



JULY-AUGUST 2009

# Military Review

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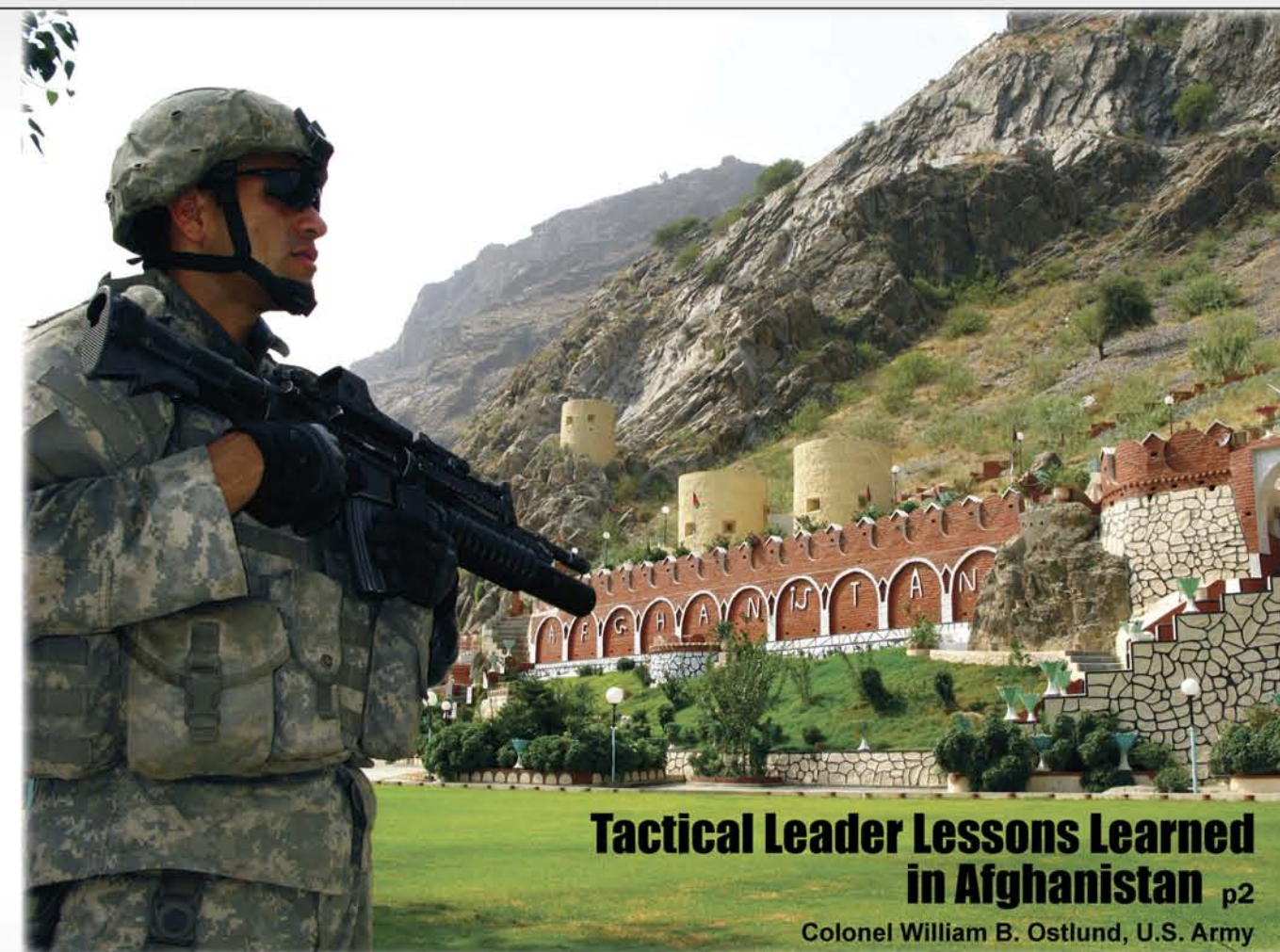
JULY-AUGUST 2009

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Able Company Soldiers from 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment (Airborne), pull overwatch during Operation Destined Strike while 2d Platoon, Able Company searches a village below in the Chowkay Valley in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 22 August 2007. (U.S. Army, SGT Brandon Aird)

Military Review



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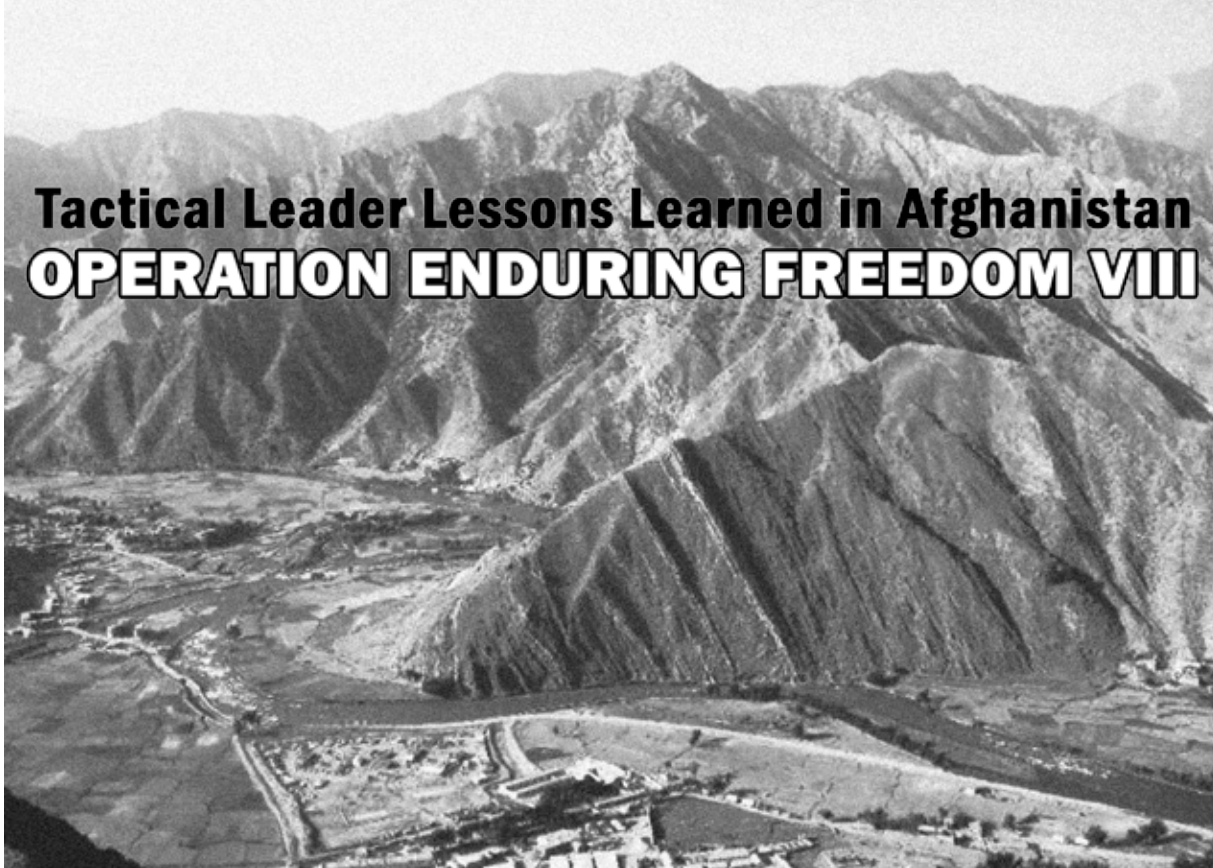
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Secretary of the Army 0832906

# Tactical Leader Lessons Learned in Afghanistan

## OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM VIII



**Colonel  
William B. Ostlund,  
U.S. Army**

*Colonel William B. Ostlund is the deputy commander for the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. He earned a B.S. from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and an M.A.L.D. from Tufts University in Boston, MA. Colonel Ostlund has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the United States, Korea, Europe, the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan; most notably as commander of 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, in Vicenza, Italy, and Kunar Province, Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom VIII.*

PHOTO: Camp Blessing, Monogai, District, Kunar Province Afghanistan, 1 November 2007. Looking towards the Korengal Valley. (ROCK staff photographer)

**T**HE 2D BATTALION (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, learned valuable lessons during its 11 months of train-up and 15 months conducting combat operations in support of foreign internal defense missions in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> Soldiers spent 90 percent of their time conducting nonlethal counterinsurgency (COIN) actions intended to train the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), connect the population to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), and improve the infrastructure throughout the area—a mere 10 percent of time was spent on lethal activity. This discussion relates the knowledge and experience gained.

### Predeployment Training

The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, the “Rock” of the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, is stationed at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy. A scenic post in a beautiful country, Caserma Ederle has no military training areas. There is a six-lane marksmanship indoor range, a high school football field, and a brigade-size parade field. The closest training areas in Italy are three hours away, and inadequate. Eight hours away in Germany is the nearest useful place to train. These geographic realities forced Task Force Rock small-unit leaders with limited resources to use creative ways to train Soldiers. They used their imaginations and figured out “how to” train versus “why not” to train. They dealt with day-to-day training challenges locally while commanders and staff focused on designing and resourcing high-payoff, multi-echelon, scenario-driven training that was conducted in Germany.

The unit adopted a training framework from the 75th Ranger Regiment. Trainers focused on discipline and standards (ethics and Army values), mental and physical toughness, medical training, weapons proficiency,

battle and crew drills, and mobility. In training, the unit emphasized clear and honest communications; SAMs (safety, accountability, and maintenance); operations security; and morale and welfare.

Early in the predeployment training phase, the battalion mapped out the “battalion fight” and trained to it, but then modified the map after the predeployment site survey. Ultimately, the focus was on—

- Command and control.
- Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance management.
- Fires integration and deconfliction.
- Medical evacuation.
- Emergency resupply.
- Information operations.
- Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) and targeting nonlethal aid.

The battalion further reviewed the Mission Essential Task List to identify essential battle tasks, collective tasks, and individual tasks. It was obvious that not every task could be resourced, trained, and retrained enough to ensure every Soldier met the “go” standard, but subject matter experts could be identified for each task and Soldiers could be made at least familiar with selected tasks.

The task force ultimately validated 16 weeks of scenario-driven and multi-echelon training objectives during the task force’s Joint Multinational Readiness Center Mission Readiness Exercise. The unit trained well on all requisite tasks and had no deficient areas of training. A secondary benefit of working through these training management challenges was the opportunity for leaders to realize that not all decisions will be right, but that indecision is crippling. This principle served the unit well when deployed, as decentralized decisions were continuously needed at the “speed of life.”

In February 2007, during live-fire training at Grafenwoher, Germany, after eight months of predeployment training and just three months before deploying, the task force was informed that there had been a change in plans and they would now deploy to Afghanistan instead of Iraq. Since the unit’s training focus was always on framework tasks and standards rather than location specific conditions, the task force’s transition was seamless. Training continued and confidence and competence increased.

***...the task force was informed that there had been a change in plans and they would now deploy to Afghanistan instead of Iraq.***

During this time, the unit arranged a predeployment site survey that entailed an organized leader development program led by 1-32 Infantry leaders. The task force left the predeployment site survey with a clear understanding that COIN in Afghanistan was more complex than a “clear, hold, and build” mission. Clearing the mountainous valleys was impossible, holding them was problematic, and building capacity was a long-term venture. Achievable objectives included:

- Separating insurgents from the population.
- Stabilizing the area of operations.
- Transforming the area of operations for economic revitalization.

These objectives formed the framework for the task force’s efforts.

## **Deployment Environment and Lines of Effort**

In May 2007, Task Force Rock deployed to the remote, austere, undeveloped, and contested Kunar Province in Afghanistan, adjacent to Pakistan in the Hindu Kush mountains. The unit was deployed for nearly 15 months. During that time, Task Force Rock conducted 9,500 patrols and scores of named operations.

Soldiers in the task force Rock area of operations entered a full-spectrum COIN fight in a new brigade zone. Anti-Afghan forces were within a mile of every base, and, if left unmolested, they attacked Soldiers on firebases as they fought for relevancy while the Afghan National Security Forces and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan worked for legitimacy. The Task Force’s lethal fight thus entailed protecting at-risk coalition forces, Afghan security forces, the Afghan government, and Afghan infrastructure.

Nonlethal actions entailed developing self-reliance among the population and patiently progressing toward realistic development goals. Targeted



nonlethal efforts were initially rudimentary. Population-centric information operations (IO) were continuous, and these efforts significantly matured as the task force tried to influence both the population and the enemy. Task force leaders conducted scores of “key leader” engagements and *shuras* monthly—all with nested IO themes.

The task force identified four nested lines of effort:

- Security sector control.
- Governance.
- Economic development.
- Information operations.

To be effective, Task Force Rock collaborated with Afghan security forces, government officials, and the population. The result was a near tripling of the number of security forces in the task force’s area of operations. This influence was referred to as “SWAY-CON,” which became an acceptable term when working to coordinate effort. The task force quickly recognized that all units had to work outside of their Mission Essential Task List and all Soldiers had to work outside of their MOS. Officers and NCOs were required to be generalists and had to—

- Operate coordination centers.
- Supervise tactical operation centers and command posts.
- Direct effects cells.
- Mentor Afghan security forces and Afghan government leaders.
- Administer detention facilities.
- Manage intelligence fusion centers.
- Perform as managers and field ordering officers for CERP.
- Conduct inventories and investigations.
- Serve as mayors and force protection leads.

All companies were called upon to maneuver regardless of specialty or function. They all had to be capable of performing common Soldier skills and tasks and a host of specialized duties.

***All companies were called upon to maneuver regardless of specialty or function.***



An Afghan National Army platoon commander briefs members of the Afghan security forces and Task Force Rock on the Rock Tempest CONOP, Camp Joyce, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 9 April 2008. Afghan security forces led several planning efforts and the execution of combined operations in Kunar.

U.S. Army, CPT Duane Mantel

Operating norms allowed Soldiers to maintain freedom of maneuver in four-vehicle convoys. Although the goal was four or more up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), the minimum to move throughout the area was two up-armored HMMWVs with counter-improvised explosive device (IED) measures and crew-served weapons with two Afghan security force vehicles in the counter-IED bubble. Movements had to be coordinated, and all convoys made radio checks when entering an adjacent unit’s battle space. Ground assault convoys and combat logistics patrols stayed inside the range of organic indirect fire systems unless approved by the tactical operations center, in which case other assets were ideally apportioned to mitigate the lack of organic fires. Pre-combat checks and inspections under these conditions saved lives and validated the adage that what gets checked, gets done.

Task force and provincial reconstruction team (PRT) leaders understood risks, and their efforts continuously sought to mitigate those risks to the mission, force, and population. Soldiers conducted daily missions to protect bases, maintain their freedom of maneuver, and connect to the population. The task force and the PRT cooperated to build Afghan National Security Forces in depth, mentor the Afghan government, and build the infrastructure, which created employment for the local

population. Not all was perfect, and there were no absolutes—success in COIN required continuous thought and reassessment with no status quo.

In the Task Force Rock area of operations, the Soldiers inherited and maintained a synergistic relationship between the task force and the PRT. To address the lines of operation adequately, they divided the duties. Task Force Rock worked security, information operations, governance, and economic development from the local population to the provincial level. The PRT worked government, economic development, information operations, and security from the provincial level to the local population. Although efforts routinely crossed, identifying the two units' "areas of focus" covered the dividing lines of effort in detail so that both the local population and U.S. military leaders engaged each other effectively and consistently.

The task force sought to establish and maintain a secure environment, which required intelligence synchronization, Afghan security force partnership, Afghan security force-led operations, and a shared purpose of maintaining daily contact with the population and defeating the anti-Afghan forces.

The PRT took the lead in developing governance. They worked with provincial and district leaders and routinely sponsored village and tribal *shuras*. They diligently worked with the interagency and international community to support, assist, and improve the Afghan government institutions. They mentored the Afghan leaders to create and implement solutions to problems.

As the task force and PRT relationship matured, the realization that "perfection" is an enemy in COIN became apparent. Entities that sought perfect solutions sat paralyzed; those that created perfectly efficient systems refused to see the ineffectiveness at user level; those that sought perfectly equal solutions failed to understand equal is not equitable. COIN environments demand thoughtful, flexible, energetic leaders who consistently provide timely, adaptable solutions in lieu of time-intensive, perfect solutions. Both the task force and the PRT proactively worked to achieve mutually supporting solutions to the province's problems.

## Nuances of Information Operations in Kunar

Information operations were critical to achieving lasting nonlethal effects. When an early and

### *Entities that sought perfect solutions sat paralyzed...*

resounding tactical victory nearly turned to strategic defeat, Task Force Rock learned that it was not enough to just fight and win. To maintain a tactical victory, the nonlethal fight had to be planned and executed just as rigorously as the lethal fight. Early in the deployment, the task force realized that "We don't have to be right—we just have to be first, and not wrong." There is an enormous difference between being "right" and being "not wrong" in the IO environment. In Afghanistan, our sense of right and wrong and our perspectives differed from that of the local population. The task force quickly became adept at presenting a narrative tailored for our Afghan population. It turned every setback into a victory and every victory into an extended success.

Task Force Rock moved from reactive to proactive IO, then from enemy-centric to population-centric IO. The task force sought to defeat the enemy's efforts by—

- Anticipating and preempting the enemy's most likely IO course of action.



Larry Legree, Kunar PRT commander, meets with Yaka China elders to discuss effects of operation ROCK Avalanche, Yaka China in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 21 October 2007. Commander Legree explained the benefits of working with the Afghan government and supporting the Afghan National Security Forces as he heard their request for support.



DOD

**Governor Zalmay with members of the province and national government discussed the way ahead with elders from throughout the province, 28 October 2007. Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army secured the *shura*.**

- Anticipating and preempting the enemy's most dangerous IO course of action.

- Leveraging Afghan security force and Afghan government leaders, the cultural advisor, and the media.

Themes were synchronized with the PRT and delivered by task force leadership and Afghan counterparts, thereby reinforcing consistent messaging throughout the task force area. Pashtunwali themes were familiar and conveniently used to target the population. Islam was not a taboo subject. Rather, it was understood, overtly respected, and used to convey messages to the population through key leader engagements with local *shuras*. Mullahs were routinely engaged—generally before Friday's sermon—with nested themes and messages that were shared between both parties. Anti-Afghan forces' missteps were highlighted against a Pashtunwali and or Islamic backdrop. Their many mistakes showed how the anti-Afghan forces' actions were contrary to Pashtunwali and Islam. Information exploitation of these missteps served to undermine the anti-Afghan force's relevance and to separate them from the population. Afghan security forces, the Afghan government, and the religious leaders overtly supported the international community's efforts to encourage the democratically elected government of President Karzai. These themes were constantly in the media via radio, television, billboards, newspapers, and word of mouth on the street.

Nonlethal efforts require leaders to continuously and rigorously dominate the IO environment. All leaders have to be in the game, be alert, knowledge-

able, and willing to voice concerns—and many times this includes voicing concerns to a higher headquarters that does not understand the operational environment. The military has sought to embrace the media for decades to tell our Soldiers' stories, but still some military leaders just do not “get it” and seek to isolate or shun the media. Everyone knows that the media will get their story, but how reporters obtain it reflects whether the military is able to have any influence. The final product resides with and is most influenced by the editor or producer. Regardless of effort, not all stories will be favorable, and obstructing the media can only have negative consequences.

## **Money and the Counterinsurgency**

Separate but related is the U.S. government's penchant for spending millions to oversee the spending of thousands. Dollars are nonlethal effects, metaphorical “bullets” in COIN for the CERP Projects and key leader engagements. Dollars were the most cost-effective tool available. The task force could expend millions in ordnance in an afternoon with no questions asked, but thousands of dollars in nonlethal effects

***Nonlethal efforts require leaders to continuously and rigorously dominate the IO environment.***



required answering many questions over many days, or even weeks. Faster is better—less restrictions are preferable. However, regardless of laborious requirements, leaders must figure out how to effectively target and resource nonlethal effects.

In David Kilcullen's recent release, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, he commented on his observations in Kunar Province:

The fact that Kunar has bucked the general trend seems largely to be the result of a consistent U.S. strategy of partnering with local communities to separate the insurgents from the people, bring tangible benefits of governance and development to the population, and help the population choose their own local leaders through elections. Road building has been a key part of that effort.<sup>2</sup>

## Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement are authorizations to legitimately use lethal force with proportionality and discrimination. They must be understood by everyone, as COIN presents tough calls. Understand that—

- Positive identification may mean reasonable certainty, not “beyond reasonable doubt.”
- Hostile intent, determined by the commander who is on the scene, may be based on an assessment of all facts and circumstances known. The commander may not only be authorized but also obligated to address the threat.
- Imminent threat may not mean an immediate threat.

Escalation of force is a deliberate process. Questionable incidents will occur, and they must be investigated. The population's concern over such incidents must be addressed, regardless. As Brigadier General John W. Nicholson, former commander of 3-10 Infantry, succinctly conveyed, “Afghan lives are hard and short, 30 years of war, life expectancy of 45, one in five of their children die before age five... They accept hardship, even death, as the will of God, but what they won't tolerate is injustice.”<sup>3</sup>

The Soldiers that live among the population are “the experts,” and they care more about the popu-



U.S. Army, CPT Duane Mantel

LTC William Ostlund (ROCK Commander) and an Afghan Border Police mentor conduct a review with Afghan National Army, Afghan Border Police, and Afghan National Police during Operation Stalking Wolf in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 13 December 2007. Afghan National Security Forces lead with coalition support, and mentorship was the norm in Kunar Province.

lation than any others care—including the host-government leaders. The Soldiers are the ones who will live or die with that population. Those that live with the population know COIN is not an impatient man's game; most operations proceed like a glacial thaw, and not all platoon, company, or battalion areas thaw at the same speed. Persistence, patience, and presence are required in COIN.

## Living and Working with the Population

Task Force Rock and the PRT instinctively understood that they should not rush to failure by allowing the fledgling Afghan National Security Forces or their government to suffer defeat. When living and working with the population, leaders have to continuously gauge partner capacity and identify, understand, and appreciate gaps. Lieutenant Colonel Chris Cavoli, former commander of 1-32 Infantry, advised coalition forces that they must sense when they are the problem and the most compelling reason that there is not stability in an area and then consider relocating to an area that requires coalition presence.<sup>4</sup>

***The Soldiers that live among the population are “the experts,” and they care more about the population than any others...***

Much emphasis is justifiably placed on making “cops.” Increasing their numbers, improving their quality, mentoring them, and partnering with them is critical, but cops (the Afghan security forces) are comparatively easy to produce in a country with high unemployment. More challenging are the other components required to have rule of law: courts and confinement. The dearth of courts and confinement facilities complicates targeting and interdicting anti-Afghan forces. A common understanding of guilt in a country without enforceable laws is challenging, and rule of law will only be tangentially resolved via solid Afghan security force partners. The lack of rule of law further forces the release of the “less bad,” which adversely affects the population’s perception of justice and the credibility of the Afghan security forces and the Afghan government.<sup>5</sup>

## Leader Lessons and Principles

Some lessons are worth emphasizing here as principles. Leaders must know their units and their capabilities and the physical and human terrain in the area of operations. Commanders must support their subordinate commanders, and leaders must continuously seek to understand the operating environment. Commanders should be positioned where they can best influence the fight; when out of position, they must confidently trust and support their trained staff and subordinate leaders to fight the immediate battle during their absence. Leaders must circulate among the units on the battlefield; they must share risk to have credibility, but not be reckless in the process. The Rock command sergeant major and I generally traveled together by ground transportation five to six days per week, but looked at different things and talked to different Soldiers when at the firebases. While circulating, leaders should monitor discipline indicators, but be positive, respectful, and appreciative of the efforts of their subordinates. Senior leaders must monitor company commanders and first sergeants for fatigue. When in tough fights, communication calls to subordinates who are in the fire fight should be positive, encouraging, and offer assistance. Everything else can wait; the two assistant division commanders routinely demonstrated this positive leadership technique.

Applying Army leadership doctrine helped eliminate many Soldiers’ mental challenges. As the battalion prepared for their third deployment, open and

frank communication was the norm—something that was practiced by the two previous command teams. All Soldiers were to deploy, all would stay in the fight, and a very small but effective rear detachment would closely manage the wounded and those being chaptered from the Army. The company and battalion rear detachment and the greater Vicenza community provided invaluable support to families and deployed Soldiers. Holding the few criminals associated with the task force accountable to a very high standard served to curb illicit activity.

## Soldier Conditions

Some of the realities of having “no infrastructure” are worth mentioning. Limited Class IV, barriers, power, hot and cold drinks or food—for months on end—meant our Soldiers had very little respite. They maintained an incredible operational tempo that cannot be understood by those who have not shared the same burdens. For 15 long months, the Soldiers of the Rock kept the enemy at bay. Battle Company’s platoons pulled out of the continuously contested Korengal Valley three separate times for rest and recovery. On these three to seven day breaks, units went to Camp Blessing, a small place that offered Soldiers better force protection. It had a 24-hour mess hall, laundry facilities, a gym, and morale, welfare, and recreation accommodations. Most notably, Camp Blessing housed the battalion-command sergeant major and operations sergeant major, both of whom had a vested personal interest in caring for their Soldiers. The other companies were able to self-recover and occasionally rotate to Camp Blessing or similar bases. As verified by the mental health professionals and Rock Soldiers, two echelons back is as far away as Soldiers need or desire to go from their unit combat outpost.

The brigade psychologist was a credible warrior first and a doctor second. He and the task force chaplain, also a first-rate warrior, circulated in the area of operations. They resided on platoon firebases for days at a time. Both were invaluable to maintaining maximum combat power forward. When the psychologist or chaplain recommended a Soldier rotate from a platoon firebase, which was comparatively rare and always accomplished through the chain of command, that Soldier was employed elsewhere within the task force and permitted to continue serving honorably by contributing to the task force efforts.



## In the Final Analysis

Ultimately, the task force was involved in 1,100 enemy contacts. Those engagements required:

- 5,400 fire missions (expending 36,500 rounds).
- 3,800 aerial deliveries (bombs and gun runs).
- 23 Javelin anti-tank missiles.
- 108 TOW missiles.
- Hundreds of grenades thrown.

The enemy routinely engaged at the maximum effective range, but on at least five occasions were close enough to touch Americans. Twenty-six members of Task Force Rock gave their lives in Kunar Province. Other noteworthy Soldier statistics include:

- 143 wounded.
- Three nominated for the Medal of Honor.
- Two nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross (one awarded by the time of this publication).
- 25 Silver Stars awarded.
- 90 Bronze Star Medals with Valor awarded.
- Over 300 Army Commendation Medals with Valor awarded.

The Rock's experience leading up to their deployment and throughout the duration of the deployment was instructive if not unique. Divergent personalities came together and connected to train while building a cohesive team of families and fighters. Supporters at home ensured that the Soldiers of the Rock were remembered and recognized while they were deployed and again upon their return. The Rock was one of six battalions in the 173d ABCT and one of scores that served in Afghanistan during this period. The hope is that the lessons and ideas that were "hard learned" by Soldiers of the Rock can serve as a start point for others as knowledge and experience gained. **MR**



**SSG Erich Phillips is awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in Vicenza, Italy, on 15 September 2008 for actions at the Ranch House, Waygul Valley, Nuristan Province, on 22 August 2007. SSG Phillips was subsequently awarded a Silver Star and Purple Heart for actions on 13 July 2008 at Wanat Vehicle Patrol Base, in Waygul Valley, Nuristan Province.**

### NOTES

1. U.S. Army Field Manual 7-15, *The Army Universal Task List*, Army Regulation 8.3.2.3, Washington DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 August 2003, 8-15.
2. David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 71.
3. BG John W. Nicholson articulatedly restated this observation during a conversation in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on 6 February 2009.
4. LTC Chris Cavoli provided this guidance during a predeployment site survey conversation while we were traveling in a ground assault convoy along the Pech River Road in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 15 March 2006.
5. This is my personal experience after 15 months of duty in Afghanistan. Task Force Rock increased the number of available security forces (Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and Afghan Border Police) from a force of less than 1,000 to 2,604 trained, uniformed, positioned, and partnered security personnel in Kunar Province. What was absent were courts and confinement facilities.

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# Exploiting Insurgent Violence in Afghanistan

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brouns, U.S. Army

**M**ORE THAN SEVEN years after control of Afghanistan was wrested from the Taliban, victory remains elusive. The Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and a host of other unsavory characters have been driven underground, successful elections have been held—an achievement likely to be repeated soon—and a nominally functional Afghan government exists. Tactically, insurgents pose little threat to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), coalition forces (other than the ISAF), or the Afghan National Army. The Afghan infrastructure and economy have made dramatic progress after three decades of nearly constant war.

In spite of tactical and local successes, however, the possibility of strategic defeat looms ever larger. Both military and civilian casualties have continued to climb steadily. Combined coalition and ISAF troop strength has more than quintupled since 2002, yet Afghan frustration with the security situation continues to grow. Ordinary Afghans' trust and belief that their immediate situation and that of Afghanistan in general will improve has remained low since its sharp downward slide in 2006 and 2007. As security concerns persist, the perceived or actual failure of many investments and projects to reach remote rural areas where poverty predominates provides fertile ground for insurgent recruitment. After seven years of promises, time is running out. Afghans have lost patience with rhetoric. They need to see delivery on promises of improved security and tangible improvements in their personal situation—and soon, if we hope to successfully provide lasting stability to Afghanistan.

Within military and NATO circles, there has been much talk of the need to better sell the idea that we are succeeding in Afghanistan. Millions are being spent in efforts to market success, to overcome the media preference for bad news, and to compete with an agile enemy in an extremely complex and often unfavorable media landscape. Within the military, efforts to gain control of the Afghan narrative have been dubbed as “strategic communications.” As many headquarters struggle with the concept, which is all about achieving greater efficacy and unity of voice in public communications, one wonders whether what is really needed is not “strategic communications,” but a better communications *strategy*.

To be fair, communicating about Afghanistan is an enormously complex undertaking. It is tempting to think that providing “good news stories” to the media, along with facts and statistics and a consistent narrative

*Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brouns, U.S. Army, is a strategic communication officer stationed at NATO's Joint Forces Command Headquarters, Brunssum, the Netherlands. He has deployed on four tours to Kabul, Afghanistan, as a member of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan or Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force. He holds a B.S. from University of California, Davis and an M.S. in from Troy University.*

PHOTO: U.S. Soldiers and Afghan policemen walk at the site of a suicide attack in Kabul on 15 March 2009. (AFP, Massoud Hossaini, Hamed Zalmay)



as to why we are in Afghanistan, will solve the problem. However, the number of stakeholders involved and the number of audiences to engage simultaneously can be overwhelming. In an ideal world, all stakeholders, from the UN to the village elder somewhere in Afghanistan, would be communicating identical messages, echoed by the media. Unfortunately, differing and frequently competing agendas, differing perceptions of the current situation, and most important, vastly differing audiences with differing needs and interests suggest that the best we might hope for is some measure of *coordinated* communications. NATO and ISAF have a significant role to play in achieving this coordination.

In spite of a renewed focus on Afghanistan—long in the background when our attention was on Iraq—we have made little headway in changing perceptions, either there or internationally. Changing this momentum is critical to the future of Afghanistan. The most important perceptions are on two fronts: the people of Afghanistan must support their current government and reject what the insurgents offer, and the people of the countries contributing troops and resources to ISAF must support their governments' efforts in Afghanistan. NATO and ISAF must communicate with all of these audiences to compete with an aggressive insurgent communication strategy. Even if our communication strategy is successful, actions in Afghanistan ultimately influence perceptions among all audiences more than any press release will.

Trying to control the “information space” is in many ways like trying to control beads of spilled mercury from a broken thermometer. Journalists who know they will get more traction from their editors from the latest mobile phone call from a self-appointed “Taliban spokesman” often ignore carefully managed and researched press releases, full of facts and statistics. Bad news tends to lead—there is much bad news to report—and the good news that exists often goes unreported. Ultimately, however, strategic communications cannot substitute for facts on the ground. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has said, “The solution . . . is not in some slick PR campaign, or trying to out-propagandize Al-Qaeda, but through the steady accumulation of actions and results that build trust and credibility over time.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Future is in Afghan Hands

The facts on the ground are not currently working in our favor. Last summer's “fighting season” culminated in 268 coalition deaths and for the first time exceeded the death toll in Iraq for several months.<sup>2</sup> Attempts to rationalize the steadily increasing military and civilian tolls—arguing they are a result of our increasing presence in heretofore neglected areas—ring hollow among our audiences. Winter having provided an opportunity for insurgents to regroup, recruit, and respond, it is unlikely that even the deployment of ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand additional troops will significantly alter the situation for the better without a significant change in strategy. Since the earliest days of Operation Enduring Freedom, when there were 9,200 Soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, violent incidents have increased roughly in parallel to the overall troop strength. In fact, given the insurgents' increasing use of asymmetric methods, both the incidence of events and the accompanying casualties (to include civilians) have climbed even faster than the troop strength. While 20,000 additional troops seem like a significant step forward, the past seven years argue in favor of the security situation deteriorating further before it gets better. The idea that there is a “tipping point” at which increases in troop strength will cause the violence to begin trending downward is a dubious one. If there is such a tipping point, it may take somewhere in the neighborhood of 150,000 additional troops. This is an investment that neither the U.S. nor other NATO partners are likely to make.

We can make up some of the shortfall by continuing to train and equip indigenous Afghan forces, including the army, police, border security forces, and other components of the Afghan National Security Forces. With the exception of the army, progress has been frustratingly and painfully slow. The total number of Afghan National Police today, for a country of nearly 30 million, is only twice the number of police officers in New York City.<sup>3</sup> Despite having borne the brunt of insurgent violence, the Afghan

***The facts on the ground are not currently working in our favor.***



Iain Cochrane

**Despite complaints of corruption, many dedicated Afghan National Policemen risk their lives daily. The ANP bears the brunt of the insurgency, with three times the casualties of the Afghan National Army.**

police continue to suffer from charges of corruption, tribal factionalism, and a lack of equipment and training. The Afghan National Army (ANA) stands at a strength of close to 70,000, with an eventual goal of 134,000 in the next three years, amid questions of financial sustainability. Even if the international community develops a workable scheme to fund the ANA while the Afghan economy continues to develop, it may be that we cannot afford the time needed to build their capability to defend Afghanistan on their own.

The shortfall in security forces has prompted calls to arm tribal militias—a sort of “neighborhood watch” program with guns. A similar initiative greatly contributed to reducing the level of violence in Iraq. However, there are important differences between Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of having just two main factions—Sunnis and Shi’as—Afghanistan is host to hundreds of tribes and clans who can be convinced to work together to defeat a common threat, such as a foreign invader. But in the absence of a common threat, they default to working for the interests of their own tribes or a

leader who temporarily unites a few tribes to solve a local problem. If we empower Afghanistan’s tribes to provide their own security, we will have wasted years of work disarming militias in order to give a monopoly on military force to the national government (where it belongs). For an example of what can happen when Afghanistan’s tribes take control of security, we should recall the violence in Afghanistan after the Soviets left and the bloody power struggles that persisted until the Taliban were able to impose their own peculiar brand of security.

Arming “ordinary Afghans” and asking them to secure themselves will create more problems than it will solve, but those same “ordinary Afghans” are precisely where we should place our focus. Ordinary Afghans need to buy into their current form of government and reject what the insurgents offer. However, the current unpredictable security situation does nothing to reassure these ordinary Afghans with regard to the future. This requires a minimal level of security to buy time to accomplish the infrastructural and economic development necessary to stabilize the country and provide a basic standard of living. This basic standard of living will dry up the recruiting base for the insurgents, because a population that has nothing to lose is easy to recruit for suicide bombings against “foreign invaders.” A relatively small number of insurgents from economically depressed areas are able to use spectacular attacks and propaganda to inflate their perceived strength. As a result, even in areas where there is relative prosperity, the insurgency can easily manipulate a security vacuum to its advantage even when the majority is against the insurgency. We must improve security and basic living standards concurrently if we wish to convince ordinary Afghans that their government is winning the fight against the insurgents.

Afghanistan’s history over the last three decades makes Afghans especially reluctant to choose sides. While Afghans privately prefer their current government to anything the insurgents might offer,

***Afghanistan’s history over the last three decades makes Afghans especially reluctant to choose sides.***





Iain Cochrane

**Afghan National Army recruits come from a wide variety of backgrounds and enlist for a number of reasons. (February 2007)**

they are hesitant to state this openly, because doing so makes them extremely vulnerable. Throughout their history, Afghans have repeatedly suffered indignities from hostile external powers, internecine rivalries, warfare, and overnight changes in government. Because control of their villages has changed hands repeatedly without warning, and continues to do so, the average Afghan will remain uncommitted until the future is clear. Sir Robert Thompson's observation about Malaya applies: "What the peasant wants to know is: does the government mean to win the war? Because if not, he will have to support the insurgent."<sup>4</sup>

It is imperative that we challenge Afghans to make a public—and irrevocable—stand in favor of the government. However, with this imperative comes a heavy responsibility. If we convince Afghans to take such a stand, we are obligated to back them up when insurgents challenge them—as they certainly will. There are enough security forces in Afghanistan to do this locally and in isolated incidents, but it rarely happens. From time to time, a number of Afghan tribes and communities publicly state their support to the government. It is an absolutely critical and moral imperative that we support them when insurgents challenge them on these public statements. Nearby communities carefully watch the situation to see what develops. If they

like what they see, they are much more likely to behave in a similar fashion—news travels fast in Afghanistan in spite of the relative austerity of traditional mass media. This trend needs to be nurtured and developed until it reaches critical mass—a grass roots, pro-government uprising that the insurgents will be powerless to stop.

### **Hearts and Minds: An Uneven Playing Field?**

For an ordinary Afghan, the biggest obstacle to taking such a stand is the insurgents' effective use of propaganda—and especially the use of violence

as a form of propaganda. Insurgents clearly understand the criticality of the information environment and recognize the importance of propaganda in achieving their aims. In some ways, the media environment represents an uneven playing field that favors the insurgents—and they relentlessly use it to their advantage. They share religious, tribal, and ethnic ties; a language; and a much deeper and richer understanding of the Afghan culture and Afghan needs and vulnerabilities. They are rarely bound by the need for truth or the need to verify facts, which allows them to react much more quickly to events—especially when they have engineered those events to support their cause. Moreover, the media corporations' desire for profits favors the type of sensationalist reporting that publicizes insurgent propaganda.

However, in some ways, the Afghan government, NATO, and ISAF are their own worst enemies. They ought to be able to use their credibility, resources, and easy access to audiences to highlight the Taliban's inability to offer Afghans anything but brutality. Despite this advantage, many observers question who is winning the war of ideas.<sup>5</sup> Cultural differences between NATO/ISAF and the Afghan people, and between the Afghan government in Kabul and some of its constituents in remote areas, offer a big advantage to the insurgents.

However, many hindrances to competition in the war of ideas are self-imposed. Bureaucratic and hierarchical structures may help ensure the consistency of messages, but they also hamper agility. Limitations on the use of religious themes also somewhat limit the use of poetry, music, and other culturally relevant tools. Other hindrances include the lack of a consistent NATO policy with regard to Pakistan and other neighbors, different approaches with regard to holding the Afghan government accountable, and difficulties in harmonizing messages with the UN.

In spite of their best efforts, foreign forces and the government of Afghanistan also inadvertently provide fodder for insurgent propaganda planners. Mistakes and accidents that lead to civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure are an unavoidable consequence of military operations. Even the use of precision weapons cannot eliminate such incidents. A relative lack of ground troops leads to greater reliance on aerial weapons when those ground troops run into trouble. Exploiting the strong Afghan mistrust of foreign intentions and the burdens of history, insurgents are able to turn our mistakes into propaganda wins and mobilize support for their cause. Our troops' unfamiliarity with Afghan culture leads to further mistakes and missteps with regard to Afghan expectations. The Afghan government has less trouble with this and is able to employ its own military forces in a more personal and culturally sensitive manner. However, lacking a significant air force of its own, Afghan soldiers require foreign air power to get them out of a pinch, often again resulting in blowback toward international forces when things go wrong. Far bigger problems for the government, however, are the continued and widespread perception of corruption within its highest levels, a perceived failure to provide critical services—including security—and its lack of legitimacy among the Afghan people.

The informational methods of insurgent propaganda such as night letters, statements to the media, internet sites, mobile radio, and

DVDs, often carries little credibility with the Afghan people.<sup>6</sup> Looking only at these “traditional” forms of propaganda, however, is to overlook a significant aspect of the insurgent propaganda effort.

The power insurgents wield in the “information space” is not about what they *say*—it is about what they *do*. Actions such as beheadings, public hangings and beatings, suicide bombings, improvised explosive device attacks, and assassinations demonstrate the insurgency's ability to follow through on promises. This propaganda has real credibility with ordinary Afghans and with international audiences. Religion-based justification for the insurgency fails to resonate with the vast majority of Afghans; however, it only takes a handful of zealots willing to blow themselves up in a crowd of Afghans to send a much more powerful message. These actions give real credence to insurgent threats to cause harm. A demonstrated willingness to back up their threats puts the insurgents in the position of being able to wield sticks much more effectively than the carrots we have at our disposal.

While repeatedly demonstrating their willingness to “keep promises” with regard to violence, the insurgents are simultaneously able to capitalize on the Afghan government's inability to keep promises of security, development, and governance. The insurgents' record of providing development and governance is abysmal, and they lack a single,



Iain Cochrane

Tea houses are an important place where issues of the day are discussed, to include the role and performance of international forces, May 2007.

common vision for Afghanistan. However, the insurgents only need to show that the government of Afghanistan and the West are failing. By preserving the status quo—a stalemate—they boost their own credibility and undermine our credibility and that of the Afghan government.

The insurgents use their ability to blend with the population and to exploit popular grievances and ethnic, religious, and historic ties to portray the government as inept, and foreign forces as outsiders. The insurgents' aim is to eventually offer a brutalized, frustrated, and embittered population their alternative as the only solution to the status quo. Armed with a significant advantage in the informational space, they are willing to lose conventional, tactical engagements to obtain their strategic goal—the eventual rejection of the government of Afghanistan and the foreign occupiers.

At the heart of the insurgents' strategy is the emphasis they place on *persuasion* as the ultimate goal of all their operations. In Western military circles, we tend to characterize actions as “kinetic” or “non-kinetic.” This separation between the two is the core of our problem and of the insurgents' success. The insurgents view “kinetic” and “non-kinetic” as one and the same. According to *Asia Report*, “We tend to view information operations as supplementing kinetic [fighting] operations . . . virtually every kinetic operation they undertake is specifically designed to influence attitudes or perceptions.”<sup>7</sup>

Al-Qaeda's attacks on 9/11 were not simply about killing large numbers of Westerners; they were about influencing the attitudes of the American people, and the actions of the United States government. While being driven into the mountains was not likely a part of Al-Qaeda's calculus, only Osama bin Laden knows for certain whether the ultimate objectives of this massive information operation have been achieved. The Taliban and other insurgent groups within Afghanistan have continued planning their operations in this way. The insurgents push their information strategy both within Afghanistan, where they rely heavily on threats and intimidation, and internationally, where they use “all available networks—political, social, economic and military—to convince the enemy's political decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit.”<sup>8</sup>

## Turning Insurgent Violence to Our Advantage

The perceptions of involved publics represent NATO's Achilles heel when it comes to Afghanistan—whether Afghan, American, French, or any of the other partners contributing troops to the ISAF mission. If Afghans do not support their government and our troops, we will not succeed. At the same time, if the West fails to see any hope and purpose in the ISAF mission, it will withdraw its support.

The trend within Afghanistan is not in our favor. Internationally, there are signs that the insurgents are not only increasingly targeting non-Afghan audiences, but may be seeing increasing success with them. To debate whether more effort is needed to convince Afghans that the insurgency will fail, or to convince the international community to provide more support, is fruitless. Both are needed, and soon.

However, the military has more control, more levers, and can better coordinate its actions within Afghanistan. In addition, the support of the Afghan people for their form of government, as opposed to that offered (if any) by the Taliban, is ultimately what the conflict in Afghanistan is about.

Recognition of the importance of public perception within Afghanistan has increased dramatically within NATO military circles. Despite what news reports suggest, there have been massive efforts to reduce civilian casualties, conduct joint Afghan-ISAF operations, change the way we search the homes of suspected insurgents, and train soldiers to behave in ways that harmonize better with Afghans.

In a nod to the insurgent's ability to mobilize public opinion with violence, we now factor the potential psychological effects of our military actions into our planning considerations. Coalition planners understand that focusing on the network and attempting to kill or capture all of the terrorists

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or insurgents is a Sisyphean task. It fails to address the root cause, the movement.

Rather than using influence actions or operations to *supplement* the main effort—killing and capturing insurgents—“influencing” needs to be *the* main effort in Afghanistan. Influencing needs to be supported, in turn, by military force as needed. This does not imply we should not use military force, but in deciding if, when, or how to use military force, the primary factor to consider is its impact on Afghans and their support for their government.

Since 2005, the use of suicide bombings—once virtually unheard of in Afghanistan—has climbed astronomically.<sup>9</sup> Concurrent with this, the use of improvised explosive devices and the orchestration of events in which insurgents kill Afghan public servants and Afghan civilians have risen dramatically—along with the media coverage. While there has been much study of the trends in insurgent use of “traditional” forms of propaganda, we often ignore, overlook, or misinterpret the role of violence in influencing attitudes and behavior. There have been steps to address insurgents’ use of violence, but they only scratch the surface in terms of the dynamics involved in shaping Afghan public perceptions. We need to turn the insurgents’ use of violence to our advantage.

Ongoing efforts to counter insurgent propaganda focus heavily on the use of mass media to change *attitudes*, because we are familiar with mass media from our own culture, and because using them to change attitudes worked relatively well in recent NATO efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo. In Afghanistan, we often place the use of mass media and other tools to influence attitudes in a parallel or supplementary role, to operations. We try to increase public support for government efforts, while operations to clear insurgents from their hideouts continue unabated. There are billboards, newspapers, television spots, and a growing network of radio stations. We use these tools to change the attitudes of the Afghan public (in the hopes that behavior will follow), while we ignore the behavior of the insurgents themselves. We presume they are so entrenched in their ideology that we cannot hope

to change them. More important, we almost entirely neglect behavior itself as something we should try to change. There are some efforts to persuade insurgents to behave differently by “showing them the consequences of their behavior”—i.e. by pursuing them relentlessly with military means. When insurgents continue to behave violently, the response is often to exploit their behavior and violence to illustrate that they are nothing more than “bad people” who do not deserve popular support. We highlight insurgent atrocities—IED attacks, suicide attacks, bombings, assassinations, and killings of innocents or “spies”—to attempt to drive a wedge between ordinary Afghans and the insurgents. Ironically, the people who we ask to withdraw their support are powerless to side against the insurgents if they value their own lives or those of their families.

The first problem with this tactic is that the Afghan people are already overwhelmingly against IED makers and insurgents.<sup>10</sup> Afghans know all too well who is doing the killing and who is doing the dying. They want it to stop, and feel powerless to stop it themselves.

However, their non-support for insurgents does not translate into increased support for ISAF or for the Afghan government. In fact, surveys often show the opposite: the increase in random, unpredictable violence often goes hand-in-hand with an increased anger at their government and ISAF for failing to prevent such incidents. Some Afghans not only blame ISAF for these deaths, but also suspect complicity in it, because they are unable to grasp how such a large, wealthy and powerful collection of nations cannot manage to rid them of what we have for years claimed are only a few thousand insurgents. The hope that we can continue to operate as we have until now, and that one day Afghans will simply conclude that they have had enough violence from insurgents and stand up to them is futile. A far more chilling—and not altogether unlikely—scenario is that they will instead lose patience, stand up to their own government, and demand an end to the foreign troop presence.

We devote a great deal of energy to educating our troops how to best avoid becoming victims of

***...we almost entirely neglect behavior itself as something we should try to change.***



Iain Cochrane

Elders discuss unknown topics in front of their closed shops, March 2008.

bombings and attacks, knowing they will continue and probably increase for the foreseeable future. These efforts should continue, along with efforts to find technical solutions that can offer temporary relief until the insurgents adapt their tactics in response. However, we should not discard the possibility that we can use influence operations to slow or even reverse the current trend of insurgent violence. To do this, however, *it is necessary to stop publicizing these events with the aim of building popular support for ISAF or the Afghan government*, because this may actually support insurgent aims and encourage repetition. If we understand the insurgents' aims in carrying out violent attacks, it may be possible to convince them that they are not achieving these aims, thus persuading them to change tactics.

Insurgent violence aims to create terror, fear, and uncertainty among the populace. Continued unpredictable violence causes Afghans to question whether their government or foreign forces can do *anything* to prevent it. When, as often is the case, this violence targets government or foreign forces, and Afghan bystanders are injured or killed, Afghans protect themselves from future occurrences by avoiding government or foreign forces. When it happens once or twice, Afghans may blame the insurgents. When it continues unabated or increases, Afghans are more likely to blame the authorities for failing to take effective action to prevent it.

Action on the part of Afghans themselves becomes even less likely over time, according to the well-documented psychological phenomenon of “learned helplessness”—when people come to believe they have no control over a situation, they

will become passive, even if they actually do have the power to change the circumstances. Publicizing insurgent violence thus serves the insurgents' goals by increasing elements of the environment that favor the insurgent cause.

The *worst* action we can take is to attempt camouflaging our own mistakes with regard to civilian casualties and damage to Afghan infrastructure—regrettable and unintended as they may be. Occasionally, the media publicize statements by ISAF officials underlining that insurgents cause more civilian deaths intentionally than ISAF causes accidentally. This not only confuses two separate issues that require separate solutions, but also places ISAF on the morally corrupt side of the issue. To equate the accidental deaths ISAF causes in trying to provide security with the intentional deaths the insurgents cause in trying to bring down their government further blurs ISAF actions with insurgent violence in the minds of ordinary Afghans—whose outrage at ISAF-caused civilian casualties is a result of higher expectations for ISAF. Afghans express less moral outrage at insurgent killings because they hold insurgents to a different moral standard. Afghans expect ISAF to stop killing, and to stop insurgents from killing.

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to civilian casualties...***

To make matters worse, the behavior of our own troops often unwittingly provides an unexpected bounty to the insurgents who engage in violence, and further encourages repetition of it. After an attack, ISAF troops are often “locked down” for a specified period to ensure the attack is not part of a broader series of attacks. ISAF troops permitted to go to the affected area do so under full alert, under increased protection and vigilance. Rarely are there any efforts to interact directly with affected Afghans, possibly because ISAF prefers to “let the Afghan authorities handle it.” While these actions are all understandable from a “force protection” standpoint, they may actually do more harm than good. They perpetuate the idea that ISAF soldiers are more concerned with their own safety than that of ordinary Afghans, and they increase the gulf that separates Afghans from foreign troops who ride around in armored vehicles, hidden behind bulletproof plates and tinted windows and sunglasses. They fail to convey any compassion for human suffering, to build or exploit common anger against the perpetrators, and convey fear rather than power or authority. While insurgents have on occasion planned complex attacks involving several explosive devices, the vast majority of such attacks involve just a single explosion. It is therefore questionable whether the gain of such follow-on restrictions justifies the lost opportunities and the message unintentionally conveyed.

Reversing the effects of violent attacks will convince insurgents to change their tactics. This means that terror, fear, and uncertainty need to be transformed into public outrage and mutual solidarity. Afghans need to be encouraged to redirect their anger toward insurgents in a public way instead of holding foreign forces and the Afghan government responsible for security incidents. Fanning the flames of the existing frustration via press statements to the mass media will do little to achieve these aims; the intervention needs to be on a personal level. Rather than lying low after an attack, ISAF troops and leaders—in a gesture of compassion and solidarity—need to increase their visibility in the affected areas. In consultation and in partnership with local Afghan authorities, and perhaps together with local members of the Afghan National Police, visits to heads of affected families and tribal elders, where appropriate, to offer condo-

lences, express sympathy, and offer gifts would be helpful. Such visits, accomplished properly, might encourage affected communities to demonstrate publicly against the violence, and express solidarity with their government and Soldiers working to prevent such attacks.

While some may question the feasibility of orchestrating public demonstrations against insurgents, it has in fact happened several times recently. In mid-October 2008, local authorities in Helmand and surrounding provinces carefully managed responses to a series of insurgent attacks. Afghans there vented their anger against insurgents rather than the authorities, and the protests spread to the faraway provinces of Laghman, Nangarhar, Paktia, Herat, and Bamiyan. In Herat, an assembly headed by the provincial governor heard statements by various participants, government officials, and clerics, damning the Taliban as “un-Islamic.” These protests did not happen spontaneously; government authorities carefully nurtured them. These protests gave local Afghans a means to express their anger against those actually responsible and bolstered the idea that the government is concerned for the welfare of those affected. The Ulema Council in Kabul likewise issued statements about the un-Islamic nature of the attacks. To continue to build on these events, local government and foreign representatives expressed condolences three and forty days after the event, as is the local custom.

These are the kinds of events that should receive publicity in the mass media, to demonstrate that Afghans affected by insurgent violence are not alone in their grief or anger. We must study the lessons learned from such incidents and apply them elsewhere. In addition, as mentioned earlier, we should increase the level of security and presence so that we do not leave these newly empowered Afghans open to retribution by the insurgents.

Besides causing insurgents to question the utility of violence to achieve their aims, these kinds of engineered events have additional benefits behind the scenes. Quite often, there are those within the community who have knowledge of others who actively or passively support the insurgents, but are unwilling to share it with the authorities. While we would like those with this kind of knowledge to report it to ISAF or to government security forces, it may be just as beneficial in the end if they report



the information to their elders or simply voice their disapproval privately. This avenue affords local leaders, now armed with this knowledge, opportunities to show they are doing something to solve the problem and highlights the insurgents' status as the minority they truly are.

In order to take full advantage of such opportunities, we must re-think what we would like our intelligence efforts to produce. We need to replace reporting and analysis that occurs behind classified computer systems, feeding the efforts to kill or capture insurgents, with local intelligence on insurgent identities, locations, and support networks. Village and tribal dynamics, local economics and power structures, and the needs of affected Afghans—the “human terrain mapping” currently in vogue—is necessary if we intend to influence the thinking and actions of local Afghans. The meaning and effect of propaganda of all types needs to be understood locally, not just in Kabul. Rather than using expensive technical means or Western-based contractors, we should obtain this kind of intelligence through human contact, supported by cultural, religious, and anthropological expertise that is often freely available locally.

Finally, while mass media continue to have certain uses, the disproportionately large human and financial resources that are consumed by ISAF mass media exploitation need to be made available at the grass-roots level. If we are to win Afghan hearts and minds, we must win them one village and valley at a time. They will not be won by the kind of slick television advertising that sells Coca-Cola. They will not be won by publishing a million ISAF newspapers a year when roughly three-quarters of Afghans are illiterate. They will not be won with a nationwide radio network that plays identical content, even if supplemented with regionally produced recorded content. As in our own countries, Afghans implicitly trust and prefer local media to Kabul media. More important, they trust what their village and tribal elders tell them much more than they trust what Kabul or Brussels tells them.

***The meaning and effect of propaganda of all types needs to be understood locally, not just in Kabul.***

Rather than seizing upon every act of insurgent violence to point out the obvious—that the insurgents are bad people—thereby giving additional press to an action designed to induce fear and gain publicity in the first place, we should reserve our use of the mass media for other issues. Afghans who read newspapers and regularly watch television tend to be decision makers and members of elite minority groups. We should use the media to influence government policy, expose corruption, encourage investment, promote education, and inform this public on the events that affect them. We can use the media to influence opinion and facilitate dialogue among students and the elite in search of longer-term solutions for those acts of terrorism that are already the subject of regional or national public discussion.

We can exploit insurgent atrocities to our advantage, and to the advantage of the Afghans who seek a peaceful future. We just need to do it differently. We should place less emphasis on throwing more



Iain Cochrane

ISAF's newspaper provides a means to inform the literate minority. The other 75 percent or so must be reached in other ways. (Kabul, April 2007)

troops and money at the problem, and consider changes in strategy.

Rather than assuming insurgent behavior cannot be changed—or worse, giving free publicity to their behavior and thus encouraging repetition—we should try to convince insurgents to change their tactics, and galvanize public opinion against them if they do not. The insurgents are rational, adaptive opponents of the Afghan people who have been honing and refining their techniques for seven years—if not longer. Afghanistan is burning, and

the vast majority of Afghans know who started the fire. Rather than arguing over who should operate the fire hoses, or inadvertently fanning the flames, we need to energize and empower ordinary Afghans to help extinguish the fire in Afghanistan before it consumes all of us. **MR**

*Special thanks go to Joanna Nathan  
and Marc Segers for their helpful  
comments and ideas.*

## NOTES

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of Words?" International Crisis Group, 24 July 2008.

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7. Asia Report No. 158; Ibid.

8. Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (Osceola, WI: Zenith Press, 2006), 2.

9. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan conducted a study of suicide bombing trends from 2001 to 2007 ("Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan, 2001-2007") which can be found at <<http://fetcher.fw-notify.net/0000000234952526336/UNAMA%20-%20SUICIDE%20ATTACKS%20STUDY%20-%20SEPT%209th%202007.pdf>> (5 December 2008). In 2008, a series of large-scale attacks has continued to drive casualty figures upward.

10. Numerous surveys and studies support this claim. Among them: Altai Consulting's "Nationwide Research and Survey on Illegal State Opposing Armed Groups—ISOAGs" (April 2006); Environics Research Group's "2007 Survey of Afghans"; the Charney Research Poll released in Nov 2007; and numerous surveys by Manasia Research Associates.

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# ADULT EDUCATION IN *Afghanistan*

**The Key to Political and Economic Transformation**

**Captain Chad M. Pillai, U.S. Army**

**R**ECENT ANNOUNCEMENTS from the White House by President Obama's administration spoke of a "civilian surge" that would deploy hundreds of U.S. officials to Afghanistan, in addition to sending thousands more U.S. troops there as well. This is an auspicious opportunity for the U.S. Army to apply both the knowledge and experience learned from Iraq at the local Afghan community level.<sup>1</sup> As in Iraq, the new civilian teams will focus on establishing security for the local populace and developing local governance and economic growth. However, these initiatives will not succeed in Afghanistan until the high rate of illiteracy is reversed. According to the United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the literacy rate in Afghanistan for men aged 15–24 is 51 percent and even worse for women at 18 percent. UNESCO states:

Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.<sup>2</sup>

By addressing the high rate of illiteracy in Afghanistan, the U.S. and its allies will be able to combat the "ignorance and fear" that has gripped the people, and help dilute the influence of the extremist Wahabi schools that proliferated under the Taliban regime. From 2006 to 2007, the United States established adult education programs first in Tal Afar, and then in Ar Ramadi during the period leading up to the "surge." These same models could prove useful in Afghanistan.

## **Tal Afar's Education Gap**

In late 2005, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, commanded by then Colonel H.R. McMaster, conducted Operation Restoring Rights in the city of Tal Afar, a strategic city located near the Syrian border. McMaster's operation successfully cleared out the bulk of the insurgent forces from the city and established the blueprints for the successful follow-on strategy employed by the Ready First Combat Team, commanded by Brigadier General Sean MacFarland, in Ar Ramadi in 2006 and 2007, and later for the "surge" in Baghdad. McMaster's strategy consisted of flooding the city with U.S. troops

*Captain Chad M. Pillai is a Command and General Staff College student at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He received his B.A. from SUNY Brockport and his M.I.P.P. from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the Continental United States, Iraq, Europe, and Korea—to include serving as the civil military operations officer of 2-37 Armor in Tal Afar and Ar Ramadi from 2006 to 2007. His article "Tal Afar and Ar Ramadi: Grass Roots Reconstruction" appeared in the March/April 2009 issue of Military Review.*

PHOTO: A U.S. Army Soldier assists an Iraqi police applicant during the literacy testing phase at the Iraqi police recruiting facility at Camp Blue Diamond, Iraq, 12 October 2006. (U.S. Army, SGT Timothy Stephens)



in several outposts in order to establish security and help rebuild the Iraqi Police Force. MacFarland's brigade assumed control of Tal Afar from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. He picked up and continued this strategy by expanding it where McMaster had left off.<sup>3</sup> MacFarland's vision for Tal Afar and the western portion of Nineveh Province was to—

- Defeat remaining insurgency.
- Reestablish the Iraqi Security Forces to assume responsibility for their own jurisdiction.
- Provide for regional economic development of the community.

During the implementation of this strategy, it became clear that one factor could undercut the mission's success—the high rate of illiteracy in the local population.

The Ready First Combat Team held major police officer recruitment drives to expand the Iraqi Police force from several hundred to over 2,000 men. After examining the application pool, one detrimental and eliminating factor became painfully obvious—the vast majority of applicants could not pass the standard reading and writing test. This lack of literacy denied many otherwise highly qualified Iraqi men the opportunity to join the police force. Even those possessing basic literacy skills struggle to read and write police and evidence reports, which makes prosecuting perpetrators difficult. The reconstruction sector further demonstrated the lack of literacy among Iraq's population. Many of the applicants were denied the opportunity to earn contracts for construction project bids, simply because they could neither read the project requirements nor write a comprehensible bid document for the contract.

Colonel John K. Tien, commander of Task Force 2-37 Armor in Tal Afar, recognized that to successfully apply his “soft power” tools to establish long-term security and stability among the Iraqi people, he and his staff had to devise a plan of action to

address the high illiteracy rate of the population.<sup>4</sup> An Iraqi interpreter who was working for the attached civil affairs team led by Major Max Muramoto, provided an insight by stating, “If I had the opportunity to go back to school, I would—in order to improve my future career opportunities.” His words set off a light bulb in U.S. forces about establishing a basic skills program; it would not just help alleviate the high rate of illiteracy among Iraqi adults, but also further expand economic opportunities and better governance. In addition, such a program would provide a resource for unemployed military age men to improve their career opportunities when compared with insurgent propaganda and the easy economics of emplacing IEDs.

## Adult Education Programs

In June 2006, the Tal Afar Adult Literacy Program was established using Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds. The program consisted of six school locations in both the Shi'ite and Sunni areas of the city, with at least one school reserved for women. Designed for 1,000 students, the first program had over 800 students enrolled. A private contractor managed the program while the city director of education supervised. Provincially qualified teachers worked at night to earn extra money. All of the students had to meet the government's education standards for evaluation. The program proved its worth when several of the students graduated early by successfully passing the literacy requirements for the Iraqi Police. It was so successful that, after the original program expired, a second contract proposal expanded the program to include an additional 1,500 Iraqi students.

Since the adult literacy program was limited to adults aged 19 to 40 years old, a separate program was created to meet the literacy requirements of Iraqi high school dropouts ranging from 16 to 18 years of age. Under Iraqi law, such students must pay tuition to return to school and earn their high school diplomas. As a result, a tuition assistance program pays the cost of tuition, books, and test fees for 500 qualified students who are screened by three entities: the Iraqi director of education, Iraqi security forces, and American security forces. The screening verifies that the students have no ties to the insurgency.

***This lack of literacy denied many otherwise highly qualified Iraqi men the opportunity to join the police force.***

Students who graduate from either the adult literacy program or high school require additional education to gain the skills necessary for worthy employment afterwards. In 2006 and 2007, the Tal Afar economy consisted of three major sources:

- Agriculture production.
- Government jobs (i.e., Iraqi Security Force).
- Government reconstruction projects.

In order to meet the demands of the slow but growing economy, the city needed craftsmen: machinists, carpenters, plumbers, welders, electricians, automotive repair technicians, nurses, and administrative assistants. Both MacFarland and Tien advocated a vocational program that provided critical skill training. In 2006, the original Iraqi-sponsored vocational schools could barely support 190 students in their poorly equipped, rundown buildings. Task Force 2-37 proposed expanding the program to support a student population of 1,000 and establishing a community technical college for the local populace. To pay for both the required equipment and the additional instructors, the task force used CERP funds for a limited time until the Iraqi government could assume the continued cost of the program.

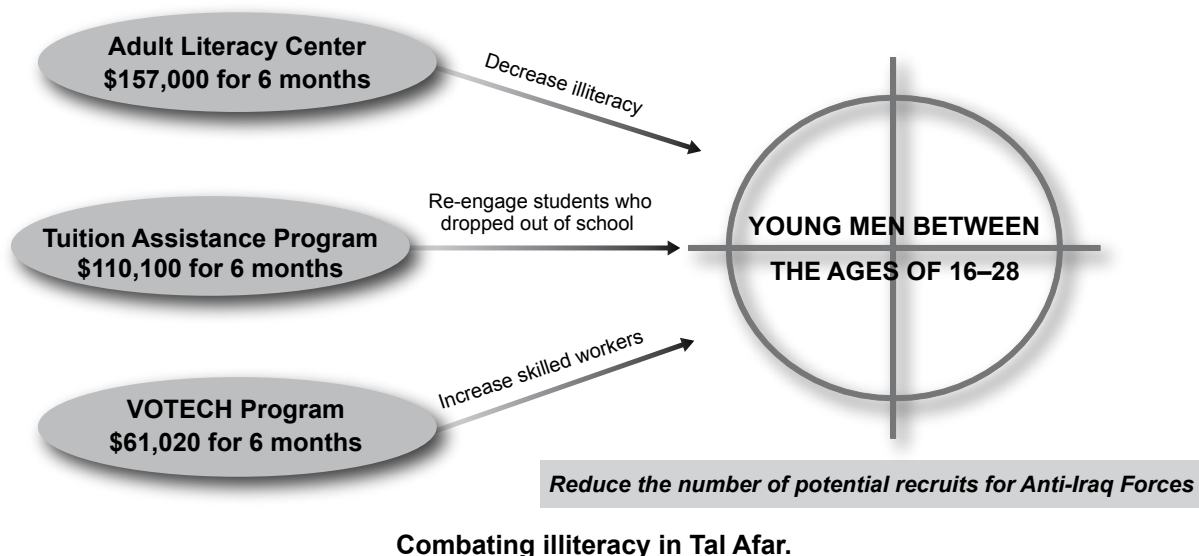
In addition to expanding Iraqi Security Forces, the adult education programs helped to “drain the swamp” of potential insurgent recruits by providing alternative economic opportunities for the population (see figure below).<sup>5</sup> The program could expand the initial student population from 800 to 2,000 the

following year, a 250 percent increase. Because of this success in Tal Afar, the program was applied in Ar Ramadi within six months.

## Ar Ramadi

In June 2006, the Ready First Combat Team was reassigned from Tal Afar to Ar Ramadi, leaving behind Task Force 2-37 to continue the mission. MacFarland began to transform Ar Ramadi by utilizing his knowledge and experience from Tal Afar, despite the mission’s label that the region had already been “lost” to insurgents, as articulated by the senior Marine Corps intelligence officer.<sup>6</sup> From June to November 2006, MacFarland and his Arabic speaking civil-military operations officer Captain Travis Patriquin altered the landscape by reaching out to the Iraqi tribes and aligning them with Sheik Sittar throughout his Awakening movement. Meanwhile, back at Tal Afar, Task Force 2-37 had successfully experimented with and fully utilized the “tool bag” of “soft power” tactics that had been provided by the Ready First Combat Team, to include the adult education programs. Upon their subsequent reassignment to Ar Ramadi in October 2006, the Ready First Combat Team utilized Task Force 2-37’s soft power tactics developed in Tal Afar.

Following MacFarland and Patriquin’s vision, Task Force 2-37 worked quickly to reach out to, turn around, and align the tribes in the Jazeera area to unite against Al-Qaeda. In early December 2006, the first three cooperative tribes formed the





**Students in class on first day of school on 26 January 2007, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq.**

Jazeera Council, and by February 2007, the council included all the newly pacified tribes in the Jazeera area. Similar to the experience in Tal Afar, the goal of rapidly expanding the Iraqi Security Forces and conducting reconstruction projects was halted by the same problem of high illiteracy rates. The tribes embraced the proposed adult literacy programs with enthusiasm. By January 2007, the first adult literacy center opened in Jazeera with an enrollment of over 200 men and—most surprisingly—over 500 women.

The throng on the first day of classes demonstrated the success and popularity of the program, especially as tribal sheiks came forward requesting that their communities establish similar literacy programs. Over two years have passed since February 2007, and Ar Ramadi has become one of the most peaceful cities in Iraq. Although we cannot scientifically substantiate the importance of educational programs for adults, we also cannot ignore that it is the largest positive factor for our mission's success.

## **Application in Afghanistan**

As many have stated, Afghanistan is not Iraq; however, there is one thing common to the constant state of war and the effects of war on the people of both societies who have suffered since 1979. In Afghanistan in particular, entire generational groups are uneducated due to the horrific disruption of “normal” society functions from 20-plus years of war and devastation. As UNESCO reports, only about 51 percent of the male population is literate and the numbers may be lower in the remote rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

***In Afghanistan...  
entire generational groups are  
uneducated due to the horrific  
disruption of “normal” society...***

Afghanistan does not have the same structured society and educational systems as Iraq. As a result, programs would have to be adapted to facilitate smaller communities and targeted to specific ethnicities like Pashtu or Tajik. However, the need for adult literacy education in Afghanistan is possibly greater than in Iraq. During the Taliban regime, the broken educational system became defunct under the influence of the radical religious extremists, who claim that the “Golden Era” of Islam resulted not from intellectual exploration but from close-minded puritanical Islam.

## **Contractor Oversight**

Constant management and oversight is required for a successful adult education program. In Tal Afar and Ar Ramadi, U.S. Soldiers who were project officers routinely visited and inspected the adult literacy program for daily enrollment of students, school material purchases, utilization of resources by both students and instructors, curriculum standards, classroom instruction, and instructors' pay. Constant inspections and media publicity ensured that the contractor abided by his contract, thereby providing the best possible education to the student body. If not closely monitored, contractors can pocket the money while cheating the students. Unfortunately, this proved true in Tal Afar when a women's computer literacy program was established. When the contractor failed to provide the proper equipment and required materials, the students received substandard instruction.

***...the need for adult literacy  
education in Afghanistan is  
possibly greater than in Iraq.***



## Caveats

Provincial reconstruction teams and tactical military units can devise programs that are affordable and significantly increase the literacy rate among the populace of Afghanistan. By utilizing their knowledge and experience gained in Iraq, U.S. forces can transform the political and economic environment of the Afghan society through initial and well-thought-out educational adult literacy programs. If they do not, the ordinary doctrinal strategies used to reform the country will fail and the government will remain corrupt with a largely uneducated population. **MR**

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Photo courtesy of USMA NMAA mentors

On 25 January 2009, the National Military Academy of Afghanistan graduated its inaugural class of 84 new lieutenants, with 64 joining the Afghan National Army and 20 joining the Afghan Air Corps. The academy, located in Kabul, has been continuously supported over the past four years by faculty mentors from the United States Military Academy at West Point and the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, augmented by active duty and reserve U.S. Soldiers and coalition units from around the world.

# RETHINKING IED STRATEGIES

## From Iraq to Afghanistan



**Commander John Moulton,**  
U.S. Navy

**I**MPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (IEDs) have been emblematic of the insurgency in Iraq. Why have so many disparate insurgent groups with varying resource levels chosen the same means to pursue their often-conflicting goals? And, a more important question, what can we do to eliminate IEDs as the leading cause of coalition force casualties?

Coalition forces cannot out-armor or out-engineer the problem, although an IED's physical effects can be, and have been, mitigated. The insurgency in Iraq has been a complex problem, the taming of which requires adaptive, comprehensive effort. We will not defeat the IED problem with a single solution. Nor will we likely ever solve it in the literal sense. However, if we counter IED attacks as part of an overarching counterinsurgency strategy, we can reduce an insurgency's ability to gain strategic advantages with IEDs.

The first step in understanding how to do this is to examine how the IED's unique nature as a weapon system has benefitted insurgents in Iraq and provided them with the ability to gain strategic advantages. Then, adjusting how counter-IED (CIED) forces document IED attacks, we can look at more IED attacks forensically and resource CIED partnership programs so they can perform a strategic role in counterinsurgency. The CIED effort can contribute to the overall counterinsurgency effort in both Iraq and Afghanistan by reducing the insurgents' ability to use IEDs to achieve strategic goals.

### Because They Work

The IED has become a widely used weapon for insurgents in Iraq for one reason: it works. The IED's effectiveness as a weapon system largely derives from its ability to detonate in close proximity to a target. The enemy in Iraq does this either by using a suicide operative to initiate the IED or by having its victim or victims unknowingly set off the device. Examples of victim-initiated attacks include using the weight of the victim or vehicle to trigger an electric switch, using landmines to initiate an IED, or using passive infrared systems that detect movement.<sup>1</sup> The IED detonates close

*Commander John Moulton, U.S. Navy, was the J-5 for Combined Joint Task Force Troy in Baghdad, Iraq. He holds a B.S. from the U.S. Naval Academy and M.S. degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the U.S. Naval War College. He has served in various command and staff positions in the continental United States, Italy, and Iraq.*

PHOTO: Soldiers react to a simulated roadside improvised explosive device attack during a skills demonstration at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, 23 May 2009. (DOD, CPL Jo Jones)

to its target and at a predetermined angle. The IED has the same effect as a precision-guided weapon.

While victim-initiated IED detonations depend on victims taking actions to initiate them, insurgents have reduced the element of chance by including separate arming and firing systems and by using command initiation systems where a triggerman arms or fires the IED. Typical methods used in Iraq include powering the IED via a copper wire previously laid out between the device and the triggerman, or using commercially available technology such as long-range, cordless telephones or electronic key fobs to transmit an arming or firing signal.<sup>2</sup> By using these methods, the IED's triggerman can physically distance himself from the scene of the attack without reducing its effectiveness.

In this manner, IEDs can incorporate the weapon system concept of standoff. By gaining distance, the triggerman limits his chances of death or injury when he detonates the IED, reduces his odds of capture by being further away from his victims, and facilitates his escape.

The use of commercially available products in IEDs in Iraq is extensive. By using commercial products, insurgents ingeniously take advantage of the creative power of a global market-based economy. Rather than having to research, design, test, and manufacture their own initiation systems, insurgents rely on the power of consumer demand to entice companies and their research labs to develop and produce smaller, lighter, longer range, less expensive, and increasingly reliable electronic items, which they can use in their IEDs. These constant technical improvements also benefit the insurgent by making it difficult for CIED forces to adapt. If insurgents find one of their systems is susceptible to IED countermeasures, the multitude of commercially available systems readily provides them with options for switching to other systems. Effective IED countermeasures against one initiation system often result in insurgents switching to other means of initiation to continue their IED campaign.<sup>3</sup>

The dual-use nature of these commercial products also enables the insurgent to hide them in plain sight. The insurgent can use legitimate electronics shops to order and stockpile components prior to assembly. The devices' actual signals, transmitted among other signals on the electromagnetic spectrum, do not distinguish themselves as nefarious in a routine sea of benign transmissions from other devices.

Besides the arming and firing systems, an IED also requires an initiator and explosive component. However, due to the amount of military ordnance throughout Iraq, explosive components are readily available, and the region has a long history of trade practices that are beyond the central government's control.<sup>4</sup> Some insurgents have the ability to manufacture homemade explosives. Further benefiting the insurgents is the fact that the ordnance in an IED does not have to be pristine or stored in dry conditions because insurgents do not drop IEDs from an aircraft or shoot them out of a gun tube.

The ability to use commercially available items and the prevalence of explosives means that insurgents face a low barrier to entry to build, stockpile, and use IEDs. While external support and state sponsorship can help insurgent groups, they are not prerequisites for waging an IED campaign in Iraq. From this perspective, a strategy based on effectively controlling Iraq's borders, akin to the U.S. government's war on drugs, might reduce IED attacks but would not preclude them.

A unique aspect of the Iraqi insurgency is that numerous insurgent groups with conflicting goals have chosen to wage their insurgencies via an IED campaign. Due to the conflicting nature of many of these groups' goals, it is highly unlikely that they have chosen to use IEDs as part of an overarching strategic campaign. Do insurgent groups choose IEDs for strategic reasons or merely because they are the most feasible means to reliably attack coalition forces? Regardless of why insurgents choose IEDs, they gain strategic advantages by using them.

***If insurgents find one of their systems is susceptible to IED countermeasures, the multitude of commercially available systems readily provides them with options for switching to other systems.***



## The Strategic Effects

One of the primary strategic advantages of IEDs is the ability to seize the initiative from coalition forces. IEDs enable an insurgent to choose where and when an attack will occur. This forces the militarily stronger coalition forces to react to their deeds. By attacking with IEDs, a single insurgent can successfully attack an entire formation of heavily armed vehicles that are protected with the latest armor—without revealing his own position and making himself vulnerable to a counterattack. By not amassing forces to successfully mount an attack, the insurgents avoid exposing themselves to the coalition forces' critical strength—combined arms firepower.

This strategy frustrates coalition forces. The sudden, precise, and largely unpredictable nature of an IED attack can unnerve military personnel on patrol. Difficulties in identifying the perpetrators compound this feeling, thus preventing an effective counterattack. Taking advantage of this frustration to generate a coalition overreaction is one insurgent tactic. This overreaction can occur in many different ways, including a gunner with IED-induced nervousness firing at civilians due to his failure to correctly apply escalation of force procedures, using force as a default response without appropriately weighing other courses of action, or indiscriminately, inaccurately, or excessively applying force. These overreactions benefit the insurgents by generating situations where they or other opponents of the counterinsurgency can label coalition forces as reckless in using violence with little regard against the people they came to liberate.

Also frustrated are commanders trained to “seize the initiative” through “maneuver” and “surprise,” to “get inside their enemy’s OODA [Observe, Orient, Decide, Act] loop,” and to “find and fix” the enemy.<sup>5</sup> Either we accept daily attacks and casualties as the price for being in Iraq or we change and adopt strategies and tactics foreign to our way of thinking about how to wage wars. One example of how IEDs are changing military thinking in Iraq is the purchase of mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles and add-on armor for other vehicles. Both of these increase the odds of Soldiers surviving

***...overreactions benefit the insurgents by generating situations where they or other opponents of the counterinsurgency can label coalition forces as reckless...***

an IED attack but run counter to DOD’s transformational goals of becoming a lighter and more agile force.

Such measures to bolster force protection can have a negative effect on counterinsurgency operations because they involve putting distance and armor between coalition forces and the Iraqi people. Through the use of IEDs, insurgents have caused coalition forces to isolate themselves from the people of Iraq. This has likely made “buttoned up” armored vehicles with “Danger—Stay Back” signs and lasers and gun barrels trained on nearby vehicles an enduring part of the coalition force image.

IEDs raise the cost of the war even beyond the price paid in casualties, destroyed vehicles, and force protection measures. Through sustained, widespread IED attacks, insurgents have been able to prolong the conflict by preventing coalition forces from establishing security throughout the country. This has caused the United States to maintain a significant force level in Iraq ever since the initial invasion. In addition, IEDs enable insurgents to maximize the



**Students maneuver their way along an improvised explosive device recognition and avoidance course at Camp Slayer, Baghdad, Iraq, 30 January 2009.**

effect of their forces relative to their numbers. By choosing a weapon that individuals or small cells can employ, insurgents have forced coalition forces to adopt expensive force protection measures throughout the country. Just as two individuals acting as the “D.C. Sniper” during the fall of 2002 were able to spread fear across the Washington, D.C., area and compel law enforcement officials to react to their actions, IED cells in Iraq have had an effect disproportionate to their size.

## As an Image

With its violent nature and persistent ability to cause casualties, the IED is well suited for insurgents fighting in the information age. A burning military vehicle or carnage in a marketplace enables insurgents to offer war correspondents a tempting opportunity to pen a bold headline or capture an eye-catching video clip, readymade for posting on the web or for dissemination via the 24-hour news networks. By using images that illustrate the Iraqi government and coalition forces’ inability to prevent such violence, the web and media deliver the insurgents’ message to a global audience free of charge. In this manner, the IED has become iconic of the insurgency in Iraq. The slow, steady work of a successful counterinsurgency whose goal is to enable a state of “normalcy” does not often produce such ready-made media moments. Thus, the insurgents graphically dominate the news coming out of Iraq in a way that has eluded coalition forces since the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s statue in Firdos Square on 9 April 2003, or the Iraqi national elections in January 2005. Although there has been a marked decrease in violence in Iraq since July 2007, no resonating images represent the experience.

## Eroding Domestic Support

Although an IED is useful tactically as a short-term area denial weapon, its primary strategic value is not to attrit military forces, but to erode domestic and political support for the counterinsurgency. One of the strategic advantages that insurgents in Iraq have gained from using IEDs is the ability to portray coalition forces as ineffective in establishing security. It does not bode well for the world’s predominant military power if the world sees its efforts to use technology or armor to defeat an IED threat as insufficient against “small pockets of resistance.”<sup>6</sup>

***Although there has been a marked decrease in violence in Iraq since July 2007, no resonating images represent the experience.***

This can sow seeds of doubt, especially in a casualty-adverse electorate. Those with access to large national audiences, such as political leaders, members of the press and media, and entertainment figures who oppose the counterinsurgency effort can nurture these doubts. The doubts can have the spill-over effect of hardening insurgent resolve to fight, bolstering insurgent recruiting efforts, and causing the local populace to doubt the long-term commitment of counterinsurgency forces. Those who get a majority of their information by reading headlines, glancing at web pages, or briefly watching 24-hour cable news channels are especially susceptible to equating images of an exploding IED with the security situation. The slow but steady progress of a government and counterinsurgency force intent on establishing mundane normalcy may not be readily apparent to them.

Insurgents in Iraq are aware that nonstate actors used IEDs in Lebanon. Nonstate actors caused 241 U.S. casualties when they attacked the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut with a suicide vehicle-borne IED on 23 October 1983.<sup>7</sup> This caused some observers to question the rationale behind the U.S. presence in Lebanon during the early 1980s and contributed to the Marines’ withdrawal. Rather than tactically defeating the Marines in battle, these nonstate actors were able to strategically raise the cost of the Marine presence in Beirut until it exceeded the U.S. political will to keep them there. In addition to being a relatively inexpensive, easy to employ weapon system with a low barrier to entry, the IED has proven to be an effective way for a nonstate actor, with or without popular support, to force the withdrawal of a large military force.

Technical IED countermeasures are expensive and have not kept up with the adaptability displayed by insurgent IED makers and emplacements. Insurgents have displayed the ability to cause coalition force casualties by adapting their systems faster than

coalition forces can respond to the changes. While some have blamed much of this on an unwieldy or exceptionally bureaucratic military procurement system, many innovations and new methods have failed to reduce these shortcomings.

The urgent needs of field commanders, the need to prioritize competing systems, and the opportunity costs of not pursuing other systems will always hamper CIED procurement. Further lengthening this process is the vital need to test and evaluate new systems in an environment that replicates the physical conditions and the crowded electromagnetic spectrum found in the Iraqi battlespace. Not accurately testing and evaluating these systems can lead to ineffectiveness or electronic fratricide, with signals from one system distorting or cancelling out those of another.<sup>8</sup> Once we validate an item and the techniques, tactics and procedures (TTP) associated with its employment in a simulated Iraqi battlespace, we must evaluate its effectiveness in actual operations and develop and implement a plan to field it. Combined, all of these factors enable Iraqi insurgents to stay a step ahead of coalition forces by reducing the ability of the U.S. to capitalize on its critical strengths in technology and material resources.

The IED is an unparalleled strategic weapon for insurgents to employ against a stronger military force. The availability of explosives and commercial technology means that the insurgents can fabricate it locally without large-scale financial or logistic support. Its improvised nature means that insurgents can readily adapt it to overcome countermeasures. The IED enables small insurgent cells to cause casualties in large and powerful military formations and to reduce their risk by incorporating standoff. It keeps coalition forces from applying their advantages in maneuver and firepower, and forces them to adopt expensive force protection measures that increasingly isolate them from the populace whose support they seek. It enables insurgents to take free advantage of the media to vividly portray the counterinsurgents as unable to establish order and security, and this helps erode popular support for the counterinsurgency. Worse, many IED attributes and characteristics cause leaders to focus on reducing IED attacks and casualties at the expense of the counterinsurgency effort. However, if we apply proven counterinsurgency principles to the CIED effort, we can thwart the insurgents' ability to use IEDs strategically.

## What We Should Do

While the U.S. spent \$3.63 billion in 2006 on a largely technical, engineering-based CIED effort, the level of IED attacks throughout Iraq did not begin to decrease until July 2007.<sup>9</sup> These attacks continued to decline from 100 attacks a day to approximately 60.<sup>10</sup> In order to sustain this downward trend, coalition and Iraqi leaders must examine the situation to determine the cause or causes of this decline. However, unless we can find a clear relationship between the decline in IED attacks and specific coalition CIED operations or TTP, it would be prudent for coalition CIED leaders to conduct their own critical analysis and not shy away from innovative TTP or organizational structures that challenge existing doctrine.

Thus, rather than focusing on ways to prevent an IED from detonating or mitigating its explosive effects, the Army should seek to improve the CIED force's counterinsurgency effectiveness.

**Providing relevant information.** As Sir Robert Thompson, who helped defeat the communist insurgency in Malaya, has stated, "Anyone having any responsibility for dealing with an insurgent movement must know his enemy and what that enemy is attempting to do."<sup>11</sup> The U.S. Marine Corps' *Small Wars Manual* operationalizes this statement as follows: "The military strategy of the campaign and the tactics employed by the commander in the field must be adapted to the situation in order to accomplish the mission without delay."<sup>12</sup> But do we do this effectively when insurgents in Iraq adapt their IED campaign faster than coalition forces can react? The answer is to change how CIED forces in Iraq provide information on their operations to their chain of command and to other units.

Currently, CIED reports in Iraq focus on the what, when, where, and how of an IED attack.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, this generates hundreds of reports daily with photos and information on coalition force actions before, during, and after the attack, and on

***The answer is to change  
how CIED forces...  
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command and to other units.***



the type of IED the enemy employed. What is largely missing from this deluge is the “who” and “why” that might enable staffs to turn the information into intelligence. By remembering the purpose of such reports and using information technology systems to better convey this information, military leaders will better understand IED networks and the effects of operations against them.

Reports should emphasize *the IED network*. While understanding coalition force mistakes may help mitigate future attacks, this should not be the focus of reports: such knowledge does not directly help the counterinsurgency effort. By focusing on coalition and insurgent TTP in comparison to previous attacks, we can develop a larger picture of the IED network. EOD Mobile Unit 2 used this method with some success to profile IED networks. However, it was not adopted theater-wide.

While this emphasis on patterns of events can make reports more useful, if such information remains buried, we cannot act on it effectively. To help separate the wheat from the chaff, we must determine where value is added to IED reports during their processing up the chain of command.

Thompson’s observation from Malaya that “an insurgency is a junior commander’s war” also applies to the CIED fight in Iraq. Because of his day-to-day missions rendering IEDs harmless, the non-commissioned or junior officer EOD team leader is best suited to recognize similarities and trends in IED attacks in his area of operations. On the other hand, because his focus is local and he is tactically oriented, the next higher level in the chain of command may be in a better position to recognize any extension of the patterns to other areas of operation. Team leaders can sift for relevant information by focusing their reports on the changes and patterns they see, thus preventing those higher in the chain of command from receiving too much extraneous information and enabling them to analyze why these patterns are emerging.

Higher echelons add value by analysis and pattern identification. Thus, posting information on the web displays pertinent information more effectively and enables all users with appropriate access to it to view the information faster than via e-mail, where briefing cycles drive deadlines.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, web-sites enable units preparing to deploy to the same area and other units at the same echelon to access the information much sooner.

Recognizing, as Thompson did, that a “conventional command structure . . . leads to a lack of initiative in the junior ranks,” junior leaders who are more information technology savvy than senior leaders should develop reporting formats and innovative ways to disseminate information about IEDs to the larger counterinsurgency force.

**Perspective.** Coalition forces should also change how coalition leaders view IEDs. Currently leaders see IEDs from a conventional warfare perspective—that is, as impediments to maneuver. By realizing the IED’s inherently improvised nature, counterinsurgent leaders will see that the IED itself is a valuable source of information. It can provide greater understanding of the insurgency and help us discover new ways to defeat it.

The *Small Wars Manual* states that the counterinsurgent’s “purpose should always be to restore normal government or give the people a better government than they had before, and to establish peace, order, and security on as permanent a basis as practicable. Gradually there must be instilled in the inhabitants’ minds the leading ideas of . . . security and sanctity of life and property . . .”<sup>15</sup>

Coalition forces will be able to reap intelligence on IED networks through forensic analysis of the IEDs themselves—if they view IEDs as murder weapons left at the scene of a crime rather than landmines placed to inhibit maneuver. Furthermore, using forensic evidence to seek convictions at the Iraq Central Criminal Court can bolster the Iraqi judicial system.

Convicting IED-makers and establishing the rule of law are not lofty goals that interfere with the war effort. As Thompson wrote, “It should be the firm policy of the government to bring all persons who have committed an actual offence to public trial. This has the great advantage not only of showing that justice is being done, but of spotlighting the brutality of terrorist crimes and the whole nature of the insurgency.”<sup>16</sup>

***...the IED itself is a valuable source of information. It can provide greater understanding of the insurgency and help us discover new ways to defeat it.***

The tactical situation will not always facilitate recovering an IED and treating the surrounding area as a crime scene, but once leaders gain actionable intelligence from EOD teams and forensic evidence, they will become aware of the benefits of exploiting IEDs, as opposed to simply detonating them in place as the preferred course of action.

Currently, ad hoc organizations called “weapons intelligence teams” gather forensic evidence about the insurgent IED campaign in Iraq. These teams, and their command and control structure, fall under Combined Joint Task Force Troy, and consist of EOD technicians, combat arms soldiers, and intelligence personnel trained to gather forensic evidence. However, we are not using them as effectively as we could be due to their need for additional security and because they can exploit an area only after an EOD team has cleared it. Assigning an intelligence specialist to each EOD team to collect forensic evidence would produce numerous benefits. All EOD responses could then include forensic information, and instead of EOD and weapons intelligence teams simultaneously reporting on the same events, intelligence specialists could help write IED reports, and EOD technicians and combat arms Soldiers could return to more gainful employment in their specialties.

Exploiting IEDs and attack scenes will lead to more evidence and intelligence. This in turn will enable us to identify more insurgent IED cells and link them to attacks using evidence that can result in criminal convictions. By regarding the IED itself as a source of information, coalition force leaders will be able to turn the insurgents’ most relied upon critical strength into a critical vulnerability.

**Indigenous security forces’ responsibility.** We must enable indigenous security forces to assume responsibility for the CIED effort. The insurgents attack coalition forces with IEDs, but they also use them to attack hospitals, schools, Iraqi officials, markets, and religious sites and gatherings such as the Golden Mosque in Samarra and the Shi’a Ashura celebration. Such attacks will not end once coalition forces withdraw. Training Iraqi CIED forces follows General Petraeus’s “Leading-to-Partnering-to-Overwatch” counterinsurgency strategy and the *Small Wars Manual*’s guidance to “make self-sufficient native agencies responsible.”<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately, this effort is already underway in the Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal School and Iraqi



Members of a weapons intelligence team provide counter improvised explosive device intelligence through collection, analysis and tactical exploitation in support of Multinational Corps Iraq, 12 February 2009.

Army Bomb Disposal Company’s partnering program. Iraqi units are “already responding to 80 percent of the EOD calls,” and one U.S. commander reported “see[ing] people walking around [Diwaniyah where] they wouldn’t risk it before... [as] the Iraqi people see their fellow Iraqis working to help them.”<sup>18</sup> While this is promising, another officer involved in this same effort noted, “Although progress is noticeably underway, there is still a great deal of work left.”<sup>19</sup>

One reason for this is the low priority these two programs receive in the CIED and counterinsurgency effort. In mid-2007, only two people in the CIED effort supported the partnership program as their primary duty.<sup>20</sup> While the programs have already yielded strategic benefits, such benefits will remain limited unless we give the programs enough resources to contribute to the larger counterinsurgency effort. Enabling security forces to protect their fellow citizens by prosecuting IED-makers

and gathering evidence that can lead to criminal convictions would be a great advantage for the counterinsurgency. It makes “the government . . . a protector of those who are innocent, and it puts the terrorists in the position of criminals.”<sup>21</sup>

## Engendering Success by Changing the Mind-set

My three recommendations—establishing unit websites to share IED reports focused on IED networks, restructuring the weapons intelligence teams, and adequately resourcing bomb disposal

partnership programs—all focus on changing our approach to problems, rather than relying on engineering or technological solutions, which have narrower applications. While these recommendations have grown from experience in Iraq, they also apply to other IED campaigns against counterinsurgent power, for example, Afghanistan. And Afghanistan will not likely be the last place where the U.S. will confront an insurgent IED campaign. An overarching counterinsurgency strategy requires a CIED strategy to turn the enemy’s use of IEDs into a vulnerability. **MR**

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# Year of the NCO 2009

Featuring in the September-October

## *Military Review*

- The winning essays for the 2009 General William E. DePuy Combined Arms Center Writing Competition on “Leader Development from Initial Entry Training to the Battlefield”





## Nangarhar Regional Development Plan

*Bridging A Rich Past with a Bright Future*



**“Nangarhar Inc”**

*Serving the Greater Nangarhar Community  
through the creation of one  
of Central and South Central Asia's  
Premier Commercial Trade and  
Transit Hubs*

# AFGHANISTAN'S NANGARHAR INC

## A Model for Interagency Success

Major David K. Spencer, U.S. Army

**W**HILE CREATING SOLUTIONS for economic development problems in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2007 and 2008, the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team entered into a unique partnership with U.S. government interagency personnel. The result—the Nangarhar Regional Development Plan—was a transformative achievement with far-reaching implications for the counterinsurgency (COIN) effort in Afghanistan.

Its conception through interagency collaboration was equally important as a model to emulate for future success. With these and other efforts, the U.S. military is a closer partner with the U.S. interagency community than ever before. Continuing to foster these relationships will be critical to unity of effort and success in the War on Terrorism.

### National Strategy

As a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade operating in the strategically important eastern region of Afghanistan (the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, and Nuristan), I observed the implementation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's National Development Strategy from 2007 to 2008. The national strategy, approved in interim form in January 2006 at the London Conference, used district and provincial development plans as devices to achieve the overarching strategic vision. The creation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and associated provincial development plans involved a series of national and sub-national consultations. Each of 16,753 (later expanded to 18,500) community development councils in Afghanistan submitted project “wish lists” to the 345 respective district development assemblies. These assemblies are vehicles at the district level designed to consolidate projects into the district development plans.<sup>1</sup>

### Formulation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy

The projects sent to the district development assemblies were primarily poverty reduction projects and those that affected essential needs of communities (flood control projects, wells, etc).<sup>2</sup> The district assemblies took

*Major David K. Spencer is currently a student at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. He received a B.A. from St. Bonaventure University. During deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom 08 as the brigade fire support officer, he managed the brigade's efforts in governance and development in coordination with U.S. Government agencies. He has served in the continental United States, Europe, two tours in Iraq, and one tour in Afghanistan.*

the top projects in each of the eight sectors of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and created the district development plans. From these plans, the top ten projects in each sector were used to create the provincial development plans. In effect, their plans are a consolidated grass-roots driven project wish list generated by communities that did not have a regional view of the development problem. They only saw their own local problems in most cases. Although the provincial development plans state that the national strategies were taken into account, how sector strategies affect the provincial plans in a meaningful way is not clear.

The Afghan National Development Strategy embraces three visions: the political, the economic and social, and the security. Some projects affect each of these. For example, roads are extremely important in Afghanistan and cross all lines of effort. The strategy identifies six other cross-cutting examples: regional cooperation, counter-narcotics, anticorruption, gender equality, capacity development, and environmental management.<sup>3</sup>

Task Force Bayonet followed three primary lines of effort nested within its higher headquarters' mission and intent: governance, development, and security. These lines of effort were nested within the Afghanistan National Development Strategy visions, but, although the task force was well equipped to deal with security issues in its region, the brigade had to work hard to address development and governance lines of effort to complement the strategy's political and economic visions.

In developing an operational strategy, the brigade identified economic solutions as critical to overall success. Compelling arguments and data points identify the insurgency in the eastern portion of Afghanistan as one driven by economics. The numbers of ideological fighters in the region are quite low. Many people fight because they have no other way of making a living. In some cases, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have reduced the number of fighters simply by paying \$5.50 per day for the services of fighting-age males—50 cents more a day than the insurgents paid them.

Defeating an economic insurgency requires an economic strategy. A statement from the interim national development strategy is telling: "Ultimately, we want to move beyond dependence upon international aid and build a thriving, legal, private sector-led economy that reduces poverty and enables all Afghans to live in dignity."<sup>4</sup> The Afghan government understands that development efforts in many cases need not attempt to reduce poverty directly. The long-term solution is to build a thriving economy that will do the job. Revisions in the 2008 version of the strategy display the same logical thought process, but mark a noticeable shift to favor poverty reduction semantics. Because Afghanistan qualifies as a "heavily indebted poor country," obtaining funding from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund requires a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy serves as this strategy paper for donor funding, but the Afghan government unfortunately uses some policies and procedures that may actually increase poverty. In the 2008 strategy document, the government took a step backward with an economic development objective to "reduce poverty [and] ensure sustainable development through a private-sector-led market economy."<sup>5</sup> Poverty reduction came to the forefront to leverage international donor money—but at the expense of truly reducing poverty in the long-term by building a thriving economy.

## The Problem

If the Afghan government continues to pursue the economic strategy set forth in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, how can the provincial development plans build a thriving, legal, private-sector-led economy? The contributors to the plan do not have the regional vision necessary to address solutions that build the critical infrastructure required to bring about long-term sustainable economic growth. The grass roots projects understandably address only the immediate needs of communities. Afghanistan's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's National Area

***The numbers of ideological fighters in the region are quite low. Many people fight because they have no other way of making a living.***

Based Development Program is currently using \$2.5 million of donor funds from the Asian Development Bank on district and provincial development plans projects in Nangarhar Province. The vast majority of the projects are gabion walls and associated check dams not designed to bring about economic growth and which are frequently washed away by floods. They are simply projects that have been identified as important to communities in the near term.

This situation highlights the major challenge in the provincial development plan construct. Top-down planning with bottom-up refinement should reshape the provincial development plans. Instead of a simple list of check dams, gabion walls, and micro-hydro projects, Task Force Bayonet worked to build the capability of district development assemblies and other Afghan government officials to draw development plans that link together projects to capture and enhance economic value chains. A comprehensive watershed management plan should lead to a dam with associated power production. Irrigation projects and agricultural development projects should increase the production of grain, leading to a grain elevator powered by the dam project while roads link all the projects together. These interconnected initiatives operating as a whole are far greater than the sum of the parts.

## The Solution

In Task Force Bayonet's area of operations, the problem was clear; the difficulty lay in how to address it. The task force began operations in May 2007, and from the beginning, it was apparent that the interagency components required to address governance and development solutions were not present. Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and U.S. Department of Agriculture positions in the PRTs were not filled; there was little or no interagency staffing at the brigade level, and the entire complement of interagency personnel in the eastern region was less than 1/100th of one percent of the paratroopers on the ground from the Department of Defense.

The onus to provide a solution fell on the shoulders of the agency that knew and interacted with the people and government every day. The brigade accepted this task as a necessary burden. FM 3-24,

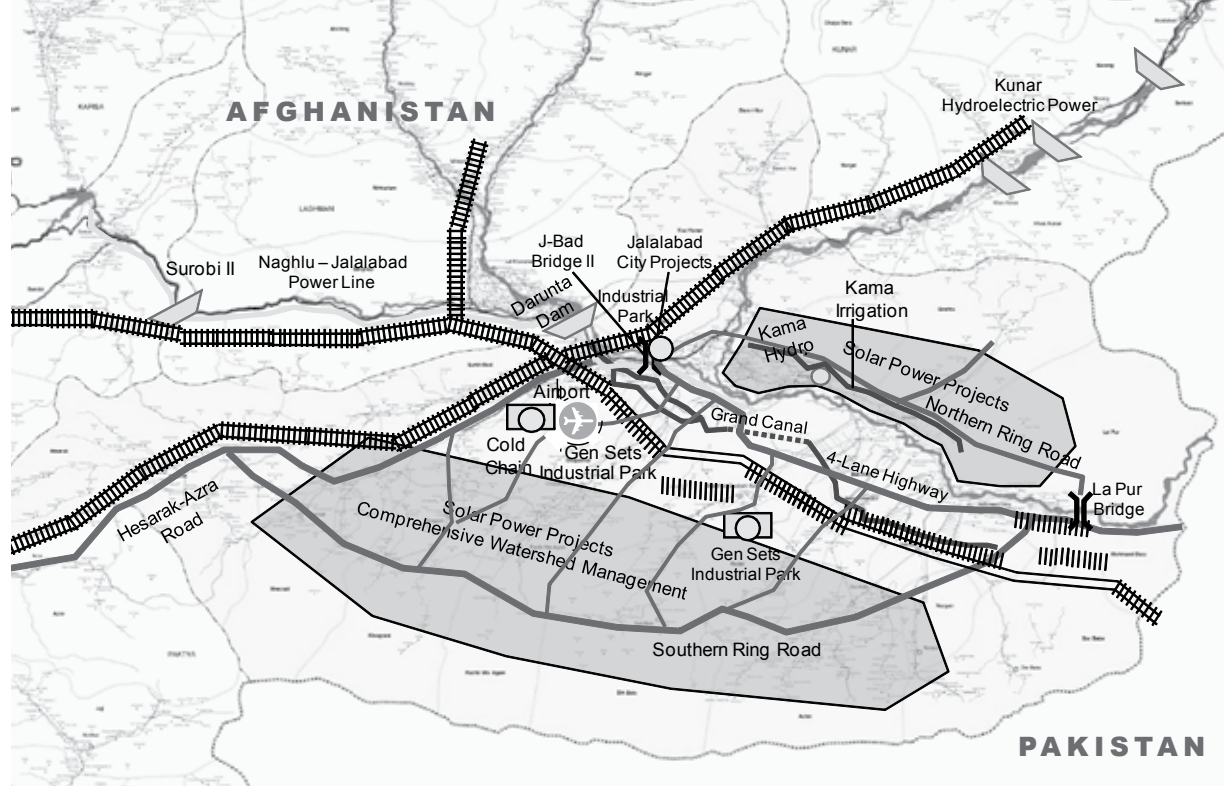
*Counterinsurgency*, states that whenever possible, civilians should perform civilian tasks but "military forces [must] be able to conduct political, social, information and economic programs 'as necessary.'... Depending on the state of the insurgency, therefore, Soldiers and Marines should prepare to execute many nonmilitary missions to support COIN efforts. Everyone has a role in nation building, not just Department of State and civil affairs personnel."<sup>6</sup> In fact, Task Force Bayonet undertook a number of initiatives in governance and development simply because no one else was available to do so.

It was with this in mind that the brigade commander and senior leaders traveled to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul at the invitation of the acting brigade political advisor. They met with various interagency leaders to discuss possibilities in Nangarhar. During a meeting with the acting USAID Afghanistan director, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) director, Department of State interagency resource coordination director, Task Force Bayonet commander Colonel Charles Preysler, Ambassador William Wood, and other leaders, Task Force Bayonet agreed to help facilitate the creation of an economic development plan for the agencies to execute together. The Ambassador said he would like Nangarhar to be a "model for success." And so Nangarhar Inc was born.

Eight key members of the Task Force Bayonet staff, to include the brigade operations officer, the fire support officer, the CJTF-82 liaison officer to Task Force Bayonet, as well as representatives from PRT Nangarhar, traveled to the U.S. Embassy for nine days to prepare the plan. The PRT members were at the end of their deployment with nearly a full year of experience working in Nangarhar under their belts. The leaders from Task Force Bayonet had more than nine months of experience in Nangarhar and the eastern region. Working with the Department of State interagency resource coordinator, with advice and input from the Afghan Reconstruction Group, INL, and USAID, the team prepared the business plan for Nangarhar Inc.

The 62-page business plan used the corporate model to jump-start and create sustainable, long-term economic growth leading to full employment. The plan included input from all agencies involved





A Nangarhar Inc Update Briefing slide, May 2008, depicts overall Nangarhar Inc project vision.

and included compelling strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group, a management and sustainability plan, and 35 prioritized projects with project descriptions, general scope, charts depicting associated timelines, cash flows, and required resources. The projects fell into three categories: quick impact, near term, and long-term.

The Nangarhar Inc quick-impact projects aimed at leveraging the Nangarhar governor's poppy eradication success from 2007 to 2008. However, their critical purpose was to jump-start economic growth in the region. Additionally, intermodal transportation solutions (roads, rail, and a regional airport with an international gateway) were critical to address Nangarhar as a potential agribusiness base.

Due to the lack of available export mechanisms, up to 30 percent of produce grown in Nangarhar rots in the field. To leverage these export opportunities, cold storage with collocated power solutions are also critical to enhancing the economic value

chain. Currently, Nangarhar exports a large percentage of its agricultural products to Pakistan, which processes, packages, and stores them until they are later resold in Nangarhar at many times their original price. Nangarhar Inc addresses the critical infrastructure requirements for Afghans to enhance their agribusiness value chain and recapture these lost potential revenues.

During creation, the task force identified power solutions as most critical. Thirty-eight businesses in Jalalabad had failed in a 12-month period in 2008 due to high fuel costs.

Long-term projects have higher price tags, but are critical to ensure the self-sufficiency of the government and to reduce reliance on donor support. One noteworthy long-term power project harnesses an estimated 1,100 megawatts of potential hydroelectric power in adjacent Kunar province by means of a series of dam systems in the Kunar River basin. Power from this project can go not only to businesses in Nangarhar, but can also assist in developing the Federally Administered Tribal Area and Northwest Frontier Tribal Provinces across the border in Pakistan.

This is an example of a project that requires the combined efforts of the interagency to succeed. USAID funding and expertise may contribute to dam design with the Afghan Ministry of Energy and Water, while the Department of Defense and

***Due to the lack of available export mechanisms, up to 30 percent of produce grown in Nangarhar rots in the field.***

PRTs work local government issues with the Afghan government in the eastern region. However, U.S. Embassies in Kabul and Islamabad, with national level Afghan and Pakistani officials, must resolve cross-border issues such as power purchase agreements and resolution of water rights disputes. No one agency can pursue all of the Nangarhar Inc projects. Of necessity, this plan must move forward with close interagency cooperation.

Indeed, one of the noteworthy aspects of this plan is the amount of interagency cooperation that went into its creation. The experience of the military forces and expert input from the interagency produced the base business plan. The coordinated efforts of the interagency, led by the U.S. Embassy, are continuing to move Nangarhar Inc forward to its logical conclusion—the development of a strategically important trade and transit corridor that will allow the tremendous strengths of the area to create a self-sustaining regional economic engine.

Nevertheless, the future for Nangarhar Inc as a model for success is not a certain one. The combined and coordinated efforts of the U.S. Government interagency must lead the effort in the early stages and emplace critical infrastructure to attract large-scale foreign capital investment. Unfortunately, uncoordinated development is ubiquitous in Afghanistan. Numerous donor and development agencies in Afghanistan operate under their own priorities. International donors, such as the Asian Development Bank, partner with the United Nations Development Program and governmental agencies such as USAID, GTZ International (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, an EU funded development agency), and DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency). Afghan development efforts under various ministries, such as the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, nongovernmental agencies, and PRTs, operate within the constraints of their respective agencies. In large part, they support the Afghan solution—the Afghanistan National Development Strategy—but development efforts in Afghanistan are disjointed and disconnected because they often follow fundamentally challenged provincial development plans and their own guidelines and mandates.

Task Force Bayonet recognized that the lack of coordination had led to numerous instances of “project fratricide” and that solutions beyond the national development strategy were required. To that end, Task Force Bayonet implemented an initiative called “district mapping” to map the past projects completed in a district. It mapped all development agencies’ current projects and future projects envisioned provincial and district Afghan leaders. The plan is moving forward in cooperation with the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan and the Joint, interagency, multinational, and host-nation community of the eastern region. This initiative has tremendous potential.

Even within the U.S. government, efforts are not always synchronized. Although the U.S. is fighting a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan as part of the War on Terrorism, USAID (the primary U.S. development agency operating there), is focused on “developing Afghanistan.” Although the country team director (the Ambassador) directed that development efforts focus on certain priorities, USAID instead focused on its internal priorities. Although FM 3-24 only covers the ground elements of the Department of Defense and not the rest of the interagency, the following statement from that manual is wholly applicable to the current situation:

Unity of effort must be present at every echelon of a COIN operation. Otherwise, well intentioned but uncoordinated actions



Afghans gather in front of a development site that is being monitored by the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team in Jalalabad in the Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan, 30 May 2009.

can cancel each other or provide vulnerabilities for insurgents to exploit. Ideally, a single counterinsurgent leader has authority over all government agencies involved in COIN operations...The U.S. ambassador and country team, along with senior HN representatives, must be key players in higher level planning; similar connections are needed throughout the chain of command.<sup>7</sup>

Without unity of effort between the U.S. government agencies, ensuring the success of focused development strategies such as Nangarhar Inc becomes difficult.

## The Way Ahead

We must address interagency discord while pursuing strategies similar to Nangarhar Inc. Although the Department of Defense and Department of State are conducting a counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, the mandate of USAID can be simplified as “development,” although its objectives aim to further the foreign policy goals of the United States. “Developing Afghanistan” can move forward in many ways and does not always contribute to the kind of effects desired in a COIN environment. Department of Defense doctrine indicates “reinforcing success,” while agencies such as USAID typically go where the need is greatest, sometimes for short-term gain at the expense of long-lasting effects that strike at the heart of insurgencies. The country team leader, in coordination with and supported by the various agencies operating in strategic regions, must address these issues.

Nangarhar Inc’s solutions are logical and compelling replies to those who argue that we should spend development funds equally across Afghanistan or in other developing countries. Providing what some might consider a disproportionate amount of development funds in areas such as Nangarhar will pay a high dividend because the seed for success already exists. Investing in other areas can be likened to “pouring water into the sand.”

The Afghan government also must become more involved in all phases to ensure success of Nangarhar Inc. Various government documents show they understand this. Article 10 of the Afghan Constitution “encourages and protects private capital investments and enterprises based on the market economy...”<sup>8</sup> The government notes in



U.S. Army, 1LT William J. Hackenbradt

**Nangarhar Inc Coordination Conference, FOB Fenty, Jalalabad, July 2008.**

the Afghanistan National Development Strategy that “given the major limitations in the economic environment that must be addressed, the successful transition to a competitive market economy will require sustained commitment, albeit with the support of the international community. Simply creating conditions in which the private sector can operate alone will not be sufficient.”<sup>9</sup> Continued efforts are required by the U.S. government to emplace the critical infrastructure needed to jump-start economic growth in Nangarhar, with government cooperation in setting and sustaining the conditions required not only to enable and sustain Afghan businesses, but also to bring in foreign capital and private investment.

In the expansion of the Nangarhar model to the other PRTs in eastern region, future plans and refinements of the provincial development plans must take place in close cooperation with the government. Coordinating development plans in the manner of Nangarhar Inc, while weaving them into the fabric of the provincial development plans, will achieve the vision of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

Task Force Bayonet moved to the next logical step of Nangarhar Inc. It provided the Nangarhar Inc creation methodology to the three other PRTs in the eastern region and helped them coach their Afghan counterparts to refine their provincial development visions. “Wadan Laghman” (Prosperous



Laghman), Kunar's "Province of Opportunity," and a development plan in eastern Nuristan are all refinements of Provincial Development Plans. Task Force Bayonet hosted a conference to coordinate these activities with Nangarhar Inc in an "Eastern Region Development Plan."

This plan, with Nangarhar Inc as the economic engine, harnesses the plentiful natural resources of the adjacent provinces and leverages the potential of the region as a strategic trade and transit hub.

For Nangarhar Inc to become successful and spread across the country as part of a future U.S. COIN strategy, the U.S. government interagency must act together in a coordinated manner with the embassy in Kabul. Coordination of efforts will create a synergistic effect that will contribute to the

overall counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan and illuminate the way ahead for an eventual exit strategy in Afghanistan. To be successful in the War on Terrorism, we must duplicate the level of U.S. interagency cooperation illustrated in the creation and implementation of Nangarhar Inc. **MR**

#### NOTES

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2. *Ibid.*, 11.
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6. Field Manual 3-24, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xxxi, 49.
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8. *The Constitution of Afghanistan*, 4 January 2004, Article 10.
9. *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*, 4.

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# The Israeli Defense Forces Response to the 2006 War with HEZBOLLAH GAZA

Matt M. Matthews

*Matt M. Matthews is currently employed by the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He spent 16 years as a member of the opposing forces battle command training program and served a combined total of 12 years in the active Army, Army Reserve, and Kansas Army National Guard. Mr. Matthews holds a B.S. from Kansas State University. He is the author of several CSI press publications including, We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War and has coauthored numerous scholarly articles.*

PHOTO: Israeli artillery shells explode over Gaza City during Israeli strikes on 16 January 2009 as seen from the Israel-Gaza border. Israel shelled Gaza seeking to ratchet up pressure on Hamas to bow to truce efforts gathering pace in Egypt to end the deadliest assault the Jewish state has ever launched on the enclave. (AFP Photo, Jack Guez)

**W**ITHIN HOURS of the first Israeli air strikes against Hamas on 27 December 2008, military leaders, analysts, pundits, and the media began to speculate about the ability of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) to conduct a successful campaign in Gaza. A mere two days into the operation, as the Israeli Air Force (IAF) continued to pummel terrorist targets in Gaza, some within the Israeli media were already suggesting that “the army had no appetite for a ground war.”<sup>1</sup> Such speculation at the onset of Israeli operations against Hamas was undeniably a direct result of the IDF’s uninspiring performance during its 2006 war against Hezbollah.

As the campaign progressed, however, it quickly became evident to many that the IDF Gaza campaign, Operation Cast Lead, would prove decidedly different from the 2006 war against Hezbollah. This time, the Israeli Prime Minister made no grand announcements of unachievable strategic goals.<sup>2</sup> As the IAF demolished Hamas leadership, training camps, and weaponry in the early stages of the campaign, there were no bombastic proclamations that “[w]e have won the war,” similar to those the chief of the IDF general staff made in 2006.

## Cultural Change

Indeed, the Israeli ground forces in Gaza seemed to have undergone a major cultural change toward decisiveness, aggressiveness, commitment to the mission, and willingness to accept casualties. Commanders led from the front, and the IDF seized cell phones from Israeli soldiers and restricted

the media's access to the battlefield. In a complete reversal from 2006, Israel promptly called the IDF reserves to duty, and they arrived on the battlefield well trained and well equipped. Unlike 2006, the ground campaign shined. "Up to brigade level it was a showcase, orderly, perfect execution, timely [and] disciplined, [the] reservists as good as regulars," wrote one Israeli officer.<sup>3</sup>

The campaign against Hamas was a dramatic turnaround by the IDF after its faltering performance against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The Israeli government's response to the IDF's dismal performance during the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war had been swift and revealing. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government quickly formed a committee to investigate problems associated with the conflict. The findings in the resulting Winograd Report severely criticized Olmert, Defense Minister Peretz, and the chief of the IDF general staff.<sup>4</sup> The report also concluded that the IDF had not been ready for war:

All in all, the IDF failed, especially because of the conduct of the high command and the ground forces, to provide an effective military response to the challenge posed to it by the war in Lebanon, and thus failed to provide the political echelon with a military achievement that could have served as a basis for political and diplomatic action. Responsibility for this outcome lies mainly with the IDF, but the misfits between the mode of action and the goals determined by the political echelon share responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

Both Peretz and Halutz resigned by the summer of 2007.<sup>6</sup> According to Russell W. Glenn, "a considerable number of Israelis blame the poor performance during the 2006 war, in part, on their prime minister and defense minister lacking requisite military experience."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, many Israelis believed that proven combat leaders were required at the helm. Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak soon replaced Peretz. Their differing military experiences could not have been greater; Peretz had fulfilled his military obligation as a maintenance officer in the IDF, and Barak was a decorated combat veteran, who had also commanded a tank battalion in the Sinai during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, later brigades, and an armored division. In 1991, he became a lieutenant general, and the 14th chief of the general staff.<sup>8</sup>

Halutz's replacement, Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi, was also an IDF combat veteran. Ashkenazi fought in the Yom Kippur war, participated in the Entebbe Operation in 1976, and was the former commander of the Golani Brigade and a former IDF deputy chief of staff. Both Halutz and Ashkenazi were in the running for the position of chief of the general staff in 2005. When Halutz won the coveted appointment, Ashkenazi abruptly resigned. After two years as a civilian, however, Ashkenazi returned to active duty, determined, as one IDF official put it, "to pull the IDF out of the muck."<sup>9</sup>

To his credit, Halutz instituted at least 70 fact-finding teams before his departure. Twenty of these teams focused directly or indirectly on the general staff, while others focused almost exclusively on IDF operations in the field. Once in command, Ashkenazi appointed his own team of high-ranking officers to study the findings of the Winograd Report and weigh it against the IDF's own internal probe. According to one source, "The IDF has made sure it has all the answers needed to rebut whatever arguments [a]rose regarding the military, thus attempting to send the message that the military had already identified all the major failures during its own probe of the war, implementing the lessons learnt accordingly."

Indeed, in September 2007, Ashkenazi introduced "Teffen 2012," a five-year plan to increase the IDF's warfighting ability. One of the major goals of "Teffen 2012" was to create "a decisive ground manoeuvre capability based on modern main battle tanks (MBTs) and other armored fighting vehicles, attack helicopters, low altitude unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and transport aircraft." The plan also envisioned advances in the IAF's "precision-strike capability," "intelligence superiority through all means of gathering" and "preparedness and sustainability through expanding emergency stocks of munitions."<sup>10</sup> Senior officers pointed out that some adjustments the IDF made after the 2006 war "were not short of 'revolutionary,' but admitted that the military would not be able to objectively assess their efficiency until the next large operation."<sup>11</sup>

## Sweeping Transformation

While some of the changes within the IDF were groundbreaking, most simply involved a return to its venerable military principles. "Training, training, and training—as well as innovative thinking,"



is how one officer described the IDF's response to the 2006 conflict.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, Ashkenazi and Barak wasted little time in implementing a sweeping transformation within the IDF.

One of the first items on the agenda was the incoherent doctrine that several of Halutz's own fact-finding teams had already branded as "completely wrong." They concluded the doctrine used during the 2006 campaign created "confusion in terminology and misunderstanding of basic military principles." The IDF had replaced proven methods with "an alternative 'conceptual framework' for military thinking, replacing traditional notions of 'objective' and 'subjection' with new concepts like 'campaign rationale' and 'conscious-burning' of the enemy. . . based on this doctrine, the IDF was to rely on precise stand-off fire, mostly from the air, using ground maneuvers only as a last resort."<sup>13</sup> The "core of this document is the theory of SOD (Systemic Operational Design)" noted one its creators, retired Israeli Brigadier General Shimon Naveh.<sup>14</sup>

The IDF quickly jettisoned SOD elements in its doctrine. Asked what changes the IDF made to its doctrine after 2006, one officer replied, "SOD cancelled."<sup>15</sup>

The IDF's transient embrace of SOD post-modern theories at the expense of traditional principles of war was, arguably, one of the strangest episodes in the history of military doctrine. Using John Ellis' work *Against Deconstruction* as a backdrop to describe the failings of SOD, Yehuda Wegman writes that SOD was "the image of intelligence and complexity . . . the use of rhetorical means in order to create the illusion of intelligent analysis at a time when there was no such analysis." Wegman adds, "The first casualty of the new language was the main principle of war: adhering to the mission."<sup>16</sup>

## New Doctrine

Having abandoned SOD, the IDF went to work on a new doctrine, which it has yet to finalize. As a stopgap measure, the Israeli military has apparently returned to the doctrine in place prior to 2006.<sup>17</sup> Drastic changes within the IDF continued under Ashkenazi and Barak. "There was an almost immediate adjustment in training," one expert in the field acknowledged. "The IDF started training more on the offensive and defensive, what we call conventional warfare skills."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, within the IDF Armored

Corps, the changes in training were swift. Tank units once again focused on their traditional roles and advantages, that of "speed and firepower." Israeli armored brigades trained for months at the IDF Ground Forces Training Center in Nagev, Israel. As an example, Armored Brigade 401, which had lost 8 tank crewmen in 2006, conducted a 12-week training exercise in which it trained in urban terrain, but spent most of its time "sharpening the skills needed for armored combat," according to the *Jerusalem Post*. "Our advantage is our ability to move fast and our firepower," a brigade commander emphasized. "The tanks are now driving faster and using smokescreens—something they didn't use during the war—since we now understand that the threat of anti-tank missiles is 360 degrees."<sup>19</sup> At the company and battalion levels, IDF units also conducted extensive and realistic training in an area meant to replicate southern Lebanon and Hezbollah tactics.<sup>20</sup>

The IDF reserve forces, particularly tankers and artillerymen, returned to their designated weapons systems and trained on the basics. More importantly, the reserve forces started to receive their full equipment sets. In the immediate aftermath of the 2006 war, the IDF procured tens of thousands of ballistic helmets and vests and night vision goggles, as well as significant quantities of grenades, small arms ammunition, and magazines. After years of performing "other" duties, the reserve soldiers returned to their equipment to address what one observer called "classic warfare needs."<sup>21</sup>

With a new lengthened training program in place, the reserve armored corps began conducting live-fire exercises and participating in full-scale division maneuver training. These exercises included all required combat support units. Unlike 2006, when some reserve officers first met their soldiers on mobilization, these large exercises, the first in years, brought the organization together. Furthermore, all reserve officers selected for command were sent to

**After years of performing  
"other" duties,...  
reserve soldiers returned to  
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"classic warfare needs."**

the proper schools and directed to conduct regular exercises with all forces under their command.<sup>22</sup> The IDF reserve explored a new “fitness index” resembling the one used by the IAF to qualify pilots.<sup>23</sup>

By late 2008, the IDF had undergone an almost complete transformation. Having scrutinized its missteps during the 2006 war, the IDF abandoned the defective doctrine of the past and returned to the fundamentals of modern warfare. If airpower and precision fires were to be decisive, they must be coupled with well-trained and highly motivated combined-arms ground maneuver forces. Air power alone could never be the sole instrument of victory. As the IDF continued its retraining, Hamas fired rockets into Israel from Gaza. This time, the IDF would be prepared.

## The Gaza Conflict

After winning local elections against its political rival, Fatah, in 2006, Hamas gained complete control of Gaza in 2007 by confronting the Palestinian Authority and driving it out. The military wing of Hamas carried out this violent coup d'état, and by 2008, this force had grown to approximately 15,000 fighters considered by many to be the “most organized and effective militia in the Palestinian Territories.”<sup>24</sup> However, as Anthony Cordesman reported, Hamas's triumph over Fatah “occurred far more because of a lack of leadership and elementary competence on the part of the Fatah/Palestinian Authority forces than any great skill on the part of Hamas. Unlike the Hezbollah, Hamas never had to develop the combat skills necessary to fight an effective opponent.”<sup>25</sup>

Israel responded to Hamas's rise by establishing an economic blockade. According to Cordesman, “Some 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza became hostages to the power struggle between Israel and Hamas.” As the noose tightened, Hamas responded by smuggling in weaponry, with Iran and Syria supplying much of it. Small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, and rockets moved through tunnel systems connecting Egypt and Gaza, and through the Sinai and the Mediterranean Sea. From time to time, Hamas used its rockets and mortars to attack Israel, and the IDF responded in kind.

Hamas attempted to replicate a Hezbollah-type defensive system in preparation for any IDF incursion into Gaza. Cordesman believes Hamas

attempted to follow the pattern Hezbollah established in an effort to “create tunnels and strong points in Gaza, develop new booby traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and to create [a] spider web of prepared strong points, underground and hidden shelters, and ambush points throughout urban and built up areas as defensive strong points.”<sup>26</sup>

An Israeli military source described Gaza as “one big minefield—IEDs, traps, and tunnels in almost every block.”<sup>27</sup> Hamas was also fully prepared to use the civilian population as human shields and to fire rockets from mosques, schools, and hospitals. It did not oppose placing weapons and rocket stockpiles in civilian homes and attempted to counter Israel's massive firepower by placing its fighters in the midst of the population. According to one source, Hamas set up “kill zones . . . with no regard for the consequences for non-combatants.”<sup>28</sup> To prevail, Hamas would have to tie down the IDF in a vicious urban fight while it attempted to triumph on the world stage through the clever manipulation of the media.<sup>29</sup>

While replicating Hezbollah's tactics might have seemed a good idea, several major factors proved highly problematic for Hamas. First, Hamas lacked Hezbollah's training and fighting prowess. One IDF officer explained that Hamas was not as well trained as Hezbollah and not as highly motivated. However, he continued, Hamas is “an organized force, trained and equipped by Iran, but of vastly different levels of competence.”<sup>30</sup> Unlike Hezbollah in 2006, Hamas also lacked large quantities of sophisticated antitank missiles, without which it was hard-pressed to stop IDF tanks.<sup>31</sup> Second, the rugged terrain in southern Lebanon was ideal for defensive operations, while Gaza was much smaller, flat, and heavily urbanized. According to an Israeli military source, it represented a “completely different war DNA.”<sup>32</sup>

After months of continued small-scale, back-and-forth skirmishing, Hamas and Israel agreed to a bilateral ceasefire on 19 June 2008. Not designed to foster a lasting peace, the break in fighting simply allowed both sides to prepare for the next round of hostilities. Hamas used the time to continue work on its defenses and to smuggle more weapons into Gaza, including 122-mm *Katyusha* rockets from Iran. Meanwhile in Israel, the IDF began planning its response.

Unlike in 2006, when Israel had no time to design a coherent response to Hezbollah, the IDF began covertly preparing a masterful campaign plan against Hamas. Cordesman wrote—

These plans included an air attack phase, an air-ground phase to further weaken Hamas and secure areas in the north, and a contingency plan to seal off the Philadelphia Corridor and the Gazan-Egyptian border.... The IDF did not go to war with plans to conduct a sustained occupation, to try to destroy Hamas or all its forces, or to reintroduce the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, although such contingency plans and exercises may have existed.<sup>33</sup>

With ample time to prepare, the IDF was also able to collect an unprecedented amount of highly sensitive information on Hamas, enabling it to gain complete intelligence domination. In fact, Israel had been preparing a “mosaic” of Hamas targets for years. The lull created by the ceasefire provided an opportunity to combine this information with recently obtained human intelligence to create “a remarkably accurate picture of Hamas targets in Gaza that it constantly updated on a near real time basis.” Israeli military and civilian intelligence networks completely “penetrated” Hamas’s network at all levels.<sup>34</sup> More than one IDF commander said the IDF had been “blind in Lebanon, but in Gaza they could see everything.... The operations in Gaza were 200 percent better.”<sup>35</sup>

**First stage.** In early November 2008, the IDF launched a raid that killed six Hamas fighters inside the Gaza Strip. Hamas responded with a barrage of rockets fired into Israel and announced it would end the ceasefire on 18 December 2008. This proved to be a costly blunder. Unlike Hezbollah, which had thoroughly prepared for war in 2006, Hamas was unprepared to do battle with the IDF in the closing days of 2008. Hamas had not completed its tunnel systems, established a new secure communications network, or planned logistical operations and the deployment of certain weapons systems.<sup>36</sup>

Hamas fired 200 rockets into Israel from 4 November to 21 December 2008. As the month of December ended, Hamas continued to taunt the Israelis with ongoing rocket and mortar fire. Like Hezbollah in 2006, Hamas had greatly underestimated the eventual Israeli response.<sup>37</sup>

Israel implemented a highly detailed deception plan that convinced Hamas that it had no plans to

***Hamas continued to taunt the Israelis with ongoing rocket and mortar fire....[but]...[they] had greatly underestimated the eventual Israeli response.***

engage in a full-scale conflict, and then the IDF launched Operation Cast Lead. At 1130 hours on 27 December, IAF aircraft roared in from the Mediterranean to strike numerous Hamas targets in the largest assault ever carried out in Gaza. In the first passes alone, the IAF hit 180 Hamas targets with masterful precision, destroying weapon storage facilities, rocket assembly shops, training camps, command centers, communication networks, and other targets.<sup>38</sup>

As the IAF’s precision munitions continued to thunder down, Hamas fighters fired 50 rockets into Israel, killing one civilian and wounding six others. Fire from both IAF fixed-wing aircraft and attack helicopters hit Hamas fighters scurrying to fire their rockets and mortars. “Virtually all IAF fixed wing strikes,” wrote Cordesman “could be carried out... with their maximum payload of precision weapons... [for] multiple strikes per sorties on relatively soft targets.” On the first day alone, Israeli forces killed approximately 200 Palestinians, the vast majority Hamas fighters. The IAF proudly announced, “The targets had been marked by intelligence collected during the months preceding the attack.”<sup>39</sup>

The IDF continued to pummel Hamas from the air for the next several days. Then, the Israeli Navy moved in off the coast of Gaza, striking numerous Hamas targets. Hamas continued to fire rockets and mortars. On 28 December, Hamas launched 14 rockets and fired 16 mortar rounds, injuring at least five Israelis. The next day, Hamas launched longer-ranged rockets deeper into Israel. Although the attacks continued to kill and wound Israeli civilians, Israel’s population weathered this adversity better than in 2006.<sup>40</sup>

By 30 December, the IAF was convinced that they had inflicted “critical damage to Hamas.” One IDF officer went so far as to suggest, “The IAF began its attacks at 11:30 and could have ended them at 1140.” The air campaign had been so successful that some within the IDF were equating it



with the 1967 Six Day War. However, while the air missions were certainly effective, Hamas rockets and mortars continued to strike Israel.<sup>41</sup>

There can be little doubt that the initial air attacks against Hamas were highly successful and succeeded in knocking out many key targets, as well as important Hamas commanders. Nevertheless, up until this time, as Cordesman pointed out—

Israel had not demonstrated that its ground forces, and air-land capabilities, had overcome the problems and limitations revealed during the fighting in Lebanon or demonstrated that they had either defeated Hamas's forces or forced it to accept any meaningful ceasefire. The IAF might have achieved most of its tactical objectives in attacking its prewar target base, but it did not achieve any major strategic or grand strategic objective.

While Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak debated how to conduct the war and when to end it, the IDF stuck to its campaign plan, and on 3 January 2009, released a communiqué that stressed—

The objective of this stage is to destroy the terrorist infrastructure of the Hamas in the area of operation, while taking control of some of [the] rocket launching area used by the Hamas, in order to greatly reduce the quantity of rockets fired at Israel and Israeli civilians.

The IDF spokesperson emphasizes that this stage of the operation will further the goals of Operation Cast Lead as communicated till now: To strike a direct and hard blow against the Hamas *while increasing the deterrent strength of the IDF*, in order to bring about an improved and more stable security situation for residents of Southern Israel over the long term. The forces participating in the operation have been highly trained and were prepared for the mission over the long period that the operation was planned.<sup>42</sup>

The IDF spokesperson wishes to reiterate that the residents of Gaza are not the target of the operation. Those who use civilians, the elderly, women, and children as “human shields” are responsible for any and all injury to the civilian population. Anyone who hides a terrorist or weapons in his house is considered a terrorist.<sup>43</sup>



AFP Photo, Mohammed Abed

**A Palestinian man sitting on the rubble of a building reads a leaflet dropped by Israeli Air Force planes over the Gaza Strip on 3 January 2009 as smoke from Israeli jets leave trails in the sky.**

**Second stage.** The IDF launched the “second stage” or air-land phase of its campaign plan on 3 January 2009. While the plan contained several alternatives for the use of ground forces in Gaza, the salient objectives were to “set tangible and achievable goals: reinforcing deterrence, weakening Hamas, [and] sharply reducing or ending the threat from smugglers and rockets over time.”

The blueprint restricted this phase to less than 10 days. “It did so,” wrote Cordesman, “because it calculated that the war would begin to reach a point where serious negative consequences began to build up after about two weeks from the beginning of the first air strikes.” Some of these costs included increased IDF casualties, regional instability, and the steady acceleration of civilian casualties.<sup>44</sup> This was certainly a complete reversal from the confused, haphazard IDF response to Hezbollah. This time, the Israeli military moved forward with a well-conceived plan and predetermined objectives. Unlike 2006, it did so with a suitably trained, highly motivated ground fighting force.

During the last days of December 2008, the “Gaza Division,” under the direction of Southern Command, moved its units into attack positions along the border. The Gaza Division was a regional or territorial headquarters with few organic units

***...the Israeli military moved forward with a well-conceived plan and predetermined objectives.***

assigned to it.<sup>45</sup> The division's command post was highly practiced in Gaza operations and expert on the terrain and possible combat scenarios.<sup>46</sup> For this operation, the Paratroopers Brigade, the Givati Brigade, and the Golani Brigade all reported to the Gaza Division. Although these brigades fell under the command of the Gaza Division, they operated more like independent brigade task forces, complete with their own artillery. Several IDF reserve brigades were also under the operational control of the Gaza Division.<sup>47</sup> Although Israel called up "tens of thousands" of IDF reserves, they only saw limited action during the closing days of the conflict.<sup>48</sup> In 2006, the IDF employed five divisions against a mere 3,000 or so Hezbollah front-line fighters; now, in Gaza, the IDF grappled with approximately 15,000 Hamas operatives with slightly more than one division.

**Air-land cooperation.** The IAF assigned a forward air operations officer to each brigade, giving the brigade commander "practical control" of air operations. According to Cordesman, "each brigade had its own attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as on-call strike aircraft."<sup>49</sup> This was an important transformation. Israel had removed fixed-wing CAS from the ground forces before 2006. One IAF officer described the new air-land cooperation as "groundbreaking." He insisted that the "concentration of air assets in a tiny territory permitted unparalleled air-land coordination. Unmanned aerial vehicles cleared around corners for platoons. Apaches provided integral suppressive fire during movements by small units. Jet fighters removed mines and IEDs, prepared terrain for ground movements, and laid down overwhelming firepower ahead of ground advances, servicing even the smallest unit."<sup>50</sup> In Gaza, the IDF used a variety of innovative tactics, techniques, and procedures.

A massive artillery bombardment up and down the border preceded the ground attack into Gaza and knocked out many of Hamas's defensive positions.

In the north, along the coast, the Paratroopers Brigade moved south toward Atatra, while the Golani Brigade attacked from the northwest in a three-pronged advance south toward Beit Lahiya, Jabaliya, and Shajaiyeh. Moving northeast from the south, the Givati Brigade advanced toward Zeitoun, while a large tank force assembled near Netzarim Junction. On the heels of the artillery salvos, the IDF forces, led by armored bulldozers, pushed across the border. Roving above the onrushing armored columns were attack helicopters and UAVs, which projected real-time intelligence back to IDF command posts. According to sources familiar with the campaign, "advanced digital systems were available at every major level of combat," and "the IDF fought with greatly improved plasma displays and ergonomic, operator-friendly software." Instead of following road networks that Hamas almost certainly mined and set up for deliberate ambushes, the IDF used its armored bulldozers to smash through buildings to create alternate routes.<sup>51</sup>

**Rapid progress.** Accompanied by bomb-sniffing dogs, swarms of infantrymen protected tanks and other armored vehicles from hidden explosive devices in built-up areas. The IDF took full advantage of Hamas's lack of night-fighting skills and equipment. Most, if not all, of these operations took place during hours of darkness. As the Israelis pushed across the border, senior commanders advanced with them.<sup>52</sup> "What you are seeing today," retired Israeli IAF General Isaac Ben Israel told the press, "is a direct lesson of what went wrong in 2006. In Lebanon, we learned that if you want to stop these rocket launchers, you need to send soldiers in and take the area and control it, and this is what is being done now."<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Hezbollah, which fought tenaciously for every inch of ground in 2006, Hamas fighters apparently had little appetite for the IDF's violent, well executed onslaught. Hamas IEDs and roadside explosives had little to no effect as IDF armored vehicles roared across the border.

***The IDF took full advantage of Hamas's lack of night-fighting skills and equipment.***

Having learned its lessons against Hezbollah, the IDF reinforced its armored vehicles' belly plates to better withstand enemy IEDs and mines. Conversely, locally produced roadside bombs used by Hamas seemed to lack the explosive power of similar Hezbollah devices. As IDF ground forces advanced, Hamas military leaders found themselves cut off from their frontline fighters and were unable to communicate or exert effective command and control.<sup>54</sup> "Hamas fighting prowess hardly inspired awe," an embedded Israeli journalist reported. "Hamas gunmen—in full view of the people of Gaza—abandoned the arena and fled into the crowded neighborhoods where they quickly shed their uniforms. The offensive array of bunkers and tunnels and booby-trapped buildings—set for remote detonation—were captured intact."<sup>55</sup>

Although descriptions of most of the movements of IDF brigades remain classified, it is clear that the ground forces made rapid progress. They quickly cut off Gaza City from the rest of the territory. "By the third day of the air-land phase," Cordesman wrote, "the IDF was able to move forward to the point where it could begin to attack Hamas forces in detail. These operations continued to be conducted at the brigade level, rather than at the division level as in the past. This gave the forward commander much more freedom of initiative, particularly from second guessing that had sometimes reflect[ed] more concern over risk of casualties than rapid, decisive action."<sup>56</sup>

While this command arrangement seems to have worked, some within the IDF say that there was a certain "vagueness" between the political levels and the military as to objectives and end states as well as an indifference to the IDF's strategic and operational processes. "It seems," wrote an IDF officer, "as if the ministry of defense and the Chief of Staff were directly working with colonels in the field and bypassing the chain of headquarters." He maintained that this may have led to a "less effective operational design," but had "nonetheless, to a degree succeeded." This same officer was also uncertain of whether "a clear operational design" was in place for the duration of the air-ground campaign. It was instead just "general pressure and attrition across the field," he surmised.<sup>57</sup>

By 5 January, severe ground combat continued to flare up across Gaza, but this kind of persistent

***...persistent fighting was limited due to Hamas's efforts to avoid pitched battles at all cost.***

fighting was limited due to Hamas's efforts to avoid pitched battles at all cost. "In contrast," Cordesman wrote, "the IAF kept up a steady round of attacks, as did the Israeli artillery. This kept Hamas under constant pressure even when they did not engage in direct combat." When these head-to-head clashes did erupt, however, they were often brutal. On 5 January, three soldiers were killed and another 24 wounded when an IDF tank mistakenly fired into a building they were occupying during an intense firefight between Hamas and members of the Golani Brigade. What all these soldiers were doing in the same building is unknown, but similar incidents transpired in 2006.<sup>58</sup>

From 6 to 10 January, the IDF continued to put pressure on Hamas, and the IAF hit approximately 250 targets in Gaza, including Hamas rocket-launching squads and areas, smuggling tunnels, manufacturing and storage facilities, sites containing hidden mortar shells, and the homes of Hamas fighters used as weapons storage facilities. The IAF also targeted groups of armed gunmen and Hamas command centers. Israeli intelligence continued to perform well for the IDF, pinpointing known Islamic Jihad fighters. On 8 January, with the help



Israeli soldiers prepare artillery shells as troops keep position on the Israel-Gaza border, 9 January 2009.

AFP Photo, Jack Guez



of the Israeli intelligence, the IDF struck four operatives who just days before had fired rockets into Israel.<sup>59</sup>

As the ground campaign continued, the IDF killed or captured hundreds of fighters and expanded its control over more of Gaza. Hamas leaders also had to confront new attacks from their political rivals. To make matters even worse, they remained cut off from their fighters in the field, making command and control nearly impossible.<sup>60</sup> Although threatened with a crushing defeat, Hamas still believed it could strengthen its standing in the Arab world by continuing to resist and by conducting an effective IO campaign. However, while Hamas's propaganda machine tried to capture worldwide sympathy for its plight and paint Israel as the aggressor, the IDF pushed on relentlessly, seemingly unconcerned about any wide-reaching IO effort. One IDF officer said that the Israelis would never win global public opinion, but thought Israel's IO campaign had worked well in conveying the message that "we did as we pleased, when we pleased, and where we pleased—full battle space domination." He also considered the IDF's ability to be "less transparent" in this conflict as a positive factor.<sup>61</sup>

To their credit, IDF legal planners fully participated in the development of Operation Cast Lead, and the IDF took great pains to limit civilian casualties. In fact, the IDF set up phone banks with Arabic speakers to call homes targeted for destruction to give their occupants a reasonable amount of time

to evacuate them. According to one source, these callers were under stringent orders to convey the message to adults only. Nevertheless, many Palestinian civilians died or were wounded, and Hamas took full advantage of this to increase its popular standing on the world stage.<sup>62</sup>

From 8 to 18 January, the IDF continued to batter Hamas with its air-land capabilities. Soldiers from the Givati Brigade later said they had put into service many of the lessons learned from the 2006 campaign against Hezbollah. Officers from the brigade spoke in glowing terms of their new fighting principles such as "commitment to mission and pushing for contact with the enemy." Indeed, a fresh, innovative spirit seemed to radiate from many IDF ground units. A Givati Brigade battalion commander stated during the height of the ground battle that his men "must deal with the enemy and nothing else. We are focusing on the mission. We haven't even received newspapers here. When we finish what we have been tasked with, we'll express interest in what people up there are saying about it." The IDF took cell phones away from IDF soldiers to thwart any problems with communications security and so that they could focus more intently on the battle rather than affairs at home.<sup>63</sup>

On 11 January, after what one Israeli officer called, a bit of "fine-tuning," IDF reserve forces began moving into Gaza. Under the command of the Gaza Division, the reserve brigades moved into sectors regular IDF forces had already secured, allowing the regular infantry to continue offensive operations. In the two weeks prior to their commitment into Gaza, the reserve brigades trained intensely at the Ground Training Center in Tze'elim. "New and advanced equipment was issued to the reservists," the IDF reported, "and they have expressed their satisfaction about the quality of the equipment and emphasized its role in the improvement of their operational abilities." The increased training, as well as the upgrading of equipment, helped produce a force far superior to the IDF reserves employed against Hezbollah in 2006.<sup>64</sup>

As the reserve brigades rolled into Gaza, the IDF air-ground campaign continued to kill and capture Hamas fighters. On 13 January, the IDF reported that they had already captured hundreds of Hamas gunmen while the Givati and Paratroopers Brigades continued to destroy weapons stores and



AFP Photo, Mohammed Abed

**Members of the Ezzedine Al-Qassam brigades, Hamas's military wing, give a press conference in Gaza City on 19 January 2009.**

tunnels. The ground forces and the IAF eradicated 22 cells of Hamas fighters in synchronized operations. While the IAF also managed to knock out 20 rocket-launching sites, Hamas was nonetheless able to launch two rockets and fire 12 mortar rounds into Israel. Since the opening of hostilities, Hamas indirect fire had killed three Israeli civilians and wounded 255 others.<sup>65</sup>

While the IDF still listed its main objectives as “the creation of a better security situation [and] cessation of rocket and mortar fire and all terrorist attacks from the Gaza Strip,” the situation was rapidly reaching a decision point. Either the IDF could expand the ground campaign significantly in an effort to eradicate all rockets, mortars and Hamas fighters, or Israel could begin to move toward a ceasefire.

Expanding the campaign could have resulted in increased casualties for the IDF and Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Palestinian civilian casualties and the massive destruction produced by the conflict were causing mounting apprehension around the world. As Cordesman pointed out, “air-land phase of the fighting scored continuing tactical gains, but it also exacerbated the political, strategic, and humanitarian problems that had arisen during the air phase.” On 13 January, a senior IDF officer informed the press that the “political echelon will have to make [a] decision on [the] military operation’s future.”<sup>66</sup> After five more days of fighting, the Israeli cabinet announced a unilateral ceasefire in Gaza on 18 January.

## **Triumph**

The IDF’s campaign against Hamas was an impressive achievement. While the enemy that the Israeli military confronted certainly lacked many of the traits normally associated with a professional fighting force and undoubtedly fell far short of the combat prowess of Hezbollah, these facts do not diminish the IDF’s accomplishments.

In the end, the IDF’s real triumph was not its ability to quash an inferior military organization like Hamas, but its success in retraining and restructuring its ground forces in the wake of their disappointing performance in 2006. These postwar reexaminations and alterations allowed the IDF to defeat Hamas so decisively and convincingly that would-be enemies of Israel could not fail to take note.

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ing performance in 2006.***

There were striking differences between the 2006 war with Hezbollah and the conflict with Hamas. The IDF abandoned the peculiar doctrine in place in 2006, which ran counter to the basic principles of war, and returned to classic military principles. These included mission and aim, initiative and offensive, continuity of action, and the maintenance of morale and fighting spirit. All of these principles were absent in southern Lebanon, but certainly on full display in Gaza. The IDF returned to a policy of commitment to the mission and simplicity.<sup>67</sup>

There was also a vast difference in leadership during the course of the two conflicts. Ehud Barak, a solid leader and ground combat veteran, replaced Defense Minister Peretz, a man with no combat experience. By 2008, the veteran ground commander Ashkenazi had replaced the verbose theorist Halutz. While Halutz was prone to garrulous public statements during the 2006 war, Ashkenazi remained relatively silent during the Gaza campaign. Even as Barak and Prime Minister Olmert debated the direction and timetable of the Gaza operation, Ashkenazi adhered to the IDF’s campaign plan. This was indeed very different from Halutz’s erratic approach in 2006.

Another major difference between 2006 and the Gaza campaign was training and equipment. In 2006, IDF ground forces, both regulars and reserves, were ill-trained and ill-equipped for a war against Hezbollah. Senior officers and enlisted soldiers alike floundered. Lacking basic combat skills, and in many cases required equipment, they were thwarted by the veterans of Hezbollah. Both tankers and artillerymen had been away from their equipment for too long, and their competence and proficiency showed it.

Owing to the hard work and foresight of Barak and Ashkenazi, the situation had changed dramatically by 2008. In Gaza, senior officers, leading from the front, understood their responsibilities and were able to maneuver their forces. Soldiers had trained in basic combat skills, were proficient in the use

of their equipment, had trained for night fighting, and were equipped for it. They were also highly proficient in indirect fire skills. More important, in little time, the IDF was able to regain its combined arms maneuver capabilities.

The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war and the 2008 conflict in Gaza demonstrate that a resourceful, imaginative enemy can catch even a historically

successful army unprepared. However, the IDF proved adept at indentifying and analyzing its mistakes and miscalculations. A rigorous training program that focused on time-honored principles of warfighting enabled the IDF to restore competence and credibility in its ground forces. One need look no further than the 2008 Gaza conflict to affirm the IDF's great success in this endeavor. **MR**

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# DETAINEE HEALTHCARE

## as part of INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Lieutenant Colonel Beverly D. Patton,  
U.S. Army

**D**URING TIMES OF CONFLICT, the United States has always provided healthcare to detained persons, prisoners of war, and displaced civilians. But ever since 9/11 and in the wake of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq, detainee healthcare has become a strategic mission. The legacy of Abu Ghraib created a powerful negative image not only in the minds of those in the Muslim world, but also worldwide, thereby damaging the United States' political international standing. Among the four instruments of national power—diplomacy, information, military, and economic—the United States can use the instrument of information to educate and persuade others, clarify America's position, and project positive images that help accomplish its strategic goals. Providing detainee healthcare can create such positive images, helping to win “hearts and minds” through services and training that are not otherwise readily available in a war-torn country.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past 90 years, the United States has been involved in the two World Wars and five other major conflicts: Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In each conflict, America has provided care for prisoners of war or detained persons, and rendered that care as part of the operations of war. Wartime necessity and experiences, previous practices, and the Geneva Conventions have guided detainee care. Such care has been particularly challenging during the current conflict in Iraq. United States forces were supposed to turn the governing of Iraq over to a new, pro-democratic government and depart once Saddam Hussein was captured.<sup>2</sup> The United States expected that the lion's share of rebuilding would fall to the Iraqis themselves, and many war-related issues such as prisoners of war and detained persons would be under the purview of the new Iraq government.<sup>3</sup> But what started as a conventional war between professional, uniformed militaries became an insurgency.

This faulty assessment of how the war would unfold, coupled with the American failure to provide enough troops to quell the insurgency, led to the detention of thousands of Iraqis.<sup>4</sup> The Abu Ghraib prison scandal forced the United States to initiate efforts to overcome the negative perception of how America cares for its detainees.<sup>5</sup>

### Detainee Healthcare in Previous Conflicts

The United States has been involved with detainee and prisoner of war (POW) care in conflicts throughout its history. During the Civil War, both

*Lieutenant Colonel Beverly D. Patton, U.S. Army, is a nutrition consultant for the Pacific Regional Medical Command and the chief dietician at Tripler Army Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. She received a B.A. from Fresno State College, an M.S. from California State University, and a Ph.D. from Oregon State University.*

PHOTO: An inmate is ready for dental work at a US military detention facility, Camp Bucca, Iraq, 17 March 2009. (AP Photo, Dusan Vranic)

the Union and Confederacy established POW camps. The Union camp in Elmira, New York, and the Confederate camp in Andersonville, Georgia, had the largest number of detainees. Both camps had challenges caring for its prisoners.<sup>6</sup> At the Elmira camp, severe winters and a poor drainage system exacerbated difficult living conditions, and an inadequate diet with few vegetables led to cases of scurvy. Eventually, many prisoners died of illness, exposure, and related causes. The Confederate prison at Andersonville had similar losses. While Elmira suffered the throes of severe winters, Andersonville presented the opposite conditions—searing heat and no shelter. As in Elmira, a fetid body of water ran through the camp, and prisoners used it for both bathing and drinking. The environmental conditions, coupled with poor sanitation and diet, led to dysentery, scurvy, malaria, and illness from exposure to the elements. Medical care was largely nonexistent. However, poor management and a lack of resources played a larger role in creating life-threatening conditions at this camp than did any intentional effort to abuse prisoners.<sup>7</sup>

The various countries involved in World War I promised to adhere to the Hague rules of fair treatment, the precursors of the current Geneva Conventions. An estimated eight million men were incarcerated during World War I, but a much smaller percentage of prisoners died than in the U.S. Civil War because the International Red Cross and individuals from neutral countries inspected prisoner-of-war facilities.<sup>8</sup>

Conditions for prisoners of war during World War II were actually much worse than in World War I. The Geneva Convention of 1929 was applicable to the conflict, but Japan was not a signatory to it. The International Red Cross had no access to prisoners in Japanese camps where the Imperial Army held POWs from Australia, Canada, China, Great Britain, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and the United States. Prisoners were subjected to ritual murder, beatings, harsh treatment, forced labor, medical experimentation, lack of food, and poor medical care. Treatment in other countries' prisoner-of-war camps varied. Both Germany and the Soviet Union intentionally abused each other's prisoners. The American experience with prisoners of war in World War II varied from region to region. Each facility had a medical clinic with monthly medical evaluations,



**U.S. Marines carrying a Japanese prisoner to be evacuated and treated for malnutrition, Iwo Jima, February 1945.**

and the food was comparable to that consumed by American Soldiers. After the war ended, captured German medical personnel administered health care to their countrymen while U.S. forces supervised. The United States provided little of its own direct care to the captives themselves. Due to poor field sanitation, diseases such as typhus, dysentery, and malaria arose along with other health problems. Insufficient infrastructure and the poor health of the few Japanese soldiers taken prisoner hampered American efforts to care for prisoners in the Philippine POW camps. There, malaria, dysentery, and poor hygiene created significant problems.<sup>9</sup>

At the outset of the Korean War, from August to November 1950, the number of prisoners of war swelled to a staggering number. There were not enough guards to control the prisoners, and prison food, clothing, and shelter were inadequate. In January 1951, the United Nations Command established a large prison at Koje-do Island, off the coast of South Korea, and tasked the United States to run the prison. It eventually housed five times the facility's intended capacity. Guard training varied, and at one crucial point, the camp commandant was taken hostage. The Red Cross was present during the reconstruction and reorganization of Ko-je do and other POW camps, and questioned some of the tactics that United Nations camp commanders used to control the prisoners.<sup>10</sup>

During the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese prisoners lived in a similar island prison in the Con-Dao Islands off the South Vietnamese coast. While U.S.

forces did not directly oversee the prison, they did provide advisors for the facility. Abuses by South Vietnamese guards came to light in the 1960s. Congressmen investigated these allegations when they visited the prison in 1970, and *Life* magazine published the photos that were taken.<sup>11</sup>

In two articles that were published in *Military Medicine* in December 1991, Army physicians described their experiences while administering medical care to POWs during Operation Desert Storm.<sup>12</sup> The articles were noteworthy for the doctors' concise descriptions of the prisoners' medical, surgical, and dental conditions, and their recommendations regarding future POW healthcare. The first article reported that more than 20 percent of the prisoners were on sick call, and many Iraqi prisoners wanted to have "injuries sustained in previous conflicts evaluated by [the] American doctors."<sup>13</sup> The second article described problems caused from inadequate medical staffing and the "lack of simple equipment most physicians normally take for granted."<sup>14</sup> It added, "The overwhelming number of prisoners resulted in the camps not being able to adequately feed or house several hundred prisoners at any given moment." Furthermore, while the most common complaint was trauma, then toothache, other afflictions included—

...upper respiratory infections, headaches, urinary tract complaints, skin diseases, diarrhea, dyspepsia, backache, and hemorrhoids. The detainees had a variety of psychiatric complaints, including insomnia, anxiety, and frank depression, as well as nicotine-withdrawal symptoms. A number of medical conditions were seen unexpectedly... The Iraqi army did little or no medical screening [and] insulin-dependent diabetes, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, and number of other conditions were encountered.<sup>15</sup>

## Operation Iraqi Freedom

Despite these historic (and as it turned out, prophetic) observations, problems with detainee care

during Operation Iraqi Freedom mirrored that of previous conflicts and, in particular, the problems seen in Korea on Ko-je do Island.<sup>16</sup> The ability of U.S. forces to control the detainees, much less care for them, was made more difficult by a rapid influx of prisoners, an inadequate number of guards, a lack of detainee operations training for personnel, and the added complication of various religious, tribal, and ethnic groups who fought not only their captors, but also each other.<sup>17</sup>

The few medical personnel working at Abu Ghraib in 2003 and 2004 noted inadequate supplies such as chest tubes, catheters, orthopedic casts, and other items used to treat injuries.<sup>18</sup> A physician's assistant stated that U.S. personnel took chest tubes from deceased persons and inserted them into live ones because of a shortage of such medical supplies.<sup>19</sup>

The Independent Panel to Review DOD Detention found "significant shortfalls in training and force structure for field sanitation, preventive medicine, and medical treatment requirements for detainees."<sup>20</sup> The panel recommended that "as the DOD improves detention operations force structure and training, it should pay attention to the need for medical personnel to screen and monitor the health of detention personnel and detainees."<sup>21</sup>

The Army Surgeon General disputed some of the findings regarding medical care.<sup>22</sup> However, he noted that the Army had launched a review of medical detainee operations and delineated a policy for record keeping and the training of all Army medical personnel in detainee medical operations.

The assistant secretary of defense for health affairs provided guidelines for detainee care in June, 2005.<sup>23</sup> The standard of care for detainees was to be the same as that received by American and coalition forces. The 10-page-long Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 2310.08E, *Medical Support for Detainee Operations*, sets forth guidelines for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner as well as behavioral science consulting, incident and consent for treatment reporting, and medical record keeping.<sup>24</sup>

***A physician's assistant stated that U.S. personnel took chest tubes from deceased persons and inserted them into live ones due to a shortage of such medical supplies.***



Other guidance issued or reviewed included Army Regulation 190.8, *Enemy Prisoner of War, Retained Personnel, Civilian Internees and Other Detainees*; Field Manual Interim 4-02.42, *Medical Support to Detainee Operations*; and the chapter on “Care of Enemy Prisoners of War/Internees” in *Emergency War Surgery*.<sup>25</sup> All of these documents define aspects of detainee medical care.

In April 2005, a full combat support hospital deployed to Abu Ghraib to care for detainees; two separate theater internment facilities became operational: Camp Bucca in southern Iraq and Camp Cropper in Baghdad. Additionally, the prison at Abu Ghraib closed. At each site combat support hospitals opened with and were augmented by over 200 medical professionals from an area support medical company, a ground ambulance medical company, and Romanian Army healthcare professionals.<sup>26</sup> The hospitals had “task-organized” force structures which incorporated medical specialties not always included in the tables of organization for such hospitals. Additionally, specialty care that was not provided at the theater internment facility was accessible from other regional combat support hospitals.

The combat support hospitals have taken on additional roles as well. Because public healthcare in Iraq has significantly declined over the past few years and sectarian strife prevails, the combat support hospital has also become a medical training facility for future theater internment facilities and Iraqi military medics and civilian nursing assistants.<sup>27</sup>

## Just War and the Geneva Conventions

The morality of war, its initiation, and its conduct should be a constant concern for civilian and military leaders. Two separate concepts have developed over the centuries: *jus ad bellum*, the justice of going to war; and *jus in bello*, law during war itself. *Jus in bello* is the philosophical and traditional basis for how the United States conducts war. Military and civilian leaders decide the rules of engagement, which targets to attack or avoid, and how to deal with prisoners of war. Their decisions affect those who must enforce these rules: warfighters at all levels.<sup>28</sup>

The military leader must comprehend both the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* concepts. Martin

L. Cook states that military officers “set the tone for how civilians are treated, how POWs are captured, confined and cared for. They determine how Soldiers who violate order and the laws of war are disciplined and what examples they allow to be set for acceptable conduct in their commands.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore, military leaders need to incorporate the concepts’ tenets into every phase of planning and executing war.<sup>30</sup>

Military leaders must evaluate two moral demands in *jus in bello*: discrimination (combatant status) and proportionality. The distinction between combatants, those who are a legitimate target of war fighting, and non-combatants, those who should be spared intentional attack, is critical. However, when combatants do not wear uniforms, children detonate bombs, and contractors perform not only support but warfighting functions, it is difficult to determine who is a legitimate combatant and who should be protected.<sup>31</sup>

The principle of proportionality is a part of *jus in bello* decisionmaking. What is the value of a target when measured in proportion to the amount of destruction and loss of life required to destroy it? Should we avoid attacking specific targets just because they might be of use when hostilities end?<sup>32</sup>

Cook argues that comprehending and applying the principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* and the Geneva Conventions are strategic leader competencies for the conduct of war.

The first Geneva Convention in 1863 adopted as principles the neutrality of military hospitals and ambulances and the non-belligerent status of individuals caring for wounded and sick Soldiers of any nationality.<sup>33</sup> The current Geneva Conventions date from 1949 and relate to sick and wounded combatants on land, on the sea, or shipwrecked; and they protect both prisoners of war and civilians in war.<sup>34</sup>

## Political Instruments of Power and the Strategic Role of Detainee Healthcare

As aforementioned, the U.S. uses four instruments of national power—diplomacy, information, military, and economic—to accomplish national strategic goals. They are the “tools . . . the United States uses to apply its sources of power.”<sup>35</sup> The U.S. government controls information to protect national security. The government can use strategic communication

to deliver guidance in specific instances. The military plays a role in strategic communication when it supports public and military diplomacy activities, and uses information operations, public affairs, and defense support to public affairs.

Joint Publication 1 notes that strategic communication should be a part of all military planning, written into operation plans, and carefully ordered with other government entities, coalition partners, and civilian organizations.<sup>36</sup> A paper from the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security at University of Illinois asserts that information was once an “ancillary instrument of power,” but now it is a decisive element in economic and military campaigns.<sup>37</sup>

Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations*, elaborates on the role of information in military operations. The publication states, “at all levels, information activities, including IO [information operations] must be consistent with broader national security policy and strategic objectives.”<sup>38</sup> The publication also defines strategic communication as—

...focused U.S.G. [United States Government] efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of U.S.G. interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all elements of national power.<sup>39</sup>

An issue paper at the Center for Strategic Leadership noted that counterinsurgency operations in Iraq constituted a different type of war with less emphasis on “kinetic warfare” and greater concentration on information operations as the main effort.<sup>40</sup> The U.S. government faces significant challenges in reaching and affecting public opinion in the Middle East. In 2004, a State Department advisory group said, “The apparatus of public diplomacy [of which information operations is part] has proven inadequate, especially in the Arab and Muslim world.”<sup>41</sup> A recent report from the Pew Global Attitudes Project concluded that the American image “remains abysmal in most Muslim countries in the Middle East and Asia.” Polling of citizens in five Muslim countries (Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Pakistan, and Indonesia) found that less than 33 percent held a favorable image of the United States.<sup>42</sup> (The Project

asked a series of questions that included, “Have you heard about Abu Ghraib/Guantanamo abuses?”)

The Bush administration tapped both an advertising executive, who was also a former diplomat, and the executive’s director of strategic communications to execute public diplomacy to influence Middle Eastern audiences. However, the “Madison Avenue” approach and a careless lack of knowledge about the target audience that they wished to influence hurt U.S. efforts.<sup>43</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has recommended “a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security—diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action and economic reconstruction and development.”<sup>44</sup> The creation of Alhurra, an Arabic satellite television station sponsored by the U.S. government, has also failed to advance U.S. political aims. Caught in the politics of those in the United States who oversee and fund it, Alhurra has been viewed with skepticism in the Middle East and lacks the credibility of other Arab stations like Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps a better way to reach to the target audience is the method outlined in FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*:

Treat detainees professionally and publicize their treatment. Arrange for host-nation leaders to visit and tour your detention facility. Consider allowing them to speak to detainees and eat the same food detainees receive. If news media or host-nation government representatives visit your detention facility, allow them as much access as prudent. Provide a guided tour and explain your procedures.<sup>46</sup>

Major General Douglas Stone, Commander, Task Force 134, Detainee Operations, adopted such an approach when he took three representatives of the Iraqi media to Camp Bucca, the largest detainee camp in Iraq. He allowed the representatives to film some detainee operations and introduced them

**...the “Madison Avenue” approach and a careless lack of knowledge about the target audience...hurt U.S. efforts.**

to detainees. The Iraqi media toured the camp hospital and interviewed healthcare providers who described typical care regimens and emphasized that Iraqi detainees received the same level of care as American and coalition forces.<sup>47</sup>

Stone later had a U.S. military strategic communications director and native Middle Eastern media consultants help disseminate his message, which stressed transparency, care and custody, release, and the rule of law. Detainee health care fell into the care category, and Stone explained that while the physical care of detainees (shelter and food) was intuitive, civilian Iraqis had to see for themselves that the medical care was indeed equivalent to that of American and coalition forces before they would believe that it was true.<sup>48</sup>

## Recommendations

Detainee healthcare has been a continuing mission for American military forces in every conflict. In the Iraqi conflict, military medical personnel have also taken on the role of training other elements of Iraqi society to provide additional numbers of native medical practitioners. However, detainee healthcare may well exert its strongest role as part of

**...detainee healthcare may well exert its strongest role as part of the information instrument of U.S. national power.**

the information instrument of U.S. national power. Medical care benefits more than just the individual Iraqi. The dissemination of such positive messages about the medical care of detainees through a program of strategic communications can further U.S. political goals.

The Iraqi media has broadcast news clips of detainee healthcare operations, but this has not often happened elsewhere in the Middle East. The impact of such positive messages would be greater if Arab news networks distributed them throughout the Middle East. Engaging the Arab networks requires careful crafting of the message, but the potential exists to reach a wider Middle Eastern audience and demonstrate the altruism of the American people—much as the publicity about relief assistance in Southeast Asia did after the tsunami. **MR**

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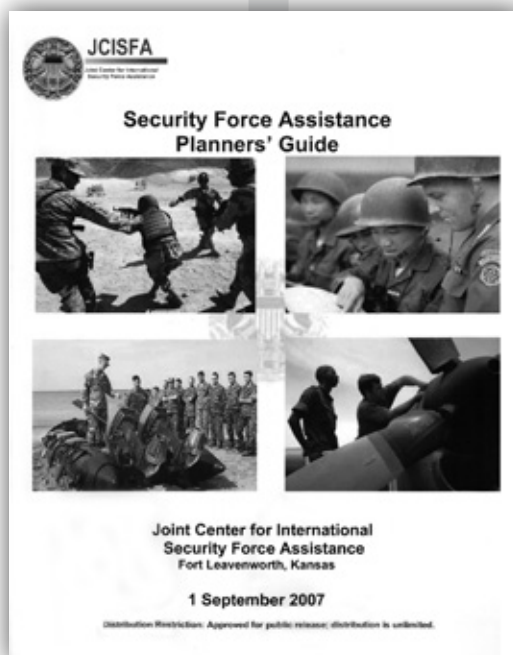
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**"In the final analysis, it is their war. They are the ones who have to win it or lose it. We can help them, we can give them equipment, we can send our men out there as advisers, but they have to win it."**

—President Kennedy, 2 September 1963



# UNDERSTANDING INNOVATION

**Colonel Thomas M. Williams,**  
U.S. Army Reserve

*Colonel Thomas M. Williams is presently a branch chief in the 3d Battle Command Training Group, 2/75 Battle Command Training Division. He holds a B.A. from Boston University and an M.S.S. from the U.S. Army War College. He has served as an ILE instructor in the U.S. Army Reserve, and in a variety of command and staff positions in the Army National Guard, including command of the 172d Military Police Battalion in Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004 to 2006.*

PHOTO MONTAGE: (upper left) U.S. Army SPC Robert Troxler, a radio operator, with the fiber optics team, 25th Infantry Division, stands inside a communication vault in knee-deep water, as he pulls lines of fiber optic cable through tubing buried underground in Bagram, Afghanistan, 22 March 2009. (U.S. Army, SSG Marcus Butler)

**W**HEN FORMER PRESIDENT George W. Bush spoke to the graduating class at the United States Naval Academy in 2001, he declared a commitment to a military culture of risk-taking and forward thinking, and to recognizing and promoting visionary leaders. The President's pledge was an intriguing promise for members of the armed forces who argue for more creativity and professionalism in the military. The problem is, in contemporary usage, the word *innovation* is now just a buzzword used to sell everything from software to blenders. Its definition is now so broad that we can declare nearly every unorthodox action, thought, or event acceptable as long as we label it innovative. Whether conducting counterinsurgency operations, preparing for conventional war, or transforming to meet new and yet undefined threats, imprecision begets failures. Regulations and field manuals arrayed in lines of vague language will only serve to confuse leaders and produce well-intentioned but misguided actions. The Army's strategic-level leaders must shift their mind-set from the popular appeal of feel-good generalities to a more precise vision grounded in carefully articulated definitions. Rigor is called for. This article explores the nature of "innovation," how the term is abused, and how its lack of precision can spawn behaviors that are more destructive than constructive.

## Military Innovation?

When Bush embraced the assumption that the military's "bureaucratic mind-set" frustrates imagination and inventiveness, he challenged commissioned officers to "think big thoughts" and risk failure, because in failure, he reflected, "we will learn and acquire the knowledge that will make successful innovation possible."<sup>1</sup>

That the Army was listening is clear. Field Manual 1-0, *The Army*, states that "Army leaders are continuing to foster creative thinking."<sup>2</sup> They are

“challenging inflexible ways of thinking, removing impediments to institutional innovation, and underwriting the risks associated with bold change.”<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps this statement is true, but given the contemporary use of the word “innovation,” it is also meaningless. Claiming to be innovative carries about as much weight as declaring a love for puppies; it’s easy to say and unpopular to challenge. When words represent some indistinct idea, they are susceptible to reinvention or distortion with potentially significant unintended consequences.<sup>4</sup>

A recent article about military innovation makes the statement that we should not worry about defining innovation because “we know what innovation is.”<sup>5</sup> Still, the most basic literature search suggests otherwise. Although the common definition of innovation appears simple—the introduction of a new idea, method, or device—a more precise definition (and comprehensive understanding of how organizations apply the term in practice) will keep frivolous uses of the term from clouding judgment.

## Tension in the System

Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter provides such a comprehensive definition of innovation in organizations. She explains that innovation is more than doing an assigned task faster, or even better. Performing such assigned tasks requires ordinary resources, routine power and authority, and little or no information sharing or gathering outside of the unit; consequently, the changes encounter only minor opposition from the institution. One can accomplish a task within the boundaries of established practice. On the other hand, something that is “innovative” involves highly problematic situations that cross organizational lines and threaten to disrupt existing arrangements. Such problematic situations require resources and skills beyond what we need to do our jobs. According to Kanter, innovations have implications for other functions and areas, and therefore “require data, agreements, and resources of a wider scope than routine operations demand.”<sup>6</sup>

Kanter’s definition makes it clear that true innovation is not a discrete event or individual action, but a process. As a process, it demands that leaders understand multiple complex systems. Innovation thus includes building consensus and preventing interference or sabotage from risk-averse or hostile players. It also requires an understanding of differ-

ing frames of reference, intricate structures, and diverse control and boundary systems.<sup>7</sup>

Control systems represent the shared values of an organization. They act as a moral compass to encourage initiative and decentralized decision-making. Employees as trusted agents are ideally free to act because they know what is acceptable under such a framework.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, boundary systems function as limiters. They are the constraints and restraints imposed by management—consistent with specific codes of conduct—to prevent unlawful or unethical action. Taken together, controls and boundaries help organizations motivate and inspire creativity without sacrificing protection against opportunistic behavior.<sup>9</sup>

Structure comes in the form of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a value-neutral term, an organizational model that is neither good nor bad. Although it is popular to say that bureaucracy restricts human potential, its highly developed sets of rules and procedures also ensure fair treatment among employees.<sup>10</sup> Bureaucracy ideally emphasizes employee participation, conflict resolution, and shared goals.<sup>11</sup> For example, although they are considered bureaucratic, Army regulations protect Soldiers against unfair treatment and the capricious behavior of their leaders. Bureaucracy, in the form of law and regulation, exists to make the Army a meritocracy, not a system where manipulation and cronyism are more important than performance. A strong relationship binds innovation with control and structure. The former cannot exist without the latter two.

Professor Robert Quinn of the University of Michigan developed the “competing values” framework using the four management models that developed as the industrial revolution evolved into the present technological revolution.<sup>12</sup> His framework incorporates the roles managers play in each of these models and helps organizations address the everyday tensions and demands created as these different styles interact.<sup>13</sup>

Quinn’s argument is that there’s a point where a leader’s ability to do good using a particular model and value set diminishes, leading to unfortunate

***Structure comes in the form  
of bureaucracy.***



consequences.<sup>14</sup> Quinn calls this the “negative zone.” All leaders must understand this pressure so that “one’s strengths do not become the source of one’s failure.”<sup>15</sup> Innovators, for example, can be creative, but if they push their inclinations too far, their behavior leads to belligerence, chaos, disastrous experimentation, and unprincipled opportunism.<sup>16</sup>

Opposing the innovator are the monitors and controllers. As the dependable technical experts, they are the backbone of the organization. However, like the innovator, they can cease to be an effective member of the organization if they move into the negative zone. In the bureaucrat’s negative zone is mindless adherence to policy or procedure leading to unimaginative and cynical behavior, neglected possibilities, and stifled progress. In this negative zone, they function in a way that is antithetical to professionalism.<sup>17</sup> Good leaders, Quinn says, must balance the positive aspects of bureaucracy against the desire to innovate. To function properly, a strong culture of innovation *requires* a strong bureaucracy.

Despite this, many in the Army are quick to blame the “bureaucratic mind-set” for inhibiting progress, but according to John Kenneth Galbraith, there are more complex reasons why organizational change is difficult. Galbraith coined the term “conventional wisdom.”<sup>18</sup> Galbraith states that what exists, and is familiar, has an advantage because it has proven acceptable to a majority. People approve of what they understand, and they will passionately defend what they have learned and are familiar with. In short, familiarity is acceptable, and acceptability leads to stability. Galbraith adds that any deviation (or originality) might be seen as faithlessness or backsliding. Organizations, he argues, achieve stability by formal adherence to an officially proclaimed doctrine and stigmatize any deviation as incorrect. With conventional wisdom, *rank is a reward for articulating what is acceptable* (for defending the conventional wisdom). All education and professional development programs focus on perpetuating this doctrine to capture what is known, proven, and practical.

**...many in the Army are quick to blame the “bureaucratic mind-set” for inhibiting progress...**

Still, Galbraith says conventional wisdom serves a greater good: “Every society must be protected from a too facile (simplistic) flow of thought....A great stream of intellectual novelties, if all were taken seriously, would be disastrous. Men would be swayed to this action or that; erratic and rudderless.”<sup>19</sup> Galbraith states that events and *not* ideas change conventional wisdom. The people who appear as great innovative thinkers are often only pointing out what has become true, but not yet commonly known and accepted. Change is normal and expected. Without an appreciation of the existing system, self-proclaimed mavericks might be sabotaging a normal and rigorous process of proposal, peer review, and acceptance. For this process to work well, the champions of innovation and the managers of bureaucracy need to understand that this is not a zero-sum game, and that irrational actions do not build consensus.

## Innovation in Complicated Systems

Although many leaders recognize this truth, they continue propagating common fallacies when they talk about change. For example, when Bush referred to the development of carrier aviation during the interwar period (during an address at Annapolis), he painted a picture of simple choices. He retold the fable about pioneering aviators challenging recalcitrant battleship admirals for control of the Navy and how fortunate we were that the aviators succeeded. The truth is far more complicated, and a folklore version of it only adds to popular misunderstandings about innovation. The interwar period demonstrated how innovation happened in a complicated system, not a historic struggle between progress and obstinacy.

Despite the restrictions of the Washington and London Naval Treaties (meant to control the arms race), the U.S. Navy in the 1920s and 1930s had to cover two oceans and the Panama Canal Zone. Although the Navy enjoyed popular support, budgets were tight, and the decision to build any ship meant betting on what that ship would face through its 20- to 30-year service life. A fleet’s power came from the weight of its offensive punch and how much damage it could inflict on the enemy’s fleet and still survive. The battleship was a proven, technologically advanced weapon, and continued investment

in battleship construction fit the accepted paradigm. Despite a legend to the contrary, the aviation community did enjoy meaningful support during these years, as advances in carrier and aircraft design showed. But given limited budgets and an unknown enemy, the admirals running the Navy were asked to bet their future offensive punch on small aircraft, each carrying one 500-pound bomb, with no radio communication for command and control, and a range of roughly 350 miles, one way. Radar, which came into being by the late 1930s, did not exist. Despite the *promise* of aviation, aircraft carriers were not a strong offensive weapon. If their planes could find their target, and hit it, the bombs they carried would not penetrate the decks of many capital ships. Aviation at that stage of development lacked the ability to defeat an enemy fleet.<sup>20</sup> The fact that aviation drew the attention it did was the result of a remarkable leap of faith, deliberate negotiation, and reasonable investment in unproven but promising technology.

Just as former President Bush did in his remarks, we tend to treat innovation with reverence. We have romanticized it, and we are always chasing after it, as if it is some holy grail. This sets up unrealistic expectations, and it can compel leaders to push their behavior into Quinn's negative zone by chasing a chimera. Fortunately, there is evidence that today's Army is very much an innovative organization with a culture that accepts creativity and embraces change. The Army of the 1970s and 1980s was far less accepting of innovation. As with wars of the past, the immediacy of current operational environments has the capacity to open minds.

## **The Military's Risk Acceptance Culture**

The business community envies many of the common concepts and processes today's military officers take for granted and even fail to see as innovative. When executive coach Kathleen Jordan encourages business organizations to build a culture of risk acceptance where leaders experiment, try, sometimes fail, but always learn, her model is the military's after-action review process. Jordan offers eight examples from the military that she says would help the business world become more innovative, if it adopted them.

She begins with the military's risk acceptance culture, calling it "fast beats perfect." Jordan lauds the

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innovation with reverence.  
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military decision-making process, calling it a decision process by careful design in an uncertain and ambiguous environment. Leaders will never have all of the information necessary to make perfect decisions, she says, so one must know how to take advantage of opportunity. Believing that powerless leaders are more inclined to guard territory and shun collaboration to the detriment of an organization, she praises the military for delegating authority by empowering subordinates and trusting in their judgment when the chaos of battle precludes gaining further guidance or instruction.<sup>21</sup> To this, she adds the remarkable use of commander's intent to provide a framework for subordinates to change what they are doing in order to meet an overall purpose.

Finally, Jordan focuses on character and training, commending the military's ongoing commitment to leadership development and skills training. Training in itself is not innovative, but it provides the kind of leverage that makes all the "innovative insights," such as "commander's intent," possible. To Jordan, the military's rigorous and continuous training program is a model for the corporate community.

Ironically, even as Jordan published her work, the Army was reinventing major portions of its education program. Colonel George Reed has observed that "one of the hardest things for successful professions to do is question the assumptions on which their success is founded."<sup>22</sup> Yet, the Army does it regularly. As noted, the Army overhauled its entire officer education system in the last three years, doing so largely because of the feedback its senior leaders received from the Army Training and Leader Development Panel for Officers. The transition from the Command and General Staff to the new ILE program represented a shift in more than the curriculum. The Army fully updated its pedagogical methods, shifting from the instructor-oriented environment to student-centered collaborative learning pioneered in the late 1980s with the Combined Arms Services Staff School.



Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division assigned to Patrol Base Olsen in Samarra, Iraq, stand in formation prior to meeting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, 18 December 2008.

DOD, MCI Chad McNeely

The Center for Army Lessons Learned is another example of the Army's willingness to accept creativity and embrace change. In fact, its mission *is* change.<sup>23</sup> It represents a process by which senior leaders and analysts review and evaluate merit-worthy ideas before disseminating them to the field. Between March 2005 and August 2006, The Center responded to more than 8,000 warfighters from every service, component, and rank.<sup>24</sup> Change does not always come at the pace its champions demand, but in the main, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the military is not afraid to critically examine its own practices and admit that there is a better way.

## Bureaucracy, Creativity, and Innovation

Even so, it remains popular to denigrate structure and call for radical change. We have slurs such as "McDonaldization" to describe bureaucracy, and pundits calling for bureaucracy-busting ways to circumvent control systems and short-cut the change process.<sup>25</sup> Journalist Richard Chevron—who has likened innovation to lying, cheating, and stealing in order to drive change—envisioned ad hoc teams of *conspirators* taking risks with corporate funds without corporate permission.<sup>26</sup> He

describes innovators as angry and frustrated mavericks looking for new ideas. He calls them zealots and malcontents, people who will never become CEOs or leaders because they are more interested in finding new challenges, more "obsessed by searching for the future" than they are about following career paths. The maverick breaks rules to invent new rules.<sup>27</sup>

Business guru Tom Peters agrees, and celebrates the idea of destruction and failure as essential to creativity and innovation. Peters says that ours is "an age that begs for those who break the rules, who imagine the heretofore impossible... and stride forth."<sup>28</sup> He adds, "We value performance, but performance is the last refuge of those with shriveled imaginations!"<sup>29</sup> According

to Peters, innovation is frightening to many of us because it represents a loss of control and authority.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps this is why the term "innovator" was once a pejorative, a clear insult. In the late 18th century, calling someone an innovator was an accusation of *impulsiveness*, and likely to infringe on the law. Innovators were dangerous.<sup>31</sup>

Extreme but increasingly popular interpretations of innovation worry some business leaders and military scholars. According to Robert Simons, author of *Control in the Age of Empowerment*, the pressure to achieve superior results sometimes collides with behavioral codes, compelling some to bend the rules.<sup>32</sup> Simons agrees that flexibility and innovation are essential elements of today's competitive business climate, but his litany of "unwelcome surprises," where employees who broke through control mechanisms jeopardized entire businesses, makes it clear that Cheverton's bureaucracy-busting conspirators are putting their careers at risk.

**... it remains popular to denigrate structure and call for radical change.**



Equating innovation to rashness, military historian Conrad Crane warns that the military “does not need a culture that encourages daring risk-taking.” He agrees that innovation and boldness have become the latest buzzwords and should not be substitutes for sound judgment.<sup>33</sup> Citing how today’s political leaders misrepresent historic events to bolster their interpretation of innovation, he makes a credible case for a more careful examination of innovation.

Consider the case of General Billy Mitchell. In spite of anecdotal accounts that his views on air power prompted his court-martial, the Army actually prosecuted him because of insubordination. He accused the War Department of criminal negligence for not adopting his ideas wholesale. In many cases his notions would prove incorrect.<sup>34</sup> The issue was never the military’s failure to accept innovation, but the unacceptable behavior of a man unwilling to recognize—as good strategic leaders should—the nature of his environment and the systems necessary to advance his vision.

The Army needs a system that encourages mistakes and does not punish failure, but not one that permits and encourages liberal interpretations of boundaries and control systems. Such an unrestrained environment may be too much for today’s officer corps to handle. The Army Training and Leader Development Panel (for officers) revealed that officers striving to follow the service’s values and ethics have an inadequate understanding of what these concepts mean and that the Army’s leaders do a poor job of reinforcing the message.<sup>35</sup> In 1999, the Strategic Studies Institute published *Army Professionalism, The Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21st Century*. One of its conclusions is that the encroachment of egoism (“What is good is what’s best for me”) now pervades the Army’s leadership.<sup>36</sup> What the authors essentially said was that an officer is inclined to do what is right, not because it is right, but because it looks good: the implication being that this same officer would do what is wrong if it made him look good. Most alarmingly, one may fail to see the difference.<sup>37</sup> The boundaries of what is acceptable and what is risk are very much open to interpretation.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of scholars and practitioners willing to debate the future of the profession in an open and constructive way. There is a perpetual tension between the need for conformity and the desire for critical thinking. Among these discussions is the charge that the Army’s anti-intellectualism and bias against thinkers prevents some from fully expressing their ideas.<sup>38</sup> Another suggests that the officer evaluation system, with its focus on individual accomplishment as opposed to long-term organizational health, prevents officers from ever thinking creatively.<sup>39</sup> One report claims a bias against the warrior, and that the Army focuses so much on the long term that it neglects their immediate needs.<sup>40</sup> And this exchange persists in the premise that a bureaucratic mind-set (again, seen as negative) dominates the Army’s culture. The root of this pattern—with bureaucracy always seeming to surface as a contentious issue—may stem from the very composition of the officer corps.

Studies continue to show that a plurality of military officers come from two very distinct Myers-Briggs (MBTI) personality types, each with a preference for efficiency, data, structure, and the bottom line—a preference for bureaucracy.<sup>41</sup> Quinn reminds us that an inclination toward structure does not preclude us from acting flexibly and creatively and embracing change. In other words, a bureaucratic disposition need not be an impediment to change, but it may influence how the Army as a group defines the boundary between Quinn’s negative and positive zones. Of course, the Myers-Briggs typology test is not an exact science, but these findings do point to a kind of personality dominance in the Army’s officer corps.

This data can suggest that the Army suffers from groupthink, that the organization and the people running the system exert pressure to enforce conformity.<sup>42</sup> This conclusion is plausible because, according to the aforementioned studies, the remainder of the officer corps is distributed among the other 14 MBTI types. Peer pressure from such a dominant group can nullify diversity.<sup>43</sup> Groupthink behaviors include an unquestioned belief in the

***The boundaries of what is acceptable and what is risk are very much open to interpretation.***

group's morality and a collective effort to rationalize actions or discount opponents. It manifests as self-censorship, but it mirrors Galbraith's notion of stability through formal adherence to an officially proclaimed doctrine.<sup>44</sup>

The message for Army leaders—particularly for the 46.5 percent of officers outside of the majority—is to recognize the tendency or bias toward bureaucratic thinking. Cheverton and Peters reminded us that frustration and anger drive conspiratorial and ungoverned behavior. One can easily imagine zealots acting to create separate evaluation plans or new tactics or rules of engagement based on facile experimentation, with potentially unintended consequences for all. Whether talking about innovation or change or conformity and what defines a troublemaker, how these different types interact and communicate could mean the difference between successful change or “ideas stigmatized as incorrect.”<sup>45</sup>

## Innovation Gone Awry

The abuses and leadership failures at Abu Ghraib represent a glaring contemporary example of uncontrolled innovative behavior. They serve as a warning to those condoning rampant bureaucracy-busting. A maverick might see in the abuses an expression of creativity, just another set of concepts developed to address a perceived difficulty, but not inherently wrong. Control systems such as rules of engagement, when perceived as obstacles, risk circumvention in the name of expediency or perceived noble ends. The maverick might claim that innovative tactics, especially if successful (as defined by the individual) should supersede any restrictions put in place by “Fobbits,” “REMFs” (rear-echelon m-f-s) or “petty bureaucrats.”<sup>46</sup> While it is true that innovation needs its champions and mavericks, innovators are not necessarily wearing white hats in the effort to combat bureaucratic inertia. When facile judgments

cross into ethically normative and strategic ramifications, they are malignantly corrosive.

Before the Army finds itself embroiled in a scandal that results from a second- or third-order effect of some ostensibly well-intentioned innovation, it should desist from its rush to remove barriers. However, this does not mean the Army should cease its call for new ideas, prudent experimentation, or a culture that rewards creativity. It just means the Army needs to develop a more precise vision of what it wants and use a vocabulary to match.

We can find both in “the learning organization,” a concept developed 17 years ago by MIT lecturer and author Peter Senge. The learning organization is not a trendy program, but a prescription for getting past cosmetic and short-lived buzzwords and into the details of real improvement. Senge's ideas are thus trenchantly relevant to current Army doctrine and concepts. In fact, the Army already practices much of what Senge details, so there is little new to implement or adopt. Studying his concept serves two purposes. First, we can take credit for having an institutional culture that many consider a model for corporate America, and second, by doing so, we can drop the rhetoric surrounding “innovation” and concentrate on generating improvements within the system.

Senge's premise is simple. For a business to succeed, its employees must learn faster than their competitors. Organizations must recognize the obstacles to learning and behave in ways to mitigate these tendencies. According to Senge, people base decisions on incomplete information, using assumptions and generalizations without understanding the big picture. They solve symptoms and then seek to blame some anonymous “them” when, in the end, nothing changes, or their myopic ideas complicate rather than solve the problem.<sup>47</sup>

## Innovation in Learning Organizations

If this language sounds familiar, it should. It reflects the negative depictions of so-called “innovative” behavior. Part of what makes an organization a learning one is its ability to get past superficial models and broad abstractions that characterize our romantic view of innovation and mavericks. The successful organization sets aside unchallenged assumptions, gut-based “facts,” and sloppy reasoning, because they prevent objectivity

***The abuses and leadership failures at Abu Ghraib represent a glaring contemporary example of uncontrolled innovative behavior.***

and stifle learning.<sup>48</sup> Learning organizations insist on fact-based decisionmaking, and insist on data and a careful examination of evidence to ensure the focus is on the cause, not on the symptoms of the problem. The Army's new ILE curriculum, which stresses critical thinking and insists on the use of intellectual standards such as clarity, accuracy, and fairness, is evidence of this behavior. Although we often debate their merits, the processes found in our doctrine for deliberate decisionmaking verify that we acknowledge our conscious or unconscious biases and work to overcome them.<sup>49</sup>

Learning organizations also regularly review successes and failures and examine how they react to emergent environments. Organizations that understand that "the knowledge gained from failure is often instrumental in achieving subsequent successes" are willing to learn from past experience.<sup>50</sup> To the military officer, this logic is not new. The benefits of this process are evident in the Center for Army Lessons Learned products, internal after-action review data, and the benefits of ad hoc groups such as the Improvised Explosive Device Task Force.

An important tenet of a good learning organization is its ability to disseminate what it learns quickly and efficiently. This includes not only information sharing, but also incentives to reward success so that practices can change quickly. Dr. Jordan recognized in the military a sense of unparalleled collaboration, simultaneously accusing the business community of opposite behavior. She says that while it is easy to talk about sharing best practices, corporate reward systems actually undermine teamwork and encourage sub-optimization.<sup>51</sup> In the military, she observes, the sense of mutual support overrides competitiveness. Notwithstanding the debate about officer evaluations, the business community believes the military defines success as the achievement of mutual goals, not as individual accomplishment.

Understanding the learning organization is only half the battle. The other half is in making sure not to fall into the trap of cosmetic change, or worse. Galbraith says that members of the establishment will often advocate for originality by dressing up old truths in new forms or by accepting minor heresies as good. Such substitutes for real change can short circuit introspection and reflection, which are by no means widely accepted or easily practiced. According to historian Williamson Murray, rash judgments coupled to personal agendas easily cloud or distort understanding.<sup>52</sup>

Change is hard no matter how you dress it up, and we can expect setbacks and imperfections. The most important thing senior leaders can do to keep the process vibrant and substantial is to refuse superficial debate, publicly challenge arguments (inside and outside of the Army) that fail to meet intellectual standards, and resist the urge to distill thinking and learning down to a matrix where too often the objective is simply to complete a checklist. The way we develop critical thinkers—members of an organization committed to learning—is through practice, not prescription. The simplistic language found in FM 1-0 is inimical to this concept and detrimental to the Army's leadership development goals. The next Army Chief of Staff should rethink his message and how he delivers it; otherwise, he will get exactly what he asks for, but not what he really wants.

The potential consequences of ambiguous language are real and occurring. The ongoing discussion in the Army about innovation, boldness, adaptability, and change is promising, and it proves that we need not accept buzzwords as substitutes for meaningful guidance. Offering the model known as the learning organization is an attempt, not to dump another panacea into the mix, but to suggest an existing framework for understanding innovation, one that will add precision to its message and ideally develop creative and flexible leaders. **MR**

***The most important thing senior leaders can do to keep the process vibrant and substantial is to refuse superficial debate...***



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# FUTURE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT in an Era of Persistent Conflict

Major Paul S. Oh, U.S. Army



Major Paul S. Oh is currently an assistant professor in the Social Sciences Department at the United States Military Academy. He is a 1997 graduate of West Point where he was commissioned as a military intelligence officer. Major Oh served in Tal Afar, Iraq, from 2004 to 2005 with 1/25th Infantry (Strykers). He was also stationed in Fort Lewis, WA, and Schofield Barracks, HI, holding various intelligence positions. He holds a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

PHOTO: U.S. Air Force pararescuemen from 82d Expeditionary Rescue Squadron wait for a Marine Corps CH-53E helicopter to land during a training exercise near Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, 2 May 2009. (U.S. Air Force, SSGT Joseph L. Swafford Jr.)

**F**RAMING THE FUTURE strategic environment in an era of persistent conflict is an immense challenge.<sup>1</sup> Unlike during the Cold War era, the United States no longer has an overarching paradigm through which it can view the world. Nonstate actors and irregular warfare dominate America's attention as it continues to fight insurgencies while coping with terrorist threats like Al-Qaeda. Traditional threats persist in places like the Korean peninsula, while the rise of China presents the prospect of a future strategic competitor. Increasingly global forces in economics, the environment, and health have greater impact on citizens worldwide. The U.S. is not sure how to structure, fund, and oversee its national security apparatus to meet these future challenges. No overarching paradigm suffices, and the United States faces the prospect of racing from one crisis to the next.

Several institutions have conducted studies to help policymakers plan for national challenges beyond the next 20 years. Among the most recent are *Mapping the Global Future* by the National Intelligence Council; *Joint Operating Environment* by United States Joint Forces Command; *Forging a World of Liberty under Law* by the Princeton Project on National Security; *The New Global Puzzle* by the European Union Institute for Security Studies; and *Global Strategic Trends Programme* by the British Ministry of Defense Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre.

These studies suggest the trends that will characterize and shape the future strategic environment: globalization, demographics, the rise of emerging powers, the environment and competition for resources, nonstate actors and challenge to governance, and advances in technology. These trends will present complex, multidimensional challenges that may require careful use of the military along with other instruments of national power.

To respond to this future strategic environment, the United States will most likely be involved in three types of missions: expeditionary warfare to manage violence and peace, defense of the command of the commons, and homeland defense. The land forces will spearhead expeditionary missions to “contested zones” to protect American interests abroad.<sup>2</sup> Sea, air, and space forces will counter threats to the American command of the commons—air, sea, space, and cyberspace—where the American military currently has dominance. The military will also support the interagency effort in homeland defense as technological advances weaken traditional natural barriers to attack on U.S. soil.

## Future Trends of the Next 20 Years

Globalization will force future trends that present both optimistic and pessimistic likelihoods.

**The good.** In *Mapping the Global Future*, the National Intelligence Council calls globalization the overarching “mega-trend” that will shape all other trends of the future.<sup>3</sup> Globalization is an amorphous concept, but here it is meant in its broadest definition—the increasingly rapid exchange of capital, goods, and services, as well as information, technology, ideas, people, and culture.<sup>4</sup> Markets for goods, finance, services, and labor will continue to become more internationalized and interdependent, bringing immense benefits to the world as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Globalization will continue to be the engine for greater economic growth. The world will be richer with many lifted out of poverty. It is unclear, however, whether a richer world where America has less relative economic power will be better for the United States in terms of its global influence.<sup>6</sup>

Studies before the recent economic shock had expected the global economy to be 80 percent larger in 2020 than in 2000, with average per capita income 50 percent higher.<sup>7</sup> According to the European Union Institute for Security Studies, the world economy will grow at a sustained annual rate of 3.5 percent between 2006 and 2020.<sup>8</sup> The United States, European Union, and Japan will likely continue to lead in many high-value markets, with the United States continuing to be the main driving force as the world’s leading economic power. Emerging economies will continue to do well, with the Chinese and Indian gross domestic product tripling by 2025.<sup>9</sup>

The percentage of the world’s population living in extreme poverty will likely continue to decline.<sup>10</sup>

**The bad.** The benefits of globalization will not be global. The harsh realities of competitive capitalism will produce definite winners and losers, and result in increased social and economic stratification both internationally and within countries.<sup>11</sup> Internationally, these losers will concentrate in certain areas of the “arc of instability,” a “swath of territory running from the Caribbean Basin through most of Africa, the Middle East, and Central and Southeast Asia.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the gap between countries who are benefiting economically, technologically, and socially and the countries that are left behind will continue to widen.<sup>13</sup> And although absolute poverty will decline worldwide, this will not be the case for these regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the number of people living in absolute poverty—on less than one dollar a day—has increased from 160 million in 1981 to 303 million today.<sup>14</sup> Poverty and aggravated income inequality will remain a monumental challenge in the next 20 years.

The Defense Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre notes, “Absolute poverty and the comparative disadvantage will fuel perceptions of injustice.”<sup>15</sup> The disparities will be evident to all because of globalized telecommunications. Populations of “have-not” countries that perceive themselves to be losing ground may continue to be breeding grounds for extremist and criminal ideologies that lead to violence within and outside those countries.

Greater economic interdependence will lead to greater political interdependence. Although such a scenario diminishes the prospects of major industrialized war between two nations, it also means that what happens in one part of the globe will affect other parts of the globalized world. Economic shocks will reverberate throughout the globe. A drastic downturn in the U.S. economy, for example, has caused a global economic recession, perhaps requiring global or regional political solutions.<sup>16</sup>

**And the ugly.** The new era of globalization also means that the United States cannot depend on geography to shield it from the many problems of the developing world. This was clear on 9/11 when the hate espoused by the extremist ideology of radical Islam manifested itself in attacks on U.S. soil. The dangers of interdependence are manifest in other





AP Photo: Elizabeth Dalziel

**A Chinese security guard wearing a protective mask cordons the entrance of a hotel designated as a quarantine facility for those who have been in contact with swine flu cases, Beijing, China, 11 May 2009.**

areas as well. Effects of climate change, disease, and pandemics originating from remote parts of the world will affect the United States.

Infectious disease is already the number one killer of human beings.<sup>17</sup> AIDS is a scourge in most of the world and poses an extreme societal threat in portions of sub-Saharan Africa. Even more frightening is the threat of a global avian influenza pandemic.<sup>18</sup> The ever increasing connectivity of nations resulting from globalization means that a virus originating in a remote part of an undeveloped country can spread throughout the world at a frightening pace, as evidenced by the recent “swine flu” panic. A pandemic would also cause economic hardship, even if the disease were physically kept out of the United States.

## Demographic Trends

Experts expect the world’s population to increase by 23.4 percent from 2005 to 2025.<sup>19</sup> The population growth in the developed world, however, will remain relatively stable. The United States will have 364 million citizens by 2030, while the population of the European Union will grow from 458 million to 470 million in 2025 before declining.<sup>20</sup> Japan and Russia will experience a decrease in population, with Japan’s population falling from 128 million to 124.8 million and Russia’s population falling from 143.2 million to 129.2 million within the next 20 years.<sup>21</sup>

Developed countries will also experience significant population aging. In the European Union, the ratio of employment age citizens (15-65) to the retired (over 65) will shift from about 4 to 1 in 2000 to 2 to 1 by 2050.<sup>22</sup> Japan will approach 2 to 1 by 2025, and the median age in Japan will increase from 42.9 to 50 years.<sup>23</sup> This trend will fortunately not have as severe an impact on the United States due to higher fertility rates and greater immigration.<sup>24</sup> Europe and Japan could face societal upheaval as they try to assimilate large numbers of migrant workers from the developing world. These factors will soon challenge the social welfare structure of these countries, their productivity, and discretionary spending for defense and foreign assistance.

**Developing countries.** Ninety percent of global population growth by 2030 will occur in developing and poorer countries.<sup>25</sup> Population growth in these areas will be 43 to 48.4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, 38 percent in the Middle East/North Africa region, 24 percent in Latin America, and 21 percent in Asia. Nine out of ten people will be living in the developing world in the next 20 years.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to the developed world, a significant portion of the population growth will be the “youth” of the region with a “youth bulge” occurring in Latin American, Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>27</sup> About 59 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa will be under 24 years by 2025.<sup>28</sup> In the Middle East, the working-age population will expand by 50 percent and in North Africa area by 40 percent, challenging governments to provide employment for a young and undereducated populace with little employment opportunities and setting up the potential for violent conflict. As a recent *Economist* article notes, these young men without “either jobs or prospects” will trade “urban for rural poverty, head for the slums, bringing their anger, and machetes, with them.”<sup>29</sup> In the last two decades, 80 percent of all civil conflicts took place

***Experts expect the world’s population to increase by 23.4 percent from 2005 to 2025.***

in countries where 60 percent or more of the population was under 30 years of age.<sup>30</sup>

**Migration.** Significant portions of the global population will be on the move, mostly to the cities. By 2030, 61 percent of the global population will live in cities as compared to 47 percent in 2000.<sup>31</sup> And while the urbanization ratio will be greater in developed countries compared to developing countries (81.7 percent versus 57 percent), the developing countries will struggle to control the transition to urban societies.<sup>32</sup> Shantytowns will likely proliferate in “mega-cities” struggling with crime and disease. Migration to wealthier countries will also continue as workers search for better economic opportunities. The Defense Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre reports that the number of people living outside their country of origin will increase from 175 million in 2020 to 230 million by 2050.<sup>33</sup> Environmental degradation, natural disasters, or armed conflicts will also forcibly uproot populations. How both the developing and developed countries absorb the influx of migrants may determine the level of conflict associated with these movements.

**Identity.** How segments of the global population identify themselves may drastically change in the next 20 years. Individual loyalty to the state and state institutions will become increasingly conditional.<sup>34</sup> Identity will increasingly be based on religious convictions and ethnic affiliations.<sup>35</sup> Religious identity may become a greater factor in how people identify themselves. Although Europe will remain mostly secular, religion will have greater influence in areas as diverse as China, Africa, Latin American, and the United States. In some areas of the developing world, Islam will continue to increase as the overarching identity for large numbers of people. In other regions, ethnicity and tribal loyalties will continue to be the dominant form of identification.

## Emerging Powers

The rise of powerful global players will reshape how we mentally map the globe in an increasingly multipolar world. *Mapping the Global Future* likens the emergence of China and India to the rise

of a united Germany in the 19th century and the rise of the United States in the 20th.<sup>36</sup> The global center of gravity will shift steadily toward the Pacific.

**China.** China will become a powerful actor in the global system. The rise of China has been called “one of the seminal events of the early 21st century.”<sup>37</sup> China’s economic and diplomatic influence will continue to expand globally. Its gross national product is expected to surpass all economic powers except the United States within 20 years.<sup>38</sup> China’s demand for energy to fuel this growth will make it a global presence as it ventures out to secure sources of energy. In East Asia, China is likely to wield its growing influence to shape the region’s “political-institutional contours” to build a regional community that excludes the United States.<sup>39</sup> All this will likely be accompanied by a continued Chinese build-up of its military to reinforce its growing world power status.

Whether China continues to pursue a peaceful rise will have a profound impact on the course of international affairs in the next 30 years. The rise and fall of great powers has been one of the most important dynamics in the international system, a dynamic that is often accompanied by instability and conflict.<sup>40</sup> Defense Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre believes China will approach international affairs with a fair amount of pragmatism, but face daunting challenges as it develops. It



DOD, Cherie Thurby

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Cao Gangchuan conduct an inspection of troops during an official military welcoming ceremony honoring Gates’ arrival in Beijing, China, 5 November 2007.

***When China does establish itself as a global power, it may be less restrained in its conduct of foreign affairs.***

may exert its growing hard and soft power to either protect its growth or ensure internal stability. When China does establish itself as a global power, it may be less restrained in its conduct of foreign affairs.<sup>42</sup>

**Other powers.** Other nations may also play a greater role in the international arena. Among those mentioned in the studies are India, Russia, Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil.<sup>43</sup> Depending on its ability to achieve greater political cohesion, a more united European Union could also play a greater role, especially as a model of global and regional governance.<sup>44</sup> Another possibility would be the rise of a rival alliance.<sup>45</sup>

The rise of these powers may mean a decline of the relative power of the United States. Though the United States would continue to play the major role in international affairs, its overwhelming dominance may decline. In the next 20 years, a more multipolar world may develop with political, economic, and military power diffused throughout the globe and America's ability to influence dialogue in key global issues relatively diminished.

## **Environment and Competition for Resources**

Scientific consensus increasingly points to human activity as a main contributing factor in global warming. Although climate science is complex and the estimates of probable damages differ, the possibilities of catastrophic effects caused by global warming are real. Major consequences are likely because of "melting ice-caps, thermal expansion of the oceans, and changes to ocean currents and flows."<sup>46</sup> Possible consequences on land include increased desertification, reduced land for habitation and agriculture, spread of diseases, and an increase of extreme weather events.

The worst-hit regions will likely face political, economic, and social instability.<sup>47</sup> These regions will be an arc of instability affecting the non-integrated areas of the globe and particularly

worsening the already marginal living standards in many Asian, African, and Middle Eastern nations.<sup>48</sup> The likelihood of more failed states collapsing will increase as weak governments are unable to cope with decreases in food and water and increases in disease and violent uprisings.

**Competition for resources.** Exacerbating the environmental concerns is the ever-increasing competition for resources. As countries grow richer and modernize, the demand for resources will greatly increase in the next 20 years. According to the International Energy Agency, demand for energy will likely grow by more than 50 percent by 2035, with fossil fuels projected to meet 80 percent of this increase.<sup>49</sup> The world economy will remain heavily dependent on oil through 2025 at a minimum.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, global consumption of natural gas will increase by 87 percent.<sup>51</sup> The United States has so far shown little inclination to seriously address its addiction to oil. Growing Asian powers' consumption of oil will also skyrocket; China will have to increase consumption by 150 percent and India by 100 percent by 2020 to maintain current growth.<sup>52</sup> Such explosive consumption will exacerbate global warming in the absence of a global framework to tackle the problem.

Because of global growth, competition for these resources will intensify as the United States and other major economies vie to secure access to energy supplies. The competition will bid up energy prices, making it even more difficult for developing nations to afford minimal energy for their populations. As Isaiah Wilson notes, resource security has persistently been the primary objective of advanced-nation security and military strategies. Quests for this security will continue to draw nations into military and economic engagement in the "arc of instability."<sup>53</sup> The United States will continue its involvement in the Middle East for years to come. China will continue to build bilateral agreements with various nations in Africa to secure its oil supply.

The degradation of the environment and increased economic growth of nations will cause competition not only for traditional energy sources, but also for necessities like food and water. Major portions of the population will live in areas of "water stress," and the amount of arable land may diminish.<sup>54</sup> The consumption of *blue water* (river,



lake, and renewable groundwater) will continue to increase, depriving even more people of access to clean drinking water.<sup>55</sup> Concurrently, environmental degradation, intensification of agriculture, and a quickened pace of urbanization will all contribute to the reduced fertility of and access to arable land.<sup>56</sup> Increased reliance on biofuels for growing energy needs will reduce food supply crop yields. Competition for other food sources, including fish, will increase.<sup>57</sup> Even now, African fishermen bemoan the disappearance of their livelihoods while Europeans bemoan the increasing prices for fish in restaurants.<sup>58</sup>

## Nonstate Actors and Challenges to Governance

Scholars view the rise of nonstate actors as a fundamental challenge to the Treaty of Westphalia-based international system.<sup>59</sup> The United States, as the leader and architect of the Westphalian system, has been and will continue to be the primary focus of this challenge. Nonstate actors that do not see themselves bound by national borders are likely to continue to grow in strength and lethality. Small, empowered groups will be increasingly able to do greater things while states' near monopoly on information and destructive power continues to diminish.<sup>60</sup> Various factors have aided their cause. The National Intelligence Council sees a "perfect storm" in certain regions of the underdeveloped world as weak governments, lagging economies, religious extremism, and the unemployed youth fuel extremist movements.<sup>61</sup>

Al-Qaeda remains a formidable near-term threat. Recent testimony by American intelligence officials reported that Al-Qaeda is continuing to gain strength from its sanctuary in Pakistan and is "improving its ability to recruit, train, and position operatives capable of carrying out attacks inside the United States."<sup>62</sup> Even if the West neutralized Al-Qaeda, the National Intelligence Council

believes that the factors that gave rise to Al-Qaeda will not abate in the next 15 years and predicts that by 2020, "similarly inspired but more diffuse extremist groups" will supersede it.<sup>63</sup>

**Challenges to governance.** Nonstate actors such as Al-Qaeda will play a major role in spreading extreme and violent ideologies. Fueled by the perceived injustices in a globalized world and by frustration with the oppressiveness of regional authoritarian regimes, major segments of the population in the arc of instability may rally to radical Islam and attack the institutions of traditional government through violent means. These forces may also cross national boundaries to form a transnational governing body dedicated to terrorism and jihad. The National Intelligence Council, for example, sees a possible scenario in which political Islam provides a context to form a Sunni Caliphate and draws on Islamic popular support to challenge traditional regimes.<sup>64</sup> The Princeton Project on National Security presents another scenario where a radical arc of Shi'ite governments rules areas from Iran to Palestine, sponsors terrorism in the West, and tries to destabilize the Middle East.<sup>65</sup>

Governments in the arc of instability will face daunting challenges to stability. They will have to deal with the adverse effects of globalization, climate change, unemployment, and a new form of identity politics. To succeed, they will need to fight internal corruption and reform their inefficient, authoritative governments. They will need to do this as a radical ideology fiercely attacks their legitimacy and any connections to the Western world.

International crime will also challenge governance.<sup>66</sup> Criminal activities will continue to increase in sophistication and lethality as enhanced communication technologies and weapons continue to proliferate.<sup>67</sup> Such activities will be increasingly intertwined with civil conflict and terrorism as criminal groups leverage the benefits of increased globalization and their alliances with states and nonstate actors, to include terrorists.

Nonstate actors may also provide opportunities for increased cooperation to meet these future challenges. International, regional, and nongovernmental organizations will continue to grow in capacity. Although governance over international trade and crime has increased due to expanded transnational government networks, new collaborative institutions

***...nonstate actors [are] a fundamental challenge to the Treaty of Westphalia-based international system.***

and mechanisms will be required to cope with increasingly complex global and regional problems.<sup>68</sup> These networks must continue to grow in strength to solve global problems.

## Technology

Advances in technology elicit great hope as well as great fear, because major technological breakthroughs have an impact on every aspect of our lives. We can expect further progress in information technology and nanotechnology, innovations in biotechnology, and increased investments in research and development.<sup>69</sup> Faster computers combined with elements of nanotechnology and biotechnology may improve our ability to deal with daunting challenges such as human health, environmental issues, and malnutrition.

On the other hand, technology's availability and ease of transfer allow broader access to previously unavailable weapons. The ease of use of commercial technology has also exacerbated the problem of proliferation.<sup>70</sup> This is most dangerous in terms of weapons of mass destruction. The Princeton Project on National Security asserts that the "world is on the cusp of a new era of nuclear danger."<sup>71</sup> North Korea does possess nuclear weapons. Despite the findings of the recent United States National Intelligence Estimate, it seems likely that Iran is still determined to acquire the ability to build nuclear weapons. If the international community cannot rein in these countries, other countries in the Middle East and East Asia will likely also attempt to join the nuclear club.<sup>72</sup>

Countries will also continue to pursue chemical and biological weapons, as well as delivery capabilities for these weapons. Chemical and biological weapons can be integrated into legitimate commercial infrastructures to conceal a country's capabilities.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, more countries will be able to acquire ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles. By 2020, the National Intelligence Council believes that both

North Korea and Iran will have intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capabilities, and several countries will develop space-launch vehicles.<sup>74</sup> A preview of such capabilities came on 5 February 2008 when Iran launched a Kavoshgar-1 rocket into space using technology similar to that needed for long-range ballistic missiles.<sup>75</sup>

Concurrently, many in the United States fear the waning of American domination in research and development of new, emerging technology. The number of American Ph.D. engineering students is decreasing while the number of foreign students returning to their countries from U.S. universities is on the rise.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, the *Economist* notes that the domestic trends in American politics and immigration policy are keeping the world's best and brightest talents from "darkening America's doors."<sup>77</sup>

**Technology and terrorists.** The potential nexus of terrorist groups and nuclear weapons is perhaps the most frightening scenario for national security experts. The increasing ease with which terrorists can acquire weapons to deliver a nuclear attack on the United States presents a nightmare scenario. Graham Allison notes that there are more than 200 addresses around the world from which terrorists can acquire nuclear weapons or fissile material.<sup>78</sup> Russia, Pakistan, and North Korea are among the likely sources. If terrorists cannot acquire a nuclear bomb, the technology and tools are now available for them to build their own.<sup>79</sup> The difficult part is acquiring the fissile material needed for a homemade bomb. There is evidence that Al-Qaeda attempted to acquire a nuclear weapon for an attack on the United States.<sup>80</sup> The prospect of Iran gaining nuclear capabilities is also of great concern because of the capabilities of its proxy force, Hezbollah.<sup>81</sup>

## Operating Environment and Threat Evaluation

The second part of this paper explores the ramifications of these trends for each type of mission set by explaining the operating environments and the nature of the threat. There are obvious limitations to such framing. First, missions will likely be joint and interagency ventures with success not achieved purely through the application of military force. Second, labeling these challenges as "threats" inherently implies an adversarial relationship, which may not always be the case. The emergence

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of great powers, for example, may not necessarily lead to adverse conditions in international affairs. Third, some challenges do not fit neatly into these categories, so we may not always identify an emerging threat. The emerging radical Islamic community in Europe might be an example.

However, categorization does highlight the vastly different types of missions our military forces may perform during the next 20 years. With tighter budgets for discretionary spending, the U.S. must prioritize missions and use military forces efficiently and effectively. Examining and analyzing mission sets allows each service to plan accordingly and adapt to myriad possibilities the future strategic environment may hold.

So, what do these trends mean for our military forces? American expeditionary forces may need to enter what Posen labels “contested zones.” These zones correspond to areas the Pentagon has called the global “arc of insecurity.” Any mission in these zones will be both dangerous and difficult because political, physical, and technological realities negate many American military advantages. Although this will have to be a joint venture, land forces will likely spearhead such missions. The air, sea, and space forces, on the other hand, will lead the effort in countering threats to the “command of the commons.” With the rise of emerging powers and advances in technology, countries will venture into the commons where the U.S. military has traditionally maintained dominance. Finally, all forces will continue to support the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies in defending the homeland against nontraditional actors. For each mission type, the U.S. military will face increasingly capable threats seeking to take advantage of any vulnerabilities.

## Expeditionary Warfare to Contested Zones

Although both the Navy and Air Force have begun structuring their forces for expeditionary warfare, the land force will likely spearhead the



U.S. Air Force SSGT Corey Farr, a pararescueman from 82d Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, prepares to board a Marine Corps helicopter during a training exercise near Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, 2 May 2009.

U.S. Air Force, SSGT Joseph L. Swafford Jr.

missions into the “contested zones” in the arc of insecurity. These areas, running from the Caribbean Basin through most of Africa, the Middle East, and Central and Southeast Asia, will disproportionately involve the losers from globalization.<sup>82</sup> In fact, these zones are where the many trends of the next 20 years will converge. Increased poverty or at least relative poverty, large numbers of unemployed youth, environmental degradation, competition for resources, emergence of deadly nonstate actors, failed states, and proliferation of devastating technology will be the most evident and severe here.

The American expeditionary force may be drawn into these areas for a variety of reasons. First, these areas will continue to be breeding grounds and safe-havens for extremist ideologies and criminal elements. Second, increased global demand and competition for energy sources could require military intervention in these contested zones. Third, tribal wars or genocides may oblige the United States to join multilateral forces in stabilizing failed states or regions. Fourth, humanitarian interventions may increase if natural or man-made disasters cause mass suffering or death. In these zones, the American forces will be involved in both the management of violence and management of peace, forcing it to “fight” wars in a different fashion.

Political, physical, and technological facts will make the missions in these areas particularly difficult. Local actors have stronger interests in a war’s

outcome than the United States, and our adversaries will have a plentiful supply of males of fighting age. They will also have the “home-court advantage.” They have studied the way the U.S. military fights, and the weapons required for close combat are inexpensive and plentiful.<sup>83</sup> In addition, conflicts that involve more than battles between traditional armies will also require nontraditional expertise in areas like cultural awareness, working with and training allied nations, interagency operations, and diplomacy.<sup>84</sup> Major General Robert Scales goes as far as to say that the next World War will be the social scientists’ war, describing the wars to follow as “psycho-cultural wars” requiring officers with knowledge based on the discipline of social sciences.<sup>85</sup> These factors negate the traditional advantages of the American way of war built on technology and organization.

What will the operating environment look like for U.S. expeditionary forces in the contested zones? A survey of the literature suggests that U.S. forces will have to operate in an environment characterized by the following factors:

- **Highly urban environment/megacities.** Approximately 60 percent of the world’s population will live in cities by 2030.<sup>86</sup> Some of these cities will grow into megacities containing huge shantytowns. They may have high crime rates, ineffective or corrupt police forces, and high levels of instability. Some megacities may collapse into chaos.<sup>87</sup>

- **Extreme environments.** These regions may become increasingly inhospitable due to human activities and climate change. There may be less access to basic resources needed for survival, like food and water. These conditions could often obligate U.S. forces to provide such resources to populations in countries in which they operate.

- **Communicable disease.** Countries may also have high levels of communicable disease, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, hepatitis, and tuberculosis.<sup>88</sup>

- **Endemic hostility.** There may be underlying hostility among the populace caused by transnational or intercommunal conflicts or virulent anti-American ideologies, such as militant Islam.<sup>89</sup>

- **Collapse of functioning state.** U.S. forces may have to operate in regions where the government has failed and local warlords use extreme violence to control populations.<sup>90</sup>

- **Nonmilitary partners.** U.S. forces will have to understand how to work with other government

agencies and elements of society to combat adversaries.<sup>91</sup> The management of peace will undoubtedly be an interagency affair as the integrated instruments of national power become increasingly crucial for success. The presence of media and internet coverage will also complicate missions. The military will need heightened awareness of legal implications and the rules of engagement.<sup>92</sup>

- **Cheaper and deadlier weapons.** Adversaries will continue to benefit from wide availability of weapons, and they will continue to modify what is cheaply available to cause maximum damage on U.S. forces.

- **Weapons of mass destruction.** Advances in and the proliferation of technology may make the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons on U.S. forces a real possibility.

- **Greater collaboration with developing country militaries.** Demographic declines and fiscal pressures will result in reduced military capabilities among developed-country allies. Future coalitions will increasingly rely on less well-trained and poorly equipped developing country forces that may not share the U.S. professional military ethic.<sup>93</sup>

- **Media on the battlefield.** The media will likely cover the actions of the expeditionary force on the ground and communicate them in real time to a global audience.<sup>94</sup>

- **Humanitarian disasters.** Increasingly devastating natural disasters caused by climate change could require more military humanitarian assistance.

Threats will come from multiple sources:

- **Terrorists.** Terrorists will continue to target U.S. interests abroad, seeking soft targets to send messages and inspire similar groups to action.

- **Paramilitary forces.** These forces will be intermingled with the local population and ally themselves with terrorist groups. The United States will face rebel groups, gangs, insurgents, and private military companies.

- **Tribal forces.** Armed tribal forces may be a big challenge because they have the potential to switch from being adversaries to allies depending on American strategy and tactics and on shifting local political calculations.

- **Criminal elements.** Weak governance will allow both transnational and local criminal elements to thrive. Drug cartels will continue to be an international presence and the most notorious criminal networks.<sup>95</sup>



- Traditional militaries. Although hostilities with another state may be rare, increased competition for resources may cause state-to-state conflicts.

## Maintaining the Command of the Commons

Posen describes the “commons” as those areas that no state owns but that provide access to much of the globe. It is analogous to the command of the seas, although Posen also includes command of the air and space.<sup>96</sup> The Joint operating environment includes the command of cyberspace as well. According to Posen, “command of the commons” means that the United States gets vastly more military use out of the commons than other states, that the United States can generally deny its use to others, and that others would lose access to the commons if they attempt to deny its use to the United States. The command of the commons has been “the key military enabler” of America’s global position and has allowed the United States to better exploit other sources of power.<sup>97</sup>

The United States sea, air, and space forces will lead in responding to these challenges to the command of commons. Though the command of the commons will most likely remain uncontested in the near- and medium-term, the rise of emerging powers could lead to competition over time. Posen notes that the sources of U.S. command include American economic resources and military exploitation of information technology.<sup>98</sup> As American economic power begins to decline relatively, and as advanced technology becomes more diffused, other nations may exploit these factors to become viable contenders. Already, nations have launched missiles into space, started investing in blue water navies, and increased their cyber warfare capabilities.

The following are critical considerations for the operating environment:

- Increased interest in space. Emerging powers will continue to expand their space programs. Advances in technologies will enable more nations to launch rockets and satellites.<sup>99</sup> The United States will be increasingly concerned about capability of nations to convert this technology into intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as weapons threatening to U.S. space capabilities.

- Nuclear proliferation. As more countries acquire nuclear weapons, American ability or pro-

clivity to intervene in various areas of the commons (or contested areas) may decline due to the threat of nuclear retaliation.

- Missile technology proliferation. Missile technology proliferation may deny certain areas of the commons to the United States. Examples include sea-lanes in the Straits of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Strait of Malacca.<sup>100</sup>

- Connectivity vulnerabilities. Increased automation and reliance on information technology leave the United States more vulnerable to cyber-attacks as adversaries use techniques such as worms, viruses, Trojan horses, botnets, or electromagnetic pulse.<sup>101</sup>

The rise of great powers will feature nations with increased conventional military capabilities like that of the United States. They will possess “information-enabled network” forces as well as naval forces with air and undersea capabilities.<sup>102</sup> Nations may be able to challenge command of their regional sea-lanes, as well as U.S. dominance in space and cyberspace. Also, nonstate actors may be able to exploit technology to conduct cyber-warfare.

## Military Support to Homeland Defense

With globalization and advances in technology shrinking the world, the homeland of the United States will be more vulnerable. 9/11 was a watershed moment in America as national policymakers began reexamining existing defenses and the balance between security and liberty. Many fear that terrorist and other criminal elements will continue to exploit the openness of American civil society to attack our financial, energy, or governmental infrastructure. The increasing availability of nuclear weapons may result in an attack that dwarfs the physical and psychological damages of 2001.

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Many doubt the effectiveness of our changes and criticize the behemoth Department of Homeland Security and the restructuring that occurred with the creation of this agency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's performance during Hurricane Katrina heightened these concerns. Some scholars also doubt the wisdom of the creation of the Office of National Intelligence and the preservation of the Federal Bureau of Investigations as the lead law enforcement agency on domestic intelligence.<sup>103</sup> Still others call for reform of Congressional committee jurisdictions and oversight capabilities. How the U.S. military will best support this interagency effort is still unclear. The military has been viewed simultaneously as the last and greatest safety net for devastating events as well as a possible threat to civil liberties when operating within the U.S. borders.

The demand for higher levels of security in the homeland leads to tension with many of the political and cultural traditions of America. Increased domestic surveillance conflicts with cherished civil liberties. Similarly, increased border protection affects immigration and even openness to foreign business travelers, both of which can have negative economic and cultural impacts. The vigorous, often partisan, debates in Washington on wiretapping, torture, and immigration will likely continue well into the future. Following are the areas of major concern:

- Weapons of mass destruction. Proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical technology and material will leave the United States increasingly vulnerable to attacks with weapons of mass destruction.
- Natural disasters. Hurricane Katrina may have been a sign of things to come, with the nation looking more to the military as the most effective institution for dealing with devastating natural disasters.
- Economic shocks. Terrorist elements may target key financial nodes in the United States such as the New York Stock Exchange to attack the global financial system.<sup>103</sup>

- Energy crisis. Shortages of supplies relative to increasing demand may leave the United States susceptible to energy shocks.

- Refugee flows. Economic and environmental factors may increase both legal and illegal migration from Latin America and elsewhere.

- Cyber-attacks. Increased automation of our financial systems, physical infrastructure, and government operations renders the homeland more vulnerable to attacks on our information systems by both state and nonstate actors.

There are multiple probable sources of threat. Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups remain the biggest threat to U.S. homeland. Other Islamic terrorist groups may emerge not directly linked to Al-Qaeda, but inspired by similar extremist ideology. Elements of our society may become disposed to extremist Islamic ideology and independently plan attacks. Transnational criminals, including drug cartels, will continue to have a presence in the U.S. Although state attacks on U.S. homeland will be rare, hostile states may use proxy forces to attack vulnerable sites using difficult-to-trace methods, such as cyber-attack. States could also potentially use economic measures, such as energy embargos or financial measures as holders of U.S. debt, to damage the U.S. economy.

## Facing the Challenges

The challenges of the next 20 years are immense and diverse. Some are immediate and others are long term or systemic. In this context, the U.S. military must be sufficiently flexible and multi-talented to play the various roles the nation may ask of it. Operations in the contested zones will be extremely complex and multidimensional, and perhaps more frequent; the military will have to redefine the concept of war and the nature and utility of military forces. Great-power politics will continue and may manifest itself in a challenge to American command of the commons. America may have to reexamine

***...the military will have to redefine the concept of war and the nature and utility of military forces.***

its hegemonic status and the role of U.S. forces in maintaining the international system. Threats to the U.S. homeland will continue and increase. The military will need to function effectively in the interagency process to aid in the defense of our

homeland. Yet, our military must do this in an era of likely declining military funding. Forward-thinking analysis of likely trends on these various military missions will prove essential to preparing for the challenges ahead. **MR**

## NOTES

1. This article was originally written for the United States Military Academy's 2008 Senior Conference. The article reflects the views of the author, and not necessarily of West Point. Special thanks to Mr. Roland DeMarcellus, Colonel Mike Meese, and Colonel Cindy Jebb for their guidance and help in editing.
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# How to End the Genocide in **DARFUR** and Why It Won't Happen

Midshipman Brendon J. Mills, U.S. Naval Academy

**O**N 25 APRIL 2003, two rebel groups, the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, attacked the El Fasher airport in Darfur, Sudan, killing 75 Sudanese government troops and destroying seven government aircraft.<sup>1</sup> In response, the Sudanese government in Khartoum began a counterinsurgency campaign to end the rebellion in western Darfur by using proxy militias with the support of government air and ground forces. Four hundred thousand people have died because of that counterinsurgency campaign, and another 1.3 million have been displaced.<sup>2</sup> If a genocide were to occur in the United States that affected the same percentage of its population, 20 million Americans would die and 65 million others would be displaced persons.<sup>3</sup>

The world responded to the violence in Darfur with two operations. The first, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), began in 2004. The African Union Mission in Sudan at first monitored the Addis Ababa Agreement of 28 May 2004, which established a temporary ceasefire between the government and the Sudan Liberation Army; however, both sides violated the cease-fire, and the AMIS remained as an observer, powerless to stop the violence.<sup>4</sup> In 2005, AMIS received a broader mandate to protect civilians on the ground, but the African troops that made up AMIS's peacekeeping force proved too few and unqualified to end the genocide.

The second (and current) operation to bring peace to Darfur, United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), is under the auspices of both the UN and African Union, yet, like AMIS, it lacks the ability to stop the genocide. In July of 2007, the UN Security Council, recognizing the failure of the AMIS, passed Resolution 1769, which authorized organizing 24,000 troops for Darfur while providing a strong mandate to protect civilians there as well.<sup>5</sup> This resolution, however, has not delivered peace to Darfur.

The main reason for UNAMID's lack of success is that UNAMID, like AMIS, has only low-quality African troops at its disposal. The Sudanese government ensured that no first-world troops deployed to Darfur by refusing to accept Resolution 1769 unless it contained a status of forces agreement mandating that Western militaries intervene only if African troops could not.<sup>6</sup> The Sudanese government was able to achieve this agreement because, as *The New York Times*' Lydia Polgreen reported, "When previous large (peacekeeping) missions were organized in Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the central governments in those countries had collapsed or were so weak that they had little choice but to accept peacekeepers."<sup>7</sup>

*Brendon J. Mills is a first-class midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy. He has served as an intern at the Defense Intelligence Agency.*

PHOTO: Nigerian soldiers serving with the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) stand guard during an inspection in southern Darfur on 10 March 2008. (AFP Photo, Albany Associates, Stuart Price)



Unfortunately, because of its oil reserves and ties to first-world countries, the Sudanese government remains relatively strong and can maintain its claims to sovereignty and dictate the nature of the peacekeeping force within its borders.<sup>8</sup>

Without a high-quality military force partaking in operations, UNAMID cannot succeed. According to Polgreen:

Even the troops that are in place [in Darfur], the old African Union force and two new battalions [of UN forces], lack essential equipment, like sufficient armored personnel carriers and helicopters, to carry out even the most rudimentary of peacekeeping tasks.<sup>9</sup> Some even had to buy their own paint to turn their green helmets United Nations blue.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, UNAMID has neither the mandate nor the forces to end the Sudanese government's air operations against civilians. Without properly equipped and trained troops or the means to stop the air strikes against civilian targets, UNAMID will continue to fail; clearly, peacekeeping operations in Darfur must change in order to end genocide in that region.

## No-Fly Zone and Peacekeeping

As the world's preeminent military and economic power, the United States is the sole actor who can bring about the change in peacekeeping that Darfur needs to achieve peace. In a speech at the Naval Academy in 2007, Max Boot, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, advocated sending Blackwater (now called "Xe"), the private military contractor, into Darfur to end the genocide for the bargain price of \$40 million.<sup>11</sup> When combined with a no-fly zone over Darfur, putting private military contractors on the ground there is a viable option for bringing the genocide to an end quickly and cheaply. Analyses of past no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq and of South African private military contractor actions in Angola and Sierra Leone suggest that the United States could end the

genocide in Darfur by implementing such a zone over Darfur and introducing military contractors to act as a force multiplier for UNAMID.

In Operation Provide Comfort and Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch, the United States demonstrated the important role air denial plays in disrupting state-sponsored crimes against humanity. After the first Persian Gulf War in 1991, the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein began a campaign to control the rebellious Kurdish population in northern Iraq and the Shi'ite population in southern Iraq after Iraq's defeat by coalition forces. The Iraqi military used helicopter gunships extensively in both regions. In northern Iraq, the gunships fired napalm and chemical weapons on civilian targets.<sup>12</sup> The United States responded with Operation Provide Comfort in the North, which expanded into Operation Northern Watch in 1996. The U.S. launched Operation Southern Watch and in southern Iraq in 1992.

The United States and its allies used combat aircraft and patrols to achieve air superiority and end Iraq's aerial persecution of the Kurds and Shi'ites. Operation Northern Watch maintained air superiority over Kurdish regions in northern Iraq from 1996 to 2003 using approximately 50 combat and support aircraft.<sup>13</sup> Considering that the U.S. Air Force has over 2,000 combat aircraft at its disposal, Operation Northern Watch was a minimal commitment that produced excellent results.<sup>14</sup>

Major Michael McKelvey states that the two no-fly zones in Iraq resulted in "the elimination of Iraqi aircraft in the two areas of operation ... an end to the use of aircraft against innocent civilians, and a permissive environment for other allied military actions."<sup>15</sup>

These observations indicate that establishing a no-fly zone over Darfur using U.S. aircraft could easily and cost effectively end the Sudanese government's use of aircraft against civilian targets.

The Sudanese government uses Russian-made bombers and attack helicopters to attack civilian targets in Darfur. Scott Straus, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, describes the integral role that aerial attacks serve: "The Sudanese Air Force has participated in attacks by bombing villages before soldiers and militias launch ground attacks. There is considerable evidence that the militia, army, and air force act in a coordinated fashion."<sup>16</sup>

***... the United States is the sole actor who can bring about the change in peacekeeping that Darfur needs to achieve peace.***

**...observations indicate that establishing a no-fly zone over Darfur using U.S. aircraft could easily and cost effectively end the Sudanese government's use of aircraft against civilian targets.**

Brian Steidle, the central figure of both the book and documentary, *The Devil Came on Horseback*, vividly describes the strikes by the Sudanese Air Force against civilian targets: "The [government of Sudan] GOS would sometimes 'drop' bombs by kicking them out the back end of the Antonovs."<sup>17</sup>

Other reports claimed the GOS would target civilians by throwing mortar rounds out of the back of aircraft as they flew over villages or packing 55-gallon drums with explosives and shrapnel and just rolling them out. It was not a very high-tech operation, but it was lethal.<sup>18</sup> These tactics, although rudimentary, achieved the government's aims in Darfur, for, as Alan Kuperman writes, they "are effective at wreaking terror, compelling people to flee their villages."<sup>19</sup>

As previously mentioned, United Nations Mission in the Sudan has neither the capability nor the mandate to stop the Sudanese government's use of military aircraft against civilian targets in Darfur; however, if the United States would establish a no-fly zone over Darfur, this aerial aspect of the violence in Darfur would end.<sup>20</sup> The pilots of the Sudanese Air Force would not fly against U.S. aircraft because, as mercenaries and former Soviet Air Force contractors, their primary motivation as pilots is to make a profit, which, of course, they cannot enjoy if they are killed.<sup>21</sup> The mere presence of U.S. aircraft over Darfur would deter these pilots from flying and end the air attacks against civilians. If the pilots attempted to defy the no-fly zone, U.S. fighters could easily destroy their aircraft and remain unchallenged as they did over Iraq for over a decade.<sup>22</sup>

## **Private Military Contractors as Peacekeepers**

A no-fly zone over Darfur, however, will not end the genocide by itself. No-fly zones alone cannot end ethnic cleansing, especially when ground forces conduct the majority of the atrocities. Such

conflicts require peace-enforcing ground elements. McKelvey writes:

Air power has definite limitations in the degree of control it can exert over an opponent. The lack of ground forces in support of Operation Southern Watch has severely restrained the ability to protect Shi'ites on the ground. . . . Operation Provide Comfort, on the other hand, has successfully employed both ground and air forces to stop the oppression of the Kurds in Northern Iraq.<sup>23</sup>

This view affirms that effective ground elements remain a necessary component to any strategy to end the genocide in Darfur.

Private military contractors represent a cost-effective and capable option available to policy makers for bringing effective ground elements into Darfur to end the genocide. The case of the South African private military contractor Executive Outcomes (EO) in Angola and Sierra Leone in the 1990s offers a convincing example of how contractors can facilitate the end of African conflicts cheaply and effectively. Executive Outcomes formed in 1989 as apartheid ended in South Africa. Due to post-apartheid laws, a large supply of South African special forces soldiers became available for hire, and EO's founders, former South African special forces soldiers themselves, took advantage of this labor market to create the company. The high-level training and experience of the EO personnel resulted in the creation of a highly effective fighting force.<sup>24</sup>

Executive Outcomes had two highly successful interventions in Africa during the 1990s and served as a "force multiplier" and combat force that ended two conflicts that were not unlike the genocide in Darfur. In Angola, Executive Outcomes fought on behalf of the Angolan government against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels. Executive Outcomes fielded some 550 men and trained over 5,000 troops and 30 pilots.<sup>25</sup> In less than a year's time, EO-trained Angolan forces brought the UNITA rebels from controlling 85 percent of the Angolan countryside in 1993 to signing the Lusaka Protocol in November 1994, ending the fighting and facilitating a new round of elections.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to acting as a force multiplier, Executive Outcomes secured vital areas for government



AP Photo: HO

**Handsome Ndlovu, Steyn Marais, and Renier van Der Merwe pose next to a Russian-built MI-8 helicopter in the Angolan province of Lunda Sul in late 1994. The three men, soldiers for the South African company Executive Outcomes, were reported missing by the company several days after this photograph was taken, and are presumed killed in action by UNITA, the Angolan rebel movement.**

and supported government units. For example, EO personnel seized a series of diamond mines and oil installations from rebel forces, helping fund the government's war effort while reducing UNITA's ability to maintain its rebellion.<sup>27</sup> Pilots on the EO payroll provided air support to government troops and EO personnel in combat. Pilots "belonging to Ibis Air—in which EO was a significant shareholder—flew combat missions in MI-8, MI-17, and MiG 23 fighters."<sup>28</sup>

The success of Executive Outcomes as a force multiplier and combat element came at a relatively small cost compared to other humanitarian interventions. Vines states, "EO activities in Angola cost \$60 million, with 20 fatalities." This small cost resulted in a peace settlement to a conflict that, at its height, killed over 1,000 people per day.<sup>29</sup>

However, the Lusaka Protocol did not last. In 1997, the civil war between UNITA and the Angolan government resumed. The Lusaka Protocol required Executive Outcomes to leave Angola, which precluded the government from being able to provide long-term security and end the conflict.<sup>30</sup>

In Sierra Leone, Executive Outcomes provided similar services and similar results. The Revolutionary United Front, in a four-year campaign against the government, gained control of most of the country at the cost of 15,000 lives and the displacement of 1.5 of the country's 4 million people.<sup>31</sup> Sierra Leone hired Executive Outcomes in May 1995 as a force multiplier, a combat element, and an air support provider for Sierra Leone's 14,000-man army.<sup>32</sup>

As it had in Angola, Executive Outcomes and Sierra Leonean forces it trained achieved quick and impressive success against the Revolutionary United Front. Vines describes EO operations:

[Executive Outcomes'] military progress (in Sierra Leone) was rapid. Again, the company acted as a force multiplier providing technical services, combat forces, and limited training. By late January 1996, [Executive Outcomes] backed forces had retaken the southern coastal Rutile and Bauxite mines . . . [Executive Outcomes] claims that only two of its personnel were killed during its operations, which lasted a year and a half. As in Angola, a ceasefire followed, in November 1996.<sup>33</sup>

In early 1996, 120 EO personnel supported by attack helicopters turned back a major offensive against the capital of Freetown by numerically superior Revolutionary United Front forces, proving its abilities as an effective combat force against low-quality militias more profoundly than in Angola.<sup>34</sup> In addition, EO operations in Sierra Leone came at a comparatively low cost of \$35 million.<sup>35</sup>

These interventions in Angola and Sierra Leone provide a blueprint for how a private military contractor could deploy to Darfur and bring stability to that region. The janjaweed are "rifle-armed and camel or horse-borne Arab tribal cavalry" who receive their payment in loot; thus, they represent the low cost option for counterinsurgency.<sup>36</sup> The low cost of the janjaweed means that they are low-

***In early 1996, 120 EO personnel supported by attack helicopters turned back a major offensive...***

quality units similar to the Revolutionary United Front or UNITA. Brian Steidle stated that Sudanese forces in Darfur and the janjaweed were “not a well-structured or disciplined entity. Compared with Western [military] standards, their capabilities were poor.”<sup>37</sup> A contractor such as Blackwater (Xe), DynCorp, or Sandline International could deploy to Darfur, using the Executive Outcomes blueprint, and effectively neutralize the inferior janjaweed and government units under the cover of a U.S.-enforced no-fly zone.

A contractor in Darfur could effectively act as a force multiplier for the UNAMID by using helicopters, its own personnel, and surveillance aircraft to provide security for threatened villages and internally displaced-persons camps until UN troops could effectively do it themselves. The no-fly zone over Darfur would allow contractor units to use unmanned aerial vehicles and helicopters to monitor endangered villages and camps, quickly move ground units to areas under attack by the janjaweed, and then deploy the necessary ground and air elements to defend the village or camp. This objective could require relatively few contracts because, as Executive Outcomes demonstrated outside Freetown against the Revolutionary United Front, a few highly trained and competent contractors can defeat large numbers of low-quality militia. The ability to move troops with helicopters and do reconnaissance from the air would allow them to cover large areas with few troops because, instead of having to defend every village and camp, they could monitor the movements of the janjaweed and move to only those areas they attack.

While the contractor elements provide security for the villages and camps of Darfur, their force multiplier component could train UNAMID troops so that a permanent stabilizing force could remain in Darfur as a peacekeeping force. In order to keep peace, however, peace must exist. The contractor combat elements could provide the force necessary to bring about peace, and then contractor-trained UNAMID soldiers could take over to ensure long-term stability, preventing a relapse into civil war.

Even if the combat elements could not bring the Sudanese government to sign an accord stopping the genocide, the low cost of both the no-fly zone and the contractors means that they could remain in place for many years. Based on Executive Outcomes’ costs in



AP Photo, Marcelo Hernandez

**Thousands of displaced people receive food at a relief center outside Kuito, Angola, 14 June 2002. Nearly three decades of civil war have left much of the country in ruins, and the United Nations says up to a half million people face starvation.**

Angola and Sierra Leone, Boot’s figure of \$40 million would probably be enough for a contractor to operate in Darfur for six months.<sup>38</sup> The U.S. appropriated \$192.4 million for Darfur in 2004.<sup>39</sup> The UN currently has over \$1.7 billion at its disposal for peacekeeping efforts in Darfur.<sup>40</sup> The cost of a contractor, therefore, would represent a relatively small sum for either the United States or the UN to pay, especially when one considers the enormous potential contractors have to end the genocide in Darfur.

## Political Challenges

Why has the United States not established a no-fly zone and introduced a contractor in Darfur? Many reasons exist. Individuals, governments, societies, the world community, and the U.S. military are only a few of the sources of inaction on Darfur, and each has a different reason for thinking that U.S. intervention is unacceptable.



Samantha Power, a leading scholar on genocide, argues that the United States hesitates to intervene to stop genocides primarily because not enough domestic political pressure exists to force elected officials and policy makers to act. However, this is not the case with Darfur. In her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, Power writes, "The real reason the United States did not do what it could and should have done to stop genocide was not a lack of knowledge or influence but a lack of will."<sup>41</sup> Straus sums up Power's argument well when he says, "For the battle (to stop genocide) to be won, argues Power, constituents, civil society, elite opinion makers within the government need to pressure representatives to create the necessary political will."<sup>42</sup>

Straus argues that a strong domestic coalition for intervention in Darfur does exist, but that other sources impede UN action. Since the genocide in Darfur began, individuals and organizations shocked by the tragedy have formed a diverse and potent interest group. Straus writes that the, "coalition included evangelical Christians, African-Americans, human-rights organizations, Jewish-American groups, and government officials."<sup>43</sup> The group has broad political influence. For example, evangelical Christians remain one of the Republican Party's most fervent and loyal constituencies, while African-Americans represent one of the most avid and loyal constituencies of the Democratic Party. Unfortunately, as Straus articulates, "the domestic pressure was not sufficient to generate a concrete policy to stop the genocide."<sup>44</sup> Straus points to the War on Terrorism as a major obstacle to U.S. intervention in Darfur. The U.S.'s troop commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan and its lack of credibility stemming from the War in Iraq made it difficult to garner the international support to intervene.<sup>45</sup>

More important, a series of incidents involving contractors in Iraq make it politically and bureaucratically difficult to involve them in Darfur. On 16 September 2007, Blackwater (Xe) security personnel killed 14 Iraqi civilians without cause, creating

an image of military contractors as trigger-happy, money-loving killers with no moral or ethical standards.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, most Americans and U.S. congressmen view private military contractors and the janjaweed as similar entities, making it unlikely that Congress would deploy combatant contractors to Darfur.

A second incident involving the loss of Blackwater personnel in late March 2006 in Fallujah, Iraq, demonstrates that, even though they are not U.S. military personnel, the deaths of contractors can have major political ramifications and evoke memories of Somalia in the 1990s. While driving through Fallujah, four Blackwater contractors were ambushed, killed, and mutilated. Their bodies were further dragged by an angry mob through the streets of the Iraqi city—a scene similar to one in Mogadishu in 1992 that precipitated the end of last major U.S. peacekeeping effort in Africa.<sup>47</sup> As a direct result of these killings, U.S. Marines embarked on Operation Vigilant Resolve.<sup>48</sup> Thus, U.S. policymakers had to use military force *because of* contractors even though a major reason for the use of contractors is to avoid committing U.S. ground forces. The Fallujah killings undermined one of the major advantages. The United States may have to withdraw military contractors due to domestic political pressure, as President Clinton did in Somalia, or use U.S. military forces to stabilize a situation where they are used.

The U.S. military also seems unlikely to support the introduction of contractors and the establishment of a no-fly zone because the Pentagon does not want to give up its monopoly on military force or make the bureaucratic planning effort necessary for a no-fly zone. A U.S. government official has indicated that contractors would likely be removed from combat roles in both Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>49</sup> The Pentagon will not support hiring military contractors to assume combat operations in Darfur.

Finally, the overwhelming importance of the War on Terrorism means that the Pentagon is unlikely to spend precious time and resources on an effort that does not pose a threat to U.S. national security.

***...the overwhelming importance of the War on Terrorism means that the Pentagon is unlikely to spend precious time and resources on an effort that does not pose a threat to U.S. national security.***

Power writes, "The U.S. government is likely to view genocide prevention as an undertaking it cannot afford as it sets out to better protect Americans."<sup>50</sup>

In addition, 80 percent of Sudan's oil goes to China, and China needs that oil to support its constantly expanding economy.<sup>51</sup> China's economic involvement in Sudan makes it unlikely to support a strong peace-keeping element that could undermine the Sudanese government. China desires to maintain the status quo in Sudan so that it can continue to procure most of Sudan's oil. China might provide large amounts of military aid to the Sudanese government to sustain Chinese oil contracts, which could further inflame the situation in Darfur. With its veto power on the Security Council, China could block any American attempts to give the no-fly zone and contractors legitimacy with a Security Council Resolution.

African nations that surround Sudan and dominate the African Union oppose a U.S. intervention in Darfur because of concerns over sovereignty. An intervention in Sudan would violate the nation's sovereignty, and several of Sudan's neighbors, such as Chad and

Libya who do not have glowing human rights records, might worry that the U.S. could invade them next.<sup>52</sup> Smaller states with important national resources might also worry that, after the Iraq invasion, similar action with Sudan could indicate a pattern of U.S. imperialism. Straus writes that there is clearly "international suspicion" that "humanitarian intervention will be a mask for material and strategic interests."<sup>53</sup>

It appears unlikely the United States or any other nation will introduce mercenaries and impose a no-fly zone over Darfur to end the genocide. Thus, Darfur is an excellent example of how the desire to do the "right thing" in international relations is less significant than a variety of important elements that remain critical to the formulation of U.S. foreign policy.

The goal of U.S. foreign policy is not always to do what is morally right. Foreign policy remains a projection of a state's national interests. This cornerstone assumption of U.S. foreign policy will likely remain and will prevent the United States from using its economic and military power to stop genocides in the 21st century. **MR**

## NOTES

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27. Vines, 51.
28. Ibid. The MI-8 and MI-17 are Russian-made helicopters modified for combat operations, while the MiG 23 is a jet fighter-bomber aircraft.
29. Howe, 325.
30. Vines, 52.
31. Howe, 313.
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33. Vines, 53.
34. Arnold, 118.
35. Vines, 52.
36. "Security and Foreign Forces: Sudan," *Jane's Online*, <[http://www2.janes.com/WWW/www\\_results.jsp](http://www2.janes.com/WWW/www_results.jsp)> (27 May 2009).
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50. Power, *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, 512.
51. Steidle.
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# MISGUIDED INTENTIONS: RESISTING AFRICOM

Captain Moussa Diop Mboup, Senegalese Army;  
Michael Mihalka, Ph.D.; and Major Douglas Lathrop, U.S. Army, Retired

*"I think that, in a certain sense, we probably did not do the work necessary to win support for AFRICOM."*

—Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 13 June 2008<sup>1</sup>

*Captain Moussa Diop Mboup is the peace operations desk officer in the General Defense Staff of the Senegalese Armed Forces, Training and Organization Division, Dakar. He received an M.A. in international relations from Webster University of Missouri and an MMAS from the U.S. Command and Staff College.*

*Michael Mihalka, Ph.D., is currently a professor at the School for Advanced Military Studies. He has lectured at universities in the Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania. Dr. Mihalka received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Michigan.*

*Major Douglas Lathrop, U.S. Army, Retired, spent most of his career as a sub-Saharan African foreign area officer. Mr. Lathrop is an instructor for the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He holds B.A. degrees from Western Michigan University and University of Saint Mary; and an M.A. in national security affairs and African studies from the Naval Postgraduate School.*

PHOTO: Senegalese port workers prepare for the arrival of USS Fort McHenry at the port in Dakar, Senegal, 5 November 2007. Africans fear America has a hidden agenda, skewed by the war on terror and a self-interested scramble for resources. (AP Photo, Rebecca Blackwell)

**A**FRICA'S PROFILE rose sharply during the George W. Bush administration. President Bush expressed the strategic change in unequivocal terms: "Africa is increasingly vital to our strategic interests. We have seen that conditions on the other side of the world can have a direct impact on our own security." Bush more than quadrupled the aid sent to Africa. He launched a number of programs that help Africa, including the Millennium Challenge Account, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Africa Education Initiative, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, and the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa. On the military side, his crowning achievement was the establishment of a new combatant command, Africa Command (AFRICOM), which is adopting a new interagency style to reflect the range of issues it faces from terrorism to AIDS. However, Africans themselves met AFRICOM with skepticism and suspicion.

Media reaction to AFRICOM throughout Africa was tough. In Johannesburg, the *Business Daily* protested, "The expansion of an American strategic geopolitical military base on the continent will worsen many of the problems Africa has at present."<sup>2</sup> *Le Reporter* in Algiers said, "The African countries should wake up after seeing the scars of others (Iraq and Afghanistan)."<sup>3</sup> And Dulue Mbachu, a Nigerian journalist, lamented: "Increased U.S. military presence in Africa may simply serve to protect unpopular regimes that are friendly to its interests, as was the case during the Cold War, while Africa slips further into poverty."<sup>4</sup> The African blogosphere also reacted quite negatively, seeing AFRICOM as a springboard for further U.S. exploitation of the continent and interference in their domestic affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Many African officials have had nothing better to say. Abdullahi Alzubedi, the Libyan ambassador to South Africa, declared to a journalist:

How can the U.S. divide the world up into its own military commands? Wasn't that for the United Nations to do? What would happen if China also decided to create its Africa command? Would this not lead to conflict on the continent?<sup>6</sup>

Only smaller African countries such as Liberia have shown any enthusiasm for the project, in part because they believe the U.S. will serve as an effective counterweight to the local regional hegemonies.<sup>7</sup> Indeed these hegemonies, in particular Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria and Libya, were early and vociferous critics. There are a number of reasons why Africans resist the presence of AFRICOM, and they vary by region, but four stand out.

## **The Increasing Influence of China**

The increasing influence of China provides African nations with an alternative that, at least in the near term, is in many ways much more appealing. This has tremendous importance for U.S. Africa policy. The African continent has become one of the key battlegrounds of the upcoming “Cold War” between the United States and China. Therefore, the resistance to an increased American engagement in the continent is an early sign of an emerging fight over zones of influence. In that fight, China’s pragmatic, opportunistic political warfare strategy is winning the first rounds. (China has pursued a similarly successful strategy in Central Asia.)<sup>8</sup>

Russia, too, might become a player. Gazprom, the Russian gas firm, is competing to take over gas fields abandoned by Royal Dutch Shell in Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> Several Chinese firms have also expressed interest in fields in Ogoniland that contain gas reserves estimated at 10 trillion cubic meters.

Africans and most journalists find as disingenuous the continuing U.S. denials that AFRICOM has nothing to do with China. One of the first questions asked in June 2008 of the then assistant secretary of defense for Africa policy, Theresa Whelan, was, “Why was China missing from her briefing?” She responded:

It was missing for a reason, because this isn’t about China. Everybody seems to want it to be about China and maybe that is a little nostalgia for the Cold War, I don’t know. But it isn’t about China. It is about U.S. security interests in Africa in the context of global security. China, yes, has become more engaged in Africa, both—primarily for economic reasons. They have interests in African natural resources and extracting those resources. They also have interests in African markets. That’s fine. The United States isn’t

***... China provides African nations with an alternative that, at least in the near term, is in many ways much more appealing.***

concerned with Chinese economic competition. I mean, we’re a capitalist nation. We’re built on the principle of competition. So that is not really an issue for us.<sup>10</sup>

Africans simply do not believe this, and neither do many Americans.

A 2007 briefing making the rounds in Africa lists four common perceptions of U.S. reasons for AFRICOM: Africa’s natural resources, its democracy deficit, the increasing presence of China, and terrorism.<sup>11</sup> Other analysts say directly: “The Pentagon claims that AFRICOM is all about integrating coordination and ‘building partner capacity.’ But the new structure is really about securing oil resources, countering terrorism, and rolling back Chinese influence.”<sup>12</sup>

## **American Antiterrorist Strategy**

The African continent is not impervious to American antiterrorist strategy blowback. The antiterrorist strategy has convinced African nations of the self-centeredness of U.S. security concerns in Africa. The War on Terrorism has become a political hot potato for some African nations, especially those with significant Muslim populations that fear its destabilizing and radicalizing effects. In addition, African civil groups, human rights activists, and political opposition parties vigorously denounce its negative impact on civil liberties and democratic reforms. Some non-governmental organizations believe that the presence of U.S. troops on African soil will have the opposite effect intended by AFRICOM.

***The antiterrorist strategy has convinced African nations of the self-centeredness of U.S. security concerns...***



AFRICOM is designed to bring stability to Africa, but only as it serves U.S. interests. Many Africans believe that AFRICOM will actually destabilize the continent and put U.S. partners in Africa at risk. For all the talk of it being a new, innovative engagement, AFRICOM may simply serve to protect unpopular regimes that are friendly to U.S. interests while Africa slips further into poverty, as was the case during the Cold War.<sup>13</sup>

African countries and regional organizations have similar views. The South African Development Community, which represents 14 southern African countries, declared that none of its members would host AFRICOM. Said South African Defense Minister, Mosiuoa Lekota:

At the interstate defense and security committee meeting held in Dar es Salaam, the SADC defense and security ministers took the position and recommended that sister countries of the region should not agree to host AFRICOM—in particular, to host [U.S.] armed forces.<sup>14</sup>

He added that all 53 members of the African Union should not host U.S. forces, and if they did, threatened that “other sister countries may refuse to cooperate with it in other areas other than that particular area.”

A 2007 U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute analysis concludes that U.S. counterterrorism efforts since 2001 in Africa have been counterproductive:

Though often tactically successful, these efforts—against Algerian insurgents in North Africa and an assortment of Islamists in Somalia—have neither benefited American security interests nor stabilized events in their respective regions. This failure is ascribable in part to the flawed assumptions on which the GWOT in Africa has rested. The United States has based its counterterrorism initiatives in Africa since 9/11 on a policy of “aggregation,” in which localized and disparate insurgencies have been amalgamated into a frightening, but artificially monolithic whole. Misdirected analyses regarding Africa’s sizable Muslim population, its overwhelming poverty, and its numerous ungoverned spaces and failed states further contribute to a distorted pic-

ture of the terrorist threat emanating from the continent.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, counterterrorism in Africa has begun to mirror anti-Communism during the Cold War. Al-Qaeda has become the modern day bogeyman, directing far-flung and disparate efforts when many of the problems are local. The U.S. has not yet learned its lesson from the fiasco of the Vietnamese War.

## Appearance of Irrelevance

AFRICOM may have rendered itself irrelevant in the eyes of African leaders who would have welcomed concrete, substantial security assistance from the United States. Undeniably, security remains a high concern in Africa and would have provided a formidable bargaining chip all the more credible because of the backing of the most powerful military in the world. However, initially putting forward an implausible democratization and humanitarian agenda has wasted leverage. The result has been to feed suspicion, incredulity, and concerns about the militarization of American diplomacy. Although AFRICOM points with pride to its interagency structure, African leaders view it with suspicion. What African leader will welcome a military organization to teach him democracy and good governance?

One analyst believes the conflation of democratic idealism and the military has led to the worst of both worlds—no democracy and no security:

Rather than a clear vision, U.S. officials have painted a confusing picture of an organization that seemingly plans to mix economic development and governance promotion activities, heretofore the responsibility of civilian agencies, with military activities. Africans, given the history of military coups that once plagued the continent, tend to regard this militarization of civilian space with great misgivings.<sup>16</sup>

**... AFRICOM may have rendered itself irrelevant in the eyes of African leaders who would have welcomed concrete, substantial security assistance...**

Another analyst has similar views: “Neither could the military create conditions under which democracy could grow and flourish. Much has been done in the name of democracy that has resulted in destabilization and destruction of the host country, a process not easily reversed.”<sup>17</sup>

## AFRICOM’s Initial Bilateral Strategy

AFRICOM’s initial bilateral strategy has kept it from gaining acceptance. A more comprehensive assessment of the current diplomatic setting in the African continent would have led its architects to identify two essential elements. The first is the continent’s commitment to further integration and its preference for collective security mechanisms to address its instability. The second and perhaps more crucial element is that this security orientation is driven by the local regional hegemons—South Africa, Nigeria, and to some extent Libya—all of whom make a point of thwarting non-African interference. South Africa, Nigeria, and Libya have voiced the most radical opposition against AFRICOM in their “zones of influence.” A far better strategy would have been to open an early dialogue with the continent’s regional structures and engage them directly.

To be sure, in the face of almost uniform resistance, AFRICOM has begun to tone down some of its more innovative features. The media speculates that each country AFRICOM commanders visit on trips to the continent will serve as AFRICOM’s location, but AFRICOM always denies the claims. For example, when the head of AFRICOM, General William E. Ward, visited Uganda in April 2008, AFRICOM’s chief of public information said, “We have no interests in creating more bases in Africa and in Uganda in particular.”<sup>18</sup> Morocco, Algeria, and Libya have refused to allow a U.S. base on their territory.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, AFRICOM has downplayed its original emphasis on interagency and humanitarian assistance. One analyst recently

commented, “They are significantly walking back from interagency. What they’re now saying is that they will more efficiently and effectively deliver military programs.”<sup>20</sup>

This shift has borne some fruit. The Nigerian government has begun to soften its tone towards AFRICOM. When questioned about the combatant command, the Nigerian president gave a confused answer, but noted that AFRICOM was about traditional military assistance. The Nigerian minister of foreign affairs talked about “AFRICOM 2,” implying that Nigeria much preferred an AFRICOM that would combat terrorism and build the capacity of African soldiers to the old “AFRICOM 1,” through which the U.S. intervened on the continent without consulting local governments.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he said this would increase Nigeria’s chances for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

General Ward has done much to dispel initial reticence. For example, former President Festus Mogae of Botswana recently endorsed AFRICOM.<sup>22</sup> One Ghanaian commentator saw his country as the “perfect host” for AFRICOM.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless the big three—Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa—still view AFRICOM with suspicion. The notification that President Barack Obama would not visit Nigeria on his planned trip was interpreted in part



U.S. Army General William E. Ward, commander of U.S. Africa Command, talks with Ugandan People's Defense Force Colonel Sam Kavuma while touring the Gulu district of Uganda, 10 April 2008.

as owing to Nigeria's resistance to AFRICOM.<sup>24</sup> Mary Yates, then-deputy to the commander for civil-military affairs in AFRICOM, admitted that AFRICOM "didn't get rolled out very well. And you know, when you work in Africa, consultation is an important thing. You'd better go and listen and have about 10 cups of tea. And that probably did not occur."<sup>25</sup>

## A Public Relations Failure?

Some analysts have argued that poor public relations significantly contributed to the early resistance to AFRICOM. Brett Schaeffer of the Heritage Foundation claims:

Because the U.S. was so hesitant in announcing the details, it allowed people to fill the void with these conspiracy theories which don't have any basis on which to come to their conclusions . . . All the U.S. can do is explain clearly what role it sees for AFRICOM—which I see as very positive.<sup>26</sup>

However, no amount of public relations is going to disabuse regional hegemony of the notion that renewed U.S. interest in Africa will result in action that may run counter to their interests. Nor will any amount of denial convince Africans that AFRICOM is not about countering the Chinese (or the Indians or the Russians). They see yet again another version of the "Great Scramble."<sup>27</sup> Worse, they see the rhetoric of democratic idealism as a modern-day version of the "white man's burden," or civilizing mission. The current U.S. government may have forgotten the demeaning rhetoric of the 19th century, but Africans surely have not. Some of them liken the G8 meeting in 2006 that kicked off this recent interest in Africa to the Berlin conference in the 19th century that carved up the continent. No African attended that conference either.

## Strategy Recommendations

To correct its early missteps, AFRICOM's entry strategy and strategic communication plan should strive to advance the following lines:

- Recast the U.S. strategy toward Africa in more comprehensive terms to provide coherence, consistency, and long-term focus. Guidance should acknowledge Africa's new centrality for the U.S. and provide political impetus for the mobilization of resources and the development of a dedicated bureaucracy.
- Establish a formal collaboration framework involving AFRICOM, the African Union, and the Regional Economic Communities, including joint planning and coordinating structures. A formal recognition of AFRICOM by the African Union's Executive Council and its regional extensions would constitute a critical milestone. Accordingly, AFRICOM should renounce its usual bilateral strategy and focus on collaboration with the continental institutions.
- Jointly elaborate AFRICOM's strategy with the continent's collective security mechanisms, such as the African Union's Peace and Security Council and the regional economic councils' mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution. Negotiate memorandums of agreement with these structures.
- Redefine AFRICOM's concept and refocus the command on security issues. Maintain the civil, humanitarian, and liberalization agenda under the umbrella of the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, which have already demonstrated their effectiveness in that regard and have the confidence of Africans down to the local community level. This would also greatly appease African leaders' concerns about a militarization of U.S. Africa policy.
- Bolster AFRICOM's security package and express a U.S. commitment to provide logistic and intelligence support to African Union peace operations. Depending on the circumstances, especially in the context of Chapter VII type missions, AFRICOM's support to these missions could provide even more air support (transportation and close-air support). The command's mission statement indicates that it is adopting a more security-focused posture, emphasizing "sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs" and "other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy." AFRICOM should accentuate this reorientation and consolidate it around negotiated security cooperation mechanisms and combined planning.
- Seize the opportunity of UNAMID's current build-up to demonstrate U.S. resolve to support peace initiatives on the continent through logistic and intelligence support.
- Focus AFRICOM's training assistance on multilateral terms through the African Standby Force

and its regional brigades and provide it through battalion- and brigade-level exercises, command post exercises, and U.S.-supported peace training centers in each region. The Kofi Annan International Peace Training Center could provide an interesting laboratory for that concept. AFRICOM could assist in augmenting the capacity of the center with funds, equipment, and instructors.

## Strategic Communication Recommendations

Following are recommendations for communications that would foster a more constructive dialogue:

- Engage the African political leaders on the actual rationale behind AFRICOM to eliminate their negative perceptions against the command. In that

regard, a comprehensive strategy document issued at the political level would be helpful in clarifying U.S. strategic objectives. There is little doubt that the African nations would understand and might even accept the legitimate U.S. right to pursue its global interests.

- Open dialogue with the African civil society, clarify the objectives of the command, and underline its benefits for the security and stability of the continent.

- Tune down the antiterrorist narrative and shift it to addressing specific African security problems. Restore the centrality of Africa's security problems in AFRICOM's agenda.

- Launch media campaigns throughout the continent to further emphasize the benevolent nature of AFRICOM and its assistance agenda. **MR**

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# Leveraging LIMINALITY in Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform

Major Louis P. Melancon, U.S. Army

**A**FTER ANY GIVEN CONFLICT, within the overall stability, security, transition, and reconstruction framework, the need for security sector reform will likely be very high. There is a significant likelihood that some aspects of the security sector will no longer be appropriate for the desired post-conflict context. Security sector reform is a complex task entailing a variety of factors and should be addressed under a comprehensive umbrella of national (or even multinational, if in the framework of a coalition) policies and support. The U.S. military, has undertaken several missions in pursuit of security sector reform in real-world operations and could do so again. One aspect to the military portion of security sector reform that the United States and other countries have not maximized when conducting these missions—the deliberate leveraging of liminality—could increase the viability of reform efforts, although ethical concerns arise.

## What Is Security Sector Reform?

“Security sector reform,” for this discussion, is consistent with the definition of “security system” used by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development:

Core security actors (e.g. armed forces, police, gendarmerie, border guards, customs and immigration, and intelligence and security services); security management and oversight bodies (e.g. ministries of defence and internal affairs, financial management bodies and public complaints commissions); justice and law enforcement institutions (e.g. the judiciary, prisons, prosecution services, traditional justice systems); and non-statutory security forces (e.g. private security companies, guerrilla armies and private militia).<sup>1</sup>

This definition will be sufficient for “security sector,” but the focus here will be on actions towards a relative handful of the core actors—primarily the armed forces and gendarmerie.

The “reform” in security sector reform is harder to pin down. Just as the sector itself spans a wide range of actors, reform seeks to address the problem from a systemic viewpoint. Ensuring that the organization of core actors is appropriate in size and function, ensuring that there is civil control over the core actors, and ensuring that there is good governance on the part

*Major Louis P. Melancon, U.S. Army, is the Intelligence plans officer for the Joint IED Defeat Organization, Washington, D.C. He holds a B.A. from the University of Illinois; an M.S. from the Joint Military Intelligence College, Washington, D.C.; and an M.A. from King's College, University of London. He is also a graduate of the United Kingdom's Joint Service Command and Staff College and has served in the continental United States, Korea, and Iraq.*

PHOTO: An Iraqi policeman stands guard while recruits await instructions at the police academy in Karbala, Iraq, 5 April 2009. (U.S. Navy, Mass Communication Specialist 2d Class Kim Smith)

of the civil authority are readily apparent factors. Reform is more of a process than a goal.<sup>2</sup> Achieving certain conditions are the end states. The assistance of outside actors is required at the start, and indigenous actors of the state must follow through. There has been discussion that reform may not be the best word to describe the process because it possesses a pejorative connotation.<sup>3</sup> However, for the purposes of this discussion, it is assumed that a conflict has occurred or is on-going, and that at least one external state actor, specifically the United States, is assisting with the security sector reform process. This condition implies that there was some form of failure within the indigenous security sector and such failure warrants reform.

Dominant themes for security sector reform include—

- Civilian-military relations, especially dealing with the need for democratic oversight of the security sector.
- Maintaining stake-holder interest and investment, primarily from external actors;
- Reorganization of the resources and capabilities of core actors.<sup>4</sup>

A heavy emphasis on civilian-military relations is important—visions of a military junta running amuck among the population of some underdeveloped country leap to mind. Or worse, some capital city in flames as the military splits into opposing sides during an attempted coup. But there is more depth to civilian control than avoiding these pitfalls. Good governance—not using the security sector as a personal tool to further agendas and maintain rule in a nondemocratic fashion—is the goal.

Reform is needed to change authoritarian tendencies or to create an environment where such tendencies would not flourish to begin with. In short, security sector reform entails transforming the culture of institutions—changing or installing a specific ethos into something acceptable and useful within the context of the post-conflict environment.<sup>5</sup> However, there has been little public discussion on how to go about doing this; employing the term “liminality” can help address this void.

## What is Liminality?

While it sounds exotic, liminality is a familiar phenomenon—it is simply the transition rites that accompany a change in state or status of an indi-

***While it sounds exotic, liminality is a familiar phenomenon—it is simply the transition rites that accompany a change...within a society.***

vidual within a society. Victor Turner identified three distinct phases of the process: the separation phase, margin or threshold phase, and the reaggregation phase.<sup>6</sup> Most persons who have had experiences within the U.S. Army will already recognize a liminal process—the “Soldierization” process.<sup>7</sup> As new recruits arrive at the reception battalion, they are completing the separation phase, leaving home and heading into the unknown to undergo the rite of passage that is “basic combat training,” which is the threshold phase. When the recruits complete this training, they are allowed to wear the Army’s black beret and have a graduation ceremony. They are in this sense reaggregated into society, with the change in their position and status marked through the uniform and through the new headgear (to the society as a whole but within the Army as a subset of the society). Liminality exists any time there is some psychological change of status, and militaries around the world have been leveraging it as part of the process of transforming civilians into soldiers.

There is another more subtle aspect to liminality. Liminality rests in the linkages that the individual has, both before and after the process is complete. For instance, before starting to undergo the liminal process of basic combat training, an aspiring Soldier has links to family, friends, community, and school, among other things. There will be separation from these things in the first phase, and during the threshold phase new links are formed—to fellow recruits and to the Army community. With reaggregation, the old links will be re-established, albeit changed. Now the young Soldier has a larger set of links—those before starting the liminal process and those formed during the liminal process.

## Liminality’s Potential

Liminality’s potential comes into play if an organization can intentionally leverage the process and adjust those societal links, especially the

preliminal links, for behavior modification. In a liberal democratic society, with professional armed forces, the adjustment could be so extreme as to lead to isolation of the military from the society.<sup>8</sup> This improbable situation hints at liminality's potential to enhance security sector reform by facilitating cultural changes of the security sector's core actors. By radically adjusting the culture of the institution through socially engineering the individuals which form it, just as the U.S. military does, an organization can adjust or marginalize less constructive linkages. The inculcation of codes and slogans and even political associations are examples of how liminality can be manipulated. All organizations do this to some extent to enhance the organizational vision, and the point at which it becomes sinister can be a pitfall. It would be useful to examine a few real-world security sector reform examples to see where liminality could have been leveraged in a constructive manner. It would be counter-factual to make any assessment of how much impact such actions could have had, and so I emphasize only the opportunity points.

## Liberia and United Nations Mission in Liberia

In September 2003, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1509, establishing the United Nations Mission in Liberia and mandating, among other tasks, security sector reform—

- “To assist the transitional government of Liberia in monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States], international organizations, and interested States.”

- “To assist the transitional government in the formation of a new and restructured Liberian military in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested States.”<sup>9</sup>

While not seeking to downplay the importance of police reform or the justice system as a whole—or the role of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs—the task of the second paragraph is of interest here.

After 14 years of civil war, a concept for the structure of the new armed forces of Liberia was



UN Photo, Shima Roy

**Members of the International Police Service of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) attend the daily morning briefing at UNMIL headquarters in Monrovia before they engage in their patrols with the officers from the Liberian Police Service, 7 January 2004.**

generated, and recruiting and vetting of applicants began. Recruits were drawn from all across the country and from every ethnic group. Those who were accepted entered into an initial entry training program, loosely based on U.S. Army basic training, which was envisioned as being 11 weeks long. Due to budget constraints, this was reduced to eight weeks, and the three weeks devoted to human rights training, civics, and civil-military relations education were cut. This training was pushed to permanently formed units and alternative instructional organizations, such as the American Bar Association.<sup>10</sup>

For the Liberian context, human rights training and civil-military relations do play a large role in shaping how the armed forces will relate to their society, especially after such a long civil war filled with rights violations. Had these classes been included in the initial entry training, the values which the UNMIL was trying to instill would have likely taken root earlier and come to fruition because of the effects of liminality. Institutional

***...human rights training and civil-military relations do play a large role in shaping how the armed forces will relate to their society...***



cultural change occurs as new soldiers move through the linkages of liminal changes, and it could have occurred in this context. There is no evidence that providing this training within permanent units would not be effective, but it appears that it takes longer for institutional change to occur.

The more subtle aspect of liminality is also here. Although it is difficult to say whether less training time means less effective liminal transition, there is no evidence that UNMIL efforts were focused explicitly on maximizing the effects of liminality. A large effort was made to ensure that the entire country was represented in the armed forces, both geographically and ethnically. Each of the recruits likely would have linkages to his geographic area, his home town or village, and his ethnic or tribal identity. Bringing this diverse group together not only represented an effort to create a cultural transformation, but also provided an opportunity to deliberately weaken the preexisting links and substitute new links in the minds of the recruits. Some of these links can be associated with societal fault lines, along which instability and conflict could emerge in the future. It would be too difficult to fully break these links in the recruits, but deliberate weakening of them could potentially strengthen the institution of the armed forces against succumbing to these fault lines. It appears this opportunity was lost, in both the original and shortened basic training programs.

## Liminality under Fire: Iraq

On 23 May 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) issued “CPA Order 2” dissolving the Iraqi security sector.<sup>11</sup> The appropriateness or inappropriateness of this act is not a concern here, but it does stand out as a significant event that would urgently call for security sector reform, since only non-statutory forces (primarily political party militias) remained intact. A variety of training efforts have occurred in Iraq since 2003.<sup>12</sup> Little discussion on the structure and content of these military training programs has occurred, beyond the length of basic

training (eight weeks at the longest point, although the length has been shorter at other times).<sup>13</sup> Instead, discussion focuses on numbers of recruits in training, members of the security forces who have graduated and are on duty with a regular unit, or shortfalls in recruiting. Clearly an urgent need exists to generate indigenous forces and recreate a security sector. Moreover, there is a need to rapidly integrate nonstatutory forces in the official security sector to field experienced soldiers.<sup>14</sup> This heavy push to indigenize the security sector, is understandable. However, such haste creates a secondary effect on the training system, one which may hinder longer-term success of security sector reform.

Even with the short training periods for Iraqi security forces, liminality was still present; however, no effort was made on the part of coalition forces to leverage this phenomenon. While clearly there was a focus to generate forces, this was not an either/or situation—liminality will be there regardless. But what comes into question is how much effort is put into maximizing its effects and to what end the effects are focused.<sup>15</sup> Longer exposure times would help, but even as training time for Iraqi recruits shortened, opportunities were still present.

That is not to say that efforts towards leveraging the liminal situation of Iraqi recruits would have eliminated the problems Iraqi security forces faced



Iraqi army recruits from the 39th Brigade, 10th Division, clean their weapons at the Regional Training Center at Camp Ur, Dhi Qar, Iraq, 16 May 2009.



—absenteeism, initial poor battlefield performance, and rejection by other elements of the security forces and the population at large.<sup>16</sup>

However, one could argue that a deliberate manipulation of the liminal phenomenon could have helped reduce the likelihood of such events. Deliberately leveraging liminality could have established a positive sense of linkage in the recruits toward the security forces and could have weakened links that could be associated with tribalism. Iraqi security forces possess tribal, confessional, and political links. If such links were weakened before individuals entered into formations, it could make correction by coalition mentors of undesirable behavior an easier task.

***Deliberately leveraging liminality could have established a positive sense of linkage in the recruits towards the security forces...***

## Difficulties

It is relatively simple in hindsight to identify opportunities where liminality, as a method of social engineering, could have been used during the security sector reform process. However, the difficulty of doing this rests in three areas:

- Having a sufficient understanding of the overall end state, as well as a reasonably clear vision of intermediate points, for the state in which the security sector reform is occurring. This vision requires a well thought-out and comprehensive strategy from the political masters who decide to render security sector reform.
- Having sufficient understanding of the local context for security sector reform and sufficient time to plan an effective training package that allows for effective leveraging of the liminal phenomenon toward intermediate points and an overall end state created in the preceding point.
- Having sufficient time and space to execute a well thought-out plan in light of pressures such as budgetary constraints (the Liberian example) or a poor security situation (the Iraq example).

Notwithstanding these difficulties, there is little that cannot be overcome. If the political masters

have the will to assist another state through security sector reform effort, then all of these factors can occur. A comprehensive strategy can be developed, political and cultural understanding can be gathered to conduct planning, and basic resources such as funds and time can be protected. However, success rests on an assumption that getting into the business of social engineering is something that we, as a nation, wish to do. One cannot help associating social engineering with sinister cases of brainwashing.

There are thus serious ethical considerations that must be addressed with the idea of leveraging liminality in security sector reform. Although the question of whether to undertake such efforts does not rest with the military, it is incumbent on the military to understand the ethical implications and to ensure that the civilian masters who are responsible for the decision are fully aware of ramifications. Specifically, if the liminal process is leveraged to assist in achieving a larger end state for security sector reform, then an aspect of choice has been taken away from the reformed society as a whole. A cultural transformation will have to be planned for the entire society if the security sector reform is to take root—a modern-day version of Kemalism (from Kemal Ataturk's policies in reforming Turkey) modified for the specific security sector reform context.

Such a policy creates two distinct ethical dilemmas—the loss of choice for the society undergoing the transformation and the potential damage that such actions may have on the assisting states. The fact that security sector reform end states deal with ensuring civilian control over military forces and good governance in a democratic fashion does have the underlying foundation of self-determination and choice. And, if governing choices are not self-selected, but chosen for the state by other actors who already adhere to the concepts of good governance through democratic processes, then an air of colonialism begins to appear. Positions such as this can lead down a hypocritical path, unless the level and sequence of actions are chosen very carefully. Luckily, as mentioned earlier, the decision on whether to pursue such activities is beyond the military's scope, but a thoughtful and watchful attitude would be necessary.

Security sector reform is a complex set of tasks and end states. The military alone cannot cover all

**... the decision on whether  
to pursue such activities is  
beyond the military's scope...**

of the required areas for a successful program. A comprehensive concept should be sought before initiating assistance to another state in the form of security sector reform. However, within the tasks and actions that the U.S. military can perform, leveraging the liminal processes of making recruits into new security forces can be much more

effective than in the past. Liminality is already in existence, it simply requires forethought to guide it towards directions that would be of greatest use to achieving the desired end states. Such efforts will not provide a silver bullet to solve all the difficulties that may be encountered, but they require little additional resources—mainly time and thought—and may make overcoming those difficulties slightly easier. This does become one of the first steps in social engineering, and so the dangers inherent in that path do become real; so if the decision to pursue leveraging liminality is appropriate in security sector reform, caution should also be part of the plan. **MR**

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13. Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces*, 169.

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15. The author contacted Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, the organization responsible for developing, organizing, training, equipping, and sustaining Iraqi security forces, seeking a program of instruction for Iraqi army basic training, with the caveat that the request be filled with "off the shelf" materials so as not to create an additional workload or distract personnel from fulfilling their training mission. No information could be provided on the basic training program. The result was the same when Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, also focused on indigenizing the security sector, was contacted with the same request with caveat.

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# The Role of Empathy

## IN IRREGULAR WARFARE

Major John Bauer, U.S. Army

**J**OINT PUBLICATION 3-0, *Joint Operations*, has added “restraint,” “perseverance,” and “legitimacy” to the nine principles of war recognized by doctrine since 1949.<sup>1</sup> Of the three additions, legitimacy is the most salient to irregular warfare. Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, notes: “Political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate.”<sup>2</sup> FM 3-24 uses the word legitimacy 83 times and states, “Legitimacy is the main objective [of counterinsurgency].”<sup>3</sup> For counterinsurgency and in the broader context of irregular warfare, the seminal question is how to gain and maintain legitimacy.

### Legitimacy and Irregular Warfare

To understand legitimacy we must consider its opposite, illegitimacy. One chief cause of government illegitimacy is widespread oppression and injustice. Consequently, past leaders of successful insurgencies have exploited injustices to gain popular support. For example, Mao Tse Tung, leader of the Chinese Communists during the Chinese Civil War, contends, “Guerrilla operations...are the inevitable result of the clash between oppressor and oppressed, when the latter reach the limits of their endurance.”<sup>4</sup> Mao admonished his revolutionaries to preserve the people’s trust, telling his guerrillas there are three rules of war:

- All actions are subject to command;
- Do not steal from the people;
- Be neither selfish nor unjust.”<sup>5</sup>

We need to look no further than to the leaders of successful insurgencies from the past century to see legitimacy’s importance to success. Ho Chi Minh invoked the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution’s “Rights of Man” in declaring Vietnam independent from France in 1945. He claimed, “For more than 80 years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of liberty, equality, and fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.”<sup>6</sup>

Joint Publication 3-0 hints at legitimacy’s fundamental characteristic: “Legitimacy is based on the legality, morality, and rightness of the actions undertaken.”<sup>7</sup> If morality and rightness of actions are legitimacy’s foundation, then understanding the peoples’ perspective is fundamental to sound operational

*Major John Bauer, U.S. Army, is a strategist for Special Operations Command Korea. He holds a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy and two masters of military art and science from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS. He is a graduate of the School of Advanced Military Studies and has served multiple combat tours with Special Operations units in Afghanistan and the Philippines.*

PAINTING: “The Good Samaritan,” Vincent Willem van Gogh, 1890.



design and planning for irregular warfare. According to COIN doctrine, the proper point of departure is to first gain an understanding of the operational environment, including its people and social and cultural phenomena.<sup>8</sup> FM 3-0 now acknowledges this point as well, recently adding “understanding” as the first element of battle command.<sup>9</sup>

## Operationalizing Empathy

Empathy can be a vital attribute for Soldiers engaged in counterinsurgency operations. Since legitimacy depends on “morality and rightness,” having a normative moral principle helps fill the gap between doctrine and its implementation. Merely stating the importance of “understanding” does not guarantee its attainment. Understanding is incomplete unless it fully considers the other’s perceptions, which requires empathetic projection. One fully reaches a true understanding of the *other*, the alter ego, by incorporating the totality of the other person’s “*givenness*.” These imperatives are inherent in the so-called Golden Rule.

Although usually associated with the Christian ethic, the Golden Rule actually predates Christianity, originating in the West among the ancient Greek and Roman cultures.<sup>10</sup> It was known by virtually the whole of Greek and Roman antiquity and familiar to Herodotus and Antiphon the Sophist in the 5th century BCE.<sup>11</sup> In the 4th century CE, the Golden Rule was a part of Aristotle’s endoxa, or the common wisdom of Athens.<sup>12</sup> From Greece, it spread throughout the founding cultures of the Western World. Meanwhile in the East, the Chinese had articulated their own version of this rule of reciprocity as part of orthodox Confucianism.

Paul Ricoeur examines the Golden Rule through the lens of philosophy and finds it superior to Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative because of its anthropological dimension of solicitude, or caring.<sup>13</sup> Kant’s maxim (human beings must always be treated as an ends and never as a means) falls short of com-

prising full consideration of the other’s perspective. The Golden Rule (“Treat others as you would like them to treat you”) is a better moral formula because it adds an implicit empathetic demand.<sup>14</sup> Ricoeur claims that the Golden Rule “represents the simplest formula that can serve as a transition between solicitude and the second Kantian imperative.”<sup>15</sup> For Ricoeur, what the rule has that Kant’s formula lacks is an “intuition of genuine otherness.”<sup>16</sup>

## Empathy in Army Doctrine

Army doctrine acknowledges empathy as a tool for achieving legitimacy. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership*, defines empathy as “the ability to see something from another person’s point of view, to identify with and enter into another person’s feelings and emotions.”<sup>17</sup> With respect to empathy and legitimacy, the FM states that empathy is useful to win the support of a population: “Within the larger operational environment, leader empathy may be helpful when dealing with local populations and prisoners of war. Providing the local population within an area of operations with the necessities of life often turns an initially hostile disposition into one of cooperation.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, a given population’s disposition toward “cooperation” is closely linked to empathy. However, in order to have true empathy, military members must first accept inhabitants as human beings with equal dignity.

Empathy is necessary to gain a true understanding of the operational environment. Empathetic thinking allows commanders to discern how to act in a manner that is moral and socially acceptable. In irregular warfare, “right” actions are pragmatic because they build legitimacy and avoid injustice. When derived from an authentic understanding of the population, actions universally viewed as “right” can win the confidence of the governed and lead to legitimacy. Therefore, a single rule serves as a useful guideline for building legitimacy: “Treat the population as you would want yourself to be treated.” Another formulation often argued to be even superior to this would be: “Do not treat the population in a way you yourself would not want to be treated.”

If legitimacy is the supreme principle of irregular warfare, and if a true understanding of the civilian population is the foundation for achieving it, then success in operational design and military planning for irregular warfare depends on empathetic reflection. **MR**

**...the Golden Rule actually predates Christianity, originating in the West among the ancient Greek and Roman cultures.**



## NOTES

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## An Accident of HISTORY

**Brigadier General Huba Wass de Czege,  
U.S. Army, Retired**

**T**HE BEGINNINGS OF the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) are more than 25 years old now. Some might find it incredible that it is so young, but it's also incredible, in retrospect, that we have a SAMS at all. It certainly was not an inevitable development. Revisiting why there was a beginning at all for SAMS is an appropriate way to mark the school's 25th anniversary. What was intended,

how the key ideas that give SAMS its distinct character took shape, what the key hurdles were, and what conditions are necessary for its survival for another quarter century are topics deserving professional notice.

### The Need for Advanced Military Study

The SAMS curriculum owes its beginnings to two epiphanies among the Army's senior leadership:

- Realization that the military art of our time was more intellectually demanding than we had been prepared to accept.
- Recognition of the need to muster humility and admit that officers needed to be better educated than they were at the time.

This dawning occurred when the Army was actively questioning its core doctrine. In 1978 General Bernard W. Rogers, the then-Chief of Staff of the Army, had questioned the entire officer education system and launched a top-down look called the "Review of Education and Training for Officers" (RETO). The Army was also reflecting on how it had done in Vietnam, and was looking forward to the present and foreseeable future. I was involved in both of these efforts and was one of the most junior officers in the RETO study group—just after my graduation from the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). By 1980, I found myself at the center of the effort to revise how the Army should think about waging war with the Soviet Union.

This effort was the second try at a post-Vietnam updating of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations* (what now is FM 3-0). I had studied hard at CGSC and had afterward served successfully as a battalion XO, brigade S-3, division deputy G-3, and battalion commander, and I still felt inadequate to the task. I noticed that others around me, even senior-officer War College

*Brigadier General Huba Wass de Czege, U.S. Army, Retired, was one of the principal developers of the Army's AirLand Battle concept and the founder and first director of the School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS. He holds a B.S. from the United States Military Academy and an M.A. from Harvard University.*

graduates, were not any better equipped to think critically and creatively about military art. We had learned the military doctrine of the day, but not how to usefully judge, question, and revise it. Army officers (CGSC and War College graduates alike) had a short historical memory of the evolution of military methods, were thus stuck in the present, and were therefore unable to envisage change. Some of us could quote Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, but we did not really understand them.

Lieutenant General William Richardson, the CGSC commandant of that time, shared this frustration. In the fall of 1980, he ordered the directors of CGSC to find ways to “improve the tactical judgment” of CGSC graduates. They came forward with a number of remedies. Their suggested improvements, while helpful, were simply inadequate to bridge the chasm between what was and what needed to be. General Richardson had addressed the right problem, but the Army needed a genuine paradigm shift to solve it.

General Richardson’s committee of CGSC directors had not been receptive to my ideas about needed curriculum changes. In my view, they were making adjustments within the conventional framework, but needed to step outside it. I developed detailed ideas for developing curriculum and designing a school dedicated to filling the need, but I held off advancing my ideas and waited for an opportunity to brief General Richardson alone. Having worked with him closely on the Army doctrine that eventually came to be called “AirLand Battle,” I knew he would give me a fair hearing. In late spring of 1981 General Richardson invited me to accompany him on a 21-day trip to China to visit Chinese military officer educational institutions

ranging from pre-commissioning to general officer schools. This trip was an historic occasion, the first peaceful military-to-military exchange between Red China’s People’s Liberation Army and the American military. On a Yangtze River cruise, a short break between school visits, I finally had an opportunity to discuss my ideas. I suggested that the Army needed to select a small portion of each CGSC class and put them through a ten-month graduate degree level education program in how to think about military art.



Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831)

## Original Intentions

General Richardson’s earlier request for a CGSC evaluation and the subsequent determination of a need for advanced military education suggested a course of instruction covering:

- The logic underlying military doctrine.
- How to judge doctrine critically.
- How to think creatively about doctrine and military art.

SAMS *was not* intended to be a course of indoctrination for planning specialists. Rather, it was intended as a course for gener-

alists who would lead the Army in every way, especially intellectually. It *was not* intended to be a course for operational level staffs, but to educate selected officers in the enduring principles applicable at all levels of conflict. An underlying assumption was that, prior to the course, students would already be thoroughly indoctrinated by CGSC in current methods of operations at all levels. SAMS was thus intended to teach the logic underlying current doctrine and how it evolved and would further evolve, as missions, technology, and other conditions changed.

When General Richardson asked the CGSC faculty to improve tactical judgment, I believed he meant tactics *and* operational art. In fact, the evolution of tactical method was at the heart of post-Vietnam transformation. We saw rapid technological change ahead, and we believed the Army needed a core of officers who could evolve tactical methods as rapidly as the technology permitted. A few years after SAMS was formed, the course was changed to emphasize the “operational level” of the military art.

***Some of us could quote Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, but we did not really understand them.***

This decision was unfortunate in my view. The Army could have adapted to the “digital age” much more rapidly had the broader theoretical focus of the early course been retained. Institutionally, it might also have realized sooner what platoons, companies, and battalions on the ground should do to bring peace to a traumatized people—the simple but inescapable logic of “clear, hold, and build” that finally evolved in Iraq.

I think the reason for the change away from tactics occurred because some senior leaders did not understand the difference between indoctrination and an immersive education. But there was also a recognized need to address operations at division level and above. The Army had not thought in terms of large-scale maneuver since World War II, and the major change in doctrine introduced in 1982 centered on division- and corps-level maneuver. Although CGSC walked students through planning exercises for operations at that level, the senior officers of the Army in 1982 had been company grade officers during the brief maneuvering periods of the Korean War. Therefore there were no officers anywhere in the Army with any experience (real, simulated, or virtual) in planning or executing operations of extended large-scale maneuver. Most division- and above field exercises of the 1970s and early 1980s consisted of a few days of battalion- and brigade-level maneuver ending with “nuclear release.”

Another impetus to getting educated in division- and corps-level maneuver was a product of the doctrinal re-think of the time. We realized that, given the strategic nuclear stand-off of “mutual assured destruction,” and the political costs of being first to push the button, political authorities might wait until they saw the inevitability of defeat, and, if the inevitable was delayed long enough, diplomacy might re-freeze the action. This placed an imperative on winning the first and subsequent battles, thereby causing conventional attacks to fail and Soviet offensive will to crumble. Somewhere, somehow, officers needed to be able to conceive of extended operations at these levels.

In 1981 there was no Army or Joint school curriculum that addressed the military art of campaigning in adequate depth. By the fall of 1985, I departed Fort Leavenworth for brigade command having produced two classes who could. Nearly one half of these students commanded brigades, and about one third became general officers.

## Shaping SAMS's Distinct Character

My discussion with General Richardson while in China lasted no more than an hour. Within that space key ideas took shape that gave SAMS its distinct character, one that has persisted. Instruction at the school was to be a “journey of learning,” from company through joint task-force level. This concept stemmed from a shared belief that sound “operational art” rests on a foundational understanding of tactical dynamics—a theoretical understanding of how combined arms achieve objectives. The learning journey was to address conflict not only with states, but also with insurgents. The subject matter covered was to be *integrated* by a “role-model” faculty with a high faculty-to-student ratio. The School would rely on three basic modes of learning: Socratic-method seminar discussions of historical case studies and applicable military theory; modern case studies framed, planned, and executed using appropriate simulations and expert coaching; and in-the-field participation on division- and corps-level



The Death of Socrates (Jacques-Louis David, 1787)



***The learning journey was to address conflict not only with states, but also with insurgents.***

planning staffs in real-world exercises in Europe and Korea.

By the end of our discussion, the general had decided that the next year would be spent laying the groundwork for the school. He was being reassigned to serve as the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations under his West Point classmate General Edward C. "Shy" Meyer, something he revealed during the discussion. General Richardson would work toward establishing the school from his end in the Pentagon, and I was to spend my next year, not at Carlisle studying the War College Curriculum, as was the Army's plan, but in a curriculum of my own devoted to researching and designing a school for advanced military studies. I was to develop its curriculum and take the necessary steps to establish it at Fort Leavenworth. Under a program called the "Army Research Associate Program" I would concurrently earn my Army War College diploma and visit General Richardson monthly to report my progress.

## **Key Hurdles**

There were four key hurdles at the beginning. The first was arguing the benefits of devoting the Army's mid-career talent pool to time spent in the "school house" rather than the "field." The argument we settled on was that a class of students could be graduated for the price of one M-1 Abrams tank and that the knowledge gained and put to work in combat would recoup that cost many times over. Moreover, the time in school would not come at the expense of time in field assignments. It would come at the expense of other-than-field duty time. Students could have both field experience and another year of education. We further argued that their greater success would actually lead to longer average careers. I think this argument still holds true given the success of the school's graduates.

Another hurdle to overcome was the Army's sensitivity to creating a "general staff" or "elite" track to a general's stars. It was believed, for

instance, that what counted toward advancement was not military education, but the imprint of the selection. We sidestepped this issue by not using a board selection process, and having students "self select" for candidacy while at CGSC and by having the faculty screen candidates for suitability.

A third hurdle was building a case-study-based curriculum and finding suitable faculty in less than a year. The first part was overcome through hard work, long hours, and the talents of Lieutenant Colonels Hal Winton and Doug Johnson, both Ph.D.s in history from Ivy League schools. They were already serving on the Fort Leavenworth faculty and became part of the development team. Finding suitable SAMS faculty was too difficult to accomplish using the normal officer assignment process. The "Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship" program was developed (as, at first, an echo of what I had done to earn my War College degree) to prepare instructors to lead a SAMS seminar of majors. This fellowship program was eventually extended from one to two years in length and ultimately provided eight "fellows" by the program's third year. It has worked fairly well since.

A fourth hurdle was ensuring that the Army placed the product of its school where learning would not only be used but would continue. The solution was to assign all graduates to field commands that would commit to giving them "branch qualifying" positions for the rank of major, while they continued their education in operations by serving on the planning staffs of a division or corps. The first position insured that the extra year at Fort Leavenworth did not jeopardize chances of promotion due to lack of battalion-level experience. The second crystallized theoretical knowledge and exposed the former student to general officers who were the Army's premier tacticians. General Meyer and subsequent chiefs of staff expressed this desire in personal letters to gaining division and corps commanders. This disciplined use of a valuable new asset has been the real key to the success of SAMS.

Of the senior officers who followed General Richardson as successive commandants and deputy commandants at Fort Leavenworth, Generals Merritt, Saint, Vuono, and Palmer became the biggest supporters and shapers of SAMS while I was director. Most of all, SAMS was, and is, shaped by its

excellent faculty and fellows. Of the faculty I hired, only Robert Epstein, a noted historian of military campaigning and the operational art, remains.

## Conditions for Survival

The School for Advanced Military Studies will be around for another 25 years if it remains true to its roots. The challenges it was set up to deal with have become more difficult in our rapidly changing world, one where mission novelty and uncertainty are the norm. Military art remains as immensely challenging as it always has been—both intellectually and physically. Knowledge of its principles today, as always, saves lives and treasure. The better military art is understood, the faster victory is gained. Understanding the art entails the competence to judge and revise doctrine, and that ability will not be in demand if senior Army professionals decide it is more important to indoctrinate than to educate. At least a few of their successors must be steeped enough in operational theory to be aware of the stultifying effects of doctrinaire groupthink. The Army is full of doctrinaire officers because it grows them that way—it values “in the box” thinking among junior leaders. The Army rewards officers for their acuity in adherence to doctrine. However, our military must have a core of leaders whose imaginations have transcended this mind-set.

There will always be a need for imagination, creativity, and a broad set of skills tailored for decision making in a wide range of imaginable conditions—doctrine cannot address these needs. If SAMS indoctrinates in the groupthink of the latest Quarterly Defense Review, an exercise driven as much by interest groups and programmatic compromises as by reasoned analysis, it will fail in its intended mission. If the latest Army and Joint doctrinal concepts—inertial products of the lowest common denominator of intellectual experience—become the SAMS pedagogical standard, the program will fail to inculcate needed ability to judge and to question. It will ultimately fail to achieve its original aim of creative leadership and institutional critique.

The SAMS faculty has to use the valuable ten months afforded to it for a very productive “journey of learning,” judged from the long term rather than the short. The difference between a civilian graduate

school and a professional one is that in the civilian model, the customer is the student, and in the professional model, the customer is the profession. In both cases, the customer chooses the path of the journey. The enlightened profession indoctrinates for the short-term but educates for the long.

During the last years of the Cold War, the journey at SAMS included counterinsurgency case studies and theory, even though the next use for that knowledge was not on the horizon. Thinking similarly, SAMS should now devote a significant portion of the learning journey to large-scale, so-called “conventional” operations against states, as such conflicts may well appear in contemporary form. (They will not be “traditional” in any sense.) For instance, the basic theory for using military force to deter, attack, defend, and pacify on any scale will not change, but technology, global conditions, and local situations will shape contemporary methods. Re-fighting historical battles and campaigns in a new and modern form is educational. Applying enduring theory under modern conditions to invent new methods and test soundness is educational. SAMS thus needs to recalibrate itself upon the logical, theoretical foundation of operational art by—

- Understanding the dynamics of soldiers, evolving weapons, and ever-adapting forms of enemies.
- Preparing to operate within a mosaic of peoples.
- Using the most modern ways of communicating and interacting.

This complexity entangles rote processes found in unavoidably stale doctrine and makes the need for critical and creative thinking ever immediate. One cannot think either critically or creatively without deeply understanding the subject matter in need of such thought. Academic disciplines that do not advance the understanding of military art, while valuable, are better taught elsewhere. SAMS has to focus on what brings victory.

***SAMS should now devote a significant portion of the learning journey to large-scale, so-called “conventional” operations against states...***

The beginnings of SAMS may have been accidental, but its endings are predictable. SAMS will continue as long as senior Army professionals value critical and creative thinking, and SAMS delivers that product. Any accountant can tabulate the cost of an enterprise, and that cost will always remain an issue, but the real value of something is not found in its numbers. Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm demonstrated the value of SAMS to the Army; results were directly traceable to graduates who had achieved tangible results. We have not yet seen that connection with Iraq and Afghanistan—the names of those credited with finding the way to success in Iraq cannot be found in the rosters of former SAMS students. Perhaps the SAMS curriculum was too weak in pertinent areas. When SAMS fails to deliver critical



**Genghis Khan (c. 1162–1227)**  
A mind untrammelled by doctrine.

and creative thinkers, the talent-pool's attention will be drawn by other professional employments. The Army will not yield up its top talent for a second year of schooling at Fort Leavenworth if it has more pressing work for them elsewhere. The SAMS graduates, faculty members, and the Army that nurtured it are all broadly deserving of congratulations. But this is no time for complacency. SAMS graduates must be the school's most vigilant and ardent critics. **MR**

***SAMS graduates must be the school's most vigilant and ardent critics.***



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# TERRORISTS

## Neither Soldiers nor Criminals



**Amitai Etzioni**

**I**N CURRENT HOSTILITIES in Iraq, Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan, and elsewhere, from Colombia to the Horn of Africa, nonstate actors—in particular, terrorists and insurgents who act like terrorists—play a much larger role than they did during WWI, WWII, and the Korean War. In these wars between states, the accepted rules of war, embodied in documents such as the Geneva Conventions, applied much more readily than in contemporary conflicts. Currently, conventional armies that seek to adhere to the rules of war are disadvantaged and are under pressure to circumvent the rules. These conditions suggest that work is needed to modify and update these rules.

Changes to the rules of war would hardly be unprecedented. The First Geneva Convention, dealing with the treatment of battlefield casualties, did not exist until 1864, and since then additional conventions have been agreed upon and other rules of war have been modified. The same holds for “international law,” which some people evoke as if it was etched in stone and unambiguous—but is actually neither. Indeed, even in well-established democratic societies, laws are constantly recast. For instance, there was no constitutional right to privacy in the United States until 1965, and the way we now understand the 1st Amendment (the right to free speech) was formed in the 1920s. In both cases no changes were made in the text of the Constitution, but new interpretations were employed to bring the Constitution—as a living document—in line with the normative precepts of changing times. Hence, it stands to reason that the new threats to security now posed by nonstate actors—several of whom have a global reach, are supported by massive religious radical movements, and have potential access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—demand modifications in the interpretations, if not the texts, of the rules of war.

*Amitai Etzioni is professor of international relations at The George Washington University and author of Security First: For a Muscular Moral Foreign Policy (Yale, 2007).*

PHOTO: The sun sets behind the Commissions building where the U.S. military held preliminary hearings for four detainees charged with conspiracy to commit war crimes, Guantanamo Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, August 2004. (AFP, Mark Wilson)

### A New World

Unfortunately, the advocates of two major approaches to counterterrorism have dug in their heels and stand in the way of the needed adaptations. On the one side are those who speak of a “war on terror,” which implies that terrorists ought to be treated like soldiers who, under the current rules of



war, can be detained without being charged or tried until the end of the war. On the other side are those who favor treating terrorists like criminals, endowed with the rights and privileges accorded to citizens of democratic societies who have been accused but not yet convicted of having committed a crime. Both approaches, we shall see shortly, have serious shortcomings, and hence invite the quest for a third way.

The ambiguities surrounding the current characterization of terrorists are illustrated by the following: Should one bring them to trial in the United States, like criminals? They are likely to walk. (The few cases brought before American judges, even conservative ones, were decided against the government. As noted by Benjamin Wittes and Zaahira Wyne of the Brookings Institution, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has thus far issued rulings in habeas cases for 29 Guantanamo detainees—24 of which it held to be unlawfully detained.) Should we hold them until the war ends? Even if it lasts 100 years? Send them home? Many nations refuse to accept them, and such a release violates various international laws concerning sending people to countries where they might face torture or execution. Bring them to military tribunals? The evidence against them—often obtained on the battlefield—frequently does not satisfy even these less demanding tribunals. (Wittes reports that military prosecutors have estimated that even under the Military Commissions Act they have enough evidence to be able to bring to trial at best only 80 Guantanamo detainees.)

The effect of these considerations, and the legal and normative confusion they reflect, is best understood with reference to the field of law and economics. This field, which studies the incentives and disincentives generated by public policies and laws, has shown that it is counter to the public interest to enact laws and design policies that, however unwittingly, promote undesired behavior through perverse incentive structures. The ongoing confusion surrounding the status of what I call “combatant civilians” caught on the battlefield in Afghanistan, Iraq, and in other parts of the world—highlighted by the complexities the United States faces in dealing with those locked up at Guantanamo Bay—has produced a set of perverse incentives. As a result of this widespread legal confusion, some commanders in the field, Special Forces, and CIA agents are

tempted to not take prisoners (the most extreme side effect); to turn terrorists over to other forces not bound by American legal concepts, such as the Afghan military or the Iraqi police; or to ship them to secret prisons (extraordinary renditions)—all to avoid having to treat them either as prisoners of war (POW) or as criminal suspects! Moreover, missions are scaled back because collateral damage is considered too high, while—we shall see—some of those damaged are actually civilians who volunteered to assist and serve terrorists. Also, as a result of the confusion, America’s reputation is tarnished, the legitimacy of our operations is questioned, and opposition to counterterrorism measures is growing at home. There must be a better way.

## Neither Fish nor Fowl

Before I outline a third category to which terrorists do belong, and the implications of this reclassification for the way they are to be treated both during armed conflicts (that is, while fighting them on the battlefield) and once they are caught, I will first briefly spell out the main reasons they should be treated as neither soldiers nor criminals. In proceeding, I use a common definition of terrorists as individuals who seek to drive fear into a population by acts of violence in order to advance their goals in a *sub rosa* manner. Terrorists, as a rule, wear no insignia that identifies them as combatants, resort to a large variety of other means to make themselves indistinguishable from noncombatant civilians, and often use civilians’ vehicles, homes, and public facilities, such as schools and places of worship, for their terrorist acts.

Academics like to dwell on matters of definition, often disregarding that practically all definitions are fuzzy at the edges. One matter of this definition should be cleared up, though. Several scholars hold that the individuals at issue qualify as terrorists only if they attack noncombatants or if they attack combatants while concealing themselves as noncombatants; if they limit themselves to openly attacking combatants, they do not qualify as terrorists. An open attack on combatants may qualify one as an enemy combatant (as in insurgency) but not as a terrorist. I suggest that one should rely much more on the observation that terrorists pass themselves off as noncombatant civilians for the purpose of stratagem, which is a cardinal factor affording them

advantages over conventional armies and which turns confronting them into a highly asymmetric armed conflict.

After the battle of Waterloo, Napoleon is said to have asked why he was not given any cover. His artillery officer responded that he had six reasons: first of all, he was out of shells—Napoleon responded, “Never mind the other five reasons.” In a similar vein, the characterizations of terrorists as soldiers or as criminals have such fatal flaws that there is hardly a need for an extended discussion of the finer and secondary points that can be made as to why neither category fits.

Soldiers are agents of a state, which can be held responsible for their conduct; states can be deterred from violating the rules of war by cajoling, incentives, and threats of retaliation. In contrast, most terrorists and insurgents are not agents of a state, nor are they necessarily members of a group currently qualifying for POW status under international law. They often act in parts of the world that lack effective government, or are supported by foreign governments, but only indirectly, and hence one often cannot determine whether they fight for, say, Iran or on their own. Even when they are affiliated with a state or are part of a government, as Hezbollah is in Lebanon, the national government often is unable to control their actions.

The fact that terrorists are typically not agents of an identifiable state is particularly an issue as we face what is widely considered by far the greatest threat to our security, that of our allies, and to world peace—the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. Although nuclear forensics has made some progress, there is considerable likelihood that in the event of a terrorist nuclear attack, we would be unable to ascertain from whom the terrorists acquired their weapons and how. (Was it handed to them? Did they bribe their way in or did they steal it in the dead of night?) This absence of a “return address” and the resulting inability to deter WMD attacks with the threat of retaliation alone ought

to lead one to recognize that terrorists cannot be treated like soldiers.

Furthermore, the notion that terrorists are akin to soldiers wrongly presumes that there is a clear line that separates them from civilians who—it is widely agreed although not always honored—ought to be spared hostile acts as much as possible. In WWII it was considered highly troubling when civilians were deliberately targeted (as distinct from injured as “collateral damage”), for instance in London, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki—given that here the difference between civilians and military targets was clear and well-understood, but ignored. In contemporary conflicts, in which non-state actors play a large and increasing role, such distinctions often cannot be readily made.

Terrorists capitalize on the blurring of the line between soldiers and civilians by acting like civilians as long as it suits their purpose, then deploying their arms and attacking before quickly slipping back into their civilian status. To the extent that American Soldiers and Marines adhere to the old rules, they are often expected to wait until the civilians reveal themselves as combatants before engaging them, and even then they cannot respond with full force because both terrorists and insurgents often hide in civilian homes and public facilities as they launch their attacks. True soldiers do not hide behind the skirts—or burqas—of civilians or under their beds, nor do they use their homes, schools, and places of worship to store their weapons.

The media reports with great regularity that American soldiers, bombers, or drones killed “X” number fighters and “Y” number civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or in Iraq. When I read these reports, I wonder how the media can tell who is who. As someone who engaged in close-quarter combat, I suggest that this clarity is very often missing during the conflict (and by no means is it always available after the fact). It hence may be possible for the media to make such distinctions sometimes (especially if they are willing to rely on the word of the local

***...the characterizations of terrorists as soldiers or as criminals have such fatal flaws that there is hardly a need for an extended discussion of the finer and secondary points...***



A U.S. Marine from 3d Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, and an Afghan National Police officer provide security in Delaram, Farah, Afghanistan, 23 March 2009.

population), but often such a line cannot be drawn by those engaging in battle. Ergo, such a line cannot serve as the basis for dealing with fighters who act like and locate themselves among civilians.

In short, characterizing terrorists as soldiers greatly hampers our security if we abide by the rules of war, and casts doubt on the legitimacy of our actions if we do not. Often we end up on both wrong ends of this stick.

The reasons terrorists cannot be treated as criminals are equally strong. By far the most important of these, which alone should stop all suggestion of subjecting terrorists to the criminal justice system, is that security requires that the primary goal of dealing with terrorists be *preventing* attacks rather than prosecuting the perpetrators after the attack has occurred. This is particularly evident when we concern ourselves with terrorists who may acquire weapons of mass destruction. It also holds for many terrorists who are willing to commit suicide during their attack and hence clearly cannot be tried, and who are not going to pay mind to what might be done to them after their assault. Finally, even terrorists not bent on committing suicide attacks are often “true believers” who are willing to proceed despite whatever the legal system may throw at them. All these kinds—those who may use WMD, the suicide bombers, and the “mere” fanatics—are best prevented from proceeding rather than vainly trying to prosecute them after the fact, and most cannot be effectively deterred by the criminal justice system.

In contrast to the need for prevention, law enforcement often springs into action after a criminal has acted—when a body is found, a bank is robbed, or a child is kidnapped. By and large, the criminal law approach is retrospective rather than prospective. Law enforcement assumes that punishment after the fact serves to deter future crimes (not to eliminate them, but to keep them at a socially acceptable level). True, to some extent law enforcement can be modified to adapt to the terrorist challenge. For instance, greater use can be made of statutes already in place to act against those who engage

in conspiracy to commit a crime, that is, those who plan to strike. However, significant kinds of preventive action cannot be accommodated within the law enforcement regime. These include acts that subject a considerable number of people to surveillance or interrogation or even administrative detention—without any individualized suspicion. The aim in such cases is to disrupt *possible* planning of attacks without necessarily charging anybody with anything, or to pry loose some information through what under criminal law would be considered fishing expeditions. For example, in 2002-2003, the FBI invited 10,000 Iraqi-Americans to be interviewed, without claiming that any of them were terrorists or supported terrorists. If a police department did the same thing to fight crime (say, invited 10,000 members of any given ethnic or racial group to come to police headquarters to be interviewed about drug deals in their neighborhood), I expect a major political storm would ensue. Representatives of

***...even terrorists not bent on committing suicide attacks are often “true believers” who are willing to proceed despite whatever the legal system may throw at them.***

the given groups, civil rights advocates, and select public leaders would complain about racial profiling, and the police chief involved might well not last the week. All this illustrates that prospective approaches that are deemed necessary to fight terrorism cannot be used to curb crime, which relies greatly on retrospective approaches.

Following normal criminal procedures also makes the prevention of terrorist attacks and the prosecution of captured terrorists more difficult. First, collecting evidence that will hold up in a normal criminal court while in the combat zones and ungoverned regions in which many terrorists are captured is often not practical. And, to quote Matthew Waxman, a professor of law at Columbia University, the criminal justice system “is deliberately tilted in favor of defendants so that few if any innocents will be punished, but the higher stakes of terrorism cannot allow the same likelihood that some guilty persons will go free.”

Additionally, most violent criminals act as individuals while most terrorists act in groups. Hence, the criminal procedures of open arrest records, charging suspects within 48 hours or so, and speedy trials in open court all undermine the fight against terrorism. Counterterrorism requires time to capture other members of the cell before they realize that one of their members has been apprehended, to decipher their records, and to prevent other attacks that might be under way. Also, security demands that authorities do not reveal to other terrorists their means and methods, which means that often one cannot allow them to face their accusers. (Imagine having to bring in a CIA agent or Muslim collaborator that we succeeded in placing high in the Iranian command—in order to have him testify in open court about the ways he found out that X, Y, and Z are members of an Iranian sleeper cell of terrorists in the United States) In short, terrorists should not be treated as criminals any more than as soldiers. They are a distinct breed that requires a distinct treatment.

### The Third Way

The distinct rules for engaging terrorists have not been worked out, in part because the two camps are each locked into their soldiers/civilians or criminal/innocent legal and normative precepts. Indeed, we badly need a group of top notch legal thinkers *combined with people who have extensive combat*

**...terrorists should not be treated as criminals any more than as soldiers. They are a distinct breed...**

*experience* to work out these rules. I turn next to outline select preliminary guidelines concerning the ways to deal with terrorists during armed conflicts and in future counterterrorism campaigns, as well as with those individuals already detained. I am hardly alone in trying to help develop this highly unpopular position. Columbia University’s Phillip Bobbitt goes down this unbeaten path in his valuable *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century*, in which he implores policymakers to stop relying on outdated legal and strategic thinking in dealing with terrorism. Much more detailed work is carried out in the outstanding book *Law and the Long War* by Benjamin Wittes, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Both agree that there is a need for distinct legal and normative precepts for dealing with terrorists. (One may ask why I hold that this third approach is very unpopular despite the fact that both books received rave reviews, as did my much more limited attempt to deal with this issue in *The Financial Times* on 22 August 2007. I reached this conclusion by noting that despite the warm welcome to these texts, so far they have been almost completely ignored by policy makers, most legal scholars, and most assuredly by advocates of human and individual rights.)

For each of the following suggested guidelines, much remains to be worked out and surely additional criteria are called for. They mainly serve to illustrate the third approach:

**Terrorists are entitled to select basic human rights.** Merely because they are human beings, terrorists have basic rights. Although terrorists should be treated as civilians who have forfeited many rights, certain basic rights should be considered inviolate even for them. They should not be killed when they can be safely detained and held, nor should they be subjected to torture.<sup>1</sup> Other basic rights are implied in the examination that follows; for instance, concerning their rights not to be detained indefinitely and to an institutionalized review of their status.



**Special detention authority.** Terrorists cannot be held until the end of the war (the way POW may be) because the armed conflict with terrorists may last for a hundred years or peter out without any clear endpoint. There will be no signing of a peace treaty with Bin Laden on top of a battleship, and if there was one, it would not mean much to other terrorist groups. Also, holding anybody without review for an indefinite period is a gross violation of basic human rights, and one that can be readily remedied. Detained terrorists should be subject to periodic review by a special authority to determine if they can be safely released or if their history warrants further detention. Note that while much attention has been paid by the media to the plight of those detained, little attention has been paid to those that have been released and proceeded to commit acts of terror, particularly, killing civilians. For instance, Abdallah Saleh al-Ajmi, a former Guantanamo Bay detainee, was repatriated to Kuwait as per a prisoner transfer agreement with the U.S. In his trial in Kuwait, al-Ajmi was acquitted and then released. About two years after his release from Guantanamo, al-Ajmi killed 13 Iraqi soldiers in a suicide bombing.

At the same time, terrorists should not be incarcerated for a set period of time, the way criminals are, depending on the gravity of their attack. The main purpose of detention is to *prevent* them from attacking again rather than to punish them for their crime. Thus, if the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is finally settled and the settlement is faithfully implemented, those terrorists jailed by Israel and by Palestinian authority can be released. Charging terrorists with a crime within 48 hours of capture or releasing them, the way criminals are treated in the United States, will not do as it does not allow enough time for essential counterterrorism measures. (Various extended periods, but not unlimited ones, that have been set in law in democratic societies provide a precedent of sorts. For instance, in the UK, criminal suspects are usually held only 48 hours without being charged, but

legislation now allows that time to run up to 28 days for terrorists.)

Many related issues remain to be worked out, including how to ensure that preventive detention is not used too widely and which procedures should be used to determine who can be released. (For such a discussion see Matthew Waxman's article in the *Journal of National Security Law and Policy*, "Administrative Detention of Terrorists: Why Detain, and Detain Whom?")

**A National Security Court.** Neal Katyal, a highly respected legal scholar and the new Principal Deputy Solicitor General of the United States, favors a separate judicial authority for dealing with terrorists: a congressionally created national security court. Unlike a military commission, this court would be overseen by federal judges with life tenure, and detainees would have the right to appeal decisions—appeals which would then be reviewed by a second set of federal judges. But unlike a civilian court, detainees would not receive the full panoply of criminal protections (for instance, they would not be allowed to face all their accusers, if these include, say, CIA agents working covertly), and the national security court would also have different evidentiary standards than civilian courts (such as allowing the introduction of certain kinds of hearsay as evidence).

Similarly, Wittes points out that so far the main steps in the U.S. to develop a systematic position on dealing with captured terrorists have been taken by the executive (various presidential declarations, orders and "findings") and the courts (including decisions such as *Rasul vs. Bush* and *Hamdan vs. Rumsfeld*). He criticizes this approach, and instead suggests that Congress should formulate a distinct legal architecture to deal with terrorists by authorizing the creation of a national security court, with rules and practices less exacting than those that govern domestic criminal courts, but in which terrorists are granted more legal rights and protections than the current Combatant Status Review Tribunals.

Wittes also favors that the standards for admissible evidence be lower than for domestic criminal cases; the court should bar the admission of evidence gleaned from torture, but, aside from that, "probative material—even hearsay or physical evidence whose chain of custody or handling would not be adequate in a criminal trial—ought to be fair game."<sup>2</sup>

***There will be no signing of a peace treaty with Bin Laden on top of a battleship...***

Terrorists cannot gain full access to all the evidence against them, which criminals are entitled to, without creating very large security risks. Even for parts of the evidence to be revealed, I favor allowing terrorists to choose among lawyers who have security clearance. (This also greatly curtails the possibility that the lawyers will serve as go-betweens for terrorists and their compatriots, as was the case with lawyer Lynne Stewart.)

There is much room for differences about the specific nature and workings of the national security court. For instance, I would rather call it a national security review board to stress that it is not a typical court. However the main point is incontestable: *Terrorists must be tried in different ways than criminals and soldiers are tried.*<sup>3</sup>

**Surveillance of civilians.** A major tool of counterterrorism is to identify the attackers before they strike, an essential element of a prevention strategy. Surveillance has a key role to play in such efforts. It entails allowing computers (which do not “read” messages and hence cannot violate privacy) to screen the billions of messages transmitted through cyberspace as well as old-fashioned phone lines. It is a highly obsolete notion to suggest that in order to conduct this kind of surveillance the government must first submit evidence to a court that there is individualized probable cause for suspicion—the way we typically deal with criminals. All messages that pass through public spaces (as distinct from, for instance, within one’s home) might be screened to identify likely terrorism suspects who then can be submitted to closer scrutiny.

The notion that one can and should deal differently with Americans versus others is also highly anachronistic. I often ask civil rights advocates when was the last time that they were asked to show their passport when they sent an email or used their cell phone. That is, most times there is no way of determining the nationality of those who communicate through modern technology. The rule of thumb used for a long time by American authorities, such as those at the National Security Agency, has been that if the message is coming from American territory or sent to someone who is in American territory, it is presumed to involve an American. This assumption leads to absurd results, all favorable to terrorists. For instance, numerous messages (such as emails/phone calls/text messages) sent between many dif-

***...the notion that one can and should deal differently with Americans versus others is also highly anachronistic.***

ferent parts of the world, say, from Latin American to Europe, pass digitally through the United States; these cannot be legally scrutinized as long as the said rule is followed. Above all, it’s quite possible terrorists will be among the over 50 million visitors who come to the United States each year, and that before they strike, these terrorists will contact their masters overseas, as the 9/11 attackers did, as well as those who attacked other nations, such as the United Kingdom and Spain. This suggests that all messages be initially screened, in the limited sense that computers determine whether they actually should be read or their patterns further examined.

One effective way to ensure that mass surveillance is not abused is to set up a review board that will examine regularly the way data are collected and used, and that will issue annual reports to the public on its findings. The fact that both the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence have privacy officers is also a step in the desired direction. This kind of oversight works largely after the fact, rather than slowing to a crawl the collection of information, which is the case if each act of surveillance must be reviewed by a special court before it is undertaken. Such oversight points to the right balance between allowing the government to advance security and subject these efforts to public scrutiny.

**Armed conflict zones and combatant civilians.** The greatest difficulties concern the battlefield itself. Imagine that a U.S. Navy destroyer in foreign waters is approached at great speed by a boat, or a truck is racing toward an American checkpoint in Afghanistan. If this were a conventional war and the boat or truck were carrying soldiers of the other side and was marked with the insignias of the army we were contending with, they would be stopped by an uninhibited use of arms (under most circumstances). If, though, these vehicles have no markings and look like civilian means of transportation, and if the occupants are wearing civilian clothing, the way



U.S. Army, SSG Isaac A. Graham

**Afghan National Policemen man a guard shack on the road leading across the Pakistan/Afghanistan border below checkpoint 7 in the Tirzaye district of the Khovst province of Afghanistan, 27 March 2007.**

they ought to be faced is, at least legally speaking, ambiguous. Often, as was the case with the USS *Cole* and at various checkpoints in Afghanistan and Iraq, terrorists are allowed much more leeway than soldiers of an opposing army would be granted—to the disadvantage of our conventional forces.

Under the new suggested rules, the United States and other nations working to prevent terrorist attacks in a contested area, say, the southern region of Afghanistan or an Iraqi city in which security has not been established, would declare the area an armed conflict zone. This would entail warning people that all those who approach troops or their facilities and who seem to pose a threat will be treated accordingly. This could mean, for instance, that in societies like Iraq in which most males carry firearms, people would be advised to either stay out of armed conflict zones or leave their weapons behind.

Such armed conflict zones could also be declared around ships in international waters. If boats that act in ways that suggest hostile intent enter such a zone, (say, 200 hundred yards around a ship), they would be warned to leave or surrender; if they refused

and ignored a warning shot, they would be treated as a hostile force. In this case, if they are innocent civilians who happen to go fishing next to one of our ships, they would not be harmed.

Furthermore, civilians who carry out combat-like missions or provide support for such missions—I call them combatant civilians, the proper characterization of terrorists—would be treated as if they were a hostile force. For instance, if civilians act as spotters or intelligence agents, carry ammunition and replace weapons, or house terrorists—they would be treated like terrorists. A mental experiment might help in considering this matter. Assume a U.S. military unit is coming under mortar fire. The American forces identify a person with field glasses on a rooftop overlooking the area. He also has a walkie-talkie. As more and more rounds of shells are coming in, it becomes apparent that someone is clearly providing feedback to the attackers as their aim is improving. If this person was wearing the uniform of a soldier, he would not be spared. Just because he wears civilian clothes—in an armed conflict zone—he would not be treated any differently.

At the same time, civilians who go about their work without any overt signs or evidence that they are combatants should be treated by the old rules, as individuals that are to be protected from military strikes as much as possible. Thus, shooting women and children (as was reported to have happened at one point in Gaza), carrying out retribution killings (as was reported to have happened in Haditha in Iraq), or burning down a village (as took place in Mai Lai) are as gross a violation of the new rules as they were of the old ones.

The main point behind these specifics, which surely can be adjusted to take into account differences in circumstances, is that terrorists, by acting like innocent civilians, are endangering the safety and rights of true civilians. And, that civilians who act as combatants, even if they only serve as support troops, forfeit many of their rights as noncombatants. They force conventional armies and police seeking to establish basic security in a conflict zone to drop the obsolescent line that treats differently soldiers, who in war are a fair target, and civilians. *A new line should be drawn between combatant and noncombatant civilians.* It will allow security forces to deal with all those who carry arms in the armed conflict zone, carry out combat-like or

***A new line should be drawn  
between combatant and  
noncombatant civilians.***

combat support missions, or who seem intent on attacking our forces or those we seek to protect.

This is much less of a change in policy than it might seem at first. The various U.S. military forces, and those of other nations, all follow one set or another of rules of engagement, aside from (but consistent with) the rules of war. These typically allow the troops to take whatever measures they require in self-defense. For instance, the standing U.S. Army rules of engagement state, “A commander has the authority and obligation to use all necessary means available and to take all appropriate actions to defend that commander’s unit and other U.S. forces in the vicinity from a hostile act or demonstration of hostile intent.”<sup>4</sup> This rule could be interpreted to apply to defending against civilian attacks and points to similar forms of engagement to those previously outlined. However, these rules leave it open-ended as to what self-defense entails. The suggested additional guidelines should hence be viewed as seeking to spell out what self-defense entails, although it is true that no set of rules can cover all the permutations that arise in combat situations. Other precedents for the approach here outlined are found in the periods in which even democracies have declared a state of emergency or martial law. For instance, in April 2004, during the U.S. military operation in Fallujah, the military made announcements on local radio and distributed leaflets asking residents to stay in their homes.

The concept that underlines the armed conflict zone, which may need considerable additional deliberation, is the separation of combatant and noncombatant civilians, to protect the latter and forcefully deal with the first. Will they undermine counterterrorism drives by alienating the civilian population? Will armed conflict zones cause us to lose the peace, even if they help us to win the armed conflict? That is, do these counterterrorism tactics undermine the strategic goals of the conflict? Is it not best to instead proceed to develop the economic, civil society, and political life of the areas involved?

As I showed in detail elsewhere, without first establishing basic security, development cannot proceed.<sup>5</sup> And regimes that do not provide for elementary safety lose not just their legitimacy but also their credibility. Second, there are limitations on what one can achieve through development.<sup>6</sup> To reduce corruption to tolerable levels, to elevate national commitments to a level in which they trump tribal ones, to modernize an economy, and to build a civil society takes decades and many billions of dollars, at best. Winning the hearts and minds of the population (to the extent that it can be achieved) supplements measures that enforce safety, but safety cannot be based on it in areas in which terrorists take hold and in which significant elements of the civilian population are combatants.

Above all, to demand that civilians who raise their arms against us be treated like noncombatants until they choose to reveal their colors, and to allow them to slip back into this status whenever it helps advance their goals, imposes several costs. The most obvious ones are casualties on our side. Such an approach also generates perverse incentives for nations with conventional armies to circumvent the rules, to find some *sub rosa* way to deal with combatant civilians. Redefining the rules of armed conflicts is not just a much more effective way, but also a much more legitimate way, of dealing with violent nonstate actors.

## **Tomorrow’s Freedom Fighters?**

There are those who say that those we consider terrorists today will be considered freedom fighters tomorrow—and some people already view them in this way. As I see it, deliberately killing a human being, or merely terrorizing one, is a morally flawed act. There are conditions under which this act is justified, as in self-defense, or legal, as when a court orders an execution, or the president orders the army to defend the nation. However, none of this makes killing and terror “good”; we are always commanded to see whether we can achieve the same purpose without killing or terror—for example, using non-lethal means such as tasers in law enforcement and taking the enemy soldiers as POWs rather than killing them, once they no longer endanger us.

While killing and terrorism are always morally flawed means, there is no moral equivalency in



terms of the purposes for which they are applied. Those who use these means to overthrow a tyrannical government (for instance, members of the underground in France who fought the Nazis during WWII) may deserve our support, while those who use them to undermine a democracy (for instance, those who attacked the United States on 9/11, and those who attacked Spain and Britain in the following years)—deserve special condemnation. *However, the fact that some purposes are noble and others foul does not make the means used good.* Hence, while not all combatants are created equal—while some may indeed be today's or tomorrow's freedom fighters—none of them are engaged in regime change in ways that one should consider morally superior to nonlethal means.

***...the fact that some purposes are noble and others foul does not make the means used good.***

## How Far Can One Go?

Up to a point, these and other such counterterrorism measures might be viewed as merely modifications of the criminal justice system or as a hybrid of that system and the laws of war. However, given the scope and number of differences involved, together they amount to a distinct approach. This is most evident when we acknowledge that the prevention of terrorist acts requires questioning and even detaining some people who have not yet violated any law.

The preceding suggestions are merely ways to launch and foster the explorations of the third approach, one that faces considerable resistance from both sides of the political spectrum. They are far from a worked-out model that can be implemented as public policy without considerable additional deliberation and modification. Above all, for the distinct treatment of terrorists to be fully embraced, it must gain acceptance among the public of the United States and its allies (a difficult enough task) while also being viewed as legitimate by people around the world. It hence requires transnational dialogues and the develop-

ment of new norms and agreements—say, a new Geneva Convention—which, to reiterate, would be hardly the first time these conventions have been significantly altered.

When all is said and done, one might differ about how far one can go in preventing terrorism and how to best deal with terrorists, but still agree that it makes little sense to treat them either as criminals or as soldiers. At issue is not a matter of neat classifications, but ways to maintain the institutions of a free society while also protecting it from devastating attacks.

Behind many of the discussions of the issue at hand—especially by those who have never been involved in combat—is a sub-text, a quest for a clean war, one in which no bystanders are hurt, collateral damage is minimized if not avoided all together, and strikes are “surgical.” Thus, for instance, various observers objected to the use of airpower in Kosovo—and recently of bombers and drones in Afghanistan and Pakistan—and urged greater reliance on land troops, because they hoped that these troops might be able to better separate civilians from fighters.

As I see it, the same respect for human life and for human rights takes one elsewhere. One must recognize that, although some measures can be taken to protect noncombatant civilians, at the end of the day some such civilians are very likely to be hurt. Hence, the best way to minimize innocent civilian casualties is to exhaust all other means possible to deal with conflict short of armed interventions—to go the extra mile, to ignore provocations, to invite intermediaries, to turn the other cheek and to avoid, if at all possible, an armed clash. Fighting is by nature bloody. Although it can be tidied up to some extent, ultimately it is tragic and best avoided if at all possible. However, when an armed conflict is forced on a people by those who bomb our heartland, killing thousands of innocent civilians working at their desks, an appropriate response requires dealing with the attackers as terrorists, and not being hobbled by obsolete precepts and rules. The time has come to recognize that those who abuse their civilian status by pretending to be civilians but acting like terrorists forfeit many of the rights of true civilians without acquiring the privileges due to soldiers. **MR**

## NOTES

1. It remains to be worked out what should be considered torture. It can be defined so broadly that it would block most interrogation techniques—for instance, if it encompasses a ban on humiliating the detainees and it leaves up to them to define what is humiliating—or so narrowly that waterboarding and many other cruel measures would be allowed as long as they do not lead to organ failure. It goes without saying that the suggested guidelines' use would be much hampered unless the definition is worked out, presumably somewhere in between these two extremes.

2. Benjamin Wittes. *Law and the Long War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008) 165.

3. Nor can they be tried as soldiers, as much of the evidence is not admissible in military commissions either.

4. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, *Standing Rules of Engagement for U.S. Forces*, 15 January 2000, A-3.

5. Amitai Etzioni, *Security First: For a Muscular, Moral Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2007); Amitai Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics* (New York: Free Press, 1988).

6. Amitai Etzioni, "Reconstruction: An Agenda" in *Statebuilding and Intervention: Policies, Practices, and Paradigms*, ed., David Chandler (New York: Routledge Press, 2009) 101-21.

**The following is a letter sent to Professor Etzioni from a senior officer in Afghanistan in direct response to this article. *Military Review* considers it a valuable insight to the issues raised in Professor Etzioni's discussion.**

*Dear Professor,*

*I thought the concept of armed conflict zones particularly useful. I know that informally we have done similar things but it is usually by an ad hoc series of population and resources control measures such as establishing curfews, PSYOPS announcements about a restrictive weapons policy, etc. We should absolutely have a set of measures grouped together for use in an armed conflict zone. The measures could be modified of course, but in general there would be a well known established set of procedures. I'm going to have a Judge Advocate look into the idea and see if we can at least establish a procedure for us to use while deployed.*

*The enemy in southern Afghanistan is actually more akin to guerrillas. They do employ terrorist tactics—but these kinds of tactics are largely learned from Arabs and other foreign fighters. (The Afghan [insurgent] has a tradition of using IEDs, but even during the Soviet era they used them more like traditional tactical mines; suicide bombing in Afghanistan is a recent tactic.)*

*Afghans also employ tactics to intimidate and terrorize a local population but there is a difference in approach and intent between brigands, war lords, and Taliban. But in the end, most of the Taliban that we will fight rely on light infantry tactics and organization and not terrorism. That is the substantial thing we have to consider in our approach to this war, too. Al Qaeda is a global threat that relies on terrorism, and the use of special operations forces to attack and decapitate leadership may be effective. Local and regional forces who enable Al Qaeda, like the Taliban, on the other hand, fight as guerrillas, and they must be defeated by conventional forces because formations, and not simply leaders or networks, have to be attacked and destroyed. Conventional forces are the only organizations with the means for such a task.*

*Unfortunately our Army had not adopted a counter-guerrilla strategy and instead is focused on stability operations and on the idea that reconstruction (even in areas that were never constructed) will have value.*

# FIELD HOSPITAL SUPPORT for Civilians in COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Colonel Albert R. Bryan, U.S. Army Reserve, Retired



**I**F AN IRAQI MAN believes that your hospital has saved the life of his child, sister, or parent, will he shoot at you? Most will not. He may even tell you where insurgents and criminals are hiding, which furthers the counterinsurgency (COIN) mission and decreases U.S. casualties.

This point may seem obvious, but it bears repeating. Medical support of civilians in an area of operations can be a tool for winning support for the counterinsurgency. Unfortunately this realization is dawning much too slowly, as doctrinal changes are always slow. For instance, while one combat support hospital (CSH) could note that 60 percent of its patients at times were Iraqis, and another could note that it routinely sees civilians injured by “collateral damage,” it still remains the enunciated policy of Medical Command (MEDCOM) that you do not treat civilians if you can possibly avoid it. It was this way in Desert Storm and persists in the current operating environments.

Instances of providing care, including the transportation of injured children by a Marine unit in Ramadi to Baghdad for treatment, are spur-of-the-moment targets of opportunity, or random acts of kindness. They are not part of the commander’s visualization and design for operations. They are not part of the execution of plans. Campaign design does not include deployment of field hospitals in support of civilians. If the evacuation of the Ramadi children in September 2007 was, in fact, a proactive part of information operations employed to favorably influence the populace’s perception of all coalition actions while simultaneously discrediting the insurgents, this reporter was unaware of it.

## Bucking Doctrine

What field hospitals can contribute in COIN remains largely unexplored, and the reasons why they have not been deployed for civilian support appear merely doctrinal. The capacity of a deployed U.S. field hospital to do good (and to look good doing it) presents an awesome but underappreciated “force multiplier” to senior commanders. During Desert Storm, the 13th Evacuation (EVAC) Hospital from Wisconsin and another EVAC from North Carolina were colocated on Pipeline Road. In six weeks, they saw 17,000 patients, had admitted 500 patients, and performed 200 surgeries. After Desert Storm the 912th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH), Tennessee, was deployed to support Shi’ite refugees at Safwan, Iraq. The refugees were effusively

*Colonel Albert R. Bryan, U.S. Army Reserve, retired, spent four years on active duty in Germany where he served as a flight surgeon and an internist. He deployed with the 13th Evacuation Hospital in Saudi Arabia and with the 912th MASH in Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. COL Bryan has served on temporary duty as a consulting physician in medical clinics outside of the United States. He received a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin, and earned his M.D. at McGill University.*

PHOTO: An Iraqi man presents a child to a U.S. Navy Hospital corpsman for medical care in a town in Ninewa province, Iraq, 16 December 2008. (U.S. Marine Corps, SGT Jason W. Fudge)

***What field hospitals can contribute in COIN remains largely unexplored, and the reasons why they have not been deployed for civilian support appear merely doctrinal.***

grateful for routine obstetrical, medical, pediatric, and surgical attention. In Pakistan, the 212th MASH, Landstuhl, treated 20,000 casualties of the 2005 earthquake in four months. These treatments included 500 hospitalizations and 425 operations. The 212th was deployed also in Bosnia and Croatia along with the 48th Air Transportable Hospital and Navy Fleet Hospital 6. The latter two treated civilian refugees routinely to great effect; the 212th adhered to MEDCOM doctrinal limitations.

A field hospital's capabilities come from a complex interaction of the clinical sections: emergency room, laboratory, pre- and post-operative care, anesthesiology, surgery, internal medicine, intensive care unit, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology, nurses, and corpsman. The level of nursing care in U.S. field hospitals is at least an order of magnitude better than what I have observed as a physician in six of the best hospitals in Frankfurt, Germany, and in Moscow, Russia. Most line officers have little knowledge of this scientific expertise that military hospitals bring to the field. Only one commanding general, General Frederick Franks, Jr., experienced the modern field hospital as a patient. He had to have his leg amputated in Vietnam. Twenty years later, as commander of VII Corps in 1991, when faced with a serious refugee problem in Iraq, he deployed three MASH units to provide civilian refugees with standard medical care. He ignored MEDCOM doctrine.

Shortly after Desert Storm, MEDCOM told me "Doctor, we're here to preserve the fighting strength,

***...[In 1991] when faced with a serious refugee problem in Iraq, [General Franks] deployed three MASH units to provide civilian refugees with standard medical care. He ignored MEDCOM doctrine.***

period, end of story. If we take on care of civilians, then the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the UN, Merlin, and MSF (Doctors Without Borders) will all back off and we'll be stuck with them." There is clearly a doctrinal influence in such an aversion to imaginative use of medical assets. Complex mission needs, as in COIN, demand a flexible, imaginative approach not trammled by rigid doctrinal assumptions.

Medical support is a doctrinal combat service support function associated with corps-level logistics, a G4 mission. Medical support may be occasionally referred to in the morning report by G1, but rarely if ever, as a logical line of operation (LLO) in G3 planning. It is not a doctrinal form of engagement. Nor is it a doctrinal form of information operations. Yet, in a COIN environment, targeted medical support of civilians as a tool for peace and stability could and should be used.

Two important means of measuring success in COIN operations are improvement in intelligence voluntarily given by the population and a decrease in insurgent recruitment. Within days, smiling faces replaced sullen expressions on both patients and their families treated at the 912th MASH in Iraq—just as they had done after a six-month anticommunist campaign in Malaya and Vietnam in 1966. If we think past the limitations of doctrine, imagining a COIN role for field hospitals is obvious. In COIN operations they are force multipliers, non-kinetic "weapons systems." They save peoples' lives, which affects not only the families involved, but also the milieu of an insurgency.

## **Soft Power and Economy of Force**

Field hospital support for civilians produces several positive effects in COIN. A modern treatment center will epitomize the "soft power" or persuasive side of U.S. foreign policy. Word of medical successes spreads rapidly throughout a country and is remembered when memories of abuses fade. Police and citizens groups have a vested interest in protecting a medical facility that combines host nation and U.S. military care in which their family and neighbors are being treated. The police themselves might be the next patients. Women are accorded regard that they can never expect from Al-Qaeda and Sharia insurgents. Civilian patients frequently are treated in the same hospital where U.S. soldiers are treated. A higher regard cannot be accorded or communicated.





**U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeants Daniel Wilson, right, and Julie Zygulski wrap a bandage around an Iraqi man's leg during a physical therapy session at the Air Force Theater Hospital at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, 22 July 2008.**

In addition, civilians can see that the hospital's doctors recognize the contributions of medicine from the Golden Age of Islamic civilization and demonstrate respect for the work of physicians from Arab countries. We should capitalize in showing this appreciation and demonstrate that the military can do more for them than drop bombs and kick in doors. For the majority of civilians, especially when sick or injured, medicine transcends ideology.

As insurgents and criminals retreat before a successful clearing phase, fully intending to return when our attention is diverted, they leave open a window of opportunity for activities of the "hold" and "build" phases to win hearts and minds of the population with hospital care and other services. Even the most intractable areas can be won over by the "soft power" of medical care.

As "soft power," medical care is a highly efficient economy-of-force measure. The two components of

the combat support hospital can be supported for approximately \$12 million per unit per year, plus transportation. In contrast, a smart bomb costs \$1.27 million, and each F-22 Raptor aircraft costs \$135 million. If we can afford smart bombs to help win a war, can we not also afford to use field hospitals as a "weapon" to help secure the peace?

Field hospitals in the COIN environment can provide treatment, advice, training, material support, and security for medical providers during a transition period between phases and the assumption of responsibilities by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and by the host nation. Nongovernmental organizations cannot bring with them secu-

urity or evacuation assets. One hears from senior MEDCOM officers that the military fears it will be stuck with the care of civilians. Of course, this must never happen even for a short time under any circumstances. This refrain reveals more doctrinal rigidity than truth. With a modicum of financial encouragement from the U.S. Agency for International Development, and spearheaded by the Army Medical Corps, NGO participation could and should take root and blossom during the "build" phase of COIN and irregular warfare operations.

## Obstacles

The major problems with deployment of hospitals for civilian support are not security or recruitment. Regional host nation/U.S. hospitals, complete with secure housing for providers and families, have been in the planning stage for over two years, but none is open as yet. Reluctance on the part of the MEDCOM staff to face the complexity and risk involved in integrating medical assets into LLOs for COIN operations is the main obstacle. They do not want to buck the doctrine.

A significant problem involves the level of authority to decide whom to treat at the CSH. The officers in charge of the emergency medical team, operating room, and admissions office have

***Word of medical successes spreads rapidly throughout a country and is remembered when memories of abuses fade.***

to seek permission through the required channels. Thus when a Marine battalion commander reports that he has an important sheik in his area who is hard of hearing and asks the hospital to help the sheik, he is put off. The hospital answers that it will submit a request through channels rather than arrange forthwith for an audiologist. Time is lost, as are opportunities to undermine the insurgency.

Another obstacle is the interpretation or obstruction of the commander's intent. For instance, the Multinational Force-Iraq commander may direct that medical assistance be provided to the population in the short term—that we conduct medical visits, mentor HN doctors and nurses, and provide medical assistance to civilian facilities. In fact, this happened when I was in Iraq. The surgeon may then specify that up to 10 percent of medical assets be utilized for nation-building activities. The medical brigade commander may then rewrite the mission statement to include site visits as patient loads permit. He then may issue 18 pages of algorithms and eligibility restrictions on who may be treated. This filtering also occurred. For doctors and nurses, this bureaucratic appendix insulted their judgment and humanity. Few can read through such an appendix without feeling that it is antithetical to the job they came to do. The CSH commander may then reinterpret that part of his mission to read something like, “The hospital will support cooperative engagements . . . as directed” (i.e., only if specifically directed). He may then order CSH personnel not go beyond the wire and that indigenous medical personnel will not be trained at the CSH because “It's not our mission.” This layering of bureaucracy also occurred.

Lack of knowledge of the big picture is also a problem. Only rarely does a Reserve Component hospital commander have an understanding of civil affairs or how medical care can contribute to COIN operations. Although their professional credentials, and those of the nurse and doctor providers, meet the highest civilian standards, they do not participate in medical staffing of LLOs in campaign design and planning. Hospital commanders should be oriented to civil affairs, to FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, and to FM 8-42, *Combat Health Support in Stability Operations and Support Operations*. A field hospital that is 80 percent underutilized in the middle of Iraq is obviously missing opportunities

***A field hospital that is 80 percent underutilized in the middle of Iraq is obviously missing opportunities to win hearts and minds.***

to win hearts and minds. However, according to the doctrinaire, it is better that the staff watch movies, run in the gym, read a book, and hold cookouts rather than examine a civilian or help an old sheik with his hearing.

## Exploiting Strength

Al-Qaeda never stops recruiting among the disaffected, but its cannot provide medical care. Opportunities knock for U.S. “soft power” as long as we are in Iraq and Afghanistan and as long as people become ill and get hurt.

Contacts work. Iraqi casualties often receive treatment at U.S. military facilities, and wounded detainees have said things to me like, “I can't believe you Americans are so nice to me.” A dramatic case happened in late 2007. The wife of a sheik suffered an amniotic fluid embolus during childbirth in a local hospital. Her complicating coagulation deficit is usually fatal in the U.S., uniformly so elsewhere. At the CSH, by dint of heroic efforts of the intensive care unit physician and the blood banking system, she survived. She and her child are alive and well at home. Her community is grateful. Such acts have far-ranging ripple effects.

An overarching policy change is needed to authorize hospital providers to expedite medical, not tactical, decisions at the local level. We need to unravel top-down rigidity which frustrates more than it facilitates. The cost of a \$3,000 hearing aid is insignificant compared with that of a smart bomb or a Soldier's leg. Yet its effects can have tremendous and lasting value that could save the bomb and the leg. Doing what can be done in a timely manner wins hearts and minds. Appearing not to do what one could do alienates people. We do both. The relative impact is hard to quantify, except in terms of winning or losing hearts and minds. **MR**

# MR Review Essay

## ***Influencing a Soldier, Lessons Learned***

Steve McGregor

Australian Army officer and anthropologist David Kilcullen describes counterinsurgency as “armed social work.”\* After spending 14 months as an Army officer in Iraq, I wholeheartedly agree. Yet how does a Soldier prepare for this challenge? Military service academies produce engineers—not social scientists. And the U.S. Army Chief of Staff reading list, something of an institutional barometer, is dominated by works such as *We Were Soldiers Once . . .*, *The Face of Battle*, and *Patton*. These books explain the mind of a Western Soldier, not that of an Eastern Muslim. Yet, in my experience, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*, by V.S. Naipaul, prepared me for the social challenges of counterinsurgency in Iraq more than any other book.

*Among the Believers* is a kind of travelogue, recording Naipaul’s mealtime conversations and personal encounters in several predominantly Islamic countries. Although he wrote it immediately after the Iranian revolution in 1979, Naipaul’s book describing his three-year foray through Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia is remarkably prescient and a valuable read for anyone wanting to better understand Islam, politics in Asia, and the challenges facing Iraq today.

I read *Among the Believers*, while I was a platoon leader stationed in Yusufiya, Iraq. My unit operated out of a dilapidated Russian thermal power plant along the Euphrates River, and we conducted daily patrols to talk with Army commanders and influential Iraqis in the area. Most often, our “meeting engagements” with Iraqis took the form of leisurely lunches—meals outside in the shade where local tribesmen would share rice, sheep, cucumbers, unleavened bread, and

oranges with American and Iraqi soldiers. We stood while eating and used our hands to scoop white rice into our mouths and pull mutton off the bone. The host would often tear pieces of the choicest meat with his hands and give them to us to eat. Those afternoons were almost familial and seemed intimate in ways that sometimes felt awkward. After all, we were wearing Army uniforms and there was always the “business” of the war: taking advantage of relationships to inquire about terrorist leaders and weapons caches.

I soon realized that what felt odd about these lunches with Iraqi locals was my tendency to categorize each Iraqi as a “friend” or an “enemy,” a military habit that prevented me from appreciating Iraqi life and the influence of history, architecture, art, clothing, food, religion, and family. I felt convicted by Naipaul, who derived insight from his approach to Iraq. During a conversation, a reclusive ayatollah once asked Naipaul about his religion. “I am still a seeker,” Naipaul replied. Naipaul always tried to understand the character of the people he met—not convert them or argue with them. Therefore, before meeting an Iranian religious judge responsible for thousands of death sentences during Khomeini’s revolution, Naipaul confessed a desire “to enter his mind, to see the world as he saw it.”

Once I asked a local sheik how long he had lived in Yusufiya. When the interpreter finished translating my question to him, the sheik looked confused. “I have always lived here,” he said, explaining that he and his family had lived in the same house for five generations. We were eating lunch on the lawn beside his home. Around the table were his brothers, sons, and cousins. What would be a family reunion for me

was a typical meal at home for the sheik. Understanding the strength of family became essential to my understanding of the Awakening movement, in which thousands of Sunni tribesmen allied themselves with U.S. and Iraqi soldiers. I have often heard the Awakening and the U.S. troop surge discussed in juxtaposition to each other—with the assertion that one or the other contributed the Soldiers who brought security to Iraq. But I came to understand the Awakening as chiefly a social event, one that occurred when the American and Iraqi armies demonstrated their support of Arabic tribal culture.

One example of this is the capture of a local Iraqi wanted in connection with insurgent activity—I’ll call Jasim. In typical Army fashion, a Special Forces team descended into Yusufiya one night and raided Jasim’s house. He was conveniently absent and no one seemed to know his whereabouts. The next day our unit met with the tribe. After apologizing for the disrespect of the raid, the American company commander explained the situation and asked that the tribe hand Jasim over to them. This was presented as a test of the tribe’s power. By the end of the week, the tribe turned Jasim in at the nearest American patrol base. When the Special Forces tried to assert their power over the tribe, the tribe resisted. However, by supporting the sheik and explaining our position, we found our man. The use of pre-existing social networks enabled military success and improved safety.

Naipaul’s *Among the Believers* also drew my attention to history because Naipaul framed his observations with history. He interrupts his experiences in the Muslim areas with descriptions of relevant wars

and political events, such as the 8th century Muslim conquest of Sind (now Pakistan and Southern Afghanistan) and Dutch followed by Japanese rule in Indonesia. Naipaul relates the significance of these events, but he also uses the local understanding of what took place. "History, in the Pakistan school-books I looked at," writes Naipaul, "begins with Arabia and Islam."

As it happened, the history of Yusufiya posed one of our greatest challenges. Generations of centralized authoritarian rule instilled a tradition of government by petition rather than planning. When I asked a ministry of education representative for Yusufiya what his goals were for improving education in the area, he insisted that new schools were needed in Qarghuli—a relatively wealthy area where the U.S. Army had already built two new schools. When I pointed this out, he was unfazed; the Qarghulis were a noisy tribe who frequently pestered the ministry for more assistance, and they must have new schools. Without a strong centralized government handing down orders, the local council in Yusufiya was unable to prioritize its constituents' needs. However, as much as Yusufiya needed security, it also needed representative democracy. Toward this end, my unit facilitated meetings between the government council and local tribes. We also helped the council set goals and draft the first locally prioritized budget in recent history.

*Among the Believers* also deals with the nature and influence of the West. Naipaul writes of sitting on the verandah of an old British hotel in Penang, an island off Malaysia, speaking with two local Muslim converts and asking them if "in an old colonial hotel like this, half desired, half rejected, a village Malay might feel that he had become a stranger in his own country?" They enthusiastically agreed. The West is

somehow everywhere in these societies, and often something to eschew or hold in contempt. One of the Malays, a schoolteacher, shared with Naipaul a paper he authored titled, "The Bankruptcy of the West." It was a treatise against consumption, promiscuity, and temptation.

Such contempt for the West burst forth in Yusufiya when, soon after the occupation, American soldiers raped an Iraqi girl. In retaliation, insurgents kidnapped, tortured, and killed American Soldiers. The kidnappings occurred before my unit arrived in Yusufiya, and the bodies had not been recovered. We spent a great amount of energy searching for the lost Soldiers—though certain of their fate because of videos seen on the cell phones of average Iraqi citizens.

Farmers, schoolteachers, poets, students, and religious disciples are the people that interested Naipaul in his travels in Muslim area. More than ever, ideas of such people about the West are influencing the world. Chicken farmers were members of an insurgency that fought against the American infantry. One of our more significant detainees was captured for having thousands of pounds of munitions buried under a chicken coop. The ideas about America and the West held by impoverished farmers were influencing the stability of Yusufiya, Iraq, and the Middle East.

"The West," observes Naipaul, "or the universal civilization it leads, is emotionally rejected... but at the same time it is needed, for its machines, goods, medicines, warplanes, the remittances from the emigrants, the hospitals that might have a cure for calcium deficiency..." This rejection, which Naipaul decides is not an "absolute rejection," leads one to ask if the source of the trouble is their ideology or our presumptuousness. Naipaul frequently encountered sentiment that the West is an imperial force instead of a liberating

one. People debate this issue now throughout Iraq.

*Among the Believers* examines the nature and the practice of Islam. For some of the people Naipaul met, especially in Pakistan, Islam was "more than personal salvation, more than a body of belief; it had become country, culture, identity, [and] it had to be served, at whatever the cost to the individual or the state itself." Naipaul talked with an Indian journalist in Tehran, who emigrated to be part of "the society of believers." From Naipaul's perspective, this social force, Islam, is at the heart of the Iranian revolution, Pakistan's succession from India.

As a mentor to the local government council in Yusufiya, I helped strengthen the government's social influence as support for the insurgents waned. Often my battalion facilitated meetings between the government and local tribal sheiks. One afternoon, during the first of many visits, the government council leader appealed to the tribes in the language of family, saying, "I am a government official, but today I come as your brother." That meeting, and the lunch that followed, signified the new bond developing between government and tribes. It reminded me of a moment from *Among the Believers* where Naipaul ate with two Iranians, squatting and "eating as it were from the same dish." Naipaul noticed that one Iranian "liked the moment of serving and sharing. It could be said that it was a Muslim moment; it was the kind of sharing Muslims practiced."

In Yusufiya, peace and stability came when the military, the government, and the tribes began to share burdens. Though battle drills and the fundamentals of marksmanship remain important, it's time the Army also began preparing its leaders for such relationships.

\* David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles," *Small Wars Journal*, (*Military Review*, March-April 2006).



# MR Classics Revisited



**THE FORGOTTEN SOLDIER:** Guy Sajer, Brassey's, Washington, DC, 1990, 465 pages, \$15.95.

There has been much debate about Guy Sajer's *The Forgotten Soldier* since it first appeared in 1967. Many historians have cited inconsisten-

cies in equipment and weapons, improper display of patches on uniforms, and an inability to find various names on unit rolls as reasons to dismiss the author's claim that this work is autobiographical. Still, Sajer appears to have supporters as well as detractors. Though this debate has been exhausted if not resolved, there is no need to spend a great deal of time questioning whether the book is autobiography or fiction. Instead, a close examination of the text alone and how it might impact Soldiers of today's Army may be of greater value than continuing the debate regarding the book's appropriate genre.

Books are written for a purpose, and Sajer is blunt in explaining his reason for sharing his experiences: "to reanimate, with all the intensity I can summon, those distant cries from the slaughterhouse." He succeeds in doing just that. Sajer's descriptions often focus on fear, hunger, filth, and isolation. He only rarely makes death noble, and even then the courageous soldier who sacrifices himself defending his native Prussia is killed by being run over by a tank—can one think of a more gruesome, less romantic end? Another fellow soldier, whom he refers to as "the veteran," sacrificed himself because he "had had enough of fighting and retreating" and realized there was nothing left for him after the war. A nation needs wholly committed soldiers, but what happens to these warriors when they realize that what they fought for is gone?

*The Forgotten Soldier* describes war on the Eastern front from 1942-1945 as seen by a young German soldier. Though from Alsace, Guy Sajer was half-German, born of a German mother and French father. He originally joined the service in hopes of flying, but after failing the *Luftwaffe* tests, he was sent to infantry basic training and then initially assigned as a truck driver in a transportation unit. He served in that capacity from the fall of 1942 until the spring of 1943 when he volunteered for duty as an infantryman and joined the *Wehrmacht's* elite *Gross Deutschland* division. After initial training with the division, whose camp entrance sign bore the words "We are Born to Die," Sajer served with the *Gross Deutschland* through several major engagements until he was captured in 1945. The book's value lies in its descriptions of the challenges Sajer and his fellow soldiers faced as the Eastern Front crumbled and the division fought both conventional forces as well as partisans in its retrograde.

The author is an inconsistent and sometimes awkward narrator, often stating that he can remember nothing about certain time periods. At other times, he offers exceptionally vivid descriptions of events. This inconsistency makes a great deal of sense because a young soldier, in intense combat though still in his teens, would not have seen the entire battlefield. His world would be himself, his squad, and at most his company. Perhaps the most heavy-handed moments come when the author forewarns of the death of comrades—rarely does the death of any unit member come as a surprise. This approach does not contribute to suspense, which is one of the few weaknesses of the text (assuming Sajer intended to use such a literary device).

An autobiography is often an exercise in rationalization as the

author explains why he was right and the rest of the world was wrong. To his credit, Sajer is candid in assessing his shortcomings and in doing so gains great credibility. He admits failure in his first test as a leader. After being promoted to *obergefreiter* (roughly equivalent to corporal), he led his anti-tank squad in a defense against a Russian attack. Almost overrun and believing he was about to be captured by Russians, Sajer ordered one of his soldiers to kill him. The soldier refused. As Sajer assessed the situation, he froze in front of his squad, unable to make a decision and, in his own words, "incapable of leading." Clearly his is not a story of self-aggrandizement. He questions his competence and courage throughout the book, revealing a sense of personal uncertainty that captures the reflections of a soldier at war.

Sajer effectively depicts the growing sense of defeat in an army. Initially the expectation was that the German Army would roll to victory. When that became unachievable, the goal shifted to retaining territory. From there, each established defense became essentially a no-penetration line with an ultimate goal that "no Bolshevik will ever tread on German soil." In the end, the Bolsheviks most definitely reached Germany as did all the other allies in theatre, culminating in Sajer's capture by the British in 1945. The author's treatment of the psychology of defeat is instructive even for those who cannot imagine the possibility of losing in battle. The *Gross Deutschland* is encircled and conducts a breakout, is penetrated and launches counterattacks, and is threatened and executes spoiling attacks. In short, this book addresses major combat operations between large units, a type of warfare many would like to view as anachronistic.

Of significant interest is Sajer's description of the partisan effort

against the retreating German Army. Imagine the German plight, retreating from the Russian Army while being picked apart along the way by partisans who were, in Sajer's words, terrorists. The fight was bloody and characterized by atrocities, evisceration and emasculation only two partisan methods of many cited. The partisans employed raids and ambushes, and even killed the

unit's revered company commander. In fact, the partisan threat was so significant that one-fourth of Sajer's unit was on guard duty at all times. Such constant pressure would surely drain an army, and many methods employed to reduce the partisan threat proved ineffective. One can learn much from Sajer's narrative.

Sajer explains why men join elite units as well as what makes those

units fight as one when there seems to be no reason to continue. In the end, his memoir is just that, an account of his personal experiences. That it is not a thoroughly researched history makes it no less significant. This book will remain relevant because it explores the psychology of the soldier at war.

**LTC James Varner, USA, Retired, Platte City, Missouri**

## **MR** Book Reviews



**SOLDIER'S HEART: Reading Literature Through Peace and War at West Point,** Elizabeth Samet, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2007, 259 pages, \$15.00.

When I was a cadet at West Point over 30 years ago, there was much

ado about the *scholar-warrior*. By the time I finished my tours teaching in the English Department, the *scholar* part dropped off and the phrase was shortened simply to *warrior*. Elizabeth Samet demonstrates why when she recounts the story of Colonel David Hackworth, whose contempt for “perfumed princes” (i.e., academics) oozed out onto the page whenever he exercised his pen. Hackworth unwittingly (irony is the soul of wit) was ripping-off Shakespeare when “steeling his soldiers’ hearts.” In contrast, Samet—unafraid of the virtues of learning—gives the Bard due credit for inspiring her title.

Instead of being *literary*, the American military is far too *literal*, missing the subtleties, nuances, and ambiguities of language—and the mind—that would enable us to more meaningfully and creatively relate to each other and the world. Samet’s book is a story of one civilian professor’s experience at West Point, teaching in the one department that attempts fundamentally to make cadets aware of their language,

and, by doing so, help them to better interpret their own experiences. Her book importantly demonstrates how sorely we need an officer corps with a greater literary consciousness.

One wonders how much more enlightened our war-making practices could have been if only West Point had forged a philosophical, literary culture for our military institution rather than an engineering culture. Philosophical thought processes facilitate reflection, not just problem-solving. I still remember a former department head’s entreaty to consider our experience in Vietnam as one in which we had solved all the technical problems through our vaunted engineering processes, yet we had failed overall there because none of the human challenges faced then, as now, can be engineered.

The military institution at large constantly talks of critical thought and creativity, but it is bereft of any literary or poetic or philosophical imagination that would enable true critical and creative thought. Aristotle says in his *Poetics* that poetry is more important than history. And his ancient view may be even more relevant today, as understanding a peoples’ literature, poetry, and mythology may go further to explain why they act than the histories that pretend at objectivity and the sciences that reduce human action into behavioral constants and formulas.

Throughout the book, Samet relates her personal experiences at West Point to literary analogs. She

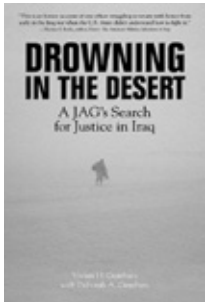
presents an array of insights about the formation of moral ideas, especially the influence impressed on young people through the world’s most popular *literary* works, taken by many millions to be sacred texts. But how does one, for example, reconcile an admiration for Grant through reading his memoirs with the questionable moral worthiness of Grant’s legacy? Samet fails to address such questions, the answers to which would have been the valuable link to military reflection.

*Soldier’s Heart* is a great book to read if one is looking for a reading list of important literary books. At times, it felt like an extended bibliographic essay, wandering through a labyrinth of ideas, encountering several authors and their works before turning every page. This labyrinthine quality may partially explain why the book does not have an index; it would have been too much. It reveals much about the author as a person, and makes one want to sit in on her classes. It gives one an appreciation for the value of having civilian professors who have first-rate academic minds teaching at the academy.

Samet’s been dealt a stronger hand than she plays, folding too often with the humility card, admiring perhaps too much the bluff of those in power while lamenting too often her lack of military experience cards. She perhaps undervalues her outside perspective. Admirably, she admits of getting too closely cloistered within a military community

that exists as a virtual reality, so it was refreshing to read about her moving to New York City, where she no doubt regains her independent perspective—which is her greatest asset as a teacher who is valued by her students. Her book would be the perfect addition to the CSA's reading list to re-introduce the warrior to the scholar.

**LTC Tim Challans, USA, Retired, Washington, D.C.**



**DROWNING IN THE DESERT: A JAG's Search for Justice in Iraq**, Vivian H. Gembarra with Deborah A. Gembara, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008, 320 pages, \$26.95.

Those interested in the life of an army lawyer in combat will enjoy this personal narrative. Cap-

tain Vivian Gembarra goes to Iraq as the attorney for the 3d Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division in 2003. Her tale reveals a decent Soldier carrying considerable intellectual and human burdens. Gembarra's main difficulty lay in trying to get gung-ho infantry commanders to pay due attention to both the rules of war and of civility.

The book centers around a drowning incident presented by 1-8 Infantry Battalion commanded by the princely Nathan Sassaman. Sassaman's Soldiers pushed two Iraqi citizens off of a bridge and killed at least one other civilian in the adolescent style nurtured by Sassaman himself. The search for justice invoked by the title is unrealized when a particular military tendency to close ranks holds sway over the more important but difficult notion of abstract justice.

The case sits at the nexus of important issues—the laws of war, battle tension, the death of a beloved comrade, fighting spirit, respect for civilians, and a general's exercise of military command. Gembarra sets out the main threads in a sensitive and compelling fashion that, perhaps, tends too much toward John Grisham and not enough toward,

say, John Marshall. While the book does get to big points about justice, it will seem to some that these points don't emerge until midway through the book, thus missing the chance for a more substantial discussion.

This intimate and at times charming personal story pursues justice in the style of a legal thriller, which will engage many readers. But the book implies a greater aim that will leave other readers, this one for example, frustrated.

The chief military officer is then-Major General Raymond Odierno. Gembarra sets out what is at least a circumstantial case for the general's poor judgment owing perhaps, to his too-great affection for the person Nate Sassaman as well as his too-great sympathy for infantry Soldiers who lost their bearings. The punishments he oversaw, and the punishments he did not pursue, leave room to wonder about his commitment to the rules of land warfare and about his respect for human rights.

I came to respect Gembarra, and it is easy to understand why an author might choose to set out the facts leaving readers to draw their own conclusions, but a book with the words "Search for Justice" in its title might have pushed harder.

**LTC Al Bishop, USA, Retired, Arnold, Nebraska**

**WIRED FOR WAR: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century**, P.W. Singer, Penguin, NY, 2009, 499 pages, \$29.95.

"In the blink of an eye," observes P.W. Singer, "things that were just fodder for science fiction are creeping, crawling, flying, swimming, and shooting on today's battlefields."

In *Wired for War*, that blinking eye belongs to Singer himself, a prominent military analyst and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute. Singer's previous two books, on the rise of military contractors and the proliferation of child warriors, anticipated and illuminated emerging issues within military culture, just as military and political leaders were beginning to

take notice. Singer's latest work repeats that feat, but his new topic, robotic weaponry, poses far greater challenges—and threats—to our national security.

That warning may sound more like science fiction than sober analysis, but in the world of military technology, life seems to be imitating art. From *Star Trek's* "communicators" to the robotic spiders in *Minority Report*, Singer illustrates that what we can imagine, we can invent. Indeed, Singer's constant references to popular culture serve to demonstrate the power of imagination while illustrating various technical and ethical dilemmas that will confront policy makers in the near future.

For example, how will armed robots change military culture? Singer explains how scientists, after nearly a century of toying with the idea, have now turned the concept of unmanned weapons systems into reality. From tracked vehicles bristling with machine guns to airborne drones launching Hellfires from 30,000 feet, the American military is steadily expanding its ability to kill our enemies by remote control. Will unmanned weapons create a bloodless battlefield in the future, or will such long-distance warfare simply dehumanize both the victims and those pulling the trigger (or clicking the mouse)?

Not every change involves lethal weapons. New surveillance systems, for example, can see through walls and eavesdrop on calls, but the systems designed to hunt terrorists can also track the movements, record the phone calls, and monitor the web surfing habits of American citizens. Who will draw the line between national security and personal privacy? According to Singer, it won't be the scientists, many of whom seem far more concerned with reliability and performance than with the ethical implications of their work.

These are among the many challenges Singer examines. More preview than polemic, *Wired for War* offers a peripatetic, 360-degree examination of the current and

future state of robotic weaponry, while citing the viewpoint of philosophers, scientists, theorists, bloggers, terrorists, journalists, and generals. Detailed endnotes provide useful additional information.

One of the most ominous trends discussed in the book is the steady progress toward machines and weapons systems with “artificial intelligence,” the ability to think and learn for themselves. The prospect of such “self-aware” robots seizing control plays a central role in science fiction, and some of Singer’s experts take the threat very seriously.

Singer acknowledges the inherent glitches in Microsoft software and the probability that scientists will always incorporate safeguards, but otherwise offers little comfort. In a sub-chapter titled “When Should We Salute Our Robot Masters?” the author concludes that “we’re embedded in a matrix of technology that increasingly shapes how we live, work, communicate, and now fight. We are dependent on technology that most of us do not even understand. Why would machines ever need to plot a takeover when we already can’t do anything without them?”

The scariest challenge may be Singer’s forecast for the seemingly inevitable proliferation of robotic weapons among America’s enemies, while the Pentagon continues to buy expensive, manned systems, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, designed to win 20th-century wars. Even though America has led the way in developing military robots, Singer notes that creators of revolutionary weapons rarely enjoy any long-term advantage. Rivals have traditionally been quick to develop effective countermeasures, or they borrow, steal, or simply rent the new technology.

In an effort to raise public awareness, for example, three well-intentioned undergrads at Swarthmore College recently tried to hire an unarmed drone to film war crimes being committed in Darfur. Singer reports they found a willing contractor, but the price tag proved too rich for the students’ resources. Other non-governmental agencies may have deeper pockets—and

more dubious intentions. Since the modern, global economy now makes technology more transferable than ever, there is little doubt whether America’s rivals will develop their own unmanned weapons systems. Rather, there is only the question of when.

While proliferation may be inevitable, American policy makers need not stand by and wait for the worst. In the book’s most important chapter, the author traces the history of Just War theory and international agreements on the conduct of war. Citing precedents such as the banning of dum-dum bullets, Singer eloquently argues for new laws that will restrict the future development and employment of unmanned systems. Independent military analysis plays the important role in American society of providing voters and policy makers with critical assessments that frequently challenge the official party line. In the past decade, however, the field has become overcrowded, with too many retired generals simply regurgitating official talking points on cable news networks. Amidst this fog of war, P.W. Singer’s omnivorous curiosity offers an occasionally chilling breath of fresh air.

**LTC William C. Latham,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**INFORMATION STRATEGY  
AND WARFARE: A Guide to  
Theory and Practice**, edited by  
John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer,  
Routledge, New York, 2007, 248  
pages, \$150.00.

John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer have assembled a collection of essays on the frequently misunderstood relationship between the management, planning, content, utilization, and dissemination of information, the basic components of information operations (IO), and military strategy. The work’s thesis is that technology and interconnectedness brought about by the arrival of the Information Age and Globalization enabled the development of IO and the information domain.

The rise of a new domain and tools by which national objectives can be achieved requires a unique and distinct strategy—information strategy. Information strategy represents a new measure of power and is an equal, not subordinate, partner with military strategy.

Arquilla’s intellectually strong and insightful introduction sets the tone for the rest of the book and sets up the three themes the volume explores. The first theme makes the case for information strategy based upon the irregular nature of modern conflicts. The second theme discusses the organizational implications of information strategy for U.S. institutions, particularly the Department of State. The third theme examines several of the tools in the IO toolkit, such as psychological operations, deception, and cyber operations. A strong conclusion by Borer caps off the work with an honest look at the difficulties of developing and operationalizing an information strategy.

I will not say the book is a classic that will be referred to for all time, but it is an academically solid work relevant to modern conflict. The conceptual groundwork for information strategy is not new. A careful reader can detect the intellectual strains of Thomas C. Schelling, Robert Jervis, Yaacov Vertzberger, and Stephen J. Cimbala. What this work does is make the work of past political theorists relevant to the modern military commander, strategist, and foreign policy planner by placing it within the context of the challenges they face on a daily basis. This is no small task.

This book is not for the casual reader. However, it most certainly deserves a place in military libraries and should be required reading for IO practitioners, senior staff officers, and policy makers responsible for putting troops in harm’s way.

**James E. Shircliffe Jr.,  
Waldorf, MD**

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**BAD STRATEGIES: How Major  
Powers Fail in Counterinsur-  
gency**, James S. Corum, Zenith



Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008, 304 pages, \$28.00.

James S. Corum's *Bad Strategies* is a well-written, coherent argument that adaptive, flexible military organizations are necessary but insufficient to win against insurgents. Corum argues that the key to winning against insurgents is to have the right strategy in place. He further argues that democracies tend not be particularly effective in developing effective counterinsurgency strategies and in persevering to execute the strategies, at least in the case of insurgencies.

His conclusions are both cautionary and a prescription for actions democratic governments might take to preclude developing bad strategies and avoiding defeat. Perhaps the most useful of these is to avoid insurgency where possible by effective long-term strategic thinking in the first place and by seeking political accommodation when it appears that an insurgency will develop. Corum raises more questions than he answers in his conclusion, but this book is a worthy effort that contemporary officers and policy makers should read.

Corum considers four cases in developing his thesis—France in Algeria, Britain in Cyprus, and the United States in Vietnam and Iraq. Given the current American infatuation with David Galula, Corum's chapter on France is, in some ways, the most interesting. He asserts that France, including its political elite at the time, viewed losing Algeria as emotionally intolerable because Algeria was technically part of metropolitan France. That, along with the loss of Indochina, made the potential for losing Algeria unbearable. Thus, emotion, not cold-blooded strategic thinking, drove France's policy in Algeria.

French policy makers, the Algerian French, the *pied noirs*, the French Army, and the French Colonial Army found themselves at odds with international public opinion and their American allies in particular in the first two decades after VE Day. France's policy makers were unable to think long-term about the

essential conundrum of Algeria—that indigenous Algerians dominated a large European minority. Ultimately, the *pied noirs*, more than the Algerian insurgents, precluded a reasonable political accommodation. Corum also argues that the French Colonial Army fighting in Algeria adapted rapidly and well to the challenge confronting it. Nonetheless, the French Colonial Army failed in the end, because the strategy of maintaining the status quo ante could not hold. It took quintessential French Nationalist Charles De Gaulle to release the Algerians from their colonial bondage.

In other cases such as Cyprus, Vietnam, and Iraq, the Great Powers, like the French before them, suffered from false analogies, short-term views, flawed objectives, and a lack of perseverance that made military innovation irrelevant. In short, in the absence of carefully considered political and strategic objectives, Armies cannot win, however well they are organized. The moral for the U.S. Army, simply stated, is that neither FM 3-24 nor a brigade-based Army tailored for counterinsurgency will overcome flawed strategy.

**COL Gregory Fontenot,  
USA, Retired,  
Lansing, Kansas**

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**THE FOREVER WAR**, Dexter Filkins, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2008, 373 pages, \$25.00.

While the topic of this remarkable book is war, specifically the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the *leitmotif*—the thematic link that runs through it—is running. Over a period of years, *New York Times* correspondent Dexter Filkins made a regular practice of running at dusk through the streets of Baghdad. Even as the violence increased, Filkins found ways to run several miles through the streets, past razor-wire and past amused Iraqis, all while observing the changes endured by that tortured city and its inhabitants. The author ignored the hazards that went with his routine, proving himself something of an adrenaline junkie, the kind of

man who seeks danger rather than avoiding it.

Filkins is a journalist with both an urge and a knack for being in places where mayhem and tragedy abound. An angry crowd of Tikritis chase him at the burial of Saddam's sons, Uday and Qusay. He accompanies a Marine company as it is decimated in the fighting for Fallujah. He interviews an American-hating insurgent leader in a shadowy room in Baghdad. At times, the book seems like a succession of narrow escapes and near misses.

It is not a book of tightly argued analysis. As an award-winning reporter, Filkins uses vignettes that serve as snapshot views of the war. Some are as well crafted as a fine short story. Some are very sad, like his description of the death of a Marine ambushed while escorting Filkins into a minaret in Fallujah. Some accounts read like *Catch-22*, such as the story an army captain tells him of using a female soldier—an attractive blonde—as the prize at an auction. While part of the U.S. unit pretended to accept bids for her from agitated Iraqi males, the rest of the unit used the distraction to execute a house-to-house search behind the backs of the inhabitants. The topics of the various vignettes are diverse, but Filkins emphasizes how inscrutable Americans have found Iraq and its people to be.

In the flyleaf picture in the back of the book, Filkins looks both jaded and exhausted. Indeed, Filkins admits his time in Iraq led him to an emotional numbness. Describing a now burned-over park built by Americans, he writes, "Everything was like that in Iraq: anything anyone ever tried burned to black." The author's powerful writing will enable readers to understand some of his feelings. Perhaps those who have been to Iraq and Afghanistan will understand too much.

**LTC Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**ACHIEVING VICTORY IN  
IRAQ: Countering an Insurgency,**

Dominic J. Caraccilo and Andrea L. Thompson, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2008, 240 pages, \$24.95.

Two Army combat veterans of the Iraq War, Colonel Dominic J. Caraccilo and Lieutenant Colonel Andrea L. Thompson, wrote *Achieving Victory in Iraq: Countering an Insurgency*. Armed with real-life experiences as staff officers assigned to the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq, Caraccilo and Thompson provide a doctrinally sound and thorough analysis of the current situation in Iraq. Detailing the complexity of counterinsurgency operations, they lay the groundwork for victory for Iraqi forces. Their work is well researched, compelling, and timely.

The authors consider inadequate civil policing to be the “greatest error in judgment” of the war: “The lack of a capable manned, trained, and equipped police force is clearly a major issue in Iraq, and it is perhaps the single most important problem that must be solved today.” They make a strong case for Iraqi forces standing their ground against an insurgency. Advocating the use of Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, Caraccilo and Thompson meticulously detail doctrine, providing a thorough analysis of its early origins: “We concur with so many others in believing that if there is a Clausewitz of counterinsurgency, Galula is it.” They recommend “bottom line” solutions in keeping with the concepts of FM 3-24 and the current *Multi-National Forces Iraq Commanders Guidance*. The authors applaud U.S. post-surge efforts and confirm the current U.S. strategy for success is to train Iraqi forces to fight and win on their own. Current, fresh, and thought provoking, this book is a must read for military professionals concerned with theory and practice of contemporary counterinsurgency operations. The book is a worthwhile contribution to the ever-expanding literature on irregular warfare.

**LTC Michelle Miller,**  
**USA, Retired,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**SHIELD OF DREAMS: Missile Defense and U.S.-Russian Nuclear Strategy**, Stephen J. Cimbala, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2008, 193 pages, \$24.00.

The phrase “shield of dreams” is sufficient to invite the question, “If we build it, will they come?” Cimbala’s answer is a resounding, “That depends.” For starters, it depends on who *they* are. The bipolar world of the Cold War is rapidly receding in the rear-view mirror, and a new, multipolar world of both state and nonstate actors and of heretofore-unrealized threats has emerged. These actors possess or could obtain nuclear weapons and may be willing to use them in ways that defy the old Cold War calculus. Thus, as one considers the complexities of life in what Cimbala calls the “second nuclear age,” the proposition that a ballistic missile shield could, by itself, make nuclear weapons obsolete seems indeed to be a dream.

What, then, is to be done? In response, Cimbala suggests that ballistic missile defenses can be an important component of a security strategy that continues to include nuclear weapons. Cimbala is not unduly fixated on numbers; he believes that the whole matter is far more nuanced than the numbers alone reveal.

Perhaps the greatest service provided by *Shield of Dreams* is the occasion it affords to reflect upon what it means to shield against a percentage of incoming nuclear missiles. What does it mean to shield against 50 percent, 20 percent, or 10 percent of a nuclear attack? What percentage defines an effective ballistic missile shield? If every incoming nuclear weapon represents the equivalent of the destruction of Hiroshima (in fact, modern nuclear weapons are substantially more destructive than that), how many “Hiroshimas” can a nation experience before a ballistic missile shield becomes a moot point? As Cimbala points out, ballistic missile defense is no panacea; but if nations carefully consider the role that such defenses can play in a much more comprehensive security scheme,

then to that extent, it turns out that such a shield—its sometimes dreamy and elusive qualities notwithstanding—may indeed be an idea whose time has come.

**COL John Mark Mattox,**  
**Kirtland AFB, New Mexico**

**STALKING THE RED BEAR: The True Story of a U.S. Cold War Submarine’s Covert Operations Against the Soviet Union**, Peter Sasgen, Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2009, 297 pages, \$25.95.

Of the many “non-combat” aspects of the Cold War, few were more dangerous than submarine patrols. In addition to the inherent risks of submerged operations, Cold War submariners had to deal with the possibilities of collisions, nuclear reactor malfunctions, and (for the Soviets) liquid rocket fuel accidents. These risks were particularly acute for the U.S. attack submarines sent to prowl the northern waters of the Soviet Union collecting intelligence under the “Holystone” program. The Navy has kept such operations so tightly compartmentalized that only a handful of historical accounts have been published.

To circumvent security restrictions, Peter Sasgen, author of a number of works on World War II submarine warfare, wrote *Stalking the Red Bear* as fiction, presenting the experiences of an actual *Sturgeon*-class submarine captain under the pseudonym of “Roy Hunter” in the imaginary “*USS Blackfin*.” Set in the early 1970s, this account purports to tell the reader both the U.S. and Soviet sides of an intelligence patrol in the Barents Sea, near the bases of the Soviet Northern Fleet.

Before describing the actual mission, Sasgen provides an excellent summary of the U.S. submarine program of that time, including the infamous procedures established by Admiral Hyman Rickover to select and train nuclear submarine officers. The story includes every aspect of preparation from training to family issues to mess hall menus. The author also attempts to describe

the equivalent environment aboard Soviet submarines, where over-aged officers had to motivate and train Soviet draftees in a vain effort to equal American capabilities.

*Stalking the Red Bear* is an evocative portrait of the nuclear submarine world of the mid-Cold War, and as such makes excellent reading. However, the fictional nature of this story, while allowing Sasgen to discuss a host of otherwise classified matters, also makes the book difficult to compare to the few conventional studies of the problem, such as Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew's *Blind Man's Bluff*.

**COL Jonathan M. House,**  
**USAR, Retired,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**ONCE UPON A TIME IN WAR:  
The 99th Division in World War II,** Robert E. Humphrey, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2008, 366 pages, \$24.95.

Robert E. Humphrey has written a well-researched account of young men seeking to fulfill their obligations to their homeland by enlisting into the infantry and becoming members of the 99th Division, which was destined to fight in World War II. Humphrey uses extensive primary sources, which include 350 personal veteran accounts and interviews. He also traveled to the areas in which these accounts originated. The result is a gripping tale of emotions from moments of deep serenity to absolute sheer terror, each portrayed in such vivid detail that it seems the reader is sitting in the next foxhole watching the scenes unfold.

The book has three parts: the transition from civilian to Soldier, the 99th Division's campaign trail, and the transition from Soldier to civilian. The transition from civilian to Soldier was fraught with the frustrations of young boys maturing into men and their exposure to the army organizational caste system. Humphrey, unfortunately, tries to tell too many stories of the civilian-to-military transition, which does overwhelm the reader at times, unintentionally confusing

who's who throughout the rest of the book.

The story develops as the 99th Division begins its trek eastward from Belgium through the Battle of the Bulge over the Rhine River and into Bavaria. The account splits into two different views: that of the conquerors and that of the prisoner of war. The conqueror's view is rife with harrowing details of carnage and tests of morality. The POW point of view, which is the most depressing part of the book, depicts how American Soldiers were cruelly treated by Germans. Initially as the troops arrived home, they received wild fanfare; however, as more troops trickled home these Soldiers received only the acknowledgement of their neighbors and the love of their families.

I recommend this book to any person who strives to understand the impact of wars upon nations, particularly the youth, who transitioned from citizens to Soldiers and back again with extraordinary effect placed upon their lives. It highlights their expectations to be able to revert to a civilian life amidst a society that did not understand or condone combat fatigue/post-traumatic stress disorder, nor was it equipped to handle the Soldiers affected by it.

**Major Joseph E. O'Hanlon III,**  
**USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**BECTON: Autobiography of a Soldier and Public Servant,** Julius W. Becton Jr., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2008, 279 pages, \$29.95.

Lieutenant General Julius Becton's well-written autobiography details his early life, outlines his notably successful military career, and continues with his equally successful service in a variety of challenging civilian government positions.

He reveals his life as a young black American growing up in a middle class Pennsylvania town, the son of hardworking parents. From that background, he entered military service during World War II, attended Officer Candidate School,

served in combat during World War II, the Korean War, and eventually as a battalion commander in South Vietnam, commanding the 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division.

His perspective and level of detail provides readers with a clear window of how the Army treated even the most successful black officers during its years of segregation and not always smooth transition through integration of the U.S. Army. While the integration of the Department of Defense is often held up as glowing example of this social effort, it is clear from his description that it was a challenging period requiring patience among minority officers. Becton describes a large institution that was still feeling the effects of racism through the 1970s and into the 1980s, effects he saw and felt even as a division and corps commander.

Becton went on to successfully command the 1st Cavalry Division, and later, the Army's largest corps, VII Corps, in southern Germany at the height of the Cold War. He was adept in media relations, and when he spoke to members of the media, he meant exactly what he said. Some of his comments, made when leaving corps command, may well have cost him a final promotion, but he didn't retract them.

In retirement, he served as the Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, United States Agency for International Development; Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; president, Prairie View A&M University, and finally, superintendent of Washington, D.C.'s troubled public school system. He never shied away from the tough jobs, and in each job, he provided stellar leadership.

**COL Neal H. Bralley,**  
**USA, Retired,**  
**Lansing, Kansas**

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**BRADLEY,** Alan Axelrod, Palgrave Macmillan, New York and England, 2008, 204 pages, \$21.95.

In the latest addition to Palgrave Macmillan's *Great Generals Series*,

Alan Axelrod examines the career of General of the Army Omar Bradley. The author's aim is to offer "an objective narrative" and "just evaluation" of Bradley's life and enduring significance, from his early childhood in Missouri through his tenure as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The author argues that Bradley's fate, starting at an early age, seemed tied to chance: a decision to apply to West Point after a suggestion from his Sunday school superintendent, orders for duty in Siberia after World War I subsequently revoked by the War Department, and the CEO of Pan American World Airways helping him find a way to transport cargo from Southeast Asia to Brazil. Axelrod demonstrates that chance affected Bradley's life as he progressed from a division to an army group commander during World War II, but so too did the steady hand of General George Marshall, a mentor who assigned Bradley to key positions of responsibility within the Army.

Nearly half of the biography assesses Bradley's decisions and actions during World War II. The reader learns of the general's evolving respect for General Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership and Bradley's simmering dissatisfaction with Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's generalship. Axelrod also devotes considerable attention to General George Patton, about whom he wrote in an earlier edition of the *Great Generals Series*. Bradley, who before the cross-channel attack would have preferred keeping Patton out of the European theater, used the flamboyant general to transform Operation COBRA and thwart Hitler's Ardennes counteroffensive in 1944.

While one learns much about the Bradley-Patton connection, the reader is left wanting more detail about Bradley's post-World War II assignment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and chair of the NATO military committee. Bradley served at the pinnacle of the military hierarchy from the early years of the Cold War through the turbulence

of Korea. While Axelrod highlights this period when assessing Bradley's legacy, he does not offer analysis commensurate to the general's impact on the direction of military policy in this era.

To make his case about Bradley, Axelrod relies on published sources—particularly biography and autobiography. He depends extensively on *A General's Life* by Bradley and Clay Blair. Many details of Bradley's life are taken from this work, published two years after the general's death in 1981. Axelrod states that "no full-length biography" of the general exists, and he makes no claim that *Bradley* fills that void. We still await a comprehensive biography of the general's life.

**Stephen D. Coats, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE OTTOMAN ROAD TO WAR IN 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War,** Mustafa Aksakal, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, 232 pages, \$99.00.

This book has the look and feel of a dissertation that converted for publication as a book—illumination of relatively obscure sources, a scholarly approach to those sources, thoroughly documented references, and attention to detail. Just the same, it is surprisingly readable.

The core question in Aksakal's book addresses why the Ottoman Empire entered the conflict in World War I on the side of the Central Powers and the Central Powers allied themselves with the Ottomans. His primary effort is to place the Ottoman decision for war in context, examining both the internal and external political landscapes facing the Ottomans, in the process largely debunking the widely accepted perception that Ottoman leadership was either incompetent or mesmerized by German influence.

A fundamental question for those not already intimately familiar with the Great War is why the Turks chose to participate in the first place, and why they chose to align them-

selves with the Central Powers. The answer is European encroachment: geographic, military, political, and financial encroachment, primarily by Great Britain, France, and Italy.

Aksakal lays out quite clearly the view of the world from the Ottoman perspective. Aggressive, expansionist European powers bent on imperial goals surrounded the Ottoman Empire. The maps provided by the author make the situation abundantly clear—the European powers, especially the Triple Entente members, had been biting off chunks of the Ottoman Empire for years. If the trend continued, partition of the Empire was the likely outcome.

At the same time, the Russians clearly had designs on Armenia, the Bosphorus Straits, the Dardanelles, and even Istanbul. The humiliation of the First and Second Balkan Wars, in which the Ottomans lost major European territory to Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania—all former territories of the Empire as recently as 1878, made the squeeze even more acute. From the Ottoman perspective, it was time to stand firm or be partitioned into pieces of European empires.

The environment was equally complex internally. The author illuminates the internal friction of the Sublime Porte and the populist ground swell prompted largely by the tales of Muslim refugees pouring in from annexed former territories. This examination is both thorough and thoroughly documented, but would have benefited immensely from some simple visual aids. The maps that show the losses of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century provide excellent aids to situational understanding, but they are the only such illustration in the entire book.

Similar graphic explanations or illustrations of the relationships between ministries of the Sublime Porte would have been helpful, as would diagrams showing both the official relationships between the key personalities (title, office, office hierarchy) and familial relationships if they existed—there were at least nine



Pashas in this story. Photographs of the principals would also help readers who find visual enhancements key aids to understanding.

This is a worthwhile book, but it is not an “easy read.” It does an excellent job of illuminating a relatively dim corner of history. In doing so, the book not only shines light on the events leading up to World War I, it provides superb understanding of context in the Balkan region that assists comprehension of events there in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

**Thomas E. Ward, II, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**NEXUS: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I**, Jonathan Reed Winkler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2008, 346 pages, \$55.00.

In the midnight darkness of 4 August 1914, a British post office barge crept into the English Channel. War was imminent. The Germans had ignored London’s final ultimatum. The barge proceeded to a patch of ocean totally unremarkable in every geographical aspect but one: directly below lay Germany’s communication link to much of the globe. Before daylight broke, grappling hooks slithered into the depths to pull up a length of enemy transoceanic cable, and axe-wielding crewmembers enthusiastically hacked it to bits.

As a historical footnote, this could be the first case in which the current term “hacking” would apply.

Strategic communications has come a long way on a nine-decade-long trail into cyberspace.

The British had a pretty good handle on the breadth of strategic communications by the time the Great War started. When an Allied agent learned that a German team was headed for the coast of Mexico with radio parts, the British spread the rumor that they were carrying diamonds. Local thugs picked up this talk of riches, and the radio team simply disappeared. Sure sounds like PSYOP, which is still a part of strategic communications.

Responding to the need to read a potential enemy’s mail, so to speak, came the successful U.S. intelligence operation nicknamed the “Black Chamber,” which later evolved into the National Security Agency.

With the coming of World War I, U.S. officials—mainly naval officers—realized the strategic necessity of a secure signal net. Whether a neutral nation, as the United States was in 1914, or a belligerent, as it later became, the potential was there for communications isolation. Eavesdropping (by friend or foe!) in matters of military, commercial, or political significance loomed. This period of bureaucratic and technological war for signal independence is the subject matter for author-historian Winkler.

Winkler’s is a formidable (and somewhat expensive) volume that can blend quaintly archaic terms like “gutta-percha”\* with tales of large-scale bureaucratic intrigue. No U.S. central authority capable of consolidating the nation’s interests into a strategic cable and radio policy would surface until 1934, when the former assistant secretary of the Navy, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, established the Federal Communications Commission.

Winkler’s research and clarity of presentation provide an important book for those interested in signal communications, and offer a good historical read for the technologically challenged. The book’s plentiful illustrations prove pleasing and frustrating: rewarding in their abundance (pinpointing Guantanamo as the linchpin of the proposed 1916 West Indies hemispheric radio net) but devilishly hard to follow with confusingly intertwined and ill-defined dotted lines.

In addition, page 347, which should have completed my index, was lost somewhere in 21st century typographical cyberspace. My index listings end with “Western Union,” leading me to thumb endlessly for the numerous references to Yardley, Herbert O. (father of the Black Chamber), or Zimmermann, Arthur, who sent a secret telegram (ultimately read by everybody) that

precipitated American entry into the 1914-1918 war. Gutta-percha, however, was high enough in the alphabet to fill up a largish index entry.

\*A strategically scarce tree sap that insulated the nexus of copper thread making up the vital message wire of underwater cable as early as 1851.

**George Ridge, J.D.,  
Tucson, Arizona**

**LINCOLN AND HIS ADMIRALS**, Craig L. Symonds, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, 430 pages, \$27.95.

Distinguished author and historian Craig Symonds has written a gripping and insightful book about President Abraham Lincoln, his Department of the Navy, and the Union admirals who won the Civil War. While highlighting the Union naval strategy and key personalities of the war, the book is really an intensive examination of Lincoln—his role as commander-in-chief, his decision-making processes, and his exercise of civilian control and management of the military in time of war.

By his own admission, Lincoln knew little of ships, but over four years, he evolved into a wartime commander-in-chief who was able to effectively manage the Navy and coerce and cajole its chiefs into action, either alone or in joint operations with the Army. Despite possessing a coterie of strong-willed naval advisors with divergent opinions, Lincoln often had to make some subtle and difficult decisions alone. Symonds illustrates this with the famous *Trent* affair, which risked war with Great Britain over the controversial seizure of a British ship on the high seas.

Symonds is highly qualified to write this story. As Professor Emeritus at the U.S. Naval Academy, he has written a number of books on sea power, including *Decision at Sea* and *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan*. Symonds is a talented author who keeps the reader engrossed from the first page. I particularly appreciated his ability to show Lincoln’s strong

interest in technology, ranging from ironclads to new weapons. The book is superbly researched with a portfolio of primary and secondary sources. I recommend this book to all officers attending professional military institutions for the insights it offers to the Civil War period at sea and Lincoln as commander-in-chief.  
**Kevin D. Stringer, Ph.D.,**  
**Zurich, Switzerland**

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**SOUTHERN STORM: Sherman's March to the Sea**, Noah Andre Trudeau, Harper/Collins Publishers, New York, 2008, 704 pages, \$35.00.

The picture of Sherman's March to the Sea as an American epic and an episode of total war has governed popular memory and Civil War historiography since 1865. Drawing on numerous primary sources (official records, memoirs, and diaries, Union and Confederate, Soldier and civilian), Trudeau tries to determine exactly what happened on the march. In the course of his research, he found that each day of the five-week march was recounted in at least 50 journals.

Trudeau has illustrated each day's progress with a small map that included weather data. He notes most people assume the march occurred in mild sunny weather, but he shows that mild weather turned to rain and cold, something Sherman had not anticipated. He confirmed that the campaign was well organized, carefully planned, but left room to improvise; reporting the army carried a 20-day supply of bread, a 40-day supply of sugar, coffee, and salt, and three days of animal feed with it as well as a 40-day beef supply on the hoof. These supplies were almost untouched because of the army's foraging.

While Sherman promised to "make Georgia howl" and his army was not gentle, Trudeau's account concerns military prowess and survival, not rampant destruction. Union soldiers burned homes, confiscated crops, and crippled railroads as they marched from Atlanta to Savannah but few Confederate or Union soldiers were killed and north-

east Georgia quickly recovered. The mythology suggests a much grimmer story, but Trudeau writes the march may "forever be best remembered for everything it wasn't."

His day-by-day, mile-by-mile narrative of the march sometimes becomes tedious (one wearies of reading about the availability of sweet potatoes) but the march was dangerous because small groups of foragers risked constant enemy sniping and outraged citizens as Sherman abandoned his supply base and his communication with the outside world. While the cities in the army's path bore the brunt of the army's anger and war industry was destroyed, civilians' homes were usually protected if they did not interfere with the army's passage.

Sherman avoided major confrontations with the Confederate forces by dividing his army into two columns, the Army of the Tennessee (led by General O.O. Howard) and the Army of Georgia (led by General Henry Slocum). This allowed him to threaten the maximum number of targets and thin out Southern defenses. Neither general was noted for imagination and independence, but both were hard-driving, capable commanders who Sherman relied on to execute his plans without question.

The Confederate response was hampered by a divided command structure that gave similar responsibilities to three generals and the governor of Georgia. Each general remained ignorant of the other's plans and actions, defining their own roles without consulting each other; each operated independently according to his own interpretation of his responsibilities. Trudeau blames this divided command structure on Jefferson Davis, but fails to note the fissiparous nature of a nation founded on the doctrine of states' rights. In fact, the various commanders did not have sufficient force to do any more than sting Sherman's army, and civilians did not answer the call for 10,000 volunteers.

Sherman punished the South. His beliefs about war's hellish nature and cruelty are amply demonstrated. His purpose was to rend

the Southern social fabric, make civilians lose faith in their leaders' ability to protect them, thus hastening the end of the war. This process included taking food, destroying war industry, and most importantly, liberating slaves. Trudeau portrays some of their thoughts, fears, and hopes. Often slaves who left their homes to free themselves and follow the army were told to return because the army could not and would not provide for them.

At times, the army pulled up its bridges immediately after crossing rivers, leaving the freed slaves on the opposite bank unable to cross. Nevertheless, many found ways to stay with the army, which employed them as laborers. Trudeau argues that the conservative Sherman wanted to postpone the question of the freed slaves' fate until the war ended, but liberating them destroyed the old social structures. The physical and psychological destruction wrought by the army made restoring the old order impossible.

Finally, Trudeau illustrates that both Union boasting and Confederate memories have exaggerated the amount of damage that actually occurred. He examines the impact of the march on the war. In areas through which the troops passed (a 60-mile wide swath through central Georgia) there was extensive damage: animals killed, foodstuff confiscated, fences cut down to build campfires, all crippling the already rudimentary Confederate logistical system. However, more fences than houses were destroyed. Many antebellum homes in the march's path can be toured today.

The biggest property loss was the slaves, most of whom followed their liberators. The march raised Union morale, disrupted Confederate logistics, and set the stage for the war's final campaigns in the Carolinas and Virginia. Trudeau shows that the march never reached the level of total war, but he also shows that when societies are mobilized, the line between combatants and non-combatants becomes blurred.

**Lewis Bernstein, Ph.D.,**  
**Seoul, Korea**

**Imitation of Horace, Book iii, Ode 29, Line 65**

**Happy the man, and happy he alone,  
he who can call today his own:  
he who, secure within, can say,  
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.**

**Be fair or foul, or rain or shine  
the joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.  
Not Heaven itself, upon the past has power,  
but what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.**

—John Dryden (1631–1700)



A U.S. Soldier provides security during combat operations near Forward Operating Base Herrera, Afghanistan, 18 April 2009. (U.S. Air Force, SSGT Shawn Weismiller)

# Eight Imperatives for Success in Afghanistan

From “Commander’s Initial Guidance,” 13 June 2009



1. **Protect and Partner with the People.** We are fighting for the Afghan people—not against them. Our focus on their welfare will build the trust and support necessary for success.
2. **Conduct a Comprehensive Counterinsurgency Campaign.** Insurgencies fail when root causes disappear. Security is essential, but I believe our ultimate success lies in partnering with the Afghan Government, partner nations, NGOs, and others to build the foundations of good government and economic development.
3. **Understand the Environment.** We must understand in detail the situation, however complex, and be able to explain it to others. Our ability to act effectively demands a real appreciation for the positive and negative impact of everything we do—or fail to do. Understanding is a prerequisite for success.
4. **Ensure Values Underpin our Effort.** We must demonstrate through our words and actions our commitment to fair play, our respect and sensitivity for the cultures and traditions of others, and an understanding that rules of law and humanity do not end when fighting starts. Both our goals and conduct must be admired.
5. **Listen Closely—Speak Clearly.** We must listen to understand—and speak clearly to be understood. Communicating our intentions and accurately reflecting our actions to all audiences is a critical responsibility—and necessity.
6. **Act as One Team.** We are an alliance of nations with different histories, cultures, and national objectives—united in our support for Afghanistan. We must be unified in purpose, forthright in communication, and committed to each other.
7. **Constantly Adapt.** This war is unique, and our ability to respond to even subtle changes in conditions will be decisive. I ask you to challenge conventional wisdom and abandon practices that are ingrained into many military cultures. And I ask you to push me to do the same.
8. **Act with Courage and Resolve.** Hard fighting, difficult decisions, and inevitable losses will mark the days ahead. Each of us, from our most junior personnel to our senior leaders, must display physical, mental, and moral courage. Our partners must trust our commitment; enemies must not question our resolve.

GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, U.S. Army  
Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan

Commander, International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan



# Arithmetic on the Frontier

—Rudyard Kipling



A great and glorious thing it is  
To learn, for seven years or so,  
The Lord knows what of that and this,  
Ere reckoned fit to face the foe—  
The flying bullet down the Pass,  
That whistles clear: “All flesh is grass.”

Three hundred pounds per annum spent  
On making brain and body meeter  
For all the murderous intent  
Comprised in “villanous saltpetre!”  
And after—ask the Yusufzaies  
What comes of all our ‘ologies.

A scrimmage in a Border Station—  
A canter down some dark defile—  
Two thousand pounds of education  
Drops to a ten-rupee jezail—  
The Crammer’s boast, the Squadron’s pride,  
Shot like a rabbit in a ride!

No proposition Euclid wrote,  
No formulae the text-books know,  
Will turn the bullet from your coat,  
Or ward the tulwar’s downward blow  
Strike hard who cares—shoot straight who can—  
The odds are on the cheaper man.

One sword-knot stolen from the camp  
Will pay for all the school expenses  
Of any Kurrum Valley scamp  
Who knows no word of moods and tenses,  
But, being blessed with perfect sight,  
Picks off our messmates left and right.

With home-bred hordes the hillsides teem,  
The troopships bring us one by one,  
At vast expense of time and steam,  
To slay Afridis where they run.  
The “captives of our bow and spear”  
Are cheap, alas! as we are dear.