of-government approach to these efforts. The 1973 Swiss Security Report is one example of the need for current governments to provide national-level direction to these defensive efforts. All elements of national power must be integrated into a defense concept, and the psychological/information war component takes a leading position for preparation. As shown in the Swiss case, credible media outlets, an educated, critical-thinking population, and a degree of national pride are antidotes to adversarial propaganda campaigns.

Third, while guerrillas may come from parts of the armed forces, a clandestine cadre organization can provide one structural model for unconventional warfare preparation and clandestine

network establishment, with new recruits being brought into the underground and auxiliary forces only after hostilities are initiated. Naturally, other models can and should be evaluated. Of particular interest is the recruitment of nonmilitary personnel conducted by the P-26. In an age of biometrics and electronic databases, this approach could provide a resistance movement a greater degree of security against aggressor pacification operations.

Fourth, resistance planning and operations must be well integrated with an adequate conventional military force deterrent. Resistance operations alone are insufficient in deterrent effect to dissuade an aggressor. The Swiss coupled a resistance concept and organization with a four-corps, 625,000-person conventional military force, which represented almost 12 percent of its population in time of national emergency.

Finally, Switzerland did not possess a true SOF capability during the Cold War. Today, SOF are traditionally responsible for unconventional warfare and resistance missions, and they can be an important catalyst for resistance planning and preparation by facilitating unified action

with their interagency brethren to achieve unity of effort in resistance operations.

The Cold War ended with the dissolution of that “Prison of Nations” called the Soviet Union. Yet an irredentist and revanchist Russia has emerged after almost two decades to replace it. Already casting its shadow on the NATO members of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Kremlin may look to other post-Soviet states such as Moldova, Kazakhstan, or Georgia for further “Russian World” adventurism.³¹ Considering how to adapt the Cold War concept of Total Defense to current events, especially its critical resistance element, is an important task for national policymakers and their SOF elements to evaluate. The Swiss Cold War experience provides a useful starting point. JFQ

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New from NDU Press

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Strategic Forum 298

Cross-Functional Teams in Defense Reform: Help or Hindrance?

By Christopher J. Lamb

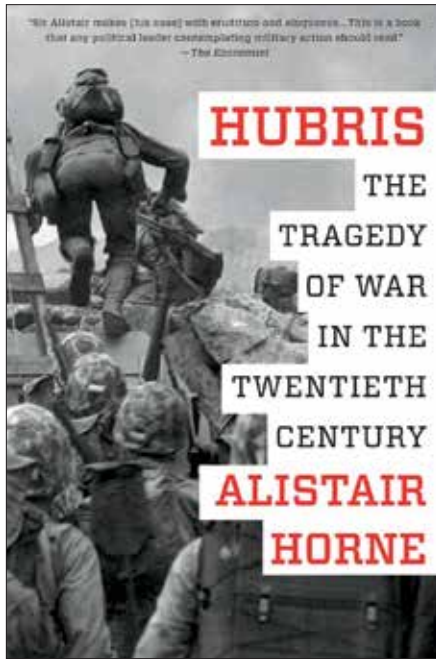


There is strong bipartisan support for Section 941 of the Senate’s version of the National Defense

Authorization Act for 2017, which requires the Pentagon to use cross-functional teams (CFTs). CFTs are a popular organizational construct with a reputation for delivering better and faster solutions for complex and rapidly evolving problems. The Department of Defense reaction to the bill has been strongly negative. Senior officials argue that Section 941 would “undermine the authority of the Secretary, add bureaucracy, and confuse lines of responsibility.” The Senate’s and Pentagon’s diametrically opposed positions on the value of CFTs can be partially reconciled with a better understanding of what CFTs are, how cross-functional groups have performed to date in the Pentagon, and their prerequisites for success. This paper argues there is strong evidence that CFTs could provide impressive benefits if the teams were conceived and employed correctly.



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Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century

By Alistair Horne
 HarperCollins, 2015
 \$28.99, 400 pp.
 ISBN: 978-0062397805

Reviewed by Ryan A. Sanford

Hubris, or excessive pride, comprises one part of a tragic dyad. The other part of the dyad is *peripeteia*, or a sudden reversal of fortune. For historian Alistair Horne, the hubris-peripeteia dyad comes to the fore in the decisions and actions of some of history's best-known leaders and commanders, whose arrogant overreach led to rapid reversal, defeat, and shame. In *Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century*, Alistair Horne examines six 20th-century battles to show how an inability to assess the strategic context properly, an overestimation of one's ability, and, potentially most significant, an ignorance of history's lessons, preceded many inglorious failures on the battlefield. Much like a Baroque composer, Horne establishes the hubris and peripeteia theme of his fugue using the Russo-Japanese War as the exposition, and then presents

the theme in new ways using different battles and their actors.

Regarding the Russo-Japanese War, Horne explains that while neither the Russian nor the Japanese army performed spectacularly, the Japanese navy surprised the Western world with its overwhelming victory against the Second Pacific Squadron at the Battle of Tsushima, thereby establishing fertile soil for hubris to take root. To wit, according to Horne, the Japanese naval victory coupled with their Pyrrhic victory in Manchuria not only forced the Russians to the negotiating table at Portsmouth in autumn 1905, but it also sowed the seeds of the "myth of Japanese invincibility."

Belief in this myth stoked the fires of militarism in Japan during the interwar years. Those flames blinded Japan to its strategic reality, thereby leading to its overreach in Mongolia, a crippling defeat at Midway, and its eventual surrender in August 1945. For Horne, pride caused Japanese leaders to misappropriate historical analogy and attempt to view their battles with the Soviets and Americans as nearly identical to their struggle against Tsar Nicholas II's Russia in 1905. According to Horne, an earlier generation's victory paved the way for its successor's defeat. Excessive pride made brittle the strategic decisionmaking process where, in fact, elasticity was needed to account for and adapt to changes in the strategic environment.

Using the Nazis' perilous foray into the Soviet heartland as a new subject, Horne further develops the hubris-peripeteia theme. Here, he argues that German arrogance, exemplified by its ideology and selective ignoring of history, set the foundation for eventual Nazi defeat. Whether discounting the Russian army's resurgence in Mongolia or holding in high, but uncritical, regard the Wehrmacht's performance in Western Europe, Horne asserts that Adolf Hitler never examined the strategic context, and how it had changed, before Operation *Barbarossa*. Hitler's *geopolitik* and belief in the superiority of ethnic Germans blinded him to reality, which led to the Nazi reversal of fortune. That said, Horne acknowledges that the Allied

victory resulted as much from Allied effort as it did from Nazi mistakes. Still, Horne ponders, counterfactually, what history would have recorded had hubris, to include ignorance of history and an ideological and racial fanaticism, not occluded Hitler's vision when he decided upon the perilous thrust into Russia.

The Axis powers did not have a monopoly on the proclivity to believe in one's infallibility. Indeed, examining General Douglas MacArthur's leadership during the Korean War and France's inglorious surrender at Dien Bien Phu, Horne writes a fitting recapitulation and coda for the theme of hubris and peripeteia. In the case of MacArthur, Horne juxtaposes his demigod status with the shame that followed his dismissal from command. Horne argues that MacArthur's belief that "generals are never given adequate directives," coupled with his performance leading to the Chinese intervention in autumn 1950, stoked his hubris and caused him to act in ways that undermined his civilian leaders' policy aims. In turn, a tragic reversal of fortune followed as exemplified by the humiliating "bug out" by United Nations forces and President Harry Truman's decision to replace the general in April 1951.

Overall, Horne's thesis and argument are compelling. There are, however, some weaknesses worth noting. While many will appreciate Horne's masterful grasp of history and his ability to tie together events that seemingly do not cohere, his habit of ascribing many of the decisions, actions, and outcomes in his examples to hubris ignores the reality that war is inherently complex. In other words, the path from hubris to disaster is not always straight. Nor does every case hinge on individual or institutional hubris. Given the same conditions and actors, small perturbations in seemingly insignificant components of the larger battle could result in different outcomes. Such is the nature of nonlinearity inherent in human endeavor.

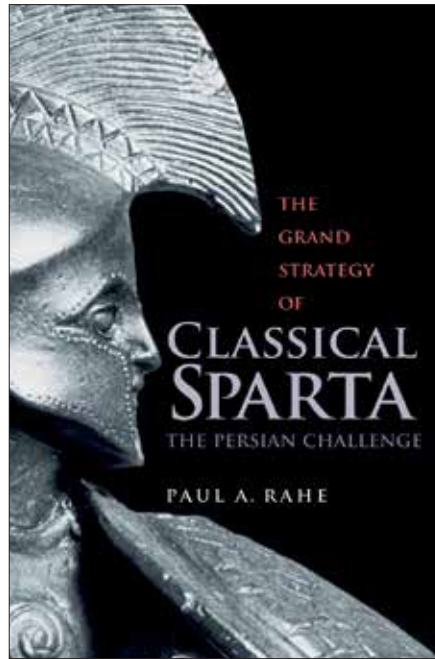
Still, Horne's argument that hubris was the sufficient condition for the reversals of fortune in his examples might have been more convincing had he used the methodology of process tracing. Even in failing to follow such a methodology, Horne could have provided the reader

with the tools to conduct such an inquiry. With only a limited bibliography and a paucity of notes, however, such an inquiry would prove daunting.

Despite these minor issues, Horne's work is instructive, especially because of the author's consistent reminder of the fate awaiting those who ignore the past. In fact, such a theme could have easily taken pride of place in this work. Horne's explanation of how the Battle of Tsushima, the 1940 Blitzkrieg, and the Battle of Verdun persisted as analogies for the Japanese at Midway, for Hitler during Barbarossa, and for the French in Indochina, respectively, shows the power analogies wield within the mind of the decisionmaker. In fact, Horne's examples provide additional evidence of the power of historical analogy, much as Yuen Foong Khong described in *Analogies at War*. For Horne, the arrogant not only tend to ignore history, but they also are heavily inclined to extend beyond their abilities. Indeed, Horne's six examples demonstrate the validity of Clausewitz's concept of a culminating point and the importance of reading the strategic context correctly to assess when such overreach will prove detrimental. Given the complexity of the strategic environment in the Pacific and ongoing operations in the Middle East, such reminders are helpful.

Finally, some may find Horne's lack of any prescriptive counters to the influence of hubris to be a detriment. Yet this, too, is a strength. With a prescription, one can easily fall prey to "checking the box," all while treading the path of hubris. Instead, Horne cautions that hubris is insidious. While one is most vulnerable to its effects during triumphant moments, the pathogen lingers. Thus, an awareness of its presence is, for Horne, the best medicine of all. The knowledge of hubris's infectiousness and the willingness to admit one's fallibility may prove the closest thing to an inoculation against hubris and its most dangerous manifestation, peripeteia. JFQ

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The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta: The Persian Challenge

By Paul A. Rahe
Yale University Press, 2015
\$34.95, 424 pp.
ISBN: 978-0300116427

Reviewed by Williamson Murray

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, Americans and their military leaders have had all too little sense of the importance of history and too little grasp of literature on thinking about strategy and the role of military power in the world. In fact, in the massive assault by the literati of the intellectual world, America's elites have come to regard the dead men of ancient Greece as thoroughly suspect and not worthy of serious study. In that regard, the *stèle* (tombstone) that marked the grave of the great Greek dramatist Aeschylus identifies him as a veteran of the pitched battle between the Persians and the Athenians at Marathon in 490 BCE, with no mention of his dramatic triumphs. His memorial reads:

Beneath this stone lies Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, the Athenian,

who perished in the wheat-bearing land of Gela;

of his noble prowess the grove of Marathon can speak,

and the long-haired Persian knows it well.

It serves as one more reminder of why the past appears to be of little use to Americans who look forward to a brave new world.

Professor Paul Rahe has directly challenged those assumptions that history is bunk. His *Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta* is a brilliant study of Spartan strategy during the Persian Wars (500 to 479 BCE) that deserves to be read by those few still interested in the conduct of grand strategy and the choices, good and bad, made by leaders under the pressures of war. He has laid out the obvious as well as the underlying factors that eventually led to victory on the part of the Spartans and their Greek allies against the great empire of Persia. The victory of the Greek states was by no means inevitable. Their opponents not only had an immense superiority in numbers, but from the beginning also possessed an advantage in the general disunity of the Greek city-states. Thus, it took extraordinary political and strategic skill for a few Greek leaders to hold their fragile alliance together.

For Sparta, its leaders, and their strategy, the problem was both internal and external. On one side, they confronted a deeply hostile population of helots, whom they ruled with a ruthlessness that still echoes through the ages. Those helots were essential to Sparta's military power because they provided the sustenance on which the economy and warrior polis depended, since the Spartans forbade any kind of industry or trade to its warrior citizens, whose sole business was preparation for war. Not surprisingly, the Spartans confronted the potential of massive revolt among the helots, revolts that their neighbors were more than willing to support. Thus, they were deeply conscious of the importance of balancing their internal dangers with the external threats in the Peloponnesus. Against Sparta's ancient opponent,

Argos, they waged a series of wars over the centuries to maintain their superiority in the Peloponnese. For the Arcadians, the other independent Peloponnesians, the Spartans bound their city-states as tightly as possible to the Spartan regime. As Rahe underlines, Sparta maintained a highly successful strategy “designed to keep their Argives out, the helots down, and the Arcadians . . . in.”

But Sparta’s strategic approach would work only so long as the Peloponnese confronted no external threat. And at the end of the 6th century BCE, that threat appeared with the rise of Persia and the creation of a great empire lying to the east of the Aegean. Rahe’s story then is a brilliant account of how the Spartans adapted their strategy to an entirely different world that they had ruled so successfully in the past. It is a tale of great leadership, the difficulties of making effective grand and military strategy in the face of quarrelsome allies, and the importance of the sharp end of combat. The Persian threat to the Greek city-states had begun to emerge at the turn of the 6th century BCE as the Persians spread their control over the Middle East and through Anatolia toward the Aegean. The city-states along the western fringes of Anatolia resisted, but received insufficient military aid from the Greeks in the Western Aegean to fend the Persians off. It was inevitable that the Persians would attempt to spread their power and rule across the Aegean into Europe. In the late 490s, they moved against the Greek city-states on the mainland of Europe. Many Greeks “medized” (threw their lot in with the Persians), but the Spartans and the Athenians refused.

The result was an invasion of Attica and the astonishing victory of Athenian hoplites over the Persian army on the plains of Marathon in 490 BCE. Almost 200 Athenians died in the battle, and their epigram noted:

*Reputation, indeed, as it reaches the ends
of the sun-lit earth*

*the valor of these men shall make manifest:
How they died*

*Doing battle with the Medes and crowning
Athens*

*Very few, awaiting and welcoming war at
the hands of the multitude.*

The Spartans arrived late for the battle because of a religious festival, but it was not due to chance. The Persians’ intelligence on the Greeks obviously knew the Spartans and their religious sensibilities and struck the Athenians when the Peloponnesians would not be available. The same factor in Sparta’s deeply religious commitment to its traditions occurred a decade later. As Rahe points out, Leonidas and the 300 would go down to defeat in 480 BCE at Thermopylae because the main Spartan army was detained at home celebrating a religious festival in the Peloponnese.

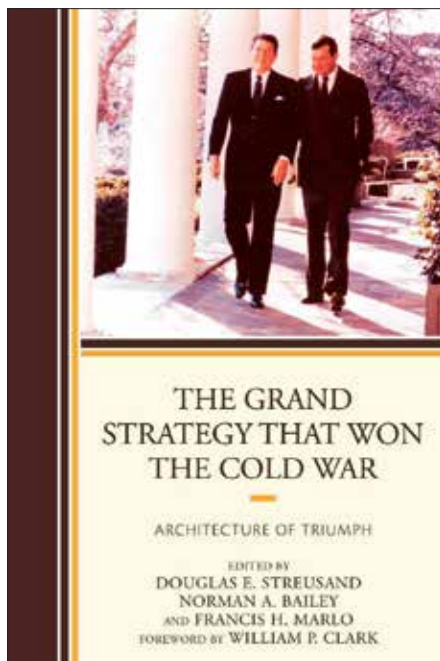
Ten years after Marathon, the Persians returned with a massive land army and navy. Here, the alliance between the Spartans and the Athenians would hold together in spite of the extraordinary differences in their cultures and politics. The Athenian Themistocles, son of Neocles, perhaps the greatest strategist of all time, had seen the danger with the greatest perception. Well before the Persians moved in 480 BCE, Themistocles had already persuaded his fellow countrymen to spend the whole windfall they had received from their silver mines at Laurium to expand the Athenian fleet instead of spending it on themselves at a time when the Persian threat still appeared distant. It was as if in the present day and age, the American people agreed to spend their entire social security payments on buying new equipment for the American military. That fleet was to provide the margin of Greek superiority in defeating the Persian fleet at Salamis.

But, as Rahe points out, the naval victory at Salamis did not end the threat, as accounts of the war, most written by Athenian sympathizers, suggest. While Xerxes and the Persian fleet scuttled off from the Aegean in flight after Salamis, the massive Persian army remained to threaten the Greeks not only with battle, but also with efforts at subversion to break up the Greek alliance. The Spartans

were largely responsible for keeping the alliance together, and then in the summer of 479 BCE, the Spartan generals directed the combined force of hoplites to a great victory that ended the Persian threat to Greek freedom.

In the largest sense, it was the superiority of Greek strategy that would allow them to hold onto their freedom. Rahe’s history, then, is crucial because it ties the pressures of war and battles to the execution of an effective strategy. Here, both the Spartans and the Athenians proved far superior to their Persian opponents. Rahe sums up what the Spartans and their allies had achieved in the following terms: “That an alliance of small cities . . . should stand up to and annihilate what was arguably the largest army and most formidable fleet ever assembled—this was and still is a wonder well worthy of extended contemplation.” For those interested in understanding strategy in the real world and the price that men have been willing to pay for their freedom, this is a book well worth reading. JFQ

Professor Williamson Murray is the author or editor of over 20 books, most recently *A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War* (coauthored with Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh).



The Grand Strategy That Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph

Edited by Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, Francis H. Marlo, and Paul D. Gelpi
Lexington Books, 2016
\$95.00, 296 pp.
ISBN: 978-0739188293

Reviewed by John Culclasure

For anyone crediting and honoring Ronald Reagan as the President who defeated communism, this is a must-read book. The authors of the various chapters—several were members of President Reagan's National Security Council staff—single him out as the progenitor of the “grand strategy” that brought down the Soviet Union. The book begins as a record of the formative events shaping Reagan, the man, in terms of his views and perceptions of communism. In the second part, the reader discovers the broad sweep of the many discussions, meetings, and decisions that helped Reagan see the fruition of his strategy to win the Cold War.

Reagan intended to *defeat* communism; in essence, he went to war. This

distinction enconces him as nonpareil among Presidents in dealing with the threat. President Reagan's thinking was encapsulated in a simple, trenchant statement he made as governor of California: “We win and they lose.” His outlook was very basic, very fundamental, and, it must be added, very timely, as the earlier strategies to counter the Soviet Union fluctuated between détente and containment. Reagan said no to both.

The authors eloquently and effectively highlight those early events shaping Reagan's views. They return to his days with the Screen Actors Guild when Reagan, the actor, was deeply moved by *Witness*, the autobiography of one-time communist Whittaker Chambers. For Reagan, the book delineated the ends, ways, and means of communism, and basically set him on the conservative course he followed for the rest of his life. His 1964 speech delivered on behalf of Barry Goldwater's Presidential campaign, titled “A Time for Choosing,” stands out as another milestone of Reagan's views. Specifically, Reagan surmised the United States could not play defense all the time; it would lose. Eventually, he concluded the United States must eschew détente and take a strategic initiative to roll back—not just counter—the communist threat.

The documentation and primary sources in the book's second part are fascinating reading in themselves. Drawing on declassified National Security Decision Directives and talking points, some included as appendices, the authors show the 40th President as an able planner, very much involved during his first term's outset. While the documents capture only a short span of his Presidency's early years, Reagan's burst of energy is nevertheless evident; he shines as a crafter of a strategy that was indeed “grand.” It was never static, and it entailed, as evidenced in the documents, all sources of power: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. Indeed, Reagan wanted them all working cohesively to fight the Cold War and to win it decisively. Reagan's great faith in U.S. technology is also evident in excerpts of his personal diary.

Those documents also assist the authors' attempts to correct the record about the fall of communism. Specifically, they assert the Soviet Union's demise did not “just happen,” to put it colloquially. Contrary to myth, President Reagan is far more than what some journalists described as a casual spectator, simply watching the Cold War events unfold toward an inevitable conclusion. The authors claim that Reagan was the instrument of change, unwavering from his endstate. Nor did Reagan alter his views in the face of the media swoon over Mikhail Gorbachev when that Soviet leader entered the international scene.

The intense focus on Reagan and his high-level measures is one of this book's shortcomings. The reader may notice a slight neglect of other factors affecting the demise of the Soviet Union. There is good coverage of the internal suffering from the malaise produced by communism; the Soviet people were indeed dissatisfied with “the great Lie.” Reagan took advantage of that dismal internal state of affairs, knowing it created fertile ground for the effects of Radio Free Europe (RFE), which Reagan's administration reenergized after it had languished in the 1970s.

Also, the absence of argument makes the book come across as fawning. The authors' individual chapters consistently reinforce each other, with no attempts made to counter or debate the other contributors' theses or points of view.

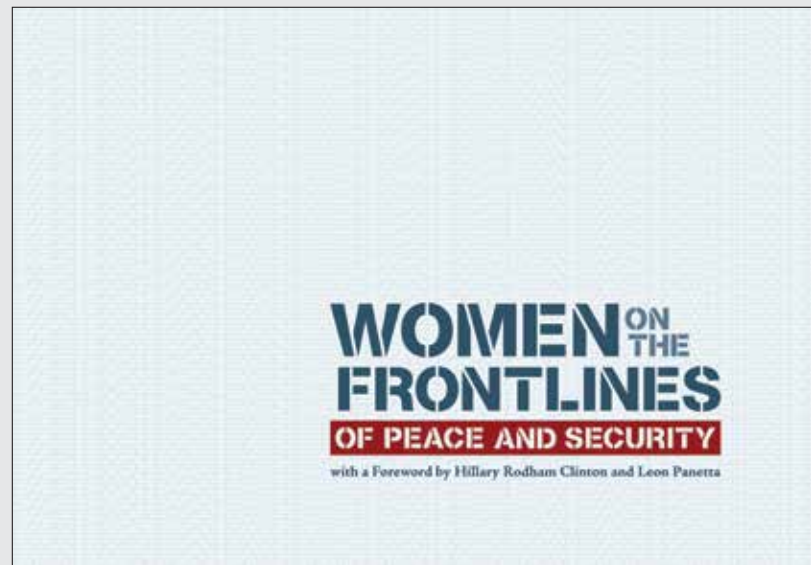
Furthermore, the book's focus on high-level strategic exchanges creates a dearth of coverage of operational exploits. The military build-up during Reagan's administration is not really addressed. There is no mention of the seminal Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Neither the Joint Chiefs of Staff nor the Chairman receive much attention. When they do appear, however, it is heartening to see them as cooperative actors for the most part.

President Reagan's methodical dissection of the entire Soviet problem is instructive, reflecting the system's approach, which is now a major part of joint publications. Also, the book's sections

dealing with the power of information lend themselves well to future joint operations. Current articles about information operations are replete with the need for fine-tuned narrative, key leader engagement, and considerations of the proper target audiences. This is bolstered by a very instructive reference to RFE by the dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who exhorted the medium's power but deplored its ineffective content in the 1970s.

Given the way the book demonstrates Reagan's steadfastness, future commanders in chief might be inclined to follow his example to address the threats facing the United States in much the same way. After all, one of the newer principles of war is "perseverance." Future Presidents will, in essence, have a grand strategy model should they need it. JFQ

Professor John Culclasure teaches at the U.S. Army Command and Staff Officers' Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



From NDU Press

Women on the Frontlines of Peace and Security

Foreword by Hillary Rodham Clinton and Leon Panetta

NDU Press, 2015 • 218 pp.

This book reflects President Barack Obama's commitment to advancing women's participation in preventing conflict and keeping peace. It is inspired by the countless women and girls on the frontlines who make a difference every day in their communities and societies by creating opportunities and building peace.

Around the globe, policymakers and activists are working to empower women as agents of peace and to help address the challenges they face as survivors of conflict. When women are involved in peace negotiations, they raise important issues that might be otherwise overlooked. When women are educated and enabled to participate in every aspect of their societies—from growing the economy to strengthening the security sector—communities are more stable and less prone to conflict.

Our understanding of the importance of women in building and keeping peace is informed by a wide range of experts, from diplomats to military officials and from human rights activists to development professionals. The goal of this book is to bring together these diverse voices. As leaders in every region of the world recognize, no country can reach its full potential without the participation of all its citizens. This book seeks to add to the chorus of voices working to ensure that women and girls take their rightful place in building a stronger, safer, more prosperous world.

Available at ndupress.ndu.edu/Books/WomenontheFrontlinesofPeaceandSecurity.aspx



USS *Hopper* prepares to moor in Homer, Alaska, in conjunction with its participation in biennial training exercise Northern Edge 2017, which includes units assigned to Alaskan Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Third Fleet, Marine Corps Forces Pacific, and U.S. Army Pacific, April 29, 2017 (U.S. Navy/Joseph Montemarano)



Adaptive Doctrine

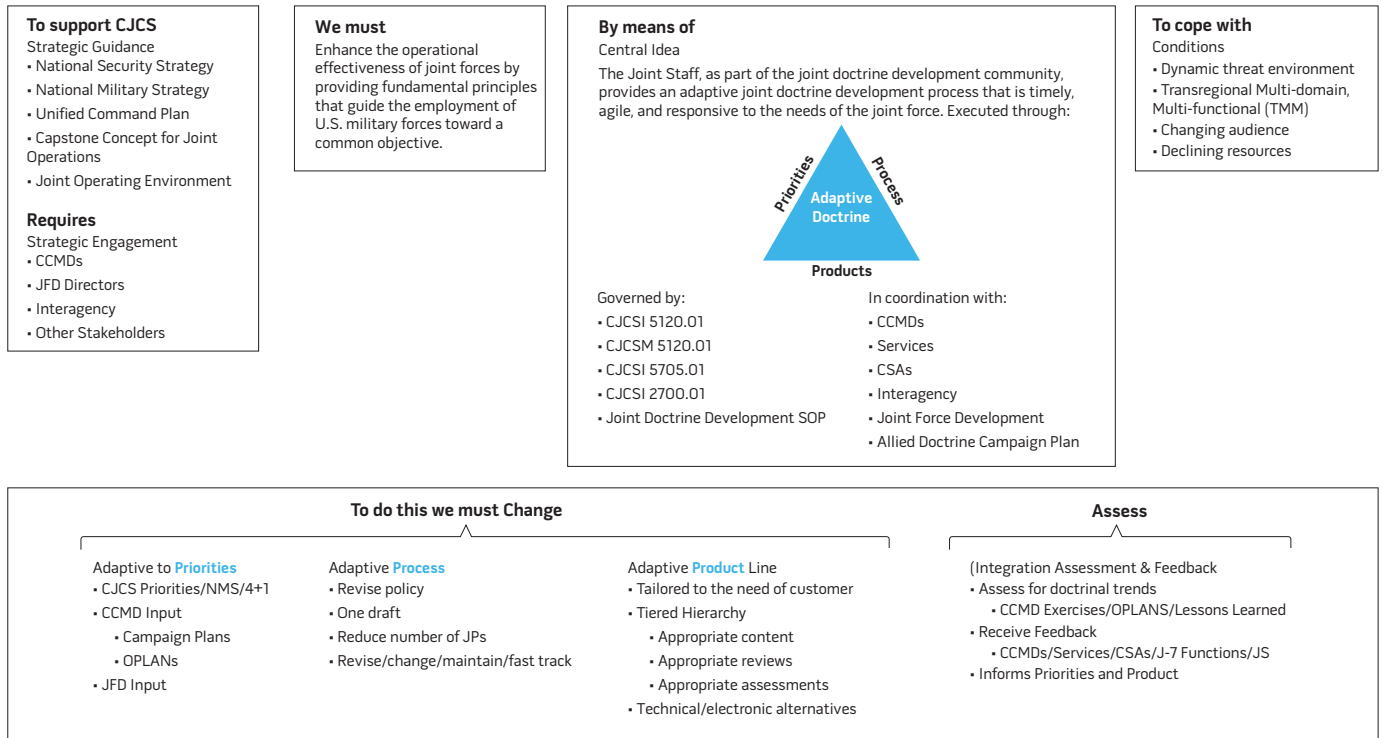
Infusing the Changing Character of Warfare into Doctrine

By Gregory E. Browder and Marcus J. Lewis

The nature of war is changing. . . . It is my assumption today that it would be very difficult for any conflict to be isolated to a region. Any conflict we have will be trans-regional, multi-domain and multi-functional.

—GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.

Figure. Adaptive Doctrine



The changing character of warfare demands a more flexible doctrine development approach. In response to the risk associated with revising joint publications (JPs) based on their age, the Director of Joint Force Development, Vice Admiral Kevin D. Scott, recognized that JP development must be prioritized based on top-down guidance and bottom-up refinement. As a result, the joint doctrine development process is being redesigned. This Adaptive Doctrine approach will reduce the time required to revise publications; ensure the process is being effectively managed to produce high-quality revisions; and reset the content of the joint doctrine library to reflect a portfolio that is lean, appropriately linked to joint warfighting functions, and is manageable within manpower and fiscal limitation. The figure explains the central

idea of how the Joint Staff has updated the process. The following details further explain the three components of the updated Adaptive Doctrine development approach.

Priority. The JP hierarchy has been reviewed, detailing the association and usefulness of a particular publication to the National Military Strategy and joint force. That analysis provided a baseline from which combatant commands, Joint Staff, and Service inputs were used to prioritize the library and calendar year 2017–2018 Joint Doctrine Development and Assessment Schedule.

Process. To meet process redesign challenges, the Joint Staff J7 is instituting several key policy changes such as single staffing of revision drafts during the JP development process; by exception, a second draft may be required. This adjustment will reduce the revision process time from 17 to 12 months. However, this streamlined process necessitates the highest quality initial input from Joint Doctrine Development stakeholders. Additionally, the development process is being refined to ensure the appropriate

level of effort is applied to each JP revision to enhance its usefulness and currency.

Product. J7 has also decided to reset the JP library to determine whether the content as it is presently represented in the doctrine library is best suited to be maintained as is; consolidated in another joint publication(s); recategorized as a different product such as a subject specific manual or handbook to ensure joint doctrine is appropriately tailored; or should be eliminated altogether. These efforts will further inform whether changes are needed to our current product line to meet resource and manpower limitations.

This Adaptive Doctrine approach will ensure joint doctrine development is responsive to strategic guidance, the joint force, and remain timely based on continuous assessment and feedback from the end user. As transregional, multidomain, and multifunctional threat environments continue to evolve, we must capitalize on our ability to adapt the joint doctrine that guides joint force commanders and their staffs as they prepare to conduct missions worldwide. JFQ

Lieutenant Colonel Gregory E. Browder, USA, is Deputy Division Chief, Joint Doctrine Division, Joint Staff J7. Lieutenant Colonel Markus J. Lewis, USA, is a Strategic Planner, Joint Doctrine Division, Joint Staff J7.



Captain Timothy Black pilots KC-135 Stratotanker on combat refueling mission over Southwest Asia while two Navy F/A-18C Hornets fly alongside, May 21, 2017 (Air National Guard/Andrew J. Moseley)

Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*

By Rick Rowlett

The Joint Staff Director, Joint Force Development Directorate (J7), signed a revised Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, on January 17, 2017. This JP 3-0 is the latest in a series that began with a January 1990 “test publication” titled *Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations*.¹ General Colin Powell approved the first official version of JP 3-0 in 1993 based, in part, on agreements reached among the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a number of debated aspects of joint

operations.² In a measure to increase access to and understanding of joint doctrine, General John Shalikashvili, Powell’s successor,³ issued the 1995 JP 3-0 in a hard-copy, purple-covered format as part of a Joint Doctrine Professional Library Desk Set.⁴ The Chairman also made the joint doctrine library available on the Internet. Since then, the joint doctrine development community has revised JP 3-0 in 2001, 2006, and 2011. There also was a Change 1 in 2008 to ensure continuity with JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, and a Change 2 in 2010 to incorporate text on cyberspace and cyberspace operations.

JP 3-0 is the keystone document of the joint operations series. It provides the doctrinal foundation and fundamental principles that guide the Armed Forces in all joint operations. The 2017 JP 3-0 is not a radical departure from previous versions. The majority of changes ensure the publication now contains the most current terms, definitions, and references based on changes to other JPs in the joint doctrine library since approval of the 2011 JP 3-0. For example, the joint community’s recommendations resulted in additional relevant information on joint electromagnetic spectrum operations (JEMSO)—those activities consisting of electronic warfare and joint electromagnetic spectrum management used to exploit, attack, protect, and manage the electromagnetic environment to achieve the commander’s objectives. JEMSO is an important topic in JP 6-01, *Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Management Operations*, and JP 3-13.1, *Electronic Warfare*. Similarly, JP 3-0 authors expanded content associated with the “protection” joint function by adding

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paragraphs on protection of civilians, which may be the primary purpose of a mission or a supporting task. Addressing this topic in JP 3-0 provides continuity with several other JPs, such as JP 3-07.3, *Peace Operations*, and JP 3-07, *Stability*; each covers protection of civilians in their specific context.

Beyond the type of updates mentioned above, it is essential that the constructs and language on overlapping topics are consistent and complementary between JP 3-0 and JP 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, and JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*. Thus, the more significant changes in the new JP 3-0 focused on this objective.

Security cooperation encompasses efforts by the Department of Defense with foreign security forces and institutions to build relationships that help promote U.S. interests and enable partner nations to provide the United States access to territory, infrastructure, information, and resources. Security cooperation also helps those organizations build and apply their capabilities and capacities consistent with U.S. defense objectives. JP 3-0 discusses security cooperation in the context of military operations across the conflict continuum at the low end of the range of military operations. Combined with military engagement and deterrence, security cooperation helps maintain U.S. global influence and keep day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict. Chapter VI in JP 3-0 focuses on military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence.

Joint Planning, the focus of JP 5-0, touches all aspects of joint operations. JP 3-0 and JP 5-0 authors collaborated to ensure continuity between these keystone JPs during each revision cycle. JP 3-0 is the proponent publication for operational art, while JP 5-0 is the proponent for operational design and the joint planning process. While focused at the operational level, content in both JPs addresses strategic and tactical issues. For example, the introduction of theater campaign planning in JP 5-0 resulted in related changes in JP 3-0 to ensure continuity and

consistency in language. Both JPs modified their discussions of phasing joint operations for the same purpose. JP 5-0 eliminates the figure that depicts phasing. JP 3-0 retains a figure that shows notional phases on an operation, but the associated text clarifies that it represents only one alternative. Actual phases will vary according to the nature of the operation and the joint force commander's decisions. The objective of ensuring doctrinal continuity and consistency also applies to the relationship between JP 3-0 and JP 1, which is currently in revision and scheduled for publication in fourth quarter 2017.

The JP 3-0 revision was informed by the latest information available from joint community feedback; various lessons learned and best practices from current operations; and relevant, validated constructs identified during assessment of approved joint concepts. The revision focused on achieving continuity and appropriate balance across JPs of related topics such as security cooperation and joint planning. Achievement of that objective ensures that the revised *keystone* joint operations publication will remain a relevant and current doctrinal foundation for all other JPs. JFQ

Notes

¹ Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, January 1990).

² On November 23, 1992, General Colin Powell signed a memorandum (CM-1502-92, Subject: A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts) that formalized an accompanying paper titled *A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts*. This paper represented agreement among the Joint Chiefs of Staff on selected aspects of joint operations, and was intended to guide development of the 1993 JP 3-0 as well as JP 3-03, *Doctrine for Joint Interdiction Operations*, and JP 3-09, *Doctrine for Joint Fire Support*.

³ Admiral David Jeremiah served as acting Chairman for 23 days between Generals Powell and Shalikashvili.

⁴ The desk set also contained other keystone JPs, a CD-ROM, and a VHS video.

New from NDU Press

for the Center for Strategic Research

Strategic Forum 295
*Reflections on U.S.-Cuba
Military-to-Military Contacts*
by Hal Klepak



President Barack Obama's visit to Cuba in March 2016 opened up the possibility of strategic benefits for

both nations. Well after over 50 years of hostility, however, it will not be easy to keep this nascent relationship on track. Avoiding missteps requires a deep knowledge of Cuba and particularly its Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, or FAR). The FAR are a complex and powerful institution that enjoys great public respect—more so than Cuba's Communist Party—and remain central to the functioning of the Cuban economy and state. Broadening rapprochement without the support of the FAR is inconceivable.

This paper offers insights concerning the FAR. It argues that it will be important to expand cooperation in the right areas and that it will be important to start small, go slow, build trust, consult early and often, let Cuba take the lead, and avoid imposing or reflecting a U.S.-centric view of civil-military relations.



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New from NDU Press

for the Center for Complex
Operations

*Like, Comment, Retweet: The State of
the Military's Nonpartisan Ethic in the
World of Social Media*

by Heidi A. Urban



Past research contends that with the exception of voting in Presidential elections, military officers' political

participation is fairly muted. Through a survey of more than 500 military elites attending the United States Military Academy and National Defense University, this case study seeks to establish the nature and extent of political expression throughout social media and whether such expression is in keeping with the norm of nonpartisanship.

Findings suggest that while most military elites continue to identify as conservative and Republican, fewer appear to do so today than at any other time over the past 30 years. Military elites who identify as liberals and Democrats are more likely to have more politically diverse military friends on social media, but are also more likely to report feeling uncomfortable by their friends' politics. This study concludes by considering the implications these findings carry for the norms of an apolitical, non-partisan military.



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Joint Publications (JPs) Under Revision (to be signed within 6 months)

JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*

JP 3-07.3, *Peace Operations*

JP 3-12, *Cyberspace Operations*

JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*

JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*

JP 3-27, *Homeland Defense*

JP 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*

JP 3-35, *Deployment and Redeployment Operations*

JP 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*

JP 3-72, *Nuclear Operations*

JP 4-02, *Joint Health Services*

JPs Revised (signed within last 6 months)

JP 2-03, *Geospatial Intelligence in Joint Operations*

JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*

JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*

JP 3-13, *Information Operations*

JP 3-13.4, *Military Deception*

JP 3-15.1, *Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Operations*

JP 3-59, *Meteorological and Oceanographic Operations*

JP 4-01, *Defense Transportation System*

JP 4-01.6, *Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore*

JP 4-06, *Mortuary Affairs*

JP 4-08, *Logistic Support of Multinational Operations*

JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*

CHARTING A COURSE

Strategic Choices for a New Administration

Edited by R.D. Hooker, Jr.

From NDU Press

Charting a Course:
Strategic Choices for a New Administration
2016 • 396 pp.

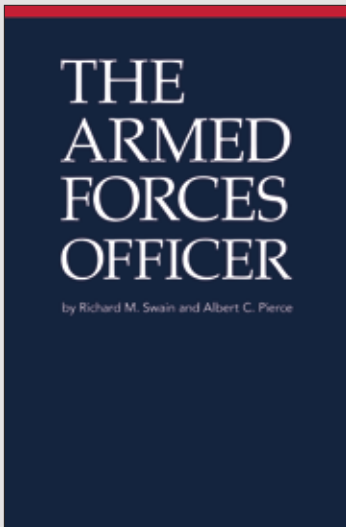
The Trump administration takes office in a time of great complexity. The President faces a national security environment shaped by strong currents: globalization; the proliferation of new, poor, and weak states, as well as nonstate actors; a persistent landscape of violent extremist organizations; slow economic growth; the rise of China and a revanchist Russia; a collapsing Middle East; and domestic policies wracked by division and mistrust. While in absolute terms the Nation and the world are safer than in the last century, today the United States finds itself almost on a permanent war footing, engaged in military operations around the world.

This book, written by experts at the Defense Department's National Defense University, offers valuable policy advice and grand strategy recommendations to those senior leaders who will staff and lead this administration in national security affairs. The President and his staff, Members of Congress, and the many leaders throughout government concerned with the Nation's security interests should find this book valuable. Their task is not an easy one, and this volume's insights and reflections are offered with an ample dose of humility. There are no silver bullets, no elegant solutions to the complex problems confronting America and its leaders. This volume provides context and understanding about the current national security environment to those in the Administration as

they prepare to lead the Nation during challenging times. To those senior leaders who bear the heaviest responsibilities, these policy insights may chart a course forward.

The lessons encountered in Afghanistan and Iraq at the strategic level inform our understanding of national security decisionmaking, intelligence, the character of contemporary conflict, and unity of effort and command. They stand alongside the lessons of other wars and remind future senior officers that those who fail to learn from past mistakes are bound to repeat them.

Available at ndupress.ndu.edu/Publications/Books/charting-a-course/.



New from NDU Press

The Armed Forces Officer

2017 • 212 pp.

From the Foreword by General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: “In 1950, the great Soldier-Statesman George C. Marshall, then serving as the Secretary of Defense, signed a cover page for a new book titled *The Armed Forces Officer*. That original version of this book was written by none other than S.L.A. Marshall, who later explained that Secretary Marshall had ‘inspired the undertaking due to his personal conviction that American military officers, of whatever service, should share common ground ethically and morally.’ Written at the dawn of the nuclear age and the emergence of the Cold War, it addressed an officer corps tasked with developing a strategy of nuclear deterrence, facing unprecedented deployments, and adapting to the creation of the Department of Defense and other new organizations necessary to manage the threats of a new global order.

“This new edition of *The Armed Forces Officer* articulates the ethical and moral underpinnings at the core of our profession. The special trust and confidence placed in us by the Nation we protect is built upon this foundation. I commend members of our officer corps to embrace the principles of this important book and practice them daily in the performance of your duties. More importantly, I expect you to imbue these values in the next generation of leaders.”

Available at ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/1159223/the-armed-forces-officer/.

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JFQ

JOINT FORCE QUARTERLY

Published for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by National Defense University Press
National Defense University, Washington, DC

