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A Soldier with 1st Platoon, Apache Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, walks through a field to the village of Dahanah, Wardak Province, Afghanistan, 2 December 2010. (Photo by SGT Sean Patrick Casey).

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

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# The Coming Test of U.S. Credibility

Amitai Etzioni



*America's influence has dwindled everywhere with the financial crisis and the rise of emerging powers. But it seems to be withering faster in the Middle East than anywhere else.*

—“Great sacrifices, small rewards,” *The Economist*, 1 January 2011.

**T**HE RELATIVE POWER of the United States is declining—both because other nations are increasing their power and because the U. S. economic challenges and taxing overseas commitments are weakening it. In this context, the credibility of U.S. commitments and the perception that the United States will back up its threats and promises with appropriate action is growing in importance. In popular terms, high credibility allows a nation to get more mileage out of a relatively small amount of power, while low credibility leads to burning up much greater amounts of power.

## The Theory of Credibility

One definition of power is the ability of *A* to make *B* follow a course of action that *A* prefers. The term “make” is highly relevant. When *A* convinces *B* of the merit of the course *A* prefers, and *B* voluntarily follows it, we can refer to this change of course as an application of “persuasive power” or “soft power.” However, most applications of power are based either on coercion (if you park in front of a fire hydrant, your car is towed) or economic incentives and disincentives (you are fined to the point where you would be disinclined to park there). In these applications of power, *B* maintains his original preferences but is either prevented from following them or is pained to a point where he will suspend resistance.

Every time *A* calls on *B* to change course, *A* is tested twice. First, if *B* does not follow *A*'s call, *A* will fail to achieve its goals (Nazi Germany annexes Austria, despite protests by the United Kingdom and France). Second, *A* loses some credibility, making *B* less likely to heed *A*'s future demands (Nazi Germany becomes more likely to invade Poland). On the other hand, if *B* heeds *A*'s demand, *A* wins twice: it achieves its goal (e.g., the United States dismantles the regime of Saddam Hussein and establishes that there are no WMDs in Iraq), and it increases the likelihood that future demands will be

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*PHOTO: Anti-government protesters demonstrate in Tahrir Square in Cairo, 1 February 2011. (The Yomiuri Shimbun via AP Images)*



***In short, the higher a nation's credibility, the more it will be able to achieve without actually employing its power ...***

heeded without power actually being exercised (e.g. Libya voluntarily dismantles its WMD program following the invasion of Iraq). In short, the higher a nation's credibility, the more it will be able to achieve without actually employing its power or by employing less of it when it must exercise its power.

Political scientists have qualified this basic version of the power/credibility theory. In his detailed examination of three historical cases, Daryl G. Press shows that in each instance, the *Bs* made decisions based upon their perception of the current intentions and capabilities of *A*, rather than on the extent to which *A* followed up on previous threats. Thus, if *A* does not have the needed forces or if *A*'s interests in the issue at hand are marginal, its threats will not carry much weight no matter how "credible" *A* was in the past. For example, if the United States had announced that it would invade Burma unless it released opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest (she was eventually released in November 2010), such a threat would not have carried much weight—regardless of past U.S. actions—because the issue did not seem reason enough for the United States to invade Burma, and because the U.S. Army was largely committed elsewhere.

Another political scientist, Kathleen Cunningham, has shown that the credibility of promises—as opposed to the credibility of threats—is much more difficult to maintain because the implementation of promises is often stretched over long periods of time.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of this essay focuses on dealing with threats, rather than promises.

## **Declining U.S. Power and Credibility**

Over the last few years, much attention has been paid to the relative decline of U.S. power, but much less has been said of changes in U.S. credibility.

While there has been some erosion in the relative power of the United States measured since 1945 or 1990), the swings in the level of its credibility have been much more pronounced. When the United States withdrew its forces from Vietnam in 1973, its credibility suffered so much that many observers doubted whether the United States would ever deploy its military overseas unless it faced a much greater and direct threat than it faced in Southeast Asia. Additional setbacks over the next decades followed, including the failed rescue of American hostages in Iran during the last year of the Carter administration and President Reagan's withdrawal of U.S. Marines from Lebanon after the October 1983 Hezbollah bombing of U.S. barracks in Beirut. The bombing killed 241 American servicemen, but it elicited no punitive response—the administration abandoned a plan to assault the training camp where Hezbollah had planned the attack.<sup>2</sup>

Operation Desert Storm drastically increased U.S. military credibility. The United States and the UN demanded that Saddam Hussein withdraw from Kuwait. When he refused, U.S. and Allied forces quickly overwhelmed his military with a low level of American casualties, contrary to expectations. Saddam's forces were defeated with less than 400 American casualties.<sup>3</sup> The total cost of defeating Saddam was \$61 billion—almost 90 percent of which was borne by U.S. allies.<sup>4</sup> When Serbia ignored the demands of the United States and other Western nations to withdraw its hostile forces and halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, NATO forces defeated the Serbs with little effort, losing only two troops in a helicopter training accident.<sup>5</sup> U.S. credibility reached a high mark in 2003, when the United States, employing a much smaller force than in 1991, overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime swiftly and with a low level of American casualties, again despite expectations to the contrary. In the first phase of the war—up to 1 May 2003, when the Saddam regime was removed and no WMDs were found—there had been only 172 American casualties.<sup>6</sup> Only \$56 billion had been appropriated for Iraq operations.<sup>7</sup>

Those who hold that credibility matters little should pay mind to the side effects of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Libya did not merely stop developing WMDs or allow inspections, it allowed the United States to pack cargo

planes with several tons of nuclear equipment and airlift it from the country.<sup>8</sup> The country surrendered centrifuges, mustard gas tanks, and SCUD missiles. It sent 13 kilograms of highly enriched uranium to Russia for blending down, destroyed chemical weapons, and has assisted the United States in cracking down on the global black market for nuclear arms technology.<sup>9</sup> The reasons are complex, and experts point out that Muammar al-Gaddafi, the leader of Libya, was under considerable domestic pressure to ease his country's economic and political isolation.<sup>10</sup> Gaddafi also believed he was next in line for a forced regime change. In a private conversation with Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, in 2003, Gaddafi is reported to have said, "I will do whatever the Americans want, because I saw what happened in Iraq, and I was afraid."<sup>11</sup>

Iran's best offer by far regarding its nuclear program occurred in 2003, at a time when U.S. credibility reached its apex. In a fax transmitted to the State Department through the Swiss ambassador, who confirmed that it had come from "key power centers" in Iran, Iran asked for "a broad dialogue with the United States." The fax "suggested everything was on the table—including full cooperation on nuclear programs, acceptance of Israel and the termination of Iranian support for Palestinian militant groups."<sup>12</sup> (The Bush administration, however, considered the Iranian regime to be on the verge of collapse at the time, and, according to reports, it "belittled the initiative.")<sup>13</sup> Richard Haass, who at the time was serving as director of policy planning at the State Department, stated that the offer was spurned because "the bias [in the Bush administration] was toward a policy of regime change."<sup>14</sup> Still, in 2004, Britain, France, and Germany secured a temporary suspension of uranium enrichment in Iran.<sup>15</sup> It lasted until 2006, when American credibility began to decline.<sup>16</sup> Also in 2004, Iran offered to make the "European Three" a guarantee that its nuclear program would be used "exclusively for peaceful purposes," as long as the West would provide "firm commitments on security issues."<sup>17</sup>

In 2005, as U.S. difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan mounted and its level of casualties—as well as those of its allies and of the local populations—increased without a victory in sight, U.S. credibility was gradually undermined. Since 2005, more than 4,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have



(AP Photo/Iraqi TV via APTN)

**Saddam Hussein is seen in this image from video broadcast on Iraqi television, 2003.**

died, and the direct cost of military operations in the country has exceeded \$650 billion.<sup>18</sup> The same holds true in Afghanistan—only more strongly—already the longest war in which the United States has ever engaged, with rising casualties and costs.

Both credibility-undermining developments were the result of a great expansion of the goals of the mission. In Iraq, the mission was initially to overthrow the regime and ensure that it has no WMDs. In Afghanistan, the mission was initially to eradicate Al-Qaeda. But in both countries, the mission morphed into the costly task of nation building—although other terms were used, such as reconstruction and COIN (counterinsurgency)—which includes building an effective and legitimate government composed of the native population.

In popular terms, the United States won the wars but has been losing the peace. The distinction between the pure military phase (which was very successful in both countries) and the troubled nation-building phase that followed has eluded the Nation's adversaries, who have focused on the fact that the United States seems to have great difficulties in making progress toward its expanded goals. Thus, even if the United States achieves its extended goals



in these two nations, it will have done so only with great efforts and at high costs. And many observers are very doubtful that these nations will be turned into stable governments allied with the United States—let alone that they will be truly democratic. The fact that the United States is withdrawing from Iraq (and is on a timeline, however disputed, to begin withdrawal from Afghanistan)—regardless of whether its goals are fully accomplished—further feeds into the significant decline in its credibility. This stands out especially when compared to the credibility it enjoyed in 2003 and 2004.

The fact that the United States has, on several occasions, made specific and very public demands of various countries, only to have these demands roundly ignored—without any consequences—has not added to its credibility. On several occasions, the United States demanded Israel extend the freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank and cease building in East Jerusalem. While one can question whether such a call for a total freeze was justified, especially as no concessions were demanded from the Palestinians, one cannot deny that, as Israel ignored these demands and faced no consequences, U.S. credibility was diminished.

The same has occurred in Afghanistan. The United States voiced strong demands, only to be rebuffed very publicly by a government that would collapse were it not for American support. Moreover, the United States was forced to court President Hamid Karzai when he threatened to make peace on his own with the Taliban and was courted by Iran. A particularly telling example took place on 28 March 2010, when President Obama flew to Kabul and “delivered pointed criticism to Hamid Karzai” over pervasive corruption in the Afghan government.<sup>19</sup> Then-National Security Advisor James Jones voiced the president’s concerns, stating that Karzai “needs to be seized with how important” the issue of corruption is for American efforts in the country.<sup>20</sup> But Karzai was “angered and offended” by the visit.<sup>21</sup> Only days later, he made a series of inflammatory remarks about Western interference in his country, accused foreigners of a “vast fraud” in the Afghan presidential election, and threatened to ally himself with the Taliban.<sup>22</sup> A few weeks after these statements, Karzai was in Washington as a guest of the White House, where he was well-received, and all seemed forgiven.

## The Next Test

As I will show shortly, in recent years a large and growing number of U.S. allies and adversaries—especially in the Middle East—have questioned American commitment to back up its declared goals—that is, they question the Nation’s credibility. Hence, the way the United States conducts itself in the next test of its resolve will be unusually consequential for its position as a global power. I cannot emphasize enough that I am not arguing that the United States should seek a confrontation, let alone engage in a war, to show that it still has the capacity to back up its threats and promises by using conventional forces. (Few doubt U.S. power and ability to act as a nuclear power, but they also realize that nuclear power is ill-suited for many foreign policy goals.) However, I am suggesting that the ways in which the U.S. will respond to the next challenge to its power will have strong implications for its credibility—and for its need to employ power. One’s mind turns to two hot spots: North Korea and Iran.

North Korea is an obvious testing ground for American resolve. While Iran is denying that it is developing a military nuclear program, North Korea flaunts its program. While Iran is using its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas, to trouble U.S. allies in the Middle East, North Korea has openly attacked the U.S. ally South Korea, both by reportedly torpedoing a South Korean ship in March 2010, killing 46 sailors, and by shelling a South Korean island in November, killing two South Korean soldiers. While Iran is spewing over-the-top accusations against the West, its rhetoric is no match for North Korea’s bellicose statements and actions. In short, North Korea would seem to be the place where U.S. credibility is most being tested and will continue to be in the near future.

At the same time, many military experts agree that on the Korean peninsula, the United States will be deterred from responding effectively to North Korean provocations and assaults. North Korea already has nuclear arms, roughly 1,000 missiles, many of which could devastate Seoul and other South Korean targets.<sup>23</sup> It has between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of chemical weapons (including sarin and mustard gas) that could be mounted on missiles, a sizeable conventional army, and leaders who are difficult to deter because they are considered irrational.<sup>24</sup>

Hence, after the 2010 hostile acts by North Korea against a key U.S. ally, both Secretary of State



**U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks beside South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan during a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Seoul, South Korea, 28 May 2010.**

Clinton and President Obama called on China for help. That is, the United States—unable to act—was publicly beseeching another power to come to the rescue. At the same time, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, made a hasty trip to the region to discourage unilateral South Korean action.<sup>25</sup> All of these statements seem very prudent, even unavoidable. In fairness, I do not discern another course the United States could have followed. However, it does not build credibility or trust among allies. In short, unless the North Korean challenge grows much more severe, and arguably, even if it does, the United States is unlikely to enhance its credibility by the ways it responds to the challenges it currently faces there.

### **Next Test: The Middle East**

This brings us to Iran. The president has consistently stated—both as a candidate and since taking office—that an Iran with nuclear arms is “unacceptable.”<sup>26</sup> Shortly after his election in November 2008, Obama declared that “Iran’s development of a nuclear weapon” is “unacceptable.”<sup>27</sup> In February 2009, he repeated that statement, saying Iran “continue[s]

to pursue a course that would lead to [nuclear] weaponization and that is not acceptable.”<sup>28</sup> In March 2010, after a meeting with European leaders, Obama stated, “The long-term consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran are unacceptable.”<sup>29</sup> When signing into law a new round of sanctions against Iran in July 2010, Obama repeated, “There should be no doubt—the United States and the international community are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, this has been a consistent stance throughout different U.S. administrations. In 2007, then-Vice President Cheney said, “We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.”<sup>31</sup> In 2009, Secretary of State Clinton declared, “We are going to do everything we can to prevent you [Iran] from getting a nuclear weapon. Your pursuit is futile.”<sup>32</sup> Moreover, many see the acquisition of nuclear arms by Iran as a “game changer” because it would embolden Iran to become a regional hegemon. And yet many in the Middle East doubt that the United States will use its military force to stop Iran from gaining nuclear arms if sanctions fail.

All the nations in the Middle East, including the United States’ closest and strongest allies, are



already indicating that they have serious doubts about the U.S. commitment to the region, although the steps they have taken so far in response vary a great deal. The nuclear issue is the last cause for these concerns, which stem from many sources. They are due, in part, to the perception that the United States is overextended. Its military is held to exhaustion and mired in Afghanistan. It still seeks to play a role in practically all international and even domestic conflicts—from Colombia to Burma and from Sudan to Kosovo. It extends some form of aid to over 150 nations, including countries of rather limited global significance or relation to U.S. interests—East Timor, for instance.<sup>33</sup> The United States own economy is viewed as challenged, and its polity is often gridlocked. The notion of a “post-America” period of international relations is gaining currency.<sup>34</sup>

Leaders overseas also note that influential American public intellectuals are calling on the United States to scale back its global activities. Michael Mandelbaum, Peter Beinart, and others argue that the next era of American foreign policy will be characterized by a much more constrained approach to the world. Others predict, or at least fear, that America is not merely scaling back, but will initiate a new isolationism leading it to abandon its allies and retreat to fortress America,” an inward-looking America unconcerned with global affairs.<sup>35</sup>

A brief cook’s tour of the countries in the Middle East reveals that they are aware of and concerned about U.S. disengagement and declining power, and they are unable to determine how far America will draw down and which obligations it will continue to honor. That is, they question U.S. credibility.

The scaling back is most obvious in Iraq, where U.S. troops are rapidly leaving and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki recently stated that no American soldiers would remain in Iraq after the end of 2011. This posture puts the United States in the awkward position of trying to convince Iraq to allow some of its forces to remain or to attach them to its embassy. Maliki declared that Iraq would not

fall into Iran’s orbit.<sup>36</sup> However, the influence of Iran over Iraq’s Shi’ite-majority government is significant and growing. Iran has provided funding, training, and sanctuary to Shi’ite militias.<sup>37</sup> It also has become Iraq’s main trading partner.<sup>38</sup> Particularly revealing is the return of radical Shi’ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr to Iraq from Iran in early 2011. The eight months of deadlock following Iraq’s 2010 parliamentary elections had ended only after Sadr threw his political faction’s support behind the unity government of Prime Minister Maliki. Iran, where Sadr had been living for almost four years in self-imposed exile, brokered the deal.<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution stated that this development has the White House “very, very worried,” and added, “This is something Iran has been trying to do for months. Clearly this is a big win for them and really bad for the United States.”<sup>40</sup> Although Iran’s growing influence is not without ambiguities and difficulties, the fact remains that however one scores it, Iraq is a place where American influence is sinking, and Iranian influence is slowly rising.

Syria was a nation the United States hoped to disengage from Iran and bring into the Western fold. First, the Bush Administration, and then—to a much greater extent—the Obama administration courted Syria. Thus, in February 2010, Obama sent Under Secretary of State William Burns to meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and announce the nomination of a new ambassador to Syria, the first since 2005. The United States was willing to discuss lifting sanctions against Syria and pressuring Israel to give up the Golan Heights.<sup>41</sup> Syria’s apparent response to the U.S. move was to host Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in order to underscore the strength of the Iranian-Syrian alliance.<sup>42</sup> Syria not only rebuffed the U.S. overture, as it did previous ones, but moved in the opposite direction: closer to Iran. Iran has transferred advanced radar to Syria as a means of deterring Israeli military action,<sup>43</sup> and Syria serves as a main pipeline through which Iran ships missiles and

***All the nations in the Middle East...are already indicating that they have serious doubts about U.S. commitment to the region...***

other arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon, despite UN and other demands to desist. After the United States announced it would nominate a new ambassador, a gesture of engagement, the presidents of Syria and Iran jointly and publicly mocked U.S. policy, and Syria's president Bashar al-Assad criticized what he called America's "new situation of colonialism" in the region.<sup>44</sup>

Lebanon is often considered one of the most democratic and pro-Western nations in the region. At the same time, Iran's role in Lebanon is greater than in any other nation in the region. This is due in part to the fact that Iran paid for a significant portion of the reconstruction of south Lebanon after the Israeli incursion, and because Hezbollah joined the government as a powerful coalition partner in 2009, while previously it was in the opposition. Even more important, Iran has placed in the hands of Hezbollah numerous advanced missiles and other military equipment,<sup>45</sup> and Hezbollah often follows instructions from Iran about when to employ its arms against Israeli,<sup>46</sup> American,<sup>47</sup> and other targets.<sup>48</sup>

Turkey was once solidly in the Western camp. A secularized nation, a staunch member of NATO, a nation keen to join the European Union, and with

considerable commercial and even military ties to Israel, Turkey has become more Islamist, moved away from the West, and closer to Iran, since the 2002 election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to serve as prime minister. In the first five years of AKP rule in Turkey, trade with Iran multiplied six-fold.<sup>49</sup> This increased economic cooperation has translated into better political ties. In June 2010, when the United States finally succeeded in convincing Russia and even China to support additional sanctions against Iran, Turkey (working with Brazil), came up with a deal it negotiated with Iran regarding the treatment of uranium. Many observers viewed this deal as merely a stalling tactic to try to head off the sanction vote—that is, Turkey acted on Iran's behalf to undermine a major U.S. drive against Iran. When the vote did finally take place, Turkey voted against the sanctions.

Afghanistan's place on this axis is much less clear. The United States has announced that, as of July 2011, it will start scaling down its forces and will withdraw by 2014, although this deadline is said to depend on conditions on the ground. Switzerland has already removed its troops while the Dutch and Canadians will be gone by the end of 2011.



(AP Photo/Bassem/Tellawi)

**Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Syrian President Bashar Assad review the honor guard at al-Shaab presidential palace in Damascus, Syria, 25 February 2010.**



The United Kingdom has announced it will have all its troops out in 2011. There is a strong sense among the Afghan elites that the United States has already abandoned them once (after they drove out the Soviet Union) and may well do so again.<sup>50</sup> They are mindful of the growing opposition to the war in the United States and its budgetary difficulties. The United States has already appropriated \$300 billion for Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup> It plans to spend at least \$400 billion more over the next decade.<sup>52</sup>

Pakistani elites have a similar fear of being abandoned by the United States: they worry that the United States is tilting toward India, which it views as a rising regional power that could “balance” China, and they are concerned the United States will distance itself from Pakistan once the Taliban is defeated. Pakistani media charge that the United States views their country as “The Disposable Ally.”<sup>53</sup>

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt are considered “Sunni nations” and the Arab nations closest to the United States. All these nations have expressed concerns about U.S. staying power.<sup>54</sup> In the absence of a strong American presence in the region, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are likely to follow their inclination to accommodate and compromise with the powers that be, rather than push back. For example, when Saddam was riding high and mighty, Jordan refrained from condemning Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990.



(AP Photo/Salih Zeki Fazloglu, Anatolia, Pool)

**Iranian negotiators arrive for talks between Iran and world powers on Iran’s nuclear program, Ciragan Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2011.**

It briefly joined Egypt and Syria in attacking Israel in 1967, but when Israel gained the upper hand, Jordan was quick to cut back its involvement, and in effect moved closer to Israel.<sup>55</sup> They are weathervane states, and the wind is blowing east.

Egypt, the most distant nation of the three from Iran, may be the only one with staying power. It does not maintain an embassy in Tehran and does little trade with Iran, and has shown that it can follow its own lights, both in dealing with Hamas and with Israel. The recent revolution—removing Hosni Mubrak from his 30-year reign—brings a whole new set of possibilities for Egypt.

As of the beginning of 2011, these Sunni nations, and most others in the Middle East, experienced regime-challenging convulsions, starting with the ousting of the president of Tunisia. It will take years to find out whether these convulsions will lead to truly democratic regimes, continued upheaval, Islamic fundamentalism, or to some other outcome. However, two developments are already quite clear and both deeply affect the issue at hand. First, the new regimes are very likely to be less committed to the United States than the old outgoing autocrats. And second, the new regimes will be more subject to meddling by Iran. This meddling may take only the form of fervent religious appeals and funding, but if the opportunity arises, also the provision of arms. To put it differently, if Iran’s hegemonic and militaristic ambitions can be dwarfed one way or another, the regime changes in the Middle East will be much less potentially damaging to the United States than if Iran is allowed to continue to follow its current course.

All three countries face transitions that could make them more vulnerable to Iranian influence—for instance, if the Palestinian majority plays more of a role in the government of Jordan or the Muslim Brotherhood in that of Egypt. However, these developments are particularly difficult to foretell. What is much clearer is that these nations are unlikely to serve as bulwarks against emerging Iranian hegemony in the region.

In addition, since 2008, both the Israeli government and the majority of Israeli voters have grown suspicious of U.S. support, in response to various reports about President Obama’s viewpoints and acts.

American allies in other regions are also consumed by doubts. South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan have

been enhancing bilateral military cooperation with the United States to make it more likely that America will honor its commitments to their security.<sup>56</sup> These countries will naturally also look to the way the United States responds to the Iranian challenge in the Middle East in order to judge to what extent they can rely on the support of an America that is scaling back its international role.

These countries are already consumed by doubts. Thus, a senior Japanese official briefed a group of Washington policymakers and analysts in January 2011, about what he called Japan's "credibility gap" with the United States. He reported that Japan was unsure that the U.S. nuclear umbrella indeed covered it, and that he believed that the U.S. would act against North Korea only if it sent its nuclear arms to other nations—not if it added to its nuclear arsenal and threatened its neighbors. (The official was talking under Chatham House rules, which allow one to use the information provided, but not to cite the source or venue.)

The fact that the United States is drawing back in the Middle East cannot be contested, given the drawdown in Iraq and expected drawdown in Afghanistan. Moreover, the fragile condition of these states after U.S. withdrawal is unlikely to enhance its credibility, especially given the high level of sacrifice involved in order to achieve whatever was achieved. Iranian influence is already growing in Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon and is

increasingly feared elsewhere, especially after the 2011 uprisings against aging Arab heads of state in Tunisia and Egypt. The question is whether the United States will be able to maintain its power and enhance its credibility in the region in ways other than those it used in the past; that is, without relying on large-scale military interventions, ground forces, and major commitments of economic aid. The American people are not likely to favor such costly commitments under current economic conditions at home. The strategy based on dealing with the nations on Iran's periphery—courting Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey to "peel" them away from Iran, to isolate Iran, and to induce it to change course—seems to be failing. The main alternative to working on Iran's periphery in order to affect Iran at the core is to deal directly with Iran itself in one way or another.

Best, and least likely, is for continued negotiations and engagement to work. Sanctions may lead to the same results, although their work is, at best, slow, and the day Iran tests its first nuclear weapons may well be closer at hand. We might want to consider military options as well. Whatever course we follow, success or failure here will determine U.S. credibility in the near future to a very large extent, and this in turn will significantly affect the ability of the United States to discharge what it sees as its global responsibilities and live up to its commitments overseas. **MR**

*For more discussion, please visit Amitai Etzioni at <http://blog.amitaietzioni.org/> and <http://icps.gwu.edu/>.*

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# FM 7-0

Training Units and Developing Leaders  
for Full Spectrum Operations



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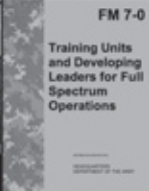


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**FM 7-0**  
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# Military Theory, Strategy, and Praxis

Jacob W. Kipp, Ph.D., and Lieutenant Colonel Lester W. Grau, Ph.D., U.S. Army, Retired

*I want to speak to you tonight about our effort in Afghanistan—the nature of our commitment there, the scope of our interests, and the strategy that my administration will pursue to bring this war to a successful conclusion.*

— President Barack Obama, West Point, New York, 1 December 2009.<sup>1</sup>

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PHOTO: A statue of Sun Tzu at Encheon, Yurihama, Tottori prefecture, Japan.

**P**RESIDENT BARACK OBAMA began his December 2009 address to the Corps of Cadets at the U.S. Military Academy by invoking strategy. Since the address included comments about a further increase in U.S. military deployments by 30,000 troops, few would argue that the address had no strategic content. However, that admission conceals a glaring problem. Strategy today is not what it was during the Cold War or even during World War II. There is a radical difference between strategy formulated to fight conventional wars and deter nuclear wars and that necessary to conduct armed struggle in the post-modern world. The state no longer defines the nature of the conflict in the latter case.

A review of the literature on war and military thought reveals that the authors most often cited are those of the Western military tradition with a few ancients, one or two Chinese, and a few Russian or Soviet thinkers thrown in.<sup>2</sup> Military theoreticians of old still hold sway in the staff and war colleges of the world's professional militaries. Western students have at least a nodding acquaintance with the writings of Clausewitz, Jomini, Du Picq, Douhet, Fuller, Liddell-Hart, Machiavelli, Mahan, and Upton. Interested students also investigate Sun Tzu. Advanced students study Svechin, Triandafilov, and Tuchachesky to appreciate operational art. Professionals need to know the foundations of their profession, and much of the old theory is still applicable. Over the last decade, in the face of the challenges posed by terrorism and insurgency, a larger community of officers has returned to examining counterinsurgency and low intensity conflict and even named the realm another generation of war, the fourth. Mao, Lawrence, Giap, and Galula are still read, but contemporary authors addressing the complexity of counterinsurgency have gained on them. These include Martin van Creveld, William Lind, Joe Celeski, Shimon Naveh, and David Kilcullen, as well as John Boyd, Deitrich Doerner, Arthur Cebrowski, and William Owens.



U.S. Army



**President Obama walks to the lectern to present his strategy on Afghanistan before an audience of a 4,200 cadets and guests in West Point's Eisenhower Hall, 1 December 2009.**

An earlier theory of warfare based on the nations-at-war model emphasized the primacy of conflicts between nations and saw constabulary functions, such as countering brigands and pirates, as a necessary but secondary task. However, contemporary theory has had to give a central place to combating nonstate actors. Since 2001, with the exception of a few weeks in the spring of 2003, the United States and its allies have been making war on nonstate actors, quasi-organizations beyond the brigand or pirate status, but clearly not state actors. Their persistence on the scene suggests that in some parts of the world the Western concept of the nation-state born with the Treaty of Westphalia is under challenge. Indeed, the territory of these nonstate actors encompasses that of several states, even though they formally control little of it. (Although the agents of these nonstate actors impose their control over local judicial systems and religious practices, they carry out few functions of a state.)

This different sort of conflict is challenging the way armed forces organize, equip, and conduct

themselves in the face of this threat. The introduction to U.S. Army and Marine Corps Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, notes that the publication fills “a doctrinal gap.” Iraq and Afghanistan experiences drove the doctrine writers. However, as the manual makes clear, the political dimension of the counterinsurgency demands strategic as well as tactical and operational adjustments. Counterinsurgency, it seems, is a matter for the whole of government, not just the military.

A decade ago, staff colleges taught diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power and students sought to apply military, informational, diplomatic and economic power to their staff problems. Discussions of conflict today begin with complexity theory, systems analysis, and Design.

To plan a campaign, one must understand the problem at hand, but today's problems defy templating.<sup>3</sup> Army discussions of Design have focused on operational art, but Design applies to strategy as well. Strategy is the point in the process where one first

addresses the political dimension.<sup>4</sup> Naveh, Challans, and Schneider have called this reorientation “the structure of operational revolution.”<sup>5</sup> It negates the autonomy of operational art. It imposes the centrality of strategy at the highest level by injecting political direction at the start and retaining control of political intervention throughout the campaign by reframing the conflict if necessary. The informational element develops a narrative to explain actions taken and contemplated.<sup>6</sup> The narrative has strategic impact because it feeds directly into the political process.

The impact of technology on warfare in the past few decades has changed the organization of military institutions. The conduct of network-centric warfare and precision strikes across the depth of the battlefield has introduced a new calculus (and modeling) based upon computational power, networks, sensors, and guidance systems. This new technology has had a profound impact on the tactics, organization, and funding priorities of those possessing and facing such capabilities. The struggle between the sides has no clear winner. On some occasions, advanced technology has brought profound successes for those it empowered. On other occasions, those lacking advanced technologies have shown an ability to adapt to its threats and engage in protracted struggles, which democracies find hard to sustain.<sup>7</sup>

U.S. operations in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 brought lightning success against Taliban field forces and seemed to confirm the decisive impact of Army transformation. Then, the appearance of a post-Saddam insurgency in Iraq and the Taliban’s reconstitution in Afghanistan and Pakistan forced major adjustments. In retrospect, proper planning, proper resourcing, and finishing what we started might have prevented both insurgencies or made them less severe. An insurgency is always weakest as it begins.

Modern militaries and their political leaders have a bias toward seeking decision by annihilation. This has caused much frustration when they confront a protracted struggle. In such cases, war is not the continuation of politics by other means. Rather, war assumes a political content all its own, which, in fact, reshapes the content of the war itself. This insight is not new. Clausewitz, who took part in the campaign of 1812 as a member of the Russian staff, saw firsthand how political content could frustrate military genius by injecting the concept of the people’s war

into the combat at hand. In 1812, Napoleon lost in Russia without a single decisive defeat. Swarms of partisans, winter, and the dogged pursuit of the Russian Army embodied what Lev Tolstoy called *narodnaia voina* (people’s war).<sup>8</sup>

Clausewitz discussed this problem in the context of the Newtonian universe. Today’s military theorists confront a universe of quantum mechanics generating *wicked problems*. Good planning cannot overcome a fundamental misunderstanding of such problems. Decision by annihilation gives way to protracted struggle, where the advantages of advanced technology seem negated. Technology, which seemed to liberate warfare from the risk of stalemate, now seems impotent against the complexity of war among the peoples. Meanwhile, the military educational institutions that once taught Clausewitz as the chief theorist of modern war have had to reconsider “small wars” and insurgency. Technology is no substitute for theory, and war theory lags.

Under transformation, as practiced by the Department of Defense under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, technology became a substitute for theory; Rumsfeld and DOD assumed that the U.S. military would use its informational advantage and network organization to defeat quickly any opponent in the field and deter most from engaging in conflict. Two protracted wars later, this assumption has proved to be wrong. The unstated assumption of the technological determinists was that a simple template could be applied to all conflicts, and technology would leverage a rapid and decisive outcome. In the aftermath of Operations Desert Storm, Deliberate Force, Allied Force, and Enduring Freedom, it seemed that such was the case. There were messy details—the survival of Saddam, the protracted deployments into Bosnia-Herzegovina, the negotiated end of NATO’s war over

***Under transformation, as practiced by the Department of Defense under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, technology became a substitute for theory...***

Kosovo, and the survival of remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. However, they were not enough to stimulate a profound debate about ends, ways, and means. Instead, when planning turned to Iraq, the issue was the size of the force needed to achieve a rapid decision against the Iraqi army in the field and the speedy occupation of Baghdad. The post-conflict environment was simply assumed to be a benign one that would permit the rapid redeployment of U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq.

However, insurgencies are like Tolstoy's unhappy families, they are each unique, and as such, demand complex study to understand their dynamics. This is, of course, almost impossible before the intervening power applies force. However, the longer the war continues, the more apparent it becomes that such study is necessary to define the conflict's political center of gravity and the population's allegiances. Nation building assumes that one can impose an ersatz model of Western institutions and values on these populations. Unfortunately, this misses the point. Stability will come when the population assumes that its security is at hand. No checklist of

projects, which the occupier assumes represents the wishes of the population, will serve as a reliable guide to progress. Progress can only be determined by feedback from the local population, never easy to obtain in a foreign land during an armed insurgency.

Soldiers are not likely to be the best agents for collecting such information, and it matters not whether they are foreign troops or national troops unconnected to the local population. Home guard units and local police can provide such information, but their primary loyalty will be to the immediate security of their community. Building trust with them takes time and great effort. It means accepting the protracted struggle, which the insurgents see as their road to victory.

Instead of making the effort to understand the desires of the local populations, armies will be tempted to apply a template of violence to intimidate the insurgents and accept "collateral damage" to noncombatants as a necessary cost on the road to military victory. That such damage actually broadens the base of the insurgency and makes both the national government and the



Yugoslav Army M-84 tanks withdrawing from Kosovo, June 1999.



occupying force appear as oppressors is not often apparent until after the damage has occurred. The point is to apply violence in a directed fashion against enemy combatants, as a constabulary applies it to protect the community it is supposed to defend against lawless actions. For soldiers on the ground, this demands a much different set of rules of engagement than those practiced in high-intensity conflict. The rules are similar to those applied under martial law. These new situations demand a clear rethinking of strategic priorities.

Strategy addresses the ends, ways, and means of war and embraces how a nation prepares for and conducts it. There are essentially four components to strategy: the economic, political, military, and informational.<sup>9</sup> Strategy determines how the state will fight the war, the desired phases of the war, and under what conditions and how the state will end it. Strategy sets ends, ways, and means so that political and military leaders can determine progress, or lack of progress, in implementing a strategy.<sup>10</sup> Leaders, however, must explain their conduct to their citizens, the larger international community, and last but not least the population directly affected by the conflict. This implies both knowledge of the population in question and the existence of means to solicit feedback from that population over the course of the conflict. Close examination of most theaters of conflict reveals the existence of many communities that must be monitored within each population. This last point is an admission that this population is not “the other” or an unfortunate complication on a neat battlefield without constraints on firepower. In this sense, strategy recasts the conduct of operations and tactics. It is an admission that soft power may be more effective in achieving stability than kinetic means.

Strategic assessment helps determine how successful various courses of action might be, and once the conflict has begun, permits a review of the conflict and the likelihood of success in following a particular strategy.

Nevertheless, for eight years, the United States and its allies were directly involved in the Afghan conflict without a comprehensive strategy. Our initial intervention was punitive, designed to punish Al-Qaeda and the Taliban for protecting Al-Qaeda. Half-hearted efforts at state-building followed

while Washington shifted its attention to Iraq. In the meantime, Al-Qaeda survived, and the Taliban recovered and became a source of armed insurgency in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even though counterinsurgency experts agree that the solution to a guerrilla conflict lies primarily in the political and economic realm, no systematic exposition of national or alliance strategy was forthcoming until President Obama stated that the Afghan conflict was a necessary conflict and recast it to embrace both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Obama’s speech at West Point outlined the first clear attempt to articulate U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Down to this point, the struggle in Afghanistan appeared to be an open-ended commitment to the application of military power in a protracted war, in which success was both undefined and remote and depended most upon the continued application of limited though growing combat power. Strategy seemed to be in the hands of the generals without a political dimension (which makes it a military strategy but hardly an overarching national strategy). After a long review in consultation with his political and military advisors, President Obama articulated a strategy for Afghanistan. Critics may argue over the size of the additional deployment, the chances of success on the ground, and even the importance of the conflict in determining national priorities, but not whether Obama has now an articulated strategy for a conflict deemed necessary to U.S. and NATO interests.

One should not confuse articulating a strategy with predicting the course and outcome of the conflict. There are too many variables beyond the power of even the United States to control. In the final analysis, the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan will determine the outcome of the conflict.

Time will tell whether the current strategy has incorporated the right elements to manage the

***...for eight years, the United States and its allies were directly involved in the Afghan conflict without a comprehensive strategy.***

conflict to a successful conclusion—a settlement among Afghans that will enhance regional stability and reduce the threat of terrorist attacks emanating from Afghan and Pakistani territory. Every strategy's chance of success depends upon getting the correct definition of the problem in order to apply elements of national power to its solution. Strategy is dialectical in the sense that success depends upon the enemy's responses in the struggle for the loyalty of the population. Moreover, this is not a macro problem subject to a grand exercise in templating. It depends upon local dynamics, which require deep knowledge of each region and its population, understanding the human terrain, and plotting its evolving features.

Recent wars have uncovered a glaring national strategic weakness—the inability to plan beyond a mission with purely military ends, ways, and means. The changing nature of warfare conducted by U.S. opponents has exacerbated this weakness. National strategic thinking and planning is running behind its advancing military without the proper integration and employment of assets. The drawn-out nature of U.S. conflicts demonstrates that *lessons are not being learned*.

## How Did the Mismatch Occur?

During World War II, military theory, strategy, and praxis were in balance. The Cold War and Korean War operated both within and outside comprehensive strategy, since the assumption was that nuclear exchange would destroy the planet, and the strategy was to prevent this from happening. Strategy emphasized the military component and military technology at the expense of the political and economic components. Conventional maneuver war was to occur at the operational level under nuclear-threat. The nuclear balance of terror dominated international relations and restrained risk, so antagonists poked at each other using proxies in limited contests (South Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan, and numerous “Wars of National Liberation”).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the bipolar nature of global relations came to an end. The West was in ascendancy. Yet how would theory, strategy, and praxis adapt to the new reality? Would nuclear terror matter in a world without nuclear stand-off? What would be the impact of regional nuclear proliferation that put nuclear weapons into the

***The drawn-out nature of U.S. conflicts demonstrates that lessons are not being learned.***

hands of states disposed to conflicts along ethnic and religious lines with the remaining “superpower” unwilling or unable to lead the planet in other than the conventional military dimension? With the U.S. superpower's much-heralded economic dominance fading—as it became a debtor nation with a much-smaller industrial base and a proclivity to engage in credit excesses that shocked global financial markets—what kind of influence could it wield?

**Desert Storm—the stage-setter.** Operation Desert Storm set the stage for today's dilemma. Potential opponents of American power saw that trying to match the technologically-advanced ground, air, and naval forces of the United States was a sure path to military, if not political, defeat. The U.S. military trained to take on the Soviet Union and, given a half-year to prepare the theater, was unbeatable in Kuwait against a foe that had fought the Iranians to a stalemate in the 1980s. The only apparent way left to oppose America and its allies was to adapt Liddell-Hart's strategy of “the indirect approach” to the 21st century. That is, enemies had to mitigate the technological overmatch that America depended upon for quick victory by moving the contest to an area where that technology would be degraded (forest, jungle, mountains, delta, or urban center) and making military mass disappear by replacing regular formations with guerrillas and partisans. This strategy is the point that William Lind made in his articles on fourth generation warfare. It was the subtext to all the discussions of “asymmetric warfare” in the 1990s.

**Kosovo.** The Serbs provided the first post-Desert Storm conflict for NATO and U.S. Armed Forces in Kosovo. The Serbs learned from the Iraq experience that camouflage was effective for the Iraqis and moved their army into the mountains and forests, hid their systems, and turned the engines off. They built mockups of tanks, bridges, and command posts. Their goal was to preserve the army for post-conflict use. They were successful. The planned three-day air

operation lasted 78 days. The Serbs did not surrender but negotiated a settlement via the European Union on terms better than those initially offered by NATO. NATO air forces had accurately destroyed their target sets, which included real military facilities as well as mockups and, when that did not bring about Serbian defeat, made civilian infrastructure the primary target, destroying power plants, transportation nodes, and bridges, which disrupted commerce in the Danube region for years. West Germany, Russia, and Finland finally intervened and negotiated a settlement that left the Serbian government intact, postponed the issue of Kosovo's independence, and resulted in a long-term occupation mission for NATO.

Then the Serbian Army emerged from the woods. Trained analysts counted battalions as the units drove out. They were mostly intact. It had survived. John Warden's concentric-circle adaptation of Douhet's theory of air power reduced civilian casualties, but it could not impose a political defeat on an opponent who still held the ground in contention. Kosovo ended with a negotiated settlement, when it appeared that NATO would have to risk fracture over the combat deployment of ground troops into Kosovo. The Clinton administration's narrative of victory through airpower alone began to disintegrate and threaten alliance solidarity. In spite of this, some acclaimed the air-only operation as the new face of warfare: future war would involve U.S. air power supplemented by somebody else's ground forces. There was no need for U.S. ground forces in future conflicts. They would arrive as part of an allied occupying force to serve as a constabulary to maintain a settlement air strikes had dictated.

This view of future war did not incorporate a system for conflict termination beyond continuous bombing, and it assumed no economic or political costs for the air offensive. Any delay in war termination was simply a matter of adjusting the target set to achieve the right physical and psychological destruction against the targeted actor, which, in the case of Serbia, was not the nation but its political and military elite.

**Afghanistan.** Afghanistan provided the second post-Desert Storm conflict. The United States had been attacked. A punitive expedition

would punish those who launched those attacks. The Bush administration, especially Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, wanted to recreate Desert Storm with the sophisticated technology that a decade of acquisitions had provided. However, Afghanistan was not Kuwait or Iraq and none of the conditions of Desert Storm applied. It was not a prepared theater. The United States did not have a half-year to prepare by moving massive stocks and forces into position. The Nation did not want to commit its own ground forces. It wanted another Kosovo with U.S. airpower and someone else's army defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Although Afghanistan was nominally a state, the Taliban was mostly a government in name only—a government of a failing or failed state.

Based on advice from Pakistan, the United States wanted to replace the Pashtun-Taliban with a Pashtun government drawn from the Durrani tribal group—the traditional rulers of Afghanistan. The United States needed a Pashtun force to defeat a Pashtun force. Further, the Pashtun force needed to support a Durrani government. Yet the Durrani were the power base of the Taliban. The majority Pashtun tribal group, the Ghilzai, had their own ambitions and goals.

The United States enlisted the help of an old friend, Abdul Haq, to raise a Pashtun force to fight a Pashtun



Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani hold a joint media event at the site of the World Trade Center disaster in lower Manhattan, 14 November 2001.

DOD, R. D. Ward



force. The United States had already launched an air operation against Afghanistan. It was an air operation designed against a prepared theater targeting the Taliban integrated air defense system, command and control system, tank maintenance facilities, and logistics columns. None of these “target sets” made much sense against the Taliban, and it was clearly not a prepared theater. The air operation quickly ran out of targets.

Abdul Haq, trying to recruit his Pashtun force, begged that the air operation cease because of the civilian casualties it created and because the targets struck were of little advantage in defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, but his pleas were ignored. The only real target in the country was the Taliban and Al-Qaeda field forces deployed against the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras (and some Pashtun) who belonged to the so-called Northern Alliance. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda were a conventional force, deployed in a linear fashion. With good ground spotters, they were an optimum target for air strikes. They deployed in a single echelon, had no meaningful reserves, and no national mobilization capacity, thus making the field force a very fragile target. Initially, this target was ignored. The United States, for political reasons, did not want the Northern Alliance to break out and seize the country.

Then, on 25 October 2001, the Taliban killed Abdul Haq. There would be no Pashtun force to defeat a Pashtun force. Without committing U.S. ground forces, the Northern Alliance was the only available force. U.S. special operations teams had joined the Northern Alliance forces. They could provide effective ground observation and adjustment to air strikes. When the forces of the Northern Alliance, U.S. airpower, and special operations combined, they quickly overcame the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces deployed in static positions. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda pushed out rear guards, abandoned the cities, and went to the mountains. After the initial shock, the enemy retreat was coherent, and it succeeded in preserving its leadership, its logistics structure, and much of its force. The U.S. effort did not have a plan or the capability to complete the defeat of the enemy and run the country. The United States assumed that it had won since it now controlled the cities. The Soviets and British had made this same mistake.

It soon became obvious that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban represented movements that could rally political support and raise irregular forces to fight an insurgency. In the meantime, the United States introduced conventional ground forces, which were able to smash the remaining conventional enemy forces. However, there still was no long-term strategy for dealing with the Pashtun problem or establishing a post-conflict order in Afghanistan.

During this interval, it would have been useful for U.S. political and military leaders to have a deep understanding of Afghanistan and its historic pattern of warfare. It starts with the defeat of conventional Afghan forces and then devolves into low-grade, marginally effective guerrilla war. The occupier hardly knows there is a guerrilla conflict going on and is more concerned with criminality than guerrillas. Over time, the overly bold and stupid disappear from the guerrilla force, which becomes more competent and able to challenge the government and occupying forces. The guerrillas do not evolve into a regular army and risk defeat in conventional battles. Eventually, the new government and the occupier confront a full-blown insurgent threat. The guerrilla force tries to win over the countryside and strangle the cities.<sup>11</sup>

**Iraq.** The invasion of Iraq was the third post-Desert Storm conflict. Someone else’s army was not available to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The region was a prepared theater with well-established coalition logistics bases, lines of communication in good repair, and forces positioned forward. The coalition had ample time to get set and into position (although Turkey’s intransigence prevented getting forces in place for an initial northern axis). When the invasion occurred, some Iraqi camouflage measures succeeded, but it is difficult to hide everything in an open desert. SCUD missiles are one thing; divisions are another. The armed forces of Iraq resisted effectively in some areas, but in others, they felt

***It soon became obvious that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban represented movements that could rally political support...***

it was useless to fight, so they went home. Shortly after the invasion, two Foreign Military Studies Office analysts went to Iraq and interviewed Iraqi military personnel. Their story: “The officers left, and I went home.” However, the Fedayeen resistance was prepared to engage the United States in guerrilla warfare. They had trained for it, and they were equipped.

Airpower proved effective against the Iraqi conventional forces. Airpower was constrained in attacking civilian targets. One result was a lack of wide-spread damage to Baghdad and other cities. The air forces were very precise in their targeting and left most of the infrastructure intact. This precision and concern for the civilian population may have actually worked to the coalition’s disadvantage. When talking to Iraqi civilians, several of them asked, “Were we really defeated? Nothing is destroyed. Our army just quit.”

Baghdad was the anti-Dresden. Constrained bombing certainly did not break the will of the civilian populace. Most of them were glad to be rid of Saddam, but many were determined to make the occupier bleed through guerrilla war.

## The Way Ahead

The American military had been prepared to fight World War III. They were not so ready to fight in forest, jungle, mountains, delta, or urban centers—or to fight guerrillas. The post-conflict stage (phase IV) eluded implementation. Mahan, Clausewitz, Douhet, and Mao incorporated the political and economic element as part of war theory. Today, military planners are searching for “an immaculate victory with arms-length use of cruise missiles, predator drones, and special ops.”<sup>12</sup>

But what do you do after you have bounced the Taliban out of position and out of the cities? How do you deal with non-state combatants? How does the civil population fit into the military calculations?

The post-Cold War lesson for the United States seems to be that the political and economic realms are vital to post-conflict resolution and must be an inherent part of strategy, military planning, and military theory. War planning should not embrace



Abbie Rowe, National Park Service/John F. Kennedy Library

**President John F. Kennedy meets with the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, Andrei Gromyko, in the Oval Office, 18 October 1962. Attendees are, from left to right, Vladimir Semenov, deputy minister of foreign affairs, USSR; Anatoly Dobrynin, ambassador of the USSR; Minister Gromyko; and President Kennedy.**

annihilation at the expense of political calculations and adjustments during the campaign, but neither should risk aversion outweigh coherent, realistic war planning. One can become enamored with Moltke the Elder’s victory at Sedan and miss the point that Bismarck came up with the political strategy that kept France divided and isolated Paris. An integrated national leadership should discuss the political, economic, and military dimensions of the conflict in a common language in a democratic and open society.

Technological determinists’ claims notwithstanding, warfare is not predictable.<sup>13</sup> Embarking on a conflict involves risk. The best the national leadership can do is to assess that risk and develop strategy that will minimize it. If embarking on a conflict involves risks the society will not accept, the nation ought not go to war. War has become much more than the continuation of politics by other means. It is at its heart a political process of great complexity in an environment fraught with chaos, which most of its actors understand imperfectly. Understanding a war is a labor of Sisyphus, a necessary, difficult, and frustrating task, defying efforts to impose meaning, unity, and clarity on events. The interactions of the contesting sides and other actors and the evolution of the conflict itself negate such efforts. War is a chameleon, changing its appearance and even its

content before one's eyes. This does not negate the need for theory. Without theory, there can be no sound political course of action or strategy.

The immediate task that praxis places before theory is the need to deal with conflict on difficult terrain—both topographical and human. The great guerrilla theorists, Mao Tse Tung, T.E. Lawrence, and Vo Nguyen Giap, recognized this problem. However, their theories do not apply to Afghanistan because, once again, insurgencies are like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each unique in their environment. This is not the first time a modern force faced a tribal irregular force. The Indian Wars of the United States and the European powers' wars with the United States come to mind. The Russian and Soviet experiences in Central Asia and the Caucasus also are relevant. However, in each of these cases, the regular force sought to incorporate territory into its domains through punitive expeditions or direct conquest. Afghanistan may have begun as a punitive expedition, but failure to finish the job properly, subsequent political commitments, and a revived insurgency made it a difficult problem involving a strategy of attrition and political negotiation.

Strategy is the domain of governments, not the military, but the political authorities have abandoned strategy, making it a military-only concern. The military is heavily involved in planning, but strategy is something more. Reducing strategy to a task of the senior military commander in-country and not the government as a whole leads to a military- and geographic-specific strategy. However, any strategy for a particular conflict has wider and deeper implications at home and abroad. Ultimately, it falls to the head of state to explain a strategy, to mobilize the whole of government, and to gain and sustain public support in spite of the costs in blood and treasure. Behind this problem stands the need for shared discourse about national security issues so that the real alternatives can be part of an informed public debate.

In the United States, the “bully pulpit” still belongs to the president. These considerations should direct the formation of U.S. strategy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. Readers of different political persuasions can read Obama's December 2009 address in different ways, depending upon their own assumptions. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Obama did articulate a three-part, whole-of-government strategy for the United States and its NATO allies to apply to the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the words of General David Petraeus, “What that is enabling us to do for the first time here is to carry out a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign.” Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus helped shape and implement the strategy to deny enemy sanctuary and build population safe havens where governance can take root and a legitimate economy may emerge.<sup>14</sup>

Praxis and technology can influence but cannot drive theory and strategy. The military situation facing the world today is different. It requires new approaches, organizations, priorities, and theory. The conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan do not lend themselves to maneuver warfare, air-centric warfare, or effects-based operations, although each is relevant to the task of developing a theory of post-modern conflict.<sup>15</sup> The *informationization* of warfare will go forward. It will bring in its wake weapons systems based on new physical principles. Still, changes in military technology will not stop an adaptive opponent from trying to impose his own strategy on a conflict he assumes involves his vital interests. This fact alone makes a relevant theory necessary as well as a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond the military dimension.

The enemy will always have a vote. Praxis attempts to make it an insignificant one. Theory and strategy should be about the ends, ways, and means to counter that enemy and adapt to his changes. Praxis should direct future strategic choices, and technology should enhance the conduct of political and military conflict. **MR**

***The immediate task that praxis places before theory is the need to deal with conflict on difficult terrain—both topographical and human.***



## NOTES

1. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," West Point, New York, 1 December 2009, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>> (6 December 2009).

2. Martin van Creveld, *The Art of War: War and Military Thought* (New York: Smithsonian Books, 2005).

3. Huba Wass de Czege, "The Logic of Operational Art: How to Design Sound Campaign Strategies, Learn Effectively and Adapt Rapidly & Appropriately," unpublished essay, January 2009, 2.

4. The Army discussion of design has been associated with the annual war game run by JFCOM at the Army War College for the Army chief of staff under the title "Unified Quest." These discussions led to the publication of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, *Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, in January 2008, which addresses an approach to problem framing and design before commanders actually begin operational planning under MDMP (military decision making process). In this context, design implies a political-military dialogue among political leaders and military commanders before planning, during planning, during execution, and following execution.

5. Shimon Naveh, Jim Schneider, and Timothy Challans, *The Structure of Operational Revolution* (Washington, DC: Booz Allen Hamilton, 2009).

6. In the work that gave first prominence to the term "operational art" [*operativnoe iskusstvo*], Aleksandr Svechin spoke of the risk of adopting a strategy of annihilation, which in practice meant transforming all problems into matters of operational art and solvable by combat power and reduced politics to a secondary role. See Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy* (Minneapolis: Eastview Press, 1992), 240.

7. Lester Grau and Jacob Kipp, "The Fog and Friction of Technology," *Military Review* (September-October 2001): 88-97.

8. Early in 1813, while still serving as a Russian officer, Clausewitz took part in the effort to ignite a people's war against France in his native Prussia, although his King was still an ally of Napoleon.

9. The dual content of informational power in this formulation often goes unmentioned upon. In systemic terms, it means the information generated about friendly and hostile ends, ways, and means and the engagement in strategic

communication to create a narrative that explains national choices and counters enemy information operations. Of course, this involves many elements of national intelligence. But it demands a convincing national narrative to explain a course of action, the costs, and the outcome. Implausible narratives rather quickly collapse in the face of facts on the ground, or as Stalin used to say, "Facts are stubborn things." National policy based upon finding and destroying weapons of mass destruction when none could be found comes to mind as a telling example. But one could also look at the conflict in Afghanistan which is described as a fight with the Taliban, when the armed resistance is much more diverse and the conflict more complex.

10. This is not the U.S. official view. The U.S. definition of strategy is "A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives." Joint Publication 1-02. This definition may be part of the problem. Strategy is so much more than a prudent idea.

11. An occupier can change this calculus by removing the label of occupation from the equation via withdrawal under conditions that strengthen the capacity of the government to practice the traditional Afghan strategy of dividing the opposition and securing its base in the cities. Such an end is not neat, does not involve military victory, and can often depend upon making alliances of convenience with local war lords, tribal leaders, and ethnic communities. Lester W. Grau, "Breaking Contact Without Creating Chaos: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol. 20, April-June 2007, 234-61 and Makhmut Akhmetovich Gareev, *Moya poslednyaya voyna: Afghanistan bez Sovetskikh voysk* [My last war: Afghanistan without Soviet Forces], Moscow: INSAN, 1996.

12. Charles Krauthammer, "Afghan War Forces Obama to Make a Real Decision", *Kansas City Star*, 13 October 2009, A13.

13. Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way for Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 242-43.

14. Department of Defense, "Petraeus Explains Afghanistan Strategy," *Defense and Security News*, at <<http://www.defencetalk.com/petraeus-explains-afghanistan-strategy-28574/>> (17 September 2010).

15. Still, a leaflet left on an Afghan door promising death to the inhabitants if they cooperate with coalition forces is an effects-based operation.

# RED TEAMING



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UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN MILITARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES



# Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Security Forces

## Fighting Asymmetry with Symmetry

Major General Michael R. Boera, U.S. Air Force, and Lieutenant Colonel Paul R. Birch, U.S. Air Force

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PHOTO: Afghan National Army Air Corps personnel conduct a pre-flight inspection of their Mi-17 helicopter before a training mission at the Kabul Airport, Afghanistan, 5 February 2009 (photo by MCPL Robert Bottrill).

**A** SYMMETRY: WAYS TO exploit it, and means to counter it pervade the thinking of military professionals as much today as it did a decade ago. *The Guardian*, immediately after 9/11, pointed out that “asymmetric warfare” had become a “buzz phrase.”<sup>1</sup> The need for military professionals to be experts at asymmetric warfare has become a dominant theme in Western military literature and thinking.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of Defense directive that addresses irregular warfare says plainly, “IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will.”<sup>3</sup> Quoting this guidance, U.S. Joint doctrine advocates asymmetric means for conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare.<sup>4</sup> Individual services’ doctrinal publications continue the theme, and many nations either borrow directly from U.S. doctrine with respect to this point or echo similar themes.<sup>5</sup>

To those engaged in the campaign to build security capability within Afghanistan, the conflict remains “asymmetric” by current definitions of the term. Insurgent military capabilities exhibit (to borrow from General Montgomery Meigs’ definition of asymmetric warfare) “an absence of a common basis of comparison” with the military capabilities of the coalition nations fighting and working to stabilize Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Although earlier U.S. Joint doctrine identified asymmetry as applying only to techniques used against friendly forces, later scholarship recognized that asymmetric techniques are used by both sides. In fact, the search for an asymmetric advantage is the key to *any* successful combat endeavor, whether in irregular war or conventional war.<sup>7</sup> Whatever insights we have gained into asymmetric warfare in recent years, solid techniques for waging successful asymmetric warfare are harder to come by.

Those of us gathered around a dining table at the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) compound listened intently, therefore, when a senior advisor and retired flag officer from one of our coalition partner countries asserted, “*We must combat asymmetry with symmetry.*”<sup>8</sup>

This was a novel turn of phrase. Was unfamiliarity with the wars occurring in southwest Asia causing him to neglect the character of war there? No: he was drawing on extensive experience as a veteran of the Iraq War and had been working for months in Afghanistan.

Had he dismissed the body of knowledge germane to fourth-generation warfare, expanded recently at the expense of thousands of coalition and Afghan lives?<sup>9</sup> Was he advocating that the coalition find a way to turn the struggle in Afghanistan into a conventional war, one that ignores “hearts and minds” and instead uses large-scale maneuver tactics to bring stability to Afghanistan?

The answer to these questions is an emphatic “No.” Far from dismissing received wisdom about how to conduct effective counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare, the speaker, British Lieutenant-General Sir Graeme Cameron Maxwell Lamb, was offering a useful way to consider the nature of asymmetry and helping spur some creative thinking essential to success in asymmetric warfare. In summarizing

his observation—“symmetry of all parts of the government, its armed forces, the coalition, the international community, those in the fight, and those supporting the fight will, if applied with rigor, overwhelm those who have had to contest by asymmetric means”—he offered something that all coalition forces must appreciate: some of the most effective force multipliers in the Afghanistan COIN struggle are the professionalism, standards, and discipline that coalition forces impart.<sup>10</sup> Military organizations displaying—and passing on—these positive influences offer a welcome alternative to the chaos and misery inflicted on a nation that has suffered for more than three decades under insurgency, civil war, and oppressive governments.

General Lamb’s comments have immediate relevance to members of the NATO command charged with building effective security forces in Afghanistan. The Combined Air Power Transition Force—which in September 2010 was renamed the NATO Air Training Command (NATC)—is a subordinate command to the NATO Training



US Navy, MCS2 David Quillen

**BG David W. Allvin, commanding general, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, NATO Air Training Command- Afghanistan, left, BG Michael Boera, commanding general Combined Air Power Transition Force, LTG Gilmary Hostage, commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command, Southwest Asia, and LTG William B. Caldwell, commanding general, NATO Training Mission and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, stand at attention for the national anthems of Afghanistan and the United States during the change of command ceremony between Boera and Allvin held on the Afghan Air Force base in Kabul, 7 September 2010.**



Mission, Afghanistan and the Combined Security Transition Command, Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A), commanded by Lieutenant General William Caldwell, IV. The NATO Air Training Command is a coalition advisory team that works with the Afghanistan Air Force (AAF) and other national security institutions as a catalyst to rebuild national aviation capabilities. Members of NATC have observed the value of a specific kind of “symmetry” in waging a COIN campaign. In this article, we set forth two perspectives from which this kind of symmetry helps Afghanistan. One is the pursuit of military effectiveness, and the second is the larger effort to restore social order. These perspectives should shape the current approach to COIN warfare, particularly in generating security forces. They are integral to the success of the 46-nation coalition that is trying to restore order and peace to Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup>

## Military Perspective

The case for military effectiveness is a fundamental perspective to address because generating capable, sufficiently large, and competent Afghan security forces is the NTM-A/CSTC-A's main effort. In building these security forces, striking a balance between COIN and conventional capability is important. COIN doctrine possesses a specific understanding of asymmetry. In this setting, “symmetry” has a pejorative context, so we have to distinguish the kind of symmetry we are advocating. Like Lieutenant General Lamb, we do not call into question the utility of indirect methods or engaging the population, the cornerstone of our current COIN doctrine. Nor do we dispute that unique, unpredictable measures are required to fight insurgents here. The coalition is not fighting a conventionally equipped enemy in Afghanistan whose equipment and tactics mirror our own. An

approach that uses symmetry to engage asymmetry does not ignore asymmetric advantages and disadvantages.

**Symmetry and order.** Instead, this approach equates symmetry with order, and prioritizes it as a precondition for military success. Before Afghanistan's internal security forces can employ effective “irregular” tactics, they need a strong foundation of basic and advanced military competency. To construct this competency, we must follow a building-block approach of consistent training, reinforced at every step with detailed instructor feedback and documented with a written record of performance. Although it may seem obvious to anyone who has participated in military training, this structured approach constitutes an indispensable symmetry in the pursuit of COIN capability.

The former ISAF commander, General Stanley McChrystal, described the building of COIN capabilities within the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) as imperative “so that Afghans themselves can assume greater responsibility over the security of their country.”<sup>12</sup> Afghan aviation, elementary though it is now, provides proficient battlefield mobility and promises to grow into a robust system able to transport Afghanistan's infantry-centric COIN forces to fight at the right time and place. The Afghan Air Force can reliably provide medical airlift capability for wounded soldiers and police, and in January 2010 demonstrated its ability to control rotary wing attack assets with newly minted forward observers. On 13 February 2010, the air force conducted its first operational air assault mission.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of these successes, we must be relentless in our pursuit of airlift, aero-medical evacuation, and close air support capabilities—they are the heart of COIN-centric air power. However, to be effective, our basic methods will be neither unconventional nor creatively novel. On the contrary, they will exhibit a great deal of conventional order and symmetry.

**Aviation capacity development.** It is worth mentioning here that the ANSF includes more than just traditional military forces. In Afghanistan, the effort to build effective police forces is at least as important as the effort to create military capacity. The need for police forces capable of conducting

***Before Afghanistan's internal security forces can employ effective “irregular” tactics, they need a strong foundation of basic and advanced military competency.***

operations in the style of light infantry, for example, has made the European Gendarmerie Force a model of choice for the development of civil-order police in Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> The government of Afghanistan is so enthusiastic about the concept that it has changed the name of the erstwhile “Afghan National Civil Order Police” to the “Afghan Gendarmerie Force.”

Coalition aviators, likewise, make contributions to air policing. In addition to building COIN capacity among the Afghan airmen who operate and support the fixed-wing and rotary-wing fleets, NATC personnel help develop the aircrew of a rotary-wing aerial interdiction squadron in the Ministry of the Interior’s Counter-Narcotics Division.

Regardless of the category (military or police) of the aviation forces, analyses using “mission, enemy, terrain/weather, troops/support, time available, and civil considerations” (METT-TC) inevitably causes concern when one considers the “troops” (or “airmen”). Often, these concerns focus on the training these aviators have received.

In all militaries, aviation training is a complicated endeavor. Basic pilot training alone takes at least a year, and advanced courses to make operators tactically proficient must follow the initial training. Additionally, aviation’s common language is English, and Afghanistan’s flyers must be proficient before they can continue flight training. This requirement often adds a year of intensive language training to the time investment, but it is essential that pilots conform to the International Civil Aviation Organization standards, which stipulate operations in English. Further, age imbalances in the Afghan Air Force’s demographic makeup mean that it will be decades before Afghanistan has a self-sustaining pilot training pipeline.<sup>15</sup>

In sum, investment in aviation capability requires a long-term vision. Before NATC’s involvement as a bridging force for the air force, training was almost non-existent. Afghanistan’s limited aviation capability was cobbled together from surviving remnants of the last decade of



U.S. Air Force, SSgt Sarah Brown

LTG William B. Caldwell, IV, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan commander (center), and Afghan Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak, Minister of Defense, watch an Afghan Air Force pilot candidate use a rotary wing simulator at the Thunder Lab in Afghanistan, 10 August 2010. The Thunder Lab is an English immersion course that teaches new Afghan lieutenants about Western culture, leadership development, and aviation operations in preparation for their pilot training.

civil war. To its leaders, dedicating platforms and flight hours to training missions seemed irresponsible. Yet, without this short-term sacrifice, the overall system will stagnate, withering when Afghanistan's already-aged operators can no longer fly.<sup>16</sup> Emphasis on long-term goals and the need for replacement training is a form of symmetry that NATC contributes. We must graft the structure required to instill a long-term view onto Afghanistan's military organization through external advisors and give it time to take root. Building meaningful training structures requires patience on the part of NATO allies and relies on a consistent, symmetric approach applied over many years.

**Command and control.** The need for patience in applying a consistent mentoring approach is important to every commander charged with building Afghan security forces, and it grows in importance with the level of complexity. Just as it takes decades for a soldier to progress from basic infantryman to a *kandak* (battalion) commander to a general capable of commanding a corps, the development of meaningful institutional command and control processes takes time. One of NATC's biggest challenges on this front is developing effective command and control for Afghan air power. The Afghan Air Force must clear this final hurdle if it is to take full responsibility for internal air power-based security.

To help instill this form of symmetry, NATC works diligently to train Afghan Air Force personnel and expose them to effective types of aviation command and control. The current favored mode of controlling aviation assets here is something we call "cell phone command and control." This is a practice during which senior commanders make allocation and apportionment decisions at the last minute, asserting authority by giving orders into a handset. Part of the reason for this institutional habit is Afghanistan's previous use of a Soviet model of

highly centralized control. Soviet command and control in the 1980s was far from using "mission command" as a foundational principle, and the lack of initiative among tactical commanders brought up under that system is striking.<sup>17</sup>

The problem is not purely cultural, however. Afghan's cell phone command and control reflects a tendency for technological "reach back" to become "reach forward" by higher headquarters, a problem experienced by the U.S. Air Force in the opening years of Operation Enduring Freedom and with which all modern air forces continually struggle.<sup>18</sup> It is not just cell phones that increase the temptation to centralize all aspects of air power command and control; the modern air operations center has the same effect.<sup>19</sup>

Cell phone command and control works passably for a tiny fleet of airplanes—and complements Afghanistan's traditional culture of patriarchal, centralized decision making, but it will fail as air power capacity expands. To help facilitate the ANAAC's development of effective command and control, NATC has helped establish an air corps command center. The nascent capabilities of this organization have begun to interface with the larger allied air operations controlled by the ISAF Joint Operations Center at Kabul International Airport. As Afghan air presence increases, the interface will grow larger, until Afghanistan is ready to take control of all its airspace and all of the air power employed here.

**Leadership development.** In helping the Afghan Air Force develop these capabilities, we expose its leadership to NATO's best air power command and control organizations to demonstrate the practices to run the extensive network of coalition air power arrayed over Afghanistan. In a recent example, Brigadier General Abdul Wahab Wardak, the Afghan Air Force chief of staff, and Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Tahir, deputy chief of air plans for the Afghan Ministry

***Cell phone command and control works passably for a tiny fleet of airplanes—and complements Afghanistan's traditional culture of patriarchal, centralized decision-making, but it will fail as air power capacity expands.***



of Defense, joined members of NATC for a tour of several organizations that operate at Bagram Air Base. Major General Curtis Scaparrotti, the Combined Joint Task Force 82 commander, and Brigadier General Steven Kwast, the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, sponsored the trip as a way of increasing cooperation between Bagram units and the Afghan people they support.

Follow-on training opportunities have centered on helicopter training with the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade and aero-medical evacuation training with the 455th Aero-Medical Evacuation Squadron. Both operations allow our Afghan counterparts to see effective command and control being practiced on a large scale. Tangible evidence of success in this area came when the Afghan Air Force made the decision to send more helicopters from Kabul to Kandahar to support operations in southern Afghanistan. The move was coordinated at a national level and was not a last-minute agreement between regional commanders.<sup>20</sup>

Imparting a long time horizon for training and instilling a command and control vision in the Afghan Air Force are but two examples of needed symmetry in Afghanistan's military forces that NATC fills. While the need for symmetry is easily evident in developing basic military capability, a broader goal in Afghanistan is that the growth of symmetry in the military will have a far-reaching effect on the society it protects. This is a much more ambitious goal, but it is a tacit assumption in the strategy that has made growth of Afghan security forces the NTM-A/CSTC-A's top priority.

## Societal Perspective

The value of symmetry in NATO's Afghan COIN efforts appears in a second, societal frame of reference. Two facets of it—the osmosis of military order into a society and the ways a society perceives attempts to imbue it with order—reveal a deep appreciation of symmetry's benefits.

Consider first the value of military structure and discipline in a civilization. Simply having structured systems in place may be helpful for military efficiency, but the ideals that make militaries work can also form a foundation upon which societies stand. Samuel Huntington paid homage to the professionalism of a modern officer corps in his classic work *The Soldier and the*

*State*. In his depiction of the order and symmetry of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he rhapsodized about how military structure can bolster the society it exists to protect: “On the military reservation the other side of the South Gate, however, exists a different world. There is ordered serenity. The parts do not exist on their own, but accept their subordination to the whole . . . The post is suffused with the rhythm and harmony which comes when collective will supplants individual whim.”<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the order of West Point, the chaotic streets of today's Kabul are an apt metaphor for Afghanistan's corruption, the country's most pressing problem in many public officials' estimates. Corruption begins at an individual level with a “get-mine-first” attitude that values short-term personal gain over long-term social stability. Endemic corruption surfaces in all of the nation's institutions, and the Afghan Air Force is no exception. In the context of military training and operations, NATC advisors stress to their Afghan Air Force partners the importance of rejecting theft, graft, and bribery in building an effective organization.

The idea of “stamping out corruption” is not in itself an effective strategy, however. Of greater importance to NATC is helping Afghan military leaders build transparent institutions. As individual members of the Afghan Air Force see their organization reward high performance and promote based on capability and effort rather than tribal ties or family connections, their concept of national service will change. Although reducing and eliminating corruption is an unavoidable step, the development and reinforcement of similar values that percolate back into Afghan society is a prerequisite for building a sustainable ANSF. More recent civil-military relations literature has argued the specific point that military norms facilitate the growth of functioning democracies, and there is reason that effective military discipline can directly reinforce Afghanistan's new experiment with openly elected government.<sup>22</sup>

Still, using military structure alone as a blunt instrument with which to reshape a whole society is too simplistic. The imposed structure must accommodate the society, even as it hopes to rehabilitate it. By way of analogy, consider the example of “broken windows” policing techniques, which aim to tackle minor neighborhood disorder before it



U.S. Air Force, Ssgt Sarah Brown

**Afghan children play near the base of a mountain-top cave overlooking the city of Kandahar, 2 June 2010. The overlook is also the site of an Afghan National Army remote outpost.**

blossoms into serious crime.<sup>23</sup> Many Americans associate these methods with former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his first police commissioner, William Bratton.<sup>24</sup> Reputable studies have validated the success of “broken windows” techniques.<sup>25</sup>

The overall effort to grow the ANSF has parallels to “broken windows” policing. Above all, it is an attempt to create order in the face of chaos. The commitment of the international community reflects its confidence that the Afghan people can secure their own future under an initial umbrella of enhanced protection, just as a neighborhood free from thuggish behavior can reverse a tide of crime after a few months. Studies differentiating effective policing techniques from those that merely increase fear in the minds of residents point to the care with which we must administer those programs. Successful programs make it clear to innocent residents that the increased patrols and enforcement are targeting crime, not them.<sup>26</sup>

Our challenge is similar in Afghanistan. Despite the best coalition intentions, efforts amount

to naught if the people we aim to help do not perceive our involvement favorably. Unless the structures and techniques we offer to the ANSF are appropriate for this environment, coalition presence becomes a burden rather than a balm. NATC and other commands that operate under the NTM-A/CSTC-A have captured this idea in the phrase “listen to the mountains.”<sup>27</sup> Borrowed from the school-building mountaineer Greg Mortenson, the slogan reminds us that we cannot attempt to build a military for Afghanistan that is a replica of Western militaries or we will isolate the very people we are trying to help.

As an example, Afghanistan is nowhere near the U.S. military in its information technology (IT) capability, but it has a very robust human intelligence capability, one that is better than those of most Western countries. Trying to saddle the Afghan Air Force with an IT-intensive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance system like that of the U.S. Air Force would not only overwhelm this society, but also distract the force from effectively employing a capability that it now enjoys. Coalition “assistance” would be perceived as—and

would *be*—unhelpful meddling, not the useful symmetry that we can provide as advisors with a constant awareness of what is appropriate for our Afghan partners.

In contrast, air power that is appropriate is the airlift support that enables national elections. In August 2009, Mi-17 helicopters flew to all parts of Afghanistan, including areas inaccessible by road or any other kind of aircraft, to deliver official ballots. This is a perfect example of how NATC's efforts create a basic military competency—the ability to fly to isolated areas—while at the same time enabling democracy. Similar synergy will come from Afghan Air Force recruiting efforts. Those who choose to serve their country as pilots, gunners, and aircraft maintainers—"Eagles for Afghanistan"—will continue to build military capability.<sup>28</sup> Even greater, however, will be the effect on thousands of schoolchildren, buoyed by the concept that diligent study can lead them to a career in their nation's own advanced air force. There is no better way to combat

the asymmetric challenge of the extremist *madrassa* than by expanding opportunities and motivation for the symmetry of a modern education.

## Maintenance of Symmetry

The examples above show how improving the Afghan Air Force's military capabilities can benefit Afghan society. In the act of rebuilding the national ministries, military institutions, and unit capabilities, the presence and maintenance of symmetry offers hope to a war-torn country. "In order," Huntington wrote, "is found peace; in discipline, fulfillment; in community, security."<sup>29</sup> General McChrystal defined the pursuit of order in Afghanistan as ISAF's main effort. NATC, proceeding on its urgent mission to equip Afghanistan with enduring air power capacity, shares the same vision. In modeling discipline and symmetry to the aviators with whom we interact, we are confident that the people of Afghanistan possess the ability to defeat the myriad asymmetric challenges arrayed against their society. **MR**

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# Mexico

## Failing State or Emerging Democracy?

Major Juan P. Nava, U.S. Army

**I**N JANUARY 2009, the retiring director of the Central Intelligence Agency, General Michael Hayden, described the increasing violence in Mexico along the nearly 2,000-mile long U.S. southern border as greater than Iraq and on par with Iran as the greatest potential threat to U.S. national security in the future.<sup>1</sup> *The Joint Operational Environment, 2008*, a study authored by the U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), said either Mexico or Pakistan were “worst case scenarios” for U.S. national security should either nation rapidly fail or collapse.<sup>2</sup>

### Tension on the Border

Violent deaths in Mexico nearly doubled in 2009 to just over 7,000, and the manner of death in some cases was especially gruesome.<sup>3</sup> Reports of brutality and emerging accounts of government corruption add to the negative popular perception of Mexico in the United States. Mexico appears capable of becoming a failed state where a destabilizing insurgency could potentially thrive.<sup>4</sup>

In March 2010, drug cartel gunmen assassinated U.S. consulate staff employees and their spouses in the presence of their children in the middle of the day as they left a consulate social event.<sup>5</sup> In response, the U.S. Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security joined the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence to conduct an impromptu cabinet-level visit with their Mexican counterparts to strengthen relationships and to ascertain how best to support the Mexican government’s struggle with illicit drug organizations.

United States experts on Mexico and Latin America identify weaknesses in specific areas, but they clearly articulate exceptional strengths in others. For example, in her *Foreign Affairs* article, “The Real War in Mexico,” Shannon O’Neil, the director of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force on U.S. Policy for Latin America, declares that Mexico will not fail. Citing Mexico’s ability to meet the essential needs of its populace, hold free and fair elections, and exercise civilian political control of the military, O’Neil recommends that the United States recognize

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PHOTO: Special forces soldiers stand in front of a Mexican flag during a ceremony marking the second anniversary of the death of fallen soldier Angel Guadalupe Aguilar Villatoro in Tijuana, 15 October 2010. Aguilar Villatoro was killed during a shootout with gunmen in that border city. (AP Photo/Guillermo Arias)

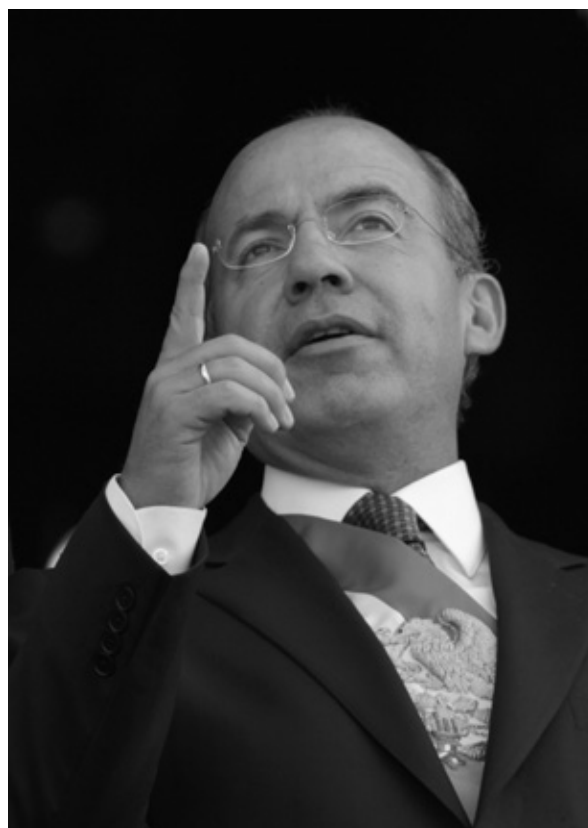
Mexico as “a permanent strategic partner, rather than an often-forgotten neighbor.”<sup>6</sup> Many of O’Neil’s comments reflect the tensions between the two nations as artifacts of a long history of cooperation, competition and compromise, while significant amounts of literature, largely written by Mexican authors, plead for the United States to understand the conflicted relationship between the two nations.<sup>7</sup>

Is the increased cross-border criminal violence in Mexico evidence of impending state failure, or is it merely an unintended side effect of democratization? O’Neil claims that the current high level of violence reflects “an unintended side effect of democratization and economic globalization,” and not a signal for the eventual failure of Mexico as a nation-state.

The narco-criminal violence along the U.S.-Mexico border and within Mexico is the reaction of criminal organizations to President Calderón’s aggressive and intensifying counter-narcotic policies. Elected as an anti-corruption conservative, President Calderón continues to pursue policies that represent the will of the people expressed in free and fair elections. The voters chose from among multiple viable competing political parties, including one that reigned in Mexico for nearly seven decades. The empirical evidence, whether of an emerging democracy or of a declining nation-state, indicates that Mexico retains national durability and strength despite significant economic challenges that include a deteriorating security situation in some areas.

In *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, Robert Rotberg of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University posits that states are strong or weak “according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods.”<sup>8</sup> In hierarchical order, Rotberg’s criteria for determining the strength or weakness of states include the provision of security, the uniform application of the rule of law, the ability of the populace to participate in free and fair elections with the tolerance of divergent positions, and the provision of essential services such as education and medical aid.<sup>9</sup> The level at which states provide these political goods determines their “strength” or relative durability.

Assessing the presence of or lack of democracy highlights Samuel Huntington’s concepts of political modernization and adaptability as a



(AP Photo/Marco Ugarte)

**Mexico’s President Felipe Calderon attends a parade commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution in Mexico City’s Zócalo Plaza, 20 November 2010.**

rationalization of authority and the increased participation in politics of social groups throughout society.<sup>10</sup>

For seven decades since 1929, Mexican politics were dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI. Mexican politics largely resembled the subliminally oppressive conditions described by Marina Ottaway in *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Mexico endured what Samuel Huntington described as a one-party authoritarian regime whose success came from the consistent rotation of new leaders from conservative to progressive and back.<sup>12</sup> Huntington asserts that this rotation provided stability as tempered ambitions kept potential political opponents in line.

The center-right National Action Party, or PAN, established with the help of the very influential Roman Catholic Church, leveraged Mexican distrust for the PRI and campaigned for social and economic reform. The move towards the center-right reflected a resurgence of conservatism, both social and

economic, intended to thwart deteriorating security conditions. President Vincente Fox's election legitimized a multi-party at the national level. Mexico finally emerged as a truly democratic polity. The election exemplified what Huntington described as the central procedure of democracy, "the election of leaders through competitive election by the people governed."<sup>13</sup>

In the meantime, the United States focused on international terrorism after the September 11 attacks. It did not help that Fox openly disagreed with U.S. foreign policy and the war in Iraq. The United States did not put much effort or resources on the counter-narcotic strategic partnership with Mexico until the Merida Initiative became law in June of 2008. The Merida Initiative established a multi-year program with heavy investment in counter-drug forces, especially in Mexico. Congress approved funds targeted to support Mexico in its struggle against illegal drug organizations.<sup>14</sup> The United States held up recent payments because of alleged Mexican human rights violations, but resumed them once Secretary of State Hillary Clinton certified that human rights conditions met "acceptable" standards.<sup>15</sup>

Felipe Calderón took office in 2006 despite a disputed election fraught with claims of irregularities and alleged voter fraud.<sup>16</sup> Calderón vowed to win the war against drug trafficking and drug cartels and deployed over 35,000 Mexican Armed Forces troops to combat a threat to Mexican national stability.<sup>17</sup> The deployments placed tremendous strain on the Mexican military, which bears the burden of eradication, interdiction, and law enforcement operations while the Mexican Federal Police undergo reforms to reduce corruption and dysfunction.<sup>18</sup> The Mexican Army continues to enjoy the confidence of the population, but military operations, while marginally successful against the powerful drug cartels, have failed to change the tolerant mindset the disenfranchised and desperately poor have about illicit activities such as the drug trade.<sup>19</sup>

***Calderón declared war on drug trafficking and drug cartels...***

## **Security: The "Prime Function"**

Robert Rotberg identifies security as the primary political good that any government must provide to its people, calling it the state's "prime function."<sup>20</sup>

He defines security as the means to—

prevent cross-border invasions and infiltrations, and any loss of territory; to eliminate domestic threats to or attacks upon the national order and social structure; to prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security; and to enable citizens to resolve their differences with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion.<sup>21</sup>

By this definition, the sharp rise in criminal violence in the northern regions of Mexico and the border states of the United States indicates declining security conditions due to gangs, cross-border crime (i.e. smuggling, kidnapping, etc.), and transnational terrorism.

Often using mercenary paramilitary forces, competing drug cartels are waging a "narco-insurgency" on a national scale in large portions of rural Mexico's populated areas.<sup>22</sup> Motivated by greed, these opportunistic organizations take advantage of society's devolution into poverty by inserting large criminal systems that defy judicial authority. Elevated rates of recidivism reveal minimal deterrence of crime.<sup>23</sup> Declining social conditions indicate proxy governance by narco-criminal elements, at least at the regional or state level. These cartels have no interest in providing any essential services required by the people.

Gangs like Los Zetas are also a formidable paramilitary force threatening the stability of Mexico. They produce violent transnational terrorism and export it to the United States.<sup>24</sup> Los Zetas takes its name from the federal police radio code for the force pursuing Arturo Guzman Decenas, a lieutenant in the elite Army Airborne Special Forces Group, who deserted the Mexican military to protect the then-leader of the Gulf drug cartel, Osiel Cardenas Guillen.<sup>25</sup> Guzman and 30 commandos who joined in the desertion had received exceptional training from European nations, Israel, and U.S. Army Special Forces, making them superior to the federal police and the average Mexican soldier.<sup>26</sup> Better equipped





**Rubén Barragán Monterrubí, alias “El Montes,” is presented to the press at federal police headquarters in Mexico City, 2 December 2010. Accused of drug trafficking from Panama and the Dominican Republic to the United States, Barragán is an alleged member of the criminal organization, Los Zetas.**

and armed, the Zeta gang has access to large caliber automatic weapons, surface-to-air missiles, and high-tech communications equipment, while Mexican security forces have only austere capabilities.<sup>27</sup>

The Mexican Federal Police and the Mexican Army killed or arrested many of the original 31 Zetas, but younger, less well-trained members fill the gap. The gang employs ex-Kaibiles, elite Guatemalan Special Forces, to improve member training on tactics and weapons.<sup>28</sup> Their expertise in counterinsurgency tactics provide a kinetic advantage to the ruthless younger generation of Zetas, also known as “The New Zetas,” or “Nuevo Zetas.” With training bases across Mexico and Guatemala, the Nuevo Zetas proliferate nationally and internationally.<sup>29</sup>

The primary systemic weakness of Mexico is its inability to keep its citizens secure and exercise its authority over its sovereign territories. Nikos Passas, professor of criminology at Northeastern University, defines cross-border crime as “conduct

which jeopardizes the legally protected interests in more than one national jurisdiction and which is criminalized in at least one of the states/jurisdictions concerned.”<sup>30</sup> In describing this phenomenon, Passas includes terrorism along with the emerging crimes brought on by globalization.

We can discuss the metrics of troop/police deployments and mathematically measure murders, attacks, and other violence, but we cannot measure the psychological phenomenon. Do the people feel secure? Bruce Schneier, a leading expert on security, in his essay, “The Psychology of Security,” says there is a difference between feeling secure and actually being secure.<sup>31</sup> Polling conducted by Gallup Consulting in February 2009 indicated that Mexicans increasingly felt less secure.<sup>32</sup> Polling by MUND Americas in Mexico City also confirms this from a Mexican source.<sup>33</sup> Although most Mexicans have a highly unfavorable view of the cartels, they see their government as unable to do anything about them or illegal narcotic activity.

Those who believe that Mexico will fail argue that President Calderón's current counter-drug strategy actually triggered the displacement of malign actors throughout Mexico by aggravating the narcotics organizations. They contend Calderón caused the current eruption of violence because the displaced criminals are seeking to reestablish their operations, influence, and status. They now spread their illicit organizations into more remote ungoverned spaces, taking advantage of Mexico's porous northern border. They are also forming cross-border relationships with powerful drug networks in South America and distributors and "down-flow" actors supplying the high-demand U.S. market.<sup>34</sup> Elaborate "third-generation" gang networks—which Max Manwaring, professor of military strategy at the U.S. Army War College, calls transnational criminal organizations—distribute, market, and sell illegal narcotics and export violence and intimidation as Mexican cartel satellites.<sup>35</sup>

Peter Andreas addresses the complex border security issue and the "loss-of-control narrative" in

*Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide*. He writes, "The stress on loss of control understates the degree to which the state has actually structured, conditioned, and even enabled (often unintentionally) clandestine border crossings, and overstates the degree to which the state has been able to control its borders in the past."<sup>36</sup>

Mexico's disproportionate distribution of wealth, high unemployment rate, and slow rate of growth of its gross domestic product are potential sources of instability.<sup>37</sup> Approximately 18 percent of Mexicans live in poverty in terms of access to food, while 47 percent live in poverty with respect to financial assets. Mexican citizens continue to look north for financial support and opportunity.<sup>38</sup> Although poverty does not cause people to engage in illicit activity, it helps explain why Mexican officials are apathetic about securing the northern border.

In summary, the Mexican state appears headed for further erosion, a general lack of security, an apathetic electorate, and weakening economic and government institutions. Mexico joins a community



U.S. Air Force, Master Sgt. Jerry Morrison

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during a recent visit in Mexico City, Mexico, 23 March 2010. Secretary Gates along with Admiral Mullen and Secretary Clinton attended the Merida Initiative Plenary which focuses on helping the Mexican government fight drug-trafficking cartels and other security threats.

of nations, including the United States, with an ineffective sovereign border. The illicit community in Mexican society is hard to eliminate because it has tentacles that extend to legitimate businesses. The failure of Mexico to prevent, protect against, and prosecute crime threatens all citizens' security. Feelings of insecurity depress voter turnout, encourage political corruption, and discourage belief in democratic principles.

## State Strength

Mexico's primary strengths include a representative democracy capable of fair elections, an able and largely professionalized military/security force structure responsive to civilian authority, a judiciary that strives to implement the rule of law, and a stable economic infrastructure. Combined, these elements include aspects of each of Rotberg's "political goods" criteria for state strength.<sup>39</sup>

**Representative democracy.** Regarding a representative democracy capable of fair elections, Grayson articulates the intricate political maneuverings that achieve further differentiation and fractionalization of Mexican political parties.<sup>40</sup> However, this differentiation and fractionalization actually reflect symptoms of democratization inasmuch as they allow for the representation of diverging views without fear of retribution.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the development of the PAN—largely with the assistance of the Roman Catholic Church—and the subsequent election of Vicente Fox represented a desire by the Mexican people for a conservative-right, anti-corruption option with a renewed sense of hope for change. President Fox engendered an expanded economic globalization as well as anti-corruption initiatives intended to assuage the anger of those who elected him in 2000. The disputed elections of 2009, the representation of seven major political parties in the bicameral Mexican government, and openly contested local, provincial, and national level elections reflect both the necessary participatory elements of democratization and the essential political goods indicative of state strength.<sup>42</sup>

**Responsive security force.** As a capable and professional military/security force structure responsive to civilian constituted authority, the Mexican military has had a civil-military pact with the elected government of Mexico since the national rejection of post-revolutionary violence in

1946. Of the 20 Latin American nations, Mexico is the only one that did not suffer a military coup or takeover of government in the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> The Mexican military and security forces—branches of the executive branch of government with a long tradition of domestic stabilization and an early history of political power—enjoy the respect of the people, institutionally professionalize, and respond to the constituted authority of elected civilian leaders. Underequipped and out-sourced, these forces struggle to establish control and achieve the delicate balance between policing a state and becoming a police state.

**Rule of law.** As a function of a bilateral security agreement with the United States, Mexico now extradites wanted narco-criminals for prosecution and subsequent incarceration. Calderón's decision to extradite these criminals was a significant departure from a longstanding precedent and demonstrates his willingness to support the U.S. National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy "building on ongoing cooperation and integrating efforts launched through the Merida Initiative."<sup>44</sup> Calderón proved his commitment to strategic success against the cartels by going so far as to extradite Mexican citizens to the U.S. judicial system. He continues to articulate an increasingly aggressive stance against the drug cartels despite the growing apprehension of the Mexican people.

Yet, according to Associated Press writer Alexandra Olson, "Mexico City's homicide rate today is about on par with Los Angeles and is less than a third of that for Washington, D.C."<sup>45</sup> In the past 10 years, Mexico's murder rate actually decreased. In fact, the murder rate per 100,000 citizens of Mexico is one third of other Latin American countries like Guatemala or Venezuela and only half that of Colombia. In the most recent global statistics, Mexico had 2.4 percent of total crime in the world while the United States accounted for 18.6 percent. In terms of murder, Mexico ranks sixth in the world after India, Russia, Colombia, South Africa, and the United States.<sup>46</sup> Luis de la Barra of the Citizen's Institute for Insecurity states, "We are like those women who aren't overweight, but when they look in the mirror, they think they're fat. We are an unsafe country, but we think we are much more unsafe than we really are."<sup>47</sup>



**Economical infrastructure.** Mexico is number 105 of 177 on the Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace 2009 Failed State Index, rating better than nations such as Russia, Venezuela, China, Egypt, or Israel. (Using this index, the lower number a country rates, the more likely it is to become a failed state.)<sup>48</sup> When looking at the sub-areas studied within this index, Mexico appears in the best 33 percent of all measured nations regardless of the category, to include economic health, state legitimacy, public services, and the nation's security apparatus. Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace recognizes some improvement in Mexico in the past three years.<sup>49</sup>

Mexico has the 12th largest world economy in terms of gross domestic product and purchasing power parity—just ahead of Spain, South Korea, and Canada—and is the second largest trade partner—just ahead of China and just behind Canada to the United States.<sup>50</sup> The World Bank ranks Mexico as the second largest economy in Latin America, after Brazil.<sup>51</sup> With \$1.4 trillion in gross domestic product, Mexico's economy falls just shy of California in purchasing power. These figures only account for the licit economic measures within the country. These indicators also

support the argument that Mexico enjoys relative stability macro-economically. The Mexican economy demonstrates durability, diversity, and resiliency as the second largest trading partner to the United States. Largely due to the ongoing efforts at globalization and in no small part due to previous free-trade status with the United States, the Mexican economy will achieve growth on pace or ahead of the United States. Wealth distribution inequities in Mexican society continue to produce internal tensions, but do not represent a threat to national economic progress.

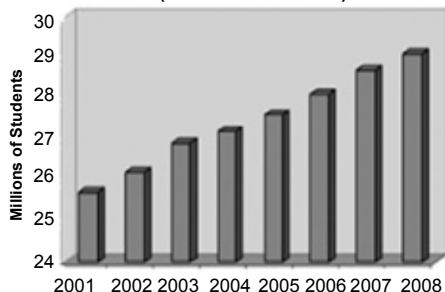
Concerning the delivery of other political goods and essential services, Mexico has improved in public education enrollment and overall health services. To address U.S. concerns about the strength and status of Mexico, the Mexican ambassador presented U.S. government officials a briefing entitled "Mexico and the Fight Against Drug-Trafficking and Organized Crime: Setting the Record Straight" in March of 2009 to illustrate Mexico's continued success in providing essential services to its people (see Figure 1).<sup>52</sup> The left side of the figure indicates the increased school enrollment of Mexican youth, while the graph on the right compares the life expectancy increase trend to the decreasing infant mortality rate.

## Failed State?

By all significant measures, Mexico has a functioning state. It does face major challenges in many issue areas, but the Mexican government has a clear and firm commitment to address them.

Mexico provides public education to almost 30 million people...

**MEXICO: PUBLIC EDUCATION ENROLLMENT**  
(millions of students)



Source: Ministry of Education

...and has experienced a steady improvement in health indicators

**MEXICO: HEALTH INDICATORS**



Source: INEGI

**Figure 1. Mexican public education and health indicators.**

**Reformed politics.** The Mexican political system reformed in 1989 at the end of what Huntington refers to as the “Third Wave of Democratization.”<sup>53</sup> The evolution of Mexican politics from a single-party system stemmed from electoral reforms that started in 1988 and involved the transparent financing of political parties.<sup>54</sup> In October of 1990, Mexico created the Federal Electoral Institute.<sup>55</sup> Theoretically, this oversight organization created the freeness and fairness necessary to achieve democratization. The institute is “in charge of organizing federal elections, that is, the election of President of the United Mexican States and Lower and Upper Chamber members that constitute the Union Congress.”<sup>56</sup>

The recent responsiveness of politicians in Mexico to the influences within the political environment, notably the electoral reformations, oversight institutions, emergence of national political parties, and social/religious actors, represents Mexican political adaptability. This adaptability reflects an evolution toward “political modernization.”<sup>57</sup> Fair elections are the most obvious advancement in the democratization process. Political leaders answerable to the population are the driving power behind President Calderón’s fight against the drug cartels.

## Opportunities for the Future

Mexico currently lacks the ability to prevent border infiltration, struggles to neutralize or eliminate the domestic criminal threat to its social structure, and cannot prevent violent crimes that endanger the security of many Mexicans. However, Mexican citizens can access the judicial system without threat of government reprisal. The Mexican judicial system enables citizens to resolve their differences without retribution or intimidation. Consistent with Rotberg’s concept of “predictable, recognizable, systematized methods of adjudicating disputes,” and enhanced by extradition to the U.S. judiciary, the Mexican judicial system continues to enforce a rule of law as an embodiment of the values of the people.<sup>58</sup>

Drug cartels permeate Mexican society with expanded international networks. The cartels operate among the Mexican people, but the people still regard the cartels negatively and try to rid society of opportunistic criminals. The violence

***The violence associated with drug crime in Mexico does not reflect an insurgency movement.***

associated with drug crime in Mexico does not reflect an insurgency movement.

Violence will likely increase as a reformist president stirs up proverbial hornets nests in certain regions of Mexico. Calderón’s “clear-hold-build” strategy continues to achieve results on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border, both in terms of captured or eliminated cartel members and in increased and successful prosecutions of narco-criminals, especially in the United States. Metrics of Calderón’s success or failure do not include the number of those killed in drug related crime. Rather, more appropriately, President Calderón’s measurement of success centers on his ability to convince both the Mexican people and the international community that his aggressive efforts will achieve a stable and secure environment within a highly competitive new media information environment rife with counter-messaging of instability, violence, and potential state failure.

Calderón’s close election demonstrated the cartels’ political strength as they strove to re-acquire positions of power within government. Calderón exerted even more pressure on the cartels after the election. This pressure caused cartels to react with both increased number and ferocity of attacks on citizens, police, soldiers, judges, and politicians.

Even though U.S. media, especially those from the border regions, used the spectacular nature of the deaths to agitate the U.S. citizenry to the point of contemplating Mexico as a failed state, Mexico exhibits all the necessary traits of a young and struggling democracy. However, without significant support, it could easily fall back into semi-authoritarian practices that would embolden and further enable cartels to operate beyond the influence of the Mexican government. However, a return to a semi-authoritarian or even an authoritarian government does not mean the state will fail.



U.S. Army, SFC Class Jon Soucy

**Army MG Peter Aylward, center, speaks with Arizona Army National Guard soldiers near Nogales, AZ, while visiting troops serving along the southwest border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents, 13 September 2010.**

Over 400 cases of corruption within U.S. agencies have originated from the southwest border.<sup>59</sup> These officials, possibly beholden to Mexican cartels, stand accountable for their own actions. Likewise, the market for illegal drugs stems from a prevalent U.S. hunger for illegal substances. Most of the weapons used in narco-violence originate from the United States. Still, American citizens living in Washington, D.C., statistically and proportionately, are more likely to die from murder than a Mexican citizen.

The ongoing drug-related violence in the northern regions of Mexico and the southwest border regions of the United States indicate Mexican state weakness in the area of security, but falls well short of indicating that Mexico will fail. The violence epitomizes the will of the people carried out by a democratically elected government against the cartels. As the government continues to conduct aggressive counterdrug operations on behalf of the Mexican people, this violence will

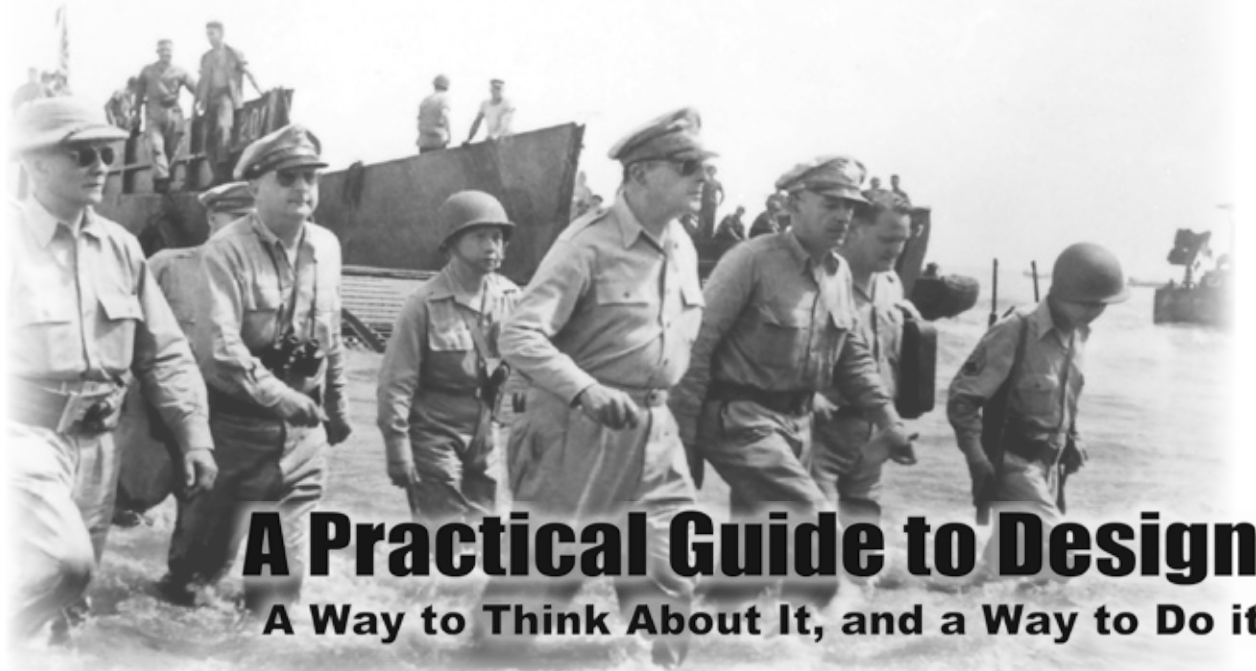
also continue. Rather than representing a fragile or failing state, the current security conditions in Mexico are an opportunity for Mexico to become a strong democracy, a strategic regional partner, and an important economic ally to the United States. The amount of violence only indicates the amount of neglect and disregard for cartel proliferation during previous Mexican administrations.

Returning to Rotberg's criteria for determining the strengths of states based upon their ability to provide political goods, we can say that while Mexico struggles to provide security in large areas of the country, it does apply the rule of law, enables its citizens to participate in free and fair elections, and provides essential services to the population. It faces significant economic challenges, an ongoing struggle with transnational organized criminal organizations, and increasing voter apathy, but Mexico will not fail. To believe otherwise is to be myopic or biased, or fail to understand the real Mexico. **MR**



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# A Practical Guide to Design

## A Way to Think About It, and a Way to Do it

Lieutenant Colonel Celestino Perez, Jr., Ph.D., U.S. Army

**M**ILITARY COMMAND IS difficult. This difficulty arises in part because the commander's operational environment renders near-complete understanding and prediction impossible. Yet understanding and prediction *of a kind* are necessary. Since the commander's lethal and cooperative work occurs in a socio-political and ethical context, he must understand a complex mix of military and nonmilitary factors and visualize how his units' and other actors' interventions will play out. It follows that commanders face the same challenges that vexed political theorists from Socrates to Machiavelli to Marx and statesmen from Caesar to Madison to Obama. Military commanders, like political theorists and statesmen, need political judgment to interpret and intervene in the world.<sup>1</sup>

### The Challenge of Prediction

Commanders' orders are based on interpretations and predictions.<sup>2</sup> Field manuals, operations orders, and commanders' decisions contain embedded hunches about the world and about causes and effects. For instance, (a) *if* my soldiers live among the population, and (b) *if* my soldiers "partner" with host-nation forces and attack irreconcilable extremists, and (c) *if* my interagency partners and I visit regularly with key leaders, and (d) *if* my troopers help build schools, *then* villagers will support the local government instead of the insurgency. These informed hunches about the future are *if-then* hypotheses based on the commander's interpretation of the environment. Of course, these hypotheses and interpretations are fallible.

The challenge of prediction in human affairs has always plagued philosophers, political scientists, and statesmen. Their predictions have been notoriously unreliable.<sup>3</sup> Socio-political phenomena, which include wars, are not susceptible to simple cause-effect analysis. Causes and effects in human affairs are tangled, multi-causal, multi-directional, and contingent.<sup>4</sup> Success depends partially on humility amidst the contingency that suffuses the dynamics of socio-political

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PHOTO: General Douglas MacArthur wades ashore at Leyte, Philippine Islands, 1944. (U.S. Army)

affairs. Satisfactory “end states” seldom take the form predicted or initially desired.<sup>5</sup> A commander knows that—despite his best efforts—his interpretive and predictive judgment will have significant gaps and errors.

A good commander embraces and accounts for his fallibility. If surprise is possible during a battalion’s attack against a tank platoon in a remote battlefield, how much more likely is it to occur when a field commander directs attacks against multiple enemies and amidst a heterogeneous population, a fragile host-nation government, a precarious coalition, and a maze of bureaucracies and independent organizations? Commanders used to speak in terms of “getting into the enemy’s decision cycle.” The relevant number of decision cycles the commander now must consider has vastly increased.<sup>6</sup>

The Army’s approach to Design provides commanders with a way to think about the dynamic factors at play in a world of irregularities, surprises, and fleeting opportunities. Below, I describe how commanders may use doctrinal Design to do the

conceptual work of understanding, visualization, and description. Design exploits the talents of the staff (among others) to help commanders answer four fundamental questions relevant to any action. I next describe the ethos of Design in terms of eight leadership values, which I suggest are typified in the leadership style of General David Petraeus. Finally, I describe one way to do Design, which emphasizes collaboration, competition, and board work. This way is consistent with both doctrine and the approach put forth by the U.S. Army School for Advanced Military Studies.

## Understanding, Visualizing, and Describing

If the judgments of pundits are notoriously unreliable, their direct influence is also relatively inconsequential. However, military commanders exercise judgment, and their decisions carry direct consequences.<sup>7</sup> Commanders exercise judgment when performing the activities of understanding, visualizing, and describing. Commanders must understand their



**U.S. Army GEN David H. Petraeus, commander of International Security Assistance Force, presents a coin to SPC Vincent Contreras of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at Panjwai District Center in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, 7 October 2010. GEN Petraeus also presented a coin to each of the soldiers present at the ceremony commending their efforts in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.**



environment and the principal problem their units confront. They must visualize those overall conditions that compose a more desirable environment as well as those broad actions they will take with their troops, resources, speech, and relationships to nudge the environment toward an improved state of affairs.<sup>8</sup> Finally, they must describe the fruits of their understanding and visualization to superiors, subordinates, fellow commanders, nonmilitary persons, and several publics.

In some cases, commanders need nothing but thoughtful solitude to understand and visualize. As staffs focus on orders, commanders focus on the environment itself to create the contextual understanding and concepts that will frame their units' actions.<sup>9</sup> So long as staffs are competent at performing, say, the Joint Operation Planning Process or the Army's Military Decision Making Process, they will produce adequate orders in accordance with their commanders' visions that compose their planning guidance, intent, and operational approach.<sup>10</sup> Occasionally, commanders might invite staff personnel to sift ideas about planning details, but—on the whole—commanders feel competent to provide staff with adequate guidance and direction.

If, however, a commander desires help understanding and visualizing, Design becomes an option.<sup>11</sup> Commanders once “made their bones” fighting fictional Krasnovians on a remote battlefield. The focus was on the attack, the movement to contact, and the defense. Such single-minded focus is no longer possible.<sup>12</sup> Before, most commanders were concerned only with the “M” of the operational variables: political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time (PMESII-PT) and gave little thought to the “C” of METT-TC (the mission variables: mission,

enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations).<sup>13</sup> Now commanders must make sense of a dizzying array of acronyms and terms that represent very real factors. Troopers are still doing the attack, the movement to contact, and the defense, but they perform these missions “among the people” and amidst a volatile, contingent mix of socio-political and ethical factors.<sup>14</sup>

Military professionals describe this volatile mix of factors as being *ambiguous, complex, uncertain, and ill-structured*. When trouble appears, there is no consensus about what the fundamental problems are, how to solve them, what the desired “end state” should be, and whether an “end state” is achievable or not.<sup>15</sup> Now, suppose that no person can single-mindedly achieve adequate understanding of the contingent swirl of factors that compose such problems. Suppose, “many heads are better than one.” Suppose we come to fully appreciate the tragic possibility of rightly solving the wrong problem.<sup>16</sup> Might Design become an attractive option, albeit one without guarantees?

Design places the staff in the position to help a commander perform the activities of understanding, visualizing, and describing.<sup>17</sup> If a commander can exploit his staff officers' (and others') education, experiences, and ingenuity, his own thinking may improve; consequently, his planning guidance and commander's intent may improve.<sup>18</sup> *It follows that the Army's approach to Design does nothing more than give a bit of structure to those periodic conversations any commander has with his staff officers to improve his appreciation of the mission.* Of course, the practice of Design benefits from a multiplicity of perspectives, whether these come from military officers, scholars, interagency representatives, nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers, or indigenous persons.

***Design does nothing more than give a bit of structure to those periodic conversations any commander has with his staff officers ...the practice of Design benefits from a multiplicity of perspectives, whether these come from military officers, scholars, interagency representatives, nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers, or indigenous persons.***

The structure that Design imparts is straightforward. Design merely asks the commander and his thinking partners to maintain and revise provisional answers to four questions.<sup>19</sup> These questions seem to be fundamental to any human action, whether that action is buying a cup of coffee, “fixing Ramadi,” or planning a political campaign. The four questions follow.

**What is going on in the environment?** The answer to this question helps the commander “fill out” the first part of what Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process*, calls the *Environmental Frame*. This question prompts officers to capture “the history, culture, current state, and future goals of relevant actors in the operational environment.”<sup>20</sup> Officers should consider the tendencies, over time, of the various relationships between the actors and the environment as a whole. They should consider also various potential best-case, worst-case, and intermediate scenarios as the unit alters its degree of intervention in the environment over time from doing nothing to becoming fully committed.<sup>21</sup>

**What do we want the environment to look like?** The answer to this question helps the commander “fill out” the second part of the *Environmental Frame*, which is the “end state.” This question prompts staff officers to posit “a sought-after future state of the operational environment” in terms of a system of desirable conditions.<sup>22</sup> Guidance and directives from the next echelon of command will shape the end state as well; however, humility is in order. A military unit is unlikely to impose successfully an “end state” on an ever-changing world. A military unit is more likely to nudge reality—in cooperation with other socio-political actors—toward an improved state of affairs through lethal, nonlethal, and cooperative interventions at multiple points of potential opportunity.

**Where—conceptually—do we act to achieve our desired state?** The answer to this question helps the commander “fill out” the *Problem Frame*. This question prompts the commander and staff to prioritize where—conceptually—the unit must act to move closer to a desirable state of affairs. For instance, does the commander envision that the fundamental problem he faces is related to governance or population security? Or is the problem related to economic development or security-force training? Or must the unit act to mitigate corruption

or engender reconciliation with former enemies?<sup>23</sup> The group should make a special effort to identify those tensions between actors that the commander might exploit to his advantage; e.g., that tension between Sunni tribal leaders indigenous to Iraq and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) fighters that defined the Anbar Awakening in Iraq. How a commander chooses to understand or frame a problem will influence how he chooses to “solve” it.

**How do we act and speak in order to achieve our desired state?** The answer to this question helps the commander “fill out” the frame that FM 5-0 calls the *Operational Approach*.<sup>24</sup> This question prompts the commander and staff to explain, in broad terms, how the commander will employ his troops, resources, speech, and relationships to nudge the environment toward a more desirable state.

Answering the above questions does not constitute a sequential, four-step procedure. The questions can be answered neither sequentially nor with any sense of finality. A group will confront the four questions iteratively. A well-honed Design effort will approximate addressing the questions simultaneously.<sup>25</sup> Of course, the answers always remain provisional and open to revision because the commander’s understanding and visualization develop and change during planning and (especially) execution.

Design also entails the use of narratives and drawings.<sup>26</sup> For each question, the group communicates its answers in terms of a simple, clear graphic and a written narrative.<sup>27</sup> Leaders routinely communicate in terms of narratives and graphics. See, for instance, Figure 1, which depicts General Petraeus’s briefing slide from his service as the top commander in Iraq.<sup>28</sup> He used the “Anaconda Slide” before Congress in April 2008 to describe his operational approach to defeat Al-Qaeda in Iraq. He continues to show this slide as an example of the conceptual, big-idea work that a leader must do; hence, this slide and the general’s accompanying congressional testimony compose the graphic and narrative that help answer Design’s fourth question regarding the operational approach for, in this case, defeating AQI.

Despite this slide’s clarity, military professionals should wonder how many conversations, arguments, white-board sketches, battlefield circulations, scholarly insights, historical analyses, and counterinsurgency-theory debates must have preceded this single

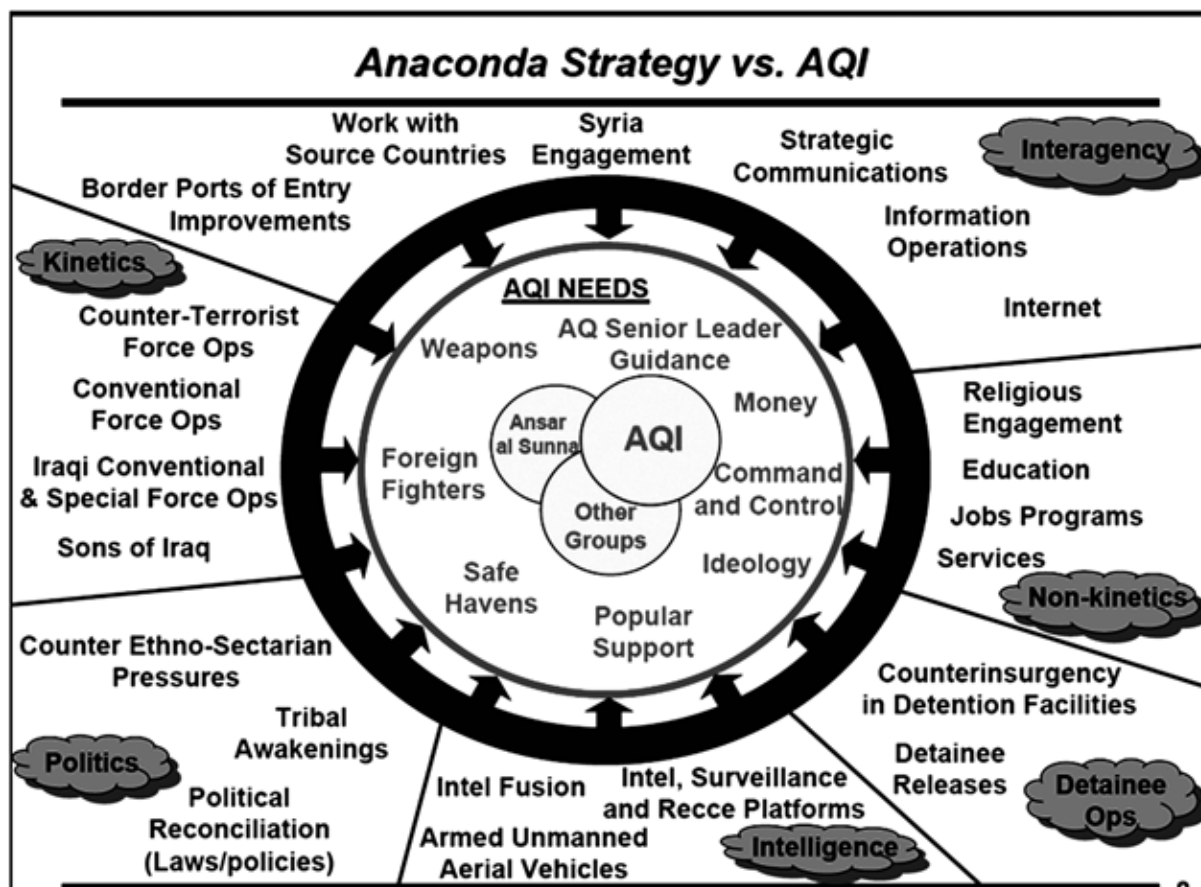


Figure 1: Anaconda strategy vs. Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

slide's creation. A certain approach to leadership and staff work is necessary to exploit the contributions of these various activities. Design simply disciplines a leader and his organization to cultivate dialogue and clash of views by following Petraeus's example; i.e., to think deeply, to argue productively, and to describe vividly—using pictures and words—the results.

## The Ethos of Design

Petraeus, who led the creation of Army FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, exemplifies Design thinking.<sup>29</sup> In a series of talks (many available on YouTube) since January of 2010, he describes an approach to leadership consonant with Army Design without explicitly invoking the term. He says the fundamental job of a leader is to "get the Big Ideas right"; i.e., a leader must "determine the *right overarching concepts and intellectual underpinnings*." These Big Ideas are the broad concepts that give direction to an organization. The term "Big Ideas" signifies the sort of conceptual

work that proceeds from a commander's understanding and visualization.<sup>30</sup>

In what follows, I compare the ethos of Design with Petraeus's reflections on leadership. I find eight important values embedded in Army doctrine. These values compose what I call the ethos of doctrinal Design. These values are:

- Benefits that arise from "collaboration and dialogue" among persons with multiple perspectives, experiences, and expertise.<sup>31</sup>
- Necessity of cultivating a clashing of opinions or, in FM 5-0's words, a "competition of ideas."<sup>32</sup>
- Importance of confident commanders who can fearlessly cultivate dialogue, collaboration, and clash.<sup>33</sup>
- Importance of humility and a sense of fallibility insofar as one's first "cut" at a complex problem will likely be incomplete or wrong; hence, the importance of assessments and revisions of one's understanding and visualization.<sup>34</sup>



- Importance of all staffers, commanders, troopers, and partners possessing a shared understanding.<sup>35</sup>
- Importance of recording the results of collaboration, dialogue, and clash via the communicative media of spoken and written narratives and pictures.<sup>36</sup>
- Importance of cultivating a “learning organization,” which entails posturing the staff to seek out relevant perspectives, consider them in an efficient manner, develop creative ways to learn about the environment and employ the unit’s resources, and actively seek to confirm and revise the answers to Design’s four questions.<sup>37</sup>
- Importance of holistic understanding; i.e., the ability to understand how several disparate variables within and around one’s area of responsibility are interrelated.<sup>38</sup>

## Petraeus on Leadership

What follows below are excerpts from a speech Petraeus delivered to the American Enterprise Institute on 6 May 2010 about the creation of the Army counterinsurgency manual. He explains how the creation of Big Ideas “typically requires an ability to think creatively and critically about complex challenges, constantly testing one’s assumptions and often embracing *new concepts*.” This approach, which is consonant with Design thinking, served him well during his commands at Fort Leavenworth, Iraq, and Central Command. Petraeus explains:

- “In my experience, big ideas don’t fall out of a tree and hit you on the head like Newton’s apple. Rather, they start as seeds of little ideas that take root and grow. The growth takes place primarily in discussion—*spirited, freewheeling, challenging discussion* . . .”
- “We sought to *broaden the usual pool of participants* involved in drafting a doctrinal manual. In so doing, we engaged not just members of *our military* and *partner militaries*, but also *diplomats, aid workers*, representatives of *NGOs* and *human rights groups*, *think tank members*, *journalists*, and, also, of course, *those with experience* in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

● “The *collaboration and discussions* spurred by the COINdinitas created a *good bit of debate*—and, periodically, some *healthy discord*.”

● “*We sought to create situations in which individuals could thrash out different views* . . . Ultimately, the various debates resulted in a *sharper, more thoughtful product*, and they also likely helped with the *ultimate communication and implementation of the concepts* when we completed the project.”

● “*We sought to encourage young leaders to think for themselves, to improvise, to exercise initiative, and to challenge the conventional wisdom*.”

● “Enabling this in 2006 was the fact that all of us in uniform had worked hard over the years to ensure that our services were ‘*learning organizations*’. . . After all, war requires constant learning and adaptation, and that is particularly true in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations. As the COIN manual observed, the side that learns and adapts the fastest often prevails.”

Petraeus describes a leadership style whose ethos is integral to Design. He habitually enlists the help of talented persons. With this implicit admission of humility, he invites others—veterans, scholars, civilians, experienced military officers—to think through a situation with him. He remains an active participant throughout the discussions and debates. He is able to benefit from the “competition of ideas” because he is a confident leader who purposefully cultivates dialogue and clash. He strives for holistic understanding. Finally, he records the results of his and his interlocutors’ thinking to ensure that all persons—coalition partners, troopers, Congress—know and share his understanding of the situation.

## Three Building Blocks of Design

The only way to learn Design is to do it.<sup>39</sup> I attempt to describe how to do Design in such a way that an instructor or planning leader can, in a short amount of time, begin doing Design’s conceptual work. First I describe the three building blocks of Design. I next suggest that four principles should guide the group in their work. I also explain an

***“In my experience, big ideas don’t fall out of a tree and hit you on the head like Newton’s apple...”***

efficient way to get a group of officers to start doing Design quickly.

There are three building blocks of Design thinking: systems and subsystems, narratives, and models.<sup>40</sup>

**Systems and subsystems.** When an officer confronts a new challenge, he should approach a white board or butcher-paper easel with markers in hand. His goal is to depict the key actors, whether these be persons or groups (Taliban leaders, Afghan Army leaders, farmers, NGO representatives, the president), institutions (Congress, the United Nations, bureaucracies), or structures (tribal systems, civil society, economic systems). The officers must focus on the relationships between the actors and discern any ongoing dynamics or trends (reconciliation, reintegration, corruption, exploitation, heightened grievances, economic downturn, unstable civil-military relations, etc.).

Thinking in terms of systems and subsystems also means attempting to map the relationships between the various actors, institutions, and structures to discern tensions, flows, and feedback loops.<sup>41</sup> The intent is to focus less on specific cause-effect relationships within the environment and more on how the multiplicity of factors combine to form a holistic, dynamic system. The system, just like a human person, takes on a dynamic of its own that is not reducible to its individual parts.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the individual parts take on their full significance only when seen within the context of the whole.

As an example, suppose a group desires to reform the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) for college football. Who are the actors and what are the relationships among them? The key actors might include the various football conferences, universities, television networks, businesses, advertisers, recruiters, high school athletes, college athletes, coaches, and the sports media. Which of these entities are allies or want the same things? Which of these entities are antagonistic or want vastly different things? What dynamics, such as money and recruiting trends, are in play? What does the group seeking to reform the BCS want? If the BCS system continues as it is, what will happen? What indirect or unintended effects reinforce the current BCS system and its putative pathologies? What indirect or unintended effects pull the BCS system in a more desirable or more undesirable direction?

**Narratives.** As the officers create a holistic view of the environment, they must discern and describe the actors' "narratives" or "stories." Officers should cultivate the skill of perspective-taking. Officers should, as much as possible, describe how various actors see and explain the world using those actors' own words and images.<sup>43</sup> Narratives represent different "takes" on the same reality. They represent the various actors' meaning-infused interpretations of the world. Consider two of the many prominent narratives relevant to the Israeli government's evacuation of the Jewish settlers from Gaza in 2005. A Jewish settler's narrative articulates what it means to settle in Gaza as part of a divine plan. A Jewish officer's narrative articulates what it means to be a military professional who carries out the will of the state regardless of the Jewish settlers' religious beliefs. These contrasting narratives obviously clash. When military professionals think about cultural understanding or the human terrain, these narratives are the key.<sup>44</sup>

**Models.** A model, within the context of Design, is a descriptive or causal account from one perspective about what is going on in the environment. There are as many models as there are actors in the environment. A model, which is often embedded in an actor's narrative, comprises the actions a specific actor performs, the purposes for which he takes these actions, and the actor's narrative. For example, consider the following stylized model used to describe the typical Afghan farmer and his causal story: a farmer has a choice between supporting the Taliban or the local government and the coalition. The farmer sees that the coalition soldiers clear the area of Taliban enemy, which the farmer appreciates. However, the farmer waits to see if the coalition soldiers leave or stay. If they stay, the farmer will tend to support the government to the extent that he trusts he will be protected from the Taliban. However, if the coalition soldiers leave, survival instincts will make the farmer likely to support the Taliban. This model is one of many explanatory or causal stories at play in Afghanistan.<sup>45</sup>

Other insight-inducing models exist, beside first-person models such as the farmer's. An actor does not completely understand his situation, particularly when complexity and counterintuitive dynamics are in play.<sup>46</sup> Hence, an officer might usefully consult "outsider" views as a fruitful complement to the

various first-hand narratives and models. Suppose officers are studying how to reform a corrupt police force. They may choose to consult the abundant scholarly literature on institutional corruption and past attempts to mitigate it. Such study will enable the officers to encounter a treasure chest full of relevant perspectives produced by scholars who have studied corruption in various contexts. Indeed, there might be some useful, counterintuitive lesson, relationship, or dynamic relevant to battling corruption in the scholarly literature that might be helpful to a commander and staff officer. Other “outsider” perspectives are available from various bureaucracies and organizations.<sup>47</sup> Wrestling with these models improves the officers’ ability to evaluate the various hypotheses, “takes,” or “cuts” at what is going on.<sup>48</sup>

## Four Guiding Principles of Design

**Avoid forcing a solution onto a problem.**<sup>49</sup> *Forcing* or *imposing* a solution to achieve an inflexibly predetermined end state may work when building a chair in one’s garage or even killing 30 enemy soldiers on a hill in a remote desert. Force and imposition are likely not effective amidst the realities of working cooperatively with bureaucrats, indigenous governments, coalition forces, civil society, and citizens. Moreover, force and imposition are slippery endeavors amidst the contingent swirl of socio-political events.

**Allow the “solution” to emerge over time from the context.** Commanders accomplish this through the thoughtful employment of troops, resources, speech, and relationships. This mindset, I suggest, is what enabled an improvement in Iraq during the “surge” of 2007 to 2008. Tension existed between foreign Al-Qaeda forces and indigenous Sunni actors fighting against or resisting the coalition. A forced solution would have entailed doing a critical-vulnerability analysis of both AQI and the Iraqi Sunni “extremists.” This analysis would have been followed by a series of deliberate attacks on both AQI and Iraqi Sunni forces until both groups were decimated. However, *by thoughtfully focusing not on the plan but on tensions within the environment*, commanders and staffs at various levels were able to exploit the AQI-Iraqi Sunni tension, realign the friend-and-foe relationships in their areas, and achieve an improved

state of affairs in which coalition troopers and Iraqi Sunnis were pointing their rifles not at each other, but toward AQI fighters.<sup>50</sup>

**Consider taking actions to learn about the environment.** Imagine soldiers probing an enemy defense with light attacks over a period of time. The purpose of these attacks is to learn how the enemy will respond to a big attack. Commanders should incorporate similar actions to confirm or deny windows of opportunity for cooperative or lethal actions.

**Reframe the problem, if necessary.** When the environment changes substantially or the commander finds that his hypotheses about the environment, the problem, and the operational approach are wrong, *reframing* is in order. More brainwork will be necessary to help the commander perform his conceptual responsibilities in accordance with the activities of understanding, visualization, and description, *if* the commander desires the help.

## Getting Started

Go to a white board. Attempt to depict the actors, relationships, and dynamics that compose subsystems and systems that are in the environment or affect what happens in the environment. Attempt to discern each actor’s narrative. Next, create a model of how each of the key actors sees the environment. Finally, if possible, check the scholarly literature for insight-inducing descriptions and accounts.

There is really no obligatory technique for doing this board work. Different persons will strive to pull the conversations and board work in various directions in accordance with their experiences, education, training, institutional affiliation, and views of the world.

This collaborative friction is a good thing. The instructor or group leader should resist the urge to force too quickly the officers into a certain direction. The leader should especially resist the urge to give the practitioners a template or a framework. Simply allow the officers to argue, investigate, critique, and develop a shared understanding of the environment by attempting to describe the actors and especially their relationships on a whiteboard.

The point of these messy *design drawings* is not to create an actual, near-perfect representation of what is actually going on.<sup>51</sup> The participants are not striving for scientific understanding; they are simply attempting to get a “bite” on what is going



on as quickly and thoroughly as possible.<sup>52</sup> Their drawings serve only to help them achieve a common focus, raise new questions, consider several points of view, and incorporate scholarly and practitioner perspectives.<sup>53</sup> These drawings may appear busy and incoherent to the outsider. That is irrelevant. So long as they are the focus of fruitful argument and shared understanding, all is well. The Design scene is a bunch of persons around a whiteboard—markers in hand—sharing viewpoints, arguing, and creating a shared understanding for each frame.

Meanwhile, discussions, debates, and additional board work will ensue. These may become heated. The commander or planning leader should manage them, but the leader must not squelch the competition of ideas too early. Nevertheless, each of these conversations, debates, and drawings must come to a point. The purpose of this work is to enable the leader, who is a Design participant, to create a narrative that answers the first fundamental question, “What is going on?”

As the leader begins to settle upon a certain understanding of the environment, the group must slowly set aside the messy design drawings and begin production of a refined *presentation drawing*. The presentation drawing emerges from the various design drawings and any other work produced to gain understanding of the environment. This presentation must be clean and clear enough to facilitate the commander’s description (his narrative) of the environment to persons inside and outside of the unit.<sup>54</sup>

For each of the remaining three questions, the officers repeat the activities of thinking via messy design drawings, producing a clean, vivid presentation drawing and a written or spoken narrative that, together with the presentation drawing, describe the commander’s understanding or visualization.

The fourth presentation drawing, which depicts in broad terms how the commander will achieve an improved state of affairs, should use terms and concepts taken as much as possible from operational art: lines of effort, decisive points, objectives, tasks, conditions, end states, defeat mechanisms, stability mechanisms, and so forth. This technique, while not obligatory, does help translate the conceptual work emanating from Design into immediately useful guidance for

detailed planning; however, *take deliberate care to preserve the group’s appreciation of the holistic context within which these lines of effort will operate.*<sup>55</sup>

The narrative that describes the commander’s operational approach is called the mission narrative. Some consideration should be given to craft the mission narrative in such a way that all stakeholders can appreciate the commander’s visualization of how to achieve the mission.<sup>56</sup>

Petraeus’s “Anaconda Slide” provides one example of a clean, vivid presentation drawing that helps describe his answer to Design’s fourth question, the operational approach.

Design entails production of a variety of messy *design drawings*. These drawings serve to catalyze thinking and focus disciplined questioning. This thinking informs the answers to Design’s four questions and enables the production of clean *presentation drawings* and accompanying oral and



MAJ John Clark of the United Kingdom and MAJ Edward Croot, U.S. Army, draw links among Peruvian elites, the government, the general population and entities such as the drug economy while conducting a discourse on U.S. Southern Command during the Operational Command Workshop, 28 January 2008.

Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

written narratives that describe a commander's Big Ideas with respect to Design's four questions. The more officers practice Design, the better they will be at it; however, Design practitioners must remember that their answers to the four questions are provisional and will likely need to be reframed.

## The Design Option

The practice of Design is optional. It provides a coherent structure within which a commander and his staff can think about the environment, the problem, and the operational approach. *Design's inefficiency is useful only insofar as it helps the commander understand, visualize, and describe.* One imagines that various commanders will employ Design differently—if they choose to use it at all.

So long as the ethos described above and exemplified by General Petraeus is allowed some influence in the operations process, the commander and his staff officers will develop into a powerful learning organization. Leaders must be tolerant of dialogue, collaboration, and clash. A leader must also be capable of managing it. The fruits of Design include, without guarantees, a more thoughtful commander's planning guidance and commander's intent as well as narrative and graphic descriptions of the environment, the end state, the problem, and the operational approach.<sup>57</sup> Each of these will, in turn, establish the Big Ideas that will drive the development of a unit's campaign plan, detailed planning for subsequent missions, and the exploitation of opportunities as they appear during mission execution. **MR**

## NOTES

1. This article is intended to be a faithful albeit contestable description of Design as articulated in U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 26 March 2010). I present this paper as a help to those struggling how to understand, teach, or do Design. My interpretation does emphasize certain elements that, while contained explicitly within FM 5-0, are not as prominently featured. These elements include the emphasis on political judgment, the four fundamental questions of Design, and the ethos of Design. Also, I have relied heavily on the example of GEN David Petraeus. His leadership style seems to exemplify Design thinking, albeit without the esotericism that attaches to too many other explanations of Design. Where possible, I buttress key points with substance from *Art of Design*, Student Text, Version 2.0, School of Advanced Military Studies, May 2010. I thank several colleagues for helping me think through problematic areas of Design, especially Mark Mumm, Len Lira, Tom Clark, Alex Ryan, Jay Nelson, and Dave McHenry. I thank especially my students in two different classes at Fort Leavenworth. This article does not say everything that needs to be said about Army Design, but it says enough to get people started and, one hopes, think more deeply about what we as military professionals are doing. Note: The SAMS text is available at <<http://www.cgsc.edu/sams/index.asp>>.

2. FM 5-0, para. 1-10.

3. See, for instance, Philip Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

4. See Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Analytical Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms Across Research Traditions," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 12. See also Craig Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and William Connolly, "Method, Problem, Faith" in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, eds. Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 340-45.

5. Although this statement may seem obvious, it is something that many officers continue to desire. This desire exists also in doctrine, which specifies that "every operation focuses on a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable end state." (FM 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 6 October 2008), para. 4-41). The desire for a clear end state exists also in the seductive Powell Doctrine. For a discussion of this doctrine in its political and ethical dimensions, see William F. Felice's *How Do I Save My Honor? War, Moral Integrity, and Principled Resignation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 83-86.

6. Of course, contingency arises also from nonhuman factors as well. Consider the political and military effects of the August 2010 floods in Pakistan, or the effects arising from a volcano in Iceland that stopped airline traffic throughout Europe in April 2010. It was an extended stay in Paris, attributable to volcanic ash, which enabled a *Rolling Stone* reporter to write a rather consequential story about the top commander in Afghanistan at the time, GEN Stanley McChrystal.

7. FM 5-0, vi.

8. FM 5-0, para. 2-37 and 2-53.

9. An order from a subordinate unit's higher command gives specific instructions appropriate to the general context of that higher command's operational environment. A subordinate commander must do the conceptual work necessary to, among other things, create the specific context that pertains to that commander's own piece of the environment. The subordinate commander must also prioritize and generate new tasks and objectives specific to the subordinate command's "local" environment. Studying and making sense of the higher order, which is the focus of mission analysis, is not the same thing as studying and making sense of the specific factors at play in the subordinate commander's environment.

10. *Ibid.*, para 3-2. See also para. 2-37 and 2-39, especially Fig. 2-2. An important point to reflect upon is the distinction between the sort of information that arises from, say, mission analysis and conceptual thinking. Facts, assumptions, limitations, tasks, etc. may well be "true" or "valid"; however, these discrete items are without meaning until put into a context. It is the commander, with the help from his staff, who provides the meaning by integrating these distinct items into a story or narrative. For instance, the theorist of international relations, Alexander Wendt, has called attention to the hypothesized fact that a certain person has a gun in his hand; however, that fact only takes on meaning when a story or narrative communicates whether the gun-holding person is a friend or an enemy. Obviously, perspective matters. It is the commander's job to provide this perspective. See also *Art of Design*, Student Text, Version 2.0, School of Advanced Military Studies, May 2010, 73.

11. *Art of Design*, 21. Many persons ask whether Design occurs before or during the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). I argue it is best to think of Design *not* in temporal relation to MDMP, but as inextricably linked to the commander's activities of understanding, visualization, and description. Since a commander may desire to improve his understanding and visualization at any time during the operations process, design thinking may also occur at any time.

12. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on 16 June 2010, Petraeus stated, "Every insurgency is local. Therefore, every counterinsurgency has to be local. And you've got to understand the dynamics of each village and city . . . you know, we fought Afghanistan for seven years in seven one-year increments, but the fact is that we didn't capture—we didn't develop the sufficiently granular understanding of the areas, and that is what this all depends." See also LTG Michael T. Flynn, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," published by Center for a New American Security, January 2010.

13. See, for instance, para. 1-21 in FM 5-0.

14. Of course, we have always fought among the population, but we have not sufficiently accounted for the cooperative and political roles that the military has played. In the recent past, the civilian and ethical dimensions of military work were emphasized neither in training nor in theorizing about the military profession. It is only now that the profession of arms is gaining an ample appreciation for the political and ethical factors that affect all military operations, not only counterinsurgencies and stability operations. See, for instance, Nadia Schadow, "Organizing to Compete in the Political Terrain," a monograph published by the Strategic Studies Institute, July 2010.

15. *Ibid.*, para. 2-23. Other ill-structured problems might include the economic downturn, healthcare reform, poverty alleviation, etc. The problems that military professionals must confront are enormously complex. If there is to be a relatively durable solution to our campaigns, it will most likely not be the result of applying some tried-and-true doctrine or method that has worked in the past. Indeed, if durable solutions arise, they will arise as a result of a new instantiation of creativity informed by doctrine, scholarship, experience, and current circumstances, but not enslaved by them.

16. *Ibid.*, para. 3-26.

17. *Ibid.*, para. 3-1. See also the Preface.

18. *Ibid.*, para. 3-63, B-67, and B-68.

19. *Ibid.*, 19.

20. *Ibid.*, para 3-44.

21. *Ibid.*, para. 3-51.

22. *Ibid.*, para. 3-46. At some point, perhaps during detailed planning, the commander may want to consider a range of end states, to include a most-optimal, aspirational end state on the one hand and a minimally adequate, "good enough" end state on the other. Moreover, it might be useful to specify such aspirational and adequate end states for different time periods—18 months out, 3 years out, 5 years out, etc. I thank Dr. Jack Kern for this insight.

23. Ibid., para 3-53.
24. Ibid., para 3-58.
25. See *Art of Design*, 15. I thank my colleague, LTC Len Lira, for emphasizing this simultaneity in a series of conversations.
26. See, FM 5-0, para. 3-50, 3-52, and 3-59.
27. *Art of Design*, 15.
28. A slight variant of this slide is available in David Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," *Military Review Special Edition, Counterinsurgency Reader II*, August 2008, 211.
29. FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: GPO, 6 December 2006). See chap. 4, "Designing Counterinsurgency Campaigns."
30. GEN David Petraeus's explication of the big ideas come from his "Commander's May 6 [2010] Speech at the American Enterprise Institute." See the transcript at <[www.centcom.mil/en-from-the-commander/commanders-may-6-speech-at-the-american-enterprise-institute.html](http://www.centcom.mil/en-from-the-commander/commanders-may-6-speech-at-the-american-enterprise-institute.html)> (16 August 2010).
31. FM 5-0, para 1-31. See also *Art of Design*, 18-19 and Scott Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools and Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
32. Ibid., para 1-32. See also *Art of Design*, 200-201.
33. Ibid., See also *Art of Design*, 57.
34. Ibid., para. 1-7 and 1-20.
35. Ibid. The field manual's preference for shared understanding is expressed throughout, e.g., para. 3-4.
36. Ibid., para. 3-50, 3-52, and 3-59.
37. Ibid., para. 1-32.
38. Ibid., Reflect upon the implications of, *ibid.*, para. 2-42 and, especially, para. 1-5.
39. *Art of Design*, 9.
40. This focus on systems, narratives, and models is loosely based upon Peter Checkland and John Poulter's *Learning for Action* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2006). Checkland and Poulter describe a manner of inquiry called Soft Systems Methodology. This approach, which is taught at the School for Advanced Military Studies, is sophisticated, but it includes a handy Preamble entitled "A Ten-Minute Account of Soft Systems Methodology for Very Busy People." Soft Systems Methodology attempt to discern systems, narratives, and models is consistent with a broad range of scholarly approaches to studying socio-political phenomena.
41. Ibid. See also, 202.
42. Reflecting on the concepts of emergence and emergent causality is helpful in understanding the importance of a holistic, systems view of the environment. For a theoretical account of emergent causality as it applies to socio-political and ethical phenomena, see William Connolly's "Method, Problem, and Faith."
43. The relationship between the narrative and frameworks such as PMESII-PT is worth investigating. Although I cannot develop the argument here, I assert it is possible to set the PMESII-PT framework aside when attempting to describe the operational environment. Instead of attempting to discern, with no clear criterion for relevance or inclusion, what substance should go under each operational variable, it is more useful (and efficient) to attend closely to first-actor narratives. First-person actors, through

their narratives, will reveal how they see the world in terms of politics, the military, economics, and so forth. The relevant substance will shine brightly through the various conflicting narratives. The analyst may then sort these variables in accordance with the PMESII-PT framework, but perhaps this is a useless step. The commander seeks to create a contextual, holistic account of the environment. Attending to conflicting narratives in an effort to create the commander's holistic understanding of the environment is superior to jamming items under "P," and "M," and "E" with the use of questionable criteria for relevance and absent context.

44. I gathered these narratives from a documentary film entitled "Gaza: The Fight for Israel," available at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybRMfwkS-kk&feature=related>> (7 October 2010). For the political, economic, and ethically constitutive aspects of the narrative, see Rogers M. Smith, "The Politics of Identities and the tasks of Political Science," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, eds. Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 61.

45. See GEN Stanley McChrystal, the former top military commander in Afghanistan, describe this model to a group of ambassadors at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j6FX8DjuYQ>> (6 October 2010).

46. See Ian Shapiro and Alexander Wendt's "The Difference that Realism Makes," in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*, ed. Ian Shapiro (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 31-37.

47. *Art of Design*, 33.

48. Ibid., 52.

49. Ibid., 14.

50. Ibid., 15-16. Also, see quotation by John F. Schmitt, 38: "The rationale is to pull out of the problem itself the logic for solving the problem rather than apply or adapt some predetermined logic."

51. Ibid., 201.

52. Ibid., app. D, which provides a useful catalogue of generic, albeit probing questions.

53. Ibid., 68, 208.

54. For examples of the environmental frame, see *Art of Design*, 162, 193, and 194.

55. Commanders at the battalion level and above now routinely produce "campaign plans." These campaign plans, which are often part of a unit's base order in theater, comprise lines of effort, conditions, tasks, objectives, and the end state. If a commander and his staff answers Design's fourth question in terms of these elements of operational art (even if in skeleton form), they will have created a substantial link between Design, the development of the campaign plan and base order, and the execution of MDMP. Design helps a commander write his planning guidance and the commander's intent, which inform the campaign plan and MDMP. Of course, the campaign plan should also include objectives or tasks that will exploit enemy vulnerabilities and protect the vulnerabilities of the friendly military forces and the host-nation government. Thus, intelligence preparation and Design work inform the campaign plan.

56. FM 5-0, para. 3-66.

57. See FM 5-0, para. 3-63 to 3-67 for the Design concept.





# Beyond Reconciliation

## Developing Faith, Hope, Trust, and Unity in Iraq

**Major Nathan Minami, U.S. Army;  
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*PHOTO: U.S. Army CPT Andrew Lewis, commander of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, discusses plans for additional humanitarian efforts with Iraqi soldiers and local government officials near Joint Security Station Shawra Um Jidr in Baghdad, Iraq, 21 March 2010. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Jesse Gross)*

**A**S THE U.S. military begins its drawdown in Iraq, how we transition out of the country is just as important, if not more important, than how we entered in 2003. If Iraq is to become a legitimate democracy, our long-term ally, and a beacon of hope and prosperity in the Middle East, it is critical that we exit Iraq in a manner that supports these strategic goals. While much progress has been made since 2006 to reconcile various divides (ethnic, political, economic, and social), Iraq still has much work ahead toward becoming a unified state. This article discusses the efforts of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 10th Mountain Division, to help the leaders of eastern Baghdad and the Mada'in Qada region to develop a forum where influential leaders from all sectors of the community (religious, governmental, nongovernmental, tribal, and security) can meet to discuss practical solutions to various challenges and problems. This includes theoretical and conceptual development of the problem and the selected course of action, as well as discussion of how the forum was established and lessons learned from the process. It also describes how the BCT integrated various staff and enablers such as the Human Terrain Team (HTT), Information Operations, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), Operations Planning Group, and subordinate units in developing an itihad (unity) strategy for the BCT.

### Problem and Purpose

There are a multitude of different schisms within Iraqi society that prevent unity at all levels. The one that is most often cited and recognizable is the general divide between Sunni and Shi'a groups. But other divides exist, such as disenfranchised Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish sub-populations who do not have political access due to a lack of balanced government representation. Other schisms stem from inadequate minority rights; unequal wealth and benefits distribution; unreconciled grievances between various tribal, political, governmental, and ethnic groups; and external influences such as Al Qaeda and Iran that encourage movement toward political extremism. While all of these divides serve as barriers to progress, they are exacerbated by entrepreneurs who take advantage of these schisms for their own benefit.

Early in the planning process, we acknowledged that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any one effort to address even the most important divides. Consequently, instead of viewing the problem as a diverse collection of many fragments, we reframed it by looking at the population on a scale from those supporting extremism on the two ends of the spectrum to those in the middle supporting national unity and a peaceful and prosperous Iraq (Figure 1). While detailed statistics were not collected, it was assumed that the population followed a distribution that was generally uniform in nature. The problem, therefore, was developing a movement that would shift the distribution from generally uniform to more of a bell curve. The number of people who support Shi'a or Sunni extremists would decrease and the population supporting national unity would increase.

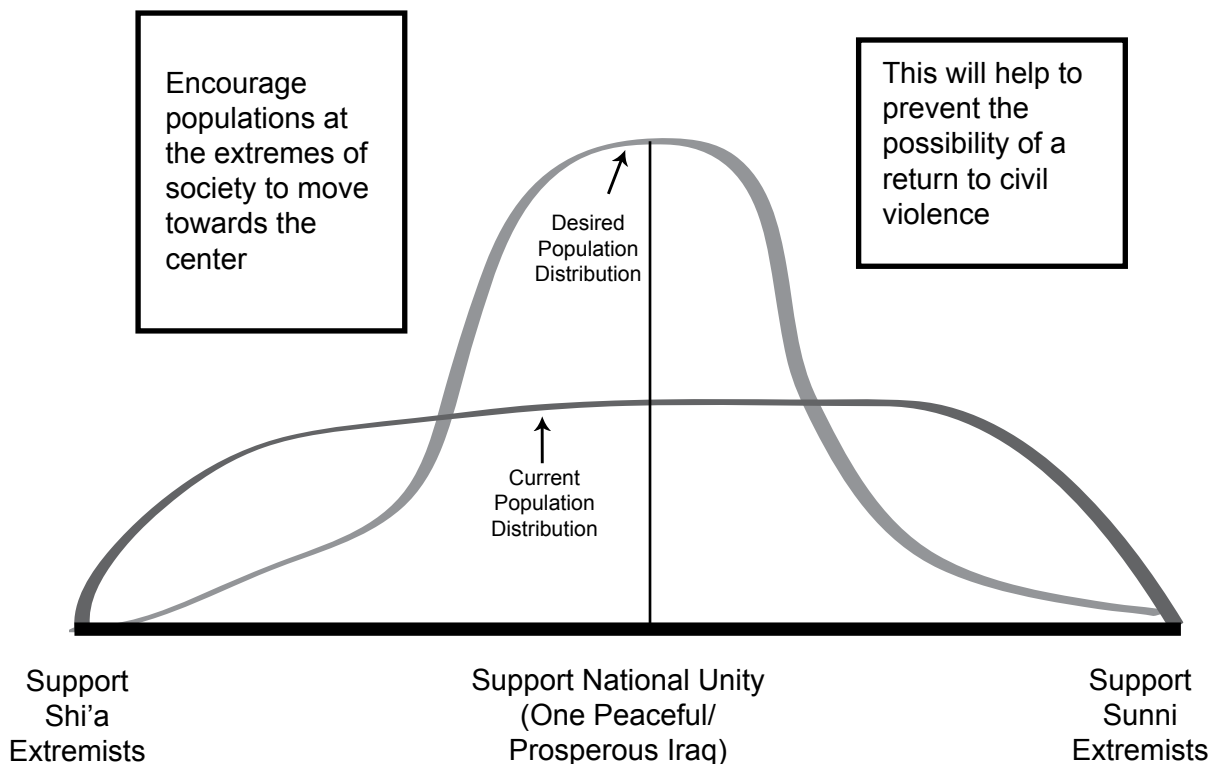
In seeking to help the people of eastern Baghdad and the Mada'in Qada to overcome this challenge, the brigade staff set out to encourage Iraqis to

support national unity and a peaceful, prosperous, and unified operational environment. Further, the purpose of the brigade's *itihad* effort included encouraging Iraqis to reject extremism, resolve conflicts and disputes peacefully, and build trust between various parties. The end state for this effort was a system of meetings in which a diverse group of influential leaders could break down schisms and barriers through open dialogue to promote hope, faith, trust, and unity. Ultimately, this would allow the Iraqis to build on the success of the 2010 national elections and set the conditions for the drawdown of U.S. forces in the area.

### Theoretical Development

While the theoretical development for the BCT's *itihad* concept included various lessons and concepts from the general reconciliation, conflict management and negotiation, and peace and stability operations literature, most of the ideas came

## The Challenge



**Figure 1: The Challenge**

from Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*.<sup>\*</sup> Key for this project were Gladwell's concepts of contagiousness, the understanding that even the smallest things can have big consequences, and that positive changes do not happen incrementally, but rather in one critical moment in time. Gladwell describes the tipping point as the moment in time when a thought, product, or virus instantly takes hold and exponentially spreads. Consequently, the main objective for this project was to determine how the idea of unity among the people of eastern Baghdad could become like a virus and spread throughout the region at an epidemic rate.

Gladwell describes three types of people who are critical for creating an epidemic. The first of these is a *maven*. According to Gladwell, mavens gather knowledge about a particular subject, product, or matter. Mavens are obsessed with a particular topic. The second type of individual is a *connector*, who has an astonishingly large number of personal acquaintances. Connectors can rapidly pass anything to dozens, if not hundreds, of people due to their vast number of contacts on any given day. The third type of individual is a *salesman*. Salesmen are unusually persuasive and can easily sway people in one direction or another.

Other important concepts in creating a tipping point according to Gladwell are *context* and *stickiness*. Context refers to how and which small aspects in the environment play the largest role in determining our identity, how we behave, and whether or not epidemics occur. Stickiness refers to the ability to parcel information in a manner appealing and enticing enough that people readily accept it.

Finally, an important concept in Gladwell's work is that epidemics have a surprising paradox. This paradox states that in many cases it is necessary to create several tiny movements before one large movement or epidemic can take hold.

**...the main objective...was to determine how the idea of unity... could become like a virus...**

Using these tipping point concepts, the BCT staff developed a phased methodology. The first step was to identify as many mavens as possible who could help the team better understand the problem. The second step was to examine the precise message the BCT wanted to infuse into the population. The next step was to develop the context and determine which aspects of the environment weighed most heavily on the problem. The fourth step was to determine how to make the message stick, or rather how to get Iraqi leaders to adopt the message as their own. The final step was to identify which connectors and salesmen among the two million inhabitants of eastern Baghdad would be most important for spreading the unity theme.

## Concept Development

Based on the theoretical construct for this project, a campaign plan was developed with representatives from the HTT, Information Operations, Psychological Operations, PRT, the S2 section (intelligence), the S3 section (operations), and all maneuver battalions. In addition, maven input included consultation with professors and graduate students, subject matter experts, a review of existing reconciliation and stability operations literature, and local leaders from the community who were believed to have in-depth knowledge regarding the problem. The most important aspect of maven input was what the group received from local leaders. Despite the wide range of expertise among staff representatives with multiple tours in Iraq and extensive academic knowledge, ultimately, it was the local leaders who best understood the intricacies of the many challenges, disputes, and concerns of people in the region.

One example of the importance of local leaders' input concerned the initial concept of developing reconciliation within the community. As the team listened to local mavens, it became obvious that the community did not view the problem as reconciliation, as most viewed reconciliation as implying a state of ongoing conflict. Local mavens clarified that the problem was slightly different. The real issue was a lack of unification between various groups, which prevented efforts to work collectively for the common welfare of the population.

Two central objectives were developed as part of the campaign plan. The first was to encourage



Iraqis to support national unity within eastern Baghdad. The second objective was to encourage the population to reject extremist positions, work to resolve conflicts and disputes peacefully, and to build trust between various entities in the community.

In addition, three phases were developed for the campaign. The first phase consisted of preparation, or development of the campaign plan itself. This included holding weekly unity working groups with key staff members to develop the theme, context, and stickiness, as well as to gather maven input and to identify critical salesmen and connectors in the community. The second phase involved Gladwell's paradox of the epidemic, creating small movements to inject the theme into various segments of the population. The concept for this phase was to initially invite Iraqi mavens to a series of meetings where the theme, context, and stickiness of the message could be refined. At some point, local salesmen and connectors would be invited so that they could spread the theme among the population. The plan called for development of constructive measures for diverse leaders from different communities to work together and build trust. There were also two important decision points during this phase of the campaign. The first was to determine which Iraqi leaders to empower during the meetings so that those with good ideas would not be stifled by others with more influence. The second decision point was to determine which Iraqi leaders to empower with responsibility for continuing and leading the *itihad* process.

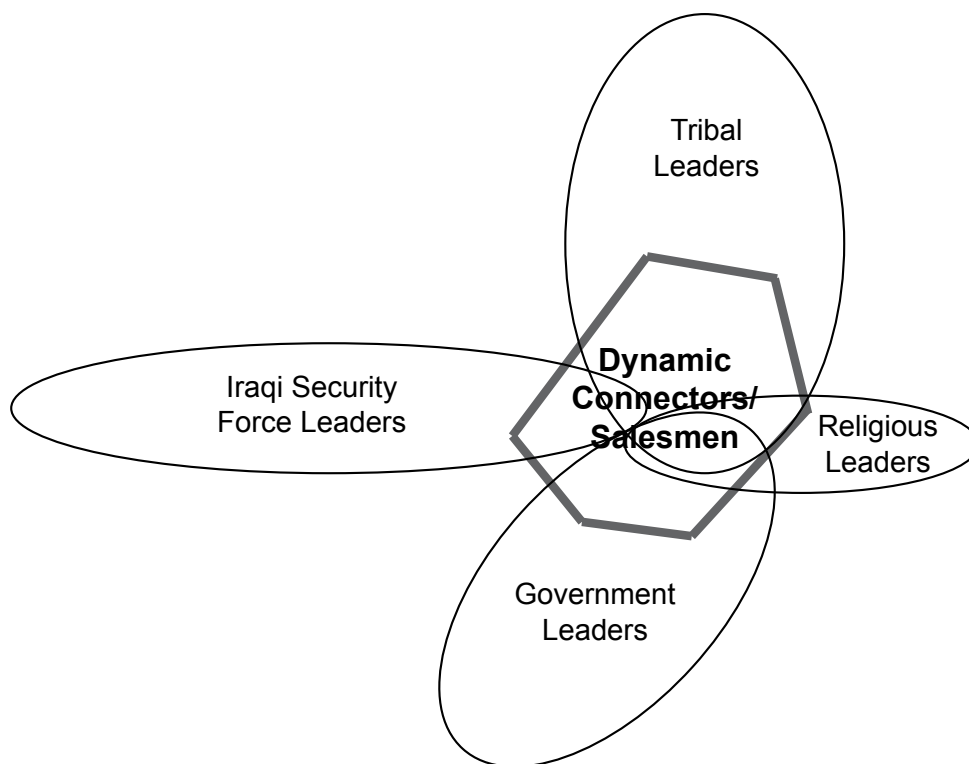
The unity epidemic would be ignited during the third phase. During this period, Iraqis would take full ownership of the movement and U.S. leaders would attend meetings only to monitor and offer assistance when asked. In some cases, it was conceived that this might include providing funding for unity projects. The end state for the *itihad* movement was that the citizens of eastern Baghdad would overcome existing tensions and disputes and support a peaceful and unified region within Iraq. In addition, the end state envisioned citizens working together to resolve conflicts peacefully, with trust and mutual respect existing between all groups and among the majority of the population.

Once the problem, purpose, and initial campaign plan were developed, the working group began

***...the central theme was changed from one of reconciliation to a more positive focus on creating trust and unity.***

to focus on developing the theme and addressing context and stickiness. Based on the input of various mavens, the central theme was changed from one of reconciliation to a more positive focus on creating trust and unity. The ideas of faith and hope were also introduced as being central to making trust and unity possible. Some of the ideas that followed from this theme were that working together will create a prosperous future for families and future generations; communication between various groups is important, and mutual respect is a critical component of creating and maintaining civil accord; many are stronger than just a few, and harnessing the collective capabilities of the whole allows economies of scale to increase the prosperity of all; and, if the group stands united, they will be successful, but if not they are likely to never see the positive social and economic conditions desired by the majority.

Once this theme was developed and refined, the team examined the context of the problem in order to understand what small conditions in the environment might assist or hinder efforts to promote the message of unity in eastern Baghdad. The team focused on environmental factors that prevented people from working together. Two factors driving wedges among the population were massive amounts of garbage littering the streets and excessive graffiti in many neighborhoods. These factors seemed similar to Gladwell's study of New York City crime, where rampant graffiti in the subways spurred lawlessness and criminal activity. Other factors contributing to the problem were a general disconnect between the government of Iraq and the majority of the population and a lack of trust that caused people to focus on their own welfare and not the collective good of the whole community. Another contextual factor that divided the population was people not knowing their neighbors in adjacent communities, creating



**Figure 2: Network Analysis**

ignorance and a barrier to communication and unity. Finally, aggravating this distrust was widespread corruption and a lack of governmental follow-through.

There were also a number of important environmental factors that united the population, including soccer, oral traditions, the success of the 2010 Iraqi national election, and common values such as patriotism and honor. Another important unifying condition was the hope expressed by much of the youth in Iraq that the future will be positive, prosperous, and nonviolent. Complementing this is the soft power that the West wields by connecting the region to the rest of the world through the media, movies, and the internet.

The working group determined that stickiness was the most difficult aspect to address. Some corollary messages that might help the theme stick were that working together will enhance the quality of life for all; cooperation is the path to developing economic prosperity; and the population has a common enemy, namely extremists and Iranian influence that seek to usurp their hard-earned freedoms. Traditional

Arab values of honor, pride, heritage, and self-worth could also help to make the message of unity stick, as well as developing mechanisms (small victories) to show the population that working together leads to success, and that success breeds success.

The final step in concept development was to determine which of the many influential leaders in the community were essential to invite to the unity meetings. The goal was to keep meeting size to approximately 20 people so all invited could participate actively without making the meeting's length unmanageable. In addition, a smaller group would allow members to develop strong relationships. A list of the most influential leaders in the operating environment was collated based on nominations from various staff members, subordinate units, and local leaders themselves. This list included each leader's contact with other leaders in the community, which allowed the group to develop the network diagram shown in Figure 2. In addition, special emphasis was placed on choosing leaders who had already demonstrated they were willing to place the greater good in front of their own personal interests.

While it was clear that all of the leaders nominated were important and influential (most qualified as all three of Gladwell's people types: mavens, connectors, and salesmen), what was less clear was how they were interrelated. The network diagram produced by the BCT's human terrain team showed that once all of the various leaders and their contacts were mapped out, they naturally aligned along four general groups: tribal leaders, religious leaders, Iraqi Security Force leaders, and governmental/political leaders. The software package used an internal algorithm to determine how the various leaders were interconnected and which were most important for connecting all of the disparate leaders together in a unified network. These dynamic connectors/salesmen included leaders from all four general groups and were determined to be of great importance not because of the large number of associations within their own or groups, but because they were key for linking diverse segments of the community together. While there were some exceptions made for particularly influential leaders, the majority of the people invited to the meetings came from the dynamic connectors/salesmen portion of the network diagram.

## Execution

While the original concept was to invite only a small number of local mavens to initial "phase two" meetings, delay of the Iraqi national elections and other factors in the operational environment forced some changes. Approximately 20 individuals who were believed to embody all three characteristics of a maven, connector, and salesman were invited to the first meeting. In addition, the initial goal became more ambitious: to infuse the message of unity to the group at the first meeting. The first meeting began with introductions of the BCT commander and division deputy commander by the BCT's PRT representative, who had already built a relationship with most of the invitees. Both leaders provided opening remarks, and then the BCT commander invited everyone to introduce himself. This was an important part of the initial meeting since it included a diverse group of leaders who did not know each other prior to the meeting. Following introductions, the BCT commander delivered the unity theme and invited the guests to share their suggestions and comments. After a lengthy discussion and lunch,

all were solicited for suggestions about the next meeting.

The central theme delivered was that "we, the U.S. Army, have asked you all to come together because you are all noble, influential leaders who are critical to building prosperity in the region. In order to create prosperity, you must communicate with each other, create mutual respect, work together, and stand united against external forces that want to create unrest." Vignettes were used to reinforce this message, especially the success of recent efforts to develop democracy, freedom, elections, the economy, and essential services. The message was delivered in a positive manner with special attention to ensure that the theme did not come across as belittling or talking down to the guests. It was delivered in a collegial manner that focused on how progress could be expanded. In addition, the BCT commander emphasized that the U.S. Army viewed everyone at the meeting as equals, which was underscored by ensuring there was no table or head in the seating arrangement. Instead, sofas were placed in a square so that no invitee would feel more or less important than another.

In order to work together, communication is essential, and the unity conference forum was advertised as one way to increase the communication between various diverse groups. Likewise, the meeting's theme stressed mutual respect as an important part of creating civil accord and essential in efforts to work together. It was noted that the local population has a great history of being able to work together to create prosperity, evidenced by its role as the cradle of civilization, and the focal point that Baghdad played in the realms of science, medicine, mathematics, education, business, literature, and philosophy during its Golden Age.

The meeting's theme also emphasized that many are stronger than just a few and that the local population had come together during the 1980s to defeat Iran during that eight-year conflict. The final aspect of the message was the need to stand together against external forces attempting to create unrest and steal the Iraqi nationality, identity, and momentum of the recent elections. One recent success in this area was the stalwart actions of the Sons of Iraq and the Sunni Awakening in expunging Al-Qaeda and other extremists from





Unity Conference attendees, eastern Baghdad, 23 April 2010.

much of the country, including southeastern Baghdad and the Mada'in Qada. Other, more local, victories were important as well, such as establishing a tip line for informants and efforts to reduce vehicle borne improvised explosive devices. The initial message concluded with a final appeal to the group to work together to create faith, hope, trust, and unity.

Attendees made important points at the meeting. Improvements in essential services including water, electricity, and sewage services were not visible to the average citizen. Political reforms to represent and work for all the people were slow, and the majority of the population was skeptical about the new government's abilities to help its citizens. The Government of Iraq had failed to interact with local communities to address issues, especially in rural areas. Many attendees expressed concerns with economic development and the need for improvement with businesses, jobs, salaries, and the standard of living. Similarly, corruption throughout all levels of government was another concern, delaying prosperity and preventing change in the social infrastructure, especially essential services.

One of the most critical outcomes of the meeting was the Iraqis' combined understanding that they have the collective power to solve many problems themselves. By coming together they could produce a nonpartisan, unified voice to the Government of Iraq that represented the views of 2.5 million inhabitants. In addition, the group resolved several problems at the meeting. The government representative committed to more rural visits to assist with citizen needs. An Iraqi Army division commander agreed to grant amnesty for certain individuals in rural tribal areas. Through this dialogue, the *itihad* meeting attendees began to slowly develop trust among each other, a trust they realized would help them to withstand various pressures and external forces that will certainly be presented in the future.

Attendees also wanted to remove political hate and sectarian violence from the Friday prayer messages at Shi'a and Sunni mosques. The group determined that this would be an important part of building unity in the region. Iraqi security officers and government officials focused on the positive cooperation with tribal leaders on security, political unrest, and assisting with economic development.

The group recognized that the tribal leaders play an important part in carrying the message of unity to a majority of Iraqis and they needed to be incorporated into future efforts.

The reaction of the invitees far exceeded the expectations of the BCT working group. While many invitees took the opportunity to express their concerns in the area, nearly all agreed exuberantly that the concept of unity and the *itihad* forum was one that needed to continue. Several members of the group offered to host the next meeting, and the group collectively developed ideas for future agendas. They insisted on a focused agenda and agreed that hard solutions must result from future meetings. The group also identified other influential members to help with issues in subsequent meetings. While the BCT's working group had envisioned the need for several meetings to infuse the unity idea, it was immediately accepted by the group in a manner that showed the theme was much more contagious than expected.

## Conclusion

There were several important lessons from this process. First, as U.S. presence declines in Iraq, U.S. forces still retain the distinct ability to pull together diverse segments of Iraqi society to create new movements and initiatives. Another important lesson is not to underestimate the desire of the Iraqis to work together. The national elections

were a clear indicator that a large portion of the population wants to overcome partisan barriers and instead work towards improving the lives of themselves and their fellow citizens. In many cases, all that the population needs is a small catalyst to help initiate reforms, and the unity conference was one example. A final important lesson is that solutions to some problems exist outside the venue of official military doctrine. In this case, while it is unlikely that Malcolm Gladwell envisioned his tipping point theory applied to creating a unity epidemic in eastern Baghdad, it did provide an outstanding organizing framework for the working group.

As we transition from counterinsurgency to stability operations in Iraq and begin the process of withdrawing all military forces from the country, how we transition will be of great importance. Failure to create the conditions that will allow Iraq to continue fostering democracy will result in our loss of a long-term strategic ally in the region. The diverse segments of Iraqi society must work together. The unity concept is one way of accomplishing this. By creating local and regional unity movements in multiple areas across Iraq, it will be possible for Iraq to finally tip toward becoming a truly unified state. This idea could also be employed in Afghanistan to encourage various segments of society to work together for the common prosperity of the general population. **MR**

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## NOTE

\* Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2002).

# Mechanized Forces in Irregular Warfare

Major Irvin Oliver, U.S. Army



**A**S THE ARMY develops a way forward in what General George W. Casey has called an “era of persistent conflict,” it seems increasingly clear that mechanized forces are playing a diminishing role in favor of infantry-centric formations. However, while this improvisation has validity in the current operating environment, it discounts the utility of heavy forces in irregular warfare and implicitly assumes no need for armor in the future. The Army’s doctrine for irregular warfare should include employment of mechanized forces, and training should incorporate the use of mechanized forces in all types of warfare.

With the arrival of U.S. Marine Corps M1A1 tanks in Afghanistan, it may be worth considering giving mechanized forces a wider role in irregular warfare. For many, the initial view may be that mechanized forces have little or no place in the style of warfare common in Afghanistan for several mistaken reasons—the logistical burden, the perceived limitations of utility, and the relative strategic immobility. While there may be some validity in all of these criticisms, they are flawed or incomplete arguments that rely on tenuous assumptions. The primary consideration for introducing mechanized forces into irregular warfare situations should be the means of employment and type of terrain.

The Army should reconsider the applicability of mechanized formations in all types of combat operations. Doctrine should clearly express mechanized forces’ capabilities, limitations, and unique attributes in irregular warfare. Because it does not, their use is determined by local tactics, techniques, and procedures or word-of-mouth employment considerations. Such discovery learning was understandable during the early periods of combat operations in the current conflicts, but is unacceptable with almost ten years of combat experience within the current force. Doctrine should also formalize the acquired experience in Iraq and Afghanistan that may have wider application. One doctrinal field manual is insufficient for light and Stryker infantry units and mechanized units.

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*PHOTO: U.S. Marines prepare M1A1 Abrams tanks for driving, Bubiyan Island, Kuwait, 21 November 2009. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Gunnery SGT Scott Dunn)*



Training should incorporate strategies used in current operations. Experience shows that some manner of light/heavy task organization is likely, and training should reflect that reality.

Defense policy analyst Stephen Biddle writes of how important force employment is to victory in modern battle. Yet, defense planners and policy makers tend to overlook force employment and look to technology or new operational concepts for future battlefield victories.<sup>1</sup> Technology continues to advance and evolve at ever-increasing rates, resulting in a much more rapid diffusion of its powers to potential enemies. This constant change limits U.S. ability to rely on a technological advantage against conventional or irregular forces. In addition, new operational concepts are rarely new or revolutionary, and trying to foresee the next revolution in military affairs risks leaving the Army to fight as it did in the previous war or to recreate itself based on fundamentally flawed assumptions.

## Transition within the Army

According to Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute, the Army is preparing for war against an irregular force that does not field formations like those “from the era of industrial warfare.”<sup>2</sup> The recent conversion of two heavy brigade combat teams (BCTs) to Stryker BCTs makes it clear that the Army is moving toward a lighter-weight, infantry-centric force in the belief that it has less need for the firepower, protection, and shock effect that armor brings to a fight. This belief is partly due to the slow strategic mobility of heavy forces and the relatively low numbers of dismounted Soldiers in heavy BCTs. It is difficult to argue against more infantry within our formations, but beyond the obviously greater need for infantry, the Army should ask what role armored and mechanized forces could play in the future.

How can we most effectively employ those forces? The answer lies within force employment—how to task organize those armored and mechanized forces and assign their tactical tasks and supporting relationships. Armored and mechanized forces may be able to play a significant role across the spectrum of warfare, including in irregular warfare.

A forthcoming Army report that considers the future security environment envisions the Army operating in or near population centers, which places a premium on close-quarter survivability and tactical

mobility.<sup>3</sup> Light and medium forces are vulnerable against modern antitank weapons and even the outdated armor found throughout the developing world. A mix of forces that includes heavy forces may provide a significant advantage.

A 2008 RAND study of medium-armored forces like the Stryker BCTs found those forces to have four clear advantages over heavy forces—strategic mobility, higher road speed, a smaller logistical footprint, and greater trafficability in areas with an immature infrastructure.<sup>4</sup> However, they present a commensurate loss of firepower, protection, and cross-country mobility that requires detailed strategic planning, intelligence, and supporting arms to compensate for.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from the study that the Army is better off with a mix of force types that complement each other and help it remain prepared for both conventional and irregular warfare. Some worry that Army transformation is coming at the expense of armored and mechanized forces and combined arms maneuver warfare. One of the takeaways of the RAND study is that armor, both medium and heavy, has historically been very useful in irregular warfare. The method of employment is what has been decisive. In the era of persistent conflict, Army forces conduct security missions and large offensive operations across substantial areas.<sup>6</sup> Many counterinsurgent and stability missions and operations are tactically defensive in nature, but U.S. land forces still need to prepare to conduct classic conventional operations against threat forces that field armor or advanced antitank systems. Eliminating too many of our heavy BCTs may increase our vulnerability to these threat forces.

The Israelis discovered this lesson the hard way in Lebanon in 2006. Up to 40 percent of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) casualties, including dismounted infantry, were due to modern antitank systems.<sup>7</sup> This led the IDF to refocus its doctrine and training for maneuver warfare, armored weapon systems, and conventional combat preparation.<sup>8</sup> These changes were evident during the 2008 war against Hamas in Gaza.<sup>9</sup> While irregular warfare is a likely part of the Army’s future, it would be unwise to assume that conflicts like counterinsurgencies will be its exclusive bill of fare. The Army may want to maintain a significant heavy force within the active component.

Soldiers and marines in mechanized formations have proven their ability to conduct counterinsurgency and irregular warfare successfully since 2003. Many of those troops have published their experiences in numerous periodicals. A sampling of their writings provides some insights in considering armor for irregular warfare.

First, mechanized forces clearly have different tactical applications than light and Stryker forces. Second, those forces are highly adaptable and are quite capable of overcoming their structural limitations. Finally, the determinant of success or failure seems to be the presence of creative, adaptive leaders and training.<sup>10</sup> Modifications to structure and training may be the most effective way for heavy armor to remain relevant in force planning for a future of irregular warfare.

The current wars have reminded many of us of the infantryman's importance in any conflict. Infantrymen are central to the success of mechanized forces in irregular warfare. Mechanized infantrymen have mobility, firepower, and the ability to clear complex terrain with their organic firepower in overwatch.

There is some question as to the proper ratio of heavy forces to light and Stryker forces as the Army rebalances its structure for the current operating environment. The risk for the Army and the United States is that the rebalancing results in fewer mechanized forces than necessary to respond adequately to unforeseen threats. Future threats to the United States may have greater warfighting capabilities, and we may sorely miss the mobility and firepower of mechanized forces if the Army's rebalance leans too far away from them. Nonstate organizations like Hezbollah have arguably demonstrated military capability greater than that of enemy forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and mechanized forces are well suited to counter that

capability. This nonstate or hybrid threat is one for which Israel was not fully prepared when it fought Hezbollah in 2006. There is some concern, even within the Israeli government, that the IDF had been lulled into a false sense that there was no longer a conventional military threat to Israel and that, in the future, Israeli security concerns would center around irregular warfare with the Israeli Air Force able to defeat conventional threats.<sup>11</sup> This reduced the need for conventional-style maneuver or firepower. The Israelis looked to air power as the answer.

The U.S. Army may be making a similar mistake—establishing a need for ground combat power for irregular warfare with only limited capability against more conventional threats from irregular forces. The IDF's performance in Gaza in 2009 showed that they had learned these lessons and made changes to better fight the hybrid threat.

Even if the United States were to focus exclusively on irregular warfare, mechanized forces can play a decisive role. Most current literature on irregular warfare focuses on the early stages of insurgency, not the latter stages or other military operations in which conventional forces play a decisive role.

A look at the literature on insurgency suggests that the irregular force must become more conventional if it is to achieve its political and military objectives. Insurgency is offensive tactically, but defensive strategically, which is not decisive.

According to Mao Tse-Tung, there are three stages to an insurgency: strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and strategic counteroffensive.<sup>12</sup> In the defensive phase, the insurgent seeks to gain support from the civilian population using subversion and coercion. In a strategic stalemate, insurgent forces have achieved some level of parity with government forces as well as some measure of popular support. Insurgent forces may also provide services to the population in an effort to subvert the government. In the strategic counteroffensive phase, insurgent forces are stronger than the government and transition from guerrilla warfare to more conventional high-tempo warfare. The insurgencies in Algeria and Vietnam were examples of such high-tempo warfare, as were insurgencies of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Jaysh Al-Mahdi in southern Iraq. High-tempo counterinsurgency forces may be decisive in neutralizing insurgents and forcing a retrograde back to the strategic defensive.

***Modifications to structure and training may be the most effective way for heavy armor to remain relevant...***

## The Utility of Armor

Armored and mechanized forces have proven their worth in irregular warfare, but this fact seems to be lost on many analysts of future forces. There are numerous examples of mechanized forces being decisive in conventional-style irregular warfare and counterinsurgency and stability operations. Armored forces led assaults through the city of Fallujah during the November 2004 battle to reclaim the city from entrenched terrorists.<sup>13</sup> During the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, conventional forces equipped with armor played major roles in the Battle of Hue and several battles around Saigon. Armored and mechanized forces were instrumental in defeating enemy forces in all types of terrain.<sup>14</sup> The experiences of combat in Iraq have also shown the utility of armored and mechanized forces in combat against irregular forces when the operations tempo increased and they defended terrain or otherwise sought decisive engagement with U.S. forces. For example, during the Battle of Fallujah, U.S. forces used armor effectively in assault and support roles against insurgent forces who had chosen to stand and fight. The employment of

armor in such a non-traditional manner may have contributed to the relatively low casualty rate for U.S. forces in the battle, as well as to the high tempo of the advance and the short duration of the fight.<sup>15</sup> Irregular forces will, at some point, attempt to fight regular forces in a more conventional manner to achieve objectives.

Operation Iraqi Freedom provides many contemporary examples of successful employment of armored and mechanized forces in irregular warfare. The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's successful counterinsurgency operations in and around Tal Afar, Iraq, are one example.<sup>16</sup> Those of the 1st BCT, 1st Armored Division, in Ramadi, Iraq, are another.<sup>17</sup> The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment is a heavy cavalry regiment designed to conduct reconnaissance, security, and economy of force operations for a corps commander. At its heart are three ground cavalry squadrons of M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle scout platoons and M1 tank platoons. In comparison to infantry brigades or even other heavy brigades, the regiment has fewer Soldiers available to conduct dismounted operations while still maintaining full mounted



U.S. Marine Corps, Lance CPL Joseph A. Lambach

U.S. Marines perform pre-mission checks on an M1A1 Abrams tank in Camp Fallujah, Iraq, 21 January 2007.



capabilities. Its deployment to Tal Afar began with a kinetic operation to gain a foothold in the city and to collect intelligence.<sup>18</sup> The regiment's heavy force structure was beneficial in the early kinetic operations. The 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment was favorably asymmetric against most irregular forces in most areas. In areas that restricted the movement of armored vehicles, the regiment used a combination of Iraqi Security Forces and dismounted U.S. forces to great effect. Although it was task-organized with an airborne infantry battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division, most of the force was mechanized. The key to success was leadership and intellectual agility. Leaders had to understand the situation beyond its tactical aspects and employ available forces in the most effective way to take advantage of capabilities and mitigate limitations through adaptive force employment.

Influenced by 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's success, 1st BCT, 1st Armored Division (1/1AD), conducted a similar operation in Ramadi, Iraq. While the operation focused on the civilian population, the brigade was in regular enemy contact. The 1st BCT was successful in a manpower-intensive counterinsurgency strategy while simultaneously fighting irregular forces. The brigade used its armored vehicles and crews to operate combat outposts throughout the city and to conduct route clearance operations in support of those outposts. Its use of armored forces is an example of their utility in irregular warfare; the onus is on the employment of those forces, not the forces themselves.

Armored and mechanized forces have done much of the fighting in Iraq in various configurations. At times, they have been standard mechanized formations, motorized without their armored vehicles, and even dismounted, but these variations in organization demonstrate the flexibility of the formations and the adaptability of their leaders. If the Army has both the right organizations and adaptive leaders, armor can still play an important role in irregular warfare.

## **Armor Below the Brigade**

Much of the focus in recent years has been on the Army's shift to becoming a brigade-centric organization. However, what may be real progress in Army force employment from a doctrinal standpoint is the deployment of smaller armor

***... what may be real progress in Army force employment... is the deployment of smaller armor packages to operational theaters.***

packages to operational theaters. This is not a new concept, even within the Army, but the idea does not get the same doctrinal or operational treatment elsewhere. There is clearly a role for armored and mechanized forces in irregular warfare because of their inherent capabilities. As the Army looks to reduce the amount of armor it employs, we risk losing or lessening a capability that most irregular forces cannot match. We risk losing a form of asymmetry. The U.S. Marine Corps and foreign services have acknowledged the value of armor and focused on its employment. When the Marine Corps reorganized Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), it decided to maintain an organic armored presence within the organization, with Colonel Gregg Olson, the 11th MEU commander, going so far as to say that he is a "firm believer that there's plenty of problems that can be solved with an M1A1 battle tank."<sup>19</sup>

The smallest Marine Air-Ground Task Force is the Marine Expeditionary Unit, which contains a ground combat element built around a reinforced infantry battalion that typically includes an M1 tank platoon, a light armored vehicle platoon, and an amphibious assault vehicle company.<sup>20</sup> Obviously the Marine Corps, a light infantry fighting force, values having an armor capability available for most operations and seeks to maintain and upgrade this capability. As the United States prepares for more Iraq and Afghanistan scenarios and operations in failed or failing states, the Marine Corps continues to preserve an armor capability, even deploying U.S. tanks to parts of Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup>

The differences between the employment of armor and employment of limited mechanized forces may be useful to consider. With only three tank battalions and seven mechanized battalions to support 36 infantry battalions, Marine Corps armored and mechanized forces typically deploy

US Marine Corps CPL Ned Johnson



**Marines with Delta Company, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, fire the main cannon of an M1A1 Abrams tank at a range at Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 13 January 2011.**

in much smaller support packages. For example, marine tank platoons deploy with embarking MEUs, and the Marine Corps doctrinally employs tanks at the section level in support of infantry companies in a direct-fire support role.<sup>22</sup> While the Army has some similar experience, Marine Corps doctrine and training specifically address the employment considerations and command relationships unique to such a task organization. Stryker BCTs have similarly employed the Stryker Mobile Gun System in support of infantry, but, with some exceptions, most of the Army does not conduct operations in a comparable manner. One of the key exceptions is the deployment of the reinforced company-sized units that prepare to deploy in support of the airborne forces.

The most recent example of such a use of armored and mechanized forces is Operation Airborne Dragon. On 7 April 2003, U.S. Army, Europe, deployed Task Force 1-63 Armor in support of the

173d Airborne Brigade to support the opening of a northern front during the invasion of Iraq. Task Force 1-63 contained the battalion headquarters, a tank company, a mechanized infantry company, and combat support and combat service support elements. The two maneuver companies supported a full airborne brigade during this early phase of the war.<sup>23</sup> Employing armor in such situations may be more likely in the future. The introduction of heavy forces was a clear escalation, and one for which the Iraqi forces in the north had no answers. This was a form of asymmetric warfare, and it provided a marked advantage for both the 173rd Airborne and the special operations forces that Task Force 1-63 supported. The immediate ready task force that deployed by air is not a new concept for the Army, but it still lacks doctrinal support. The preparation, deployment, employment, and sustainment of Task Force 1-63 posed unique challenges for the Army, yet the use of a small, mechanized task force in

support of light forces was successful. We should codify lessons learned in this operation and in similar deployments. While irregular warfare may not see large armored forces sweeping across vast swaths of land, the use of those armored forces may still be beneficial.

## The Canadian Experience

Canada is one of the main U.S. allies in Afghanistan. Its forces operate primarily in Regional Command East, which includes Kandahar, one of the most volatile areas in Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> Because of the tactics the Taliban used against Canadian forces, the Canadians chose to use some armored forces in Afghanistan, specifically tanks and engineers.<sup>25</sup> While there were clearly challenges in deploying armor to Afghanistan, there were some valid lessons to learn for future force employment even in this restrictive terrain.

Force employment and the tactical tasks the Canadian armored troops received were outside published doctrine. Training on some of these non-doctrinal tasks may help to make them more standard and prepare our forces to better integrate all elements of combat power.

To integrate armor more closely with light infantry, Canadian forces task organized their armor down to the platoon and section level.<sup>26</sup> This is similar to Marine Corps methods of armor employment. Employment of mechanized forces in Afghanistan required a somewhat unorthodox method of command and control, with the dismounted and mounted leaders handing over control for different phases of combat operations.<sup>27</sup> Battle handover can be one of the more complex tactical tasks. Mechanized and armored units also task organize at the same levels, but this, too, falls outside published doctrine. Doctrine for mechanized forces should include task organization below the platoon level, especially in an irregular environment.

There were other notable findings of the Canadian experiment with armor in Afghanistan. The Canadian forces discovered that in Afghanistan, their tank plows and rollers were effective in route clearance operations against improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These implements were also effective in

hasty and deliberate minefield breaches, as well as breakthroughs in complex terrain.<sup>28</sup> The United States will likely never see a battlefield without some form of IEDs, and even light forces usually require some logistical support that must travel along vulnerable routes. Route reconnaissance and security may be a role for which mechanized forces are well suited.

There is a psychological value to the employment of armor as well, even in the developing world and among irregular forces fielding obsolete armor. The Canadians found that armor led to a greater resolve among soldiers, and they found that the presence of increased combat power reduced the kinetics of their operations.<sup>29</sup>

Forces must employ armor in combined arms teams to be successful, but there is clearly a place for armor in light infantry-based combined arms teams. Mirroring findings in the U.S. Army, the Canadians found that their individual training for armor crewmembers needed to focus on basic skills, including physical fitness, marksmanship, crew-level tasks, and first aid.<sup>30</sup> These basics are necessary regardless of the conflict or the terrain.

Finally, in open areas of Afghanistan, like southern Afghanistan, Taliban forces tended not to engage armored and mechanized Canadian forces. This is



U.S. Marine Corps, Lance Cpl. James J. Vooris

**U.S. Marines take cover during operations, Fallujah, Iraq, 10 December 2004.**

likely attributable to the extended range of the Leopard C2 tanks they deployed.<sup>31</sup> Deploying armor shows a resolve that few weapon systems can match.

However, there are limitations to the utility and effectiveness of armored and mechanized forces in places such as Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup> There are vast areas where the terrain is simply too restrictive, the logistical burden too heavy, and risk of collateral damage too great in comparison to small arms. Tactical and strategic situations will often dictate that the benefits—greater mobility in open areas, survivability, firepower, and psychological influence—outweigh the limitations in using such forces.

The Canadian experiment with armor in Afghanistan is a reminder that force employment—the way a commander uses his available troops—is the decisive factor in war. U.S. military planners should consider innovative ways to use all three types of Army BCTs in irregular war and develop doctrine to prevent institutional amnesia once the current wars end. The Marine Corps deployment of M1A1 tanks to Afghanistan may be partially in response to the withdrawal of Canadian and Dutch armor, but these countries had a fair amount of success with tanks in the same region. The added benefit that the Canadians and Dutch did not have was crews and leaders who had experience with armored and mechanized forces in irregular warfare. U.S. leaders, staffs, and crews can call upon a trove of lessons learned and intuition gained from their combat and counterinsurgency experiences over the last seven years in Iraq. While the terrain, civilian, and logistical landscapes are different, the principles are the same. The experience, adaptability, and innovation of U.S. forces may lead to a much more positive outcome.

## Conclusion

Armored and mechanized forces have shown their effectiveness in built-up areas in numerous engagements in Iraq and have exhibited a great

deal of utility in other operations short of war. The key determinant to their effectiveness in irregular warfare is force employment—how we use them, not necessarily where.

As the Army studies further changes to its force structure, defense planners should reconsider the value they assign to heavy BCTs. Tactical maneuver and mobility are critical to success in modern warfare.<sup>33</sup> The heavy BCT, when employed with competence, innovation, and a clear understanding of capabilities and limitations, provides a marked advantage.

In modern warfare, techniques of cover and concealment, tactical combined arms maneuver, and small-unit initiative reduce vulnerability.<sup>34</sup> The Army should develop doctrine for mechanized forces that addresses these techniques and other considerations in irregular war. Any transition from conventional combat to irregular warfare requires stability and reconstruction after U.S. forces have achieved their objectives.<sup>35</sup>

Current Army doctrine, while still evolving, does not adequately address the role of armored and mechanized forces in irregular warfare. Also noteworthy is the apparent decline in the influence of armor in favor of speed and precision. The decline of the role of mechanized forces may be due to the belief that the future will consist of counterinsurgencies and police actions. Mechanized forces may not, by themselves, be the ideal type of forces to conduct irregular warfare, but when used as a complement to lighter forces they may bring a unique capability to the battlefield for which an enemy force must account. When integrated with dedicated counterinsurgent forces, mechanized forces can provide timely and critical direct fire support and support security operations, and complicate the calculus for the enemy.

As the Army redesigns to better prepare for the future, it may want to consider the forces available and the uses to which it employs them. Even if the future does present a new generation

***...force employment—the way a commander uses his available troops—is the decisive factor in war.***



of counterinsurgencies and stability operations, mechanized forces may be ideal for economy of force operations. Mechanized forces must be prepared individually, collectively, and doctrinally regardless of the situation or terrain in which they may find themselves. Creative and adaptive leaders have been highly successful using mechanized forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, where force employment is decisive.

As the Army reorganizes, brigades are becoming lighter. In today's Joint environment, questions logically arise: If the Army chooses to eschew most of its armored and mechanized capabilities in favor of a lighter posture, what will it use to fill the resulting void? What will make the Army unique within the Joint framework toward which the U.S. military marches? As technology proliferates and diffuses, what will provide an asymmetric advantage in the future? **MR**

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# Fighting to Understand

## A Practical Example of Design at the Battalion Level

Lieutenant Colonel Pat Proctor, U.S. Army

**S**INCE ITS BEGINNINGS as an emerging concept, there has been a great deal of debate and confusion about just what design is. That is not surprising. In some ways, any attempt to describe design is an attempt to describe the indescribable.

Design is, by its nature, a creative process that defies form or structure, an inherently free-form, creative process that allows a staff to understand, frame, and solve complex problems. Even its name has been hard to fix. Over time, adherents have called it “systemic operational design,” “commander’s appreciation and campaign design,” “campaign design,” and simply “design.”

Before the publication of the new Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (March 2010) finally made Design a formal part of Army doctrine, there were only a few places to turn for descriptions of the concept. The first attempt to enshrine campaign design in Army doctrine came in FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which dedicated all of chapter 4 to campaign design. The first publication solely devoted to design came from the U.S. Army Capabilities Integration Center. After numerous draft versions, which were, for several years, the only detailed description of design, the center’s efforts were finally published as TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, *Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design* (28 January 2008).

Several authors in past editions of *Military Review* have also produced solid explanations of design theory, including Major Ketti Davison (“From Tactical Planning to Operational Design,” September-October 2008), Brigadier General (retired) Huba Wass de Czege (“Systemic Operational Design: Learning and Adapting in Complex Missions,” January-February 2009), and Colonel Stefan J. Banach (“The Art of Design: A Design Methodology” and “Educating by Design: Preparing Leaders for a Complex World,” March-April 2009).

This article will not tread ground these previous sources have ably covered. Instead, this article offers a case study for application of design to a real world problem, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment’s combat operations in the Tikrit and ad Dawr districts of Salah ad Din province, Iraq, from 2009 to 2010.

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PHOTO: U.S. SSG Miguel Rodriguez, serving in Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, in support of 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, leads his platoon after receiving small arms fire during a routine security mission in rural Tikrit, Iraq, 17 March 2010. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Jason Stewart / RELEASED)

By applying the concepts of design to this complex, adaptive environment, we, the officers of Task Force Patriot, developed a deeper understanding and more appropriate solutions to the problems we faced than we could have achieved using a more traditional planning methodology. In the process, we learned a number of lessons and developed a number of techniques that leaders can easily transfer to any situation that calls for a design solution.

## Which Design?

In mid-2009, without the benefit of the newest version of FM 5-0, the first question we had to answer was what design tools were appropriate to the problem we faced. We chose to borrow from all of the literature on the subject to distill theory into techniques we could integrate with the more familiar Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). This exercise yielded some core ideas that carried us through multiple iterations of design before and during our tour in Iraq. Surprisingly, the principles we finally settled on fit very closely with those in the new FM 5-0. The principles are as follows:

**Understand the problem before seeking a solution.** Traditional, systematic planning methodologies like MDMP rest on the underlying premise that analysis alone will identify the problem a military force is required to solve. Contemporary design theory, on the other hand, posits that, in a complex environment, there are many problems; some of them cannot be solved, others should not be solved. In design, problem identification is an end, in and of itself.<sup>1</sup>

**Improve understanding through discourse.** Discourse, or “critical discussion” as it is called in FM 3-24, is the process by which military professionals, informed both by their experience and their independent investigation, arrive at a better shared understanding of an environment, a problem, and a proposed solution.<sup>2</sup>

**One’s understanding is just a theory.** In a complex, adaptive environment, some things will be obvious, some things will only seem obvious, and some things will be completely opaque. The shared understanding a design team achieves through discourse is just a theory.<sup>3</sup> Some or all of it could well be wrong, especially initially.

**Incorporate learning into the Design.** It is as important for the unit to improve its understanding

as it is to solve the problem it identifies. The problem the design team identifies is based on its shared understanding of the environment. The better the design team understands the environment, the better the solution it will develop.<sup>4</sup>

**Reframe as necessary.** An old adage says that one must “fight the enemy, not the plan.” A design team should not be reluctant to start over if its understanding of a problem turns out to be wrong. The operational logic that drives all of the tactical actions a military force executes relies on an understanding, a theory, about the environment. If that theory is disproven, the design team *must* develop a new theory to understand the environment and redesign some or all of the campaign.<sup>5</sup>

## Design in Practice: Initial Design

We in the Proud American Battalion initially heard in May 2009 that we would deploy to the Salah ad Din province of Iraq. Soon after the end of our mission readiness exercise at the National Training Center in June, the staff was relatively sure the battalion would be replacing elements of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, in the Tikrit and ad Dawr districts of the province, and it began mission analysis.

Doing mission analysis before design is a departure from both the prevailing design theory and the new FM 5-0.<sup>6</sup> In all of the current and draft doctrine, design exists outside of, and before, the MDMP. We decided to depart from this methodology because we knew so little about the area to which we would deploy. The unit’s last deployment had been to Baghdad, and some of the staff members had never even been to Iraq.<sup>7</sup> The staff needed much more information to engage in informed discourse.

The technique the staff implemented was iterative mission analysis. The staff conducted an initial mission analysis by mining secret sources for every scrap of information we could find on the area of operations. We also made contact with the units we would replace and got as much information about the area as we could. When we were satisfied we had gathered as much data as possible, we analyzed that data and conducted a traditional mission analysis brief to share the knowledge.

Then, departing from the traditional MDMP, we did not immediately launch into planning by beginning course of action development.

Instead, the staff began the more creative design process. The staff no longer organized along warfighting functions. We became a design team. Initially, we divided the team into four two-man working groups, each with an area for further study and a time and date to report to the whole group. In these whole-design-team sessions, we discussed the ideas each working group provided and consolidated them into a shared understanding of the environment.

The first breakout group collected public media statements from the president and other national leaders; national strategy documents; and Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), and Multi-National Division-North (MND-N) operations orders. The group then combined this material with the purpose, key tasks, and end state articulated by the brigade commander in his commander's intent. We did this to arrive at a deeper understanding of what we were really being asked to do and why.

Two other groups were divided geographically, one in the Tikrit district, the other in the ad Dawr district. They used both secret and unclassified sources to conduct a political, military, economic, social, infrastructural, and informational analysis of each district.<sup>8</sup> They emphasized the political, economic, and social factors often neglected in traditional mission analysis.

The final group had the challenging task of tying together the distant history of Islam and the recent history of successive occupation of the area by the 4th Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division, and finally the 25th Infantry Division, and communicating the impact each left on our future area of operations.

As the design team brought all of these perspectives together, a picture began to emerge of our area and what we should be doing there, or in design parlance, the environmental and problem frame.<sup>9</sup>

Salah ad Din province was the home province of Saddam Hussein and the center of power under his regime. Since the beginning of the war, the battalion's area of operations—the Tikrit and ad Dawr districts—had become a study in contrasts.



U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Luke P. Thelen

**U.S. Army SFC Christopher Currie of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, talks with children after attending a meeting at a police station in the town of Wynot, near Tikrit, Iraq, 16 November 2009.**



The Tikrit district contained the provincial capital and many of the most powerful provincial leaders. However, just downstream on the Tigris River in the ad Dawr district, the people had no political power at all; in the 2009 provincial elections, the district did not win a single provincial council seat.

In the midst of this disenfranchisement was a huge pool of soon-to-be-unemployed, military-aged males—the Sons of Iraq. This hodge-podge military force, stood up by Sunni sheikhs as part of the *Sawah* (the Awakening) to defeat Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), was now in a state of limbo. The central government in Baghdad didn't want them, but continued to pay them—reluctantly and often late—for fear they would drift into the ranks of insurgent groups.<sup>10</sup> In our area, there were over 1,500 Sons of Iraq, an appealing prize for our dominant insurgent group, Jaysh Rijal Tariqah al-Naqshabandi (JRTN), the armed wing of the New Ba'ath Party.<sup>11</sup>

The brigade had directed the Proud Americans to advise and assist Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army units in our area of operations. Yet, all of the reports from the units the battalion would replace and the military transition team in the area uniformly praised the quality of both the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army. Advising and assisting the Iraqi security forces would require very little effort.

Another factor that loomed large over our impending deployment was the transition that would soon take place in Iraq. President Obama had already announced that he would reduce U.S. forces in Iraq to 50,000 by August 2010.<sup>12</sup> Indications were that the brigade would begin some dramatic transition around March 2010. It was unclear initially whether that meant redeployment or expansion to a much larger area of operations, but it was clear that the Patriot battalion was under a time crunch, with only about six months—from October 2009 to March 2010—to concentrate on the Tikrit and ad Dawr districts. We, as a design team, had to be realistic about what we could accomplish in this short time.

The design team pulled all of these elements together to form the campaign design. Our theory was that, if we did nothing, the tendency of the environment would be for ad Dawr's disenfranchisement to worsen and for the Sons of Iraq to be fired and sent back into their communities unemployed. This would leave the district with 500



U.S. Army, SGT Kari Ronningen

**Iraqi Army officers, sheikhs, Sons of Iraq, and U.S. soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, attend a ceremony in Tikrit, Iraq, 11 February 2009.**

military-aged males, many former insurgents, available for recruitment by JRTN. Our desired end state was that the Sons of Iraq find gainful employment and ad Dawr find a legitimate, nonviolent voice in the politics of Salah ad Din province.

The problem statement then was the difference between the perceived tendency of our operational environment and our desired end state:

- We had only six months left to affect the situation in our area of operation (AO). After that, district and local governments and security forces would be on their own.

- There was a sizable force of Sons of Iraq that the government was reluctant to pay. JRTN was already actively recruiting them, and these were all potential insurgents if the situation deteriorated after we departed.

- Ad Dawr district had no political representation in the Salah ad Din provincial government. When the coalition money departed, projects in the district would dry up, fomenting discontent in the

rural populace (which contains a large number of former Sons of Iraq).

Our operational approach was to try to find alternate employment for the Sons of Iraq and to create a relationship between the ad Dawr district government and the Salah ad Din provincial government that would endure after U.S. forces departed.

In addition, of course, we would partner with Iraqi security forces (ISF) in our area of operations as directed by brigade.

We chose to communicate this operational approach to the battalion using a lines of effort construct that would be immediately familiar to commanders. However, at the bottom of the lines of effort, we also included a diagram that graphically illustrated the goal of our efforts, that is, increasing ad Dawr's political power while reducing the number of Sons of Iraq. The diagram, along with a restated mission and commander's intent, constituted the battalion's campaign design.

With this design established, the Patriot staff transitioned back into a traditional MDMP structure and completed a plan that arrayed the battalion's forces, assigned tasks and purposes to each unit, and synchronized and resourced them to achieve the commander's intent. The result was the campaign plan that the task force then carried forward into Iraq.

## Emerging Understanding, Emerging Design

Not surprisingly, learning began almost immediately after the Proud Americans arrived in Iraq. A pattern began to emerge as we began the relief in place and began to engage key leaders in our area of operations. All of the power brokers, key provincial council members, key police officials, and key bureaucrats were from one city in the AO, al Alam, across the Tigris River from Tikrit. Moreover, they were all from the same tribe, the al Jibouris. Likewise, all the key leaders we met in the ad Dawr district government were from the city of ad Dawr and the al Duri tribe. The staff began to suspect that the cause of disenfranchisement in the ad Dawr district was not political, but tribal. We decided we needed to reframe the problem.

A hasty design team assembled and immediately began to mine all of the secret and unclassified sources available for the history of the al Jibouri

and al Duri tribes. After a few days of investigation, we believed we had found an answer. When Vice President Saddam Hussein executed his coup and deposed President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr to become president of Iraq, he did so with the help of tribes from his home province, the al Jibouris and the al Duris. Both tribes shared in the spoils of his victory; the al Jibouris took many of the top positions in the Iraqi army, especially the Republican Guard, while the al Duris took many of the key political positions, including the vice presidency. After the Gulf War, however, the al Jibouris decided they had had enough and hatched a succession of plots to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Saddam's reprisals were ruthless. Hundreds of senior al Jibouris were killed.<sup>13</sup> Only the fact that Saddam needed them to run his army saved the tribe from utter destruction.

The al Duris had remained loyal throughout this episode, so perhaps the al Jibouris resented that the al Duris had not joined them when they turned on Saddam. Perhaps some al Duris even participated in Saddam's purges of the al Jibouris. Our expanded understanding of the environment led us to believe we had discovered a tribal feud and that ad Dawr's lack of representation in civil government was only the political manifestation of this deeper problem.

Based on this insight, we modified our operational approach. The "political" line of effort was renamed the "social-political" line of effort to indicate that we would be dealing with both a tribal and a civil government. We would continue to foster communication between the district and provincial governments (in the political realm), but we would also find the key tribal leaders in each tribe, and foster a reconciliation, a *sulh*, between the two tribes (in the social realm). With this modified operational approach, the staff again transitioned back to its MDMP structure, and this process generated new specified tasks for battery commanders, synchronized in time to achieve a new, expanded commander's intent.

## Back to the Drawing Board

As certain as the staff was that it had found the real problem in the area of operations, this approach only carried the battalion through the transfer of authority and about a month of operations. Problems

with our theory began to emerge as commanders began to move through their battle space, talking to key tribal, political, and security leaders. At first, no one would acknowledge that any feud existed, even when pressed. We identified the top al Jibouri sheikh in Salah ad Din, but he expressed no animosity toward the al Duris. None of the al Duri sheikhs seemed to perceive any rift with the al Jibouris, either. Moreover, when we looked more closely, we discovered ongoing interactions taking place between the ad Dawr district and Salah ad Din provincial governments; the al Duri chair of the ad Dawr council periodically travelled to Tikrit to talk to members of the provincial council. While ad Dawr was definitely poor, lacking services and industry, it was still communicating with the provincial council.

Other confusing signals challenged our picture of our environment as well. The city of ad Dawr *was* poor, with rampant unemployment and no industry to speak of, yet the al Duri sheikhs we met all seemed to have nice cars and plenty of money. Additionally, no matter how many al Duri sheikhs we met, none of them was the top sheikh, the chief of all of the sub-tribes of the al Duri. How could the battalion forge reconciliation without a sheikh to represent the al Duris?

The city of ad Dawr did not seem to be responding as we expected, either. Security was always good in the city—until U.S. forces entered. When the Proud American soldiers entered the city of ad Dawr, they encountered uniform animosity from the populace. The unit that preceded us, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, received small arms fire nearly every time they entered the city. Despite Task Force Patriot's engagement with the leadership and a significant surge of Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) money, it was not long before our battalion met with the same reception. This violence finally culminated in tragedy when Corporal Tony Carrasco was shot and killed in ad Dawr on 4 November 2009.

It was obvious to the staff that its understanding of the AO (and thus the operational approach) was flawed. We needed to find a new theory that better explained what we were seeing. The battalion began another process of reframing. We sought more information, expanding the search for understanding by engaging other tribes to get a neutral perspective. The first breakthrough came when the battalion engaged the top sheikh of the albu Nasiri, Saddam Hussein's tribe. Like other sheikhs, he saw no feud between the al Jibouris and al Duris. However, what was most interesting was that, when asked the identity of the head sheikh of the al Duris, he demurred, obviously uncomfortable with the question.

The battalion also sought the opinion of Iraqi security officials with experience in the city. Some of the most valuable information came from an al Duri police lieutenant colonel driven out of the town in 2006. He told us that he and his father, one of the al Duri sub-tribe sheikhs, had worked hard to make both the district council and security forces more inclusive, enfranchising not just the 35,000 people inside the city of ad Dawr, but also the 40,000 or more people who lived outside the city, in the rural areas of the district.<sup>14</sup> The mayor and chair of the district council opposed this effort. Their opposition culminated in the expulsion of the lieutenant colonel from the town, violent intimidation that drove many of the rural tribal leaders out of the district council, and, in December 2006, a car-bomb attack that destroyed the Joint coordination center where the more inclusive security force worked.<sup>15</sup> When the smoke cleared, the ad Dawr district council and police force were both dominated by a single sub-tribe of the al Duris.

The staff also began reviewing the recent history of ad Dawr, as related by officers in the battalion who had served in the area in previous tours and as found in documents that had passed from unit to unit since the beginning of the war. The investigation revealed that Task Force Patriot's experience

***It was obvious to the staff that its understanding of the AO (and thus the operational approach) was flawed. We needed to find a new theory that better explained what we were seeing.***



U.S. Army, SGT Jason Stewart

**U.S. Army SSG John Kratz, serving in Alpha Battery 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, in support of 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, helps clear the area after receiving small arms fire during a routine security mission in rural Tikrit, Iraq, 17 March 2010.**

in ad Dawr was not unique. Every unit that had assumed responsibility for ad Dawr since 2003 had taken a similar, standard counterinsurgency approach: identify the root complaints of the populace and try to address those problems to co-opt the insurgents. Each effort had ended in failure. The coalition forces had cleared and held the city on at least three different occasions, most recently as part of the Iraq “surge” in 2007.<sup>16</sup> In each instance, conditions seemed to improve but, as soon as the city returned to local security force control, the insurgency reemerged.

With this new historical perspective, we began to ask different questions of the political and tribal leaders across the rest of the AO. The picture that began to emerge shattered our original perception of our operational environment. Repeatedly, leaders from across our area of operations told us that the city of ad Dawr had refused to accept the reality of the present. The most powerful people in the town were high-ranking generals and bureaucrats from the former regime, now shut out of opportunities in the new Iraq. They were “children,” as one sheikh put it, “stuck in the past,” and not willing to move

into the future. While ad Dawr had “Concerned Local Citizens,” it did not have Sons of Iraq; the al Duris never joined the *Sawah* and never turned on the Sunni insurgency. When Al-Qaeda in Iraq was powerful in Salah ad Din, ad Dawr embraced them. Now JRTN was powerful, and ad Dawr embraced JRTN instead. “AQI or JRTN,” one senior police leader told us, “they are the same people with a new banner.” The staff also discovered that Izaat Ibrahim al Duri, the former Iraqi vice president, was an ad Dawr native, a recognized sheikh of the Naqshabandi order, and the current head of JRTN.<sup>17</sup>

Armed with all of this new information, the design team again convened and forged a new understanding of the operational environment. First, we believed the elusive head sheikh of the al Duris we had been looking for was none other than Izaat Ibrahim al Duri. JRTN’s “brand name” was its reputation for resisting U.S. forces. By videotaping and posting its attacks to the Internet, JRTN generated income from like-minded individuals across the Islamic world. We theorized that JRTN was actually the primary industry in ad Dawr, the source of the wealth the al Duri sub-sheikhs displayed.



Clearing and holding and other counterinsurgency techniques had failed in ad Dawr because they *were* all based on separating the populace from the insurgents. But the people of the city of ad Dawr were the insurgents and the only way to address their grievance would be to put Saddam Hussein back in charge of Iraq.

The design team also theorized that the political disenfranchisement of ad Dawr we had observed even before we arrived in Iraq was real. The other tribes in the area had decided to join the political process and participate in the future of Iraq and, as a result, had turned their backs on the al Duris and the city of ad Dawr, the spiritual center of JRTN, which chose to remain in the past. If enfranchising ad Dawr was not to be Task Force Patriot's goal, what should our goal be? What problem should we be trying to solve? An answer began to emerge when we reviewed the "white noise" in our engagement notes.

The white noise consisted of things key leaders said to our commanders that we initially ignored because they did not relate to the questions we were asking. The white noise was *fear of Baghdad*. A lingering and pervasive fear of all of the leaders we encountered across AO Proud Americans was fear of Baghdad. This fear was not without foundation. The central government had a Shia brigade of federal police "occupying" Samarra.<sup>18</sup> The Maliki government had repeatedly attempted military operations to detain high-level government and police leaders in Tikrit because of their alleged "former Ba'ath" ties. Baghdad had issued and rescinded an order numerous times to fire high-level police officials, including the provincial director of police, because of their roles in the former Ba'ath regime. The power of JRTN, the armed wing of the New Ba'ath Party, in Salah ad Din was the justification for Shia fears of a Ba'ath resurgence.

The staff believed that the tendency of the environment would be toward disaster if we did nothing: after the departure of U.S. forces, the Shia-dominated government would feel compelled to take heavy-handed measures in the city. This could reignite sectarian conflict and potentially lead to civil war.

A re-examination of MNF-I, MNC-I, and MND-N orders revealed that commanders at all

levels considered the potential failure of Sunni reconciliation a grave threat to the future stability of Iraq. The Proud American battalion had ad Dawr in its AO and was in a unique position to deal with the JRTN, the single greatest threat to Sunni reconciliation.

The battalion adopted the following problem statement:

*The ad Dawr district government is dominated by al Duris, which causes the whole district to be ostracized by the province, blocks rural access to provincial resources, creates a JRTN safe-haven in the city, and feeds GoI [Government of Iraq] charges of Salah ad Din's Ba'ath ties. Left unchecked, al Duri/JRTN domination of ad Dawr could drive the Shia-dominated GoI to respond militarily, potentially reigniting sectarian warfare.*

The battalion's desired end state became the defeat of JRTN.

Rather than follow the same clear and hold methodology that had failed before in ad Dawr, the design team proposed a three-pronged operational approach, which would occur along the same three lines of effort as the original campaign design to minimize the disruption to current operations. However, we changed "reintegration" to "economic transition" to communicate the shift from simply employment to the broader economic empowerment of rural ad Dawr. The key elements of the operational approach mirrored these three lines of effort:

- Use ISF partnership to maintain situational awareness on the security situation and disrupt the JRTN inside the city of ad Dawr.
- Use key leader engagements combined with CERP projects as leverage to unite the rural leaders in the ad Dawr district in preparation for district elections in late 2010.
- Use CERP projects and provincial reconstruction team expertise to help rural ad Dawr build sustainable industries that create jobs—especially for former Sons of Iraq and other potential JRTN members—that will be vital to the broader Iraqi economy after the departure of U.S. forces.

Thus, the ISF lines of effort focused on disrupting JRTN, but the decisive operation occurred along the social-political lines of effort, unifying

the sheikhs of rural ad Dawr marginalized by the al Duri-dominated district government. Economic transition would focus on building industries—primarily agriculture—in rural ad Dawr and employing Sons of Iraq and other potential JRTN recruits. With these two lines of effort, Task Force Patriot would try to co-opt the al Duris and JRTN politically and economically and move both the political and economic centers of power out of the city of ad Dawr and into the rural areas of the district.

## Fighting To Understand

The key to Task Force Patriot's success was the energy we expended learning about our environment. While this article has covered the major redesigns that occurred during the operation, we initiated dozens of smaller course corrections and refinements throughout our deployment. In our weekly targeting cycles, there were as many patrols working to answer questions about our environment—testing our hypotheses—as there were trying to change it. The staff was able to continuously update and revise its model for how the system, our battalion AO, worked. Practically every week, the battalion staff published updates to the operational picture or changes to the details of the lines of effort as the battalion charted its way forward in the campaign.

With each iteration of the design process based on an ever-increasing understanding of our operational environment, the task force drew closer to its end state. Throughout this process of iterative design, the Task Force Patriot staff also learned a number of lessons that might serve future staffs as they embark on the design process. The lessons are as follows:

**Seek to disprove your theory.** Design the campaign to constantly disprove the original understanding of the environment and the problem. If one attempts only to *prove* his first theory, one will almost certainly find a way to do so. The Proud

Americans lost valuable time trying to repair a tribal rift that did not exist. We could have saved this time if we had focused on trying to disprove our theory by putting al Jibouris and al Duris together in a room.

**Constantly consolidate understanding.** Every two weeks, we brought all of the commanders and staff of the battalion together to talk about what we were seeing in our AO. We constantly shifted the focus and format of this meeting so that the gathering never became a dry briefing, but remained a conversation. We often invited other travelers in our area, including the human terrain team, tactical psychological operations team, and provincial reconstruction team to provide their input.

**Nothing is “white noise.”** Every scrap of information enriched our understanding of the environment. Just because a fact is not important to the design team's current understanding of its environment does not mean that it will not be important sometime in the future, as the team's understanding evolves.

We lost many important pieces of the puzzle for understanding the politics of Salah ad Din province. The facts did not answer the questions we were asking at the time. The staff needed a method to capture and catalogue every detail discovered about the operational environment so that, if the questions change, soldiers do not have to be put in harm's way to gather information the unit once had, but lost.

## Conclusion

In the end, the Proud Americans' efforts did produce an effect on the district, the JRTN, and the future of Sunni reconciliation:

- A series of large-scale, ISF-led raids disrupted the JRTN in the critical days before the national elections.
- The provincial and district governments did find employment for the vast majority of the Sons of Iraq in our area of operations.
- Through targeted CERP projects, especially for electric infrastructure, the task force was able to reignite the dormant agricultural industry in rural ad Dawr and put many more Sons of Iraq to work.
- We were able to pass on to the unit that replaced us a united coalition of sheikhs from rural ad Dawr, organized and motivated to compete in district elections in late 2010. **MR**

***The key to Task Force Patriot's success was the energy we expended learning about our environment.***

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# How Emotional Intelligence Can Make a Difference

Gerald F. Sewell

**Resilience:** showing a tendency to recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus.

— Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership: Confident, Competent, and Agile

*You're going to see in the next probably 90-120 days that we'll come out with a comprehensive fitness program, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. What we realize is that we need to bring mental fitness to the same level of attention that we give to physical fitness because we're dealing with the realities of war. You can build resilience in mental fitness just like you can build resilience with pushups.*

— Chief of Staff of the Army General George W. Casey, Jr., 14 January 2009

*After eight years of war, we must better prepare our Soldiers and their Families to persevere with the challenges inherent to military service. The key to increased resiliency is placing the same level of enthusiasm toward conditioning our minds and souls as we place toward conditioning our bodies.*

— Brigadier General Ed Cardon, Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

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PHOTO: Soldiers fire their weapons as part of the "stress shoot" at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, 9 January 2011. (U.S. Army SGT Luther L. Boothe, Jr.)

IN OCTOBER 2006, the Army's revised leadership doctrine became official with the publication of Field Manual (FM) 6-22. The new leadership framework introduced by FM 6-22 highlighted 12 leader attributes and 8 leader competencies: what the leader needs to "Be, Know, and Do." Listed within the leadership attributes is the leader behavior "Resilience." FM 6-22 says, "Resilient leaders can recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining their mission and organizational focus. Their resilience rests on will, the inner drive that compels them to keep going, even when exhausted, hungry, afraid, cold, and wet. Resilience helps leaders and their organizations to carry difficult missions to their conclusion."<sup>1</sup>

This reference was the first recognition of the importance of resilience in Army leadership doctrine. Unfortunately, the four short paragraphs in FM 6-22 only look at one aspect of resilience, that of leaders in combat.

Fortunately, the Army has recognized the need for resiliency beyond the battlefield—and not just for soldiers, but for all members of the Army family. The necessity for strengthening this vital behavior has become more significant because of the stress on the force of more than nine years of war. The Casey and Cardon quotations above illustrate the increased importance Army leadership has placed on soldier resiliency and the major steps taken towards helping not just leaders but all members of the Army family to attain



greater levels of resiliency. The key element of this increased recognition and intent to build resiliency in the force is the introduction of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) initiative.

The Army's CSF initiative has a goal to build resiliency not just in leaders but also in all of the members of the Army family. According to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College website, CSF enables soldiers, families, and Army civilians to have increased resilience through a holistic approach that ensures a healthy, balanced force that excels in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict.<sup>2</sup>

The CSF program's stated purpose, as outlined in the 2009 Army Posture Statement, is to:

- Enhance resilience, [which is] achieved by a combination of specific training and improved fitness in the five domains of health.
- Decrease post-traumatic stress.

- Decrease the incidence of undesirable and destructive behaviors.

- Lead to a greater likelihood for post-adversity growth and success.<sup>3</sup>

The program has identified key areas to maintain in instilling and increasing resiliency as the five dimensions of strength:

- Emotional.
- Social.
- Spiritual.
- Family.
- Physical.<sup>4</sup>

The goal is to build strength and fitness in each dimension, thereby increasing individual, family, unit, and Army resiliency.

The Army and the University of Pennsylvania have developed a comprehensive plan of training to build resiliency through building strength in each

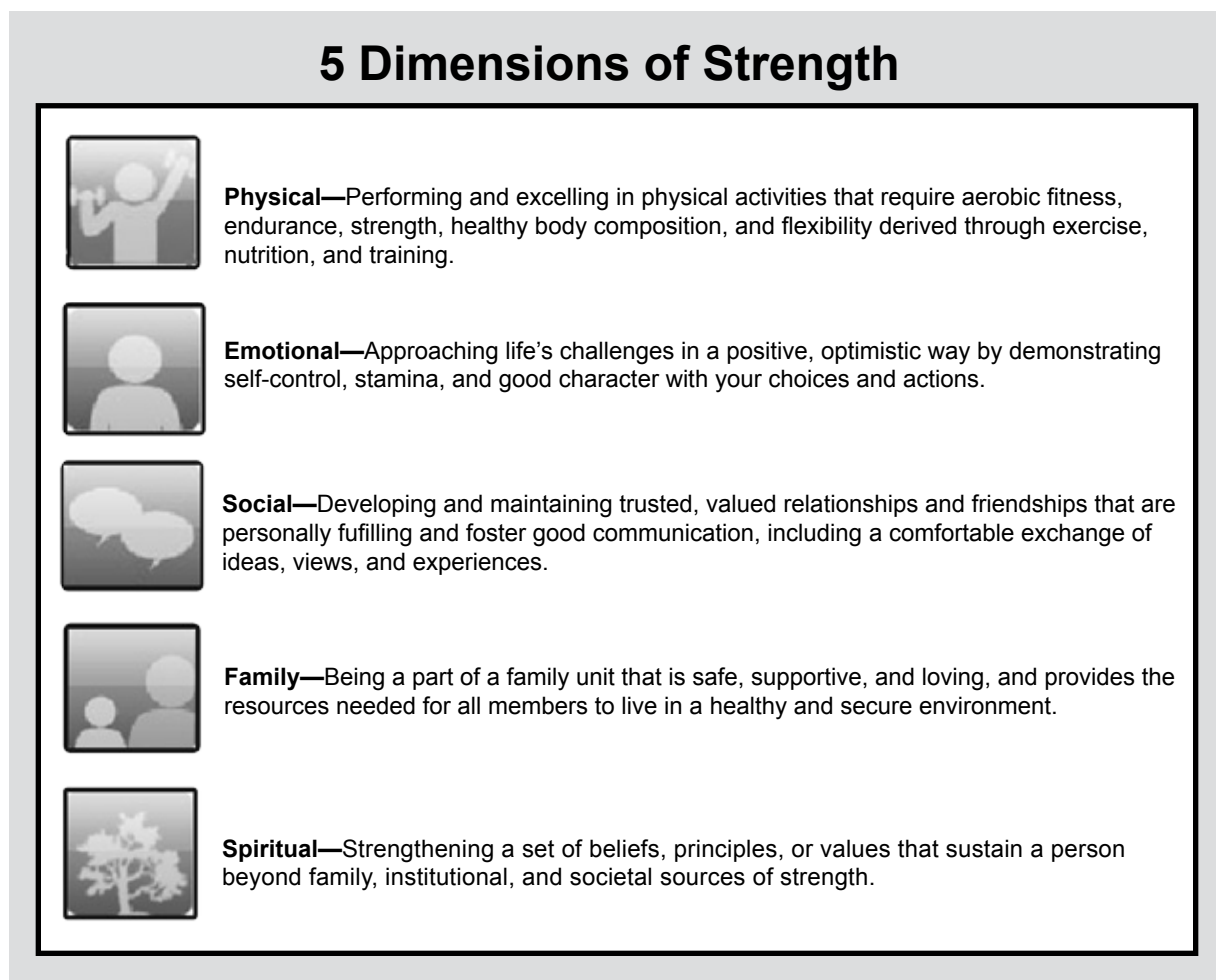


Figure 1. The five dimensions of strength

dimension. Each of these dimensions is affected by how balanced an individual is in his understanding and confidence in himself, his relationships with others, and his or her environment. To truly address each of these elements holistically, the Army's comprehensive fitness programs must include awareness and training in emotional intelligence (EI).

### The CSF Program in Brief

The Army's initial push to increase the resiliency levels of the force involved training 32 non-commissioned officers and civilians to be master resiliency trainers. The training, conducted at the University of Pennsylvania, is a 10-day course designed to train sergeants and civilians how to teach their leaders methods to instill resilience in their subordinates. The training at the University of Pennsylvania is not a new program designed specifically for the Army, but a modification of the university's current program for teachers. According to the Army News Service, master resiliency training is being adapted from the Positive Psychology Program at the University Of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, which developed it to instruct teachers (middle and high school) how to impart resiliency skills to their students during the school year.<sup>5</sup> The school curriculum for this course includes the current recommended resiliency reader for the Army's program, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte's *The Resilience Factor*, as the required text. This 10-day course is now offered at the Army's Victory University at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The Army has also begun to integrate resilience training into all of its officer and enlisted professional military education courses.<sup>6</sup>

### How Emotional Intelligence Can Make a Difference.

According to Dr. Reuven Bar-On, emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social,

and survival aspects of intelligence. These aspects are often more important for daily functioning than the more traditional cognitive aspects of intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with one's immediate surroundings in order to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands.<sup>7</sup>

Although only one of the intelligence dimensions deals specifically with soldier and family emotions, emotional intelligence is inherent in all aspects of intelligence and finds its way into every area of an individual's life. This holistic nature of emotional intelligence is the very reason it can influence resiliency in a positive manner. Recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence to resiliency, Reivich and Shatte write, "While not much can be done to improve your IQ, a lot can be done to improve your resilience, a key component of emotional intelligence."<sup>8</sup> Understanding the competencies of emotional intelligence and applying them to life increases comprehensive fitness and resiliency.

Emotional intelligence is about understanding your own emotions and those of others in order to be a more successful person. The emotionally well-balanced person will be successful in anticipating adversity and its impacts—personally, professionally, relationally—as well as anticipating the potential response of others to adversity. This will allow him to develop appropriate responses to adversity and bounce back quickly. Emotional intelligence helps individuals deal with the stressors of the environment by understanding their emotions as well as the emotions of others.

The Bar-On Model, Figure 2, defines the emotional intelligence competencies in 5 key composite realms with 15 subscales. These realms and subscales highlight the major areas of focus for improving soldier resiliency.

***The emotionally well-balanced person will be successful in anticipating adversity and its impacts—personally, professionally, relationally—as well as anticipating the potential response of others to adversity.***

INTRAPERSONAL	INTERPERSONAL	ADAPTABILITY	STRESS MANAGEMENT	GENERAL MOOD
Emotional Self-awareness	Empathy	Reality Testing	Stress Tolerance	Optimism
Assertiveness	Social Responsibility	Problem Solving	Impulse Control	Happiness
Independence	Interpersonal Relationship	Flexibility		
Self-Regard				
Self-Actualization				

**Figure 2. The Bar-On Model of emotional intelligence.**

Although they have major application to each of the CSF domains as they relate to resiliency, two of the emotional intelligence realms more directly affect the CSF dimensions of emotional and social fitness. These two areas are Bar-On's intrapersonal realm and the interpersonal realm.

## The Bar-On Model

**Intrapersonal realm.** The intrapersonal realm, which involves what we generally refer to as the "inner self," determines how in touch with your feelings you are, and how good you feel about yourself and what you are doing in life. Success in this area means that you are able to express your feelings, live and work independently, feel strong, and be confident in expressing your ideas and beliefs. The scales under this realm include self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-regard, and self-actualization. This realm allows the soldier to develop true self-awareness of his or her strengths, weaknesses, and fears, and builds the ability to deal with each of these through self-awareness.

**Interpersonal realm.** The CSF social dimension is primarily addressed by Bar-On's *interpersonal realm*. This realm captures the three key areas in which soldiers need to attain strength in order to have and maintain orderly and effective relationships. These relationships define how effective a soldier will

be in the social dimension. Recognizing the issues that surround him or her in regards to interacting with others and acting to develop any shortcomings will improve a soldier's resiliency. This realm's three subscales—empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships—address the social competencies that, when exercised effectively, leads to successful interaction with others. The *others* this refers to is not just work and job relationships, but includes family, neighbors, teachers, coaches, mentors, and anyone who is part of the soldier's life.

Each of the remaining three realms of Bar-On's model emphasize the importance of developing emotionally intelligent fitness. They deal with areas in which the individual has to develop personal competency and strength leading to personal resiliency. These realms are *adaptability*, *stress management*, and *general mood*.

**Adaptability realm.** This realm includes the ability to be flexible and realistic and to solve a range of problems as they arise. It addresses the ability to size up and respond to a wide range of difficult situations.<sup>9</sup> Its three scales are reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving. Addressing this area is necessary to developing resiliency because it deals directly with the ability to identify and cope with problems and unexpected events.

**Stress management realm.** The stress management realm concerns an individual's ability to tolerate stress and control impulses. This realm includes the ability to withstand stress without caving in, falling apart, losing control, or going under.<sup>10</sup> Its two scales are stress tolerance and impulse control. Stress tolerance addresses the ability of the individual to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without developing physical or emotional symptoms by actively and positively coping with stress.<sup>11</sup> Impulse control addresses the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act.<sup>12</sup> This latter ability determines how well an individual makes decisions by first considering alternatives and consequences.

**General mood realm.** The general mood realm is influenced heavily by how well an individual performs in the other realms. It concerns an individual's outlook on life, ability to enjoy oneself and others, and feelings of contentment or dissatisfaction.<sup>13</sup> Its two scales are *optimism* and *happiness*. They describe this realm and extol the advantages of having a positive outlook on life.

## Emotional Intelligence Assessment and Training

Using emotional intelligence to develop and improve resiliency requires a starting place. *Assessment* is the first step in development. Although it is a relatively new field of study, a host of very good emotional intelligence assessment instruments and education and development programs exist.

One of these is Bar-On's *Emotional Quotient inventory* (EQ-i), which measures an individual's level of emotional intelligence and provides an assessment report that suggests a development program. The EQ-i must be administered by a certified coach/counselor before its results are presented to the individual. This counselor also assists the individual in understanding the report and developing a program to improve his score.

## Emotional Intelligence and Resiliency

People are inherently emotional and social creatures who get their motivations and satisfactions from other people and from the level of success they attain while interacting with their environment.

The current operational environment optempo has increased pressures on the force, causing the Army to place more emphasis on the need to ensure and build resiliency in individuals. The Army has developed the CSF initiative for that purpose. However, a vital piece is missing from current CSF training.

A logical response to the need for training in emotional social creatures is to address the emotional aspects that can help develop resiliency. The very nature of emotional intelligence causes an individual to gain strength by acknowledging his or her emotions. The ability to build resiliency and individual strength is enhanced when individuals understand the emotional aspects of their personality that influence his or her actions. Armed with this understanding, they can begin to address them and build the emotional strength that leads to personal resiliency. **MR**

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### NOTES

1. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 2006), 5-3.

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5. See <<http://www.military.com/news/article/army-news/preston-touts-comprehensive-fitness.html>> (26 January 2010).

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8. Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte, *The Resilience Factor* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 18.

9. Steven J Stein and Howard Book, *The EQ Edge-Emotional Intelligence and Your Success* (Ontario: Josey-Bass, 2006), 161.

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## Change 1 to Field Manual 3-0

# The Way the Army Fights Today

Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen, Jr., U.S. Army

*We know how to fight today, and we are living the principles of mission command in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet, these principles are not yet institutionalized in our doctrine and in our training. They do not “pervade the force.” Until they do, until they drive our leader development, our organizational design, and our materiel acquisitions we cannot consider ourselves ready, and we should not consider ourselves sufficiently adaptable.*

— General Martin E. Dempsey, Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

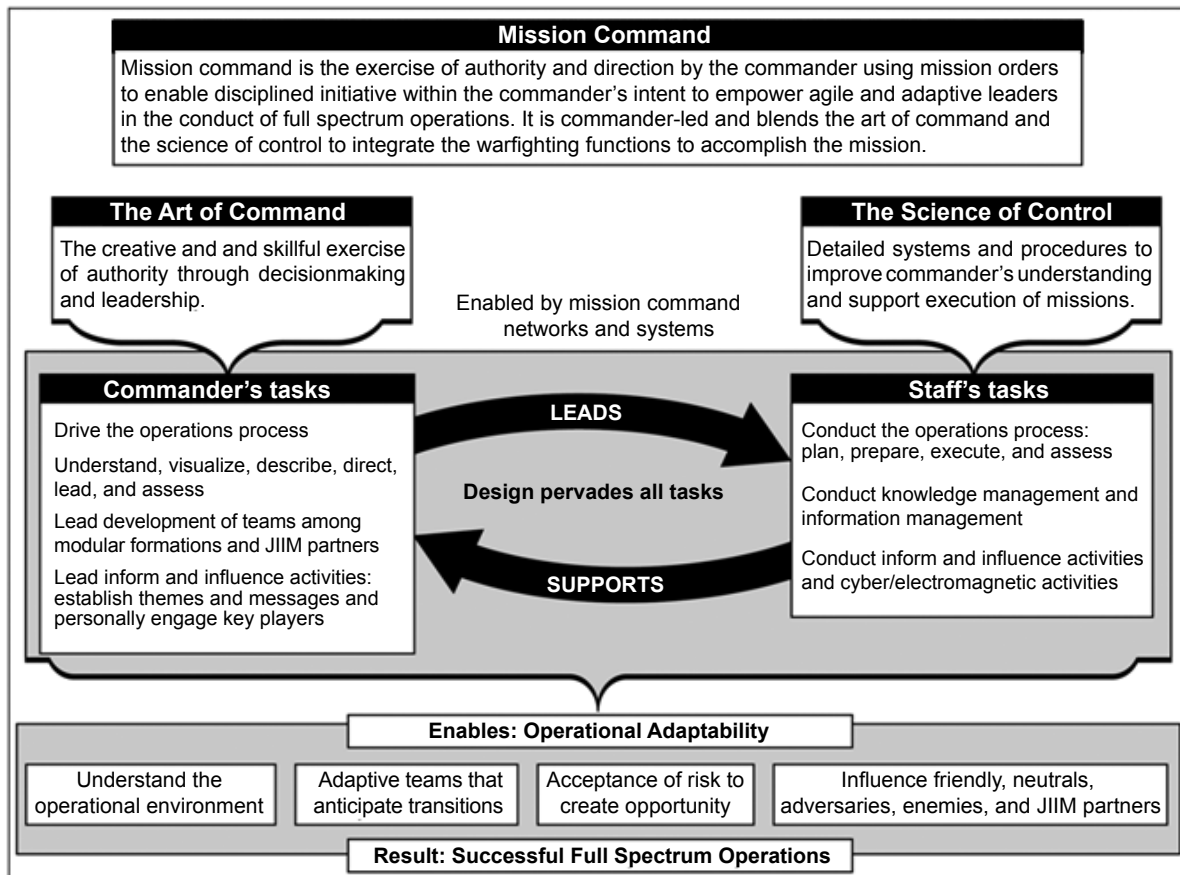
**T**HE 2008 VERSION of Field Manual (FM) 3-0 initiated a comprehensive change in Army doctrine by capturing the Army’s experience of over seven years of combat and using it to change the way the Army conceptualized operations. It established full spectrum operations—simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations—as the central concept of Army capabilities. Over the next two years the Army’s full spectrum operations approach was validated in the crucible of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Change 1 to FM 3-0 builds on the tenets of this approach to increase the Army’s operational adaptability by having the concept of mission command (MC) replace “battle command” as an activity and replace “command and control” as a warfighting function. During nearly a decade of war, both the operational environment and how the Army operates in it have changed. This article highlights MC and other major changes in Change 1 to FM 3-0 to account for the changes in the operational environment and how we operate in it. This is the critical first step in institutionalizing these changes so they can pervade the force.

## Operational Environment and Hybrid Threats

Combat experience and intelligence assessments often focus on hybrid threats that combine in a decentralized manner the characteristics of conventional and unconventional forces, terrorists, and criminals. Although the 2008 version of FM 3-0 did not discuss hybrid threats by that name, it included their characteristics, and these characteristics have now become the norm.

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*IMAGE: Campagne de France, Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, 1864, Oil on Canvas.*



JIIM- Joint Interagency Intergovernmental Multinational

Figure 1. Mission command as an activity.

To combat this threat, the Army is decentralizing its capabilities and conducting operations in a more distributed fashion. The operations take place in a complex and fluid environment and require leaders who not only accept but also seek adaptability and embrace it as an imperative. To enable leaders at all levels to succeed in this environment, the Army has determined that the term “mission command” is a better description of how we must approach the art of command and the science of control on the 21st century battlefield.

## Mission Command

Mission command emphasizes the importance of context and using disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to manage transitions among offensive, defensive, and stability operations and between centralized and decentralized operations. Mission command emphasizes that the leader must understand, visualize, decide, direct, lead, and assess.

In previous versions of FM 3-0, the term “battle command” recognized the need to apply leadership to “translate decisions into actions—by synchronizing forces and warfighting functions in time, space, and purpose—to accomplish missions.” However, the terms “battle command” and “command and control” do not adequately address the increasing need for the commander to frequently frame and reframe an environment of ill-structured problems. The terms “battle command” and “command and control” also do not adequately address the commander's role in team building with Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners. However, *mission command* suggests the critical role leaders at every echelon play in contributing to a shared understanding of the operational context.

By emphasizing mission command as an activity, Change 1 to FM 3-0 reinforces the central role of commanders, at all levels. Whereas the 2008 edition of FM 3-0 referred to mission command as the “preferred method for executing command and

control,” Change 1 defines mission command as the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations. Commander led, and blending the art of command and the science of control to integrate the warfighting functions to accomplish the mission, mission command focuses on the human dimension of operations instead of processes and technological solutions.

Figure 1 shows commander’s tasks that must be accomplished while executing the art of command to develop an adaptable force. Commanders must understand their higher commander’s intent, the authority to act, and the technical systems needed to support their actions. Commanders must also be able to form high-performing teams with a broad range of Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners.

Figure 1 also highlights staff tasks that integrate previously stove-piped capabilities. Change 1 of FM 3-0 increases the use of knowledge management and information management. It introduces the evolved concepts of “inform and influence activities” and “cyber/electromagnetic activities.”

## Operational Art and Design

Leaders and forces base their adaptability on critical thinking, their comfort with ambiguity, their willingness to accept prudent risk, and their ability to adjust rapidly to a continuously evolving environment. The 2010 edition of FM 5-0 introduced “Design” into Army doctrine. Design is a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and foster innovative approaches. Design underpins the commander’s role in leading innovative, adaptive efforts throughout the operations process. Understanding the operational environment enables

commanders to anticipate and manage transitions and accept risks to create opportunities. Change 1 to FM 3-0 incorporates design as a critical part of mission command.

## Inform and Influence and Cyber/Electromagnetic Activities

Change 1 to FM 3-0 replaces the five Army information tasks with *inform and influence activities* (IIA) and *cyber/electromagnetic* (C/EM) activities. This represents an evolutionary change in how the Army views information with roots in Joint and Army doctrine. The Joint construct of information operations focuses on adversaries and is organized around capabilities. Earlier versions of FM 3-0 and FM 3-13, *Information Operations*, used this Joint construct. The 2008 FM 3-0 revised how the Army viewed information operations by describing five information tasks—information engagement, command and control warfare, information protection, operations security, and military deception. Change 1 to FM 3-0 has adopted the IIA and C/EM activities frameworks because Army forces today operate in and among the population, and such operations are significantly different from land operations and those in other domains.

The Army IIA construct emphasizes the commander’s personal involvement in developing themes and messages as an essential part of the operations process. Commanders directly involve themselves in developing themes and messages that inform and influence actors and audiences in a dynamic environment. Inform and influence activities employ cooperative, persuasive, and coercive means to assist and support Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners to protect and reassure populations and isolate and defeat enemies. Cyber/Electromagnetics activities exert technical influence to protect friendly information and communications while disrupting the enemy’s ability to manipulate and move information.

Mission command uses IIA and C/EM to shape the operational environment.

## Mission Command as a Warfighting Function

As aforementioned, Change 1 to FM 3-0 supplants “command and control” with mission command as a warfighting function (Figure 2). Over time,

***Change 1 to FM 3-0 incorporates Design as a critical part of mission command.***

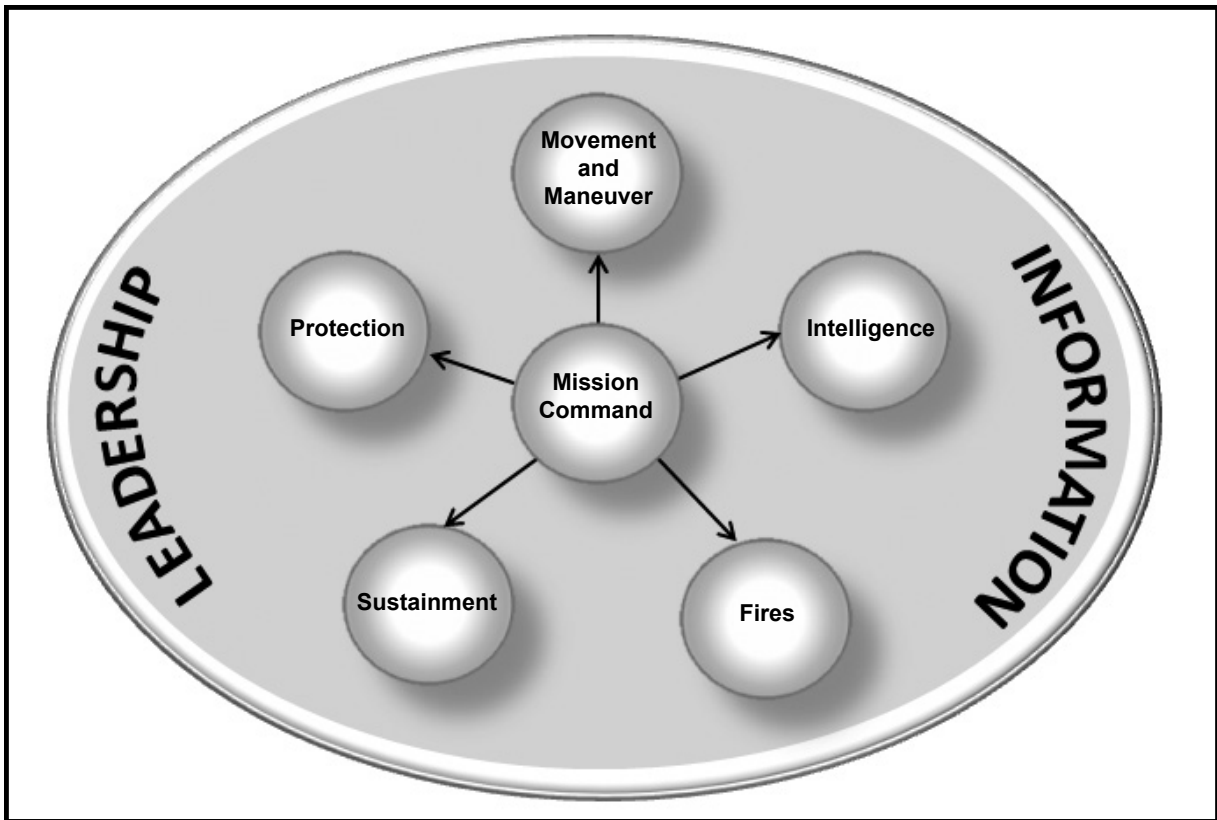


Figure 2. Mission command as a warfighting function.

command and control became nearly synonymous with the technical aspects of the network, often at the expense of the human dimension. In addition, the term “command and control” is inadequate to describe the role of the commander and staff in today’s fight. Mission command, as both the activity and the warfighting function, more accurately captures the commander’s role in warfighting.

## Other Changes

Two other revisions of note in Change 1 to FM 3-0 include new characterizations of the spectrum of conflict and security force assistance. These are described below.

**Spectrum of conflict.** While it retains the spectrum of conflict with levels of violence ranging from “stable peace” to “general war,” Change 1 to FM 3-0 drops the intermediate points on the spectrum “unstable peace” and “insurgency”; however, it retains the five operational themes and includes Joint “types of operations and related activities” within the discussion of operational themes. Change 1 further develops the discussion of major combat operations.

**Security force assistance.** Change 1 to FM 3-0 emphasizes the increasing importance of security force assistance (SFA) missions. Both the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) and the *Army Capstone Concept* identify security force assistance as a critical requirement for the foreseeable future. The *Quadrennial Defense Review* states, “Within the range of security cooperation activities, the most dynamic in the coming years will be SFA missions: ‘hands on’ efforts conducted primarily in host countries to train, equip, advise, and assist those countries’ forces . . . .”

The *Army Capstone Concept* states, “Security force assistance is essential to stability operations, countering irregular threats, preventing conflicts, and facilitating security transitions.” Recent experience reinforces the findings in the QDR. The Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts require a substantial commitment of conventional forces for SFA, and it is forecast that Army forces will remain heavily committed to SFA missions in the emerging security environment.



## Implications for the Force

Change 1 to FM 3-0 requires educating both the generating and operating force on how mission command affects the execution of full spectrum operations. The biggest impact may be on how commanders and staffs interact daily. Mission command requires collaboration and dialog within an environment of mutual trust in which subordinates at all levels are empowered to make decisions. Establishing such an environment is challenging owing to the realities of force packaging and the ARFORGEN cycle, as well as the operational tempo of today's units.

Nonetheless, we must focus on training the force to operate in a mission environment rather than a detailed command environment, and we must encourage disciplined initiative and a willingness to accept risk among both commanders and their staffs. Although some units have already moved toward mission command, a future force culturally


adapted to the concept and its tasks may best realize its benefits.

## Summary

As demands on leaders have expanded dramatically so has the need to empower them with skills, knowledge, resources, and freedom of action. Change 1 to FM 3-0 provides an opportunity to advance the concept of mission command beyond mere philosophy and let it serve as a catalyst for change in the Army. Change 1 to FM 3-0 is a critical step to drive changes in leader development, organizational design, training, and materiel acquisition to develop operational adaptability across the force.

The publication and dissemination of Change 1 to FM 3-0 enables mission command to pervade the force and have an immediate impact across the Army through leader development venues such as the Command and General Staff College and training venues such as Battle Command Training Program seminars. **MR**

Change 1 to Army Capstone  
**FM 3-0** Operations



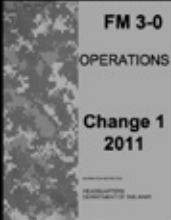
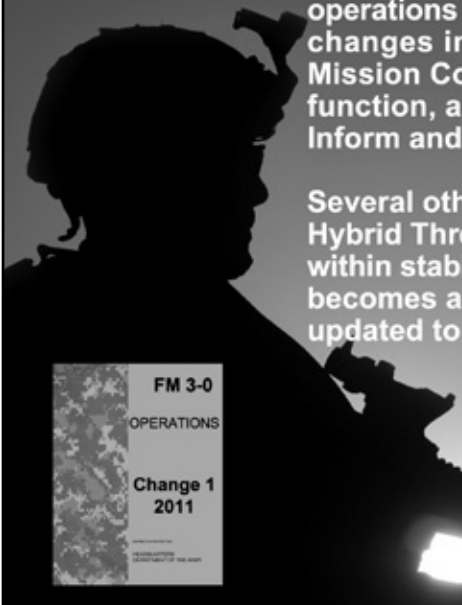
U.S. Army  
Combined  
Arms Center  
Intellectual  
Center of the Army

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>





# The Way Out of Afghanistan

Bing West

**W**E HAVE A problem. Our counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine states that “Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation-builders as well as warriors.” In ten years, we haven’t built an Afghan nation, but the effort to do so has diverted and weakened the warrior ethos.

The United States invaded Afghanistan in order to destroy the Al-Qaeda network. However, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban escaped over the border into Pakistan. Instead of pursuing them, America stayed in Afghanistan, vowing to build a strong democratic nation that would prevent the return of the terrorists.

To lead the new Afghanistan, the United States, acting in concert with the UN, selected Hamid Karzai in 2002, a politician from a prominent Pashtun family. The United States also facilitated a revision of the Afghan constitution to give Karzai authority to appoint all provincial governors. Karzai in turn placed tribal relatives and cronies in those positions of power.

Worse, the United States gave Karzai absolute authority in selecting military and police leaders. So command positions were put up for sale, requiring payoffs and political connections. The result was corrupt, unprofessional leadership that allowed the Taliban to reassert control in the countryside east and south of Kabul.

When President Obama took office, Afghanistan was lurching out of control. Obama stressed partnership with Pakistan, increased the number of American troops to 100,000, and promised to begin a withdrawal in mid-2011. During his first two years in office, three different American generals took command in Afghanistan, the U.S. military strategy concentrated upon population protection, Pakistan continued to shelter the Taliban, and Karzai proved erratic and unreliable.

## Where Are We?

Let’s start with the enemy. The Taliban move unchallenged across the 1,400-mile-long border with Pakistan, easily avoiding Americans

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author.*

*A former assistant secretary of defense and combat infantryman, Bing West has embedded with dozens of frontline units in Afghanistan over the past two years. This article is excerpted from his new book, *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way Out of Afghanistan* (Random, 2011).*

*PHOTO: U.S. Army SPC Newton Carlizzi on his way back to his outpost from the village of Paspajak, Charkh District, Logar Province, Afghanistan, 20 June 2010.*

encumbered by armor and heavy gear. In the north, the Taliban are supported by subtribes in the capillary valleys. In the south, they take a cut of the drug trade, while warning the poppy-growing farmers that the government will eradicate their livelihoods. Overall, some Pashtun villages are friendly, others hostile, and most unwilling to partner with Americans because firefights and destruction are sure to follow.

Jihad against infidels emerged as a powerful war cry of the Taliban. Eighty-four percent of Afghans identify themselves foremost as Muslims. An ideology as much as a religion, Islamic beliefs are intended to form the basis of governance. But the Kabul government has failed to project itself as the true protector of Islam, while the Taliban have won disciples among the rural mullahs. Worse, the Taliban, drug lords, and many rural Afghans continue to conspire to provide 95 percent of the world's heroin.

The strengths of the Taliban are their Islamist fervor and their sanctuary. Pakistan is determined to remain a supporter of some Taliban cliques in case the United States quits the war and the extremists again seize power. As long as Pakistani territory remains a sanctuary, the war will not end.

The vulnerabilities of the Taliban are threadbare logistics and popular disinterest. Having lived under Taliban control in the 1990s, most Pashtuns dislike rather than support the Islamist cause. While the Taliban add recruits every year, there has been no overwhelming groundswell of popular support.

In the net, neither side is winning. On the one side, the United States lacks the numbers to secure thousands of villages and the Afghan security forces lack confidence; on the other side, the Taliban cannot mass forces due to U.S. firepower. The Taliban believe that after an American withdrawal, the rural districts will topple like dominos.

## What is Our Military Strategy?

Arrayed against the enemy are the 47 nations of the coalition. Most nations contribute only

political symbolism. The French, Dutch, Canadians, Australians, and British have been in the fray. But at this stage, it's mostly an American effort, with Afghan forces fighting alongside, or a few steps behind.

The coalition strategy of COIN is "to secure and serve the population"; in return, the population is expected to reject the insurgents.<sup>1</sup> This theoretical social contract was enshrined as doctrine in a 2006 U.S. Army and Marine Corps manual entitled *Counterinsurgency*.<sup>2</sup>

Secretary of Defense Gates endorsed the nation-building mission. In 2008, he told the students at the National Defense University, "Where possible, kinetic operations should be subordinate to measures to promote better governance, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented . . ."<sup>3</sup> The COIN social services—governance, economics, addressing of grievances—transformed our military into a giant Peace Corps. This was the enlightened way for soldiers to fight an insurgency.

Advocacy of enlightened counterinsurgency sprouted into a social network that boosted the careers of some military officers comfortable with academic theories and with expressing themselves in books, articles, and web sites. Battalion commanders learned to brief as mantra four lines of operations—security, development, governance, and rule of law. It wasn't enough to fight the guerrillas; American commanders became de facto district governors, spending most of their time upon nonmilitary tasks.

Nation-building by the U.S. military featured three tasks:

- Protecting the population.
- Giving money and conducting projects to stimulate patriotism.
- Linking the population with competent government officials.

**Protecting the population.** Protecting the population requires a vast number of troops. There are more than 7,000 Pashtun villages to patrol, and in 2008 the U.S. lacked the manpower to cover most of

***The COIN social services—governance, economics, addressing of grievances—transformed our military into a giant Peace Corps.***



U.S. Army SPC Carl L. Hardy, Psy-Ops

Afghanistan forces, in conjunction with U.S. Army soldiers, pass out anti-Taliban posters, 17 June 2009.

them. A patrol passing through a village once every two or three days could not constitute protection. And even when protected, the Pashtuns could not reciprocate by providing information against the Taliban or recruits for the Afghan army.

Arguments that the identical technique of population protection had worked in Iraq are misplaced. The Sunni tribes in Iraq have a distinct hierarchy and had come over to the side of the strongest tribe—the Americans—because they believed the Americans were winning. In Afghanistan, the Pashtun tribes are less hierarchical and most are staying neutral until they see who is going to win.

**Giving money.** The coalition has funded billions in projects so that the tribes would align with the government. The U.S. military coined the aphorism, “dollars are bullets.” Battalion and company commanders have doled out millions of dollars.

In response, Afghans from the top down have grabbed the money. Like President Lyndon Johnson’s “war on poverty,” nation-building has created a culture of entitlement and dependency.

Ironically, American liberals oppose the Afghanistan war because it diverts funds from domestic entitlement programs, while conservatives opposed to those programs at home support a war based on the same entitlements. Both the Kabul government and the Pashtun tribes are accustomed to receiving something for nothing and giving nothing in return. Afghanistan is the world’s second-poorest nation and the second-most corrupt.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Linking the tribes with the central government.**

In the U.S. military, everyone is promoted based on performance, not connections. In Afghanistan, promotions are granted through a mixture of payoffs, blood relations, and ability. The government does not function under a set of rules that rewards competence. Many capable Afghan officials are assigned to districts, but it is on a catch-as-catch-can basis. Linkages between the villages and the government are friable.

The counterinsurgency theory of persuading the population to turn against the Taliban has proven wrong in practice. The coalition lacks the massive numbers to protect thousands of villages, and many



of the villagers have cousins who are Taliban. Pashtun elders accept government services like schools and roads, but don't urge their young men to join the government's army. The tribes survive by behaving, as General David Petraeus put it, as "professional chameleons."<sup>5</sup> The people are the prize for winning the war, not the means of winning it.

In the summer of 2010, the International Council of Security and Development conducted extensive polling in Helmand and Kandahar.<sup>6</sup> The results illustrated a high degree of popular skepticism, insular self-absorption, and xenophobia that call into serious question the American COIN strategy of "securing and serving the population." U.S. military operations were judged as "bad for the Afghan people" by 70 percent of the respondents. Working with foreign forces was judged to be wrong by 74 percent. A large majority in all three districts believed the NATO forces did not protect the local population or respect Islam and local traditions.

The local Pashtun populations view themselves as observers, not as participants in the war. Sociologists will say these attitudes show that NATO continues to lose the battle of the narrative. But we may be too hard on ourselves. The gulfs in culture, religion, language, and tribal traditions are too huge to be leapt by increased sensitivity training or drinking cups of tea. The fact is that giving billions of dollars has created a culture of entitlement and expectancy without a popular feeling of obligation among the Pashtuns to reciprocate by denouncing, informing upon, or fighting against the Taliban Pashtuns.

Yet our liberal doctrine of COIN is based upon this two-way social contract: Americans provide protection and services—the International Security Assistance Force mission is "to secure and serve the people"—and in return the people (Pashtuns) provide recruits for the Afghan security forces and passively and actively turn against the insurgents. The Pashtuns have done neither. The Pashtuns have not upheld their side of the social contract. They are determined to stay neutral until they are convinced which side is going to win.

The Nobel Prize winner Roger Myerson put it this way: "A government is legitimate when everyone believes that everyone else in the nation will obey this government . . . people everywhere

will ultimately accept the rule of a faction that is able to win decisive battles, kill its enemies, and protect its friends, even if the faction lacks any other culturally accepted symbols of legitimacy."<sup>7</sup>

The Taliban understand that; they believe they are the better fighters, and they are willing to kill their enemies.

The American military, on the other hand, has lost sight of its core mission to neutralize the enemy. For years, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen have emphasized that "We cannot kill or capture our way to victory."<sup>8</sup> The message has taken hold. Risk-averse senior staffs review the size and the movement of even small-unit patrols. American troops see few insurgents and are very careful when they shoot back. A lawyer sits in every battalion operations center to rule on whether a target can be struck, and no coalition soldier is permitted to arrest an insurgent.

Reports about arrests and raids are issued daily from the military headquarters in Kabul. These reports include a standard paragraph stating, "The security force did not fire their weapons and they protected the women and children for the duration of the search."<sup>9</sup> When a wartime command feels compelled to announce that weapons are not fired, the warrior ethos has been eviscerated.

The cost of pursuing the "secure and serve" COIN mission has been neglect of the military means of defeating the insurgents. The U.S. agreed that NATO forces would serve under the sovereignty of the untrustworthy Karzai government. Karzai controls all promotions within the Afghan military, although our forces do the fighting and know which Afghan officers are good and bad. Our forces are not permitted to arrest insurgents, and we don't know what kind of deal Karzai is going to eventually cut with the Taliban.

Americans cannot invade Pakistan to remove the sanctuary, or remain in large numbers inside Afghanistan long enough to win over the Pashtuns.

Based on the past ten years, population protection and nation-building as U.S. military missions have failed. Indeed, President Obama has insisted that his strategy is "not fully resourced counterinsurgency or nation-building."<sup>10</sup> Yet our mortal enemy, Al-Qaeda, is confined to Pakistan only due to our forces in Afghanistan. A full U.S. military pullout in the short term—say, by 2014—will result in a bloody civil

war likely to be won by the Taliban. This would invigorate Al-Qaeda, imperil a nuclear-armed Pakistan, and shake global confidence in America.

So what courses of action remain? There are two alternatives: negotiations or building up the Afghan forces.

## Are Negotiations the Solution?

Karzai has behaved as if the war were between the Americans and the Taliban, with the Afghan government a neutral party seeking a settlement.<sup>11</sup> President Obama has ordered “working with Karzai where we can, working around him when we must.”<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly, Karzai has issued the same instruction to his officials. Thus, negotiations are motivated by the American desire to cut back its commitment and by Karzai’s fear of abandonment.

In the fall of 2010, General Petraeus set out “to bleed the insurgency and pressure its leaders to negotiate.”<sup>13</sup> He cited impressive killing rates by Special Operations Forces. For years, Petraeus and other senior officials had told the conventional forces to focus on the population and fight the enemy only when he gets in the way. If Special Operation Forces, only seven percent of the total force, were the hammer for a negotiated settlement, then the majority of troops assigned to population protection were having little effect upon the Taliban.

We are in danger of undercutting our own warrior ethos at precisely the time that our air-to-ground surveillance and strike capabilities offer us a decided advantage over any foe. We have a generation of combat-experienced leaders. But the warrior ethos requires an aggressive spirit of the offense, a desire to crush the enemy. Sitting on the defense with patrols in safe areas is not the way to demoralize or shatter the Taliban’s morale and mystique.

Negotiations ratify strength on the battlefield, not the other way around. Under the current circumstances, negotiations do not offer a reasonable solution or a safe way out of Afghanistan.

## What Is the Way Out?

There are solid reasons to remain engaged. Our mortal enemy, Al-Qaeda, is confined to Pakistan only due to our forces in Afghanistan. As mentioned, a full U.S. military pullout in the short term will result in a civil war likely to be won by the Taliban.

***We must implement a strategy that matches our reduced means.***

So a stable Afghanistan is helpful, although not critical, to our national security. But we can’t afford to spend a \$100 billion a year on something merely helpful. We have been waging war using an ATM machine that has run out of cash. We must implement a strategy that matches our reduced means. Being poorer, we have to fight smarter.

That means cutting back on the marginally useful missions of population protection and democratic nation-building. The Pashtun population has refused to turn against the Taliban, and the unreliable Karzai—with dictatorial powers and four more years in office—has no intention of building a democracy. Our conventional battalions are exerting too much effort for too little return.

This war will be decided between the Afghan forces and the Taliban, not by a switch in sides by the tribes. Afghan soldiers, however, lack the motivation to challenge the Taliban. “Afghan forces will never take a lead role in fighting,” Special Forces Captain Matt Golsteyn said, “as long as the coalition is willing to bear the brunt.”

In the 2010 battle for Marja, Golsteyn was advising a battalion of 400 Afghan soldiers. But he had only ten mature Special Forces sergeants, too small a team for sustained combat. So the Marines placed under his command a rifle platoon, engineers, and fire support specialists. Thus, a captain commanded an advisor task force rather than a team, but his force enabled the Afghan battalion to perform credibly on its own.

That model deserves emulation. The primary U.S. mission should be to transition to a hundred such advisor task forces, while reducing our total force from 100,000 to 50,000. These advisors would go into combat with the Afghan forces, provide the link to fire support, and have a voice in who gets promoted. All these units should be overseen by a three-star general, because they will be the centerpiece of the American effort.

The American public will very likely support the war indefinitely if fought at lower cost. This

isn't a patriotic war. In 2010, the war did not rank among the top ten problems that concerned the public. However, neither the public nor the press has turned against the war, as happened in Iraq.

In 2005, a Marine squad in the Iraqi city of Haditha killed women and children. Exhaustive investigations failed to substantiate acts of murder. Nonetheless, Haditha remained on the front pages for months because for many in the press and Congress it conveniently symbolized a disastrous war.

In 2010, a few U.S. soldiers were charged with randomly murdering Afghan civilians for sport.<sup>14</sup> Most of the press and politicians ignored the story. The Democratic majority in the House supported the war while liberal commentators in the press were loath to weaken Obama by inciting an antiwar movement.

Although this alignment of domestic politics suggests that support for the war can be sustained, Obama has made no pretense of his discomfort with the war. "I'm not doing ten years," Obama said. "I'm not doing long-term nation-building . . . There needs to be a plan about how we're going to hand-off."<sup>15</sup>

The advisors provide the means for that hand-off, and they're not upset that their commander-in-chief and most Americans have other concerns and

priorities. In October of 2010, I was talking with a group of advisors, all volunteers on their second tour. They couldn't wait to get back into combat.

"If I get clipped, I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me," a sergeant said. "I'm doing what I want to do. Some of us aren't coming back. We know that. Let's get on with the damn job!" The advisors cheered the sergeant for expressing their sentiment. In the Marines and Army, there are hardy, adventurous men who embrace the sweat, heat, cold, bruises, vomit, cordite smell, blasts, rifle cracks, screams, and camaraderie, knowing that some among them will lose limbs or bleed out. They don't need a patriotic war or sacrifices by the public. We cannot explain why they choose the rough life. They march to a different drummer. They like to fight and are highly skilled at it.

As the history of our battles in Afghanistan will illustrate, our advisors are feared by the Taliban and inspire loyalty and spirit among the Afghan soldiers. This war will be decided by grit. The Taliban are hardy, fierce fighters. Today, they have the spirit to beat the Afghan security forces. The mission of the advisors is to infuse a winning spirit into the *askars*, the members of the security forces. That, not population protection, must be the primary task.



SPC John Lombardo, left, and SPC Christopher Keefe pull security on a hilltop near Shinkay, Afghanistan, 6 January 2011. Specialists Lombardo and Keefe are assigned to Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul, Qalat, Afghanistan.

The services will organize an advisor corps only if Congress or the president orders it. The Army envisions irregular war as the likely form of future combat. Yet the core unit for the Army and the Marines remains the conventional battalion, as organized in World War II. Both services have been unwilling to change. We don't want to fight the wars of others. We also don't want to allow Islamists to kill us. Therefore the Army and Marines must offer incentives and reward advisors with recognition and promotions greater than those reserved for conventional command billets. They will not do that without powerful external impetus.

As a nation, we must commit to stay in Afghanistan for as long as it takes, while cutting back our conventional forces and building an advisor task force. In addition, Special Operations Forces must hunt down Islamist leaders, while helicopter assaults by Ranger-type units continue along the border with Pakistan. Neutralizing the enemy, not protecting the population, must be the main mission. The task of the advisors is to build and support Afghan security

forces until they are as fierce in battle as are the Taliban. This will take years. The Afghan soldiers will fight if American advisors are alongside them; the Afghans will crumble without them.

Our mistake in Afghanistan was to do the work of others for ten years, expecting reciprocity across a cultural and religious divide. Given the huge size of the country, the tribal traditions and the vast sanctuary of Pakistan, protecting the Pashtun population and expecting them to reject the Taliban in favor of the Kabul government is a strategy too open-ended. The U.S. military must hand off nation-building to the State Department and de-emphasize population protection. It is self-defeating to cling to a theory that has enfeebled our warrior ethos and not led to victory. It is time to transition to an advisor corps that can invigorate the Afghan security forces and prevent an Islamist takeover.

Afghanistan was the wrong war for the counter-insurgency strategy. Our troops are not the Peace Corps; they are fighters. Let them fight, and let the Taliban fear. **MR**

#### NOTES

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**KABOOM: Embracing the Suck in a Savage Little War**, Matt Gallagher, Da Capo Press, 2010, 294 pages, \$24.95.

As its title implies, *Kaboom* is about as subtle as a road-side bomb. Matt Gallagher writes on everything from the potentially deadly routine

of patrolling the streets of an Iraqi town to the sudden thrill of a high-speed pursuit of a known insurgent. His account of life as a company grade officer during the surge in Iraq is insightful, colorful, and at times irreverent. It is an excellent snapshot of a junior officer embroiled in a counterinsurgency fight.

For many who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan, Gallagher's memoir will strike a chord. The author shares his thoughts about how the military is pursuing counterinsurgency operations from the ground level. Gallagher's style varies from prose to dialogue to even rap-style poetry. He covers everything from the extreme poverty of people to a soldier dealing with the loneliness of being reassigned mid-way through tour. Much of what is presented is common to many soldiers serving in a combat zone, but Gallagher's kaleidoscopic lens presents a collage of the complexities leaders face fighting a "savage little war."

Gallagher deployed to Iraq in late 2007 and remained there until February 2009. *Kaboom* started out as an online blog, a tool for staying in touch with friends and family, but it gained a larger following. In the summer of 2008, Gallagher's chain of command ordered him to shut down his blog due to some controversial posts. It might be tempting to choose sides in this blog situation; however, viewing the book solely through the blog incident deprives the reader of

what Gallagher learned through that experience as well as a whole host of others. There are fundamental lessons depicted in these pages common to those engaged in combat and worthy of study and discussion. Clearly the experience was life-changing for the author. He says, "What we didn't know, even though the old soldier stories say it clear as day, is that we would always be there, even long after we left."

*Kaboom* is an excellent choice for a leader development program at battalion and brigade level. I also recommend the book to senior leaders seeking a viewpoint of subordinates they may lead into combat. For military and civilian alike, *Kaboom*, leads the reader through the maze of complexities we have asked the next generation of combat leaders to face. *Kaboom* is an exceptionally engaging read.

**LTC Richard A. McConnell,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**FIGHTING CHANCE: Global Trends and Shocks in the National Security Environment**, edited by Neyla Arnas, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University Press, Potomac Books, Washington, DC, 2009, 330 pages, \$35.00.

*Fighting Chance: Global Trends and Shocks in the National Security Environment* is a compilation of essays by distinguished scholars meant to "stimulate a productive debate" and help establish an enduring whole-of-government approach to unforeseen crises and preserve U.S. national security interests. Each work corresponds to one of six trend categories established by the Department of Defense: conflict; demographics; economy; environment; culture, identity, and governance; and science and technology. Regional

experts reflect on these trend categories within Africa, China, Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Russia, Eurasia, South Asia, and Latin America. The book assesses how probable trends, possible natural disasters, and unexpected events created by irrational actors could shape the U.S. national security environment in the future.

While sorting through the static surrounding these trends, the authors "go beyond the obvious dangers." They clearly articulate how the trends intersect and interact with each other to create possible strategic shocks and, therefore, national security concerns. Particularly interesting are the discussions regarding population, age, and ethnic demographic shifts that continue between the developed and developing world. The possible crisis dynamics include a Christian-dominated, developed world that is in need of workers, yet nurtures nationalism and tighter immigration laws—in contrast to the growing, youthful, unemployed, non-Christian populations of the developing world.

The discussion of the future role of the Department of Defense in influencing trends and mitigating shocks is especially useful. The authors believe in a highly adaptive and functional military able to effectively work with allies, interagency organizations, and international institutions across all instruments of national power—specifically in conducting stability and reconstruction operations. They caution against an excessive role of the military and misallocation of federal funds.

This thought-provoking, insightful work leaves the reader pondering the vast complexities, dynamics, interconnectedness, volatility, and fragility of a globalizing world. The reader feels small, yet empowered with an informed appreciation of

how difficult it is for nations to posture themselves in ways that preserve their survival, relevance, and prosperity. The book will be of interest to many, particularly academics and graduate students within the social sciences and career interagency and military professionals.

**LTC David A. Anderson, Ph.D.,  
USMC, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth Kansas**

**CONTEMPORARY STATES OF EMERGENCY: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions**, edited by Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, Zone Books, 2010, New York, 406 pages, \$36.95.

No relationship is more complex or internationally significant than the one between military forces and humanitarians. Seventeen top academic essayists explore this linkage and provide insights the military rarely hears. For example, a former vice president of Medecins San Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) describes the many divisions within the humanitarian world as these organizations struggle over direction and limited funding. Interestingly, the Greek Section of MSF was expelled during the Kosovo War after they sent a team to bring aid to hospitals in Pristina and Belgrade. In a nod to Clausewitz, an editor even asserts humanitarianism is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means.

The “Right to Intervene” has become an important tool of the United Nations’ Security Council, used increasingly in mandates worldwide. The 1999 Kosovo experience was often discussed as a watershed event when MSF, the UN’s High Commissioner for Refugees, and other humanitarian organizations openly sided with NATO and abandoned their normal neutrality. This collaboration has continued, although the International Committee of the Red Cross has discreetly warned that military intervention has actually increased the risk to aid workers.

Several of the more powerful essays concerned civilian deaths during military humanitarian operations, such as Kosovo or Somalia. International courts have been hesitant to consider trying Western military leaders despite “incidental” casualties and “iatrogenic violence” unleashed as a byproduct of war. The hiding of Picasso’s *Guernica* war painting during U.S. Secretary of State Powell’s 2003 UN speech was cited as an instance when UN officials avoided difficult questions that may be raised about the consequences of Security Council military actions in the name of humanity. Despite wariness from both civilian and military sides, Craig Calhoun contends it is increasingly hard to keep emergency response distinct from military operations.

Laurence Falls presented a unique perspective of humanitarian organizations as benevolent dictators, occupying positions of dominance. They practice “therapeutic governance” when a state is unable to protect its citizens. The migratory corps of humanitarian experts is a new feature of international intervention, serving like high-profile emergency room doctors.

The most significant shortcoming of the book is the lack of military contributors. The editors chose to rely on attendees at an international social science conference in Canada and a seminar in Paris. The inclusion of thoughts from experts like retired general Anthony Zinni or General Douglas Fraser would have made the book more comprehensive. Despite this flaw, there is no doubt that before military officers participate in another intervention, they should consider this book’s insights.

**James R. Cricks,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**REBELS WITHOUT BORDERS: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics**, Idean Salehyan, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2009, 216 pages, \$39.95.

Idean Salehyan has produced an interesting, persuasive study that pushes future research on civil war

and insurgencies outside the box. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines civil war as “a war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country.” Salehyan’s work expands the definition beyond this narrow scope. According to him, civil war, rebellion, and insurgency should not be studied as if they solely occur within the clearly delineated borders of a country. These events are not isolated from the regional or international context in which they occur. Salehyan provides strong evidence in the form of quantitative cross-national datasets and qualitative case narratives to demonstrate how interstate and intrastate conflicts are driven by transnational relationships, connections, and actors that readily bridge the traditional boundaries of the modern nation-state.

The study considers recent conflicts and provides in-depth case studies on the Nicaraguan Civil War (1978 to 1989) and the Rwandan Civil War (1990 to 1996). Salehyan clearly illustrates how insurgents use borders to their benefit before and during a conflict. Internationally recognized borders define geographical jurisdiction, where the authority of one state ends and another begins.

However, as Salehyan’s work clearly demonstrates, it is in this border region where the opportunity may exist for a nascent insurgent organization to improve its logistical base, increase its force strength, refine the organization structure, and influence the target population with propaganda. Salehyan shows how the relative strength of the states involved, their relationship with one another, and the presence of a third party can affect the intensity, duration, and resolution of a conflict. While each civil war or insurgency is different, they react to the variables in a similar, predictable manner.

Salehyan’s work is scholarly in nature, providing a detailed review of his research methodologies, an extensive bibliography, and a detailed index. The book is recommended for anyone interested in conflict and conflict resolution, and especially

for those researching civil war, insurgency, and counterinsurgency.  
**LTC Randy G. Masten, USA,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**QUICKSAND: America's Pursuit of Power in the Middle East,** Geoffrey Wawro, The Penguin Press, New York, 2010, 720 pages, \$37.95.

Geoffrey Wawro's *Quicksand: America's Pursuit of Power in the Middle East* attempts to be a single history of America's involvement in the Middle East, beginning in the late 19th century. It is an excellent first attempt to synthesize this entire era. Previous literature has examined specific time periods, specific geographical areas, or specific topics. This is not to say that *Quicksand* is comprehensive; this is no social or cultural history but rather one limited to politics and foreign affairs, and its arrangement is chronological, not topical. Further, the perspective is American more than, say, Egyptian or Iraqi or Israeli.

The book provides a clear exposition of the various threads of U.S. involvement, working through material from early Zionism and Wilsonian idealism to the adventures of Dick Cheney and George Bush in pursuit of moral diplomacy, regime change, and oil. Along the way, presidents and statesmen do stupid things for reasons that may or may not stand careful scrutiny, and occasionally there is a hero or a heroic moment. Mostly, those who were once heroes are shown to be far from their mythological stature. As histories should, *Quicksand* provides a nuanced corrective to contemporary media coverage.

The book is frequently provocative. A major weakness is that the quality of the evidence declines sharply after 1980. Before that, the documentation is excellent, relying heavily on primary sources but not forgetting the pertinent secondary sources. The last 30 years, when history is still current and subject to debate in public rather than academic circles, is based on secondary sources with axes to grind. Even oral history, the salvation of other

authors who write of recent history, is absent from the footnotes of the controversial chapters. And there is a slight tilt to the left.

Exceeding 600 pages of text, *Quicksand* is not a one-night read. Given the wealth of material, particularly for the years before the Reagan presidency and the new conservative ascendancy, hasty reading is not advised. The complexity of the U.S. involvement is also something that takes time to absorb. The individual seeking to understand how we got to where we are today will be well served to begin with Wawro's *Quicksand*.

**John H. Barnhill, Ph.D.,**  
**Houston, Texas**

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**A HISTORY OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS,** Edward M. Spiers, Reaktion Books, Inc., London, 2010, 223 pages, \$35.00.

Edward M. Spiers, professor of strategic studies and the pro-dean of research in the faculty of arts at Leeds University, is a long-time contributor to the scholarly world of literature on chemical and biological weapons. His latest work is a succinct and readily accessible account of the history and key issues associated with chemical and biological weapons from World War I to the present. It successfully avoids the tedious rendition of technical details and acronyms that often plague works of this kind and would make an excellent graduate or undergraduate text to introduce the development and use of chemical and biological weapons, as well as the pertinent chemical and biological treaty regimens.

The book's discussion of chemical and biological weapon-related concerns in the post-9/11 and post-anthrax letter era is especially valuable in that it enables the reader to view the present dialogue in historical context and not merely as an aberration stemming from post-9/11 concerns over public safety. Of particular note is its even-handed discussion of the complexities associated with

acquiring "actionable" intelligence about clandestine chemical and biological research programs and, when intelligence can be obtained, distinguishing between malevolent and legitimate chemical and biological research. The book's summary of the intelligence situation surrounding the 2003 invasion of Iraq is particularly informative.

Perhaps the book's most valuable contribution results from the care the author takes to distinguish media hype from responsible scientific analysis. Spiers illuminates what aspects of the problem ought to be taken in stride and what aspects ought to cause concern to both private citizens and public policymakers.

While not a criticism of this excellent history, its nature and composition invites interesting philosophical reflections which, at some point and in some future work, deserve an answer: "Why discuss chemical and biological weapons in tandem?" Phenomenologically, chemical and biological weapons are very different things. Legally, they are governed by two distinct international treaties. In terms of their likely efficacy or military utility, the differences are likewise significant.

Quoting CIA Director William Webster, the author notes that "biological warfare agents, including toxins, are more potent than the most deadly chemical warfare agents and provide the broadest area coverage per pound of payload of any weapons system." Given that advances in the life sciences may be to the 21st century what advances in physics were to the 20th, one might be tempted to venture less timidly and suggest that biological weapons are potentially *far* more potent—orders of magnitude more potent—than chemical weapons. Of course, there are similarities: both are weapons, both are eschewed (at least publicly) by all respectable nations, both are subjects of international law. But what is it about chemical and biological weapons that makes it appropriate to discuss them in the

same breath? One could make the case that both elephants and whales are big, that they are gray, that they are mammals, and that they both can be trained to perform for audiences at zoos. However, that does not necessarily mean that elephants and whales belong in the same discussion. Of course, it is a long-standing practice to discuss chemical and biological weapons together, as well as in the company of nuclear weapons, but the practice is a curious one which probably deserves scholarly justification.

In sum, *A History of Chemical and Biological Weapons* is an excellent overview of an often underappreciated segment of 20th- and 21st-century security studies. It deserves the thoughtful attention of both students and professionals occupied with the enormously difficult problems associated with chemical and biological weapons.  
**COL John Mark Mattox, Ph.D.,  
USA, Kirtland Air Force Base,  
New Mexico**

**CONFRONTING THE CHAOS:  
A Rogue Military Historian  
Returns to Afghanistan**, Sean M. Maloney, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 2009, 275 pages, \$34.95.

Dr. Sean Maloney is Canada's designated military historian for his country's efforts in Afghanistan. He is a former Canadian Army combat arms officer who teaches at the Canadian Royal Military College War Studies Programme and is the strategic studies advisor to the Canadian Defence Academy. He has the frequent flyer miles to Afghanistan, the worn-out boots, and shredded rucksack to complete his credentials. His first book, *Enduring the Freedom: A Rogue Historian in Afghanistan*, covers the 2002 to 2003 period of Canada's efforts in that war-torn land. Maloney's new book continues the coverage to 2005. Both are must-read books. Maloney provides the military historian's perspective to this crucial period with a reasoned, rational view that avoids the deadline distortion

of news reporting. This is not to say it is a slow or academic read. Maloney is irreverent, acidic, and clearly not politically correct. The man is a biker who is often out-of-favor with higher-ups in what he terms the "Canadian nanny state."

While the U.S. Army was focusing on Iraq in 2004 and 2005, Afghanistan was fighting for its life. There were three on-going wars: one against the post 9/11 Taliban and forces of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, another with the remnants of Al Qaeda, and another with the narco-lords. The coalition focused on the first war in the eastern provinces of Paktia, Paktika, Nangrahar, and Kunar. In the meantime, the neo-Taliban were "raising the south" in Kandahar and Helmand Provinces among the Baluchis and Kakar Pashtun. The drug lords joined the cause. Still, the period had its successes, such as the Heavy Weapons Cantonment Program, the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program, and the successful conduct of three national elections.

What U.S. soldiers know about Afghanistan is normally from the American experience, yet the coalition effort is much wider. Maloney provides a look at the other parts of the coalition with humor, proportionality, and personal observations. Since the Canadians were concentrated in the south, Maloney focuses on that area.

There is one drawback to this first-rate book. There are no maps. Ground war is intimately concerned with geography, so grab a good map before you start reading.

Maloney provides a good look at the coalition mission through 2005 and the changing U.S. mission in the East. Understanding NATO and coalition goals and operations is a byzantine labyrinth. Maloney provides that understanding without losing his tactical focus. I strongly recommend his book to historians and military professionals alike.

**LTC Lester W. Grau,  
USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**THE CULTURE OF MILITARY INNOVATION: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the U.S., and Israel**, Dima Adamsky, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2010, 231 pages, \$25.95.

This carefully researched work presents a detailed case study in comparative strategic culture and the revolution in military affairs. First, it discusses the different traditions in which military innovation has developed in diverse nation-states. Second, it addresses how a "new theory of victory" originates in various cultural settings. It assesses the national cultures of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Israel and how they have approached and interpreted the changing nature of warfare.

The author contends that the most recent revolution in military affairs can be traced to the 1970s when standoff precision-guided munitions were introduced. The Soviets were first to recognize that the munitions would fundamentally change warfare and represented a critical discontinuity referred to as the military-technical revolution. The revolution in military affairs and the military-technical revolution are terms describing "radical military innovation that render existing doctrine and forms of combat obsolete."

Adamsky makes a convincing argument that the American way of war elevates material superiority, advanced technologies, and the attrition of the enemy by massive firepower over a fighting style focused on innovative doctrine, strategic imagination, or creative maneuvering. American romanticism with technology and confidence in homegrown ingenuity explains a strategic culture that is described by Adamsky as anti-intellectual, antihistorical, and uninspired. It is a culture that is uncomfortable with counterinsurgency and stability operations in which technology and firepower have less application. This way of war has developed from an American cognitive style that is



logical-analytical and focuses on the object independent from the context in which it is embedded. It is further characterized by applied research, empiricism, and induction.

The Israeli way of war was founded on the quest for absolute security, a cult of the tactical offensive, the ability to improvise, preemptive strikes, and a national siege mentality. They view leadership, courage, and combat experience as the essentials of military art rather than formal education or theoretical knowledge. They value doers who are flexible and adaptable rather than theorists or philosophers, resulting in a weak commitment to military theory and doctrine. Also, their military thought did not keep up with the sophistication of their weapons. They developed and procured weapons systems but treated them as force multipliers for their current operational concept rather than as an inducement to change their existing military architecture. Israeli cognitive style is pragmatic and focuses on doing above understanding. It takes a problem-solving perspective that emphasizes analysis and procedural knowledge over descriptive knowledge or strategic vision. It is thus less receptive to acknowledging paradigmatic changes in the nature of warfare.

This volume has a highly academic and uneven literary style and an irritating repetition of key ideas. However, its freshness, use of primary sources (approximately 80 pages of detailed notes), and basic premise that understanding national culture helps predict a nation's military innovation make it an ideal reference for strategists, scholars, armchair generals, and those interested in applying cultural models to organizational behavior.

**Gene Klann, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**GANGS, PSEUDO-MILITARIES, AND OTHER MODERN MERCENARIES**, Max G. Manwaring, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2010, 238 pages, \$36.00.

*Gangs* is from the pen of a venerable author and educator within the American military establishment. Dr. Max Manwaring gives us an additional element about wars that do not involve the maneuver of formal military units—the concept of legitimacy. Manwaring provides a straightforward list of key points and lessons, leading off with “develop a coherent legitimacy theory of engagement.” His list of what one must do to prevail against gangs is pretty long and daunting, but Manwaring must be credited with addressing the challenge and providing such a list. The gangs about which he writes are more than just street gangs and drug cartels; he also includes paramilitaries, vigilantes, popular militias, and youth leagues. Manwaring considers state use of gang-like organizations as a way to manage violence against militarily superior foes.

Manwaring helpfully divides his discussion according to who might be fighting whom: state versus parts of its own society, non-state actors versus other non-state actors, a nation-state versus other states through proxies, etc. The book focuses on the purposeful use of gangs as an element in unrestricted forms of warfare. Thus, Manwaring begins by citing Lenin's perspective on the use of agitation violence and then updates that part of Leninism through today's leftist asymmetric and unrestricted warfare. It is refreshing to read a point finessed through his examples rather than stated: legitimacy does not necessarily reside with the government against a gang. The gang might be an illegitimate tool of a government. Manwaring does not directly broach the possibility that the concern for legitimacy might require opposition to government, but we can infer from his elevation of the question of legitimacy (and the examples he uses) that it will not necessarily reside with the counterinsurgent.

It is also encouraging to see a book on general security theory using a majority of examples from the Western Hemisphere, given

that the greatest and most pressing challenges to U.S. security will likely come from that half of the globe. Of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, for example, Manwaring writes: “Chavez's concept of regional superinsurgency, conducted primarily by popular militias, appears to be in accord with Lenin's approach to the conduct of irregular asymmetrical political war.”

Manwaring acknowledges a formidable group of collaborators that has been thoughtfully attending to these questions for some time, though it is perhaps overly homogenous (almost all retired U.S. Army officers). The footnotes, bibliography, and index will be particularly useful to many readers.

**Geoffrey B. Demarest,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE WAR IN KOREA, 1950-1951: They Came from the North**, Allan R. Millett, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2010, 644 pages, \$45.00.

This is the second volume of a projected trilogy on the history of the Korean War meant to synthesize, as much as possible, various national viewpoints. One of Allan R. Millett's goals is to put the Koreans back at the center of their own history. He portrays the political and military struggle in Korea in local terms as a struggle between two competing revolutionary movements, and in international terms as part of the Cold War. His first volume provides a succinct summary of Korean political history, 1945-1950.

After summarizing the events in the first volume, Millett narrates the war's first year when the communists, and then the UN, tried to unite Korea by force. He ends the volume with both sides determining how they will achieve a political solution after their military strategies have failed. Drawing on primary material from Russian, American, South Korean, and Chinese archives, he shows how the tensions between Stalin, Mao, and Kim were resolved and led to an invasion of southern Korea, and then repeats the process

for U.S. relations with South Korea and the UN. Millett punctures myths and opens the way for a more dispassionate examination of the war and its implications, giving the reader detailed accounts of the decisions being made in Moscow, Beijing, New York, and Washington.

Millett easily shifts between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of warfare and does not eschew high politics and diplomacy. He tells the course of battles and their effect on the participants and then explains problems faced at higher levels. His narrative integrates topics other have neglected: atrocities, the effects of disease, and “battle fatigue” on UN troops; the logistical problems faced by all the combatants; problems in managing multinational troop contingents; and UN and South Korean integration plans for North Korea. He shows how events in Korea looked to decision makers in Moscow, Beijing, and Washington, pointing out that neither Kim Il Sung nor Syngman Rhee were invited to join in these high-level strategic discussions. His analysis of the campaigns of the war’s first year is refreshingly free of institutional triumphalism and he presents a succinct summary of the rewards and difficulties on both sides.

Millett superbly integrates national points of view into his narrative, not concentrating on the action of a single country at the expense of the others. As befits a careful scholar, his notes offer insights about the sources as he explains a subject’s historiography and how he differentiates between views. In addition, Millett includes a lengthy bibliographic essay in which he discusses his research and how it fits into Korean War historiography. His judgments are as judicious as his style is felicitous.

This volume, along with its companion, will repay the time it takes to read. When completed, the trilogy will be this generation’s standard work on the war.

**Lewis Bernstein, Ph.D.,**  
**Seoul, Korea**

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**“EXECUTE AGAINST JAPAN”:  
The U.S. Decision to Conduct  
Unrestricted Submarine Warfare,**  
Joel Ira Holwitt, Texas A&M  
University Press, College Station,  
2009, 245 pages, \$37.50.

U.S. Navy submarine officer Joel Ira Holwitt has performed an impressive feat with this book. Of the questions bothering historians and others about the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, surely the decision to engage the Japanese in unrestricted bombing and submarine warfare has puzzled most. Up until the Japanese attack, freedom of navigation of the seas and stalwart opposition to unrestricted warfare—a “shoot first ask questions later” approach to war perfected by the Germans in World War I—were pillars of American foreign policy.

For the American government to have overturned 160 years of naval and diplomatic precedent was astonishing since the decision makers all had clear memories of German provocation in 1917. Most historians have tended to simply consign the decision to anger and revenge over the dastardly attack at Pearl Harbor. Yet the abruptness of the decision still boggles the mind—at one stroke pretense and precedence were swept aside. Holwitt’s book examines this question closely and reveals a much more nuanced and complex process that led to this stunning turnaround in foreign policy. Combining expert use of primary archival sources and the records of wargaming and policy papers at the Naval War College, he has found that the U.S. Navy had been thinking about the issue of submarine war zones for some time and had institutionally decided that unrestricted submarine warfare would be instituted as a matter of course (along with strategic bombing). This is the major finding of the book. By the late 1930s, it was an open secret among the Navy’s top strategic leaders on the General Board, at the Naval War College, and in the planning division of the Chief of Naval Operations, that the Orange War Plan against Japan must include this rejection of traditional restraint.

In addition to this major discovery in the archival evidence, Holwitt’s study reinforces the conclusions of others that this course of action did not translate into submarine design or changes in tactics, which is one reason U.S. submarines initially performed so poorly (faulty torpedoes being the other). However, he does make a case that the Orange War Plan resulted in an “accidentally” fortuitous design for fleet submarines that were ideal for unrestricted commerce warfare. The only weakness in his argument here, and it is minor, is that he fails to link this design to the constraints of the Washington Naval Treaty (1922) on overseas basing that mandated long range, habitable submarines.

Holwitt is to be commended for not shying away from moral judgments—noting that the biggest losers were civilians both at sea and ashore (who starved). He also finds it “troubling” that the decision was made almost completely divorced from civilian control. This is a superb book that fully explains how the United States came to adopt a strategy regarded by many as illegal and tantamount to “terror.”

**CDR John T. Kuehn, Ph.D.,**  
**USN, Retired,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**PATTON, TENACITY IN  
ACTION,** Agostino Von Hassell,  
Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN,  
2010, 192 pages, \$19.99.

*Patton, Tenacity in Action* is an in-depth, personal look at General George S. Patton, Jr. The book refutes many of the exaggerated personality traits seen in the 1970 movie about Patton starring George C. Scott.

Von Hassell focuses on the complex nature of Patton the man. Patton had many fears, hopes, joys, and triumphs and as many failures and successes. Patton was far from perfect, but he was not a cold-hearted task master. He was constantly afraid of his own cowardice and took unusual risk to prove otherwise, he was driven to succeed but was sensitive and ever-caring about the soldiers he led.

The book covers Patton's early childhood including the learning difficulties he overcame to earn a West Point appointment. Von Hassell explains the history of Patton's family and what they expected of young George. Details of Patton's discipline, appetite for reading and learning, and his unwavering determination help in understanding Patton in his later years as master tactician and strategist.

The majority of the book relates Patton's military career, including his crowning jewel—the liberation of Bastogne. Von Hassell tells how Patton's personality influenced his vision and decision-making processes as an officer and a general. Most interesting is Patton's decision to relieve the embattled garrison at Bastogne and how the media portrayed Patton in the movie of the same name.

I recommend the book to anyone interested in successful military leaders, and to anyone determined to get past the myths about Patton.

**Kenneth J. Miller,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE GRAND DESIGN: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War**, Donald Stoker, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, 512 pages, \$27.95.

Donald Stoker insists that too many studies of how the Civil War was won and lost focus on battlefield campaigns and tactics. Stoker argues the North won because it destroyed the Confederates' ability to maintain effective resistance, and the South lost because it failed to keep its armies intact long enough to gain independence. While battles are important, strategy ultimately determines the outcome.

In *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*, Stoker defines strategy as different from policy, operations, and tactics. Strategy, he explains, is the overall plan of action for defeating the opposing belligerent. Policy is the political outcome desired by the war, and tactics and operations are the battle and campaign level of warfare.

Both the North and South

attempted to develop a winning strategy early in the war, but neither succeeded. Northern generals confused themselves by trying to accomplish too much at once. Their objective was to capture the Confederate capital in Richmond. General McClellan tried to end the war in one campaign. The Confederates, on the other hand, struggled to defend their territory with an inadequate amount of men. They defended cities and tactical objectives, but their armies sustained irreplaceable casualties. They stretched their resources beyond their capacity and failed to sustain a strategy that would have allowed them to win.

If the North had earlier adopted the strategy they chose late in the war, the rebellion might have ended rather quickly. Ulysses S. Grant's aggressive battle-seeking campaigns forced the South to fight, and casualties whittled away at Confederate numbers as well as their morale. Southern forces had been able to counter Union pushes into their territory, which were aimed at fixed locations, by harassing Northern supply routes. Campaigns like Sherman's March through Georgia took the advantage away from the South because it allowed the North freedom of movement and made use of its superior manpower.

Stoker argues his point effectively; he avoids bogging the reader down with details of campaigns and battles. Rather, he discusses the in-depth planning that went into campaigns and describes them with an eye to their strategic importance. Stoker extensively explains the problems encountered by Northern and Southern generals in relation to strategic planning. He shows that both sides failed to keep a clear focus on how they could win the war and allowed other factors to complicate their objectives. It was the North's eventual adoption of an effective strategy, and the South's failure to do so, that determined the final result. *The Grand Design* is an excellent look at Civil War strategy with lessons that can be applied today.

**Ryland Breeding,  
Richmond, Virginia**

**CAVALRY OF THE HEARTLAND: The Mounted Forces of the Army of Tennessee**, Edward G. Longacre, Westhome Publishing, Yardley, PA, 2009, 429 pages, \$35.00.

Building on some of his earlier works, *Lee's Cavalrymen* and *Lincoln's Cavalrymen*, Edward Longacre's *Cavalry of the Heartland: The Mounted Forces of the Army of Tennessee* is a rich, comprehensive history of the Confederacy's Western Army cavalry operations, which arguably had some of the most colorful mounted officers of the American Civil War. Longacre takes the reader from the Western Army's creation in Tennessee and Kentucky through its final battles in North Carolina. He chronicles mounted operations across the theater through the experiences of key officers, particularly generals Nathan Bedford Forrest, John Hunt Morgan, and Joseph Wheeler. In doing so, Longacre provides an even narrative, balancing the more renowned raids with the mundane duties of the Southern mounted arm in support of its army in the field.

The book's title is misleading. Rather than confining the book to merely the Army of Tennessee's operations, Longacre tells a far more comprehensive story of mounted operations across the expanse of the entire western theater. Realizing the interrelated nature of operations between the scattered western departments, he skillfully includes examples from all three. For instance, he recounts Joseph Johnston's decision in early 1863 to gather cavalry forces in west Tennessee and northern Mississippi into a single, powerful corps under Earl Van Dorn—a decision that proved disastrous to the Confederate war effort. Pemberton's Army of Mississippi, bereft of cavalry, was unable either to determine Grant's intentions toward Vicksburg or contain Union cavalry thrusts such as Grierson's celebrated raid. Putting these and other cavalry operations into their proper context against the backdrop of the larger field operations in the west is this study's true virtue.

As with earlier works, Longacre's *Cavalry of the Heartland* is based on meticulous research using both primary and secondary sources. While the depth of the author's research is evident, his narrative does not get bogged down despite some minute and important detail. Longacre includes useful maps, short biographies, and orders of battle which—combined with the rich analytic text—provide a captivating story of the western Confederacy's knights errant and a compelling history of the western theater of war. As such, *Cavalry of the Heartland* should be regarded as an important resource on the Civil War's western theater and should be included with the likes of Stanley Horn's classic *The Army of Tennessee* and Steven Woodworth's more recent *Nothing but Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865*.

**Dan C. Fullerton, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**EUROPEAN WARFARE 1350-1750**, edited by Frank Tallett and D.J.B. Trim, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, 394 pages, \$34.99.

*European Warfare 1350-1750* is an anthology of perspectives and interpretations by leading military historians on warfare over a span

of time that has traditionally been treated by at least two different groups of specialists: historians of the Middle Ages and those of the Early Modern Period. The book addresses the perceived need by both groups of scholars to cross the artificial divide between their chosen periods. Its publication follows a decision made at a conference at the University of Reading, England, entitled "Crossing the Divide: Continuity and Change in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Warfare." This new perspective has resulted in reframing the timeline of history so that the years between 1350 and 1750 are seen as a continuous and coherent whole.

The volume's 14 essays are wide-ranging and tend to take a long view of a specific complex subject—the *longue durée*—while keeping an eye for the relevant detail. They cover such diverse topics as "Warfare and the International State System"; "Aspects of Operational Art: Communications, Cannon, and Small War"; "Legality and Legitimacy in War and its Conduct 1350-1650"; "Conflict, Religion, and Ideology"; and "Warfare, Entrepreneurship, and the Fiscal-Military State." Most students of the period will find at least a few pieces that speak to their interests.

The essays are preceded by an insightful introductory piece

by the volume's editors, which summarizes the state of knowledge and conceptualizations about the period and suggests areas for further exploration. While emphasizing the themes of societal and technological change and the symbiosis between the military and the emergence of the modern nation-state system, the editors have avoided the controversies associated with the concept of a "military revolution" or a "revolution in military affairs," which have colored so much of the debate about the period. The emphasis is on continuity and development in the context of significant technological and societal change.

Most of the essays assume a basic understanding of military and cultural history and are not suited for the casual reader. Scholars and students of the periods involved will find invigorating perspectives and stimulating ideas for their own research. The anthology is supplemented by biographical sketches of the contributors, maps, and an extensive bibliography that includes both primary and secondary sources (although I noticed the absence of important sources on the Early Italian Wars)—highly recommended.

**LTC Prisco R. Hernández,  
Ph.D., USAR, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas**



# MR We Recommend

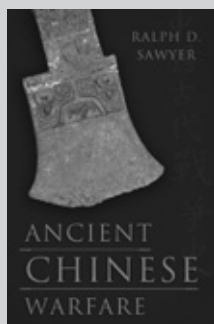


**THE TWILIGHT WARRIORS**, Broadway Books, New York, 2010, 400 pages, \$24.99.

*The Twilight Warriors* by military historian and former navy pilot Robert Gandt is the engrossing, page-turning story of this tightly knit crew of young naval aviators who find themselves thrust into the epic Battle of Okinawa, the last great campaign of the Pacific theater and the largest land-air-sea engagement in history. From the cockpit of a Corsair fighter, we gaze down at the Japanese task force racing to destroy the American amphibious force. Through the eyes of the men on the destroyers assigned to picket ship duty, we experience the terror as wave after wave of kamikazes crash into their ships. Standing on the deck of the legendary battleship Yamato, we watch Japan's last hope for victory die in a tableau of gunfire and explosions.

Derived from hours of interviews with the surviving Tail End Charlies as well as memoirs, journals, and correspondence of Okinawa veterans from both the American and Japanese sides, *The Twilight Warriors* is, at its core, the story of a band of steadfast young Americans in the thick of a massive, all-important military campaign and their enigmatic, fanatically courageous enemy.

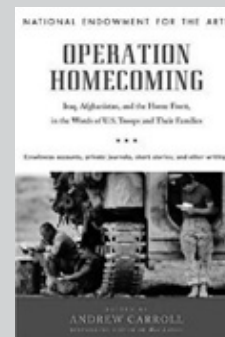
*From the Publisher.*



**ANCIENT CHINESE WARFARE**, Ralph D. Sawyer, Basic Books, New York, 2011, 576 pages, \$39.99.

The history of China is a history of warfare. Rarely in its 3,000-year existence has the country not been beset by war, rebellion, or raids. Warfare was a primary source of innovation, social evolution, and material progress in the Legendary Era, Hsia dynasty, and Shang dynasty—indeed, war was the force that formed the first cohesive Chinese empire, setting China on a trajectory of state building and aggressive activity that continues to this day. In *Ancient Chinese Warfare*, a preeminent expert on Chinese military history uses recently recovered documents and archaeological findings to construct a comprehensive guide to the developing technologies, strategies, and logistics of ancient Chinese militarism. The result is a definitive look at the tools and methods that won wars and shaped culture in ancient China.

*From the Publisher.*



**OPERATION HOMECOMING: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front, in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families**, Andrew Carroll, ed., University of Chicago Press, IL, 2008, 432 pages, \$16.95.

*Operation Homecoming* is the result of a major initiative launched by the National Endowment for the Arts to bring distinguished writers to military bases to inspire U.S. soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and their families to record their wartime experiences. Encouraged by such authors as Tom Clancy, Mark Bowden, Bobbie Ann Mason, Tobias Wolff, Jeff Shaara, and Marilyn Nelson, American military personnel and their loved ones wrote candidly about what they saw, heard, and felt while in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as on the home front. Taken together, these eyewitness accounts, private journals, short stories, letters, and other personal writings become a dramatic narrative that shows the human side of warfare.

*From the Publisher.*



THERE WAS A KNIGHT WHO TRAVELED WITH US, AND HE WAS QUITE A WORTHY MAN. EVER SINCE HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO RIDE HE LOVED CHIVALRY, TRUTH AND HONOR, FREEDOM AND COURTESY. HE FOUGHT BRAVELY IN HIS MASTER'S WARS, AND HAD RIDDEN AS FAR AND WIDE AS ANYONE, IN BOTH CIVILIZED AND WILD COUNTRIES, AND HE WAS ALWAYS HONORED FOR HIS VALOR. HE WAS AT ALEXANDRIA WHEN IT WAS CONQUERED, AND IN PRUSSIA HE WAS OFTEN GIVEN THE SEAT OF HONOR ABOVE THE KNIGHTS OF MANY NATIONS. HE HAD SAILED THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH GREAT ARMIES AND FOUGHT IN FIFTEEN BATTLES, INCLUDING THE GREAT VICTORIES IN LITHUANIA, RUSSIA, AND TURKEY, TO NAME A FEW. THREE TIMES RIVALS CHALLENGED HIM TO JOUST, AND THREE RIVALS HE DEFEATED. AND THOUGH HE WAS DESERVING OF MANY HONORS, HE WAS WISE AND MODEST. IN ALL HIS LIFE HE NEVER ONCE SPOKE OF ANYONE WITH VILLAINY. HE WAS A TRUE, PERFECT, GENTLE KNIGHT.



WITH HIM THERE WAS HIS SON, A YOUNG SQUIRE—A GOOD LOOKING AND LUSTY BACHELOR—ABOUT TWENTY YEARS OLD WITH A HEAD FULL OF CURLY HAIR. HE WAS WELL BUILT, AGILE, AND OF GREAT STRENGTH. HE HAD BEEN IN CAVALRY CHARGES IN FLANDERS, ARTOIS, AND PICARDY, AND BORE HIMSELF WELL AND COURAGEOUSLY IN THE CLOSE FIGHT. A USEFUL COMPANION WAS HE TO HIS FATHER. HE RODE HIS HORSE WELL, KNEW HOW TO JOUST, AND SANG SONGS OF HIS OWN COMPOSING. HE COULD DRAW AND WRITE, AND NEEDED NO MORE SLEEP THAN A NIGHTINGALE. COURTEOUS HE WAS, MODEST AND OBEDIENT. WHAT WAS MORE, HE COULD COOK.

A SINGLE YEOMAN TRAVELED WITH THEM, AS THEY WISHED TO TRAVEL LIGHT, AND THIS YEOMAN WAS CLAD IN A HOODED COAT OF GREEN. A SHEAF OF PEACOCK ARROWS—BRIGHT AND KEEN—HE CARRIED ON HIS BELT, AND HE KNEW WELL HOW TO CARE FOR HIS GEAR. HE NEVER LET THE FEATHERS ON HIS ARROWS DROOP, AND IN HIS HAND HE BORE A MIGHTY BOW. HE KEPT HIS HAIR CUT SHORT, AND HIS FACE WAS TANNED FROM LIVING OUTDOORS. HE KNEW WELL THE INTRICACIES OF WOODCRAFT. UPON ONE ARM HE WORE A LEATHER WRISTGUARD, WITH A SWORD AND SHIELD HANGING CLOSE, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE HE WORE A BRIGHT DAGGER, AS SHARP AS THE POINT OF A SPEAR. A SILVER SAINT CHRISTOPHER MEDAL SHONE ON HIS CHEST, AND HE SLUNG A HUNTING HORN ON A GREEN CORD AROUND HIS NECK. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS A TRUE FORESTER.

