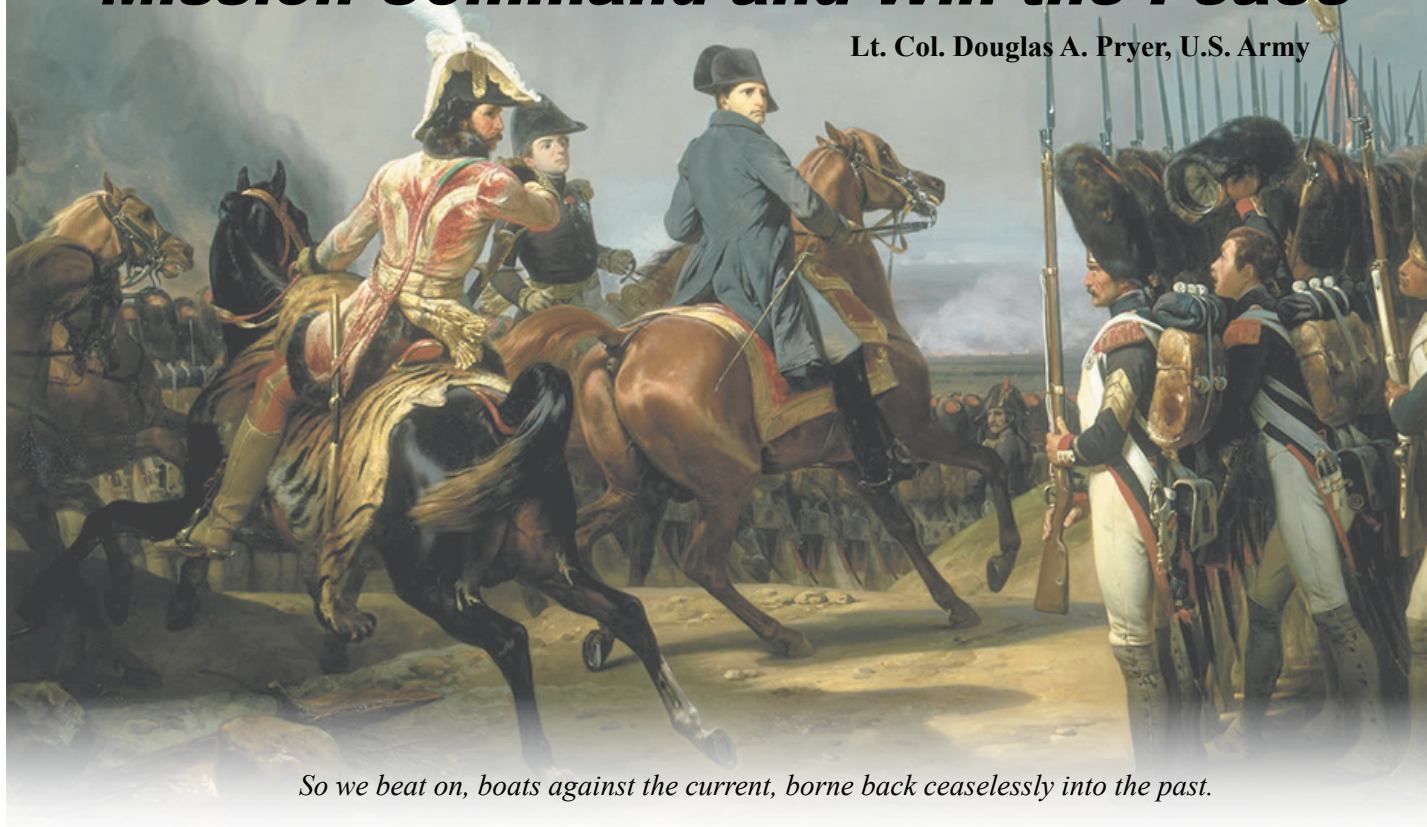# Growing Leaders Who Practice Mission Command and Win the Peace

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So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

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IMAGE: Horace Vernet, *Bataille d'Iena*, oil on canvas, Versailles, France, Napoloean in front of his troops at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt, 14 October 1806. Prussia's defeat in this battle led to the birth of mission command.

A Philosophy's German Birth and American Adoption

LIKE MANY GREAT military innovations, mission command was conceived in the womb of war following defeat's painful insights. In 1806, Napoleon decisively beat the Prussian army at the twin battles of Jena and Auerstedt. Although the French attack was poorly coordinated, the rigid Prussian army fought even worse, failing to capitalize on opportunities. In the weeks that followed, Napoleon's Grande Armée pursued their demoralized enemy, destroyed Prussian units piecemeal, and occupied Berlin.

This event's psychic shock propelled the Prussian amy's transformation. Gerhard von Scharnhorst, the chief of the Prussian General Staff, spearheaded reform. Scharnhorst believed that the best way to prepare armies for battle was to comprehensively educate junior leaders and then empower them to make independent decisions.[1] The General Staff and Military Academy he founded would influence generations of German officers to think as he did about command.[2]

The great military theorist Carl von Clausewitz was Scharnhorst's protégé. Clausewitz's concept of "friction" gave sustenance to the embryonic philosophy that would later be called "*auftragstaktik*" (mission command). Clausewitz wrote that because of war's reciprocal nature and underlying moral forces, "war is the realm of uncertainty."[3] Unforeseen difficulties accumulate

at every level, creating a "kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war."[4] Success, he concluded, goes to commanders who outmatch the enemy's ability to exploit friction.

Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, who considered himself a disciple of Clausewitz, is known as "The Father of Auftragstaktik."[5] During Moltke's 30-year tenure as chief of staff, auftragstaktik was "established as coherent theory . . . and enforced as official doctrine."[6] Moltke cemented the support that military culture, education, and training gave to what had become decentralized command. Schools gave extensive tactical educations even to junior officers and noncommissioned officers.[7] Leaders typically valued aggressive initiative over strict obedience from their subordinates, and, until the 1920s, officers faced training scenarios in which they had to disobey orders to meet the commander's intent.[8]

Decentralized command propelled the Prussians to rapid victory over the French in 1870. In 1918, semiautonomous German "shock troops" achieved the only major tactical breakthrough on the Western Front (a breakthrough they could not exploit due to attrition and logistical shortcomings).[9] Later, as a key components of "blitzkrieg," auftragstaktik fueled the quick defeat of Allied armies in Europe, Asia, and Africa at the start of World War II.

Elements of this philosophy drifted across the Atlantic. Since at least 1905, U.S. Army doctrine has sporadically endorsed these elements.[10] As long ago as the American Civil War, a few notable commanders (such as Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee) routinely issued mission orders.[11] General George S. Patton Jr. exemplified mission command more than any other American commander, even outperforming his German foes in this regard. "Never tell people how to do things," wrote Patton. "Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."[12]

Nonetheless, it was not until our Army looked for ways to offset the Soviet army's huge quantitative edge in Europe that auftragstaktik was given precedence in doctrine.[13] The 1982 U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, was a milestone in this regard, emphasizing mission orders, subordinate initiative, and an "offensive spirit" (an unintended double entendre).[14]

Today, *mission command* is the foundation of the U.S. Army's warfighting philosophy.[15] It features prominently in key doctrine and as a subject at service schools.[16] It even has a dedicated manual, Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*, which 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 unified land operations."[17]

Thanks to our Army's adopting auftragstaktik, advocates say we can do more with less throughout the spectrum of conflict. Mission command gives small unit commanders the flexibility to rapidly react, maneuver, and win battles involving heavy conventional forces. Since "local commanders have the best grasp of their situations," empowering junior officers to solve their own problems helps us defeat insurgencies.[18] And, decentralizing information operations ensures we keep pace with dispersed enemies' rapid delivery of messages to key populations.[19] Doctrine and training, proponents argue, have finally come together to ensure that Army leaders can outmatch their enemies' ability to exploit friction.

If only it were this easy.

Helmuth von Moltke the Elder is often referred to as "the Father of Auftragstaktik." It was under his direction that the Prussian Army institutionalized the mission command philosophy.

Saying It Is So Does Not Make It So

"So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." Thus F. Scott Fitzgerald ended *The Great Gatsby*, hauntingly evoking the idea that human beings can only with difficulty escape key events of their past. The same can be said of institutions, borne back to their past by deep, often hidden cultural biases.

The eminent organizational theorist Edgar Schein defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems."[20] Schein defines three levels of organizational culture. The first level consists of visible "artifacts" such as mission statements, heroic narratives, and doctrinal manuals.[21] The second consists of the unwritten rules and values that govern day-to-day behavior.[22] And on the deepest level, the third level, are the organization's basic assumptions, its preferences for certain solutions based on past experiences.[23]

Schein's model helps us understand why organizations may say they value one thing when actually they prefer something else. It also explains why our Army may not be fully implementing mission command, despite a strong doctrinal commitment to the approach.

In a recent book, Israeli Defense Forces veteran and scholar Eitan Shamir comprehensively addresses the effects of military culture on the practice of mission command. With regard to the U.S. Army, he argues, forces inhibiting the practice of mission command outweigh the forces supporting it.[24] Tom Guthrie, Jorg Muth, Donald Vandergriff, and many other critics agree.[25]

The proof, some say, lies in our Army's lackluster battlefield performance in the decades since auftragstaktik's adoption. To them, even an apparent victory such as the Gulf War is a qualified success. In that war, coalition forces fought to detailed plan in one massive, synchronized enveloping attack. Written orders with annexes typically ran 1,000 pages long, and, as Gen. Colin Powell later wrote, "No one over there was going to tell Schwarzkopf he made a mistake."[26] When the Iraqi army collapsed earlier than expected, commanders lacked the freedom of action, competency, and initiative to pursue and destroy retreating Iraqi columns.[27] Most of the Republican Guard escaped, ensuring the survival of Saddam's regime and another war with Iraq a decade later.[28]

Some critics argue that, with a few notable exceptions, our Army has also failed to exercise mission command during more recent conflicts.[29] Wrote British Brigadier Nigel Aylwin Foster after serving with U.S. forces in Iraq for a year:

> . . . whilst the U.S. Army may espouse mission command, in Iraq it did not practice it . . . Commanders and staff at all levels . . . rarely if ever questioned authority, and were reluctant to deviate from precise instructions. Staunch loyalty upward and conformity to one's superior were noticeable traits. Each commander had his own style, but if there was a common trend, it was for micromanagement, with many hours devoted to daily briefings and updates.[30]

Our Army's adoption of mission command is, at best, half-realized. Outlined in this essay are three cultural tendencies to overcome if mission command's promise is to be fulfilled. Even more critical is putting mission command in proper perspective: it is not a philosophy that necessarily wins wars instead of battles. For this philosophy, we must look elsewhere, within an ancient theoretical tradition that helps us better understand the one enduring constant of warfare—human nature.

To grow leaders who truly practice mission command and can win the peace, our Army requires a fundamental reorientation, one that supports deep changes to Army culture, doctrine, training, personnel management, and education.

The River Our Doctrine Rows Against

The most important cultural quality supporting mission command, experts agree, is a climate of trust based on perceptions that colleagues are professionally competent and possess sound judgment.[31] Other enabling cultural characteristics include excellent communication based on shared understanding of doctrine, high value on learning as expressed and emphasized in training and education, tolerance for well-intended mistakes, a propensity for action and initiatives, and responsibility linked to authority.[32]

(U.S. Army)

Technology contributed to significant micromanagement as early as the Vietnam War. Company commanders were often forced to deal with several levels of commanders orbiting in helicopters above them.

Unfortunately, few of these qualities are what they could be in our Army.

All that glitters is gold. The British poet Thomas Gray ended a poem about a cat that drowned chasing goldfish in a tub, thus: "*Not all that tempts your wandering eyes/And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;/Nor all that glisters gold.*" Our military would do well to heed this moral rather than continue the often-headlong pursuit of glittery new technology.

Our love of technology is a cultural preference with deep historical roots. It is, perhaps, the natural one for the military of an economically powerful nation. Technology's decisive use in long-ago wars of near-annihilation reinforced this preference. For example, Native Americans could not win against the repeating rifle, and in 1945, the atom bomb emphatically ended our nation's bloody struggle with Japan.

This preference prevails despite superior weapons proving nondecisive on more recent battlefields. In Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, such weapons made missions seem accomplishable, only for

us to find that quick victory was a shimmering mirage. Short-term kinetic effects like "body counts" and "shock and awe," we learned, are not in themselves sufficient to achieve lasting success in modern conflicts. Indeed, they can actually be harmful if they distract us from modern war's most significant components, its political and moral aspects.

Technology's primacy is most evident in budgetary decisions. The U.S. Army is currently set to downsize more than the technology-based Air Force and Navy.[33] Of the categories of military spending, only the procurement budget is projected to grow over the next three years.[34] Most of this growing budget is going to high-dollar, "gee-whiz" weapons such as jet fighters, missiles, submarines, and destroyers—weapons that have only marginally influenced battlefield outcomes during the last 50 years.[35]

Our Army is not immune to technology's sirens' song. We are, for example, spending billions on

enhancing internal networks of sensors and information pathways. Such networks provide an obvious lure away from mission command. During the Vietnam War, commanders in helicopters gave orders to junior leaders below them in the midst of battle.[36] Today's senior leaders do not have to leave their command post—or even be in theater—to micromanage operations.

Telling senior leaders they can watch and communicate with their smallest units is one thing. But, also expecting them not to control these units' actions when they disagree with their subordinates' decisions is almost certainly unrealistic.

Every book is sacred. Shamir says, "An organizational culture dictating that subordinates cannot be trusted will be expressed through strong control procedures."[37] This is precisely the culture that Tom Guthrie describes as belonging to the U.S. Army: "If we intend to truly embrace mission command, then we should do it to the fullest, and that will require commitment to changing a culture from one of control and process to one of decentralization and trust. We cannot afford to preach one thing and do another."[38] Army leaders want to be trusted, Guthrie says, but are slow to trust.[39] Instead, they tend to micromanage subordinates and encourage them to "do things by the book."[40] In an actual brigade, he asks, will company commanders really be permitted to not post schedules on company boards six weeks out?[41] To not conduct weekly training meetings?[42]

Guthrie is right: control and process swamp "Big Army" training. The Digital Training Management System allows any leader to remotely view and critique a unit's training schedule—or show up to see if it is being followed. Units are assigned "mission essential tasks" that are broken into "collective tasks," which in turn prescribe supporting tasks, conditions, and standards. Field Manuals, ADPs, ATPs, STPs, TCs, and SOPs—all contain rubrics explaining how to solve specific problems.[43] Training is complete when a unit performs the required actions in the required order. If a trainee misses a step or finds another solution, retraining is required. By focusing on automatic behavioral responses to given stimuli and on process instead of results, our Army perpetuates a pattern of our past, when major wars were fought largely with conscripts who had little time for formal military education before being thrown into battle.

As a junior officer, it never occurred to me there might be a better way to prepare units for combat. I then served two years with a British Army regiment as an exchange officer. This regiment rotated a squadron [company] every six months through dangerous Helmand Province in Afghanistan. Rather than being told exactly what to do when and how, deploying squadron commanders were given empty training calendars and told, "Get your troops ready for combat!" And that is exactly what they did. They regularly talked to the regimental commander, to each other, and to staff officers about what, when, where, and how to conduct training. This dialogue built trust and esprit de corps among leaders. It also led to effective and, at times, inspired training.

These squadrons received nothing but praise from their coalition leadership in Afghanistan. Enabling their success was a personnel system that selects only mature, staff-college-educated majors for company command: these officers "not only excel when given a degree of freedom, indeed, they demand this freedom from their commanding officers."[44] Education also supported their success: cadets are trained and mentored by "colour sergeants considered the best of their generation and who have passed an extensive period of selection," and "the instructors at the UK Staff College . . . are taken from the top 10-15% of majors."[45]

Do not argue with the commander. In combat, "Big Army" decision briefs too frequently transpire thus: a junior staff officer nervously briefs as the commander asks questions. Briefing complete, quiet discussion ensues between the commander and a few trusted advisors. While the few discuss, most staff members listen (or daydream). Finally, the commander delivers guidance. When he does, it is the rare subordinate who says, "Wait a minute, sir. You're wrong, and here's why." When this does occur, the dissenting officer is almost invariably a leader of great credibility and rank, such as the chief of staff or operations officer.

It is likely that the taboo against openly disagreeing with the commander also dates from the time when a few professionally educated commanders had to lead subordinates who had little military education. In these circumstances, suppressing collaboration ensured that a commander's time was not wasted answering foolish questions. However, a noncollaborative environment is incompatible

with mission command. No leader—no matter how brilliant, experienced, and well-educated—is an island. In the absence of detailed orders, he must be willing to listen and accept advice from others.

A commander's encouragement and acceptance of criticism is necessary for establishing a climate conducive to mission command. Also, his spending time developing his subordinates is key so that they understand how he thinks and can correctly execute his intent.[46] Over time, this dialogue builds mutual trust.[47] Unfortunately, in survey after survey, Army officers report that their leaders' greatest shortcoming is the failure to develop subordinates.[48]

> *A commander's encouragement and acceptance of criticism is necessary for establishing a climate conducive to mission command.*

War is a Moral Contest and a Favorable, Enduring Peace the Prize

Half-hearted implementation is not the main problem with the Army's foundational philosophy. The deeper problem is that it fails to pass the essential litmus test of any army's core philosophy: does it help win wars, not just battles? True, auftragstaktik transformed the German army into a tactically superior force. However, in 1871, the Treaty of Frankfurt saved this army from fighting (and perhaps losing) a protracted insurgency in Paris. They were also defeated in two world wars. Expediting the loss of World War II were oft-brutal tactics that enraged local populations and ensured the army fought on three fronts—on the western and eastern fronts and against strong insurgencies. Field Marshall Erwin Rommel wrote that his only concern regarding junior officers was that they "bring with them a good grounding in tactics."[49] Rommel's view epitomized the military culture that produced an army that was as strategically weak as it was tactically strong—a dichotomy that would have been even more pro-

nounced in today's "age of the strategic corporal."[50] Indeed, as our own military learned in Vietnam, it is possible for a tactically superior force to win nearly every battle but still lose the war.

The reason mission command fails as a foundational philosophy is that it says nothing about the framework—the intents of higher commanders—in which missions are executed. If this framework is flawed, even perfectly executed missions produce flawed outcomes.

A good starting place for understanding what this philosophy could say can be found in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Sun Tzu gave "moral influence" primacy in war. Leaders who exercise this influence are not simply avoiding unlawful actions; they are choosing just actions that cause "the people to be in harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany them in life and unto death without fear of mortal peril."[51] Thus, to Sun Tzu, the key to military success is fostering the will to fight of one's nation and troops by maintaining their sense of moral purpose (or "Tao" or "justice").

Clausewitz likewise emphasized moral forces, devoting the first book of *On War* to the subject. He wrote, "One might say that the physical seem little more than the wooden hilt, while the moral factors are the precious metal, the real weapon, the finely honed blade."[52] An important distinction Clausewitz made was between "Absolute War," war with no limitations on the use of force, and "Real War," war as it must actually be fought given social and other constraints.[53] Like Sun Tzu, Clausewitz considered these constraints critical because of their ability to inspire one's own country and soldiers to fight harder (or to give up, if disregarded).

U.S. Air Force Col. John Boyd broadened this tradition. Boyd famously described decision making as an "observe-orient-decide-act" (OODA) loop: the side that achieves immediate tactical success is the one that, through rapid and well-chosen action, disrupts their opponent's OODA loop and prevents them from responding effectively. This is precisely the type of success that mission command potentially enables. However, Boyd also emphasized that grand strategy must have "a moral design" and that the "name of the game" in warfare is to "preserve or build up our moral authority while compromising that of our adversaries in order to pump up our resolve, drain away adversaries' resolve, and attract them as well as

A Palestinian demonstrator throws stones toward Israeli forces during clashes over road closures in Kfar Kadum, West Bank, 19 August 2011. "Fourth generation warfare" theorists like T.X. Hammes argue that, in the information age, "the sling and the stone" can be more powerful than the tank, due to the ability of insurgents to undermine the perceived legitimacy of a more powerful nation's actions among this nation's decision-makers.

others to our cause and way of life."[54] Thus, to Boyd, just as important as morally influencing one's own side was exerting this influence upon an enemy and this opponent's base of popular support.

"Fourth generation warfare" theorists have expressed views consistent with this tradition. They argue that, thanks to information technology, today's insurgents can far more easily convince the political decision makers of enemy nations "that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit."[55] Insurgents do this by undermining perceptions of the "legitimacy" of this nation's actions among international organizations, this nation's people, and the populations and leaders of allied countries.[56] (Noteworthy here is that Sun Tzu's moral concept of "justice" buttresses the political concept of "legitimacy.")

Current U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine narrowly falls within this tradition. The doctrine states that the greatest prize for either counterinsurgent or insurgent is the good opinion of the population they wish to govern: "The primary struggle in an internal war is to mobilize people in a struggle for political control and legitimacy."[57]

Army Doctrinal Publication 1, *The Army*, briefly intersects this tradition, stating that the "moral-ethical field" of conflict includes not just obeying laws, but applying combat power in such a way as to meet the expectations of America's citizens.[58] However, this doctrine does not explore how soldiers are supposed to fulfill Americans' expectations—unless its discussion of institutional artifacts (the Oath of Service, Soldier's Creed, Army Civilian Creed, Warrior Ethos, and Army Values) are assumed to be these means.

Peter Fromm, Kevin Cutright, and I are currently writing within this tradition. We argue that, in an increasingly "flat" world, information technology enables warring parties to affect the perceptions and moral judgments of all of a conflict's key populations—their own troops, enemy forces, populations at

home and in the theater of war, and the international community—to a degree never before possible. The enduring negative judgments of just one of these populations have the potential to defeat America's military in a conflict. Moreover, even conventional wars must be fought far differently today than in the past. As I wrote: "Many still do not realize that, when Dresden's citizens have video cell phones and are plugged into the Internet, the military that firebombs them probably does not get to continue its [population-centric] strategic bombing campaign."[59]

Key to our argument is that "legitimacy represents the psychological hub of a lasting peace. For a modern democracy to create legitimate outcomes from war, its conflict must follow what is perceived to be a moral trajectory."[60] In our view, any "peace" short of the annihilation of one's enemy and this enemy's base of popular support must be reinforced by moral forces. One way these moral forces (specifically, those involving judgments of right and wrong) are made visible is via political organs, processes, debates, and decisions. Thus, while war may be as Clausewitz called it, "the continuation of politics by other means," politics is but the visible manifestation of broader and deeper moral currents.

Undergirding this theoretical tradition is the idea that the real goal of war is a favorable peace that lasts due to supporting moral forces. As Clausewitz wrote, "In many cases, particularly those involving great and decisive actions, the analysis extends to the ultimate objective, which is to bring about peace."[61] The philosopher John Rawls amplified this idea, describing what occurs when a peace is simply coerced rather than morally earned: "The way a war is fought and the actions ending it endure in the historical memory of peoples and may set the stage for future war."[62] Unfortunately, Army doctrine promotes annihilative tactical victory as the ultimate goal by arguing that peace is the natural consequence of such victory. For example, the Army's capstone manual says, "If U.S. forces fight, the Nation expects us to inflict a defeat of sufficient magnitude that the enemy abandons his objectives and agrees to peace on our terms."[63]

…the real goal of war is a favorable peace that lasts due to supporting moral forces.

A modern army's warfighting philosophy must set the ultimate goal for conflict as achieving a favorable peace obtained via actions that give this peace an enduring moral foundation. Beyond the counterinsurgency manual's narrow focus on local sentiment and our Army's capstone manual's unelaborated mention of the importance of fulfilling American expectations, this idea has largely been an afterthought to America's military services. The possible exception is the U.S. Marine Corps, which has recognized the primacy of the "human" domain in armed conflict in doctrine since at least 1995.[64]

Joint doctrine has recently taken small steps in the right direction. Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning,* describes warring parties as involved in a "clash of moral wills and/or physical strengths." It also provides the PMESII (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information) rubric to help planners systematically consider a conflict's physical and human domains.[65]

Still, this doctrine raises more questions than it answers. In a clash of wills, do physical factors really matter as much as moral ones? Is there a relationship between "moral wills" and communities' perceptions of right and wrong? If there is, how deep is this relationship? Do the concepts of "just war" and "just actions" belong within the PMESII construct? If these concepts do belong, just how important is it that our nation and military perform actions that conflict-influencing populations deem just?

The U.S. Army's lengthy 2011 study on the human domain likewise describes war as a "savage clash of wills." However, the scope of this study is confined to the issue of soldier readiness. Thankfully, our Army's 2012 "Capstone Concept" provides room for growth, admitting that "current doctrine does not adequately address the moral, cognitive, social and physical aspects of human populations in conflict."[66]

The U.S. military's slow doctrinal acknowledgment of the overriding importance of war's political and moral factors primarily derives from cultural bias. One such bias is the misconception of many military leaders that strategic concerns are for politicians and tactical concerns are for soldiers. But, in the information age, all tactical actions are potentially political. A deeper inhibition, though, is

that many soldiers are simply blind to all but the physical aspects of war. To them, war is nothing more than killing the enemy before he kills you (and doing so quickly, before the "liberal press" turns American civilians against the war). Any other viewpoint, they ironically and anachronistically contend, is out-of-touch with reality.

Our military's preference for purely physical solutions has roots in an increasingly distant past, when we could employ raw force with much greater abandon and success. Until the start of the 20th century, for example, our Army could relocate, concentrate, and even exterminate America's indigenous peoples without incurring significant moral blowback. However, just as modern democracies can no longer sustain population-centric bombing campaigns, our Army can no longer resort to such harsh counterinsurgency tactics that, if used today, would produce counterproductive outrage and quickly lead to national shame and defeat.

Our Army must better prepare leaders for modern realities.

Changing a River's Course

In 1812, an earthquake near New Madrid, Mo., caused the Mississippi River to flow backward for several hours. Today, our Army needs just such a tectonic shift, but one that changes our course permanently rather than temporarily. This shift will not happen on its own. Senior Army leaders must guide change deliberately and with the faith of a Scharnhorst or Moltke that they are doing what is right for our institution and nation.

There are several models that senior leaders can leverage to effect organizational change—change that would prepare leaders to practice decentralized command and promote morally-aware strategic and operational frameworks for this command.[67] Steps these models suggest include:

● *Unflinchingly assess Army culture*. To determine the extent of harmful cultural bias, surveys must ask the uncomfortable questions that typically go unasked. Should civilians on the battlefield be treated with respect? Should detainees? Is torture okay? Should soldiers assume additional risk to avoid killing locals? If so, how much risk? Should the opinions of local nationals and coalition allies matter to soldiers? Should international law be respected? And so on.[68]

● *Get organizational buy-in for change*. Not since the end of the Vietnam War have conditions been better for this. Even those soldiers who supported America's entry into Afghanistan and Iraq generally agree that the cost of these campaigns was exorbitant.[69]

● *Clarify the cultural goal*. This means publishing a clear, consistent, and concise professional ethic.[70] This ethic must include prioritized values and an ethical decision-making tool that help leaders of all ranks reason through and resolve ethical problems.

● *Transform doctrine and training*. Most field manuals stifle creativity and should be either discarded or greatly abridged. Capstone doctrine should unequivocally declare an enduring, favorable peace as the ultimate prize of conflict. The human aspects of conflict (especially moral factors) need to be delineated to properly illustrate how they aspects support this peace. In training, we must focus on results not process. For instance, to reinforce collaboration and build trust and initiative among leaders, Tactical Decision Games rather than rigid tasks/conditions/standards could be employed.[71] Some training scenarios should force junior leaders to disobey explicit tasks in order to meet their commander's intent.

● *Improve leader evaluations*. Efficiency reports must display 360-degree input from subordinates, peers, and superiors. The perceptions of subordinates as to whether they feel mentored or micromanaged, and whether their leaders promote or stifle collaboration and learning, should be weighted heavily.

● *Put experience where it counts*. Selection for company command needs to be far more stringent, not something every junior officer does to get promoted. Teaching positions at service schools should be important, rather than detrimental, to career advancement, and the standards for filling these jobs—especially those jobs that influence cadets and junior NCOs—should be high.

● *Make education our top priority*. The primary goal of Army education should be to make all leaders professionally trustworthy and, to a degree, morally autonomous. Instruction should aim to

advance moral reasoning skills as well as historical and cultural understanding of likely theaters of deployment. A tiered approach that provides more extensive instruction for strategic leaders is necessary. However, junior leaders require meaningful ethical instruction that includes vignettes and exploratory discussions and goes beyond simple PowerPoint indoctrination.[72] When dollars are short, the last thing cut should be education.

There are alternatives to our growing leaders who can practice true mission command and win the best possible peace. We could, for example, continue as we have done, pulling our oars against the current of an increasingly remote past, often exhausting ourselves and our nation's treasury for the sake of little (if any) lasting battlefield progress. Or worse, we could give in to this current, let go of what adaptive doctrine we have created, and float unmerrily down the stream toward the next series of rapids waiting to capsize us.

Surely though, such alternatives are unacceptable. *MR*

NOTES

1. Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S., British, and Israeli Armies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 33.

2. Ibid.

3. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46.

4. Ibid., 65.

5. Like Clausewitz, Moltke recognized the importance of friction in war. He embraced attempts to counter and exploit friction by empowering leader initiative at the lowest levels: "The advantage of the situation will never be fully utilized if subordinate commanders wait for orders. It will be generally more advisable to proceed actively and keep the initiative than to wait to the law of the opponent." See Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, ed. Daniel J. Hughes, trans. Daniel J. Hughes and Harry Bell (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995), 133.

6. Martin Samuels, Command or Control: Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918 (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 11.

7. Antulio J. Echevarria, "Auftragstaktik: In Its Proper Perspective," *Military Review* (October 1986): 50-56, 55. Much later, the World War II German Gen. Hermann Balck would say: "We lived off a century-long tradition, which is that in a critical situation the subordinate with an understanding of the overall situation can act or react responsibly. We always placed great emphasis on the independent action of the subordinates, even in peacetime training." See William DePuy, "Generals Balck and von Mellenthin on Tactics: Implications for NATO Military Doctrine," *DTIC Online*, 19 December 1980, <www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA097704> (5 July 2013), 19.

8. Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), 311.

9. Jonathan House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th-Century Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, August 1984), 34-36.

10. Clinton J. Ancker III, "The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present," *Military Review* (March-April 2011): 43.

11. U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 11 August 2003), 2-11. Grant's guidance to Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman before Sherman's infamous "March to The Sea" consisted of this simple expression of intent: "You, I propose to move against Johnston's Army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their War resources. I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of Campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done and leave you free to execute in your own way." This is not only an excellent example of mission command but also a good example of why mission command alone is insufficient for winning the peace: Southerners' outrage over Sherman's brutal tactics helped catalyze a century-long low-level insurgency in the South.

12. George S. Patton Jr., *War as I Knew It* (Boston-New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995), 357.

13. Shamir, 101-108.

14. FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 20 August 1982), 2-2. This manual stated: "Initiative implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations. The underlying purpose of every encounter with the enemy is to seize or retain independence of action."

15. Mission command is discussed extensively in all key doctrine, including TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0, *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept*; Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1-0, *The Army*; ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*; ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, and FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, states that "The foundation of unified land operations is built on initiative, decisive action, and mission command—linked and nested through purposeful and simultaneous execution of both combined arms maneuver and wide area security—to achieve the commander's intent and desired end state" (page 5). Since "initiative, decisive action, and mission command" are the foundation and "initiative" and "decisive action" are key components of mission command, it can

be deduced from this statement that the mission command philosophy alone is the foundation of the Army's warfighting doctrine.

16. Clinton J. Ancker III, and Michael Flynn, "Field Manual 5-0: Exercising Command and Control in an Era of Persistent Conflict," *Military Review*, Mission Command Symposium (Special Edition, June 2012): 40-46, 46.

17. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: GPO, 17 May 2012), iv. In this essay, references to "mission command" are to the philosophy of decentralization only.

18. FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: GPO, December 2006), 1-26.

19. Mark L. Stock, "Succeeding at Strategic Engagement: 'Empower and Decentralize,'" *IOSphere* (December 2010): 25-27.

20. Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 2010, 18.

21. Ibid., 23-25.

22. Ibid., 25-27

23. Ibid., 27-28

24. Shamir, 202.

25. Tom Guthrie, "Mission Command: Do We Have the Stomach for What is Really Required," *Army*, June 2012, 26-28, 26; Jorg Muth, "Foreign Policy: The Best Defense. An elusive command philosophy and a different command culture ," 9 September 2011, <http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/09/09/an_elusive_com­mand_philosophy_and_a_different_command_culture> (22 June 2013); Donald E. Vandergriff, *Misinterpretation and Confusion: What is Mission Command and Can the U.S. Army Make it Work?* (The Land Warfare Papers, The Institute of Land Warfare, February 2013).

26. Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York, Toronto: The Random House Ballantine Publishing Group, 1995), 496.

27. Several sources have argued that the U.S. Army did not exercise mission command well during Desert Storm. A small sampling includes: Shamir, 136-37; Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver Warfare Theory and Air-Land Battle* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press), 1991, 269; Martin van Creveld, Kenneth S. Brower, and Stephen L. Canby, *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare* (Montgomery, AL: Air University Press, 1994), 214.

28. Shamir, 136-37.

29. Shamir, 136-44. To Shamir, exceptions to the rule that the U.S. does not implement mission command well include the 3rd Infantry Division's "Thunder Runs" in Baghdad in early 2003 and the operations of the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul, Iraq, from 2003-2004.

30. Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* (November-December 2005): 2-15, 6-7.

31. Shamir, 26-27. Shamir reached this conclusion by comparing eight credible sources.

32. Ibid. This list came from summarizing the aforementioned eight sources.

33. Todd Harrison, *Analysis of the FY 2013 Defense Budget and Sequestration*, Backgrounder (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, August 2012), 5.

34. Ibid., 4. (See Figure 1.)

35. Ibid.; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer. Overview: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2013, 4-14, 7-8.

36. David Richard Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: US-Vietnam in Perspective* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), 142. "The company commander on the ground attempting to fight his battle could usually observe orbiting in tiers above him his battalion commander, brigade commander, assistant division commander, division commander, and even his field force [corps] commander. With all that advice from the sky, it was easy to imagine how much individual control the company commander himself could exert on the ground."

37. Shamir, 22.

38. Tom Guthrie, "Mission Command: Do We Have the Stomach for What Is Really Required?" *Army Magazine*, June 2012, 26-28, 26.

39. Ibid., 26.

40. Ibid., 27.

41. Ibid, 26.

42. Ibid.

43. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP), Army Techniques Publication (ATP), Soldier Training Publication (STP), Training Circular (TC) or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

44. Maj. Patrick J. Williams, MC RHG/D (British Army), email to author, 2 July 2013.

45. Ibid.

46. John T. Nelsen II, "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters* (September 1987): 21-34, 26.

47. Nelsen, 25-26; Lothar Rendulic, *The Command Decision* (Stuttgart, Germany: Historical Division, U.S. Army Europe, 1945-54, 1947), 9. German superior officers maintained close teacher-student relationships with their subordinates, relationships that were reinforced by the time they spent together in map exercises, terrain walks, sand-table exercises, and field exercises.

48. The Center for Army Leadership, *2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 21 May 2012), 8, 67. This report is based on a survey of 16,800 uniformed leaders. Exhibit 4 shows that, for the fifth year in a row, surveyed officers reported that "Develops Others" was their leaders' worst attribute.

49. Erwin Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, ed. B.H. Liddell Hart, trans. Paul Findlay (New York: Da Capo Press, 1953), 523. Rommel wrote: "With the lower-ranking staff officers, I was less concerned about their knowledge of strategy (for how often does a junior staff officer have to think in terms of strategy?) than that they should bring with them a good grounding in tactics, to enable them to cope with the many tactical problems which faced us in the African campaign."

50. Marine Gen. Charles Krulak coined the term "strategic corporal," which refers to the possibility of the actions of even junior enlisted service members having strategic repercussions on battlefields in the information age.

51. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War: The New Illustrated Edition*, trans. Samuel Griffith (New York: Watkins Publishing Limited, 2005), 92.

52. Clausewitz, 142.

53. Ibid., 223-26.

54. John R. Boyd, "The Strategic Game of?" *Project on Government Oversight: Defense and the National Interest*, June 2006, <www.dnipogo.org/boyd/strategic_game.pdf]> (25 June 2013), slide 54.

55. Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006), 2.

56. Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW) theory has lost popularity in recent years, largely due to the criticism that the model describes warfare as progressing in linear phases that are artificial, misleading constructs. The so-called "fourth generation of warfare," critics argue, is really describing low-level military conflict that is as old as warfare itself. These critics, however, miss the point. 4GW theorists are not arguing that insurgencies and terrorism are new, but rather that information technology enables these groups to influence an enemy nation's political decision makers—far more easily and to a far greater degree than they typically could in the past. 4GW is a not a new form of warfare; what is new is the general level of effectiveness of this type of warfare and, hence, its attractiveness to those groups considering armed conflict.

57. U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, FM 3-24, 1-8.

58. ADP 1, *The Army* (Washington, DC: GPO, 17 September 2012), 2-4.

59. Douglas A. Pryer, "Steering America's Warship toward Moral Communication (and Real Success) in the 21st Century," *Military Review* (January-February 2012): 24-34, 27-28.

60. Peter D. Fromm, Douglas A. Pryer, and Kevin Cutright, "War is a Moral Force: Designing a More Viable Strategy for the Information Age," *Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ)* (1st Quarter, 2012): 40-46; "War is a Moral Force," *JFQ*, 45.

61. Clausewitz, 158. Clausewitz is far from the only military theorist or philosopher to argue that peace is war's ultimate objective. Francis Lieber, who wrote General Order 100 for the Union Army (one of the foundational documents of international law), wrote in Article 29 "the ultimate object of all modern war is a renewed state of peace." Immanuel Kant wrote "that establishing universal and lasting peace constitutes not merely a part of the doctrine of right but rather the final end of the doctrine of right within the limits of reason alone." See Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123.

62. John Rawls, "Fifty Years after Hiroshima," in *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 567.

63. ADP 1, *The Army*, 1-7. The 2001 version of this manual even more closely associated annihilative victory with moral success: "The ability to close with and destroy enemy forces, occupy territory, and control populations achieves moral dominance over enemy will and destroys means to resist."(FM 1, The Army (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001).

64. U.S. Marine Corps, Doctrinal Publication 1, Warfighting (Washington, DC: GPO, 1995), 13-14. This manual states: "No degree of technological development or scientific calculation will diminish the human dimension in war. Any doctrine which attempts to reduce warfare to ratios of forces, weapons, and equipment neglects the impact of the human will on the conduct of war and is therefore inherently flawed." For an excellent summary of how joint and service doctrine describes the human domain of war, see Frank Hoffman's and Michael C. Davies', "Joint Force 2020 and the Human Domain: Time for a New Conceptual Framework?" in the *Small Wars Journal*, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/joint-force-2020-and-the-human-domain-time-for-a-new-conceptual-framework.

65. U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: GPO, 11 August 2011), III-22.

66. U.S. Army, TRADOC Pam, 525-3-0 (Washington, DC: GPO, 19 December 2012), 15.

67. Within the military, probably the best-known model for organizational change is John Kotter's eight-step process: (1): Establishing a Sense of Urgency; (2): Creating the Guiding Coalition; (3): Developing a Change Vision; (4): Communicating the Vision for Buy-In; (5): Empowering Broad-Based Action; (6): Generating Short-term Wins; (7): Never Letting Up; and (8): Incorporating Changes into the Culture.

68. Some of these suggested questions were asked in the 2006 Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) survey conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan. This survey found "that only 47 percent of soldiers and 38 percent of Marines agreed that noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect. More than one-third of all soldiers and marines reported that torture should be allowed to save the life of a fellow soldier or marine, and less than half of marines said they would report a team member for unethical behavior." See Sara Wood. "Petraeus Urges Troops to Adhere to Ethical Standards," *U.S. Department of Defense News*, 11 May 2007, <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=45983> (June 3, 2013). The MHAT reports can be accessed at <http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/reports/reports.html>.

69. Pew Research Center, "War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era," *Pew Research Social & Demographic Trends*, 5 October 2011, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/05/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era/> (26 June 2013). In this 2011 Pew survey, only one-third of all 9/11 military veterans (still serving or not)) thought that both the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts had been worth the costs.

70. See Clark C. Barrett, "Finding 'The Right Way': Toward an Army Institutional Ethic" (Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 21 September 2012), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1129> (26 June 2013) for a comprehensive summary of how current doctrine fails to consistently, clearly, and concisely define a professional ethic.

71. T.X. Hammes, letter to Col. John A. Keenan, editor, Marine Corps Gazette, 3 January 2010. Provided by Col. Hammes to author, 6 July 2013. A Tactical Decision Game is a traditional training tool used by the U.S. Marine Corps. A vignette is provided that a team analyzes and plans against. A teacher/moderator manages the imaginary execution of the plan much as a "dungeon master" might during a "Dungeons and Dragons" game. The moderator flips the coin and, if heads, the step is successful, and if tails, something bad happens (such as the leader becoming a "casualty"). The team then explains their counteraction.

72. Barrett, 26-28. Barrett describes a three-tiered educational system that is based on Lawrence Kohlberg's moral stages of development, that promotes high-order skills based upon one's degree of responsibility, and that advocates that even junior leaders be taught basic moral reasoning skills.