



Starved prisoners stand in a concentration camp 7 May 1945 a day after they were liberated by the 80th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army in Ebensee, Austria. (Photo by Lt. Arnold E. Samuelson, U.S. Army, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration)

# Planning to Prevent Genocide

## Lemkin's Warning and Eichmann's Crimes

Lt. Col. Michael H. Hoffman, U.S. Army Reserve, Retired

The word *genocide* was first coined in 1944 by European expatriate lawyer Raphael Lemkin living in America. That was the year he warned the world of the ultimate purpose behind accounts of shocking atrocities on a mass scale being reported out of Europe, where the nondescript and seemingly unnoticeable *Schutzstaffel* (SS) Lt. Col. Adolf Eichmann had quietly put in place the last components of his criminal-style operational planning that played a key part in Nazi perpetration of the Holocaust. This article, considered in combination with a reading of modern U.S. joint doctrine, offers insights for commanders and planners who may be tasked to mitigate or prevent entirely the repetition of such horrors in future operational environments.

## Genesis of a Concept

At the outset, readers may find useful some background on how this article came about. Since 2011, I partnered with expert staff from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to offer a genocide prevention elective for students enrolled in the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College core course. During my research, the significance of Lemkin to any discussion of the modern concept of genocide became pronounced. As a result of his influence, Lemkin's name and ideas figure prominently in the genocide prevention elective from the start.

The world acquired its initial understanding and definition of genocide through his insight derived from

his determination to expose mass atrocities of the kind being committed in all theaters by the Axis prior to and during World War II. Lemkin apparently had no military experience but discerned, in Axis actions in Europe toward targeted minorities and other civilian populations under their control, a repeating pattern of similarities in organization and methods in

**Lt. Col. Michael H. Hoffman, U.S. Army Reserve, retired**, is an associate professor with the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Belvoir satellite campus. He is an attorney with extensive civil and military experience in the field of international law and humanitarian protection. He holds a BA from The Ohio State University and a JD from Southern Methodist University School of Law.

the war crimes being committed that he determined could not be coincidental.<sup>1</sup> He identified a clear connection between reports of widespread Nazi German atrocities in Europe and policies and directives that were imposed in Nazi-occupied nations or that were imposed by their collaborators. Consequently, Lemkin was among the first to clearly discern and warn the world of the full implications of these developments, namely those of a new type of deliberately organized crime against entire groups of people, a crime with no legal name that had now emerged in Europe. He subsequently coined the word “genocide” to describe the phenomenon he had identified.<sup>2</sup>

## Another Key Figure

At the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the students take guided tours of the museum's Permanent Exhibition right after they are introduced to the concept of genocide as developed by Lemkin. However, in addition, it soon became apparent to me during those tours that another individual figured repeatedly, in this instance as a perpetrator of many of the crimes as the story of the Holocaust was shown through the exhibits. Among those identified as having responsibility for the Holocaust, Adolf Eichmann repeatedly surfaces, sometimes, it may appear on passing observation, as only a seemingly minor figure in the many historical events leading up to and during the Holocaust as recounted in the exhibits. However, on closer examination, Eichmann was far more than a minor, faceless, compliant criminal participant who was “following orders.”

## Eichmann: More than Just a Functionary

Eichmann had no formal training in anything like twenty-first-century military operational planning. However, he possessed what can only be viewed as an intuitive criminal talent for understanding how to use methods similar to operational planning in order to make possible the murder of millions.

While more visible and prominent senior Nazi leaders were responsible for ordering and directing that the Holocaust take place, a key mid-level officer they relied on to actually organize and oversee the operational implementation of their genocidal criminal plan was Eichmann. His role in planning and carrying out

the actual implementation of the Holocaust began in 1939.<sup>3</sup> By 1944, and by then far into this genocidal process, he had carefully worked out and put in place the last of the planning elements that were then employed in an attempt to destroy what was left of the Jewish population of Europe.

Students of modern operational art and design should take note of Eichmann's background during the 1930s and 1940s as a useful character study that may help to illuminate some of the kinds of personality types and traits that U.S. intelligence agencies should look for among individuals who emerge in environments conducive to a rise of genocidal tendencies. These include a particular penchant and talent for bureaucratic organization, fanatical dedication to a cause, sterile ruthlessness in personal relationships, a complete lack of empathy for people outside one's own ethnic group, and a peculiar type of shrewd intelligence that enables them to carry out barbaric acts with extreme efficiency. As disturbing as it is to comprehend, Eichmann's record serves as a warning to not underestimate and discount out of hand a seemingly bland personality behind which may be great learning skills and operational insights totally focused on committing war crimes.

## Genocide Defined and Distinguished from Other Crimes

Nearly a century ago, the record reveals Lemkin and Eichmann both had intuitive perceptions regarding the effective use of concepts resembling important aspects of modern operational art; one used his to warn of genocide and the other to commit genocidal crimes.

In Lemkin's case, he was not engaged in planning or conducting operations but rather in conducting penetrating analysis of the Nazi regime and its use of what we can today identify as criminal use of familiar forms of operational art. In doing so, he unmasked for any who would listen the intended Nazi end state as he categorized the details of the actual programmatic system underway of synchronized political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) activity focused collectively on mass murder and cultural annihilation of the Jews in Europe along with other groups of people targeted under Nazi ideology for destruction.

After first proposing the term "genocide," Lemkin became a powerful idea leader in the drive for its official acceptance and recognition as an international crime.<sup>4</sup> Lemkin had proposed a different description of genocide in 1944, but the definition found in the 1948 Convention is the one universally accepted today. It is legally defined in Article II of the Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within



SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, head of the Reich Security Central Office, was principal organizer for the deportation of Jews to the Auschwitz concentration camp in German-occupied Poland. Believed to have been taken in 1942, the image shows Eichmann in his lieutenant colonel's uniform. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)



the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>5</sup>

Setting aside the above definition, it is also important to understand that there are other discrete categories of international crimes that are not technically genocide but that should be understood in their relation to genocide as legally defined. Such recognition is important to prevention planning since some malign activities can be confused with others in a legal sense. Like genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes often entail mass carnage and suffering but in circumstances that do not meet the specific, currently accepted definition of genocide and that may not match the identified categories of protected groups, as set out in the Genocide Convention.

Broadly speaking, many crimes involving mass atrocities are defined as “crimes against humanity” but may not meet the specific legal elements set out in the Genocide Convention. War crimes also include a wide range of violations of the laws and customs of war involving targeting, and breach of the legal protections afforded for civilians, wounded and sick combatants, and prisoners of war.<sup>6</sup>

In a practical sense, awareness of the differences in defining such acts legally during operational deployments is vital since commanders and staff must be able to distinguish in a legal sense what they may encounter initially. Additionally, they also must be alert

to recognizing when one category of these large-scale mass crimes is morphing into another as events transpire and circumstances change.

It should therefore be obvious that legal advice is always essential in planning to meet any of these

threats, but a broad general awareness that there are distinctions underscores the fact that the crimes sometimes take place in differing operational environments.<sup>7</sup> This is also germane because, as is seen in Lemkin’s analysis from 1944, not all methods of genocide rely entirely on military force; some rely heavily on nonmilitary methods as well.

Of note, to aid commanders and staffs, some guides have been developed to advance mass atrocity prevention doctrine and practice.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the U.S. Holocaust

Memorial Museum has published a valuable guide that explores options for genocide prevention.<sup>9</sup> However, leaders and planners still need historical case studies to help them develop their practical understanding of such threats.

## One Unique Case Study: Genesis and Maturation of Lemkin’s Warning

Lemkin was the first to fully visualize crimes reported out of Nazi-occupied Europe as genocide and alert the world. As noted above, at the same time, Eichmann was formulating and implementing his own operational



Photograph of Raphael Lemkin taken sometime between 1947 and 1959. (Photo courtesy of the New York Public Library Digital Collection)

methods to perpetrate the crime identified by Lemkin that is now called genocide.

Lemkin was born in Poland in 1900, one of three children in a Jewish family.<sup>10</sup> He was first influenced to think about threats to humanity when he read Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis* at a young age and when he

was the time to outlaw the destruction of national, racial, or religious groups.”<sup>15</sup> As a result of his proposal, he was forced out of the official Polish delegation under pressure from an anti-Semitic paper that attacked his proposal, along with opposition to his participation from the Polish minister of justice. Though Lemkin was not



Lemkin drew on his legal materials to visualize and articulate long-term Nazi goals even before political and military strategists perceived and described them.



heard about an attack on the Jewish community in nearby Bialystok.<sup>11</sup> Anti-Semitic mob attacks like the one in Bialystok in 1906 were called pogroms and were frequent.<sup>12</sup> The impact was not lost on him.

By the time he graduated law school in 1926, Lemkin was thinking deeply about the Ottoman massacres of Armenians in 1915 and the absence of any means of international legal redress for such crimes. “At Lwow University, where I enrolled for the study of law, I discussed this matter with my professors. They evoked the argument about sovereignty of states. ‘But sovereignty of states,’ I answered, ‘implies conducting an independent foreign and internal policy, building of schools, construction of roads, in brief, all types of activity directed toward the welfare of people.’ Sovereignty, I argued, ‘cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of innocent people.’”<sup>13</sup>

Following graduation, Lemkin pressed on with his critical assessment of the problem. He adopted an analytical approach like one employed by modern-day U.S. field grade officers, as identified in Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*: “Operational art is the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.”<sup>14</sup>

By 1933, he felt impelled by the dangerous situation in Europe to present his ideas at an international penal conference in Madrid. He later reminisced, “I felt the time was ripe for me to put before the conference my idea, which had been maturing for so many years. Now

allowed to attend, his report circulated at the conference. It documents his continuing focus on the problem.

He later recalled that he “formulated two new international law crimes to be introduced into the penal legislation of the thirty-seven participating countries, namely, the crime of *barbarity*, conceived as oppressive and destructive actions directed against individuals as members of a national, religious, or racial group, and the crime of *vandalism*, conceived as malicious destruction of works of art and culture because they represent the specific creations of the genius of such groups.”<sup>16</sup> These proposal were steps forward but not to be his ultimate warnings or recommendations.

Six years later, Lemkin was a refugee. He had fled Poland at the beginning of World War II, found interim refuge in Sweden, and was fortunate to secure admission to the United States in mid-1941 to accept a teaching appointment at Duke University School of Law.<sup>17</sup> Early 1942 found him in Washington, D.C., working as a consultant for the Board of Economic Warfare.<sup>18</sup> He lobbied, sometimes at very high levels, to warn of the genocide in Europe and worked desperately to complete his book detailing the crimes even as they unfolded.<sup>19</sup>

Lemkin’s effort to fully grasp what was happening in Europe had already begun back in Sweden, where he worked through old business contacts to begin collecting copies of Nazi occupation laws. He continued to assemble such documents after he arrived in the United States. When *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* was published in 1944, his first paragraph in the book focused on those sources.

Axis rule, he argues, “is covered by a network of laws and regulations which create the instrumentalities of a most complete administrative control and coercion. Therefore these laws of occupation are an extremely valuable source of information regarding such government and its practices.”<sup>20</sup>

His methodology in *Axis Rule* incorporates a systems approach that resembles the PMESII favored in our twenty-first-century doctrine. Notably, reports on the dire situation of the Jewish population in Europe were already widely known, but Lemkin drew on his legal materials to visualize and articulate long-term Nazi goals even before political and military strategists perceived and described them.<sup>21</sup>

An examination of chapters I–VII of *Axis Rule* demonstrates that Lemkin analyzes his evidence to shed light on Nazi use of instruments that he identified as administration, police, law, courts, property, finance, and labor to meet their objectives. The book provides an equally insightful look at the specific application of these instruments of power and coercion in each country occupied by Axis powers.<sup>22</sup>

Lemkin reported the Nazis were leveraging those sources of power to commit genocide. In concept, Lemkin’s analytical model of Axis sources of genocidal power resembled some basics of formulating modern joint doctrine. Our current doctrine highlights the use of instruments of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic—to achieve lawful and ethical goals.<sup>23</sup>

Next, in chapter VIII, “The Legal Status of the Jews,” Lemkin reports that “the Jewish population in the occupied countries is undergoing a process of liquidation (1) by debilitation and starvation, because the Jewish food rations are kept at an especially low level; and (2) by massacres in the ghettos.”<sup>24</sup> In chapter IX, his introduction to the concept of genocide, he reports these crimes in more detail.<sup>25</sup>

Lemkin then introduces genocide in chapter IX to mean “the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group.”<sup>26</sup> Expanding on that, Lemkin explains that “generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups,

with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.”<sup>27</sup> Lemkin draws on a systems approach to explicate the relationship of the elements within the process of programmatic genocide.

His writing shows that Lemkin had an intuitive grasp of center of gravity (COG) analysis as it is described in our modern doctrine, including JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, which states, “The COG is the source of power or strength that enables a military force to achieve its objective and is what an opposing force can orient its actions against that will lead to enemy failure.”<sup>28</sup> In 1944, Lemkin made the following similar observation on German war aims: “The objective of this scheme is to destroy or to cripple the subjugated peoples in their development so that, even in the case of Germany’s military defeat, it will be in a position to deal with other European nations from the vantage point of numerical, physical, and economic superiority.”<sup>29</sup>

Apply COG analysis to Lemkin’s observation and it becomes apparent that genocide may result even if some members of a targeted population survive but their center of gravity as a people is destroyed. This is backed by language in the Genocide Convention prohibiting “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part”; in other words, this treaty includes genocidal crimes that might directly impact some but not all members of the group.<sup>30</sup>

Also consider the striking similarities between modern PMESII and Lemkin’s findings on “Techniques of Genocide in Various Fields.”<sup>31</sup> In the early twenty-first century, JP 3-0 offers this on PMESII and the operational environment (OE): “One way to think of the OE is as a set of complex and constantly interacting political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) systems.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1944, Lemkin set out his findings on “techniques of genocide” in this order: political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious, and moral.<sup>33</sup> This was Lemkin’s PMESII equivalent that he used to forecast the common features of genocide and send out his warning to the world.

He explores each technique in detail in chapter IX of *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Here, largely in Lemkin’s own words, is a synopsis of the techniques:

1. Using the political technique, “in the incorporated areas ... local institutions of self-government were



destroyed and a German pattern of administration imposed.”<sup>34</sup>

2. The social technique was “accomplished in part by the abolition of local law and local courts and the imposition of German law and courts.” In Poland and Slovenia, “the intelligentsia and the clergy were in great part removed from the rest of the population and deported for forced labor in Germany.”<sup>35</sup>
3. Using the cultural technique of genocide in some areas, “the local population is forbidden to use its own language in schools and in printing.” Further, “the population has also been deprived of inspiration from the existing cultural and artistic values. Thus, especially in Poland, were national monuments destroyed and libraries, archives, museums, and galleries of art carried away.”<sup>36</sup>
4. The economic technique of genocide, he found, “creates difficulties in fulfilling cultural-spiritual requirements. Furthermore, a daily fight literally for bread and for physical survival may handicap thinking in both general and national terms.” Lemkin identified that “it was the purpose of the occupant to create such conditions as these among the peoples of the occupied countries, especially those peoples embraced in the first plans of genocide elaborated by him—the Poles, the Slovenes, and the Jews.”<sup>37</sup>
5. The biological technique of genocide was sought by “a policy of depopulation.” This included “measures calculated to decrease the birthrate” of other groups, and “endeavoring to encourage the birthrate of the Germans.”<sup>38</sup>
6. The physical technique of genocide, he reported, included first, “racial discrimination in feeding” everywhere. “Rationing of food is organized according to racial principles throughout the occupied countries.” As Lemkin noted, “The result of

## AXIS RULE IN OCCUPIED EUROPE

Laws of Occupation • Analysis of Government •  
Proposals for Redress

BY  
RAPHAËL LEMKIN

WASHINGTON  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE  
DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW  
700 JACKSON PLACE, N. W.  
1944

To view a digital copy of *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, visit <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9443228.textImage>. (Photo courtesy of Gallica, the digital library of the National Library of France)

racial feeding is a decline in health of the nations involved and an increase in the deathrate.” This technique of genocide was also characterized by the “endangering of health” of groups who were “deprived of elemental necessities for preserving health and life.”

Lemkin reported on Jews forced into life-threatening crowding and deprivation in ghettos, and deadly mass deportation of Poles “in unheated



Defendant Adolf Eichmann takes notes as he sits inside a booth made of bulletproof glass 29 May 1961 during his trial in Jerusalem. (Photo courtesy of the Israel Government Press Office)

cattle trucks and freight cars” under harsh winter conditions. Lemkin also identified “mass killings” as the third physical technique of genocide, which he reported was “employed mainly against Poles, Russians and Jews, as well as against leading personalities from among the non-collaborationist groups in all the occupied countries.” Also, he reported, “The Jews for the most part are liquidated within the ghettos, or in special trains in which they are transported to a so-called ‘unknown’ destination.”<sup>39</sup>

7. The religious technique of genocide involved attempts to “disrupt these national and religious influences.” In his reference to other systematic religious attacks, in addition to those underway against Jewish communities, Lemkin noted that this sometimes involved “systematic pillage and destruction of church property and persecution of the clergy, in this way the German occupying authorities have sought to destroy the religious leadership of the Polish nation.”<sup>40</sup>

8. The moral technique of genocide was calculated “to weaken the spiritual resistance of the national group” by way of “an atmosphere of moral debasement within this group.” Lemkin wrote of German attempts to inflict this form of genocide by promoting use of pornography and excessive alcohol consumption, and by facilitation of gambling.<sup>41</sup>

Within a year of publication of his book, the war in Europe was over, and unfortunately, the accuracy of Lemkin’s awful assessment was fully vindicated by widespread investigations.

Meanwhile, his health was in decline, and he learned that his parents had perished in the Holocaust.<sup>42</sup> However, this did not slow Lemkin, who put all his energy into promoting the adoption of the Genocide Convention and then encouraging its ratification.<sup>43</sup>



His name faded in the years following his death in 1959. Nevertheless, today, he is widely respected among legal scholars and historians as the driving force behind the Genocide Convention.

## Eichmann's Crimes

While Lemkin was using his intuition and talent to alert the world to genocide, Eichmann was using his intuition and talent to perpetrate targeted systematic mass murder on an almost unimaginable scale.

As a matter of background, Eichmann was born in Germany in 1906. He worked as a salesperson in the 1920s and 1930s until joining the SS in 1934. In 1938, he took charge of an office in Vienna that was set up to organize the expulsion of Austria's Jewish population. In 1941, he was appointed director of an SS office of "Jewish Affairs" in Berlin. From that point, he became responsible for a massive program for deporting Jews from across Europe to lethally overpacked ghettos and death camps.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, the writer Hannah Arendt has had an oversized influence on the scholarly perception of Eichmann's actions and role in the Holocaust, and this carries massive consequences for understanding the mechanisms of genocide. Her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* led many to conclude uncritically and without deeper investigation that he was indeed "banal," merely uncreatively and unquestioningly following orders. She judges him only as an ordinary man who "shows his utter ignorance of everything that was not directly, technically and bureaucratically, connected with his job, and also shows an extraordinarily faulty memory."<sup>45</sup> She dismisses him as an individual of no particular ability, but then contradicts herself by noting of Eichmann, "For the first time in his life, he discovered in himself some special qualities. There were two things he could do well, better than others: he could organize and he could negotiate."<sup>46</sup>

Arendt goes on to say, concerning Eichmann's key role in organizing rail transport to the death camps, that "Eichmann was troubled by no questions of conscience. His thoughts were entirely taken up with the staggering job of organization and administration in the midst not only of a world war but, more important for him, of innumerable intrigues and fights over spheres of authority among the various State and Party offices that were busy 'solving the Jewish question.'"<sup>47</sup>

Her observations have been damaging in assessing Eichmann's actual role in the Holocaust because she dismisses him as basically a nobody, elevated to authority only because of his penchant for merely faithfully and unimaginatively carrying out orders. However, in her assessment, she fails to answer an essential question about him: "Why would his superiors have entrusted a banal person of the limited intellectual and creative abilities she ascribes to him with organizing and overseeing a massive criminal plan of unprecedented size and complexity?" In this she fails to grasp the actual reality of the nondescript Eichmann as the gifted, murderous practitioner of operational art he was, who used his organizational skill and intuitive understanding of bureaucracy to organize systematic genocide with industrial-style efficiency on a scale without precedent in human history.

No form of equivalence of underlying purpose is intended by taking note of uncomfortable similarities between modern military practices related to improving organizational effectiveness in military planning and execution of operations, and Eichmann's methods for organizing and conducting genocide. Quite the contrary, one of the underpinning assumptions about U.S. military organization and operations is the assumption that they are being executed for a moral and humanitarian purpose. However, organizational processes are disinterested in themselves; similarly organized processes using similar devices and concepts can be used for achieving good or evil.

While Lemkin was uncovering the genocidal system in Europe, SS Lt. Col. Eichmann was playing a key role in devising and implementing it. He was a staff officer, but his authority derived from the SS chain of command. It gave him power to formulate and cajole the implementation of Nazi Germany's genocidal plans by way of railroad transport to the ghettos and death camps.<sup>48</sup>

Where Lemkin's writings and career give a clear view of his thought process leading up to adoption of the Genocide Convention, Eichmann's thought process leading up to genocide is murky and largely reliant on the evidence of what he did not on a written record that he left. Not surprisingly, what Eichmann did say and write is notoriously unreliable. However, some insight can be gleaned from the records of his police interrogation and trial in Israel from 1960 to 1961.<sup>49</sup>

Eichmann revealed something of the development of his criminal “operational art” when he was questioned by Avner Less, a chief inspector in the Israel Police. Eichmann bragged about setting up an efficient

engaged in criminal planning involving the SS and other organizations. This system could be described as one of “intergovernmental” and “multinational” approaches to genocide. Eichmann also provided staff support for the

“An operational approach to genocide prevention should provide insights necessary to protect our Nation and also help our friends and others in need against such threats coming from enemies who operate under no form of moral restraint.”

bureaucratic system in Vienna to deal with Jewish applicants seeking to escape from Nazi Austria.<sup>50</sup> Though he tried to deny any responsibility for the mass killings that came later, he admitted being present when victims were killed with exhaust fumes at Chelmno and admitted to visiting other killing centers including Auschwitz and Treblinka.<sup>51</sup>

His awareness was a foundation for his visualization and methods. Eichmann’s record documents his use of familiar operational concepts but for purposes at odds with all civilized norms. His crimes were committed using planning concepts that look like forms of operational design and interorganizational coordination.

In our joint doctrine, “Operational design is the analytical framework that underpins planning. Operational design supports commanders and planners in organizing and understanding the OE as a complex interactive system.”<sup>52</sup> Early on, Eichmann built a complex system to manage expulsion of the Jewish people from Austria. As German goals shifted from deportation to murder, Eichmann adapted his approach to genocidal purposes.

In 1943, he was sent to Poland to survey the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto following the famous uprising there, and then to Denmark to investigate the successful escape of most of the country’s Jewish population to Sweden. When Eichmann arrived in Hungary in 1944, he drew on his observations and experience to organize a phased “interorganizational” plan for the deportation, enslavement, and murder of that country’s Jewish population.<sup>53</sup>

Eichmann used a systems approach to arrange mass transport to the death camps. He was constantly

Wannsee Conference in January 1942 where the SS enlisted the support of a number of government ministries in the destruction of Europe’s Jews.<sup>54</sup>

In our joint doctrine, “interorganizational planning and coordination is the interaction among elements of DOD; participating USG [U.S. government] departments and agencies; state, territorial, local, and tribal agencies; foreign military forces and government departments and agencies; international organizations; NGOs [nongovernmental organization]; and the private sector to achieve an objective.”<sup>55</sup> Eichmann used such forms of cooperation for malign purposes.

Eichmann added to his criminal perspective by learning to cultivate cooperation for Jewish deportations from local officials in German-occupied foreign territory.<sup>56</sup> His office in Berlin was constantly coordinating for trains to transport victims to the death camps, arranging for the confiscation of victims’ property, and coordinating cross-border arrangements with foreign offices for deportation to the camps.<sup>57</sup> To get a sense of his operational reach, it is useful to look at the verdict reached in his 1961 trial before the District Court of Jerusalem in Israel.

Eichmann went into hiding at the end of the war and escaped to Argentina, where he lived until Israel’s Mossad caught up with him in 1960. They flew him to Israel, where his trial began the following year on charges brought under Israeli and international law.

On 12 December 1961, the court convicted him, in part for crimes that he committed “together with others” that were specifically directed against the Jewish people including the responsibility for the murder of millions, forcing millions into deadly living conditions,

mass deportations, robbing millions of their property, and taking measures to prevent childbearing.<sup>58</sup> His appeal was denied by the Israeli Supreme Court on 29 May 1962. Eichmann was hanged 31 May 1962.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusions

A critical assessment providing greater insight into how Eichmann was able to orchestrate crimes on such a massive scale has been hampered for sixty years. Unfortunately, Hannah Arendt's "banal" Eichmann thesis has deflected some valuable intellectual energy away from developing a better-informed investigation of his crimes.<sup>60</sup> Eichmann used his own, self-taught form of operational art. He combined that with his ability to draw on Nazi Germany's instruments of power to help bring about the murder of millions of European Jews.

On the other hand, Raphael Lemkin, though noted for his great influence in the field of international law, remains underappreciated for his prescient insight into Nazi goals as events unfolded in Europe prior to and during World War II. Though he did not influence the direction of the Allied war effort, his example should be kept in mind and illuminate how today some civilian practitioners who are engaged in human rights and humanitarian protection work should be better heeded since they may have a profound grasp of the challenges where identification and prevention of genocide and other mass crimes of violence in the contemporary world are concerned.

Additionally, serious students of genocide prevention should understand that war criminals are often skillful military practitioners of what may be conceived

of as operational art—including Eichmann. Genocide and similar mass crimes are complex and require such skilled—though morally bankrupt—individuals to organize and execute them. The essential involvement of individuals who have such skills should be kept in mind by anyone tasked to plan and conduct genocide prevention operations. With the above noted, it is disturbingly clear that Eichmann effectively applied organizational and planning efficiency to achieve genocidal objectives that were inherently devoid of law, morality, or humanitarian ethics. Unfortunately, modern events have revealed that the emergence of Eichmann was not a unique historical phenomenon.

We tend to look at the concept of genocide prevention from the operational perspective of potential rescuers. However, we can also draw on that perspective to improve human rights and humanitarian conduct among partner forces who look to us for support. Ultimately, an operational approach to genocide prevention should provide insights necessary to protect our Nation and also help our friends and others in need against such threats coming from enemies who operate under no form of moral restraint. Other individuals, resembling Eichmann in their characteristics, have frequently emerged on the world stage since World War II. Consequently, modern-day practitioners of operational-level warfare would be well served to take note of Eichmann's background, and the defining features of his character, as traits that may help to discern other seemingly "banal" perpetrators among adversarial groups who, in reality, are key players in organizing and perpetrating similar horrific international crimes. ■

## Notes

1. Philippe Sands, *East West Street: On the Origins of "Genocide" and "Crimes against Humanity"* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2016), 149.

2. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

3. "Adolf Eichmann: Key Dates," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 30 June 2021, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-eichmann-key-dates>.

4. Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, ed. Donna-Lee Frieze (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xiv–xv.

5. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide art. 2, 12 January 1951, 78 U.N.T.S. 277, accessed

18 June 2021, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf>.

6. To explore the differences between the categories of these crimes and the challenges in defining them, see Gerhard von Glahn and James Larry Taulbee, *Law Among Nations: An Introduction to Public International Law*, 11th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 411–15, 544–46.

7. For a summary of each of the three categories of crimes, see Sarah Sewell, Dwight Raymond, and Sally Chinn, *Mass Atrocity Response Operations: A Military Planning Handbook* (Cambridge, MA: Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, 2010), 103–5, accessed 21 June 2021, <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/MARO-Handbook-091117.pdf>; *Mass Atrocity*



*Prevention and Response Options (MAPRO): A Policy Planning Handbook* (Carlisle, PA: The U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2012), accessed 14 October 2021, <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/MAPRO-091117.pdf>.

8. Ibid., 41–100; Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.3, *Peace Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 1 March 2018), app. B; U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Protection of Civilians Reference Guide*, Second Edition (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, U.S. Army War College, January 2018), accessed 20 August 2021, <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/3520.pdf>.

9. Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (Washington, DC: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), 149–70, accessed 21 June 2021, <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Fundamentals-of-Genocide-and-Mass-Atrocity-Prevention.pdf>.

10. Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial*, x.

11. Ibid., xi, 17.

12. Vladimir Levin, "Preventing Pogroms: Patterns in Jewish Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Russia," in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 95–96.

13. Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial*, 20.

14. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 17 January 2017), II-3, accessed 6 July 2021, [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3\\_0ch1.pdf](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_0ch1.pdf).

15. Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial*, 22–23.

16. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 91.

17. Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial*, 41–106.

18. Ibid., 112–13.

19. Ibid., 114–17.

20. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, ix.

21. Ibid., 77–78, 89.

22. Ibid., xvii–xxviii. For a summary, see the highly detailed table of contents.

23. JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 12 July 2017), 1-12–1-15.

24. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 77.

25. Ibid., 88–89.

26. Ibid., 79.

27. Ibid.

28. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1 December 2020), IV-22.

29. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, xi.

30. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide art. II, 12 January 1951, 78 U.N.T.S. 277,

accessed 20 August 2021, <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280027fac&clang=en>.

31. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 82.

32. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, IV-3.

33. Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, xix, 79–90.

34. Ibid., 82–83.

35. Ibid., 83.

36. Ibid., 84–85.

37. Ibid., 85–86.

38. Ibid., 86–87.

39. Ibid., 87–89.

40. Ibid., 89.

41. Ibid., 89–90.

42. Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial*, 117, 180; Sands, *East West Street*, 345.

43. Sands, *East West Street*, 361.

44. Ibid., 361n3; "Adolf Eichmann: Key Dates," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 30 June 2021, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-eichmann-key-dates>.

45. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 54.

46. Ibid., 45.

47. Ibid., 151.

48. David Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann: Rethinking the Life, Crimes, and Trial of a "Desk Murderer"* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2007), 119.

49. Ibid., 424.

50. Jochen von Lang, ed., *Eichmann Interrogated: Transcripts from the Archives of the Israeli Police*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983), 52–54.

51. Ibid., 77–78.

52. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, IV-1.

53. Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann*, 165.

54. Ibid., 112.

55. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1-24.

56. Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann*, 165–66.

57. Ibid., 120–23.

58. Leon Friedman, ed., "Judgment of the District Court of Jerusalem (12 December 1961), The Eichmann Trial," in *The Law of War: A Documentary History*, vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 1627, 1654–55.

59. Ibid., 1657, 1687.

60. Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*, trans. Ruth Martin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), xxii–xxv.