Military Review

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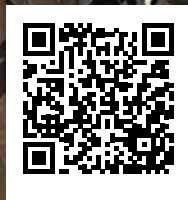
Military Review™

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

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Cover photo: Soldiers with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team
fire weapons over a trench during a live-fire exercise in the mountains
of the Mojave Desert 24 July 2021 at the National Training Center
in Fort Irwin, California. (Photo by Pfc. Emily White, Oklahoma Army
National Guard)

Develop, Modernize, Influence

Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army
Director, Army University Press

My role as editor in chief of *Military Review* is but one aspect of my duties as director of the Army University Press (AUP). I would like to discuss that directorate in this issue and how, over the course of the past several months, the Army University Press team has been working hard to ensure that our mission and vision are in alignment with Army University and the Combined Arms Center.

As with most U.S. military organizations, the mission, vision, priorities, goals, objectives, lines of operation, and lines of effort can evolve as leadership changes and evolves. While the mission of Army University Press has not changed in several years, the vision of the organization has changed. We must be more responsive and adaptive to the ecosystem in which we operate. Additionally, we must ensure that how we achieve our vision fully aligns with the Army University strategic vision.

The Army University Press mission statement asserts, "The Combined Arms Center's Army University Press creates and distributes multimedia products in support of the military profession, education, and Army mission in the 21st Century." A previous version of the Army University Press vision stated that we are focused on "advancing the ideas and insights military professionals need to lead and succeed." However, while consequential, that vision was not aspirational. It is what we do every day—inherent in the execution of our mission.

Coming together as a team, the Army University Press senior staff has crafted a new vision statement that is aspirational, reflective of the future impact we hope to have on military leaders, and declarative of the impact we intend to have beyond the Command and General Staff College, Army University, Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the Army. Ask a consumer of Army University Press products who our target audience is,

and a common response is that AUP is primarily focused on serving students at Fort Leavenworth attending the Command and General Staff College. Although students attending programs at Fort Leavenworth are a target audience, they are not our only target audience. We aspire to be more.

Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army
Director, Army University Press

The new Army University Press vision has three components. First, Army University Press aspires to be "the nation's premier military service press and the publisher of choice for Army leaders." This aspirational component will be a constant challenge, as we know that our sister-service peers are undoubtedly professional and provide an example, in many ways, of how we need to evolve and improve. Additionally, we are also very aware that Army leaders often choose other outlets, media, and platforms to project their messaging, strategic communications, command information, and thought-leading essays and articles. Indeed, AUP is an underutilized resource that can assist leaders with educating and developing their teams and units. It is incumbent on AUP to constantly work toward informing

the Army of our capabilities and resources. Likewise, we must focus on building relationships with Army senior leaders, informing them of our global audience and international reach, and assisting them with publishing or producing products that align with our common interests and mission.

Second, the Army University Press vision reflects the mission and vision of our parent organization. To do this, we must "support professional education across the spectrum of career development, building agile and adaptive leaders prepared to engage in the future operational environment." This reflective statement speaks to two primary imperatives. We must be involved and engaged in informing professional military education (PME) development initiatives, providing the full spectrum of products AUP currently has or can develop to improve, strengthen, and augment PME. Additionally, we must support the vision of the *Army Learning Concept, 2030–2040* in the quest for developing and educating agile adaptive leaders.

Third, the Army University Press vision declares that we must "lead, educate, and influence thinking and intellectual engagement within the military professional community ... and beyond by advancing insights and ideas professional military leaders need to succeed." This declaration honors our legacy vision while simultaneously opening the aperture of our audience to include the full Army enterprise and beyond. If you are reading this and would like to be a part of this vision, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team.

To operationalize our vision, we recently briefed senior leaders at Fort Leavenworth to gain approval of our roadmap to 2025. Using the Army University provost's lines of effort, AUP gained approval to pursue our course for the next two years. This roadmap is characterized by three primary lines of effort: Develop Leaders, Modernize the Ecosystem, and Influence the Enterprise.

To develop Army leaders, AUP will be working deliberately to contribute to and develop curriculum across the full spectrum of PME. This requires building collaborative relationships with leading, peer, military-centric publishers. If you are on a combatant or major command staff, we want to connect and work with you as well to support your mission and area of responsibility with appropriate

current AUP products or with products that we can develop together to support your command. If you are a member of an allied or partner-nation military, we want to connect with you as well to discover and pursue collaborative opportunities within the intent of AUP's mission.

To modernize our ecosystem, AUP is doing a complete review, update, and overhaul of our internet platform. The intent is to attract, sustain, and retain customers and users. By 2025, we expect to attract over 1.5 million users per year and increase our social media and YouTube subscribers to reach 150,000. As we reach milestones along this course and build momentum, we want to use the strength of our growing demand signal to promote Army enterprise programs and initiatives.
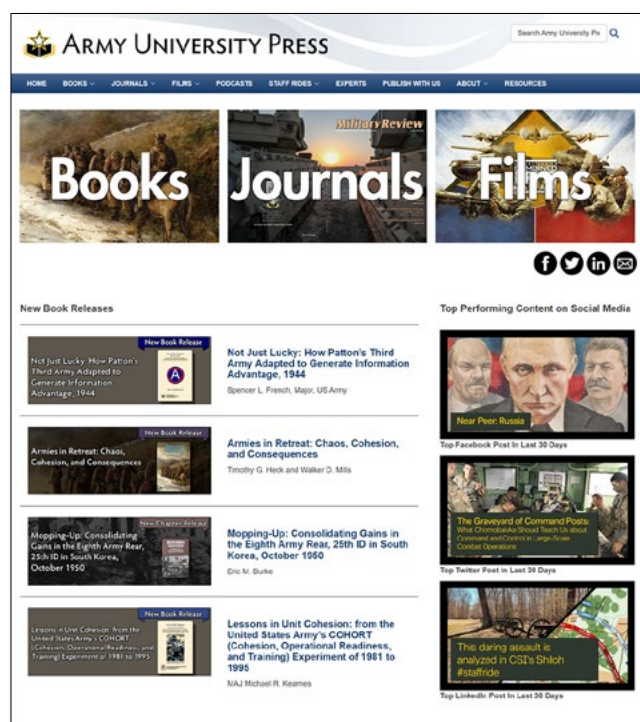
Army University Press Homepage https://www.armyupress.army.mil/

To influence the Army enterprise, AUP is working to gain better awareness among Army senior leaders in an effort to become the Army's publication outlet of choice, not just for senior leaders, but leaders at every level. We are passionate about leading a resurgence of military intellectual thinking and renewed interest in Army journals, writing, and writing programs. As previous letters from this

editor in chief have stated, we must promote warrior scholarship!

What you will begin to see from Army University Press is a new look. Our website changes are happening daily. We added the "Podcast" drop zone to promote and amplify appropriate podcasts on our website. We added the "Resources" page to help steer consumers and visitors to other organizations and websites that we believe appropriately share some of our vision for the military professional community of practice. We added the "Experts" page to help identify subject-matter experts within AUP's staff and will soon be adding subject-matter experts from across the Command and General Staff College and the Leavenworth National Security Consortium.

New product releases from AUP are exceptionally exciting. For example, to follow up our Army University Films Team's "Near Peer Competitor" series that features films on Russia and China, we will be producing and releasing three new series. The "Regional Powers" series will feature several films on regional power players. Our "National Security Strategy" series will feature three films on national security policy process, informing audiences of the roles of the White House, National Security Council, Interagency, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Joint Staff. Our "Global Challenges" series will investigate and inform viewers about international challenges that we face as a world community.

Our Books and Research program will be producing a timely book covering topics in the field of civil-military relations. Working with leading scholars in the field of civil-military relations, AUP will provide a one-volume primer that we hope will become a permanent resource for military students enrolled in programs, schools, and civil-military relations electives under the umbrella of Army University and the Army War College. More importantly, we believe the book to be so consequential that it should be issued to every student through their commissioning source.

Our *Military Review* journal is working hard with multiple contributors to soon release a series of dedicated and special editions. These dedicated issues and special editions will feature articles related to the fiftieth anniversary of the all-volunteer force, space and missile defense, special warfare, the intelligence warfighting function, and more. If you are interested in contributing, please reach out to us to gain information related to publishing an article with *Military Review*.

The Army University Press is very excited to announce the development of a fellowship program that will initiate collaboration and work with several "fellows" who will routinely contribute to AUP journals and films, capitalizing on their subject-matter expertise and national and international reputations. The fellowships available with AUP will also offer opportunities for new and mid-career leaders and applicants working to improve their writing, get published, and contribute to professional dialogue.

We know we will have challenges. In a resource-constrained environment, there are always challenges related to achieving and realizing aspirational visions. However, we will strive to maintain popular products, such as our NCO Journal and podcast. Both are increasingly popular products with a growing demand and audience, and they are important platforms for sharing NCO scholarship, writing, and lessons.

If there are products, changes, books, films, articles, podcasts, or ideas you have for Army University Press or one of our subordinate divisions, please reach out to us and let us know. If there are appropriate resources that you think we should be promoting or amplifying on our website, please reach out to us and let us know. If you want to partner with us or find out more about our vision, forthcoming initiatives, or fellowship opportunities, please reach out to us and let us know. We are your Army University Press, and we want to serve you. Help us by sending an email or calling our office. We look forward to hearing from and working with you to execute our mission and achieve our vision. ∎

Write for *Military Review*

Suggested Writing Themes and Topics—2023

- From the U.S. military perspective, what are the greatest external threats to the United States? Why and how?

- Do any external threats realistically threaten the survival of the United States or its allies? If so, how?

- Are there nations that consider themselves to be at war with the United States? If so, how are they conducting war and what would increase the probability of their success?

- Is there a new "Cold War"? If so, which nations make up the new confederated blocs (e.g., new "Axis" powers) aligned against the United States and how do they cooperate with each other? What types of treaties or agreements do they have that outline relationships they share to reinforce each other?

- Who does synchronization of DIME (diplomacy, information, military, economic) elements of power to achieve strategic goals best on the global stage? Contrast and compare employment of DIME by China, Russia, Iran, and the United States. How should the United States defend itself against foreign DIME?

- Does China have an "Achilles' heel"? What is its center of gravity? If it has one, how can it best be attacked/exploited?

- What does China view as the United States' "Achilles' heel" or "center of gravity"? (e.g., trade relations? Resource shortages? Diminishing technological manufacturing base? Societal instability and factionalism?) How specifically is it exploiting these? Specific examples?

- What is the impact of irregular immigration on the security of the United States? What role does the U.S. military currently have by law to protect U.S. borders from irregular immigration and criminal activity linked to it? What relationships does the military currently have with other security institutions to protect the border? What relationships should it legitimately have? How should the National Guard be used?

- Update on status of security force assistance brigades. What is the role now of the U.S. Armed Forces in Africa? Far East? Middle East?

- What logistical challenge does the U.S. military foresee due to changes in infrastructure and forward operating locations?

- What is "just over the horizon" in terms of weapons systems about to be deployed? Nanoweapons? Electromagnetic? Artificial intelligence? Other? How is the Army planning to mitigate effects?

MAY 2023

COMBINED ARMS
DOCTRINE NEWSLETTER &
DOCTRINE DEVELOPER'S GUIDANCE

Mission Command Center of Excellence | US Army Combined Arms Center | Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

The United States Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) Doctrine Newsletter & Doctrine Developer's Guidance is designed to facilitate the production and dissemination of doctrine. Doctrine priorities for the next 6 months are—

- FM 3-0 (Operations) MTT execution.

- Aligning keystone and capstone doctrine to FM 3-0.

- Operations Doctrine including ATP 3-92 Corps Operations, ATP 3-91 Division Operations, and ATP 3-94.3 Rear Operations

- Publication of ADP 3-13 (Information).

- Energizing Command and Control Doctrine with the development of ATP 6-0.5 (Command Posts) following the publication of FM 5-0, ADP 5-0, and ADP 6-0.

- Setting conditions for the publication of a capstone publication on irregular warfare in late 2024.

CAC is the Army doctrine proponent. The preparing agency for Doctrine Developers' Guidance is the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD), Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCOE). Comments and recommendations may be mailed to Commander, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, ATZL-MCD, 300 McPherson Avenue, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2337, or emailed to usarmy.leavenworth.mccoe.mbx.cadd-org-mailbox@army.mil.

For the Army doctrine proponent,

RICHARD D. CREED, JR.
Director, Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate

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Military Review
Invites Your Attention

The latest issue of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate's semiannual doctrine newsletter is now available: a comprehensive authoritative review of developments related to the status of Army doctrine formulation, updates, and announcements of recent releases.

Combined Arms Doctrine Newsletter (Spring 2023)
https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/D7B75FEF-C5BA-4C83-8FE9-83556F327C4B-1684250389150/CACxDoctrinexNewsletterxSpringx2023.pdf

Newsletter Collection
https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog/search?current=true&search_terms=CADD-CADN

(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Juneteenth
Freedom's Journey (1619–2123)

Col. Dwayne K. Wagner, U.S. Army, Retired
Edited by Amanda Cherry and Heather Karambelas

20 August 1619
A transatlantic feat,
Slave ships filled keel to deck,
Enslaved hearts beat and beat,
Their voices sing to Gods unknown:
"When will I be free?"

19 April 1775
Colonists challenged the King,
Men and women, white and black,
And every shade between,
Their voices sang to a God well-known:
"We will fight to be free!"

14 October 1781
A battle, often ignored,
Enslaved Africans, muskets, and grit,
Dislodge the Redcoats once more.
Battle of Yorktown and Redoubt 9,
The enslaved men ask their Gods:
"Does victory make freedom mine?"

12 April 1861
A nation, torn apart,
Brother and cousins, swords drawn,
Pointed at our nation's heart,
Soldiers cried to their Christian God:
"Will my death set others free?"

1 January 1863
A proclamation decree,
Unshackled chains, the Black Enslaved,
An attempt to make all free.
Texas slaves cried to their Gods:
"Why not us ... and … why not me?"

9 April 1865
End of the bloody war.
Over six hundred thousand dead,
Grant meets with Lee once more.
Blue and Gray mothers wailed to their God:
"Can our sons now be freed?"

1863 to '65
Freedom took two years.
Texas ignored Emancipation.
More pain, more blood, more tears.
Field-slave Wagoner said to his God:
"What now will you have us fear?"

19 June 1865
A glorious day indeed.
Arrival of troops in federal blue,
Texas Enslaved are freed.
A coal-skinned mother in Galveston shouts:
"We be free! We are free!"

1865 to '77
Forty acres and a mule.
Reconstruction failed to hold,
Rich power brokers ruled.
Poor voices agonize to God:
"Will freedom find us soon?"

1865 to 2021
Juneteenth is freedom's grace.
Celebrated Texas-wide,
Now ready for America's embrace.
Deacon Wagner looked to the heavens:
"Is Juneteenth freedom's taste?"

The Texas African American History Memorial, made of bronze and granite and erected in 2016 on the capitol grounds in Austin, traces the history of African Americans in Texas from the 1500s to the present. The central portion of the memorial depicts Juneteenth, which commemorates 19 June 1865, the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas, more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery. (Photo by José Pestana via Flickr)

18 June 2021
This holiday, "they" celebrate,
Exactly what does it mean?
Am I allowed to participate,
To celebrate the free?
I asked my God for guidance:
"Join hands in liberty."

19 June 2021
Juneteenth, Juneteenth
Let's celebrate.
America righted a wrong.
Juneteenth, Juneteenth
Let's elevate:
"With love, praise, and song."

19 June 2023
Juneteenth seeks to unite.
Indigenous, immigrant, enslaved or not,
America has earned this right.
Citizens quietly self-reflect:
"Juneteenth brings freedom's might."

2024 and beyond.
The next 100 years.
Juneteenth represents our quest.
Make freedom the last frontier.
Our grandchildren silently smile,
As June 19th now endears.

A picnic at the Emancipation Day celebration, 19 June 1900. (Photo courtesy of Grace Murray Stephenson, via Austin History Center, Austin Public Library [PICA-05476])

TEXAS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MEMORIAL

New Years, Easter, Memorial Day,
We lovingly recognize.
July the 4th and Labor Day,
Are gleefully embraced with pride.
Juneteenth, our newest holiday,
Can help unite our tribes.

My father's story of olden times,
Included Juneteenth lore.
The slaughtered hog, the greens, the yams,
The songs, the dance, and more.
While Grandma sang a country tune:
"Knockin' on Heaven's Door"

If I am not free; You are not free.
If you are not free; I am not free.
America, our land of liberty.
We ask and pray:
"For equality."

Juneteenth is for you,
Juneteenth is for me,
Our histories not aligned.
Regardless of each journey,
Our futures are intertwined.
I hear ancestral voices ask:
"America, will thine be mine?"

Top: A group of African Americans gathered around a man with a pocket watch leaning on a pulpit made out of U.S. Sanitation Commission crates on 31 December 1862. A sign on the wall reads "1 Jan-Slaves Forever Free." (Image courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Collection)

Right: Handwritten text of the Emancipation Proclamation on a card, circa 1863–1880s. (Image courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Collection)

Col. Dwayne Wagner, U.S. Army, retired, and his five siblings celebrated Juneteenth in Texas from 1970 to 1978, and he has held Juneteenth gatherings around the world during his military travels from 1978 to 2008. His family originally migrated to East Texas under the name Wagoner, their enslaved name, and after freedom changed their name to Wagner. A speaker, panelist, and social media provocateur, Wagner focuses on asking Americans to see the world through the eyes of others and treat all with dignity and respect. He taught policy and strategy at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, from 2008 to 2023, earning recognition as the 2017 Civilian Educator of the Year and the Association of the United States Army Kansas City Chapter 2023 Civilian Employee of the Year.

General Order No. 3, issued 19 June 1865. (Images courtesy of the National Archives)

Two and one-half years after President Abraham Lincoln's historic Emancipation Proclamation, Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued General Order No. 3 on 19 June 1865, which informed the people of Texas that all enslaved people were now free. This day has come to be known as Juneteenth (also called Freedom Day or Emancipation Day), the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. The order reads,

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.

To view the full handwritten order, visit https://www.archives.gov/news/articles/juneteenth-original-document.

Members of Task Force Dark Rifles surveil from the corner of a rooftop in the mock urban town of Barasu during National Training Center rotation 21-05 at Fort Irwin, California, 16 March 2021. (Photo by Sgt. Adeline Witherspoon, U.S. Army National Guard)

Concrete Command

Why Combat Training Centers Should Prioritize Training on Urban Command Posts

Lt. Col. Craig A. Broyles, U.S. Army

Charlotte Richter

Among the most intractable challenges facing U.S. Army brigade combat teams (BCT) attending the combat training centers (CTC) preparing for large-scale combat operations (LSCO) is maintaining command and control against adversaries equipped with sophisticated overhead surveillance complemented by electronic warfare technology that rapidly locates and facilitates the targeting of command posts. To effectively execute command-and-control operations, a headquarters must ensure its ability to receive and transmit data as it collaborates across all warfighting functions to guide operations. Traditionally, commanders choose to synchronize multidomain operations by physically collocating staff planners in a masked stationary location as a means of continuity. However, while positioning staff together fosters good command and control, the sheer mass of modern electronic signatures of communications emanating from this headquarters to subordinate units increasingly risks easy detection by opposing forces (OPFOR).

To mitigate this vulnerability, some commanders have experimented with dispersing and frequently relocating the component elements of the tactical headquarters to dilute concentrated electromagnetic signatures. Although dispersion may increase the survivability of mobile command posts, some units mark the technique as unsatisfactory because the constant interruption to communications between component elements often leads to stovepipe planning. Consequently, the ongoing discussion of Army training experimentation to mitigate the problem of command post vulnerabilities rests on integrating an alternative to stationary, mobile, and hybrid rural command posts: leveraging existing urban infrastructure for effective command and control.

Stationary versus Mobile Command

Military professionals who maintain the traditional view rationalize optimal command-and-control operations to mean staff elements should be located together and remain relatively stationary because effective headquarters requires stable conditions for staff collaboration facilitated by frequent face-to-face communication, situational awareness, orders production, and rehearsals best achieved under canvas and camo nets with tables, chairs, computers, projectors, printers, etc. In practice, experience shows static headquarters can move but only with deliberate planning, rehearsals, and an alternate

command post. These moves average twelve hours to displace and become operational at a new location. Those supporting the necessity for stationary command posts mitigate detection by OPFOR by proper use of terrain, camouflage, and other operational security practices already regularly trained at CTCs.

However, as demonstrated in the figure (on page 15), these command posts appear as standout anomalies in the field under advanced electromagnetic and thermal detection sensors from air and space reconnaissance despite best practices in camouflage and operational security. Critics of stationary commands assert that although such headquarters initially provide better command and control at the outset of combat operations, a post with a glaring electronic signature cannot move quickly from the threat of detection, thus reducing survivability in LSCO.

In contrast, some soldiers argue that an optimal tactical headquarters is fully mobile. These units espouse less ideal working conditions, crowding staff action officers inside the back of trucks and vans to extend survivability with the ability to displace in minutes rather than hours. For them, tents, canvases, and temporary shelters represent wasted time that could risk lives upon attack or discovery. By accepting the risk of some staff-action degradation and stovepipe planning imposed by vehicle size and portability constraints, mobile headquarters can also keep up with fast-moving armor and Stryker formations in the LSCO environment, providing the best chance for exercising operation control.

Notwithstanding, other soldiers contend that mobile headquarters sacrifice communication, stable data reception, and an essential part of interoperability: collectively synchronizing a

Lt. Col. Craig Broyles, U.S. Army, is an infantry officer and instructor at the Senior Service College at the School of Advanced Military Studies. He previously commanded NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group Poland and 3-161 Infantry Battalion, "Dark Rifles," in the 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard.

Charlotte Richter specializes in multimedia coverage. Her education includes undergraduate degrees in journalism and global and international studies from the University of Kansas, and professional experiences as a reporter and freelance strategist.

methodical staff process to support the commander's decision-making and effective order dissemination. Military leadership across the branches agree that training, even doctrinally, must prioritize clear communication to meet changes on the battlefield.[1]

However innovative, irrespective of mobility, any reconfiguration of command posts—including adding vehicles to make static configurations more mobile in some hybrid combination—will prove futile unless BCTs conceal the electronic signature of a headquarters while fostering an adaptable, collaborative command environment. Consequently, the remedy to the problem of command post vulnerability is finding ways to hide electronic signatures effectively.

Field Headquarters in Context

A cultural factor in military thinking that inhibits solutions to successfully masking electronic signatures is the overarching belief that tactical headquarters must be located "in the field" or in a rural setting far removed from buildings and civilians. This belief stems from the assumption that the austerity of a location intrinsically promotes safety—this view needs to be corrected.

During previous conflicts with less technological dominance in air and space domains, rural tactical

A Command Post Node/Satellite Transportable Terminal is employed 19 August 2020 during Saber Junction 20 in Hohenfels, Germany. The annual exercise is conducted by the 7th Army Training Command U.S. Army Europe to assess the readiness of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to execute unified land operations in a joint, combined environment and to promote interoperability with participating partner nations. (Photo by Master Sgt. David Ruiz, U.S. Army)

headquarters created an advantage or a reliable platform from which to command. Combat in an era of less urban development offered more options to hide from civilian interference, more protection from guerrilla or special operation forces actions, and the ability to dig in to protect against air and indirect fire. Additionally, hiding from adversaries could be accomplished using traditional cover and concealment techniques such as camouflaging vehicles and tents, enforcing noise and light discipline, proper dispersion, and vigorous counter reconnaissance patrolling. Today, however, modern detection sensors linked with long-range, precision-guided munitions are so effective that current battlefields now resemble submarine warfare in many respects far more than in previous eras of land combat—if it can be seen, it can be killed, and quickly. As military theorist Robert Leonhard observes about the modern operational environment, "The real battle is about detection."[2]
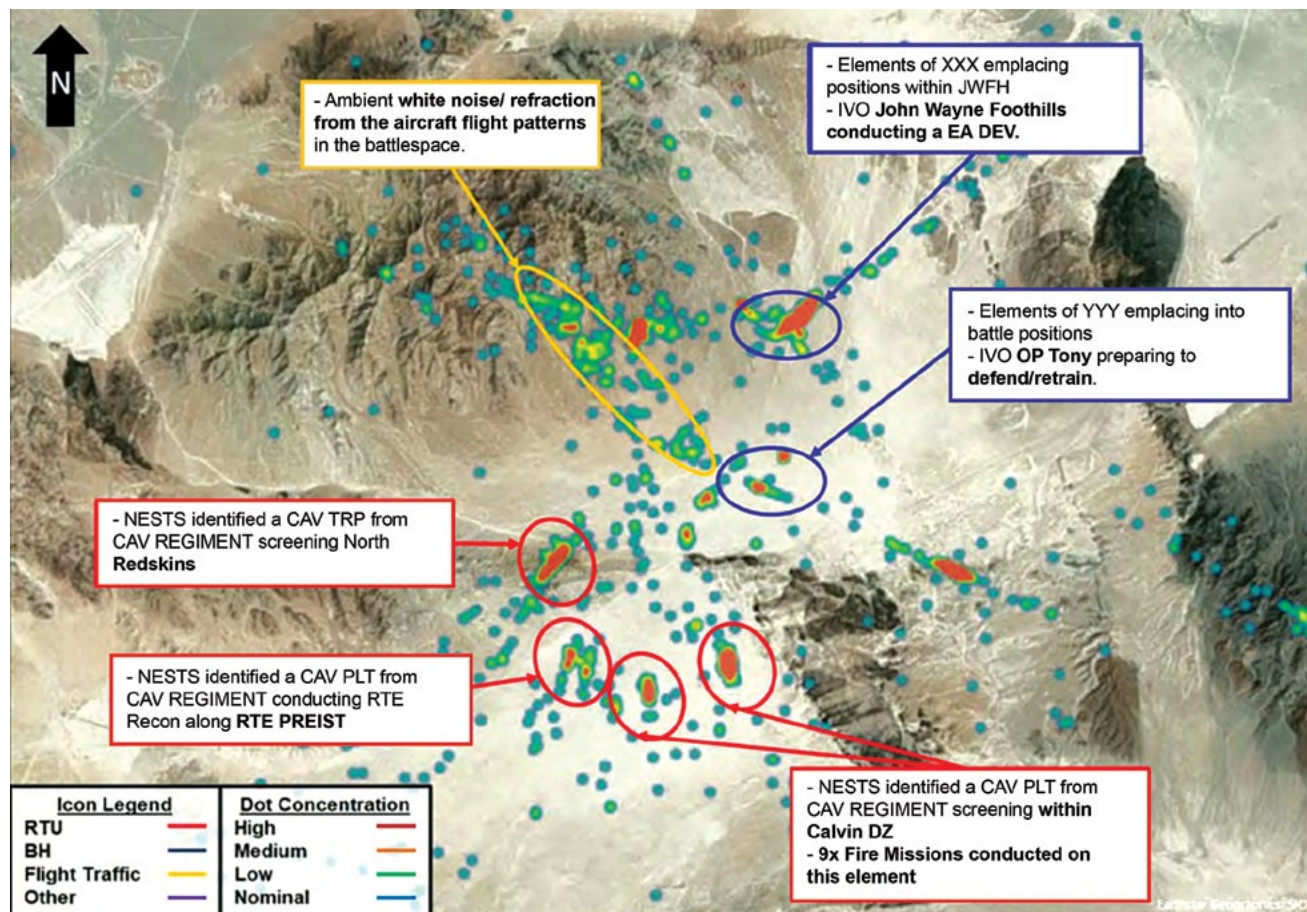
(Figure courtesy of Col. Scott Woodward, U.S. Army)

Figure. Electronic Signatures from an Exercise at Fort Irwin

Eluding detection begins with understanding the magnitude of BTC signatures. Blending in on the current battlefield means the electromagnetic BTC signature cannot be darker or brighter than the existing environment. Therefore, the most plausible location for effective command post operations removes the stark contrasts seen in reconnaissance technology by settling into a city's urban sprawl, where established infrastructure and civilian signatures appear within the same operating space.

Using Preexisting Civilian Infrastructure

As of 2020, more than half of the global population resides in urban areas, and the U.S. Army anticipates twenty-first-century combat to move into or around cities.[3] Conveniently, urban landscapes offer electromagnetic and thermal concealment to hide tactical headquarters emissions. Cities also provide

the advantage of existing buildings, roads, and urban infrastructure that a BCT can retrofit to serve as a survivable tactical headquarters and modify around the activities of the resident population.

For example, during my command of Battle Group Poland stationed near the Suwalki Gap, we explored the possibility of an urban headquarters upon finding flaws in our field operations. We operated a command post rurally, maintaining distance from Polish Territorial Defense Forces camps, local towns, and borders lining Russia and Belarus. One of the difficulties communicating in the field was establishing an FM antenna on the ground high enough to support radio transmissions. Battle Group Poland found FM communications almost impossible outside of three to five kilometers, even while using several OE-254 antennas. The absence of high ground and dense forests negated using FM communications. Consequently, we had to rely on other forms of

Soldiers with the 334th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, enter a building during military operations in urban terrain training at Camp Ripley, Minnesota, 18 July 2022. (Photo by Spc. Elizabeth Hackbarth, U.S. Army)

communicating with each presenting unique difficulties because of the environment.

Tactical headquarters using urban terrain could occupy buildings to leverage their capabilities such as antennas placed on top of high buildings, existing fiberoptic lines, and internet connections. For example, a survivable headquarters could be a parking garage, given the massive concrete structure provides a solid foundation around signals, storage for vehicles and personnel, and access to roadways. Parking also assumes an area designed around the needs of many people that would also be available to a tactical headquarters.

Using Existing Civilian Communication Networks

To further mitigate communication challenges in a conflict, the United States could exploit a dense network of existing urban communications capabilities in Europe and CTCs to command-and-control friendly forces. Getting the host nation's agreement to use such capabilities, followed by preplanning and

subsequent exercise, would expedite command and control at a critical stage during the repositioning and deployment of forces to deal with an adversary. Under peacetime restrictions, tapping into existing civilian communication capabilities is not considered acceptable on the grounds of security and privacy.[4] However, anticipating potential conflict that would no doubt require innovative expedient solutions, planning for such communications compatibility between military and civilian communications systems before a crisis should be a priority U.S. Army and NATO initiative to enable tactical headquarters to assume operations rapidly after initiation of hostilities.

Urban Sustainment Advantages

Tactical headquarters falling in on existing structures in urban environments offer sustainment advantages in contrast with large sustainment requirements to support command posts in rural areas. Operating in the field means relying heavily on resupply along unbroken lines of communication. Enemies historically target

Franco-German soldiers of the 3rd Company of the Jäger Battalion 292 of the German-French Brigade train for urban combat 29 March 2017 at the Altmark military training area in Germany as part of the preparation for a deployment in support of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence mission. (Photo by Jana Neumann, Bundeswehr)

supply lines and communication vulnerabilities upon the outbreak of conflict. By operating in a cityscape, urban headquarters can plan around susceptible or compromised lines using public and private networks or emergency routes.

As Field Manual-3-0, *Operations*, mandates, U.S. forces must "fight and win while outnumbered and isolated."[5] Tactical headquarters in urban environments can use existing water, fuel, food, and sewage capabilities with multiple sustainment lines to substantiate metropolitan populations. This network serves as a near-term advantage by relieving the pressure of any choice of vulnerable lines of communication.

To highlight this advantage in current context, Russian and Ukrainian forces have garnered attention for using urban landscapes. However, the invasion led to the inevitable use of neighborhoods and power plants as battlegrounds. Throughout the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict, Ukrainian and Russian forces frequently utilize strategic command-and-control posts in urban and residential areas, including the Chornobaivka Airport, to survive and shift urban terrain assets to organize effective offensive operations.[6]

Defense of Command Posts in an Urban Environment

Urban environments offer tactical headquarters more security options than austere field environments. Tactical headquarters are notoriously vulnerable targets for OPFOR, and securing them is always problematic. Tactical headquarters rarely have dedicated personnel for security, so they must pull soldiers from the headquarters to establish guard duty rosters, complicating defense. When soldiers reorganize, it is common for headquarters personnel's warfighting skills to have atrophied due to a lack of refresher training and experience. Yet, these headquarters staff soldiers with little recent experience and weapons skills training are responsible for defending the most lucrative target from the best soldiers and arms available to an enemy if the command post is detected. This is an unfair fight with a marginal chance of success.

By operating tactical headquarters in cities, the odds even up for soldiers with limited weapons skills because of the urban environment's defensive advantages. For one, offensive forces are disadvantaged when attacking an urban headquarters. A few soldiers—with effective leadership and organization—properly utilizing the 720-degree (360 horizontal, 360 vertical) possibilities can fight off vastly outnumbering attackers. Additionally, tactical headquarters can reinforce security and defense with mutual interest civilian organizations including police, fire, and volunteers.

Cultivating Support from Urban Populations

Another dimension that urban areas offer under certain circumstances is support from local populations. Local support can bolster defense, communication, and credibility in and around a headquarters based on two assumptions: willing authority to the military and subsequent friendly interactions. Psychological scar tissue from the Global War on Terrorism created a common planning assumption that civilian populations are hostile to the presence of U.S. forces. However, civilian relationships are conditional and will likely be more neutral, even friendly, in many future warfighting scenarios involving U.S. forces. As illustrated by Battle Group Poland, the village leadership and town mayors near the Suwalki Gap highly supported U.S. forces and our efforts—they believed supporting our forces was in their best interests against potential Russian threats. They told us, in the event of a Russian invasion, NATO forces could rely on Polish civilian leadership for aid, including support for offering and obtaining access to desirable tactical headquarters locations in urban areas.

These relationships also commit an enemy to the logistics and narrative justifications of attacking an urban headquarters with an active population. If the military can co-opt civilian populations rather than create a "human shield" by forcing civilians to stand in front of enemy fire, adversaries who choose to attack in an urban environment inherently risk more of their force.

Though the presence of tactical headquarters operating in towns is associated with some risk to the local population, there is not necessarily an expectation of support. A real threat often prompts endangered citizens to flee as they can. According to the CIA World Factbook, more than twenty million people fled Ukraine and an estimated 5.3 million citizens were internally displaced because of the Russian invasion in 2022.[7] Citizens who choose to stay in their country during an attack tend not to have any option or desire to resist. The former group can be worked around while the latter group can be leveraged through their grievances against an adversary.

Conclusion

Though field craft in rural areas still has relevance, tactical headquarters should give at least as much attention to training that develops "city craft" for the simple reason that there is a greater likelihood that most of the battlefields U.S. forces will face in the future will be urban fights.

Training to take advantage of an existing structure allows soldiers to train as they'd fight by co-opting the environment, breaking the premise of "losing doctrinally."

Throughout their careers, active-duty soldiers may have limited opportunities to train in a CTC rotation and build a mental model of warfare they can integrate into the combat experience. Training to maintain command and control in urban and rural environments can create a cross-discipline advantage in a sometimes singular opportunity to understand these complexities in person.

National Guard soldiers may have only one CTC experience to build their experience of LSCO in practice. In an actual conflict, if initial echelons are lost early, the next force must have exposure to another option for tactical headquarters operations outside of traditional field operations.

Additionally, CTC rotations should actively look at ways to reduce the friction on the command post when moving in a tactical command post is already so hard. During the repetition of moving, establishing communications, and camouflaging, a training unit never becomes fully proficient at commanding and controlling operations, though it builds resilience and reaction skills. Structural developments—though currently operating as more of an anathematic aspect of CTCs—should be used to practice adapting infrastructure for combat.

In my experience during exercises in Europe, using the urban environment for tactical headquarters deployment appeared to be the most feasible solution to be an effective and survivable headquarters in eastern
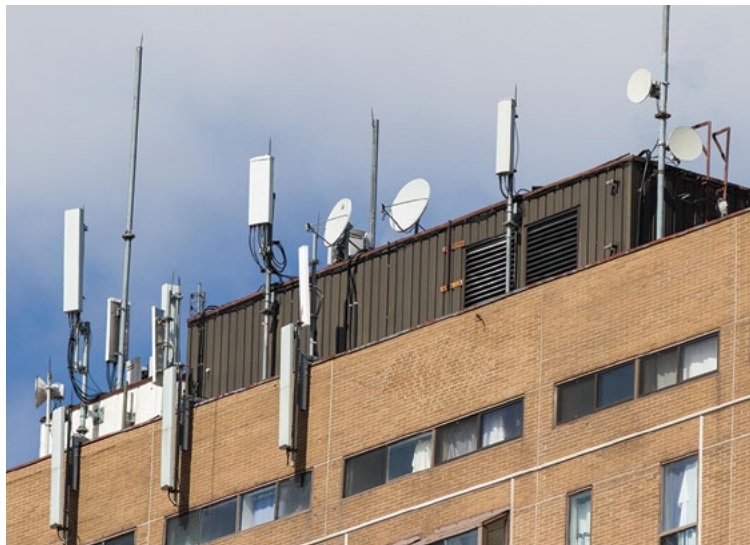
Satellite and cellphone antennas crowd the top of a building 18 March 2016 in Kingston, Ontario. Unit command posts operating in urban settings should develop and employ techniques for exploiting similar concentrations of electronic devices in urban settings worldwide to mask their own electronic signatures. (Photo by Lars Hagberg, Alamy)

Poland. In the field, supply lines of communication are highly vulnerable to interdiction and are time-consuming. We saw firsthand how easily drones could detect our forces. Additionally, the dense forests and absence of mountains hindered communications. By contrast, it was much more difficult to spot and track troops in cities and towns and easier to mask our electronic signature.

Today, twenty-first-century tactical headquarters can no longer count on finding refuge in the "rural jungle" but rather in the "urban jungle." As a practical matter, until future breakthroughs in technology or camouflage and concealment emerge, the dense plethora of civilian electromagnetic and thermal signatures emanating from sprawling urban jungles in cities and towns offer the only currently feasible and effective "electronic camouflage" available for command posts attempting to evade detection from enemy electronic and overhead surveillance. Proper "electronic camouflage" means not emitting a too bright or dim electromagnetic signature to blend into and hide among the plethora of civilian electronic signatures already present.

As the Army prepares for LSCO in an increasingly urban world, it should rethink how to train units to leverage rather than resist opportunities urban environments can provide for tactical headquarters. Doing so is the only practical methodology available at present, however imperfect, to enable tactical headquarters to be both effective and survivable in the densely populated LSCO environments of the regions in which, unfortunately, the Army most likely may be called upon to fight, for example, in Asia or central Europe.

We should leverage existing structures and practice that way because it is more likely to be realistic rather than hauling big loads of stuff to establish command posts in austere rural settings. To that end, the Army's CTCs need to invest in preparing simulated urban facilities to effectively train units and drive innovative solutions for overcoming the disadvantages of urban warfare. ∎

Notes

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Military Review

Invites You to Read More About Command Posts
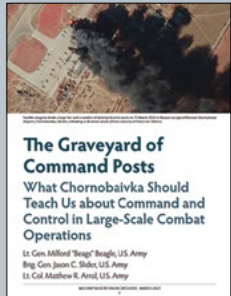
"The Graveyard of Command Posts: What Chornobaivka Should Teach Us about Command and Control in Large-Scale Combat Operations"

To fight and win on the modern battlefield in large-scale combat operations, Army command posts must become more flexible, agile, and resilient while not sacrificing effectiveness. To read, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/journals/military-review/online-exclusive/2023-ole/the-graveyard-of-command-posts/.

"Hiding in Plain Sight"

Success in large-scale combat operations requires Army divisions to develop the ability to overwhelm an adversary's capacity to perceive reality and make timely decisions, which necessitates the integration of a host of disparate capabilities within combat teams. These formations must change the way they organize their staffs, equip their formations, and train in their use of information to both survive on and dominate the modern battlefield. To read, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/March-April-2023/Hiding/.

"Restructuring the Division Command Post in Large-Scale Ground Combat"

In a recent Warfighter exercise, the 4th Infantry Division demonstrated how employing three enduring command nodes increased the survivability of the division mission command infrastructure and kept the division commander and staff from being consumed with the close fight at the expense of setting future conditions. To read, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2021-OLE/Reichert/.

"The Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Is the Support Area Command Post"

The authors argue that in order for the division's maneuver brigades to maintain momentum during large-scale operations, a dedicated mission command node is required to control and assess operations in the support and consolidation areas. To read, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2018-OLE/Oct/MEB/.

"Command Post Operations"

Two observer/coach trainers provide their insights on how to more effectively incorporate staff into viable standard operating procedures as well as how to make better use of mission command information systems. To read, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2018-OLE/Mar/CP-Ops/.

Bayraktars and Grenade-Dropping Quadcopters

How Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh Highlight Present Air and Missile Defense Shortcomings and the Necessity of Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Capt. Josef "Polo" Danczuk, New York Army National Guard

The onboard camera of a Russian Lancet one-way attack unmanned aircraft targets a Ukrainian SA-8 "Gecko" air defense system in April 2023, seconds before the aircraft struck and destroyed the vehicle. (Screenshot from Funker530)

The Turkish-made Bayraktar TB-2 armed with lightweight, laser-guided bombs, shown here on 2 November 2014, carried out successful attacks by Azerbaijan against Armenian and Artsakh forces in 2020 and by Ukraine against Russian targets in the early stages of that conflict. (Photo by Bayhaluk via Wikimedia Commons)

The increased use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in modern war is no surprise. Modern drones provide outstanding aerial capabilities at all echelons, from a frontline infantry soldier using a small, commercial quadcopter to surveil enemy positions, to large UAS equipped with advanced precision munitions and the ability to operate beyond line of sight from its operator. Necessarily, armed groups seek to counter their adversaries' UAS capabilities by destroying, disabling, or negating them and their effects on the battlefield.

While we can look to almost any conflict fought in the last decade for important lessons on the use and countering of UAS, two of the most recent conflicts provide numerous examples of how modern militaries are fighting the UAS fight. The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan saw widespread use of UAS but also the weaponization of information about that use. The ongoing war in Ukraine reinforces many observations from Nagorno-Karabakh, but it also shows how modern warriors not only would prefer to have, but inherently require, UAS at the lowest echelons. Russian's full-scale invasion of Ukraine reveals how small UAS (sUAS), sometimes purchased commercially or even donated through crowdfunding campaigns, can provide an offensive capability against a larger, technologically capable adversary.

The numerous lessons could likely fill an entire journal, so this article focuses on four lessons. First, we saw the effective use of one specific UAS platform in both conflicts: the Turkish-produced Bayraktar TB-2. The TB-2 flew into popular war songs and crowdfunding campaigns as the world watched clip after clip of TB-2s effortlessly destroying enemy air defenses, tanks, command posts, and supply convoys.[1] With its lethal effects on the battlefield, the TB-2 and similar UAS will undoubtedly be ubiquitous in future conflicts. Second, all sides of the conflicts have used UAS in information operations. The abilities of UAS on the battlefield have captured the public mind, and government information outlets have capitalized on that by publishing video feeds from their UAS or sharing statistics and footage of their forces destroying an enemy's UAS.

Third, more specifically in Ukraine, military forces have acquired drones outside their military procurement channels to equip frontline forces with sUAS to execute the tactical fight, often with strategic effects.

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Ukrainian soldiers watch drone feeds from an underground command center in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, 25 December 2022. The Ukrainian government minister in charge of technology says his country has bought some 1,400 drones, mostly for reconnaissance, and is now developing air-to-air combat drones that can attack the drones Russia is using against Ukrainians. (Photo by Libkos, Associated Press)

While not a new tactic in war, Ukrainian and Russian forces alike have made widespread use of modifying commercial sUAS to drop munitions on enemy forces, providing their forces with an accurate, immediately correctable offensive weapon. Fourth, despite the widespread use and success of UAS, both conflicts reveal how present air defense systems and tactics currently fail to provide adequate counter-UAS (C-UAS) defense against these threats.

These lessons reveal critical shortcomings in the United States' C-UAS—specifically C-sUAS—capabilities, as well as the lack of organic tactical sUAS capabilities, training, and fielding for use by our forces. Future conflicts, regardless of the adversary, will inevitably require U.S. forces and our allies to protect against enemy UAS. As the conflicts show, any viable C-UAS program requires widespread air defense and force protection capabilities at all echelons, not just one short-range air defense (SHORAD) battalion per Army division that rarely, if ever, train together. It will require novel C-sUAS capabilities and tactics in addition to traditional SHORAD and C-UAS defense. And, just as important as negating an adversary's UAS

is providing the benefits of such UAS to friendly forces at all echelons and for all types of units.

Bayraktars in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine

For decades, the United States and other technologically advanced militaries were the only ones with the technical expertise and money to put unmanned aircraft in the sky. However, as both military-designed and commercial drones become cheaper, more plentiful, and easier to operate, they will continue to proliferate to militaries and armed groups around the world, bringing their deadly capabilities with them.[2]

Take the Azeri's Bayraktar TB-2s. When Azerbaijan launched its offensive against Armenian and Artsakh forces in 2020, it made effective use of the TB-2s. It destroyed Armenian air defenses, tanks, battle positions, and much more, thereby enabling ground forces to maneuver effectively against Armenian forces and rapidly advance through the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.[3] Armored assets in fortified battle positions with cover and concealment as well as air defense systems actively searching for air tracks were not safe from

A Ukrainian serviceman attaches a hand grenade to a drone to use in an attack against Russian targets near Bakhmut in the Donbas region of Ukraine on 15 March 2023. (Photo by Aris Messinis, Agence France-Presse)

Azeri TB-2s.[4] Yet, Azerbaijan had only just acquired the TB-2 a few months prior to the war. The government announced the acquisition in June 2020 and were employing them on the battlefield by November 2020.[5] Similarly, Ukraine received its first TB-2s in July 2021 and used them for its first kinetic strike in the Donbas region against militants of the Donetsk People's Republic on 26 October, just three months later.[6] Ukraine's acquisition and use of such an advanced UAS was a potential impetus, or at least a purported one, for Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to begin building up forces along the Ukrainian border before the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022.[7]

Both Azerbaijan and Ukraine were able to acquire, field, and employ the TB-2 in just a few months. While both militaries are relatively modern and well-equipped, they are not what the United States would typically consider near-peer or a comparable conventional adversary. This shows how easily modern militaries can acquire, train on, and effectively deploy a UAS comparable to the TB-2's capabilities. While such systems are surely not impervious to current air defenses, video feeds from both conflicts show a startling ability to fly directly above enemy air defenses unthreatened, targeting and destroying them instead.

UAS like the TB-2, which are larger and require more logistical and communications support to operate, are classified as Group 4 or 5 UAS.[8] They often provide an organic kinetic strike capability in addition to reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA). As a result of real-time information sharing, these UAS can also perform immediate battle damage assessment (BDA) and provide data for prompt correction of artillery or other fires on a target, as Azerbaijan and Ukraine have done.[9]

The proliferation of Group 4 and 5 UAS will give many militaries and armed groups the abilities that Ukraine and Azerbaijan employed to great effect. The TB-2 has already seen use in various African states, and worldwide sales show no signs of slowing down.[10] United States and allied ground forces and their leaders should expect any adversary to effectively employ such UAS against them. Even if a potential adversary does not possess such UAS now, Ukraine and Azerbaijan's rapid acquisition and deployment of the TB-2 demonstrate that any modern military can, and likely will, acquire Group 4 and 5 UAS and use them

A video feed from a Ukrainian TB-2 shows it guiding a missile onto a Russian Buk M-3 air defense system outside Kyiv on 28 February 2022. The missile struck and destroyed the Buk system. (Screenshot courtesy of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine via Twitter)

to great effect, often sidestepping current air defense platforms. Such UAS may even soon become a C-UAS weapon in its own right.[11]

UAS in the Information Fight

As critical as the TB-2 and other UAS were to the parties of both conflicts on the battlefield, they were also a major factor in the information wars. Government media outlets shared drone feed footage of their UAS striking or surveilling enemy forces. In the face of such public fascination with the purported successful employment of UAS, the opposite side would often attempt to discredit such reports, usually by sharing footage or reports of shooting down UAS. Both conflicts clearly show how important UAS have become in the information domain, as the public perceives successful UAS use as crucial to battlefield success.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan published numerous clips of its TB-2 feeds and its Israeli-made Harpy drones, which are one-way loitering attack UAS that fly into their targets to destroy them.[12] These clips showed the destruction of Armenian vehicles, artillery, troop positions, and more. Azeri government

outlets shared these clips on social media sites like Twitter directly on the official ministry of defense page for the world to access and view. Third-party sites like Funker530, a combat footage website, and other social media users and platforms reshared these clips, increasing worldwide viewership.[13] Fascination with the Azeri's use of UAS presented an image that the Azeri military was highly successful and effective on the battlefield. The government's goal was clearly to paint a picture of battlefield success to ensure domestic support and international awe at the military's effectiveness.

The Armenian government sought to counter this information, especially as the forces of their military and that of their ally, Artsakh, lost territory during the conflict. As domestic turbulence grew in light of Armenia's losses, the government published its own footage showing an air defense intercept and destruction of an Azeri UAS, a modified AN-2 Colt. Armenia shared this footage on its Twitter page as well, likely hoping for high viewability just as Azerbaijan was able to garner with its drone footage.[14] Government accounts also tweeted photos purporting to show debris from Azeri TB-2s after being shot down.

While Azerbaijan's injection of UAS footage dwarfed Armenia's C-UAS information operations, it was still an interesting development. That Armenia felt the need to respond to the effects of Azerbaijan's drone information operations illustrates how important and effective they can be. The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict ushered in a new technique of state-sponsored

In future conflicts, the United States should expect that the success of UAS and C-UAS employment, whether real or purported, will be an increasingly important aspect of information operations. Successful UAS employment is therefore significant not only for the effects they bring to the tactical battlefield but also on mobile devices and social media platforms.

> " In future conflicts, the United States should expect that the success of UAS [unmanned aircraft systems] and C-UAS [counter UAS] employment, whether real or purported, will be an increasingly important aspect of information operations. "

UAS-related information operations that Russia and Ukraine have exploited.

Ukraine's government outlets also quickly published TB-2 recordings on official government channels such as the messaging application Telegram. They included strikes on the Russian backed-up convoy outside Kyiv, thwarting Russia's attempt to topple the capital.[15] These clips have also featured in Ukraine's recent counteroffensives such as showing the destruction of air defenses and boats on the strategically and symbolically important key terrain of Zmiinyi (Snake) Island, which forced Russia to withdraw on 30 June 2022.[16] Just like in Nagorno-Karabakh, third-party sites republished these clips, increasing viewership and global fascination. The TB-2 became so famous that Ukrainian fighters wrote songs and shared videos of them dancing along.[17]

And just as Armenia sought to counter this information effect, Russia shared stories of shooting down TB-2s. They even went so far as to stage a fake air defense kill of a TB-2, all to appear to be successfully countering Ukraine's UAS employment.[18] Ukrainian government sites have also touted their own C-UAS capabilities, sharing videos of shooting down Russian UAS, posing with downed UAS, and sharing destroyed UAS counts in their daily briefings.[19] While all sides oftentimes inflate such counts and reports in a conflict, the fact that they are so central and oft-reported reveals how important the conflict parties view them in their information operations.

The public is increasingly fascinated with unmanned operations in conflict and associate UAS/C-UAS success with success in the overall war effort. This will apply to information consumers domestically, in allied nations, in a potential adversary's nation, and worldwide.[20] Finally, as unmanned ground and naval vehicles become increasingly capable and autonomous, there is little reason not to expect those platforms to impact the information domain as armed groups and state militaries begin employing them in combat.

Group 1–3 sUAS in Ukraine

While the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict lasted six weeks, the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has continued for a year and a half. Further, the war in Ukraine has resulted in mass mobilization within Ukraine, resulting in hastily organized units such as the Territorial Defense Force and the Ukrainian International Legion for foreign volunteers.[21] As the war continued, both the newly organized units and firmly established units began employing smaller, cheaper, Group 1–3 sUAS extensively.

Ukrainian forces (and, to a lesser extent, at least in Western media, Russian forces) have purchased or received donations of commercial drones for their use. While not as large, capable, or long-range as standard military designed UAS, these drones can still provide an essential RISTA and BDA capability. Frontline personnel, such as at the platoon or squad level, can employ their own UAS rather than relying on UAS held as

intelligence assets at the battalion-or-above level. This permits them and their leaders to see the battlefield in real time, make immediate adjustments, and better avoid ambushes or prepared enemy positions.[22]

Video footage from Ukraine also shows that Ukrainian forces modified such Group 1–3 sUAS to carry and drop munitions—often antitank rounds,

radars and are usually too small to counter with current U.S. Army SHORAD systems like the FIM-92 Stinger missile, whether fired in a Man-Portable Air Defense System (MANPADS) configuration or from the legacy Avenger or new Maneuver-SHORAD (M-SHORAD) platforms. While the United States has developed and acquired a litany of C-sUAS systems

> sUAS [small UAS] have such a low radar cross-section that they can avoid detection by most modern U.S. Army air and missile defense radars and are usually too small to counter with current U.S. Army SHORAD [short-range air defense] systems.

grenades, or mortar rounds—onto enemy positions, vehicles, and personnel.[23] This is far from the first time we have seen commercial drones fitted to carry and drop such munitions; in Syria, militant groups like the Islamic State pioneered this technique as early as 2015.[24] However, Ukrainian forces appear to use them in large numbers and outside of formal military acquisition and development channels. Their effectiveness can be seen plainly in the published video footage. Furthermore, Ukraine has acquired purpose-built munitions-dropping sUAS. A Taiwanese-based producer, DronesVision, sent eight hundred purpose-built munitions-dropping UAS to Ukraine via Poland. The Revolver 860 system can carry eight 60 mm mortars to drop directly onto targets below.[25]

Whether purely commercial sUAS conducting surveillance, jerry-rigged commercial drones carrying whatever munitions available, or purpose-built munitions-dropping sUAS, the United States must expect to face an ever-increasing quantity and variety of Group 1–3 sUAS on today's battlefield, no matter the adversary.[26] Ukraine's rapid acquisition, proliferation, and employment of commercial sUAS shows that any potential adversary can exploit current technology similarly. Taiwan's Revolver 860 UAS is an example of one of the first, but certainly not the last, of a small munitions carrying UAS.

These Group 1–3 sUAS have such a low radar cross-section that they can avoid detection by most modern U.S. Army air and missile defense (AMD)

(e.g., Fixed Site-Low, Slow, Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Integrated Defeat System [FS-LIDS]; Mobile Low, Vehicle Integrated Defense System [M-LIDS]; and Mobile Air Defense Integrated System [MADIS]), they are not currently fielded to trained personnel across the force, especially our maneuver forces, in sufficient numbers to counter this exponentially growing threat. There is also an immediate need for highly mobile C-sUAS systems to accompany friendly forces that must remain agile to avoid detection and targeting by those same sUAS and other enemy collection techniques. If Ukraine and Russia are rushing "drone busters" to their forces, why aren't we?

Providing Friendly sUAS Capabilities in the Tactical Fight

The lessons of Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh are not limited to C-UAS. They also reveal the necessity of all tactical units having a sUAS RISTA capability. In Ukraine, sUAS have become so essential to the battlefield that Ukrainian forces have sent sUAS on sUAS-recovery missions behind enemy lines—a drone rescuing a drone.[27] Maneuver platoons can employ sUAS to surveil an objective before occupying, conducting movement, or attacking. RISTA/BDA sUAS are clearly essential for correcting indirect fire of all types, whether used by forward observers or any front-line soldier.

sUAS benefits should not be limited to maneuver units only, however. The ability for real-time,

A Ukrainian soldier controls a drone as its camera shows Russian troop positions during heavy fighting at the front line in Severodonetsk, Luhansk region, Ukraine, 8 June 2022. (Photo by Oleksandr Ratushniak, Associated Press)

on-demand aerial reconnaissance or surveillance is essential for all units. For example, a battery—whether air defense or field artillery—conducting a Reconnaissance, Selection, and Occupation of Position performs a ground reconnaissance of a potential new site and the routes there.[28] A sUAS would allow them to add a real-time air reconnaissance capability, protecting the ground element until they have surveilled the site and route. Any unit—logistics, medical, engineer, etc.—conducting a road march or occupying a new position can use a Group 1–3 sUAS to conduct an air reconnaissance of the route ahead of them, doing so even as they move. A sUAS RISTA capability at echelons lower than brigade combat teams will also reduce the number of priority intelligence requirements submitted to higher headquarters, thereby freeing up brigade-and-above intelligence assets.

Equipping units with Group 1–3 sUAS—ideally government-developed but, if necessary, commercial off-the-shelf as Ukraine has done—will also benefit the defense of fixed sites from ground attack. This includes command posts at all echelons, forward arming and refueling points, tactical assembly areas, communications relay sites, and many more. sUAS can monitor the site perimeter, entry control points, and routes in and out of the area with a live feed direct to the element tasked with site security or the local command post.

Of course, the internal proliferation of sUAS would necessitate training in discretion; if I fly a small quadcopter over the brigade command post twenty-four hours a day, it will be quite easy for an enemy force to determine where we are and target us, both visually and based on electromagnetic emissions. But the benefits of having the capability of a sUAS for monitoring relatively fixed sites and conducting reconnaissance of new sites and routes, employed with proper discretion, far outweigh the risks, especially since the adversary is very likely to be using comparable sUAS to try to find our positions anyway. If Ukraine and Russia are rushing Group 1–3 sUAS to their forces, why aren't we?

Current AMD and C-sUAS Shortcomings

Both Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine show the inability of current AMD systems to defend friendly forces against new UAS like the Bayraktar TB-2 and

Group 1–3 commercial sUAS adapted for military use. A number of videos released by both Azerbaijan and Ukraine during their respective conflicts show the TB-2 striking Soviet-era AMD platforms, still in use by a number of countries—including NATO countries—like the SA-8 "Gecko" or the Buk M-1/2 (SA-17 "Grizzly"), and others.[29] Russia also recently shared video of a Lancet one-way attack UAS striking and destroying an American-made Avenger system.[30] Ukraine and Russia's use of commercial Group 1–3 sUAS demonstrates the requirement for a vast expansion in C-sUAS coverage, and combatants there have scrambled to rapidly equip their forces with C-sUAS weapons.[31] Even if current AMD platforms could adequately intercept such sUAS (which they cannot), their high quantity, cheapness, ease of use, and proliferation among tactical-level units means modern militaries need a C-sUAS capability interspersed throughout their forces. From a warfighting function perspective, this is both a fires and a protection issue.[32]

What does this mean for air defense and protection against sUAS? First, there is little doubt that modern militaries will require more air defense. As Group 4 and 5 UAS like the TB-2 increase in quantity and capability, militaries will need more C-UAS AMD systems to deny those systems airspace and, ideally, intercept and destroy them. AMD and the fires warfighting function, including incorporating nonlethal fires via electronic warfare capabilities, are best suited to counter Group 4 and 5 UAS. Indeed, Russia has reportedly vastly improved its ability to counter Ukraine's TB-2s, incorporating electronic warfare capabilities alongside traditional air defense systems to relegate the TB-2s to reconnaissance duties safely away from potential intercept.[33]

Second, there is also an urgent need for a robust C-sUAS capability that can detect, identify, respond to (including engagement), and report the enemy sUAS, with the aim of negating the effects of the enemy's sUAS.[34] The current radars and weapon systems that most militaries, including the United States, rely upon were designed and maintained with a counter-aircraft mission, adept at detecting and destroying fighters, bombers, and helicopters, not small, slow UAS. While the United States and other modern militaries possess capable C-sUAS systems such as M-LIDS and various "drone buster" guns, these systems must be available

organically—not as a just-before-deployment attachment or fielding—for maneuver and support units alike. Just as all units can receive and deploy with antiarmor systems like the AT-4, or formerly deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan with counter-improvised explosive device systems, all units require a short-range C-sUAS capability to at least defend against Group 1–3.[35] Most importantly, they need this capability *now*. The next fight, whoever it is against, will see widespread use of sUAS by our adversary.

Third, units must train with UAS, including Group 1–3, in mind. Tactics thought to be left to the history books—air guards, react-to-air attack, using small arms to fire at aircraft—need to return and adapt to the C-UAS fight.[36] Even if units cannot train with an air defense unit directly, trainers can provide their opposing forces with sUAS to conduct RISTA operations against the training audience. They can even rig them to drop foam Nerf footballs or tennis balls to mimic current battlefield tactics. And while these changes will come at a financial cost, they cannot exist solely at combat training centers.[37] Adversary UAS need to be incorporated into regular field training exercises, combined live-fire exercises, command post exercises, convoy training, small-unit training, and more.

The question quickly arises: How best to address these shortcomings? There are a variety of options available to policymakers and planners. The Army's current approach to counter armored threats provides a possible framework with multiple options. Ground forces could field C-sUAS weapons systems directly to lower-echelon units, just as we currently do with AT-4s and did for counter-improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the Army began the Additional Skill Identifier A5 program, training infantry soldiers on the Stinger platform. One option is to expand this program or make such training standard, just like AT-4s, or supplement the current Additional Skill Identifier A5 program with additional C-UAS training and equipment.

There is also an option to add a separate SHORAD/C-sUAS element to units organically. This would prevent haggling over command and support relationships and reduce demand for AMD/C-sUAS resources when, as is the current doctrine, U.S. SHORAD battalions are "potentially" distributed to Army divisions,

not organically a part of the maneuver units.[38] An element organic to maneuver units could be a new type of SHORAD battery, minimally reliant on integration with other air defense sensors and shooters, in each brigade combat team, perhaps within the brigade engineer battalion. This battery might consist of a platoon of sensors, a C-sUAS platoon with electronic warfare weapons systems to counter Group 1–3, and a typical SHORAD platoon with weapons like the Stinger missile in MANPADS configuration to counter aircraft and Group 4 and 5 UAS.

Or, again looking to the example of antiarmor capabilities within maneuver units, every maneuver battalion could include a platoon within the battalion headquarters and headquarters company or weapons company dedicated to C-UAS, perhaps with two squads for C-sUAS and one squad of traditional SHORAD. After many decades of risk-averse air defense, the increased risk of decentralized air defense shooters is necessary in this emerging world of UAS. The Army could look to how Air Force tactical air control parties, embedded in Army maneuver forces, receive a tactical air picture as inspiration for how to integrate the necessary SHORAD/C-UAS capabilities in maneuver forces into the joint AMD fight. Whether this hypothetical C-UAS element resides organically at the battalion, brigade, or division level, with or without a C-UAS weapons system fielded directly to frontline personnel, or a mix of all of these, the key takeaway is that maneuver units need C-UAS organically and in adequate numbers to defend their battlespace independent of external support. Better minds can determine the precise form of the solution—the *immediate* need, however, is all too apparent.

Whatever the solutions, a few principles are evident, principles that the Joint Counter-Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Office may consider in their strategies, particularly when updating the Department of Defense C-sUAS strategy that has not been updated since January 2021 despite the stream of lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine.[39] As mentioned, we need more air defense force protection assets, better equipped for C-UAS and specifically C-sUAS, dispersed to the lowest level, organic to maneuver and nonmaneuver units alike, and with more integrated and accountable training. The large-scale drone fight is already here; our ground forces need the equipment, knowledge, and training to counter and survive it.

Conclusion

The wars of Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine show us the present and the future of UAS warfare. Whether it is the employment of Group 4 and 5 UAS like the TB-2 Bayraktar or ingeniously adapting and rigging commercial off-the-shelf sUAS for RISTA and offensive capabilities, the wars show that any potential adversary, and the United States itself, can and should rapidly acquire and employ such UAS. These drones have reshaped the battlefield, reshaped the information fight, and obviated or revealed gaps in older air defense systems. It has ushered in new urgency to a latent shortcoming in the U.S. Army and Department of Defense-wide—its C-UAS capability.[40]

Just as the United States and allied ground forces should seek to distribute the benefits of small RISTA UAS to all units at low-level echelons, they must also rapidly add, improve, and integrate C-UAS force protection capabilities with all units down to the tactical-unit level. Failure to do so before the next conflict, whomever it may be against, will lead to public embarrassment in the information domain, tactical losses of materiel and personnel, and lost opportunities in the offense. Domination of the skies will not just depend on advanced fifth-generation aircraft—it will require the Group 1–3 quadcopters and C-sUAS weapons we are seeing proven on the battlefield every day in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine. ■

Notes

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Syrians, Chechens; and Crimean Tatars – Bayraktar], Instagram video, 28 February 2022, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.instagram.com/tv/CaiTrp_DMX5/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

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7. Andrew E. Kramer, "How a Dispute over Groceries Led to Artillery Strikes in Ukraine," *New York Times* (website), 15 November 2021, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/15/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin.html. The article notes that, in the lead-up to the full-scale invasion to come on 24 February 2022, "Mr. Putin has twice in the past week pointed to the drone attack [the first Ukrainian TB-2 strike] as a Ukrainian escalation, justifying a potential Russian response." Regarding the build-up of troops that would later launch the full-scale invasion: "Asked on Saturday about accusations from Washington that Russia was massing troops on the Ukraine border, Mr. Putin responded by criticizing the United States for supporting the drone strike."

8. Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-01.81, *Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Techniques* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], April 2016), para. 1-9–1-10, fig. 1-1.

9. Ibid., para. 1-9.

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12. A note on citations to clips of drone footage. First, many of the clips depict war footage, at times graphically, so viewer discretion is advised. Second, the citations in this article are merely to provide a reference to one or two examples of each development discussed in this piece. Anyone can simply search on the internet for "Ukraine grenade-dropping drone," or any similar search, and find hundreds of related videos, which further substantiates the points made in this article. As one of many examples, see an Azeri Ministry of Defense tweet with TB-2 feed footage: Azerbaijan Ministry of Defense (@wwwmodgovaz), "#Azerbaijan Army destroyed #OPs of armed forces of #Armenia located in Azerbaijan territory," Twitter, 9 October 2020, 12:40 a.m., accessed 27 April 2023, https://twitter.com/wwwmodgovaz/status/1314440465920528385.

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14. Ministry of Defense of Armenia (@ArmeniaMODTeam), "Destruction of an #Azerbaijan'i drone," Twitter, 1 October 2020, 12:08 p.m., accessed 27 April 2023, https://mobile.twitter.com/ArmeniaMODTeam/status/1311699432132546564; "Karabakh Air Defense Shoots Down Another Turkey-Made Bayraktar Drone of Azerbaijan," News.am, 8 November 2020, accessed 27 April 2023, https://news.am/eng/news/612134.html.

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22. 93-тя ОМБр Холодний Яр [93rd Mechanized Brigade], "Нічого особливого, просто точна робота холодноярських артилеристів по позиціях росіян" [Nothing special, just the precise work of the Holodoyarsk artillerymen on the positions of the Russians], Facebook video, 18 October 2022, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.facebook.com/93OMBr/videos/639599104225843; Sam Skove, "Near the Front, Ukraine's Drone Pilots Wage a Modern War on a Shoestring Budget," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 31 October 2022, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-drone-pilots-modern-war-shoestring-budget/32108994.html.

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34. ATP 3-01.81, *Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Techniques*, para. 1-11.

35. Kyle Rempfer, "Drones Are Biggest Tactical Concern Since the Rise of IEDs in Iraq, CENTCOM Boss Says," *Army Times* (website), 8 February 2021, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/02/08/drones-are-biggest-tactical-concern-since-ieds-rose-in-iraq-four-star-says/. Indeed, Marine Corps Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr., then U.S. Central Command commander, acknowledged in early 2021 that the emerging sUAS threat was analogous to IEDs in Iraq.

36. Ibid.; Andrew E. Kramer, "'We Heard It, We Saw It, Then We Opened Fire,'" *New York Times* (website), 23 October 2022, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/23/world/europe/ukraine-russia-drones-iran.html; Henke, "Once More Unto the Breach," 74; ATP 3-01.81, *Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Techniques*, Appendix A. Appendix A includes training requirements for counter-sUAS, including small arms engagement like Ukrainian forces described in the *New York Times* article, and have occurred in a number of other situations worldwide. Appendix A's training requirements need to be harmonized with C-UAS (Groups 4 and 5) air and missile defense training and traditional counter-air training. These training models need to be established as requirements, not just recommendations, for units' evaluations and included in mission essential task lists alongside traditional force protection measures.

37. ATP 3-01.81, *Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Techniques*, fig. A-1.

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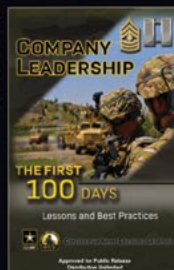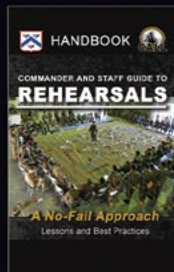
Kenyan traders demonstrate on 28 February 2023 in Nairobi against unfair business advantages for Chinese nationals in the country engaging in the import, manufacture, and distribution of goods. (Photo by Tony Karumba, Agence France-Presse)

The Exploitable Conditions Framework

Strategies for Sociocultural Research and Analysis

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History underscores how empires were built on exploitation from the Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America to the French and British in North America, from the British in India to the Russians in Siberia, among numerous other examples. Today, the concept of exploitation is useful for understanding and explaining how a range of contemporary actors—including statesmen, businesses, warlords, and governments—interact with an array of sociocultural conditions to achieve their objectives. When weaponized, exploitation is more effective and less costly than war for gaining an advantage over rivals or for rendering systems (e.g., governments, institutions, markets, resources) amenable to their interests. For example, for centuries, developed countries have been leveraging their influence in weaker countries to gain access to natural resources, solve infrastructure problems, obtain cheap labor, or steer or orchestrate ethnic and religious divisions. Manipulating societal contexts helps exploiters achieve their parochial objectives, including increasing instability, undermining local governance, accumulating wealth, increasing local access, and expanding their influence while decreasing the influence of rivals.

However, despite the centrality of exploitation to geopolitical strategizing, very little work has been done to delineate the parameters of exploitation. More can be done to identify and understand the arenas where it takes place to how it is expressed concerning the parochial objectives of the exploiters. The few attempts to examine exploitation have not related it to specific local conditions or the global competition for influence among rival actors. Thus, how actors exploit sociocultural conditions to advance their interests has largely been a matter of conjecture. When exploitation, local or national vulnerabilities, and global competition have been linked, it has been done by experienced analysts working within other analytic traditions in one-off assessments that did not fully explore the parameters of each factor.

Our approach is directed toward improving the Army's capacity for identifying critical sociocultural seams that will be relevant to their efforts to understand the operational environment (OE). Not every analyst employed by the Army can be equally skilled at understanding how actors leverage their proximal positions relative to weaker actors in pursuit of their parochial objectives, but neither do they need to be geniuses to apply our approach. We believe a different approach to sociocultural analysis is required from the fuller examination and understanding of inherent and evolving social conditions that lend themselves to domestic and foreign exploitation. The Army needs approaches developed to suit its needs—along with associated procedural rules—which can enable sociocultural analysis of the OE that is currently frozen by an undue focus on outdated or cumbersome methods.

The Exploitable Conditions Framework (ECF) links vulnerabilities to the activities of motivated actors. Linking vulnerabilities to the activities of motivated domestic and foreign actors can have an enormous impact on security and stability as well as on U.S. regional objectives. This approach is not isolated from more general sociocultural and social science-based analytic approaches. However, our emphasis is on first identifying the broad set of conditions that are potentially exploited, then verifying actor behavior about these conditions and their ultimate ends. While this article is directed primarily at Army sociocultural and intelligence analysts, we believe it can be useful to anyone interested in studying social phenomena—cultural, economic, political, environmental, educational, industrial, legal, medical, or otherwise—especially if their studies engage the intersection of domestic and foreign elements and security and stability.

What Is the Exploitable Conditions Framework?

The ECF will help analysts to understand, analyze, explain, and predict how, why, and when a global competitor will leverage its relative influence to gain an

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advantage over rivals. Furthermore, the more we know about disruption that the exploitation of OE conditions has on the OE, the more we can determine any impact on U.S. relationships and interests, and the interests and relationships of U.S. allies. Accounting for the connection between conditions and actors (e.g., various malign domestic actors, global actors like China and Russia) is a way of analyzing the U.S. access and influence.

The ECF outlines the logical pathway through which the internal frailties of a country enable domestic and particularly foreign actors to achieve their parochial objectives. The framework, which is user agnostic—meaning any actor type, including the United States, could exploit the conditions identified through it—was developed in response to a request from an Army unit interested in understanding the sociocultural conditions around the globe that contribute to instability—specifically conditions that U.S. adversaries would likely exploit to their advantage and to the disadvantage of the United States.

Identifying a set of malleable sociocultural conditions that could interact to offer opportunities for exploitation should be of major interest to Army analysts and planners. As we demonstrate in this article, the identification of exploitable sociocultural conditions fits empirical situations and is understandable to experienced analysts and laymen alike. Most importantly, the framework provides relevant understanding, explanations, interpretations, and predictions.

When the Global Cultural Knowledge Network developed the ECF in 2019, the framework had twenty-four conditions.[1] In its current revised form, the framework has twelve conditions that conform to four key criteria: (1) they are sociocultural factors, (2) they are exploitable, (3) they are measurable, and (4) they are detectable at the operational level of war.[2] The four criteria suggest that analysis of the conditions must yield more comparable and potentially generalizable findings, even though they can be case sensitive. As with the initial framework and comparable approaches, an analyst using the framework may not need to bend data out of contextual shape to provide an assessment because the conditions and actors have inherent visibility and measurability.

Rationale for the Exploitable Conditions Framework

The objective of ECF is to help the warfighter anticipate the array of conditions within the OE that pose vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities, if unattended, provide opportunities for foreign or domestic actors to advance their interests, the consequences of which may pose risks to security and stability in the OE and for U.S. regional access and influence. Through ECF, an analyst can identify conditions that are present in an area or region of interest and determine what conditions are inherently exploitable, then identify who is primed or postured to exploit those conditions and any possible effects of adversary engagement with these conditions on the stability of the OE and U.S. regional interests. Ultimately, an analyst can establish the logical pathway through which otherwise benign problems in the OE become destabilizing and its implications for the United States and its partners.

Seeing ECF in this way implies it is a conceptual framework for studying and analyzing the patterns of exploitation and exploitative relations in an OE. Like all conceptual frameworks, the ECF graphically and narratively explains the main issues to be examined—key conditions, key actors, and competing objectives—and their consequential relationships (see figure 1, page 37). The relational construct provides a clearer understanding of the consequences of the condition-actor relationship for the security and stability of the OE and U.S. regional priorities and objectives.

As a rule, framework building relies on a few general constructs that subsume a mountain of particulars.[3] Conditions such as "multiple sovereignties," "ineffective government," and "demographic pressures" are the labels we put on profound historical subjects containing many discrete events, activities, and behaviors. No matter how inductive in approach, any Army analyst should know how to group ideas and events that pertain to each construct into separate bins. Thus, each construct (e.g., multiple sovereignties) is a bin, and each bin comes from theory and experience. Setting out bins, naming them, and getting clearer about their interrelationships, including their connections to defined actors and a set of objectives, establish the foundations of a conceptual framework.[4]

During active analysis, binning—using the twelve ECF sociocultural conditions as frames or constructs—forces Army analysts to be selective (see figure 2, page 38). At the outset, selectivity requires analysts to decide which of the conditions are relevant to an actor context, which relationships among

EXPLOITABLE CONDITIONS FRAMEWORK (ECF)

Multiple Sovereignties
Areas not subordinate to the national government

"Technification" of Society
Mass adoption of disruptive technologies and trends

Environmental Threats
Stress caused by significant changes in the natural environment

Ineffective Government
The inability to provide for a society's essential needs

Cross-Border Encroachment
Spillover effects from proximity to sources of instability

Resource Scarcity
Demand for goods and services is greater than the available supply

Mobilizing Ideologies
Unifying belief systems that threaten the status quo

Demographic Pressures
Stress caused by significant changes within a population

Economic Inequality
Substantially unequal distribution of income, wealth, and opportunity

Illicit Networks
Transactional systems operating beyond the reach of formal authority

Infrastructure Deficits
Inadequacy of systems and institutions that facilitate basic services

Divided Societies
Communities where competing values or identities create factions

OE EXPLOITABLE CONDITIONS — 2028 —

* None of the conditions are inherently more important than the others, although in certain circumstances some conditions may weigh more heavily in a country or region.

(Figure by Susan Littleton, TRADOC G-2 graphics specialist)

Figure 1. Exploitable Conditions Framework

conditions and actors are the most meaningful, what consequences are likely from the interaction of conditions and actors, and what additional information is required to advance the analysis. In addition, the framework also permits multiple analysts to work on a single project, in which case, ECF helps them to examine the same phenomenon in a manner that permits an eventual cross-case analysis.

Several important questions guided our development of the ECF. From a societal perspective, the ECF asks what societal conditions exist that pose profoundly undesirable challenges for populations and the state, the manipulation or steering of which could disrupt society's order. From a structural perspective,

the ECF asks what behavioral and relational logics, attitudes, and practices related to societal conditions are likely to shape the security and stability of the OE. From a competition perspective, the ECF asks what factors are likely to determine whether, how, and to what extent rival global powers manipulate OE conditions to their advantage—in other words, how might rival powers direct the societal conditions to affect the strategic competition options of the United States. These questions explore the diverse sources of competition within the OE, the OE's resilience to competition, and, most importantly, the inherent societal contradictions that increase opportunities for power competition in the OE.

Focus   Fragment   Filter   Finalize
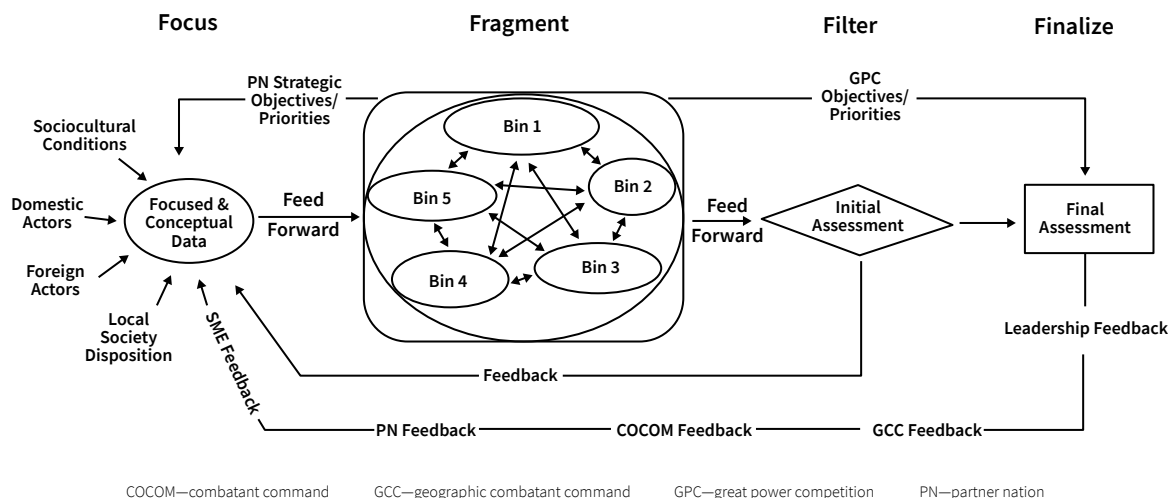
(Figure by authors)

Figure 2. Exploitable Conditions Framework Analytic Mode

COCOM—combatant command   GCC—geographic combatant command   GPC—great power competition   PN—partner nation

Understanding Exploitability

The core concept in ECF is exploitation. Exploitability is the likelihood or the ease with which an actor, domestic or foreign, could make use of and derive benefit from a vulnerability. Critical to this definition is the concept of "benefit," or the gain to the actor from taking advantage of a condition. This benefit or gain can be measured at the tactical, operational, or strategic levels.

For example, an expansive body of work characterizes U.S. adversaries, particularly Russia and increasingly China, as engaging in activities to bolster their influence in areas where the U.S. historically held an advantage.[5] To achieve their objectives, these adversaries, with help from their partners and proxies including nonaligned nonstate opportunists, constantly search for ways to capitalize on OE vulnerabilities, especially in direct areas of interest where they hope to challenge or usurp U.S. influence.[6] Thus, within (and even nearby) any global area of interest, actors engage in specific behaviors to harness opportunities created by specific vulnerabilities, sometimes even creating distortions within those vulnerabilities to render them more exploitable.

The above implies that ECF conditions are important but are irrelevant unless an actor uses or manipulates them to assert influence. Domestic and foreign actors transform conditions into opportunities for achieving consequential outcomes. ECF contextualizes this condition-actor relationship by zeroing in on the complications that actors introduce into an area. There are several reasons why analysts should prioritize this condition-actor exploitative relationship in analyzing, explaining, predicting, and measuring exploitability, including

- the increasing globalization that is shrinking space and time and connecting local communities to more powerful external influences, wherein increasing proximity creates opportunity and incentives for external actors to engage, even at the microlevel;

- a broader conceptualization of threats to include the spectacular increase in adversarial activities in developing regions with a strong historical connection to the United States that has the potential to unravel national governance, stability, and U.S. regional influence;

- developing regions are becoming arenas of global competition, which potentially undermines a historical U.S. foreign policy objective to insulate developing countries from the harmful consequences of great-power rivalry; and

- the metastasizing of grievances associated with otherwise common sociocultural conditions, the grafting of these grievances onto national reckoning, and the manipulative deflection of the real source of the grievance to implicate the United States or its partners to gain critical access and influence.

(Continued on page 40)

Central African Republic
Exploited to Become a Russian Client State

Russian mercenaries provide additional security for a convoy with President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central African Republic, 16 February 2022. (Photo by Clément Di Roma, VOA via Wikimedia Commons)

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a prime target for exploitation from multiple actors—most notably Russia—because it possesses **several exploitable conditions including ineffective governance, divided societies, multiple sovereignties, and environmental threats**. As a result of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra brokering a deal for Russian arms, mercenaries, and a protection force in exchange for access to the country's gold and diamond mines, Moscow has been active in the country, culminating in its capture of the state.

The pretext for the deal was CAR's continuing struggles with itinerant groups who leveraged the exploitable conditions of divided societies, multiple sovereignties, and environmental threats to upturn security and stability. Thus, after numerous failed attempts to resolve the intransigent instability, Touadéra's regime buckled under Russian pressure to surrender the state to Vladimir Putin. A Russian, Valery Zakharov, became CAR's national security advisor, and the unfolding Russian capture of the Touadéra regime led France, CAR's longtime ally, to withdraw from the country, further advancing Russia's geostrategic interests.

Consequently, the Wagner Group, Russia's shadowy paramilitary force with links to Russian defense intelligence, deployed about two thousand mercenaries to the country. While their professed mission in CAR is to support the security and stabilization of the country, their actual goal and activities involve securing the mines and maintaining the Touadéra regime in power, even manipulating the 2020 elections to achieve this. In the process, Wagner operatives routinely abuse human rights, threaten UN peacekeepers, and harass opposing voices.

The exploitative relations between Moscow and the Touadéra regime have equally increased the governance burden on the citizens, worsening corruption and insecurity and undermining civil liberties. Apart from its cascading effects on governance and society, Moscow's exploitation of weak governance in CAR also highlights the fact that once an exploiter gains unfettered access into a sovereign country, their foothold is nearly impossible to remove, making Russia's exploitation of CAR consequential for the country and the regional balance of power for years to come.

Ineffective Government   Divided Societies   Multiple Sovereignties   Environmental Threats

These concerns highlight two broad approaches for measuring the exploitability of a condition: the categorical approach and the contextual approach. The *categorical approach* calculates the exploitability of a condition by using a Likert scale that provides an exploitability rating.[7] The rating is the likelihood that an actor can find and use the vulnerability within a condition to undermine local or national governance, unravel security and stability, and degrade U.S. national or regional influence. Here, the analyst evaluates the likelihood of exploitation from "very unlikely" to "very likely." In this sense, all vulnerabilities related to a condition have categorical exploitability, and U.S. Army planners and decision-makers may use this approach to prioritize security cooperation, exercise, and military information support operations planning.

The *contextual approach* determines the exploitability of the condition based on information known about the condition. For example, the condition's pathway of social relations, path linkages to any number of actors, and heuristics (i.e., explanations or understandings derived from historical experience) can provide an understanding of how internal vulnerabilities might increase the exploitation of an OE condition with the potential to undermine the U.S. influence. Thus, analysts may use the contextual approach to assess the likely impact of exploitation on governance systems and U.S. influence.

Understanding Exploitation

ECF defines exploitation as the deliberate effort of a domestic or foreign actor, working alone or in collaboration with others, to gain an advantage from a condition by leveraging their proximity to the OE, manipulating local factors (e.g., relationships) connected to the condition, or steering the condition or the perception of it to gain benefits. Typically, the actor utilizes a range of resources, including elements of national power, to transform an otherwise benign but potentially combustible condition into a situation that benefits the actor. Exploitability means the environment can accept exploitation because the conditions are desirable to the actor or actors who desire to leverage them.

Understanding exploitability can help to explain exploitation, particularly the proximal relations between the actor and the condition that creates the pathway through which exploitability results in exploitation. Powerful domestic and foreign actors exploit vulnerabilities within conditions regularly to the extent that authorities fail to meet conventional minimum standards of effective governance. For example, motivated actors have exploited ineffective governance, multiple sovereignties, divided societies, and resource scarcity in the Central African Republic (under President Faustin-Archange Touadéra), Mali (under interim President Assimi Goïta), Somalia (under former President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo), and Sudan (under Lt. Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan) to unravel political governance and create insecurity and instability to their advantage.[8] Similarly, motivated actors have exploited ethnic and religious differences (i.e., divided societies) to degrade stability and prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from gaining NATO membership.[9]

The idea, then, that one or more condition exists as vulnerabilities that offer opportunities for friendly or adversarial exploitation has major significance for analysis, theory, and policy. In terms of analysis, it explains accessibility (i.e., proximity to conditions), relevance (i.e., gravity or consequence), and efficacy (i.e., success or failure) of an adversary's effort to undermine local governance or to challenge U.S. influence. This gives analysts a mechanism for understanding and prioritizing threats arising out of local conditions based on the degree or extent of their exploitability. In terms of theory, exploitability contributes new insights into how adversaries prioritize conditions for exploitation at different levels of government and the specific steps they take to exploit conditions. Theoretically and practically, this exploitation presents significant consequences of undermining local governance, degrading U.S. influence, and advancing their parochial interests. From a policy perspective, understanding exploitation as a concept contributes to deepening understanding of otherwise opaque adversarial activities as threats to U.S. global influence and offers countermeasures that can mitigate threats and advance U.S. interests and influence.

Applying ECF to Military Analysis

ECF provides a practical means by which analysts can incorporate social science methodology and thinking into military analysis. As a framework for sociocultural analysis, ECF can be applied in one of three functional ways (see figure 3, page 41).

3 WAYS TO APPLY THE ECF

For detailed understanding of how to apply each process, see the ECF: Step-by-step handout.

SORTING TOOL — **1**

1. Understand the conditions
2. Select a focus
3. Conduct research
4. Organize and label by condition
5. Perform preanalysis
6. Conduct analysis
7. Develop judgments and conclusions

INTERPRETIVE DEVICE — **2**

1. Select a focus
2. Conduct research
3. Perform preanalysis
4. Conduct analysis
5. Understand the conditions
6. Apply the conditions to the analysis
7. Develop judgments and conclusions

3 ANALYTIC TRADECRAFT

Conduct research → Identify cognitive and perceptual biases → Identify limitations in your frames → Establish mechanisms to bypass problematic frames

(Figure by Susan Littleton, TRADOC G-2 graphics specialist)

Figure 3. Three Ways to Apply ECF

First, it can be used as an organizing tool to visualize vulnerabilities and destabilizing effects. For this application, ECF is used at the start of data collection and analysis to organize sociocultural data. In this way, the framework helps analysts to visualize and understand the OE through the lens of exploitable conditions. In particular, ECF can show how an area may be vulnerable based on its exploitable conditions.

Second, it can be used as an interpretive tool to make sense of exploitation in the OE. Here, ECF is used after data collection and analysis to make sense of the discovery. In this way, ECF illuminates conditions

more likely to be exploited, by whom, and for what purpose. This and the first application are useful ways to extend and expand the view of the OE and contribute to military decision-making.

Third, it can be used as tradecraft for grounding analysts in sociocultural analysis. As tradecraft, ECF is used as an analytic technique and standard that builds critical thinking skills to challenge assumptions and judgments, identify mindsets, stimulate creativity, and manage uncertainty about the exploitation of the OE. Regularly using ECF can enable Army analysts to structure thinking for grappling with and resolving difficult questions about vulnerability and build useful training scenarios that reflect real-world exploitation.

Inherent Value of the ECF

ECF is a simple framework that helps to reveal vulnerability and explain exploitation. It is a system of ideas offering (1) an encompassing image of society and (2) a way of thinking about the OE.

ECF as image of society. ECF provides a perspective of the OE from its systems of shocks. A shock occurs when a specific sociocultural issue challenges or confronts an area's institutions and mechanisms for maintaining stability. Within the context of ECF, shocks are relatively sudden changes to the nature of key sociocultural conditions that make them vulnerable to exploitation. In this way, ECF can serve as an important monitoring, measuring, and alert system for stakeholders to detect and track changes affecting vulnerability—especially those resulting from exploitation.

The effects of exploitation may include the inability of a state's governance systems to channel resources to address needs and/or the unraveling of social structures and cohesion. This inability (to channel resources needed or to attend to state unraveling) may lead to insecurity and instability in the immediate area. There are three ways an analyst can monitor a sudden change in sociocultural conditions.

Monitor the change to the nature of a condition. This refers to a significant change in a condition that produces a more than proportionate effect. For instance, a significant change in mineral extraction laws may increase oil company profits and boost oil extraction activities but also invigorate active opposition to oil extraction. This can lead to a manipulated surge in militant activity that undermines oil production,

worsens insecurity, and threatens economic and political stability. Thus, the change in the condition (i.e., new oil extraction law) makes the effect of the conditions (i.e., resource scarcity and economic inequality) on society more consequential when exploited. For example, petroleum extraction in Nigeria, which may be analyzed under the broader ECF label of "Resource Scarcity," has witnessed at least three related shocks affecting multiple exploitable conditions:[10]

- The discovery of commercial quantities of oil in 1956 created a major revenue windfall and spurred resource control agitations (resource scarcity), led to a devastating civil war, and deepened suspicions and antagonisms among Nigerian ethnicities (divided societies).
- The pervasive and unremitted environmental degradation that is a direct outcome of oil production (environmental threats) has spurred civil agitation including the current Niger Delta militant violence (divided societies).
- The dramatic hike in oil prices in the 2000s magnified disparities in revenue generated from oil (i.e., billions of dollars) and the miserably poor conditions of the Niger Delta people (economic inequality), as well as the unmitigated devastation of the Niger Delta ecology (environmental threats).

Monitor the change to a government's mechanisms for absorbing shocks. This is the ability of the government to accept, manage, and neutralize the harmful effects of shocks (i.e., change to institutional capacity to address shocks or mitigate risks). For example, the failure of Colombia to overhaul its security policies to rely less on the military to enforce security in rural areas and enable a stronger civilian police force created a security gap that illicit networks exploited to advance their parochial interests, worsening gang- and drug-related insecurity in the country (ineffective government and illicit networks).[11]

Monitor the change to the reactive capacities of society. This is the ability of society—the people (e.g., individuals, groups, and communities)—to maintain cohesion and to continue to function at a previous capacity despite the change to a condition or its effects. Thus, how society reacts to exploiting a condition can worsen the impact of an exploited condition in an area. For example, communities across West African countries affected by climate variability suffer reduced

capacity for mitigating climate effects on their economy (ineffective government and environmental threats). As a consequence of their diminished reactive capacity, they have been easily manipulated to focus on the behavior of similarly affected neighbors (e.g., farmers, herders) and less on climate factors, which has deepened suspicions and antagonisms and increased hostility and violence (divided societies).[12]

Thus, establishing a baseline view of society is a common military action and an important starting point for monitoring exploitability. The ECF serves as a useful "lens" to observe society and its potential for disorder viewed through the actor-condition relationship. Further, the image may reflect the crystalizing of mutable conditions into immutable challenges and the analyst can observe and track this metamorphosis including its effects.

ECF as a way of thinking. More than a way of viewing society, more than a signaling system to alert stakeholders of important societal changes, ECF provides a way to understand the interplay of conditions and the people involved—a structure-actor nexus. Structures typically are seen as static and nearly immutable. However, the ECF conditions assume their force because of the behaviors of actors who can manipulate or direct a condition or a system of conditions to create a more complex challenge for society.

Therefore, it is important to understand the structure-actor interaction and its consequences. ECF helps the analyst anticipate the complex interaction between a condition and an actor by forcing the analyst to ask deliberate questions about the relationship. For example, if an analyst has a bin labeled "Resource Scarcity," and within it is a subhead called "behavior," the analyst is implicitly asking questions about behaviors concerning resource scarcity. Suppose the analyst has a two-way arrow from the "Resource Scarcity" bin to the "Divided Society" bin. In that case, they are questioning how people who manipulate resource scarcity (or are affected by it) are creating divisions in society and, reciprocally, how divisions in society affect the behavior of those who manipulate resource scarcity (or are affected by it). Questions such as this help to operationalize ECF and are a critical task for analysts working with ECF to understand the fundamentals of this structure-actor interaction.

Notably, then, it is not merely the nature of a condition that produces insecurity or instability; rather, it is the manipulation of the condition by motivated actors that leads to insecurity and instability. For example, the condition of "Divided Societies" is not inherently disorganizing and may not produce disorder. It becomes disorganizing and produces disorder when actors exploit the difference to advance their parochial objectives. This weaponization of difference, as Russia has done in the Central African Republic, hinders the transformative quality of difference for improving political processes, creating constitutional and institutional safeguards against authoritarianism, and permitting justiciable resolution of political disagreements.[13] Instead, suspicions among divided groups are worsened, insecurity and instability deepen, and Russia's regional objectives are entrenched, limiting U.S. influence.[14]

Situating the framework in this way means analysis must account for the two broad strains within ECF: the condition itself and the exploitability of the condition. Both are discrete and very different social facts that interact to create instability. We can think of the conditions as material social facts *and* how the conditions are exploited as nonmaterial social facts. While the analyst must be attuned to the material conditions, they must be similarly prepared to address the nonmaterial aspects, including actor interests, strengths, ideology, and resources.

Summary and Conclusion

ECF is a deductive model that begins with some orienting structures or frames (i.e., the conditions), extracts questions, and then starts to line up the questions with the appropriate analytic and sampling frame (e.g., actors, events, and documents can be sampled). In other words, ECF provides the analyst with preferred analytic "bins" to easily make the relational arrows as they construe, understand, explain, or predict social phenomena in the OE. Analysts use ECF to explicitly decide which questions are most important and how they should get the answers. Analysts can make a better analysis of the OE when the analytic framework and associated questions, cases, and instrumentation are explicit, instead of implicit. Thus, ECF permits and facilitates better analysis of the sociocultural landscape of the OE and saves the Army time and resources.

When analysts are presented with a set of requisite conditions, which infer some a priori notions about the factors that have the greatest explanatory and predictive power, they only have to focus on operationalizing the conditions through carefully considered research

questions. These questions will determine whether the conditions are present or absent in the OE, who is exploiting (or likely to exploit) them, and whether that had an impact on the security and stability of the OE or U.S. influence. How and why any number of actors exploit a condition is important because they bring into sharp relief the sociopolitical relations through which a condition is transformed from a benign state to a disorganizing or destabilizing state.

ECF is emerging as an explicit constructive frame in military and defense analysis. However, analysts in different fields and within the Department of Defense have always thought about the OE as a specific universe of form, structure, and interactions, including the sociocultural universe. Their efforts to understand the universe that the military operates in, however, must change as this universe changes its fundamental character. Old ways of knowing must give way to new ones. ECF represents a new way of thinking about and conducting sociocultural analysis of the OE during a time of increasing competition among peer and near-peer global powers as well as regional and local powers, and as the arenas of contestation are increasingly shifting from old centers to new ones.

Sociocultural analysis, therefore, should emphasize social conditions that lend themselves to exploitation and propose ways that the Army can mitigate risks resulting from the potential exploitation of a condition to U.S. interests and Army missions across the OE. Each condition is a conceptual scheme that allows analysts to describe important social processes, at least for a time until these processes change fundamentally. ECF provides, in essence, a set of eyes for seeing the sociocultural reality of the OE and, equally significant, for understanding this reality at a given time and place. ∎

Notes

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THE GLOBAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (GCKN) is a hub for sociocultural analysis for the U.S. Army TRADOC G-2 Operational Environment Enterprise. GCKN provides a practical means by which analysts can incorporate social science tools, methodologies and sociocultural thinking into military analysis. Developed largely for the Army intelligence and sociocultural analyst communities, the GCKN approach is useful to anyone interested in social phenomena—cultural, economic, political, environmental, educational, industrial, legal, medical, or otherwise—especially if their studies engage the intersection of domestic and foreign elements, security and stability.

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U.S. ARMY

STRENGTH and WISDOM

Sgt. Ben Levine of Company D, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), Task Force Iron Gray, Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, assists security force assistance brigade (SFAB) service members and soldiers from the Armed Forces of Djibouti Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide on M240B machine gun capabilities 20 October 2021 in Djibouti. The SFAB is comprised of military advisors who support foreign security forces in the U.S. Africa Command area of interest. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Dyer, U.S. Air Force)

The Wagner Group and U.S. Security Force Assistance in Africa

Changed and Challenging Dynamics

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Past analysis points to challenges confronting U.S. security force assistance (SFA).[1] As captured in joint doctrine, "SFA activities are often used to shape the OE [operational environment] or assist a PN [partner nation] in defending against internal and transnational threats to security or stability ... SFA activities may be used to assist a PN to defend against external threats or help contribute to multinational operations and help develop or reform another country's security forces or supporting institutions."[2] No doubt, the United States is by far the world's largest provider of SFA, whether assessed in terms of the range of activities performed, the number of countries engaged, or the amount of money spent. Nevertheless, U.S. SFA efforts are often plagued by self-doubt, (sometimes unrecognized) limitations, and marginal effectiveness. As one study put it, "SFA's real costs and risks are easy to underestimate, and its military benefits have often been oversold."[3]

This article examines how U.S. SFA challenges in Africa are now heightened by Russia's Wagner Group, the armed nonstate actor increasingly favored by the Kremlin. To expand, according to a 2018 RAND report, SFA is the predominant form of U.S. engagement in Africa.[4] Hence, improving U.S. SFA is both important and no small feat on its own given the multiple objectives of reducing conflict, countering terrorism, and promoting democracy and accountable civil-military relations on the continent. With the Wagner Group and associated actors in Africa, there is presently not only an alternative for assistance, there is also a competing provider that does things very differently in terms of means and ends, all the while strengthening Russia. The Wagner Group's growing presence on the continent underscores the urgency of a longer-term partnership-oriented response by the United States.

Though the Wagner Group operates in many African countries, this study's evidence is predominantly drawn from two cases: Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali.[5] For the former, Russian personnel arrived in 2017, and the United Nations (UN) reports that as many as 2,300 individuals are active. Although nominally described as "instructors," their activities have gone beyond training to include fighting alongside CAR's armed forces in the country's civil war, securing mining sites, and providing close protection to President Faustin-Archange Touadéra's regime. As for Mali, approximately one thousand Wagner Group personnel have engaged in training, counterterrorism, and junta protection tasks since December 2021.[6] These two cases are important as the countries have had past military relations with Western countries, including the United States. They are emblematic of the model Russia is honing for the Wagner Group's activities.[7] Lastly, in a geostrategic sense, CAR and Mali are in a larger region deemed conducive to further Wagner Group operations or those of other similar Russian actors.[8]

The Wagner Group

Looking at the U.S. context, the private military and security company (PMSC) might be the actor most closely resembling the Wagner Group at first blush. The United States has extensive relationships with PMSCs, especially those developed over the course of the two major interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq earlier this century. These PMSC efforts were reflective of the U.S. government's needs for guard, defensive, and training services and in keeping with the longstanding desire of multiple presidential administrations to introduce private actors into the defense realm.[9] Through a mix of competitive contracting and sustained demand, PMSCs became an important part of the contractor pool helping to form the "Total Force" concept identified in the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*.[10] To fulfill its needs, the U.S. government relied on both U.S. PMSCs and those of other countries. Similarly, the United States, though an important client for PMSCs, was not the sole source of their revenues. PMSCs sought out commercial relationships with other countries, corporations, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations, sometimes simultaneously with U.S. government requirements.

The first indication that the Wagner Group is something different rests with the fact that while it is often classified as a PMSC, analyses have frequently used other descriptions too. Examples include the following: "a proxy organization of the Russian state," "a nebulous network that combines military force with commercial and strategic interests," "a 'pseudo-private' military company," and "an informal semi-state security group."[11] Correspondingly, the Department of State labels the Wagner Group as a "surrogate for the Russian ministry of defense."[12] As such, the Wagner Group does not offer its services on the open market; it provides for the needs of the Kremlin and supporting

A Wagner Group mercenary gives a tactical training lesson to members of the armed forces of the Central African Republic circa September 2022. (Photo from the Wagner Group website)

oligarchic networks—notably those linked to Yevgeny Prigozhin.[13] In turn, the Wagner Group frequently utilizes Russian military infrastructure, platforms, and kit. Contracting, if that is the appropriate term, is not open and transparent.

The legality of the Wagner Group is similarly oblique. On the one hand, it lacks a legal corporate registration. As well, under Article 359 of the Russian Federation's Criminal Code that concerns mercenaries, an entity like the Wagner Group is seemingly forbidden.[14] On the other hand, Russian President Vladimir Putin has muddied the legal waters: "If … Wagner is violating any Russian law, the General Prosecutor should conduct an investigation. If they violate no Russian law, they can pursue their business interests in any part of the world."[15] The general prosecutor has not acted against either the Wagner Group as an entity or those that operate under its name since Russia's reliance commenced in 2014.

A further distinction pertains to the Wagner Group's service offering. Like the U.S. experience with PMSCs, the Wagner Group provides protective, defensive, and training services. However, unlike the U.S. PMSC case, the Wagner Group employs offensive violence in terms of taking the initiative, seizing territory, and changing the political status quo. The United States Federal Acquisition Regulation plainly asserts that "security contractors are not allowed to conduct direct combat activities or offensive operation."[16] To juxtapose, Russian military officials have perceived what they term "private military companies" as a potentially offensively oriented and inherently disruptive tool.[17]

U.S. Security Force Assistance Challenges

Objectives and incentives. For the United States, the appeal of SFA is replacing large-scale military commitments in favor of shifting the emphasis to PN activities and developments. Part of this effort concerns dealing with U.S. security needs related to countering terrorism or insurgency in a cost-effective way. Another part concerns making African state security apparatuses more professional, democratically oriented, and cognizant of U.S.-associated civil-military relations norms through exposure, guidance, training, and education.

SFA's considerable scope underscores both lofty intentions and inherent tensions. Other investigations have revealed the high bar set through their questions. A 2018 RAND report asks, "Do partner security
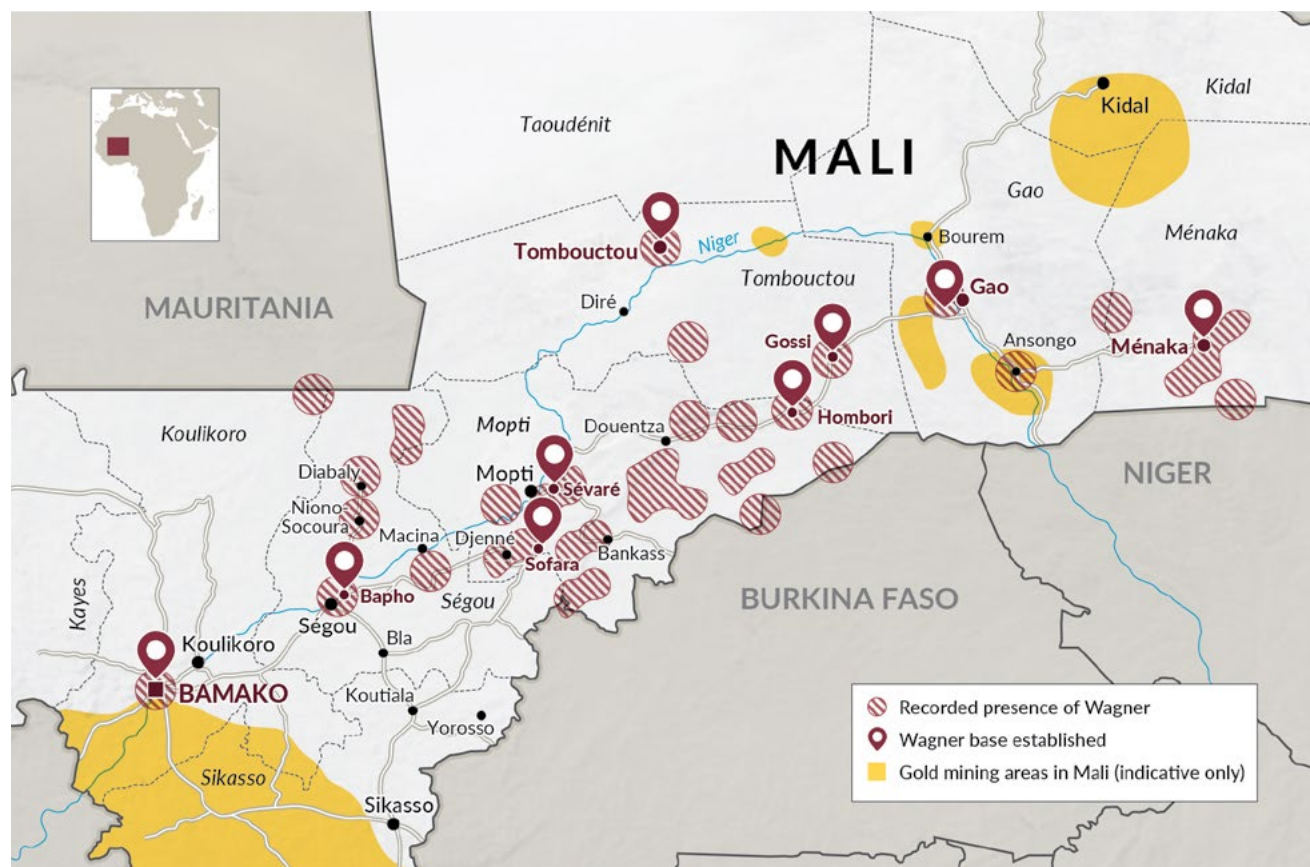
(Map from Stanyard, Vircoulon, and Rademeyer, *The Grey Zone: Russia's Military, Member, and Criminal Engagement in Africa* [Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, February 2023])

institutions use the improved capabilities gained from U.S.-provided equipment and training in ways that contribute to stability and reduce violence?"[18] Similarly, for Øystein Rolandsen, Maggie Dwyer, and William Reno, "Does the provision of SFA make the people in the recipient country feel safer? Does it enable the recipient state to assert control over its territory and populations in an accountable manner?"[19] Seeking answers to these questions is critical because of what Rita Abrahamsen refers to as "combative contradictions" in the African milieu.[20] On the one hand, SFA is about making African security institutions more capable to counter threats. On the other hand, it is about simultaneously restraining those increasingly potent institutions "in the name of development, democracy and civilian oversight."[21]

SFA contradictions are increasingly apparent as strengthening security institutions has become more prominent than constraining and shaping them. Analysis reveals successive U.S. policy waves dating from the late 1990s that have shifted the balance.[22]

Again citing Abrahamsen, the onset of the Global War on Terrorism particularly saw "the imperative to 'train and equip' ... [dominating] over more developmental and political ambitions to limit defence spending and ensure democratic oversight ... [and] accountability."[23] This emphasis invigorates the urgency of combatting actors that threaten PN and U.S. interests alike. But it also signals engagement with fewer objectives, less profundity, and shorter timelines that stymie the sustainment of transformative partnerships. This is about recalibrating the balance so that U.S. commitment toward substantive change in PN is more than just rhetoric.

A concomitant set of tensions for the United States stems from SFA objectives that do not always correspond with the incentive structures of PN leaders and elites. There are three factors. First, at its heart, SFA is often oriented toward a performance-based legitimacy common in the developed world whereby the state is essential in the provision of services and security.
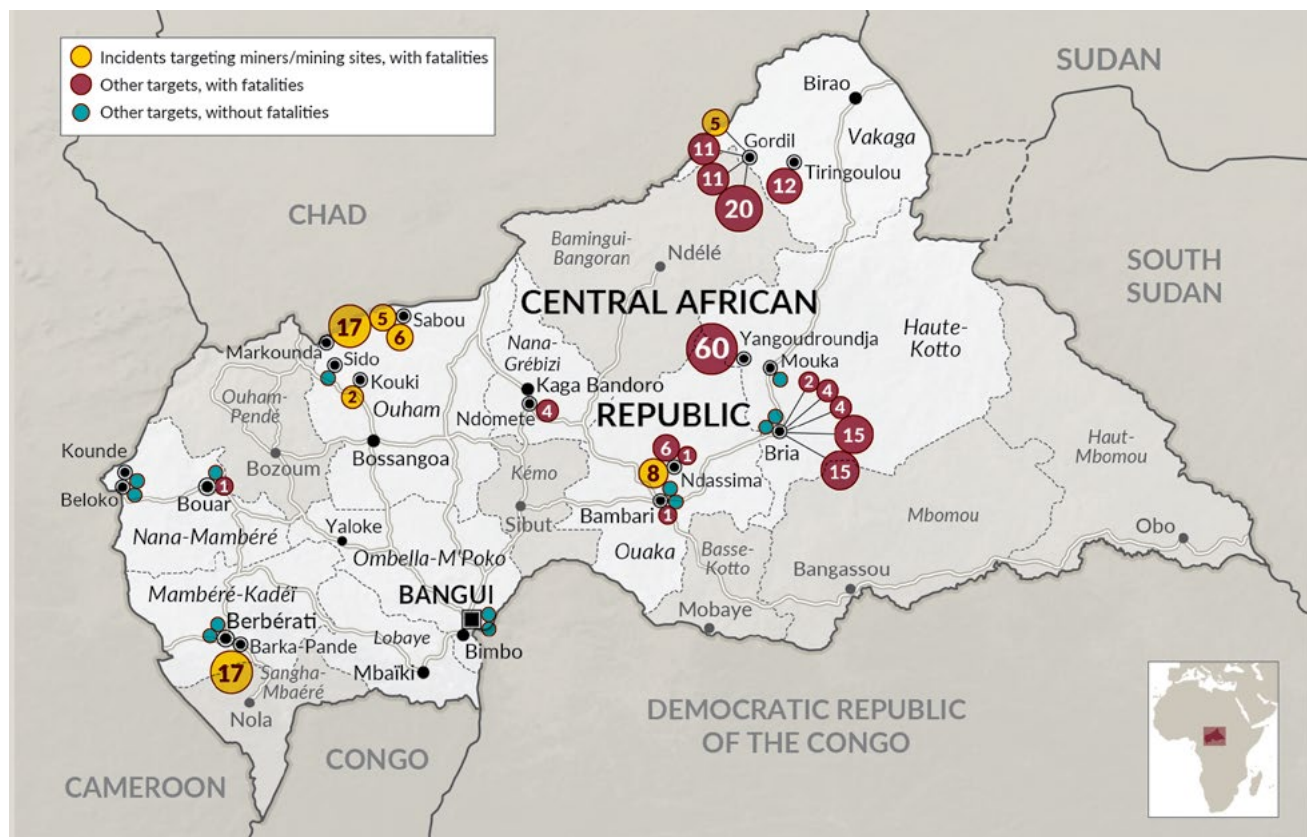
The numbers indicate reported casualties inflicted by Wagner attacks. (Map from Stanyard, Vircoulon, and Rademeyer, *The Grey Zone: Russia's Military, Member, and Criminal Engagement in Africa* [Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, February 2023])

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, for instance, echoed this in his February 2021 remarks to a summit on the Sahel: "Historical social grievances, a lack of accessible public services, and exclusion from political processes … all of these erode the legitimacy of governments in the eyes of the people."[24] However, such a penetration of the country and civil society risks upsetting the informal power brokerage operating at the regional/ethnic level in many African states.

The second is how SFA may shift the standing and influence of security actors internally. While SFA may bolster the standing of these actors writ large, this may upset internal power balances given slights, real or perceived, in the distribution of opportunities and equipment. Instead, PN leaders often direct SFA largesse toward particular units so that they can fragment the security sector, weaken it as a whole, and in turn, better coup-proof their control.

The third, in relation to the previous two, is that leaders will not contemplate these risky and substantial changes if the United States is not clearly committed

over the long term.[25] Given that tactical and operational efforts tend to be realized earlier than those regarding governance and professionalization, PN will often emphasize certain benefits and underplay others.

As an authoritarian state, Russia does not have the same worries as those of the United States, and its activities through the Wagner Group and linked Prigozhin initiatives are in keeping with local incentives and opportunities. To explain, analysts recognize that not only are many African leaders differently incentivized, but the contemporary international milieu also offers them particular avenues to achieve their aims that will likely not lead to stronger stakemaking per se. As Mick Moore puts it, one should not be blinkered by a one-way command-and-control ideal of a typical developed world state. Instead, there is a need to appreciate that "capacity derives much more from the strength of—and ability to mobilise—networks and connections within the state apparatus itself, across states and between state and non-state actors."[26] Resources and legitimacy increasingly come from without rather

Members of the Wagner Group oversee training in Central African Republic circa end of 2022. (Photo courtesy of the Russian government via Ahmed Hassan, Grey Dynamics)

than from within. In the specific realm of security, a leadership may not need to turn to its population for validation and to develop relationships between the citizen and the state through the harnessing of military might.[27] Internal resources can be minimized and outsiders can alternatively be employed.

The CAR and Malian leaderships have taken advantage of this even though it may heighten state fragility. In CAR, Russian-trained local personnel were not reintegrated into the European Union training mission (suspended in December 2021), thus setting the groundwork for a parallel security structure.[28] Moreover, especially sensitive tasks fell to foreigners only. Sewa Security Services, interconnected with the Wagner Group and Prigozhin, provide security details to President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and key members in his government. Wagner Group personnel

numbers in country also increased in December 2020 for fear of election-related violence and instability threatening Touadéra's regime. As for Mali, the Wagner Group, through its close protection activities, backstops the ruling junta's control as it recalibrates the country's democratic future. While initially there was to be an eighteen-month transition period, it shifted to five years with elections now pushed back to 2026. As recognized by the Center for International and Strategic Studies, "The Malian junta's turn to Russia and the Wagner Group is intended to shore up its domestic political position rather than to meaningfully address insecurity in the country."[29] Also note the incentive structures regarding resource extraction. The so-called "resource curse" evident in many African countries permits elites to benefit from resource exploitation, which in turn entrenches their control/governance. Rather than turn

to citizens to form a bargain for their taxes and efforts in return for services and security, elites can rely instead on the global marketplace.[30] The Wagner Group and the associated Prigozhin network are linked to the curse and add their own dynamics. In CAR, as the quid pro quo for the Russian presence, Lobaye Invest, another Prigozhin entity, has secured concessions in gold and diamond mining areas. Wagner Group/Sewa Security Services in turn provide site protection and collect customs duties.[31] Revenues simultaneously sustain their presence and that of Touadéra's regime. As for Mali, access to three gold mining concessions accompanied the Wagner Group's introduction.[32] True, Malian mineral resources are not relied upon to the same degree as the CAR case, in part because many sites are in rebel held areas, and in part because of existing controls over mining at the central and tribal levels.[33] Nevertheless, Russia has expressed continued interest in Mali's resources and commentary reveals changes in the Malian mining code allowing for expanded Russian extraction activities.[34]

Human rights. The United States has a longstanding interest regarding the human rights observance of PN military units that receive SFA. Since the late 1990s, the Leahy Law is a prime manifestation of this interest. With statutory provisions applying to both the Department of State and the Department of Defense, the U.S. government is prohibited from funding SFA for PN military units for which there "is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights (GVHR)."[35] These violations include rape, torture, extrajudicial killing, and enforced disappearance. In some instances, SFA to promote human rights and the respect for the rule of law in "Leahy-ineligible" PN military units is permitted, but not for individual unit members or commanders for which there is credible information linking them to gross violations of human rights.[36] This particular policy arose out of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act and can now be nestled into requirements in place since the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act calling for all SFA to include human rights training.[37]

It stands to reason that should a SFA PN unit subsequently go on to commit violations, this is doubly vexing for the United States. The first relates to seeming U.S. complicity and the second to making it harder to justify and maintain relationships with a particular PN. Analysis identifies many instances when such violations have occurred in Africa, analysis that informs arguments for the substantial reduction in SFA to limit these transgressions.[38] When conditionality is not exercised and a relationship with a PN nevertheless remains unaltered due to U.S. security needs, Washington's commitment to human rights is derogatorily deemed "fluid" and its reputation harmed.[39]

Certainly, the Wagner Group's African efforts have faced human rights criticism. For instance, in the midst of offensive Wagner Group operations alongside CAR personnel in 2021, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights received "reports of mass summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture during interrogations, forced disappearances, forced displacement of the civilian population, indiscriminate targeting of civilian facilities, violations of the right to health, and increasing attacks on humanitarian actors."[40] Similarly, in 2022, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali identified a "significant surge in gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law" instigated by Malian soldiers, "accompanied by Russian elements in many instances."[41] A Brookings Institution examination underscores the distinction: the Wagner Group offers "the ability to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations unconstrained by human rights responsibilities, unlike the United States, allowing African governments to be as brutish in their military efforts as they like."[42]

It follows that conditionality is absent and human rights vexations do not similarly trouble Russia's presence in Africa through the Wagner Group. Policy wise, Russia follows a stabilization approach that, contrary to a liberal

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Children mine for gold in a traditional mine on 5 May 2014 in the Central African Republic village of Gam, where gold mining is the main business activity of the region. Wagner Group elements inside Mali and the Central African Republic are frequently reported to be colocated with Russian mining interests. Numerous deadly attacks against miners as well as common practices related to the exploitation of child labor for mining are attributed to Wagner Group operatives. (Photo by Issouf Sanogo, Agence France-Presse)

stance, places primacy on the utility of violence and sovereignty and much less so on human rights.[43] From the perspective of either the leadership in CAR or Mali, this reliance on violence and sovereignty allows it to fend off unwelcomed interventions, contain unrest, and gives it a freer hand in responding to domestic challenges.[44] Moreover, the human rights transgressions of Wagner Group supported units and Wagner Group personnel do not impact negatively upon the Kremlin in a de jure manner in two ways. One relates to the Wagner Group's aforementioned blurriness that allows the Kremlin to deny a command-and-control relationship. For Sorcha MacLeod, the chair of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries, the "distance between the Russian state and the group" is purposeful: "It operates in a situation of opacity, there's a real lack of transparency and that's the whole point."[45]

The second is the diplomatic top-cover Russia extends through the UN. For CAR in 2022, Russia pushed off a U.S. attempt in the UN Security Council to investigate abuses by Russian and local personnel. It also blocked the renewal of a UN arms embargo monitoring group. In the case of Mali, Russia prevented the UN from launching an independent investigation into a March 2022 incident at Moura in which approximately three hundred people were allegedly killed by Malian soldiers and Wagner Group members. Taken together, this protection from further scrutiny solidifies Russia's approach and is representative of its ongoing commitment to its African partners.

Next Steps

Russia's activities through the Wagner Group could motivate a recasting and a reinvigoration of U.S. SFA in Africa. Although SFA may be the predominate mode of U.S. engagement as noted above, it is an approach that often enjoys only fickle political and institutional backing.[46] This reinforces the narrowing

A Wagner Group operative provides personal protective overwatch to Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra who waves to the crowd as he arrives to celebrate the sixty-fourth anniversary of Central African Republic independence during a military parade in Bangui on 1 December 2022. (Photo by Barbara Debout, Agence France-Presse)

of scope and timelines analyzed earlier. Competition could seize U.S. policymakers and push back what has uncharitably been referred to as "strategic dithering."[47] This would not be to mimic the Russian approach; that would simply be a race to the bottom from the U.S. perspective. Instead, competition could lead toward (re)launching the needed and ongoing partnerships with African states, but not for the sake of simply providing a robust alternative to the Wagner Group. Rather, substantial partnerships are required for U.S. SFA to bear fruit. They allow for political and cultural relationships and understandings to develop.[48] Moreover, they recognize that not only does SFA objectively demand a lot of a PN, it also asks PN leaders to change the way they do things, to take risks, and to follow other incentives. Knowing that U.S. support and assistance will be there for the long term and appreciating that change may only occur incrementally is important. Competition with Russia might inform the rationale for this approach, but U.S. policymakers should not lose sight of effective partnerships through SFA as the goal.

This competition will likely grow, thus augmenting the urgency of a U.S. shift. The Wagner Group's current presence is part of the larger Russian "pivot to Africa" launched after the 2014 invasion of Crimea to escape the resulting economic and political isolation implemented by the United States and others. Since then, to advance diversification, the Kremlin instigated military agreements with more than twenty African countries and Russian extractive firms have expanded their footprint on the continent. Following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin's impetus to avoid the effects of sanctions and to take the initiative has only grown. Gold and diamond extraction and sale can avoid sanctions put in place on Russia's banking sector.[49] Russian investment in African natural resource extraction may permit the laundering of illegally obtained funds.[50] As well, developing stakes in African oil and gas concessions grants the Kremlin even greater influence over how European states satisfy their energy requirements.[51] It is telling, therefore, that though some Wagner Group personnel shifted to Ukraine in 2022 to support Russian operations,

most of the group's contingent remained in Central Africa.[52] This demonstrates commitment to existing African partners and shows resolve to others who may be attracted to what Russia, through the Wagner Group, has to offer.

Certainly, many African states are arguably so attracted. Again, this relates partially to the considerable demands of U.S. SFA coupled with the uncertainty that the United States will be a long-term partner. What Russia offers via Wagner Group engagement is a competing alternative that does not come with the same strings attached. Yet attractiveness is also evident in African empathy toward Russia's stance. In the wake of the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the largest number of abstentions in the UN General Assembly's condemnation and in the suspension of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council came from Africa. Also in this vein, African states have not fulsomely embraced the economic sanctioning of Russia. Taken together, as stressed by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, "Africa is fast becoming crucial to Putin's efforts to dilute the influence of the United States and its international alliances."[53]

Concluding Remarks

Though Russia does not operate with the intent and scale of the Soviet Union nor possess the growing power the likes of China, it is fair to recognize that Russia has utilized "niche strengths" to effectively "punch above its weight."[54] The Wagner Group, given its actions, capabilities, and opaqueness, forms one of these niches that has been applied in CAR and Mali. As such, Russia should not be simply viewed as "a geopolitical gremlin," putting a spanner in the works wherever it goes.[55] It has certain goals, partially anchored in a desire for standing and partially based on necessity in the wake of its increased isolation after 2014 and doubly so now after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. What it offers through the Wagner Group is a competing alternate method of engagement with very different means and objectives that may be appealing to some African leaders given their political situations and the incentives they face. This pressurizes U.S. SFA efforts, but potentially allows for reorientation through the formation of long-term partnerships that are more than just responding to the Russian challenge.

Regarding future issues for research that fall out of this article, one can look both externally and internally. For the external, it is evident that U.S. policymakers are looking to like-minded Western allies for support and assistance in Africa.[56] Key here will be ensuring that these foreign providers of SFA are equally committed, not only to limiting Russia's space to maneuver, but also to developing and sustaining partnerships with African states over the long term. Internally, there has been criticism that U.S. forces providing SFA are often short changed in terms of training, the maturing of language competencies, and timely recognition and promotion.[57] Keeping partnerships with African states energetic and beneficial to all parties will require ongoing consideration of these variables internal to the U.S. military ecosystem. ■

Notes

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11. For these examples, please see the following: Danielle Paquette, "Russian Mercenaries Have Landed in West Africa, Pushing Putin's Goals as Kremlin Is Increasingly Isolated," *Washington Post* (website), 9 March 2022, accessed 11 April 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/09/mali-russia-wagner/; Declan Walsh, "Putin's Shadow Soldiers: How the Wagner Group Is Expanding in Africa," *New York Times* (website), 31 May 2022, accessed 11 April 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/31/world/africa/wagner-group-africa.html; Nick Mitchell, "What Is the Wagner Group?," National World, 24 March 2022, accessed 11 April 2023, https://www.nationalworld.com/news/world/wagner-group-russian-mercenaries-ukraine-3589837; Justin Ling, "Moscow Turns U.S. Volunteers into New Bogeyman in Ukraine," *Foreign Policy* (website), 15 March 2022, accessed 11 April 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/15/russia-mercenaries-volunteers-ukraine/.

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FUTURE WARFARE WRITING PROGRAM

Call for Speculative Essays and Short Works of Fiction

Military Review calls for short works of fiction for inclusion in the Army University Press Future Warfare Writing Program (FWWP) for 2023. The purpose of this program is to solicit serious contemplation of possible future scenarios through the medium of fiction in order to anticipate future security requirements. As a result, well-written works of fiction in short-story format with new and fresh insights into the character of possible future martial conflicts and domestic unrest are of special interest. Detailed guidance related to the character of such fiction together with submission guidelines can be found at https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Special-Topics/Future-Warfare-Writing-Program/Future-Warfare-Writing-Program-Submission-Guidelines/. To read previously published FWWP submissions, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Special-Topics/FWWP-TOC/.

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AUP Films

The People's Republic of China is determined to become the leading global economic and military power. In an effort to assist those researching China or other issues in the INDOPACOM area of operations, the Army University Press invites readers to examine the repository of resources it has that may help them glean valuable lessons learned from previous conflicts in the INDOPACOM region. This repository includes books, films, staff rides, and journal articles. The newest addition to the Army University Press menu of resources is the Army University Films Team.

The Army University Films Team creates documentary films designed to teach current U.S. Army doctrine using historical case studies. Army University Films works in conjunction with the Combined Arms Center, Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, Army University, Army Centers of Excellence, and other professional military education programs to select relevant doctrine and historical topics as the basis for its documentary films.

Legacy Products in the Archives: *The Big Picture*

The first installment of the long-running Army production *The Big Picture, The First Forty Days in Korea* follows several companies of the 24th Infantry Division during America's entry into the war. Unlike later episodes of *The Big Picture*, which offer interviews with subject matter experts, *The First Forty Days in Korea* is almost exclusively narrated combat footage recorded and produced by the Army Signal Corps.

The fourth installment of *The Big Picture*, *Chinese Reds Enter the Korean War* outlines the UN struggle against a new enemy and the brutal cold. After looking at the situation in Korea from 20 October through 20 November 1950, the episode describes the evacuation process for the wounded from the front to hospitals. The film also showcases the production of new weaponry at Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Navy's fight against winter storms in the Sea of Japan, the Air Force's pack plane, and the latest in winter uniforms.

The fifth installment of *The Big Picture*, *United Nations Forces Escape the Chinese Trap* follows the United Nation retrograde from the Chinese border at the Yalu River to the massive evacuation of soldiers, marines, and civilians at Hungnam.

For more information and access to entire inventory of films and documentaries, see https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Documentaries/.

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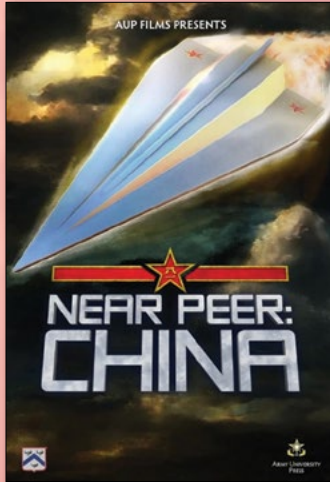
Near Peer: China

Okinawa 1945: Typhoon of Steel
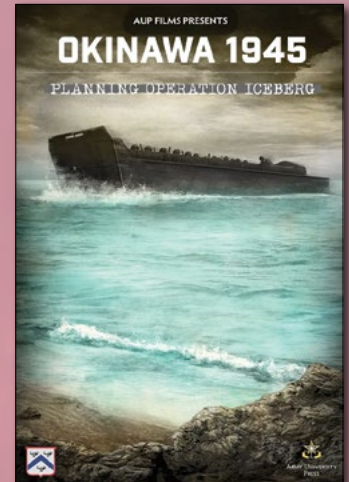
Okinawa 1945: Planning Operation ICEBERG
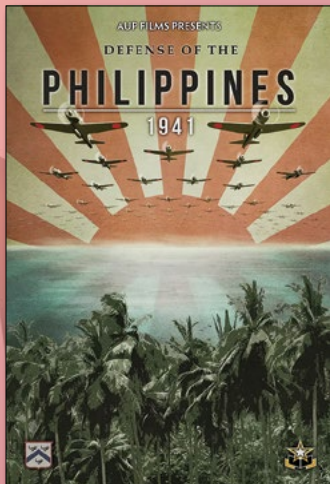
Defense of the Philippines, 1941
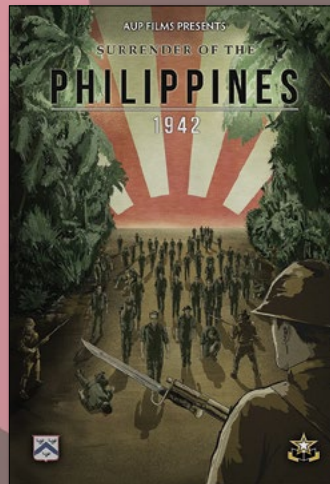
Surrender of the Philippines, 1942
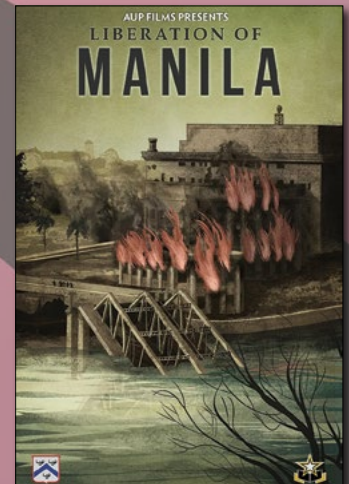
Liberation of Manila

Korea: Chipyong-ni

Korea: Twin Tunnels
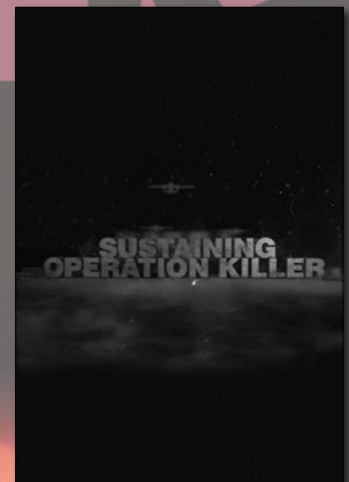
Korea: Sustaining Operation KILLER

Staff Rides

The Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team develops and conducts two types of staff rides as educational tools for the US Army: live and virtual. Both focus on the timeless and universal aspects of warfighting that provide important insights into the factors affecting military operations including terrain analysis and concepts of leadership. Presentations employ vignettes and open discussion among participants. The live staff ride takes place at the site of actual battlefields. The virtual staff ride (VSR) consists of simulated terrain built in a 3D virtual environment produced largely from satellite imagery, digital terrain elevation data, photographs, video, and firsthand accounts. The team has developed multiple VSRs to replicate terrain that Army organizations cannot readily access from the continental United States. Additionally, the staff rides element makes available staff ride handbooks for units that wish to conduct their own.

Examples of Virtual Staff Rides

The Korean War staff ride series examines the 2nd Infantry Division's fight at Chipyong-ni at multiple levels of command. The Combat Action Korea (the Lost Patrol) is a three-hour staff ride that examines a platoon reconnaissance mission and the follow-on relief effort of a company to rescue the isolated platoon (27–30 January 1951). The Battle of Chipyong-ni is a four-to-six-hour staff ride that studies the attack of multiple divisions of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army against the 23rd Regimental Combat Team's perimeter at Chipyong-ni (27 January–15 February 1951).

Chipyong-ni perimeter, Battle of the Korean War Virtual Staff Ride

Each version of the Korean War VSR is fully exportable to any organization that has access to the Army-licensed gaming software, Virtual Battlespace 3 (VBS3). Each exportable package includes full instructor support materials, student readings, and instructions on how to use everything.

Other VSR Specifically Relevant to INDOPACOM

- Battle of Buna, Papua New Guinea (1942)
- Battle of Munda Point, New Georgia (1943)
- Bougainville: Defending the Lodgment (1943–44)
- Battle of Lone Tree Hill, Papua New Guinea (1944)
- Okinawa (1945)

All virtual staff rides can be requested at https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Staff-Rides/Virtual-Staff-Ride/.

For more information on staff rides overall, see the Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride website at https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings/.

Army University Press

Books

The AUP Books section at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, publishes original, interpretive research on topics pertinent to current topics of immediate and enduring interest to the U.S. Army and sister services. To that purpose, AUP offers a variety of documents in monograph and article format that may be of use to those vested in defense planning within the INDOPACOM region and Korea. All AUP publications are released in digital format onto the Press's website. Examples of such materials are noted below.

Art of War Papers

- *Inside the Sea Dragon: The Generations Within the Current People's Liberation Army Navy Officer Corps* by Lt. Cmdr. Brian Juskiewicz (USN) (2019), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/inside-the-sea-dragon-the-generations-within-the-current-peoples-liberation-army-navy-officer-corps.pdf

- *How China Wins: A Case Study of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War* by Maj. Christopher Gin (2016), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/how-china-wins.pdf

- *Jakarta Knows Best: US Defense Policies and Security Cooperation in 1950s* by Maj. Richard Hutton (2019), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/jakarta-knows-best-us-defense-policies-and-security-cooperation-in-1950s-indonesia.pdf

- *Survival Through Adaptation: The Chinese Red Army and the Extermination Campaigns, 1927–1936* by Maj. Wilbur Hsu (2012), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/ArtOfWar_SurvivalThroughAdaptation.pdf

Leavenworth Papers

- Leavenworth Paper #2, *Nomonhan: Japanese-Soviet Tactical Combat, 1939* (1981), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/Drea-Nomonhan.pdf

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- Leavenworth Paper #19, *Scenes From an Unfinished War: Low-Intensity Conflict Korea, 1966–1969* (1991), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/Scenes-Froman-Unfinished-War.pdf

- Leavenworth Paper #22, *Moving the Enemy: Operational Art in the Chinese PLA's Huai Hai Campaign* (revised) (2003), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/bjorge_huai.pdf
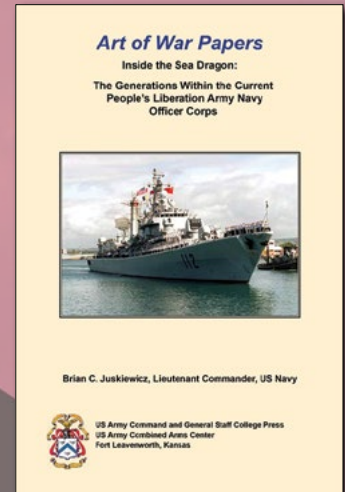
Inside the Sea Dragon: The Generations within the Current People's Liberation Army Navy Officer Corps
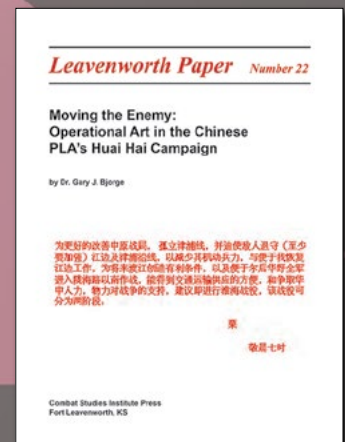
Moving the Enemy: Operational Art in the Chinese PLA's Huai Hai Campaign

For more information, contact BOOKS at https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Books/Books-and-Manuscript-Guide/.
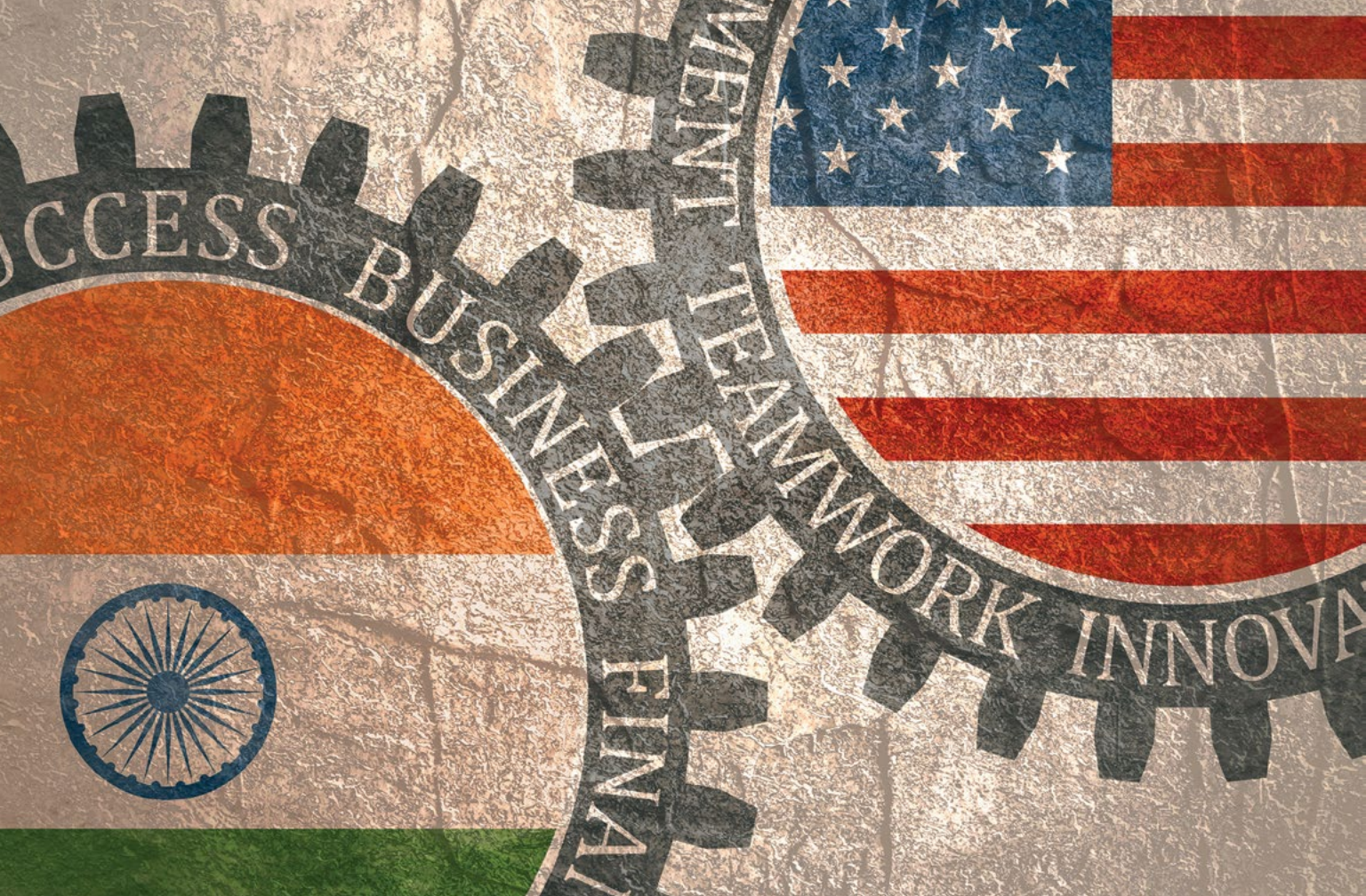
Toward a Mutually Beneficial Partnership with India to Improve U.S. Strategy in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Maj. Patrick O'Brien Boling, PhD, Louisiana National Guard

Dr. Paul Sanders

Chess has only two outcomes: draw and checkmate. The objective of the game … is total victory or defeat—and the battle is conducted head-on, in the center of the board. The aim of Go is relative advantage; the game is played all over the board, and the objective is to increase one's options and reduce those of the adversary. The goal is less victory than persistent strategic progress.

—Dr. Henry Kissinger

"The distribution of power across the world is changing, creating new threats."[1] From a U.S. national perspective, there has been a recognized change in the strategic environment with the weakening of the post-World War II world order.[2] The two reasons for this shift that stand out the most are a rising China and a disruptive Russia. To address this change, it would be prudent to form alliances and partnerships with other democratic and like-minded nations, aiming to tilt the competitive balance and rebalance the distribution of power.[3] To achieve this, it is crucial to avoid repeating past mistakes, such as those made in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the United States created alliances based on pressure instead of on the willingness of the parties involved.[4] While these changes present new threats, they also present opportunities, including the possibility of forming an enduring and equitable partnership between India and the United States.

This window of geopolitical opportunity exists because both nations currently seek a common solution to contain China's influence. For India, this common interest is primarily regional, while for the United States, China is considered a pacing threat and the "most consequential strategic competitor" at the global level.[5] These interests intersect in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) region, providing an opportunity for a mutually beneficial partnership. Despite the obstacles that have existed for decades, the perceived threat from China now makes such a partnership seem more attainable than at any point in recent history. This potential partnership between India and the United States could be seen as a win-win for both nations.

Collective action, not just pontification, is required to address the changing distribution of power worldwide. The 2022 *National Security Strategy* (*NSS*), signed by President Joseph Biden, proclaims, "We must proactively shape the international order in line with our interests and values."[6] The *NSS* goes on to explain how the Nation's most important strategic assets are alliances and partnerships worldwide.

One strategy developed by the Department of Defense that will be used for proactive shaping is integrated deterrence.[7] "Deterrence remains an essential pillar of U.S. defense posture."[8] The concept of integrated deterrence means it is integrated across domains, across the whole of government, and across allies and partners.

There are numerous U.S. alliances and partnerships that can be strengthened by implementing the concept of integrated deterrence and collective action, but India is uniquely positioned to benefit the United States through an enduring and equitable partnership. India's value to the United States is due to its growing national power in the INDOPACOM region and its underleveraged global power potential. This U.S. and India partnership could build on existing similarities between the two nations, including shared cultural values, common goals, advancements in innovation, aligned economic interests, and diplomatic competition with China. This article examines the common interests as well as practical impediments to a working relationship between the United States and India. The Indo-U.S. partnership is an opportunity for a declining power (the United States) to ingratiate itself with a compatible, emerging one (India) to benefit both.

Partnership Compatibility

The similarities in culture and commonality of purpose make an equal and willing partnership with India a logical choice. Both internal developments and external influences, including the integration of Eastern

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Dr. Paul Sanders, U.S. Army, retired, is an Advanced Operations Course instructor with the Department of Distance Education at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds an MA from Chapman University and a PhD from Northcentral University in California. During his military career, he served in a variety of assignments as a logistics officer and, earlier in his career, as a Special Forces engineer with 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).
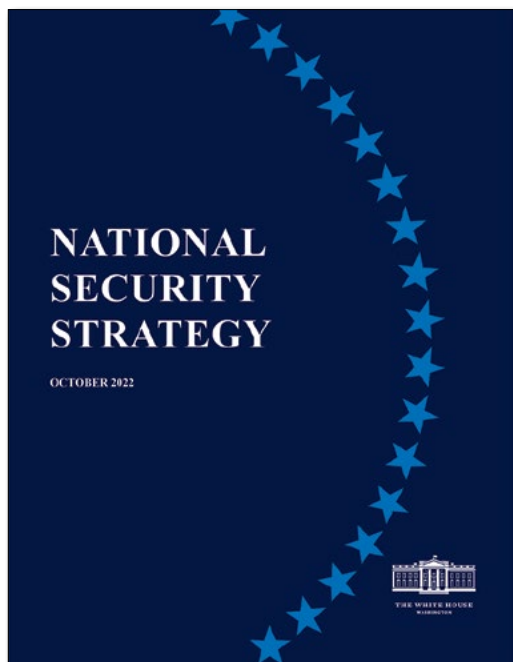
and European philosophies and customs, have shaped India's cultural heritage. This integration took place while maintaining its independence and at the same time rejecting foreign domination. This spirit of independence, particularly following India's emancipation from British rule, is similar to that of the United States.

India's cultural heritage informs its foreign policy. India asserts itself as a sovereign nation that greatly respects the independence and sovereignty of other nations. Additionally, India's foreign policy restricts foreign interference with other countries.[9] India's foreign policy aligns with the United States and other U.S. strategic partners. In addition to shared values, India and the United States have similar political and economic systems. Both have classic liberal democratic-hybrid political systems, and India has gradually adopted a more capitalist economic system while the United States has moved toward a more regulated, socialist-oriented economy. As the two countries near this crossroads of more regulated and less regulated systems, there is increasing potential for commonality between the two nations.

Cultural similarities. The cultural exchange between the United States and India has been a two-way street, with Indian culture influencing the United States and vice versa. The influence of Indian culture can be seen in the popularity of Indian philosophy (Hinduism), fashion, and Bollywood, while the United States has inspired India in areas such as media, protection of free press, and Hollywood.[10]

The growing population of Indian Americans in the United States is a testament to the cultural compatibility between the two nations. The United States benefits from this population because they are statically higher educated. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2020, Indian Americans made up approximately 1.2 percent of the U.S. population.[11] Indian Americans are among the most educated populations, with 99 percent having a least completed high school, 73 percent achieving a bachelor's degree, and 40 percent attaining postgraduate degrees.[12] Indian Americans as a demographic have above-average economic prosperity.[13] Indians assimilate easily into the U.S. population as indicated by high levels of academic and financial success in a significant portion of the U.S. population, demonstrating the cultural compatibility between the United States and India.

The commonality of cultures and shared values between the United States and India offers a strong foundation for a partnership, which can be further strengthened through collaboration in areas such as innovation, economic interests, and diplomacy. The current U.S. *National Security Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy* both address concepts like integrated deterrence, which offers an expanded opportunity for the United States and India to work together to address challenges in the INDOPACOM region and beyond.

Shared values. To best understand how deep these similar cultural roots are, it is important to remember that India was a former British colony like the United States. The founders of the governments in India and the United States rebelled against British government rule. They then slowly evolved into liberal democracies that promote individual freedoms and equality. The Indian and U.S. governments represent a variety of cultural and political views. In times of peace, the populations of both countries struggle with internal differences, but in the face of outside threats, they coalesce around a national identity.

The authors believe that a country seeking equality of competition translates to the same values in external trade. The similarities in cultures and shared values

Top: Over eighty thousand attendants celebrate at the 2013 Festival of Colors on 30 March 2013 in front of the Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork, Utah. Events like those shown in these pictures demonstrate the influence Indian culture has on the United States and vice versa. (Photo by Lisa Dacis via Wikimedia Commons)

Bottom: Indian players of American football run on the field 23 March 2012 during a practice session at the Salt Lake Stadium in Calcutta, India. (Photo by Bikas Das, Associated Press)

make India a logical choice for a strategic partnership with the United States. The strong bonds they share between their people have made them ideal partners in trade and diplomacy. As both nations continue to grow and evolve, they will undoubtedly continue to be valuable allies and work toward a more equitable world.

Emerging Global Power

India is an emerging global power that recently surpassed China in total population and could soon surpass them in innovation with aid from the United States. Sharing in innovation gives the United States an opportunity to ingratiate itself by contributing to India's rise. Innovation captures both the growth of the population in India and technological advancements possible with India. The population will provide the people, labor, and ideas that will drive innovation. In terms of demographic, India has a growing and increasingly industrious population, making it an attractive partner. The population of India stands at 1.427 billion; China is now the second most at 1.425 billion.[14]

Growing to rival China. India and China's labor populations have a comparable distribution across the three main sectors: services, industrial, and agriculture. India is weighted more in agriculture versus services but nearly equal in the industrial sector. The age distribution of military-aged (15–64 years) populations marginally favors China, with 68.3 percent compared to India's 67.51 percent (2021 figures).[15] However, China's population is beginning to age out due to fewer females, resulting from the one-child policy introduced in the 1970s.

India's population surpassed China's population in 2023. India's growth rate of 1.02 percent is more than double China's growth rate of 0.42 percent. China's population is projected to seriously decline by 2030. India's population is expected to reach 1.65 billion before an expected decline in 2060.[16]

As overall prosperity improves so does education; literacy rates should see improvements above the present 77.7 percent.[17] Any decline in China's population will create a labor shortage that could benefit India's educated but underemployed workforce. Based on these population demographics, both now and into the future, India is a strong contender for economic competition with China.

Advancements in innovation. The population growth story of India is compelling, but equally important will be the exponential growth of innovation in technology. India's technological needs present a great opportunity for the United States to build further trust with India as a research and development partner. India has demonstrated respect for intellectual property (IP) per the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement (TRIPS) and the World Trade Organization.[18] China, in comparison, has a dubious history of violating TRIPS.[19] China's IP theft threatens U.S. national security. An equal threat is China's dominance in the production of rare earth metals components.[20] India's compliance with TRIPS provides a safer alternative to China for manufacturing sensitive technologies.

India is also emerging as a center of innovation, as evidenced by an ever-increasing number of patents filed. In 2020, India granted only 4,988 of 23,141 resident patents filed, but granted 21,373 of 33,630 nonresident patents.[21] India's consideration for a greater number of foreign patents further demonstrates the country's willingness to be a partner in technological innovation. India has also distinguished itself as an emerging center of research and development globally. According to Global Innovation Indexes, from 2011 to 2021, India has ranked high as an innovation leader in the central and southern Asia region, lower-middle economic group category, and performed above expectations.[22] While not scoring as high on the Global Innovation Indexes scale as countries like the United States or China, India does surpass the United States, and it rivals China regarding innovations per gross domestic product (GDP).

Mutually Beneficial Ends

India seeks to boost its economic competitiveness and military capabilities. An early investment by the United States in India's emergent economy, which is far from its potential and poised to compete globally, would increase access to manufacturing and innovation. India has been purchasing advanced weapons from various countries, including Russia, the United States, France, and other nations. The government of India signed a ten-year agreement with Russia for small arms and other advanced weapons systems. Additionally, India sought advanced nuclear submarine and advanced avionics technology from various European Union and North American countries.[23]

India's pursuit of advanced military weaponry has allowed its country to emerge as a potential counterbalance to China's threats to the supply chain.[24]

Aligned economic interests. A partnership between the United States and India would be financially viable and sustainable for both nations, as their current economic interests are aligned. Here are some key statistics to consider. India is the ninth-largest economy globally and the third largest in Asia, behind China and Japan. India has the second highest growth rate of 8.4 percent among the G20 countries, ahead and almost double the 4.9 percent growth rate of both China and the United States.[25] India's 2021 GDP was $3.176 trillion U.S. dollar (USD) equivalent and is projected to grow by 6.5 to 7 percent to USD$5 trillion by 2026.[26]

In 2026, India's working population is projected to surpass that of China, as the Chinese workforce begins to decline and its economic growth rate slows. India will be poised to fill a growing gap in goods and services. China's declining workforce could be an opportunity for employment by India's youth bulge. Fortunately, this segment of the Indian workforce has experienced an increase in literacy by twenty-four percentage points from 1993 to 2017–18 and has experienced a fifteen percentage point increase of youth attending educational institutions during that same period.[27] Meanwhile, China's debt is projected to increase from USD$12.037 trillion, or 71.84 percent of GDP in 2021, to USD$21.659 trillion, or 83.75 percent of GDP in 2026, due to the rising cost of supporting an aging population.[28] On the other hand, India's debt is projected to slow from USD$2.429 trillion (84.68 percent of GDP) in 2021 to USD$4.252 trillion (83.75 percent of GDP) in 2026.[29]

The average Indian household debt is 34.6 percent of GDP, the Chinese household debt is 62.14 percent of GDP, and the U.S. household debt is 78.03 percent.[30] As the United States faces difficulties in financing its high levels of debt to GDP, a partnership with India and its lower debt-to-GDP ratio could help to mitigate attempts by China to drive up prices through supply-side restrictions.

Shared diplomatic competition with China. Diplomacy with India is critical for balancing China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Having an enduring partnership with India would provide regional legitimacy within INDOPACOM and a direct counterbalance to China's influence. The partnership could also benefit the United States by encouraging third-party nations and other regional powers such as Russia to form partnerships with India and the United States. This could catapult India to a higher position in the global power hierarchy.

Diplomacy with India is complex. The very challenges that make a relationship with India compelling for the United States are the same challenges that both attract and limit U.S. leverage. Limited leverage should not be confused with the absence of leverage. The United States should use a pragmatic approach that considers the present power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. Diplomacy should begin with an understanding of the limited intervention approach by India to regional diplomacy.

During the Cold War, the Indian government had been more aggressive toward its neighbors; this resulted in the neighboring countries seeking to isolate India's influence. In the 1990s, India shifted to a more cooperative "Look East" policy, which transformed its perception among regional powers. Over time, India's neighbors began to see India more as a partner than a threat.[31] India began to focus on economic partnerships as the vehicle for diplomacy. As these relationships grew, India sought security by forming regional coalitions.[32] "Look East" became "Act East," which sought to increase economic diplomacy. A component of the Act East coalitions is countering China's economic and military threat. As a result of these economic partnerships, the Indian economy improved.

India is now seeking recognition as a responsible nuclear power and a seat on the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which will require substantial diplomatic support from the United States.[33] The United States has taken steps to support India's acquisition of nuclear energy.[34] These actions could provide the United States substantial leverage in the near term.

One of the challenges to diplomacy in competition with China is legitimacy. To effectively engage in diplomacy with India, it is important to have an appreciation for India's unique history and identity. India's rich history predates China, including the ancient Harappan civilization, the Mauryan Empire, and the Mughals, among others.[35] This history supports India's claims to territorial issues and usage of the seas within the INDOPACOM theater.

Soldiers of 2nd Brigade, 11th Airborne Division, and Indian army soldiers carry out a mock operation to flush out armed gunmen from a house during the Indo-U.S. joint exercise Yudh Abhyas in Auli, in the Indian state of Uttarakhand, 29 November 2022. (Photo by Manish Swarup, Associated Press)

The second challenge to diplomacy in competition against China is territorial disputes on land and in sea lanes. Establishing legitimacy for land and sea usage and territorial claims is a top priority in the INDOPACOM theater. India claimed the lands of Jammu and Kashmir, triggering a war between India and Pakistan. These lands remain contested, with China involved as a third-party claimant over Kashmir.[36] Additionally, the Sino-India War was sparked by a dispute over territory.[37]

China's invasion of Tibet to annex territory and its incursions into Kashmir to build a road have added to territorial tensions. In 2017, China further escalated tensions by constructing a road on the Himalayan plateau of Doklam in the sovereign territory of Bhutan near the Indian border. The Chinese used this as an opportunity to paint India as the oppressors of Bhutan's foreign policy.[38]

India also faces disputes with China over Indo-Pacific maritime movement corridors. China began activities in Sri Lanka by providing naval craft to the country, which coincided with the Sino-Pak Naval agreement and the sale of Chinese naval vessels to Bangladesh.[39] In 2010, China loaned Sri Lanka an excessive amount of money for a port with insufficient traffic to justify the loan. In 2019, China exercised a loan provision that allowed it to confiscate the port when Sri Lanka failed to make payments.[40] The Straits of Malacca are also a friction point with China. India moves 50 percent of its trade and 70 percent of its oil through the Straits of Malacca.[41] China's military activity within the straits threatens not just the Indian navy but also threatens India's economy.

Territorial disputes and sea lanes are significant friction points in the INDOPACOM theater. If India backs down from China's aggression, they risk conceding territory or access to sea lanes to China. On the other hand, attacking China would give them justification to attack India. India's military is not yet prepared to engage a significant threat. Assisting India with equipping its military provides an opportunity for the United States and its forces to check China's provocations.

Existing alliances between the United States, India, and other nations can both present opportunities and pose complications to any future Indo-American partnership.

Indian and Chinese forces clash on 28 September 2021 in the mountainous Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh at the Line of Actual Control—the de facto border between the two countries. Both sides reported minor injuries. A border skirmish the year before in the Ladakh region had resulted in at least twenty-four deaths. (Screenshot from China Central Television)

India and the United States have similar relationships with China, but with subtle differences. While the United States is an economic trade partner and competitor with China, and to a lesser extent, India, it also competes with China in diplomacy, information, and the military. For India, the United States is its largest trade partner (China is second), and it mainly competes with China in diplomacy, information, and the military (including territorial disputes along the borders with China).[42]

As discussed earlier, India is increasingly competitive in culture, innovation, technology, economics, and diplomacy. It is important to consider that an Indo-American partnership formed to compete with China does not have to be confrontational. The *NSS* is very clear that the United States will work with any nation that shares our goal of a rules-based world that is free, open, secure, and prosperous.[43]

Admittedly, the combined leverage of an Indo-American partnership would be more substantial for both countries in the great-power competition relative to China. However, regarding China, India and the United States could serve as each other's best alternative for a negotiated agreement rather than engaging with China independently. China's more aggressive use of national power and the decline of U.S. global power highlights the need for a partnership with India while also preventing the United States from dictating India's foreign policy.

The Russian entanglement. India's enduring partnership with Russia, which originated during the Cold War, is an important consideration. At that time, India's opposition party, the Indian Communist Party, had strong ties with Russia, and the Indian government had aligned itself with Russia and adopted some socialist policies domestically. At the same time, the United States had supplied military equipment to Pakistan, which were employed against India. As a result, India became the largest customer of Russian military arms, many of which are still in use by the Indian military today.

The long-standing relationship between India and Russia only complicates the Indo-American partnership, if one believes the United States has the right to impose its foreign policy on its partners. Perhaps it is time for the United States to enter more equitable and willing partnerships rather than coalitions of the coerced.

India could likewise question the U.S. relationship with Pakistan. This logic also applies to Russia's relationship with Pakistan and India's relationship with Iran. India has maintained economic trade with the rogue nation of Iran and maintains an embassy in that country. This provides India with access to Iranian diplomatic channels and any strategic partner with a back door for negotiations. The United States can find potential benefits by shifting the paradigm and reevaluating the Indo-Russian relationship. Consider that perhaps Russia's entanglement with India could be reducing the potential of Russia's invention on behalf of China.

The United States has not lost its moral high ground by avoiding dichotomous alliance formations. This can also be implied to intervening in internal conflicts such as friction between the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh populations within India or ongoing border disputes with other nations (e.g., Pakistan). With Russia's recent missteps internationally, India may replace Russia as the third superpower in a New Cold War. Furthermore, as both the United States and Russia are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, an alliance with India may result in India becoming a security council member. Having a similarly minded democratic nation on the security council could be a positive outcome.

Conclusion

The Indo-U.S. partnership is an important opportunity because of their compatibility as partners, the opportunity for a declining power to ingratiate itself to an emerging one, and commonality of purpose.

The similarities in culture and commonality of purpose make an equal and willing partnership with India a logical choice. India's foreign policy aligns with that of the United States and other U.S. strategic partners. The cultural exchange between the United States and India has been a two-way street, with Indian culture influencing the United States and vice versa. In addition to shared values, India and the United States have similar political and economic systems; both have classic liberal democratic-hybrid political systems that promote individual freedoms and equality.

India is an emerging global power that recently surpassed China in total population and could soon surpass them in innovation with aid from the United States. India's growth rate of 1.02 percent is more than double China's growth rate of 0.42 percent. China's population is projected to seriously decline by 2030. India has demonstrated respect for IP and is emerging as a center of innovation. Sharing in innovation allows the United States to ingratiate itself by contributing to India's rise.

An early U.S. investment in India's emergent economy, far from its potential and poised to compete globally, would increase access to manufacturing and innovation. A partnership between the United States and India would be financially viable and sustainable for both nations. Diplomacy with India is critical for balancing China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Regarding Indo-Russo relations, perhaps it is time for the United States to respect a partner's rights to form its own relationships.

This article presents both practical and historical considerations for how action-plan items can be implemented regarding India. The newest *Indo-Pacific Strategy* document outlines an action plan comprised of ten lines of effort, over half of which were addressed directly or indirectly herein.[44] That document recognizes the foundational concepts of integrated deterrence and collective action. The action plan and those concepts will benefit from an even closer partnership with India. ∎

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Military Review

Military Review is a legacy journal of the AUP that has an archive of published articles reaching back more than a hundred years. For readers unfamiliar with the origin and history of Communist China from its beginning to the present day, *Military Review* has assembled a collection of selected articles from its own archives as well as works drawn from other sources at the following website:

https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Special-Topics/World-Hot-Spots//China/

Qing-era representation of Sun Tzu (Artwork courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; appearing in Geoff Babb, "China's Military History and Way of War: A Backgrounder," *Military Review* World Hot Spots [March 2023], https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2023-OLE/Babb/)

A Libyan man holds up a sign asking for a no-fly zone over Libya near the border town of Musa'id, Libya, 13 March 2011. Muammar Gadhafi's forces swept rebels from one of their final strongholds on Libya's main coastal highway, closing on the country's opposition-held eastern half after hours of strikes from warships, tanks, and warplanes. (Photo by Anja Niedringhaus, Associated Press)

The Responsibility to (Selectively) Protect

R2P's Dubious Future Post-Libya

Capt. Pat Serrato, U.S. Army

On the afternoon of 17 March 2011, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) overwhelmingly voted to establish a no-fly zone over the skies of Libya and demanded an immediate cease-fire in the country's ongoing civil war.[1] UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1973 was seen as a historic measure that would establish an institutional precedent within the United Nations (UN) to address

future crimes against humanity that were endorsed and sanctioned by a state against its own citizens. The significance of UNSCR 1973 was not merely that it authorized the use of force, but as Matthias Dembinski and Thersea Reinold note, it authorized the use of force "against the will of an acting government of a functioning state for the first time in history."[2]

An additional novelty associated with UNSCR 1973's adoption was within its overall premise. Since its acceptance, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was inaugurally invoked and incorporated within a resolution aimed to militarily intervene to safeguard citizens amid civil strife. Regrettably, what was considered a key prime mover in ushering in an era of a more proactive and assertive UN in confronting atrocities, UNSCR 1973 and the disastrous aftermath of NATO's intervention in Libya has impeded the comprehensive acceptance of R2P that it initially received.

This article examines R2P's historical emergence and framework prior to showing how the norm's standing and status have significantly diminished in the years following NATO's intervention in Libya. Moreover, it posits that R2P's future is questionable, absent major reform.

Capt. Pat Serrato, U.S. Army, is an infantry officer and recent graduate of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, where he earned an MA in international public policy. Serrato's most recent assignment was as commanding officer of Cobra Company, 4th Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. He has also served in a variety of leadership positions in 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division in Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; and 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment in Fort Benning, Georgia.

R2P's Emergence

The African variable. In 2009, Paul Williams noted that R2P could very well be thought of as a "norm born out of Africa."[3] In his work, Williams elaborates on the overall effect events throughout Africa in the 1990s had on the international community (IC) and in R2P's conception. Mogadishu heralded such change.

The outbreak of the Somali Civil War in 1991 ushered in an unprecedented level of famine that worsened the ongoing warring amongst rival clans. The juxtaposition of these two developments resulted in hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths.[4] The crisis in Somalia prompted the UN to establish two separate but complementary operations to provide humanitarian relief and monitor a UN-brokered cease-fire.[5]

The UN eventually ended its mission soon after a disastrous U.S. military operation occurred within the country's capital. Although guided by internationally accepted principles and intent, UN actions did not ameliorate the domestic situation in Somalia, and the country eventually collapsed into itself. However, a glimmer of a silver lining flickered amid the postconflict drab. The experience in Somalia provided a spark for a new international doctrine aimed at preventing such humanitarian disasters. A few years later, the developments within another East African country would fan that initial spark into an international zeal to prevent widespread suffering.

An independent report commissioned by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide showed that although the UN amassed credible evidence of an impending genocide, the institution failed to prevent and protect Rwanda's minority Tutsi population.[6] The failures to prevent and halt such atrocity stained the UN as an institution and generated serious policy discussions to prevent such violence in the future. R2P's foundation was thus formed.

New century, new doctrine, new norm. In the year 2000, Canada spearheaded an international initiative to close the IC's warning-response gap regarding future atrocities. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was established and tasked with developing a preventative model. The ICISS published its inaugural 108-page report in 2001 titled *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* to introduce a new international methodology aimed at addressing future humanitarian challenges such as those witnessed in Somalia, Rwanda, and Kosovo.[7] Although the ICISS's report was the first time the IC collectively codified R2P, it was not the first time the principle was expounded upon. In fact, the ICISS notions on R2P

were grounded in the concept as originally articulated by Francis Deng, I. William Zartman (my former professor), and company in their 1996 book titled *Sovereignty as Responsibility*.

One of the critical points carried over to the ICISS report first promulgated by Deng concerned the redefinition of sovereignty. For Deng, the notion of sovereignty must incorporate certain responsibilities for which governments would be held accountable.[8]

seemed to dismiss the ICISS report's more far-reaching and detailed framework. However, a major congruency between both documents involved preventing specific atrocities. Both documents argue that specific crimes (e.g., genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity) warrant R2P's enactment. Another key similarity is the emphasis both documents make on prevention efforts to contain or quell violence rather than resorting to military intervention at the onset

> As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan himself argued, for a state to be legitimate, sovereignty must demonstrate responsibility.

The ICISS commission agreed. In its report, the ICISS carried this notion forward by formally arguing that a nation's sovereignty was no longer purely based on the Westphalian concept. On the contrary, the ICISS report used Deng's redefinition to argue that a state's sovereignty was instead premised on a responsibility toward its population. In other words, as former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan himself argued, for a state to be legitimate, sovereignty must demonstrate responsibility.[9]

During the final days of the 2005 UN World Summit, the UN unanimously adopted the 2005 World Summit Outcome document that recognized R2P as an official norm. However, the summit outcome resolution condensed the 108-page ICISS report into merely two paragraphs. Questions soon emerged as to what responsibilities and obligations the outcome document incurred on member states.

R2P as a Norm

What does R2P entail? Articles 138 and 139 in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document were the only provisions that codified R2P. Although the document carried over key themes from the ICISS report, it severely lacked detail. As Noele Crossley notes, the 2005 World Summit reflected the "lowest common denominator" and truncated the ICISS report to the "crudest form of consensus."[10] Although the United Nations had officially endorsed R2P, its sheer ambiguity generated a plethora of questions, and its terseness

of a conflict's life cycle. As the 2005 World Summit Outcome document states, "The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability."[11] The ICISS report strikes a similar tone. In its synopsis, the report unequivocally states, "Prevention is the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect: prevention options should always be exhausted before intervention is contemplated."[12] Rather than simply serving as a vehicle to justify armed intervention, R2P was intended to limit the use of force, strengthen the international order, and provide guidelines for concerted international action to protect populations from mass atrocities.[13] Conceptually, R2P's doctrine was formulated to provide a continuum of responses which includes preventative efforts, non-coercive and coercive actions, and reconstructive measures in that sequence.[14] This rubric, informed by a zealous notion to prevent widescale atrocity and anchored by the idea that the use of force would be a last resort, would be novel additions to the international *jus cogens* moving forward.[15] However, the sheer lack of detail in the World Summit document generated more questions than answers.

Amid mounting confusion, an effort was made in 2009 by Edward Luck, special advisor for the Responsibility to Protect, to add more substance to R2P as a doctrine. In his report to the UN, Luck outlined a "three pillars approach" for implementing R2P.

Member states vote to approve a resolution that would impose a no-fly zone over Libya during a meeting of the United Nations Security Council at the UN headquarters in New York on 17 March 2011. In addition to the no-fly zone, the resolution authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians from attacks by Muammar Gadhafi's forces. (Photo by Jason DeCrow, Associated Press)

Luck's approach emphasized (1) the protection responsibilities of the state, (2) international assistance and capacity building, and (3) timely and decisive response from the IC.[16] Luck's report answered some of R2P's doctrinal inquiries; however, one key point of contention remained unresolved that generated uneasiness among the developing world: sovereignty.

A house built on an unstable foundation. R2P proponents sought to advance a progressive vision of global order that emphasized collective security, multilateralism, and global governance, much like the human security agenda does.[17] However, such an ambition risked eroding traditional definitions of sovereignty. It was the pioneer of R2P, Francis Deng, who recognized this change and accepted it as a pivotal prerequisite to the notion. The traditional principles associated with Westphalian sovereignty are captured in Article 2, paragraphs 4 and 7, of the UN Charter.[18] These articles codify the concept of sovereignty along two principles: territoriality and the exclusion of external actors from

domestic authority structures. R2P erodes these concepts by declaring that if a government fails to fulfill its part of the social contract, that is in protecting its citizenry, then its claim to sovereignty may be voided. Thus, sovereignty implies responsibility.[19] The UN's endorsement of R2P in 2005 ended the Westphalian ideals of sovereignty.

Understandably, changes to long standing norms bring about angst and suspicion—especially if such changes challenge a state's sovereignty. Soon after the 2005 World Summit, strong opposition arose from postcolonial countries who argued that R2P could serve to justify military action or foreign interference in domestic affairs. For these states, R2P was an unsavory attempt to "justify an already inherently unequal international system."[20] Furthermore, this coalition of nations argued that weaker countries would be even less able to influence their own affairs and would always feel as if stronger powers could intervene at any time. Such a dichotomy would allow the strong

to judge the weak. In essence, R2P exacerbated the cleavage between the Global South and the Global North. Ultimately, such concerns emanating from the Global South not only were justified but foreshadowed future developments.

A Novel Norm in Action: Libya

With the ground situation worsening during the Libyan uprising of 2011, the UN faced a dilemma. Should it heed the warnings and threats promulgated on national radio of then Libyan President Muammar Gadhafi to protesters and proactively intervene? Or should it simply choose to monitor the situation from the sidelines? As the situation deteriorated and Gadhafi's forces appeared intent on conducting a large-scale massacre throughout the city of Benghazi, the UN decided to step in at the invitation of the African Union and League of Arab States using a novel *jus ad bellum* principle—R2P.

A map from 21 March 2011 shows coalition intervention events in Libya. (Map by Jolly Janner via Wikimedia Commons)

Responding to calls for intervention from regional security organizations such as the African Union and League of Arab States as well as other UN bodies, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1970, which asserted Libya's "right to protect" its citizens and imposed an arms embargo and travel ban on the Gadhafi family and on key members of the government.[21] However, with progovernment forces rapidly advancing on rebel positions, calls for the UN to establish a no-fly zone gained traction. Within a month of Resolution 1970's adoption, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1973, which established a no-fly zone and authorized states to "take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat."[22] As then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated, "Resolution 1973 affirms, clearly and unequivocally, the international community's determination to protect civilians from violence perpetrated upon them by their own government."[23] For the first time since its establishment, R2P was invoked and incorporated within a UN resolution aimed to militarily safeguard citizens amid civil strife without the approval of the respective sovereign.

After Resolution 1973's adoption, a coalition of nations primarily composed of NATO members volunteered to enforce the no-fly zone in the skies above Libya. After the coalition successfully destroyed Gadhafi's antiair defense systems, it quickly evolved to supporting rebel forces on the ground. What started off as a moral crusade justified in protecting civilians quickly added one additional objective: regime change.[24] Eight months later, Gadhafi was found in a drainage pipe, beaten, sodomized with a bayonet, and killed by rebel forces. His body was publicly displayed as a "trophy" inside a Misrata meat store.[25]
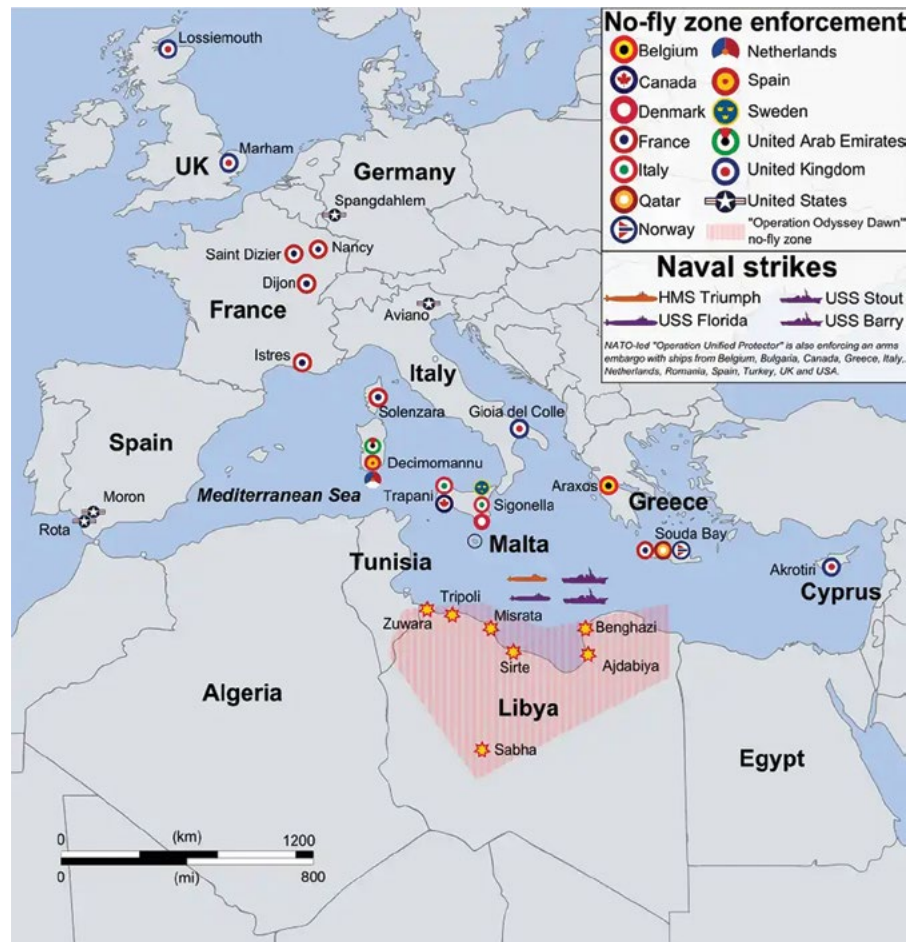
A Qatar Emiri Air Force Mirage 2000-5 takes off 25 March 2011 in support of a Joint Task Force Odyssey Dawn mission. Qatar was the newest member of the coalition supporting the no-fly zone over Libya. (Photo by Paul Farley, U.S. Navy)

The Aftermath of Libya and the Delegitimization of R2P

NATO ended its mission soon after Gadhafi's death against the wishes of the Libyan National Transitional Council. Many were left bewildered at how quickly NATO's mission evolved from R2P to regime change and questioned the logic of NATO's intervention and its true purpose. For many, NATO reinterpreted the UN mandate to achieve its true ulterior motive.[26] Rather than protecting Libyans, NATO used Resolution 1973 as a cover to oust Gadhafi from power. Furthermore, NATO stymied the African Union's mediating efforts which might have led to a political power-sharing arrangement that kept Gadhafi in power. The rejection of such peaceful solutions by NATO calls into question the prevention responsibilities enshrined within R2P. The rejection of a regionally orchestrated outcome by NATO and its absence postintervention illuminates the most glaring failures of R2P in Libya. Although military intervention is intended to be a last resort in R2P's framework, NATO and the UN's decision to resort to hard power by circumventing Luck's first two doctrinal pillars is exactly

what postcolonial states warned against. These actions, coupled with NATO disregarding the rebuilding aspect of R2P's postintervention pillar, and the overall worsening situation in the country postintervention, corroborated the anxieties the Global South had expressed and consequently dealt a significant blow to R2P writ large.

When ICISS first expanded upon R2P, the principle emphasized the importance of prevention and rebuilding rather than military intervention. NATO's campaign in Libya proved that the Global North could use R2P as a façade for pursuing underlying core objectives. Furthermore, it can be argued that if NATO's priority were the protection of civilians, it would have been sufficient to operate within the parameters of Resolution 1973.[27] Even if one were to argue that protecting civilians necessitates regime change in certain instances, then such a policy still must be enacted as a *last resort* as stated in both the ICISS report and in the World Summit resolution, and it must be enshrined within a requisite UNSC mandate. As Giselle Lopez notes, "While it is debatable whether the intervention fulfilled the 'right intention' requirement, it is apparent

A bomb dropped by a warplane explodes 11 March 2011 on the outskirts of Ras Lanuf, Libya. Activity resumed at a key refinery nearby in Zawiyah that supplied the capital and western Libya after clashes between pro- and antiregime forces had forced it shut. (Photo by Alfred/Sipa via Associated Press)

that it did not fulfill the requirement of armed intervention as a last resort."[28]

Syria's Descent into Chaos amid the Shadow of Libya

As NATO's intervention in Libya was ongoing, another humanitarian disaster occurred on a much larger scale within the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region. What started off as antigovernment protests by Syria's youth during the Arab Spring rapidly escalated to all out civil war. Credible reports began emanating from Syria detailing indiscriminate bombings on civilian areas, mass rapes, prolific detention, and extrajudicial killings. As a result of such atrocities, Eastern Europe and the Middle East soon found itself inundated with Syrian refugees with estimates of up to 6.8 million Syrians forced to flee their country.[29] Facing an ever-deteriorating situation, the UNSC failed to garner enough votes to adopt a resolution that established sanctions on Bashar al-Assad's government with Russia

and China vetoing the measure. Vitaly Churkin, then Russia's ambassador to the UN, announced his rejection of the measure was due in part to the resolution's framing founded on "a philosophy of confrontation."[30] China's ambassador expressed similar concerns. With the rejection of the measure, the situation was now up to individual countries on how to respond to the atrocities. If the situation in Libya justified invoking R2P, surely Syria would. In fact, when the resolution was rejected by the UNSC, it can be argued that Syrians were suffering vastly more at the hands of government forces than Libyan citizens were leading up to NATO's intervention. Unfortunately, the negative shadow cast on R2P via NATO's response in Libya reined in the IC from stepping in and protecting Syrians. Libya's fallout was beginning to reshape the IC's attitude and commitment to R2P's core principles.

In 2016, President Barack Obama sat down for an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, editor in chief for *The Atlantic*. During the conversation, President Obama

admitted that both the Iraq War and Libya influenced his decision not to intervene in Syria. Obama candidly offered his justification for not intervening in by stating, "Any thoughtful president would hesitate about making a renewed commitment in the exact same region of the world with some of the exact same dynamics and same probability of an unsatisfactory outcome."[31]

Obama's response illuminates the point of conflict where ideological considerations clash with interventional realpolitik. If the essence of R2P's doctrine is to protect civilians, then the IC would have to muster the will in doing so in every instance in which atrocities occur, and not solely in circumstances that align with national interests. R2P was not designed to be used selectively and when convenient. On the contrary, its original intent was to provide security guarantees to civilians agnostic of what country they reside in. Instead, R2P has been used as a moral blanket to pursue hidden agendas in instances where doing so aligns with national security interests. In essence, R2P is UN-approved casuistry.

R2P's Dubious Future

As Robert Pape argues, if R2P were to be fully realized and implemented in line with the Libyan precedent, then R2P "requires intervention in a much larger number of cases, in this way corroding the norm of state sovereignty and undermining the present normative international order."[32] Furthermore, Libya set the bar so relatively low that virtually every instance of anarchy and tyranny, or even the potential of, represents an opportunity for the IC to ignore the preventative tenants of R2P and violate the sovereignty of states. Thus, R2P threatens to "undermine, confuse, and potentially destabilize the existing normative framework structuring the international relations of states."[33]

In addition to the issue of sovereignty, R2P raises other substantial issues that neither the ICISS report nor the 2005 World Summit document provides guidance for. Gareth Evans, a former cochair for the ICISS and president of the International Crisis Group, notes that neither publication quantifies what is "large scale," to what extent peaceful options must be pursued, and how to ensure proportionality.[34]

Further degrading R2P is in the way the IC selectively invokes the concept. For example, if Libya was the litmus test, why not intervene in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, or Haiti? Each of these examples are either on par with

the situation in Libya leading up to NATO's intervention or worse. The answer of course is that neither of these reside within the intersection of the national interest and political will of the Global North.

Although I maintain that R2P's future is dubious, I do think major reform would rehabilitate the principle and address key sources of apprehension. Such recommendations are as follows:

1. UNSC must conduct an after action report studying what led up to UNSC 1973 and regime change in Libya and what safeguards could be implemented to avoid similar mistakes.[35]

2. A mechanism to hold intervening states accountable for providing adequate support postconflict must be developed.

3. The UN must not support armed intervention without a concerted effort to adhere to Luck's three pillars framework. Such preventative measures may include diplomacy, judicial measures, economic measures, peacekeeping, etc. Regardless, the UN must protect weaker states from stronger ones willing to use force without a sincere commitment to conflict prevention or postconflict rebuilding efforts.[36]

4. Empower regional organizations to act as gateways to international intervention to combat the imperialist critique of R2P. Such regional institutions can serve as an explicitly "anti-imperialist" function. Such a regional effort could help ease the tension in the Global South.[37]

5. The UN must clarify who holds the responsibility to protect and to rebuild. Does the latter fall onto the shoulders of those who intervene? Does the IC automatically assume NATO will form the core of the former? More specificity is needed in these areas.[38]

6. A framework must be developed to ensure states operating within a UN mandate abide by its parameters.

7. A renewed emphasis on peacekeeping forces would strengthen R2P's conflict prevention model and could contain conflicts from escalating to the point where military intervention is required or resolve them prior to the conflict crossing the Rubicon of open warfare.

8. The UN must proactively monitor potential conflict areas and assess if any atrocities particular to R2P have been committed and to what extent.

Such early warnings would allow the IC to develop conflict prevention options.

Conclusion

R2P emerged from atrocity. The sheer levels of violence and suffering witnessed in Africa throughout the early 1990s galvanized the IC to develop a framework to prevent similar future catastrophes. Deng lobbied for a change to the international zeitgeist by championing a novel concept known as the Responsibility to Protect. For Deng, R2P's redefinition of sovereignty was warranted if the global community was to take conflict prevention seriously. In 2001, the ICISS commission codified an actionable framework using Deng's concept in its seminal report to the IC. The ICISS report established guidelines that were premised on prevention, reaction (noncoercive and coercive), and rebuilding. Additionally, the ICISS report emphasized R2P's guiding principle was to strengthen the international order by providing guidelines for concerted action to protect populations from specific atrocities (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity). Military intervention would only be warranted as a last resort if all prevention methods were exhausted. In 2005, the UN unanimously adopted R2P as a norm in the World Summit; however, its terse codification generated confusion among states. To provide more substance, Luck created an R2P framework in 2009 premised on three pillars: (1) the protection responsibilities of the state, (2) international assistance and capacity building, and (3) timely and decisive response from the IC. NATO's intervention in Libya manifested the Global South's collective concerns regarding R2P. For these countries, R2P could be used as a vehicle for regime change sought by stronger nations on smaller states in an era where the redefinition of sovereignty favors the more powerful. Furthermore, the IC's selective and blasé approach regarding atrocities that are on par, or surpass, Libya preintervention water down the principle's moral grounding and demolish its overall intended aim. Consequently, absent major reform, R2P's future is dubious at best. ∎

Notes

1. United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC), Resolution 1973, Libya, S/RES/1973 (17 March 2011), accessed 10 March 2023, https://undocs.org/S/RES/1973(2011). Resolution 1973 was passed in a vote of 10–0 with five countries abstaining, including China and Russia, the only permanent members who did not approve of the resolution's stated aim.

2. Matthias Dembinski and Theresa Reinold, *Libya and the Future of the Responsibility to Protect – African and European Perspectives*, PRIF-Report No. 107 (Frankfurt, DE: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2011), accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk_downloads/prif107.pdf.

3. Paul D. Williams, "The 'Responsibility to Protect,' Norm Localization, and African International Society," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 1, no. 3 (2009): 392–416.

4. John Norris and Bronwyn Bruton, *Twenty Years of Collapse and Counting: The Cost of Failure in Somalia* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, September 2011), accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/twenty-years-of-collapse-and-counting/. Norris and Bruton argue that since 1991 approximately 450,000–1.5 million Somalis have perished and upward of 800,000 Somalis have fled to neighboring countries amid the ongoing crisis.

5. The two operations authorized for Somalia were UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) I and II.

6. Ingvar Carlsson, Sung-Joo Han, and Rufus M. Kupolati, *Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, S/1999/1257 (New York: UNSC, 1999), accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20S19991257.pdf.

7. Noele Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial? Continuity and Change in the Debate on 'Humanitarian Intervention,'" UCL (University College, London) Discovery, accessed 10 March 2023, https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10058488/1/R2P_Still_Controversial_Review_Article_Cam_Rev_Int_Affairs.pdf.

8. Francis M. Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1996).

9. Kofi Annan and Nader Mousavizadeh, "Interventions: A Life in War and Peace," *European Journal of International Law* 24, no. 2 (2013): 730–32, https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/cht035.

10. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

11. UN General Assembly, Resolution 60/1, 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1 (24 October 2005), 30, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf.

12. Gareth Evans et al., *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa, CA: International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, December 2001), xi, accessed 10 March 2023, https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/18432/IDL-18432.pdf.

13. Ibid.

14. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

15. Dembinski and Reinold, *Libya and the Future of the Responsibility to Protect*.

16. UN General Assembly, *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/63/677 (New York: UN, 1 December 2009), accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180580/.

17. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

18. UN Charter art. 2, para. 4 and 7, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text.

19. Dembinski and Reinold, *Libya and the Future of the Responsibility to Protect*.

20. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

21. UNSC, Resolution 1970, Libya, S/RES/1970 (26 February 2011), accessed 20 April 2023, https://undocs.org/S/RES/1970(2011).

22. Ibid. China, Russia, India, Germany, and Brazil abstained from the vote.

23. "Libya: Ban Welcomes Security Council Authorization of Measures to Protect Civilians," UN News, 18 March 2011, accessed 10 March 2023, https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/369392-libya-ban-welcomes-security-council-authorization-measures-protect-civilians.

24. Ivo H. Daalder and James Stavridis, "NATO's Victory in Libya: The Right Way to Run an Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* (website), 2 February 2012, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2012-02-02/natos-victory-libya. The military campaign in Libya named "Operation Unified Protector" had three initial objectives: (1) policing the arms embargo, (2) patrolling the no-fly zone, and (3) protecting civilians.

25. Andrei Netto, Ian Black, and Luke Harding, "Muammar Gaddafi's 'Trophy' Body on Show in Misrata Meat Store," *The Guardian* (website), 22 October 2011, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/21/muammar-gaddafi-body-misrata-meat-store.

26. Dembinski and Reinold, *Libya and the Future of the Responsibility to Protect*.

27. Giselle Lopez, "Responsibility to Protect at a Crossroads: The Crisis in Libya" (New York: Humanity in Action, February 2015), accessed 10 March 2023, https://humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/responsibility-to-protect-at-a-crossroads-the-crisis-in-libya/.

28. Ibid.

29. "Syria Refugee Crisis Explained," USA for the UN Refugee Agency, 8 July 2022, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/. In addition to the approx. 6.8 million Syrians that have been forced to flee the country, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees estimates that 6.9 million Syrians remain internally displaced.

30. Associated Press, "Russia and China Veto UN Resolution against Syrian Regime," *The Guardian* (website), 4 October 2001, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/05/russia-china-veto-syria-resolution.

31. Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *The Atlantic* (website), April 2016, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/.

32. Robert A. Pape, "The New Standard for Humanitarian Intervention," *The Atlantic* (website), 4 April 2011, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/04/the-new-standard-for-humanitarian-intervention/73361/.

33. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

34. Gareth Evans, "The Responsibility to Protect," NATO Review, 1 December 2002, accessed 10 March 2023, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2002/12/01/the-responsibility-to-protect/index.html.

35. Lopez, "Responsibility to Protect at a Crossroads."

36. Ibid.

37. Crossley, "Is R2P Still Controversial?"

38. Dembinski and Reinold, *Libya and the Future of the Responsibility to Protect*.

The Impact of Supply Chain Issues on Military Training and Readiness

Lt. Col. Paul Santamaria, U.S. Army

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The success of the U.S. military rests on two key requirements. First, the military must "train as it fights," completing extensive amounts of training to ensure that it can adequately perform its missions in combat. Second, the defense industrial base must be able to provide a robust supply chain of goods that allows the U.S. military to conduct both training and combat operations. This first requirement hinges on the second requirement since without proper access to equipment and supplies, the U.S. military is not able to conduct its training to standard.

The Russian failures in the Ukraine-Russia War highlight the results of the inability to meet these two requirements. In the years leading up to the war, the Russian defense industrial base faced numerous challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. These supply chain issues resulted in Russian soldiers unable to collectively train to standard; this in turn, resulted in an inability to conduct large-scale operations. If the United States is not able to maintain a steady supply chain of defense material, it could potentially face similar failures in future large-scale combat operations.

Over the last few years, the U.S. defense industrial base has been plagued with supply chain issues. This study discusses these supply chain issues with a focus on how they directly impact the ability of the U.S. Army to train. The analysis includes a case study that considers supply chain issues related to medium-caliber ammunition, which are the rounds that are used in many crew-served weapons.

State of the Defense Industrial Base

The defense industrial base consists of companies, laboratories, research organizations, and suppliers that comprise the supply chain that ensures that the U.S. military has the right resources. A 2022 report from the National Defense Industry Association (NDIA) found that this base has an overall grade of "unsatisfactory, failing."[1] This is the first year that the report has awarded it a failing score. The NDIA report looks at the following criteria to capture the health of the defense industrial base: demand, production inputs, innovation, supply chain, competition, industrial security, political and regulatory, and productive capacity and surge readiness.[2] In each of these categories, the report awarded a score between 0 and 100, with the overall score as the average of the individual scores. The overall score was 69, one point short of passing.[3]

Soldiers from the 13th Missile Defense Battery, 10th Army Air Missile Defense Command, and Israel Defense Forces soldiers load and stack up magazines with 5.56 mm ammunition to perform advanced rifle and reloading tactics on 27 January 2022 at an undisclosed location. (Photo by Spc. Xabiel Schindler, U.S. Army)

Figure 1 (on page 87) provides several quotes from the report that explain the reasons for the failing score.[4] One of the largest issues with the state of the defense industrial base is the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the supply chain and production capacity. These two criteria saw a decrease in scores of 8 and 15 points, respectively. Naturally, these issues have hit every industry; however, in the past, the defense industry has been more resilient to larger economic issues. Moreover, shortfalls in these two areas have a direct impact on ensuring that the U.S. military has the necessary equipment, a critical issue given the current sociopolitical climate. The pandemic also decreased public approval for defense spending, which resulted in a decrease in the political and regulatory scores.

The industrial security indicator achieved an overall score of 50, the lowest score among the eight criteria. This score was based on information security and intellectual property rights; the low score is indicative of several data breaches and economic espionage. These security risks pose a significant issue given that the defense industry is heavily dependent on the sharing of sensitive and classified information among the government and defense industries. This issue becomes even larger given a recent RAND report that

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"For the first time, because of the evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sustained challenges noted in past reports, our Vital Signs study has scored the health of the defense industrial base below a passing grade."

"The cost and availability of the inputs used in the production of goods and services shapes the health andreadiness of the defense industrial base."

"The largest decline within this sector is the cost of goods and services due to rising prices as seen around the U.S.economy, with productivity also showing a small drop."

(Figure by author)

Figure 1. Quotes from *Vital Signs 2022*

states that the Chinese military heavily relies on intellectual property theft.[5]

Further, the report gave a failing score to innovation for the defense industrial base, pointing to a decrease in basic research and development investments from the Department of Defense. Several studies have shown that innovation is key to success on the modern battlefield, given the dynamic nature of modern warfare.[6] However, innovation in the defense sector has been somewhat stagnant, especially when compared to the commercial sector.

One of the key underlying causes for these issues is that vendors in the defense sector project future cash flow on the defense budget publication every year through the president's budget submission. Any significant fluctuations in the budget for certain goods can result in a reduced cash flow leading to decreased investment in infrastructure and layoffs of skilled labor. Moreover, with many defense items procured on fixed-price contracts, defense vendors assume the risk of price fluctuations in the market. This decreases the incentive for the defense industry to invest their own funding in modernization and manufacturing innovation.

Current Challenges with Defense Supply Chain

One area of concern in the defense industrial base is the supply chain and the associated ability of the defense industrial base to get the necessary production inputs. There has been a global shortage of numerous different products ranging from baby formula to semiconductors. Many of these shortages were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought national attention to the holistic fragility of the supply chain. The pandemic caused many companies to implement COVID-19 safety measures such as limits to the number of employees in the workspace, social-distancing measures, and travel restrictions. These measures in turn resulted in decreased productivity and output from these companies, resulting in numerous shortages.[7]

These issues were most readily seen in the health-care system, where the U.S. industrial base was not able to respond to the increased demand associated with the pandemic, leaving hospitals without critical supplies. Despite numerous efforts to boost the U.S. industrial base's capacity to produce the ventilator systems, personal protective equipment, and life-saving medicines necessary

to combat the pandemic, the response remained sluggish. These issues highlight the need for a more resilient supply chain that can better respond to national issues.

Unfortunately, the defense industrial base is not immune to these supply shortages. Although some critical, military-specific materials have preexisting stockpiles designated for the military, many raw materials are procured on the open market. Moreover, while there are specialized pipelines in place to ensure the flow of critical components, this seldom extends to the raw materials.

The forces of supply and demand have tested the resilience of the defense industrial base commodity areas as they now must share the market with other constrained commodity areas. Many defense vendors find pricing for raw materials to not only be too high but also often unreliably held for a sufficient period for them to price out contracts for the Defense Department. Raw material vendors cannot guarantee pricing because of the volatility of the customer base demand, labor shortages, and exponentially high shipping costs. This leads to the defense industry pricing in the risk that its initial cost estimates will come in higher than when it originally bid.

For example, steel, aluminum, and other metals have seen a significant amount of volatility in their market trends. Steel and aluminum are used in multiple different military applications, including aircraft carriers, military aircraft, rifles, tanks, ammunition, shipping containers, and radios. Another item that has impacted a range of military applications is computer chips. As technology evolves, computer chips are now used in almost every military vehicle in addition to many pieces of weaponry. The shortage of computer chips has slowed the production rates associated with certain missiles, including the Javelin missile.

There are further issues related to the steady deindustrialization of the defense industrial base over the past fifty years, to include workforce and manufacturing innovation. This deindustrialization was brought on by changing mission requirements associated with the end of the Cold War, the advent of high-tech and advanced digital technologies, and the rise of the People's Republic of China as a dual military and economic threat. This deindustrialization has weakened the U.S. defense industrial base and exposed it to major vulnerabilities and risks.[8] In particular, the reliance on foreign suppliers for key materials coupled with limited surge capacity poses a threat to supply chain resilience when faced with future supply shocks and operational demands.

These issues are further amplified by the advances in the commercial sector. Nondefense industries have innovated new manufacturing technologies that have been integrated into their production operations. Generally, the commercial sector is moving toward "Industry 4.0," which is characterized by the integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing, and advanced robotics into the manufacturing process.[9] These innovations are driven by the potential for huge sales from a global consumer market along with foreign and domestic competitors.

While some of these innovations have carried over to the defense sector, much of the defense sector still relies on traditional manufacturing processes. This is in part due to the cash flow uncertainty related to annual budgets. However, a larger issue is the general lack of competition in the defense industrial base. The defense industrial base is limited to only domestic companies with several prime defense companies dominating the field. Moreover, there is limited overlap between defense technology and commercial technology, so the companies are not able to leverage advances in the commercial sector without significant investment.

Impact of Supply Chain Issues on Military Training

The supply chain issues associated with the production of defense materiel result in soldiers unable to get the necessary materiel. Military material is typically classified as expendable, durable, and nonexpendable. Nonexpendable items are major end-items that a unit is expected to maintain proper accountability. Nonexpendable items range from vehicles to weapons to computers. Durable goods are those items that wear out in time and include uniforms and tools. Expendable items are those items that are used up consistently and include bullets and food.

As shown in figure 2 (on page 89), while supply chain challenges impact all three classes, expendable items tend to be the least resilient to perturbations in the supply chains, since they must be constantly replenished. Nonexpendable items, which can range from aircraft carriers to rifles, have significant development timelines that can absorb delays in raw materials. Most
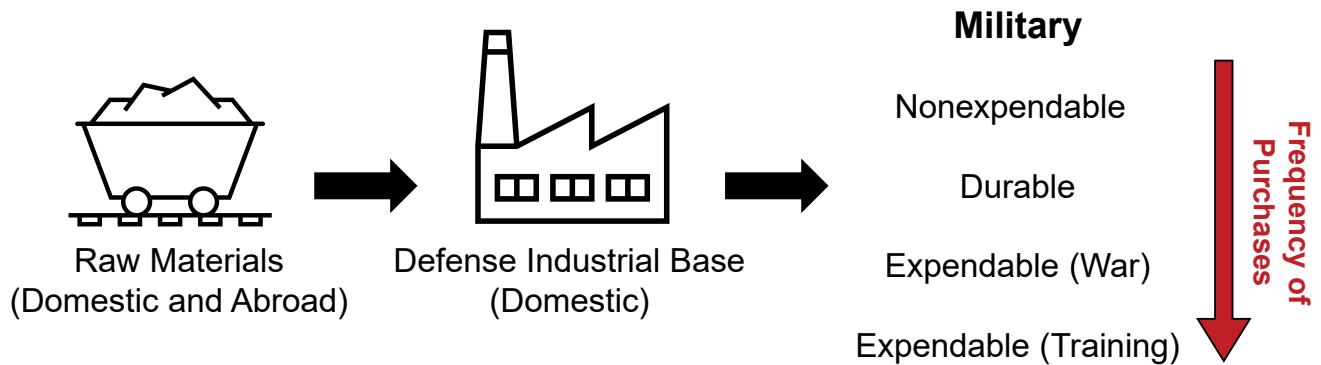
Figure 2. Impact of Supply Chain Issues on Military Equipment

nonexpendable items are replenished infrequently, allowing corporations the time necessary to deal with supply chain shortages. To a lesser degree, most durable items tend to last on the order of years, allowing these items to have some resiliency to supply chain shortages.

Expendable items intended specifically for combat are typically stockpiled and replaced sparingly. Meanwhile, those expendable items purposed for training are continually procured and depleted, typically on an annual basis. For example, each year, the Department of Defense establishes the total munition requirement for each service, a quantity of ammunition that constitutes the amount needed to support war reserve, operational, training, and test use cases. The demand for the purchase and usage of supplies and equipment for training is not resilient to supply chain perturbations.

As shown in figure 3 (on page 90), military units train using a crawl-walk-run structure. Initially, much of the training is classroom based and on simulators. However, as the units move into the "walk" and "run" phases, the training exercises become more real. As units move into the "run" phase, they are typically conducting live simulations, where soldiers are using real equipment in a simulated environment, such as a combat training center. For an Army unit to be considered adequately trained, it must have completed these tasks in a realistic environment as part of a live-fire exercise.[10] Such exercises require a tremendous number of resources, including a large number of training rounds, massive quantities of jet fuel, and a plentiful supply of spare parts. When units cannot get the necessary supplies and equipment, they cannot adequately conduct training to standard. While they can manage with what they have, to achieve

an adequate level of readiness, a unit must train with the right equipment and supplies.

To better understand these numbers, consider the 5.56 NATO standard rounds used by soldiers across the Army. There are approximately one million soldiers on active duty, in the National Guard, and in the Army Reserve. It takes approximately one hundred rounds per soldier to qualify with their weapons, resulting in a need for one hundred million rounds per year.[11] Without this ammunition, soldiers would have to qualify on weapon simulators, which would not adequately prepare them to fire their weapons in combat. Additionally, blank rounds, which have many of the same components as standard rounds but without the projectiles, are commonly used for training exercises. During a combat training center rotation, a soldier may readily deplete hundreds of blank rounds. Without these blank rounds, soldiers would just have to yell "Bang" to simulate gunfire.

Case Study on Medium Caliber Ammunition

The ammunition community has become increasingly susceptible to significant supply chain issues. There was a reduction of over $600 million in funds allocated for the procurement ammunition, Army appropriation between fiscal years (FY) 2021 and 2022. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased prices of commodity metals and shipping costs. With most ammunition procured on fixed-price contracts, the risk was assumed by the defense vendor. The ammunition suppliers, at large, had to return to the government to request price adjustments to account

Amount of Equipment Required (vertical axis)

Live Simulations
Field Training
Range Exercises
Virtual Simulations
Classroom Exercises

Crawl · Walk · Run

Level of Training
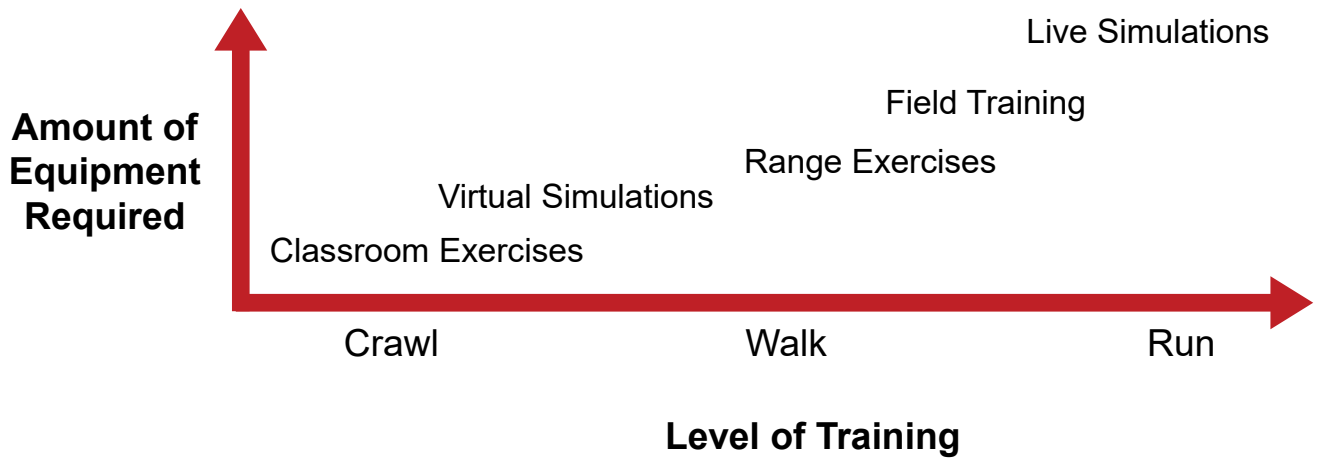
(Figure by author)

Figure 3. Impact of Shortage of Military Equipment on Training

for increased costs which in turn led to the Defense Department buying less ammunition than required.

Medium caliber rounds include the 20 mm rounds used by the F-15 Eagle or F-22 Raptor, 25 mm rounds used by the M2 Bradley, and the 30 mm rounds utilized by the A-10 Warthog and AH-64 Apache. Typically, most of the medium caliber ammunition produced for military applications are target practice rounds. Generally, program managers procure a stockpile of the necessary high explosive and armor piercing rounds for combat operations. The rounds have a shelf-life greater than twenty years, so the stockpiles are infrequently replenished. However, target practice rounds are used for weapon qualification and training exercises, so they must be replenished annually.
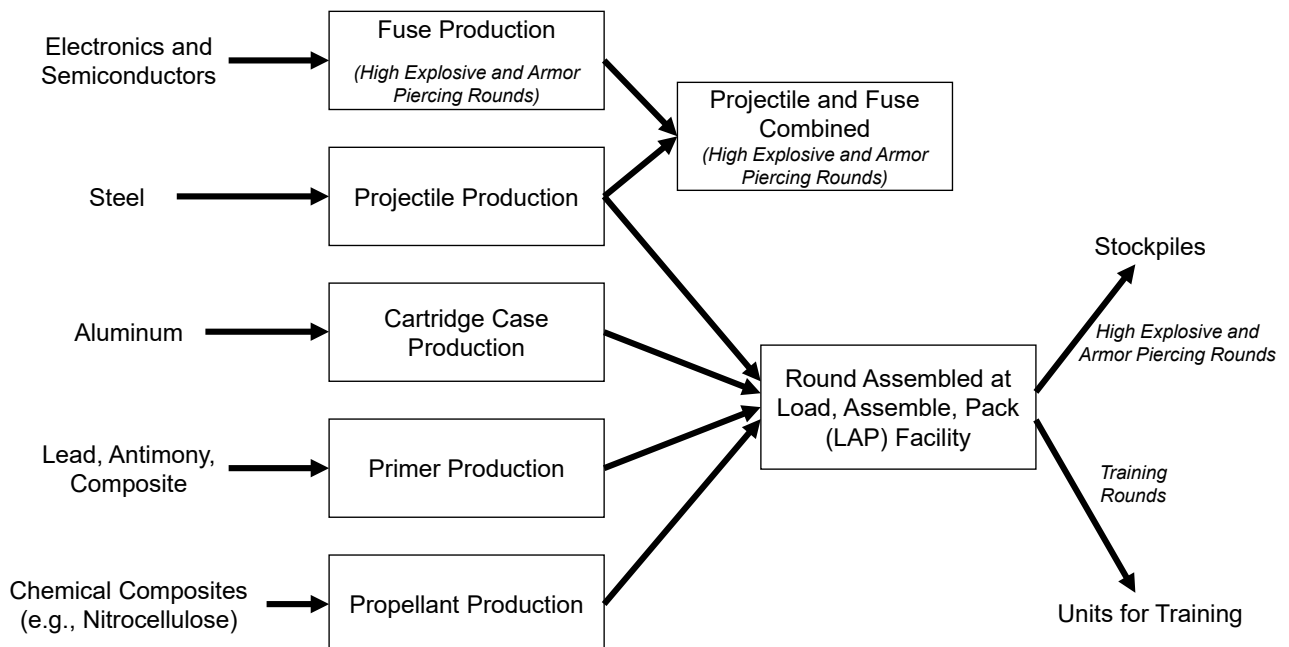
(Figure by author)

Figure 4. Assembly Process for Medium Caliber Ammunition
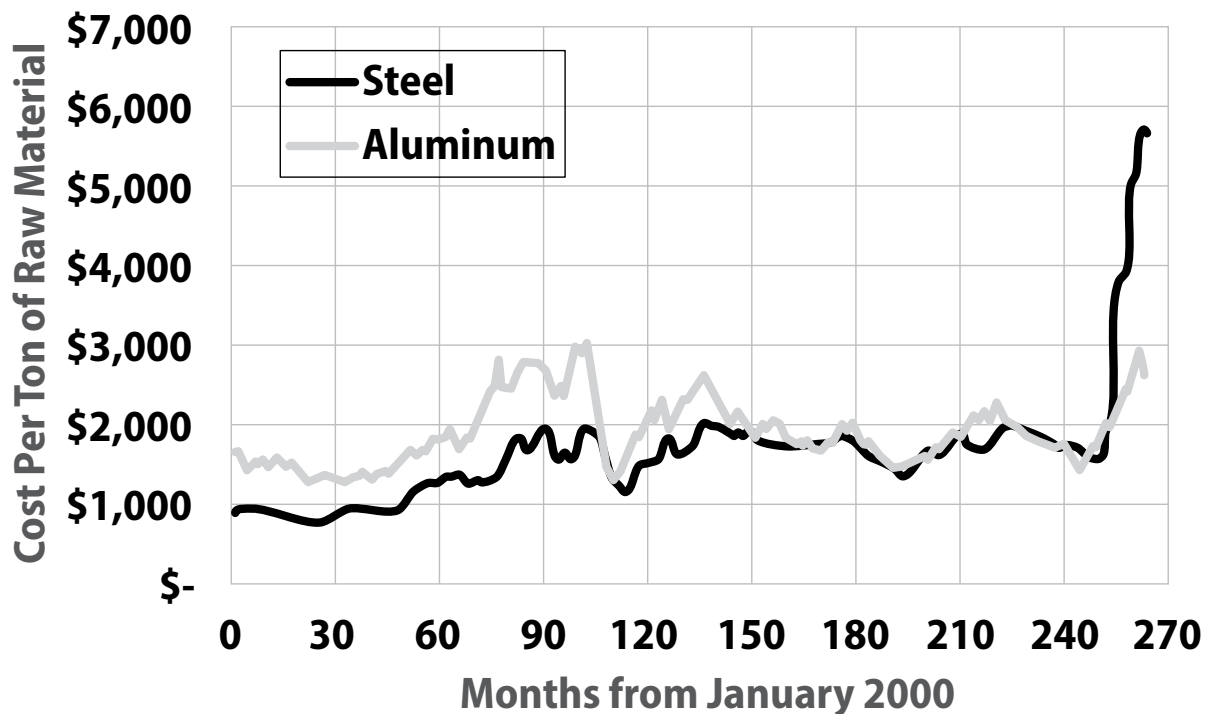
(Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and International Monetary Fund)

Figure 5. Steel and Aluminum Prices Over Time

Medium caliber rounds are typically comprised of five main components. First is the *primer*, which is struck by the weapon system and sparks the chemical reactions needed to begin the firing process. Second is the *propellant*, which ignites following the striking of the primer. The exothermic chemical reaction from the propellant pushes the *projectile* forward out of the weapon barrel and toward the target. All these components are held together by the *cartridge* case. The fifth component, the *fuse*, provides a primary trigger to initiate the detonation of the explosive material in the projectile. However, target practice rounds do not include a fuse. Moreover, the projectiles for target practice rounds are much simpler and are simply shaped blocks of steel.

Figure 4 (on page 90) displays the flow of materials that go into each component of the round. Some fuses require electronics and semiconductors; however, fuses are only required for high explosive and armor piercing rounds that have limited production. The raw ingredients for primers are lead, antimony, and composite material, while the propellant requires a chemical composite material such as nitrocellulose. Meanwhile, the projectiles and cartridge cases rely on steel and aluminum respectively. Note that the ammunition producers must compete with the commercial sector for procurement of steel and aluminum for their rounds.

Much of the ammunition defense industrial base is supported by government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) or government-owned, government-operated (GOGO) facilities. These facilities are owned by the government, but GOCOs are managed by contractors and GOGOs by government employees. Many of these GOCO or GOGO facilities have been in operation since World War II and still utilize the same tooling and production processes from that era. This has resulted in several challenges in ramping up production, as the old tooling and processes may not be as efficient or effective as modern methods. The lack of investment in updated technology and equipment has hindered the ability of these facilities to increase their output and meet the growing demands of the defense industry.

Furthermore, most ammunition is procured on a fixed-price contract. In a fixed-price contract, the supplier assumes the risks associated with producing a product or service at a predetermined price. This

Model Results: Cost Overrun
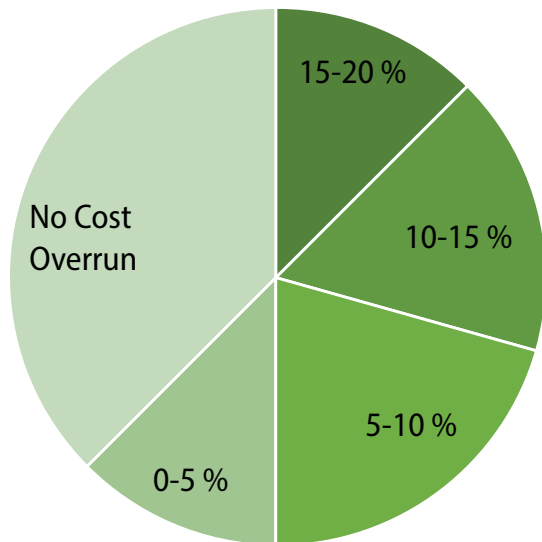
Model Results: Shortfall (Lots)

Cost Overrun chart labels: No Cost Overrun; 15-20 %; 10-15 %; 5-10 %; 0-5 %

Shortfall (Lots) chart labels: 5 Lots; 4 Lots; 3 Lots; 2 Lots; 1 Lot; No Shortfall
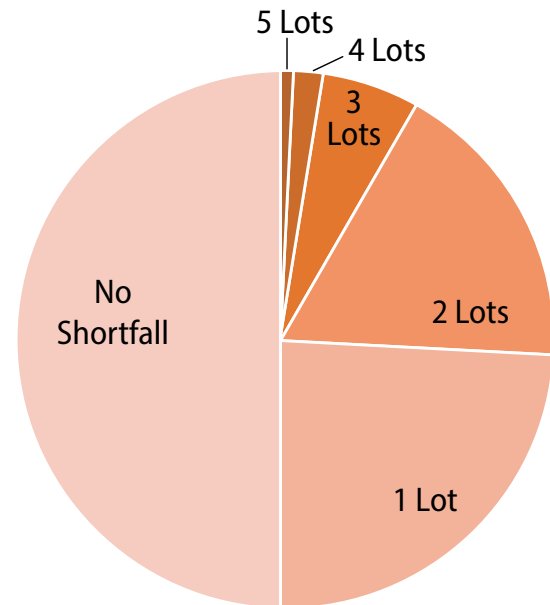
(Figure by author)

Figure 6. Simulation Results for Cost Overrun and Annual Shortfall from Simulation

means that the supplier could be responsible for any cost overruns or unexpected expenses that may occur during the production process. As a result, ammunition suppliers who operate under fixed-price contracts have a reduced incentive to invest their own funding in modernization and manufacturing innovation. This is because any investment made by the supplier to upgrade their equipment or processes will not necessarily result in a corresponding increase in the price they receive for the product. In fact, the fixed-price nature of the contract may discourage suppliers from investing in modernization and innovation as they would be assuming the risk of those investments without any guarantee of a return.

Raw material shortages impact on medium caliber rounds. Any shortages in the raw materials shown in figure 4 can result in a shortfall in the acquisition of medium caliber target practice rounds. Perhaps the most likely issue is the procurement of the steel and aluminum for the projectile and cartridge cases respectively. Figure 5 (on page 91) plots the cost of steel and aluminum since 2000. It becomes clear that there is a substantial amount of volatility in the market.[12]

In particular, there was a rapid rise in the cost of steel relative to aluminum over the past year. However, even without the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still significant fluctuation in prices month to month.

The availability and cost of medium caliber rounds depend on the availability and cost of the steel and aluminum necessary for making the projectiles and casing. To analyze this relationship, a model was created in ProModel, a discrete event simulation that allows for modeling process flows and manufacturing processes. The model was set to run for one year to produce 30 mm rounds specifically for the U.S. Army for annual weapons qualification. The requirement was for one lot, containing one hundred thousand rounds, per active-duty brigade combat team and 0.25 lot per reserve brigade combat team. As such, the annual production requirement was thirty-eight lots per year.

The model was run for five hundred iterations, using random number seeds mapped to price fluctuations of steel and aluminum shown in figure 5. The results from the model are shown in figure 6 (on page 92). Of particular interest, the model indicated a 62 percent likelihood of a cost overrun on the rounds. These cost

Steady State

Raw Materials → Ammunition Production Facility → Training Rounds

Emergency Procurement

Raw Materials → Ammunition Production Facility → Training Rounds / Rounds for Foreign Aid
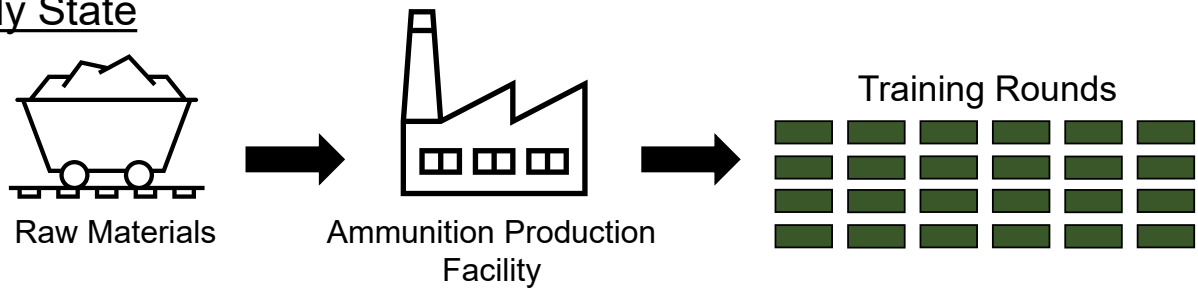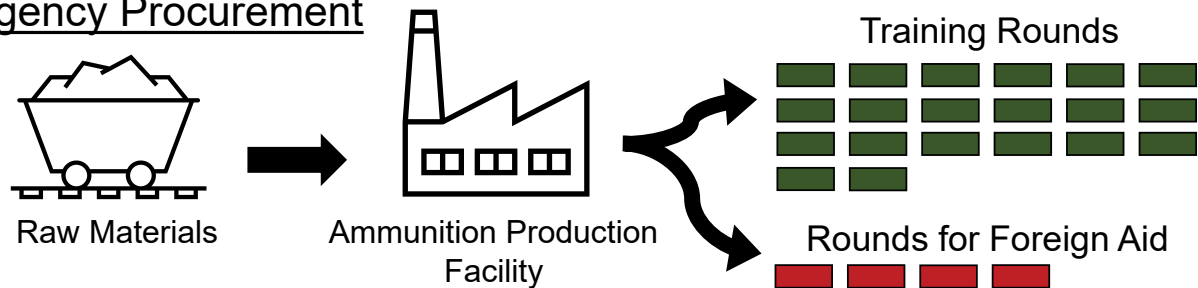
(Figure by author)

Figure 7. Rounds That Are Sent as Part of Emergency Foreign Aid Compete with Resources Necessary for Producing Training Rounds

overruns varied from just a marginal increase all the way up to the cost 20 percent over the original price. Additionally, due to the fluctuation in price tied to the availability of aluminum and steel, 50 percent of the time the unit was not able to produce the required number of lots. In an extreme case, the production was short five lots, which would indicate that five active-duty brigade combat teams or twenty reserve brigade combat teams would not have the ammunition necessary to train. This model also does not consider the Air Force and Navy demands for the same caliber and cartridge case, which would likely result in further delays in meeting ammunition demand.

Bottlenecks in the production of medium caliber rounds. As seen in the above analysis, access to metals for casings results in a bottleneck for the casing materials for medium caliber rounds, resulting in likely cost overruns or shortfalls. Even without these issues, there are issues on the production side. The ammunition facilities are operating at a steady state with the amount of equipment and personnel necessary to provide the required number of target practice

rounds per year. However, the system is not resilient to perturbations in demand.

Take for example the ammunition that has been supplied from the United States to Ukraine. U.S. defense officials state that these rounds are not drawn from its own contingency stockpiles. Therefore, they are manufactured specifically for Ukraine. Although these rounds are primarily tactical cartridges, they are produced in the same facilities as the target practice rounds with many of the same materials, including the casings, as illustrated in figure 7. The ammunition plants have not been able to produce enough to meet the demand signal while maintaining the steady production of training rounds. Given the necessity of arming Ukraine, the production of training rounds had to be cut back. Since there is not a stockpile of training rounds, there will be a shortfall that would not allow military units to practice gunnery with.

The U.S. government has appropriated millions of dollars through tranche and congressional supplemental appropriation to modernize these bottlenecks. Further, in two years, a fifteen-year industrial base modernization

plan will kick off and invest $16 billion to $18 billion from FY 2024 to FY 2038.[13] Unfortunately, these future planned efforts do little to help manage the supply chain and bottlenecks developed in producing weapons now. The lack of modern tooling and processes only exacerbates the supply chain problems and has even led to the U.S. seeking to purchase weapons from other nations to supply to Ukraine.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This article set out to explain the impact that supply chain shortages will have on military training. The constant flow of materiel necessary for realistic training is not very resilient to supply chain perturbations. A case study is also presented for medium caliber ammunition to demonstrate the impact that the global metal market and foreign military aid will have on procuring training rounds.

While many of the supply chain issues will eventually resolve themselves, the shortages associated with the COVID-19 pandemic provide an important lesson for the need for resilient supply chains for military goods, especially those related to training. Militaries and their associated defense industrial bases, as they rebuild themselves from the pandemic, should consider and address these issues. Many of these issues can be resolved by ensuring that there are persistent mechanisms for procuring the necessary raw materials. Additionally, manufacturing facilities need to be upgraded, leveraging the advances in the commercial sector. ■

Notes

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A Foundational Approach to Build and Sustain a Strong People-Focused Culture at the Battalion Level and Below

Lt. Col. James "Mike" Blue, U.S. Army

Capt. Ashley Barber, U.S. Army

Capt. Bianca Castillo, U.S. Army

Rob Morgan, PsyD

The 2019 publication of the *Army People Strategy* outlines fundamental and foundational principles for application across the force to sustain operational readiness. In accordance, senior Army leadership pushes reforms to transform Army-wide culture and climate. Commanders at battalion-and-below-level organizations have the opportunity and ability to creatively employ innovative measures to meet the secretary of the Army's objectives designed to achieve and maintain total readiness.

The *Army People Strategy* states, "The Army faces many of the same culture challenges as the rest of our Nation: sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, extremism, and suicide. If permitted to persist in the Army, these behaviors can break trust within Army teams—from squads to major commands."[1] To address these issues, AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, and the *Military Implementation Plan: 2023-2025 Army People Strategy* direct subordinate unit commanders to utilize local resources and experts in the field to tailor solutions based on unit needs.[2] Through these policies, local units are encouraged to create new ways to modernize the application of the Army's goals in line with the *Army People Strategy*.

Army command programs such as the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program, the Equal Opportunity (EO) Program, safety programs, and the Suicide Prevention Program are managed at the battalion level. In addition, each battalion contains a unit ministry team in charge of religious welfare of the soldiers and the spiritual, ethical, and moral well-being of the command. In most cases, junior Army leaders serve in appointed positions as an additional duty to meet program requirements in addition to performing the duties associated with their unit leadership positions. While the Army institutes policy, and commanders are obligated to manage these command programs, the effective implementation of these additional duty positions are critical to creating an environment that fully addresses corrosive behaviors. Too often, these Army command programs lack connection to the formation and rely on one-time initiatives or the individual skills of personnel lacking longevity. As a result, effects are not realized across the organization or maintained past transition of those filling these crucial roles.

The 307th Military Intelligence Battalion (MI BN), an Intelligence and Security Command forward

Soldiers from the 307th Military Intelligence Battalion pose with the Titan Cup 2 December 2022 on Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy, after winning the first portion of the 307th Foundation Day. The quarterly Foundation Day effectively targets needed training based on trends in the unit, risk areas associated with the time of the year (e.g., holiday stress, summer safety), and mandatory training of Department of the Army programs. (Photo by Capt. Erik Furgal, U.S. Army)

collection battalion, is a subordinate command of the 207th Military Intelligence Brigade (Theater) stationed in Vicenza, Italy, that has taken an innovative approach to operationalize the vision of the *Army People Strategy*. The battalion implemented Operation Titan Foundation, which relates to the secretary of the Army's fourth objective, "build positive command climates at scale across all Army formations," and fifth objective, "reduce harmful behaviors in our Army."[3] The problem statement addressed in this operation was, "How does the unit build an enduring program to sustain a strong people-focused culture (driven at the team leader level), maximizing all resources available to battalion-level organizations?" The following outlines how the 307th MI BN implemented Operation Titan Foundation and the specific tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that can be applied across other battalion-level commands within the Army.

The Goal

A strong people-focused culture is a priority and directly affects operational readiness. This includes understanding and helping to overcome an individual's life obstacles. Units acting proactively to prevent escalation of life events into crisis or catastrophe, as well as minimizing corrosive behavior, can sustain the Army's most important resource—its people. Ultimately, the goal of Operation Titan Foundation is to effectively integrate and synchronize people-focused programs across the battalion, in conjunction with the support of local resources, to limit risk to soldiers and sustain operational readiness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social-Ecological Model for Suicide Prevention (see figure 1, page 98) is a framework that can help others understand the science behind the 307th MI BN's program. The Social-Ecological Model structure outlines factors that influence corrosive behaviors and can be utilized
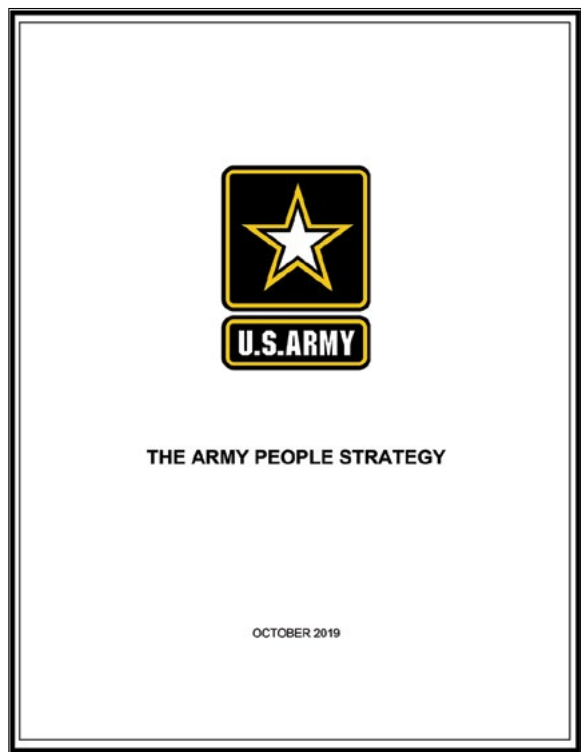
To read *The Army People Strategy*, visit https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/the_army_people_strategy_2019_10_11_signed_final.pdf.

to support the development of prevention strategies.[4] When applied effectively, the model ensures leaders "consider the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors … to act across multiple levels of the model" simultaneously.[5]

When this model is applied to a typical Army environment and forms the basis of command programs, the interlocking impacts can be realized. Societal impacts create the overlapping base of the model and, in most cases, are influenced by changing norms in American society. Cultural issues around stigmas and identity challenge healthy command climates but are known and must be continually addressed. Communities play an outsized role in battalion-level efforts when resources on local garrisons are sometimes stretched thin. Routine and regular engagements with garrison/community enablers help junior leaders in the Army understand how to rapidly access them to address and reduce high-risk soldier behavior (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, suicide ideations, substance abuse). It is important to note that these solutions do not work unless units can build their cultures around individual team members and connected relationships.

The Program

To accomplish this, the 307th MI BN created Operation Titan Foundation with the express purpose of operationalizing the synchronization, integration, and focus of command programs to build a strong command climate and enable the battalion's center of gravity—the intelligence collection team leader—to lead in any environment. The unit has effectively integrated this effort into every facet of the organization's operations and training. The TTPs developed and guidance given from the battalion leadership are directly in line with Army policy and goals.

Figure 2 (on page 99) outlines the three main pillars of the unit's effort to ensure that focus remains on command team development and connectivity, education and empowerment of junior leaders, and synchronization of the command programs. Ultimately, the 307th MI BN operation effectively combines organizational management with leadership development and empowerment. The goal is to actualize the Army's guidance of developing a people-focused culture based on evidence-informed, targeted engagement to sustain the holistic health of the organization.

The programmatic pillars were designed to create a sustainable culture inside the unit; however, an important step sometimes skipped is defining the target culture. Figure 3 (on page 100) outlines how the 307th MI BN defined its target culture and shaped preventive measures and organizational processes to maintain its "strong people-focused" culture. While not necessarily groundbreaking, this simple step ensured command programs remained focused on the most critical aspects of the target goal of unit culture as well as the associated command climate attained at echelon. More importantly, the assessment framed the program for junior leader understanding and professional development.

Titan Foundation, combined with unit risk inventories and command climate surveys, minimized the impacts of corrosive behavior and increased mission, soldier, and family readiness across the board. As highlighted in figure 3, the target culture of the unit is the strong people-focused culture every leader wants to achieve in their formations. This culture relies on the program's three main pillars to ensure sustainment through time and continual leader transition. To mitigate risk to soldiers implementing this foundational operation, command teams must remain decisively engaged in junior
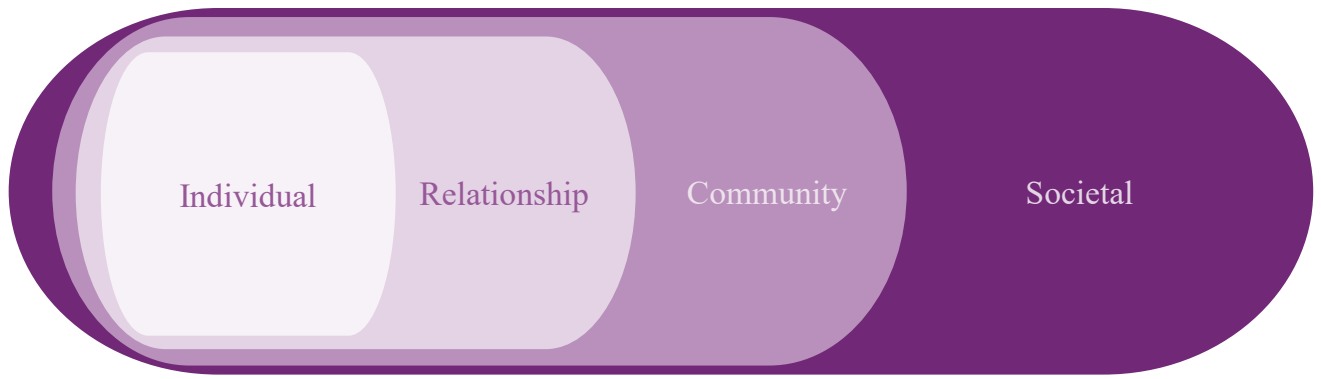
(Figure from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Figure 1. The Social-Ecological Model

leader empowerment, sustaining unit training management integration, massing Department of the Army programs, and leveraging research on training and prevention. The program emphasizes increased harmonization between leaders at echelon and garrison enablers.

Pillar 1, "Command Team Development and Connectivity," focuses on five main objective areas and applies measures to mitigate risk behavior, synchronize foundational training within unit training

management, connect families, and manage individual talent. As an example, the 207th Military Intelligence Brigade (Theater) offers the "Lightning Combine" for captains, like the Battalion Commanders Assessment Program, to compete for company command with the intent of developing these leaders for the rigors

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PEOPLE FIRST INITIATIVE

OPERATION TITAN FOUNDATION

Command Team Development and Connectivity	Education and Empowerment of Junior Leaders	Synchronization of the Command Programs
Risk Mitigation, Unit Foundational Training Integration, Family Integration, Talent Management, Education and Empowerment of Leaders	NCO Development Program, Environmental Shaping, Platoon Wellness Weeks, Leadership Development Program with Routine Command Team Engagement	Training Modality Diversity, Foundation Days, Female Mentorship, Realistic Scenario-Based Training

(Figure by Dr. Rob Morgan)

Figure 2. Pillars of Effort

of command and choosing the right personnel for the correct company-level leadership positions.[6] Command team development and connectivity are paramount to maintaining emphasis while building a foundational operation. Choosing the right leadership at the company level is vital to building an operation with leader buy-in across all echelons. With the right leaders selected and developed for the correct command position, a deliberate effort is made to continually engage junior command teams to ensure command emphasis remains on cultural sustainment.

Pillar 2, "Education and Empowerment of Junior Leaders," focuses on four main objectives: NCO development, environmental shaping, platoon wellness weeks, and leader professional development sessions with command team involvement. These objectives are used to ensure that leader development programs are codified, the unit environment remains conducive to good order and discipline, and routine command team engagements occur at echelon to reinforce the cultural narrative. The understanding of the soldier has always been essential in the history of warfare. To that effect,

an essential defining characteristic of strong unit culture is a team leader's ownership of caring for soldiers beyond training them in basic soldier tasks.

Ownership involves leadership at the platoon to team-leader levels to identify and act on risk factors impacting soldier readiness outside of physical readiness. It must be a body-and-mind-care effort. Soldiers and leaders in the organization are expected and encouraged to support and utilize the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness program. Additionally, team leaders must be trained to be the first line of defense in their soldiers' holistic health and wellness. These actions can include identifying a soldier suffering from mental health issues, having the awareness and emotional intelligence to identify a soldier disconnected from their support network, or cueing onto relationship issues requiring external support by garrison enablers. The Holistic Health and Fitness program expands the readiness paradigm to include "how Soldiers think, feel, and interact with their environment."[7] Outside of preventing and reacting to risks, it is important team leaders are incorporating goal setting,

BLUF: The intent of the OP TITAN FOUNDATION is to effectively synchronize, integrate, and focus command programs (SHARP, EO/EEO, CFRR, Suicide Prevention, UPAR, Chaplaincy, and Safety) to built towards a strong Command Climate and enable the BN's Center of Gravity - the Collection Team Leader - to lead in a deployed environment. In conjunction with Unit Risk Inventories and Command Climate Surveys, this program is designed to maintain the best climate possible.

DEFINING THE TARGET

TARGET CULTURE
- Strong Unit Climate
- Positive Diversity/Inclusion
- Junior Leader Empowerment
- Focused Individual Empowerment Management & Sustainment

Targeted effort on integration/inclusion of new Soldiers/Families
Junior leaders knowledgeable/ connected to minimize risk
Strong unit partnership with garrison enablers; cross-talk on TTPs
Unit trusts leaders at echelon to address issues proactively
Individual talent management for every member of the team

GOOD
- Decent Unit Culture
- CO/PLT Leader Empowerment
- Small Pockets of Reactionary Issues
- Sustained Readiness

CO/PLT level problem solving; lack of junior leader involvement
Foundation programs stove-piped; lack of cross-talk
Adheres to Foundational Training Requirements; not cultural
Identifies at-risk trends and proactively mitigates
Foundational Training Intergration into CO training/deployment plans

MEDIOCRE
- Reactionary Unit Culture
- BN/CO CDR Needed to Address Issues
- Suffers from Risk to Mission/Force Issues
- Reactionary Readiness

Command is reactionary to risk mitigation measures
Lack of ownership/knowledge of mid-grade leaders
Soldiers seek assistance outside of chain of command; lack of trust
"Check the Block" mentality on Foundational Training
Unhealthy competition-based culture

BAD
- Inability to Accomplish Mission
- Lack of Accountability
- Negative Work/Life Balance
- Culture Erodes Readiness

Workplace hostility
Drug, Alcohol, Domestic Issues
Founded Equeal Opportunity Violations
Suicide/Unidentified Suicide Ideations
Counter-Productive leadership

FACTORS AND IMPACTS

(Figure by Lt. Col. Mike Blue and Capt. Ashley Barber)

Figure 3. Defining the Target Culture

individual program development, and team building in their training.

Pillar 3, "Synchronization of the Command Programs," is probably the most important aspect at a battalion level. As previously stated, command programs tend to become stovepiped and redundant due to a lack of communication or understanding by the additional-duty soldiers or garrison enablers to promote interactions between programs. In evaluating high-risk soldiers, issues tend to cross over multiple programs and require cross talk between managers to determine the best course of action.

Instead of further breaking down every component 307th MI BN executes in each pillar of Titan Foundation, there are four specific TTPs that the battalion has determined could be replicated across the force to harden individual unit programs designed to build solid and people-focused climates.

TTP #1: Titan Risk Reduction Board

Most units across the Army conduct moderate and high-risk soldier boards to discuss mitigation measures at the individual level. Typically, these discussions occur between battalion command teams and owning

company command teams, focusing on resources to support the affected owning unit. To make at-risk soldier boards more effective and increase experiential learning, the battalion created a more inclusive practice of mitigating at-risk soldier behavior.

To achieve the integration of leadership development, risk mitigation, and garrison resource utilization into a traditional battle rhythm event, the battalion established a monthly at-risk board chaired by the battalion command team and managed by the battalion executive officer and unit ministry team. The board includes all company command teams, unit leaders serving in foundational additional-duty positions, and enablers within the brigade and garrison (behavioral health, Military and Family Life Counseling Program, and Army Substance Abuse Program) to discuss methods and programs to deliberately support at-risk soldiers identified across the command.

Compared to other programs, the new board discusses soldiers experiencing a risk event in an open forum to ensure that company-level leadership adapts to the lessons learned from other command teams dealing with similar at-risk behavior. This system leverages the concepts of social learning theory—effectively

307th MI BN TITAN RISK REDUCTION BOARD

				OVERALL RISK ASSESSMENT		
RANK/NAME:		AGE:		APPROVED LEVEL (BN CDR)	RECOMMENDATION	MODERATE
MOS:		TIME IN SERV:				
CO:		SECTION:				
DUTY POS:		TIME IN POS:				
TIME IN UNIT:		TIME DEPL:				
LAST DEPL:		LOCATION:				
RESIDENCE:						

SUPPORT STRUCTURE

SUPERVISOR:		SPOUSE (TIME MARRIED):		CHILDREN NAME (AGE):	
BATTLE BUDDY:		TITAN HOBBIES:		FAMILY LOCATION:	
UNIT MEMBER'S GOALS					

ASSESSMENTS

DISCIPLINE/LEGAL	OCCUPATIONAL	WEAPONS	RELATIONSHIPS	FINANCIAL	SUBSTANCE ABUSE	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
HIGH	LOW	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH

HEALTH AND WELLNESS (PROFESSIONAL)

TYPE	CASE MGR	START DATE	APPTM FREQ	MEDICATIONS	PLAN OF ACTION/WAY AHEAD	PROF ASSESSMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS / LEADER LOG: EVENTS/ ENGAGEMENT/ COMMANDER'S ACTIONS (DA 4833 / DA 5248)

		DATE	ACTION / EVENT	CONTROL PERSON	COMMENTS
DATE OF CHAPTER					
CHAPTER TYPE					
DATE OF FLAG					
FLAG TYPE					
DATE OF BAR					
MEB/ # OF DAYS					
ETS DATE					
DEROS DATE					
NOTES:					

(Figure by Lt. Col. Mike Blue)

Figure 4. Risk Reduction Board

increasing the depth and speed of leader development.[8] To mitigate the potential ramifications of sensitive information becoming widespread knowledge, the unit created a sanitized care card format and set business rules to protect at-risk soldier's identities (see figure 4). The care cards help unit commanders track changing risk assessments, relevant demographic data, activated resources associated with the case, and leadership connectivity through time. The format also ensures that at-risk cases are effectively transitioned during a change of command, and historical data is retained for continuity of care and action.

This inclusive board format accomplishes three significant tasks: (1) helping commanders organize concerning variables to present to the battalion commander, (2) cueing junior leaders to engage across multiple domains and resources to support soldiers experiencing risk events, and (3) acting as a primer for other commanders to address similar behaviors in their formation. Tangible results from over a year of at-risk board execution has led to a dramatic decrease in at-risk

behavior across the battalion. Due to the program's success, the at-risk boards now fully incorporate all battalion- and company-level command teams across the brigade to ensure a greater shared understanding of issues faced and optimize the utilization of low-density garrison resources to support the entire brigade.

In addition to what has been previously outlined, the monthly risk reduction board also is a touchpoint across the command for compliance tracking. At the company level, this board ensures that each command team actively uses the Commander's Risk Reduction Toolkit and forecasts upcoming unit risk inventories to ensure a consistent pulse on the formation is maintained through leader transitions. The board creates a shared understanding of which soldiers across the formation have received formal suicide prevention and intervention-related training to ensure that each dispersed location where soldiers live and work is covered.

Ultimately, this new board process connects all company-level leaders with garrison support resources in an environment designed to help them learn

from their peers, mitigate risk factors, and openly develop strategies using the mass effect of leader dialogue at echelon. Developing leaders of the future requires engagement and connection; this effort has directly increased observational and experiential learning at speed.

TTP #2: Titan Foundation Day

When developing the program, a significant gap in foundational training was identified: company-level leaders were each attempting to resource, conduct, and individually track all Army-mandated training requirements at their level in addition to required military occupational specialty (MOS) training and certification. In response, battalion leadership created a quarterly Titan Foundation Day to effectively target needed training based on trends in the unit, risk areas associated with the time of the year (e.g., holiday stress, summer safety), and mandatory training of Department of the Army programs. Command teams and the Foundation staff coordinate during monthly synchs to ensure Foundation Day meets the current and predicted needs of the formation. In addition, the integration of families and esprit de corps opportunities are used throughout the day to strengthen the unit climate and the organization's well-being.

The first Foundation Friday event started with a three-mile battalion run targeting engagement with families and concluded with the introduction of the Titan Foundation initiative. Following the run, soldiers, civilians, and family members received presentations promoting healthy behaviors from the Caserma Ederle tactical strength and conditioning coaches, the Army Wellness Center, and the unit master resiliency trainer. The battalion then hosted a scavenger hunt around Caserma Ederle, their home base, to familiarize junior leaders with the location and utility of essential resources available in the Vicenza military community. Moreover, the battalion facilitated access for soldiers to easily schedule appointments for services presented during the briefings. The event concluded with lunch provided by the unit chaplain and a leader-led discussion on SHARP/EO-related topics.

The second iteration of Foundation Friday built on the success of the first. The unit gave thanks ahead of Memorial Day by conducting a physical training (PT) event called a "Murph," in honor of Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Michael P. Murphy. In addition to the PT session, the unit organized a race between the companies to boost healthy competition. It was a chance for the unit to remember past losses and address the stigma about mental health. Personnel discussed challenges associated with depression, trauma, and suicide in the military. The remainder of the morning was spent conducting small group SHARP training following the new Army SHARP modules led by each company commander. The groups discussed scenarios while SHARP representatives, and leaders facilitated questions and answers and supported thoughtful discussion. Each group then discussed their scenario with the larger audience to provide understanding across the formation. The unit ended the afternoon with a cultural integration event focused on creating safe and inclusive environments and honoring Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with a potluck meal. While the Army celebrates diversity through Army Heritage Month, the unit honors federal observances to drive equality through inclusion. Integrating learned experiences and cross-communication allowed the unit to share and work through different perspectives, resulting in a more informed and bonded Titan formation.

Each Foundation Day has brought new innovative ideas to target at-risk training areas and physical fitness while making it enjoyable for all soldiers. For example, Foundation Days now feature a PT event where companies compete to win the Commander's Trophy. PT events range from pugil stick and combatives tournaments to combat-focused PT. The Foundation staff also introduced trivia and training at stations throughout PT events to reinforce the day's intent and integrate mental fitness into the physical training program. Another concept developed for Foundation Day was the introduction of cultural awareness events in the local community for soldiers and families. This event included a walking tour through the city center of Vicenza with stops at historic locations. At each station, Foundation staff gave short training about their programs as well as the history of the site. The teams, made up of six to eight personnel from all companies, were also provided with information and advice on local mannerisms, local areas to eat, and other recommendations for future visits.

An essential addition to Titan Foundation Day was the integration of the battalion's female mentorship

program, Titan Valkyrie. The goal of Titan Valkyrie was to not only mentor women but also to provide mentorship and training to the entire battalion on issues or biases that can detrimentally affect both men and women. During this training, both males and females were encouraged to discuss their points of view on the different challenges women face. The first topics chosen for the unit to discuss were excerpts from the book *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* by Michael Kimmel.[9] Using provided quotes from the book, the battalion discussed the differences in the upbringing of boys and girls, unfair biases, and the possible impacts to them later in life. It led to a conversation on the differences in treatment some women have faced in their military careers, the nature-versus-nurture argument, and changes made in the Army over the last decade. Comments and responses were given by both males and females and from soldiers across all ranks.

Foundation Days continue to adapt to provide better training with more resources and to target worthwhile discussions among the battalion soldiers with the intent to engage in current and future impacts on unit culture. In addition, it is used to provide companies with a dedicated, predictable day to receive and train the Titan Fundamentals. Over time, soldiers and leaders have become more connected with themselves, each other, their garrison, and the local area, and they have utilized more of the resources allocated to them.

TTP #3: Foundational Training Integration

For battalion-level and below leaders, time is one of the most precious resources available and requires deliberate management to ensure that all requirements levied on commanders are achieved. It is challenging to fix compounding socially charged, corrosive problems while integrating large-scale programmatic changes to how units train at the company level. Leaders utilizing only one information/experience presentation method by disseminating information restricted to a classroom or through computer-based platforms will only partially address the problems we face as an enterprise and only target limited types of learning experiences. While the Army is shifting to a greater emphasis on leader-led discussions to aggressively address corrosive behavior, company-level units must make these types of discussion natural, practical, and more frequent, not just limited to one-day events. It needs to be integrated into their unit activities as a pattern of behavior.

Part of 307th's strategy is to adapt the training guidance to "hide training in training." While this adage is not new, the increased focus from command teams has led to small-group-level discussions across the unit that resonate more with soldiers and increase the "relationship level" connection between our junior NCOs and soldiers.[10] Additionally, this small-group-directed emphasis has increased unit-level touchpoints during other mandatory activities like physical fitness events and planned training (e.g., small-arms ranges, MOS-specific training, and sergeant's time training events).

For the 307th MI BN, collective training exercises focus on the certification of junior leaders conducting forward collection in small teams guided by the Military Intelligence Training Strategy (MITS) program. Outside of MITS, for team leaders to succeed in deployed environments, they must also certify their leadership abilities when dealing with crises. To test a leader's reaction to stress and pressure, the 307th MI BN integrated several key MOS-tied training events with conducting ethically based, foundational training in a simulated deployment environment. Through the conduct of MITS Tier 2 (platform) certification and Tier 3 (team) certification, the unit has executed multiple scenarios to develop its teams and team leaders.

The first Tier 3 certification led by the battalion involved two such scenarios. One involved all collection teams traveling through a simulated airport terminal of the country they are tasked to collect in with the possibility of being pulled from security or customs lines for a secondary screening. Soldiers were tested on their ability to react to a high-stress situation, comprehend their limitations according to their mission authorities, and attempt to pass through secondary screening without violating any rules. Each soldier is given an after action review of their performance. The observer coach/trainer analyzes any violations to determine if they were the result of a lack of training or experience or if the soldier knowingly made an unethical decision. Additional iterations have included testing a collection teams' ability to understand their mission authorities and read through all relevant documents related to their mission.

The second scenario tested the soldiers' understanding of the battalion alcohol policy for deployed

soldiers. The soldiers were tasked to attend a meeting that occurred in a place that served alcohol. The person they were tasked to meet with would pressure them to drink alcohol to test their reactions. The goal of these two scenarios in the first Tier 3 Certification Exercise (CERTEX) was to gauge training in specific areas identified as blind spots for collection teams and to be deliberate in asking teams about their authorities before they deploy. These ethical scenarios also assisted in identifying potential red flags in the formation when team leaders deliberately chose to make unethical decisions; these led to command decisions whether the team leader should stay in their position, be counseled, or be removed from specific deployments.

The 307th MI BN's annual Tier 2 CERTEX was designed to assess and certify the ability of the battalion and its companies, operational management teams, and small collection teams to accomplish their wartime intelligence missions. During the three-week certification, several Foundation events served as exercise injects to simulate the reality of suicide prevention, SHARP, EO, and chaplain resource utilization. At the same time, the battalion focused on controlling collection during large-scale contingency operations. Apart from simulating the use of standard operating procedures and checklists most battalions maintain, the integration expanded intelligence-collection soldiers' understanding of resources and support mechanisms while in a deployed environment. One inject included a walk-in role player in distress reporting a sexual assault to a collection team to force the team to shift focus from collection to the essential human response of helping another person regardless of nationality.

Halfway through the CERTEX, the battalion command team and the white cell (exercise support element) executed a missing soldier event with comprehensive safety measures in place. A responsible junior NCO was chosen to simulate the missing soldier. Only specific individuals knew of the missing soldier inject within the simulation, including the company commander, the rear-detachment element, and the soldier's family. Twenty-four hours prior to the start of the missing soldier scenario, the soldier was instructed to initiate subtle cues to indicate a personal internal struggle. Once the soldier was removed from the environment, the unit began conducting the battle drill for a missing soldier. With a clinical psychology

subject-matter expert and the battalion chaplain on hand for support, the battalion command team, the company commander, and the white cell carefully monitored the stress levels of the unit while they began the search for the soldier. This observation and monitoring by supportive enablers allowed the unit to end the scenario appropriately when the training objectives were met and use the on-hand resources for debriefing and emotional support if other soldiers experienced triggers. Comprehensive after action reviews were conducted at the battalion level. Each company led discussions on the missing soldier scenario with the clinical psychologist and the selected junior NCOs to discuss the event, outcomes, and distress indicators, and to answer questions.

Integrating foundational training into certification exercises is essential for everyone from team leaders to battalion staff to be adaptable to various situations and seek help and clarification in ambiguous situations. At the unit level, it is crucial when developing these scenarios to carefully plan, execute, and emplace mitigation measures to ensure soldiers learn the appropriate lessons and to react to any unforeseen trauma that may occur in the process of execution. Additionally, it is vital to have Foundation and garrison experts involved to ensure the scenario is appropriate for what the unit is attempting to test.

TTP #4: Holistic Health and Balance Initiatives

A significant prevention focus of the Department of the Army and essential to the efficient functioning of units is the ability to "promote connectedness."[11] One deliberate target for Titan Foundation is to create balance for our soldiers while using initiatives to improve their holistic health and that of their families. Our Army families play an essential role in the connection of soldiers with their units and are a vital contributing factor to whether a soldier chooses to stay in the Army. The health of a family plays a large part in a soldier's ability to focus on their job and perform at a level needed for the mission. Unit leaders know they must make a deliberate effort to integrate families into the organization from when a soldier is assigned to the unit to when they depart. What is sometimes forgotten is the need to develop/educate our family members as a vital part of the Army's Golden Triangle (leader, friends, family)

Signs are placed on the barracks doors of every soldier in the 307th Military Intelligence Battalion who received formal training in suicide prevention, equal opportunity, or the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program to connect unit members to internal resources and, almost more importantly, to promote a subtle psychological message supporting foundational programs. (Photo courtesy of the authors)

to combat the corrosive distractors we spend so much time on with our soldiers and apply command programs to support our sometimes-overstretched force to achieve balance.[12]

As a deliberate effort, the battalion targeted ways to increase family integration at the beginning of a soldier's tenure in the unit by utilizing a spouse/partner sponsorship program. Spouse/partner sponsorship can help connect spouses within the unit before they even arrive, especially for those coming to units outside the continental United States. A spouse sponsorship program comprises spouse volunteers who make themselves available to answer questions to inbound spouses about the area, provide moving tips, and offer advice to ease the stress of moving to a new location. This program mitigates the challenge of spouses attempting to obtain information through their significant other while the soldier is also working

to understand their new environment through their sponsor, who may or may not have answers for questions related to a spouse's concerns.

There is added value in creating opportunities for spouses to be integrated into unit foundational events. For example, when units bring in garrison enablers like Army Community Services, Family Advocacy, or Finance, it is crucial to bring spouses into the training to normalize spouse interaction with unit members and enablers on the installation. This integration provides spouses with resources on the installation directly while also increasing the time soldiers can spend with their families. Increasing family presence and interactions at unit events also provides an avenue for commanders to have more informal contact with soldiers and families to identify indicators that may display future issues in the formation (e.g., relationship issues, neglect, or health concerns).

Another avenue to increasing family integration is respecting the time soldiers have during their off hours and organizationally supporting the learned behavior of achieving work-life-family balance. The battalion initiated a "blackout policy," setting organizational ground rules to limit work-related conversations and hours to support better health and wellness. No emails, texts, or phone calls are authorized between the hours of 1800 to 0600 during duty days and no contact is permitted during nonduty days. The policy further forces all soldiers (regardless of rank) to leave work by 1800 hrs. The only exemption authority for this policy is the battalion commander. In practice, the execution of the policy only works when commanders remain engaged and enforce the policy. To ensure the policy could functionally work without increasing risk to force, the communications blackout allowed for leader communications, support coordination for operational activities, and commander's critical information requirement reporting. This battalion-level policy is similar to the policy put in place by a former 10th Mountain Division commander. In his policy, then Maj. Gen. Milford Beagle states, "The ultimate aim of this policy is to stimulate the use of Army systems, processes, and doctrine to disseminate information and effectively use our training management processes."[13] Over time, the 307th MI BN policy has helped leaders at echelon force themselves to leave work on time. However, more importantly, it has instilled a process of deliberate communication with those they lead.

Apart from total family balance and health, there must also be a deliberate focus on the health of the single soldiers that reside in the barracks. One of the near-term priorities addressed in the *Army People Strategy* is the need to improve the quality of life in soldier housing.[14] At the unit level, issues identified through trend analysis and directed efforts in making soldiers' voices heard based on anonymous survey feedback identified the barracks as a risk area for soldiers. From adjacent unit corrosive behaviors to soldiers taking risks while intoxicated, the barracks can create risk for soldiers. To mitigate these identified issues and create a safer environment, deliberate efforts at the unit level were made to improve our soldiers' living environments to reinforce foundational principles.

The unit assessed the physical security environment of their barracks and targeted mitigation efforts on access points into the facilities through which unwanted individuals might gain entrance to soldiers' living spaces. Consistent education and engagement were conducted regarding risk behaviors associated with the physical security of the barracks and actions needed to prevent soldiers from opening up themselves and their fellow soldiers to unknown dangers. Increasing leader presence in the barracks during risk time frames has been equally important. Understanding the times soldiers leave and return to the barracks during weekends is vital to ensuring risk behavior is prevented or deterred. Educating NCOs on the importance of evaluating their surroundings and utilizing bystander practices to prevent detrimental behaviors can make a difference in creating a safe environment for soldiers to thrive. Rewarding these positive behaviors through public praise and positive reinforcement in front of a formation helps to show the impacts of leaders taking an interest in soldiers' well-being.

Just as important was the creative approach NCOs responsible for foundational components took to subtly shape the psychological message in the barracks environment. Apart from traditional means like putting up EO/SHARP boards mandated by Department of the Army policy, the unit worked with the local garrison enablers to design door stickers to be placed on qualified support personnel's barracks doors. The stickers were placed on the door of every soldier in the battalion that had received formal training in suicide prevention, EO, or SHARP. This simple effort changed the barracks environment by connecting unit members to internal resources and, almost more importantly, promoting a subtle psychological message on foundational programs.

Each initiative provided some balance and support for soldiers in the fast-paced environment of military intelligence. The critical learning point for leaders in the battalion was to reinforce them at echelon continuously. Summer permanent-change-of-station cycles can mean renewed stress for families as they prepare to move to a new environment, blackout periods can be lost during periods of heightened activity and require leader engagement to stop violations, and barracks require consistent leadership engagement to ensure problems are discovered and addressed quickly.

Conclusion

The focus the 307th MI BN has put on improving people-focused culture not only helped decrease our high-risk behaviors but also changed how soldiers view training experiences, increasing their interest and engagement in valuable topics. It changes the nature of SHARP or EO training from being "just another 350-1 classroom requirement" to a way for leaders to build soldiers of significant character who know how to prevent, act, and assist in nebulous situations. A poignant example of this connection across social-ecological domains was an event where one 307th private first class identified suicidal ideations in a friend assigned to another brigade on post. The situation lasted from night until early morning as the soldier kept talking to the struggling friend while getting his leadership involved to assist with the situation. Due to the maturity built at the lowest levels, the young soldier was able to conduct a warm handover of his friend to his chain of command in the early morning hours. The creation of the Foundation Operation is heavily integrated into the unit culture and harmonizes Army programs into how a unit conducts itself daily. The foundational operation has accomplished this fundamental integration in multiple domains, including comprehensive experiential training and programs for suicide prevention and holistic health. As each future program develops, it should be integrated into the foundation model utilizing a diverse set of tools and Army programs to build sustainable initiatives that arm junior leaders

of tomorrow. Each activity planned by the battalion must include a discussion about integrating into current battle rhythm events or pair it with other required training and resource awareness on garrison.

Moving beyond flattened learning experiences to multifaceted, engaged, purposeful learning, the foundational operation is slowly changing the discussion about training and the culture of a unit. ■

Notes

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Military Review Creative Kiosk

The military is in some sense a cultural enclave that tends to promote different social perspectives on many issues that may differ somewhat from civilian perspectives due to different lifestyle experiences. To capture some of these expressions, *Military Review* has established the Creative Kiosk to collect and publish a modest selection of such cultural artifacts of possible broader interest to its reading audience and to augment understanding of the historical record of the times when such were collected.

To learn more about the Creative Kiosk and its submission guidelines, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Creative-Kiosk/.
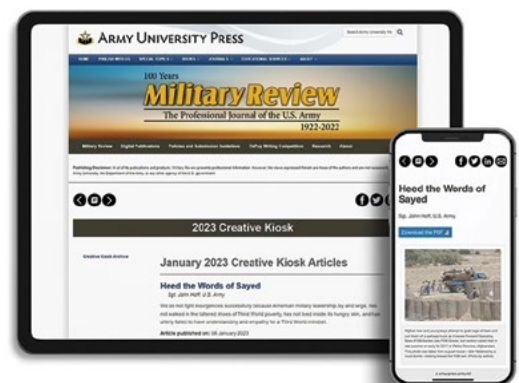
Sgt. 1st Class Herbert B. Hales of the 228th Transportation Company checks the uniform of Spc. Shalese Willis, a supply specialist for the 377th Quartermaster Company, 8 November 2014 before she appeared before the 642nd Regional Support Group promotion board in Decatur, Georgia. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Gary A. Witte, U.S. Army)

Contextualizing the Results

Improving the Order of Merit List

Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew J. Reed, U.S. Army

The greatest value of a picture is when it forces us to notice what we never expected to see.

—John Tukey, mathematician

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs)—the backbone of the Army—are the envy of professional militaries around the globe. They are not just technical experts but also leaders, coaches, and experienced warfighting professionals. They are trusted agents and wise counselors, empowered to make decisions within the operational intent. They assess and mitigate risk and solve problems before anyone realizes an issue exists. Army NCOs are the all-being, all-knowing, all-doing backbone of the force. And yet, every year the Army tells half of these organizational powerhouses they are below average.

Maintaining the all-volunteer force is a strategic imperative, and the Army is in a serious fight to recruit and retain enlisted talent. It cannot afford to disenfranchise talented NCOs who, year after year, are told they are subpar even while receiving high ratings on their evaluation reports. While it is unlikely the Army intended to alienate half of its NCOs when it overhauled its enlisted centralized board program in 2019, that is exactly what happened as the Army combined a forced distribution system with a lack of meaningful feedback. There must be a better way. As the Army competes for human capital, it must enhance the talent evaluation board's feedback mechanisms by clarifying insights, contextualizing the results through data visualization, and providing personalized feedback to its NCOs. Shifting the paradigm will improve organizational performance, while maintaining the status quo has long-term negative consequences.

The Current System

Once per quarter, the Army convenes a board of senior officers and sergeants major to evaluate the service files of each NCO in a specific grade. The four boards are delineated by grade with one grade evaluated each quarter.[1] The Army evaluates its sergeant first class (E-7) population in October, and staff sergeants (E-6) are evaluated in January. April is for master sergeants (E-8), with sergeants major (E-9) evaluated in August. These evaluation boards consist of multiple panels grouped by military occupational specialty. Each panel consists of sergeants major and

a lieutenant colonel or colonel from those occupational specialties.[2] Together, they review tens of thousands of files for the designated grade and career field. Figure 1 (on page 110) provides an example of the composition of a staff sergeant (E-6) talent evaluation board.

Over the span of approximately thirty days, the talent evaluation board reviews the records of tens of thousands of NCOs. It examines each NCO's awards, military schooling, civilian education, assignment history, and typically the last five evaluation reports that could span up to five years of work performance. This review determines promotions and impacts an individual's selection for the next phase of professional military education that serves as a prerequisite for advancement. Finally, the board screens for separation due to poor performance. Panel members accomplish all of this by looking at a file for, on average, three to five minutes.

To score the files, panel members use a combination of suggestive performance indicators described in regulation and specific guidance issued by stakeholders such as branch proponents and the sergeant major of the Army, as well as their own experience and professional judgment. Files are scored from 1 to 6, with a series of pluses and minuses (+/-) that can be awarded for positive or negative findings that do not warrant numeric change. Each panel member scores the files that are tallied together to get a total board score along with the associated pluses and minuses. The outcome is bucketing NCOs based on the board's assessment of their potential: *Most Qualified, Fully Qualified,* and *Not Fully Qualified. Most Qualified* NCOs possess an average board score of 5.5 and higher, while *Not Fully Qualified* NCOs typically have an average board score of 2.99 or less.[3] With a board score between 3.0 and 5.49, *Fully Qualified* NCOs occupy the space in between.

Upon completion of the board, the Army's

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| | PANEL A
IN (11B) | PANEL B
IN (11C), SF, PO, CA | PANEL C
AV, AR | PANEL D
FA, AD | PANEL E
EN, MP, PA, CM |

BOARD PRESIDENT
BG

| PANEL A
IN (11B) | PANEL B
IN (11C), SF, PO, CA | PANEL C
AV, AR | PANEL D
FA, AD | PANEL E
EN, MP, PA, CM |

| PANEL F
CY, SC, EW | PANEL G
MI | PANEL H
QM | PANEL I
OD | PANEL J
TC |

| PANEL K
JA, FI, AG, CH | PANEL L
MED |

RECORDS	MEMBERS	DAYS
~20,000	~60	~28
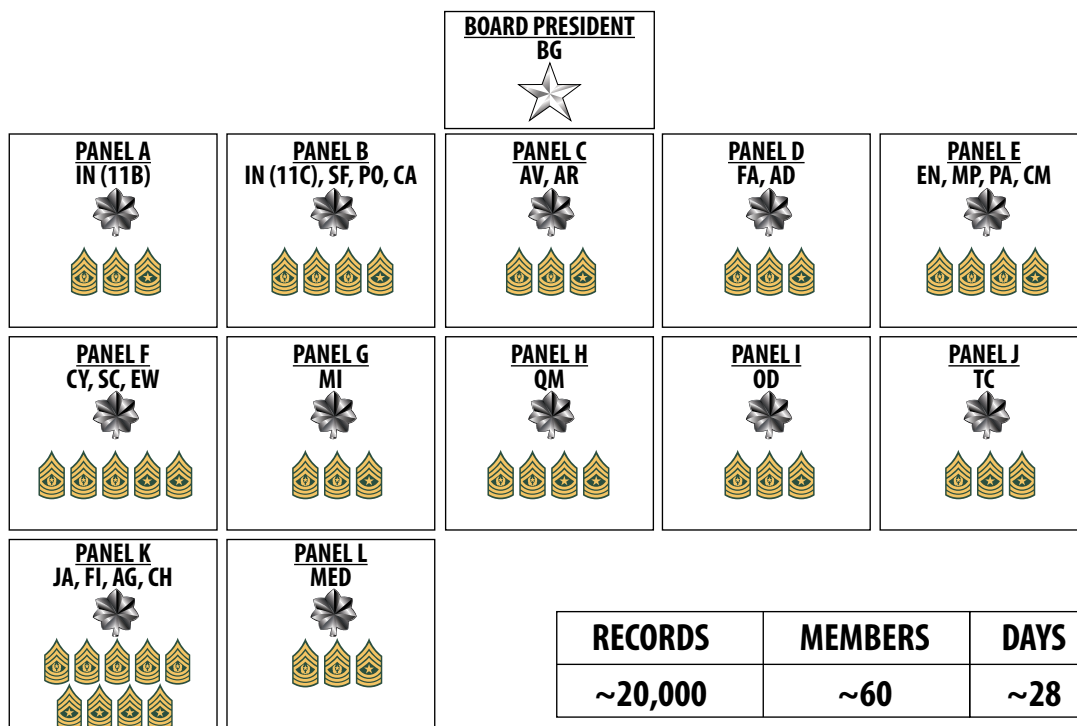
(Figure from "Centralized NCO Evaluation Board Process," slide 9)

Figure 1. Composition of the Staff Sergeant Talent Evaluation Board

Human Resources Command places the evaluated NCOs into a forced distribution system, ranking them from 1 to N based on their total board score and military occupational specialty. The Army calls this distribution the Order of Merit List (OML). For example, assume there are 2,400 infantry sergeants first class in the Army. The board would evaluate those NCOs against each other and then rank them from 1 to 2,400. In the event where multiple NCOs share an identical board score, the Army determines tiebreakers by seniority; first by time in grade, then by basic active service date, and finally by date of birth.[4] Continuing with this example, an infantry sergeant first class with an OML of 1201 or greater would be, by definition, below average.

While assessing as below average is a factually correct statement, it belies the reality of a professional fighting force that is highly skilled, competent, and envied around the globe. Depending on the context provided (or lack thereof), ranking 1,201 out of 2,400 can mean entirely different things. The issue is that the Army does not provide any context when it publishes OML numbers. Instead, on the appointed date, the Army publishes the numbers to its Army Career Tracker website. Figure 2 shows exactly what is displayed to NCOs at the conclusion of the talent evaluation board.

The Army provides no context or feedback mechanism to these results; only the result is provided. Does simply displaying a person's standing relative to their peers accurately reflect performance and potential? Upon seeing these numbers, would anyone get a sense of how to improve?

OML NUMBER

47 out of **302**

Current as of: 25 Dec 2020
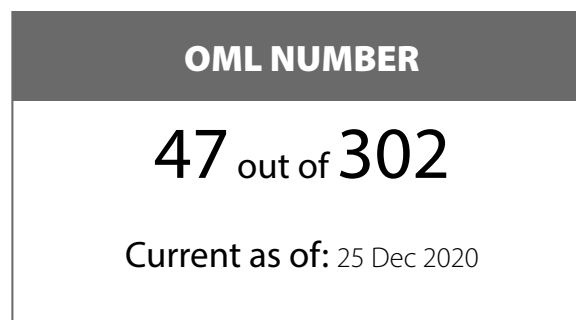
(Figure by author)

Figure 2. Order of Merit List Results as Displayed in Army Career Tracker

The Problem with Forced Distribution Systems

Numbers are not especially useful without context. Imagine a software company with a team of fifty developers. The company's managers capture the developers' work performance on periodic reviews. The developers are all highly skilled. They possess a deep understanding of the technologies they utilize and consistently deliver high-quality products on time and under budget. Additionally, the developers are known for their professionalism and ability to deliver results under stressful conditions. Because their work is skilled and unique, it is challenging to hire new employees to backfill losses. Few people can, or even want, to do their jobs.

Now imagine this same company brings its vice presidents together each year to rank the developers based on their periodic reviews and personnel files. The results determine opportunities for development, promotions, and termination should conditions warrant. It would become clear that such a system is inadequate at discerning top performers from those slightly less skilled. The developers are talented, they possess similar skills, and they collectively exceed expectations. There likely exists only minor variance in work performance.

While the Army is not a software company, the parallels are instructive. Much like the software developers, NCOs are highly skilled and provide a service that is hard to replicate—not anyone can come in off the street to fill a vacancy in the profession of arms. Additionally, like the software developers, Army NCOs often share similar skills, assignment histories, and abilities. Forced ranking systems may seem like a straightforward way to enable personnel decisions within large organizations; however, they are problematic and a fundamentally inadequate mechanism to assess long term potential.

One major disadvantage of forced distribution systems is that they create a culture of individualism within an organization. In organizations that operate with forced ranking systems, employees focus more on outperforming their peers in search of higher rankings versus working together as a team to achieve organizational goals.[5] Forced ranking systems also lead to a lack of creativity and diversity of thought as individuals fear negative rating impacts should they challenge the status quo.[6] Perhaps the single biggest issue with the Army's forced distribution system is that it provides a number devoid of context, thus leaving individuals unable to gauge their performance against a known standard. While the Army recently adopted this twentieth-century practice, a telling indictment of its effectiveness is that many Fortune 500 companies abandoned the practice years ago.[7]

In Search of Something Better

The Army can improve its feedback by contextualizing the results with three things. First, provide NCOs with their average board score in addition to their final OML ranking. Transparency matters, and Army NCOs deserve to know exactly how the board graded. Second, contextualize the results by showing the distribution of board scores relative to OML numbers. This provides a more complete picture of where they stand compared to their peers versus only displaying the raw OML number alone. Finally, provide personalized feedback from the panel to evaluated NCOs. Gen. James McConville recently said the Army was in a war for talent.[8] Winning this fight requires making changes to provide clarity on a confusing system.

Average board score with trends over time. The Army's NCOs are professional warfighters—the world's best. They deserve to know how a talent evaluation board scored their file. Currently, the Army only shows the resulting OML number with no other feedback mechanism. Displaying the average board score alongside the OML number helps NCOs understand how the panel evaluated their file. Figure 3 (on page 112) shows how this could look in the Army Career Tracker, the digital platform displaying the OML result.

The Army should also provide this data over time (see figure 4, page 112). As NCOs progress through their careers, receive multiple evaluation reports, and attend schools and professional development, they deserve to know how all those career events shape their board scores, year after year, in relation to their peers.

Contextualizing the results. Once NCOs receive their board score and OML results, it is helpful to contextualize the information by displaying a distribution of board scores relative to the resultant OML number. This ensures NCOs fully understand where they stand among their peers, as a 20 percent OML difference is likely derived from a much narrower board score (e.g., OML 200 and 600 have little variance

Average Board Score	OML NUMBER
5.1	1201 out of 2400
Current as of: 2 March 2023	Current as of: 2 March 2023
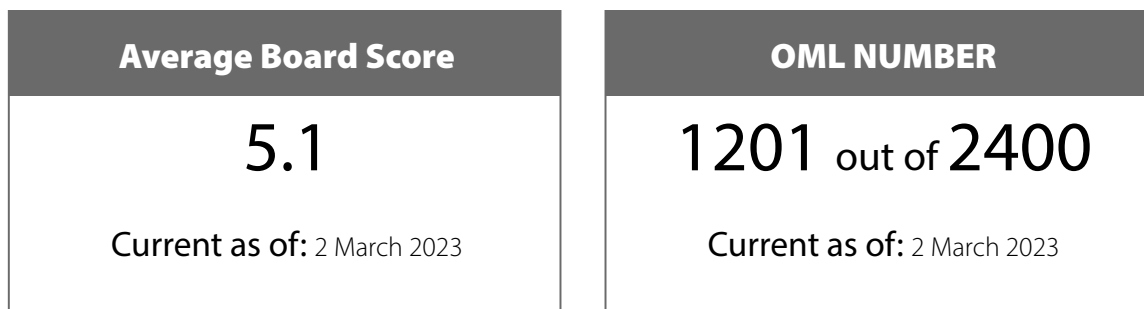
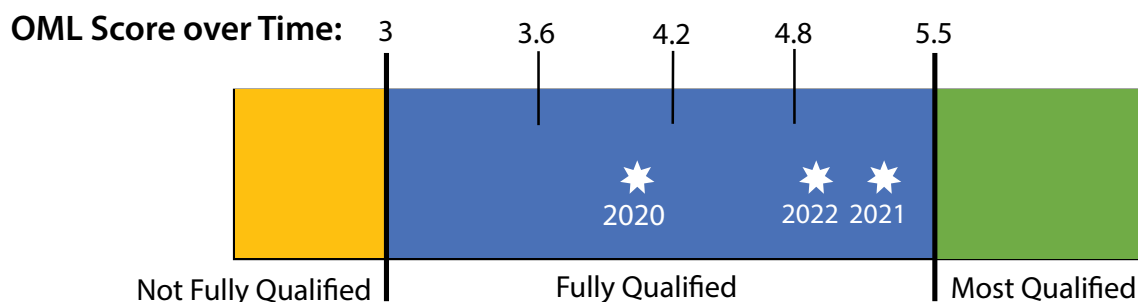**Figure 3. Suggested Display of Average Board Score in Army Career Tracker**

between their board scores). In the example of infantry sergeants first class used, they had a total evaluated population of 2,400 at their most recent talent evaluation board. If one of those NCOs receives an OML of 1320, the number is not very helpful unless the NCO knew how it stood in relation to their peers.

Just like the software developers, the board results are unlikely to be a normal distribution as the evaluated NCOs all share similar knowledge, skills, attributes, and assignment histories. The distribution would likely be negatively skewed, with the distribution's tail extending toward the left. This means there would be fewer NCOs at the lower end of the distribution and more at the upper end. This effect is supported by empirical research demonstrating that commonly held assumptions that workplace performance follows a Gaussian (normal) distribution are false. Workplace performance across a wide range of industries and functions is much more likely to resemble a power-law distribution with most workers at the upper end.[9] In Army terms, this means more NCOs would have similarly higher board scores versus a normal distribution that resembles the classic bell shape. Figure 5 (on page 113) provides a visual example of this phenomenon, and the Army should provide this as feedback to NCOs based on the board's results.

Visualizing data in this way helps contextualize the results for NCOs. On any given board, half of an OML may reside in the upper third of the board score distribution. Showing only the OML number belies a simple truth: while the OML number portrays an NCO as subpar, the reality is that they are an exceptional performer in an otherwise crowded field of other exceptional performers. This reframing, while subtle, means a great deal when talented NCOs are considering whether to stay in the Army.

Personalized feedback. The most meaningful mechanism of feedback is also the hardest to achieve. The Army should provide personalized feedback to NCOs on how the board members considered their file against regulatory guidance, board instructions, and voter philosophy. While the Army has

OML Score over Time:

Not Fully Qualified | Fully Qualified | Most Qualified

3 — 3.6 — 4.2 — 4.8 — 5.5

2020 — 2022 — 2021

Figure 4. Suggested Display of Average Board Score over Time

Example Distribution of Total Board Scores, SFC, 11B
n=2400

Most Qualified (MQ) Line: 5.5
Not Fully Qualified (NFQ) Line: 2.99

Anticipated Yearly Promotions thru OML: 850

Half of the OML results are in the upper third of the board score distribution

AVERAGE BOARD SCORE:	NFQ>3	3	3.2	3.5	3.7	4	4.2	4.5	4.7	5	5.2	NFQ>5.5
	15	35	85	158	197	229	281	341	403	376	253	27

2400   2200 2000 1800 1600 1400 1200 800 600 400 200   1

(Figure by author)

Figure 5. Distribution of Total Board Scores Relative to Order of Merit List Results

already acknowledged it intends to take steps in this direction, the current proposal is to simply offer a series of "+" or "-" based on the six leadership competencies and attributes.[10] The Army can, and should, provide something more meaningful that is grounded in regulatory guidance.

Each military occupational specialty has a unique set of performance indicators that are maintained and updated by the branch proponent. For example, the performance indicators for an infantry sergeant first class typically state that they should have earned their Ranger Tab and/or Bradley Master Gunner Badge, earned their Expert Infantryman Badge, served twenty-four months in a platoon sergeant position, and earned a minimum of thirty college credit hours.[11] Additionally, there is an expectation that infantry sergeants first class possess exceptionally high fitness scores as they are the primary warfighters of our profession. While other branches may possess slightly different requirements, all panel members use their experience and judgment to consider evaluation reports, assignment histories, military schooling, and other indicators found within personnel files.

Currently, NCOs receive zero feedback relative to these indicators. Using criteria common to most branches as a baseline, figure 6 (on page 114) provides a numerically based example of how personalized feedback could look. While this example does not provide qualitative or branch-specific feedback, it does provide a starting point from which to improve. Ideally, NCOs receive both a quantitative rating and qualitative comments from the panel members as feedback.

Negative impacts. The Army releases the results roughly two months after the board finishes reviewing the files. On the day the OML results are released, the Army Career Tracker updates the new OML numbers without data visualization, feedback mechanisms, or context. There is no story in the numbers nor is there an understanding as to why an NCO received the OML number they received. Half are told they are below average with no feedback and no path forward. There are, however, serious implications for promotions, schooling, and assignments. And there are serious effects on morale across the force.

Quantitative Feedback
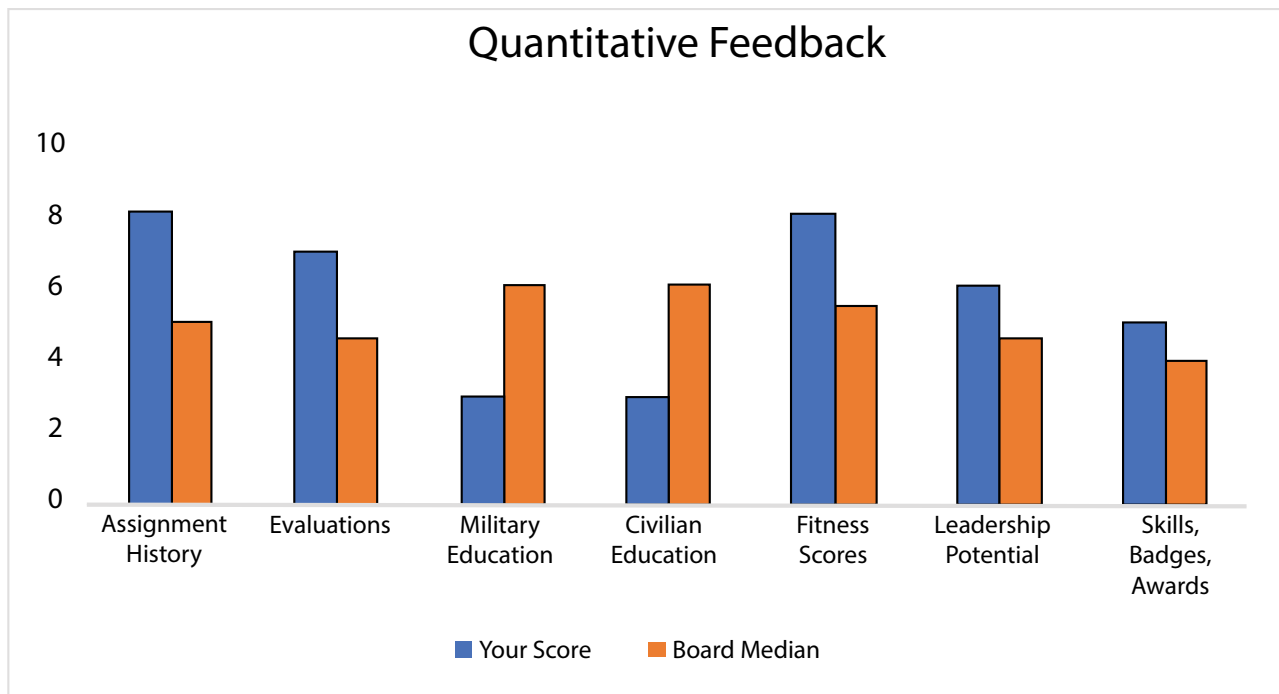
(Figure by author)

Figure 6. Suggested Personalized Feedback on Key Performance Indicators

The first is a sense of individualism that is a byproduct of not ranking higher.[12] This manifests as Army NCOs with below average results become hyperfocused on their own evaluation reports, wanting to ensure a better rank the following year. Closely related to individualism, hypercompetitiveness emerges as NCOs compete against others in unhealthy ways. Rather than working together for the organization's collective good, "spotlight Rangers" begin to cast light on their own efforts while diverting attention away from their peers. While both are natural human responses created by a forced distribution system that lacks context and feedback mechanisms, they are unhealthy for a force requiring collaboration and teamwork to accomplish the mission.

Finally, the blended retirement system compounds the issue as the Army lost its most significant incentive to retain talented leaders to retirement. While it's true less than 20 percent of soldiers made it to retirement under the old system, initial term losses skew the relevance of that statistic, as those losses were unlikely to be assessed at talent evaluation boards year after year.[13] NCOs with desire to serve for many years beyond their initial enlistments now weigh OML results alongside their matched Thrift Savings Plans. While the blended retirement system is certainly good for many midcareer service members, it does add a unique layer of complexity to uncontextualized OML results.

To put this in perspective, consider an NCO with eight years in service, who ranked in the 55th percentile two years in a row (i.e., 1320 out of 2400 on their OML). Without context, they would feel disenfranchised, let down, or that they are not good enough to remain in service. The Army provided no feedback and left it to the individual to draw their own conclusions on their OML score. Viewing an OML of 1320 out of 2400 would lead many to believe they are a substandard performer, no matter what leaders tell them. Unbeknownst to them, they reside in the upper third in terms of performance relative to their peers, not the bottom half.

Anecdotally, these are real conversations happening across the force today. NCOs grow frustrated with the lack of context behind board results and OML numbers. Given these circumstances and the opportunity to transition with a matched Thrift Savings Plan, it is not surprising when many seek new professions in a labor market that values transitioning military talent.

Conclusion

Talent evaluation boards were adopted to streamline personnel decisions across the enterprise while ensuring NCOs were promoted based on merit versus tenure.[14] Unfortunately, the output lacks clarity and personalization. While forced distribution systems may seem efficient, without context, they carry significant disadvantages that impact morale and effectiveness. By displaying average board scores, contextualizing results, and providing personalized feedback, the Army can change the way its NCOs interpret the results. The Army is in a war for talent. If it intends to win, it must seriously consider how it provides feedback following its evaluation boards. ■

Notes

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3. Ibid., slide 20.

4. Ibid., slides 21–22.

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Capt. Adam Magy, the incoming command of Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, stands in front of his company formation during a change of command ceremony at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, 13 October 2020. Delta Company was serving as a part of Task Force Bayonet in the Horn of Africa. (Photo by Sgt. Sirrina Martinez, U.S. Army)

The Discipline Gap

How Army Leadership Curricula Misses the Mark and Why It Should Change
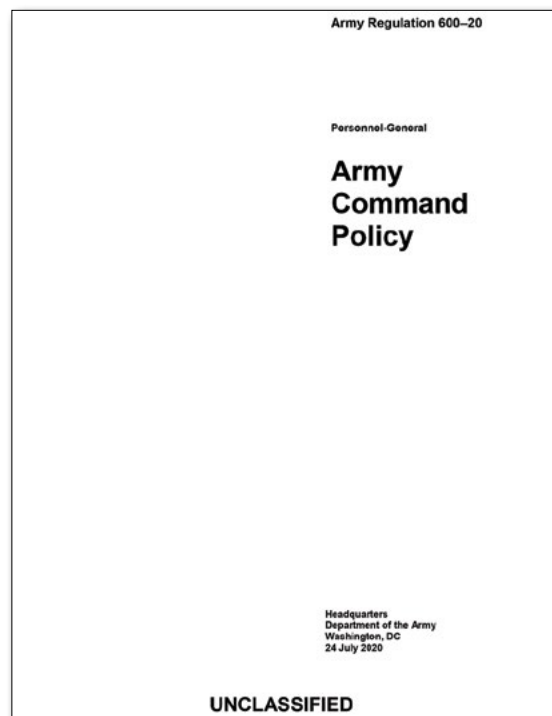
Lt. Col. Anthony Lenze, U.S. Army

Army efforts to prepare junior officers for command falls short. The critical deficiency lies in officer leadership curricula that treats discipline with indifference. Courses prior to command do not to teach officers how, when, and why *they must* meet their specific statutory and regulatory requirements related to discipline. As a result, company commanders are unprepared to appropriately wield command authority against a spectrum of indiscipline that requires time, deliberation, and consistent action. The problem then materializes as inaction by commanders, as seen in 2020 at Fort Hood, Texas. There, commanders were held to account for failing to actively police formations and enforce standards. The aftermath from Fort Hood is consistent with the two key elements of command: authority and responsibility.[1] It is the commander who is solely responsible for unit discipline. The first time a company commander realizes this magnitude should not be during the initial senior rater counseling in the brigade commander's office. The Army's preparatory curricula should develop junior officers' understanding of discipline and their duties to execute accordingly, as a function of leadership, in advance of command.

Leaders hesitant to acknowledge the underlying issue in the Army's approach to leadership and discipline would likely retort that commanders just need to call their judge advocate (i.e., JAG).[2] However, this simple solution did not alleviate the risk at Fort Hood, and it is never a cure-all for company commanders. Today's JAG at the company level is a military justice advisor (MJA) who advises roughly thirty to thirty-nine company commanders from a brigade or higher echelon. In many respects, an MJA is a legal opinion mill.[3] They do not have the capacity to assist company-level leaders with every breach in standards, especially when the law is not in question. Even when an MJA advises a particular command action, they are not able to supervise its effect on the fire team, squad, or platoon. Most importantly, MJAs are not responsible for a discipline's overall effect on safety, climate, and culture. That responsibility lies squarely with commanders.

Although statute, regulation, and doctrine expressly articulate a commander's duties toward discipline, a regimen to emphasize these requirements as a function of leadership is not in place. At best, future commanders receive varied instruction at the installation level in a pre-command course. This instruction varies in quality, content, and duration.[4] It also lacks a uniform message and the gravitas expressed by senior officials who urge commanders to discipline their formations.[5] Instead, the Army should meet its requirement by using its multiple leadership courses that prepare officers for command. Currently, new command teams are simply left to figure out discipline on the job amidst a host of other new vital responsibilities. Neglecting the command duties and leadership related to discipline in Army schools only exacerbates ongoing turbulence to command authority.

The 2022 National Defense Authorization

To view Army Regulation 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, visit https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN32931-AR_600-20-004-WEB-6.pdf.

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Act removed commanders' authority over the most serious Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offenses.[6] At the same time, Congress does not have plans to alter the nearly one hundred other less serious UCMJ offenses retained in command authority. Though the merits of this recent military justice reform

in junior officers who assume command unequipped to appreciate what is at stake.

A brief discussion of command duties is first required to highlight the extent and challenge of command authority. This article will then highlight the flaws in current leadership courses that neglect to

> According to doctrine, the ability of a command team to effectively discipline its unit is a measure of its *primary* responsibility. Statute, regulation, and doctrine all effectively link discipline and command. Army leadership courses do not.

are beyond the scope of this article, these legislative changes come as no surprise. For years, lawmakers have questioned the ability of commanders to effectively and impartially act upon egregious violations of the UCMJ, namely sexual assault. To some, a partial divestiture of UCMJ authority does not go far enough. Calls to completely remove the commander from the UCMJ process will surely continue unless efficiency, trust, and accountability drastically increase. The upcoming revisions to the UCMJ do not address the underlying issue, namely insufficient command action against indicators and warnings that materialize into high-risk behavior. The Army's response should be holistic and address more than just changes to military law.

This article argues that the Army's leadership curricula should change to incorporate lessons that formally address the specified responsibilities of command discipline. To neglect instruction in these fundamental areas of command is a disservice to junior leaders cloaked with Title 10 responsibilities over America's sons and daughters. Currently, the Army does not emphasize the variety and importance of disciplinary tools in primary training courses for junior officers with rigor and as a function of leadership. Likewise, even students at the Army's staff and war colleges also do not discuss the impact that command discipline (and its statutory requirements) has on Army organizations. But the most pressing concern lies with the soldiers; the company level is where discipline has the greatest impact on a daily basis. The Army's leadership curricula convey an indifference toward discipline, which results

address command discipline. Finally, this article will suggest changes to Army leadership curricula to bridge the current discipline gap at the company level and to better prepare junior officers for the realities and responsibilities for command.

Army Leadership Curricula Should Reflect the Known Discipline Challenges Ahead and Aid Junior Officers for Command Accordingly

It is widely understood that commanders are responsible for what a command does or fails to do.[7] When commanders fail to act or when they mistakenly apply command authority, they lapse in leadership. Despite any generational differences, soldiers today still value trust, consistency, and accountability. When the Army disregards discipline as an element of its leadership curricula, it devalues one of the most consequential challenges awaiting company commanders.

Command: Statutory, regulatory, and doctrinal responsibilities for leadership. It is well known that command requires officers to perform duties that have no civilian equivalent.[8] Civilians do not lead employees into combat with legal authority to kill, nor are they charged with *enforcing discipline and the law* with command authority. Federal law clearly articulates a commander's duty for this second point: commanders must "take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the Army."[9] Army regulation also plainly states, "Military discipline is instilled through positive *leadership*, … resulting in a

Capt. Wayne Penebaker, military justice advisor for 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, earns his Air Assault Badge at Fort Polk, Louisiana, 15 January 2021. Penebaker provided military justice advice to forty-seven command teams throughout 2020–2021. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley Morris, U.S. Army)

communicate—both directly and indirectly—how their actions fit within their leadership philosophy and the Army's enduring mantra: "taking care of soldiers." It is therefore incumbent upon the Army to ensure academic curricula addresses why commanders must deter indiscipline, protect the individual and unit, punish wrongdoing, and rehabilitate offenders.[12] Junior officers must know how and when to use discipline, but they must also develop an appreciation for the why and its relation to leadership prior to command.

This is not to suggest that discipline, as a function of leadership, is the only key competency for command. The U.S. Army Research Institute identified thirty-five key competencies for company commanders.[13] These competencies underscore the enormous weight shouldered at the company level. Most of these responsibilities are addressed in the Army curricula leading to command. However, only a handful arguably derive from a commander's statutory responsibility to address violations of regulation and the law.[14] Only one is at the heart of a commander's codified requirement: discipline. A commander's failure to actively implement measures to ensure unit and individual discipline exposes the command to unmitigated high-risk behavior and jeopardizes its mission. A commander's role to discipline through leadership was recently summed up by the Government Accountability Office (GAO):

> Commanders at all levels will exercise their discretion … without the unlawful command influence of superiors. At the same time, superior commanders are required to provide *leadership* and exert lawful influence over their commands in the interest of maintaining good order and discipline. The balance

mental attitude about proper conduct and obedience to lawful military authority."[10] Army doctrine carries an often overlooked but complimentary message toward discipline. According to doctrine, the ability of a command team to effectively discipline its unit is a measure of its *primary* responsibility.[11] Statute, regulation, and doctrine all effectively link discipline and command. Army leadership courses do not.

The Army has a duty to ensure that its commanders understand their key role in disciplining a formation under the law. This understanding is distinct from rote comprehension of technical tools like the UCMJ. A reliance on technical tools is useless if a commander is dim to their overall effect on the unit and soldier. If the commander fails to grasp the *why* behind the use of different discipline levers, they will apply instruments of command inconsistently, inappropriately, or not at all. Moreover, commanders must be able to thoughtfully

U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence battalion commanders and command sergeants major address a group of Military Intelligence Captains Career Course students during a senior leader panel discussion held at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, on 8 August 2017. (Photo by Randall Baucom, U.S. Army)

between these two competing requirements requires agile *leadership*, situational awareness, and strong character, all of which are familiar and expected aspects of *military leadership*.[15] When a command team violates its explicit statutory duty to take action to ensure good order and discipline, it is swiftly relieved.[16] In recent years, this was demonstrated most prominently in the tragic events surrounding the disappearance and murder of Vanessa Guillén at Fort Hood in 2020. Examining Fort Hood's climate and culture, the Independent Review Committee determined "no commander chose to intervene proactively and mitigate known risks of high crime, sexual assault, and sexual harassment."[17] All in all, twenty-one leaders were relieved of their responsibilities for not ensuring a safe, healthy, and disciplined command.[18] The ability to shoot, move, and communicate is irrelevant when leaders fail to take actions to reduce risk and discipline a formation.

The tragic events at Fort Hood were the result of several issues identified by the Independent Review Committee. No single commander was solely responsible. At the same time, every commander across the Army should be asking the same question: What actions am I taking to proactively mitigate the risks identified all too late at Fort Hood? Similarly, the institutional Army should evaluate its alignment of leader preparation according to doctrine, which states, "Leaders should identify and resolve conflict before it affects personal and organizational functioning, good order and discipline, and cohesion."[19] An assessment of leader development curricula demonstrates that the Army underappreciates its responsibility to maintain good order and discipline.

The current curricula to prepare junior officers for command is incongruent with the actual responsibilities to discipline. The current Army curricula is ineffective in preparing junior officers for command.

The Army develops its junior leaders through precommissioning and branch schools prior to company-level command. These schools comprise the institutional domain of Army leader development but do not address the *how, when,* or *why* of command discipline. Nor does the Army leadership curricula include strategies to address the wide array of soldier indiscipline.

Company commanders are often handed responsibility for unit personnel discipline without sufficient training and guidance related to specifying how such discipline is legitimately enforced and what tools are available to facilitate enforcement. (Photo by Art Guzman via Pexels)

The institutional domain's leadership curricula is not tailored to the current environment. Amidst the erosion of command authority and stark examples of failures in command discipline that destroy public trust, the Army leadership curricula remains the same. Leadership courses often rely heavily on case studies to discuss the challenges of leadership. Although these case studies provide valuable leadership lessons and solicit useful analysis and discussion, they do not touch on command discipline. The current leadership curricula for junior officers does not address the requirement to discipline soldiers or the commander's discrete statutory responsibilities.

Opportunities to modify leadership curricula to address the critical shortfalls toward discipline abound. Instead of trying to only inspire future (and current) officers with "A Message to Garcia," instructors should ask the following:

- What should a commander do if a subordinate fails to complete a task?
- What tools does a commander possess to correct the deficiency and what responsibility is there to do so?
- Why are these authorities in place?
- How can unit trust be affected by a decision to act versus a failure to address the issue?
- Does the experience or rank of the soldier affect the commander's corrective action?[20]

Similarly, other effective case studies can teach junior officers a framework to accompany a commander's responsibility to discipline. For instance, "The Decision to Launch the Challenger" leadership curricula could include highlighting the need for command's consistent approach to discipline within its current lesson plan (i.e., a normalization of deviance). Here, leadership curricula could promote normalizing an expectation (and acceptance) of command action that addresses a deviation from known standards. Company norms toward standards and consequences create a climate that teammates can trust. Finally, junior officers should be challenged to connect the causes and effects between minor infractions and high-risk behavior. There may be no better case study for this lesson than that of "Broken Windows."[21] The broken windows theory states,

> If the first broken window in a building is not repaired, the people who like breaking windows will assume that no one cares about the building and more windows will be broken. Soon the building will have no windows.[22]

The learning outcome here should challenge officers with the role that curiosity plays in understanding individual and unit-wide problems. When officers discover minor problems in their command, what proactive steps can they take to address these issues? Are leaders increasing their presence in the barracks in the manner that the police increased their foot patrols on the streets of Newark? What value comes

Curiosity on a personal and professional level enables leadership teams to address broken windows. "A failure of imagination combined with an apathy of diligence can result in tragedy." (Photo by Smallbones via Wikimedia Commons; quote courtesy of the author from 3/10 IBCT People PowerPoint slides, 10 December 2020)

from this presence and how does it affect individual and unit discipline? Whether a curriculum employs case studies or uses other ways to demonstrate discipline within the realm of leadership, the Army should implement changes that go beyond its current approach for junior officers.

Though Army University provides curricula to prepare junior officers for positions of greater responsibility, its current leadership instruction severely under delivers. Such instruction, by doctrine, should be responsive to the current environment to address matters of law and policy.[23] While general leadership is covered during pre-commissioning sources and branch schools such as Basic Officer Leader Course or the Captains Career Course, it ignores the statutory, regulatory, and doctrinal requirements of command in relation to discipline. This is a disservice to junior officers who graduate from these schools without a true grasp of Army leadership—particularly for command. Any military justice classes that junior officers receive are a product of mandatory training that lacks

a command emphasis on leadership and discipline. A judge advocate merely fills a block of training with the legal authorities and processes that Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development,* requires.[24] This approach fails to link command authority with its effect on leadership. A recitation of UCMJ articles cannot impress upon officers the responsibilities of command to the necessary extent that discipline requires.

The Army places an implicit burden on junior officers to develop their perspective on discipline in the operational (i.e., on-the-job) and self-study domains. This amounts to a strategy of hope. Theoretically, officers can learn from watching company-level leaders in action and rely upon mentors for supplemental guidance. In practice, however, many junior officers assume command without comprehending the nexus between the use (or misuse) of discipline and its leadership effect. Simple modifications to leadership curricula could address this shortfall in the institutional domain.

In fairness, the Army does send its junior officers to another block of instruction that covers need-to-know UCMJ topics. But this instruction is ineffective in developing company-level leaders able to apply command authority to indiscipline. It consists of undefined and widely varied instruction at the future commander's home installation. The Army refers to this as the Company Commander/First Sergeant Pre-Command Course (CCFSPCC) and the institutional Army has little to no visibility on its execution.[25] A CCFSPCC

command discipline as a distinct component of leadership instruction. Still, the GAO's findings are relevant to demonstrate the Army's haphazard approach to preparing command teams at the company level for their responsibilities toward discipline. The GAO found that CCFSPCC was offered at twenty-five installations and in some instances provided less than ninety minutes of instruction.[27] Army officials acknowledged that "some installations probably do not allot sufficient time to cover all the legal topics in the course."[28] That may be

> The Army should develop leadership lessons to address how, when, and why commanders employ the many tools within their authority. This will assist commanders with assessing complex situations and, more importantly, the effects their decisions have within their unit and beyond.

consists of firehose-style briefings from multiple presenters to help command teams understand the resources, tools, and local policies at their post. Again, any instruction related to discipline is briefly presented by a judge advocate who describes military justice's tools and processes. It does little to create an environment for discourse that pairs effective leadership with philosophies on discipline. The limited time available and the potpourri of other topics undercuts the importance of instilling discipline and why commanders are encouraged to deliberately employ command authority. The fact that CCFSPCC instructors have not held command themselves only weakens its impact. Metaphorically, CCFSPCC supplies command teams with hammers and nails without an understanding of the when and why of their industry. The Army leaves command teams to figure out discipline on-the-job, as CCFSPCC arrives too late to be a primary embedding mechanism for discipline.

The Department of Defense knows the Army's CCFSPCC is not meeting its intent and recently acknowledged that company-level legal training needs greater focus. The Department of Defense's formal acknowledgement came in response to a GAO report that reviewed the Army's curricula for preparing commanders for their legal responsibilities.[26] But this report only focused on the Army's need for legal training; it did not consider the Army's need to consider

true, but even if improved, CCFSPCC is not the forum for establishing a basis for how discipline relates to leadership. A judge advocate instructor cannot galvanize command teams into seeing discipline as a form of leadership when CCFSPCC focuses solely upon UCMJ processes. Instead, the Army needs to develop leadership curricula for its institutional domains that prepare junior officers for command.

Discipline belongs in Army leadership curricula. Disciplining a soldier or collective unit is a command decision, not a legal one.[29] While a judge advocate—who sits at least two echelons above the company level—is available to provide advice, it is a function of command authority to ensure good order and discipline with a positive command climate. Consider also that a judge advocate sometimes serves nearly forty other company commanders with advice. Judge advocate availability and the legal perspective is not always aligned with a command assessment at the company level. The burden lies with the commander to know how, when, and why to use discipline. Should the hand of discipline be heavy or soft? Will the commander's action impact society, the soldier, and the greater Army? Decisions related to discipline fall squarely within the art of leadership. Yet the Army provides no real effort to train future leaders for this art.

The Army should develop leadership lessons to address how, when, and why commanders employ the many tools within their authority. This will assist

commanders with assessing complex situations and, more importantly, the effects their decisions have within their unit and beyond. A leadership curriculum can draw from fact patterns that many company-level leaders continue to face, such as failures to report on time, lack of military bearing, fraternization, alcohol and drug abuse, and barracks infractions. For the foreseeable future, these issues will remain within the wheelhouse of command. When a company commander acts to address these instances of misconduct, what impact does the action aim to achieve? Is an action always required? Does a passive or reactionary approach to discipline create counterproductive leadership? Will a company commander's inaction play a role in unit or individual discipline?

Additionally, leadership instruction should assist future commanders in understanding how discipline affects their command climates. Whether a commander takes corrective administrative actions to institute a bar to continued service or recommends a soldier be separated from the Army, these actions impact soldier and unit-wide trust. The difficult decisions that commanders make in these situations are a product of their overall ability to lead. Junior officers should be made to contemplate this friction and be challenged with finding their own balance. It is not enough to tell junior officers to choose "the harder right." Leadership curricula should provide foundational instruction to address the gamut of indiscipline and the potential follow-on consequences to both action and inaction.

Specific modifications that strengthen leadership curricula. Army leadership curricula can be strengthened by challenging junior officers with balancing these command responsibilities. This can be done by demonstrating the correlation between command inaction and high-risk events. The Army has numerous case studies in the form of completed investigations that can be sanitized of personal information to serve as a basis for education. Leadership curricula can use these case studies to create vignettes that force junior officers to think through complicated situations that test a leader's ability to discipline their soldiers and formation.

In addition to drawing lessons from fact patterns that can assist future commanders, the Army's leadership curricula should encourage discourse into the how, when, and why commanders should act. For example, the classroom discussion could center around three

distinct problem sets that future company commanders may face:

- A barracks fight between two specialists that does not result in any injuries but raises concern over potential future incidents.
- A star platoon sergeant who has developed an overly familiar professional relationship with a private first class from a different platoon.
- A platoon leader who receives two off-post speeding tickets and one on-post traffic violation within a month's time.

These problem sets are unfortunately common across the Army, yet the current leadership lessons provide no guidance to assist junior officers for resolving these issues and reducing future high-risk behavior. Appropriate command emphasis is needed in each of these problem sets to reduce risk to the individual and collective unit. Junior officers should be taught that command actions should escalate in relation to any future misconduct or high-risk behavior. The use of written counseling, no-contact orders, bars to continued service, and summarized or company-grade Article 15s all provide opportunities for command teams to confront the indiscipline face-to-face, implement an appropriate command action, and then assess the corrective or the rehabilitative follow-on effect. Likewise, as primary embedding mechanisms, junior officers should be aware of the risk commanders assume if their actions are passive or fail to escalate in conjunction with the infractions. Commanders who fail to act with measures that escalate against indiscipline are in a reactive posture that permits high-risk behavior to occur as a foreseeable consequence. Failing to implement discipline as a function of leadership ignores the statutory, regulatory, and doctrinal duties of command.

After discussing command actions related to indiscipline, instructors should then broach the topic of administrative separations with junior officers. A separation is a command process that company-level leaders are expected to start, particularly after a soldier's pattern of misconduct. In other instances, the Army requires the separation process to begin after a serious UCMJ violation occurs (e.g., driving under the influence or the abuse an illegal substance).[30] Company commanders drive the separation process and provide recommendations as to disposition for the separation authority's decision. When does a

commander decide a soldier is unable to conform to established norms and that forcing that soldier to leave the Army is best? How could the individual, the Army, and the public benefit from the retention or separation of a particular soldier? Leadership instructors should ask these difficult questions and then contrast any asserted thresholds with achieving a positive command climate and the leadership need- ed to communicate these difficult decisions. All the while, soldiers within the unit watch and discuss the command norms that are constantly on display that either detract from or instill discipline. Taking actions to promote command discipline within a positive climate is the essence of leadership in the Army.

The noncommissioned officer's role in discipline and leadership. Understanding how discipline affects climate and trust is particularly relevant as soldiers of Generation Z fill the Army's ranks. A recent Army University Press article written by Sgt. 1st Class Roland Hanks notes that the new generation of soldiers views leadership horizontally as opposed to the tradition- al hierarchy of command.[31] Implicitly, a new soldier may be less inclined to view command authority with proper deference. Coincidentally, Hanks also contends Generation Z soldiers want fairness and accountability toward accepted standards of the Army Profession.[32] The ability of a commander to navigate this dynamic is a measure of leadership. Any contradictions be- tween authority and accountability that Generation Z soldiers perceive must be clearly understood and communicated by the command team. Notably, the new generation of soldiers wants—as it always has— noncommissioned officers (NCOs) for role models. Therefore, the driver behind a disciplined formation must be the combined efforts of officers and NCOs.

Company commanders do not discipline their formations alone. Discerning NCOs always influence their formations. Leadership curricula should address the challenge of disciplining a formation not from the perspective of just the commander but as a member of the command team. Typically, a company commander and first sergeant have similar philosophies on disci- pline. But this is not always the case. Disagreements can arise related to the actions a commander imposes or recommends as well as the corresponding effects. Commanders must use careful judgment in deferring to an NCO and underwriting their recommendations.

A commander's ability to make tough decisions and seek the support of senior NCOs can be crucial to the message ultimately sent through the ranks. Effective commands empower all NCOs to influence junior enlisted soldiers toward accountability and fairness. The NCOs are discipline's couriers who can quell junior soldier discontent or reduce their misunder- standing (generational or not) of command authority. Ultimately, company-level leaders should pursue a state of command where personnel experience a palatable level of discomfort when standards are knowingly violated. The NCOs are part and parcel to achieving this state. The timing, rate, and strength of this influ- ence is an art and requires commander/senior enlisted member joint leadership. Astonishingly, the leadership curricula throughout the Army does not address this officer/NCO dynamic related to discipline.

Conclusion

The Army prides itself on preparation and training for key assignments and challenges. Yet this notion is at odds with the state of junior officer preparation for command responsibilities. In recent decades, the Army has not taken adequate measures to holistically address high-risk behavior that harms public trust and leads to a reduction in command authority. It has instead allowed itself to accept a reactive posture to address an ongoing crisis of indiscipline that has led to unspeakable trage- dies and a reduction to command authority. There is no amount of PowerPoint slides from the Judge Advocate General's Corps (or any other branch of the Army) that can influence junior officers to see that discipline is a function of leadership. Alternatively, this message should be thoughtfully added to all junior officer cur- ricula, from pre-commissioning to the Captains Career Course.

A change to how the Army prepares its leaders is in order. This change requires leadership courses to imbue young officers with the known challenges ahead from minor to major discipline infractions. More important- ly, leadership curricula should teach how, when, and why discipline matters to command and it should incor- porate the many case studies that signal this vital mes- sage. The American public is counting on commanders taking actions that reduce risk over time and ensuring service members are held accountable in an appropriate, timely fashion. At the same time, junior officers must

balance their role prioritizing "People First." This is the essence of the leadership challenge today. Moreover, as Hanks noted, the NCO ranks are also living an Army Profession that values accountability and a dedication to standards. It is the company command team who must lead formations in a trusted climate that seeks these ideals. The Army misses a key opportunity in its leadership curricula if junior officers are not challenged with this leadership dynamic. It must not only address this dynamic, but stress at the earliest stage of leadership development the importance of incorporating discipline into every junior officer's leadership philosophy. ■

The views expressed in this article are the personal opinions of the author and do not represent those of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Army.

Notes

1. Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2020), para. 1-6(b).

2. JAG is shorthand for judge advocate or military attorney within the Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps.

3. The author does not wish to denigrate the duties of a military justice advisor (MJA); their legal practice is essential to the Army. The sentiment that MJAs are basically legal opinion mills highlights the difference between their role and the commander's role on unit discipline.

4. *See* U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) 21-338, *Military Training: The Services Need to Ensure That All Commanders Are Prepared for Their Legal Responsibilities* (Washington, DC: U.S. GAO, July 2021), 1.

5. James Mattis, memorandum for secretaries of the military departments, chiefs of the military services, and commanders of the combatant commands, "Discipline and Lethality," 13 August 2018, accessed 19 December 2022, https://partner-mco-archive.s3.amazonaws.com/client_files/1534283120.pdf.

6. National Defense Authorization Act of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 533, 135 Stat. 1541, 1695 (2021).

7. AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, para. 2-1(b).

8. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, November 2019), para. 1-97. "The legal and ethical responsibilities of a commander exceed those of any other leader of similar rank serving in a staff position or as a civilian manager."

9. 10 U.S.C. § 3583(4) (2018).

10. AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, para. 4-1a.

11. ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, para. 5-43.

12. James E. Baker, "Is Military Justice Sentencing on the March? Should It Be? And If So, Where Should It Head? Court-Martial Sentencing Process, Practice, and Issues," *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 27, no. 2 (2014): 72–87, accessed 19 December 2022, https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/facpub/1468/.

13. Lauren A. Ford et al., *Identification of Company Command Competencies*, Technical Report 1320 (Fort Belvoir, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, June 2013), accessed 19 December 2022, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA587475.pdf.

14. 10 U.S.C. § 3583(2)-(4).

15. GAO-21-338, *Military Training*, 1 (emphasis added).

16. 10 U.S.C. § 3583(2)-(4).

17. Christopher Swecker et al., *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 6 November 2020), ii, accessed 19 December 2022, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/forthoodreview/2020-12-03_FHIRC_report_redacted.pdf.

18. Haley Britzky, "A Stunning 21 Army Leaders Will Be Disciplined over Vanessa Guillén's Disappearance and Death," Task and Purpose, 30 April 2021, accessed 19 December 2022, https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-fort-hood-21-leaders-guillen/.

19. ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, para. 6-33 (emphasis added).

20. Elbert Hubbard, *A Message to Garcia* (East Aurora, NY, 1899).

21. George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows," *The Atlantic* (website), March 1982, accessed 19 December 2022, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/.

22. Quote from Randall G. Sheldon, "Assessing 'Broken Windows,'" Center on Juvenile Criminal Justice, accessed 19 December 2022, http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/broken.pdf.

23. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 3 April 2019), para. 2-4(b).

24. AR 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 10 December 2017), Appendix F.

25. Conversation with Army University officials to author, May 2022. Army University officials acknowledged there is no discussion of discipline as a function of leadership within Army leadership curricula.

26. GAO-21-338, *Military Training*, 201. Notably, the GAO report did not interview junior officers or company commanders and determined the Army needed to continually assess its legal training provided to commanders.

27. Ibid., 25.

28. Ibid., 46.

29. Actions to address a "covered" Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offense are legal decisions; however, actions on the nearly one hundred other UCMJ articles remain as command (not legal) decisions.

30. In these instances, commanders have no discretion due to Army-wide separation polices.

31. Roland Hanks, "What Soldiers Want: The Gen Z Perspective," NCO Journal, 22 February 2022, accessed 20 December 2022, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2022/February/What-Soldiers-Want/.

32. Ibid.

Reexamining Administrative Investigations

Creating an Investigating Officer Functional Area

Maj. Peter B. Postma, U.S. Army Reserve

Administrative investigations are critical to maintaining a command's good order and discipline.[1] Through these investigations, commanders discover misconduct, assess financial liability, and address many other issues that, when corrected, enhance good order and discipline.[2] Correcting issues increases a unit's operational effectiveness. Unfortunately, far too often, administrative actions are completed at a substandard level, hindering the command's ability to be effective. The current administrative investigative system underserves commanders. Under the current system, a great deal of resources are utilized on every investigation to train-up investigating officers to comply with the requirements of Army Regulation (AR) 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations and Boards of Officers*.[3] The Army should create a new functional area for an
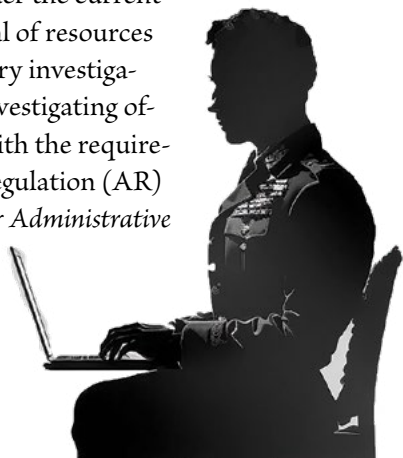
(AI-generated artwork by Michael Lopez, *Military Review*)

administrative investigating officer to address these issues and better serve individual commands and the Army as a whole.

Motivating the Transition to a Functional Area

The need to transition administrative investigations to a separate functional area Army-wide is motivated by several reasons. First, significant time is taken from investigating officers' day-to-day responsibilities, which results in competing priorities, delays, and poor work product. Second, substandard investigations result from a lack of formal training, which leads to errors and illogical conclusions. Finally, trends underlying systemic issues are difficult to identify and mitigate due to the number of current investigating officers, which results in poor institutional knowledge.

Competing Priorities: Investigation versus Officer's Primary Duties

The first consideration supporting the establishment of an investigating officer's functional area is the significant time taken from an officer's primary duties and responsibilities when performing administrative investigations. Time is essential to officers, especially
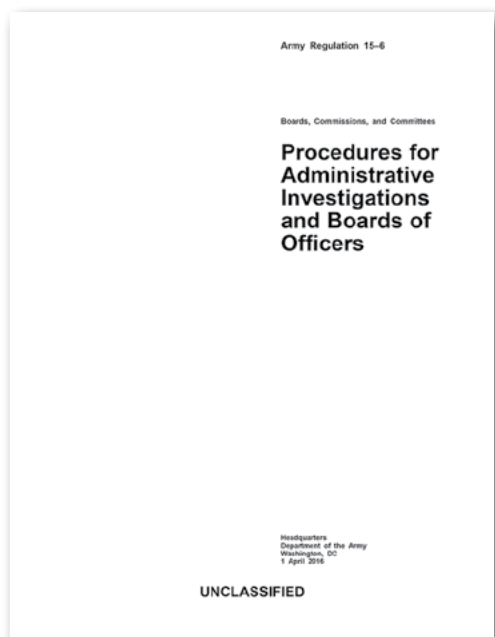
To view Army Regulation 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations and Boards of Officers*, visit https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/r15_6.pdf.

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those in key developmental positions. Conducting quality investigations takes time and focused effort. Because of the time investigations require, the best qualified officer is less likely to be appointed because units seek to retain their high performers for other missions.[4]

This leads to subpar investigations.

Conducting investigations diverts a substantial number of hours from daily operations. The time to complete investigations ranges from fifteen hours to several hundred hours depending upon the complexity of the investigation. In the author's experience overseeing over two hundred investigations, the average investigation takes approximately fifty hours to conduct. Some investigations, however, can take significantly more resources. For example, the Abbey Gate investigation into the death of thirteen service members on 26 August 2021 at the Kabul Airport required hundreds, if not thousands, of hours by the investigation team.[5] The time to conduct a good investigation includes conducting a legal in-brief, determining an investigation plan, conducting witness interviews, gathering other evidence, typing the findings and recommendations, and coordinating with the legal advisor prior to submission to the approving authority.[6] Throughout this time, the officer should focus on the investigation, not his or her day-to-day responsibilities.[7] Yet there is a cost; by conducting a single investigation, the current system removes an officer from his or her day-to-day responsibilities for over a week. This can significantly cripple a staff section or unit leadership. In an average brigade, there are twenty to one hundred investigations each year depending on the size and component of the brigade, with an average of seventy-five per year per brigade.[8] Therefore, within an average brigade approximately 3,750 hours per year are utilized to conduct investigations.[9] This is the equivalent of two officers working full-time to conduct investigations.

Officers at all levels face multiple competing demands, whether they are green-tab leaders or leading on a staff. Once the appointment is made, the investigating role should take precedence over all other duties.[10] The precedence ensures completion in a timely manner to address issues in the command.[11] However, the investigative precedence and priority generally does not happen. The investigating officer's regular duties do not cease because of an appointment; operations and day-to-day administrative actions still need to be planned, coordinated, and executed. Among these competing demands, the officer's daily duties and evaluation report receive priority, not the investigation. This is routinely accounted for in the appointment process, with officers in key positions substantially less likely to be appointed, even if they are the best qualified to conduct the investigation.

Thorough investigations require the best qualified officers as investigating officers.[12] An officer is "best qualified for the duty by reason of their education, training, expertise, length of service, demonstrated sound judgment and temperament."[13] Unfortunately, these qualities are seldom determinative factors when appointing an investigating officer. After determining the pool of officers eligible by rank requirements, those in key positions are typically disregarded due to

their critical workload.[14] Appointing authorities are reluctant to appoint and assign highly effective officers because they conduct the lion's share of the daily operations. Their appointment will detrimentally affect operations. Next, some officers are removed because of demonstrated ineffectiveness. The focus shifts to the most expendable, relatively competent officer who can have his or her daily operations impacted. At times the most expendable officer will conduct an excellent in-

when determining an investigative plan and conducting interviews. This can create psychological barriers from a lack of training and a lack of consistent repetitions. During their entire careers, officers will conduct very few investigations, with several years between each investigation. During the legal in-brief, the legal advisor provides a fifteen- to sixty-minute overview of the investigative process and answers all questions from the investigating officer. However, this legal in-brief is

> Beyond a legal in-brief from the legal advisor, there is no training. This lack of training leads to inefficient investigations, errors, illogical conclusions, and a legal advisor continuously directing and focusing an investigating officer.

vestigation. However, this is the exception and not the rule. Generally, an officer is deemed the most expendable because his or her demonstrated capabilities match his or her workload. While the investigating officer may not be the most competent in the brigade and may not conduct an excellent investigation on his or her own accord, the legal advisor generally can coach the investigating officer to the point of a complete, legally sufficient investigation. Therefore, the best qualified officer is rarely chosen, despite the language in AR 15-6.

Lack of Formal Training Creates Investigative Issues

The next reason for supporting the establishment of an investigating officer functional area is that the current lack of formal training repeatedly creates investigative issues. Beyond a legal in-brief from the legal advisor, there is no training.[15] This lack of training leads to inefficient investigations, errors, illogical conclusions, and a legal advisor continuously directing and focusing an investigating officer. Inefficient investigations can affect readiness when soldiers are flagged for an extended period due to an ongoing investigation. Formally trained functional area officers would substantially minimize these problems.

The lack of formal training in the current system leads to inefficient investigations. Few Army officers have any formal training as investigators. This lack of investigative background and training creates obstacles. Investigating officers tend to be unsure of themselves

akin to teaching a person how to weld over the phone. Verbal instruction is good, but the application takes practice for proficiency. Unease and lack of training coupled with the continued focus on day-to-day responsibilities leads to procrastination. Additionally, due to a sense of unease during investigative interviews, investigating officers often do not ask necessary follow-up and clarifying questions to provide needed detail. For example, I have observed inexperienced investigating officers seek structured templates and stick to preplanned interview questions. These are tactics that inhibit investigators from developing a thorough investigation and lead to unanswered questions or insufficient evidence, which could have been obtained by an experienced investigator. Additionally, these poor interviews do not fully capture the specificity required to arrive at effective findings and recommendations. This leads to reinterviewing individuals. All of this results in delayed completion of written findings and recommendations. Inefficient investigations create consequences for the flagged subject of the investigation when there is no substantiated finding, such as loss of professional military education, promotion, or the selection for an advantageous career move.[16] This is due to the requirement that the subject of an investigation has a nontransferrable flag imposed for the duration of the investigation. Therefore, the lack of training leads to inefficient investigations that have secondary and tertiary effects.

Next, untrained investigators lead to investigative errors. An error may be harmless or substantial when it has a material adverse effect on an individual's substantive rights.[17] For example, a substantial error is to deny a respondent's right to counsel. This most commonly occurs in an investigation when the investigator fails to inform a soldier of his or her Article 31 rights prior to interviewing a witness suspected of an offense.[18] When rights warnings are not given and a soldier provides an

appear to be a reluctance to hold soldiers accountable, whether that is financial liability for damaged property, administrative action, or nonjudicial punishment. This lack of logic significantly increases the work required to attain a legally sufficient investigation often involving significant back and forth between the legal advisor and investigating officer.

When findings and recommendations are unclear or unsupported, the legal advisor attempts to guide the

> When rights warnings are not given and a soldier provides an incriminating statement, it creates a substantial error. This significantly impacts an investigation.

incriminating statement, it creates a substantial error. This significantly impacts an investigation. When there is a substantial error, the approval authority cannot use the affected part of the investigation as the basis for adverse action or must set aside the entire investigation and appoint a new investigating officer and refer it to that officer.[19] Providing Article 31 rights should not be complicated; however, investigating officers do, at times, fail to provide the rights. More commonly, they fail to document that the rights were given on the DA Form 3881. Their lack of training makes them unfamiliar with the investigative process. Through formal training, investigating officers would understand incriminating information and the circumstances in which to read rights warnings. Trained investigators would substantially decrease the number of errors in administrative investigations.

Investigating officers' illogical findings and recommendations based on unsupported findings increase the investigative effort required. Another common problem under the current system is investigating officers' findings can be unclear, not concise, and unsupported.[20] Findings are supposed to be based on factual evidence; however, sometimes findings are the result of illogical inferential leaps, rather than logically based on the facts.[21] Similarly, recommendations are not always logically based on the findings. From my perspective, when conducting legal reviews of administrative investigations, the illogical recommendations from the findings

investigating officer to build a legally sufficient investigation. Not all investigating officers accept suggestions, and the legal insufficiency is noted during the legal review. If deficiencies are not addressed, the approval authority can send the investigation back to the officer for further investigation or modify and approve the findings and recommendations consistent with the evidence.[22] All of this massively increases the effort and hours invested into each administrative investigation by the investigating officer, legal advisor, legal reviewer, and the approval authority.

Finally, the legal advisor sometimes must directly guide and propel an untrained investigating officer to complete the investigation. This occurs most often when an officer is overly focused on his or her day-to-day responsibilities. During the investigation, when it is determined that the investigating officer lacks the drive, the
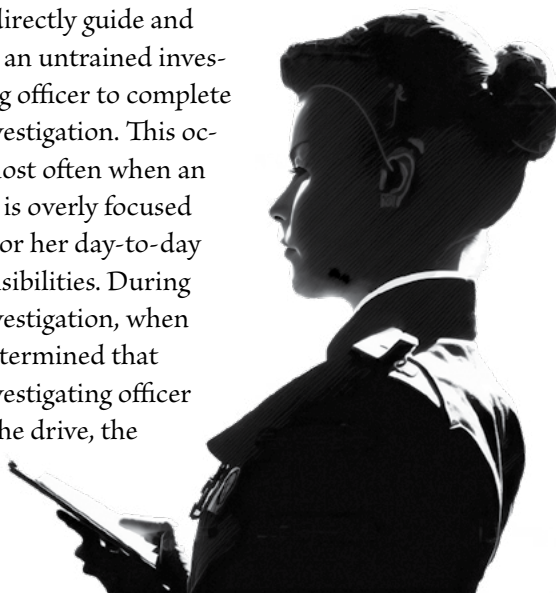
(AI-generated artwork by Michael Lopez, *Military Review*)

legal advisor will push the investigating officer to complete the investigation. This turns into direct supervision. This is differentiated from when a judge advocate is assigned to assist with an investigation, which is prudent when there is a high-profile investigation, such as the Abbey Gate investigation.[23] Occasionally, the chain of command must become fully engaged to ensure the investigation's completion.[24] While this should not be required with a commissioned officer, however, at times it is. Given the already stressed schedule of an

area, the investigating officers would have historical knowledge framework for future investigations. By identifying similar issues, commanders could utilize these trends to rapidly effectuate change. Functional area investigating officers would rapidly identify micro-level issue trends well before the legal review that are informed by historical knowledge. This trend analysis would occur like that of other staff members such as the equal opportunity officer and the sexual assault response coordinator.

> Creating an investigating officer's functional area would have an additional benefit in that it could better identify and address trends occurring at brigade and higher levels.

Army officer, the investigating officer responsibility is often the first duty to be pushed to the bottom of that list of priorities. When investigating officers avoid their responsibilities to investigate, it is usually the legal advisor who guides them to completion.

Identify Trends

Creating an investigating officer's functional area would have an additional benefit in that it could better identify and address trends occurring at brigade and higher levels. Staff officers are supposed to identify risk and provide courses of action to the commander to mitigate that risk.[25] Currently, investigating officers focus on one micro problem set at a time and lack situational awareness regarding past trends across a command. For example, an investigating officer may uncover an issue with lateral transfer processing. This piece of evidence may determine the financial liability for the investigation at hand but may be part of a systemic issue unit wide. Currently, identified issues are corrected through implementing recommendations one issue at a time with little historical knowledge or follow-up to ensure recommendations are implemented effectively long term. Most historical knowledge of previous findings and recommendations is institutional knowledge held by the brigade legal section, which provides historical investigative perspective through staff synchronization. By implementing a functional

Proposed Change: Creation of an Investigating Officer's Functional Area

To address the issues with the current administrative investigation process, the Army should create an investigating officer's functional area. This functional area would be assigned at the brigade and higher command levels. These officers would become part of the personal staff, directly reporting to the commander.[26] With the creation of this functional area, the superior rank requirement found in AR 15-6 should be modified. After examining the strengths of a separate functional area, this section examines two other alternate courses of action. First, quarterly assignments as an investigating officer and second, transitioning legal administrator warrant officers to serve as dedicated investigating officers. Both courses of action would reduce some of the issues identified previously. However, the creation of a separate functional area provides the most comprehensive solution and best serves to enhance good order and discipline.

A functional area will lead to routinely superior investigations, which support good order and discipline. The functional area officers assigned would be trained through a dedicated multiweek functional area course after which they would be solely focused on administrative investigations. This eliminates the quandary of choosing among untrained or unqualified officers. Rather, a qualified, competent, fully

trained officer will always be assigned. This will eliminate time taken from line officers' day-to-day responsibilities. Due to the training and repetition conducting investigations, investigative issues will be reduced including poorly conducted investigations and substantial errors. Through multiple investigative repetitions, recommendations logically based on findings supported by material facts will occur. Finally, because there is a dedicated, trained officer, the legal section will not have to coach an officer to complete an investigation in a timely and sufficient manner. Thus, the creation and assignment of functional area investigating officers will lead to routinely superior administrative investigations.

Under this proposal, functional area investigating officers would be added and assigned to brigade level and higher commands. As noted earlier, on average 3,750 hours are consumed by investigations within a brigade each year. This equates to two officers' full-time duties. Therefore, it is the recommendation that two additional officers be assigned at the brigade level as full-time functional area investigating officers. Like officers in other functional areas, these officers would have previously completed key developmental assignments as captains, such as company command.[27] Prior key development assignment completion would provide increased perspective as an investigating officer. It is recommended that at the brigade level, one captain and one major be assigned who will provide additional depth and experience. At the division level, a lieutenant colonel and at least one major and at the corps level, one colonel and at least one lieutenant colonel should be assigned. The functional area investigating officers at higher echelon will assist when there are higher volumes of investigations. Additionally, those at higher echelons should be designated as investigating officers for sexual harassment investigations, which require the investigating officer to come from outside of the brigade.[28] Finally, functional area officers at the brigade level will be able to utilize a technical chain like the judge advocate technical channel.

These officers will serve as part of the personal staff. The investigating officer will join the chaplain, public affairs officer, safety officer, staff judge advocate, and others as part of the commander's personal staff.[29] If the brigade commander is suspected of wrongdoing, then the functional area investigating officer would then come from division level. This would not be a change from the current construct. Although assigned at the brigade level, functional area investigating officers will conduct investigations at lower levels like judge advocates assisting lower-level commands. Furthermore, in a complicated investigation, where specialized knowledge would be beneficial, the commander can maintain the ability to appoint non-functional area assistant investigating officers. This is like when safety investigations occur. For example, when there is an unmanned aerial vehicle incident, the safety investigation will include someone with that specialization.

Finally, concurrent with creating the functional area, the superior rank requirement of AR 15-6 should be modified. Currently, AR 15-6 requires that the investigating officer is senior to the subject of the investigation.[30] The requirement is understandable due to perception of bias where a junior officer may be unwilling to fully examine and make adverse findings regarding misconduct of senior officers that could impact their careers. However, under a separate functional area, the investigating officers would be rated by the brigade commander with an intermediate rater of the next higher echelon functional area officer in their technical chain. This would be like the rating scheme for a brigade judge advocate.[31] When there are trained investigators, superior rank should not be determinative over prior formal functional area training. This is like Criminal Investigation Division investigators who can investigate all ranks due to their training. Therefore, AR 15-6 should be modified to remove the rank requirement when a functional area investigating officer conducts the investigation.

Anticipated Positive Consequences of a Functional Area

Multiple positive consequences will result from instituting a separate investigating officer functional area. These positive results include a focused attention leading to expedited investigation completion, fewer procedural errors, well-written investigations, brigade legal teams more focused on preventative law training, and the provision of trend analysis to commanders to address issues. Each of these results will enhance a command's ability to enforce good order and discipline. Therefore, creating a functional area for investigating officers should be pursued.

The first benefit from having dedicated, trained investigators will be the speed at which investigations are completed. Investigative repetitions will lead to efficiency. Investigating officers will have greater focus on the investigative work itself rather than on figuring out how to investigate through on-the-job training. This will enable faster turnaround of investigations, enabling a command to identify issues and make more rapid changes. This increases command efficiency and effectiveness.

Next, there will be substantially fewer errors as well as findings and recommendations that comply with the requirements of AR 15-6 prior to legal review. Trained investigators will have a greater understanding of how to avoid procedural errors that can create significant issues. For example, functional area officers will understand when to provide rights warning. Additionally, because of the repetition and training received, functional area officers' written findings and recommendations will be better written and not require multiple rewrites to comply with AR 15-6 and other regulations relevant to the specific investigation. It is more likely findings will be fully supported by the facts, and the recommendations will be consistent with the findings. Both benefits enable

more efficient investigations, rapidly identifying issues that enable an increased command efficiency and effectiveness.

The next benefit derived from creating a functional area investigating officer is that brigade legal teams can provide increased focus on preventive law and advising commanders. With a centralized system, the Army will have a resource that can give real-time information on trending concerns amongst the force. Judge advocates will invest significantly less time putting investigating officers on track to achieve legal sufficiency. However, there will be times when legal issues arise, and the attorney will need to be consulted like that for military police investigations and the criminal investigative division. When there is less interaction due to knowledgeable investigating officers, the judge advocate will have increased capacity to advise commanders at all levels and increased ability to practice preventative law. This supports increased good order and discipline throughout the command.

Continued or Potential Drawbacks and Risks of a Functional Area

Creating a separate functional area for investigating officers will not solve all issues, and there will be continued drawbacks and risks with administrative investigations. There are three primary drawbacks and risks. First, there might exist a perceived lack of independence due to membership in the commander's personal staff. Second, the allocation of resources below the brigade level may depend on the personality of the brigade commander. Next, functional area investigating officers may not have sufficient specialized knowledge for investigations into technical, specialized areas. Finally, there will be times when investigations have issues regardless of how much training the investigative team received. While these risks exist, the benefits vastly outweigh these risks, which can be mitigated.

The first drawback or risk is a perceived lack of independence of functional area investigating officers because others view these officers as controlled by the commander. This would not be a new issue, but a continued issue from the current system. The Army already combats this perceived lack of independence in sexual harassment investigations, where the Army now requires the investigating officer to come from outside of the brigade.[32] Because the commander gets to determine the scope of an investigation, this perception will continue to persist. Generally, commanders are more willing to err on the side

(AI-generated artwork by Michael Lopez, *Military Review*)

of caution when it comes to investigations and therefore will conduct administrative investigations more liberally than conservatively. Additionally, there will continue to be oversight of investigations by judge advocates to ensure legal sufficiency. Therefore, the risk of bias is assessed to be a low risk, although it is acknowledged as a risk.

The next risk is that brigade commanders may retain the use of functional area investigating officers and not allow subordinate commanders to utilize the resource.

> " Commanders are more willing to err on the side of caution when it comes to investigations and therefore will conduct administrative investigations more liberally than conservatively. "

This could leave battalion and company commanders with continued issues with appointing non-functional area officers, creating a decreased desire to investigate issues within their command. While this is a risk, it does not pose a significant risk. For example, in almost all units the lowest level that a judge advocate is assigned at is the brigade level. However, the judge advocates assigned at the brigade level provide legal advice to leaders throughout the brigade. The judge advocate may have more interaction with the brigade commander, but they engage at all command levels. Brigade commanders understand that addressing issues at the lowest level is generally the best course of action. Like the brigade judge advocate, a functional area investigating officer will likely have more interaction with the brigade commander than a company commander; however, the functional area investigating officer will provide his or her expertise at each command level. Additionally, a brigade commander will understand that maintaining an investigative resource at their level hinders the ability to enforce good order and discipline throughout their command. Therefore, while the retention of functional area investigating officers at the brigade level is a potential drawback, this is assessed to be a low risk.

The next drawback is a potential lack of expertise for a functional area officer when conducting investigations in a specialized field. For example, if investigating aircraft damage that occurred during a landing, under the current system, an aviator

would be the best investigating officer because of his or her experience. Under the proposed system, the investigating officer would likely not have an aviation background and might therefore have a lack of understanding of aviation operations. This could be a drawback in a variety of specialized areas within the Army. However, the risk can be significantly reduced through the appointment of an assistant investigating officer to provide the technical ex-

pertise related to the investigation. The number of investigations where technical expertise is required should be minimal. Therefore, the lack of expertise in specialized fields is not assessed to be a significant risk with the creation of a functional area for investigating officers.

The final drawback is there will be times when investigations have issues regardless of how much training the investigative team received. The Army Criminal Investigation Division's investigation into Spc. Vanessa Guillen is an example of how, even when trained criminal investigators are involved, there can be significant issues.[33] No solution will be perfect. If implemented, sometime in the future there will be an investigation that becomes terrible either due to procedural missteps or overlooking evidence that in hindsight should have been obvious. While the drawback will exist in a rare number of cases, having trained, professional, investigating
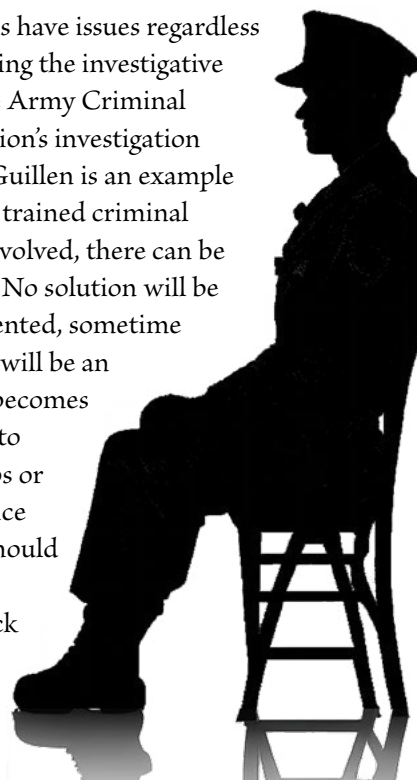
(AI-generated artwork by Michael Lopez, *Military Review*)

officers will provide a substantial benefit which greatly outweighs these drawbacks.

Alternate Courses of Action

While creating a separate functional area would provide the most benefits, there are two alternate courses of action that may also achieve increased results, but to a lesser degree. The first alternate course of action is to appoint investigating officers on a quarterly basis and the

The second alternate course of action is to transition some legal administrator warrant officers to be full-time investigating officers. Currently, legal administrator warrant officers serve as technical experts, legal office managers, and advisors to enable the management of operations, systems, and resources for the delivery of legal services within the Army.[34] Due to their area of expertise, legal administrator warrant officers currently serve at the division level and higher, with a current strength of 107

> The first alternate course of action is to appoint a small group of organic officers on a quarterly basis to serve as the investigating officers under the current system.

second is to utilize legal administrator warrant officers to conduct investigations. While both courses of action would increase the capabilities of investigating officers, they would not provide as robust of a solution as creating a functional area devoted to investigating officers. However, the first alternate course of action could provide an interim solution during the transition to a functional area.

The first alternate course of action is to appoint a small group of organic officers on a quarterly basis to serve as the investigating officers under the current system. Four to five officers would serve as a standing group of investigating officers. The time spent as investigating officers would be their only duty, and not an additional duty. As the only duty for three months, it would still allow that officer to achieve branch-specific accomplishments in his or her primary position for evaluation purposes during the other nine months of his or her annual rating period. Additionally, an assignment as an investigating officer for three months could serve as a transition role for officers incoming or departing the brigade such as pre- or postcommand captains. Prior to assuming this duty, the investigating officer group would undergo brief formal training. Having formal training would give the investigating officers a better grasp of how to conduct administrative investigations. Formal training of this standing group would minimize investigating officer quality issues under the current system but continue to lack the comprehensiveness of functional area training. Additionally, the issue of superior rank would continue to persist.

warrant officers throughout active duty and 191 warrant officers across all Army components.[35] This is an insufficient number to fill the investigating officer role Army wide. Transitioning the role of administrative investigations to these warrant officers would require a dramatic increase the size of this military occupational specialty and its dispersion below the division level. Furthermore, current legal administrator warrant officers may not seek to transition into this new role from their current vital role. Like the functional area course of action, the rank requirement of AR 15-6 would need to be eliminated since this military operation specialty is composed only of warrant officers. Additionally, due to their legal administrative specialization, these warrant officers might not have the breadth of experience that captains who have completed key developmental assignments postcommand could bring to investigations. Therefore, while this could be an acceptable course of action, it may not be feasible, and it does not provide the totality of benefits that having a separate functional area would provide.

Conclusion

Issues exist in the current use of officers to conduct administrative investigations. Significant time is taken from officers' primary day-to-day responsibilities, which results in competing priorities, which in turn result in delays and poor work product in the investigation themselves. Investigating officers without formal training generally conduct substandard investigations,

leading to errors and illogical conclusions and extensive time investment by legal advisors. However, these administrative investigations are critical to maintaining good order and discipline within a command. The current system underserves commanders and the Army. These investigations should discover issues, which when corrected, enhance good order and discipline and increase operational effectiveness. Creating a functional area focused on administrative investigations will consistently enhance the performance level of these investigations.[36] Not only will the investigation competency significantly increase, but the pace investigations

completed will also increase. While there will be some drawbacks and risks that remain, they pale in comparison to the substantial benefits that will be gained through creating a separate functional area solely focused on conducting administrative investigations. Therefore, the Army should create a separate functional area for investigating officers to conduct administrative investigations. ■

The views of this article are the author's and do not reflect those of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army.

Notes

1. Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2021), para. 4-4.

2. *2019 U.S. Army Commander's Legal Handbook*, Misc. Pub 27-8 (Charlottesville, VA: The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, June 2019), 106.

3. See, generally, AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations and Boards of Officers* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2016), accessed 28 November 2022, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/r15_6.pdf.

4. This statement is based on the author's experience and from his personal discussions with other judge advocates in multiple commands and components. Generally, this is in line with the Pareto Principle, which states that 80 percent of work is done by 20 percent of the people.

5. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., "General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., Commander, U.S. Central Command, Holds a Press Briefing," U.S. Central Command, 4 February 2022, accessed 28 November 2022, https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/Transcripts/Article/2925583/.

6. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 2-6a, App. C-5b.

7. Ibid., fig. 2-5.

8. These numbers were calculated by querying multiple brigade judge advocates and looking at historical data from various units.

9. The 3,750 hours per year is based on the average of seventy-five investigations times fifty hours on average per investigation.

10. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, fig. 2-5.

11. Ibid., para. 2-3a.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., para. 2-3f.

15. Ibid., para. 2-3a, 2-6a.

16. AR 600-8-2, *Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag)* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2021), para. 2-1e, 3-1; AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 1-10.

17. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 3-20a, para. 3-20c.

18. 10 U.S.C. § 831 (2019).

19. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 3-20c.

20. Ibid., para. 3-10a.

21. Ibid., para. 3-11a.

22. Ibid., para. 2-8b(3)(a).

23. McKenzie, "Press Briefing."

24. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 2-5.

25. Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2014), para. 2-2–2-18.

26. Ibid., para. 2-105.

27. William H. Waggy II, *Attracting the Right Volunteers: U.S. Army Functional Areas and the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 72, 74, accessed 28 November 2022, https://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs_dissertations/RGSDA841-1.html.

28. Army Directive (AD) 2021-16, *Immediate Actions to Improve the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2021).

29. FM 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, para. 2-105–2-214.

30. AR 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations*, para. 2-3f.

31. AR 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2019), app. D-2.

32. AD 2021-16, *Immediate Actions to Improve the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program*.

33. Kyle Rempfer, "Spc. Vanessa Guillen Case Could Be Army CID's 'Tailhook Scandal,'" *Army Times* (website), 17 March 2021, accessed 28 November 2022, https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/03/17/spc-vanessa-guillen-case-could-be-army-cids-tailhook-scandal/.

34. "Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description," U.S. Army Recruiting Command, last updated 27 July 2022, accessed 30 March 2022, https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/270A/.

35. "Personnel, Plans & Training Office," U.S. Army Judge Advocate General, accessed 30 March 2022, https://www.jagcnet2.army.mil/ppto#.

36. There is no published statistic on the percentage of investigations that have issues or where those issues are specifically concentrated. However, from my perspective as a legal advisor, investigation generally can and should be performed at a higher quality.

Brigade executive officer Lt. Col. Eric Wesley of 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, leads the fight from a hasty tactical operations center (TOC) established following a rocket attack on the original brigade TOC on 7 April 2003 near Baghdad. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Gen. Eric Wesley, U.S. Army, retired)

Setting the Conditions for Mission Command to Flourish

Lt. Col. Marc (Dewey) Boberg, EdD, U.S. Army, Retired

Maj. Justin Cunningham, U.S. Army

In April 2003, the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division "Spartans," as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, successfully executed a large-scale combat operation (LSCO) across diverse terrain to include urban and suburban, agrarian desert, and remote wadis. The operation, now referred to as the Thunder Run, culminated in a complex urban environment as the brigade attacked into downtown Baghdad. The complex nature of both the terrain and the operation necessitated decentralized execution. The commander, Col. David Perkins, recognized the challenges inherent in such a chaotic environment and assessed that his brigade combat team could exploit the chaos because he trusted his subordinate units to operate successfully under those conditions.[1]

At the time, well before Army Doctrine

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Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, had been published as U.S. Army doctrine, the Spartan Brigade exercised many of what have subsequently evolved into the principles of mission command to successfully execute LSCO, unleashing the talent and disciplined initiative of subordinate units and individuals to accomplish the commander's intent. The success of the Thunder Run on 7 April 2003 was not due to some pristine or adroit planning actions the night before. Rather, it was the culmination of more than a year of developing a command climate of trust based on positive leadership, competence developed during training, and a shared/collective understanding of the bigger operational purpose.[2]

Mission command is the U.S. Army's current doctrine for command and control. It describes how commanders, supported by their staffs, integrate the art and science of command and control to lead forces toward mission accomplishment. When properly exercised, mission command "empowers subordinate decision-making and decentralized execution appropriate to the situation" within the higher command's intent and purpose.[3] Ultimately, it maximizes the talent and capabilities of the organization to exercise disciplined initiative to achieve the commander's refined purpose as stated in his or her intent.

The reality is that a commander cannot just show up to the unit and declare they will use the principles of mission command. It requires a process to set the conditions that will eventually allow the unit to flourish under any conditions. The entire organization, starting with the commander, must embrace and cultivate the principles of mission command. When done effectively, the result is an organization that flourishes—one that can reach greater heights of success, thrive even under challenging circumstances, and grow exponentially. Units and individuals can unleash their full capabilities and talents to meet and exceed expectations. More importantly, subordinates can achieve positive results under unexpected conditions the commander never anticipated because subordinates at echelon are adapting to conditions that the commander may not be able to see. Mission command is like a 401(k) that produces consistent returns.[4]

Before leaders can leverage the benefits of empowerment, they must build trust, develop a positive organizational climate, and create a cohesive team. In many ways, it is about sequencing and continuous

1st Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment at Red Cloud tank range preparing for overseas deployment in May 2002 at Fort Stewart, Georgia. (Photo courtesy of Brig. Gen. Andy Hilmes, U.S. Army, retired)

application of the principles that lead to empowerment. A climate of mutual trust is not built all at once; it is a continual process, and it can be strengthened or weakened every day.

An organizational climate that flourishes in the application of the principles of mission command develops them through three key steps—building teams, communicating, and empowerment:

1. *Build teams*
    - Competence
    - Mutual trust
2. *Communicate*
    - Shared understanding
    - Commander's intent
    - Mission orders
3. *Empowerment*
    - Disciplined initiative
    - Risk acceptance[5]

Effective employment of mission command principles results in what Dr. Stephen Covey calls "creative excitement."[6] It loosens the bands of heavy control and empowers the team to exceed compliance of stated standards and allows them to seek the best possible

way to accomplish the purpose outlined in the mission statement. A cohesive unit of trustworthy individuals working in an organizational culture based on mission command principles is prepared to unleash their talents to accomplish the commander's intent. The application of mission command principles demands more from subordinates at all levels since it is ultimately empowerment based on trust and professionalism.[7]

Building this type of organization requires a unit culture of trust that encourages subordinates to take the initiative instead of controlling information and decision-making at a central point. Mission command, when employed effectively, creates a learning organizational climate that is literally a team of teams empowered and trusted down to the lowest level to make the right decisions within the scope of the commander's intent. The leaders influence the overall culture by developing a climate based on trustworthiness. Commanders are still responsible for what the unit does or fails to do, but when they appropriately create a unit climate based on the principles of mission command, they become facilitators rather than controllers with an "eyes on/hands off" mentality and functionality. The temptation

A 3rd Infantry Division soldier trains at the Udari Range Complex in Kuwait during March 2003 prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo courtesy of the 3rd Infantry Division)

to lead as a chess master, deliberately controlling each move of the organization, must give way to an approach of the farmer, setting conditions that enable the crops to flourish rather than directing every detail.[8]

Alternatively, absent mission command, leaders will find themselves overwhelmed with requirements and are dependent solely on their own judgment, which means they fail to leverage the extended capacity of the senses and judgment of everyone in their formation. In the case of the Spartan Brigade, Perkins was able to unleash not only his own mind and observations but also five thousand minds and senses on the battlefield.[9]

Build Teams

The development of a positive command climate based on trust is critical in the first step, "Build Teams." Leadership is more than simply telling people what to do; it is about inspiring an understanding and belief in the mission in others then enabling that belief to become a reality. ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, defines leadership as "the activity of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."[10] The leaders of a unit have significant influence on how the climate is developed and nourished; they can take a direct and controlling approach, ensuring strict adherence to a specified set of expectations enforced at every turn—not unlike playing a board game where the player has complete control of every move—or they can create the conditions to establish a learning organization. To build a learning organization, leaders must also develop a sense of trust and psychological safety that encourages subordinates to break out of their comfort zones, take risks, learn and grow from their mistakes, and seek new heights. This type of organization takes longer to cultivate, like a farmer tending his fields seeking a better harvest. When done correctly, it can result in a team that feels trusted and holds itself accountable to grow trust.

Commanders are ultimately responsible for the climate of the organization at every level—company, battalion, brigade, and upward. The *Army People Strategy* defines Army culture as "the foundational

values, beliefs, and behaviors that drive an organization's social environment, and it plays a vital role in mission accomplishment."[11] The Center for the Army Leadership describes the difference between a unit climate and culture. Army culture is the larger, strategic level beliefs, customs, norms, symbols, traditions, language, and artifacts of the organization and are very long-lasting and difficult to change, while the climate is much more localized and influenced by the leaders and members of the organization.[12]

In a climate of mutual trust within a learning organization, leaders and subordinate units become more comfortable adapting, innovating, and applying creativity to solve complex challenges. This is because leaders have developed trust in subordinate judgment, and subordinates become confident their leaders will support their decisions. Over time, this atmosphere of mutual trust encourages subordinates to take risks and implement fresh, original ideas in execution. This is the potential power of the application of mission command—but leaders and units must be allowed to make "honest" mistakes as part of the learning process to continue improving performance.

The organizational climate reflects members' perceptions and attitudes about the unit, and it comes from the organization's daily operations and functioning. The climate impacts team members' morale, cohesion, commitment, initiative, trust, motivation, and, ultimately, performance. It is generally much more palatable based on the current network of personnel and can change as leaders come and go. Creating a positive organizational climate is a core leader competency. The climate of the organization is a subset of the overall culture heavily influenced by current leaders, eventually leading to impact on the greater organizational culture.[13]

When we wrestle with defining trust, several terms come to mind including credibility, belief, delegation, empowerment, and confidence. We can simply define trust as "confidence," while its opposite is "suspicion" or "doubt."[14] If there is trust in someone (or a team), there is confidence in that person's ability and commitment to accomplish specific outcomes. When we lack trust in someone or something, we are suspicious or doubtful in their ability to accomplish something. In broader terms, trust is our belief in the reliability, ability, capability, or credibility of someone or something. Mutual trust engenders confidence in the capability, reliability, and credibility of the entire unit.

Inspiring trust is critical to success because it fosters positive behaviors that lead us to trust or have confidence that a person (or unit) can achieve positive outcomes. We define this as our level of trustworthiness. Since others see only our behaviors, we, as individuals, control how worthy we are to be trusted by the choices we make and the behaviors we demonstrate. When we demonstrate the behaviors associated with trustworthiness, we provide the opportunity for others to extend trust to us—we are showing that they and others can rely on us, and we are inviting them to have confidence in our ability and commitment to accomplish the desired outcomes or commander's intent. We are sending the message that we are reliable.

Trustworthiness is a prerequisite for professional autonomy, but we often do not think about the multidimensional nature of trust. Levels of trust are influenced by the trustor's propensity to trust and the trustee's character, competence, commitment, and caring. In simple terms, even if someone is worthy of trust it doesn't mean they are trusted because that requires others to extend trust.

Coach John Wooden often used a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln, "If you trust, you will be disappointed occasionally, but if you distrust, you will be miserable all the time."[15] It is true that when you empower others (trust them) they may not accomplish the task in the same way you might have done it. It is also true that there is a chance they might not accomplish the task at all. But as Lincoln's quote indicates, *if you distrust, you will be miserable all the time because you are convinced you have to do everything or at least control every step of the process.* Trust requires the humility to be coachable coupled with a willingness to be accountable as well as a willingness to recognize the potential in others. A culture of trust means that we can provide each other feedback and see it as supporting our improvement. We own our mistakes, create a plan to improve the process, and apply those lessons, resulting in better performance, and resulting in a true learning organization.

In order to create this climate, the Spartan Brigade spent months trying to understand the complexity of the challenges they would face. A leader and a unit must learn to understand each other, the environment, and the enemy. They need to take in many different viewpoints,

challenge assumptions, and stress-test ideas and solutions. Prior to the Thunder Run, members of the Spartan Brigade conducted more than a year of intense training on Fort Stewart and at the National Training Center (NTC), followed by months of live-fire training in the Kuwaiti desert prior to crossing the line of departure.[16]

During each iteration of the training, leaders sought and tried new methods to command and control on the move, used different maneuver formations, and found innovative ways to employ resources. In many ways, training is a way to visualize what the enemy could do and what the options are to respond. Perkins stated, "I can't overstate how much training, analysis, and self-examination we put into everything from TOC [Tactical Operations Center] configurations to individual load plans to how to leverage Blue Force Tracker, which was bolted on right before crossing the line of departure. During all this training, you are continuing to build the all-important 'secret sauce' of knowing yourself and your unit."[17]

Every mealtime and every evening, the leaders would get together and conduct a sort of informal wargaming, reviewing possible and "what if" scenarios about potential situations they might encounter. No discussions or ideas were off-limits. Then, many times over the following days, the unit would test out new ideas in training—some made it to the finals, others were immediately discarded without any "penalty" for the idea or execution. The aim was to always get better and develop multiple options to present the enemy with multiple dilemmas. Constant dialogue is key to building a thorough understanding of the problem and describing all the way down to the most junior soldier. It is also a key ingredient for building trust. Perkins said, "Show me a unit that doesn't trust superiors or subordinates, and I will show you a unit that doesn't have good dialogue."[18] As Brig. Gen. (retired) Andrew Hilmes, Company A, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, commander during the Thunder Runs later remarked, "Our success stemmed from that culture of trust, and the desert training experience strengthened it."[19]

The climate of an organization emanates from members' shared perceptions and attitudes—how they think and feel about it daily. The current state of the climate is demonstrated through the regular behaviors of the unit members and, ultimately, by their performance. According to ADP 6-22, everyone within the organization contributes to the climate, and if you seek a positive, trusting climate, their behaviors and performance are part of it.[20]

The most important role of a leader is to create a positive climate that energizes and encourages people, fosters connected relationships and great teamwork, and empowers and enables people to grow, providing the opportunity to achieve the organization's desired outcomes. The organizational climate drives expectations and beliefs that in turn drive behaviors. The behaviors, which demonstrate character, competence, and commitment, lead to organizational trust. It requires the leader to facilitate helping subordinates learn how to think and exercise their innovation and creativity in lieu of teaching them what to think. We do not seek the clone army from *Star Wars*—we seek a trusted and adaptive organization to meet the ever-changing requirements in the multidomain operations battlefield.

Leaders cannot build a positive climate based on trust in a day—it is more like a garden or farmer's field that must be prepared, planted, fed, weeded, and cultivated to create a place where the principles of mission command can be applied and thrive, empowering the organization to unleash their talent and take the disciplined initiative necessary to achieve greatness. Leaders who understand the potential in a tiny seed understand that it takes significant effort and patience to achieve the desired harvest, but if they set the conditions and continue to nourish that seed, it can flourish and thrive and achieve greatness.

Communicate

Commanders use the operations process to accomplish step two, "Communicate," effectively. The commander drives an effective planning process to understand, visualize, and describe the operational environment and articulate their intent to their unit.[21] Through this process and the use of mission orders, the commander facilitates clarifying purpose, aligning resources, and communicating their vision and end state.[22] It is nearly impossible for the commander, even if he or she has developed a great team, to unleash their talents if the commander is unable to effectively complete the communicate elements of mission command because the organization will not have the shared understanding necessary to be empowered.

Gen. George S. Patton once said, "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will

3rd Infantry Division soldiers dine in the Kuwaiti desert during March 2003 prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo courtesy of the 3rd Infantry Division)

surprise you with their ingenuity."[23] However, the Army has a tradition of more rigid command and control—often emphasizing strict obedience. Many commanders are very controlling as they seek to force the organization to conduct operations "their way." This controlling style of leadership can lead to almost immediate results, but at what cost? In a controlling organizational climate, members of that organization tend to fall into a habit of doing nothing more than what they are told. They comply with the commander's expectations but rarely exceed them because they are not trusted or empowered to do anything more than what is asked of them. They focus on compliance and avoiding failure rather than seeking and exploiting new opportunities. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, if conditions change, they do not have the muscle memory or perceived authority to adjust and adapt.[24]

The principles of mission command build upon each other. Mission command requires competent leaders, staffs, and teams operating in an environment of shared understanding and mutual trust. It hinges on highly effective teams functioning in a climate where

subordinates are expected to seize opportunities and mitigate risks within the scope of commander's intent.

Achieving an organizational climate based on trust and empowerment—even inspiration—where members of the team are innovative and creative to not just meet expectations but exceed them, requires a commander who is willing to accept risk and allow subordinate organizations to seek innovation, which may occasionally result in less-than-ideal results. If these failures along the path of improvement are seen as learning opportunities instead of black marks against the unit, they can help foster a learning organization that consistently seeks to exceed previous performance and stated expectations. As the unit learns, it gains greater competence and understanding—the members will seek to not just comply but to cooperatively exceed expectations, holding each other accountable along the way and eventually resulting in an exponential increase in performance as their heartfelt commitment leads to creative excitement.[25]

Going back to the Spartan Brigade's successful execution of LSCO in Iraq, it must be recognized that Perkins and his command team of battalion commanders,

3rd Infantry Division M1A1 tanks firing at the Udari Range Complex in Kuwait during March 2003 prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo courtesy of the 3rd Infantry Division)

battalion sergeants major, and company commanders had been together for nearly two years prior to the final attack into Baghdad. During this time, the brigade trained extensively at Fort Stewart, Georgia, completed a high-intensity (now LSCO) rotation to Fort Irwin's NTC, and trained together for months in the Kuwaiti desert prior to crossing the line of departure for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Early in Perkins's command tenure at Fort Stewart, he conducted "company lanes," a training event focused on the company-level echelon and their skill sets and requirements. During this exercise, the commander and brigade staff developed a "lane" that was embedded with challenges that made mission accomplishment nearly impossible. Perkins was less interested in mission accomplishment and more interested in cultivating an environment for decision-making. He was more interested in his commanders' ability to assess and decide with agility than he was with *compliance*. In this exercise, he planted and watered the seeds of mission command.[26]

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."[27] As leaders, it is important to understand how our team members behave and that their behavior reflects our values and command climate. Does this mean nobody ever fails or gets in trouble? No, these things occur in every organization. The key to developing a trusting, learning unit climate is how the leaders react to these experiences—that is what really defines what we represent as leaders. In most cases, the unit's climate is truly defined by how we react to challenges. This is exactly what Perkins was doing with his company lanes exercise.

These training experiences were not always perfect execution and high fives on the objective for the training units. Members of the Spartan Brigade, like most units, had performance successes and failures regularly. However, the real success of the training was due to the climate of the organization. Individuals and units learned from these experiences and were willing (more importantly, *empowered*) to adjust, accept risk, empower subordinates to try new things, and then review performance again.

Similarly, the Spartan Brigade's NTC rotation was not seen as a final grade but rather as an opportunity to apply what they learned at home station in a unique environment against an adaptive enemy—and the results were not always great. As they trained, they adapted and tried again, building greater trust as relationships and outcomes improved.[28]

As an example, Perkins attempted to conduct a unique command-and-control methodology in each operation at NTC. One emphasized a command-and-control effort that was fixed and static; one focused on an effort with a lean and agile command post absent all capabilities; a third split efforts from the air in a rotary command post paired with a ground command post. The point here was that he was less concerned about the objective and more concerned about lessons learned and how best to adjust to the changing environment of the battlefield. It was this approach at the NTC that led to an effective command-and-control infrastructure later in Baghdad.[29]

Even the brigade TOC was a learning organization applying principles of mission command. Initially, it was a large complex series of tents and vehicles. They learned and adapted through experimental learning at the NTC and later in the Kuwait desert. By the time combat operations commenced, the main TOC consisted of three armored M577 Command Post Carriers and three HMMWVs—a much more agile command center that was followed by the larger infrastructure of the TOC as time permitted. This allowed for a brigade TOC that was relevant to the maneuver battalions in the current fight and could provide subordinate units with the resources they needed. This is also the brigade TOC that would be struck by a missile attack during the morning of the 7 April Thunder Run attack and would have to quickly adapt and reconstitute under the leadership of the brigade executive officer, Lt. Col. Eric Wesley.[30]

These experiences built on each other, resulting in increased competence, mutual trust, shared understanding, and a willingness to accept risk. If mission command is to be effectively employed, the commander, and in fact the entire organization, must set the conditions. The leaders of the Spartan Brigade recognized that when it was time to cross the line of departure to initiate LSCO, it was too late to try and build trust. It must be built before that point; it must be cultivated in advance. "Like ethics, you can't surge on trust."[31]

While in Kuwait prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the command sergeant major of 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Gallagher, a veteran of operations in Mogadishu, Somalia, engaged Perkins every day, imploring him, "Not another Mogadishu!" Since he trusted Gallagher, Perkins also empowered him to design and build an urban training area in the Kuwaiti desert made of various Conex containers, then to facilitate every unit in the brigade executing various battle drills in this simulated environment. The climate of trust allowed subordinates the opportunity to lead up and then be empowered to enhance the overall unit's competence, ultimately impacting positively in competence, cohesion, and trustworthiness.[32]

Empowerment

The third step, "Empowerment," including subordinate organizations exercise of disciplined initiative and the commander's willingness to accept risk, is only possible after the first two steps have been achieved. Effective team building includes a command climate of mutual trust, and communication that leverages the commander's role in the operations process to effectively convey the commander's intent with its refined purpose and alignment of resources. This allows the organization to attain a shared understanding of the situation and desired end state, employing mission orders to allow flexibility and empower subordinates to do what is necessary to achieve the defined end state.

It is important to note that trust is not the same as "certainty." There cannot be a claim of trust when the outcome is certain. Confidence in decision-making (that of both subordinates and superiors) in uncertain outcomes is the real indicator or trust. This implies that those who trust know there is an element of risk. Both leaders and subordinates assume risk in a trust environment because the outcome is uncertain, but they choose to trust based on established relationships and previously demonstrated competence. There is a belief that the organization can make it happen when empowered. Finally, the implication of this is that when trust is extended, the expectation is that commanders will underwrite assumed risk if the understood mutual relationship is not violated. Risk is inherent in trust.[33]

The Thunder Runs were successful to a great extent because the V Corps and 3rd Infantry Division

commanders established clear commander's intent and then empowered 2nd Brigade to take the initiative to achieve it. Perkins describes it like this: "These thunder runs were successful because the corps and division-level commanders established clear intent in their orders and trusted their subordinates' judgment and abilities to exercise disciplined initiative in response to a fluid, complex problem, underwriting the risks they took."[34]

Within the brigade, Perkins followed a similar pattern because he trusted his subordinate units to successfully achieve his intent. This was possible because of the time and effort put into

- developing effective, competent teams and a command climate of mutual trust,
- using the operations process to develop a commander's intent and then creating mutual understanding by communicating that higher purpose and his visualized end state through mission orders, and
- empowering subordinate units through risk acceptance and allowing them to exercise disciplined initiative within his intent.

In simple terms, the commander's role is to inspire trust through the organization, clarify purpose, describe a desired end state, align systems to accomplish that intent, and then unleash the innovation and creativity of the team to accomplish it.

In a careful analysis of the second Thunder Run into the city center, Perkins only retained a small handful of decisions at his level, delegating the rest to subordinate leaders.[35] He could do this because of the culture of trust that existed within the unit. He sought to convey his intent by clarifying purpose, aligning systems, providing a vision for end state, communicating those few critical decisions he sought to retain at his level, and then unleash the talent of the subordinate units to accomplish the mission. Once he ensured mutual understanding of his intent, he sought to be physically present where he envisioned the critical "brigade relevant" decisions had to be made.

As the actions on 7 April unfolded, subordinate units and even individuals were empowered to make things happen. Every time a new challenge unfolded, someone or a unit did not wait for orders to come down the chain of command. Rather, they took the disciplined initiative to overcome the challenge. Officers, NCOs, and soldiers reacted in a positive manner to avoid catastrophe because they understood the commander's intent, including the bigger purpose for their organization and their necessary role, and made it happen by exercising disciplined initiative.

Literally hundreds of actions occurred within subordinate units that the brigade leadership did not need to know about, and which ultimately led to mission accomplishment. This was not because they "performed better," but because they were empowered to make adjustments that made the entire unit better because they made an audible under the framework of intent.

Conclusion

Brick by Brick, Day by Day
Culture isn't built in a day.
Success isn't built in a day.
Mindset isn't built in a day.
Habits aren't built in a day.
Greatness isn't built in a day.
The foundation isn't built in a day.
It's built one day at a time. Keep showing up. Keep doing the work.

—Kevin DeShazo[36]

The success of 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division's Thunder Run on 7 April was not due only to planning and preparation on the night of 6 April; it was primarily due to the development of a positive command climate based on mutual trust over the course or nearly two years.[37] The decision to remain in downtown Baghdad overnight on 7 April was not a rash decision. This decision required the concurrence with the 3rd Infantry Division command group and corps commander, but it was the culmination of nearly two years of training and team building that ultimately made it happen. Trust flowed in multiple directions, upward to the division and corps, laterally to the other brigades, and downward to battalions and companies, all the way to the newest privates. "If you get the command climate right … any Army unit can do this."[38]

Developing a unit who flourishes, consistently exceeding expectations, is about sequencing and continuous application of the principles of mission command. They can be packaged as team building, communication, and empowerment. Before you can begin to leverage the benefits of mission command you have to build trust, develop a positive command climate, and build a cohesive team. Only then can you

Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, rolls into downtown Baghdad on 7 April 2003. (Photo by Brant Sanderlin, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

start to put the elements of mission command together. You don't build trust and command climate in a day; it is a continual process, and every day, it can be strengthened or weakened. Building the team and a positive command climate alone will not get the job done; as that climate is established, it requires the engagement of the commander in the operations process, constantly communicating to create the mutual understanding of the commander's intent, refining purpose, aligning resources, and inspiring subordinate organizations.[39] ∎

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Ballad of the Green Beret

The Life and Wars of Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler from the Vietnam War and Pop Stardom to Murder and an Unsolved, Violent Death
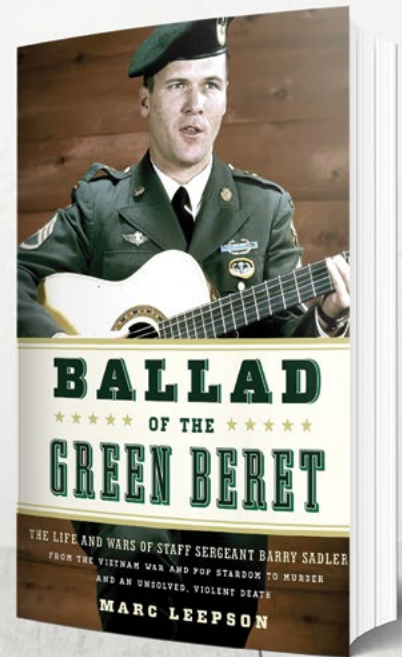
Marc Leepson, Stackpole Books, Lanham, Maryland, 2023 (paperback edition), 296 pages

Lt. Col. Rick Baillergeon, U.S. Army, Retired

Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say
The brave men of the Green Beret
                    —"Ballad of the Green Berets"

I would submit the preponderance of *Military Review* readers are quite familiar with this verse from a song recorded in 1966, "The Ballad of the Green Berets," principally written and recorded by Army Staff Sgt. Barry Sadler. The song was a fixture on radio stations, holding the number one position on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart for five straight weeks (5 March–2 April 1966) and selected as the top song of 1966.[1]

For Sadler, it brought him huge fame and an accompanying amount of fortune. The song completely changed his life. Unfortunately, he could not adapt to most of these changes. His life, which had focused on being a soldier, ended as he knew it and a new life as a celebrity and a public relations conduit began. It was a

life that years later would ultimately result in a tragic end for Sadler. It is the classic rise-and-fall tale, which author Marc Leepson superbly details in his biography of Sadler titled *Ballad of the Green Beret: The Life and Wars of Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler from the Vietnam War and Pop Stardom to Murder and an Unsolved, Violent Death*.

Leepson is well-equipped to craft this volume and capture the life and wars of Sadler. First, he is a U.S. Army veteran who served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. Second, Leepson is a noted military historian who has not only written nine books but has also published works in many magazines and newspapers and has appeared as a contributor on numerous national television networks. Finally, his book resume includes highly acclaimed biographies of Francis Scott Key and Marquis de Lafayette. In total, he possesses the knowledge and interest in the subject, the research skills, and the ability to package his research into a highly readable volume to meet this challenge.

Within the *Ballad of the Green Beret*, Leepson strives to provide readers with a comprehensive look at

Sadler's life. It is a life that can be categorized into three distinct phases: life before the song, life during the popularity of the song, and the years following the wane of its popularity. I would like to address the key periods in this life in this review. I believe this will undoubtedly spark interest in the volume.

Sadler's childhood did not afford him a particularly bright future; his parents divorced when he was five and his dad died shortly after that. Sadler's early years were far from stable. At seventeen, Sadler dropped out of high school and joined the Air Force. He served for four years, and his service gained him some valuable maturity and the opportunity to earn his high school diploma. Sadler's time out of the military did not last long. Soon after separating from the Air Force, he volunteered to serve in the Army.

When Sadler met the Army recruiter, he was told he could opt out of basic training since he previously completed Air Force Basic Training. However, Sadler decided to go through Army Basic, graduating in late 1962 and then completing Airborne School in January 1963. It was during airborne training that he and a few of his friends decided they wanted to be Special Forces (SF) medics. As Leepson highlights, Sadler did not volunteer for SF because of the mystique or wanting to be part of an elite unit. Instead, he was told he would get an afternoon off from jump school if he took the SF exam.[2]

Sadler passed the exam and in February 1963 began SF medic training. It was during training that Sadler began crafting what would become "The Ballad of the Green Berets." Sadler passed SF training and was assigned to Fort Bragg until December 1964 when he deployed to Vietnam. All the while, he continued to work on the song.

In May 1965, Sadler stepped on a fecal-covered punji stick while on patrol. He suffered a severe leg wound resulting in a bad infection. The infection effectively ended his tour, and he deployed back to Fort Bragg to recover. The recovery period meant far more time for Sadler to dedicate to the "Ballad."

During his recovery, two events occurred that were key in turning Sadler's "work in progress" into a record. First, leadership in the SF community became enamored in what they had heard of Sadler's song. They felt it would be a boon in their recruiting efforts and thus, were instrumental in Sadler getting a record deal.

Second, Sadler was introduced to Robin Moore (author of *The Green Berets*), who would be influential in adding to the song's lyrics and promoting the ballad.

In early 1966, the song was released, and the timing was impeccable. As Leepson states, "That song all but perfectly fit in the early 1966 American zeitgeist. It captured the national imagination when the Vietnam War was widely seen as a necessary step in the American-led fight against a world-wide communist insurgency."[3] Soon, the song found heavy rotation on radio stations of all formats. "Ballad" was played alongside songs from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Simon and Garfunkel. It would become the number one song in the country.

The success of the song publicly and its huge support in the SF community ensured that Sadler would not see the "field" again. Instead, Sadler's deployments consisted of taking part in extended nationwide tours to market his song and Special Forces. It was not the Army life Sadler envisioned, and in May 1967, he decided to leave the Army and received his honorable discharge. This was also the time when the public popularity of the song began to significantly wane. The disenchantment with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam was certainly a factor in its decline. Sadler had now clearly moved onto a new phase of his life.

For the next ten years, Sadler pursued numerous ventures and sought careers in various fields, none of which proved to be successful. It began with his desire to begin a full-time music career, but there were no more hits in Sadler's kitbag. The following years brought opening a bar, pursuing a movie and television career, attempting to open a chain of battery stores, and trying once more to resurrect a singing career. By this time, Sadler's song royalties were long gone, and life was not going in a positive direction. It was at this time when he began an unexpected career as a pulp fiction writer.[4]

In late 1977, Sadler's first book hit the market to little interest and low sales. Leepson details the start of Sadler's literary career and its progression when he states, "It's fair to say that Barry's first foray into fiction was an artistic

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and financial flop, but that did not deter him. Within eighteen months he would start churning out a chain of more than two dozen action- and violence-filled mass market paperback thrillers that would sell hundreds of thousands of copies."[5]

The chain focused on the adventures of Casca Rufio Longinus; a Roman soldier condemned to live as an "eternal mercenary" because of his role in the crucifixion of Jesus.[6] Sadler believed his interest and knowledge of military history would afford him numerous possibilities regarding subject material (he was right). When asked about the potential of the series, he stated, "Run these books on and on and never have them end until I get sick of them. It's a good trick I think."[7]

As Sadler began his foray as a paperback writer, events in his personal life took center stage. In fall 1978, Sadler began having an affair with Darlene Sharpe, an aspiring country singer in Nashville. The woman had recently ended a volatile relationship with a man named Lee Bellamy. While Sadler was seeing Sharpe, Bellamy continued to harass Sharpe and Sadler as well. On 1 December 1978, it came to a head, and Sadler shot and killed Bellamy.

After many varying stories of what had occurred on that date were provided to detectives (principally on Sadler's part), he was charged with second-degree murder on 1 June 1979. After nearly a year of discussion and negotiations, Sadler plea bargained and pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter. The judge sentenced Sadler to four-to-five years in prison. However, Sadler did not immediately go to jail. Instead, after more negotiations, Sadler's sentence was suspended, and he wound up serving around a month in a county minimum security workhouse for the death of Bellamy. It is a safe assumption that Sadler's service to the Nation and "Ballad" were integral in the plea bargaining and the sentencing.[8]

The next few years saw Sadler's bitterness toward "Ballad" and dissatisfaction with his life in the states continue to grow. In an interview in July 1983, he stated, "I wasn't a hero. I was a manufactured hero by the media. I'm the best-known soldier of the Vietnam War and that's wrong. The people who were writing all those things back then couldn't even name one Medal of Honor winner."[9] Finally, in the beginning of 1984, he left the United States and flew to Guatemala, which was amid a continuing civil war.

Sadler's life in Guatemala is sketchy in many parts. What is known is that he continued to write books in his Casca series and provide significant free medical care to impoverished people living in Mayan villages. The sketchy parts regard his involvement in the Guatemalan Civil War. At times, Sadler would tell people he was significantly engaged in various actions for both sides. However, Leepson is unsure where the truth lies. He states, "Was Barry being honest or was he burnishing his image by doing what he often did—telling people what they wanted to hear."[10]

For all accounts, Sadler and Guatemala were a good pair, but he began to seek a new adventure. For Sadler, that opportunity did not come to fruition. On 7 September 1988, Sadler got into a cab in Guatemala City after some significant partying. There are several versions of what happened next (robbery gone bad, assassination attempt, or the police version—Sadler accidentally shot himself). Regardless, a bullet entered his head and caused significant injury but did not kill him. Within days, he was transported back to the United States for care.

Nothing ever seemed simple in Sadler's life, and his subsequent medical treatment was no different. Almost immediately, sides were formed on where and what care Sadler should receive. Things got ugly between family members and friends. Unfortunately, much of the time, things were settled in court. Sadler passed away in his hospital bed on 5 November 1989. At the age of forty-nine, Sadler had unquestionably lived a life that was anything but ordinary

During the past paragraphs, I have tried to provide an extremely abbreviated version of the life of Sadler. As I'm sure you gleaned from the above, Sadler lived one of those rare "stranger than fiction" lives. In fact, many would say that in many ways it was highly reminiscent of his character, Casca. Because of this life, there is much for a biographer to work with, and Leepson works with all of it. He superbly provides the details and the rest of the story to readers, which I left out. The author achieves this through exhaustive research, writing in an extremely conversant style, developing a highly organized volume, and striving to offer an objective perspective of Sadler. Let me expand on each of these characteristics.

There are many various versions of "war stories" circulating regarding Sadler. Many of these versions were initiated by Sadler himself. Consequently, it is imperative that

any biographer of Sadler put in the investigative work to find truth amongst the fabrications and embellishments. Leepson has clearly conducted this work highlighted by the over seventy personal interviews he conducted during his research. This eclectic group includes Sadler's wife, lawyers, and police detectives involved in the shooting, book and record agents, fellow soldiers, and friends. He states, "I relied heavily on interviews with people who knew Barry Sadler, as well as those who served in the Special Forces during the Vietnam War and others who had special insights into his life and times."[11]

In my experience, the best biographies are those written in a highly conversant style. This is clearly the case in this biography. Leepson is an outstanding storyteller and certainly Sadler's life provides countless opportunities. The combination of Leepson's writing style and the content of Sadler's life make this an incredibly quick read. It is one of those select books in which you quickly read and weeks later you read again to ensure you didn't miss anything

The organization of the volume is certainly instrumental in the book's readability. Leepson has broken the biography into twenty-one chapters. Each focus on a particular event or aspect of Sadler's life. These bite-sized chapters are easy for a reader to digest. They additionally serve as excellent breaks during which a reader can reflect on Sadler and a particular part of his life.

It would be easy for a biographer to be either extremely disparaging of Sadler or be too lavish in their praise of him and offer excuses for actions and decisions in his life. I believe Leepson has done neither and has been very objective in his portrayal of Sadler. Leepson certainly does not sugarcoat any of Sadler's unflattering traits or some of the aforementioned actions or decisions. The biography is certainly critical of Sadler in instances, but readers will not come away feeling that the biography is a personal attack on Sadler.

Within the biography, he also strives to provide readers with another side of Sadler. He summarizes this side later in the book. He states, "There was another Barry Sadler, of course—a smart, knowledge-hungry, charming, funny, and sometimes gentle husband, father, and friend. A man who overcame a rough childhood, served his country in peace and war, and gained national fame and admiration."[12]

Besides the obvious discussion and understanding of Sadler, I believe the biography also achieves three other key things. First, it provides readers some excellent nuggets on American culture and society in the 1960s. It reinforces the understanding some may have on the decade and provides a portrait that others may not have thought of. Second, it is a perfect case study on what happens when an organization places someone in a position that they are not comfortable with. Finally, and related to the above, it is yet another unfortunate example of how people handle fortune and fame in their lives and the negative repercussions it can have.

I believe the most important decision a biographer makes is what he wants to leave readers with regarding their subject. For many biographers, it is hard to surmise what that exactly is. I feel Marc Leepson has thought over this extensively and captured this in the book's final paragraph. It is an ending that blends Sadler's life with the Vietnam War and the song that he will always be tied to. He states, "His second, commercially successful act as a pulp novelist notwithstanding, Barry Sadler was a victim of his meteoric success, of his unhappy childhood, and of the times that he lived. Very likely the most famous Vietnam veteran of his time—and perhaps of all time—Barry Sadler also was one of the countless victims of that tragic conflict, which provided the fertile ground for the song that made him famous and helped contribute to the disastrous downward spiral that ended in his violent death."[13] ∎

Notes

Epigraph. Opening verse from "The Ballad of the Green Berets," written by Barry Sadler and Robin Moore in 1965.

1. History.com Editors, "Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler Hits #1 with 'Ballad of the Green Berets,'" History, last updated 9 March 2023, accessed 3 April 2023, https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/staff-sergeant-barry-sadler-hits-1-with-ballad-of-the-green-berets.

2. Marc Leepson, *Ballad of the Green Beret: The Life and Wars of Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler from the Vietnam War and Pop Stardom to Murder and an Unsolved, Violent Death* (Lanham, MD: Stackpole Books, 2023), 25.

3. Ibid., 231

4. Charlie Kerlinger, "Pulp Fiction: A Definition," Ben Vaughn, 9 October 2022, accessed 3 April 2023, https://www.benvaughn.com/pulp-fiction-a-definition. "Pulp fiction" is a term used to

describe a certain type of popular fiction that is characterized by its graphic and often violent content. The term was first used in the early twentieth century to describe the penny press novels that were popular at the time. These novels were often filled with stories of crime, violence, and sex, and were typically printed on low-quality paper.

5. Leepson, *Ballad of the Green Beret*, 150.

6. Ibid., 154.

7. Ibid., 178.

8. Ibid., 182.

9. Ibid., 195.

10. Ibid., 198.

11. Ibid., 233.

12. Ibid., 231.

13. Ibid., 232.

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Medal of Honor

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher A. Celiz

S gt. 1st Class Christopher A. Celiz was post-humously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on 12 July 2018 in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. Celiz was on a mission with a team of partnered forces and members of the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, to clear an area of enemy forces. When the team was attacked and pinned down by fire from a large Taliban force, Celiz knew he had to act fast. Securing a heavy weapon system, he laid down suppressive fire to allow his team to regain the initia-tive, maneuver to a more secure location, and treat their casualties.

A medical evacuation helicopter arrived but immediately began taking accurate enemy fire. Ignoring the danger, Celiz used his own body as a shield to protect a wounded team member as well as the aircraft crew. He placed himself directly between the enemy and the cockpit to ensure the aircraft could lift off but was hit by enemy fire as it departed. Although wounded, Celiz waved the aircraft away to safety instead of attempting to board the aircraft and further endanger its occupants. He died of his wounds shortly thereafter.

The aircraft pilot would later reflect on Celiz's actions. "Courage, to me, is putting your life on the line to save the life of another, as demonstrated by Sergeant First Class Chris Celiz, who died protecting my crew."

President Joseph Biden presented the Medal of Honor to Celiz's wife, Katherine, and daughter, Shannon, in a 16 December 2021 White House ceremony. In his remarks, Biden spoke of how Celiz "knowingly and willingly stepped into the enemy's crosshairs." Biden added, "In the face of extreme danger, he placed the safety of his team and his crew above his own."

For more on Celiz's award, see the U.S. Army's Medal of Honor website at https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/celiz/. ∎

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

President Joseph R. Biden Jr. presents the Medal of Honor to Katherine Celiz, spouse of Sgt. 1st Class Christopher A. Celiz, and their daughter, Shannon, during a 16 December 2021 ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Laura Buchta, U.S. Army)