



# Military Review

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

March-April 2014

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**M**ILITARY REVIEW just celebrated its 92nd birthday, so I would like to start this letter by thanking our many loyal readers, authors, and supporters. Your dedication and contributions to our journal, along with the expertise of the professional staff at *Military Review*, are the reasons the journal enjoys continued success.

I spoke to the newest students of the Command and General Staff Officer's Course on their second day of class. When I asked them how many read *Military Review* and who had submitted articles for publication, I was pleased to see many hands raised, but I was not surprised. I emphasized to

them the importance of writing about their experiences and sharing their ideas to improve the military and the Army Profession as the Army rebuilds after almost 14 years of persistent conflict.

Finding time to provide commentary on experiences and lessons learned is sometimes challenging, but writing is one of the most essential ways humanity records history. Writing is a critical part of how we express our thoughts and share ideas with one another. In addition, writing requires an author to collect and organize data to present a certain topic; authors must have facts to support their argument to earn or maintain credibility. In other words, writing enables us to be better at our profession.

With the drawdown of deployed troops and a return to an operational mindset, now is an ideal time for leaders to reflect upon their experiences and revive the enthusiasm for writing for professional publications like *Military Review* to ensure we maintain a historic perspective and pass along our best practices. There are many incentives to write, whether it be for personal reasons, historical documentation, or fulfilling a tasker or assignment. The important thing to remember is simply to write. *Military Review* just announced the topic for the General William E. DePuy writing competition. This is a great way to get those creative juices flowing and reawaken that love for writing.

This year's topic is "How can the Army maintain its adaptability and agility and find innovative solutions to face future threats during this time of work force reductions and budget cuts?" Submission information is on page 116 of the January/February issue, or you can find it on our website at <http://militaryreview.army.mil>.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the journal. The *Military Review* team is proud to bring you the March/April edition focused on leader development. We received so many articles on this topic that we felt it would be a perfect time to begin our transition to themed editions. You will find articles on strengths-based leadership theory, junior officer development, captains' education, and a General Douglas MacArthur Military Leadership Writing Competition award-winning essay.

Don't forget to check out *Military Review Spotlight*, our newest addition to the website. It features articles relevant to the Army now from budding writers as well as seasoned authors.

*"The desire to write grows with writing"*

Disiderius Erasmus



MR Spotlight



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# Military Review

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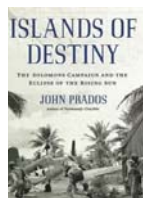
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The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the department. Funds for printing this publication were approved by the Secretary of the Army in accordance with the provisions of Army Regulation 25-30.

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# Strengths-Based Leadership Theory and Development of Subordinate Leaders

Melinda Key-Roberts, Ph.D.

**T**O CONDUCT MILITARY OPERATIONS through decentralized execution, soldiers must understand their commander's intent and then determine the best course of action to achieve mission objectives. The success of applying mission command in operations depends on how well the soldiers and subordinate leaders on the ground make decisions in rapidly changing circumstances. Unless the Army develops soldiers properly, and unless commanders establish an environment of trust and mutual understanding, soldiers will be less likely to make good decisions in the heat of the moment.

Developing subordinates is a primary responsibility of Army leaders. Army leaders develop subordinates in several ways, including—

- Constructing a positive organizational climate.
- Influencing self-development.
- Encouraging the growth of subordinates through mentoring, coaching, counseling, and careful job assignment based on individual talent.

*Dr. Melinda Key-Roberts is a senior research psychologist at the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI). Her work at ARI focuses on leader development and training, with an emphasis on leader strategies for developing and mentoring subordinates. Dr. Key-Roberts earned her Ph.D. at the University of Kansas.*



To develop junior leaders, higher-level leaders need a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of those within their chain of command. Leaders who are aware of subordinates' strengths are more likely to place soldiers in positions that play to their abilities, creating the conditions for individual and unit success.

## Army Doctrine and Strengths-Based Leadership

Doctrine is consistent with a strengths-based approach to leadership. According to Gretchen Spreitzer, the assumption underlying a strengths-based approach is that nurturing strengths, as opposed to focusing exclusively on correcting deficiencies, creates subordinate leaders who are able to recognize and realize their full potential.<sup>1</sup> In keeping with strengths-based leadership theory, Army leaders who focus on subordinates' strengths and potential will be better equipped to manage and grow existing talent within their units. At the same time, they can build subordinates' capabilities for future leadership roles. Leaders who understand subordinates' strengths and weaknesses are not only in a better position to affect individual soldiers positively, but also they are in a better position to influence unit and organizational effectiveness through team and task assignments.

## Performance vs. Leader Development

When asked about ways to assess subordinates' strengths and areas for growth, soldiers frequently reference the Army's Evaluation Reporting System. The officer and noncommissioned officer efficiency reporting processes—with their very real impact on career progression—have some bearing on subordinate development. However, these processes are designed primarily to report on performance rather than promote leader development. Alone, officer and noncommissioned officer evaluation reports contribute little to the development of subordinates.

Likely, no formal, structured system of coaching or mentoring will succeed as well as an informal approach employed by astute leaders interacting with subordinates one and two echelons below them. Unfortunately, the demands of modern leadership make it a challenge to find time for dedicated subordinate development activities. In the *Military*

*Review* article "Reassessing Army Leadership in the 21st Century," author Jason M. Pape describes how making time for subordinate development—considered a thing that *should* be done—tends to give way to requirements regarded as things that *must* be done.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the tension between time available and typical workloads, this article suggests concrete ways leaders can enhance subordinate development in the course of their day-to-day activities. The goal is to help leaders conduct developmental activities during daily business without adding time-consuming tasks to a leader's load. These suggestions will also help leaders build a climate conducive to their subordinates' development.

## Research-Based Strategies

The suggestions for leader development presented in this paper summarize themes that emerged from research exploring the application of strengths-based leadership in a military context. As part of this research, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, known as ARI, conducted interviews with 41 active duty Army leaders.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Army leaders interviewed by ARI reported using strengths-based techniques to some extent, often without an explicit knowledge of strengths-based leadership theory. Nevertheless, many soldiers reported finding the techniques successful. This article describes six ways Army leaders can develop subordinates, consistent with strengths-based leadership theory:

- Identifying strengths.
- Providing individualized feedback.
- Utilizing subordinate strengths.
- Building and maintaining a positive climate.
- Caring for subordinates.
- Empowering subordinates.

## Identifying Strengths

To develop a strength, individuals must first identify what they do well and what they need to improve on. Although individuals can identify strengths and weaknesses through formal processes, they also can use informal methods such as self-reflection. Because people tend to gravitate toward what they do well, such things as rate of learning, desire to participate in certain activities, and satisfaction gained from specific tasks can

provide strong clues to underlying talents. According to researchers P. Linley, Reena Govindji, and Michael West, other signs that individuals are using their strengths include high levels of performance, increased energy and engagement, and a sense of losing track of time.<sup>4</sup>

Leaders can assist subordinates in identifying strengths and weaknesses. According to the soldiers interviewed by ARI, leaders tend to focus on their subordinates' rank and military occupational specialty (MOS). That is, leaders focus on the

*Feedback on soldier performance should not be reserved for annual evaluation reports and mandatory counseling.*

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qualifications the Army has assigned the soldiers and neglect to take into account other skills and abilities soldiers may have. Simply asking subordinates what they believe they do well is a simple, yet often overlooked, strategy for identifying strengths. Other methods for identifying strengths and weaknesses that emerged from the interviews include observation and task exposure. "Sticking to the shadows" and observing subordinates allows leaders a candid look at their knowledge, skills, and abilities. As one participant stated, a leader can learn a lot by walking down the hall and listening to what people are talking about or watching people work.

By assigning unfamiliar tasks to subordinates and providing minimal guidance, leaders also reported learning a significant amount about the soldiers' strengths and weaknesses. While this method can help discern a subordinate's skills, it is important to keep in mind the soldier's level of experience. Giving an inexperienced junior NCO the responsibilities of a senior NCO may end with undesirable results. The goal is not to set subordinates up for failure, but to assign unfamiliar tasks they can learn to accomplish at their current skill level and rank. As one soldier

interviewed by ARI stated, "Give . . . every lieutenant at least one job every now and again that is not only out of their lane, but challenges them to do something different."<sup>5</sup> Introducing new tasks can help subordinates develop critical thinking and decision-making skills, which will be invaluable as they progress through the ranks.

## Providing Individualized Feedback

Identifying strengths alone is not enough; leaders must know how to hone talents to an even higher degree of excellence. In the interviews, the most commonly cited technique for enhancing a leader's natural talents was providing that leader with individualized feedback. Feedback on soldier performance should not be reserved for annual evaluation reports and mandatory counseling. Rather, feedback should occur as often as possible, and the leader who works most closely with the subordinate should provide it. Feedback can come in various forms, including counseling, mentoring, coaching, teaching, and assessment. As Lt. Col. Thomas E. Graham pointed out in his *Military Review* article, "Counseling: An Ignored Tool?," these techniques are cheap and often do not take as much time as leaders believe them to.<sup>6</sup> Feedback does not need to be formal. It can be as simple as telling individuals they did a good job or giving advice about how to become more proficient at a task. However, it must be genuine and precise. Vague phrases such as "good job" or "you screwed that up" do not address specific strengths or weaknesses. One officer interviewed by ARI explained,

You need to kind of step out of bounds and talk to them. Say, "hey, this is what we've been seeing," . . . and "this is something we would like for you to improve on." . . . Rather than every year when I get an annual OER [officer evaluation report], that's when I find out about it [my areas for improvement] for the first time.<sup>7</sup>

Graham also accurately comments on the mutual trust built between leaders and subordinates when using feedback techniques such as counseling, mentoring, coaching, and teaching.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, individualized feedback provides leaders an opportunity to connect with their subordinates on both a personal and professional level.



## Utilizing Subordinates' Strengths

Almost all leadership functions described by the soldiers interviewed were aimed at providing subordinates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be successful now and in future endeavors. According to Army leaders, assigning soldiers tasks they have a natural affinity toward is one of the most successful means of creating competent junior leaders. When individuals invest time and energy in their talents, they are more likely to experience success. These success experiences are an important source of efficacy information (referring to people's beliefs about their capabilities to succeed), and can positively affect how individuals feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. According to Albert Bandura, placing individuals in situations that increase self-efficacy has also been shown to result in improved productivity and job satisfaction.<sup>9</sup> The following quotations from the interviews conducted by ARI demonstrate how Army leaders capitalize on subordinate strengths:

At the end of the day, I would assign the lieutenant who had great communication skills to be the guy who would interact at a more complex level with the Iraqi Security Forces, and the guy who was completely inarticulate but could kick down the door and do raids is the guy I would generally assign to more kinetic operations.

I have one guy who's great—he's the PT stud. The other guy's a horrible PT guy . . . but [he's] good at commo. He's my commo NCO, and that's how I handle him. . . . He's not [actually] a commo NCO, he's a scout, but he's good at it [commo]—he knows what he's doing. . . . Seeing what he's good at [I say] "ok man, you're my communications NCO."<sup>10</sup>

By taking advantage of the natural talent of his NCOs, the leader in the second example ensured the best-suited person handled each task. While the need to look beyond a person's MOS or branch seems self-evident, it is important to view subordinates as individuals with uniquely individual talents. Soldiers are much more than their military experience; they come to the Army with skill sets and talents that may or may not be pertinent to their assigned MOS.

Recognizing the skills and abilities of subordinates can give leaders a distinct advantage when completing tasks and missions. Leaders who understand the range of talents within their subordinate leaders will be more successful at maneuvering people within the organization to meet the complexity and ambiguity of today's challenges. Granted, at times a leader must task the next available subordinate to complete a job. However, when given the opportunity, leaders who delegate tasks based on talent have much more effective teams. The following quotations from the interviews conducted by ARI provide additional examples of Army leaders applying this approach:

Regardless of what your rank is, you want to put the most competent person in whatever job it is for the betterment of the unit, 'cause otherwise, if you're just playing on the old Army system of "you're a SPC, you're a SGT, put the SGT in charge," that can be detrimental.



Sgt. Erica Rinard, Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 185th Armor, California Army National Guard, assigned at the time to the 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, greets Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, California Adjutant General, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, 19 February 2009. (U.S. Army)



You want a different type [of] leader for different situations. So if I had five leaders and each of them had a specific strength which I could use in very different ways—they don't all have to be the well-rounded, Johnny All-Star . . . If you can employ all that [you are given by the Army] . . . it turns out to be a very successful unit/very successful operation once you get all the pieces clicking.<sup>11</sup>

As the second leader suggested, it would be unreasonable to expect every soldier to excel at every task, or to know all there is to know about each system or organization within the military. Leaders must realize that in today's complex operational environments, neither they nor their subordinates will possess all the necessary skills or knowledge to accomplish every task. Therefore, good leaders intentionally surround themselves with the right people for the task at hand. By arranging subordinates in a way that capitalizes on strengths and mitigates personal or team weaknesses, leaders can build capable junior leaders while simultaneously creating more efficient and effective units.

## Building and Maintaining a Positive Climate

Many of the soldiers interviewed by ARI identified techniques leaders can use to build and maintain a positive climate. Techniques mentioned included being approachable, controlling personal emotions, tolerating risk and mistakes (approaching them as learning opportunities whenever possible), and being open to ideas from all personnel within the organization regardless of rank or position. Psychologists Caren Baruch-Feldman, Elizabeth Brondolo, Dena Ben-Dayana, and Joseph Schwartz report that techniques such as these establish a foundation for individual growth, while also reducing burnout among junior leaders, increasing job satisfaction, and leading to improved individual and group performance within an organization.<sup>12</sup>

Leaders interviewed by ARI repeatedly highlighted the importance of listening to all perspectives and allowing subordinates to voice honest opinions without fear of retribution. Subordinates feel valued when leaders listen to their ideas in briefings or mission planning meetings. In contrast, belittling a subordinate for an idea or suggestion stifles creativity and problem-solving within a unit.

The next quotation from the ARI interviews illustrates how leaders in the field can establish a positive climate by permitting discussion and feedback:

I think the ability to listen, not just to your superiors and your peers, but also your subordinates, is pretty critical to success. If you're too stubborn to acknowledge that fact that, "hey I might be wrong, or somebody else has a better way of doing it," regardless of their rank or who they are—you can set yourself up for failure . . . Every person is going to have something . . . to affect your performance as a unit, so being able to listen and being able to grasp those pieces of knowledge [is important].<sup>13</sup>

Consistent with prior research, participants viewed regulating one's emotions as another tool military leaders can use to cultivate a positive work environment.<sup>14</sup> A leader's mood and emotional state can affect how the unit is operating and is often contagious. In their 2010 *Military Review* article "Toxic Leadership: Part Deux," authors George Reed and Richard Olsen point out that leaders often are under immense pressure from their chain of command to accomplish a goal or task; yet, the most successful leaders are those who prevent the pressure from above from infiltrating their organization.<sup>15</sup> One soldier interviewed by ARI described how two different leaders managed their emotions under pressure and how each affected his unit:

I guess whatever problems or stress that he had coming from higher, he kind of brought it down to everybody in his shop. [In contrast,] the second guy was more of a mentor because even though he was taking it from higher, he wasn't bringing it to the shop—so that allowed him to empower more people inside the shop, and they never really saw that negative side.<sup>16</sup>

In their article, Reed and Olsen identify a concept they call *kissing up and kicking down*.<sup>17</sup> They explain that people tend to be more considerate and courteous to those who sign their paycheck—kissing up—and less civil when interacting with their subordinates—kicking down. In the example above, the second leader avoided the kicking down spiral. By acting as a buffer for his subordinates, this leader was able to establish the conditions for success within his unit.



To foster a positive climate, leaders should make their subordinates feel they appreciate an honest effort, even when mistakes are made. Study participants reported that military leaders who willingly tolerate risk are better able to provide subordinates with opportunities for development. Soldiers working in a safe and supportive learning environment have greater incentive to practice new behaviors and learn from their mistakes. As one interviewee stated, giving subordinates the opportunity to practice a task without pressure can also lead to large gains in confidence and ability.<sup>18</sup> Because mistakes inevitably will be made, leaders must make an effort to provide constructive feedback instead of embarrassing or disparaging remarks. Allowing subordinates learning opportunities in which mistakes go unpunished, but corrected, can decrease risk of failure or injury in future missions. Allowing subordinates to experiment within the commander's intent is a powerful learning experience that also cultivates trust between subordinate and commander, as the next quotation from the ARI study illustrates:

My squadron commander . . . set my standards and guidelines; and I knew I could go out there and screw up. And as long as I was within his left and right limits, he was going to defend me whether I got in trouble or not, or [he would] just take it as a learning experience.<sup>19</sup>

In decentralized operations, it is critical to maintain a positive climate for effective mission command. Leader behaviors (such as being open to feedback, regulating emotions, and tolerating mistakes) are essential to maintaining morale and effectiveness when units tackle complex assignments—especially when direct leadership is counter to the mission at hand. Leaders must be able to gauge the level of toxicity in their organization and strive to keep an open and professional working environment. Because many of the strategies for establishing a positive climate encourage subordinates to engage in independent action, they may seem counter to the traditional military structure. However, establishing a positive climate is a top-down leadership function. That is, the leader at the top establishes the rules and boundaries for group behavior, provides instructions, and establishes clear mission intent. Moreover, by allowing trial and

error, managing emotions, and accepting feedback from subordinates, senior leaders create the conditions for development to occur.

In addition to the strategies for cultivating a positive climate outlined above, further guidance on influencing unit climate will be found in ARI's forthcoming publication *CLIMATE: Instructor's*

*Because many of the strategies for establishing a positive climate encourage subordinates to engage in independent action, they may seem counter to the traditional military structure.*

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*Guide for Ethical Climate Training for Army Leaders.*<sup>20</sup> Actions such as assessing climate, modeling behavior, and articulating and enforcing standards, although discussed in the context of ethics, will apply to understanding and influencing the developmental environment in a unit.

## Caring for Subordinates

Like establishing a positive climate, caring for subordinates creates the conditions for individual and unit success. Caring for subordinates encompasses behaviors aimed at relationship and rapport building and can have tremendous payoffs. When subordinates feel that their leader is interested in them and their experiences, they feel more motivated to excel. Practices such as asking subordinates about their family and personal interests, as well as understanding their personal problems and assisting when possible, ensure soldiers feel they are an important part of the team. Soldiers will obey a command regardless of whether they personally know the leader who gave it. However, when soldiers feel they are an important part of the organization and respect their leader for more than rank or position, they often go beyond the call of duty to ensure they do not disappoint that leader.

Leader behaviors aimed at developing subordinates are often interpreted by subordinates as caring





Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey talks with soldiers and marines stationed at ISAF Headquarters and Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan, 20 July 2013. (DOD, D. Myles Cullen)

for soldiers. This overlap between developing and caring can be seen in the following examples from the ARI interviews:

If your leadership is talking to you . . . [just] to check the boxes, you know that they don't care about you. It's important to me that my commander cares whether or not my kids are doing good in school, whether or not spending 13 months in Iraq, you know, straight . . . what it does to a 5-year old, 7-year old, and 11-year old—that type of stuff. It's important that he knows me as an officer, just like I need to know my privates.

Showing that interest in that soldier, by developing him, he feels like he wants to stay. [He might say], “the squad leader genuinely cares about me, I feel like I’m on the right path.”<sup>21</sup>

A number of leaders interviewed by ARI expressed unease over showing care and concern for subordinates. Because military leaders may need to ask soldiers to perform difficult tasks, or may be required to take corrective action with a subordinate, they want to maintain professional relationships with their soldiers. However, showing care and concern for subordinates does not mean that leaders must be overly considerate or nurture unprofessional personal relationships with their soldiers. On the contrary, most military leaders interviewed by ARI highlighted the importance of achieving balance in their leadership approach.<sup>22</sup> For example, most leaders will experience a time when they must provide stern, even harsh leadership to get the job done. In general, this leadership strategy should be reserved for drastic times, when stakes are especially high (such as combat situations), and leaders should use it in such a way that soldiers do not take it personally. Individuals have their own leadership styles, and

some people may motivate their subordinates through gruff means naturally. Regardless of the approach, the key is to find a leadership style that works, and embrace it, while maintaining a positive outlook for the organization and toward subordinates.

## Empowering Subordinates

At the core of strengths-based leadership theory is the goal of developing and empowering subordinates to be independent, adaptable, and resourceful leaders. Leader behaviors such as task delegation build confidence, encourage independence, and instill a sense of responsibility in subordinates. Strategies for empowering subordinates often overlap with the other leadership functions described in this paper. For example, exposing subordinates to new tasks helps them develop new skills. Moreover, it helps leaders identify their subordinates' strengths and weaknesses. Thus, assigning a subordinate a new task with minimal guidance or interference is a good barometer of talent as well as a potential source of empowerment for the junior leader. The following statements from the ARI interviews illustrate the relationship between task assignment and empowering subordinates:

I think if you're willing to let the squad leaders and section leaders do what they're supposed to and take that responsibility, I think you'll have a better leader . . . If you give that soldier that responsibility . . . [it will] pay off dividends . . .

You've got him inculcated more into that unit, [he might think] "hey, I'm not just a trigger puller that does whatever so-and-so tells me. I have a task, a purpose, and a responsibility to stay in the unit, and they can't succeed without me."<sup>23</sup>

Empowering subordinates by helping them discover and leverage their strengths can have many advantages. People find more enjoyment and satisfaction in doing things at which they naturally excel. Identifying and using one's strengths can also increase levels of happiness, fulfillment, and confidence at work and home. Subordinates who receive positive task assignments and support from superiors and co-workers experience decreased burnout and increased productivity. Moreover,

one soldier interviewed believed that inspiring and empowering subordinates with a sense of responsibility led to fewer behavior problems in his unit.<sup>24</sup> These advantages all run parallel to the Army's goal of attracting highly talented individuals, developing adaptable soldiers, and retaining high-quality soldiers beyond their initial enlistment or commission.<sup>25</sup>

## Obstacles to Strengths-Based Leadership

While this paper strongly advocates for a strengths-based approach to leadership, the author recognizes the obstacles to its implementation within the Army. Army leaders interviewed by ARI acknowledged the importance of understanding and utilizing soldiers' strengths, yet they also emphasized the need to identify and remediate weaknesses, as the next quotation from the study illustrates:

I think to get after [a] leadership development through strengths concept, you also need to identify the weaknesses. You can't just tell somebody they're great at this and not tell them what they are bad at. And if they're bad enough to the point where it needs to go down on paper, there needs to be an effect . . . We need leaders to make that honest assessment and do the hard thing of checking that block that says refer to report on OER.<sup>26</sup>

Soldiers interviewed by ARI repeatedly indicated that leaders who focus exclusively on positive or negative feedback create systemic problems for the Army. According to participants, when leaders spend the majority of their time focused on poor performers, they are effectively ostracizing stellar performers.<sup>27</sup> Under these circumstances, mid-to-top performers receive little-to-no formal or informal development and may even find themselves being rewarded with more work. This lapse in subordinate development—combined with a failure to reward soldiers for their good efforts and an over-reliance on top performers—likely contributes to burnout and attrition among the best soldiers.

Focusing only on strengths can be just as problematic as focusing solely on deficits. Army leaders, whose jobs may hold life-or-death consequences, cannot overlook the negative. They



must balance the need to remediate weaknesses with the desire to nurture subordinate strengths. Examples provided by interviewees afford some insight into how Army leaders might capitalize on and improve the talents of subordinates while simultaneously addressing areas of concern. For example, one leader interviewed by ARI stated, “if I’m not a confident person, . . . find something I’m great at . . . and have me work on that [strength]. [This] builds confidence to work on things I’m not good at.”<sup>28</sup>

Contributing to the difficulties encountered by military leaders when identifying and developing subordinates’ capabilities is the speed of Army operations. While military leaders recognize the importance of developing and mentoring subordinate leaders, rapid deployment cycles and high turnover of personnel leave counseling and developing subordinates at the bottom of the priority list. Many leaders interviewed by ARI said they simply do not have the time to identify a person’s strengths or weaknesses while in garrison.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, once in theater, the speed

and complexity of operations often leave little opportunity for formal developmental efforts.

According to Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso of the Strategic Studies Institute, without sufficient depth and breadth of talent, organizations face an inability to innovate and meet new challenges.<sup>30</sup> Without adequate mentoring and development of junior leaders, the Army will likely encounter a shortage of talent needed to meet future operational demands. Because subordinate development is a key to building a strong future fighting force, more effort is needed to understand and address the current deficit in leader development and mentoring.

## The Road Ahead

Soldiers interviewed by ARI repeatedly referred to the interactions between leaders and subordinates as the greatest contributor to subordinate development and organizational success. To achieve success, it is clear Army leaders need concrete strategies for developing and mentoring junior leaders. This article provides some courses of action based



U.S. Army soldiers begin the ruck march portion of the U.S. Army-Europe Soldier and NCO of the Year Competition, Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany, 15 August 2007. (U.S. Army, Spc. Joshua Ballenger)

on strengths-based leadership theory, supported by feedback obtained from soldiers. To summarize, leaders will improve the probability for individual and unit success by—

- Identifying subordinates' talents and areas for growth.
- Providing individualized feedback.
- Utilizing subordinates' strengths.
- Building and maintaining a positive climate.
- Caring for subordinates.
- Empowering subordinates.

While, these strategies are common sense and may not represent a groundbreaking discovery, the

goal of this article is to increase *intentional* use of effective leadership functions to develop subordinates. According to soldiers interviewed by ARI, when leaders focus on developing subordinates, their subordinates' morale and well-being improve. Soldiers with knowledge of their own strengths and the confidence to make decisions within their commanders' guidance are also better equipped to adapt to ever-changing operational environments. By intentionally focusing on subordinates' development using the strategies outlined here, senior-level leaders do more than develop well-trained subordinates—they develop future Army leaders. **MR**

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# Developing Trustworthy Commissioned Officers

## Transcending the Honor Codes and Concepts

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and Col. Patrick A. Toffler, U.S. Army, Retired**

*The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to impart instructions and to give commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice so as to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself; while he who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his subordinates, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself.*

—Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield, in an address to the West Point Corps of Cadets, 11 August 1879

*A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate anyone who does.*

—The Cadet Honor Code, United States Military Academy

*[Character is] those moral qualities that constitute the nature of a leader and shape his or her decisions and actions.*

—USMA Circular 1-101, Cadet Leader Development System, 2005

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OUR NATION'S THREE primary means of providing the armed forces with commissioned officers are the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), officer candidate schools (OCS), and the federal service academies. Each of these sources is duty bound to commission leaders of character, entrusted with leading America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen. The importance of commissioning leaders of character is uncontested, even axiomatic; but what is required and expected of a leader of character can be a source of debate. Our aim is to clarify what it means to be a leader of character and to recommend a holistic approach to developing such leaders in each of our sources of commissioning.

To begin, it is essential to define and understand "character." Next, we must determine a theoretical or empirical method by which character may be developed. Third, each source of commissioning must design and implement tangible activities within the developmental programs. Finally, we must agree on what observable, measurable attributes are expected.

## Character Defined

U.S. Military Academy (USMA) Circular 1-101 defines character as "those moral qualities that constitute the nature of a leader and shape his or her decisions and actions."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Joel J. Kupperman, an accomplished professor, author, and philosopher, writes a similar definition of character: "[Cadet X] demonstrates . . . character if and only if [Cadet X's] pattern of thought and action, especially in relation to matters affecting the happiness of others, is resistant to pressures, temptations, difficulties, and the insistent expectations of others."<sup>2</sup> This definition reveals one's character in across-the-board decisions and actions—not just in the avoidance of lying, cheating, stealing, or tolerating, which most schools' honor codes prohibit. Similarly, Dr. James Rest's four-stage model of moral decision making (moral recognition, moral judgment, moral intention, and moral action) provides support for this perspective with its focus on recognizing that a moral-ethical issue exists (recognition or sensitivity), culminating in a behavior. In this light, our character includes values, virtues, aesthetics, ethics, morals (conscience), identity, and sense of purpose.<sup>3</sup> These qualities shape our decisions and attendant actions. By Kupperman's definition,

these are the intrinsic qualities, generating observable outcomes and revealing our character.

Fundamentally, we expect a leader to be trustworthy. Trust is gained and sustained through the consistent demonstration of character, competence, and commitment. In other words, leaders earn trust when they do their duty well, do it in the right way, do it for the right reasons, and are persevering. Accordingly, a professional member of the armed services must seek to discover the truth, decide what is right, and demonstrate the character, competence, and commitment to act accordingly (a "right" decision must be ethical, efficient, and effective).

*Accordingly, a professional member of the armed services must seek to discover the truth, decide what is right, and demonstrate the character, competence, and commitment to act accordingly.*

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Clearly, this view encompasses much more than not lying, cheating, stealing, or tolerating such acts. However, these are the fundamental proscriptions constituting the tenets of the honor codes or concepts at each federal service academy. They also are essential elements of our professional military ethic, but they are not sufficient. Even when we embrace the spirit of the honor code—reverence for truth (honesty); pursuit of justice (fairness) and compassion; recognition of the sanctity of property; and the commitment to uphold the professional military ethic—there is much more.

## Developing Leaders

It is our thesis that all the commissioning sources should espouse a concept of professional leader development that avoids placing a consequences-based emphasis on an honor code or concept. Importantly, the sources of commissioning should adopt a comprehensive paradigm for developing



character, competence, and commitment in its cadets, midshipmen, and candidates. Despite the pleas of “old grads” of the federal service academies to maintain tradition and the way things were, change is both appropriate and imperative. Over the course of their histories, the service academies have continuously and systematically improved their academic, military, and physical programs; these are widely regarded as first class. In fact, among those who rate universities, the federal service academies are perennially in the top tier across the board. The mandate, reflected in the vision, purpose, and mission of each academy to provide our armed forces with commissioned leaders of character, deserves a careful philosophical review.

By 1891, West Point’s Board of Visitors recognized the imperative of character (moral) development was as important as physical and cognitive development. Of note, they emphasized the development of character in cadets by also addressing the character of the academy’s faculty. The Committee on Discipline and Instruction reported the following to the board:

Of the regulations, we can say that they deserve our profound respect, for they are

the results of nearly a century’s experience. They have constituted the rules of conduct that formed the characters of the great men who have graduated here... [The regulations] are now more nearly perfect than ever before, because they provide for their own improvement. Judicious changes have been made all along their history, whenever experience clearly demonstrated the advantages of modifications... The Cadet is required to consider “duty the noblest word in the language” . . . Hence on the matter of discipline we conclude: That the rules of the school, considered in the abstract—their aims and methods; that the professors and officers now on duty here—their character, scholarship, skill and fidelity; that the results of the regulations as administered—shown in physical, moral and mental development of the Cadet—all deserve the commendation of the Board of Visitors.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, one key point in this passage is that appropriate modifications have been made “all along their history” to improve the way West Point develops cadets. However, it was not until 1947 that Gen.



U.S. Army Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, chief of staff of the Army, meets with cadets at the United States Military Academy during a visit to West Point, N.Y., 13 October 2011. (U.S. Army, Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade)

Maxwell D. Taylor, superintendent at the time, explicitly confirmed that the mission of the U.S. Military Academy is to develop character and the personal attributes essential to an officer.<sup>5</sup> West Point did not officially include character in its mission statement until 1957—ten years later.<sup>6</sup> Today, West Point’s William E. Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic articulates and teaches cadets the Army ethic; at the Air Force Academy this role is fulfilled by the Center for Character and Leadership Development; and at Annapolis the Vice Admiral James Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership supports this mission.

The academies each have formal programs designed to develop trustworthy leaders (see for example USMA Circular 1-101).<sup>7</sup> These programs are designed to educate, train, and inspire cadets and midshipmen to embrace the professional military ethic of their service and the armed forces.

Thus, leader and character development occur within the academic, military, and physical-athletic programs at each academy (including during extra-curricular activities). This developmental concept recognizes that individuals develop simultaneously across and within all domains as they complete the activities inherent within the four-year service academy experience. Similarly, this concept applies in ROTC and OCS, notwithstanding that their programs are of different design and duration.

It is in the successful completion of each commissioning source’s programs whereby cadets, midshipmen, and candidates develop in character, competence, and commitment—becoming trustworthy commissioned officers. In this light, three principles must be reflected in the design of the developmental programs at the academies, in ROTC, and in OCS:

- Character is multidimensional. It is our true nature: values, virtues, ethics, morals (conscience), identity, aesthetics, etc.
- Character, competence, and commitment can and must be developed simultaneously—in the same way and at the same time.
- Officership denotes transformational leadership and values-based decision making (avoiding overemphasis on transactional leadership, consequences, and rules-based decision making).<sup>8</sup>

With this foundation, it is arguable that the meaning of honor at each academy, as defined by

living according to the precepts of an honor code or concept, is inappropriately narrow. Traditionally, violations of honor were the only “failure in character,” for which the standard sanction was expulsion (or separation).<sup>9</sup>

This observation does not suggest that the honor codes or concepts are unnecessary. On the contrary, they are necessary but insufficient. In this light, honor codes or concepts are *minimum* standards of acceptable ethical conduct.

It is not surprising then that many cadets and midshipmen, staff and faculty, and service academy graduates may be comfortable with the view that avoiding an honor violation is *prima facie* evidence

*...the meaning of honor at each academy, as defined by living according to the precepts of an honor code or concept, is inappropriately narrow.*

that one has been honorable. This assumption, though common, is unwarranted and unwise. At USMA, cadets can avoid lying, cheating, stealing, or tolerating and still violate the Army Values.<sup>10</sup> For example, cadets can live by the honor code and—

- Fail to contribute their best efforts to accomplish the mission, an affront to both duty and service.
- Treat others with contempt or injustice, violating respect.
- Inappropriately offer allegiance to friends or teammates, violating professional loyalty to the Constitution.
- Make decisions and take actions that are inconsistent with the Army Ethic and ethos, a failure of integrity.
- Be fearful and fail to do what is right, lacking courage.



Perhaps Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor said it best when he wrote:

The responsibility of West Point to the cadets, however, does not end with their intellectual and physical training. It will be recalled that the mission prescribed by the Department of the Army places the development of character ahead of education in the arts and sciences and in military activities. The conduct of war is a business which calls for more than intellectual and physical attainments. No great soldier ever rose to eminence in the command of American troops who was not primarily a leader of character. It is for this reason that West Point takes the development of character as a formal objective to be pursued by all available means.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, the academy honor codes or concepts do not represent the fullness of the military ethic and the values of each service. Nonetheless, the honor codes and concepts are cardinal elements of each academy's ethos, providing a timeless foundation. Similarly, our society supports the spirit of the code (i.e., as stated earlier and in the definition of honor in the sample code of ethics, figure 1) and regards it as sacrosanct. Living truthfully is a standard and an expectation.

Additionally, the honor systems at each academy are becoming burdened by investigations and legalisms, and cadets and midshipmen know they can "lawyer up." The honor system's investigative focus is on evidence for lying, cheating, stealing, or tolerating. In our armed forces and our society, honor encompasses a broader view. Honor, in the sense of the proscriptive code, does not encompass all that is necessary to be trustworthy—a characteristic that demands much more.<sup>12</sup> For example, a willful disregard for regulations, such as "blowing post," is not seen as a breach of honor (unless one lies about the act).<sup>13</sup> But is such conduct consistent with duty?<sup>14</sup> Or in a similar fashion, a cadet could also be grossly disrespectful to another without violating the honor code. Thus, we propose that each source of commissioning explicitly and formally affirm that decisions and actions that violate any of their services' values are unethical and intolerable. At West Point, the pamphlet governing the honor code and system states:

The disciplinary and honor systems are [separate and] distinct. Regulatory indiscipline may violate one of the seven Army values. Such infractions will be addressed, but not under the honor system . . . However, while a distinction is made between "honor" violations and "regulation" violations, it must be understood that regulation violations may be unethical in their very nature. Deliberate disregard of known and established regulations for personal gain is a clear dereliction of military discipline and a divergence from ethical behavior. For example, the underage consumption of alcohol, while not an honor violation in itself, reflects negatively on the character of the cadet(s) involved because it violates the laws of the United States.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, cadets at West Point may deliberately disregard known standards of ethical conduct and, if discovered, will normally be "slugged."<sup>16</sup> It is this divide between the relative tolerance for certain ethical lapses (e.g., disciplinary violations, lack of respect, etc.) in contrast to the stigma of honor violations that gives the appearance of a false hierarchy among the Army values. A value is a principle or concept that is always important. Therefore, all values within the Army Ethic must be embraced—otherwise the ethic itself lacks integrity.

The fundamental, cardinal characteristic in all relationships is trust, not simply honesty.<sup>17</sup> A competent, committed leader of character is trustworthy. And, in a military context, with its inherent risk of serious injury and death, professional trust is sacrosanct.<sup>18</sup> Developing trust and striving to be trustworthy require a life-long commitment to live by service values. Coastguardsmen must trust that their leaders will do their duty. Soldiers must know that leaders will respect the intrinsic dignity and worth of all. Sailors must know that leaders will display courage in challenging times. Airmen must know that their leaders are men and women who place integrity first. Most importantly, the American people expect more than that our armed forces will not lie, cheat, or steal. The oaths we take on entry to our profession of arms are clear on this matter.

## Defining Expectations

To assess or judge a cadet's, midshipman's, or candidate's character, we must agree on a clearly

defined expectation for what one must do to demonstrate that he or she is trustworthy—it must be more than just a leader who follows the honor code or concept. There is a profound difference between the two. It is our contention that trustworthy military professionals (leaders) will seek

the truth (to aspire to know that which is actually so), to decide what is right, and to demonstrate the character, competence, and commitment to act accordingly.

In this regard, we are recommending that each service academy, ROTC program, and OCS

### Code of Ethics

**Purpose:** To foster trust in all our endeavors, personal and professional, we adopt this code of ethics to guide our decisions and actions, in pursuit of excellence.

**Premise:** Trust is belief in and reliance on the competence, character, and commitment of a person, organization, or institution. Trust is the foundation for successful accomplishment of the Army's mission.

**Goal:** To be trustworthy, we aspire to be leaders of competence, character, and commitment. As such, we seek to discover the truth, decide what is right\*, and demonstrate the competence, character, and commitment to act accordingly.

\*[A "right" decision is efficient, effective, and ethical.]

We pledge to live by our **Values:**

**Integrity:** Decision making and action based on principles.

**Duty:** Contributing one's best effort to accomplish the mission, striving for excellence in all endeavors.

**Honor:** Reverence for the truth (honesty) and justice (fairness), regard for the property of others, and commitment to upholding the Army Professional Ethic.

**Loyalty:** Allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America.

**Service:** Contribution to the well-being and benefit of others (teamwork).

**Respect:** Recognition of the intrinsic (infinite) dignity and worth of all people.

**Courage:** Commitment to do what is right despite risk, uncertainty, and fear.

**Pledge:** In the conduct of our duty we strive to continuously develop our character, and competence, seeking to develop these attributes to be worthy of trust and to effectively and ethically serve the common defense.

- That which is good is consistent with our sense of virtue, ethics, and morality.
- That which is moral is known to our conscience—to which we pledge to be true.

**Figure 1**  
**Sample code of ethics**

adopt a code of ethics (transcending the limited, proscriptive focus of any honor code and concept). This code of ethics should incorporate, at a minimum, each service's values. Consider this illustration from the Army leadership policy on the Army G-1 website:

Army Values are the baseline, core, and foundation of every soldier. Army Values guide the way soldiers live their lives and perform their duties. They are an inherent part of the Army [Ethic] and [demand] standards of conduct to which all soldiers must adhere. The



moral and ethical tenets of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Army values [duty, honor, loyalty, service, respect, integrity, and courage] characterize the Army profession and culture, and describe the ethical conduct expected of all soldiers.<sup>19</sup>

At USMA, ROTC, and in OCS, an inclusive code of ethics should be based on cadets and candidates embracing and upholding the Army values—as consistently demonstrated in their decisions and actions.

This principle denotes and mandates adopting the Army values as one’s own. Accordingly, one’s decisions and actions will be in accord with one’s values. In this light, an Army code of ethics must include all Army values (see sample code of ethics in figure 1).<sup>20</sup>

This code (adapted to the values of each service) encompasses what it means to be a trustworthy professional in the United States Armed Forces.

Consequently, the standard sanction for violating such a code of ethics within our sources

of commissioning should be development, not separation. Separation should be a consequence of failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress within a developmental program. Over the last decades (1990’s and continuing), West Point has employed highly successful developmental mentorship activities to provide remediation for cadets who committed serious errors in judgment. The mentorship strategies are tailored to the nature of the offense (e.g., honor, respect, regulations, alcohol-drugs, leadership, etc.). Each of these remedial programs requires a cadet to be mentored and to complete several demanding requirements, including study, reflection, service, and assessment. While these programs are specifically designed for those who have serious failings, ideally every future officer should have an opportunity to participate in a developmental practicum.

This concept has been fully supported by the Army’s governing regulation for West Point, Army Regulation (AR) 210-26, and the United States Code, as shown in figure 2. Under this guidance

Supporting Document	Excerpt(s) from Document
AR 210-26, United States Military Academy	<p>“The Superintendent will establish procedures and programs for the intellectual, military, and physical development of cadets as future commissioned officers consistent with the moral and ethical standards of uniformed service in the U.S. Army.”<sup>21</sup></p> <p>“Cadets are required to act as leaders of character. They are not only to abstain from all vicious, immoral, and irregular conduct, but they are also enjoined to conduct themselves upon every occasion with the propriety and decorum characterizing a society of ladies and gentlemen. Cadets who conduct themselves in a manner unbecoming an officer and a lady or gentleman may be separated from the Military Academy and awarded punishments under paragraph 6–4 of this regulation.”<sup>22</sup></p>
Section 3583, Title 10, United States Code	<p>“[Officers] show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination.”<sup>23</sup></p>

**Figure 2**  
**Regulations supporting developmental mentorship**

## Developmental Concept

### Activity

### Outcome

Instruction-Study-Reflection.....>>	Knowledge & Understanding
Practicum..... >>	Adherence & Discipline
Assessment.....>>	Confidence & Belief
Experience..... >>	Leadership & Wisdom

1. Instruction, study, and reflection include classroom work, lectures, discussions, reading, role playing, case studies, journaling, and contemplation.
2. Practicum includes activity focused on applying the Code of Ethics (e.g., service-learning, volunteering, leading project teams, etc.), remedial or mentor programs that result from violating the Code of Ethics, social activities with staff and faculty, and extra-curricular activities.
3. Assessment includes formal evaluations in academics, military education and training, and physical and athletic endeavors. An important contributor is the guidance received in the form of coaching, counseling, and mentoring.
4. Experience includes activities such as summer details, internships, intercollegiate competitions, and all duties away from the academies or campuses.

**Figure 3**  
**Developmental concept**

and direction, West Point and all sources of commissioning should adopt a code of ethics and implement a system for adjudication of alleged violations that is administratively and legally sufficient.

A key goal in developing future officers should be to develop their appreciation for and adoption of the code of ethics as their own. Cadets, midshipmen, and candidates must *know it, adhere to it, believe in it, and lead others accordingly*. Kurt Lewin, Albert Bandura, Edgar Schein, and other notables in the field of human development and social psy-

chology write that one is influenced by his and her environment. To endure, the elements that make up an environment must also be considered valid and worthy of continued use. Thus, the code of ethics will become an inherent, cardinal characteristic of the ethic, ethos, and culture of the source of commissioning—part of the environment—if the transformation is logical, inclusive, inspirational, and beneficial to all. The transformation will require source-of-commissioning leadership and the staff and faculty to be champions. If done according to the developmental concept depicted in figure 3,



cadets, midshipmen, and candidates will know, adhere to, believe in, and lead in the process of developing themselves and others to truly be trustworthy future leaders of the armed forces.

In expanding our concept for professional (leader) development to embrace trust, everyone (military and civilian) interacting with those in precommissioning programs becomes responsible for living, teaching, and abiding by a code of ethics. As many have observed about the culture at West Point, “When asked what we do here at West Point, the concept is: ‘We develop character as we develop competence.’”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the staff and faculty at each commissioning source have an obligation to show cadets, midshipmen, and candidates what “right” looks like (decisions and

actions that are ethical, efficient, and effective—consistent with their service’s values). It is important to recall that the West Point Board of Visitors in 1891, referenced earlier in this essay, recognized that the mission of West Point, as with the other academies, is achieved through the scholarship, skill, and fidelity of the staff and faculty who must demonstrate character, competence, and commitment in the process of developing trustworthy cadets, fulfilling the expectations of the American people.

Perhaps the Posvar Commission in 1989 was prescient in its final report: “As an ethical rule, [the honor code] happens to be stated in proscriptive terms, specifically against lying, cheating, stealing, or tolerating those who do. This list has changed, and can change again.”<sup>25</sup> **MR**

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## NOTES

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1. U.S. Military Academy (USMA) Circular 1-101, *Cadet Leader Development System*, 2005.

2. Joel J. Kupperman, *Character* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1995). The term “Cadet X” was placed in the quote to emphasize the context of the argument.

3. James Rest, *Development in Judging Moral Issues* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

4. Report of the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy for the year 1891.

5. Maxwell Taylor, *West Point: Its Objectives and Methods* (USMA, 1947).

6. Catalogue of the United States Military Academy, 1957-58.

7. USMA Circular 1-101.

8. This construct provides focus and meaning to graduates from a source of commissioning as commissioned officers in the U.S. military (see for example, the design and content of the capstone course, MX400, Officership, at USMA).

9. Not all cadets or midshipmen who are found to have committed an honor violation are separated from an academy. The superintendent may suspend the separation or take other action, thereby granting discretion. At West Point, Martin R. Hoffman, then secretary of the Army, granted this authority in January 1977.

10. The term “being honorable” in this context refers to abiding by the Cadet Honor Code; it does not refer to the holistic concept of being a trustworthy Army professional as demonstrated by living by the Army values. The values of the U.S. Air Force are integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. The U.S. Navy Core Values are honor, courage, and commitment. The U.S. Coast Guard values are honor, respect, and devotion to duty.

11. Taylor.

12. Note that the nontoleration tenet reflects the military professional’s duty to uphold the Ethic of the Armed Services. However, a cadet may decide to report a violation only through the “fear of consequences” to him or her, rather than for

the intrinsically “right” reason to “stop unethical practices.”

13. The term “blowing post” refers to cadets or midshipmen who leave the academy grounds when they are not authorized to do so.

14. The Borman Commission Report: “The Honor Code must not . . . be exploited as a means of enforcing regulations.”

15. U.S. Corps of Cadets, Pamphlet 623-1, *The Honor Code and System*, 1 February 2007.

16. Slugged is a term referring to receiving punishment tours and demerits for violating the regulations of the Corps of Cadets.

17. Retired Gen. Colin Powell has been quoted as saying, “The essence of all leadership, of all interpersonal activity, is trust,” <<https://www.wilowcreek.com/emailhtml/summit07/july.html>> and <<http://www.govleaders.org/quotes.htm>>.

18. Pat Sweeney, “Do Soldiers Re-evaluate Trust in Their Leaders Prior to Combat Operations?” *Military Psychology* 22 (Suppl. 1), S70-S88, 2010.

19. Derived from information on the website of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, U.S. Army, for Leadership Policy, 13 August 2008. Modifications by the authors reflect their recommended changes to the expression and definitions of the Army Values, <<http://www.armyg1.army.mil/HR/leadership/default.asp>>.

20. This sample code revises the current definitions of the Army Values.

21. Army Regulation 210-26, *United States Military Academy* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 26 July 2002).

22. Ibid.

23. Section 3583, Title 10, United States Code, Requirement of Exemplary Conduct.

24. Adapted from Lt. Gen. F.L. Hagenbeck, Superintendent’s Letter, “Assembly—West Point Association of Graduates,” July/August 2008.

25. Lewis Sorley, *Honor Bright: History and Origins of the West Point Honor Code and System* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill Learning Solutions, 2008).



# Evil on the Horizon

(AP Photo)

## A Perspective on the Department of State's Role in Securing Man-Portable Air Defense Systems in Syria

Maj. Matthew M. McCreary, U.S. Army

**P**OLICYMAKERS IN WASHINGTON, far removed from the soldiers and marines fighting for their lives in conflicts half a world away, rarely understand the impact their decisions have on our nation's military men and women. Further, and as many of us know all too well, the complexity of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, combined with myriad transnational challenges, reveals that the military element of power alone is not sufficient to achieve national security objectives.

To help remedy the problem, the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) created the Interagency Fellowship Program to familiarize officers with the other elements of national power. One goal of the fellowship, which enables mid-career officers to participate directly in the U.S. interagency process by assigning them to positions within federal departments or agencies, is to improve national security by synchronizing missions, promoting cohesiveness, and ensuring unity of effort with Army and interagency players.<sup>1</sup> During my assignment as an interagency fellow, I served in the Department of State with the Interagency Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) Task Force. MANPADS—often referred to as shoulder-fired missiles—pose a particular threat to both military and civil aviation. In the hands of terrorists, MANPADS could be used to cripple the civil aviation industry in particular and the global economy in general. To prevent such contingencies, the Interagency MANPADS Task Force was constituted in 2007 by order of the Deputies Committee of the National Security Staff. The task force oversees implementation of the International Aviation Threat Reduction Plan and integrates all elements of national power to reduce or eliminate terrorist access to MANPADS and other standoff weapons.

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The MANPADS Task Force, housed in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at State, reports directly to the National Security Staff and includes representatives from the Department of State, Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security, the intelligence community, and others. Even though the mission is globally focused, I spent the lion's share of my time planning for the threat posed by MANPADS falling into the hands of terrorists and other nonstate actors during and after the crisis in Syria.

For our purposes, the U.S. planning effort for Syria will provide the lens to examine the unique role played by the State Department within the interagency process, including how the organization functions and works with other players.

Before diving in, it is important to put the MANPADS threat in Syria into context. At the time of the Syrian revolution in 2011, Bashar al-Assad's regime had acquired a sizeable inventory of MANPADS, mostly to counter the Israeli air threat. The Assad regime possessed thousands of ex-Soviet SA-7 MANPADS, as well as a significant number of more advanced systems.

Beyond regime-held stocks, video and photographic evidence from the civil war in Syria has shown opposition forces, including the al-Qaida affiliate al-Nusrah Front, in possession of a variety of MANPADS acquired from captured government stockpiles or from international donors.<sup>2</sup> Current evidence reveals a multitude of MANPADS already in the hands of terrorists or at risk of being acquired by such groups in Syria. Most disconcerting is that these terrorist organizations may use instability within Syria to acquire more and better MANPADS and ultimately transport them across borders for future terrorist operations. Combined, these facts make MANPADS in Syria an important national security issue for the United States.

For future events, it is worthwhile for military planners to examine interagency efforts to secure MANPADS in Syria because by understanding current challenges, future interagency planning will be improved. In particular, it is important to understand—

- How the State Department's unique responsibilities, abilities, and culture influence the process.
- How well State partners with DOD.

- How well State is able to coordinate with other interagency partners to plan and execute operations.

The State Department's inclusive nature, focus on diplomacy, and lack of resources enable and force them to coordinate with others to achieve their objectives. The situation in Syria demonstrates the importance of the State-DOD partnership, while simultaneously revealing many of the shortcomings of the relationship. Fortunately, the State Department is well equipped to engage in effective interagency coordination because it has an institutional culture of inclusion and because interagency coordination is a requirement for the execution of foreign policy, both in Washington and at the country team level.

To remedy the shortcomings in State-DOD coordination, I propose two solutions. One involves assigning personnel from each organization into the key planning body of the other early in the process. The other remedy involves expanding existing personnel exchange programs and implementing an incentive structure to draw top-tier talent into those positions. Overall, effective interagency coordination—that is, the harmonious functioning of parts for effective results—can be achieved only when all partners willingly share information and work together toward a common goal.<sup>3</sup>

## Why is the State Department Key?

The Department of State's unique set of responsibilities, abilities, and culture influence its approach toward the crisis in Syria. Here it is important to remember that the State Department's mission (and responsibility) is to use diplomacy to "create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community."<sup>4</sup> State uses the following underlying principles to guide their approach toward mission accomplishment.

- First, they focus on building and maintaining bilateral and multilateral relationships with international partners and institutions.
- Next, they work to protect the nation against transnational threats like terrorism, poverty, and disease.
- Finally, they aspire to foster a more democratic and prosperous world that is integrated into the global economy.

Again, State uses the diplomatic element of national power to achieve U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives.

In the case of Syria, diplomacy supports “the Syrian people’s aspirations for a Syrian-led transition to a democratic, inclusive, and unified Syria.”<sup>5</sup> This mission has been extraordinarily difficult to accomplish in the midst of a civil war, and the challenge was magnified by the U.S. decision to close its embassy in Damascus in February 2012. Now, U.S. diplomats must work with and through international partners to set the conditions for success in Syria.

This predicament highlights one of the major limitations of State—namely that diplomats depend on the U.S. military, contractors, and multinational partners for physical security as they pursue foreign policy goals. Limited access to the country significantly limits the State Department’s options to secure MANPADS, support the Syrian people, and protect the United States against various transnational threats.

While the nonpermissive security environment severely limits what State can do, the inclusive nature of the department makes it effective for coordinating

the international response to secure MANPADS in Syria. The State Department has taken a lead role in coordinating with international partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to prepare for the likely proliferation of MANPADS from Syrian stocks upon the fall of the Assad regime. Specifically, State conducted detailed discussions with the key U.S. allies known as “Five Eyes” countries (United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand) and others (Belgium, France, and Germany) to identify ways to engage the region, leverage multilateral fora, and establish the international way ahead to mitigate the illicit proliferation of MANPADS and other portable advanced conventional weapons from Syria. All this coordination will pay dividends toward preventing a proliferation crisis in the future.

As far as an institutional culture, the Department of State tends to be more freewheeling, deliberative, and inclusive in their planning processes compared to others. According to national security experts Roger George and Harvey Rishikof, State depends on a culture that seeks allies, friends, and coalitions over a range of institutions harnessed to manage global instability.<sup>6</sup>



Members of Ahrar al-Sham brigade, one of the Syrian rebels groups, exercise in a training camp at an unknown place in Syria, 29 November 2013. (AP Photo)



For example, when it came to planning for securing MANPADS in Syria, State's informal nature initially presented some coordination challenges, especially with DOD. It took State a while to figure out how to approach the problem, including how to integrate interagency partners into its informal planning process. Conversely, DOD had multiple plans ready to go on the shelf to contend with the situation in Syria—plans derived through rigorous staff processes such as the military decision-making process and joint operation planning process.

The Department of Defense's formalized system lends a sense of regimen to its planning, something that is sorely missing at State. However, after myriad detailed discussions between State and our counterparts at DOD, we were able to complement one another's internal planning processes by informing and integrating efforts.

## **The Critical Piece: State-DOD Coordination**

State worked closely with DOD planners and other federal agencies to coordinate the response to the threat posed by MANPADS in Syria. Ten-plus years of warfare have taught us that the military element of power alone is not sufficient to achieve national security objectives. In particular, the U.S. experience in Iraq and Afghanistan reveals how important it is to orchestrate all the elements of national power so they work in concert and have mutually supporting effects.

With that in mind, contingency planning for securing MANPADS in the Levant is predicated on a whole-of-government approach. While the U.S. aim is for a diplomatic solution to end the crisis in Syria, the importance of the region to U.S. interests has forced DOD leaders (and planners) to work in earnest with counterparts throughout the government to update existing plans and provide the president with military options to contend with the situation in the region. To that end, State Department planners have worked closely with their DOD and interagency counterparts to coordinate various efforts to secure MANPADS and ensure current DOD plans are reflective of broader U.S. government interests. In fact, the plan to secure MANPADS in Syria has been coordinated throughout the U.S. government to such a degree that it is truly an interagency effort.

Planning for the crisis in Syria—a crisis that is likely to span the spectrum of conflict—is evidence the U.S. military must engage the State Department early and often and be as transparent as possible to achieve organizational goals. Early candid discussions are critical because they reveal those activities best suited for the military and those best left to the diplomatic and technical experts from State. Furthermore, and perhaps more important, a consistent dialogue early between State and the military can mitigate duplication of effort and clearly delineate roles and responsibilities each should play in particular contingencies.

When planning for MANPADS in Syria, planners with the Interagency MANPADS Task Force worked closely with their counterparts in DOD to integrate plans for securing MANPADS into existing DOD efforts. In addition, planners from the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Joint Staff, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), United States European Command, and relevant defense support agencies kept both the Interagency MANPADS Task Force and the broader State Department apprised of their priorities and plans in general for the crisis in Syria. This coordination enabled each individual organization to understand one another's priorities and concerns and identify the roles and responsibilities each was best suited to undertake in Syria.

The other important factor regarding State and DOD coordination is transparency. A high level of information sharing engenders trust and helps establish a common operational picture among organizations. This is important because parochialism often prevents agencies from fully disclosing the extent and nature of their planning efforts. Transparency between State and DOD was an issue when it came to Syria contingency planning. While planners shared information on issues like assistance, refugee flows, and the like, both sides were reticent to engage in extended dialogue on more detailed planning efforts. Unfortunately, stovepipes and other “cylinders of excellence” remain alive and well within the U.S. interagency planning process; consequently, any U.S. plan is likely to be duplicative and inefficient at best and incomplete and fratricidal at worst. Overall, failure to share information between organizations that are supposed to be part of the same team could lead to distrust and ultimately undermine U.S. government objectives vis-à-vis Syria.

## State's Interagency Coordination is Effective Because...

The State Department, unlike other federal organizations, is well equipped to conduct operations with other nonmilitary departments and agencies because of its inherent organizational culture—namely one of inclusion. State's tendency toward openness means more voices are at the table and, perhaps more importantly, dissenting voices are encouraged among participants. When it came to State Department planning for MANPADS security in Syria, interagency players from DOD, the Department of Homeland Security, the intelligence community, and others were invited and included in various working groups early in the process.

Candid debates over divergent views on issues such as scope, responsibilities, authorities, and funding took place in an open forum. Moreover, the MANPADS Task Force, which is a standing body focused on the MANPADS threat around the world, provided the State Department (and others) an interagency-cleared assessment and perspective on ways to deal with the threat. For this reason, the State Department's plan for securing MANPADS in Syria was more informed and robust than it would have been otherwise.

The other reason State is so well suited for interagency cooperation is that it is forced, by the very nature of the role it plays within our government, to coordinate and synchronize all aspects of the federal bureaucracy in support of foreign policy objectives. Planning efforts by Foreign Service officers and their civil servant counterparts in Washington and within country teams at embassies around the world demand a high degree of interagency collaboration to achieve success. In the case of Syria, Foreign Affairs officers in State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement and representatives of the Interagency MANPADS Task Force worked tirelessly to coordinate with regional desk officers from the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, myriad functional bureaus, and the broader U.S. government. They also worked with various international partners and multilateral organizations to capitalize on one another's relative advantage to secure MANPADS in Syria.<sup>7</sup>

In this article, we discussed the extent of State Department coordination with interagency and international partners; however, we did not high-

light the amount of internal coordination that goes on to prepare for situations like the one the United States faces in Syria. It is important to note that nothing State does occurs in a vacuum. Relevant players with both regional and functional perspectives thoroughly debate every issue.

*Genuine interagency coordination—that is, cooperation to achieve synergistic effects—can only be achieved when all partners work together selflessly toward a common goal.*

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When it came to planning for the potential threat of MANPADS in Syria, regional bureaus and functional bureaus were brought together to develop a State Department response. This internal coordination was critical when State went ahead to meet with both interagency and international partners.

While large in scale in D.C., coordination like this occurs on a micro-level each day at U.S. embassies around the world where the ambassador is responsible for coordinating U.S. government activities and programs with the host nation. The nature of foreign policy, which demands a whole-of-government approach combined with the State Department culture of inclusion, makes State a key player in the interagency planning process to mitigate the threat posed by MANPADS in Syria.

## Improving State-DOD Cooperation

This analysis demonstrates how effective interagency coordination depends on more than a willingness to engage with partners in the broader U.S. government. Genuine interagency coordination—that is, cooperation to achieve synergistic effects—can only be achieved when all partners work together selflessly toward a common goal. State's institutional culture and focus on diplomacy, combined with limited capabilities, influences its



approach toward securing MANPADS in Syria. Further, the problem set reinforces the importance of a close State-DOD partnership; however, it also reveals many of the shortcomings that still exist regarding interagency cooperation. Finally, the case of Syria provides a clear example for why State is so well equipped to engage in effective interagency coordination and how aspects of their culture could, and should, be adopted by others to improve cooperation.

The good news is that a great deal of institutional effort was expended to prepare for the potential threat posed by MANPADS in Syria. This issue captures the attention of our nation's leadership due to the deleterious effects it could have on global commerce. Clearly, the only way to tackle the issue is through an interagency response, and, arguably, the most important factor for any such response is the State-DOD relationship. Therefore, I offer some ways to improve State-DOD coordination to secure MANPADS in Syria, as well as for the numerous other transnational threats the United States faces.

The first proposal is for situations like the one we face in Syria—that is, contingency planning to mitigate the impact of a particular threat. A way to promote collaboration would be to insert personnel from each organization into the planning body of the other early in the process. For example, in the case of Syria, contingency planning, Foreign Service officers (or civil servants) from Near Eastern Affairs Bureau or the Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations could be assigned as members of the issue-focused USCENTCOM planning cell as soon as it was stood up. Similarly, assigning

military officers from the USCENTCOM J-5 (or Joint Staff) to either of the aforementioned State Department bureaus would provide a DOD voice in State Department efforts. The benefit of this solution is that it integrates efforts early and is a relatively easy, flexible response for both organizations. Clearly, individuals in selected positions would have to be identified and prepared to serve when and where they are most needed.

Another way, beyond early engagement in the various planning processes, is to expand interagency assignment opportunities and reward select personnel with promotion incentives or some other lucrative benefit. Essentially, this is an argument for expanding the existing CGSC fellowship and other DOD-State personnel exchange program assignments that exist today. I am sure division-level staffs would welcome the addition of State Department political advisors, while State would be more than happy to integrate more military officers within their bureaus and offices.<sup>8</sup>

Further, select officers (Foreign Service and military) should be assigned to counterpart agencies early in their careers to enable subsequent assignments. This would enable those officers to build experiences and contribute to a deeper interagency relationship down the road. A successful expansion of the existing program can only be achieved by providing incentives for participants, such as promotion incentives or some other reward. The benefit will be top-tier talent seeking out interagency positions. Much work remains, but implementation of some of these recommendations would go a long way to improve the situation. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Ralph Doughty, Information Memo: Summary of the ILE Interagency Fellowship as a Broadening Experience, Fort Leavenworth, KS (2010), 2.

2. Arms Control Association website provides background on MANPADS in Syrian opposition hands, <<http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/manpads>> (12 August 2013).

3. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary provides the definition for "coordination," <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coordination>> (27 April 2013).

4. State Department Mission Statement from <<http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503.htm>> (22 March 2013).

5. Fact Sheet on U.S. Government Assistance to the Syrian People, <<http://geneva.usmission.gov/2013/03/05/facts-on-u-s-assistance-to-the-syrian-people/>> (22 March 2013).

6. Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 92.

7. M. McCreary, 2013. Some of the agencies and departments that were part of the planning process for the crisis in Syria included DOD, DHS, Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Agency for International Development, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the intelligence community, and others.

8. S. Mull, 2012, memorandum for Michael L. Bruhn, executive secretary, Department of Defense: Personnel Exchange Program between the Departments of Defense and State, Washington, DC, 1. The memorandum of understanding between State and DOD mandates that no more than 98 personnel will be exchanged between the two organizations. Political advisors are generally assigned to DOD military commands in the United States and overseas and to service chiefs of staff in the DOD; (2) military academies or war colleges as faculty; or other foreign affairs personnel. No political advisors are currently assigned to division-level staffs or lower.

# Extending SHARP Best Practices

## Does a Dearth of Published Lessons Learned Reflect Disinterest in the Ranks?

Lt. Col. Heidi A. Urban, Ph.D., U.S. Army

*Two weeks ago, I told my commanders that combating sexual assault and sexual harassment within the ranks is our number one priority. I said that because as chief, my mission is to train and prepare our soldiers for war.*

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, chief of staff of the Army, during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 4 June 2013

**B**OTH SECRETARY OF the Army John McHugh and Gen. Raymond Odierno have been clear and forceful in their proclamations that the Army's top priority today is combating sexual assault and harassment within the ranks. But has the message truly taken root outside the Pentagon?

The Army's two flagship professional journals—*Military Review*, published by Fort Leavenworth's Combined Arms Center, and *Parameters*, published by the U.S. Army War College—provide a sense of the state of the profession and its priorities from the field at any given time. During the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they offered some of the best ground-level observations and lessons learned from implementing counterinsurgency doctrine. Today, contributors wrestle with topics such as the future of land power, regionally aligned forces, and adaptation in an age of austerity. Yet, largely missing from these pages is any independent thought, reflection, and critical thinking devoted to tackling the Army's number one priority of preventing sexual assault. In fact, since the Army revamped its Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program in 2008 under the "I. A.M. (Intervene-Act-Motivate) Strong" campaign,

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only one article has appeared in either journal on the topic.<sup>1</sup>

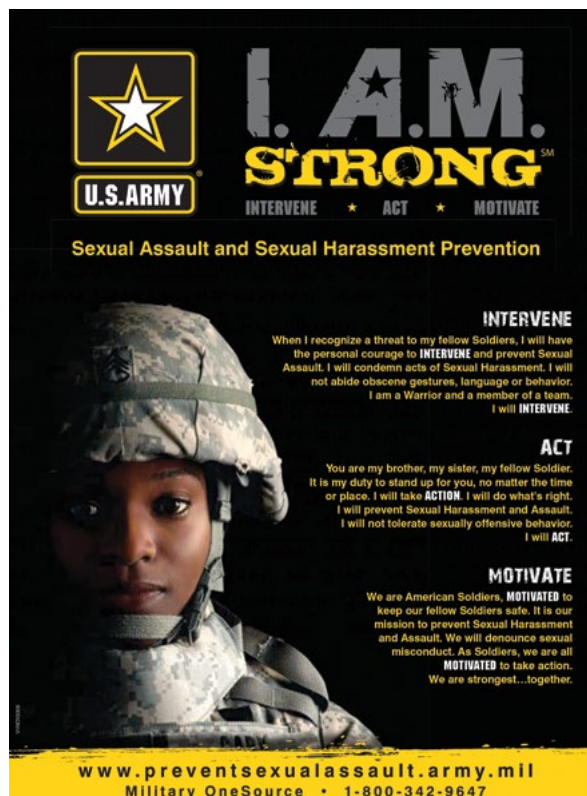
Taken at face value, this could suggest a growing gap between what senior Army leaders are saying about the institution's priorities and where the rest of the institution is focusing its intellectual energy and thought. Could it be that the secretary of the Army and chief of staff's message just is not resonating—that the rest of the Army thinks the institution's top priority should lie elsewhere? Certainly. But history has shown that innovation happens mainly at the grass-roots level, and, undoubtedly, units *are* identifying smart, effective initiatives at the local level—initiatives that are not being shared as widely as other best practices that more directly relate to warfighting functions.

This article challenges Army leaders at the levels of brigade and below to more vocally share lessons learned in the campaign to eliminate sexual assault and harassment. It offers three simple considerations for leaders as they continue to implement the SHARP program at the unit level.

## Build Ownership—of the Problem and its Solutions

If Clemenceau was right that war is too important to be left to the generals, then a similar statement can be made about SHARP: it is too important to be left to our sexual assault response coordinators (SARCs) and unit victim advocates (UVAs). Yet, this is largely what we have done—delegated our SHARP training to well-intentioned SARCs or UVAs who lead us through three-hour PowerPoint presentations directed by Headquarters, Department of the Army.<sup>2</sup> While such centralized training probably has helped increase awareness of reporting and response procedures, it has done little in terms of establishing ownership at the unit level or helping prevent incidents of harassment and assault.

First and foremost, SHARP must be a commander's program. While SARCs and UVAs are invaluable enablers, commanders must own and direct SHARP training. In this regard, the Army should loosen two restrictions to further enable commanders to own and direct their programs. First, it should lift the rank restriction for who can serve as a UVA, especially at the company level. If we truly are committed to breaking down barriers to reporting alleged incidents of harassment and



SHARP poster

assault, allowing carefully selected junior soldiers to attend the Army's 80-hour SHARP training and serve as UVAs would be an important step. With junior soldiers comprising the majority of alleged sexual assault victims and perpetrators, such a move will help establish ownership among a key demographic.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the Army must move beyond its dependence upon prescribed, one-size-fits-all SHARP training. We are at the point in this campaign when units must tailor SHARP training to their own formations, and a continued reliance on training materials developed at the Department of the Army level implies detachment and disinterest at the unit level (which is not the case). Such training had value at the outset, as it ensured a consistent approach across formations. Today, it runs the risk of turning into white noise. As with anything else, commanders must plan, lead, and inspect SHARP training to make it truly their own.

## Do a Little a Lot

A stumbling block to addressing sexual harassment and assault at the unit level seems to come

from the perception that the problems the military faces reflect larger, intractable societal issues (e.g., gender equality issues, the glamorization of alcohol and binge drinking, the hook-up culture, etc.). Reports of high rates of sexual assaults in colleges and universities reinforce this belief, leaving some to conclude that the problem of sexual assault is no worse in the military than in any other segment of society.<sup>4</sup> Such conclusions can be troublesome because at best, they allow us to rationalize the extent of the sexual assault problem in the military, and at worst, they let us abdicate responsibility. How can we be asked to solve a problem that the rest of society or other institutions cannot solve?

Rather than trying to solve the Army's sexual harassment and assault problem overnight, units should set their sights on tangible goals and objectives. More importantly, we should strive to *do a little a lot*. If this truly is the Army's top priority, frequency is a must. However, meaningful engagement need not require intensive use of time or other resources. Brown-bag lunches, seminars, sensing sessions, and informal surveys go a long way toward continued identification of problems,

sustained command emphasis, and solicitation of new initiatives aimed at prevention.

I have witnessed too many fellow soldiers expressing frustration because solving the Army's sexual assault problem will require changing the Army's culture. The sentiment is well founded because solving the problem *will* require changing the culture, a process considered slow and difficult at best. However, we need not be resigned to this prospect or assume culture change occurs only over successive generations. We can change the Army's culture by doing a little a lot.

## Listen More Than You Talk

Our unit has found it useful to conduct all of our SHARP training and engagement in small seminars with no more than 15-18 soldiers at a time. Moving away from mandated videos and PowerPoint presentations in packed classrooms to discussion-based seminars in a more intimate setting has not only resulted in a greater engagement among the training audience, but it has also unearthed a number of tangible initiatives we can implement at the unit level to help prevent



U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno gives his remarks at the Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention Summit in Leesburg, Va., 8 May 2012. (U.S. Army, Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade)

harassment and assault within our ranks. From demanding more realistic, scenario-based training that focuses both on how to intervene and how to extract oneself (or others) from a potentially disastrous situation, to having candid discussions about alcohol consumption, we have found that junior soldiers are waiting to be engaged on this issue. We stand to lose their attention or stifle their good suggestions, however, when our SHARP engagement always consists of senior noncommissioned and commissioned officers lecturing them in formal settings. The more we listen, the more likely we are to get buy-in for the SHARP program within our ranks and learn a little along the way.

## Conclusion

More than 12 years into sustained combat, the American public has a great deal of confidence in the military as an institution.<sup>5</sup> Yet, no issue threatens to erode this trust and confidence more than our failure to truly address the epidemic of

sexual harassment and assault within our ranks. Warfighting is fundamentally a human endeavor, and our most precious resource is not a piece of equipment or a technological platform but individual soldiers—America's sons and daughters entrusted to our care. If we lose the trust and confidence of the public, we threaten to tear the social fabric of our institution and profession.

Few organizations place a higher premium on the publication and wide dissemination of after action reviews, lessons learned, and best practices than the U.S. Army. Few do self-critique better than the Army, and the quality of the Army's assessments proves the Army to be a learning organization that constantly seeks to adapt and improve. Let us approach sharing knowledge on combating sexual harassment and assault with the same rigor, passion, and intellectual energy that we have displayed in fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our soldiers deserve nothing less. **MR**

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## NOTES

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# Is Experience the Missing Link in Junior Officer Development?

Maj. Adam Wojack, U.S. Army

**I**N 1808, AFTER humiliating defeats inflicted by Napoleon and France, the Prussian government placed much of the blame for its misfortunes on poor military leadership and subsequently redrafted national criteria for officer development. Gone was the discriminator that officers be selected exclusively from the nation's aristocracy. "The only title to an officer's commission," read the directive, "shall be in time of peace, education and professional knowledge; in time of war, distinguished valor and perception . . . All previously existing class preference in the military establishment is abolished."<sup>1</sup>

The Prussian government also added a requirement that all officer candidates serve six months in the enlisted ranks—to ensure a head start toward technical proficiency—and attend nine months of professional schooling before commissioning. These reforms, commonly recognized as the beginning of the modern military officer profession, were intended to secure future victory by growing the type of leader who would thrive and succeed in the increasingly complex operating environment of Napoleonic combined arms warfare. The reforms, arriving at the beginning of a period of dominance experienced by the Prussian military, and later the German military, revolutionized the way armies thought, performed, and developed leaders well into the 20th century.<sup>2</sup>

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ART: Napoleon is shown on the battlefield at Eylau (in Prussia) during one of the Napoleonic Wars (the War of the Third Coalition, 1807) in this oil painting by Antoine-Jean Gros.

In a similar but less monumental manner, following nearly a decade of continuous combat operations, the United States Army published the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) in November 2009. ALDS was the Army's initial vision of how it would focus institutional means toward building its next generation of direct and organizational leaders. It was authored by major departmental stakeholders who believed that the Army was "out of balance" in developing its leaders and recognized the need for a new leadership vision. In discussing the "competitive learning environment" of the future in which our forces would face patient and adaptive enemies using time and complexity to their advantage, the authors called for the Army to shape victory now by developing its leaders to "learn faster, understand better, and adapt more rapidly."<sup>3</sup>

To get there, the ALDS stated that the Army must focus on developing confident, versatile, adaptive, and innovative leaders in order to dominate in a changed and changing environment. A way, said the strategy, was for the Army as an institution to balance its commitment to the three pillars of leader development: training, education, and experience.<sup>4</sup>

While the effects of institutional change are rarely visible in the short term, four years later the Army still sees itself as out of balance across these three pillars, "given the emphasis [it has] had to place on warfighting," according to the latest version of the ALDS, published in June, 2013.<sup>5</sup>

Exactly where balance is still needed and where change must still occur is and likely will remain a matter of debate. This essay seeks to enter that debate by proposing that of the three pillars of Army leader development, one—experience—is most out of balance with the others when applied to our most junior officers in their pre-implementation development phase.

## Initial Development

Implementation, for the purpose of this essay, is the placement of junior officers into their first troop leadership positions following initial developmental training. Balance pertains to equal attention paid across all three pillars of the leader development model to ensure a more versatile, adaptable officer. A contemporary illustration follows: A few years ago

at Fort Leavenworth, near the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and just before the Afghanistan "troop surge," an Army brigade combat team commander spoke to a group of field grade officers about the challenge of balancing force manning with leader development requirements. He said that among his 40 current company commanders, 11 of them had yet to attend the Captain's Career Course. In other words, he said, they were on their first assignment as officers in the Army. Ten years ago, this brigade commander said, a similar ratio would have been unthinkable. Then, he said, all captains taking company command in an active duty brigade were career course graduates and on at least their second assignment in the Army.

This brigade commander went on to explain that the unanticipated effect of this increased population of younger company commanders was additional stress on the organization due to their inexperience. Although all had copious combat experience from recent deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan, none of them were as skilled, for example, at mentoring their new lieutenants or midgrade and senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs), as had been their predecessor peers of ten years earlier. This, said the brigade commander, forced his field grade officers to assume a greater role than before in this area, creating new stressors such as increased workloads for the field grade officers and perceptions of micromanagement.

While this illustration refers to company commanders rather than the entry-level junior officers who are the subject of this essay, it speaks about the factor of experience in leader development. Officers require practice over time to become skilled at most leader tasks, and each new level of responsibility requires different skills. Without the benefit of time and practice, junior officers can become a burden on their superiors while developing their leader skills.

Of the three pillars of Army leader development, experience, defined by the current ALDS as "the continuous progression of personal and professional events," may be the most elusive to quantify.<sup>6</sup> Different than education or training, which can both be measured in terms of completion of a course or field of study, experience is usually assessed in terms of participation in specific events, or time served in the next lowest position prior to upward movement. However, individuals learn at different



rates, and some environments offer greater learning opportunities. In any case, relevant job experience is normally considered essential for placement into positions of management or leadership within most civilian organizations. The Army is no different in this case, with the well-known exception of junior officer selection: based on education attained and training received, the Army places individuals from civilian life into military leadership positions at the middle point in the organizational rank hierarchy and pay scale. These individuals become the Army's

*Of the three pillars of Army leader development, experience, defined by the current ALDS as "the continuous progression of personal and professional events," may be the most elusive to quantify.*

junior officers and platoon-level leaders. Prior military experience is not required. While some of these junior officers may have prior enlisted and possibly combat experience before commissioning, this is the exception, not the rule—and not a prerequisite.

In this officer-commissioning model, two of the three pillars of Army leader development (education and training) are governed by service requirements prior to implementation, but the third (experience) is incompletely addressed. The Army has experimented with pre-implementation experiential leader training through the Basic Officer Leader Course, Phase II (BOLC II), a six-week, branch-immaterial leadership course for newly commissioned officers that ran from 2006 until it was discontinued in December, 2009.<sup>7</sup> Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, then-deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command for Initial Military Training, explained the elimination of BOLC II by saying that units

needed junior officers sooner, and cutting out BOLC II seemed the most expedient solution.<sup>8</sup>

While BOLC II may or may not have provided junior officers the opportunity to gain organizational experience prior to implementation as direct-level leaders, its cancellation—or merger into the current BOLC B, which is similar in length and scope to the pre-BOLC officer basic courses—created a void of any *proposed* experiential preparation for the Army's junior officers. This suggests a simple leader development imbalance at the career start point of our most junior officers.

## **Where Experience is Needed Most**

Doctrinally, the Army's approach to developing experience in junior officers is through on-the-job training. The current edition of Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, published in 2010, states "troop units" are "where officers begin to develop their leadership skills... Troop leadership is the best means to become educated in Army operations and builds a solid foundation for future service."<sup>9</sup>

While learning on the job is essential and beneficial, our post-implementation junior officers may not learn key lessons early enough to make the sound and timely decisions required in today's complex and competitive operating environment. These trained and educated, but inexperienced, junior officers are perhaps not the optimal problem-solvers required to achieve success in an ALDS-described future battlefield of "complexity and ambiguity."<sup>10</sup> Given the increasingly decentralized nature of conflict today, where platoon leaders are often the senior decision makers on many operational missions, this would seem where experience is most needed.

Simply put, gaining experience over time prior to implementation is rigidly programmed into the professional development of almost all Army leaders—from noncommissioned officers to company and higher-level commanders—but not for platoon leaders.

While it is not difficult to identify the shortfall in experience development among our junior officers (especially among those with no previous



military experience), it is necessary at this point to establish what causal link, if any, exists between previous military experience and higher levels of performance in post-implementation junior officers. This subject does not lack for answers found in folklore, such as prior-enlisted lieutenants being coveted by battalion commanders for their already-developed technical and leadership skills; junior enlisted men stating their preference for officers with enlisted experience because of this shared background; and the belief of some that prior-service officers simply make better platoon leaders. But the question begs exploration and proof: In what ways can previous military experience make a junior officer better, and is this potential advantage significant enough to inspire a change in how we develop officers?

A casual survey of existing literature on the subject reveals at least five different categories of why the addition of organizational or combat experience in a junior officer might improve the

performance of the leader, unit, and organization—other desired attributes such as intelligence, physical fitness, character, and motivation remaining equal. The categories are —

- Initial military screening has occurred.
- Increased technical competence and reduced train-up time within the unit.
- Increased confidence, judgment, and ability to lead by example.
- Increased ability to relate to subordinates.
- Less micromanagement by superiors resulting in reduced organizational stress.

Examples from pertinent literature discussing each category follow.

**Commitment.** In the first category, a junior officer with previous military experience is more committed to the organization, as well as the reverse, since the occupational screening process has already occurred. In other words, the Army has chosen—and been chosen by—the soldier who decides to pursue and who receives a commission.



U.S. Army Spc. Ernestine Koroma, center, assigned to the 30th Medical Command, and sponsors check her zero target of the M4 carbine assault rifle during the 2013 Best Warrior Competition at Grafenwoehr Training Area in Bavaria, Germany, 20 August 2013. (U.S. Army, Markus Rauchenberger)

The likelihood of that officer remaining past an initial term of service is higher than that of an officer with no previous experience. This is validated by recent scholarship on officer retention rates over the past decade across all commissioning sources. Research shows that Officer Candidate School officers with prior enlisted service remain in the Army at the highest rate. In contrast, U.S. Military Academy and Reserve Officer's Training Course four-year scholarship officers, both with relatively low cadet populations of prior enlisted soldiers, maintain the lowest retention rates.<sup>11</sup>

*...a junior officer with previous military experience is more committed to the organization, as well as the reverse, since the occupational screening process has already occurred.*

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The occupational screening process occurs over time and covers formative career milestones. For example, a junior officer with previous military experience has already attended and graduated from basic and advanced individual training, been awarded a military occupational specialty, served in a unit with both peer soldiers and supervisory noncommissioned and commissioned officers, and applied for acceptance into a pre-commissioning source. This period of service is more than a number of years or months: it is evidence or the assumption of positive adaptation to the specific military culture, acquisition of a range of basic individual technical skills, and possible mastery of a few. It shows a sense of commitment to the Army, since the soldier chooses to remain in service and become an officer, which is a strong suggestion that the soldier finds the military profession agreeable.

Martin van Creveld, the noted Israeli military historian, found our system of screening potential junior officers problematic when he wrote, "The outstanding feature of the road toward earning a commission in the United States is that most future officers are designated as such even before they are taken in to the forces."<sup>12</sup> The occupational screening for officers created in this manner occurs by necessity during and after implementation, placing additional stress on the organization as well as on the individual. In short, neither the Army nor the individual has chosen the other prior to placement in a direct leadership position.

**Competence.** Second, a junior officer with prior military experience has more technical competence and requires less train-up on individual and collective skills. In speaking about enlisted soldiers, military sociologist Samuel Coates wrote, "Military skills, whether in leadership or in technical specialties, are as a rule too complex to be mastered in one period of enlistment."<sup>13</sup> The required skills of officers, which can be assumed as more complex than those of enlisted soldiers—collective-level planning, leading, and decision making, for example—likely take at least a similar length of time to master. In the interim, unit NCOs often bear the burden of completing the training of junior officers.

U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*, sheds light on the responsibility NCOs have in completing the development of entry-level officers. "When junior officers first serve in the Army, their NCO helps to train and mold them. When lieutenants make mistakes, seasoned NCOs can step in and guide the young officer back on track."<sup>14</sup> This suggests, given the assumed difference in complexity between officer and enlisted tasks, that NCOs are either already competent enough at junior officer tasks to teach them, or that our entry-level junior officers are learning skills of the sort taught easily by NCOs—basic soldier or beginning leadership skills.

The requirement for NCOs to train junior officers on the job is not new. One historian, borrowing a snapshot from 1830s Army culture, described the friction that resulted from this inevitable train-up period: "Junior officers appointed from civil life, as most officers were, resented having to rely upon [the first sergeant's] coaching due to their inexperience. Professional soldiers, on the other hand, appreciated and came to rely upon him."<sup>15</sup>

*The Plattsburgh Manual*, a handbook that described how the U.S. Army created its mass-expansion officer corps for service in the First World War, summarized this point with candid rationale: “A good private makes a good corporal, a good corporal makes a good sergeant, a good sergeant makes a good lieutenant—a good colonel makes a good brigadier general—all exactly as in civil life.”<sup>16</sup> The inference to be taken from this statement is that sufficient time and exposure to develop skills at the next lowest position

creates conditions for success as one progresses up the ladder of rank and responsibility.

**Skills.** Third, junior officers with prior experience have enhanced skills in nontechnical areas only time and performance of duties can develop, such as confidence, the ability to lead by example, adaptability, and judgment. According to FM 6-22, the ability to lead with confidence involves “having prior opportunities to experience reactions to severe situations.”<sup>17</sup> Once leaders have collected experiences gleaned from these “severe situations,” they become aware of what “right looks like,” and logically, are better prepared to lead confidently and by example. Adaptability, according to our leadership doctrine, is also a product of time and practice: “As the breadth of experience accumulates, so does the capacity to adapt.”<sup>18</sup>

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), an organization that has amassed military leadership experience over the past several decades due to near-constant regional conflict, bases its leadership doctrine around personal example. While accepting that this style of leadership creates greater risk, Israel’s



Sgt. 1st Class Shvoda Gregory, motor sergeant for the 557th Engineer Company, 864th Engineer Battalion, talks to a small group of specialists and new sergeants during a five-day junior leadership development course his battalion administers quarterly to better prepare its new and future leaders, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., 24 January 2012. (U.S. Army)

forces believe leadership by example presents the opportunity for greater reward, “both in mission success and unit cohesion.” Good judgment, confidence, and adaptability are the IDF goals for junior officers prior to their implementation as platoon leaders. The Israeli model of combat leadership, according to an IDF psychologist, “requires an experienced leader to assess and mitigate risks and to make correct decisions.”<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that the IDF selects its officers exclusively from the ranks of its conscripted enlisted force. All future officers serve for two years in the ranks prior to attending a commissioning course to develop—and to be screened for—the type of technical skills, confidence, and judgment required to become a by-example style of leader.<sup>20</sup>

Glancing at the negative, a lack of confidence and judgment in a junior officer can inspire catastrophic results in a worst-case scenario. The leader of a platoon controls mass destructive combat power and must know when to apply this force, where to apply it, and in what circumstances it is justified and lawful. The official Army investigation into the



incident at My Lai, Vietnam in March, 1968, known as the Peers Report, cites the inexperience of the platoon leaders who participated as a major factor in the mass murder of roughly 400 noncombatants. The 1970 report states these junior officers chose to follow rather than question orders from their company commander concerning the use of lethal force on unarmed villagers who were mostly women, children, and old men. The Peers Report noted the “extraordinary degree of influence” wielded by the company commander, a career officer known as a strict disciplinarian, over these still-developing platoon leaders. The report concluded that inexperience contributed to the poor judgment exercised by platoon-level leaders—both officers and NCOs—at My Lai.<sup>21</sup>

Our leadership doctrine summarizes this point: “Good judgment on a consistent basis is important for successful Army leaders and much of it comes from experience. Leaders acquire experience

through trial and error and by watching the experiences of others.”<sup>22</sup>

**Relationships.** Fourth, junior officers with prior military experience are better prepared for relating to, understanding, and caring for their enlisted subordinates. While this seems a bold statement, research lends it credence. Samuel Stouffer, the noted American social psychologist, led a team of researchers during and after the Second World War in seeking feedback from U.S. Army soldiers about their experiences in the war and in the service. His findings include the perhaps unsurprising perception among enlisted men that “officers who were formerly enlisted men were *more likely* to share the view of the enlisted men than were officers who had never been enlisted men.”<sup>23</sup> While that might seem elementary, a complementary finding may not: “Officers felt ‘executive abilities’ (carrying out orders promptly and thinking for oneself) were much more important than ‘personal relations’ abilities (helping soldiers, explaining things clearly, gaining liking of men). Privates felt exactly the opposite.”<sup>24</sup> What this illustrates, according to Stouffer’s research, is while enlisted men generally maintained different values about day-to-day Army business than their officers, those officers without enlisted experience were more than likely unable to grasp this difference—in other words, were less able to relate to their men.

Enlisted experience in the U.S. Army officer corps has always had some precedent, along with the bond this shared background has created—in myth or reality—between officer and soldier. In the Army National Guard between the world wars of the 20th century, some units “preferred officers who had come up through . . . [their] own ranks . . . [and who] usually served quite an apprenticeship as enlisted men before being made officers.” The benefit of this, felt Guard officers of the early 20th century, was the “sense of round-the-clock responsibility [these officers had] for their men.”<sup>25</sup>

The practice of taking care of soldiers is believed to enhance unit morale and increase combat effectiveness. This involves ensuring basic human needs are met and soldiers are led with competence and concern. A behavioral sciences research team at U.S. Military Academy observed, “leaders who took care of their soldiers, who met their tactical needs through their own competence



Cpl. Ian Faught pulls himself up onto a wall with the help of his buddies during the Leader Reaction Course, the culminating activity of the battalion's Team Leader Development Course, Fort Hood, Texas, 29 October 2013. (U.S. Army, Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick)

and skills...and who allayed their soldiers' anxieties that they would respect their lives by avoiding wasteful casualties—these leaders led units that were the most combat effective.”<sup>26</sup>

**Trust of superiors.** Fifth, experienced junior officers are less likely to be subjected to micromanagement by their superiors, which reduces stress on the organization, increases the young officers' job satisfaction, and possibly their organizational commitment and retention in the Army. This is a broad statement, but again, current learning lends evidence. The landmark Army Training and Leader Development Panel report sought to identify issues within the Army's culture and climate that were contributing to dissatisfaction in the officer corps and decreased retention rates over the decade following the Persian Gulf War. According to this 2002 report, junior officers were “not receiving adequate leader development experiences . . . [which] leads to a perception that micromanagement is pervasive. They do not believe they are being afforded sufficient opportunity to learn from the results of their own decisions and actions.”<sup>27</sup> The Army chose to make the causal link between these complaints and poor officer retention and instituted several changes over the next several years in an attempt to reverse the trend.

Of course, micromanagement and its negative impact is nothing new. The Vietnam-era U.S. Army provides an interesting precedent of the organizational perils of inexperienced leadership “corrected” by micromanagement. In this example, NCOs created from the post-basic training, “shake and bake” Noncommissioned Officer Course were considered too inexperienced to be left alone to execute their duties and care for soldiers. The alleged micromanagers? Junior officers. As related by historian Ernest Fisher, “Because of a chronic shortage of experienced NCOs, many officers, especially at the company level, resumed the practice of bypassing their noncoms when dealing with the troops...this eroded the sergeant's proper role as a small-unit leader and pushed him to the sidelines where he became a spectator instead of the focus of the action.” The chief irony of this practice, Fisher adds, was that it occurred exactly at a time when, “because of the nature of tactics employed in Vietnam, the small-unit leader was more needed than ever before.”<sup>28</sup>

## Creating Capable Junior Officers

This brief survey of leader development literature in these five categories suggests that previous military experience, along with sufficient education and training, creates a junior officer more capable of immediately performing with competence and confidence upon implementation. This may have as much to do with the way humans learn as it does with the various complex tasks a junior officer must master. According to a leadership textbook used at Fort Leavenworth, humans learn from experience through a process called “action-observation-reflection.” Typically, humans engage in actions, observe the results or outcomes, and eventually reflect upon what went right or wrong, including whether or not to repeat the same action and how to improve the results. While actions and observations may occur at high frequency, for example, during a junior officer's initial assignment, especially in combat, the reflection period required to process this collected data may not take place until later, often much later, and sometimes only after an environmental change—such as redeployment or transfer to a subsequent job or assignment.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, when applying this learning model to a junior officer without prior military experience, it would seem that experiential reflection occurs after it might be most useful. For example, a former platoon leader now working as a company executive officer may begin to understand and benefit from his experiences and feel more confident in his ability to lead a platoon, but now the officer is fully engaged in a new job with different duties and requirements. It would seem the best way to train a platoon leader to perform at the highest level would be to allow the young officer to be a platoon leader for a sufficient time period, move the individual to another job to take advantage of time and the environmental change to stimulate reflection, and then reinsert that officer into a platoon leader position to fully capitalize on his improved abilities.

The Army, or any organization for that matter, does not have this time or resource luxury with respect to leader development and must utilize and train junior officers as they become available. It must also rotate them through other important jobs, such as specialty platoon, executive officer, and battalion staff jobs to meet organizational needs as well as to provide broadening experiences for these developing officers.

What should be apparent, given this survey of the experience pillar of our leader development model, is that more experience in a junior officer prior to implementation is better than less, and that the Army must find a way, in keeping with the intent of the ALDS, to provide more balance in the development of our junior officers.

Practical solutions are not the topic of this essay, but to be useful they all should share one thing: the benefit of experience must be factored into a junior officer's development prior to implementation as a direct leader of troops. Some known practices and ideas include mandatory enlisted service prior to entry into a commissioning program (two years seems to be a common standard, as used by the Israelis, among others). Another is an "apprenticeship" following graduation from a leadership school and prior to commissioning and implementation (the German Bundeswehr develops its officers similarly). Still another is creating a vertical rank structure in which all soldiers enter at the lowest pay grade and progress upward (however quickly or slowly) based on individual talent, desire, motivation, and supervisory recommendation. Experience at the

next lowest position before upward progression would be guaranteed. Of course, certain pay grades would have to be consolidated or bypassed to ensure company-level leaders are youthful enough to lead by example under physically harsh conditions.

This discussion aside, some, perhaps many, contemporaries would insist that the current Army officer development model works fine. They would point to the enviable supply of motivated, college-educated, and technically trained young men and women who volunteer every year to become the Army's entry-level officers and begin their on-the-job training as direct leaders. A noncontemporary, such as a Prussian army officer of the early 19th century, would likely be impressed by the education and training our new lieutenants receive but might scratch his head at the last part: beginning the on-the-job training of our officers while they simultaneously function as leaders? To this Prussian officer, our model might seem sequentially challenged, for if the literature on military leader development has one common thread, that thread is this: experience is the best teacher of military leadership. **MR**

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## NOTES

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# The Syrian Crisis from a Neighbor's Perspective

## View from Turkey

Karen Kaya

**W**HAT STARTED OUT as internal turmoil in Syria in March 2011 turned into a regional crisis, which then turned into an international crisis. The crisis in Syria is now affecting the surrounding region, most critically Syria's neighbors, who have all had to contend with instability at their borders. The humanitarian dimension alone directly affects Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, who, as of February 2014, were hosting nearly 2.5 million refugees.<sup>1</sup> However, even greater long-term repercussions could include reshaping of the entire Middle East. The crisis has deepened divisions in the region along Sunni and Shiite lines. Moreover, the Kurds are planting the seeds for an autonomous Kurdish region adjacent to the one in Iraq, causing strategic and security concerns for all neighboring countries. At the global level, the greatest risks are that Syria could become a breeding ground for Islamic militants, and those militant groups such as al-Qaida or Hezbollah could obtain and use Bashar al-Assad's biological and chemical weapons.

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(AP photo)

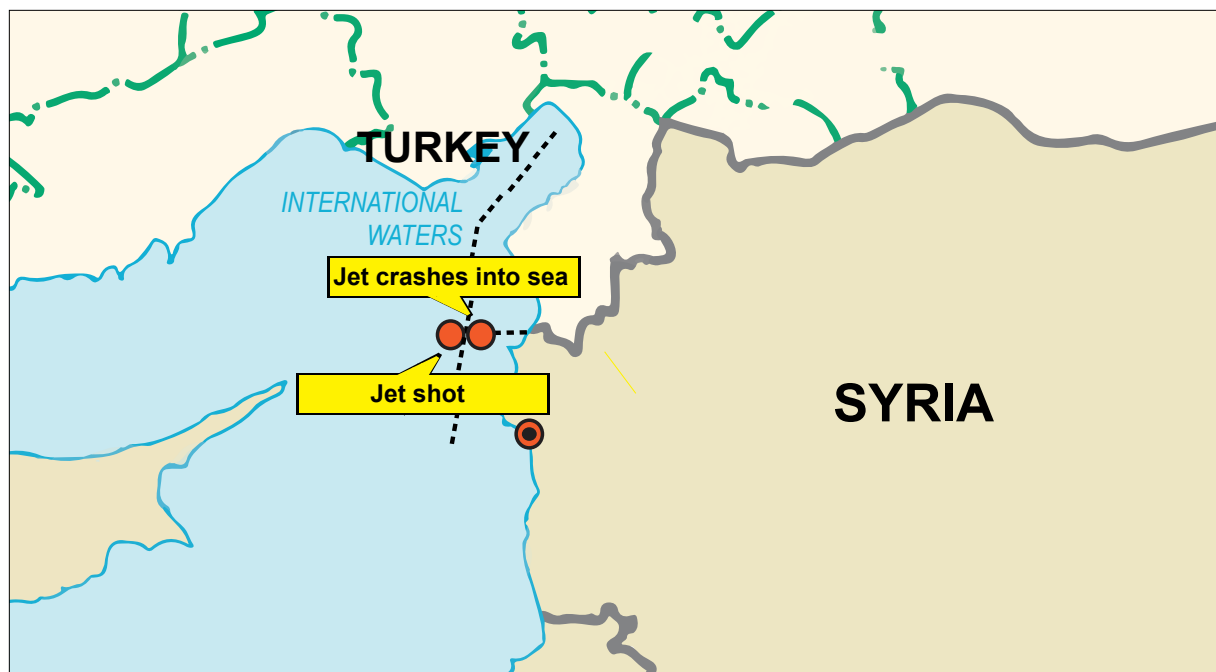
From Turkey's point of view, the crisis now poses four direct threats to its security. First, there is the issue of border security, particularly since clashes between anti-Assad forces and Assad regime forces have spilled over into the border region where approximately 600,000 refugees are located. Border violations have brought Turkey and Syria to the brink of war, while Turkey's stationing of Patriot missiles near the Turkish-Syrian border has upset its already-tense relations with Iran and Russia. Turkey suffered one large terrorist incident related to the crisis in Syria—car bomb attacks in Reyhanli in 2013—resulting in the death of over 50 Turks. Second, the prospect that Kurds in northern Syria will gain some kind of autonomous status raises concern that Turkey's 14 million Kurds will feel emboldened to renew a push for an autonomous region. Third, there is concern that the northern part of Syria could become a base for the separatist rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (known as the PKK), which Turkey is engaged with in precarious peace negotiations after fighting for almost 30 years. Fourth, there is the global threat from al-Qaida (or like-minded militant radical Islamist groups) settling in Syria, which has already

begun.<sup>2</sup> For Turkey, this means becoming neighbors with al-Qaida-linked groups and possibly becoming a transit point for Islamic militants going to join the jihad in Syria.

## Going Regional: The Jet Crisis and Activation of NATO

When the Syrian crisis first erupted, Turkey used dialogue and tried to persuade the Assad regime to stop the violence. As the violence continued, Turkey changed its stance completely, harshly criticizing Assad and calling on him to step down. Turkey eventually became party to the conflict by becoming a base of support and refuge for anti-Assad forces. It sheltered members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and military defectors fighting the Syrian forces. Consequently, Turkish-Syrian relations quickly took a turn for the worse.

The crisis became regional on 22 June 2012, when Syria downed an unarmed Turkish RF-4 (an F-4 Phantom) military jet, which crashed into the Mediterranean Sea (see map in figure 1). Following the incident, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan declared this a hostile act and announced that Turkey now considered Syria a clear and present



**Figure 1**  
**Map of where the Turkish jet was shot and crashed**

danger. He warned that Turkey would consider any military element approaching the border from Syria a threat and treat it as a military target. On 24 June, Turkey invoked Article 4 of the NATO charter, which allows consultations with allies if a member considers its security to be under threat. The NATO meeting took place on 26 June 2012 in Brussels, where the alliance expressed solidarity with Turkey.

The situation was significant in several ways. In addition to escalating the conflict to a regional level, it also put the crisis on NATO's agenda. Turkey's activation of NATO marked a new phase in a crisis that had so far focused on U.N. diplomacy.

## **Border Security**

The number of refugees living in camps along the Turkish side of the Syrian border has increased from 500,000 late in 2012 to over 600,000 early in 2014. Small border violations started occurring in April 2012 when Syrian forces attacked one of these refugee camps, killing two Syrian refugees and wounding two Turks. Over time, fighting between the FSA and Assad reached the Turkish-Syria border. FSA forces captured several Syrian border posts, but Assad's forces continued to fight back with bombs. The Turkish Army sent troops, armored personnel carriers, and missile batteries to the Syrian border to strengthen its defenses. In mid-July 2012, Bab al-Hawa, an important border crossing, fell into Syrian rebels' hands and rapidly became a jihadist gathering point. Tourism in the region quickly vanished, hurting many local businesses.

The border violations continued through fall 2012. On 3 October 2012, mortar fire from Syria hit the Turkish town of Akçakale, killing five Turkish citizens (two women and three children). The Turkish Armed Forces responded swiftly and sharply, shelling Syrian tanks and armored vehicles, leading to six days of exchanged artillery fire. The Turkish parliament passed a bill authorizing the government to send troops to Syria if necessary. This was followed by an incident on 12 November 2012, when Syrian warplanes hit opposition targets less than a quarter mile from the Turkish border, prompting Turkish F-16s to be dispatched to the area on a reconnaissance and patrol mission. The planes were armed and the

pilots were instructed to hit Syrian planes if there was any border violation.

On 21 November 2012, Turkey officially applied to NATO for the deployment of Patriot surface-to-air missile systems on its border with Syria; they were deployed in early February 2013. The Netherlands, Germany, and the United States provided the advanced PAC-3 model missiles that Turkey needed to intercept ballistic missiles, and they were stationed about 60 miles north of the border.<sup>3</sup> Both Iran and Russia criticized the deployment and made statements that this was not a deterrent but a provocation or an excuse for NATO to be in the region. A high-ranking Iranian military official commented that this move would lay the groundwork for a world war.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest damage to Turkish life was the terrorist attack on 11 May 2013. This was the largest terrorist attack in Turkey since the 2003 al-Qaida attacks in Istanbul. Twin car bomb attacks struck Reyhanlı, a city near Turkey's Syria border where many Syrian refugees had sought refuge, killing over 50 and injuring hundreds of Turkish citizens. Turkish officials believed the perpetrators were connected to Syria's intelligence agency, linked to the Assad regime, and had conducted the attack in response to Turkey's Syria policy. The incident also had domestic implications. It created an uproar in Turkey, with many criticizing the Turkish government's Syria policy and claiming that policy had led to the attack.<sup>5</sup>

## **Northern Syria = Western Kurdistan?**

An important aspect of the crisis that directly affects Turkey is the potential formation of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria, adjacent to the one in Iraq. Turkey has long feared that such a scenario would embolden efforts for Kurdish autonomy in Turkey or lead to similar territorial claims among its own Kurds. The Kurds in Syria are organizing themselves and trying to establish their own region. Turkey perceives this as a threat to its territorial integrity, given that almost half of the estimated Kurdish population of 30 million lives in Turkey. Therefore, the Turkish government's position regarding Syria has been that the regime should go, but Syrian unity should be preserved. Turkey does not want to see Syria fragmented along ethnic lines.<sup>6</sup>





**Figure 2**  
Kurds along the Turkey-Syria border

The issue is really a regional one, encompassing all of the countries in which Kurds live: Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Within each country, the Kurds live in areas they consider part of a greater “Kurdistan.” They see Kurdistan as a four-part region: eastern Kurdistan (Iran), western Kurdistan (Syria), southern Kurdistan (Iraq), and northern Kurdistan (Turkey).<sup>7</sup> A semi-autonomous Kurdish region already has been established in Iraq. This region has most traits of an independent state, including its own constitution, parliament, flag, army, border and border patrol, national anthem, international airports, and an education system.<sup>8</sup> Iraq’s Kurdish region stands as an inspiration to Kurds in neighboring Syria, Iran, and Turkey.

Syrian Kurds’ short-term goal is an autonomous region in Syria, similar to the one in Iraq. For the long term, there are aspirations for a Kurdish confederation or even an independent, united Kurdistan. As with any nationalist movement, the ultimate dream is independence, but this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.<sup>9</sup>

The Turkey-Syria border divides ethnic Kurds and traditional Kurdish lands. Drawn at the end of the World War I to follow an Ottoman railway line, it is approximately 560 miles long and is the longest border Turkey shares with any of its neighbors. People on both sides of the border are linked to each other. When Kurds in Turkey and Syria talk about their respective regions, they use the terms “above the line” and “below the line.” The two groups are

really one, and the Turkey-Syria border is really a Turkey-Kurdish Syria border (see figure 2).

Initially, the Kurds in Syria did not take sides in the conflict; they kept their distance from both the Assad regime and the rebels, focusing on the security of their own cities.<sup>10</sup> They viewed the situation in Syria as a historic opportunity to plant the seeds of an autonomous Kurdish region there. Instead of getting involved in the fighting, they focused on Kurdish national unification, establishing an army, and securing their own towns. As the fighting spread in the rest of the country, a string of Kurdish-majority

towns in the north seized local authority from the central government and took control of most state institutions in the northern part of Syria, including police stations.<sup>11</sup>

The most powerful Kurdish group in Syria is the Democratic Union Party (known as the PYD), considered the Syrian contingent of the PKK. In addition to the PYD, 15 other Kurdish groups are united under the name of the Kurdish National Council (KNC). On 12 July 2012, the KNC and the PYD came together and formed the Kurdish Supreme Committee in Erbil, the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan region. This was an initiative by Massoud Barzani, the leader of Kurdish Regional Government.<sup>12</sup> In the Erbil agreement, the KNC and the PYD agreed to control Kurdish cities jointly and planned to take advantage of any administrative vacuum to establish their rule in the Kurdish cities in Syria.<sup>13</sup> The groups even established an armed wing called the People’s Protection Committees.<sup>14</sup>

However, the PYD continued to emerge as the most powerful Kurdish faction in the region, proving it had the capacity to perform a variety of governance activities across Kurdish Syria. The PYD sustained its dominance over Kurdish governance due to its organization, networks, and control over the law enforcement and military wings of the Kurdish Supreme Committee.

In July 2013, Saleh Muslim, the head of the PYD, announced a plan to create an interim governing body to represent all of western Kurdistan. The

plan represented an important step toward Kurdish autonomy in Syria, something Syrian Kurds aspire to. Sinem Khalil, a member of the Kurdish Supreme Committee, said in their first meeting on 24 July 2012 that the Kurdish people in Syria were thirsty for unity that would help achieve their aspirations, and that was their main focus at the time.<sup>15</sup> He also said he believed their Kurdish dream (autonomy) was coming true.

Kurds in Turkey are closely following these developments. Leyla Zana, a Kurdish member of the Turkish parliament, has called on Kurds from Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria to unite and to strive together for their causes, saying that after centuries, a gate for freedom has been opened for the Kurdish people.<sup>16</sup> Separately, PKK leader Murat Karayılan said in a 2012 interview with an English-language newspaper in Erbil that Kurds seeing other federal systems springing up around the world feel they have the right to establish a state; they consider themselves a nation.<sup>17</sup>

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Thus, a new Kurdish region is taking shape. The *Kurdistan Tribune*, a platform for Kurdish news and opinion with an optimistic view for Kurdistan, claims, “What the Kurds are doing now in the west [Syria] lays the basis for a semi-autonomous region which can link with her sister in the south of Kurdistan [Iraq] ... This is not a dream; this can become a reality.”<sup>18</sup> These statements reflect that the Kurds view autonomy as the second piece of the greater Kurdistan project, which Turkey considers a threat to its territorial integrity. A Kurdish National Conference, the first of its kind, had been planned for November 2013 but was postponed indefinitely for political reasons. The group had aimed to gather all Kurdish political groups to set a roadmap for the Middle East’s Kurds.

## Another Northern Iraq? The PKK Issue

Turkey has a painful history with the Kurdish separatist movement PKK. In this conflict, almost 40,000 lives have been lost over the last 30 years. Currently, there is an ongoing dialogue in place to end the armed violence and get the PKK to lay down its arms, a precarious process with high hopes but also high risk. In the early 1990s, the PKK had found a safe haven in the Qandil Mountains of northern Iraq, which it used as a base to launch attacks on Turkey. Ankara is concerned that, if the peace process fails, the group could exploit the chaos in Syria to expand its base and influence. The PYD’s control over much of the Syrian side of the Turkey-Syria border allows the PKK a much larger space for its organization and operations, which strengthens the PKK’s position in Turkey.

In fact, when the Syrian crisis first emerged, clashes between the Turkish army and PKK militants intensified. During the last two weeks of July 2012, the PKK waged one of their fiercest battles in recent years against the Turkish army. Army forces fought the PKK using helicopters and fighter jets in the mountainous terrain close to the town of Şemdinli in southeastern Turkey. The ongoing peace negotiations have stopped the fighting and attacks, but from the Turkish military’s point of view, northern Syria is another northern Iraq, another potential PKK stronghold. Turkey views the current developments in Syria as very similar to those that took place in Iraq from 1980 to 2012. With the start of the Iran-Iraq War, northern Iraq started splitting from the central government in Baghdad. The 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq brought northern Iraq (southern Kurdistan) closer to autonomy. This area eventually became the PKK’s base of operations.<sup>19</sup>

In 2012, Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan, a terrorism expert from the Turkish Economic and Political Research Association, said that just as the PKK had established an area where it could obtain logistical support and have a base for its operations in northern Iraq after the Kurdish region separated from the government in Baghdad, the PKK would try to do the same in northern Syria.<sup>20</sup> He said that for Turkey, this would mean its problem in northern Iraq would expand to include northern Syria. He stated this would mean that while Turkey was trying to control its 190-mile border with Iraq, it would also have to control its 560-

mile border with Syria. He predicted this would become a new security concern for Turkey.

Despite the ongoing peace process, in Turkey, concerns remain about the PYD retaining control along parts of the Turkish-Syria border. PYD control of the border would create a greater safe haven for the PKK.

### Jihadi Groups in Syria: New and Unwelcome Neighbors for Turkey

Several al-Qaida-affiliated jihadi organizations have established a foothold in Syria. These groups have experience with improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, and bomb making. Their expertise and organization have allured some FSA fighters, many of whom have pledged allegiance to various groups. One such fighter explained to *The Guardian* in 2012, “The Free Syrian Army has no rules and no military or religious order. Everything happens chaotically. Al-Qaida has a law that no one, not even the emir, can break. The FSA lacks the ability to plan and lacks military experience. That is what [al-Qaida] can bring. They have an organization that all countries have acknowledged.”<sup>21</sup> An FSA commander told *The Guardian*, “They [al-Qaida] are stealing the revolution from us and they are working for the day that comes after.”<sup>22</sup> It appears that al-Qaida is turning the local conflict into a global one.

Then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta declared on 10 May 2012 that al-Qaida had become an actor in the Syrian crisis.<sup>23</sup> More and more jihadi videos are popping up on the Internet, showing different rebel groups calling for jihad, including the Islamic Front, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (an al-Qaida-linked group in northern Syria), and Jabhat al-Nusrah. What will become of these groups after the fall of the Assad regime is unknown. In 2012, an al-Qaida operative told *The New York Times*, “We have experience now fighting the Americans, and



A Syrian army soldier walks on a street during a government-organized media tour in the Jobar neighborhood of Damascus, Syria, 24 August 2013. (AP Photo)

more experience now with the Syrian revolution .... Our big hope is to form a Syrian-Iraqi Islamic state for all Muslims, and then announce our war against Iran and Israel, and free Palestine.”<sup>24</sup> In a recent audio statement, al-Qaida linked its insurgency in Iraq with the revolution in Syria, depicting both as sectarian (Sunni versus Shiite) conflicts.<sup>25</sup> As a fundamentalist Sunni movement, al-Qaida is hostile to the Shiite-dominated state of Iran. It is also opposed to the Shiite-led government of Iraq and the Alawite-led government of Syria (Alawite is an offshoot of Shiite Islam).

The greatest threat this poses concerns biological and chemical weapons. The chaos in Syria carries the risk of Assad losing control of his weapons stockpiles. In 2012, a jihadi site featured a video showing FSA rebels with chemical and biological weapons they claimed were left behind by Assad’s army when they left Aleppo in a rush after heavy fighting.<sup>26</sup> Deterring groups influenced by al-Qaida from using such weapons is a challenge; they have shown that their members are not afraid to die.

In mid-July 2013, the al-Qaida-linked Al-Nusrah Front started attacking Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Syria. These attacks came at a time when the Kurds had started working on establishing their own administration in the region, which includes



Syria's oil and gas resources. The fighting took place along large parts of Turkey's Syrian border. With the start of fighting between Al-Nusra Front elements and the PYD (which Turkey considers an extension of the PKK), Turkey finds itself in a dilemma: the government in Ankara does not want its border to become like Afghanistan, but it is also opposed to what it considers an extension of the PKK's control in the region.

On 15 October 2013, the Turkish Army announced that it had fired on fighters of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham in retaliation for a stray mortar shell that hit Turkish soil. This was the first time the Turkish Army responded to al-Qaida-linked targets in Syria.

The presence of jihadi groups on its longest border leaves Turkey with concern about what security analysts are calling the *Afghanisation* risk in Syria.<sup>27</sup> The diverse dissenting groups in Syria are not united in their goals and ideologies.<sup>28</sup> Initially, they appeared to be united against a common

enemy and obtained military and political assistance from outside actors and Muslim networks offering support. More recently however, these groups have started turning against each other or becoming instruments of their respective supporters. The mujahid groups in Afghanistan also displayed a strong resistance during 10 years of occupation by the Soviet Union. However, once the occupation was over, various nations tried to control their favorite groups through aid and financial backing while Afghanistan disintegrated into internecine chaos.

Turkey fears the spillover effects of this activity on its border, including becoming a transit point for jihadists. Foreign fighters from Libya, Algeria, Iraq, and Afghanistan are reportedly moving into Syria through Turkey.<sup>29</sup> Other risks include the potentially devastating effects on the tourism industry, which represents around 10 percent of the economy, and decreased prospects for attracting foreign investment.



Turkish soldiers patrol the Turkish-Syrian border after a blast occurred in Hacıpasa, Turkey, 3 September 2013. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

## The Chemical Weapons Attack, Diplomatic Developments, and Turkey's Position

Events of 21 August 2013 in the suburbs of Damascus, according to a U.S. intelligence assessment, included a sarin gas attack by the Syrian regime.<sup>30</sup> This attack caused the death of over 1,400 people and sparked the prospect of a military intervention. When intervention was being discussed in the United States, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu expressed their support and called for a comprehensive intervention directed at the regime, rather than a limited one. In fact, Turkey had been raising the need for a military intervention, or at least an internationally imposed humanitarian or no-fly zone, since the summer of 2012, following the downing of its fighter plane and an influx of refugees into Turkey.

Subsequent diplomatic developments, including Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, have left the Turkish government disappointed and facing the prospect of Assad remaining in power. Comments by Turkish government officials suggest they believe the outcome does not punish Assad, nor does it address the humanitarian crisis.<sup>31</sup> Ankara's position, because

of its difference with that of the international community, has left Turkey in an isolated position in the Middle East.<sup>32</sup>

The Turkish government's position does not reflect the views of the majority of Turks, however, who oppose a military intervention in Syria.<sup>33</sup> The public is wary of the costs to Turkey of such an intervention, including more refugees, worsening border security, terrorist attacks, a depressed economy, and declining relations with Russia and Iran.

The outcome of the Syrian crisis, however it eventually turns out, will have varying repercussions at the regional and international levels depending on the actors. The conclusion of the crisis will directly affect Syria's neighbors because they will have to coexist with the resulting structure. For Turkey, the most direct effect of the crisis is the likely establishment of an autonomous Kurdish region in northern and northeastern Syria. A PKK safe haven there would be a direct threat to Turkey's security. In addition, Turkey may be left with al-Qaida-affiliated or similar militant groups on its longest border. Finally, there are greater global dangers, involving such groups' potential acquisition of dangerous weapons, which will have consequences far beyond the Middle East. **MR**

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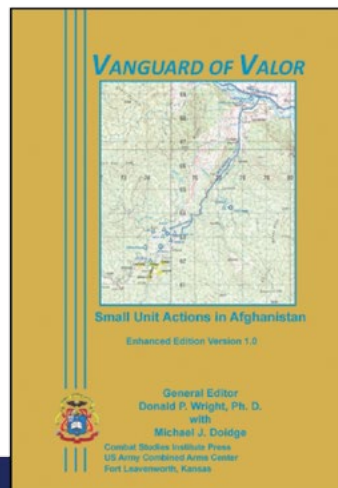
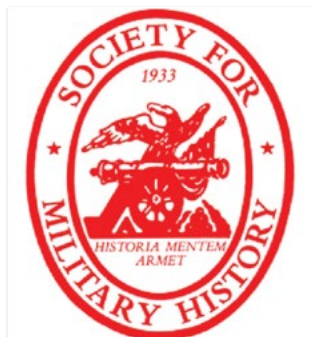
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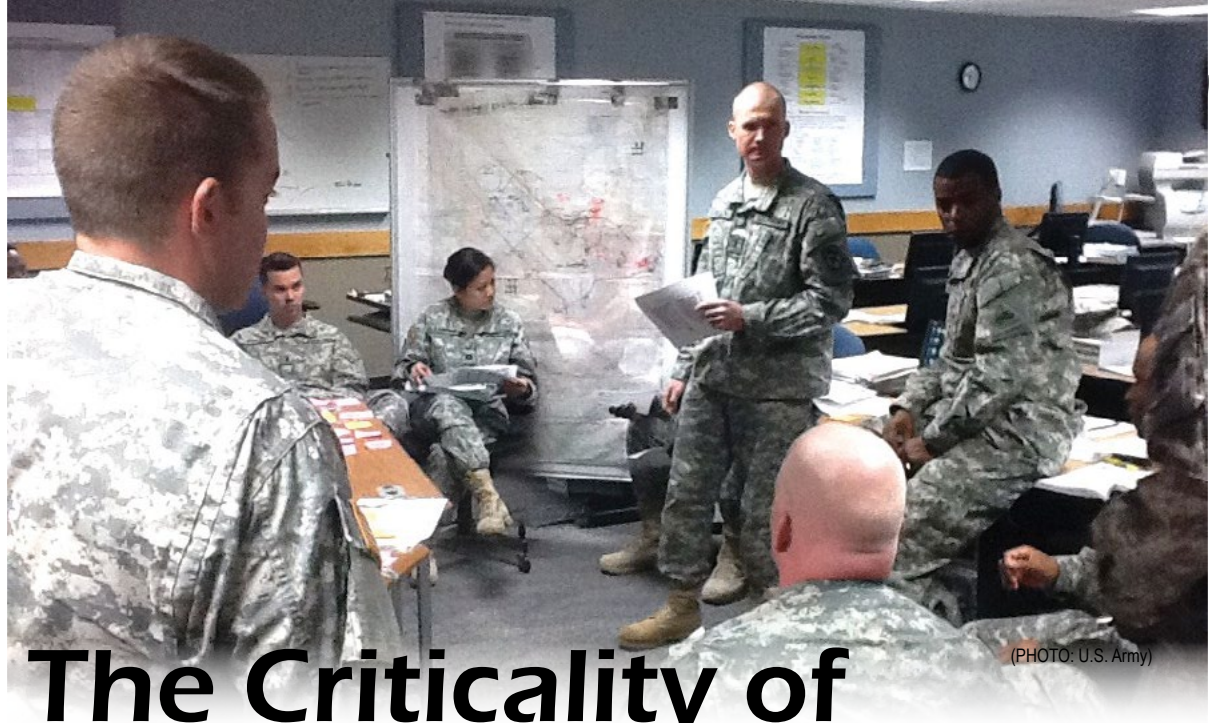


The Combat Studies Institute is proud to announce that its interactive iBook *Vanguard of Valor: Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan* has earned the inaugural Society for Military History-George C. Marshall Foundation joint prize for Use of Digital Technology in Teaching Military History. The award will be formally presented at the Society's 2014 Annual Meeting, held this year from 3-6 April in Kansas City.

This iBook is free to download and can be accessed at:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/vanguard-of-valor/id615188666?mt=11>





# The Criticality of Captains' Education

## Now and in the Future—An Update

Lt. Col. Keith R. Beurskens, U.S. Army, Retired

**T**HIS ARTICLE UPDATES the November-December 2010 *Military Review* article by William M. Raymond Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, “The Criticality of Captains’ Education: Now and in the Future.”<sup>1</sup> Significant changes have occurred across the Army since 2010; nonetheless, the education of captains remains a critical component of leader development of the officer corps. The major conclusions of the original article are still relevant today and into the near future, principally that the Captain’s Career Course (CCC) is essential to developing critical and creative thinkers who are agile and adaptive enough to address complex problems.

### The Army Leader Development Strategy and the Army Learning Model

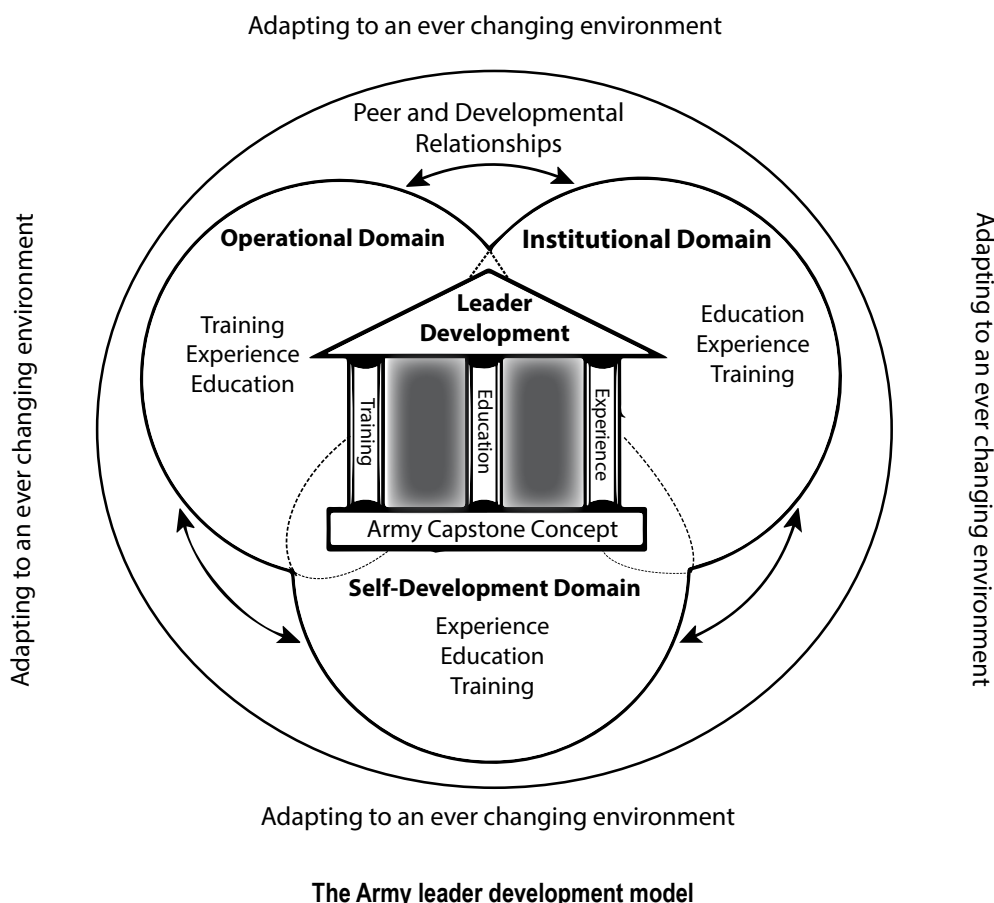
The Army Leader Development Strategy 2013 (known as the ALDS) was published with the signatures of the sergeant major of the Army, chief of staff of the Army, and secretary of the Army.<sup>2</sup> The ALDS establishes the ends, ways, and means for rebalancing the three crucial components of training, education, and experience across the operational, institutional, and self-development domains of leader development. The ALDS describes leader development as—

...the deliberate, continuous, and progressive process—founded in Army values—that grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into *competent, committed* professional leaders of *character*. Leader development is achieved through the career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the operational, institutional, and self-development domains.<sup>3</sup>

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Implementation of the Army leader development model (see figure) supports the ALDS.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) was still developing the Army Learning Concept in 2010. TRADOC Pam 525-8-2, *The U.S. Army Learning Concept for 2015*, was published in January 2011.<sup>5</sup> TRADOC subsequently published a directive in March 2011 to implement

the concept as the Army learning model.<sup>6</sup> The objective of the Army learning model is the same as originally described in the 2010 *Military Review* article: “the creation of a learning continuum that blurs the lines between the operating and generating forces by more closely integrating self-development, institutional instruction, and operational experience.”<sup>7</sup>



## 2010 CCC Study Update

In February 2010, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center commander created a team to examine the CCCs and assess if they were developing officers consistent with the requirements of Army Regulation 350-1, which states that the CCC “provides captains with the tactical, technical and leader knowledge and skills needed to lead company-sized units and serve on battalion and brigade staffs.”<sup>8</sup> The team assessed five interrelated focus areas for each CCC: curriculum, facilities, governance, staff and faculty, and students. Finally, the timing of the

study provided an opportunity to examine the 2009 common core redesign soon after implementation.<sup>9</sup> The CCC study, published in June 2010, provided a picture of the state of the Army’s CCCs.

The study presented 47 findings and 71 recommendations across the five focus areas.<sup>10</sup> It highlighted five key findings. First, there is no substitute for a high-quality small-group leader. Second, the curriculum must be current, relevant, and rigorous. Third, there is a need for increased oversight of rigor in CCC governance, especially for a formal process to reconcile common core and branch curriculums.

Fourth, most CCC classrooms need to be updated with educational technology and configured to support small-group instruction. Finally, students questioned for the study overwhelmingly emphasized the benefits of a resident course requiring a permanent change of station (PCS):

- Learning from peers and instructors with diverse backgrounds (including Army, other service, and international military students).
- Personal and professional development and networking opportunities.
- Time to achieve balance and to reset.

Sixty-one of the original 71 recommendations from the 2010 CCC study have been fully implemented, and eight others are being implemented. All of the five key findings and associated recommendations have been addressed.

First, small-group leader selection is now a priority assignment, coordinated between branch commanders and U.S. Army Human Resources Command. Small-group leaders also receive the same faculty development program as instructors at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), focused on educational instruction and facilitation.



U.S. Army captains at Fort Benning conducting wargaming during the new Captain's Career Course common curriculum pilots. (U.S. Army)

Second, the CCC common core curriculum has been rewritten completely to apply adult education principles and reflect Doctrine 2015. The course now uses the experiential learning model. Student requirements include several briefings, writing assignments, and a comprehensive exam.

Third, CGSC's School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics, established in October 2010, provides staff management of the CCC and is the proponent for the common core curriculum. The Combined Arms Center Commandant/Director of Training Conference and the Army Learning Coordination Council now provide governance of CCC. Fourth, the number of classrooms updated with educational technology and configured to support interactive small-group instruction has increased, with more classroom upgrades planned as part of TRADOC's Army School Classroom Modernization Program known as Classroom XXI (referring to a program to transform classrooms into state-of-the-art student-centered multimedia environments with 24/7 remote access). Finally, the CCC will remain a resident course, requiring a PCS.

## From Initial Concept to an Approved Mid-Grade Learning Continuum

In 2010, the 2015 CCC concept for implementing an approved mid-grade learning continuum for captains and mid-grade officers was described as follows:

Upon promotion to first lieutenant, all officers would take an Army learning assessment (ALA), which establishes a baseline for each officer's learning requirements. If significant gaps are identified in an officer's foundational proficiency required for resident phases, he or she would be required to complete a preparation course (which is also for sister service and international military students). The common core resident phase (currently at 7 1/2 weeks) would be completed at the current unit prior to change of station in a small-group, peer-to-peer facilitated seminar in an on-post regional learning center or temporary duty and return if there is not a learning center at their location. The officer will then be assigned to his or her next permanent station, attending the branch phase enroute.<sup>11</sup>



Between 2010 and 2012, the original CCC concept was tested during several pilot programs, with the lessons learned from the pilots resulting in significant changes to the concept, and, ultimately, approval of a mid-grade learning continuum.

The mid-grade learning continuum expanded to include the development of mid-grade officers from the rank of first lieutenant through promotable captain and warrant officers from the rank of warrant officer 2 through promotable chief warrant officer 3.<sup>12</sup> The intent of aligning officers and warrant officers within the course was to provide a common framework for leader development and ensure the horizontal and vertical alignment of the development of enterprise-wide leader competencies shared by mid-grade leaders. The officer and warrant officer courses include four components (ALA-1, Officer Self-Development Program-1 [OSDP-1], professional military education, and OSDP-2) tailored to each cohort's requirements.

Initiation of the officer mid-grade learning continuum takes place upon promotion to first lieutenant, when the officer takes the ALA that measures his or her knowledge in foundational Army and branch doctrine. The ALA-1 results will provide remediation guidance for the officer to complete OSDP-1, guided self-development, consisting of common core and branch doctrine learning modules for areas found to need improvement. Once piloting is complete, the ALA-1 and OSDP-1 completion will become a prerequisite to attending the CCC.

The CCC will continue to be a course requiring a PCS. The common core curriculum will not exceed eight weeks of instruction. The common core may be executed as a distinct module at the beginning or end of the course, or it may also be sequenced no lower than block level within branch material. The branch curriculum may follow the common core module and include tracks of instruction tailored to officers'

past education, training, and experience, or it may be sequenced with common core blocks.

The final portion of the mid-grade learning continuum is OSDP-2, continuing through the officer's branch key developmental assignments. Each OSDP-2 comprises tailored and modular learning agreed upon by the unit commander, branch commandant, and officer. It effectively completes the officer's prerequisites for the Command and General Staff Officer's Course and beyond. The mid-grade learning continuum model for the Reserve Component is equivalent to the Active Component model and similar in sequence and design. The only significant difference is the distributed learning delivery of portions of the instruction for Reserve Component officers versus primarily resident instruction for Active Component officers.

The mid-grade learning continuum began initial operating capability in fiscal year 2014 with the full implementation of a new CCC common core and Army learning model course design. The ALA, OSDP, and Reserve Component elements of the mid-grade learning continuum will be piloted and phased in with full implementation in fiscal year 2017.

## Conclusion

The 2010 CCC study provided a valuable baseline for making critical improvements to the CCC, and the findings and recommendations established a way ahead for revising captains' education. The mid-grade learning continuum builds on the 2010 CCC study and the Army Learning Concept and extends learning beyond the schoolhouse. It establishes a program of career-long learning supporting the goals of the ALDS. The CCC is the foundation for the mid-grade learning continuum and continues to be essential to developing critical and creative thinkers who are agile and adaptive enough to address complex problems. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. William M. Raymond Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, "The Criticality of Captains' Education: Now and in the Future," *Military Review*, November-December 2010.

2. *Army Leader Development Strategy 2013*, found at <<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/repository/ALDS5June%202013Record.pdf>>.

3. *Ibid.*, 3.

4. *Ibid.*, 8.

5. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-8-2, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 20 January 2011).

6. Operation Order 11-008, *Army Learning Concept 2015 Implementation Plan* (Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, VA, 14 March 20), 11.

7. Raymond, Beurskens, and Carmichael: 55.

8. Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, DC: GPO, 18 December 2009), para. 3-32.

9. At the time of the study, the common core curriculum comprised 7 1/2 weeks of keystone and capstone doctrinal foundations (based on Field Manuals 3-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-0, and 6-22, which every U.S. Army captain received).

10. Special Commission from The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, *Report of Findings and Recommendations 2010 U.S. Army Captains Career Course Study*, 14 June 2010.

11. "2015 Captains Career Course (CCC) Concept," Draft version 1, (School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 3 June 2010).

12. "The Mid-Grade Learning Continuum for 2015," A White Paper, Version 1.1 (School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 11 July 2013).

# Ethics Education of Military Leaders

A Edward Major, Esq

*To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.*

—Theodore Roosevelt

**E**XPANDING THE ETHICS EDUCATION of senior military leaders is critical to meet the demands of current hostilities and the challenge of preserving the trust of the public and allies.<sup>1</sup> To maintain this elusive trust, leaders must keenly understand the tension inherent in completing martial missions adroitly and ethically. Understanding the subtlety of these issues reminds us of the pervasive relevance of ethics education. Neither the officer corps nor the public will tolerate a military that does not successfully resolve this tension, and neither will accept a lower standard of conduct. This article explores why the senior service colleges (SSCs), the command and staff colleges, and associated military colleges of the United States must provide ethics education to senior leaders so they may lead effectively at the strategic level. Expansion of ethics curricula must be a priority as the Department of Defense is poised to refine common course content.

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Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks to military students and interagency partners at the U.S. Army War College, 21 September 2012. (DOD, Air Force Master Sgt. Chuck Marsh)

If any curriculum should include ethics, it is that of the senior U.S. and partner-nation military leaders attending the SSCs. Given the current environment of persistent conflict and ever-increasing lethality, and the security forces deployed to defend against it, a strong foundation in ethics is essential. Moreover, the unique reach of SSC programs to senior military leaders of the United States and its international partners allows those leaders to communicate with the policy makers of their home countries and build trust through mutual understanding of ethical conduct.<sup>2</sup>

## Foundational Arguments

Tension exists between the efficient accomplishment of missions and conformity with fundamental social values, and between personal morality and that of the military profession. What is the “right” thing to do? Ethics mediates this constant tension; choices often must be made between imperfect solutions when there is no time for the luxury of reflection. Ethics education edifies soldiers (*soldier*, in this discussion, refers to all military personnel) who are not ethics specialists, inducing them to develop professionalism, self-control, and “moral intuition.”<sup>3</sup>

Individual leaders exercise discretionary judgment many times a day, making decisions requiring high moral distinction. Overcoming the fear to act, making ethical decisions, and having the internal fortitude to take action decisively count when the everyday activity of the military profession wields the power of life and death. It follows that the moral character of individual students requires advancement during their professional development at SSCs so they develop the capability to act ethically when events demand.<sup>4</sup> Moving moral sensitivity to the point where the individual leader possesses the courage to act upon it is peremptory.<sup>5</sup> This calls for the enhancement of the leader’s “self-sustaining capacity to be a moral actor [even] in the absence of social sanctions or reinforcements.”<sup>6</sup> The objective of the SSCs is to influence students to internalize ethics so they wield their ordained power in a legal and ethical manner.

British statesman and writer John Morley said, “No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character.”<sup>7</sup> The demand therefore follows for forearming students with a predisposition for

ethical decision making by enhancing their ability to recognize and process ethical dilemmas and execute prudent behavior in response to them.<sup>8</sup> The development of ethical habits of mind is essential to equip the individual leader to react professionally to rapidly changing technology and tactics and to foster trust within military organizations and alliances with partner forces.<sup>9</sup> Ethics is a cornerstone of honorable service and esprit de corps, and a defense against brutalization.<sup>10</sup>

## Ethics Educates the “Why”

Ethics provides the essential “why,” the sense, to our rules. Understanding why provides the motivation to adopt rules, including those that guide ethical direction. Ethics education introduces students to potential issues, alerts them to issues they may not have considered, and provides direction as to how issues should be confronted. While it cannot present all possibilities, ethics education offers a methodology for dealing with ethical challenges when encountered. The more leaders understand, the more they integrate teachings into their own self-guidance system and avoid the mistakes of others. An ethical foundation supports risk management, so critical to both the exercise of foreign policy and effective prosecution of missions.

To provide ethics education is to appreciate that the behavior of soldiers begins with the environment created by their leaders. There is no better way to inculcate ethics in organizations than through the education of their leaders. Even their minor decisions are closely observed and treated as precedent, reverberating down the chain of command. In military organizations in particular, the more senior the commander, the wider the influence exerted and its resulting perversion, should the influence be flawed. Military authority exerts tremendous power on an individual’s ethical perception, which often propagates the lure of being close to power. There is the tendency to get into lock-step with what the inner circle, the focus of power, is doing, for the psychological need to become part of the in-group and also for career advancement.<sup>11</sup> This is not just the action of a young officer scrambling for recognition, but also senior military officers who seek the recognition of national politicians or simply become overly impressed with the power that they wield. This very human condition must be addressed at the SSCs



to alert students to these lures and how they may skew their judgment.

While the best combat planning in ideal circumstances is susceptible to miscalculation, escalation, mission creep, and unintended consequences, the irregular warfare typical of the current fight compounds the amorphous challenges for leaders, challenges which cannot be fully foreseen.<sup>12</sup> Compounding the challenge to the military is the demand to do more with less due to shrinking budgets—that is, to be more efficient while remaining effective. How does the leader cope with these increasing complexities while maintaining the trust of both soldiers and the public? Such challenges call for a strong moral compass, understood by leaders in cooperation with allies to help maintain the balance between completing missions efficiently and ethically.<sup>13</sup>

There is good reason for leaders to impose an ethical working environment on their commands. Several recent surveys reveal that a vast major-

ity of business employees preferred working for companies with ethical business practices and were even prepared to accept less compensation. Further, it was decisively found that the most effective workers are those who feel they are not just doing a job but are performing something that reflects who they are. They work harder and stay longer in their positions.<sup>14</sup> It is the objective of leaders to attract and retain this kind of motivated and dedicated soldier to their command. An effective ethical platform for a leader's command will attract those that identify with it.

The speed of Internet news capabilities also creates its challenges. Decisions must be made with new immediacy. Moreover, much so-called news is not filtered through responsible editorial authority but is immediately broadcast over the Internet, not fact-checked, possibly misleading, or even staged. An effective ethical environment discourages soldiers from paying attention to such sources.



The National Defense University 2011-2012 academic year kicked off with a convocation ceremony for students and faculty. The ceremony took place on the front steps of Roosevelt Hall, home of the National War College. (DOD, Katie Lewis, James Lewis, and Mark Meleski)

## Professional Education Sought by Students

Conversely, from the students' perspective, serving in the profession of arms connotes commitment to the ethical standards of their profession and a striving for their mastery.<sup>15</sup> Professions, by definition, license and continually train their members, especially their senior officers and members, and sanction behavior determined unprofessional or illegal. By this method, professions enable and motivate their members to serve appropriately in the discharge of their duty. In the leaders' perceiving themselves responsible to the larger community and duly conforming their actions to this responsibility, they retain societal trust.

The military is a profession that trains, educates, and licenses its members. Officers have much required pre- and post-commissioning training and education, interim training and studies, and professional military education throughout their careers. Promotions, awards, oaths, assignments, and periodic evaluations also award soldiers and certify them as qualified within their profession. The educational piece includes the SSCs, charged with senior leader education and necessary to maintain expertise of the military profession. The SSCs influence policy and education at institutions well beyond their walls.

## DOD Direction

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, recently stated at The National Defense University, "For the first time, our competence and character are being evaluated by experts and pundits while we fight . . . There will be an ever-increasing expectation of servicewomen and men to achieve that intricate balance of high character and high competence."<sup>16</sup> His words were more than aspirational: Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel had previously directed Gen. Dempsey to review ethics education to better inculcate "a culture of value-based decision making and stewardship of general and flag officers and their staffs."<sup>17</sup> Recently, the Joint Chiefs duly reviewed some of the ethical violations of senior leaders. They are drafting recommendations to avoid lapses in critical judgment.<sup>18</sup> Their preliminary findings included that "we need to . . . reinforce that [ethics] training more frequently in an officer's career." The chairman was charged with a long-term effort to make and implement recommendations in consultation with the secretary of defense.<sup>19</sup> These efforts remain ongoing.

Providing ethics education is to accept the burden imposed by Gen. Dempsey and echoed by the directives of the Strategic Landpower Task Force, to develop ethical senior leaders who "exercise moral nerve and restraint" and to "develop mutual trust and understanding." The responsibility of providing ethics education falls on the SSCs because they possess the expertise. Ethics education is a thoroughfare for SSCs to influence leaders' character around the globe with reverberating effect.

In stewardship, the SSCs can either prepare their own curriculum now or await the imposition of a system designed elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> It is best to be ahead of the curve by anticipating change, actively influencing the debate, and guiding policy development and implementation.

## Ever-Increasing Lethality Alters the Ethical Equation

The ever-increasing lethality of terrorism and the force deployed to combat it commands our urgent attention. These permutations drive modifications to U.S. and international security policies and changes to ethical analysis. Ethical violations mean that people die, and the resulting effects of bad press, including lawfare (referring to using international law and litigation to achieve a military advantage), entail long-term consequences.<sup>21</sup> Even after the U.S. Army condemned its soldiers' actions at Abu Ghraib prison, there was no way to prevent the public shame. It became an instant public spectacle, sullying the efforts of the U.S. and allied governments throughout much of the Near East. The sudden loss of the trust, so diligently constructed, was regained only at great expense and after much time. The very integrity and independence of the profession of arms was shaken.

Such incidents point out why ethics should be proactively taught. The offending officers and soldiers were all considered thoroughly trained and knew better, yet their training was insufficient. Some deeper thinking can prevent such violations in the future and, together with broader training, the SSCs may devise better educational systems for doing so. Post-disaster efforts are reactive and ineffective, even after the expenditure of vast amounts of money, changes of procedure, and the healing passage of time, yet further attention to ethics may subvert these problems before they occur.

## Professional Ethics

Effective professions police and hold their members accountable, and there is good reason for doing so. When a profession hangs its own violators from the yardarm, the punishment is almost always regarded as just propitiation. It serves as sufficient retribution and satisfies public demands for corrective measures. Further, if a profession effectively polices itself, it controls much of the criteria by which its members are judged and punished. As long as this authority is not abused, the profession is trusted to self-regulate. Professions must labor to maintain this trust, as it is earned every day, and even 99% on that test is a failure! The misconduct of a few paints the entire profession. A public press and jury cannot be expected to fully understand context, nor will it take the time to discover the facts before pointing an accusing finger.

*... the SSCs can build trust through mutual understanding of ethical conduct within the United States and between the United States and its partners throughout the world.*

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The United States does not espouse any particular religion, but powerfully manifests an ethical ethos to be a merciful peacemaker through its military action.<sup>22</sup> We seek peace through positive action and reconciliation for the oppressed. It is our national ethical premise to have abandoned the effort to meet our needs through the destruction of our enemies; this promise imparts great ethical power to our actions.

## Reach of SSC Programs to Senior Leaders

The second basis for teaching ethics at the SSCs highlights their unique reach to U.S. and international partner senior military leaders and SSC students' access to the senior policy makers of their countries. This represents a powerful influence through

the modeling of their ethical leadership. If ethics programs are effective, the SSCs can build trust through mutual understanding of ethical conduct within the United States and between the United States and its partners throughout the world. To be effective, government and military relations require a high level of trust. The call to shared ethical standards seeks effective understanding and trust in our own civil-military relations as well as those of the partner nations' military and security forces with which we serve. A common understanding will assist in overcoming disparate and often contradictory moral structures and laws. While it is absurd to believe worldwide agreement may be constructed during our lifetimes, the SSCs, more than any other institution, may exert a powerful influence. SSC students possess the ability to think independently and the authority to influence policy and change behavior, with influence over large geographic areas. Their professional identity, enhanced through ethics instruction, has wide-reaching utility. SSCs present the opportunity to engender a common vocabulary and trust among partners that is so essential to building effective alliances.

If the SSCs do their jobs well, their graduates will effect change within their nations and assist in the building of reliable alliances among nations. Their international students will go forth as models of behavior, with trust in America's commitment to ethical action. Recent conflicts have required broad alliances to effectively counter security threats. With the diminishing defense budgets of most nations around the world, alliances have more than ever become necessities, fiscal as well as political.

## Conclusion

Ethics is not mere abstraction, but rather an integral component of a leader's character. Leaders do not serve either their profession or country without ethics as their guiding light.

To equip an expanded ethics program at the SSCs will require careful planning to avoid offering a course that distracts from other more didactic courses (as did my ethics course in law school). To be effective, it must walk the line between philosophy and anecdotes and avoid the perils of irrelevance. It must develop critical thinking. It is not enough just to teach principles and rules; ethics education must delve into soldiers' service careers to find the challenges



they face. Students, for example, may personalize their teaching to place it into a context where they see issues as they relate to themselves. They may be encouraged to discuss or write about ethical violations they have witnessed and describe how they may have been better handled.

Teaching must stress the importance of context and circumstances. To illustrate the complexity of decisions, the SSCs should look to the challenges actually confronted by soldiers and security personnel. Such study would avoid the dreamy philosophizing inimical to many students. Challenges provided must be realistic and have applicability to the students' experiences so that the lessons may be internalized.<sup>23</sup> The professors must guard against treatment of their examples as anecdotal personal stories and thus inapplicable. My own reaction to most law school ethics course examples was, "Oh, I would never do that," or "How could he do that?" Only convincing, real-world experience brought appreciation that the examples really can and do happen!

An ethical character requires nurture and incubation. A story attributed to President James A. Garfield, when

he was a university president, is illustrative: A young entering student reviews the curriculum and decides that he wishes to get through in less than the prescribed four-year program and requests the abbreviated program. President Garfield replies, "You may take the short course; it all depends on what you wish to make of yourself. When God makes an oak, it takes 100 years, but He only takes two months to make a squash."

The point in teaching senior leaders is to inform them of issues and build ethical instincts that serve in the many amorphous situations they may encounter. The desired end state of teaching at the SSCs is to develop capacity in its students to apply their ethics education in an operational environment. Ethical actions build self-confidence in leaders, and their self-confidence helps generate trust in both their soldiers and the partners that work with them. The appreciation of ethical action is an inspiration for the building of trust because *actions speak louder than words*. There is already a richness of ethical issues to correct and, as Theodore Roosevelt warned, we must avoid educating social menaces, especially in the military profession. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 17 September 2012), chapter 2, <[http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adp1.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp1.pdf)>; Raymond T. Odierno, "38th Chief of Staff of the Army Marching Orders: America's Force of Decisive Action," January 2012, <<http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/232478.pdf>>; and draft Army white paper "The Profession of Arms, 8 December 2010, <<http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/content/PDF/Profession%20of%20Arms%20White%20Paper%208%20Dec%2010.pdf>>. The terms "moral" and "ethical" are used interchangeably herein. The term "military leader" is used to include civilian military and other civilian students of the SSCs.

2. Although we cannot hope to form a universal code of ethical conduct, even if one were desirable, much may be gained through a closer understanding among partners.

3. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: GPO, 14 June 2013), para. 1-3 et seq, <[http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf)>. The phrase "moral intuition" is from *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms*, 14.

4. Don M. Snider, communication with the author, 1 August 2013.

5. Sean T. Hannah and Patrick J. Sweeney, "Frameworks of Moral Development and the West Point Experience: Building Leaders of Character for the Army and the Nation," from *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews, eds. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 127, citing USMA Circular 1-101, *Cadet Leader Development System*, 2002.

6. *Ibid.*, 158.

7. Viscount John Morley, who attributed the quote to Robespierre. See also John Locke, "No man's knowledge here can go beyond his experience."

8. Hannah and Sweeney, 145-46.

9. Aristotle, "The moral virtues, then, are produced in us neither by nature nor against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit," <<http://www.quotesandsayings.com/quotes/aristotle/>>; and Plato, *The Republic*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Cairns Huntington (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 620.

10. See A Edward Major, Lee DeRemer, and David Bolgiano, "Ethics Can Be Taught," *Proceedings Magazine*, December 2012.

11. C.S. Lewis, "The Inner Ring," Memorial Lecture at King's College, University of London, 1944; and Leonard Wong, conversation with the author, 7 August 2013.

12. A Edward Major, "Law and Ethics in Command Decision Making," *Military Review* (May-June 2012): 64-69.

13. Odierno draft white paper, "The Profession of Arms," 8-9. I use the term "efficiently" to mean: expertly, with minimum loss of life, timely, and least expensively.

14. C.B. Bhattacharya, Sankar Sen, and Daniel Korschun, *Leveraging Corporate Responsibility: The Stakeholder Approach to Maximizing Business and Social Value* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 15 September 2011).

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21. David Luban, "Lawfare and Legal Ethics in Guantanamo," *Stanford Law Review* (2008), 60 <<http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1455&context=facpub>>; and <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawfare>>.

22. First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; *Matthew* 5:6-9, the fourth, fifth, and seventh Beatitudes; and *Zechariah* 9:10.

23. Biographies can be effective tools since they involve common situations of the need for immediate reaction and lack of time to ponder, the use of deadly force, command responsibilities, and ethical ambiguity. Yet, the decisions reached by one's hero may be another's villain and may not comport with another's ethics over different cultures and times. For example, the U.S. Civil War starkly depicts moral dilemmas. Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson are widely regarded as military geniuses (and surprisingly, outspoken unionists, and opponents of war, yet later chose to fight by conscious conviction). While they remain glorified in certain corners, many vilify them, and history often convicts them for fighting for a morally indefensible cause. Choosing individual figures may distract students and color their view. Employment of biographies must therefore be used reservedly.

# Improving Leader Development in the Operational Domain

Lt. Col. Kevin M. Kreie, U.S. Army

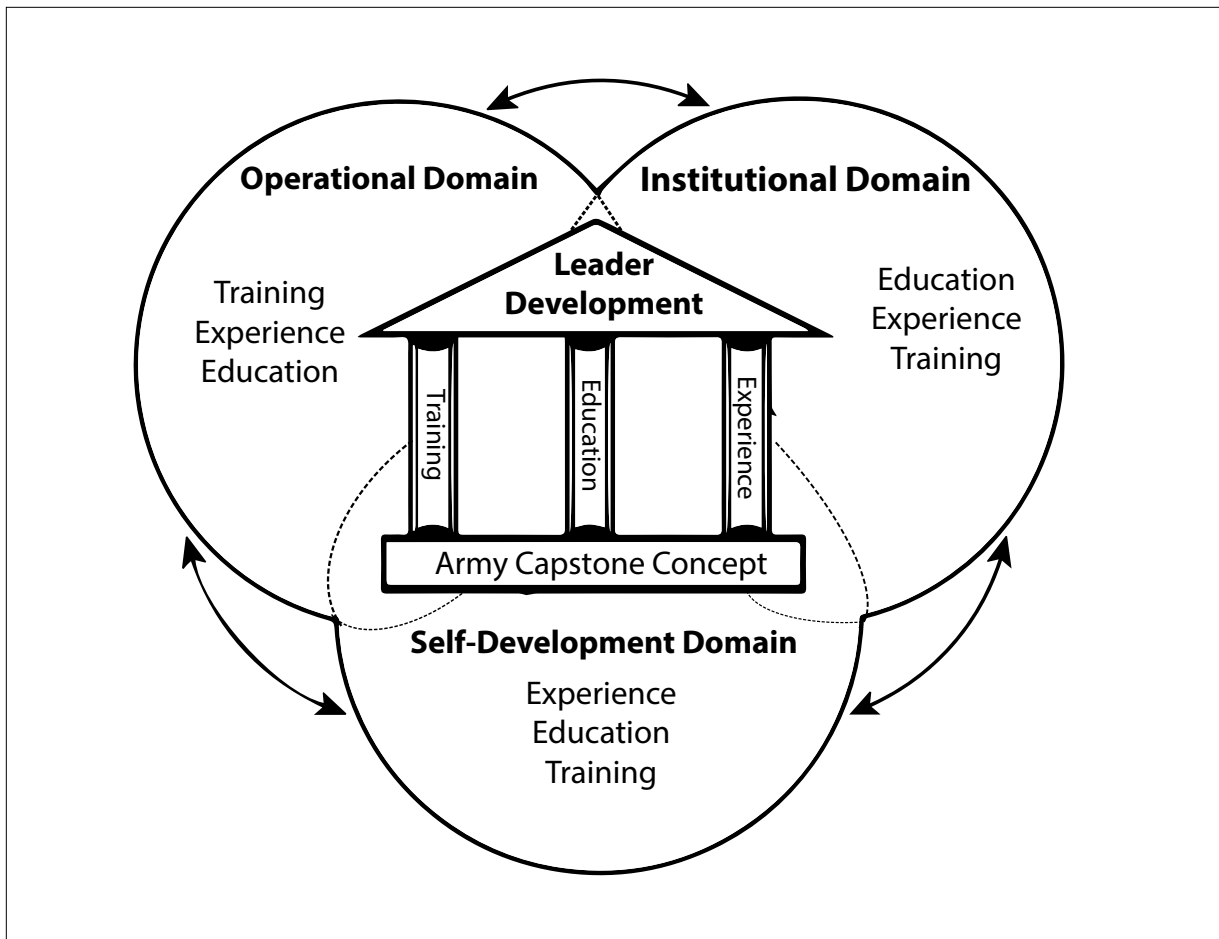
**I**MAGINE HAVING TO CHOOSE a surgeon out of three available to perform a much-needed procedure. The first surgeon just completed medical school but has not performed a surgical procedure since graduation. The second has performed many procedures illegally but has never completed medical school. The third has completed medical school and performed several procedures over ten years ago but has not practiced medicine since. If you are thinking what I am thinking, the search is not over; a qualified surgeon has attended medical school, performed surgical procedures, and continued to improve his or her craft.

This analogy illustrates the significance of each of the Army's three learning domains to effective leader development (see figure).<sup>1</sup> To become effective leaders, individuals need developmental activities in the institutional domain, the operational domain, and the self-development domain.

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(U.S. Army)



**The Army leader development model**

The Army leader development model shows experience, education, and training in each learning domain, with overlap between the domains. Leader development activities in the institutional domain tend to occur in schools and courses. Activities in the operational domain tend to occur in duty assignments. Activities in the self-development domain tend to consist of activities selected and performed by individuals. Few would disagree that Army leaders need to build a solid foundation of leadership training, typically in the institutional domain; they need to apply that training, typically in the operational domain; and they need to continue maintaining and improving on it, typically in the self-development domain. Army leader development activities in the institutional and self-development domains are, for the most part, effective. The Army as an institution generally ensures

soldiers participate in institutional leader development activities. Individual soldiers commonly exercise initiative to ensure their participation in self-development activities. However, the Army has shortfalls in leader development activities in the operational domain. Effective leader development in the operational domain depends on unit leaders taking the time to provide individualized counseling, coaching, and mentoring to their subordinates.

## **The Institutional Domain**

Leader development in the institutional domain, through programs such as professional military education and the Civilian Education System, gives individuals a foundation of leadership capabilities. These courses are designed to provide knowledge and skills deemed necessary for success at a particular professional level. As the Army Leader



Development Strategy 2013 states, “Every program of instruction in our officer and NCO development programs has been updated to account for the lessons of the past 12 years while also looking forward to the requirements of tomorrow.”<sup>22</sup> This is why it is ideal for leaders to complete these courses at the beginning of each career level. The courses also ensure leaders in each cohort build a similar foundation that helps them perform in various positions across a particular field. Additionally, attending courses gives leaders an opportunity to take a step

*The serious shortfall of leader development within the operational domain has implications for future generations of soldiers.*

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back from operational requirements and dedicate time solely to the process of learning, reflecting on their past performance in the operational field, and making changes they need for future success.

The Army does not have any serious problems of leader development within the institutional domain. Since there are forcing mechanisms or standards in practical exercises and tests that one must pass in order to graduate, when leaders complete any course, there is little doubt they will learn the minimum requirements. It is true, however, that not all students leave a certain course with the same knowledge. For example, in the Command and General Staff College, majors can participate in extracurricular activities such as completing the masters program or participating in various academic competitions. Many participate and gain additional knowledge, but many do not. Even those who only learn the bare minimum will leave the course with a significant amount of knowledge when they graduate.

Now, due to the demands of recent conflicts, some courses have been curtailed. Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III stated in reference to courses that were reduced to accommodate the deployment cycle, “We know we’ve cut a lot of

things that we are seeing we need to add back in.”<sup>23</sup> This correction, however, is an easy fix. Unlike issues in the operational domain, the issues in the institutional domain are relatively simple to change. Yet, while activities in the institutional domain are highly valuable and effective, this domain is not enough by itself.

## The Operational Domain

It is imperative for leader development to occur in the operational domain, where leaders are assigned to perform operational duties. Leaders cannot cease their development at school graduations and then continue again at the next school, years later. Learning in the institutional domain needs to be perfected and built upon in the operational domain. The responsibility to make leader development activities continue in the operational domain falls on unit-level leaders. Unit leaders must develop their subordinates. As the Army Leader Development Strategy 2013 states, “If today’s leaders do not adequately develop their subordinates through personal example, counseling, and mentorship, then today’s leaders have not succeeded in accomplishing tomorrow’s mission.”<sup>24</sup> Within the operational domain, development focuses more closely on the soldier’s specific duty position, unlike the institutional domain, in which development focuses more on a general foundation that applies across multiple positions within a career field.

The serious shortfall of leader development within the operational domain has implications for future generations of soldiers. Like the curtailing of courses due to operational requirements, leader development was minimized, if not lost, in much of the operational domain. I am not saying that leader development was not happening in the operational domain, nor am I saying no leaders were developing their subordinates. However, while leader development was occurring to some extent, it was not occurring up to par and as much as needed. As the *2012 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL)* stated, “Army leader effectiveness in the competency *Develops Others* continues to be the lowest rated, and the most in need of attention.”<sup>25</sup> As exceptional as leaders have been during the past 12 or 13 years of conflict, unit leaders simply have not had enough time to conduct leader development properly in the operational

domain because of mission requirements. However, unlike the institutional domain, correcting this is not an easy fix. Because leader development in the operational domain has been minimized, there are majors, chief warrant officers, sergeants first class, and below who joined the ranks after 9/11 and have not been developed properly. They in turn, may not understand the need to develop their subordinates, or they may not know how. Likewise, those who served before 9/11 with knowledge of how to develop others are starting to leave the ranks and retire.

Army leaders need to take prompt action to ensure leader development occurs within their organizations and to ensure their subordinate leaders are developing others, especially in the operational domain. As the Army Leader Development Strategy 2013 states, “Senior leaders must hold subordinate leaders accountable for leader development and reward those who take this to heart.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, leader development is not complicated. ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, states, “Leaders have three principal ways of developing others. They can provide knowledge and feedback through counseling, coaching, and mentoring.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, leaders pass their knowledge

to others—to individuals—so that individual soldiers and Army civilians become even better leaders.

It is true that some leader development in the operational domain occurs through activities such as real-world missions and training exercises, but unless individual leaders provide individualized counseling, coaching, and mentoring, leader development is not what it could and should be. One can only learn so much without receiving personal and specific feedback. For example, I originally wrote this article to the best of my ability, until I could no longer improve it. When others, more experienced and capable than I, took the time to review my work and provide feedback, I was able to improve it. A similar process occurs with leaders. They can perform a mission repeatedly, but unless a counselor, coach, or mentor observes and provides feedback, the amount of improvement will be minimal. The main resource the higher leader needs to develop subordinates is time—the time it takes to talk to an individual and share knowledge. The process can be beneficial to both parties.

Army leaders can combine a variety of approaches to facilitate developing others, but all depend on



U.S. Army Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the chief of staff of the Army, speaks during the Army War College class of 2013 graduation ceremony at Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle, Pa., 8 June 2013. (U.S. Army, Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade)

individual leaders taking the time to develop their individual subordinates. The Center for Army Leadership (CAL), the Army's lead for leadership doctrine and leadership development, provides tools to support leader development activities. For example, the CAL website, in the Virtual Improvement Center, offers a lesson on developing leaders through challenging job assignments. Unit leaders can task subordinate leaders to teach a class, give a presentation, or perform a task, but this type of development activity must be joined with counseling, coaching, and mentoring. As the *Commander's Handbook for Unit Leader Development*, produced by CAL, states, "Your ability to provide feedback to your subordinate leaders will significantly contribute to their development. It will enhance and accelerate learning from the day-to-day work experience—the most valued and effective environment for leader development."<sup>8</sup> Simply placing a subordinate in a position of increased responsibility or assigning a task without ensuring feedback will be marginally effective. Only when the ranking leader provides individualized feedback can subordinates achieve their full leadership potential.

## The Self-Development Domain

The self-development domain, including activities such as attending college courses or obtaining a professional license, is distinct in that it puts the primary responsibility on the individual being developed. ADRP 6-22 states, "To prepare for increasingly more demanding operational environments, Army leaders must invest more time on self-study and self-development than before."<sup>9</sup> This is not to say leaders do not have some responsibility to assist their subordinates in self-study. In the operational domain, a leader can assess leadership shortcomings of subordinates

and then can counsel and support them to conduct self-studies.

Self-development activities have never been more robust than in this age of technology. Individuals can complete college courses during a permanent change of station and even while deployed. Whereas many had to withdraw from college classes when deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm, completing college courses while deployed now has become common.

Among the numerous online tools available is the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback Program, which leaders throughout the Department of Defense can use to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Through this program, leaders can take advantage of numerous leader development resources, including coaching to help build an individual development plan.

In conclusion, the Army needs to focus attention on improving leader development in the operational domain. The institutional domain functions well, with few issues. Soldiers and civilians routinely take advantage of the plentiful opportunities in the self-development domain. However, because of operational requirements over the past 12 or 13 years, individuals have not received sufficient leader development in the operational domain. Operational experience has provided some leader development, but unit leaders have not had enough time to invest in properly developing others. Higher-level leaders must not only develop their subordinates through counseling, coaching, and mentoring, but also ensure subordinate leaders do the same. This means providing unit leaders sufficient time, tools, education, and training for conducting leader development properly so they can prepare the next generation of Army leaders. **MR**

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## NOTES

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# Leading Structured Organization in the Dynamic Information Age

**Lt. Col. Benjamin A. Ring, U.S. Army; Lt. Col. Richard K. Brown Jr., U.S. Air Force;  
Col. Lawrence E. Howard, U.S. Army Reserve; Cmdr. Peter R. Van Ness, U.S. Coast Guard**

**T**HE ADVENT OF THE INFORMATION AGE has provided a wealth of technological advances and opportunities. However, the U.S. military continues to function as a structured, hierarchical organization surrounded by a complex, globally connected, and dynamic environment. A majority of service personnel—younger men and women—are from the millennial generation; they are accustomed to a society of information permeability where knowledge spreads across nonlinear communication channels. They expect

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instant access to information and possess a desire to share it. In contrast, senior leaders entered the military before the advent of the Information Age. They are prone to possess mental models coinciding with traditional hierarchical structures, such as positional leadership, linear thinking, and inherent reservations about information sharing. This mental model embraces centralized control and resists change. It can hinder leadership of the multigenerational force and interfere with operations in a modern, highly technical, and rapidly evolving environment. To ensure future success, the U.S. military must identify innovation, leverage creativity from millennial service members, and develop change leaders capable of building a learning organization. The U.S. military can coexist as a structured organization within a dynamically complex world if senior leaders view information permeability as an opportunity instead of a challenge. Sustaining an agile force capable of responding to current and emerging threats will require creative leadership and innovative information management.

## A New Way of Thinking

Since the 18th century, the U.S. military has existed as a classic hierarchical organization with centralized control and linear information sharing. Leaders at each echelon in the chain of command hold authority over those under them and translate higher-level guidance into actionable tasks for subordinate levels. Information flows up and down through multiple echelons along linear paths and consolidates at the top. Senior positions, with more decision-making authority, possess higher rank earned through demonstrated proficiency and multiple decades of service. Flag-grade officers normally have more than 25 years in service and entered the military at the end of the Cold War but before the popularization of the Internet.<sup>1</sup> With several decades of service in the military, senior leaders possess inherent generational biases associated with structured, linear, and hierarchical organizations. Overcoming these internalized, structured mindsets presents a challenge in today's interconnected, rapidly changing, and often-unstructured environment.

Over the past two decades, advances in information technology have driven cultural changes

across the world. The growth of information-sharing capability has led to globally connected societies and rapidly changing relationships among nations. Information systems have enabled the rise of nonstate actors, facilitated Army operations, and created new battlegrounds for conflict, such as cyberspace. The world exists today as a highly technical society with instant, global access to information—a place where agility and responsiveness are necessities, not luxuries. Contributing to this dramatic evolution is the influx of a youthful military workforce that has lived exclusively in the Information Age. Known as the military millennial, this generation was born in 1984 or later and has grown up within complex, interconnected systems.<sup>2</sup> Demographically, over 66 percent of service men and women are age 30 or younger (see figure 1).<sup>3</sup> Much of this generation possessed computer skills before learning to read or write. They have children who discover the Internet, on average, by the age of three.<sup>4</sup> The military millennial generation contrasts sharply with the most senior military leaders who have served for nearly 30 years or more—longer than a majority of military service men and women have lived. While senior leaders possess wisdom and a wealth of experience, those of the military millennial generation benefit by inherently applying a systems-thinking framework to problem solving. The millennials look past simple, linear, cause and effect relationships and appreciate the complexity of the new information environment.

In today's society, information collection and dissemination occur along nonlinear paths facilitated by constant access to mobile technology. The bleeding of communications across nonstandard and unofficial hierarchically structured echelons creates information permeability. Among the chief generational impacts of the nonlinear and open dissemination of information is the compelling desire for the millennial generation to share data through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. While information permeability presents significant risk-management challenges for leaders, it enables the millennial generation on-demand knowledge discovery through venues (e.g., Google or Wikipedia) where those who are connected believe they can learn what they do not know and feel empowered to independently

solve organizational challenges. *Ad hoc* networks, teams, and working groups manifest in these out-of-band communication environments and can develop into an emerging group of expert problem solvers, innovators, or catalysts for change; they are called positive deviants.<sup>5</sup> Identifying positive deviants and creating a culture that allows them to prosper is a key challenge facing U.S. military leaders.

## A Smaller World

The primary technological catalyst for information permeability—social media—has played a major role in shaping global events. Recent upheaval in the Middle East demonstrates that information technology can give rise to societal change. While the lasting historical impact of the Arab Spring is still difficult to predict, social media continues to play a growing role in political, societal, and economic developments throughout the Arab region.<sup>6</sup> Figure 2 shows the exponential increase in Twitter use across Egypt during the beginning of the Arab Spring—an explosion in data that effectively made the world smaller.<sup>7</sup> Information permeability driven by modern technology in the hands of a youthful generation is affecting both nation states and nonstate actors.

Global information permeability is challenging the foundational values of hierarchical organizations. The U.S. military should learn from these

events and purposely adapt to avoid similar calamity. Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army chief of staff, reflected on the pace of technological change in today's world and the impact of rapid, global information exchange upon our overall security environment. He recognized that the Army, with its global reach and responsibilities, requires large technological advantages, or what he termed “technological overmatch,” to prevail decisively in combat.<sup>8</sup> The requirement for this technological overmatch drives the need to identify relevant information among a deluge of data. The U.S. military must learn to adapt rapidly in a highly technical information-permeable world, or it will fail within it.

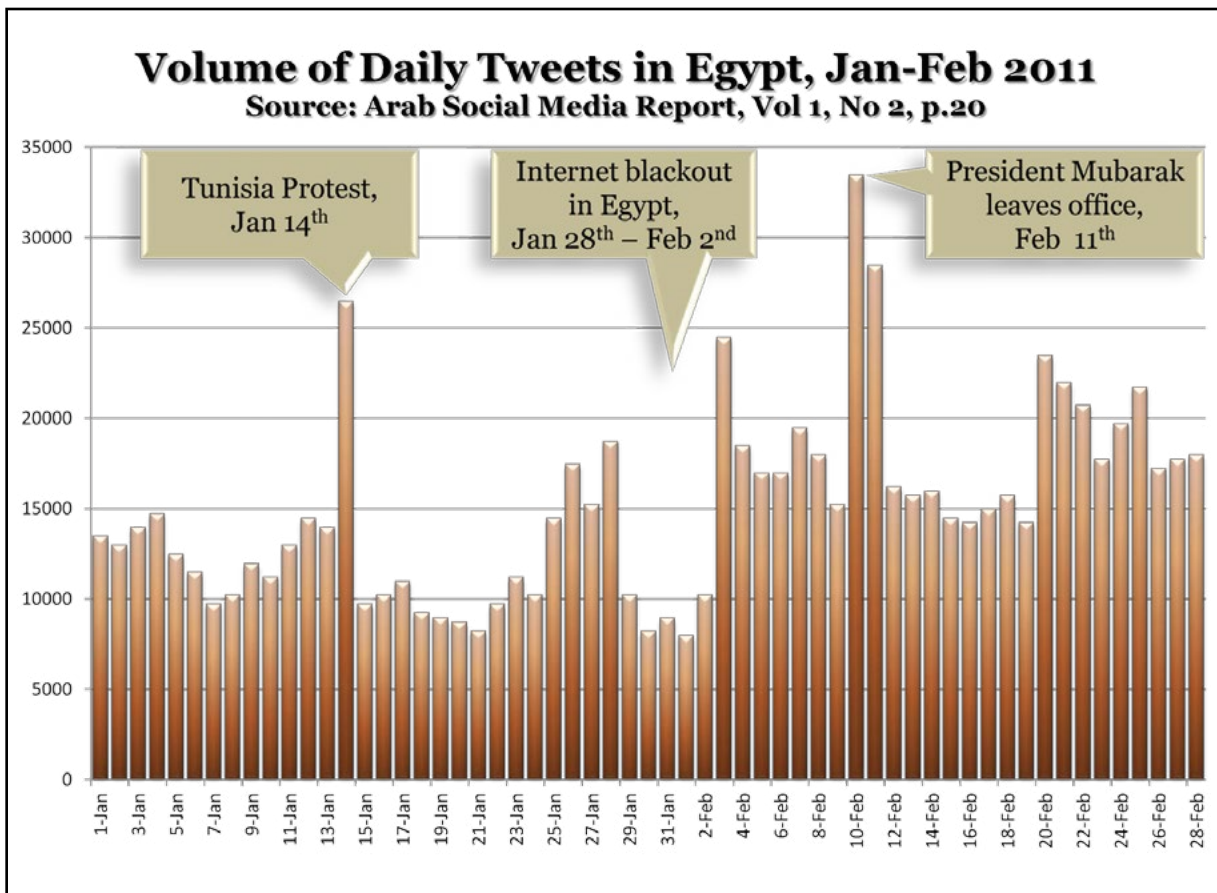
## Differing Viewpoints

While the military hierarchy excels at providing stability and maintaining order and discipline, its traditional bureaucratic model has resulted in an internal conflict of information-sharing ideals. Thrust from a highly connected, decentralized environment into the structured military, new recruits accustomed to instant information availability and rapid change become disillusioned and disenfranchised due to slow decision making and tight control of information at each level in the chain of command. This situation is brought about through traditional viewpoints regarding military functions. Peter Senge has characterized these personally established viewpoints, assumptions, assertions, or beliefs about how one

Age	Personnel	%
17-25	610, 274	43.24%
26-30	321, 533	22.78%
31-35	201, 605	14.28%
36-40	153, 361	10.87%
41+	124, 652	8.83%

Figure 1  
Active duty military personnel demographics, all service components, age comparison





**Figure 2**  
**Volume of daily tweets in Egypt, January-February 2011**

*thinks* the world works as mental models.<sup>9</sup> These rigid and highly individualized mental models affect how an individual analyzes a situation, and they explain why two people can interpret daily events in completely different ways. Military leaders with decades of service are prone to have developed mental models commensurate with a hierarchical organization rooted in linear information channels and bureaucratic processes. Senior leaders must recognize and overcome these mental models to adapt and ensure improved cross-generational communication in a rapidly evolving world.

**Mental model based on position.** One mental model associated with a structured organization values strong positional leadership where individuals execute their duties with the authority granted by their position.<sup>10</sup> In the military, those who ascend upward in the hierarchy are recognized with promotion in rank; higher positions in the organization equate to higher positions of authority. Traditional

thinking prescribes inflexible positional leadership and concludes those in senior positions are the most knowledgeable, experienced, and informed. The structured organizational model assumes that those with seniority in rank are most capable to lead and grants the authority to do so. However, younger generations do not immediately accept this mental model and, surprisingly, they do not immediately assume experience is relevant. Leaders at all levels must understand these differing viewpoints. Individuals who assume that younger subordinates accept authority at face value may ultimately fail. Instead of acting in the narrowly framed leadership role of most knowledgeable expert and attempting to command and control information, senior leaders must become the *chief facilitation officer* by guiding organizational processes, communication channels, and information dissemination.<sup>11</sup> Leaders must identify and accept subordinates who are more skilled and informed, and possibly better postured,

to lead specific organizational efforts. By mentoring and focusing highly skilled and informed individuals, the *positive deviants*, and by aligning efforts and values with strategic vision, leaders can improve the effectiveness of the U.S. military as an organization.

**Mental model using linear thinking.** A second mental model common within the U.S. military is to narrowly view and scope a problem based on traditional linear thinking. Linear thinking, or

*...information hoarding is a persistent mental model that impacts communication throughout the military.*

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the notion that each decision has a direct cause-and-effect relationship associated with positive and negative consequences, is no longer a valid assumption in a complex and dynamic environment. With 24-hour news channels, social media, and interconnected global networks, military operations and organizations are now part of a complex system of systems with nonlinear and often anonymous information-sharing relationships. Senge describes this as dynamic complexity, “when an action has one set of consequences locally and a very different set of consequences in another part of the system.”<sup>12</sup> An example of this concept is the “CNN effect” whereby a single act on the battlefield can have global strategic ramifications.<sup>13</sup> Courses of action in a standard military decision briefing can have multifaceted outcomes beyond simple cause-and-effect advantages and disadvantages. A two-dimensional decision matrix is no longer a viable tool to weigh and compare military options in a multidimensional, complex information environment. Senior leaders must understand these nonlinear relationships to ensure the U.S. military remains strong and adaptable in an increasingly interconnected, global society. Multidimensional leaders will need to mitigate risk associated with negative, threatening consequences while identifying and exploiting the positive, opportunistic ones.

**Mental model using linear information channels.** Finally, information hoarding is a persistent mental model that impacts communication throughout the military. Before the advent of the Information Age, information flowed linearly along structured bureaucratic processes and through stovepipe channels. Data passed from one echelon to the next on a need-to-know basis, with leaders at all levels encouraged to protect or hoard information.<sup>14</sup> However, as the military entered the 21st century, the potential for information flow became nearly instantaneous. Unfortunately, linear information channels persist in today’s military and, to some degree, they are critical for national security and force protection. However, this mind-set has fostered a culture of information hoarding at higher echelons in the chain of command. This tight control contradicts the military millennial’s incessant desire to share information. Leaders must break with the traditional, top-down approach to centrally managing information. Instead, they should entrust subordinates and embrace information permeability by communicating a vision and subsequently providing transparency to nonsensitive information across the organization. This empowering leadership approach avoids the paralysis from information hoarding and is more likely to inspire motivation and productivity. Robust information sharing enables *ad hoc* teams to develop, prosper, and improve organizational business processes.

## Knowledge Management

Modern information technology produces dynamic complexity in organizations, and knowledge management plays a fundamental role in taming this complexity. Leaders must be purposeful in designing collaborative environments and knowledge management structures to ensure information permeability aligns with and supports organizational goals. While there are advantages to free form, unguided collaboration through social media, a complete lack of structure or synchronization can increase organizational risk and prevent mission accomplishment.<sup>15</sup> A knowledge management system can bring people and information together, but without sufficient guidance and innovative leadership, it will not be productive. To avoid *social islands*, or collaborative spaces only serving small groups, leaders should attempt to



Staff Sgt. Frank Rodriguez, 22nd Chemical Battalion, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. (center), gives direction to Sgt. Matthew Eldridge (right) and Sgt. Jerred Keeton (left) as they prepare an explosive ordnance disposal robot for a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device exercise. The team competed in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team of the Year competition, hosted by Aberdeen Proving Ground's 20th Support Command (CBNRE) and held at Fort Knox, Ky. 13-17 August 2012 (DOD, Marv Lynchard)

create an ecosystem that knits together the organization's existing systems, making the collaborative environment more attractive and valuable to the entire organization. The Army has taken advantage of technology and knowledge management to achieve superior results. Army Knowledge Online (AKO) had over 2.4 million registered users and over 16 million monthly log-ins in 2011.<sup>16</sup> Its brand name capability, comparable to Facebook and Twitter in Army channels, brings together active, reserve, and retired military, as well as contractors, Army civilians, and even dependents in one online location. Leaders should exploit socially oriented technology and use a collaborative approach relying on leadership through personal power and influence rather than direct command and control. Facilitating a collaborative environment with vibrant information exchange sets the stage for innovation and change, but this environment also requires change leadership.

## A Changing Culture

A younger workforce raised exclusively in the Information Age presents a significant challenge

for today's military leaders. To overcome such challenges, the U.S. military must foster a culture of change leadership where leaders are willing to adapt and embrace organizational transformation. The military requires a growing number of change leaders focused on building learning organizations. Learning organizations are able to constantly adapt and inspire new cultural values among a diverse, multigenerational workforce. As David Brandon, chairman and CEO of Domino's Pizza, observed, "When an organization is successful, people tend to believe that they can stop improving. But things never stay the same: either you get better, or you get worse."<sup>17</sup>

Change leaders foster learning organizations. They inspire and empower their people to develop new organizational architectures, collaborative practices, and strategic control systems for transparent, repeatable, and goal-focused decision making. Learning organizations focus on producing, managing, and, most importantly, transferring knowledge to continuously evolve and meet new challenges based on the collective



workforce knowledge and insights.<sup>18</sup> Learning organizations will not find simple answers to the complex problems they encounter, but change leaders in these organizations may leverage the innovative and growing knowledge base of their young people to confront these challenges. Learning organizations with change leaders improve the military's ability to communicate internally and engage externally by combining the power of individual intuition, open information sharing, and collective organizational knowledge.

The U.S. military needs to become a learning organization directed by change-oriented leaders who will be able to move beyond development of strategy and enact visionary change in organizational culture. As a learning organization, the U.S. military can leverage collective knowledge to sustain leadership development at the highest levels. Mature change leaders will communicate a clear, compelling vision, philosophy, and goals for the U.S. military and passionately motivate service members to align individual priorities around a transformative vision. The military can become a proactive, learning organization in a highly technical, interconnected, and nonlinear environment if

its senior personnel embrace their role as impactful change leaders.

Looking forward, a challenging future will require military leaders to build adaptable and transformative organizations that leverage technology and knowledge management, value the innovative ideas of new generations, and emphasize organizational learning and personal development. U.S. military leadership must seek emerging change leaders among its positive deviants. These leaders will exhibit mature, systems-oriented thought processes, be in touch with new generations of service members, and inherently leverage new technology and information permeability. By fostering nontraditional communication and guiding the knowledge management process, leaders can enable innovation and build information permeability into an otherwise rigid hierarchy. Most importantly, change leaders will transform military services into change-centric, learning organizations. Ultimately, modern military services will generate and develop new and even more adept transformative leaders, allowing the U.S. military to adapt and succeed through the dynamically complex 21st century Information Age and beyond. **MR**

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## A Reply to Arnold R. Isaacs' Review Essay, "Remembering Vietnam"

(*Military Review*, September-October 2013)

William Stearman, Ph.D.

**I**N ARNOLD R. ISAACS' CRITIQUE cum review essay "Remembering Vietnam," he is determined to disabuse those of us who served in Vietnam of the belief that our service was for an honorable cause. Isaacs insists that the Pentagon's website for the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Vietnam War is "treating [the veterans] as children..." by "turning the history of Vietnam into a false, feel-good fable." Isaacs is emphasizing the atrocities committed by American troops, thereby inferring that the war was intrinsically *immoral*. He insists the war was *unwinnable* and *should never have been fought*. I would like to document that he is wrong on all three counts. I was involved with Vietnam continuously from December 1965 to January 1976, including 20 months "in-country."

### Isaacs' First Point

As evidence of the first point, Isaacs cites at length from Nick Turse's book *Kill Anything That Moves*: "[in] an unsparing account of American complicity in a huge amount of civilian death and suffering. . . . Turse . . . sees the U.S. war in Vietnam as an immoral and unjust conflict in which atrocities were not accidents or isolated crimes, but reflected the true nature of the war as it was conducted by American forces."<sup>1</sup>

*William Lloyd Stearman, Ph.D., is a retired [flag rank] senior U.S. Foreign Service officer who served on the National Security Council staff under four presidents. He was the director of the National Security Council Indochina staff from January 1973 to January 1976. He was also an adjunct professor of international affairs at Georgetown University from 1977 to 1992.*

PHOTO: Twentieth Century "Angel of Mercy" D.R. Howe (Glencoe, Minn.) treats the wounds of Pfc. D.A. Crum (New Brighton, Pa.), "H" Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, during Operation Hue City. (U.S. Marine Corps)

There were, of course, atrocities committed by U.S. troops, the most notable being the My Lai massacre on 16 March 1968, when a company from the Americal Division shot hundreds of unarmed men, women, and children. The division suppressed the bloody episode for over a year. When the massacre was finally revealed, there was a feeding frenzy by the Western media, especially the Americans. Soon the whole world knew about it. 1st Lt. William Calley was held responsible, court-martialed, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison for the crime (due to political pressure, he was eventually pardoned).

The rules of engagement issued by the Military Assistance Command Vietnam strictly forbade the killing of unarmed civilians or prisoners of war. This was and is an official policy of the United States. Guenter Lewy, in his classic *America in Vietnam*, one of the best documented, most reliable, and most even-handed of the countless books on Vietnam, notes, "Yet despite the pressure for a high enemy casualty toll, most soldiers in Vietnam did not kill prisoners or intentionally shoot unarmed villagers. Violations of the law of war in this regard were committed by individuals in violation of existing policy."<sup>2</sup> Lewy notes that from January 1965 to March 1973, 201 Army personnel were convicted of serious offenses against Vietnamese, and for the same offense, 77 marines were convicted from March 1965 to August 1971.

Even iconic anti-war activist Daniel Ellsberg rejected the idea that incidents like My Lai happened all the time. He wrote, "My Lai was beyond the bounds of permissible behavior, and that is recognizable by virtually every soldier in Vietnam."<sup>3</sup>

Without doubt, there were cases of civilians being killed or wounded in contested areas or areas under enemy control for being suspected of causing American casualties by planting mines, using poisoned punji sticks, or otherwise aiding the enemy. A number of civilians were also the unintended victims of "collateral damage" by artillery or air strikes, or simply by being caught in a firefight in populated areas. Some U.S. troops were also accidentally killed or wounded. Lewy notes that "the tendency on the part of all too many newspaper and television reporters and editors was to see the war in Vietnam as an atrocity writ large, and specific incidents reported therefore were widely accepted

as true," when there was little evidence.<sup>4</sup> The media looked for stories that put our forces or our Vietnamese allies in a bad light. I certainly found this to be true when I served in Vietnam.

One should point out that Isaacs did not begin reporting on Vietnam until after U.S. ground combat forces had been removed from Vietnam, and Turse, who was born in 1975, relied entirely

*The tendency on the part of all too many newspaper and television reporters and editors was to see the war in Vietnam as an atrocity writ large, and specific incidents reported therefore were widely accepted as true, when there was little evidence. – Guenter Lewy*

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on declassified and other documents, which I know from experience are not always reliable.

To his credit, Isaacs does fault Turse for one-sidedness in his attacks ". . . except for a single mention" of the 1968 Hue massacre, "he says nothing about Communist conduct at all."

Not long after I arrived in Vietnam, two young women, a nurse and a teacher in a village near Saigon, were executed by the Vietcong (VC) for being a government presence in the village. I sensed from this single incident that ours was a "noble cause" (as Ronald Reagan declared in 1980). From 1957 to 1972, 36,775 South Vietnamese were assassinated by the VC, and 58,499 were abducted.<sup>5</sup> This, unlike illegal U.S. atrocities, was done as a matter of policy intended primarily to intimidate and control villagers in rural areas. Our media rarely, if ever, reported these atrocities. On 30 January 1968, during the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese captured the imperial capital of Hue and executed an estimated 6,000 civilians. On 27 April 1968, *Radio Hanoi* announced that those executed were "hooligan lackeys who owed blood debts to the people." In other words, it was declared



*official policy* to eliminate “bourgeois” and other “class enemies,” including priests and foreigners. On retaking Hue, American troops discovered a mass grave containing about 2,800 bodies; there was clear evidence that a number of them had been buried alive. When German correspondent Uwe Siemon-Netto (*Springer* papers), accompanied by *Washington Post* correspondent Peter Braestrup, visited the mass grave, they noted an American television camera crew standing by doing nothing. Peter asked them, “Why don’t you film this?” he was told, “We are not here to film anti-Communist propaganda.”<sup>6</sup> This view was typical. The *New York Times*, with the largest bureau in the country, carried only a brief wire service story on this, the *greatest atrocity of the war* by far. For other media it was strictly a one-day story.

After I returned to the states, I was assigned to speak about Vietnam to audiences all over the country. As I finished each talk, I would ask, “Who has heard of My Lai?” all hands would go up. When I next asked, “Who has heard of the Hue massacre?” not a single hand would go up. I use this as an example of how our media insufficiently covered or ignored the misdeeds of the enemy. I remember that in World War II, all Americans were convinced the German and Japanese regimes were intrinsically evil, oppressive, and aggressive. This also aptly described the Hanoi regime, but how many people knew it by depending on our news media? Imagine someone during World War II chanting, “let’s hear it for Hitler” or, “hooray for Hirohito.” During the Vietnam War, it was common to hear anti-war groups chanting, “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, NLF is gonna win.”

## Isaacs’ Second Point

As to the second point, that the war was *unwinnable*, I point out that we no doubt made mistakes in our prosecution of the war. Our initial emphasis, for example, was on body count as a metric of success. However, as it turned out, we were killing a very large number of enemy troops. A *History Channel* documentary on 25 October 2004, included a knowledgeable North Vietnamese who said the North lost about 2 million people, mostly through hostilities and disease. Our side killed about a million of their troops, proportionally equivalent to the United States losing 17 million.

This attrition ultimately brought North Vietnam to the brink of defeat. Hanoi had to scrape the bottom of the manpower barrel to mount the 1972 “Easter Offensive.” The offensive cost the North 100,000 killed in action, twice that suffered by the United States in the entire war. The concept of using body count as a metric of success sounded morbid and generated a great deal of criticism from the media. The media claimed the after-battle body counts were exaggerated, and many might well have been. The only time I was able to check the accuracy of one of these counts was when we captured the enemy after action report of a major battle in III Corps area of operations in 1966. The report set their losses at a figure that was only about ten percent less than our count (although this could have been an aberration).

The turning point of the war was the enemy’s largest offensive, launched at the end of March 1972, the so-called Easter Offensive. North Vietnam attacked with the equivalent of 23 divisions well equipped with, among other things, hundreds of Soviet T-54 tanks, long-range artillery, rockets, and the latest in surface-to-air missile defense weapons. This was clearly a test of the Vietnamization ordered by President Nixon, which resulted in the withdrawal of all U.S. ground combat forces. Not long after the Easter Offensive began, Nixon sent Henry Kissinger’s deputy, Maj. Gen. Alexander Haig, to Vietnam to give him a firsthand assessment. Haig took a fellow National Security Council (NSC) staffer and me with him. I was sent to Western II Corps, placing me directly in the path of a major assault. I landed in Pleiku under artillery fire and then flew to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam 23rd Division Headquarters, which was also under artillery attack. I was extracted shortly before it fell to a tank attack. Back in Pleiku the enemy attacked us with Soviet 122mm rockets (my ears still ring from that attack). In Kontum, the principal advisor, a U.S. Army colonel, was convinced that Kontum, a key enemy objective, would fall. (He was wrong. The 23rd saved it.)

I am relating my experiences only to convey why, when I returned to Washington, I believed South Vietnam was not going to win. When our side began to win, it was not reflected in CIA reports, even though the media reported on the heroic and successful defense of An Loc. On 15 September 1972, the most significant event of the offensive occurred

when the South Vietnamese marines recaptured Quang Tri, the only provincial capital captured during the offensive, and the enemy's strongest position by far. Quang Tri is located 20 miles from North Vietnam and was defended by some of the North's best troops with the best equipment. I was out of town when this happened. When I returned to Washington, no one mentioned this significant event, and I remained ignorant of it for some time. I still carried my negative, if now outdated, memories from April 1972, modified by a few reported South Vietnamese successes such as An Loc. The South Vietnamese forces were on a roll and close to victory. After Hanoi had won the war in 1975, former top commander in the South, Gen. Tran Van Tra, writing in the *Nhan Dan*, made it clear that by the fall of 1972, his forces were on the verge of defeat.<sup>7</sup> Former CIA director William Colby wrote in his book, *Lost Victory*, "[by the fall of 1972] on the ground in South Vietnam the war had been won." U.S. air power played a decisive role in the victory.<sup>8</sup> The United States also provided essential logistic

and naval support, but without the determined and, in the end successful, efforts of South Vietnamese ground forces, U.S. air power alone could not have prevented a communist victory.

Faced with defeat, Hanoi offered negotiating concessions to Kissinger. Kissinger took the bait, and negotiations began near Paris on 8 October 1972. The North Vietnamese leaked that a negotiated peace was near. Once Congress learned this, interest in continuing the war rapidly waned. This was the first step in "snatching defeat from the jaws of victory." Kissinger also agreed to a "cease-fire in place," which left enemy troops in South Vietnam. Foreign Service officer John Negroponte, who then headed the NSC Indochina staff, courageously went *mano a mano* with Kissinger on this, but to no avail. After breaking a deadlock with the so-called "Christmas bombings," the Paris Peace Accords were signed on 27 January 1973, and were immediately subject to massive violations by communist troops and lesser violations by our side. North Vietnamese chief of staff Gen. Van Tien



John McCain after being released from a prisoner of war camp in Vietnam, March 1973. (U.S. Navy, National Archives)

Dung cogently stated in *Nhan Dan* in April-May 1976 that “the [Paris] agreement represented a big victory for our people and a big defeat for the U.S. imperialists and their [Vietnamese] lackeys.”<sup>9</sup>

After we recovered our prisoners of war and returned our troops to the United States, America lost interest in Vietnam and the fate of the Vietnamese. It was then difficult to get any aid, especially military aid, for them. Congress reduced military aid to South Vietnam from \$2.3 billion in fiscal year 1973 to \$799 million in fiscal year 1975—a crippling reduction. Gen. Van Tien Dung said in *Great Spring Victory*, “[President] Nguyen Van Thieu was forced to fight a poor man’s war. Enemy firepower had decreased by nearly 60% . . . [and] its mobility was also reduced by half.”<sup>10</sup> While this reduction in aid contributed substantially to South Vietnam’s defeat in the spring of 1975 (after the North had three years to recover from its 1972 defeat), the final blow was the 4 June 1973 Case-Church Amendment that cut off all funding for U.S. military operations in Indochina. This made it impossible for us to enforce compliance with the Paris Accords. It also ensured that South Vietnamese troops would not have the U.S. air support that was essential in 1972 and encouraged the final attack by the North in 1975, which conquered the South. We had abandoned our South Vietnamese allies to a grim and tragic fate, whereas, Hanoi would continue to count on its loyal allies, China and the Soviet Union.

## Isaacs’ Final Point

This brings us to the last point: *should we have ever fought this war?* I argue that by continuing to disparage the South Vietnamese government and its armed forces, our media convinced the American public that Vietnam was not worth fighting for. Certainly, the South Vietnamese government suffered from corruption and at times was incompetent. (Corruption was far more extensive in the tightly controlled North. In 1967, Ho Chi Minh inveighed on the radio against the widespread corruption in his country.) South Vietnamese troops performed poorly at times and lost four times as many troops as did the United States, but in the end, South Vietnam was winning the war. The test for the South came during the 1968 Tet Offensive when enemy troops (mostly Vietcong) overran the

majority of the towns and cities in the country. The North’s initial success was widely publicized by the U.S. media, making a lasting impression on the American public. What received little attention was the South’s widespread and courageous resistance, which remained true to the government and successfully countered VC efforts to incite a popular uprising against it. It was scarcely reported that the VC was soundly crushed and never really recovered from this disastrous defeat. The resulting increased security in the countryside made possible one of the most successful land reforms in history. Even when under siege, those areas under government control enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom. To me, South Vietnam was worth defending.

## United States Enters WW II Because of Vietnam

When I was teaching at Georgetown, students were surprised when I said that the United States got into World War II because of what is now Vietnam. When the Japanese were rampaging all over China, and even in response to the notorious 1937 Nanking Massacre, the United States took no serious punitive steps against Japan. However, when Japanese troops occupied what is now Vietnam, the United States and its allies placed embargoes on shipments of oil, scrap iron, and rubber to Japan. The embargo posed a major threat to Japan’s economy, and Tokyo no doubt considered it a warlike move. We took this step because then-French Indochina was an ideal staging area for invading the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Japan then assumed that when they moved in this direction, we would attempt to interpose our fleet to thwart them. To prevent this, Japan sought to neutralize our fleet by attacking it at Pearl Harbor. It then moved to capture virtually all of Southeast Asia.

President Eisenhower no doubt had this in mind when, in April 1954, he opined that a communist victory in Indochina could topple countries of Southeast Asia like “dominos.” While this “domino theory” was long pooh-poohed by many liberals and others in the United States, the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and India essentially agreed with Eisenhower, as did leaders in Hanoi, (then) Peking, and Moscow. For example, China’s famed Marshal Lin Biao stated in September 1965 that revolutionary



warfare could encircle developed capitalist countries and that the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam would show the people of the world that what the Vietnamese people can do, they can do too (as reported in my memoir).<sup>11</sup> In July 1964, North Vietnam's Defense Minister Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap declared, "South Vietnam [the Vietcong] is the vanguard fighter of the national liberation movement in the present era ... and the failure of the special war unleashed by the U.S. imperialists in South Vietnam would mean that this war can be defeated anywhere in the world."<sup>12</sup> The war bought precious time for strengthening Southeast Asian regimes while wearing down North Vietnam (which lost a million troops in the war) and effectively eliminating its threat to Southeast Asia.

In the 1970s, Indonesian leaders Suharto and Malik confirmed in an interview with columnist Robert Novak that our introduction of combat troops in Vietnam in March 1965 encouraged their courageous resistance to a nearly successful October 1965 Chinese-backed communist coup. Success of that coup would no doubt have

triggered our treaty obligation to come to the aid of the Philippines in the face of a massive communist threat that would have dwarfed what we faced in Vietnam.<sup>13</sup> Historian Norman Friedman argues that U.S. troop commitment to Vietnam also encouraged the successful British defense of Malaysia against a communist invasion force launched from Indonesia.<sup>14</sup>

As noted above, in 1941, the United States considered the area now called Vietnam important to our national security at a time when it was vastly more remote than it was in 1965. We should look at the Vietnam War as another facet of George Kennan's global "containment policy." With this perspective, our war effort, while ending in a tactical defeat, was ultimately a *strategic victory*. It most certainly was not a war fought in vain.

All of those who served in Vietnam, both in uniform and as civilians, should applaud the Pentagon for creating a website that reflects a positive side to our involvement in Vietnam. It is time the nation recognized our service in a positive light. **MR**

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## NOTES

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1. Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013).
2. Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 343.
3. Daniel Ellsberg, *Papers on the War* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), 262.
4. Lewy, 321-22.
5. Lewy, 454.
6. Uwe Siemon-Netto, *Duc: A Reporter's Love for the Wounded People of Vietnam* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 211.
7. Lewis Sorley, *A Better War* (Boston: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999), 366.
8. William Colby, *Lost Victory* (Chicago: Contemporary Books Publishing

Group, 1989).

9. Gen. Van Tien Dung, quoted in *Nhan Dan*, April-May 1976.
10. Gen. Van Tien Dung, quoted in *Great Spring Victory* (Monthly Review Press, 1977).
11. William Stearman, *An American Adventure: From Early Aviation through Three Years in the White House* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 192.
12. Lewy, 424.
13. Stearman, 193.
14. Norman Friedman, *The Fifty Year War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 315-16 and 398.

## **Arnold Isaacs Replies to Dr. William Stearman**

Arnold R. Isaacs, *Journalist and Vietnam War Correspondent*—Dr. William Stearman has every right to his opinions on the Vietnam War. He has no right to mislead readers about my essay and what it said and did not say. Stearman's distortions are startling, to put it mildly. To begin with, for reasons only he can explain, he all but ignores that my article was a discussion of selected books on Vietnam. Except for a single title, he does not refer to the books at all or say anything about their subject matter. Then he fails to make any distinction between opinions I stated as mine and opinions that are clearly described as those of the authors whose books I reviewed. The result is a complete misrepresentation of the essay's fundamental nature and its content.

The conclusion that the Vietnam War was immoral, for example, was not mine but that of Nick Turse, the author of one of the books I discussed. Far from endorsing Turse's view, as Stearman alleges, I wrote at some length opposing it. I disputed Turse's assertion that war crimes were a typical practice of American soldiers and criticized him for giving absolutely no recognition to Americans who did not commit or cover up crimes against civilians. Elsewhere Stearman similarly and falsely attributes judgments to me that were not mine but those of one of the books I reviewed. Those were not subtle differences but obvious ones, and I am at a loss to know how Stearman arrived at such consistently inaccurate interpretations of what I wrote.

Stearman took particular exception to my calling the Defense Department's history for its 50th anniversary commemoration "a feel-good fable." (That *is* my opinion, and I think an inescapable one; it's hard to know what else to call a history that glosses over all uncomfortable facts including that our side lost the war.) Stearman is not above promoting fables of his own, however. His anecdote about Peter Braestrup in Hue, for example, clearly belongs in that category.

First, the scene he describes never happened. The bodies of the 2,800 massacre victims were not found in a single mass grave as U.S. troops retook the city. Instead, as is exhaustively documented in a report written for the U.S. mission by a senior American official, the bodies were in 19 different locations that were discovered at intervals over the course of many months after the battle, so the true nature of the event emerged only over time.<sup>1</sup> Second, no such story appears in Braestrup's own account of how American journalists covered the massacre—this in a highly critical 1,400-page study of U.S. media in the Tet Offensive. Nor is it mentioned in Braestrup's 1982 oral history interview for the LBJ Library, the transcript of which runs more than 60 pages. There is no evidence that Braestrup ever told the story elsewhere, either, or that anyone else did until Stearman's friend Siemon-Netto started circulating it years after Braestrup's death. (If the anecdote had been known earlier, it is a safe bet that the many and vociferous critics of American reporters in Vietnam would not have left it unmentioned for four decades.)

It is also untrue that the *New York Times* gave only a few paragraphs to the massacre or that it was a "one-day story" for American media. In fact, the *Times* and other major papers carried a number of reports as the story began to unfold in the weeks following the battle. It is worth noting that one of the earliest and most detailed stories to appear in the *Times* was written by a journalist whom Braestrup documents as *opposing* U.S. policy and expressing unease about writing "propaganda." The journalist was not American and not a TV reporter but a *London Times* correspondent named Stewart Harris. Rather than suppress the Hue killings for ideological reasons, though, Harris was one of the first to investigate them. He wrote about them in unsparing and graphic terms—which suggests exactly the opposite of Stearman's conclusion about journalists and their values.<sup>2</sup> All this is evidence that Stearman could easily have found if he had made any effort to verify his story. I am sorry he did not see fit to do so.

The Braestrup anecdote is not the only factually questionable item in Stearman's commentary. His account of the 1972-73 peace negotiations is inaccurate in almost every detail. So is his assertion that American journalists eagerly searched for stories on war crimes by U.S. troops. The My Lai incident, for instance, was reported in considerable detail by communist news media not long after it happened, but American reporters in Vietnam quickly accepted the U.S. command's denials and made no effort to investigate the communist report. When Seymour Hersh broke the My Lai story for American readers many months later, his report was turned down by a long list of major media organizations before it was finally published by a little-known antiwar news service. Only then did the event get extensive attention. On other atrocity reports and on the issue of civilian casualties in general, the record is clear that American news media were reluctant rather

than eager to pursue such stories, and those subjects were, if anything, under-reported rather than overemphasized in U.S. media coverage of the war.

Whether Stearman's misrepresentations of my essay were deliberate or just inexplicably careless, I have no way to know. In either case, they do not advance his argument but discredit it. I am reminded of a quotation from John Adams, who wrote in 1770, "Facts are stubborn things, and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."<sup>3</sup> Whether expressing his views on Vietnam or his disagreements with my essay, Stearman would have been more convincing if he had heeded Adams's advice.

1. Douglas Pike, *The Viet Cong Strategy of Terror. Saigon: U.S. Mission* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1970).

2. Peter Braestrup, *The Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington*, 2 vols. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 1: 279-86; 2: 241-44.

3. John Adams, "Argument in Defense of the British Soldiers in the Boston Massacre Trials" (4 December 1770).

## Ph.D. Completion Timeline

Lt. Col. Shon McCormick, *Ph.D., U.S. Army, Army Strategist (FA 59)*—I am writing to voice my concerns with the Ph.D. completion timeline Maj. Gen. Gordon Davis, Brig. Gen. Thomas Graves, and Col. Christopher Prigge portray in their article "The Strategic Planning 'Problem'" (*Military Review*, November-December 2013). My own recent experience in completing a Ph.D. program encouraged me to write and ensure prospective Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (ASP3) candidates are fully aware of the cost in time and energy associated with completing the program under the conditions the authors describe.

Based on my experience, I do not think most officers can complete their dissertation according to the ASP3 model. According to the article, officers in the ASP3 program need to complete a substantial portion of their dissertation work while simultaneously performing a developmental tour at a "combatant command or other strategic headquarters." Even though I had the luxury of conducting the majority of my dissertation work as a full-time student, it still took me 18 months of eight- to ten-hour workdays.

Moreover, the only way I was able to meet this timeline was to choose a social science approach because it was more amenable to rapid completion. Those choosing a historical approach requiring significant primary research require much more time—time that I do not see provided in the ASP3 model. While the final year focused on completion is beneficial, the student's research—the most time-consuming portion of the dissertation—has to occur during the developmental tour because research is the unavoidable first step in any dissertation. To stay on track, ASP3 officers should expect to devote their weekends and other free time during their developmental tour to researching and writing.

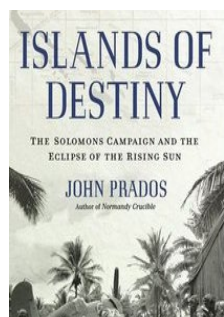
My point is not to argue that no one can finish the ASP3 program according to the model. The authors acknowledge that a number of officers have completed Ph.D. programs on their own time. I just want to ensure prospective ASP3 candidates are aware of the costs in personal time and effort they should expect to put forward under this program.



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**ISLANDS OF DESTINY:  
The Solomons Campaign and  
the Eclipse of the Rising Sun**  
John Prados, NAL Caliber, 2012  
388 pages, \$26.95

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**D**R. JOHN PRADOS challenges conventional wisdom in an engrossing new work on the Solomons Campaign in World War II's Pacific Theater. Relying on intelligence sources as well as Japanese accounts, the author argues that the Solomons Campaign, and not the Battle

of Midway as many historians suggest, represents the true decisive point that accorded the Allies an unmistakable advantage over their Japanese adversaries in terms of air and maritime superiority. This precipitated eventual Allied victory in the Pacific.

While many accounts of the Solomons Campaign focus on the ground war and the desperate, compelling battles that ensued for control of islands such as Guadalcanal and their critical airfields, Prados concentrates on the vicious struggle for air and maritime superiority that was a corollary to permanent success on the ground. Here, the Imperial Japanese Navy was still a juggernaut, "down but not out" after its spectacular loss of four carriers during the battle of Midway in June 1942.

The author shows that the Imperial Japanese Navy was more than a match for Allied naval forces, particularly early in the campaign and especially at night. The U.S. Navy suffered some of the worst defeats in its history during the Solomons Campaign; at the battle of Savo Island, for example, the Allies lost four heavy cruisers in a single, brief engagement. At one point during the campaign, the situation in the Pacific became so dire that the Navy was down to a single carrier in the entire theater—the USS *Enterprise*—and had to request the loan of the HMS *Victorious* from the British.

What turned the tide in favor of the Allies during the Solomons? Intelligence was foremost, according to Prados. The author successfully demonstrates that multiple sources—or pillars, as he refers to them—contributed to eventual Allied success. These included not only the efforts of the well-known cryptanalysts, or codebreakers, but also those of the invaluable coast watchers, radio traffic analysts, scouts, and indigenous persons who provided the Allies with the edge on enemy movements and intentions.

However, as historian Sir John Keegan has shown, intelligence alone doesn't guarantee victory—tactical execution still counts. The Allies were better able to incorporate the pillars of intelligence to decisive advantage. This explanation is one of Prados's strengths, as he gives near-equal coverage to the Japanese viewpoint, incorporating Japanese accounts, combat diaries, and wartime message traffic. It is remarkable how similar both sides were in terms of the primacy of leadership personalities, interservice rivalries, and management of the war with shoestring resources.

Another of the author's obvious strengths is his seamless integration of multiple events across all levels of war—strategic, operational, and tactical. Readers will come away with a broad, holistic understanding of the Solomons Campaign, the strengths and weaknesses of the protagonists, and the role of intelligence as a precursor but not a guarantor of victory. Prados succeeds in making his case in this thought-provoking and highly readable effort.

**Mark Montesclaros,  
Fort Gordon, Georgia**

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**THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY:  
What the Map Tells Us About Coming  
Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate**

Robert D. Kaplan, Random House,  
New York, 2012, \$27.95, 428 pages

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**R**OBERT KAPLAN'S *The Revenge of Geography* is a worthy addition to his body of

work. The author is, if nothing else, the contemporary poet laureate of geopolitics. As in his previous books, Kaplan displays a rare ability to capture vivid images in simple but incisive prose and filter them through his sensitive and cultivated mind to offer the reader keen insights into current political and social problems based on his understanding of history, social context, and geography. Kaplan has given intellectual respectability and new life to both travel writing and geopolitics, two genres that have fallen into scholarly disrepute for some time.

In Victorian times, travel writing combined descriptions of landscapes, people, and cultures with philosophical musings, narratives of the adventures of travel, and particularly revealing or colorful incidents. Many authors carried the genre to the level of high art while at the same time making significant contributions to geographical knowledge. The field of geopolitics, which initially gained respectability as a more scientific approach to international politics, failed to secure a stable position in academia because it came to be viewed as reactionary, imperialistic, deterministic, and pseudoscientific.

Kaplan's position on world affairs might be described as that of a nondogmatic realist. His views on currently intractable geopolitical problems are balanced and sober, and they are tied to a realistic assessment of human nature as neither naturally good nor evil. Politicians, diplomats, and military officers may find themselves nodding their heads in agreement as they read through one of Kaplan's assessments and violently disagreeing with him as they read the next. This is because the author is not an ideologue. He writes about what he has seen, heard, and experienced in the context of what he has read. Kaplan's commentary on the Pakistan-Afghanistan area, the Mexican-American border, and the historical and geographic roles played by such major powers as China, India, Russia, and Iran are especially illuminating. As the subtitle indicates, to Kaplan, geography is important but not deterministic; there is room for human agency in the "battle against fate."

Although Kaplan's analyses may seem impressionistic and dismissive of current trends in political theory, it is precisely for these reasons—and the fact that they are rooted in a respect for history and a deep, humanistic understanding of human

nature—that they are so compelling to thoughtful academics and interested readers alike.

Kaplan's book is not a breezy journalistic narrative. The author has done his homework both in the field and in the library, and the endnotes show an impressive and eclectic variety of sources. For all the reasons mentioned above, Kaplan's book is highly recommended to all those interested in world affairs, geography, politics, and culture.

**Lt. Col. Prisco R. Hernández, Ph.D., USAR,  
Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**LITTLE AMERICA:  
The War Within the War for Afghanistan**  
Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Alfred Knopf  
New York, 2012, 385 pages, \$12.98

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**S**HORTLY AFTER WORLD War II, Americans established their first presence in Helmand Province. Seeking to revitalize the economy of this remote and backward province, the King of Afghanistan commissioned the U.S. engineering firm Morris-Knudsen to build a system of roads and canals that would make Helmand a model for the rest of his country. American technicians and their families soon arrived, and by the late 1950s, the small American community near Lashkar Gah included a swimming pool, tennis courts, a coed school, and a community club. The local villagers called this enclave of foreigners "Little America." Over time, Morris-Knudsen was followed by soil experts from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Peace Corps volunteers, and more contractors—all seeking to make Helmand a green paradise. Yet, when a communist coup in 1978 drove the aid workers away, the Americans left behind under-conceived and unfinished projects that had failed to realize the king's vision.

For author and *Washington Post* reporter Rajiv Chandasekaran, the disappointments associated with the Little America projects symbolize the more tragic outcomes he anticipates from our current war in Afghanistan. Chandrasekaran is not a newcomer to conflict in unpleasant places. His best-selling book, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City, Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, was a scathing

critique of the Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority and its early efforts to "rebuild" Iraq. Given Chandrasekaran's position and liberal outlook, one might expect that he would be gentler in his evaluation of "Obama's war." This is hardly the case. While the author offers a sympathetic portrayal of individual soldiers and marines and their frustrating efforts to win the fight in Helmand, his description of life inside the insulated, alcohol-drenched, and ignorant American communities in Kabul is damning. Chandrasekaran finds that civilians willing to venture outside the fortified enclaves—like the State Department's Kael Weston and Carter Malkasian—were far too rare.

*Little America* covers the period from Obama's surge in 2009 to the beginning of the drawdown in 2011. In describing these events, Chandrasekaran's theme seems to be about cross-purposes: senior military leaders operating at cross-purposes with presidential guidance, marines fighting at cross-purposes with the Army, Richard Holbrooke working at cross-purposes with national security advisors, U.S. efforts to build legitimacy launched at cross-purposes with the hopelessly corrupt Karzai government, America's best intentions placed at cross-purposes to American cultural ignorance, etcetera, etcetera. Chandrasekaran's bleak assessment: "For all the lofty pronouncements about waging a new kind of war, our nation was unable to adapt . . . . Our government was incapable of meeting the challenge."

The last segment in the story of America's longest war has yet to be written. *Little America* may serve as a deeply depressing draft of that final chapter. This book is highly recommended.

**Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,**  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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**THE NORTH AFRICAN AIR CAMPAIGN:  
U.S. Army Air Forces  
from El Alamein to Salerno**

Christopher M. Rein, University Press of Kansas,  
Lawrence, 2012, 290 pages, \$31.08

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**E**XACTLY HOW DOES air power win wars? Does strategic bombing, with its massive killing power, ability to knock out industries, and

capacity to destroy resources, do the job? Does tactical bombing, with its support of the ground troops and interdiction closer to the front line, win the day? Historian Christopher Rein tackles this conundrum in *The North African Air Campaign*. This well-researched book explains the buildup of American air power in both the Eastern and Western Campaigns and their contribution to Allied victory in the Mediterranean Theater.

The book is broken down into six chapters. The introduction asks the question: how should air forces be deployed? The following chapters cover prewar theory and doctrine; the 9th Air Force fighting under the British in the western desert; Operation Torch and the creation of the 12th Air Force; the Tunisian Campaign; the Sicilian Campaign; and Ploesti and Salerno.

Rein points out that the 9th and 12th Air Forces suffered under the relentless Air Force generals who wanted to prove the theory of strategic bombing. Despite the two air forces' success supporting ground troops, their commanders gave up bombers to requests from the 8th Air Force in England, and they also were ordered to bomb Hungary's oil fields at Ploesti. In the Western Desert Campaign, the 9th, originally designated the Halverson Provisional Detachment, attacked operational targets such as enemy strong points, roads, convoys, and bridges for the British 8th Army. In this, it was quite effective, prompting Field Marshall Erwin Rommel to admit, "Anyone who has to fight, even with the most modern weapons, against an enemy in complete command of the air, fights like a savage against modern European troops."

The 12th Air Force was born out of the 8th Air Force's building up in England for the strategic bombing of occupied Europe. The 12th had little impact on Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa, with the exception of delivering airborne forces to the fight. As the 12th grew, it contributed to the campaign in Tunisia much the same way the Halverson Provisional Detachment did with the British, using bombers and fighters in an effective tactical role. One of its greatest coups was wiping out an aerial convoy of Luftwaffe transports, the "Palm Sunday Massacre." While the II Corps commander, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., originally appreciated his air support, he later complained about it when a Luftwaffe raid killed his aide.



Strategic bombing advocates claimed proof that their theory worked when bombers repeatedly attacked the island of Pantelleria, leaving its garrison to surrender to British amphibious forces with barely a fight, but the island was small and relatively undefended. For the invasion of Sicily, the 12th again delivered paratroopers and, despite some grumblings from ground commanders, successfully supported the battle. Patton even credited the air forces with his Army's rapid march across the island. The air forces, however, failed to prevent, or even tried to prevent, the Axis forces from escaping Sicily to the mainland of Italy. The bombers were instead committed to a strategic mission—the Ploesti Raid.

The 1 August 1943 Ploesti Raid was a failure. Aimed at taking out the oil refineries in Romania, the raid failed, and many planes and crews were lost. Of the eight refineries attacked, only one was put out of action, while two others were back in operation in less than a year. The author points out that the 9th Air Force lost 44 heavy bombers in 13 months of action before the raid and lost 55 attacking Ploesti. Moreover, 532 highly skilled air crewmen were killed in the raid. The losses spelled the end of the 9th as a heavy bomber command. The landings at Salerno, Italy, suffered from this lack of bombers, with the Germans almost throwing the Allies back into the sea. Transport planes helped save the day by dropping airborne forces behind the Allied beachhead to shore up the battle line.

*The North African Air Campaign* provides an excellent understanding of an under-examined element of the Mediterranean Theater and reveals the high-level conflicts between generals on the use of air power. This is a great book for students of the macro-level view of the air war in the Mediterranean. The author has done a superb job of digging into the details of the 12th and 9th Air Forces and showing how they fought an almost-daily struggle—over the battlefield and also with the Army Air Forces' brass.

**Kevin M. Hymel,**  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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**THE DRIVE ON MOSCOW, 1941:  
Operation Taifun and Germany's  
First Great Crisis in World War II**

Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson  
Casemate, Philadelphia and Oxford, 2012  
336 pages, \$32.95

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**W**HEN GERMANY ATTACKED the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the invaders chose the best possible time to defeat the Red Army, which was in transition of its leadership, doctrine, organization, equipment, and deployment. However, despite all their initial advantages, the Germans failed to defeat the defenders decisively, condemning both sides to a prolonged war of attrition that Germany ultimately lost. For seven decades, historians and general readers have sought some explanation for why the supposedly invincible Wehrmacht came to grief in 1941. The initial German alibis, focusing on the interference of Adolf Hitler and the extremes of weather and terrain, have long since proven inadequate as answers to this question.

As part of a flurry of recent studies on events of 1941, two Swedish historians, Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson, have focused on Operation Taifun (Typhoon), the final attempt of Army Group Center to reach Moscow. In tracing the last German advance, the authors provide a wealth of interesting information, such as statistics indicating the Germans lost fewer tanks and suffered fewer casualties during this operation than they had experienced during the massive battles of the summer. For those interested in details, this book offers such specifics as the number of half-track mounted infantry battalions in certain panzer divisions and the average ages of German and Soviet senior commanders.

Despite (or perhaps because of) continued tactical success, the German commanders consistently underestimated Soviet reserves, believing that each encirclement would be the last and that they could, indeed, take the Russian capital before winter arrived. The authors' conclusion is consistent with the current historiography, to the effect that Germany never had the industrial capacity and manpower to subjugate its huge opponent in a single campaign. If anything, the headlong rush to Moscow seemed to suggest that the German military and political leaders were aware of their vulnerability and sought a quick victory before they would have to face the United States. In fact, Zetterling and Frankson observe, "hardly anything suggests that Germany could have won World War II."

*The Drive on Moscow* includes ample sources from both sides of the battlefield but tends to focus on the German aspects of the story. To some extent, this perspective is unavoidable because the

Germans held the initiative throughout this period. However, in cases of historical disagreement, the authors seem to accept the German account as being more reliable than the Soviet. Thus, for example, they downplay the 1 October battle at Mtsensk—famous in Soviet accounts as a significant victory over German armor—as a small engagement that only cost the Germans six tanks.

Despite such discrepancies, this is an excellent book—well researched, fast paced, and enjoyable to read. Both historians and general readers will profit from reading it.

**Col. Jonathan M. House, USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**WHY PEACE FAILS:  
The Causes and Prevention of  
Civil War Recurrence**

Charles T. Call, Georgetown University Press  
Washington, DC, 2012, 328 pages, \$32.95

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**C**HARLES T. CALL, assistant professor of international studies at American University, sets out to determine why post-civil war peace works in some cases but not in others. His investigation is rooted in conflict theory. He applies quantitative (linear regression) and qualitative analysis to 42 contemporary country case studies—27 cases where post-civil war peace held and 15 cases where it failed—to make numerous notable findings that significantly advance the body of knowledge in conflict theory.

Call's central finding is that political exclusion of opposition groups, rather than economic or social factors, largely determines whether civil wars recur. In other words, inclusionary behavior (power sharing) closely corresponds with successful peace building. Eighty-five percent of cases with inclusionary approaches resulted in sustained peace. His finding also points to the critical role played by national actors in determining success or failure of post-conflict peace. National actors who consolidated power at the expense of social groups associated with a conflict ultimately led to the recurrence of civil war. He also challenges the widely accepted view that economics

is the first factor to address in establishing enduring post-civil war peace.

Call's investigation further uncovers the critical role international actors play in promoting inclusionary solutions to conflict and the instrumental role third-party militaries can play in stabilizing situations. He also reveals that no single factor accounts for success in consolidating peace and preventing the re-igniting of civil war. Finally, he debunks the notion that capacity building is more critical to securing peace than the legitimacy of those in power.

The author discloses that exclusionary behavior does not in all cases lead to recurrence of civil war. In fact, this is true in 4 of the 15 cases he analyzes. Because of the circumstances behind these exceptions, the fundamental outcomes of his exhaustive research are not diminished.

*Why Peace Fails* sheds new light on variables that most positively influence enduring post-civil war peace, as well as the underlying causes of civil conflict that lead to civil war. Call cites sources that represent the most credible scholarly and professional works available. His research is rigorous, comprehensive, and compelling. It is well articulated and appropriately interwoven, with substantive depth and analysis. His conclusions and recommendations are sound and constructive. Moreover, they lend themselves to productive debate and broadening research. This is particularly true for those highlighting the need for legitimacy of external actors in promoting peace and the perseverance they must exude for peace to endure. *Why Peace Fails* is a must-read for conflict theory scholars, academics in the fields of political science and international studies, and military and government leaders—especially those who shape U.S. policy with fragile states.

**Lt. Col. David A. Anderson, Ph.D., USMC,  
Retired, Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**TURNING THE TIDE**

Ed Offley

Basic Books, Perseus Books Group  
New York, 478 pages, \$28.99

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**E**D OFFLEY IS a former Naval officer with an extensive background in military reporting.

Offley has also authored *Scorpion Down: Sunk by the Soviets, Buried by the Pentagon: The Untold Story of the USS Scorpion*; *Pen and Sword: A Journalist's Guide to Covering the Military*; and *Lifting the Fog of War* (with Admiral William A. Owens, USN).

*Turning the Tide* traces the evolution of the battle of the Atlantic in World War II as Germany and the Allies vied for control of the North Atlantic. Germany sought to control the North Atlantic to starve Britain and prevent a buildup of Allied forces and supplies in England. The Allies sought control to secure sea lines of communication for movement of people and material for an amphibious assault and land campaign into the heart of Germany. Both antagonists had to battle the North Atlantic's tremendous weather conditions while waging war.

Offley sets a baseline for the reader to understand the conflict by discussing the organizations and capabilities of each force prior to 1943. He discusses a variety of topics for both opponents that blend together to provide a coherent picture of the circumstances that affected the battles at sea, such as adequacy and quantity of their equipment; service culture; laws and legalities; organization; command and control; intelligence; national resource allocation; technological advancements; and action, reaction, and counteraction to each change in the environment.

The author then shifts his focus to March 1943, when Axis U-boat efforts had reached their zenith in the North Atlantic. The author uses the Axis success in the attacks on convoys SC122 and HX229 as an example of where U-boats inflicted unsustainable losses on the Allied convoy efforts.

The March 1943 Axis actions forced the Allies to make rapid changes in their organization, command and control, and resource allocation for protection of convoys. The Allies did this in April and May 1943. Simultaneously, new detection and attack technologies came on line in quantities large enough to tip the balance in favor of the Allies. The primary example used to show the effects of the convergence of these substantial changes to Allied convoy protection was convoy ONS-5, a westbound convoy transiting to Halifax from the U.K.

The epilogue and appendices summarize the Axis and Allied convoying efforts in the Atlantic for the rest of the war and information on the capabilities

of the various models of German U-boat and Allied escort ships.

*Turning the Tide* is well researched, organized, and well written. It follows logical paths, is free of difficult military language, and does not require the reader to be an expert in naval warfare. This book is for naval and World War II enthusiasts, novice and scholar alike. Additionally it has applicability to those studying change in the midst of conflict.

**Lt. Col. Terrance M. Portman, USMC, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**ARMS OF LITTLE VALUE:  
The Challenge of Insurgency and Global  
Instability in the Twenty-First Century**  
G.L. Lamborn, Casemate Publishers, UK  
2012, 295 pages, \$32.95

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**F**OR SOME TIME, counterinsurgency has been hailed as the graduate level of warfare. However, in *Arms of Little Value*, G.L. Lamborn argues that counterinsurgency is irrelevant and even harmful without a thorough understanding of insurgency. Through case studies and analysis, Lamborn, a former Army and Central Intelligence Agency officer, seeks to explicate the importance of political action to insurgencies and explain how military power is successful only to the extent it delegitimizes an insurgency.

For militaries, undermining the political activist nature of insurgencies remains a vexing challenge. In successful cases, this has occurred in situations where reform of political and economic policies was enacted by host governments, as was demonstrated by Magsaysay in the Philippines. Conversely, there is little to defend when local partners remain stubbornly corrupt and resistant to political reform, as was the case with Diem's Republic of South Vietnam.

*Arms of Little Value* is reminiscent of Robert Taber's classic *War of the Flea*. However, Lamborn is more concerned with how the U.S. military should better prepare its capabilities through greater understanding of the political nature of war and root causes of insurgencies in particular. As he states, "Pentagon pamphlets and PowerPoint presentations



proliferate on COIN. And yet, the causes and nature of insurgency per se are seldom mentioned.”

Delving into this problem, the book’s first three chapters examine the importance of grievances—whether social, economic, or political—that engender insurgencies. However, solving such grievances is beyond the realm of the military’s capability. The author details how the military decision making process is ill suited to resolve insurgent grievances because it remains locked in a philosophical framework advocated by Antoine Jomini. The problem of differing means and ends in combating insurgencies shapes Lamborn’s argument throughout the book.

For example, he argues, “the U.S. Army has yet to figure out that Jomini has no place in the graduate school of warfare.”

In no way is *Arms of Little Value* a sardonic critique of the U.S. military. The author makes an effort to point out historical cases in which the United States made wise decisions regarding its foreign policy and use of its military. A consistent theme in this regard is that success in countering insurgencies has occurred where the United States supported host governments that reformed the negative practices that served as rationale for revolution. Insurgencies have an emboldened cause where reform has not occurred, as in the case of South Vietnam where Ngo Dinh Diem exemplified failure as a leader. Conversely, Magsaysay in the Philippines eventually overcame the Hukbalahap insurgency because of his willingness to reform. In all cases, political legitimacy is key and cannot be accomplished solely through military power or inundating a country with development aid unless real and perceived reform occurs. This issue is still problematic for the United States.

Despite the astronomical investment by the American people in national security, the defense establishment has shown itself less than fully competent at dealing with low-intensity conflict—insurgency. The answer to this failure is straightforward: the political roots of warfare have been forgotten.

This contentious claim applies to the institutional organization and pathos of the military. Notably, Lamborn cites the expertise of several contemporary generals such as Stanley McChrystal as exceptions. A troubling argument, one central to the book, is the inability of the U.S. military to truly adapt into an organization that teaches and understands the political foundations of insurgency, despite its publicized

statements that it is an evolving and “adaptable” force.

Lamborn recognizes that the U.S. military has been handed politically oriented tasks for which it is not organized, and he drives home the point that other departments must shoulder a greater share. Emphasizing conventional exercises and training officers how to plan static defenses, for example, are understandable but obviously ill-suited to address an insurgency. The author argues that this is a myopic approach and that our military has yet to get its institutional arms around political warfare embodied through insurgency. This is important to fix, Lamborn argues, since political warfare in the form of insurgencies will constitute the type of warfare most likely to occur in the 21st century.

*Arms of Little Value* is not entirely condemnatory. It presents a number of solutions and alternative perspectives on the development of policy and use of military might. Many of the author’s suggestions are in line with a recent RAND study that brought together analysts and military officers on the 10-year anniversary of the Iraq invasion. In essence, the RAND study and *Arms of Little Value* both emphasize the critical importance of an invariably clear policy goal that withstands critical scrutiny. As the RAND study indicates, this did not occur with Iraq. Failure to understand second- and third-order effects of major decisions—such as the Coalition Provisional Authority Orders Nos. 1 and 2 that disbanded the Iraqi Army and initiated de-Baathification—provides ample evidence of such failure. On the other hand, the U.S. military’s efforts in Anbar Province through the Anbar Awakening indicate an adaptability that the author could have examined as a positive example of understanding insurgency.

Although the book does not address the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan directly, the examined historical case studies point to current and recent events. Altogether, significant and substantive arguments are presented, and the author’s focusing on better understanding of the political nature of warfare is merited. Similarly, listening to and evaluating the assessments of a credible author are marks of professionalism. If readers accept the premise of honest, critical evaluation of military power’s limits, there is much to be gained from *Arms of Little Value*.

**Capt. Nathaniel L. Moir, USAR,  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**

David Finkel, Sarah Crichton Books  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2013  
256 pages, \$26.00

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**I**F DAVID FINKEL'S goal is to break readers' hearts with *Thank You for Your Service*, he succeeds.

In precise, lean prose, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* reporter unflinchingly tells the interwoven stories of the soldiers of Fort Riley's 2-16th Infantry Battalion as they fight to survive the "after-war" upon returning from an Iraq deployment that saw all 800, in Finkel's words, "come home broken in various degrees, even the ones who are fine."

The book unspools like coiled razor wire, stark words interspersed with haunting black-and-white photos purposely made plain to allow the soldiers' lives' vivid hemorrhaging to stand in sharp contrast.

Twenty-eight-year-old Sgt. Adam Schumann is a case in point, plagued by flashbacks, nightmares, and unshakable guilt as he relives his lasting trauma moment by moment, second by second. "Emory, shot in the head, is still draped across his back," Finkel writes of Schumann's tortured memories of comrades hit by enemy attacks, "and the blood flowing out of Emory's head is still rivering into his mouth. Doster, whom he might have loved the most, is being shredded again and again by a roadside bomb on a mission Adam was supposed to have been on, too, and after Doster is declared dead, another soldier is saying to him, 'None of this . . . would have happened if you were there.'"

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) may be reduced to acronyms in the press and medical journals, but they rule the after-war world of the soldiers Finkel follows in his fly-on-the-wall narrative.

These are the same young warriors he embedded with and chronicled in a previous best-seller, *The Good Soldiers*. Now he watches from his invisible vantage point as their lives disintegrate on the home front—as they beat their wives, kill themselves, terrorize their children, and despair over ever returning

to normalcy. The collateral-damage suffering of their parents, spouses, and children proves that PTSD and TBI are not just conditions, but they are communicable diseases infecting whole families and American society for generations to come. Whether or not they are curable diseases remains to be seen.

Each soldier is on a mission to find relief from these invisible war wounds and forgiveness for the men they have become, a quest in which they literally endure insults added to injuries. They face insufferable irony inflicted by an intractable bureaucracy and incredible insensitivity from an American public so disengaged during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars but now suddenly so eager to blather "thank you for your service" without understanding what it means.

One GI, his TBI-rattled brain incapable of retaining names or remembering where he parks his car, is nevertheless forced on an arduous paper chase through a convoluted in-processing system to gather 39 signatures just to join the Warrior Transition Battalion, the unit formed to treat people like him. Another, fresh from a suicide attempt during which his wife wrested a shotgun from his hands, is sent by treatment counselors on a therapeutic "Healing Heroes" hunting trip, where well-meaning but clueless civilian organizers, uttering the ubiquitous "thank you for your service," give each participant a shiny new shotgun.

Finkel traces the soldiers, both discharged and active duty, as they navigate the labyrinthine systems set up to help them. His reporting deftly reveals a stressed military culture—staggering under the weight of its own inflexibility and struggling to make sense of "lessons learned" from record numbers of suicides and something as untidy as PTSD, juxtaposed with the need for military order.

The author singles out now-retired Gen. Peter Chiarelli, former U.S. Army vice chief of staff, for his relentless quest to enlighten the services' leadership on the need to ramp up suicide prevention efforts and de-stigmatize war-induced mental illness, even as the general feared that this dismal tidal wave had not yet crested.

These themes and messages are subtly delivered through the real-life, up-close-and-personal suffering of soldiers and their families, at once horrific and mesmerizing.

At the end, Finkel offers a few Band-Aids to stanch the hemorrhaging of his subjects' unhealed lives, but it's not enough to unbreak the hearts of those reading about them.

This book leaves lasting questions: is the phrase "thank you for your service" merely lip service to acknowledge a sacrifice too great to measure? Is any amount of thanks enough?

**Carol Saynisch, Steilacoom, Washington**

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### **ZUMWALT:**

#### **The Life and Times of Admiral Elmo Russell "Bud" Zumwalt, Jr.**

Larry Berman, HarperCollins, New York  
2012, 528 pages, \$29.99

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**L**ARRY BERMAN'S BIOGRAPHY of Adm. "Bud" Zumwalt is important to more than just naval audiences. Anyone interested in the meaning of the often-used term "transformational leadership" will profit from the book. For those unfamiliar with Zumwalt, he instigated a virtual "cultural revolution" in the U.S. Navy as the chief of naval operations in the early 1970s. Before that, he served as the commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Either of these major "jobs" makes him a person of interest as a historical figure and as a role model for those studying leadership at the highest levels. Zumwalt's life was filled with triumph and tragedy.

The most important chapters are those concerning Zumwalt's time in Vietnam and his tenure as chief of naval operations. Berman examines Zumwalt's decision to use Agent Orange in the Mekong Delta to aid his river assault boat crews in interdicting the flow of munitions to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. (Zumwalt's son, Elmo III, who served in the campaign, contracted cancer attributable to the toxins and later died from complications.) Zumwalt never changed his mind about the rightness of his decision to use Agent Orange, given the circumstances of the war at the time, but he devoted much of the rest of his life helping veterans exposed to the deadly chemical.

The book's high point is the discussion of Zumwalt's ability to bring a racist, sexist, and conservative naval officer corps into the 20th century. Zumwalt issued reforms to the fleet through his famous "Z-grams." Officers who had been through Zumwalt's reforms fall into two categories. There are those who believed Zumwalt had done the Navy a great service and those who believed he had ruined it. The group with Berman's judgment of history on their side believed Zumwalt clearly brought the Navy in line with the rest of the United States as to cultural norms. Berman shows how Zumwalt led the difficult fight for institutional change from the top down in the face of opposition from his fellow admirals.

Berman brings to light Zumwalt's skill as an innovative and insightful strategist. George C. Marshall, Paul Nitze, and other famous strategists recognized how Zumwalt's talented mentoring paid great dividends to the U.S. Navy and to the nation. Berman's book is very readable. He makes a few errors common to biographies, such as the tendency to canonize the subject. Zumwalt is presented warts and all although he seems to have had few of them. A minor weakness is the book's end. We never learn how and what Zumwalt died of after his long and productive life—but perhaps that is for the best, given it was his life that mattered, not his death. I highly recommend the book to a broad audience, especially those interested in transformational leadership in peace and war.

**John T. Kuehn, Ph.D.,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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### **USEFUL ENEMIES:**

#### **When Waging Wars is More Important Than Winning Them**

David Keen, Yale University Press,  
New Haven, CT, 2012, 304 pages, \$38.00

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**D**AVID KEEN PROVIDES an insightful analysis concerning the complexities of current global conflicts and the factors continuing them long after international attention has moved on. The central premise in Keen's *Useful Enemies* is that



powerful, corrupt actors have an under-appreciated stake in prolonging wars and victimizing civilian populations. He suggests “war systems,” which include aid agencies and the U.S. military, are designed to enhance the power of these military leaders and not necessarily to achieve decisive victory. Supporting counterinsurgencies in weak states does not make the Western world safer. Our support of counterinsurgencies increases civilian dislocations while decreasing their military’s need for compromise with “terrorists” and other intractable enemies.

Early chapters focus on the economic aspects of military conflict. Diamonds and other valuable resources are the targets of greedy warlords. Warlords also take advantage of the conflicts to move people away from their homes to new locations, using security concerns to their advantage. The military-dominated governments delay any peace process that may endanger their control of this process. Keen equates Afghanistan with Vietnam as the U.S. was drawn into extended wars where “winning” was not a high priority for the local government.

Some of his most thought-provoking points are made when Keen discusses the political factors involved in the creation of “permanent emergencies.” He charges key U.S. allies, such as Egypt and Israel, with using military justifications to subvert normal democratic processes and profit from emergencies. Russia and Yugoslavia are mentioned as states where the leadership created a sense of siege to manipulate their people. In a post-9/11 analysis, Keen argues the United States is too quick to declare wars it cannot easily end. He writes that U.S. politicians “have actively encouraged the militarization of the economy” and become reliant on its technology. Finally, when he extends his analysis to shame and the psychology of violence in the United States, he reveals the randomness of some of his research by focusing on a criminology book he stumbled on in his local British bookshop. Keen’s perspective appears strongly influenced by liberal “development studies” academic circles and his personal reaction to war zone violence. He begins the book with Sierra Leone in 1995 and then presents other first-hand accounts of conflict from across the world during his wide-sweeping survey. His rhetoric is sometimes overly emotional and

may be difficult for some military professionals to stomach as he asks if this U.S. military “machinery” should be more accurately “regarded as a monster to be fed new victims.” He would have done well to heed his own advice about not demonizing the opposition. Modern U.S. military thinkers have been incorporating comprehensive approaches into counterinsurgency doctrine since 2006. Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, acknowledges the primary objective to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government. Corruption is cited as often being a key core grievance and is regularly discussed in military education as a primary detriment to overall mission success. Reading *Useful Enemies* should provoke military officers into thinking about how their profession is perceived by others and understand some of the obstacles to creating true unity of effort.

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**SMALL WARS:  
Low-Intensity Threats and the American  
Response Since Vietnam**

Michael D. Gambone  
The University of Tennessee Press  
Knoxville, 2012, 406 pages, \$40.00

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**H**OW DID U.S. policymakers respond to the multiplying challenges to U.S. security after 1973, what factors influenced their decisions, and what were the end results? Michael D. Gambone attempts to answer these key questions in *Small Wars*. The underwhelming title with its use of “small wars” and “low-intensity” could make the book easily lost among so many other recently published books that cover the same general topic. Yet, this history professor from Kutztown University in Pennsylvania has put together a work that is superior in its analysis, writing, and organization and is, therefore, relevant and useful for today’s military professional. Rather than being lost in the crowd, it is distinctly different.

Gambone’s conclusions are not ground breaking, but his analysis is fresh and informed by careful

attention to the nuances of organizational cultures, policy debates, and the interpretation of lessons learned from previous conflicts. He recognizes and attempts to explain the complexities of decisions concerning the use of military force. While he theorizes that post-war analogies and interpretations of the Vietnam War “continue to have a profound legacy for American policy and the U.S. military,” Gambone explores the influences that go far beyond this legacy. He concludes that the U.S. military of the last decade evolved to meet the contingencies of present warfare (the past 20 years) far better and to a greater degree than the Army of the Vietnam era, but these reforms came late and are likely to recede in the future.

Gambone explores this history through a combination of chronology and topics that extend throughout the period. He starts with an overview of the Cold War and then dissects events of the last 40 years. Toward the end of the book, Gambone explores related themes that have influenced U.S. participation in low-intensity conflict, providing useful chapters on the war on drugs and the rise of private military corporations. Following the effective analysis in each of these, Gambone is able to capture the essence in well-articulated conclusions. In his examination of the 1990s, Gambone makes the astute observation that “military and civilian leadership moved along parallel and complementary paths with

respect to small wars,” and that they “promoted contradictory results of better preparedness for low-intensity conflicts coupled with a reduced commitment to them.” He further proposes that, “Success proved to be one of the largest obstacles to military adaptation in the 90s.” Each chapter contains similarly well-connected conclusions that are both thought provoking and grounded in the evidence and analysis.

The book is especially relevant for its multi-dimensional look at military policy, operations, and perspective changes over the last 40 years. Gambone explains dynamics of strategic reassessments over those decades at the highest levels of government that provide a not-so-distant mirror to debates and proposals being reintroduced to the strategic discourse today. Military professionals who find themselves struggling with the recent attention being given to “new” concepts would do well to pause and read Gambone’s book. The U.S. military has struggled with building partnerships and capacity, persistent engagement, light-footprint operations, and even “deviant globalization” for many years with varying degrees of success. Any insightful understanding of recent history, such as this book provides, will be useful in approaching discussions of these themes.

**Lt. Col. Jan K. Gleiman, USA,  
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(U.S. Army)

# Announcing the 2014 General William E. DePuy Combined Arms Center Writing Competition

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**L**eadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization (ADP 6-22). As an element of combat power, leadership unifies the other elements of combat power (information, mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, and protection). Confident, competent, and informed leadership intensifies the effectiveness of the other elements of combat power.

