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# Military Review

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President Barack Obama presents the Medal of Honor to Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta during a ceremony at the White House on 16 November 2010. (U.S. Army Photo by Leroy Council, AMVID).

Military Review



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George W. Casey, Jr.  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

Official:

JOYCE E. MORROW  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Secretary of the Army 098604

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# Controlling the Beast Within

## The Key to Success on 21st-Century Battlefields

Major Douglas A. Pryer, U.S. Army



*Once an army is involved in war, there is a beast in every fighting man which begins tugging at its chains, and a good officer must learn early on how to keep the beast under control, both in his men and himself.*

— General George C. Marshall, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

### A Revolution in Military Affairs?

“**W**HAT DO I want you to do!?” the gravel-voiced brigade commander roared. “I want you to kill them!”

It was 14 November 1997, and the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division (the “Iron Brigade”) was taking part in an “Advanced Warfighter Experiment” at Fort Hood, Texas.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the exercise was to validate the Army’s “Force XXI” concept. Via computer simulation, the division was testing the effectiveness of the latest digital communications gear, reconnaissance aircraft, and combat systems against a Soviet-modeled armored force.

Blips on the brigade command post’s giant flat-screen monitor had just indicated that the massive units of the enemy (the evil “Krasnovians”) were on the move. The Krasnovian 2nd Army Group was attacking the division. Within the brigade’s sector, the brigade S2 had rightly predicted that the first echelon of the enemy’s attack would include two motorized rifle divisions of the enemy’s 1st Combined Arms Army. If the brigade survived to see it, an enemy tank division would follow.

On this, the last day of the exercise, the Iron Brigade’s bald, physically fit, and imposing commander was putting on a show. If “Old Blood and Guts” himself, General George S. Patton, had been there, he would have been impressed.

*Major Douglas A. Pryer is the senior intelligence officer for the 14th Signal Regiment, Wales, United Kingdom. He holds a B.A. from Missouri State University and an MMAS from the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Fort Leavenworth, KS. He is the recipient of CGSC’s 2009 Birrer-Brookes Award and 2009 Arter-Darby Award and won first place in the Douglas MacArthur leadership essay competition. His book, *The Fight for the High Ground: The U.S. Army and Interrogation during Operation Iraqi Freedom I*, is the first to be published by the CGSC Foundation Press.*

ART: *The Huns at The Battle of the Chalons*, Alphonse De Neuville (1836-1885)

As the commander barked orders, staff officers leapt into action, directing Army Apache helicopters and Air Force air-to-ground fighter jets toward preplanned engagement areas. These deep attacks heavily attrited the enemy's first echelon forces. Undeterred, enemy forces kept advancing into friendly artillery range, where unmanned aerial vehicles spotted them, enabling the brigade's artillery battalion to pound their formations with rolling barrages of shells. This finally proved too much for the enemy's forward divisions, which ground to a halt and assumed a hasty defense.

The battle was not over, though. The enemy's still-intact 24th Tank Division passed through the enemy's first echelon divisions and pressed home the attack. Now it was the "close fight," belonging more to the staffs of subordinate battalions than to the brigade staff. The brigade staff could do little more than track the battle and await the outcome. They did not have long to wait. In a few short hours, this enemy tank division was so battered that it, too, "went to ground," unable to sustain further offensive operations.

The brigade's staff officers were jubilant, smiling and slapping each other on the backs. True, a few friendly companies had been overrun and annihilated. But, these officers believed, they had still proven a point. Due to a situational awareness unmatched by any army unit in the annals of history, none of their casualties had been due to fratricide. What is more, thanks to the superior standoff range of their brigade's combat and reconnaissance systems, they had defeated an attacking force whose superior combat power would have achieved certain victory over any other U.S. brigade.

During this exercise, many of these staff officers had heard the term, "Revolution in Military Affairs." They believed they were at the vanguard of such a revolution. Warfare, they thought, had changed forever. The day when the U.S. Army could easily defeat any enemy who dared oppose it would soon be at hand.

Of course, this was pure fantasy.

## Enter: Reality

Six years later, on 3 January 2004, a platoon of the same brigade stopped two locals at a checkpoint in Samarra, Iraq, around 2300 hours, which was curfew time.<sup>3</sup> At the checkpoint, the soldiers

of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, thoroughly searched the vehicle.<sup>4</sup> Satisfied that the men inside, Marwan and Zaydoon Fadhil, were not insurgents, the soldiers told the two cousins that they could leave.<sup>5</sup>

First Lieutenant Jack Saville, their platoon leader, sat in a nearby Bradley Fighting Vehicle.<sup>6</sup> As the two cousins pulled away, he issued an order via the radio for his platoon to stop the truck again.<sup>7</sup> Intent on teaching the curfew violators a lesson, Saville directed his soldiers to go with him to a bridge that ran atop the Tharthar Dam and to throw the two cousins in the Tigris River.<sup>8</sup> He did not intend to hurt them, he later testified, but to frighten them.<sup>9</sup>

What exactly happened when the two Iraqis were thrown in the river was never proven in military court. Marwan would allege to investigators that he had heard soldiers laughing as he fought unsuccessfully to save his 19-year-old cousin from drowning in the strong current.<sup>10</sup> Other family members would also allege that Zaydoon had died, claiming that his dead body was fished out 13 days later from a canal below the dam.<sup>11</sup> However, the soldiers who were there would tell a different story, swearing that—through night-vision goggles— they had seen both Iraqis clamber onto shore safely.<sup>12</sup> Battalion leaders also testified that informants had told them that Zaydoon was still alive.<sup>13</sup> His death, these leaders believed, had been feigned by insurgents in an effort to smear coalition forces.<sup>14</sup>

Whether Zaydoon died or not, Saville exhibited extremely poor judgment. As mere curfew violators, the two Iraqi cousins were unquestionably entitled to Geneva protections.<sup>15</sup> What is more, Saville recklessly put himself and his men at risk of negligent homicide charges. If Zaydoon did not drown, he certainly could have drowned, considering how fast and deep the current sometimes runs at the dam.<sup>16</sup> Surely, detaining these first-time offenders overnight would have been enough to teach them the importance of keeping curfew.

What is also clear is that the ethical judgment of these soldiers' battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Sassaman, was just as skewed. When informed of a pending 3rd Brigade investigation into the incident, Sassaman directed a cover-up, telling his subordinates to inform the investigator of everything "except the water."<sup>17</sup> Sassaman's

decision to lie, and to direct his soldiers to lie, was a stunningly poor choice for any U.S. officer to make. The fact that Sassaman was also a graduate of West Point, an institution with few rivals among commissioning sources for its emphasis on officer integrity, makes it an even more surprising choice. “A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do,” the honor code at West Point famously proclaims.

The incident gained international notoriety.<sup>18</sup> Under media scrutiny, an unflattering picture emerged of the battalion’s tactics. Journalists reported that the unit had stormed homes, kicked-in doors, humiliated male occupants by manhandling them in front of their family, conducted brutal interrogations at the point of capture, indiscriminately detained large groups of male Iraqis, fired excessive counter-battery barrages, and withheld medical treatment from injured insurgents.<sup>19</sup>

This ugly image may have been to some extent exaggerated. Even so, it suggests that the problem of heavy-handed, counterproductive tactics and poor ethical decision making may have run deep in this unit. Thanks to this underlying problem, even if the death of Zaydoon were feigned, the resulting scandal undermined coalition credibility to a degree that must have exceeded any Samarra insurgent’s wildest dreams.

Ultimately, the Iron Brigade learned in Iraq that the achievement of enduring success had little to do with expensive information technology, even less to do with knowing the exact locations of friendly units, and nothing at all to do with the capability to detect large tank formations from the other side of the planet. Instead, to achieve lasting success, it would need to rethink its organization and tactics.

Even more importantly, the Iron Brigade would need to rethink how much emphasis it placed on right conduct.

## Ethics and the Information Age

The Iron Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division has hardly been alone in its struggle to adapt to warfare in the 21st century. The story of this brigade has been very much the story of our Army. Donald Rumsfeld once famously quipped, “You go to war with the Army you have . . . not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time.”<sup>20</sup> Rumsfeld would have been more intellectually honest if he had



DOD, Jim Garamone

**Air Force GEN Richard B. Myers (center) listens to a briefing from Army COL Frederick Rudesheim (right) and Army LTC Nate Sassaman at the headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry in Balad, Iraq, 2004. Behind Myers is 4th Infantry Division commander MG Ray Odierno.**

instead opined that, when choosing a war, you do not always get the war you thought you had chosen or wished to have.

We certainly did not get the wars we expected in Iraq and Afghanistan. In retrospect, what is perhaps most surprising about what Clausewitz would have called the “nature” of each of these wars is that we were caught so off-guard by them. If we had read the tea leaves properly, we would have seen that the Vietnam War rather than the Gulf War would be the real harbinger of things to come.

Today, conventional wisdom has it that in Vietnam our Army never lost a battle, but our country still lost the war. Since battalions and companies did lose engagements in that war, this maxim is an exaggeration.<sup>21</sup> Yet, it is not a great exaggeration. What is more, it comes very close to describing our often-perilous situation in our most recent military conflicts.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, even more so than in Vietnam, force of arms has not defeated the U.S. Army. Often, territory has been ceded, and yes, a few platoon-level skirmishes have been lost. There have also been some close calls in company-level engagements. Nonetheless, neither Iraqi insurgents nor the Taliban have had the option of holding any ground that our Army has chosen to seriously contest. Our overwhelming advantage in combat power has hardly mattered, though. We have still managed to suffer such grievous defeats in these two countries that, as in Vietnam, we have nearly “lost the war”—and still might.



Thanks to the personal computer, Internet, satellite phones, digital cameras, and a host of other high-speed communications devices, a watching world can learn of the misconduct of American soldiers far more quickly, completely, and luridly than it has in the past. Reports of this misconduct inspire enemy fighters, serve as recruitment boons for our enemies, turn local populations against us, degrade support for our foreign conflicts at home, and undermine the relationship between our nation and its allies.

Particularly painful episodes earn so much adverse publicity that they receive the notoriety formerly reserved for the great defeats of major historical campaigns. Instead of setbacks at Kasserine Pass or the Hurtgen Forest, though, the public talks today of place names such as Gitmo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Samarra, Mahmudiyah, or Kunduz.<sup>22</sup>

These defeats did not come at the hands of our enemies. Sadly, we inflicted these defeats upon ourselves, through unethical actions. Thus, for the remainder of this essay, I will not look outside our Army to the battlegrounds of Afghanistan or Iraq to understand what we need to do to achieve battlefield

success. Instead, I will look within our own ranks, to where the far more dangerous enemy hides. Achieving this inner victory should not be hard if we truly make the effort. After all, at our best, we have been an Army rooted in ethical principles.

## Who We Are, at Our Best

The moral defeats we have suffered thus far in the War on Terrorism are painfully ironic, considering our Army's proud history.

No army has ever posed a greater existential threat than that posed by the powerful British Army at our fledgling nation's birth. Nonetheless, during the Revolutionary War, leaders of the Continental Army and Congress were determined not only to win the war, but to do so in a way that was consistent with their moral principles and core belief in human rights.<sup>23</sup> General George Washington set conditions in this regard through personal example and military orders. In one written order, for example, Washington directed that 211 British captives be treated "with humanity" and be given "no reason to Complain of our Copying the brutal example of the British army in their Treatment of our unfortunate brethren."<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the Continental Army



George Washington and other officers of the Continental Army arriving in New York amid a jubilant crowd, 25 November 1783. The Continental Army had not only won the war, they had proven it could be won in a manner commensurate with Enlightenment ideals of liberty and human rights.

practiced an uncommon humanity for the times. During the more than two centuries that have passed since its birth, our Army has conducted most of its campaigns within this tradition of humanity.

However, our Army also contains a less dominant ethical tradition. Within this other tradition, the imagined greater good outweighs the rights of the individual. In particular, this perspective argues that the ends justify the means when these ends are to achieve victory or to save American lives. Often (but not always), racism has had something to do with our adopting this perspective. Contrast, for example, the Continental Army's restraint when fighting the British Army with the Continental Army's treatment of the Iroquois Indian tribe. Or, witness our sometimes savage treatment of Filipinos during the Philippine-American War, of Japanese during World War II, and of southeast Asians during the Vietnam War.

One remarkable Army directive not only captured both of these traditions, but it also reflected their relative order of precedence.

In July 1862, General Henry Halleck was appointed commanding general of Union forces. During that first hot, terrible summer of the Civil War, Halleck felt increasingly frustrated by insurgents. A lawyer by background, he sought clarity as to how the Army should deal with Confederate irregulars. In a letter to a scholar, he vented, "The rebel authorities claim the right to send men, in the garb of peaceful citizens, to waylay and attack our troops, to burn bridges and houses and to destroy property and persons within our lines."<sup>25</sup>

The scholar to whom he wrote was Dr. Francis Lieber, a Prussia-born veteran of Waterloo and professor of political science at Columbia College.<sup>26</sup> Lieber accepted Halleck's challenge to produce a code regulating the Union Army's conduct of the war. In April 1863, after it had been reviewed by a panel of generals, President Abraham Lincoln approved the "Lieber Code." It was finally published as "General Order 100" in May 1863.

Above all else, Lieber hoped his code would guide the Union Army to exercise wise, compassionate restraint on the battlefield.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the Lieber Code contained a long list of rules meant to ensure that Union troops humanely treated both noncombatants and prisoners of war. The Lieber Code forbade certain battlefield tactics outright, such

as torture, the use of poisons, and refusing quarter or merciful treatment to surrendering soldiers.<sup>28</sup>

Decades after the war, this code would become the primary source document for the drafters of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907.<sup>29</sup> Thus today, American soldiers can rightly and proudly assert that their great Army was not only the first Army to codify the Law of War, but also their Army helped shape the final form that this law took via the international treaty.

Yet, beneath the Lieber Code's obvious current of humane principles, there was also a strong ends-justify-the-means undertow. In a number of places, the Lieber Code gave commanders the option of violating a rule in the case of "military necessity." Unarmed citizens, for example, were "to be spared in person, property, and honor," but only inasmuch as the "exigencies of war will admit."<sup>30</sup>

This tension between our dominant and subordinate ethical traditions has never been fully resolved. In early 2002, for example, President George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld enabled harsh interrogation techniques by signing policies, which said that, in cases of "military necessity," Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives did not have to be treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.<sup>31</sup>

Thanks to subsequent torture scandals and other frightful stories of hyper-kinetic U.S. forces, it is no wonder that some outside observers believe that our Army has grown immoral. Such outsiders are wrong. Anyone who has ever deployed downrange with the U.S. Army realizes that the vast majority of soldiers conduct themselves honorably on today's battlegrounds. Still, it is frightening to think how close such observers came to being right.

## A Professional Ethic in Peril

With hindsight, it seems blindingly obvious that our Army's professional ethic was in trouble as we entered the 21st century. Owing in part to our success

***...the Lieber Code contained a long list of rules meant to ensure that Union troops humanely treated both noncombatants and prisoners of war.***



AudeVivere. The photographer and licensor of this photo does not endorse this article.



**Tens of thousands attended an Iraq War protest on 27 January 2007 in Washington, DC. The protest's organizers, United for Peace and Justice, intended to galvanize a newly elected Democratic congress into ending the war. Favorable political conditions in Iraq (most critically "the Sunni Awakening"), supported by a troop surge and more effective counterinsurgent tactics, would prevent a precipitous withdrawal.**

in the Gulf War, we thought we could ignore the human and moral dimension of war, relying instead on high-tech weapons and intelligence systems.<sup>32</sup> Our experiences in Lebanon, Mogadishu, and the Balkans encouraged a "force protection at any cost" mind-set in some leaders, who later advocated "taking the gloves off" in interrogations to save the lives of American troops.<sup>33</sup> Also, effects-based operational planning got us into the habit of evaluating proposed actions on the basis of predicted effects alone, instead of immediately rejecting some actions on principle.<sup>34</sup>

The damage to our Army's professional ethic runs deep. Officers and soldiers still argue about whether torture is right in some circumstances, and the misdeeds of former Army leaders like Lieutenant Colonel Sassaman, Lieutenant Colonel Allen West, and Chief Warrant Officer Lewis Welshofer have many apologists.<sup>35</sup>

Indicative of the depth of the problem, a Department of Defense mental health survey of soldiers and Marines in Iraq in the fall of 2006 released the following findings:

Only 47 percent of soldiers and 38 percent of Marines agreed that noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect. More than one-third of all soldiers and Marines reported that torture should be allowed to save the life of a fellow soldier or Marine, and less than half of the soldiers or Marines said they would report a team member for unethical behavior. Also, 10 percent of the soldiers and Marines reported mistreating noncombatants or damaging property when it was not necessary.<sup>36</sup>

General David Petraeus, the commander of our armed forces in Iraq at the time, was rightly alarmed by this survey's results. In response,

he wrote an open letter to the members of his command. U.S. forces, Petraeus wrote in this letter, would fail in their mission if they could not show Iraqis that they, rather than their enemies, occupied “the moral high ground.”<sup>37</sup>

While we have recently taken steps as an Army to heal our professional ethic, this healing process has been a painfully slow one. One step has been to substantially revise our doctrine, which today is far more robust, consistent, and unambiguous with regard to battlefield conduct than it was just five years ago.

Another important step has been to improve ethics instruction at basic training: all trainees now carry a card called “Soldier Rules” (an abridged version of the Law of War), and each trainee receives 35 to 45 hours of values-based training.<sup>38</sup> Also, promisingly, in May 2008 the Army established the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic for the purpose of studying, defining, and promulgating our professional ethic.<sup>39</sup> Just as promisingly, our Army is calling 2011, “The Year of the Profession of Arms” (with a clear mandate to develop the professional ethic), a strong indicator that Army leadership intends for us to do better in this area.

And we need to do better. One area in which we need to do better is officership, as evidenced by events at such places as Gitmo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, and Samarra.

The still deeper problem, however, lies in subcultures hidden within our operational Army. In *A Tactical Ethic: Moral Conduct in the Insurgent Battlespace*, former Navy SEAL officer Dick Couch presents the compelling argument that new recruits today leave their initial military training with a thorough understanding of U.S. military values, but when they are assigned to operational units, they may enter a small-unit culture that is not what higher commands want this culture to be. A potentially dangerous subculture, Couch argues, is usually due to one or two key influencers (moral insurgents) who convert or gain silent acquiescence from other members of the unit.<sup>40</sup> Since young soldiers want to fit in with their small units, they usually conform.<sup>41</sup>

Couch is correct. Abu Ghraib, the most extreme example of a small unit run by ethical insurgents, is hardly the only example. Indeed, it is no

overstatement to say that all of the great moral defeats we have suffered thus far in the War on Terrorism have involved, to varying degrees, harmful subcultures. To avert future defeat, we must first get right conduct right at the small-unit level.

This can only be done at home station.

## The Culture Training Needed Most

In recent years, our Army has placed a growing emphasis on the need for deployed soldiers to understand the local culture. All soldiers now deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan receive culture and language orientation courses, usually taught by teams of experts from Fort Huachuca or the Defense Language Institute. Just as importantly, a five-person “human terrain team” consisting of anthropologists and social scientists now supports the commander of each deployed combat brigade. This emphasis is clearly a good thing. After all, it is not rare for soldiers to operate fully in accordance with law and our Army’s professional expectations and yet undermine America’s popular support abroad via unintentional violations of religious, ethnic, or local customs.

Culture training will remain relevant to our success in the information age, but it should also involve home-station training that builds ethical cultures within operational units, especially within small units. Here are a few proposals:

- Army Values, Law of War, and rules of engagement training need to be *command business*. The impact this training has is of a completely different order of magnitude when a commander or other senior unit operator gives it rather than a lawyer. Lawyers should help develop this training, and they may even deliver a portion of it. However, at the large-unit level, a commander,

***“...having a battalion commander talk to every soldier about coming home with their honor intact worked.”***

executive officer, or operations officer should be required to lead this training. As Major Tony Suzzi, the executive officer for a cavalry squadron in the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said: “I guess I’m a simple guy, but from my combat experience, having a battalion commander talk to every soldier about coming home with their honor intact worked.”<sup>42</sup>

- Our operational Army should place its greatest emphasis on ethics training at the small-unit level. Commanders or other senior combat operators should lead initial ethics discussions, which then set the tone for longer, breakaway discussions within small units. Platoon, squad, or team leaders should lead their small units in these breakaway discussions.

- Large- and small-unit discussions should be scenario-based, with the bulk of time spent in Socratic discussions rather than passively watching PowerPoint slideshows. Furthermore, moral restraint needs to be incorporated in all battle drills, such as tank tables, urban close-quarters combat lanes, and practice interrogations. “Once my interrogators saw with their own eyes the advantages of appreciating the positive aspects of Muslim culture,” said Matthew Alexander, the noted author and interrogator who led U.S. forces to Zarqawi, “they converted [from using harsh tactics] quickly.”<sup>43</sup>

- Lawyers should be a staff component of, not the staff proponent for, ethics. First, what is technically legal is not necessarily what is right. “Moral decisions are simply too important to be left up to lawyers,” the notable historian, Michael Ignatieff, once sagely observed.<sup>44</sup> Most critically, since lawyers are not combat operators, they are not the trainers you want to have oversight of battle drills with weapons and role players. Since chaplains do not even carry weapons, they are an even poorer choice for providing such oversight.

- To ensure that ethical theory and practice is effectively integrated in training, we need an overall staff proponent conversant in both. Why not have ethics master gunners appointed within brigades, groups and battalions to ensure this integration, under the proponenty of the operations officer? Additional ethics trainers would also be appointed at the company level. These ethics master gunners and trainers would provide oversight for commanders, to include ensuring that ethical vignettes and decision making are fully integrated into all training events.

- Ethics staff appointments would be filled only by senior unit operators. At the brigade, group, or battalion level, the operations officer, assistant operations officer, or operations sergeant major would be a good choice. At the company level, it should be the executive officer or first sergeant.

- To prepare appointed ethics leaders, they would need to attend a two-to-four-week ethics course, which would need to be developed. This course could be installation-run, or be incorporated into already existing executive officer, operations officer, and first sergeant courses.

- Phase I of this ethics course should be “theory,” and lawyers, academics, mental health professionals, chaplains, and former commanders could teach classes. Phase II of the course should be application. The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic has already developed a one-week theoretical course for ethics trainers that could serve as the foundation for Phase I, and for Phase II, the experience of a firm like Close Quarters Defense® (CQD®) could be leveraged to develop the curriculum, build facilities, and “train the trainers.”<sup>45</sup>

- Generally, officers receive sufficient ethics training at their commissioning source, whether that source is West Point, a military college, or an ROTC program. However, a newly minted 22-year-old lieutenant may have just as much trouble standing firm in the face of an immoral unit subculture as a 22-year-old recruit, even if this lieutenant is the unit’s designated leader.<sup>46</sup> To foster good officership, we must focus more on training for officers to sustain their ethical understanding and commitment after commissioning. Ensuring that senior leaders lead ethics training at home station will help. The reinforcement of our professional military ethic should also be the backbone of any unit’s Officer Professional Development Program. Additionally, our service schools need to contribute more in this regard. Out of a year spent at Command and General Staff College, for example, field grade officers receive only four hours of ethics-related instruction. This is woefully inadequate, considering the moral nature of our defeats in recent years.<sup>47</sup>

## The Real Revolution

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we have edged painfully close to winning every battle but still “losing the war.” Even today, the outcome of these two



conflicts is very much in doubt. Although Iraq is far more stable than it was two years ago, it might yet unravel into civil war. In Afghanistan, while the hope for an honorable peace has sprung anew with our recent troop surge, that conflict is best described at present as a stalemate.<sup>48</sup>

One crucial reason for our current predicament is the tragic succession of moral defeats we have suffered on these twin battlegrounds. These shameful losses have strengthened the determination of our enemies to achieve victory and undermined the will of the American people at home to achieve the same. Such defeats are especially distressing considering our Army's proud history of sound battlefield conduct.

General George Marshall (a paragon of principled officership, referred to by Winston Churchill as "that noble Roman") spoke of the "beast within" which emerges inside the individual in combat. During World War II, Marshall was more concerned about controlling this beast in order to preserve good order and discipline within the ranks. However, in the information age, when this beast takes control, an insurgent may appear within our ranks who is far more politically dangerous than any insurgent we confront with arms on the battlefield—the moral insurgent.

To defeat this most dangerous insurgent, our Army's operational culture must learn that right conduct on the battlefield now matters more than anything else that we do. Good conduct cannot in itself win the peace, which often depends upon strategic conditions we soldiers do not control. But sound battlefield conduct, when combined with the right objectives and tactics, does marginalize insurgents by depriving them of the popular support that they need to thrive. Thus, as surreal as it sometimes seems to those of us who served in the 1990s, battlefield technology, armored vehicles, gunneries, and weapons ranges contribute less to our mission success today than does the ethical behavior of our troops.

This is not to say that our traditional means of waging war are no longer important. Of course, they are important. Some soldiers still find themselves in situations where, above all else, they are glad that they have good weapons that they know how to use. Sometimes, calculated ferocity is what is required of soldiers. However,



U.S. Army

**George C. Marshall, General of the Army, 1942**

in the 21st century, battlefield conduct does not just matter sometimes; it always matters, and this importance will only continue to grow as information technology improves. In the future, even conventional wars—at least if these wars are to be sustained by mature democracies like the U.S.—will have to be waged from pure practical necessity in accordance with ethical principles, to include the Law of War.<sup>49</sup> In its ability to impose socially acceptable battlefield conduct upon a democracy's military service members, information technology has become the great leveler of all forms of warfare.

Whether preparing for conventional or unconventional wars, we can no longer permit weapons and combat proficiencies to deafen us to what has become most important and, like the proverbial siren's song, wreck us upon the watching world's jagged rocks. We must make sound battlefield conduct our Army's highest educational and training priority.

On a final note, the concept of a "Revolution in Military Affairs" may be the most over-used term in military writing today. However, since I began

this essay with one misuse of the phrase, it is worth referring to once more. After spending billions of dollars to achieve a massive technological superiority over the armies of other nations, would it not be ironic if we realized that, in the 21st century, the most

fundamental component of a revolution in military affairs is our simply remembering that, at our best, we are a principled Army? If this lesson must be the starting point of any meaningful military revolution, it is surely not too late for us to learn it. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Matthew Alexander, "My Written Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing," *The Huffington Post*, 13 May 2009, <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-alexander/my-written-testimony-to-t\\_b\\_203269.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-alexander/my-written-testimony-to-t_b_203269.html)> (28 June 2010). When referring to "controlling" the beast within, Marshall was referring to managing rather than eliminating the ferocity of American soldiers. This, too, is my meaning in this essay: like falcons trained by falconers, the violent passions which arise within professional soldiers in combat must be trained to strike only the right targets. Unlike falcons, though, human beings are trained through more than simple physical conditioning; we must also be educated via appeals to our faculties of reason and emotion.

2. This opening narrative is based on my own experiences as an assistant brigade S2 at this exercise.

3. Dexter Filkins, "The Fall of the Warrior King," *The New York Times*, 23 October 2005, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/magazine/23sassaman.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/magazine/23sassaman.html?_r=1)> (28 June 2010), 1.

4. *Ibid.*, 2.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 12.

10. *Ibid.*, 10.

11. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

12. *Ibid.*, 10-11.

13. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

14. *Ibid.*

15. At the time, there was some confusion as to whether "unlawful combatants," a category coined by the Bush Administration to describe armed insurgents, were entitled to Geneva protections. This was due to policies signed by President Bush and his secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, in early 2002, which denied these protections to members of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in cases of "military necessity." In its landmark 29 June 2006, decision in the case of *Hamdan vs. Rumsfeld*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that unlawful combatants were entitled at least to the protections granted by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. There was never any question in any theater, though, whether criminals were entitled to full Geneva protections.

16. *Ibid.*, 11.

17. *Ibid.*, 1.

18. Indicative of the level of press the Samarra Incident has received, a Tom Cruise movie about the incident is under development.

19. *Ibid.*, 5-8; Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 279-90.

20. William Kristol, *The Defense Secretary We Have*, 15 December 2004, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A132-2004Dec14.html>> (28 June 2010).

21. One such tactical defeat was the near annihilation of the 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, of the 1st Cavalry Division, on 17 November 1965, in the Ia Drang Valley. This battle is vividly described in retired LTG Harold G. Moore's and Joseph L. Galloway's book, *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*.

22. The use of enhanced interrogation techniques is deeply entwined with the Gitmo, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram scandals. The Samarra incident was described above. In the Mahmudiyah killings, on 12 March 2006, five soldiers of the 502d Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, raped a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and murdered her family. The incident is the subject of a recent book, *Black Hearts*, by Jim Frederick. The Kunduz Massacre is the subject of a European documentary film. This massacre involved the deaths of hundreds of Taliban when they were transported in sealed, airless containers by Northern Alliance troops, allegedly under the oversight of a U.S. Army Special Forces team. The U.S. Marine Corps has had its share of moral scandals as well, the most notorious incidents occurring at Haditha, Hamdania, and Shinwar.

23. David Hackett Fisher, *Washington's Crossing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 375.

24. *Ibid.*, 379.

25. David Bosco, "Moral Principle vs. Military Necessity," *American Scholar*, Winter 2008, <<http://www.theamericanscholar.org/moral-principle-vs-military-necessity/>> (28 June 2010).

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. Dr. Francis Lieber, "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field," *Law of War*, 24 April 1863, <[http://www.lawofwar.org/general\\_100.htm](http://www.lawofwar.org/general_100.htm)> (10 June 2010), Articles 16 and 49.

29. Telford Taylor, "Foreword," *The Law of War: A Documentary History*, edited by Leon Friedman (New York: Random House, 1973), 6. According to Taylor, the Lieber Code "remained for half a century the official Army pronouncement on the subject, furnished much of the material for the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and today still commands attention as the germinal document for codification of the laws of land warfare."

30. Lieber, Article 22.

31. President George W. Bush, "Memorandum, Humane Treatment of al Qaeda and Taliban Detainees, February 7, 2002," *George Washington University's The National Security Archives*, <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/02.02.07.pdf>> (28 June 2010), 2; Donald Rumsfeld, Memorandum for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Status of Taliban and Al Qaeda, 19 January 2002, *George Washington University's The National Security Archives*, <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/02.01.19.pdf>> (28 June 2010).

32. Of the intelligence estimates I kept from the 1996 Advanced Warfighter Exercise described above, not one contains a single reference to a civil-military matter. These intelligence estimates discuss only the notional enemy's order of battle, equipment, and likely courses of action for its maneuver forces. Before 2003, I participated in three rotations at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, CA, and two rotations at the Combat Maneuver Training Center at Hohenfels, Germany. All but the last of these rotations were identical in the disregard for the civil-military aspects of warfare (and my last rotation in 2002 was not much better). The cliché that an Army trains for the last war it won, not the next war it will fight, certainly pertains here. The only purely military enemy we have ever fought that was remotely like the one we fought in our training exercises in the 1990s was the Iraqi Army, as we fought this army in the empty deserts of the Gulf War.

33. Dr. Don M. Snider, MAJ John A. Nagl, and MAJ Tony Pfaff, "Army Professionalism, the Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21st Century," U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, December 1999, <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub282.pdf>> (28 June 2010), 2. Since this document was written before the War on Terrorism, it does not draw a direct link between our "force protection at any cost" mentality of the 1990s and our "intelligence at any cost if it saves lives" mentality of the early years of this war. Still, this remarkably prescient document anticipates this connection, stating "that the Army's norms of professional behaviour are being corroded by political guidance on force protection." The paper also called for our Army to return to a professional military ethic rooted in principles.

34. GEN James N. Mattis, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-Based Operations," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 4th Quarter, 2008: 105-108, 107; LTC Tim Challans, "Tipping Sacred Cows: Moral Potential through Operational Art," *Military Review* (September-October 2009): 19-28, 19. In his command guidance to USJFCOM, General Mattis limited the scope of effects-based operational planning, saying, "Any planning construct that mechanistically attempts to provide certainty in an inherently uncertain environment is at odds with the nature of war." Challans makes a direct connection between effects based operational planning and an amoral mindset, saying that, "This approach, by whatever name, has little potential to accommodate important moral concerns that have proven to have strategic ramifications."

35. LTC Allen West was, like Sassaman, a 4th Infantry Division battalion commander during Operation Iraqi Freedom I. In order to extract intelligence, West allowed his soldiers to beat a detainee before firing two shots from his pistol near the detainee's head. CW3 Welshofer, a contemporary of West and Sassaman in Iraq, was the senior interrogator for the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. Welshofer was found guilty of negligent homicide in the case of a detainee who died during an especially brutal application of an enhanced interrogation technique.

36. SGT Sara Wood, "Petraeus urges troops to adhere to ethical standards in recent letter," *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Official Website of United States Forces-Iraq*, 14 May 2007, <[http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11869&Itemid=110](http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=11869&Itemid=110)> (28 June 2010). In the report, mistreating noncombatants was defined as either stealing from a noncombatant, destroying or damaging property when it wasn't necessary, or hitting or kicking a noncombatant.

37. GEN David H. Petraeus, "Appendix I: General David H. Petraeus on Values," in *A Tactical Ethic: Moral Conduct in the Insurgent Battlespace*, by Dick Couch, 113-15 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010): 114, 113.

38. Couch, 46.

39. "About the CAPE," U.S. Army Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (29 July 2010), at <<http://acpme.army.mil/about.html>> (15 August 2010).

40. Couch, 77. Perhaps to avoid confusion in the minds of counterinsurgents, Couch actually calls these immoral individuals "pirates" rather than insurgents, even though their role is much more akin to an insurgent's role.

41. Couch, 54. Exacerbating the problem, Couch points out, is that today's generation of recruits (largely consisting of "Millennials") demonstrate a greater "need to belong" than previous generations.

42. MAJ Tony Suzzi, email to MAJ Doug Pryer, 16 June 2010.

43. Matthew Alexander, email to MAJ Doug Pryer, 23 June 2010. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was a Jordanian militant and the founder of the terrorist group, "al Qaeda in Iraq." Before his death by guided bombs on 7 June 2006, Zarqawi was the most wanted man of coalition forces in Iraq.

44. Couch, xvi.

45. According to MAJ Kevin Cutright, a former philosophy instructor at West Point, the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic conducts a one-week course

at West Point called the "Master Army Profession and Ethic Trainer Course." A third of the students, he says, have been chaplains, with the remainder being staff officers, senior noncommissioned officers, and drill sergeants. Regarding the proposed Phase II training, teams from Special Operations Command and various civilian agencies have been cycling through the training facility belonging to Close Quarters Defense®, a civilian company, for two decades now. What marks the Close Quarters Defense® (CQD®) program as unique is its integration of Internal Warrior™ Training, ethical precepts, with close-quarter combat techniques. A soldier fights better, the program teaches, if he is not just fighting for his fellow soldiers but also for his family and nation. The program also teaches that true soldiers exhibit such qualities as respect, compassion, and courageous restraint. A course run by this company incorporates unarmed and armed training, progressing from individual to team. Each course is specialized for the group's mission. The company's "Hooded Box Drill™" is one particularly effective technique the company employs for reinforcing the right responses in soldiers to various scenarios. In this drill, the trainee is placed within a hooded box, and when the box is lifted, he must react quickly to a "lethal" or "non-lethal" situation.

46. MAJ Douglas A. Pryer, *The Fight for the High Ground: The U.S. Army and Interrogation During Operation Iraqi Freedom*, May 2003-April 2004 (Fort Leavenworth:

CGSC Foundation Press, 2009), 88. Cited here is the story of a platoon leader of Task Force 1-36 Infantry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, Task Force 1st Armored Division. In the early summer of 2003, this weak platoon leader stood by as his platoon descended into pure thuggery. The platoon extorted money from locals to purchase luxury items, beat looters, and apparently battered at least one innocent Iraqi just for the perverse pleasure of it. For the platoon's crimes, the platoon sergeant did jail time while the platoon leader was separated from the Army. This is just one of several recent examples in Iraq and Afghanistan of young lieutenants being changed by, rather than changing, a small unit's immoral subculture.

47. CGSC is hardly alone in this regard among our military's service schools.

48. On 13 May 2010, GEN Stanley McChrystal called the conflict there "a draw."

49. A "mature" democracy is one in which the people have acquired genuine power over their government. Samuel P. Huntington's definition of a mature democracy is probably the most commonly referenced definition. According to Huntington, a democracy which has seen the ruling party replaced by an opposition party twice in a peaceful and democratic fashion can be called a "mature" democracy. Often debated by political scientists is whether true mature democracies ever wage war against one another.



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# Muddled Dawn

## The Implications of the New Administration in Japan

Colonel David Hunter-Chester, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel David Hunter-Chester is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations, Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Fort Leavenworth, KS. He served for 20 years as a Japan-oriented foreign area officer, and he attended the Japan Self-Defense Forces CGSC and their war college. He holds a dual B.A. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and an M.A. from Stanford University.

ART: *Battle of Manila, May 1, 1898, As Seen by a Japanese Eye-witness, Matsuki Heikichi, Japanese, Meiji era, 1898 (Meiji 31), September, Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The Spanish-American War led to an expansion of American influence and power in East Asia and set Japan and the United States on a collision course.*

ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won a landslide victory in national parliamentary elections. For the first time since its founding in 1996, the DPJ was asked to form a government, having displaced the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as the governing party for only the second time since the LDP was formed in 1955 (the first time, in 1993, the LDP was out of power for only nine months). After the DPJ's victory, much ink was spilled proclaiming, or at least musing about, imminent, significant, even strategic changes to the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Much of the controversy surrounded an agreement between the United States and Japan to remove Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma from its current location in the middle of a crowded urban area in the southern part of the island of Okinawa. In 2006, after years of negotiations, the United States and Japanese governments agreed to replace the MCAS with a new and smaller facility on Camp Schwab, another Marine Corps facility in the northern, less crowded part of Okinawa. Nine months after the DPJ's landslide, the party's first prime minister, Hatoyama Yukio, resigned, largely over a contretemps surrounding the Futenma issue. Japan ushered in its fifth prime minister in less than four years. Soon the ink was spilled again, this time declaring Japan ungovernable. Has there indeed been a new dawn for the Rising Sun? Should Americans be worried, as some pundits seem to be, about the alliance, or more recently, Japan's reliability? Probably the questions most Americans would ask are: Why should we care? Why do we still have troops in peaceful Japan more than 60 years after World War II? Why is Japan important, and why is it unique?

### Politics and the Bilateral Alliance

The formation of a DPJ government in September 2009 was a new dawn for Japan, but the anticipated contrasts from previous administrations have



America's long relationship with Japan began when Commodore Matthew C. Perry's fleet visited Tokugawa Japan, in 1854. This visit alarmed the Japanese and helped fuel the subsequent Meiji Restoration and modernization of Japan. The country's sudden leap into the industrial age was aimed at saving the country from the same fate other East Asian nations suffered under Western colonial exploitation.

not really materialized. Hatoyama Yukio was the fourth prime minister in three years. Of the four—three—including Hatoyama—are the grandsons of former prime ministers and the remaining one was the son of a former premier. Thus, in terms of pedigree, Hatoyama was typical of Japan's political blue bloods, which should have been a clue to what the implications for the future would be. Further, the individual most often credited with engineering the DPJ's landslide victory was political strongman Ozawa Ichiro. Ozawa engineered the first breakup of the LDP, in 1993, when he led a group of lawmakers out of the party. This, in turn, led to the LDP's first loss of power and to several years of political tumult as politicians formed, departed, and reformed new political alliances (one result being the formation of the DPJ itself).

**Shadow Shogun.** The archetypal backroom political fixer in Japan, Ozawa had been the president of the DPJ, and thus in line to become prime minister himself, but he had been forced to resign due to a misuse-of-funds scandal. Such scandals are an all too typical feature of Japanese politics (Hatoyama himself was under investigation for possibly misreporting campaign contributions, while Ozawa was being investigated for other suspected abuses). Widely considered the real power behind the prime minister, Ozawa belongs to a long tradition of what some have called the "shadow shoguns." This appellation remains another status quo feature of the DPJ's ostensibly "revolutionary" administration, though the shadow shogun stepped into the light and ran against the current prime minister, Kan Naoto, to try to regain the presidency of the DPJ. Had Ozawa won, he would have replaced Kan as premier.

Aside from the appearances of traditional political features, the DPJ's policies would likewise hardly suggest a revolutionary stance. Since its founding in 1996, the party has had little if anything in the way of an ideology. Its constituent politicians run the gamut from fairly conservative, former LDP members to leftist, unreconstructed refugees from the defunct Socialist Party. The only thing in the past that has held this diverse set of political actors together is opposition to the LDP. Whatever the LDP stood for, or was perceived to stand for, the DPJ stood against. Salient among these oppositions was that the LDP was seen as too subservient to American interests. By leaning too much toward the United States and the West in general, the LDP helped define the DPJ's platform. The DPJ promised a more independent security stance and a greater focus on Asia in diplomacy and trade, a posture that appeared to suggest movement toward normalization. The LDP had begun supplying fuel to coalition ships early in the global struggle against terrorism and had continued to push through two-year renewals of the mission. The DPJ promised to end the mission and did in January 2010. Rather than revolutionary changes, these positions and actions represent the slow, inexorable process of Japan's postwar identity crisis working itself out.

**Form and substance.** Even before its electoral victory, as preelection polls began to consistently indicate the DPJ would win, and win big, the DPJ had already begun to moderate its policy statements.



They began to stress that the U.S.-Japan alliance would remain a pillar of any DPJ-led governments policy, and they mentioned the possibility of continuing the fueling mission, or at least finding some other way to contribute to the antiterror struggle (in the end, they have fielded no alternative). This trend might have comforted some pundits had it not been for an editorial of Hatoyama's, translated and truncated for publication in the West, in which the author espoused the need for Japan to focus more on Asia in foreign affairs. Hatoyama was critical of the "unrestrained market fundamentalism and financial capitalism, that are void of morals or moderation."

This remark did not reflect a sudden change in Japanese attitudes, as some observers seemed to think. Many in group-oriented Japan have been critical of the individual-oriented brand of capitalism espoused in the United States for decades. While I have not made an empirical study, my impression, based on 15 years of living in Japan, and my experience as an academic and a retired foreign area officer focused on Japan, is that most Japanese consider U.S.-style capitalism to be an outgrowth

of Western, and particularly American, "me-first" selfishness. Japan's social history has treated such egoistic approaches to economics as poor form, morally and pragmatically oafish and uncultured. This is not a political stance, but a deep cultural one associated with the form and substance of their values. Again, this attitude is as old as Japan's association with the United States—not new.

This is further reinforced by the fact that many in Japan were and are critical of former Prime Minister Koizumi's attempts to enact market-oriented reforms in the Japanese economy, the world's second largest until mid-2010. Now Japan's economy is in third place behind China. Critics of Koizumi's reforms feared they would not only create economic winners, but also losers. They angrily wondered who would take care of the losers as they eyed the example of economic disparity in the United States.

**More autonomy.** As aforementioned, Hatoyama also espoused the need for Japan to be more autonomous in its foreign relations, to focus more of its attention on an Asia that shared more of Japan's regional interests and cultural outlook. To facilitate



P.F. Collier & Son

Diplomats from Russia and Japan attending peace talks in Portsmouth, PA, 5 September 1905. The Russo-Japanese War, which ended in 1905, revealed Japan as a new world-class power. At Mukden in Manchuria they defeated the Russian empire in the largest land battle in history. Subsequently, the Imperial Japanese Navy crushed a Russian fleet for the second time at the battle of Tsushima. These losses resulted in Russian internal destabilization, forcing the czar to concentrate on fending off a revolution in 1905. The negotiated peace was brokered by President Theodore Roosevelt. His support of the Russians was interpreted in Japan as an effort to undermine Japan's burgeoning influence in the region and fueled resentment against the United States.



the latter point, he floated a vague idea about forming an East Asian community. The U.S. has rightly stated that, as a Pacific nation too, it does not want to be excluded from an organization which could play an important international role in the Asia-Pacific community. However, the notion that Japan should have a more independent foreign policy is a common one in Japan and also not a new idea. The impulse to greater autonomy is common among other U.S. allies as well (e.g., Japan's attitude is reminiscent of the criticism in Great Britain about Prime Minister Blair's role as an American poodle).

Hatoyama, like all previous postwar prime ministers, continued his frank denunciation of American capitalism by writing, "Of course, the Japan-U.S. security pact will continue to be the cornerstone of Japanese diplomatic policy." This pragmatism is a bow to the ongoing need for American power to steward the legacy of tensions in the area, and it would behoove the United States to keep this in mind regarding the bilateral alliance. American presence is useful to Japan, in time and in measure with evolving expectations—and other countries in the western Pacific implicitly have a voice in the situation. Clearly, Hatoyama turned out not to be the radical some seemed to fear, and this need for pragmatism in the region certainly played a part in that outcome.

What actually changed was more form than substance. The DPJ had produced a coalition with two smaller parties, the Democratic Socialist Party, a rump of the former Socialist Party, and the New People's Party, a party that stands against the kind of market-oriented reforms former Prime Minister Koizumi championed. The inclusion of these parties constrained the DPJ's options and drove their administration relatively to the left, at least on the surface of things. While, the DPJ did discontinue fueling coalition ships in the Arabian Sea in January, that action has to be seen in context. Japan had taken on this fueling mission soon after 9/11, supplying fuel to coalition ships patrolling the Arabian Sea as part of Operation Enduring Freedom to prevent the travel of or support of terrorists. At first, Japan provided the free fuel to only U.S. ships, but it soon expanded the fuel support to all coalition ships. Up until the time it ceased operations, it had provided nearly half of the fuel the coalition used; again, all at no charge to the coalition. The DPJ has said it will explore ways

to provide more civilian support on the ground in Afghanistan in place of this fueling mission and has pledged more financial support to Afghanistan.

**New roles in security cooperation.** During U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' meeting with Japanese Defense Minister Kitazawa in October 2009, the defense minister said Japan would also look at a role for its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) on the ground in Afghanistan. Such a role would be a big change in policy, but the Japanese have talked about it before, and caution has always prevailed. Even with the DSP no longer in the coalition—they left the coalition when Hatoyama flip-flopped on the promise to move the replacement facility for Marine Corps Air Station Futenma out of Okinawa—it is unlikely the DPJ will order Japan SDF boots on the ground in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, talk of it is significant as a benchmark in the evolving form of the alliance. Such a move, like that of Japan's earlier cooperation, represents an incremental step in Japan's (perhaps yet distant) normalization on security affairs.

The DPJ, under Hatoyama, had also said it would like to talk to the United States about the Status of Forces Agreement, and about the U.S.-Japan agreement to realign forces in Japan. It particularly wanted to readdress the aforementioned agreement to move Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The final point proved the most contentious, and led to Hatoyama's resignation. Hatoyama and his administration repeatedly sent mixed signals. Before the election, he had said he favored removing the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) from Okinawa completely. These mixed signals should be understood in a cultural context as well as in the political one Americans see naturally.

Hatoyama's foreign minister, Katsuya Okada, originally favored scrapping the agreed plan to make the FRF part of the already-existing Camp Schwab in the less crowded, northern areas of Okinawa. He instead recommended consolidating Futenma's facilities and airframes on Kadena Air Base, just a few kilometers north of Futenma's current site. Later, Okada said this consolidation would be unworkable (something American and Japanese negotiators said years ago). The defense minister, Toshimi Kitazawa, came out in favor of abiding by the then-current agreement, signed by the United States and Japan in 2006.



American battleships in the Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1923 being dismantled in accordance with the Washington Naval Treaty. The five major naval powers—England, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy—concluded a treaty in 1922 to limit the ongoing arms race for increasing naval inventories. At the time, battleships were the arbiter of national power and status. The treaty led to the scrapping of major new weapons systems and the imposition of size constraints on battleship tonnage. The treaty established a 5:5:3 ratio among England, America, and Japan as the three superpowers. Although the treaty limited American production more in terms of capacity, this arrangement led to intense resentment in Japan, particularly in the military establishment, and it helped lead to animosity between the United States and Japan.

Meanwhile, Hatoyama kept shifting his position. The press reported he might give a decision to President Obama when the two leaders met in December 2009. However, when the President reportedly asked the prime minister to stick to the original government-to-government agreement, the prime minister reportedly replied simply, “Trust me.” In subsequent weeks, there were additional reports of the DPJ administration looking at moving the FRF to somewhere in Japan other than Okinawa, or asking that it be moved out of Japan entirely. The Hatoyama administration said it would make a final decision in May. After more delays, when Hatoyama finally said it would be best to stick to the original agreement and build the FRF on Camp Schwab, he resigned, just

nine months into his tenure. Again, the cultural context here is important to understand, as this resignation would be expected as part of the form that delivered the substance of keeping the FRF where it needed to be.

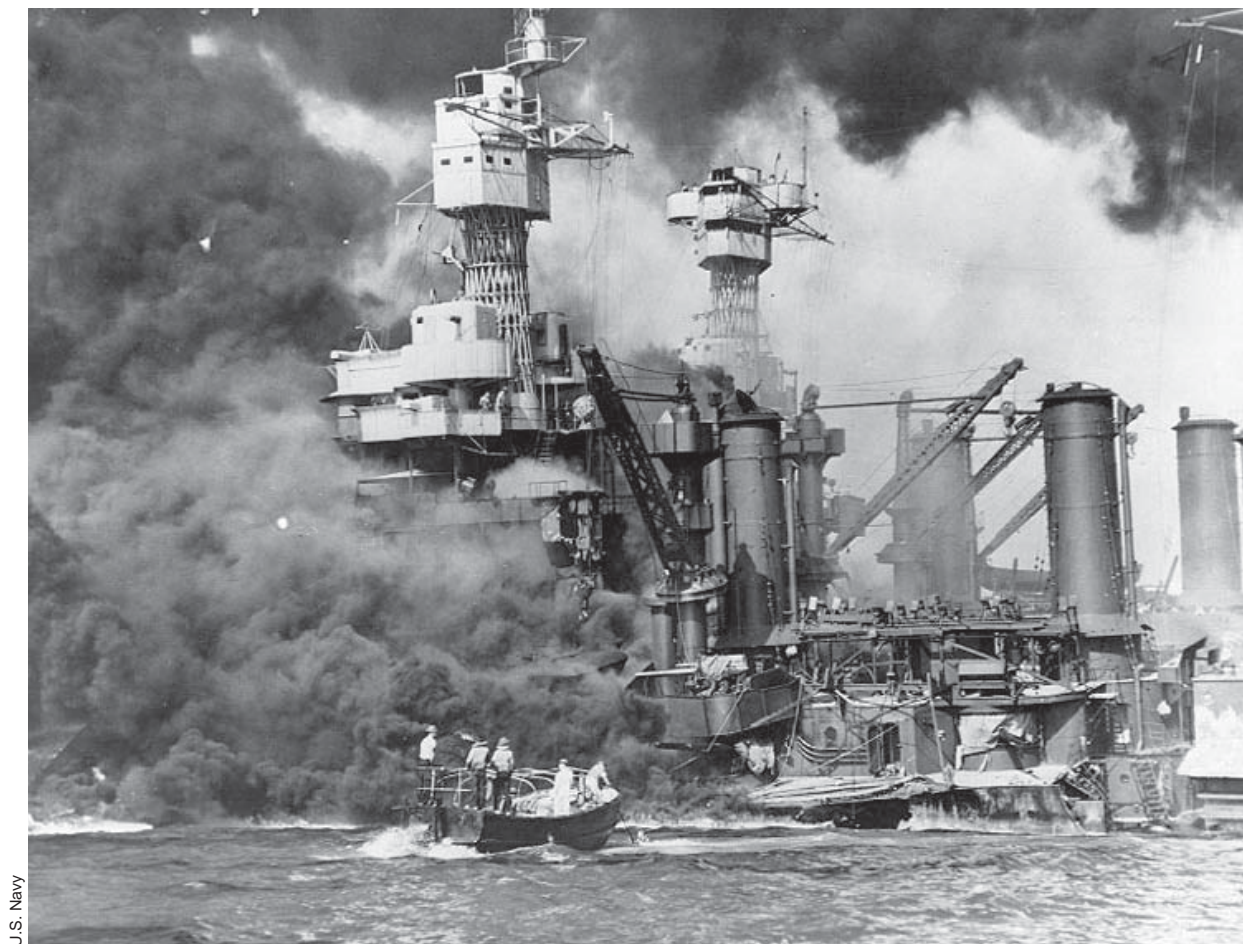
**Hidden policy changes.** Part of the dissonance presented by these key players in the DPJ and their mixed messages came from a policy the administration actually did put into effect: the idea that politicians, not bureaucrats, should be in charge of formulating government policies. Message discipline, for the most part, was very strong under LDP administrations, but most policies were created and managed by professional bureaucrats in the various ministries. A big part of the annual budget preparations, for instance,



always involved the bureaucrats coming up with detailed questions and answers to present to politicians who would have to defend policies, and thus budgetary priorities, in the Japanese Diet (parliament). The bureaucrats wrote the scripts, and the politicians faithfully followed, but the government policy the politicians were purportedly debating had been set by a council of vice ministers, the highest-ranking bureaucrats in their respective ministries. The DPJ ushered in genuine change by disallowing this weekly meeting of vice ministers.

Hatoyama also encouraged his subordinates to offer their views. While transferring policymaking power from bureaucrats to the people's elected representatives is laudable (though, again, not a new idea—politicians have discussed making this change for years), one large obstacle has been and will be the minimal staffs of individual

politicians. Politicians in Japan do not have the large staffs politicians in the United States have. Most politicians only have a secretary, if that, who does little more than correspondence and administration. Japan has the most rapidly aging society in the developed world, the highest per capita national debt, and a deeper recessionary trough than most of the rest of the advanced world. Expecting politicians, who, like politicians everywhere, have to spend significant face time with their constituents in order to get reelected, to master the complexities of these daunting issues without professional staffs is unlikely to work well. Given the scale of the problems Japan faces, changes once thought undoable must occur. Certainly, Japan's handling of these problems will have ramifications for its security posture and the bilateral alliance with the United States.



U.S. Navy

Sailors rescue survivors alongside the sunken USS *West Virginia* (BB-48) shortly after the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbor. The 7 December 1941 attack was the defining historical moment in 20th century U.S.-Japan relationships. This single, carefully planned, and well-executed maneuver effectively removed the U.S. Navy as a potential restraint to the Japanese Empire's southward expansion.



## Harbingers of Change

The fact that the public wranglings of the DPJ cabinet were about Futenma, an issue that has known more ups, downs, and unexpected high-speed curves than the most daunting diplomatic roller coaster, is particularly troubling. The United States and Japan have been trying to solve this problem for over 14 years, and the latest troubles will only confirm for many observers what they have pessimistically proposed all along, that the issue will never be satisfactorily resolved.

So, the DPJ cabinet of Hatoyama looked in many ways like its LDP predecessors, except for the party symbols the cabinet members wear on their lapels. As is typical in electoral democracies, the DPJ in power moderated the views it had espoused in the run-up to the election. The DPJ has introduced a major change by curtailing the power of bureaucrats. Whether that is sustainable is yet to be seen. In addition to the issues mentioned above, the party has already submitted a record budget woefully deficient in details—particularly the details of how to pay for the massive spending. Without the bureaucrats, and without extensive staffs, one wonders who will work out these highly technical, yet absolutely necessary, details.

The Hatoyama cabinet enjoyed extremely high levels of public support immediately after the election, but support began to wane almost immediately, sliding from over 80 percent to the 20s by the time Hatoyama resigned. Prime Minister Kan Naoto, Hatoyama's replacement, seemed to have a surer hand on the rudder, quietly letting the Americans know, for instance, that his administration would abide by the 2006 agreement to move the FRF to northern Okinawa (albeit with some adjustments to details). However, to his fellow citizens he then raised the possibility of a higher consumption tax to begin to tackle Japan's public debt, at 200 percent of GDP, the largest in the developed world. This move was not well received, and along with lingering disaffection for the Hatoyama administration, led to the DPJ not gaining a majority in the upper house of the Diet during the July 2010 elections. (They maintain the majority in the more powerful lower house which brought them to power in the first place.)

Given Japan's daunting challenges, the sidelining of bureaucratic expertise without the creation of a viable alternative, and internal differences among

DPJ members, disillusionment seems likely to continue and deepen. Kan is popular in the DPJ, but his position has been weakened, making it even more difficult for his administration to achieve the lofty populist goals the DPJ ran on last year. If the disillusion and disappointment are significant enough, another round of defections and realignments in Japan's party system could be on the horizon, with one possible result being a realignment into more ideologically cohesive center-right and center-left parties.

This result is what Ozawa—considered the Oz behind the curtain of the DPJ's victory last year—has been aiming for all along, a two-party system in Japan that he sees as more stable and productive. Though Ozawa lost in his bid to retake the presidency of the DPJ and become prime minister himself this past September, dissatisfaction with the current system may still lead to widespread dissolution and realignment in the current parties. If a two-party system does eventuate, because of or despite Ozawa's wily manipulation, Japan really will have a new dawn.

Meanwhile, Japan continues to muddle along. In the United States, we have to remember Japan is not a majoritarian democracy, but a consensual one. One has only to look at the history of the expansion of Tokyo's international airport, Narita, which was held up for literally decades because a few farmers refused to give up miniscule parcels of land. In the United States in such a situation, after a reasonable time for negotiation, the government would have declared eminent domain and the work on the airport expansion would have continued. The Japanese government, which already had eminent domain legislation on the books, instead worked for years to get the farmers to voluntarily sell their land.

In the municipality of Naha, Okinawa, the local government for the area taken up by Camp Schwab, where the U.S. and Japan agreed to build the FRF in 2006, public opinion is split almost evenly on the desirability of building the FRF. This is going to make the eventual realization of the original agreement extremely difficult for any Japanese administration, despite the fact that Kan has said the Japanese government will abide by the agreement with some adjustments, and U.S. and Japanese officials have made progress in ironing out those adjustments.



U.S. Army

Wreckage of the Mitsubishi Ordnance Plant near the hypocenter of the bomb blast at Nagasaki, Japan, 6 December 1946. World War II fundamentally changed the character of military and political alliances worldwide.

## Costs versus Benefits of the Bilateral Alliance

In the end the benefits of the alliance for both parties still outweigh costs and annoyances. The alliance gives the United States strategic leverage it would not have otherwise. The exact location of troops—and to a lesser degree the mix of those troops—is less important than the fact U.S. troops are in Japan. A balanced force gives the alliance more options, and the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force is the only U.S. ground combat force in Japan, other than a Special Forces battalion and a Patriot Missile battalion. For Japan, U.S. presence has helped ensure more than 60 years of peace with its neighbors. Japan has only had to spend an average of less than one percent of its GDP since 1960, the lowest average cost of any industrialized country in GDP terms. If the Marines, or the air wing, leave Okinawa completely, and especially if the aircraft do not redeploy somewhere else in Japan, Japan will likely have to increase its own forces on the island, at a higher cost.

Okinawa first came under the suzerainty of an important samurai family in 1604 precisely because

the island acts as the gateway between Japan and China. Okinawa still sits astride one of the most important trade corridors in the world. China is increasingly brazen in patrolling near or even through those waters. Okinawa will always have military forces; it cannot escape its geography. For now, in the big picture, it is better for both Japan and the United States that a significant portion of those forces remain American, as Hatoyama realized only too late. This latest round of diplomatic tension on Okinawa has mostly short-term implications. In the short run, Japan has damaged its trust with the Obama administration. At a time when the rise of China is changing not only the regional but the global international system, Japan is in danger of making itself less relevant in the long run.

I have always thought of Japan as America's "and" ally, because of all the proclamations that say America will work with "Europe *and* Japan," or "NATO *and* Japan" to accomplish some mutual goal. Japan, extremely sensitive and even allergic to domestic military capabilities and action, has, for the most part, preferred to contribute economically to these endeavors (though the Japanese Self-Defense Force,

since 1992, has participated in many peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, even sending air and ground troops to Iraq between 2004 and 2006). Yet Japan itself has bemoaned the tendency of other countries to see Japan as an ATM machine when it comes to international contributions. At a time when China has passed Japan in GDP to become the second-largest economy in the world, even this self-consciously less-than-desirable, less-than-honorable role of international bank teller may shrink in significance.

Japan can bounce back from these problems. In the 1970s and 1980s many thought Japan would continue to grow richer, overtaking America to have the largest GDP in the world. People were predicting this century would be the “Japanese century.” The term “competitive advantage,” as

opposed to “comparative advantage,” was coined to explain how a country like Japan, with basically no natural resources and thus no comparative advantage, could do so well in terms of generating wealth. What gave Japan this competitive advantage were things like the vaunted Japanese work ethic and Japan’s education system.

Japan still has these advantages, but the country has lacked leadership and vision. Gerald Curtis, in his book *The Logic of Japanese Politics*, proposed that Japan’s economic success may have tempered the desire of Japanese citizens to “throw out the bums” in the Diet and engender real change. Even with the long sclerotic economy dating from Japan’s speculative bubble bursting in the early 1990s, the older generation could remember steady improvement in its standard of living. An

amazing 90 percent of Japanese people still consider themselves middle class. Yet, dissatisfaction with the LDP finally grew to the point that people were ready for an alternative in the DPJ. So far the DPJ has not lived up to its promises (not that any party could have lived up to those particular electoral fantasies). A new political and economic direction in Japan seems inevitable—such change will also inevitably mean some revision of Japan’s military and security relationship with the United States. Japan still has one of the best-educated work forces in the world, and the Japanese have shown the capability to produce leaders when they need them. The consensual politics of Japan will always involve some muddling, but to take on Japan’s problems, the Japanese need decisiveness, vision, and real leadership. Otherwise, Japan, America’s “and” ally, may become less than an afterthought, as it muddles along, diminishing international trust and its own relevance to the system. **MR**



U.S. Army truck is loaded aboard a landing transport ship at Saebo Base, Kyushu, Japan, 10 July 1950. Japan has been a staunch ally of the United States since the Korean War.





T. Goto

A new Japanese Type 10 Main Battle Tank, part of Japan's formidable Self-Defense Forces arsenal. A security treaty between the United States and Japan was formalized in 1952 and then revised in 1960 as a bilateral military alliance for the defense of Japan. This alliance has strengthened and weakened over the decades but became strong again during the late 1990s and has remained so. Tension with North Korea and economic pressure from China have underscored the shared values and interests of the United States and Japan, helping to keep the relationship strong. Some have feared that the 2009 election would weaken the 50-year old alliance.

Change 1 to Army Capstone

## FM 3-0 Operations

U.S. Army  
Combined  
Arms Center  
Intellectual  
Center of the Army



Change 1 to FM 3-0 incorporates lessons from continued operations and maturing discussions on Army doctrine. Key changes include replacing Command and Control with Mission Command as both an activity and a warfighting function, and replacing the 5 Army Information Tasks with Inform and Influence and Cyber/Electromagnetic activities.

Several other changes are also readily apparent: Hybrid Threats, Security Force Assistance is described within stability operations, CBRNE Consequence Management becomes an additional task within Civil Support, Chapter 7 is updated to include design.

Refer to the CAC web site for other changes and a more in depth overview of the changes to US Army Operational Doctrine.

The proponent for FM 3-0, Change 1 is the Combined Arms Center:  
<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/FM3-0/index.asp>



# Security, Capacity, and Literacy

Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell, IV, U.S. Army  
with Captain Nathan K. Finney, U.S. Army

**I**MAGINE TEACHING a class completely devoid of letters and numbers. There would be no homework from the night before. A chalkboard would be useless outside of pictures. How much more difficult would your classes be to complete? How much longer would it take to get through the material? These are the challenges that we face in every training course we provide to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

The reason I care about literacy instruction is *capacity*. Stability in Afghanistan hinges on the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces to provide security. In order to support the Afghans in building this capacity, a foundation of professional and capable leaders is required, which begins with the basics of education, namely literacy.

When I took command of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) almost a year ago, the overall literacy rate of the Afghan National Security Forces stood at about 14 percent. As we assessed training programs for the army and police, it was immediately evident that illiteracy was affecting the speed and depth of instruction. All training has to be hands-on; each skill has to be demonstrated. Without the ability to provide written material to prime the pump, every new block of instruction starts from scratch.

Even more detrimental than poor training, illiteracy impedes the professionalization of the ANSF. Key elements of job performance for capable security forces are tied to the basic ability to read and write letters and numbers. How do we professionalize a soldier who cannot read a manual on how to properly maintain a vehicle, fill out a form for the issue of equipment, read a serial number to distinguish his weapon from another, calculate trajectory for a field artillery “call for fire,” or write an intelligence report for a higher command? How do we professionalize a police officer who cannot read the laws he is enforcing, write an incident report, record a license plate, or even sign his name to a citation? How can soldiers or officers ensure accountability of both superiors and subordinates if they cannot read what equipment the

*Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell, IV, is commanding general of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan in Kabul.*

*Captain Nathan K. Finney is a strategist currently serving with the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan in Kabul.*

*PHOTO: An Afghan instructor works with two Afghan National Police officers during literacy training in Kabul, 5 June 2010. (Courtesy of the author)*



Photo courtesy of author.

**An Afghan National Police recruit displays his pen during a visit by LTG Caldwell, Kabul, Afghanistan, 5 June 2010. A pen is often displayed as a status symbol in Afghanistan, indicating literacy.**

unit is required to have or read a pay chart to know what they are supposed to receive?

Literacy is also critical to increasing recruitment, improving retention, and reducing attrition in the current force. In Afghanistan, the ability to read is a badge of honor, a skill that Afghans, rightfully, are very proud of. A writing pen is seen as a status symbol—an outward sign that by providing this skill to the security forces, we are not only increasing their capability to perform their jobs and their credibility among the people of Afghanistan, but also developing their ability to provide for their nation after they complete their service.

To address these issues and provide the tools necessary for professional, accountable, and capable security forces, we are placing a full-court press on literacy instruction across our training facilities in Afghanistan.

## Literacy Programs

There are three elements that we have instituted to provide immediate reduction of illiteracy within the ANSF, particularly in the development of

junior and mid-grade leaders: basic literacy training programs, language instruction, and Afghan Police Training Teams.

**Training Programs.** To build the confidence of the ANSF and instill this sense of honor and commitment within Afghanistan, we have instituted literacy programs at all levels of training and education. For example, Afghan National Police (ANP) recruits attending basic training are given a mandatory 64-hour literacy course. The goal is to bring all ANP up to a level-three literacy skill (equivalent to third grade). When combined with their experience and mature judgment, this is a level sufficient to conduct day-to-day business. Future efforts will be focused on increasing literacy beyond that level, as well as transitioning literacy instruction efforts to the Afghans.

For the Afghan National Army (ANA), similar literacy programs provide a foundation to build a professional force. Literate soldiers can become the mechanics, medics, logisticians, field artillerymen, and others critical to the ANA mission.

For the ANA and ANP, we have created training sites across the country employing over 1,000



instructors. Since October 2009, we have educated over 21,000 soldiers and police to level one and almost 7,000 to level three, with approximately 34,000 currently in training.<sup>1</sup> Our goal is to have 100,000 ANSF personnel enrolled in literacy classes by 1 July 2011. These literacy programs are critical to the professionalization of the ANSF.

In addition to our efforts to build a foundation of literacy in Afghanistan, many nonmilitary organizations are providing this service to the Afghan people. These include efforts of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, a global strategic framework composed of national governments, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, private sector, United Nations agencies, and bilateral and multilateral agencies. Additionally, the Afghan Ministry of Education supports a general literacy program that provides nine months of instruction for those between the ages of 15 and 45 who did not previously have access to education, primarily in urban areas. From 2002 to 2007, this program provided literacy training to between 300,000 and 400,000 Afghans a year through about 400 teachers.<sup>2</sup> These programs focus on the

historically under-educated Afghans, primarily children and women. In contrast, our programs are focused on those that choose to serve in the ANSF. The security forces are made up of Afghans from across the country, rural as well as urban. For many, the availability of literacy training is the first educational opportunity in their lives.

**Language Instruction.** Like literacy training, language instruction is critical to professionalizing the ANSF. Understanding English allows the ANSF to seamlessly participate in NATO exercises and ensures interoperability with international forces. Additionally, English is the accepted language for the international aviation community and is necessary for pilots and the maintenance and ground crews who attend advanced training classes conducted inside and outside Afghanistan. The majority of students enrolled in the English classes attend follow-on courses in countries outside of Afghanistan, such as military staff colleges, medical courses, or pilot training. We have now established 27 locations across Afghanistan to provide this capability, with approximately 4,800 students currently in training.<sup>3</sup>



Photo courtesy of author.

Afghan National Police raise their hands to answer a question during literacy training in Kabul, Afghanistan, 5 June 2010.

**Training teams.** Literacy instruction should not end with initial basic training. In most cases, it takes at least two months of dedicated training to achieve a marginal level of literacy. While most of this instruction is now taking place at training centers before soldiers and police join their units, it continues once they enter the operational force. To address the police that are already beyond the training base and did not receive literacy support, Afghan Police Training Teams are being formed that will include a literacy instructor. While a training team is in a district, it provides literacy instruction two hours per day.

Educating Afghanistan's entire security force to a sufficient level, while also meeting current operational commitments, is a challenge. However, the reward for these efforts is significant.

There are some recognized deficiencies in our current literacy and language programs. The lack of educated and qualified teachers, particularly in remote areas, hinders the expansion and quality of instruction. Life support at military camps and police stations is barely able to support the security forces stationed there, let alone instructors who cannot commute for various reasons.

Another issue is the priority local commanders give to literacy training. Some commanders pri-

oritize even noncritical missions ahead of literacy training. We must ensure our instructors and commanders find a balance between security operations and literacy training. This is as important for retention as it is for building the capability of the ANSF. Until the Afghan leadership takes a lead role in promoting and enforcing literacy goals, we will struggle to enroll students in classes.

A recent example is the decree signed by the minister of interior that states the ANP "should" accomplish literacy training, yet leaving the enforcement and prioritization up to the local commander on the ground. Changing "should" to "will" would allow local commanders to be held accountable by both Afghans and our assessment teams.

## The Way Ahead

In Afghanistan we are battling more than insurgent forces, we are fighting government corruption, poverty, and decades of oppression—core grievances that undermine stability and feed the insurgency. These societal issues, used by those who oppose the government, have reversed the growth and progress of what was once a thriving society. Only through the education and empowerment of the Afghan people can these enemies be defeated; conventional military weapons alone will not do. By supporting programs that teach Afghans how to read and write, we are providing them the foundation for a stable and prosperous nation. We have initiated a system of life-long education for their security forces.

This system is doing more than just educating select soldiers and police officers. Our programs to educate and train the ANSF are transforming an entire generation of Afghans. Hundreds of thousands joined the ANA and ANP, and we are providing them literacy instruction, education, and marketable skills such as leadership, planning, logistics, maintenance, computer skills, medicine, law enforcement, and engineering. To this young



An Afghan instructor looks over a lesson while Afghan National Police officers prepare for literacy training in Kabul, Afghanistan, 5 June 2010.

Photo courtesy of author.



**An Afghan National Police officer watches as female police officers do homework for their literacy training, 19 June 2010.**

generation of Afghans, these opportunities constitute a new way of life. Some may leave the security forces after a short enlistment, while some may remain in the security forces for a full career. All of them will have expanded their education and skills while serving. Once their time in service is complete, they will match their higher expectations for the future with opportunities outside the security forces.

Recovery from 30 years of warfare does not occur in one year or five. Political patience and a large initial investment in education are needed to restart a society ravaged by sustained conflict and decades of oppression. The payoff for this patience and investment are professional security forces that are able to provide security, stability, and prosperity today while preserving hope and opportunity for generations to come. **MR**

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#### NOTES

1. As of 19 November 2010.

2. Based on the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education, "National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education," April 2008, 14, 17.

3. As of 19 November 2010.





# Integrated Planning

## The Operations Process, Design, and the Military Decision Making Process

Colonel Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., U.S. Army; Dr. Scott Gorman; Colonel Jack Marr, U.S. Army; Lieutenant Colonel Joseph McLamb, U.S. Army; Dr. Michael Stewart; and Dr. Pete Schifferle

**F**OR THE PAST several years, the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) has been pursuing two objectives regarding design. First, under the exemplary leadership of Colonel Steve Banach, the school served as one of the Army's champions for the concept of design, and played a significant role in getting the idea into the Army lexicon. Simultaneously, but less visibly, the school has been aggressively experimenting with the concept of design from its initial form all the way through the establishment of the methodology defined in Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process*, last spring. We now believe we are in a position to offer some insight into the role of the design methodology within the Army's operations process, along the way dispelling a number of myths about the methodology that we, SAMS, may have unintentionally played a role in propagating.

We now recognize that the most important contribution of the March 2010 edition of FM 5-0 is not the introduction of the design methodology but the recognition that effective planning has both a conceptual and a detailed component. Unfortunately, this recognition can be missed if one skips directly to Chapter 3 of the manual, and the resulting confusion is only compounded by a number of common myths about the design methodology that ignore the distinction altogether. The mythology of design arose largely because of well-intentioned efforts to advertise the potential of the concept. The unintended result has been that the field's experiments with the design methodology have not always lived up to the billing. Consequently, the debate in military journals has somehow encouraged two equally unlikely propositions about using the design methodology: either it will eliminate error from military decision making, or it is useless. The truth lies between these extremes.

Because of our extensive experimentation with the design methodology, we believe SAMS is uniquely placed to offer an honest assessment of the methodology's applicability, strengths, and weaknesses. We have already stated our most central lesson: effective planning requires *both* conceptual and

Colonel Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., is the director of the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS. All contributing authors are faculty members at the school.

PHOTO: U.S. Army soldiers from 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, kneel outside the town of Badmuk, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, after a night assault on suspected Taliban positions as part of Operation Azmaray Fury, 2 August 2010. (DOD photo by SPC Anthony Jackson, U.S. Army).

detailed thinking, and we separate the two at our peril. We have found that the design methodology offers commanders and staffs useful tools for conceptual thinking but is not a panacea for the problems that face the force today. Unfortunately, the advantages that the design methodology does offer will go largely unrealized unless the force is convinced of its value, and the common tendency to discuss its methodology with zealous propagandizing is far from helpful. We hope to start a more open discussion, admitting that we may have oversold design in the past, and we offer the following thoughts.

## Demythologizing Design

Unhelpful myths surrounding design militate against its widespread acceptance by the force. Here we want to put these canards to rest so discussion of the doctrinal design methodology can proceed constructively.

**Myth #1: The design methodology and planning are two mutually exclusive options for military decision making.** Actually, the design methodology is a subcomponent of planning. As FM 5-0 makes clear, “planning consists of two separate, but closely related components: a conceptual component and a detailed component.”<sup>1</sup> Planning encompasses the design methodology, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), and Troop Leading Procedures. All components of planning fit within the larger “operations process.” Language that attempts to split the world into “planners” and “designers” is inherently wrong and dangerous.

The design methodology is not a stand-alone methodology. FM 5-0 accurately asserts that the design methodology allows a planner to “develop approaches to solve” problems.<sup>2</sup> Put more bluntly, the design methodology does not produce solutions on its own. Why not? Because design is a tool for conceptual thinking, and effective solutions require both a conceptual component and a detailed component. A conceptual plan removed from the detailed considerations of the problem will quickly

assume a “daydream on acetate” quality, far removed from reality.

In a similar fashion, imagining detailed planning without a conceptual underpinning is equally wrongheaded. Such planning quickly devolves into a road to nowhere even if executed exactly. Such plans appear as intricate and sometimes appealing, but they will not produce desired results *because* they are not tied to the overarching purpose. Most proponents of the design methodology point to this error in planning as the explanation for why we need the design methodology in the first place. In reality, they are arguing for a *conceptual* component in planning; the design methodology is not the only tool that fills the bill, but currently it is the best option as an organized heuristic. In fact, the MDMP itself (as a heuristic) has both a conceptual and a detailed component.<sup>3</sup> When planners ignore the conceptual component of the MDMP, that process loses much of its value.

**Myth #2: The design methodology is for complex, ill-structured problems, and the MDMP is for other types of problems.** Although our doctrine, unfortunately, gives some credence to the idea that the design methodology is for complex, ill-structured problems while the MDMP is for others, this notion is false. This myth does not stand up under scrutiny. Perhaps there are some military problems that are not complex and ill-structured, but they do not draw the attention of leaders. Even problems often held as “complicated, but not complex” by those who adhere to Myth #2 only appear so in the abstract. Once one moves from an abstract, theoretical problem (such as “seize an airfield”) to a real-world version of the same problem (“seize *this* airfield in *this* real location in order to create *these* conditions”), complexity immediately rears its head. Any problem that involves predicting the behavior of human beings is inherently complex. This myth is much easier to sustain in the classroom than in the field; in the real world, the *only* problems worth thinking about are the complex, ill-structured ones, and these problems require both conceptual and detailed thinking.

**Myth #3: The design methodology is for the talented few; the MDMP is for the rest of us.** A common image of the design methodology involves a small group of talented staffers who do conceptual thinking for the commander preparing a product

***Myth #1: The design methodology and planning are two mutually exclusive options for military decision making.***

they then hand off to their less talented friends in the plans section for detailed planning. Field Manual 5-0's assertion that effective planning requires both conceptual and detailed thinking ought to make such an image suspect. The clear linkage between concepts and details makes it problematic to use designing and planning in sequence rather than in parallel.

This is not to suggest that the commander would not want to start his planning for an unfamiliar problem with a relatively small group of advisors; our doctrine recommends this technique as a proven practice. That small group begins as a *subset* of the larger group of planners rather than as a unique entity charged with conceptual thinking. They maintain a responsibility for the detailed thinking that must accompany the design methodology's conceptual thinking. The old practice among tactical commanders of having an "Orders Group A"—a select few among the staff who assist the commander in thinking about a problem at the macro level—may be a more useful model for the design methodology than the image of a sheltered group of "designers" who are not to be burdened with details. An effective planner must have his eyes constantly on both the conceptual and detailed components of planning.

**Myth #4: We plan for certainty; we design for uncertainty.** Aside from the fact that no military commander or planner has ever faced anything that looked even remotely like certainty, this myth rests on the idea that planning and the design methodology are two different things. They are not. We plan, almost exclusively, in an environment of uncertainty, and, as aforementioned, planning requires both a conceptual and a detailed component.

**Myth #5: Using the design methodology will make sure we solve the right problem correctly.** One of the reasons frequently cited for the development of design methodology is that a straightforward, unthinking, and unimaginative approach to the MDMP can produce catastrophic results. This is certainly true. However, a straightforward, unthinking, and unimaginative approach to the design methodology will produce the exact same results. The ability of a commander or staff to correctly identify their problem and the quality of the solution they produce reflect the quality of their thinking, not the methodology they use. While there is undoubtedly truth in the idea that some methods

### ***Myth #4: We plan for certainty; we design for uncertainty.***

are more restrictive than others, the impact of the methodology fades in comparison to the impact of the minds applied to the problem. *Who* is thinking about the problem is much more important than *what* instrument they use to organize their thinking. There simply is no substitute for clear and concise thinking, whether one is using the design methodology or the MDMP.

## **Beyond the Hype**

Recognizing that the design methodology is fraught with mythology is not the same as saying it has no utility. Our experience indicates the design methodology is, in fact, useful to planners for conceptual thinking, an essential component in effective planning. In light of that experience, we offer four observations to help supplant the current mythology.

**The design methodology provides a means of approximating complex problems that allows for meaningful action.** When Army officers reflected on their First World War experiences in *Infantry in Battle*, they concluded that the most essential element in the "practice of the art of war" is the ability to "cut to the heart of a situation, recognize its decisive elements, and base . . . [a] course of action on these." The ability to do this, they concluded, requires "training in solving problems of all types, long practice in making clear, unequivocal decisions, the habit of concentrating on the question at hand, and an elasticity of mind."<sup>4</sup>

The design methodology is largely focused on helping commanders and planners exercise the "elasticity of mind" that has always been a prerequisite for effective military action. It is a useful tool when the commander and staff face an unfamiliar problem, assisting them in recognizing the decisive elements in an environment in which their past experience does not immediately suffice. Our doctrine labels such problems "ill-structured," which is further defined as "complex, nonlinear, and dynamic."<sup>5</sup> Any military problem that includes an adversary, however, is "complex, nonlinear,



and dynamic” by nature, so this distinction is of little utility to military planners. The doctrine gets to a much more useful distinction when it admits that whether one sees a problem as ill-structured, medium-structured, or well-structured largely depends on “the knowledge, skills, and ability” of the person looking at the problem.<sup>6</sup> “Ill-structured” is in the eye of the beholder.

When a commander faces a novel and unfamiliar problem, he may feel overwhelmed by the uncertainty. It is here that the design methodology can help. The conceptual framework of an environmental frame, a problem frame, and an operational approach allows the commander and his staff to think about the situation without focusing them immediately on developing or refining a mission statement. It provides some intellectual breathing space to “cut to the heart of a situation.” It allows them to better understand the complexity of the problem by becoming familiar with the critical elements in the environment and then approximating the problem to a level of simplicity that allows for meaningful action. It helps, in other words, with the very same intellectual challenges that have faced commanders throughout the history of the Army.

The design methodology does not produce an executable solution, however. Its role is to assist the commander in “getting his arms around” a new and unfamiliar problem or an old problem that has changed in some new and unexpected way. Having achieved that, the design methodology must be integrated with a more detailed approach to planning, and usually the earlier this happens the better for all concerned.

**The design methodology enables commanders to meld analytic and intuitive decision making in a way that takes advantage of both.** FM 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, delineates two types of decision making: analytic and intuitive. The former, which is associated with the MDMP in the manual, is described as “structured” and “methodical,” while the latter “substitutes application of the art of command for missing information.” Although conceding that “in practice, the two approaches rarely exclude each other,” the doctrine states explicitly that “intuitive decision-making does not work well when the situation includes inexperienced commanders, complex or unfamiliar situations.”<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, the design methodology offers a third type of decision making: *synthetic*. It asks the commander to put his full intuition to work in even the most unfamiliar situation, but to temper and inform that intuition with input from selected members of “the planning staff, red team members, and subject matter experts internal and external to the headquarters.”<sup>8</sup> The design methodology is intentionally less structured than our other planning methodologies in order to get every brain, and not just every weapon, into the fight. Faced with a new and unfamiliar problem, the design methodology asks commanders to increase the elasticity of their own minds by considering input from sources that would be of questionable usefulness if the situation were more familiar. It seeks to provide by proxy the experience the commander lacks in a specific environment.

**Underpinning the design methodology are useful tools for conceptual thinking, even when that thinking is done within the framework of the MDMP.** Conceptual thinking has been around a long time, and is not synonymous with the design methodology. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of conceptual thinking done within the history of our Army was done without any reference to the design methodology whatsoever. Why, then, should we spend time and energy training the force for a new methodology that appears to be applicable in what some will argue will prove to be only a relatively small number of situations (those that are new or novel enough to be outside the experience of the commander and staff)?

The answer lies in the first claim of this article: the most important contribution of FM 5-0 is the recognition that effective planning requires both conceptual and detailed thinking. All effective planning requires a conceptual component, and many of the ideas underlying the design methodology (such as reflection, iteration, systems thinking, learning theory, narrative, cultural lenses, and more) are useful to the commander and staff even when there is insufficient time to explicitly employ the design methodology as described in FM 5-0. An effective planner will find himself using these tools even when faced with problems that are relatively familiar to him because they allow him to move quickly to the more detailed planning that is necessary for action.



School of Advanced Military Studies students use a model with broad categories, ranging from culture to security, potentially affecting their exercise issue during the Operational Command Workshop, part of the yearlong Future Warfare Study Plan Unified Quest, 28 January 2008.

**Unfamiliarity with a problem, rather than its structure or complexity, is the best indicator of design's utility.** Although our doctrine invests several pages in delineating varied structures a problem may display (and the various levels of complexity it may contain), the best predictor of how valuable the design methodology will prove is the level of familiarity the commander and staff have with the problem. The design methodology is most useful when the commander and staff are least familiar with the problem. Either the problem is itself novel, the command and staff is new to the problem, or the problem has changed in some unforeseen way. Under these conditions, a structured approach to conceptual thinking is most useful, and design methodology provides that structure.

This observation allows a more broadly defined rule of thumb for applying the design methodology. The closer a commander is to an assigned, well-defined task and purpose, the less valuable the design methodology is likely be. In the absence of an assigned mission—or with one that is broad and obscure (“Fix Ramadi” being a

contemporary example)—the commander is likely to find the design methodology useful.

Recognizing that the rule of thumb we propose applies to the design methodology, not to conceptual thinking itself, is important. The SAMS experience indicates, in fact, that the most effective planners do not compartmentalize their thinking into conceptual and detailed components. Instead, they integrate the two to such an extent that an outside observer would find it difficult to determine when the planner was engaged in one rather than the other. The question of when one uses conceptual thinking and when one uses detailed thinking, as opposed to when one uses the design methodology or the MDMP, is valid only in the laboratory. In the real world, effective commanders and staffs integrate them seamlessly.

## **A Case Study in Conceptual and Detailed Thinking**

Operation Overlord presents material for a case study in the integration of conceptual and detailed planning for a problem of staggering complexity. The planning effort—undertaken by American and British officers between 1943 and 1944—blended

conceptual and detailed planning for complex problems to enable meaningful action. Although this group of military planning professionals, known collectively as the “COSSAC staff,” knew nothing of today’s design methodology, their example of conceptual and detailed thinking is instructive nonetheless.<sup>9</sup>

Retroactively labeling the COSSAC planning effort as an example of the design methodology would be inappropriate and perhaps confusing. That is not the suggestion here. With the possible exception of some overlapping word choice, the COSSAC staff was conducting a process much more akin to the MDMP, or its precursor, the “Estimate of the Situation.”<sup>10</sup> However, this vignette does provide an excellent example of the necessary mixture of conceptual and detailed planning inherent in any worthwhile military operations process.

In the early spring of 1943, the American and British Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) ordered the establishment of a headquarters to begin the formal planning for the eventual “full scale assault against the continent in 1944 (Operation Overlord).”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the CCS directed that this staff develop a credible deception plan and determine what would be required if the German government collapsed without an invasion.

Although the headquarters would eventually transform into the staff of the Supreme Allied Commander, at the outset the CCS declined to appoint a commander and elected instead to have Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan serve as the chief of staff. Over the next nine months, Morgan and his staff conducted half a dozen distinct iterations of cyclic planning refinement, moving from a general concept to a specific planning directive, while simultaneously generating movement tables, detailed topographic and oceanographic surveys, and refined statements of operational requirements. As Morgan himself identified early on, the efforts of the COSSAC staff would transcend any previous definition of planning.<sup>12</sup> In its final form, Operation Overlord was a military undertaking of a “magnitude undreamt of before,” eventually involving over 130,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines from seven different countries.

To enable the COSSAC planners to approach a problem of the size and scale envisioned, they needed a means for approximating their complex

problem at a level of simplicity that was useful. One example of how Morgan and his staff accomplished this happened at the beginning of the planning effort in 1943. Although the COSSAC staff was instructed to build three supporting campaign plans (deception, assault, and stability), and their initial analysis suggested where and when to cross the channel and with how much, they quickly realized that the heart of their problem was landing craft. The conceptual notion of assaulting with Allied forces across the English Channel led the planning team into a detailed effort to determine how many boats and of what size and configuration would be needed. In other words, the complex problem of a multi-Army, multi-division assault from the sea with supporting airborne invasion and accompanying naval and air-delivered operational fires was reduced to an effort to determine the number of boats needed. The COSSAC planners’ efforts to approximate their problem in simple terms are akin to the conceptual notion of framing the environment and framing the problem, both of which are inherent in the design methodology.

In a similar manner, the experience of the COSSAC staff provides an example of the benefits of mixing analytic and intuitive decision making. As noted above, the benefit of this blending in the execution of the design methodology is the reduction of uncertainty by testing and supplementing the commander’s intuition. In this example, the purpose of the COSSAC effort was to confirm or deny the intuition of CCS leaders, such as General George Marshall, who instinctively sensed the pressure the invasion of Europe would have on the Nazis. What the CCS needed were details regarding the size of the force and the time and space it would take to train and assemble. As Morgan put it, the COSSAC staff needed to figure out what tools they needed, and answer these questions: “can the job be done with these tools, or not? If so, how, and if not, why not?”<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the COSSAC staff’s deliberate effort to examine in detail every military crossing of the English Channel from the 11th century to the 1942 raid on Dieppe used detailed analysis to replace uncertainty with a set of known facts. Furthermore, Morgan’s insistence on employing subject matter experts in a variety of supplementary planning efforts helped the COSSAC staff get every brain into the fight.



Would Morgan and his team have benefited from the the design methodology of our doctrine? Two indicators suggest that they would have. First, Morgan's problem seems to fit easily into our proposed "rule of thumb." He lacked an assigned mission with a clear task and purpose, and the guidance he did have was vague in the extreme. Furthermore, his familiarity with the problem was limited by the lack of experience in operations of this magnitude and operational scale. The SAMS experience over the past several years indicates that this is exactly the situation when the design methodology is most beneficial. Secondly, although the design methodology did not exist in 1943, Morgan and his staff used many of the tools that underlie its methods, "iteration" being only the most obvious example. The COSSAC staff's overall effort to reduce the unfamiliarity of the CCS (and military professionals everywhere) with the requirements for a multi-army seaborne invasion and the simultaneous development of specific missions for the land, air, and sea forces involved are a perfect example of the integration of conceptual and detailed planning. They highlight the type of situation in which the design methodology is most useful to commanders and staffs.

## The Future of Design Methodology

To get the most utility out of design, our doctrine must recognize the need for integrated planning that incorporates the best of the conceptual tools of the design methodology with the best of the detailed planning tools of the MDMP. The mental image of a group of "designers" aiding a commander's conceptual thinking and then passing off a product to the less talented "planners" who then turn it into a plan is not a viable model. As our doctrine already states, "conceptual planning must respond to detailed constraints."<sup>14</sup>

Instead, planners must be able to master conceptual thinking *and* detailed thinking, with the design methodology serving as one of several available tools. The ability of a commander or a planner to recognize the decisive elements of a problem and develop a course of action based on these rests on his ability to think in both conceptual terms and in detail. At the School of Advanced Military Studies, we remain dedicated to producing operational planners who excel at doing both.



Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

School of Advanced Military Studies students and instructor during the Operational Command Workshop, part of the year-long Future Warfare Study Plan Unified Quest 2008.

## NOTES

1. Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO]) para. 3-2.

2. FM 5-0, para. 3-1.

3. FM 5-0, para. 2-43.

4. The Infantry Journal, Incorporated, *Infantry in Battle, Third Edition* (Richmond, Virginia: Marine Corps Association Press, 1986), 1. Originally published in 1934, this collection of observations based on U.S. experiences in the Great War was developed at Fort Benning under the direction of George C. Marshall.

5. FM 5-0, para. 2-23.

6. FM 5-0, para. 2-20. It is worth noting that the historical examples of structured and ill-structured problems used in FM 5-0 are found in paragraph 3-16, and in both cases the sole factor in determining structure is the familiarity of the commander with the problem. It seems likely that the phrase "the world is increasingly complex" may be more accurately worded as "we are increasingly asked to perform unfamiliar tasks."

7. FM 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*,

(Washington, DC: GPO), para. 2-12 through 2-15.

8. FM 5-0, para. 3-32.

9. Frederick Morgan, *Overture to Overlord* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1950), 2. The name is taken from the initials of the senior officer appointed—the Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Command, or COSSAC.

10. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations*, 22 May 1941 (reprint) (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1992), 25.

11. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. *History of COSSAC*, File 8-3.6A CA (Washington DC: Chief of Military History,) 3 and 5.

12. United States Forces—European Theater, "Report of the General Board: Study of the Organization of the European Theater of Operations (General Board Study Number 2)" (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, circa 1946), 11.

13. Morgan, 61.

14. FM 5-0, para. 2-39.

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# Complexity Leadership

## New Conceptions for Dealing with Soldier Suicides

Robert M. Hill, Ed.D.

*I no longer believe that organizations are inherently unmanageable in this world of constant flux and unpredictability. Rather, I believe that our present ways of organizing are outmoded, and that the longer we remain entrenched in our old ways, the further we move from . . . wonderful breakthroughs in understanding that the world of science calls “elegant.” The layers of complexity, the sense of things being beyond our control and out of control, are but signals of our failure to understand a deeper reality of organizational life, and of life in general.*

— Margaret Wheatley<sup>1</sup>

**I**N 2009, THE Army suffered roughly 160 suicides and over 1,700 attempted suicides. As of August 2010, the Army had reported 145 suicides, 80 of which were active-duty and 65 reservist.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for these suicides remain elusive. According to an Army study released in 2010, nearly 80 percent of those committing suicide had deployed to a combat zone only once or not at all, suggesting that stress factors other than those connected with combat are involved.<sup>3</sup>

The Army has traditionally viewed issues related to morale, quality of life, and training as leadership challenges. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership*, identifies eight core leader competencies, among them the ability to create a positive, inclusive, and open environment in which soldiers believe they are valued for their contribution to the unit and its mission. Yet the increase in suicides raises the question whether such environments exist in sufficient number. A *Time* magazine article profiling a Houston recruiting battalion’s high incidence of suicides suggests there is definite room for improvement.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this article is not to argue that the steady rise in suicides is attributable to a failure in leadership. I believe that leaders at every level are genuinely striving to confront this issue; however, I do argue that unless the Army considers and adopts new forms of leadership, suicides will continue to haunt it. While the Army cannot prevent every suicide, the aim must be to reduce the number dramatically, and new visions of leadership are essential to the task.

The Army prides itself on cultivating leaders capable of dealing with some of humankind’s most intractable problems. Yet its views on leadership are

Robert M. Hill is currently deputy chief, Leader Development, Education and Training, Information Proponent Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, and a seminar leader for the Functional Area 30 Qualification Course. From July 2009 to July 2010, he served as a public affairs officer at International Security Assistance Force Headquarters, Kabul, Afghanistan. He received a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy, an M.A. from Duke University, and an Ed.D. from the University of Missouri.

The Army encourages Soldiers to reach out, talk, and listen when they need help. (Photo Credit: SSGT Carlos Burger).



surprisingly outdated. As Christopher Paparone notes, the military is wedded to a Newtonian worldview that is increasingly irrelevant.<sup>5</sup> In order to understand why our conceptions of leadership need to be expanded, we must examine the evolution of thinking about organizations in which leadership is a fundamental component.

## The Evolution of Organizational Theory

Views of leadership are typically aligned with the way organizations are framed. Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal delineate four such frames—structural, human resource, political, and symbolic.<sup>6</sup> These frames offer four different vantage points from which to analyze organizations. They reflect a historical and evolving chronology of thinking about organizations.

Through time, organizations and our conceptions of them have become increasingly complex. For example, we might symbolize an organization as a brain.<sup>7</sup> In the past, if organizations were understood purely in mechanistic or structural ways, then the notion of comparing them to the human brain would have been rejected. Either this or the conception of the human brain was far simpler than it is today. Revolutionary advances in science and technology, especially information technology, have made possible the *complexification* of thinking about organizations and leadership. Not only are vastly more complex frames, metaphors, and models available today, but the objects to which they are applied are more complex, because they can be investigated and modeled more complexly. It is useful to see how this evolution has occurred.

**Structural frame.** Two assumptions undergird the structural frame. Organizations achieve their missions more efficiently when roles are clarified and specialized (division of labor) and subsequently coordinated and integrated. The structural frame also relies heavily on hierarchy as its organizing and coordinating principle, on top of which presides a single individual. In other words, role specialization includes the creation of a leadership role with responsibilities that cannot be shared without risking the effectiveness of the organization.

Leadership theories tied to this view of organizations tend to reinforce the equation that leadership equals leader. The leader is the one around whom the

organization revolves, so understanding leadership becomes a case study of leaders themselves—their traits, habits, and behaviors. Among these behaviors is the ability to orchestrate the efforts of subordinates at all levels, either through quid pro quo transactions or by modeling desired conduct. According to Gary Yukl, the challenge with this *heroic* view of both organization and leadership is that it overly simplifies the complex dynamics involved, such as intervening variables, external factors, the dynamics of power, and situational variables, among others.<sup>8</sup>

**Human resource frame.** If the structural frame focuses on the skeleton of an organization, the human resource frame looks at its organs—the living, breathing apparatus that gives an organization its unique life. The human resource frame begins to broaden leadership possibilities away from mechanical, managerial, or transactional routines and relationships to situational and transformational ones, although the locus of leadership still remains the exclusive province of the formal leader.

Within the human resource frame, leadership tends to emerge as a function of how the people within an organization are viewed or framed from the perspective of the formal leader. Donald McGregor's Theory X/Theory Y provides a case in point. Theory X assumes that people are inherently lazy, lack ambition, and want or need to be led. Theory Y assumes much the opposite—that people are self-directed, ambitious, and need only broad guidance. If a leader operates from a Theory X perspective, then he is more likely to lead in a directed way, using tight controls and perhaps coercion. If he operates from a Theory Y perspective, then his chief task is to “arrange organizational conditions so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their efforts toward organizational rewards.”<sup>9</sup>

Other theories of leadership arising from this frame are essentially variations on the theme that the way leaders view subordinates dictates how they will lead them. Theory X supports more transactional leadership, while Theory Y paves the way for servant and transformational leadership, among others. Situational or contingent leadership is essentially leaders adapting their leadership to fit both the person led and the situation in which leadership occurs. Finally, as leaders evolve their viewpoints about others in their organizations (along the Y rather than the X axis), seeing them

less as subordinates than as peers, more complex conceptualizations of leadership emerge, among them participative, democratic, and invitational leadership.<sup>10</sup>

**Political frame.** The structural frame looked at the skeleton of an organization or its physical infrastructure. The human resource frame looked at the people inside. The political frame adds the dynamic of broader human interaction and explores facets of organizations that emerge from these interactions. Rather than being a mere collective of discrete living beings, the organization itself begins to take on attributes of a living organism. The assumptions supporting this frame are that organizations are “complex webs of individual and group interests.”<sup>11</sup> As soon as there are two people in a room, differences exist and competition begins. Leadership becomes a matter of negotiating these differences and allocating scarce resources.

The political frame concerns issues of power, mediation, and agenda setting. Leadership within this frame involves understanding the dynamics of power and how to achieve, maintain, and engage it. It further involves an understanding of coalition building and consensus building. Within the political frame, the potential for turning legitimate authority on its head becomes very real. Rigid and clear rules of engagement within the structural frame become problematic. Those on the bottom can wield as much if not more power than those at the top. Leadership becomes less a function of the leader’s qualities or his views of subordinates and more a function of the ongoing dynamic between them.

**Symbolic frame.** Enlarging the dynamic that exists between and among people within an organization—what Linda Lambert defines as its “spaces, fields or zones”—takes place in the symbolic frame.<sup>12</sup> These fields and zones channel the animating force of an organization, expressed in its culture, history, traditions, ceremonies, rituals, symbols, and metaphors. This frame widens the possibilities for leadership because it recognizes that leadership, “like energy, is not finite, not restricted by formal authority and power; it permeates a healthy culture and is undertaken by whoever sees a need or an opportunity.”<sup>13</sup>

A key assumption governing the symbolic frame is that ambiguity and uncertainty are more widespread

within organizations than we might imagine. People employ symbols and metaphor to “resolve confusion, increase predictability, find direction, and anchor hope and faith.”<sup>14</sup> Within this frame, then, leadership becomes largely an act of sensemaking. While it is possible for the formal authority to attempt to make sense of things on behalf of the entire organization, the literature on the construction of meaning (which is essentially a process of learning) concludes that sensemaking is a collaborative process in which everyone has a role, both leader and follower, teacher and learner. In fact, in this frame, the line between leader and follower melts away, as everyone has similar traits and possibilities—simultaneously leader and follower—and leadership is a quality of the entire organization rather than any single individual within it.

**Images and metaphors.** In contrast to Bolman and Deal’s four frames, Gareth Morgan employs metaphor to understand organizations: “Metaphor encourages us to think and act in new ways. It extends horizons of insight and creates new possibilities.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, it allows for more expanded and complex conceptualizations of leadership from the outset. Morgan expounds on eight metaphors in his *Images of Organization*, but makes clear that many more metaphors are possible. Each metaphor only captures one facet of an organization to any significant degree. “Metaphors create insight. But they also distort. They have strengths. But they also have limitations.”<sup>16</sup> Leaders interested in understanding their organizations better are encouraged by Morgan to examine them through as many metaphors as possible, the act of which speaks to the notion that knowledge, even self-knowledge, is both constructed and iterative.

## Frames, Metaphors, and Sensemaking: An Integrated Heuristic

Paparone effectively synthesizes the various constructs discussed so far. In his article, “On Metaphors We Are Led By,” he investigates how metaphor “shapes understanding in an increasingly ambiguous world of meaning. Indeed the rhetorical work of . . . those [he calls] ‘thought leaders’ . . . is largely the management of meaning.”<sup>17</sup> He argues that these thought leaders are still prone to outdated thinking, and his framework offers a means to avoid

the pitfalls of unreflective practice and ensure the imaginative use of metaphor.

Paparone's heuristic categorizes metaphors by the worldviews from which they arise. These categories fall into four quadrants defined by two continua: objective-subjective and simple-complicated. Bolman and Deal's four frames are overlaid onto this construct, as seen in Figure 1. While not exactly correspondent, the correlation between them demonstrates the degree to which thinking about organizations, leadership, and meaning-making is convergent and congruous.

Paparone states that within the complicated-subjective quadrant "thought leaders feed on metaphors from the other three views of reality while they attempt to impose their view of reality . . . their sensemaking, on others."<sup>18</sup> This article modifies Paparone's thought that sensemaking (what he also refers to as sensegiving) resides solely within the mind and actions of leaders who indoctrinate others with their sense of things. In a complicated-subjective world in which suicides are rampant, a more diffused and pluralistic process of sensemaking is needed.

By definition, diffused and pluralistic sensemaking only becomes possible when more people are involved in the process. Before exploring more expansive visions of organization and leadership, why we persist in privileging hierarchical structures and heroic leadership is worth examining.

## Hierarchies and Heroes

The first reason that we adhere to hierarchical structures and heroic notions of leadership is that they conform to the prevailing and unchallenged worldview that leadership equals leader, a form of circular logic from which it is difficult to break free. Yukl argues that theories and conceptions of leadership are laden with biases. These theories "include the often implicit assumption that leadership is primarily about heroic individuals who possess essential traits and skills and use appropriate behaviors to motivate and develop effective dyadic relationships with subordinates."<sup>19</sup>

Too, heroic conceptions of leadership further reinforce historical power structures. A structural (Newtonian) worldview remains a way to justify the patriarchy and the patriarch. Theories of leadership

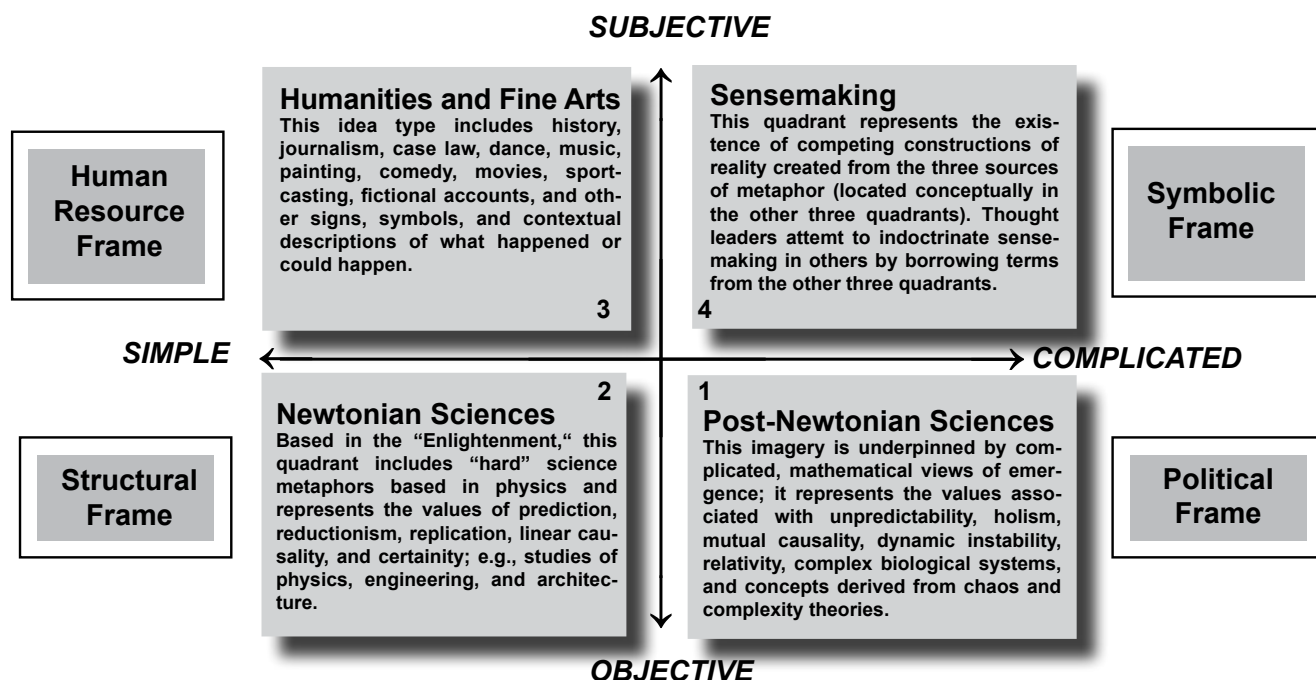


Figure 1. Paparone's sensemaking heuristic overlaid with Bolman and Deal's four frames.



thereby tend to focus exclusively on individuals at the top of the pecking order, predominately men.

Another reason for viewing leadership heroically is the need for simplicity. Human beings strive to systematize the world's complexity. Without question, organizations and leadership are complex, so we tend to "exaggerate the importance of leaders in order to explain events in a way that fits [our] assumptions and implicit theories."<sup>20</sup> Yukl concludes we want to see and explain the world in rational terms when, in fact, experience is ambiguous, messy, and often incomprehensible.

The need for simplicity and rationality leads inexorably to the last and most compelling reason we cling to outmoded visions of leadership: the demand for accountability. Military leaders take to heart the dictum that they are responsible for everything their unit or team does or fails to do. This demand for responsibility and accountability often has legal implications, as in the case of those serving in command billets, but it arises from the same implicit biases and assumptions that undergird our long-held belief that leadership is, at its core, about the qualities and behaviors of the person at the top of the organization. The need for accountability carries with it the onerous implication that the formal leader can *touch everything* and *shape all outcomes*, which is a tenuous and even dangerous assumption. In the specific case of dealing with the increase in suicides, the time has come to consider alternative conceptions of leadership, ones that imbue entire units with shared accountability. The question arises whether the Army, as an institution, will permit such conceptions to flourish or flounder. The lives of our soldiers depend on how we answer this question.

## Complexity Leadership

The 2008 revised edition of Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, was made necessary in large part because the "operational environment" had so radically changed. Among the important trends that

FM 3-0 highlights as affecting the environment are globalization, technology, demographic changes, urbanization, resource demand and scarcity, climate change and natural disasters, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and failed or failing states.<sup>21</sup> In combination, they create a global environment of chaos and uncertainty, where predictability is rare, and linearity and determinism are increasingly irrelevant and dangerous forms of thinking.

The current global environment is chaotic and uncertain, complexity underpins every system and process, and determinism is no longer consistently operative. What are military leaders to do? Below are a number of strategies.

**Think more complexly.** Yaneer Bar-Yam argues that in order to exist and survive in a complex environment, organizations must think and behave complexly.<sup>22</sup> Pierpaolo Andriani and Giuseppina Passiante employ the metaphor of "open source" to define a leadership capacity that is available to all members of the organization and that continually balances stimulation and constraint. They argue that decisions have to be made at the level at which the relevant information resides and be distributed dynamically between top-down control and bottom-up percolation. In some instances, hierarchies may be necessary for purposes of accountability and responsibility but not to dictate how employees act and think. "Rather, complex leadership requires a system in which managers facilitate the speedy co-evolution of the organization (or part of it) with the relevant external environment."<sup>23</sup> Wilfred H. Drath states that the first step to dealing with complex problems may seem counterintuitive: to create even more complex capacity. "A complex capacity to respond means something different from just a more complicated process. It means a more varied, less predictable, more layered process capable of greater subtlety."<sup>24</sup>

In the information age, with open source models such as Wikipedia defining new forms of

***The need for accountability carries with it the onerous implication that the formal leader can touch everything and shape all outcomes, which is a tenuous and even dangerous assumption.***

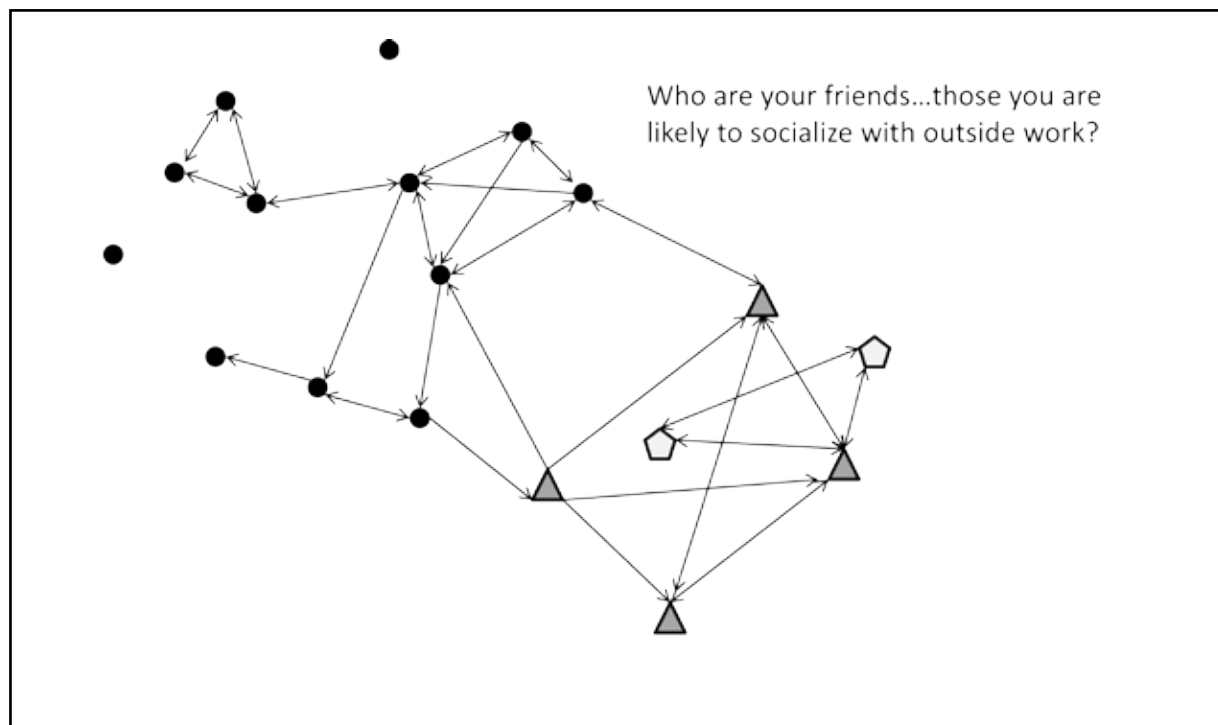
collaboration, organizations must quickly adapt similar models or risk irrelevancy. Co-evolution of the organization requires new structures of organizing, learning, and working new structures based on new ways of seeing. Kevin Kelly offers a number of metaphors that capture emergent organizational structures, among them networks, complex adaptive systems, swarm systems, “vivisystems,” and collective systems.<sup>25</sup> All of these systems are highly diverse and diffuse. There is no clear organizing center, yet a sort of collective mind exists, nonetheless; Kelly terms it the invisible hand of control without authority. The network structure best adapts to a complex, information-saturated, and interconnected world:

The only organization capable of unprejudiced growth, or unguided learning, is a network. All other topologies limit what can happen. A network swarm is all edges and therefore open ended any way you come at it. Indeed, the network is the least structured organization that can be said to have any structure at all. It is capable of infinite rearrangements, and

of growing in any direction without altering the basic shape of the thing, which is really no outward shape at all.<sup>26</sup>

For leaders who are used to hierarchical control, the struggle is how to master what Kelly terms “noncontrol,” allowing the benefits of the network or swarm to thrive while, at the same time, minimizing its disadvantages.

**Let go.** Army Field Manual 3-0, *Operations* (2008) posits that in a highly complex and uncertain environment, “predictability is rare, making centralized decision making and orderly processes ineffective.”<sup>27</sup> It instructs leaders to delegate to the maximum degree possible in order to retain flexibility and initiative. In other words, formal leaders need to let go and empower leaders at every level to contribute based on their relevant and immediate knowledge. Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom argue that there is a “sweet spot” between the extremes of tightly controlled, hierarchical organizations and open-source, leaderless organizations.<sup>28</sup> Being active and diligent in pursuit of this sweet spot is an important task for



**Figure 2.** Example of a social network diagram, produced by the Organizational Risk Analyzer application that depicts a network centered on friendships. Icon coding is used to differentiate officers (pentagons), noncommissioned officers (triangles), and enlisted soldiers (circles).

leaders who seek the capacity-building capabilities for mission command.

**Expand capacity at all levels.** Letting go invariably leads to the expansion of leadership capacity throughout an organization. The inverse also proves true. When capacity expands, leaders are more readily able to let go. Lambert defines capacity as broad-based and skillful participation.<sup>29</sup> Managers must cultivate both. Drath calls on three capabilities to create complex capacity: shared sensemaking, connection, and navigation, the last of which is the ability to continually assess and course-correct toward an uncertain point on the horizon.<sup>30</sup> There is no known destination; rather, through interconnected and shared sensemaking, the organization learns to arrive at the right destination, or rather makes each destination along its route right for that moment and time.

**Move toward profound simplicity.** Karl E. Weick asserts that “we are all struggling with events that don’t make sense.”<sup>31</sup> A noted theorist on sensemaking during chaotic or disastrous events, Weick argues that in the face of uncertainty, individuals tend to grasp for old or ready-made solutions rather than become agile and attentive to new ones. People progress from superficial simplicity, to confused complexity, to profound simplicity. Superficial simplicity is often apparent in the impulse to flee in the face of chaos or to rush to quick explanations or causes. Confused complexity occurs when superficial explanations begin to break down and leaders attempt to control the uncontrollable. Profound simplicity is the recognition that complex problems demand complex solutions that can only come through a process of shared and evolving sensemaking. Profound simplicities are “seasoned simplicities, simplicities that have been tested by mentally simulating their consequences, simplicities that reaffirm what it means to be a human being.”<sup>32</sup>

Profound simplicity echoes Eastern philosophical thought, which offers a countervailing view to the Western tradition that informs much of our thinking about sensemaking, decision making, and leadership. In the Western tradition, history is comprised of great acts, while in the Chinese tradition, history is continual transformation. In the former, the only way to deal with uncertainty is to take bold, decisive action, which is ephemeral.

In the latter, no seismic action is taken, but as François Jullien notes, efficacy is nonetheless achieved:

For, in contrast to action that, even if it is prolonged, is necessarily momentary, the duration of transformation is extended; and it is this continuity that produces effects. Chinese thought constantly returns to this theme. However imperceptible the starting point, by slowly accentuating its propensity, one can end up with the most decisive results.<sup>33</sup>

Put another way, Chinese philosophy argues that rather than imposing effects on the environment, man must allow effects to impose themselves. Weick argues that dealing with complexity requires persistent sensemaking that equates to transformation: “Sensemaking is dynamic and requires continuous updating and reaccomplishment. As a leader, don’t let people languish in the feeling, ‘Now we have it figured out.’ They don’t have it figured out.”<sup>34</sup> Dealing with the inexplicable involves telling stories about what is being faced and how to deal with it, but the stories constantly evolve based on new information. Profound simplicity means allowing these stories to unfold.

**Start small.** Eastern thought suggests that lasting change comes through continual small adjustments rather than intermittent major ones. Rather than taking decisive, bold action, leaders need to allow action to unfold organically and naturally. Weick argues that instead of thinking then doing, individuals must think *while* doing or think *in* doing: “All we have going for us is the tactic of stumbling into explanations that work and talking with others to see whether what we have stumbled into is in fact part of the answer.”<sup>35</sup>

In brief, achieving Information Age leadership requires Army leaders to empower their organizations to self-learn and self-organize so that inherent and organic ways of dealing with a complex world can be harnessed more effectively. It means becoming a true learning organization and all that this entails. It means resisting the urge to over-control the environment and allowing for stumbling into answers, no matter how antithetical this letting go may seem to current ways of operating and leading. In most instances, it means



giving way to a capacity larger than self, a capacity formal leaders nonetheless help cultivate, expand, and sharpen.

### Fictional Vignette: “I Don’t Know”

The following vignette examines how this seeming paradox might be achieved and applied to the problem of rising suicide rates.

Lieutenant Colonel Walt Dickens shook his head from side to side. The day prior, a noncommissioned officer (NCO) in the battalion next to his hanged himself in his garage. Dickens had heard about it within hours and decided to have a battalionwide stand-down the next day. He now stood before Bravo Company (he would visit each company in succession), where Staff Sergeant Hitchens had asked him why this NCO had killed himself. “I don’t know,” Dickens replied. “That’s why I wanted us to take some time today and maybe over the next few days and weeks to figure out how we ensure this doesn’t happen in our unit. I’m going to stand in the back and just listen as you all talk out loud. Captain Clarke and First Sergeant Hodrick are going to facilitate the discussion. Nothing is off the table. Don’t hold back. Speak your minds. Clarke, the first sergeant and I don’t have the answers to this tragedy. But, I am confident that we—all of us here in this room—do. So help us figure this out.” The members of Bravo Company nodded somberly.

Hodrick looked around the room. Many of these soldiers knew the sergeant who had taken his life. Their faces registered grief, uncertainty, disbelief, even anger. In a quiet voice, he asked them, “What can we do to ensure someone in this room never feels so alone, so overwhelmed, so hopeless that he or she would take his or her life?” There was a long silence. Finally, Private First Class Warren raised her hand. She looked back at Dickens, Clarke, and Hodrick. “I’ll be honest, sirs, First Sergeant . . . I sort of thought you’d tell us.”

Clarke spoke now. “You know, Warren, when Lieutenant Colonel Dickens called me last night about having this meeting and the reason behind it, I started to rattle off a list of things that the First Sergeant and I could do, like leading a sensing session, reshooting the *Beyond the Front* videos we watched during the Armywide stand-down earlier this year, and he said, ‘Whoa, Mike, this isn’t about



U.S. Army, SSG Justin Weaver

In 2009, the Army suffered roughly 160 suicides and over 1,700 attempted suicides. As of August 2010, the Army had reported 145 suicides, 80 of which were active-duty and 65 reservist.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for these suicides remain elusive. According to an Army study released in 2010, nearly 80 percent of those committing suicide had deployed to a combat zone only once or not at all, suggesting that stress factors other than those connected with combat are involved.<sup>3</sup>

what you or I should or could do. The solution is beyond us. We truly need to engage everyone in discovering solutions that will work, and even then, we have to keep engaging everyone. We can’t let up.’ So, in that spirit, have you got any ideas?”

Private Warren was silent for a long time. Everyone’s eyes were on her. She started to tear up and swore under her breath because she knew she was just fueling gender stereotypes, but she couldn’t help it. Falteringly, she spoke: “I lost my best friend in high school to suicide. I’ve carried a lot of guilt that I wasn’t there when she needed me most. So, I don’t know if this will help or not . . . I’m just a PFC . . . but I am willing for anyone to call me 24/7 if they need to talk to someone, about anything. I mean my phone is almost an appendage, and I’m a really good listener.”

Sergeants Acorn and Allan simultaneously spoke up. “I’m willing to do the same,” they said. A few more volunteers spoke up. First Sergeant Hodrick smiled. “Wow, this is good. Thank you. Let’s talk some more a bit later about how we can sustain this ‘help line’ concept. But let’s face it. This is pretty emotional right now, and emotions have a way of energizing us to *say* we’ll do something, but later on, once the emotions have subsided, that sense of passion tends to go away, too. If we do something like this, we have to be able to sustain it. We have to be willing three months down the road to still get that 2:00 a.m. phone call. Are we really ready for that level of commitment? My point is that we need to think through all this and make sure that whatever we set up we can sustain. Still, this is a great first step. What else?”

It was summer and the company was augmented by a West Point cadet, Stefan Zeninski. He raised his hand. “I’m studying the application of network science and social network analysis to problem solving. It can be a bit technical, but it’s basically a means of understanding ways that people interact with each other. I could do some action research and see what a network analysis of this company, maybe even the battalion would reveal.” Lieutenant Colonel Dickens quickly took Cadet Zeninski up on his offer. In the coming two weeks, Cadet Zeninski had soldiers complete a survey in which they were asked questions like: To whom do you turn for help being a better soldier? To whom do you turn with personal problems? Who are your friends? Who do you confide in? When he entered the results into the Organizational Risk Analyzer (ORA) software, he discovered some interesting patterns and trends that he shared with the battalion.<sup>36</sup>

With Lieutenant Colonel Dickens, the command sergeant major, and the company commanders and first sergeants, he shared a series of network diagrams like the one in Figure 2. Later, he spent time with each company showing them the same diagrams, only with the names changed to protect identities. These diagrams led to a series of conversations in which these same patterns and trends emerged.

The first pattern was a handful of soldiers in each company who were totally isolated. When asked who they turned to with personal problems or who they confided in, these individuals indicated no one. Another handful was connected to the larger

network by only a single tie. Other trends included the tendency of subgroups to form cliques based on rank or section. For example, E-3s and below turned largely to each other; platoon members did the same. While not unexpected, these findings made more explicit the tendency of such cliques to fragment the organization in ways that might inhibit communication or the “bubbling up” of potential problems. More troubling were the cliques forming along racial lines.

Armed with the insights yielded from Cadet Zeninski’s analysis, Lieutenant Colonel Dickens and his leadership team undertook a number of initiatives. First, they set up a monthly town hall meeting, inviting battalion personnel to engage their peers on issues they believed relevant to everyone. Presenters of all ranks knew they had an opportunity to raise concerns or ideas for improvement; they also knew that they had to propose solutions. The next day, officers and senior NCOs facilitated discussion groups, whose composition was rotated month to month and across the battalion. The ideas presented the day prior were discussed in greater detail and solutions refined. The outcomes of these discussion groups were addressed at the next staff call, and decisions reached on how to best implement them. All decisions were shared with members of the battalion. Whenever it would amplify the issues being discussed, Lieutenant Colonel Dickens invited a community “thought leader” to address the battalion and share experiences and ideas.

The leadership team also invited members of the battalion to complete an interest survey and, based on the results, established a series of interest groups. Every soldier had to belong to one interest group. Each month, members of these groups would share a meal, and Lieutenant Colonel Dickens allotted time in the training schedule for each interest group to participate in one activity. The gamers’ interest group, for example, had a tournament each month, sponsored by one of the battalion’s community partners. Leadership of these groups was not limited by rank. The gamers’ group selected Specialist Garcia as its leader, based on his exceptional knowledge of gaming.

Based on the results of analysis conducted by Brigadier General Colleen McGuire, then director of the Army’s Suicide Prevention Task Force, Lieutenant Colonel Dickens knew that soldiers who

committed suicide tended to exhibit patterns of risk-taking as precursors to ending their lives, such as reckless driving, reckless spending, alcoholism, or marital infidelity.<sup>37</sup> In combat, these behaviors were often masked or sublimated. Back at home station, they reemerged and, if not monitored and regulated, quickly created a downward spiral that often led to suicide. This fact only reinforced in his mind the need for constant vigilance.

Dickens memorized the name of every soldier. He expected his subordinate leaders to do the same within their units. He circulated widely and daily. He encouraged soldiers at every level to use their talents to lead from that level, and challenged formal leaders to cultivate and harness the energy that comes with shared leadership. He asked tough questions in order to stimulate meaningful conversations, and patiently listened to what he heard. He knew he couldn't let up. A suicide always hovered in the shadows, he thought.

"Good morning, Sergeant Young," Dickens said, noting a clouded look on Young's face. He was visiting Charlie Company in the motor pool.

"Good morning, sir," Young replied, a bit distant and distracted.

"Is something troubling you, Young?" Dickens asked.

"Yes, sir. Something is. Specialist Hart separated from his wife recently. Hart's been acting weird. I've tried to talk with him about it to let him know I'm here, but it's like he doesn't want to hear it. I just knew I couldn't leave it at that. He's part of the soccer interest group, so I asked Sergeant Bulfone to talk with him, see if he could make headway. He's talking to him now. I'm just anxious to know how it's going."

"Good job, Sergeant. Please give me an update as soon as you can. Track me down if you have to. If necessary, we'll get Chaplain Green involved and get Hart additional counseling."

He moved on, confident in Young's and Bulfone's ability to pull Specialist Hart out from the shadows.

This was not rocket science, he thought. It was about making and sustaining connections and conversations. Every now and again, he worried that all these meetings and discussions, all this reflection and soul-searching meant that "real work" wasn't getting done. Then, just as he approached Second Lieutenant Glazer, he reminded himself that *this was the real work*.

"Good morning, Lieutenant," he said. "What's new with 2nd platoon?"

## Shared Accountability

One challenge of suicides is that no one-size-fits-all solution exists or works. Every soldier is unique. So is the journey some take to the brink of the abyss. If we limit ourselves to heroic conceptions of leadership, then we risk the worst kind of failure because we place inordinate expectations on one or a few individuals alone to sense and fix what is wrong. No matter how brilliant a leader might be, he or she alone has limited capacity. In contrast, *a more networked organization, in which everyone is able to sense problems and fix them within his scope of expertise, offers greater chances for dealing effectively with the myriad problems confronting the Army today.*

Military organizations are operating this way to some extent already; however, they need to do it more and sooner. Leaders initiate the process by consciously, willfully, and willingly letting go and fostering an environment in which shared sensemaking and capacity building are not only possible but actively encouraged. It may well be the case that a private first class has answers to the complex conundrum of suicide that colonels do not. We must enable this soldier's voice to be heard. More important, we must be willing to listen and put his ideas into action, along with other good ideas woven together by the collective brain of the organization. If rank has any privilege, it may simply be the privilege to encourage a capacity in which everyone can equally voice good ideas and equally account for his or her own welfare and that of the organization. **MR**

***If rank has any privilege, it may simply be the privilege to encourage a capacity in which everyone can equally voice good ideas...***



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# RED TEAMING



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UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN MILITARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES



# Leadership and Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms

Lieutenant Colonel Mary E. Card-Mina, U.S. Army

*Living in a war zone is an experience that leaves no one untouched.<sup>1</sup>*

*Lieutenant Colonel Mary E. Card-Mina is currently serving as the chief of Army Judge Advocate Recruiting. She holds an MMAS from the Command and General Staff College; a J.D. from the Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America; and an LLM from the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. She served as the brigade judge advocate for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Hood and FOB Kalsu, Iraq.*

*PHOTO: PFC Joseph Dwyer, from Mt. Sinai, NY, carries a young Iraqi boy who was injured during a battle between the U.S. Army's 7th Cavalry Regiment and insurgent forces on 25 March 2003 near Al Faysaliyah, Iraq. (AP Photo/Warren Zinn, Army Times)*

**T**HE DRINKING BEGAN the night Sally Jones received her first counseling statement. In the past, she had been considered one of the best officers in her brigade. Captain Jones was organized, energetic, and dedicated to her job. Quick to volunteer, she could be counted on to organize formal and informal unit social functions. However, this was before Sally's combat deployment.

When Sally returned from her 15-month deployment, she was promoted and sent to another unit on the same large installation. At her new unit, she was often late to work. Her attention to detail began to suffer, and she made a serious error by transposing numbers on a set of reports. After scoring 80 points below her previous average on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), she obtained the reputation for being the officer who put in the bare minimum. For the unit's organizational sports day, not only did Sally not volunteer to organize any of the events, she did not even attend.

Sally's new boss, Major Sam Smith, was disappointed in her duty performance. He assumed, incorrectly, that Sally held a desk job while deployed and, therefore, could never be affected by post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Smith assumed she had always been on the forward operating base and was a "Fobbit," and that, because Sally was a female, she had not been in "combat situations" but was "in the rear with the gear." Smith did not question Sally about her deployment when he counseled her for the serious work error and her lateness.

Did Major Smith do the right thing? Did he have any biases about women in combat or soldiers who worked "inside the wire" that affected his actions? What significance is an 80-point drop in Captain Jones' APFT score? What information could Jones' former unit share about her previous performance?

Should Smith have questioned why Captain Jones chose not to participate in organizational day?

Jones exhibited post traumatic stress symptoms, and early leader recognition of her symptoms may have prevented a later, more severe condition of PTSD. During her deployment, Jones routinely went out on dangerous combat patrols as part of her duties. She witnessed several traumatic events, including the death of a fellow soldier. These experiences caused her to suffer hyper-vigilance and lose sleep at night. The resulting fatigue caused her chronic lateness and inability to focus on detailed work. She began experiencing symptoms of depression; she chose not to exercise or socialize because she found little pleasure in these activities. Eventually, she started drinking to mask her pain. If Jones' leaders had recognized and understood her symptoms, could she possibly have thrived post-deployment? The answer is yes.

## Frequent Deployments

The nature of deployments and their frequency in support of the War on Terrorism require military leaders to recognize and better understand post traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) and PTSD. Across the military, service members returning from deployment may be branded malcontents or malingers when, in fact, they are afflicted with PTSS or PTSD.

The Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program calls for developing a cohesive plan "based upon the five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family."<sup>2</sup> One of the program's aims is to reduce PTSD.<sup>3</sup> Leaders and service providers in the mental health field are the definitive proponents to assure success in this endeavor.

Leadership, as defined in Army Field Manual 6-22, is "influencing people by providing purpose, motivation, and direction while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."<sup>4</sup> By understanding and recognizing PTSD and its symptoms, leaders in every military branch and at every rank can help those suffering from post traumatic stress by motivating and guiding those persons to seek resources and treatment. Leadership doctrine and practice requires that a leader be a person of character, presence, and intellect. By applying these

attributes, leaders can have a tremendous impact on identifying PTSS and PTSD in their peers, their subordinates, and their superiors.

## What are PTSD and PTSS?

As defined by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, post traumatic stress disorder is among the signature injuries for service members who currently serve in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>5</sup> It has been defined as "an anxiety disorder that occurs after a traumatic event in which a threat of serious injury or death was experienced or witnessed, and the individual's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror."<sup>6</sup> While events of longer duration increase the chances for PTSD, brief exposure to an extreme event can also lead to it.<sup>7</sup>

Post traumatic stress disorder is characterized by "extreme general physical arousal" because the nervous system has become sensitized to an overwhelming trauma. When general arousal becomes elevated, the nervous system then overreacts to even minor stressful events. Signs of arousal include trouble falling asleep, trouble staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating or remembering, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle responses. Someone suffering from PTSD might also experience an elevated heart rate, elevated blood pressure, hyperventilation, and lightheadedness. Post traumatic stress disorder can cause physical, emotional, mental, and even spiritual fatigue during which the service member experiences discouragement, hopelessness, and despair.<sup>8</sup>

There are several other features of the disorder. Many service members feel shame and guilt about a traumatic event whether or not they were responsible for it. Some service members experience many forms of mood disturbances such as depression, anxiety, and hostility, and sometimes report chronic and often unexplained pain as well as fatigue. Some of those suffering from PTSD rely on alcohol or drugs to relieve pain and start on a path of addiction. In more severe cases, self-mutilation and other self-destructive behaviors can develop.

Many service members experience night terrors or nightmares. During night terrors, one can wake up terrified but cannot remember a dream;



in nightmares, one might feel as though he or she is reliving the event or may feel the same fear, helplessness, or rage experienced during the event.<sup>9</sup> Night terrors and nightmares are the brain's way of processing a stressful experience. Many veterans try to avoid nightmares by turning to drugs or alcohol or by avoiding sleep altogether. According to the authors of *Strategies for Managing Stress After War*, "These attempted solutions only lead to new problems such as substance dependence and sleep deprivation. This also results in more irritability and depression, poorer memory, and increased stress and anxiety."<sup>10</sup>

Typically, PTSD is diagnosed after one experiences its symptoms for three months or more. Before the onset of PTSD, service members can experience isolated symptoms, or PTSS. If not treated, PTSS can develop into PTSD, so it is paramount that leaders recognize the symptoms. In understanding the basics of PTSD and PTSS, it is vital to recognize that individuals meet traumatic events with varying

degrees of preparedness. Some service members might have a history of previous trauma such as child abuse or sexual abuse. Some might have underdeveloped protective and problem-solving skills or low self-esteem. Some might have had habitually negative personality and habitually negative thought patterns or a biologically overactive nervous system before the onset of PTSD.

There are differences between the genders regarding PTSD and PTSS. Women are more than twice as likely to develop PTSD: statistically, 10 percent of women and 4 percent of men. Studies note that some PTSD symptoms are more common in women than in men. According to a study published by the National Center for PTSD, women tend "to have more trouble feeling emotions, and to avoid things that remind them of the trauma than men. Men are more likely to feel angry and to have trouble controlling their anger than women."<sup>11</sup> Women may take longer to recover from PTSD



DOD, Cherie Cullen

**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates tours the Restoration and Resilience Center at Fort Bliss, TX, 30 April 2008. The center, which is a volunteer program for U.S. soldiers, was designed as a local initiative to help treat soldiers who return from combat with post traumatic stress disorder.**

and are four times more likely to have long-lasting PTSD than men.<sup>12</sup> Women with PTSD are more likely to feel depressed and anxious, while men with PTSD are more likely to have problems with alcohol or drugs.<sup>13</sup> Both men and women who experience PTSD may develop physical health problems. The National Center for PTSD noted that about 15 percent of all military personnel in Iraq are women and that future studies are necessary to understand the effects of combat on women.<sup>14</sup>

One way in which PTSD might manifest itself in the workplace is through power and control issues. Service members do what is expected of them in wartime, but they also understand that “what happens next” may be beyond their personal control.<sup>15</sup> Upon returning home, some service members continue to feel helpless or to feel that they cannot control their life or take charge as they once did. Sometimes, service members have the opposite response and try to control everything in their lives. Along this line, “some veterans come to possess a sense of indestructibility” or “stop listening to authority figures, since those in command weren’t able to stop bad things from happening during war.”<sup>16</sup>

Leaders must understand that barriers, real or imagined, exist when it comes to seeking help for PTSD. A 2006 survey from the Office of the Surgeon General’s Mental Health Advisory Team asked soldiers and marines about barriers to receiving mental health care services in theater. Approximately half of the service members who screened positive for mental disorders cited concerns about appearing weak, being treated differently by leadership, and losing the confidence of members of the unit as barriers to receiving behavioral health care. More than a third of the respondents stated that seeking mental health treatment would have a harmful effect on his or her career.<sup>17</sup>

## The Role of Leadership

A true leader has the ability to give meaning to a crisis event and turn it into an opportunity for

growth.<sup>18</sup> Leadership involves emotion; therefore, leaders need emotional intelligence to provide meaning in times of crisis and post-crisis recovery. Leaders at all levels are the first line of defense against PTSS and PTSD. Sound leadership is essential to ensure resiliency and recovery from the mental damage of combat experiences.<sup>19</sup> The most effective leaders, then, are leaders of character with emotional depth, leaders of presence demonstrating resiliency, and leaders of intellect with the understanding of how to help.

**Leaders of character.** Three major factors determine a leader’s character: values, empathy, and the Warrior Ethos. In the context of understanding the complex issues of PTSS and PTSD, empathy enables a leader to assist a peer, a subordinate, or a superior officer more than any other factor. Empathy is “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>20</sup> According to Lieutenant Colonel Joe Doty, former deputy director of the Army’s Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic, empathy is “literally trying to put yourself in someone else’s shoes.”<sup>21</sup> It is “understanding something from another person’s foxhole.”<sup>22</sup>

Doty asserts, “To truly understand something from someone else’s perspective, the leader must genuinely care for the subordinate, and not just from a mission accomplishment perspective.” He gives the following suggestions on ways for leaders to demonstrate empathy: practice active listening techniques, encourage the person to open up, let the service member express how he is feeling and why he is feeling that way, and actively try to monitor the service member’s feelings and emotions.<sup>23</sup>

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness aims to sustain and build emotionally strong soldiers. By being empathetic, a leader can ensure he is doing all he can to take care of his subordinates, peers, and superiors. For example, a male may not be

***The most effective leaders, then, are leaders of character with emotional depth, leaders of presence demonstrating resiliency, and leaders of intellect with the understanding of how to help.***

U.S. Army photo by SPC. Michael J. MacLeod



**CSM Lawrence Wilson, the highest-ranking enlisted soldier of Multi-National Forces–Iraq, accompanies 1SG Mike Schlitz returning to Iraq as part of Operation Proper Exit, 29 December 2009, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq. Operation Proper Exit returns severely wounded veterans to the battlefields where they were wounded to help them find psychological closure.**

able to understand every issue that confronts a female service member and vice versa, but if he is empathetic, he will attempt to gain greater understanding. Those suffering from PTSS and PTSD are in need of empathetic leaders.

**Leaders of presence.** The Army and the military call on leaders to be resilient and to develop a resilient force. Numerous deployments in quick succession test the physical and emotional resiliency of the force. Service members suffering from PTSS or PTSD need assistance strengthening their individual resiliency.

Resiliency is defined in FM 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*, as the “tendency to recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus.”<sup>24</sup> If leaders quickly recognize post traumatic stress symptoms in themselves, their peers, their superiors, and their subordinates, then the process of working toward resiliency can more quickly

begin. Symptoms that are ignored, left unchecked, or minimized only lead to greater difficulties in the long term. For example, if a leader recognizes that a subordinate is constantly tired and gets him help for sleep issues, the subordinate might not spend as much time in the downward spiral of sleeplessness, drug or alcohol use, or sleep avoidance. To foster resiliency in the force, leaders need to be resilient themselves and seek help when they need it, as well as being vigilant and encouraging others to get help.

**Leaders of intellect.** According to FM 6-22, a leader’s intellectual capacity is what allows him or her to “conceptualize solutions and acquire knowledge to do the job.”<sup>25</sup> It is the leader’s intellectual capacity that applies “agility, judgment, innovation, interpersonal tact, and domain knowledge.”<sup>26</sup> Domain knowledge “encompasses the tactical and technical knowledge as well as cultural and geopolitical awareness.”<sup>27</sup> A leader of intellect knows that there are resources available to assist with PTSS and PTSD.



All military leaders should be aware of Military OneSource, a DOD website and resource center, staffed 24 hours a day for help with counseling and locating services.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, if a leader is unsure whether he is experiencing PTSS or PTSD or if he has a subordinate with unexplainable symptoms, a mental health self-assessment is available to identify the most beneficial resources.<sup>29</sup>

The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) is another successful and longstanding program that enables soldiers, civilians, and family members to communicate with leaders about issues affecting quality of life, including concerns regarding PTSD and PTSS. One of the outcomes of the AFAP process was the recognition of a shortage of behavioral health services. As a result of innovative and aggressive recruitment efforts in 2010, the Army now employs more than 3,900 behavioral health providers, including psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, and social workers. This increase of almost 400 health professionals helps provide services that Army community members need for treatment and recovery.

In addition, the Army's Medical Command has established a new Tele-Health Division, which provides behavioral health services such as tele-psychiatry, tele-psychology, medical evaluation boards, mental status evaluations, tele-neuropsychology and a school-based mental health program. These real-time services are provided via video-conference through a network of sites across five Regional Medical Commands. More information on AFAP can be found at the Army OneSource website under the Family Program and Services menu.

Through the National Center for PTSD, the Veterans Administration (VA) offers extensive information on stress-related health problems and coping, and provides educational materials for service members, family members, providers, and researchers.<sup>30</sup> The VA's Women Veterans Program manager coordinates comprehensive health care services for female veterans on issues specific to women.<sup>31</sup>

Resilience Training, formerly known as Battlemind Training, is another key program available.<sup>32</sup> Battlemind was the creation of Colonel Carl Castro of the Walter Reed Army Institute of

Research in response to the mental health needs of service members returning from deployment. This training focuses on a unique mental skill that troops use to help them survive in combat but that can be problematic when carried over to life at home with family and friends.<sup>33</sup> Information is available online to encourage service members to do a Battlemind check for themselves and their colleagues.<sup>34</sup> Resilience Training also now contains modules for spouses, timed within the deployment cycle.

Leaders of intellect understand that PTSD affects service members differently and could be the result of one or several significant experiences. A service member's prior trauma experience combined with his or her gender and personal bias regarding mental health treatment makes each case of PTSD and each symptom of PTSS unique. In addition, leaders of intellect must also examine their own biases on mental health treatment and ensure they remove any personal barriers they might have toward encouraging mental health assistance.

## Conclusion

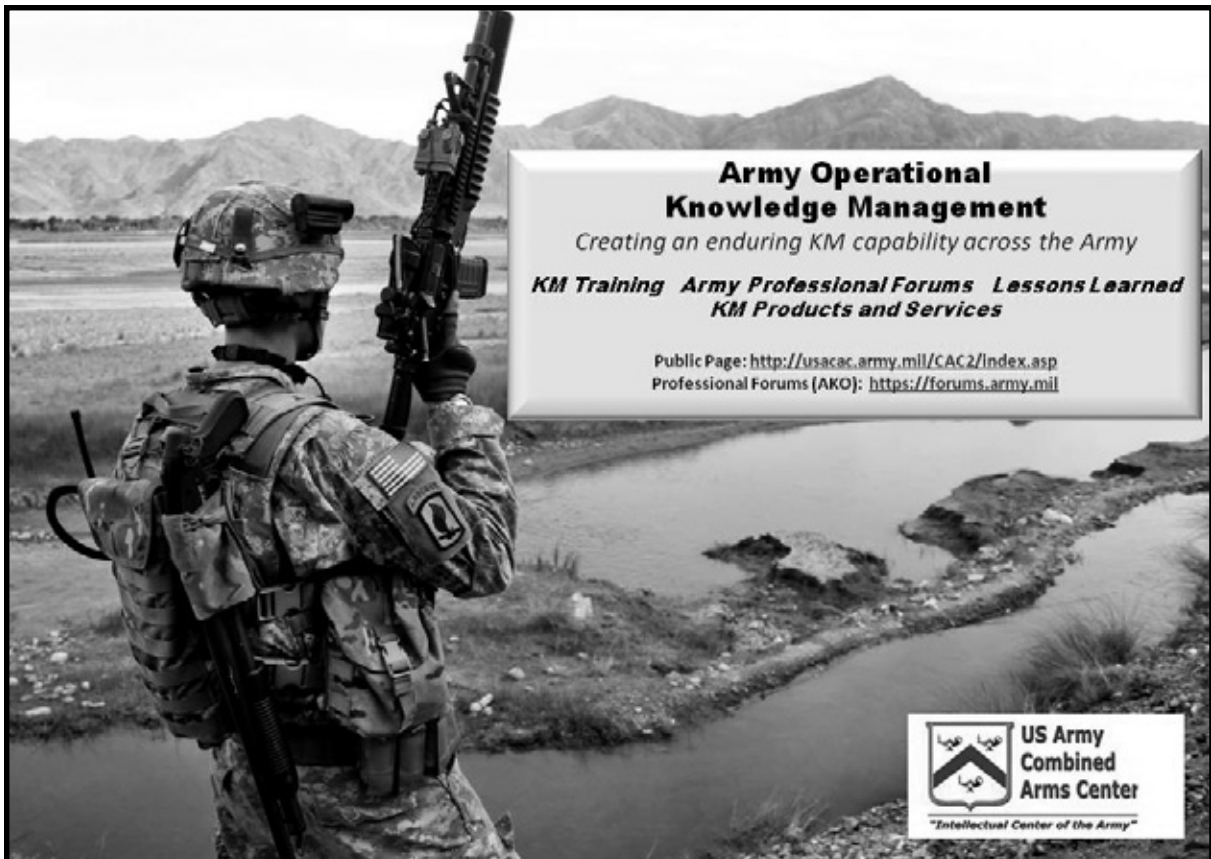
Leaders are expected to be a part of the solution and not part of the problem for those impacted by PTSD. In the opening vignette, Major Smith could have initiated Captain Jones' recovery by asking a few questions, challenging some assumptions, and making a few calls to Captain Jones' former unit. The Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program includes developing a comprehensive and cohesive program for soldier wellness. Astute leaders can contribute to this program by recognizing PTSS and helping soldiers find treatment before they develop PTSD. There is no doubt that leaders must emphasize treatment of PTSS and PTSD as a way to "return to normal." Openly encouraging the use of mental health services would go a long way toward lessening the perceived negative consequences.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, a leader can assist with PTSS and PTSD by striving to serve as a person of character, presence, and intellect. Finally, a leader should pursue the wisdom to know when service members need counseling and a few more caring and probing questions. **MR**

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12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid. IEDs, sniper attacks, physical injuries, and deaths are some of the chaotic events that are beyond a service member's control.
16. Ibid.
17. M. Audrey Burnam, et al., 277.
18. Britta Stomayer, *Human Dynamics of Crisis Leadership*, 3 February 2009 <[http://employee-management-relations.suite101.com/article.cfm/human\\_dynamics\\_of\\_crisis\\_leadership](http://employee-management-relations.suite101.com/article.cfm/human_dynamics_of_crisis_leadership)> (18 March 2009).
19. Leadership is further illustrated in the Leadership Requirements Model, which centers on what a leader is in terms of attributes and what a leader does in terms of

core leader competencies. In dealing with and recognizing PTSS and PTSD, it is a leader of character, a leader of presence, and a leader with intellectual capacity that can then lead, develop and achieve victory in the war against PTSD.

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21. Joe Doty, "Empathy as a Leadership Trait," U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Blog, entry posted 11 February 2009, <[https://courses.leavenworth.army.mil/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_id=\\_14\\_1](https://courses.leavenworth.army.mil/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_id=_14_1)> (7 April 2009).
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30. The Veterans Administration National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, <[www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)> (19 March 2009).
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33. Ibid., 57. "Battlemind" is treated as an acronym formed as follows: B=Buddies vs. Withdrawal, A=Accountability vs. Controlling, T=Targeted vs. Inappropriate Aggression, T=Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance, L=Lethally Armed vs. Locked and Loaded, E=Emotional Control vs. Detachment, M=Mission Operational Security vs. Secretiveness, I=Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt, N=Non-Defensive Driving vs. Aggressive Driving, D=Discipline and Ordering vs. Conflict.
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# Local Governance and COIN in Eastern Afghanistan 2004-2008

Robert E. Kemp

*The views represented in this paper are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. State Department or the U.S. Government.*

Robert E. Kemp is a U.S. State Department foreign service officer. During the spring and summer of 2008, he was the action officer for local governance at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. He was assigned to the Regional Command-East headquarters in Khost, Afghanistan, from 2004 to 2005. During 2007 to 2008 he was the political advisor to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, based in eastern Afghanistan, while also serving as the deputy director of the provincial reconstruction team section.

PHOTO: Members of Task Force Spartan, 10th Mountain Division, and the local provincial government are escorted to their awaiting vehicles by members of Second Platoon, Delta Company, 102nd Infantry Division and soldiers from the Afghanistan National Army after a meeting in the Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 30 August 2006. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Joey L. Suggs)

**T**HIS ARTICLE EXAMINES local governance at the provincial, district, and municipal levels in the area of Afghanistan covered by Regional Command-East from 2004 to 2008. It reviews how local governance related to counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy and operations; how governance evolved at the national level, particularly with the establishment of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance in 2007; and how changes in the national laws may have an impact on counterinsurgency.

Counterinsurgency strategy in the U.S.-led Regional Command-East had three main components, or “pillars”—security, development assistance, and local governance. Of these, security, mostly building up the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police and taking active measures against various insurgent groups, received by far the greatest effort and resources.

Development assistance, such as building new or improving existing roads, schools, health clinics, irrigation systems, and the institutions to support them, also received considerable resources, primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development and Commander's Emergency Response Program projects.

The third pillar, local governance, made progress during this period, but did not receive as many resources as the other two pillars. In part, this was the result of an imbalance between civilian and military capacity in Regional Command-East, with the military vastly overshadowing the civilian presence, both U.S. and international, including the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan. The situation also reflected a limited Afghan ability to absorb assistance, as many of the local government institutions had atrophied over the years of war. It was also the result of the priorities in the fight against the Taliban and other insurgent groups, with establishment of adequate security necessary before civil institutions could take root. Building local governance was inherently a slow process. Decades of war had reduced the pool of civil servants, many of whom had migrated to Pakistan or other countries.



A decimated education system made it difficult to produce trained local leaders. Added to this was the lack of infrastructure; in 2004, most governors occupied physical compounds, but they lacked basic equipment and staff. At the district level, conditions were worse.

## Overview

Regional Command-East is the American-led military area along the border with Pakistan, from Pakitka Province in the west to Nuristan Province in the east, then north to the Hindu Kush Mountain Range. In 2004, only one brigade, supported by a logistical aviation hub at Bagram Air Base, covered the 13 provinces of Regional Command-East. By 2008, there were three brigades assigned to the area, and provincial reconstruction teams were present in all provinces (although one team covered both Kapisa and Parwan provinces).

The general structure of local governance was established over years, particularly prior to the Soviet invasion, and was defined through law; in practice, however, it was often ad hoc and varied considerably between and within provinces. The relationship between the central government in Kabul and the provinces was not always clear and often depended on personal relationships.

At the top of the local political hierarchy were the provincial governments, headed by governors, whom Kabul appointed directly for open-ended terms. Parallel to the provincial governments were the ministries, whose representatives reported to Kabul.

The district governors (also referred to by U.S. forces as sub-governors), the only officials the majority of Afghans ever met, were on the bottom rung of governance. Municipal government was ill defined in many ways, covering both urban and rural areas of varying sizes.

Elections in the fall of 2005 chose members of the provincial councils, as well as members of the *wolesi jirga* (the lower house); members of the *meshrano jirga* (upper house) were indirectly elected.

## Critical Role of Governors

While local Afghan politics is complex, with many formal and informal players, the governor was in most cases the most important political actor in a province. President Hamid Karzai directly appointed governors, and to some extent, the governor was Karzai's "envoy" in the province. However, the governor's power varied, depending on his access to funding, his influence with tribes



President Hamid Karzai of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan walks towards the governor's compound with village elders and local government officials from Kunar Province, 18 May 2006.

U.S. Army photo by SPC Michael Zuk

and business groups, his lineage (family history often carried weight), his role in the fight against the Soviets, his ties with the Kabul government, and his speaking and leadership abilities.

Governors were the chief political contacts for coalition military and political officers from 2004 to 2008. They played a key role in the success (or failure) of counterinsurgency efforts at the provincial level. Conversely, support from coalition officials was often critical to the success (and to some extent, the survival) of governors. In Regional Command-East, coalition officers met almost daily with provincial governors to discuss events, coordinate development projects, review security efforts, plan for upcoming VIP visits, review policy guidance from Kabul, or examine potential points of friction in local society.

Several governors in Regional Command-East were successful, notably Mangal (as governor of both Paktika and Laghman), Jamal in Khost, Wahidi in Konar, and Taniwal in Pakita (until his assassination by the Taliban). These governors established reputations for honesty, strong leadership, the ability to work well with the local tribes, physical courage, and ties to Karzai. Through their popular support, they opened opportunities for provincial reconstruction teams and maneuver units to engage more with the people, move additional development funding into communities, and push back against insurgents (particularly those from outside of the provinces.) These governors depended heavily on the United States to provide security and development assistance, while U.S. forces depended on the governors to manage the complex politics of their provinces.

Given the internal divisions in many Afghan provinces, governors played an important role in resolving or reducing tribal or ethnic disputes. For example, Ghazni Province includes Pashtuns, Hazaras, Tajiks, and during warmer months, nomadic Kuchis. Their ethnic differences have historically led to considerable friction, which a skilled governor can help minimize. Tribal and sub-tribal disputes

over land or historic grievances are also potential flashpoints, and the Taliban uses these disputes to their tactical advantage, as they did in the 1990s when they took over much of the country.

Some governors were important in solving problems that occurred when foreigners interacted with Afghan society. These problems ranged from the benign, such as cultural misunderstandings, to the important, such as crops and property damage during raids, to the critical, when air strikes mistakenly killed civilians. The governors had to walk a fine line between getting the truth out (the Taliban had become expert at distorting the truth regarding coalition attacks) and not appearing biased in favor of outsiders.

In a larger sense, the governors played a critical role in strategic communications, given the cultural complexities, the difficulty of learning Afghan languages, the deep-seated suspicions towards outsiders, and Taliban disinformation campaigns. Low literacy rates and the isolation of many rural communities made this task even harder. However, many of the governors were impressive public speakers and capably presented the provincial and national government's views and supported coalition efforts. Radio networks helped the government connect with the population, and large *shuras* assemblies presented similar opportunities. For example, in 2007 hundreds of tribal elders attended a shura in Paktika Province, giving Governor Khpalwak a chance to reach much of the province, directly or indirectly.

Governors also played an important role in communicating with decision makers and populations in International Security Assistance Force home countries. For example, the U.S. Embassy sponsored several successful trips by delegations of governors to the United States and Europe, where they presented the "ground truth" of their provinces and described the repressive and violent nature of the Taliban insurgency. This was especially important in Europe, where public support for International Security Assistance Force efforts in

***These governors depended heavily on the U.S. to provide security and development assistance, while U.S. forces depended on the governors to manage the complex politics of their provinces.***

Afghanistan was often shaky. Some governors were also effective in briefing visiting officials, including U.S. congressional delegations.

Several governors played an important part in the 2005 parliament and provincial council elections. They helped organize the elections and explained to a population largely unfamiliar with elections and democracy what the elections were about, why they needed to participate, and what to expect from their representatives after the elections. As Afghanistan looks to future rounds of elections, the governors could play this role again.

## Coalition Support to Governors

Brigades, provincial reconstruction teams, and battalions helped the governors overcome various obstacles. For example, brigades hosted regional governors' conferences that brought together governors, their staffs, Kabul-based officials, and provincial security officials to discuss security and development issues. These conferences were useful in comparing notes, increasing communication

between governors, and developing regional policies and projects. They also presented opportunities for press briefings. Some provincial reconstruction teams took the lead in arranging for governors to travel to Kabul to meet with embassy and government officials and donor agencies such as the World Bank. The meetings helped the governors better understand the often-complex world of international assistance, while giving donors insights from the field.

Coalition efforts helped governors succeed in other ways. Governors often took credit for coalition-funded development projects, which increased their standing among the people. In more dangerous provinces, military assets—including convoys and helicopters—provided mobility for government officials, and the provincial reconstructions teams helped fund some governors' staffs and train them in basic administrative tasks. The provincial coordination centers, established with coalition support as "911" centers of a sort, gave citizens points of contact for Afghan security forces. Provincial reconstruction team officers, in particular, acted as neutral advisors—giving governors advice that they might not get from locals with personal agendas—while also giving some governors warnings when corruption, favoritism, or bad policy decisions threatened to undermine their credibility with the local population.

## Governors as a COIN Liability

Being an Afghan governor during this period was a daunting task, as many provinces had fractured societies, dire poverty, no infrastructure, and active insurgencies. Some governors were not up to the task. The governor of Ghazni, newly appointed in the spring of 2008, had difficulties running his large, ethnically divided and often-violent province and was soon replaced. Counterinsurgency efforts in Ghazni suffered due to the weak administration under this governor and the lack of continuity as governors changed. The long-term absence of many governors from their provinces was a recurring problem, as they spent weeks or months in Kabul or overseas. (One governor in Regional Command-East was relieved for this reason in early 2008.) This was particularly troublesome when their reluctance to delegate authority to deputies caused provincial administration to grind to a halt. Other governors suffered from lack of legitimacy because they



U.S. Air Force, SSgt Joshua T. Jasper

An Afghan engineer talks with U.S. Air Force CPT Paul Frantz of the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, 6 November 2007.



had played a particularly bloody role in previous fighting in Afghanistan, or they favored one tribal or ethnic group over another. Some had no resources to provide basic services or got little or no support from Kabul.

Corrupt governors were one of the biggest obstacles to long-term coalition success in Regional Command-East, undercutting counterinsurgency efforts, in some cases severely. For example, between 2004 and 2005, the local population in Konar believed that the governor and some provincial security chiefs misappropriated government funds and engaged in smuggling of timber and gemstones. During the same period, the locals saw the governor of Khost Province enriching himself through the sale of publicly owned land. These governors decreased the legitimacy of the Afghan government, provided openings for the Taliban to increase its influence, and almost certainly reduced the credibility of the coalition forces who worked with them.

Corruption of Afghan officials was a central, recurring theme in conversations with locals during this period. Afghans expected coalition forces to end corruption among provincial officials and were not at all understanding when this did not happen. They assumed that the coalition lacked the will to counter corrupt officials, or worse, that the coalition accepted the corruption. In fact, both Department of Defense and State officers confronted provincial officials with charges of corruption when they had compelling evidence of its practice, and this may have modified behavior in some cases. At the same time, mullahs, business groups, and later provincial councils continued to publicly and privately accuse provincial officials of corruption. Not all of the corruption at the provincial level was destined for the officials' own pockets: some governors used illegal tolls on highways and border crossings to fund projects and the day-to-day running of their governments.

***Corrupt governors were one of the biggest obstacles to long-term coalition success...***

## **Lack of Human Resources**

Afghanistan lacks the human capital to fill all governor slots adequately, and Kabul had to scramble to find good candidates willing to work in difficult and dangerous provinces. In some cases, governors had to stay on longer than they wished or to the point of exhaustion. Several governors told me they wanted to leave their posts, but President Karzai had asked them not to. Weak or absent staff support and the lack of facilities or security for the governors' families made the situation worse. In addition, many governors had conflicts or rivalries with other officials in their province, some of whom reported directly to superiors in Kabul, not to the governors.

## **District Governance**

Subordinate to the provincial level of governance are the districts, headed by district governors (also called sub-governors). By law, Kabul appoints district governors, but in practice the provincial governors appointed many of them during the period from 2004 to 2008. In Regional Command-East, district governance varied from being effective to almost nonexistent, and in most cases the district governors struggled with inadequate funding and staffing. The district governor was important because he was the only official presence many Afghans came in contact with, and he and his staff determined how a rural country perceived the government. In most cases, the district centers also had a district police chief. Ministries and judicial authorities were also present in some districts.

The district governors often seemed to merely react to what was happening in their districts, rather than work to accomplish a list of tasks. According to governance advisors Sarah Lister and Hamish Nixon, the district governor's responsibilities often included "dispute resolution and other problem-solving activities depending on relations with the provincial authorities and local, customary, and informal power-holders."<sup>1</sup>

## **Security and District Governance**

From 2004 to 2008, the availability of resources, the level of security, and the insurgent threat determined district government effectiveness. Security also affected the coalition's ability to support district governance; within Regional Command-East,

the ability of insurgents to hinder district governance ranged from negligible in Bamian Province to very significant in Nuristan, Konar, Khost, and Paktika Provinces.

The coalition reacted to security conditions at the district level with a variety of responses. In 2004 in Paktika Province, the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Walter Piatt, deployed groups of soldiers, usually led by captains, to district centers for weeks at a time. This provided enough security for the nascent district governments to begin to take root, gave the officers an opportunity to mentor and work with Afghan officials, and provided U.S. forces a good picture of what was happening on the ground. This program worked in part because the insurgent groups were only just organizing in Paktika. (In contrast, when British forces in Helmand Province first deployed to district centers, Taliban forces quickly pinned them down, and they faced considerable logistical challenges.) The Bermel district of Paktika, across from Pakistan's South Waziristan Agency, suffered from constant attacks; insurgents had twice overrun the district government. To counter this, in 2005 the U.S. 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, based in Paktika Province, established a firebase that also served as the district center.<sup>2</sup>

The security situation in Khost Province gradually worsened from 2004 to 2008, as insurgent groups, particularly the Haqqani Network, increased their capabilities. Initially, civil affairs team members from the provincial reconstruction team and company commanders from the maneuver battalion based in Khost supported district officials by visiting their compounds during daylong patrols. By 2007, the security situation dictated that most of the district centers be fortified and guarded by soldiers and police. In parts of Konar and Nuristan provinces, particularly the Pesh, Korangal, and Waygal valleys, localized insurgencies were strong, hindering the growth of local governance and even threatening firebases. An insurgent attack on Wanat in July of 2008 left nine U.S. soldiers dead.

On the other hand, security in Nangarhar Province improved so much that by 2008 Afghan security forces took over much of the responsibility for the province. District-level governance expanded due to the efforts of the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team and a special troops battalion, which ran

forward operating bases and patrol bases in several of the districts.

## Shortcomings and Suggestions

While State Department political officers posted to the provincial reconstruction teams and the brigades visited the district centers, their limited numbers meant that most support went to provincial governments. More civilian focus at the district level later bore fruit. (In 2009, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul posted officers at the district level.)

Elections of district governors have been under consideration several times but have not yet occurred. During the 2005 provincial elections, the international community judged that holding simultaneous district level elections made the mechanics of the elections too complicated. District governor appointments were sometimes handed out as favors, and some appointees reportedly enriched themselves in districts with smuggling routes.

Putting mechanisms in place to adequately fund and resource district governance would help COIN efforts, as would training civil servants to administer this layer of government. The Indian government's initiative in 2008 to train 500 Afghan civil servants was a good beginning.

## Additional Institutions

Provincial councils and the municipalities are two other layers of local governance, although coalition forces often worked with them less frequently than with the governors and district governors. Elections in September 2005 chose members of parliament and provincial councils. The councils' first task was to pick one of their members for the *meshrano jirga*. Beyond this task, their job was less defined; involvement in developmental planning, environmental protection, and evaluating provincial government seemed to be common themes.<sup>3</sup> Limited funding also hindered their effectiveness.

## Independent Directorate for Local Governance

The Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) was established in August 2007 by Afghan presidential decree, with the mandate to "consolidate and stabilize, achieve development and equitable economic growth, and to achieve improvements in service delivery through just, democratic processes

and institutions of governance at the sub-national level, thus improving the quality of life of Afghan citizens.”<sup>24</sup> The Ministry of Interior had previously been responsible for sub-national governance, but it had acquired a reputation for corruption and inefficiency. Nationwide, the IDLG inherited more than 10,000 employees of varying quality and abilities; however, its core staff—those formulating and implementing national policy—appeared to number less than 100 in the spring of 2008.

The IDLG represented a fundamental shift in how Kabul administered local governance, and it had immediate implications for COIN strategy in Regional Command-East. The directorate took a much more vigorous approach to managing local governance than the Ministry of Interior had. At the same time, IDLG officers began to assert themselves as the supervisors of local officials. They demanded a say in how provincial reconstruction teams, battalions, and brigade staffs related to local governments, and asked that Kabul be informed of coalition interactions with provincial officials.

With considerable support from President Karzai and the international community, the IDLG began an ambitious program to overhaul governance at

the provincial, district, and municipal levels. It also began increasing its influence in Kabul and improving coordination with other ministries, some of which had considerable stakes in local governance. An important step forward was the development of the “Five Year Strategic Work Plan” in April of 2008. The plan outlined general goals, including policy development, institution building, and broader governance, nested within the overarching Afghan National Development Strategy. A coherent and realistic document conceived with support from international advisors, the plan laid out a blueprint for local governance and described areas where donors could provide financial and technical assistance.

## Challenges Facing the Independent Directorate

As with all previous Afghan governments, the IDLG faced the difficult task of extending its writ to the provinces. This was a daunting task, given the size of Afghanistan and its rugged terrain, harsh winters, and the lack of transportation infrastructure. Additional challenges included limited resources, several governors who acted quite independently, the need to balance complex



U.S. Army. SSGT Isaac A. Graham

Village elders from Paktika and Khowst Provinces of Afghanistan during a meeting on local government, Firebase Wilderness, Paktika Province, 10 September 2007.



political situations at both the national and local levels, and the need for President Karzai to become involved in decision making at the local-governance level. Added to this were very real security considerations for those traveling in parts of the country.

A major hurdle for the IDLG was the lack of trained civil servants, a result of decades of war, of the migration of a significant percentage of the population to other countries, and of an education system that, by 2001, was almost nonexistent. Some of the best governors were those who had returned from overseas, but significant security risks, hardship, and low pay kept others away, a situation even more evident at the district and municipal levels.

In the IDLG's favor was the remarkably rapid expansion of cell phone coverage to many parts of the country and the availability of Internet service in cities, which allowed the directorate to be in almost constant communication with many governors. At the same time, commercial air travel was gradually becoming available for cities such as Herat, and the Afghan military's air wing began flying to more places, allowing IDLG officers to visit the provinces more easily.

Beginning in late 2007, the directorate began a review of provincial governors, removing some of the more corrupt and inefficient ones. Criteria for new governors included loyalty to President Karzai, the ability to work with the local population, administrative and governance capabilities, and the ability to work with the coalition. Some of the newly appointed governors were marked improvements, particularly Wahidi in Konar Province and Amin in Farah Province. One of Afghanistan's best governors, Mangal, was moved to the strategically important province of Helmand. In the spring of 2008, the directorate began reviews of its Kabul staff, as well as mayors and district governors.

## Transfer of Authorities to the Provincial Level

The Independent Directorate for Local Governance, as part of an effort by several ministries, began to redraft local governance laws and policies. This included examining how to devolve power from Kabul to the provinces to give local officials greater budgetary and policy authority. From a COIN

perspective, this had the advantage of making local government more responsive to its constituents, but in Kabul, there was some resistance to giving more budgetary authority to governors, because it could decrease the influence of ministries that channeled funding directly to their offices in the provinces.

This transfer of power to the local level could give more Afghans input into government programs and policies, move decision making to a level where it can adapt to local conditions (an important consideration in a country as diverse as Afghanistan), and persuade people that a government is in place and functioning. It may also be effective in countering Taliban shadow governments in some provinces.

However, compelling historical and practical reasons argue against devolution of power to the provinces. In the past, some governors have become powers unto themselves, with little accountability to Kabul. Others have come under the influence of neighboring countries, or become local warlords or the proxies of local warlords. As noted, governors in some ways act as the Afghan president's envoy to a province, so Kabul has an interest in maintaining control over them, particularly during the run up to elections. History has also shown that Afghanistan has the potential to fracture along ethnic or regional lines, which is an argument for maintaining power in Kabul.

The current constitution leaves open the option of some devolution of power. Article 137 says,

The government, while preserving the principle of centralism, shall delegate certain authorities to local administration units, for the purpose of expediting and promoting economic, social and cultural affairs, and increasing the participation of people in the development of the nation.<sup>5</sup>

An important factor in the long run will be the development of a civil service cadre with enough officers available to run government effectively at the local level. At the same time, a strong center will also

***...compelling historical and practical reasons argue against devolution of power to the provinces.***

need to remain in place to hold Afghanistan together. As World Peace Foundation president Robert Rotburg notes, “Regardless of ethnicity, many Afghan politicians and policymakers from across the country favor a strong central state in order to curb powerful regional figures who often receive support from outside the country, as well as to reduce the danger of criminal influence over local government.”<sup>6</sup>

## Funding Provincial Government

A fundamental problem for Afghan governors was the lack of funding for the day-to-day operation of provincial government and discretionary projects or emergency responses (an important consideration in Afghanistan, with its droughts, floods, and earthquakes). The IDLG approached the international community in early 2008 to help establish a “governor’s fund” to provide money directly to governors with a reputation for honesty and efficiency.

The U.S. military and the provincial reconstruction team office (with access to helicopters and aircraft) helped the IDLG arrange transportation to the provinces (including more remote provinces such as Badghis and Zabul), where provincial officials, who rarely received visitors from the central government, treated the visits as major events. The governors often assembled dozens of provincial leaders, including district governors, provincial council members, security chiefs, and tribal leaders, for roundtable discussions and held smaller meetings focused on governance, security, and development. These trips yielded positive results not only as consultations, but also as demonstrations that the central government was extending its reach to the provinces. Still, a considerable disconnect remained between the center and the provinces, and much work remains to be done in this area.

## Conclusions

As the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Field Manual *Counterinsurgency* notes, “Success in counterinsurgency operations requires establishing a legitimate government supported by the people and able to address the fundamental causes that insurgents use to gain support.”<sup>7</sup> By late summer 2008, the overall trend in Regional Command-East was positive. A system of local governance was under construction. However, the government had

not yet achieved legitimacy in many places and was only beginning to develop the ability to address the conditions that allowed the insurgency to gain limited support. Local factors, such as tribal structures and the considerable capabilities of coalition forces, helped prevent insurgent forces from gaining a critical mass of support.

Experience in eastern Afghanistan highlights the following:

- In Regional Command-East, security efforts were foremost and received most of the resources. Whether security, governance, or development should have the lead role was a subject of debate, but governance received the least emphasis of these three COIN pillars during this period.

- The coalition civilian component during this period was numerically inadequate. While many of our political officers were dedicated, competent, and effective, there were not enough of them, and as a result, the governance pillar did not move forward as much as it could have.

- The growth of government in some areas required that the coalition adjust its practices over time. In 2004, the provincial reconstruction teams and battalions had to fill vacuums of governance in some areas, but by 2008, Afghan officials were very much in the lead in some places, and the coalition was playing a reduced role.

- While difficult to document, corruption and the appearance of corruption were endemic in Regional Command-East. This was corrosive to COIN efforts and difficult to counter, given how culturally ingrained it was. The judicial system was struggling, and there appeared to be a lack of will at high levels of the government to confront corruption. On the positive side, Regional Command-East had only limited narcotics trafficking (with the exception of Nangarhar in some years), which reduced the levels of corruption in comparison with Regional Command-South, where the drug trade flourished.

- The security situation in Regional Command-East became markedly worse in the spring of 2005 as insurgent groups became more effective, preventing nongovernmental organizations from having a large presence in border provinces. This not only restricted flows of funds, but also limited access for experts in governance. Coalition officers had to fill this gap.

- A lack of trained civil servants is one of the greatest challenges to achieving adequate local

governance. There is no quick fix to this, but establishing regional civil service academies and providing adequate pay would be a positive step.

- Given the multiple, fundamental challenges to achieving adequate government in Afghanistan, the international community must be prepared for a protracted engagement and design long-term programs.

- Provincial government is also important as a testing ground for the next generation of Afghan national leadership, where leaders can gain experience and develop their political platforms.

- Improved local government will counter Taliban shadow governments. While the presence of a Taliban shadow government in Regional Command-East seemed minimal compared to some provinces in Regional Command-South, gaps in coverage invite an insurgent presence.

- U.S. programs supporting local governments were not always coordinated with programs of the

international community, and vice-versa. This was in part due to the limited presence of international donors in many of the border provinces.

- While the formal structures of local government are established and strengthened, there will still be a need for tribal governance to fill voids in rural areas until the government of Afghanistan expands.

- The government of Afghanistan needs to increase tax revenues to support government bureaucracies and fund services at the local level. At the same time, it should implement mechanisms to punish the misuse of public funds.

- As Afghan security forces strengthen, they will need strong local governments to collaborate with, not only for the immediate needs of counterinsurgency, but also for the long-term stability of their country. Otherwise, a developed Afghan military may be tempted to become involved in the political affairs of the country. **MR**

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# Influence as a Measure of Success

Major Andrew J. Knight, U.S. Army

Major Andrew J. Knight is the Field Artillery branch representative at West Point, New York. He received a B.S. from West Point and is currently pursuing an MPA from John Jay College. He is a graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course and Career Course. He was the logistics officer for the 17th Fires Brigade while in Iraq. During two tours in Afghanistan, he served as the effects coordinator for 1-32 Infantry Battalion Task Force; commander of C Company, 1-32 Infantry; and the brigade fire support officer for 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

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PHOTO: U.S. soldiers from Cherokee Troop, 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, and Afghan National Army soldiers near the end of a two-day patrol into the western Kherwar district of Afghanistan's Logar Province, 2 July 2009. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Jaime D. DeLeon)

**T**HROUGHOUT THE FALL of 2009, politicians and military strategists debated the situation in Afghanistan to determine the probability of success for the NATO mission. While the accuracy of their conclusions is not yet known, the process they used to determine the probability is very informative. This method is not dissimilar to the decision making process used by tactical military commanders. Both the strategic analysts and the tactical commanders choose data points that allow them to measure the effectiveness of their respective plans.

However, they choose these data points in different ways, and for different reasons. The primary difference between the strategic assessment conducted by the NATO heads of state and tactical assessments made by commanders on the ground is that tactical commanders determine probability for success on a recurring basis, and normally without the benefit of an assessment tool that intertwines military capabilities with critical data points within the Afghan culture.

However, reliance on militarily important data does not fully depict the success or progress of the Afghan counterinsurgency. The number of attacks, enemy killed or captured, and total dollars spent does not fully illustrate whether our counterinsurgency approach is successful on the ground. *The true measure of success in Afghanistan, and one that is not uniformly evaluated, is the amount of “influence” that the government holds over the population.*

My definition of influence in Afghanistan is the capacity or power of persons or entities to be a compelling force on the actions, behavior, beliefs, and opinions of the population.<sup>1</sup> The simplest approach to estimating influence is for a commander to conduct a subjective assessment based on population interaction, intelligence reporting, and his operational experience

in an area. Unfortunately, this is problematic because subjective measures of influence do not translate well between units and generally fail to create a homogenous assessment. Lack of an objective influence-measurement tool hampers our ability to recognize whether our actions and the actions of the Afghan government are having a positive or negative effect. If we are going to be successful in Afghanistan, we must be able to quickly and accurately determine where and when we need to reinforce success or revamp our strategy. Therefore, we need an objective method to identify influence over the population, measure it, and recognize methods for increasing influence it.

### **A Precondition for Success: Access to the Population**

David Galula defines an insurgency as “a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.”<sup>22</sup> This definition of insurgency implies that the government is competing to maintain the existing order, but in actuality the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) is *competing for recognition as the legitimate authority*. In Afghanistan, this competition ultimately comes down to local preferences in underdeveloped locations because the government cannot forcibly control society and offers little in terms of government services. The population remains indifferent to the conflict, waiting for informal leaders to determine the likely victor so they can cast their lot with the winning side. Making the GIROA appear as the probable victor is difficult, but the task is much easier when influence exists with the community leaders. This leads us to one of the key preconditions for success in Afghanistan: the GIROA must find a way to create sustained influence with the informal (tribal) leaders to guarantee it access to the Afghan population.

To govern Afghanistan, the legitimate government does not necessarily have to obtain direct access to each individual person. The informal leaders can act as effective representatives of the government as long as they maintain an open dialogue with it. The informal leadership structure is based on tribal affiliation and geographic

location, and the government should view it as a viable means to forge an enduring connection with the population. Each village has a select group of informal leaders who normally inherit the leadership role through their family’s status. These elders combine with other elders at the tribe and district level to form a *shura*. The shura normally contains representatives from all the different tribal groups within an area. The district shura sends representatives to the provincial shura, and provincial representatives participate in the national shura. The GIROA recognizes these informal groups as the traditional way of governing the tribal people, but does not give the informal groups any official legal authority.

Also important to the Afghan leadership hierarchy are the religious scholars that form a separate religious shura. Although the religious shura is a powerful body within the community, it is still subordinate to the elders. However, the religious leaders are often the mouthpiece to the population and their power lies in the cultural respect they receive for preaching. Simultaneously building influence in both the GIROA and elder groups is a necessary practice for counterinsurgent forces if they are to eventually merge the separate groups to create access to the population for the GIROA.

### **The Importance of the Traditional Informal Leaders**

A survival code exists among the Pashtun tribes to protect the populace from external forces. This system of values traditionally governs the Pashtun culture and has several different tenets that dictate members’ conduct. This code, called *Pashtunwali*, pre-dates any form of government in the Pashtun lands of modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan and is the cornerstone of the Pashtun identity.

One of the critical tenets of Pashtunwali is *nang*, or honor, which a Pashtun values more than life. Afghans will go to unimaginable lengths to preserve their honor and the honor of their family, and actively seek ways to appear more honorable. Two additional tenets that directly demonstrate an individual’s honor are *melmastia* and *nanawati*, hospitality and protection. These tenets direct that any visitor must be provided sustenance and secure sanctuary by his host, and that the host cannot refuse a request for either.



U.S. Air Force, Capt Tony Wickman

**The provincial governors of Nuristan, Langham, Nangahar, and Kunar huddle together prior to the start of the first regional *jirga*, 22 October 2009, to talk about peace, prosperity, and the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.**

Understanding cultural norms is crucial to examining certain behaviors and associations between the population and visitors. Individual and family honor depend on taking care of strangers regardless of the visitor's intentions. Even in villages heavily influenced by insurgents, the informal leaders must still offer hospitality to GIRoA affiliated visitors lest they violate their code of conduct. Because this code binds the culture of the Pashtun tribes, the enforcer of the code is society itself. By violating Pashtunwali, the offender risks his honor, and when honor is challenged a dispute will most likely arise.

Disputes are common in all societies and knowing the methods for conflict resolution is crucial to understanding the culture. Afghan conflicts, whether they involve land, resources, or personal honor, provide an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the informal leader system of authority. An informal leader will mediate the dispute so that it does not become violent and turn into a matter of *badal*, meaning

blood feud or revenge. The informal leader who can resolve a dispute peacefully is highly respected within the community because he is able to prevent violence and maintain the status quo. This status quo is kept until external forces disrupt the Pashtun lifestyle to the point that peaceful means are not sufficient, casting the informal leaders to the fore to restore order by whatever means are necessary.

Prior to the establishment of official government, the Pashtun tribes depended on Pashtunwali for survival, and it still greatly influences their lives. Much of Afghanistan is still governed by this system, keeping the informal leaders heavily involved in making decisions for the population. This traditional system presents both a distinct opportunity and a threat to the counterinsurgent campaign in Afghanistan. Whoever—GIRoA or insurgent—becomes an influence on these local leaders gains a significant advantage over the other in the war in Afghanistan.

To convince the elders to support the GIRoA, the counterinsurgent must continually assess



progress to focus his efforts. The newest assessment methodology unveiled in Afghanistan is the Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF). The United States Agency for International Development is the proprietor of TCAPF and describes it as a means to “identify, prioritize, and mitigate the causes of instability in an area of operations.” The purpose of the assessment is to clarify the true causes of instability in a region instead of basing counterinsurgency efforts on assumptions. There are four basic questions used to gather data, with further investigative questioning available to determine the reasons for each answer given. The four questions are:

- Have there been changes in the village population in the last year? Why?
- What are the most important problems facing the village? Why?
- Who do you believe can solve your problems? Why?
- What should be done first to help the village? Why?

The Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework is supposed to create data that immediately focuses efforts toward developing effective programs to create stability. This system seems valuable but has not yet been tested on a broad scale. It structures data collection to determine local problems, but lacks an implementation mechanism. Due to the social structure of Afghan society, correcting a source of instability is not as simple as implementing a logical solution grounded in Western thought. The local power brokers must approve of the actions or they will undermine any attempt by the government to stabilize their area. In essence, TCAPF is great for identifying problems in an area, but not in correcting them. *The ability to*

*influence local power brokers is the true key to enacting change and bringing the people to the side of the government.*

## Competing for Influence

The government in Afghanistan is competing with insurgents to be seen as a viable, dependable, and legitimate option for governance. Having influence with the local leaders is important to both competitors. Historically, the people of Afghanistan have fought against any external attempt at directly controlling them, most recently by defeating the Soviet Union. This natural resistance to occupation is the reason influence of the Afghan government is the predominant factor that will contribute to the overall success of the current mission in Afghanistan. *A system for measuring influence derived from data collected by patrols and population surveys would provide the ability to evaluate influence throughout the entire country.* To make this assessment system transferrable between units and different geographic areas, it must be standardized yet flexible enough to take into account regional cultural differences.

The physical interruption of Afghan lives creates discontent within the population. This discontent then becomes an opportunity for whichever side is best postured to capitalize on the situation. GIRoA or the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are often unwilling or unable to exploit these opportunities because they are either not aggressive enough or, more commonly, fail to recognize the potential to shift influence toward the government. Failing to recognize the importance of shifting influence toward the government is also a possible problem, but one that is most likely specific to ISAF. The insurgents, on the other hand, are more culturally attuned to popular sentiment and will seize all opportunities to expand their hold over the population. Because ISAF will never be able to compete with the insurgents’ innate knowledge and cultural understanding of the population, it must have a tool that measures overall friendly and enemy influence to identify opportunities for expansion of friendly influence and support.

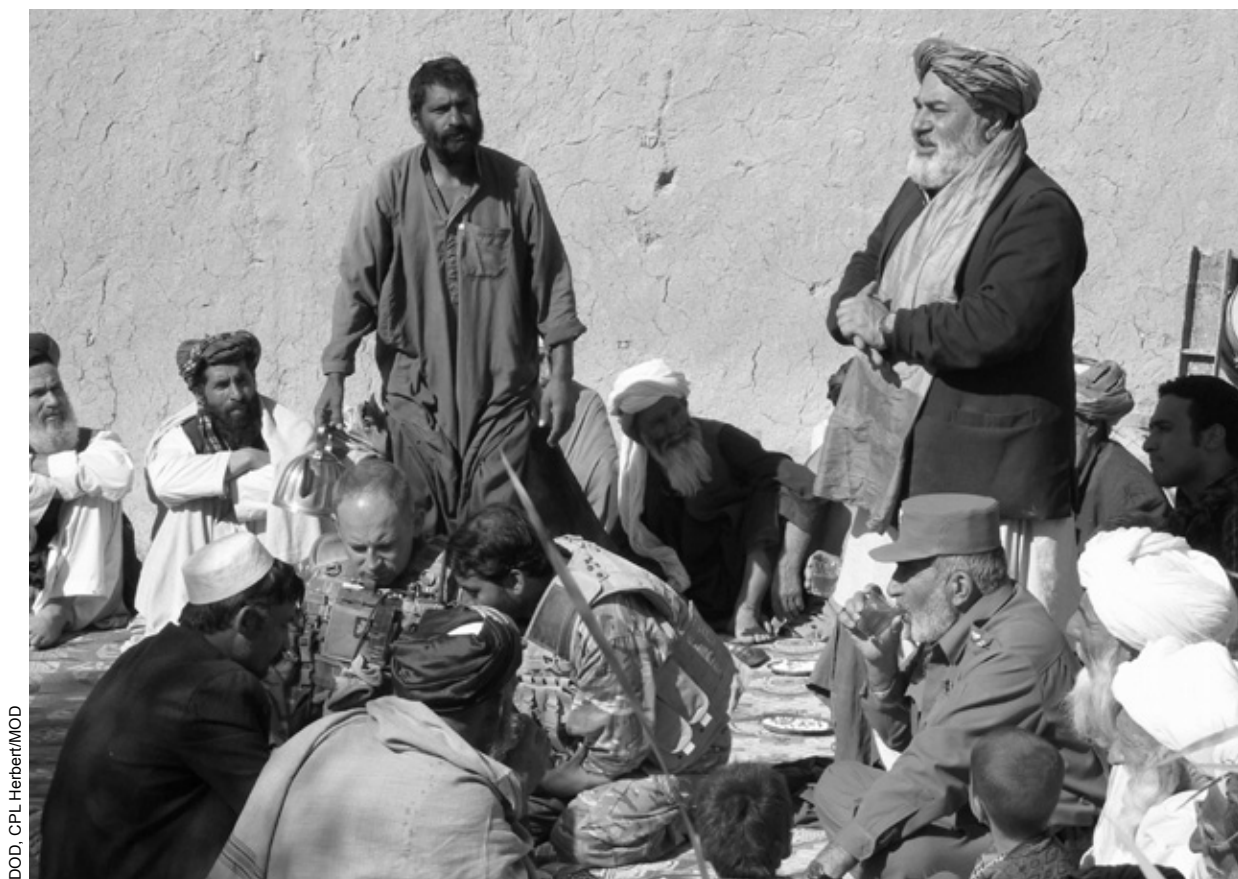
The Afghan informal leader decision making process is the most basic principle to understand

***Whoever—GIRoA or insurgent—becomes an influence on these local leaders gains a significant advantage over the other in the war in Afghanistan.***

when attempting to sway elders' decisions. With roots in Pashtunwali, the Afghan makes decisions based on benefit to self, family, village, and tribe. During times of conflict, the informal leaders will make decisions for their people, which is the primary reason why the GIRoA needs to influence informal leaders to gain popular support. If a need is identified, the population must support the solution, and that support must be built through village and tribal leaders. The local leader will only champion a cause in his village if it provides personal social or economic benefit, directly contributing to his power base among family, village, and tribe. If the elder is not convinced that it is of at least neutral impact to his personal *nang*, then he withholds his support. It is frustrating when an elder refuses to endorse a program that better irrigates crops, but further investigation might determine that he currently controls the irrigation system. Unless the elder is convinced that the new irrigation method will not decrease his social standing, it will not win

his support regardless of the benefit it provides to the people. Understanding the decision making process of the informal Afghan leader is critical to enhancing support for government operations and increasing government authority in that area.

It is necessary to understand the motivation of individual villages that resist their government. While the hard-core insurgent leadership may wage war for theocratic reasons, the population mostly supports the insurgency for individual financial gain. The most highly contested areas in Afghanistan are usually the places where the insurgency has the most to lose through enduring symbols of GIRoA presence, such as the implementation of taxation, regulation, or law enforcement. The ensuing instability tends to draw financial resources because it brings additional security forces to counter the threat. As both friendly and enemy forces engage in conflict, *a market is created that allows supporters of both sides to prosper*. Examples of this include GIRoA infringement on the timber market in the



DOD, CPL Herbert/MOD

Up to 180 village elders and locals attend an outreach shura in Nad-e-Ali, Afghanistan, 22 November 2010.

northeast and the narcotics market in the south. People in Kunar and Helmand provinces resist the GIRoA because they lose timber or opium revenues; they benefit from the absence of GIRoA regulation. The elders will only intervene on the side of the government when an influx of security or reconstruction dollars presents an economic opportunity.

The areas that resist GIRoA or ISAF presence based on the tenets of Pashtunwali commonly feel violated by some previous transgression and have rationalized the existence of a blood feud because the informal leaders gained no benefit from resolving the conflict. This type of cultural dispute is not uncommon, and an antagonist can easily expand a seam because of the limited contact that the general population has with government security forces. The similarity between economically and culturally disputed areas is that the informal leaders insert themselves in the resolution process only when they gain an advantage. Offer an alternative benefit that outperforms the current arrangement, and the informal leaders will effectively lead the population in whichever direction reflects favorably upon them. Utilizing the TCAPF program makes it easier to identify the reasons for resisting the government, but combating those reasons will depend on the ability to convince the informal leaders that they benefit most from cooperating with GIRoA and ISAF.

The enemies of Afghanistan utilize influence and, when necessary, coercion and direct control to achieve their goals. For the enemy, influence starts at the social, religious, and cultural levels to recruit people and prevent GIRoA hegemony. Ideology is the strongest and most blatantly exploited tool of the insurgents to create influence because it provides an excuse for average Afghans to rebel. The commonality of religious background, and to a greater degree, the Pashtun culture, brings insurgents instant credibility. The insurgents harness this ethnic authority to capitalize on the Pashtunwali tenet of hospitality so they can live with and draw support from the people. Once the insurgents demonstrate the benefits they bring to the area (financial gain, community safety, or eternal salvation), the influence is strong enough for them to remain until a better alternative

is available. There must be a tangible benefit. Otherwise, the people would turn the insurgents away due to the economic strain of supporting non-contributing guests, or insurgent intimidation in the area once a legitimate government force is present.

After the insurgent has settled into an area, he can obtain almost everything he needs to continue fighting. Additional manpower is easy to coerce because the population is mostly agrarian, giving them idle time between planting and harvesting crops. Insurgents can win influence easily because most Afghans live well below the poverty line, which increases the desire for financial gain. With small amounts of money, the insurgent can hire local farmers to conduct low-risk harassment attacks against ISAF and the GIRoA. Unless the government or ISAF can influence the area, there is no cultural stigma associated with earning the extra money, especially when the economic benefit is combined with cultural and religious ideologies. When elements friendly to the GIRoA gain an influence foothold, an effective information campaign can defeat the cultural and religious undertones, but only effective military operations will increase the cost of harassment attacks. Fighting against the insurgent forces is necessary to demonstrate military dominance, which increases the cost of fighting for the insurgency. An increased cost to the population reduces its desire to participate in the fighting and also reduces the counterinsurgent's need to kill part-time fighters and risk a blood feud.

As the situation continues to evolve, the population may start to see a larger economic opportunity (increased employment and educational opportunities) in siding with the government. When security forces find an enemy safe-haven, they will often increase their presence in the area. The insurgents cannot overtly display their identity in front of security forces. The insurgent relies on anonymity, so he must wait for the security forces to leave. His influence must be strong enough that it prevents the population from giving intelligence to the security forces about him, or even turning him in. The first few times that security forces visit the village, it is relatively easy for the insurgent to maintain influence because he can exploit the temporary



nature of the government's presence. Any person that mentions discussing possible improvements offered by the GIRoA is intimidated or killed to demonstrate insurgent dominance and impending victory. As GIRoA-sanctioned visits continue, so will the intimidation and violence. The insurgent propaganda campaign usually comes across as "It was secure here until the government forces arrived." If the security forces are able to stay in the area and speak with the informal leaders daily, then the insurgent loses his influence and will have to leave the area to establish a stronger base of support. Allegiance will continue to shift to maximize the benefits to the informal leaders as they ally themselves with whoever remains dominant once the conflict is over.

Initial efforts at establishing influence must use the "carrot and stick" approach to population engagement. The tactical commander reaches several different decision points that will present opportunities for both. Americans tend to use only the carrot, wanting to remain positive toward the people and not hear complaints from the informal leaders. While this can go a long way toward establishing initial inroads, continuing to provide

"rewards" for a population that does not deserve them makes the contributor appear foolish and not worthy of respect. The commander must recognize when progress ends and use the "stick," which can be merely a situation that puts the informal leaders in an uncomfortable position with their population. Commanders don't have to intimidate the informal leaders with overwhelming force, but simply challenge their influence. In implementing the carrot and stick approach, it is imperative to ensure that the coercive measures in place are easily removed. An enemy disinformation campaign can quickly undermine friendly influence measures by claiming that an undesirable change is permanent, so the counterinsurgent must remain flexible enough to take immediate action against any attempt to increase insurgent influence.

A valuable example of creating influence in Afghanistan was an operation conducted from August to November 2009 by 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Gukeisen. The operation was a multi-phased population engagement that rewarded those areas that cooperated with the GIRoA through immediate village-level



U.S. Army, PFC Richard W. Jones, Jr.

**U.S. Army LTC Gukeisen, from 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, discusses options for establishing a patrol base with Polish soldiers, Kherwar, Afghanistan, 3 August 2009.**

improvements. Several small-scale projects took place in a short amount of time, but that is not what made the operation a success. Gukeisen and his unit structured the project nomination process to start with the elder shura and require the approval of the district sub-governors. This forced the informal and formal leaders to work together to achieve progress. The rapid implementation provided visible evidence that the population could identify. Because the scale of the projects remained below specific thresholds, the unit kept the majority of the development money inside the local economy to increase the economic benefits of siding with the government. This operation benefited all parties. Government leaders were involved in the provision of resources, the local elders were able to harness the power of the government to help their people, and ISAF connected the people to the GIRoA in demonstrable ways. The International Security Assistance Force targeted cultural and religious centers for improvement, and the insurgent lost credibility, thereby weakening his influence.

## The Measurement of Influence

Assessing influence over the population is a valuable tool if used to differentiate between areas that require military operations and areas that are ripe for programs such as the example given above. There is currently no objective assessment tool available with the detail required at the tactical level. Each commander defines influence in different terms and internalizes the assessments of his subordinate commanders to create a personal view of the effects achieved in his area of responsibility. An objective way of measuring influence gives a framework that is transferrable not only between separate tactical elements, but across unit boundaries and to follow-on forces. A common metric that standardizes an assessment for operational and strategic planning purposes would also create a common picture for brigade and higher commands.

Several hundred possible questions and observable attributes define influence. To make an influence analysis system that produces accurate information, one must use a basic approach that does not overburden the data collectors. Questions and data collected should resonate with the indigenous population as well as the military operators and analysts, but remain flexible enough to accommodate

regional differences. Much of the data that we already collect can apply to the study of influence, but some additional data must augment it to enhance understanding of a particular area. The primary collector is the individual soldier and small-unit leader who interact daily with the people as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign. Emphasis on pre-deployment cultural training and basic engagement strategy are imperatives to fully understanding the influence factors at work. By teaching soldiers and leaders what to look for, the unit can draw the majority of the required information for analysis from a standard patrol report, if it elicits the relevant data points about influence. The following are examples of influence indicators for both enemy and friendly forces:

### Signs that indicate enemy influence in an area:

- The population states they are being intimidated.
- The enemy resides within the population.
- The population provides logistical support to the insurgent.
- The population allows attacks to occur from within the village.
- No reporting of insurgent movements.
- The population asks legitimate security forces to vacate the area.
- The population rejects assistance from the GIRoA or ISAF.
- The informal leaders do not readily identify themselves.
- Kids throw rocks at security forces in the presence of adults who do not stop them.
- The population propagates insurgent rhetoric during face-to-face interactions.

### Signs that indicate friendly influence in an area:

- There is a permanent presence of security forces in the area.
- The population has family members in the Afghan National Security Forces.
- The population provides information to the GIRoA or ISAF about insurgent activity.
- The population seeks the established government to resolve conflicts.
- The population sends informal leaders to voice grievances to the GIRoA.
- The population welcomes ISAF personnel into their homes.

- The population offers tea to GIRoA or ISAF personnel.
- When ISAF personnel arrive in a village, the informal leader immediately greets them.
- The population requests jobs from the GIRoA or ISAF.

Identifying *points of friction* for the people is a sound method for checking the accuracy of an assessment after estimating the extent of friendly and enemy influence. When one side has an obvious influence advantage, there most likely will not be an overt amount of stress on the population. The point at which the population will feel the most pressure occurs when friendly and enemy forces are simultaneously struggling to gain influence in an area. The insurgent will often turn to intimidation that can range from posting night letters in the bazaar to conducting public executions. The middle ground for insurgent action in a conflict area may be kidnapping locals for questioning, but even that has degrees of seriousness based on the fate of the kidnap victim. Instances of intimidation are embarrassing for the elders because the population may hold them responsible.

## The Way Forward

Defeating the insurgency in Afghanistan requires the GIRoA and ISAF to establish influence with the population. That influence must be uniformly measured to depict progress. Evaluating the success or failure of the mission in Afghanistan by metrics such as number of attacks, enemy killed, or dollars spent does not begin to define the complex problems associated with fighting against the Afghan insurgency. The counterinsurgent can rarely gather enough information to understand a tribal dispute, much less predict and evaluate the second- and third-order effects of ISAF actions.

*The proper metric for understanding success at the tactical level is the influence that the GIRoA and ISAF have over the population.* Greater control of the population would benefit the counterinsurgency, but the cultural resistance to such control is far too entrenched. In lieu of such control, holding influence over the informal power structure can achieve the same effect. Once the requisite amount of influence is achieved in an area, the population will generally maintain a level of obedience that is acceptable to the government.

Objectively measuring influence to depict progress accurately is vital as units move in and out of Afghanistan. Numerous assessment models have been utilized in Afghanistan in over nine years of war, and none have proven effective at defining the problem and measuring progress.

The proposed metrics for friendly and enemy influence above may not be the best, but that does not decrease the importance of establishing influence in a country that cannot be effectively controlled by the government. Having spent over two years in Afghanistan, and having dealt with the population on an almost daily basis, I recognize the logic behind their decisions, but that logic is not always apparent to foreigners. By following cultural norms learned during pre-deployment training and adding a thorough understanding of Pashtunwali, foreigners can unravel the seemingly erratic behavior. Quickly identifying the informal leaders expedites the transition to an environment hospitable to the government and foreign security forces. Increasing friendly influence while reducing insurgent influence is progress toward improving stability and dialogue between the population and the GIRoA, an unavoidable requirement for successful accomplishment of the NATO mission. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Random House Dictionary, "influence," <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/influence>> (14 October 2009).
2. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), 2.





# Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan Lessons Learned by a Brigade Combat Team

Colonel John M. Spiszer, U.S. Army

**T**HIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES some important lessons for brigade combat teams (BCTs) in the Afghanistan fight and those preparing to go. It is based on my observations and actions during leader reconnaissance, training, and the execution of COIN in the Nangarhar, Nuristan, Konar, and Laghman (N2KL) provinces from December 2007 to July 2009 by Task Force Duke, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, which I had the privilege of commanding.

## Hope and Faith

We in the military, and maybe even those in the press and civilians who analyze our COIN efforts, define the decisive effort in counterinsurgency as winning hearts and minds. However, based on my experiences, I would argue that this is an improper mind-set around which to base operations. As a goal or end state, winning hearts and minds provides the wrong focus for operations for a variety of reasons.

First, this focus lays on a requirement to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. This is the wrong approach. Our ultimate goal is to leave Afghanistan. We must maintain good enough relations with the people, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, but we don't have to win hearts and minds; we have to leave and turn the effort over to the Afghans. The Afghans have to win the hearts and minds.

From the standpoint of a foreign force aiding the Afghans in their internal fight against the Taliban and other threats, it is better for us to focus on hope and faith. The Afghan people need to have hope that their future is going to be better. This at least gets most of them on the fence and lessens support for the insurgents. We do this ably now by our current efforts in population security. They allow development to proceed. The people, for the most part, do not then support the insurgency—life is better than it ever has been. Security is acceptable, and roads, clinics, schools, micro-commerce, and job opportunities develop. In these areas, the insurgency has to fight using asymmetric methods and is easier to target and interdict.

*Colonel John M. Spiszer is the commander of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, and the former commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He received a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy, an M.S.A. from Central Michigan University, and an MMAS from the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS. He has written numerous articles for Military Review (including a DePuy Award winner).*

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*PHOTO: The author discussing the closure of a combat outpost and subsequent relocation of U.S. and ANSF forces with the commander and G3 of 201st ANA Corps, northern Konar Province, September 2008. (Photo courtesy of author)*



**CPT Trevor Voelkel, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment commander, with an Afghan local leader in Kandahar Province, September 2008.**

However, the harder piece is giving the people faith that they are going to get a better future, that things will continue to improve, that we, the United States, will not leave prematurely again (as we arguably did in 1989 when we stopped supporting the mujahedeen) and the situation will not revert to the chaos of the 1990s. The people must have faith that the ANSF and government are going to be there when the coalition leaves, that the conditions that have begun to improve will continue to improve, and that their lives will be better.<sup>1</sup> This is the hard piece of the effort in a country that has little tradition of government beyond the major cities and where strife and chaos have existed for the past 30 years. Corruption, the drug trade, warlordism, and cross-border issues add to the problem, but for the Afghan people to support the government instead of the Taliban and other insurgent elements, the people must have faith that the government will at least give them the future they see in other parts of Afghanistan. If we shape our operations to give the people

hope—population security, good developmental projects—and faith that their government is going to pick up the ball in the future when we do leave, then we are aiming in a better direction than just winning their hearts and minds.

Notice that unlike a focus on hearts and minds, the hope and faith effort focuses on what the center of gravity, the people, feel about their future and their government. The focus is on the people's relationship to government, not the international force. Hope and faith lead directly to better key tasks and end states for units and are the basis for a better "mission narrative" to describe and direct our operations.<sup>2</sup>

## **ANSF Development**

The hardest part is developing the capacity of Afghan institutions to stand on their own, carry on the fight, and deliver the essential services expected of a government. While there are some limitations, capabilities exist to accomplish this at the BCT level and others.

However, up until recently few units had a separate and dedicated focus in this area. Most had a governmental development line of operation or effort as part of their campaign plan, but usually lumped ANSF development into a security or combat operations line of effort. The focus was on executing operations to defeat the enemy or protect the populace, not on developing the ANSF to provide security on its own. While they must remain a major line of effort, operations to defeat the enemy or protect the populace are only the first step in giving the people hope.

Too often, ANSF development has been an afterthought, a byproduct, or the responsibility of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) or the new NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). For the Afghan people to achieve the faith in the government needed for us to ultimately depart, the coalition must make a concerted effort to build capacity. They must do so with BCTs not just assisting this effort but taking the lead. They must have a detailed, integrated, resourced, and focused development plan, one that goes beyond partnering with ANSF to improving the abilities of the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), the Border Police (ABP), the National Army (ANA), and ancillary organizations and operational coordination centers at every level. With guidance, direction, and some of the resources provided by CSTC-A, and now NTM-A, it is up to the BCTs to put this development effort into operation and make it happen. Without this level of integration and focus, we will not facilitate an Afghan ability to provide security.

The BCTs should have separate working groups and targeting efforts related to their partner ANSF units and their development. They have to be innovative in how they train the AUP, ABP, and ANA in their areas of operation. The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's ANP immersion training program (begun in 2007 and operating in N2KL through 2009) is one good example. Another was

the CJTF-101 ABP Focused Border Development program in 2008 and 2009.

For units busy clearing and holding a contested area, this new effort will be a challenge. However, if we don't spend the time to get the Afghans capable of doing the job themselves, they won't be able to accomplish their mission when we do leave. Years of effort and sacrifice will have been to no avail. The BCT can truly make a difference in the development of the ANSF.

## Restraint

Every soldier must understand the concept of restraint; the ability to practice restraint is the key task that we must train to sustain the legitimacy of our efforts in the eyes of the Afghans, our Nation, and the world. Aside from being the right thing to do, restraint is essential to prevent making additional enemies in a revenge-oriented society.

Surprisingly, however, the word "restraint" is used only three times in FM 3-24, although emerging ISAF guidance related to escalation of force refers to the necessity of "courageous restraint" in its application.<sup>3</sup> This is exactly what we are after. We must have soldiers and units who practice courageous restraint in their dealings with the people. We have to do everything we can to protect the people in Afghanistan, to limit civilian casualties, and increase the people's ability to have hope for their future and faith in their government. Conducting operations with appropriate restraint is crucial to success.

We are asking a tremendous amount from our young soldiers in a dangerous combat environment. We are asking them to accept additional risk in how they operate. Still, while it is not easy, it is not impossible. Building a team of soldiers who practice disciplined initiative and empowering them to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason without having to tell them to do it is the cornerstone of this effort. To do this, we must train our soldiers well. They must know their own weapons and capabilities perfectly so that they feel

***Aside from being the right thing to do, restraint is essential to prevent making additional enemies in a revenge-oriented society.***



confident in taking the extra time needed to identify threats properly, knowing that they can still respond accurately, immediately, and lethally if the situation dictates. They must intimately understand their rules of engagement and be masters of escalation of force techniques and equipment in order to protect innocent civilians. They must be intimately familiar with the operational environment and its threats and patterns.

We are asking a lot from soldiers, but the complex battlefield requires it. If we want to win this fight, this level of competence is a requirement, not an option. Our soldiers must practice restraint in how we employ force, how we drive, how we treat people—in every aspect of our operations. Restraint must become our primary individual skill if we hope to prevail in Afghanistan. Without it, we will undermine our efforts in the country and internationally. We are the good guys in this fight—we have to act that way every day.

## Unity of Effort

While restraint is our key individual skill, developing and maintaining unity of effort is the key leader skill required in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> Commanders and their staffs, especially at the BCT level, will

be dealing with a bewildering and varied cast of characters that no training can replicate. The list is long and confusing, including ANA, ANCOF, AUP, ABP, OCC-Ps, OCC-Rs, NDS, MOI, MOD, MOF, MAIL, PRTs, DSTs, ADTs, SCRS, DOS, USAID, USDA, UNAMA, ICRC, a host of NGOs, numerous SOF elements, RC HQs, IJC, NTM-A, CSTC-A, ISAF, BMTF, and more. I won't even try to define these things, which represent just the tip of an iceberg. There are a lot of players in the environment. Understanding them, visualizing what they bring to the fight, communicating to them what you are trying to do (and would like them to do), and directing your own actions in conjunction with (or at least not in competition with) them while trying to direct or influence their operations, is one heck of a battle command challenge.

However, the BCT that can work effectively with all entities above, parallel to, and below its level and leverage all available resources will do a much better job in providing hope to the people and faith in the government. Doing so requires an open mind, an ability and willingness to compromise, and some good background knowledge, including an understanding of the different organizations and their priorities and goals.



Courtesy of Author

**B Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment soldiers in one of many firefights in the Korengal Valley, Konar Province, November 2008.**

The staff and subordinate units have to understand why unity of effort is important, the potential stakes involved, and the end state. One careless unit leader who doesn't understand the importance of the UN can unintentionally ruin relationships for an entire tour through rudeness, arrogance, or lack of attention to detail.

We initially called unity of effort *unity of purpose*—ensuring that all the varied organizations would all row in the same direction, preferably the direction we wanted. What we didn't know as we went into it was that unity of purpose already existed. Virtually everyone wanted the same thing—a peaceful, stable, and viable Afghanistan. However, our ways of getting there were frequently different. Convincing one's own organization that any assistance is valuable and important is critical. There are many people and organizations trying to do good in Afghanistan. We are all in this together. Taking the common purpose and focusing it into a concerted effort makes a huge difference.

Furthermore, convincing your own organization that any assistance, help, influence, resource, or potential partner is valuable is important as well. There are many people and organizations trying to do good in Afghanistan. We are all in this together, and working to convince all the agencies in Nangarhar, for instance, that our focus should be on the District of Khogyani, can have important dividends. Taking the common purpose and focusing it into a concerted effort makes a huge difference. In fact, that is exactly what we achieved in Nangarhar. We focused most of the efforts and resources available throughout the province on an “at risk” district, one with a traditional infiltration route to Pakistan, a past Al-Qaeda presence, an influential tribe, and an enduring ANSF and coalition presence, into an area where we could and did make a difference. We were also able to work with other organizations to continue supporting and executing economy of force operations in other areas. Critical to gaining headway, though, was good relations with our Afghan partners, civilian counterparts, UN organizations, NGOs, Special Operations Forces, and numerous other players in the area. We were able to make a greater difference in Nangarhar due to good unity of effort amongst virtually all organizations operating there.

## Continuity

Related to unity of effort was our focus on continuity. We were extremely fortunate to assume responsibility of the N2KL area from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team that replaced the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Upon transfer of authority in July 2008, we were the beneficiaries of an operational environment that had a consistent focus for the preceding two years. We recognized early on during our leader reconnaissance and preparation for deployment that our predecessors were on track. They understood COIN doctrine and how to apply it in Afghanistan, and they were making progress in large parts of the region. Moreover, we felt that the best thing to do was to stay the course and follow the path of some very smart people and units who had gone before us.

Maintaining continuity is extremely important, and while it may not be applicable or possible in all cases, it should be seriously considered. We picked up where our predecessors left off and focused on getting our ten yards, the next first down, from the preceding series of plays. Rather than spending a large amount of time reviewing and rewriting our predecessors' campaign plan, we adopted it, attempted to improve it at the margins, and moved out immediately. While this may imply a certain lack of intellectual drive, it reassured the Afghans and other organizations and it compelled us to get things done. In short, we adopted what was at least an existing 80 percent solution from our predecessors rather than spend all of our time coming up with a 100 percent solution that we then would not be able to execute in what was a complex, fluid, and ever-changing operational environment. As one of our smart predecessors recently put it, we lived with “the realization that ‘perfection’ is an enemy in COIN” and that “entities that sought perfect solutions sat paralyzed; those

***Moreover, we felt that the best thing to do was to stay the course and follow the path of some very smart people and units who had gone before us.***



Artillerymen fire in support of troops in the Korengal Valley, Konar Province, November 2008.

that created perfectly efficient systems refused to see the ineffectiveness at user level.”<sup>5</sup> We were also fortunate that these smart predecessors knew what they were doing in conducting COIN in Afghanistan and that their lines of effort and overall campaign was going to be applicable from CJTF-82 to CJTF-101 and back to CJTF-82 and across the change in ISAF Commanders from 2008 to 2009, as well.

Overall, the continuity of operations from one BCT to the next was highly beneficial. We focused on—

- Where and when to conduct operations to separate the enemy from the population.
- Development of the ANSF.
- Using Commanders Emergency Relief Program funds to jump-start the economy, facilitate security efforts, provide jobs, and build roads and schools.
- Partnering with and developing local Afghan governments.

All this led to accumulated gains that were starting to be felt, especially along the rivers where roads and bridges that had taken years to plan, fund, and execute finally came to completion.

The sustained and continued efforts in Nangarhar, Laghman, and the Konar River Valley helped create stability and progress in an area containing well over three million people (over 10 percent of the population of Afghanistan).

## Battlefield Circulation

Battle command is the key element that ties all of a unit's efforts together. The ability to execute battle command—to understand, visualize, describe, direct, and assess—is critical to a unit conducting any operation, let alone a complex COIN fight in the most challenging terrain in the world. Effective, frequent, and focused battlefield circulation was the key to exercising all aspects of battle command for me. Owing to the nature of the N2KL terrain, I did this with my command sergeant major, the BCT S3, and very few others, mostly by helicopter.<sup>6</sup>

The nature of the fight, terrain, and friendly disposition demanded a high degree of decentralized operations, which commanders at all levels can only influence to a small degree. This required extensive efforts to ensure synchronization across the force prior to execution. Our battlefield circulation played



a key role in this across the command. In fact, it was essential because our movements were often the only way that company and battalion commanders and ANSF partner unit commanders got to some of their own subordinate units. Battlefield circulation was essential to being able to get out and understand what was going on at the remote outposts and across the BCT's area. We had discussions with the soldiers and their leaders; checked on the quality of life, living conditions, and defenses of remote combat outposts and forward operating bases; and checked on the morale, fighting spirit, and readiness of the force.

Battlefield circulation allowed me to reinforce key elements of my commander's intent and vision, see what we had coming up next, and see why hope and faith, ANSF development, restraint, unity of effort, and continuity were important for all of our soldiers, even those in the most remote location. Battlefield circulation allowed me to review and discuss upcoming operations and ensure that we were properly prepared with detailed enough planning and allocation of resources to ensure mission success. We were able to adhere to ISAF guidelines and tactics, techniques, and procedures, while also protecting our soldiers in the execution of their mission.

The nature of the terrain, the size of BCT operational environments, and the decentralized

aspects of the counterinsurgency fight make it of the utmost importance to do battlefield circulation. Battlefield circulation requires focus, planning, and preparation. It is an operation in itself each time it is conducted.

## Crucial Lessons

Counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan are different from those in Iraq. In fact, they are even different from one Afghan province to another. Nevertheless, Army doctrine provides an excellent baseline for operations. Task Force Duke used doctrine, the lessons of prior units, guidance from Regional Command-East and ISAF, and a dose of common sense to get its ten yards in N2KL by the summer of 2009.

We learned that the following are crucial:

- A good understanding of COIN.
- A focus on the populace in the context of hope and faith instead of hearts and minds.
- ANSF development.
- Soldier restraint.
- Leader focus on unity of effort.
- Continuity with previous good units.
- Continuous, planned battlefield circulation.

Task Force Duke had 39 of its personnel pay the ultimate sacrifice during our operations there. Over 280 received the Purple Heart, and over 300 received medals for valor. We owe it to them to get it right. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Faith is inherently related to what is described as the main objective in our capstone doctrinal manual on COIN—legitimacy. U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], December 2006), 1-21.

2. Mission narratives are discussed in depth in our emerging doctrine concerning design. See Jack D. Kem, *Design Tools of the Trade* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College), chap. 7. In addition, they are defined for the first time in FM 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: GPO, March 2010), 3-12. I could encapsulate our mission narrative by saying that our operations must be designed and executed such that the Afghan people have hope for their future and faith in their government to give that future to them.

3. "Courageous restraint" is introduced as a concept on page 7 of the draft *ISAF Standard Operating Procedures 373, Direction and Guidance for Escalation of Force*, 18 February 2010.

4. In getting the organization all on the same sheet of music, three documents

were critical. First, the Commander's Intent—what we wanted to accomplish—was the crucial piece that guided all actions. Second, the Vision for the organization—what we wanted to be—was important to ensure the culture of the organization supported our overall COIN efforts. Finally, I presented the Leader's Tactical Synchronization briefing to all patrol leaders and above to ensure they understood Afghanistan, COIN in Afghanistan, the commander's intent, and vision for the organization. These were key to developing unity of effort in an organization that included some 6,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians, with about half rotating out during the year.

5. COL William B. Ostlund, "Tactical Leader Lessons Learned in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom VII," *Military Review* (July-August 2009), 2-9.

6. The key individuals who went virtually everywhere with me included CSM Ron Orosz, the BCT CSM; MAJ Jon Beasley, the BCT S3; and SSG Ernie Baylor, security, RTO, note taker, and do-it-all guy. These three can take the credit for many of the successes the BCT experienced in Afghanistan. They made a difference.

# Who Will Fulfill the Cavalry's Functions?

## The Neglect of Reconnaissance and Security in U.S. Army Force Structure and Doctrine

Major Keith Walters, U.S. Army

Major Keith Walters is the operations officer for 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry at Fort Carson, CO. His previous assignments include tours as a writer with the TRADOC Joint and Army Concepts Directorate, history instructor at the U.S. Military Academy, and Stryker cavalry troop commander in Iraq. He earned an M.A. in U.S. history from Stanford University and a B.S. in international history from West Point.

PHOTO: Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, patrol the Korengal Valley in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, 18 August 2009. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division soldiers have been battling insurgents in the valley since arriving in June. (Photo by U.S. Army SGT Matthew Moeller)

**A**FTER NEARLY A decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, counterinsurgency (COIN) theorists have emerged as the most influential voices in the intellectual debate shaping Army doctrine. The Army has gained COIN expertise at the expense of combined arms core competencies. The 2009 Army Capstone Concept (ACC) addresses this emerging imbalance by restoring the concepts of conventional action and initiative as centerpieces of Army doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Even as the 2009 ACC promotes the centrality of these themes to future Joint and Army doctrine, the Army has elected to dismantle the last unit organized and equipped to provide full spectrum reconnaissance and security at the corps and Joint task force level. When the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) converts to a Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) in 2011-2012, the Army will face the future without a full spectrum reconnaissance and security force. Army leaders must reconsider the 3rd ACR-SBCT conversion.

Fiscal and manpower constraints stemming from the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, inefficiencies in the Army Force Generation model, and a misguided faith in the efficacy of remote sensors and unmanned platforms all contributed to this decision. Analysis of the long-term consequences highlights its shortsightedness. With the 3rd ACR-SBCT conversion, the abstract intellectual debate among Army officers and defense analysts as to whether the Army will be a force geared for counterinsurgency or one that deters and defeats conventional threats now has dire implications. If the Army continues to highlight COIN tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) over core combined arms competencies, the operational and tactical levels of the Army will suffer. Resolving this debate in a manner that considers both current operations and projections of the future operational environment is essential. The experiences of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and those of the Israeli Defense Forces in southern Lebanon suggest that combined arms competence must be a central tenet of an Army that can fight for information and develop situations through action.

U.S. Army, SGT Teddy Wade



U.S. Army SGT Chris Miller talks with Afghan children inside Mahsaab High School construction site, Kohistan District, Afghanistan, 16 September 2009.

## The Future of Reconnaissance and Security

The 2009 ACC describes the capabilities that the Army will need to dominate across the full spectrum of operations in the period from 2016 to 2028. It notes technological advances and emerging threat capabilities that will inform the organizational and doctrinal requirements of the future force. To meet the challenges posed by enemies wielding both conventional and unconventional capabilities, the ACC introduced *operational adaptability*, a concept that emphasizes the fundamentals of mission command and decentralized operations.<sup>2</sup>

Operational adaptability enables Army forces to accomplish the diverse array of missions that brigade combat teams and subordinate small units will face in isolated, distributed areas of operation. A single Joint task force, for example, may receive the mission to destroy a conventionally armed

and organized enemy while simultaneously securing the area's population from insurgents using irregular means and methods. At the core of a Joint task force will be its brigade combat teams with sufficient combined arms combat power to defeat conventional enemies while retaining the ability to apply the hard-won irregular warfare TTP learned in Iraq and Afghanistan. These teams will have to be adaptable and able to fight for information against enemies with diverse capabilities.

Operational adaptability means that Army leaders down to the platoon and squad levels must have an understanding of the situation in context; that combined arms formations must have the ability to act in concert with Joint, interagency, inter-governmental, and multinational partners; that tactical formations have the requisite collection, analysis, and dissemination capabilities to process information needed by commanders and units to continually assess, learn, and adapt; and



that units at all levels be sufficiently organized and equipped to exploit opportunities, consolidate gains, and transition efficiently between tasks and operations.<sup>3</sup>

These capabilities pertain to the entire future force, but have particular relevance to the reconnaissance and security capabilities required to mitigate the uncertainty and complexity of future battlefields. It is troublesome that current and projected Army force structure addresses reconnaissance and security shortcomings with technological solutions, rather than combined arms solutions. Combined arms capabilities, however, are the foundation of operational adaptability. The current organization of the ACR provides the ideal structure to achieve operational adaptability. New weapons systems that leverage the technological advances of the coming decade will enhance the ACR's broad capabilities. The Army can and should continue to field the ACR as its optimal full spectrum combined arms formation, even as it integrates the component tenets of operational adaptability in its BCTs by fielding new technologies and developing and educating leaders.

Ominously, the current trajectory of the Army—one that addresses current COIN commitments at the expense of full spectrum capabilities—does not reflect the themes of the ACC. The conversion of the 3rd ACR is emblematic of this trajectory. The loss of significant reconnaissance and security capabilities in the force portends difficulties in meeting the challenges of the future and in applying the 2009 ACC vision. The ACC's supporting ideas demand *greater* reconnaissance and security capabilities than currently exists. Even if the end product does not look precisely like the current ACR, the future Army needs formations capable of conducting full spectrum reconnaissance and security operations. The ACC presents a vision of future combat in which reconnaissance and security capabilities play the central role in the ability of the Army to successfully operate in uncertainty.

If the Army is to deploy largely to austere environments among populations with distinct non-Western cultures, predeployment engagement and analysis will be critical to the long-term success of the force. Regardless of the type of threat, the Army must retain the ability to fight for information to develop sound analyses of the physical

terrain and human dynamics confronting it. This places a premium on the collection and development of intelligence at all levels of command.

Furthermore, commanders at all levels and in any type of operation—from stability to high-intensity battle—must have the physical ability to exploit opportunities and control the tempo of operations. The ACC highlights this mind-set in its implicit call for leaders to maintain the freedom of action to seize and maintain the initiative and to develop any situation through decisive action.

Finally, the Army may find itself conducting distributed combined arms operations, with ever smaller units operating far from command and control and sustainment nodes. The forces executing such operations will rely upon decentralized authority at the point of decision. With authority, however, comes the heavy responsibility to make informed decisions derived from reconnaissance and security operations that require tactical commanders to understand and develop the situation through action in their operational areas.

*Action* and *initiative* are the common threads of these ideas that are implicit in the ACC's call for operational adaptability. Most significantly, these points all address the need for decentralized reconnaissance and security capabilities at the operational and tactical levels. In current force structure, the 3rd ACR is the only formation that fulfills these requirements; without the 3rd ACR, the Army loses much of its ability to retain initiative in full spectrum operations. The need for a combined arms force capable of reacting to developing situations and fighting and surviving in complex environments highlights the shortcomings in existing BCT structure. The ACR fields combined arms teams with greater mass and mobile, protected firepower than its BCT counterpart.

## **Army Force Structure for Reconnaissance and Security**

The 3rd ACR-SBCT conversion leaves the Army without full spectrum reconnaissance and security capabilities at echelons above the BCT. Current doctrine addresses reconnaissance and security in the context of COIN. It provides little substantive discussion of reconnaissance and security capabilities in mid- to high-intensity conflicts against enemies organized and equipped with even limited

conventional capabilities. The resulting vulnerabilities in Army force structure have not been evident in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they entail problems in future possible operational environments.

Battalion commanders have assigned reconnaissance and security functions to organic units in Iraq and Afghanistan, and corps and Joint task force commanders have been able to depend upon intelligence from BCT assets operating in their own dedicated areas of operation. Existing reconnaissance and security doctrine and force structure have been adequate in meeting unit needs in the current operational environment. However, they are insufficient in an environment that contains conventional and/or hybrid threats.

Conventional armies that serve governments hostile to the United States still exist. Russian, North Korean, or Chinese conventional forces, for example, employ counter-reconnaissance forces that can easily subdue existing BCT reconnaissance and security forces using superior mass and mobile, protected platforms. Such enemies will likely utilize

irregular means and methods in conjunction with conventional forces. For example, even though Hezbollah did not have the conventional combat power of even a single North Korean mechanized company, it employed a hybrid combination of weapons and TTP that overwhelmed Israeli forces in northern Lebanon in 2006.<sup>4</sup> The Israelis had not organized and trained to defeat forces with conventional capabilities. The U.S. Army today is similarly untrained and ill-structured to defeat such enemies.

The Army must recalibrate its doctrine and force structure to reestablish conventional dominance. In contingencies against conventional and hybrid forces, Army corps commanders will need reconnaissance and security capabilities to best inform the employment of BCTs. Current and projected Army force structure lacks sufficient reconnaissance and security capabilities. Battlefield surveillance brigades (BfSB) are not the solution. Current doctrine assumes that BfSBs can fulfill the role that the ACRs once performed for corps-level commanders. The primary mission of the BfSB is



U.S. Army, SGT Lindsay Bradford

**SGT Sean Gray (far right) observes as PFC Khonesvanh Thephavongsa (center) prepares to change the barrel of a M240 machine gun while SPC Joseph Stout lays suppressive fire during team training at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Tallil, Iraq, 6 November 2009. The soldiers are with Company C, 38th Long Range Surveillance, 201st Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Fort Lewis, WA, and will help train Iraqi Security Force soldiers on proper surveillance and intelligence gathering techniques.**

to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in support of a division, corps, Joint task force, other service, or multinational force, but *doctrine requires BCTs to augment the BfSB*.<sup>5</sup> The BfSB is ill-equipped to perform its mission in a full spectrum environment. Organized and equipped mainly for passive collection of information with a reconnaissance and surveillance squadron that provides only limited mounted reconnaissance and long-range surveillance capabilities to the brigade, the BfSB lacks organic, mobile, protected firepower. Thus, it lacks the ability to fight for information when necessary, to exploit operational and tactical opportunities, and to develop a situation through action.

Many of the issues that afflict the BfSB also hinder reconnaissance and security operations in BCTs. Armored reconnaissance squadrons of heavy BCTs and reconnaissance squadrons of infantry BCTs and Stryker BCTs, for example, lack sufficient dismounted manpower to conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, and security in COIN; furthermore, they lack the firepower and protection to conduct reconnaissance and security missions at the high end of the conflict spectrum. Although the armored reconnaissance squadrons seem to be the descendant of the division cavalry squadron, the reality is that they bear little resemblance in structure and capabilities. Many former Armored Reconnaissance Squadrons commanders are critical of the unit's table of organization and equipment, noting that insufficient manpower denied them tactical flexibility in COIN operations in an urban environment.<sup>6</sup> They adapted through combined arms competencies and used superior firepower and technology to overcome their structural deficiencies against insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, enemies in higher-intensity conflicts may not yield as easily to superior American training, firepower, and technology.

The current modular U.S. Army has not fought capable conventional forces. Shortcomings in reconnaissance and security are worrisome in training exercises against opposing forces using conventional armored vehicles (such as Soviet BRDMs and BMPs) and insurgent teams with rocket propelled grenades and IEDs. Friendly platoons and troops habitually violated the basic tenets of reconnaissance doctrine. Cavalry formations are supposed to set the conditions for the decisive commitment of the main body, but insufficient manpower, protection,

and firepower caused these platoons and troops to become decisively engaged upon contact, often forcing the commander to commit more combat power to reinforce or relieve them.<sup>7</sup>

The ability of current reconnaissance and security formations in the Army's BCTs to set these conditions in mid- to high-intensity battle is doubtful, but at least they have dedicated formations to fulfill these functions. Joint task force commanders do not. It is unlikely that they would be willing to go into battle without dedicated reconnaissance and security assets. Using BCT units for reconnaissance and security or to augment BfSBs is the only alternative.

The loss of combat power that comes with trying to fulfill the reconnaissance and security requirements of higher headquarters affects the ability of commanders from company through brigade to fight for, analyze, and disseminate intelligence across their formations. Units will increasingly rely upon corps-level headquarters or unreliable networks for actionable intelligence. This perpetuates an outdated reliance on higher headquarters. Army leaders trumpet the idea of decentralization and call for diffusion of responsibility and combat enablers to the lowest feasible levels of command, but their decision to convert the 3rd ACR will trigger the opposite reaction. The continued dilution of reconnaissance and security capabilities, exemplified by the fielding of armored reconnaissance squadrons in heavy BCTs and the reconnaissance squadrons in infantry and Stryker BCTs, and the conversion of the 3rd ACR, will *centralize* information and intelligence at the corps and Joint task force level. This is not progress toward meeting future challenges, nor is it consistent with the 2009 ACC.

Another danger to the Army is the erosion of the professional expertise required to operate such organizations. The fiscal and intellectual costs of reestablishing it to field heavy reconnaissance and security formations will be prohibitive. The 3rd ACR today has the highest concentration of reconnaissance and security expertise in the Army. The skills and expertise of individual soldiers in scout sections and on regimental staffs will be relics of military history as the Army wrestles with force structure and procurement challenges and makes decisions that fail to address the complexity and uncertainty of the future. The concurrent fielding of BfSBs will put soldiers into positions that fulfill many of the



intelligence staff functions of the current ACR, but the skills related to the collection of intelligence—the ability to conduct doctrinally sound reconnaissance and security operations—will be lost as the Army neglects these skills in favor of population-centric COIN tactics, techniques, and procedures.

The impact of the 3rd ACR-SBCT conversion will be felt in the loss of full spectrum reconnaissance and security capabilities required to meet the versatile enemies of the future. The ACC contends that competency in combined arms operations is the indispensable foundation for future Army forces. At its core are ideas that will enable the Army to fight and win in *any* form of armed conflict. Of all existing brigade-sized formations, the ACR fields the most powerful organic combined arms capabilities down to the company level, a feature that gives it the requisite level of tactical flexibility to meet projected challenges. Defeating future adversaries will require organizations that can fight for information through physical reconnaissance and human intelligence, but the Army will not be able to field such capabilities in sufficient quantities.

## Conclusion

Mission command and decentralization are inseparable concepts that call for commanders to promote initiative at the lowest feasible level. To execute effective decentralized operations, BCTs and corps or Joint task forces must have *organic* reconnaissance and security capabilities. The BfSB currently is incapable of providing the requisite level of situational understanding in operations against conventionally armed and equipped formations or hybrid forces that employ both regular

and irregular means and methods. The BfSB lacks the assets necessary for corps-level security operations. Existing Russian, North Korean, and Chinese counter-reconnaissance capabilities accentuate this point. Furthermore, the BfSB's reliance on passive surveillance and the shortage of platforms that provide operational and tactical mobility hinder its flexibility for intratheater maneuver. Without an organization designed to perform reconnaissance and security, the corps or Joint task force commander must draw those capabilities from subordinate BCTs, depleting the already limited amount of combat power available to BCT commanders.

Combined arms competence is the requisite characteristic of a winning military organization regardless of where its mission falls on the conflict spectrum. To meet future challenges, the Army must field formations that can fight for information, develop the situation through action, and exploit operational and tactical opportunities. The ACC contends that decentralization of these capabilities will be beneficial for the future force. Changing the trajectory of the Army as it operates in Afghanistan and Iraq will be quite a task, but it is an urgent endeavor. Restoring these capabilities after the conversion of the 3rd ACR will be too costly and time consuming, leaving the Army vulnerable to adversaries' full-spectrum capabilities.

Political leaders dictate the types of conflicts the Army fights, but even as the Department of Defense enters a period of constrained resources, the Army retains the ability to shape the type of force it fields. A corps-level Joint task force headquarters lacking a powerful organic reconnaissance and security formation will be vulnerable, blind, and subject to the initiative of its adversaries. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pam 525-3-0: *The Army Capstone Concept*, 2009.

2. *Ibid.*, 16.

3. *Ibid.*, 16-24.

4. Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman, *The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle, PA:

Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), xii-xv.

5. U.S. Army Field Manual-Interim 3-0.1, *The Modular Force* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 1-15.

6. These observations are from personal interviews with various commanders from July 2007 to May 2009.

7. *Ibid.*

# Multiplying by Zero

Lieutenant Colonel Michael C. Veneri, U.S. Air Force



**I** AM UNCERTAIN IF the war in Afghanistan is “winnable.” I do know this: U.S. success depends on the Afghans. For the U.S. forces to leave Afghanistan, we need them to “stand up, while we stand down.” For our efforts to have an impact, the Afghans have to function at a level where they can provide their own security, governance, and economic well-being, which arguably they were able to do in some shape or form before 1973. I am not sure we can get them up on their knees, let alone get them to stand up. Even if we get them up on their knees through unlimited funding and no time constraints, I am still not sure the U.S. would be able to leave. I did not arrive at this conclusion through a deep-seated analysis of the current strategy or some academic study of the region. I came to this idea as I watched three Afghan men trying to inflate a basketball, and I wondered if this were a metaphor for our efforts in Afghanistan.

## A Metaphor for the U.S. Effort in Afghanistan

I spent a summer as the physical education (PE) mentor to the National Military Academy of Afghanistan’s (NMAA) Physical Education department. My predecessor had recommended that I bring some equipment, so I brought along 30 basketballs, 12 volleyballs, and 12 soccer balls, as well as a few American footballs. Another previous U.S. mentor had provided the PE department with an electric air compressor, one that charges a car battery, has a floodlight, and probably retails for about \$50 at any auto store. I used this to pump air into a few balls when I first arrived. About a month later, I needed to fill up a few basketballs for some drills I planned to show the PE instructors. One of the Afghan PE instructors, a lieutenant colonel and the overseer of the air pump, grabbed the balls and began to fill one of them up.

I had been talking with my interpreter for a few minutes when I noticed the basketball was not getting any air. I pulled the pin out and found the clamp at the end of the fabric hose had come loose and some of the fabric had frayed. The pump was pushing air out but, because of the frayed fabric, air was not making it into the ball. The Afghan lieutenant colonel came over and told me it was not broken but that it would take time to fill up

*Lieutenant Colonel Michael C. Veneri is the deputy department head and an assistant professor in the Department of Military and Strategic Studies, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO. He holds a B.S. from the U.S. Air Force Academy, an M.S. from Troy University, and a Ph.D. from George Mason University. He has served multiple tours in Turkey and Italy in support of operations in Iraq and Yugoslavia, including 46 combat missions.*

*PHOTO: An instructor explains basketball to his cadets, National Military Academy of Afghanistan, Kabul, 23 June 2009. (Photo courtesy of author)*

the basketball. I told him the pump was broken. He said no, it would take time. The equipment manager, a 47-year-old senior NCO who had been a colonel prior to Karzai's arrival, came over to see if he could fix the pump, as did the boxing instructor. For the next ten minutes, three men, all 40-odd years old, sat befuddled before this air compressor as if it were some sort of an oracle.

After turning the air pump on and off several times, turning it upside down, and shaking it, the Afghans' perplexity seemed to diminish when, through my translator, I said the fabric hose was frayed and was preventing a good seal. Ah, they could fix this problem. The boxing instructor knew what to do. He grabbed a roll of scotch tape, provided courtesy of the U.S. government, and wrapped the frayed end with scotch tape—not duct tape or maybe even masking tape. While those products may have had a chance at temporarily fixing the problem, such items were unavailable at NMAA, unless a U.S. mentor provided them. In the spirit of the often-cited Lawrence of Arabia—that better they do it tolerably rather than I do it perfectly—I kept my mouth shut, waited, and watched as these three men worked the problem.<sup>1</sup>

As I sat there, I noted that this air compressor was too complicated for them on a number of levels. Foremost, the technology was beyond anything they were accustomed to using, yet I knew every high school gym and garage in America had one. When I asked what they would do if the air pump was broken, the NCO showed me the backup air pump—a circa 1950s bicycle hand pump, which was also broken with a frayed hose and lacked an air valve to put a pin or stem into. More importantly I realized they had no easy way to replace this air pump. The Afghan military's supply system is certainly not mature enough to have electric air pumps available for requisition, and their local base supply system is not developed to the point where they would have an equipment center to borrow one. Nor could the PE department rely on the local Afghan economy. The price of an air pump was beyond their means, and even if they had the money, where would they buy one? The local bazaar does not stock electric air compressors. In the United States, an electric air pump is nice to have, not necessarily needed, but so cheap and available that it has become ubiquitous. But here in Afghanistan, the electric air pump is a

luxury, and without one, the PE department would struggle to provide inflated balls for their classes.

And now it was broken. After half an hour of air flowing into my basketball—the object of three sets of intent eyes and manipulating hands—they presented to me a semi-inflated sphere and definitive reassurance the air pump was not broken. My Afghan colleagues had no backup plan to fill up balls for their PE classes or intramural activities. When I pressed them for details, they said they did not know what they would do or how they would replace it. I told them they could ask the dean or the superintendent to get them one. “A very good suggestion and I support it,” said the head of the PE department, an Afghan colonel, but I knew that if I did not get them a replacement or personally ask the question to the dean or superintendent, nothing would happen.

As I watched the three well-intentioned men work through the difficulties of applying pieces of scotch tape to a frayed fabric hose, my heart began to feel heavy for them because they worked so diligently yet so ineffectively to fix a problem that was so easy to fix by our standards and resources. I had an affinity for my Afghan counterparts. They were tough, hospitable, endearing people. I also believed in the mission. By helping train the future Afghan officer corps, we were reinforcing legitimacy through a critical institution in Afghan society where shared values could be imparted and leveraged.

As in other Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, and Iraq, the military—for good and ill—served as the arbiter of societal control. Influencing the Afghan officer corps provided another pathway, arguably the most effective one, for U.S. influence. However, as I stared at the semi-inflated basketball in front of me, I wondered if this were a metaphor for our training mission in Afghanistan. The pump was able to get some air in the ball, but not enough to make it bounce. Were we sinking all this money and effort into the country only to bring it to a point where, like the basketball, it might be better than before but still ultimately and inherently ineffective?

I knew, before I handed them the basketball, that they would not be able to fill it up with air, and I realized that the “by, with, and through” mantra of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy—at least in my experience with the Afghan Military Academy's PE department—was inadequate. I hoped that



this was not the overall macro experience for the entire U.S. mentoring effort. I could not imagine how other mentors were faring, such as those who were teaching infantry tactics, aircraft maintenance, helicopter piloting, and supply system operations, but I sensed that if it were similar to my experience inflating this basketball, having their Afghan clients do it “tolerably” would be difficult.

We were partially to blame for this. No doubt, the Afghans struggled to adapt and to learn our methods, but we struggled to adapt our ways to them. Joint Publication 3-24 and Army Field Manual 3-24 stress the need for adaptability in order to learn how to adjust and meet the needs of the environment.<sup>2</sup> Yet, I did not get the sense we were adapting our methods to fit the Afghan way, or even that we could. The U.S. military way and Afghan societal ways are definitely different and have few common intersections. I know we want them to adapt to our way, but the American way may not be the best way for the Afghans. We lacked a healthy dose of skepticism when looking at our Afghan colleagues. Technological and cultural hurdles loomed large, but we had a mission to train the Afghans and, no matter the hurdle, we would train the Afghans. Because the American way was the only way we knew, that is what we were providing them. Dogmatism overrode pragmatism. Adaptability takes time, but after almost a decade in Afghanistan, what if the Afghans cannot or do not wish to take what we are trying to provide? This leads to the temptation to do it for them, but more important, what more can we do or should we do if the host country is not adapting?

## Absorption, Initiative, and Corruption

I saw three overwhelming issues with our “by, with, and through” approach: absorption, initiative, and corruption.

**Absorption.** A technology gap exists between the Afghans and us. The Afghans therefore have

difficulty absorbing what we provide them. As was the case with the electric air compressor, our technology is too complicated for them, and we struggle to simplify it so they can understand it.

I asked one of the U.S. air advisory cadre why we were teaching them to fly Mi-17s rather than Blackhawks. He told me they were easier for them to fly. Compared to U.S. Blackhawks or CH-53s, the Mi-17 is primitive, and if America wanted to build an Afghan air force, it would have to equip it with aircraft that were not too technologically sophisticated. The Mi-17 was the solution. The problem is that we are reliant on a third country to equip the Afghans.

Relying on other countries for our mission has created odd surrogate relationships for the United States that are problematic because we can be cut out of the relationship. More importantly, *equipment builds relationships*. We have created a condition of dual reliance where we rely upon other nations to train us to be able to train the Afghans. In the case of the Mi-17, Americans are working with the Ukraine for training, technical support, and equipment. The equipment is tangential—symbolic in most cases—while the technical training, the follow-on maintenance, and the upgrades cement the relationship. If we cannot provide the Afghans with equipment that gives us the means to provide further support and the ability to nurture a relationship while building their capability, we are doing ourselves a disservice. For their part, the Afghans could cut the United States out of the picture and rely on Ukrainian or Russian support for their Mi-17 fleet support.

I saw this in the PE department. When I first arrived, I surveyed all the equipment. We had provided the Afghans with a fully stocked inventory of top-of-the-line PE equipment, yet most of it sat unused. We had built them a brand new gym that also sat unused for a variety of reasons. We had provided them with 23 brand new fitness machines, again unused until I had the head of the PE department encourage staff to use them. They were still only sparingly used and tightly controlled by PE instructors. I realized no one trusted anyone to care for the equipment, and theft was always a concern. The academy administration did not trust the PE instructors, and the PE instructors did not trust the cadets. This partially explained the

***Because the American way was the only way we knew, that is what we were providing them...***



Photo courtesy of author.

The National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) PE trophy case. The wooden shelving and trophies were donated by the Turkish mentor mission at NMAA, Kabul, Afghanistan, 4 June 2009.

tight control of equipment and facilities, but there was something else. I asked them why they were not using what we provided them. The collective response from the instructors was that it was too nice for everyday use. They told me that if the equipment was damaged, it would not be replaced or repaired because they had no means to do either.

What I did notice was that many of the staff and cadets were wearing oddly branded athletic shoes and sweat suits. I asked them who provided this gear and they told me it was the Turks. The Turkish military also had a mentor mission at NMAA. I had noticed clocks, coffee mugs, and key chains stamped with the crossed flags of Turkey and Afghanistan throughout the PE department. I had also noticed the Turks had provided trophies with taped-on paper inscriptions as awards for the Afghan intramural championships. These trophies resided in a makeshift, crooked trophy case that greeted every visitor walking into the PE department.

I assumed cultural sensitivities were the reason I was not seeing U.S. flags everywhere. The U.S. team chief assured me that the Afghans knew we were the real source of equipment, and that all the

Afghans knew this. I did not get this impression. The sharp incongruence of what we provided and what they actually used gave me pause. We had built them the nicest gym facility in the entire country, we had provided them with Nike court shoes and \$55 Nike basketballs, and yet what everyone saw were these \$2 trinkets from the Turks and the Turkish-Afghan flags everywhere. The Turks were gaining influence with such little effort and cost, cultivating a relationship through cheap items, while we were getting little return on our investment. Their refusal to use what we provided created a paradoxical dependency effect. I wanted them to be self-sufficient, but I wanted them to use U.S.-provided equipment. Since the Afghans did not use what we provided, we had no need to provide them with more. They had plenty of U.S. equipment in storage. The Turks, on the other hand, were providing them with less-costly merchandise, and the Afghans were using it. Ultimately, they were more reliant on the Turks than on us, even though we were the ones stuck with the real cost of setting up a functioning PE department.

This problem illuminates the depth of our technological gap with the Afghans. Whether

weapon systems or air pumps, our technology confounds them. Unfortunately, we have not sufficiently adapted our technologies for the Afghans to understand and use them.

Our technologies, ostensibly efficient and cost effective, were actually neither in Afghanistan. This is what led to Mi-17 and Turkish PE equipment. An American Mi-17 trainer told me they finally had reached a breakthrough when the Afghans conducted a premission briefing using PowerPoint. In a country with a 90 percent illiteracy rate, computer literacy is an advanced skill, not an expected skill. PowerPoint is a starting point for us, but it is an advanced technology for the Afghans. Because we value technology and its implied progress, we easily forget that others do not or cannot wed themselves to technology.

We provided the PE department with 23 fitness machines, three of which had been broken for some time prior to my arrival. These machines perplexed the Afghans. One of the instructors asked me why anyone would need a machine to run when he could just run outside. I had often wondered that as well, but I remarked that if the weather were bad or too cold, you could use the treadmill to train. "Why not walk the stairs?" was the question I received from another PE instructor about the Stairmaster, and in

a country where I never saw an elevator, this also made sense. However, the fitness machines were another example of the tech gap. One of my first tasks was to find how the Afghans planned to fix the three broken machines. I was told they had one repairman in Kabul who could fix these machines. However, the machines sat unfixed throughout my entire time as a mentor. There simply was no one else who knew how to repair the equipment, and since three machines were already broken, the PE department head had limited the use of those that still functioned. Twenty still worked, so I convinced the PE department head to use them.

This small achievement soon led to another epiphany: technological troubleshooting may not be a universal cultural trait. Three faculty members were using the machines one day when one of the multiple and consistent daily power outages struck, knocking out power to all the machines. Rather than push buttons on the machines, cycle a breaker or turn the machine on and off again, the three faculty members began complaining to me that the machines did not work and needed fixing. After the power came back on, I simply reset the machines by turning them off and on again. I explained this procedure to them and showed them what to do if this happened again. What really astonished me, though, was



Photo courtesy of author.

Afghan faculty enjoy their lunchtime workout in the NMAA cardio room, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2 July 2009.



that after subsequent power failures the instructors unfailingly asked me to again perform that simple task for them.

As the weeks went by, I wondered if we were creating some sort of intractable dependency effect where the Afghans would be completely reliant on us. I now knew the answer—they just would not be dependent. As I surveyed the landscape of NMAA and the surrounding Kabul airport, littered with detritus from the Soviets, I sensed that either they would do without (as in the case of the gym equipment) or they would let things sit and rot when they broke down. I realized that our expectations for them to understand and use our technologies are simply set too high. We should be supplying them with chalkboards, yet we are trying to give them Internet solutions.

What we were providing could never be maintained without significant oversight. We overlooked this requirement. That said, we were not blind to the truth. All the mentors at NMAA had been told by the senior U.S. mentor to take an “appetite suppressant” in terms of Afghan capabilities and our preexisting expectations. This tech gap arguably could be overcome with enough time and education. In the case of the PE department, I had deliberately set low expectations and recommended lowering the standard of equipment we provided, but what really stood in my way of progress was what I considered significant cultural impediments. *The most glaring in my estimation was a limited sense of initiative.*

**Initiative.** Initiative, as a value, permeates American culture. In every aspect of U.S. society, someone thinks there is a better way; not so with the Afghans. I did not get any sense of a “can do” attitude from the PE department or from any other Afghan I encountered. They readily took what I provided—lesson plans, equipment, textbooks—but when I asked them how they planned on improving their lessons or expanding their curriculum or figuring out a supply system, they had no answers, no notion of how to improve, and no institutional mechanisms to foster improvement. The PE instructors told me I could provide them with improved lesson plans, but they would not do it themselves. I finally figured out that the level above them had to approve every change, which ultimately made the dean the one who determined what was best for the PE department, not the PE instructors themselves.

This strict hierarchy prevented any type of decentralization of authority or primary level decision making. It also quashed any initiative from bubbling up from the bottom. While hierarchy is not new to military organizations and is a fundamental trait throughout Afghan culture, it proved incapacitating when I was trying to make changes within the PE department. Instructors could not change their syllabi or their method of teaching without supervisor approval.

Like most of my U.S. mentor counterparts, I was mentoring a department head with the rank of colonel. I assumed, wrongly, that he had the authority to act on my suggestions. At the end of my tour, I provided him with a set of final recommendations. He told me all my recommendations were worthy and would be considered. I mentioned to him that I was reiterating some of the previous U.S. mentors’ recommendations. I asked why they had not been implemented. He told me that I did not understand. While all the recommendations they received were worthy, unless the dean told them to make changes, they would not make them.

I realized to have an impact, the other U.S. mentors and I probably should have been mentoring the dean. A key tenet to making recommendations is to get to the one who can make changes. I wondered if we were doing that. We had mentors at every level; however, it seemed that only one level, the top, really mattered. I mentioned to the PE head that I did not understand how the dean could know more about wrestling class than the wrestling coach, yet the PE head reassured me that he did. The possibility or even the thought of change emerging from the bottom—initiated by the instructors who knew the material and knew the students—seemed remote. Initiative has to emerge from those “in the know,” and the Afghans’ virtually absolute hierarchical allegiance squelched any enterprise among the PE instructors.

***This hierarchy allegiance prevented any type of decentralization of authority or primary level decision making.***

I wondered if other U.S. mentors had similar experiences. More pointedly, for me to have had an impact, I realized I should have been more familiar with the culture and language. I would have had a better understanding of why the Afghans seemed to be, at least to me, an authority culture and not a knowledge culture.

**Corruption, power, and perception.** Corruption as defined by the Afghans is often confused with inefficiency, Afghan power dynamics, and the nature of Afghan society. Every Afghan I spoke with cited corruption as the reason why the NMAA PE department could not get supplies from the Afghan National Army. I noticed the Afghans had the resources, but they had no concept of distributing resources on the basis of priority or need. Resources seemed to accumulate at certain points and then not be distributed effectively, or at all. Afghan notions of power and trust superseded effective distribution.

The PE department head held the keys to the gym facilities. I asked him why he did not leave the doors unlocked so other faculty members and cadets could come and go as they pleased to use the facilities. He told me that he could not trust others to take care of what was his, and that I was naïve as an American because in America I can trust my cadets and officers to take care of PE equipment. Offhandedly, he mentioned that other instructors had to come through him to use the gym. This, I came to find out, gave him leverage over the faculty, a form of power. The material value of the equipment or its actual relevance did not matter. This explained why completely unusable equipment—broken field hockey sticks, punctured basketballs—remained on equipment rosters. As long as the PE department head had it, he could control it, and he wanted to control it because it gave him power in the eyes of others. This may also have explained why so many cadets wanted to be supply officers rather than infantry, aviation, or artillery officers. Many of the cadets told me that being a supply officer was a good job because that individual was in charge of resources. I interpreted this as a sense of leverage over their peers. This troubled me because the officer corps we were training would be perpetuating this problem. I did not know how we would do it, but we needed to inculcate the concept that keys to supply accounts served purposes that transcended personal aggrandizement. We also had to overcome a pervasive lack of trust.

Afghanistan is a patriarchal society. Trust is implicit among family members, which explains why Afghans prefer jobs in which they can use their position to take care of family members. This also explains the lack of trust I witnessed. At NMAA, we were trying to build a military academy that rewards merit. This is a foreign concept in a country whose social fabric is familial. Trust is not given outside of familial or tribal lines. This led to the PE department locking up everything. More important, it left a lot of competent Afghans sitting on the outside with feelings of discontent and powerlessness. If they did not have family connections, they could not get a job or have any chance to get ahead.

A particularly well-educated Afghan once approached me about working for the U.S. military. I wondered why he was working as the assistant to the NCO equipment manager. He had recently graduated from Kabul University with a degree in journalism, and he had decent English skills. He told me this was the only job he could get because he did not have the family connections required for securing a job as a journalist. He lamented that merit did not matter; only connections counted, and he did not have any. He said the U.S. military was his only hope because it hired on merit.

This widespread lack of trust and desire to aggregate resources led to a supply system so byzantine that when I asked for an equipment requirements list, they produced two—premised on hope, not on priority. One list had been created in response to a possible windfall of \$1,500 the senior U.S. mentor had tried to obtain for each department at NMAA. The second list contained standing requirements as identified by the Afghans. Neither included a scale that they actually needed, but the second list included a swimming pool, which in a landlocked country with no navy could probably wait. It also included soccer balls. A few months earlier, the PE department had received 200 soccer balls from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) donated by Europeans after a written plea from the dean. In short, the Afghans did not need the soccer balls. They had no mechanisms as we do to prioritize, request, and pay for supplies. Everything is ad hoc.

Someone needs to take an ice pick and break apart the aforementioned aggregation points to get the

supply system flowing. More important, the Afghans need the mind-set to trust others to use resources correctly and to distribute items based on priority and need, not on patronage.

This separation and facilitation is not likely to happen because mind-sets are the most difficult things to change. Cultural tendencies and beliefs persist tenaciously. We can give the Afghans everything they need in terms of equipment and training, but if we cannot change their mind-set, this assistance is all for naught. Their lack of initiative, coupled with their seemingly insuperable inefficiencies, lead to a sense of malaise when addressing their problems. In my experience with the PE department, they took no ownership for their problems, and I did not get the sense they had any proclivity to do so.

My initial feelings of sympathy for the Afghans waned as I realized that they did not take responsibility for any of their problems. They always had an excuse—corruption, poor government—or blamed someone else—the Soviets, the Americans, ISAF, Pakistan—for their problems. Discussions with Afghans often reminded me of Tom Friedman’s point about Lebanese politicians in his book, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*:

Like so many politicians born and raised in countries that had not managed their own affairs for years, even centuries, Salam (Saeb Salam, former Lebanon’s PM [prime minister]), was convinced that there was always somebody else in the world, some distant power, which had the ultimate word and the military might to impose it.<sup>3</sup>

The Afghans felt the same way. Someone else was in control. It was never their fault. Any situation could be explained away by something they seemingly had no control over, like the government or God. The *inshallah* mind-set, while noble and pious, is incapacitating. The mind-set is the default position for everything that they cannot explain, and it enables them to find fault with U.S. efforts.

## The Imperiled Math of “By, With, and Through”

When I first arrived at NMAA, my interpreter complained to me about U.S. corruption. I asked him how the U.S. was corrupt. He told me that while \$600 billion had been invested in Afghanistan, only \$6 billion had gone to the Afghans (his numbers).

He complained that the money went from the U.S. government to U.S. contractors. His math was wrong, but he was right about the flow of U.S. money. I was puzzled that he labeled this corruption. I asked him what U.S. forces needed. I then pointed to the rental cars in the parking area in front of me that we were contracting from Kellogg, Brown, and Root (now known as KBR, Inc.); the bottled water in my hand from a United Arab Emirates distributor; and to my computer, which relied on Pakistani Internet service support. I asked him if anyone in Afghanistan could supply these items to U.S. forces. He told me he didn’t think so. I realized at that point that our “by, with, and through” approach might be doomed.

Afghanistan and the Afghans provide such a limited foundation to build from that “by, with, and through” simply may not be feasible. In many ways, *we are multiplying by zero*. The Afghans have limited infrastructure; limited agricultural capability; limited to no indigenous industrial capacity; an immature consumer economy; an impotent and incoherent security apparatus; and a fledgling Western-style government overseeing a decentralized, tribally based population. No foundation exists to build on. The lack of an existing infrastructure prevents the creation of second- and third-order economic effects, construction of a security force, and the development of functioning public transportation and communication services. The United States is investing in a country in which there is literally nothing to invest. Virtually everything the U.S. uses has to be imported because Afghanistan is fundamentally underdeveloped.

What I witnessed in Afghanistan is best summed up in Robert Kaplan’s *The Ends of the Earth*. Kaplan notes that when the United States began the Peace Corps in the 1960s, both Sierra Leone and India required basic agricultural know-how. Thirty years later, India had become a net food exporter and a producer of high technology with no further need of farm assistance. Sierra Leone, on the other hand, remained exactly where it was in the 1960s when the Peace Corps first arrived.

The message of Sierra Leone was brutal: The end was nigh in the failed battle, fought valiantly by the liberal West, to equalize cultures around the world. The differences between some cultures and



**U.S.-provided Dell computers for the female cadets to use are being unloaded from a U.S.-provided Ford Ranger truck in front of the main NMAA Administration Building, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2 July 2009. The nine female cadets were expected to attend medical school in India. A key concern is that their families would not allow the women to use these computers or the computers would end up on the black market.**

others (regarding the ability to produce exportable material wealth) appeared to be growing rather than diminishing.<sup>4</sup>

I could substitute Afghanistan for Sierra Leone. It was difficult to make my interpreter understand this, but he knew it when I asked where the ISAF would get its water, its rental cars, and its Internet service. He knew that whatever we needed would come from somewhere other than Afghanistan.

We are in so many ways the polar opposite of Afghanistan. Survey any index that compares countries. The United States and Afghanistan are at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of government transparency, corruption, and freedom.<sup>5</sup> The chasms I witnessed between us and them at my level were vast and may not be possible to overcome. If I were to extrapolate my experience in the PE department to the overall U.S. effort, I would guess that the manpower, the resources, and the money to build a somewhat secure state with a quasi-modern functioning infrastructure in Afghanistan would be astronomical; and even if America took it on as a

national endeavor, chances of success would be slim. However, we are part-timers and will eventually leave.

My anecdotal experience reinforced the conundrum that we cannot want Afghanistan to succeed more than the Afghans do, but that seems to be the case. I wanted them to be able to blow up that basketball, but they could not. We want them to have a secure, quasi-modern country, but how will we get them there any other way except by doing what we know? We seem unaware that our resource-intensive efforts may not work and Afghanistan might not make strategic sense in the end.

Our inability to empower the Afghans to our standards of effectiveness is by no means entirely the fault of the Afghans. A lot of the blame rests with us. We are trying to raise them to a standard they cannot reach, and we are fully aware that they will not get there. I knew they would not be able to fill up the basketball with a broken air compressor, but I still let them try. It is our standard and not theirs we are measuring them by, but what other standard



should we use? This is the challenge of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. We need to adapt our methods and ways to best suit the Afghans, but how will we know we are doing that? We were still pouring money and resources into Afghanistan after eight years of largely fruitless efforts, so I continued to provide the PE department with equipment and assistance to train cadets.

I was repeatedly reminded that our mission was to train the Afghans and that we would continue to train the Afghans, regardless of circumstances. However, the circumstances I encountered have to be reconciled with reality—cultural impediments, the lack of initiative and ownership, and technical illiteracy.

Our efforts demonstrated the classic adage, “When you don’t know what to do, you do what you know.” We know the American way of warfare predicated on technology, a fat tooth-to-tail ratio, and an educated, professional fighting force. I know what a U.S. military academy PE department looks like. This is what we are trying to give the Afghans, and they are not getting it or don’t want to get it. We are pushing American solutions on them with little or no success. After eight years, even “tolerably” was still a future goal. They had put in some air but the basketball didn’t bounce. Much like our overall endeavor in Afghanistan, I wonder if the effort to inflate the ball is worth it. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. T.E. Lawrence, “Twenty-Seven Articles,” *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917, Article 15.

2. U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 15 December 2006), sec. 7-46 and 7-47; Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 5 October 2009: X-17.

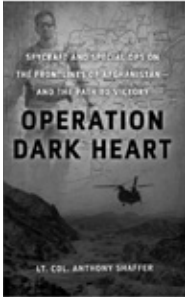
3. Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York, Anchor Books

Doubleday, 1989), 207.

4. Robert Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 54.

5. Random survey of rankings via the Internet: <[http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/gov\\_cor-government-corruption](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/gov_cor-government-corruption)>, <<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781359.html>>, <<http://www.heritage.org/Index/Ranking.aspx>>.

# MR Book Reviews



**OPERATION DARK HEART**, Anthony Shaffer, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2010, 299 pages, \$25.99.

St. Martin's Press has printed two versions of Anthony Shaffer's *Operation Dark Heart*: the original and a redacted version acceptable for public release.

The Department of Defense (DOD) contacted the publisher only days before the planned release of the book, maintaining that Shaffer's memoir posed a threat to national security. Shortly after that contact, DOD bought 10,000 copies of the book, its entire first run, and burned them all. The author then met with government officials and agreed to remove material deemed classified. The end result was a redacted version complete with distractingly large blocks of text blacked out. Still, several copies of the original version escaped the flames; in fact, at the time of this writing a couple of eBay "buy it now" prices are near \$6,000 for the original version, which one could compare to the redacted version and gain insight regarding the type of information the government considers potentially compromising.

Anyone who has ever read a redacted investigation report has a great start toward understanding the frustrations of sorting through this version of *Operation Dark Heart*. At most, this book only hints at the story Shaffer would like to tell. For example, he provides some basic biographical information with a particular focus on where he had trained and with which organizations he had served, all obscured. Thus, it is next to impossible to really appreciate either. The redacted text compromises the narrative's flow and essentially prevents one from understanding Shaffer's ascent in

the world of counterterrorism intelligence. So goes the entire book. As an aside, what was not redacted sometimes should have been, in particular Shaffer's need to share details of his love life in a combat zone. These scenes add nothing to the story, constituting at most failed voyeurism.

Shaffer gained some notoriety for his 2006 testimony before Congress that he was part of the SOCOM-led Able Danger task force. This effort purportedly identified two of the 9/11 cells as well as Mohamed Atta over a year before the world learned of them. The author discusses some of the task force's data mining efforts, but only in general terms. Shaffer fails to support his claim regarding Atta and the cells; in contrast, the DOD inspector general maintains as part of the public record that Able Danger identified neither prior to 9/11. Who does one believe?

The author admits that he is either loved or hated, but his claim before Congress that he was considered a "rock star" within his profession suggests, at a minimum, that he has no self-worth issues. The book's title comes from a cross-border operation that Shaffer was developing as a member of the Leadership Targeting Cell. After identifying a hotel in Wada, Pakistan, that served as a major Al-Qaeda headquarters, Shaffer was working to orchestrate an attack using precision strikes and assassinations to destroy the hotel and kill its inhabitants. The beauty of the plan was that the violence would appear to be the work of rival tribes rather than American special operators.

Unfortunately, the new commanding general, unlike his predecessor, disapproved of cross-border operations, and Operation Dark Heart never occurred. Much of Shaffer's narrative reads like a made-for-TV movie script: the hardened, no-nonsense intelligence professional is

punished by several careerist senior officers, who live only for promotion and personal advancement. The author never considers the possibility that operators work tactically while those above them may see a situation from the strategic perspective. Shaffer's story has made him a cult hero within conspiracy theory circles, so finding videos of his testimony before Congress is both easy and informative.

Shaffer ends his book by offering a recipe for success in a chapter titled "How to Win in Afghanistan." He offers such helpful observations as "appoint a leader who is a combination of Grant and Eisenhower." If only it were that easy. Add to this perfect leader the ability to control the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and success is imminent. In fairness, Shaffer's recipe would probably work, but the ingredients are harder to obtain than he implies. A tone of oversimplifying the challenge permeates this effort.

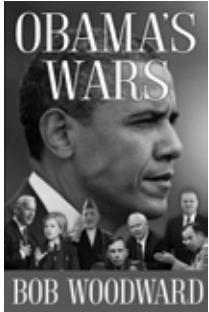
This book is a quick read, more so from the redactions than from the elegance of the prose. For example, Shaffer in one mere paragraph mentions shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic, and then defines insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting to achieve different results." Granted, inventing new metaphors, like transmission repair, is best left to professionals, but Shaffer writes almost ponderously. One must assume that he analyzes intelligence with greater skill than he can turn a phrase. That said, more is missing than just redacted information from this version of *Operation Dark Heart*. Spend your money instead on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the book that inspired Shaffer.

**LTC Jim Varner, USA, Retired, Platte City, Missouri**

*Editor's Note: Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Shaffer maintains that his book does not disclose classified*

information and has recently filed a lawsuit against the Pentagon, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency, claiming violations of his First Amendment rights.

**OBAMA'S WARS**, Bob Woodward, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 464 pages, \$30.00.



From the outset, the title of veteran *Washington Post* journalist Bob Woodward's latest entry into the annals of national security fare is somewhat deceiving. *Obama's Wars* actually focuses

on President Barack Obama's war—the fight for security, stable governance, and dignified withdrawal from Afghanistan. Through most of *Obama's Wars*, Iraq is an afterthought, a conflict more his predecessor's than his. Woodward takes his readers into a new White House with a decidedly different focus than the one he illustrated in *The War Within*, in which President George W. Bush struggled to exploit the surging success in Iraq.

*Obama's Wars* begins in the early days following the 2008 presidential election, with Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell briefing the president-elect. In typical Woodward fashion, this serves as the grand stage-setter, with McConnell guiding Obama through the complexities of the American involvement in Central and Southwest Asia, evolving threat scenarios, and the “sources and methods” at his disposal within the intelligence community to contend with those threats. From ongoing military operations in Afghanistan to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, Obama was inheriting an extremely delicate and volatile political situation that was very likely to define his presidency.

As Woodward gains momentum, his narrative builds on three distinct themes: reaffirming civilian control of the military, forging a new

regional strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and managing the sensitive political and military situation within Pakistan. At the same time, Woodward lays bare the myth of the reputed “team of rivals” that formed Obama's cabinet and inner circle of advisors and explores the disparate and often conflicting personalities that surround the new president.

Woodward is a master storyteller, and *Obama's Wars* continues his penchant for taking readers deep within the Nation's political landscape. He dedicates a significant portion of the book to Obama's efforts to establish his role as the commander in chief. Throughout, there is a sense that the Department of Defense held sway over policy during the Bush administration, exerting an incalculable influence through Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney, himself a former defense secretary. In increasingly candid moments, members of Obama's inner circle express a growing frustration with what they see as the militarization of foreign policy.

According to Woodward, no one seems more determined to reassert the power of the Executive Branch than former Marine Corps commandant General James Jones, Obama's national security advisor. The tension between Jones and the Pentagon is often palpable, but no more so than among the core of Obama's most trusted advisors—Deputy National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon; the president's advisor for counterterrorism, John Brennan; National Security Council Chief of Staff Denis McDonough; and White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel.

Along with Jones, each of them attempted to advise the president on national security policy, and each of them ultimately contributed to the growing bifurcation of the policy and strategy development process. All believed the Pentagon was purposely trying to force the president's hand in Central Asia and made no secret of their disdain for the military leadership. At one point, they even suggested that Secretary Gates had assumed the former vice president's role, “whispering confidentially in

the ear of an inexperienced commander in chief.” The leverage that they assumed this gave the Defense secretary made them all the more determined to reinforce civilian control of the military within their inner circle.

At the core of this tension was the evolution of a new strategy in Central Asia. Much of the book recounts the internal strife over the assessment of newly appointed International Security Assistance Force commander General Stanley McChrystal. Even with significant troop-level increases already in place, the former commander of the Joint Special Operations Command believed another 40,000 forces were essential to countering a country-wide insurgency in Afghanistan. Thus began a series of private—and oftentimes public—debates over the ends, ways, and means that would define success in Central Asia.

Many key uniformed leaders agreed with McChrystal's assessment, including the commander of U.S. Central Command, General David Petraeus, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen. Vice President Joseph Biden, among others, fostered a “counterterrorism plus” strategy that required an increase of only 20,000 troops. General James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Mullen's deputy, believed “the president was by law entitled to a full range of options” and posited a hybrid option that proposed a strategy that combined counterterrorism with an increased focus on the training of Afghan security forces.

Throughout *Obama's Wars*, Woodward weaves together these first two themes while at the same time exposing widening rifts between and among agencies and departments, cabinet members and key advisors, and the leaders within the military establishment. These rifts underpin and accentuate the broader story, drawing out the personalities at play and the underlying agendas so common to the Washington political scene. Rather than a contemporary “team

of rivals,” in many ways the new president surrounded himself with like-thinking individuals incapable of forging any kind of team. Finding balance in the volatile political and military landscape of Central Asia appeared to present a much less daunting task.

Through a series of senior level engagements and open dialogue, the Obama administration was able to secure the Pakistani political will to extend military reach into border province tribal areas and contain and degrade Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces, limiting their ability to influence events within Afghanistan. However, defining our relationship with Pakistan in the future proved elusive.

*Obama's Wars* is an exceptional book. No other writer maneuvers through our government's national security apparatus quite so deftly as Woodward. His writing is without par—no other writer can convey the complexities of politics so effortlessly. His investigative methods and his conclusions are as insightful as they are important. *Obama's Wars* is an essential resource for understanding the realities of American politics and the challenges of defining strategy in the current era.

**LTC Steve Leonard, USA,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**INSURGENTS, TERRORISTS, AND MILITIAS: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat**, Richard H. Shultz and Andrew J. Drew, Columbia University Press, New York, 328 pages, \$24.50.

With the exception of Operation Desert Storm and the initial stage of Operation Iraqi Freedom, war since 1990 has not followed the Western model of armed conflict. This is the claim made and supported by Richard H. Schultz, Jr., and Andrea J. Dew who provide some superb insights into the methods by which we can come to understand why and how nonstate actors fight. If you are interested in either irregular warfare or counterinsurgency, you should add this book to your reading list.

The book's focus is on anthro-

pological study and analysis. One of the first points it makes is that, unlike the West, many cultures view conflict positively. Rather than seeing it as immoral or abnormal, they view warfare as a normal state of affairs, one that is often desirable. To fully understand why this is the case and the ramifications that follow, one must study our foes' history, culture, norms, and values. The study of culture is just as important as intelligence work focused on enemy numbers, location, and capabilities. Unless we focus on the cultural aspects of the conflict, we run the risk of not only failing to understand our enemy's motivation and methods, but also of losing, despite our advantages in technology and conventional capability.

As part of their anthropological analysis, the authors focus on tribes and clans. Until the recent past, both of these terms have been viewed by the West as anachronistic. While much of the world has long focused on states as the key actors on the international stage, the fact is that large numbers of the world's population identify far more with their clan and tribe than they do with the state they live in. In this model of social organization, loyalty is first and foremost to the clan and blood line. Decentralization and autonomy are the norm and, partially because of this, conflicts with outside groups are likely to occur. The relatively small size of clans and tribes necessitates that all male members take on the role of warriors to protect their clan and tribe's interests. In such a system, martial ability is prized.

In order to illustrate how a cultural approach to understanding contemporary combat against non-state actors works, the authors focus on four case studies: Somalia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Each of these sections provides a succinct account of the history of these areas. After the historical account, each case study is examined using the following format:

- Concept of warfare.
- Organization and command and control.
- Area of operation.

• Targeting and constraints on the use of force.

- Role of outside actors.

The book ends with a short chapter on lessons learned which can be summed up in the authors' exhortation to remember Sun Tzu's advice to "know your enemy." The book offers an excellent model for doing this.

**LTC Brian Imiola,  
West Point, New York**

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**DO GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS? What History Teaches Us about Strategic Barriers and International Security**, Brent L. Sterling, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2009, 354 pages, \$32.95.

This book takes a thoughtful and analytical approach to an often overlooked element of security—the use of strategic barriers in national defense. Sterling compares six major historical fortification projects ranging from Athens's Long Walls in the 5th century BCE, to the 20th century's fabled Maginot Line. He derives useful lessons for present-day policymakers and military leaders from these and other examples.

Particularly interesting are the author's discussions of the Israeli Bar-Lev Line from 1968 to 1973 and the Great Wall of the Chinese Emperors in the 15th and 16th centuries. The former example provides useful insights into Israeli strategic culture and doctrine, relevant themes when thinking about the security dilemmas of Israel's borders today. The latter example highlights Ming attitudes towards "barbarians" and the importance of symbolism in Chinese security policy. This historical case has implications when considering security engagement with modern China.

The author distills a number of valuable points from the selected case study portfolio with his "structured focus" approach. First, he shows that strategic barriers usually serve more than one purpose. They are instruments of deterrence, frontier defense and control, power



projection, and symbolic greatness. Quite often, though, they are used to “muddle through” and avoid more difficult policy decisions. He illustrates the tension that exists between the resource investment for large-scale strategic defenses and the reality that their benefits are often not maximized as part of a more multifunctional strategy.

Specifically, exclusively defense-based strategies formed around a project like the Maginot Line have limitations against a highly motivated and mobile adversary like the German military. Finally, the dual offensive-defensive nature of fortification systems generally causes a classic security dilemma by creating a heightened subjective sense of security for the defender, while alarming and catalyzing potential enemies to action.

The author’s methodological approach works, but his analytical style makes for a dense lecture in some sections. The book’s bibliography is comprehensive, and clear maps are used to support overall understanding. Given the uniqueness of the subject and the author’s approach, I highly recommend this book for any course on general military history or defense studies and commend it to those focused on border security issues.

**MAJ Kevin D. Stringer, Ph.D.,  
USAR, Zurich, Switzerland**

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**ONCE A WARRIOR—ALWAYS A WARRIOR: Navigating the Transition from Combat to Home—Including Combat Stress, PTSD, and mTBI**, Charles W. Hoge, Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, CT, 2010, 303 pages, \$18.95.

Preparing for operations is a lengthy, structured, and comprehensive process. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines arrive in a combat zone carefully geared up for the role they will fulfill and the conditions they will face. However, during deployment, the reality of combat can take its toll no matter what the level of prior preparation, and prolonged stress can change the way the body responds to everyday

events. Paradoxically, these changes are often necessary adaptations for survival and success in combat. These adjustments unavoidably travel home with a warrior at the end of his or her tour of duty and can prove problematic. As Hoge expertly highlights in *Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior*, these skills are not always easy to “dial down,” and returning home from a combat zone can be just as difficult as serving in it for some. Returning to “normal” can be an elusive concept for many.

Acknowledging from the start that everyone changes during deployment, Hoge’s timely study tackles the physiology of stress and explains in easy-to-understand language Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—a catchall label used to describe many normal and confusing reactions to combat—and mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), or concussion in layman’s terms. In addition, Hoge highlights specific skills to help with the transition process in a series of so-called self-help chapters. These assist a warrior in contextualizing his experience and identifying a transition pathway, avoiding the perils and pitfalls along the way. However, the author clearly notes that *Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior* is not intended to serve as a substitute for therapy or treatment of any specific disorder. The book includes information and advice for consideration only; it is no substitute for professional help when it is required.

Hoge’s book stands out from the crowd for many reasons. Written in straightforward and comprehensible English, the language is unmistakably clear and resonant despite the composite nature of the subject. Also, the book deftly bridges the divide that exists between combat veterans, society, and mental health professionals in understanding combat stress, particularly PTSD and mTBI. The book was written by someone who genuinely gets it; Hoge is a 20-year active-duty mental health professional who has been at the cutting edge of psychological and neurological research. Another of the book’s virtues is that Hoge

avoids lists of symptoms and medical descriptions. Instead, he explains postwar reactions in warrior terms, rather than the impenetrable vocabulary used by medical establishments. Finally, as a survival guide, it provides essential information on what it means to be a warrior and the difficulties of transitioning home from war, a reality that must not be underestimated.

*Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior* is a must-read for all commanders, medics, welfare staff, families, and, of course, those struggling to transition to home life. Moreover, given the complexity of current operations, repeat tours, and the difficulty of reintegration into wider society, those who associate with returning veterans would also benefit from Hoge’s insights. Put simply, Hoge’s book cleverly de-stigmatizes mental health and provides essential information on what it means to be a warrior and how to transition home. It offers easy-to-follow coping strategies for navigating the transition no matter how much time has passed since leaving the war zone, proving that it can be a journey of hope and growth.

**LTC Andrew M. Roe, Ph.D.,  
British Army,  
Lichfield, Staffordshire,  
United Kingdom**

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**THE ENEMY IN OUR HANDS: America’s Treatment of Enemy Prisoners of War from the Revolution to the War on Terror**, Robert C. Doyle, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, 2010, 468 pages, \$34.95.

Prisoners of war receive relatively little attention from military historians, and American treatment of enemy combatants receives even less. With his new work, *The Enemy in Our Hands*, historian Robert Doyle successfully fills this vacuum. From the American Revolution to the War on Terror, Doyle’s narrative provides a clear, well-researched history of American policy toward enemy prisoners.

For the most part, America’s treatment of prisoners of war has

been fair and humane, even when the enemy failed to reciprocate. George Washington, for example, took great pains to ensure that captured British soldiers received adequate food and shelter, and Winfield Scott offered parole to several thousand Mexican soldiers on the condition that they cease to fight against American forces. American treatment of prisoners proved remarkably humane during the major conflicts of the 20th century, and that reputation induced millions of enemy soldiers to surrender on the battlefields of Europe, Korea, and Iraq.

Despite the record of civilized conduct, American history includes its share of brutal misconduct toward its enemies, both real and perceived. Doyle does not flinch from this topic. Instead, he illustrates how the passions of war have repeatedly undermined America's good intentions, from the seizure of Loyalist property during the Revolutionary War to recent controversy regarding the CIA's "enhanced interrogation techniques." Those who assume America's moral exceptionalism would do well to review the contradictory evidence in these chapters.

While Doyle's work includes a comprehensive summary of each major American conflict, his chronological approach may not suit those readers more interested in controversy than scholarship. Nevertheless, Doyle strikes a fair balance between historical developments and individual examples, such as his biographical sketch of Brigadier General Richard Henry Pratt, a 19th-century officer who sought to educate rather than exterminate captured Native Americans. Doyle is at his best in clarifying the technical details of such complex topics as Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus, voluntary repatriation, and the ideological and violent resistance of prisoners in American custody.

With more than 30 illustrations, a dozen appendixes, and 43 pages of end notes, *The Enemy in Our Hands* represents a significant contribution to the study of American military history and a superb starting point

for scholars interested in America's treatment of its enemies.

**LTC William Latham,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE END OF INFLUENCE:  
What Happens When Other  
Countries Have the Money,**  
Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford Delong, Basic Books, New York, 2010, 177 pages, \$22.00.

Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford Delong, both University of California, Berkeley, professors, have written a timely and intellectually intriguing book about the impending loss of U.S. influence around the world. The authors assert the increasing debt burden carried by the Nation will ultimately undermine U.S. soft and hard power around the world. They attribute the burden to excessive government spending and a willful trade imbalance in support of export-oriented economic development models. Such models are embraced by developing countries such as China.

The authors believe that debtor nations lose "freedom of action." In support of their argument, Cohen and Delong demonstrate the waning of the neoliberal trade model long embraced and promoted by the United States around the world and the evolving movement of nations toward "zero-global-sum industrial policies" (e.g., protectionism, undervaluing one's currency, subsidizing production outputs, and creating Sovereign Wealth Funds) that weaken the U.S. global economic position.

The authors believe that even though U.S. debt is denominated in its own currency and is not the problem many pundits would have you believe, neoliberal order does require a willing global hegemony, a position the United States can ill-afford to fill (under current conditions) going forward. In other words, global prosperity can no longer be fueled by a U.S. trade deficit without ultimately undermining the U.S. dollar, U.S. international clout, and the general health of the global economy.

Cohen and Delong detail the economic interdependence between China and the United States to explain how China, as the largest exporter to America, has become wedded to U.S. debt to fuel its growth policy by recycling dollar-denominated export revenue supplies into U.S.-denominated debt to preserve U.S. discretionary income and the ability to continue to buy imports. They identify this arrangement as highly problematic. However, they fall short in addressing the long-term consequences of the redistributed wealth accruing among export-oriented developing countries other than to conclude that the United States needs to "produce more, save more, and spend less," while export-oriented developing countries such as China need to spend more and produce relatively less for export.

*The End of Influence* is a thought-provoking book, but it is certainly not conclusive. The authors would have been better served by extending this short work. The book's brevity and lack of substantive depth suggests a cursory analysis short on evidence, lacking good scholarship, and devoid of a well-founded conclusion. Furthermore, the book does not contain any notes for the reader. Peculiarly, it refers readers to a website to access them. Those seeking a general understanding of the possible problems and consequences associated with the U.S. national debt and its persistent trade imbalance, articulated in blog-type dialogue, may be the main audience for this book.

**LTC David A. Anderson, Ph.D.,  
USMC, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**SIMPLE GESTURES: A Cultural  
Journey into the Middle East,**  
Andrea B. Rugh, Potomac Books, Inc., Dulles, VA, 2009, 368 pages, \$29.95.

Andrea Rugh's memoir is an account of her experiences living and working abroad in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Afghanistan from 1964 to 2002. As a woman, a trained anthropologist, a United States Agency for

International Development (USAID) adviser for development projects in the Middle East, and the wife of a diplomat, Rugh was situated uniquely to observe firsthand the social and cultural interactions of populations of varied ethnicities, religious beliefs, and tribal affiliations.

Written in response to the increasing demand for “personal, everyday account[s] of the peoples of the region” in a post-9/11 world, *Simple Gestures* reveals the kindness, generosity, sensitivity, patience, and conciliatory and sympathetic nature of the individuals encountered by the author. Experiences recounted in this narrative are memorable for their dramatic, nearly cinematic quality, including Rugh’s being kept under surveillance by Egyptian and Russian intelligence in mid-1960s Cairo, being entertained at lavish Saudi palaces, being honored ceremoniously by Pakistan’s notorious Marri Baluch tribe, and visiting secret girls’ schools while undercover in Afghanistan during Taliban rule.

Rugh’s formal training as an anthropologist informs her account. The chronological and geographical organization of the book help to reinforce the inevitable fact that its verbal snapshots represent only fragments of a nation’s culture, as they existed at a particular historical moment and as they appeared to a single observer. Nevertheless, the author’s social science background leads her to infer from observable behavioral patterns several distinguishing characteristics that polarize Western and Middle Eastern cultures, including their divergent views on communalism versus individualism, social and personal obligations versus personal rights, and religious morality versus secularism.

Rugh’s extensive travels in Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in an advisory capacity for USAID and UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) projects allowed her a firsthand look at the educational systems in these countries and the obstacles that impeded their improvement.

The book’s most sobering aspect, and perhaps its most historically

important one, is its documentation of the obstructionist role played by local and international governments and organizations in implementing international aid projects. The book’s final chapters are particularly powerful in their unflinching condemnation of the American government’s decision to withdraw aid from Pakistan in the mid-1990s and to reconstruct a post-Taliban Afghanistan in ways consistent with its own agenda and interests. By demonstrating the practical impact of these diplomatic decisions on local conditions and opportunities, her account succeeds at making visible the connection between global politics and daily existence at the local level.

**Rebecca Wisor, Ph.D.,  
West Point, New York**

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**KILLER ROBOTS: Legality and Ethicality of Autonomous Weapons**, Armin Krishnan, Ashgate Publishing, Surrey, England, 2009, 204 pages, \$99.00.

What is it about a killer robot that scares us? Is it just the idea that the robot could kill a human? Man already developed this capacity centuries ago with the mine, or explosive device, a weapon that continues to find application in both Iraq and Afghanistan. So what is it that frightens us? According to Armin Krishnan, in his book *Killer Robots*, it is the ability of the robot to make the decision to kill independently, instead of a human.

Krishnan addresses the development of killer robots, or autonomous weapons, with an emphasis on the legal and ethical issues they raise. The underlying theme he explores is the idea that autonomous weapons represent both a progress toward humanizing warfare and an unprecedented danger to humanity. In the end, the result will depend on mankind confronting the legal and moral issues raised by the inevitable development of these weapon systems and the rules or constraints implemented to address these concerns.

An examination of current international law and the law of armed conflict reveals that definitions for

the terms robots and autonomous weapons are lacking, and that these systems are not illegal. Krishnan argues that autonomous weapons do not fit easily into this legal framework and raises the issue that, even if legal, the use of killer robots will still pose a variety of ethical dilemmas.

He examines the impact of autonomous weapons on the military profession. With technology providing the military the means to do more with less, will the eventual creation of killer robots humanize war by limiting the exposure of humans to the inevitable death and destruction that war brings? While Krishnan concludes that war waged only by machines is unrealistic, more important is his exploration of the ethical and moral issues involved in the distancing of the future warrior from combat and the potential negative repercussions on the military profession.

The book provides military and civilian readers alike with an easy-to-understand examination of issues and concerns arising from the technological reality of autonomous weapon systems. By providing a historical background and analysis of technological development, the reader understands what is reality today, coming tomorrow, and probable or possible in the future. The bibliography contains numerous sources for the interested reader to delve further into related areas surrounding autonomous weapons discussed in *Killer Robots*.

The real value of Krishnan’s work comes from asking the questions raised by an inevitable future of killer robots. Like P.W. Singer’s *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century*, Krishnan helps initiate the dialog that must take place among politicians, military leaders, scientists, and the public. It is not a question of if, but when killer robots will arrive on the battlefield and what that future should look like.

**MAJ James D. Levine, II,  
U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**AMERICA IN VIETNAM: The War That Couldn't Be Won,** Herbert Y. Schandler, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2009, 209 pages, \$39.95.

Herbert Schandler's latest work on the Vietnam War is essentially a reprise of mainstream historical works critical of the war, but it nevertheless constitutes a competent summary of principal arguments holding that the United States embarked on a futile and misguided quest in Vietnam. Distilled to its essence, this account takes its cue from the early observation that the Republic of South Vietnam was an "invention" of the 1956 Geneva Conference, hence not much of a foundation on which to found a strong anticommunist base in Southeast Asia. Even so, the U.S. government was gripped by a mistaken impression that the communist world was monolithic and that South Vietnam was an important "domino," and it felt obliged to defend a regime that enjoyed too little legitimacy ever to stand on its own.

Schandler, a veteran of the war, does not entirely dismiss the possibility that South Vietnam might in time have formed a cohesive polity. He notes, for example, that North Vietnam had only a weak claim on the loyalties of residents in the South, among whom there was no general clamor for unification. However, ineffective and shortsighted political leadership in the South, particularly when pitted against the resolve of Ho Chi Minh's government in the North, created a mismatch that a formidable American military assistance could not overcome.

Schandler does not contend that the United States bore no responsibility for an enormous policy failure in Southeast Asia. On the contrary, an amorphous and shifting strategy, critical dissonance between civilian and military points of view, general cultural and historical ignorance, disunity of effort, conflicting priorities, and a dim understanding of the enemy's motivation all constituted self-inflicted wounds that undermined America's effort. Schandler

succinctly outlines the U.S. dilemma and provides enough detail to substantiate his analysis. His critique is never shrill and gives little credence to more strident interpretations of the war.

Still, Schandler's work might have been considerably more interesting had he offered substantive discussion of competing, less fatalistic scholarship about the war and its outcome. Since he does not, the reader is left to speculate about how the author would respond to recent works maintaining the United States had not yet lost the war when it threw in the towel.

In summary, the book is both highly readable and thoughtfully argued. As a concise exposition on the inexorable logic of failure in Vietnam, it fulfills the author's intent and provides a good foundation for a nonspecialist seeking a basic explanation of America's withdrawal from Vietnam.

**Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**COMBAT READY? The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War,** Thomas E. Hanson, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 2010, 158 pages, \$45.00.

Conventional wisdom often describes the Army's soldiers and leaders during the opening stages of the Korean War as unready and unprepared. Thomas Hanson's *Combat Ready?* questions this paradigm. He contends it is "unfair to condemn the troops of the Eighth Army for the reverses of the summer of 1950," and his goal is to "redress the imbalance that exists between fact and interpretation." Hanson intends to renew the debate on the performance of the soldiers and leaders and shift it from assigning blame to understanding readiness. The book accomplishes the goal and all future works on Korea will have to account for Hanson's conclusions.

Far from the picture often portrayed in history books of slovenly troops who focused more on enjoying the perks of occupation duty

than training for the harsh realities of combat, the author proves through unit records and reports as well as first person accounts that the Eighth Army was well on its way to combat readiness and in some cases was well ahead of the army at large.

Hanson directly confronts the assessments of previous Korean War histories including T.R. Fehrenbach's *This Kind of War*, a book that has been a cornerstone for military professionals for decades. He calls into question former Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan's "No More Task Force Smiths" metaphor, which he concludes has harmed the reputations of the Eighth Army soldiers and leaders. He even takes to task the official Army history, which he concludes did not do in-depth research into training and preparation. Hanson's conclusions regarding these previous histories are illuminating and will cause readers to reevaluate their previous knowledge of Korea.

Hanson's book is the first history to examine the readiness status of the infantry regiments in detail. He uses case studies of four regiments and shows through logical and clear analysis that although there were some deficiencies, the infantry regiments were trained and ready according to the standards of the day and higher headquarters evaluations. The case studies are very effective in illustrating the unit's training strategy, their plans to develop leaders, and the problems each had to overcome. Their success holding the Pusan Perimeter was not based on luck but on hard training.

The author's writing style is straightforward and direct. He questions assumptions and paradigms in a logical, easy-to-follow way. The author is blunt in his assessment and places blame where he sees it. For example, after discussing the Army G1's policy of rotating more officers for versatility and rounding, he writes, it "must be seen as one of the single most damaging policies implemented by the U.S. Army between 1945 and 1950."

This book is a significant and thoughtful analysis that will achieve



the author's goal of spurring debate on the Army of 1950. Future authors will have to account for the facts Hanson brings to light. His research fills a historical gap and provides context in which to reevaluate this period of history and the Army's performance. His conclusions and examples are applicable today as the Army begins drawing down its deployed forces; they will be faced with the same policy decisions in regard to readiness and training. I recommend this book for those interested in the Korean War and readiness issues.

**LTC Robert Rielly, USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**DEATHLY DECEPTION:  
The Real Story of Operation  
Mincemeat**, Denis Smyth, Oxford  
University Press, Oxford, 2010, 384  
pages, \$29.95.

Denis Smyth's *Deathly Deception: The Real Story of Operation Mincemeat* is a captivating book that utilizes previously inaccessible material to recount an audacious operation by the British military during World War II. Concocted by Flight Lieutenant Charles Chomondeley, the plan strategically positioned a corpse off Spanish shores to deceive German rivals. The deceased was a Welsh laborer clad in uniform to impersonate Royal Marine Major Martin whose pockets and briefcase were stuffed with misleading documentation to delude the enemy of a future invasion of Sicily. Smyth narrates the story of the operation in its entirety while simultaneously describing the essential role that British intelligence played in scrutinizing the particulars of the plan before implementation by members of the "Twenty Committee."

Smyth details the deceptive evidence placed in German hands as well as the manner in which the Nazi regime interpreted the false information. British cover planners employed strategic deception methods to exploit already existing Nazi worries. The author explains that such a tactic was far more

practical than attempting to plant pristine fears into the minds of the enemy High Command. By playing into scenarios that the Nazis had already considered, the British could persuade Hitler that because of logistical and strategic reasons, Allied forces would invade in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans well before they would attack Sicily.

Smyth portrays the complicated means by which the British measured the progress of Operation Mincemeat. British postal censor service teams closely examined the documents upon their return and found signs of tampering. In addition, military intelligence painstakingly monitored enemy radio communications for any indication that the Germans believed Major Martin's documents were authentic. Code breakers of the organization called "Bletchley Park" conveyed the first conclusive proof that the Germans had indeed accepted the documentation as genuine. British experts also learned that the scrupulous medical and logistical details taken to prepare the body as a deception had not been wasted.

Surprisingly, the author devotes almost an entire chapter to "Pam," the fictional lover created to make Martin appear realistic. Deception planners believed the floating man would appear more credible to German examiners if they employed the use of love letters to develop a personality for the deceased. Enclosed in his wallet was a photo of a young woman and two letters written by a female assistant in the Naval Intelligence Division who precisely captured the perspective of a young woman in love.

Smyth essentially credits Operation Mincemeat as a success. It influenced the German High Command to divert military forces away from Sicily to an alternative target. This allowed Allied troops to move effectively on Sicily, resulting in the success of the Allied invasion.

**Siobhan E. Ausberry,  
Fort McNair, Virginia**

**KUT 1916: Courage and Failure  
in Iraq**, Patrick Crowley, The  
History Press, Stroud, UK, 2009,  
320 pages, \$25.00.

Between Yorktown in 1781 and Singapore in 1942, the fall of Kut in 1916 stands as perhaps the single most significant setback to British arms. Though overshadowed that year by the mammoth contests at Verdun and the Somme, the surrender of 9,000 British and Indian troops in a squalid town on the Tigris River sent shock waves through the British Empire. Coming on the heels of the debacle at Gallipoli, the surrender of the Kut garrison stunned leaders in London who feared the double defeats at the hands of the Ottoman Turks would undermine Britain's imperial rule over millions of Muslims. And, though largely unknown to Americans, the siege of Kut remains a dark, unhappy episode in the proud record of the British army.

In reexamining this chapter of British military history, Patrick Crowley brings special qualifications. He is a serving infantry officer and the deputy regimental colonel of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, a unit that includes World War I service in Mesopotamia as part of its proud heritage. Crowley himself has seen combat first hand in a variety of places, including modern day Iraq. Perhaps that is why his chief focus is on the decisions of tactical leaders like Sir Charles Townshend who commanded the 6th Indian Division defending Kut, and the experience of Townshend's men as well as the relief forces that suffered 23,000 casualties in the several failed efforts to rescue them. The author understands the miserable conditions that surrounded the campaign and the unhappy consequences of trying to march to Baghdad on a logistical shoestring. He gives a brief discussion of the strategic backdrop and the Turkish side of the campaign, but his emphasis is on the stubborn determination of the soldiers defending Kut and the sacrificial bravery of the relief columns.

Along with its tactical focus, Crowley's book distinguishes itself from other accounts of the siege in

three conspicuous ways. First, his narrative is generously supported by an abundance of period maps, sketches, and photographs. Second, fully a third of Crowley's account is devoted to the unhappy fate of the Kut garrison after it fell into Turkish captivity (less than half of the enlisted soldiers survived the war), a depressing but important story. Third, Crowley is remarkably blunt in his assessment of the command dysfunction that led to tragedy at Kut. He judges the Indian army—which contributed the bulk of the troops committed to Mesopotamia operations—as singularly ill-suited for expeditionary fighting.

This unpreparedness was reflected in the virtual collapse of the flimsy British logistics structure that supported the campaign. However, the most damning verdict is left to Lieutenant General Sir Graeme Lamb, current commander of the British Field Army. Lamb finds that Townshend's failure to either resign or challenge the orders that sent him on the ill-conceived march to Baghdad was inexcusable. The Kut disaster came as a result. For that, writes Lamb, Townshend will be "damned for all time." Blunt assessment: good book.

**LTC Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**IN THE COMPANY OF  
GENERALS: The World War I  
Diary of Pierpoint L. Stackpole,**  
edited by Robert H. Ferrell,  
University of Missouri Press,  
Columbia, 2009, 224 pages, \$34.95.

The First World War was a seminal event in the history of warfare. The conflict's scale, its voracious appetite for men and materiel, and its encouragement of breakneck military innovation continue to influence the profession of arms to this day. One of the Great War's lasting legacies is its influence on senior level command, control, and leadership.

The war was a culmination of a trend that started in the last years of the American Civil War. No longer could a general be the "great man on

horseback" commanding his army through direct leadership on the battlefield. As Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett's aide during all of the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF's) major campaigns, Pierpoint Stackpole was in the unique position to witness this seismic shift in battle command. Stackpole's diary offers a rare perspective of the inner workings of the AEF and also provides the reader with an intimate view of the challenges of generalship in combat.

Pierpoint Stackpole was a Harvard-educated lawyer who volunteered for service soon after the United States entered World War I. His education and administrative talents secured his posting as Liggett's aide in January 1918. Although Liggett and many of the AEF's other senior officers later wrote of their wartime experiences, they often tended to mute their criticism of their fellow Regular Army officers who had failed to meet the AEF's exacting standards of senior leadership. Stackpole's diary is an uncensored window into the tensions and personality clashes that embroiled the AEF's senior ranks. Stackpole was an acerbic critic of some of the generals that he encountered in his day-to-day duties. He offered particularly harsh assessments of the leadership, abilities, and character of Major General Clarence Edwards and Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell.

The diary also chronicles the difficulties that Liggett faced as both a corps and army commander in directing the operations of his units. Although some historians of the Great War have derided the senior leaders of the conflict as detached "château generals," Stackpole makes clear that incomplete reports and poor communications constantly hobbled Liggett's efforts to "see" the battle, minimize command errors, and take advantage of battlefield opportunities. *In the Company of Generals* is an excellent work for anyone interested in the history of World War I and the timeless dilemmas and challenges of senior battle command. Robert

Ferrell's editing of the diary is judicious and his comments aid the reader in placing Stackpole's observations into the larger history of the AEF and its personalities.

**LTC Richard S. Faulkner,  
Ph.D., USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**CHURCHILL'S BUNKER,**  
Richard Holmes, Yale University  
Press, New Haven CN, 2010, 256  
pages, \$27.50.

Seventy years ago, with France and the Low Countries under German control and the Battle of Britain raging, Britain was forced to endure the reality of aerial bombardment. The prewar idea that the bomber would always get through had prompted the government to begin construction of a protected underground nerve center, from which to run the war. That nerve center was the Cabinet War Rooms along with the offices immediately above ground (No. 10 Annex). Holmes' book is not just about the war rooms, rather it is an informative, interesting look at the development and operation of the rooms, along with an examination of the way Churchill ran the war from them.

Following the anticipation after the Great War that heavy air attacks on London would make impossible the effective running of the country, a series of studies were planned for the evacuation of government offices. Although a move to the suburbs was possible, the complete dispersal of government would have caused significant logistical difficulties. In addition, the government could not completely abandon London because of the risk to public morale. In May 1939, it was decided the Cabinet would be accommodated in the planned Central War Room, which the Office of Works was constructing under Whitehall. It was during the Blitz of the autumn and winter of 1940-1941 when the war rooms were most often used, and later as the V1 (doodlebug) and V2 attacks got underway in 1944. Interestingly, the war rooms were

never strong enough to protect against bombs heavier than 1,100 pounds. Despite the war room occupants knowing that, no decision was taken to move away.

One of the most enlightening parts of the book is the examination of Churchill and his key aides' roles. Hastings "Pug" Ismay was probably the most important member of Churchill's staff, and his role is often overlooked when Churchill's premiership during the war is examined. Ismay's main role was as Churchill's "agent," although he also acted as an important "buffer between Churchill and the chiefs of staff." It was in this role that Ismay's immense tact and excellent social skills made him the perfect choice, serving to calm the choppy waters often left by Churchill's passing. Thus, Ismay served to smooth the workings of government to the overall benefit of the war effort.

*Churchill's Bunker* is worth reading for anyone interested in Churchill's running of the war and in British history during the 1939 to 1945 conflict. There is a good selection of plans and photographs, which are well chosen to illustrate the topic. This well-written, enjoyable book provides insight into the way Churchill ran the war.

**Nicholas Murray, D.Phil.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE LAST STAND: CUSTER, SITTING BULL, AND THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN**, Nathaniel Philbrick, Penguin Group, New York, 2010, 466 pages, \$30.00.

Some stories endure despite or perhaps because they are shrouded in myth. The Battle of the Little Big Horn has yet to reveal all of the secrets of the confrontation in June of 1876 between Lakota Sioux warriors and the U.S. 7th Cavalry.

Nathan Philbrick's *The Last Stand* sheds more light on the episode but is unlikely to resolve the debate over the battle because, as Philbrick admits, Michael Elliott's Custerology "deeply influenced my own thinking about (the battle)."

This admission may explain why Philbrick accepts the contemporary narrative myth of America. Succinctly, the current narrative is that the United States was an imperial power hell-bent on aggrandizement at the expense of others. In Custerology, Elliott goes so far as to compare the invasion of Iraq to the expansion of the United States into the west while failing to mention that if the Nation was an imperial power in the west, so too were the Sioux and Cheyenne.

The Sioux seized the Black Hills from other tribes in the late 18th century. The Arikara and Crow scouts, who served with the 7th, did so for good and cogent reasons now forgotten or at least overlooked. The myth of the Lakota as kind and peaceful pastoralists as portrayed in *Dances With Wolves* is just that—myth. Moreover, troopers fighting with the portion of the 7th Cavalry that lost at the Little Big Horn died to the last man, massacred at the hands of the Sioux who mutilated the soldiers' corpses thoroughly besides. Though the Battle of Wounded Knee is generally portrayed now as a massacre, that view does not fit the facts. In any case, Philbrick gets beyond the mythology on both sides. He concedes to both sides their good and bad points, genuinely attempting to illuminate what happened despite his apparent bias. He tells a captivating story filled with interesting, compelling protagonists and brings to light characters beyond Custer and Sitting Bull.

Philbrick took advantage of a bountiful supply of information including some recent Native American sources. He also makes use of recent archaeological evidence suggesting that Custer's wing of the 7th Cavalry fought longer and more effectively than others have argued. Philbrick suggests that the Sioux and their allies may have been close to breaking themselves.

This is an important book for serving soldiers, both to understand that what we know about any fight, or for that matter any campaign, is extraordinarily limited. It reminds us that eyewitness accounts are as

likely to confuse as to enlighten because each perspective differs.

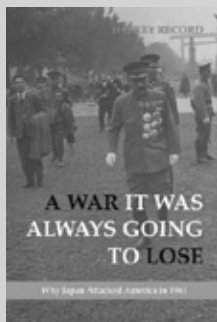
In the case of the Little Big Horn, little is known about what Custer intended to do or what he actually did that day. Benteen, Reno, and the 7th's survivors had reason to wonder just what had happened. To the extent they knew, they had reason to dissemble to protect their reputations.

*The Last Stand* is also useful to serving soldiers because of the implications for decentralized operations and mission command. Philbrick points out that the 7th Cavalry was part of a force of "about five thousand soldiers . . . expected to patrol a territory of a million square miles . . . and home to two hundred or three hundred thousand Indians." Obviously the Army operated in small packets of troops without rapid communications. Individual initiative was the only means to operate. That is just what Custer did in June of 1876—he acted on his initiative. He and more than 200 cavalymen died as a result.

Mission command and initiative are good things except when bad things happen. Philbrick's history of Custer and the 7th at the Little Big Horn provides food for considerable and careful thought about our current emphasis on decentralized operations. It should suggest to all soldiers who read it that they should believe nothing they hear or read without considering the source, the conditions, and what can be known about the protagonists in any action.

**COL Gregory Fontenot, USA,  
Retired, Lansing, Kansas**

# MR We Recommend

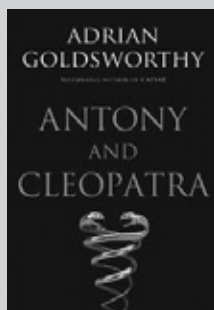


**A WAR IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO LOSE: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941**, Jeffrey Record, Potomac Books, Washington, DC, 2011, 184 pages, \$24.95.

Jeffrey Record has specialized in investigating the causes of wars. He incorporates the lessons of his earlier books in his latest, *A War It Was Always Going to Lose: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941*. The attack on Pearl Harbor is one of the most perplexing cases in living memory of a weaker power seeming to believe that it could vanquish a clearly superior force. On closer inspection, however, Record finds that Japan did not believe it could win, yet the Japanese imperial command decided to attack the United States anyway.

Record argues, the Japanese were driven by an insatiable appetite for national glory and economic security via the conquest of East Asia. The scope of their ambitions and their fear of economic destruction overwhelmed their knowledge that the likelihood of winning was slim and propelled them into war with the United States.

*From the Publisher.*

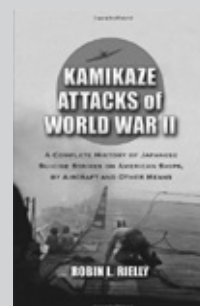


**ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA**, Adrian Goldsworthy, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2010, 420 pages, \$35.00.

Drawing on his vast knowledge of the ancient world, distinguished historian Adrian Goldsworthy transcends myth to create a nuanced, historically acute portrayal of Antony and Cleopatra, the politically entwined lovers who remain a subject of fascination more than two thousand years after their deaths.

Neither turns out to have been quite what we expect. Cleopatra has more glamour, but in terms of sheer power was the far less important of the two. She was a Greek, not an Egyptian, her rule contingent on Roman support. It was Rome that dominated the world, and Antony was an aristocrat who implicitly believed that it was his birthright to lead the Republic. His own propaganda styled him as a great soldier, but the truth was that he spent very little time with the army and displayed modest talent. The world changed as the Roman Republic turned into an empire ruled by Caesars. Through Antony and Cleopatra's lives we see not just this story, but the transition of the Greek and Roman world into a culture that would have such a profound influence on our own.

*From the Publisher.*



**KAMIKAZE ATTACKS OF WORLD WAR II: A Complete History of Japanese Suicide Strikes on American Ships, by Aircraft and Other Means**, Robin L. Rieley, McFarland, Jefferson, NC, 2010, 384 pages, \$55.00, [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com).

Drawing on U.S. government reports, interrogation reports of Japanese officers, ship action reports, and secondary sources, this book details more than 400 kamikaze attacks by Japanese aircraft, manned torpedoes, suicide boats, and suicide swimmers against U.S. ships during World War II. Part One focuses on the traditions, development, and history of the kamikazes, including the origins of the samurai class and its ethos, the development of kamikaze aircraft and watercraft, and the indoctrination of children in the Japanese school system. Part Two details the kamikaze attacks on ships in the waters around the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Taiwan, Okinawa, and Japan. Appendices list all of the U.S. ships suffering kamikaze attacks along with casualty figures, outlines, and silhouettes of various U.S. ships involved in kamikaze attacks, and silhouettes of Japanese kamikaze aircraft.

*From the Publisher.*



## Identifying the Center of Gravity of Afghan Mentoring

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Innocenti, USA, Retired, *Kabul, Afghanistan*—Major David H. Park's article "Identifying the Center of Gravity of Afghan Mentoring" (November-December 2010, *Military Review*) misses the mark not only in understanding the lessons of Lawrence of Arabia, but also about what should be the focus of the tactical Afghan National Army (ANA) mentoring effort. He correctly assesses that the ANA's center of gravity is the commanders, but I strongly disagree with his view that the decisive point is the successful teaching of the almighty Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). The focus of our mentoring efforts should be leadership 101 at all levels within the ANA.

Major Park starts his article by making a good point. The task of building an insurgent force is definitely easier than building a regular Army. However, he misses the key point, which makes Lawrence's story applicable even today. Lawrence's statement, "It is better to let them do it with their own hands than we do it" means "do not to let one's cultural arrogance as a mentor override the ability of the mentee to accomplish the task within his culture limitations, even if the end state is not up to one's standards." It is more important that they can *do* the task than *how* they do it. In Lawrence's book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, where he is contemplating how to develop his campaign against the Turks, he realizes that it is impossible to expect the Arabs to operate as a regular army. He realizes that the best way to fight the campaign is to capitalize on using the Arab strength and cultural familiarity of the "raid" as the basis for his campaign. The lesson of understanding the culture

and working from within it to achieve one's aims, as opposed to imposing a foreign concept that goes against the culture, is important. Unfortunately, this is a lesson that we disregard in our mentoring effort in Afghanistan, almost daily.

Major Park is correct in that, like it or not, ANA doctrine is a carbon copy of U.S. doctrine, and that is a strategic mistake. Instead of determining what procedures or doctrine will work best within the confines of Afghan culture, we have imposed foreign concepts on them that go against their history. The American Army has done a good job of developing an effective fighting force based on exploiting the strengths of our society, but to think that our model is the best model for all others to emulate smacks of Western arrogance. It repeats the errors of Britain in the 19th century and the Soviet Union prior to its collapse. The ANA will never be a mirror of the U.S. Army, yet we are desperately trying to make it one.

Major Park's description of Afghan decision making at the tactical level is accurate. As one of the primary mentors to the gentlemen in the article's photos of the 1st Brigade/207th Corps starting in September 2009, I personally witnessed those same situations. His description of the Afghan culture as centralized, top-down driven, and deriving its strength from its commanders is also accurate. But to make the leap that from a highly centralized culture we should focus on a staff-centric decision making process as our primary focus for mentoring at the tactical level is just plain wrong. If we want to focus on a tactical-level decision making process, then Afghan cultural aspects would tell us to focus on a commander-centric process. Many successful armies, such as the Russian, German, and British, have had tactical decision making processes that are commander-centric

and still take advantages of the staff. The fact that many of the Afghans have had formal Russian military education might lead us to look at their methods as a basis for such a process. An army that struggles with low literacy, very high AWOL rates, and comes from a society that has been devastated by war for almost 30 years is not ready for the American version of "Auftragstaktik." In my 30 rotations at the NTC as a senior observer controller, I did not see many U.S. brigades and battalions that could effectively conduct MDMP, so it is hard for me to imagine that we should build our entire tactical ANA mentoring effort at the corps and brigade level in Afghanistan around it.

Our focus for the ANA mentoring effort should be simple—leadership 101. More battles are won by effective leadership than by mastering any staff decision making process. We would do much better in acknowledging the centralized nature of the Afghan military culture and working to improve their leadership than to try to impose a Western concept of decision making on them. When I hear a senior Afghan colonel responding to an issue about providing water to his new soldiers by saying "Why should I get them water when I never had water when I was training," my number one concern is lack of leadership. Anyone who has spent any time training the ANA will tell you that the number one problem facing ANA development at all levels is lack of effective leadership. In my opinion, without effective leadership at all levels from the Ministry of Defense level to the squad, the ANA will never be able to stand on its own no matter how much money we throw at the problem.

# **“Soldier from the Wars Returning”**

A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*, 1922

Soldier from the wars returning,  
    Spoiler of the taken town,  
Here is ease that asks not earning;  
    Turn you in and sit you down.

Peace is come and wars are over,  
    Welcome you and welcome all,  
While the charger crops the clover  
    And his bridle hangs in stall.

Now no more of winters biting,  
    Filth in trench from fall to spring,  
Summers full of sweat and fighting  
    For the Kesar or the King.

Rest you, charger, rust you, bridle;  
    Kings and kesars, keep your pay;  
Soldier, sit you down and idle  
    At the inn of night for aye.



U.S. Army soldiers debark from a U.S. Air Force Douglas C-124A-DL Globemaster II, Korea, 1 November 1952. (U.S. Air Force)





U.S. Army soldiers explore the ruins of Al Hatra in Northern Iraq during their current deployment to Mosul, 20 September 2010. The soldiers are assigned to 3rd Infantry Division's Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade. U.S. Army photo taken by SPC Gregory Gieske

## **ANNOUNCING the 2011 General William E. DePuy Combined Arms Center Writing Competition**

### **“Communicating the Profession of Arms to our civilian leaders and the media”**

As the first commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General DePuy established the organization that oversees all aspects of training professional soldiers of all ranks. The second decade of the twenty-first century brings America's Army into its tenth year of persistent conflict. As an institution, the Army must inform our political leaders and the national media as to what it truly means to be a member of the profession of arms.

### **★ Contest closes 30 June 2011 ★**

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- 2nd Place**     \$750 and consideration for publication in *Military Review*
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- 4th Place**     \$250 and consideration for publication in *Military Review*
- Honorable Mentions**     \$100 and consideration for publication in *Military Review*

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