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# **Military Review**

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2017

## **Multi-Domain Battle and FM 3-0**

Perkins, p6

## **Indo-Asia Pacific and Multi-Domain Battle**

Brown, p14

## **Theater Land Operations in Iraq**

Volesky and Noble, p21

## **Ridicule as a Strategic Weapon**

Waller, p49



# Military Review

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**Cover photo:** Distinguished artist Spiros Karkavelas envisions future urban conflict in which the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Naval Services, and the U.S. Army must combine mutually supporting efforts to conduct operations in a complex environment where sophisticated robotics, electronic warfare, cyberwarfare, and space-based weaponry are employed. (Photo by Art of Spiros, Spiros Karkavelas Entertainment Design)

**Next page:** A U.S. Army AH-64D Apache attack helicopter assigned to the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion flies in front of a wall of fire during the South Carolina National Guard Air and Ground Expo 6 May 2017 at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, South Carolina. This expo is a combined arms demonstration showcasing the abilities of South Carolina National Guard airmen and soldiers while saying thank you for the support of fellow South Carolinians and the surrounding community. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jorge Intriago, U.S. Air National Guard)





## Greetings!

There has been much discussion recently on the concept of multi-domain battle, currently under development by the U.S. Army. This issue of *Military Review* offers several articles by senior Army leaders

that discuss the emerging concept from different perspectives. We begin with the second in a series of articles on multi-domain battle by Gen. David Perkins, commander of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, that explains why changes to doctrine are necessary and discusses how the soon-to-be-published Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, will set the stage for multi-domain battle doctrine.

Next, we offer an article by the commander of U.S. Army Pacific, Gen. Robert Brown, who provides his views on the impact of the multi-domain battle concept as it pertains to unified commands in general and the Pacific area of operation specifically. Lastly, the commander of I Corps, Lt. Gen. Gary Volesky, and the deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific, Australian Army Maj. Gen. Roger Noble, present their views on multi-domain battle as it applies to theater-level war-fighting, based on their practical experiences while supporting the Iraqi military in its campaign against the Islamic State.

Many of the other articles selected for this edition are intended to expand and deepen discussion relative to the concepts provided about multi-domain battle in the three

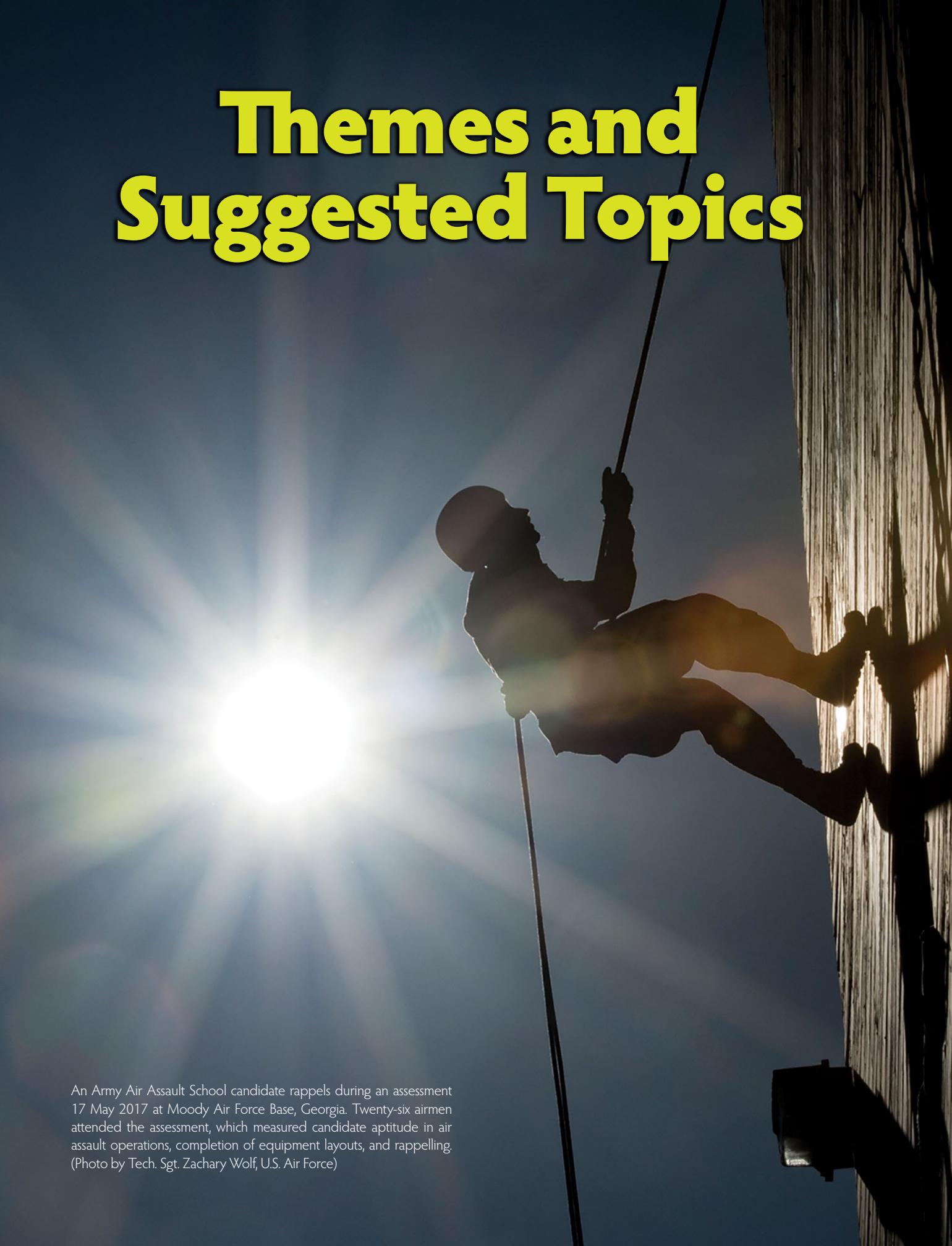
key articles discussed above. With this in mind, we invite our readers to closely peruse our other articles, and we encourage them to compare and discuss the views of these high-level leaders on multi-domain battle and comment on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ArmyUniversityPress/>) or on Twitter (@ArmyUPress).

On a different note, the *NCO Journal* has finally completed its long-awaited move from Fort Bliss to its new home on Fort Leavenworth. I'd like to welcome the staff of the journal to the Army University Press family. We look forward to working with you to provide relevant professional content to our Army's noncommissioned officers in all our publication formats.

Finally, I encourage all our readers to look for the "Special Topics" tab on the Army University Press website. The page provides a compilation of material both from Army University Press publications and from other outside sources related to trending topics and specific geographic "hot spots" pertinent to our military. One key purpose of the Special Topics webpage is to highlight topics about which the Army University Press is especially interested in receiving articles and proposals for larger studies. All Army University Press content is conveniently available online at <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/>. Please continue to read, contribute to, and enjoy *Military Review* and all the other fine Army University Press publications! ■



# Themes and Suggested Topics

A silhouette of a person rappelling down a rope against a bright sun in a blue sky. The person is positioned in the center-right of the frame, facing left. The sun is a large, bright, glowing orb on the left side, creating a lens flare effect. The background is a clear blue sky. The person is wearing a helmet and a harness, and is holding onto the rope with both hands. The rope is a thick, dark line that runs vertically down the page. The person's legs are spread out, and they appear to be in a controlled descent. The overall mood is one of focus and physical challenge.

An Army Air Assault School candidate rappels during an assessment 17 May 2017 at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. Twenty-six airmen attended the assessment, which measured candidate aptitude in air assault operations, completion of equipment layouts, and rappelling. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Zachary Wolf, U.S. Air Force)



## The Changing U.S. Army

- Are U.S. Army rotational units as effective as permanently assigned, forward-deployed units?
- Does the Army need designated security force assistance brigades? How should they be organized?
- Is there a role for the Army in homeland security operations? What must the Army be prepared for?

How is gender integration changing the Army and how it operates?

- How does Army doctrine need to change to incorporate the cyberspace domain?
- Have associated units helped or hindered readiness?

## Global Challenges

- What nations consider themselves to be at war or in conflict with the United States? How are they conducting war, and what does this mean for the Army?
- What are the ramifications of increased Russian military presence in the Middle East?
- What are the military implications of China's economic penetration into Latin America, Africa, and broader Asia?
- What must the U.S. military do to prepare for possible contingency operations in the South China Sea?
- What are the security implications of the growing Islamic presence in Europe? Elsewhere in the world?
- What must the Army do to prepare to fight in urban terrain or megacities? What are the ethical challenges to operating in this type of environment?
- What operational and logistical challenges arise from domestic and foreign infrastructure limitations and how can we mitigate them?
- How can we better prepare soldiers to operate against atypical combatants (i.e., nonuniformed or child warriors) and under conditions where noncombatants are difficult to distinguish?

## 6 Preparing for the Fight Tonight

### Multi-Domain Battle and Field Manual 3-0

Gen. David G. Perkins, U.S. Army

*In the second of a series on multi-domain battle, the commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command describes how Field Manual 3-0, Army Operations, to be published October 2017, will incorporate doctrine to help Army forces prepare for the possibility of major armed conflict in the near future.*

## 14 The Indo-Asia Pacific and the Multi-Domain Battle Concept

Gen. Robert B. Brown, U.S. Army

*The commander of U.S. Army Pacific discusses the effects of the multi-domain battle concept on operational and resource decisions in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.*

## 21 Theater Land Operations Relevant Observations and Lessons from the Combined Joint Land Force Experience in Iraq

Lt. Gen. Gary Volesky, U.S. Army  
Maj. Gen. Roger Noble, Australian Army

*The commander of I Corps and Joint Base Lewis-McChord teams up with the deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific to provide observations on theater-level warfighting and future warfare, including some that may inform the multi-domain battle concept.*

## 30 In Defense of the Theater Army

Lt. Col. Nicholas R. Simontis, U.S. Army

*An Army strategist describes the important role of theater armies and argues for retaining them in today's force.*

## 39 Expanding Tolstoy and Shrinking Dostoyevsky

### How Russian Actions in the Information Space are Inverting Doctrinal Paradigms of Warfare

Maj. Scott J. Harr, U.S. Army

*Recent Russian information operations have inverted commonly held U.S. paradigms of warfare. The author relates some major implications of those operations for U.S. joint forces in terms of policy, doctrine, and capabilities. (First place, Armed Forces Communications Electronics Association (AFCEA) Excellence in Joint Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (JC4I)/Information Operations (IO) Writing Contest)*

## 49 Weaponizing Ridicule

J. Michael Waller, PhD

*The author provides numerous examples of how satire and ridicule are effective, inexpensive instruments of psychological warfare. He recommends that the U.S. government consider ridicule as a strategic weapon.*

## 60 Fabian Strategy for a Twenty-First Century Hannibal

### Reinvigorating U.S. Strategy in Iraq and Syria

Maj. Kyle D. Packard, U.S. Army

*An Army strategist describes how using a Fabian strategy—a guerrilla-style war of attrition to isolate and starve an enemy force—could be effective against Islamic extremism in Iraq and Syria.*

## 68 **The Mission Command of Islamic State**

**Deconstructing the Myth of Lone Wolves in the Deep Fight**

**1st Lt. Michael P. Ferguson, U.S. Army**

*The author contends the Islamic State uses a mission command philosophy, and so-called lone wolf attacks in Western countries are in fact deep attacks with strategic implications.*

## 78 **III Corps during the Surge**

**A Study in Operational Art**

**Maj. Wilson C. Blythe Jr., U.S. Army**

*III Corps, led by then Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, U.S. Army, was successful during the 2007 surge in Iraq due to the effective application of well-established principles of operational art rather than the employment of counterinsurgency doctrine, according to this author.*

## 86 **Solving Deployment Challenges Using a Systems Approach to Understand the Defense Transportation System**

**Col. Dennis C. Major, U.S. Army**

**Maj. Calvin E. Townsend Jr., U.S. Army**

*Two Army logisticians discuss deployment readiness issues stemming from the Defense Transportation System. They offer five practical recommendations for improving its functioning and ensuring unit readiness.*

## 94 **Brazilian Organization for Combating Terrorism during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games**

**Col. Alessandro Visacro, Brazilian Army**

*The chief of staff of the Brazilian Army Special Operations Command describes how Brazil's joint armed forces successfully collaborated with civil agencies, intelligence organizations, and law enforcement to combat terrorism and ensure the safety of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.*

## 105 **Praise the Host and Pass the Fish Sauce**

**Medical Advisers in the Vietnam War**

**Maj. Scott C. Woodard, U.S. Army, Retired**

*A historian from the U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage presents a short history of the medical advisory mission during the Vietnam War and recounts the efforts of medical advisors in that war.*

## REVIEW ESSAY

## 116 **The Ghost Warriors**

**Inside Israel's Undercover War against Suicide Terrorism**

**Lt. Col. John H. Modinger, PhD, U.S. Air Force, Retired**

*The author critiques a book by Samuel M. Katz that delves into counterterrorism operations in Israel, specifically the activities of its premier counterterrorism unit, Ya'mas.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**119** *One reader comments on the North Korean threat.*



# Preparing for the Fight Tonight

## Multi-Domain Battle and Field Manual 3-0

Gen. David G. Perkins, U.S. Army

*This is the second of three articles discussing multi-domain battle through the lens of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. This article discusses the rationale and the approach for incorporating aspects of multi-domain battle into Field Manual 3-0, Army Operations, due to be published October 2017. In recognition of the centennial of American Expeditionary Forces entering World War I, the articles*

*incorporate relevant historical observations and lessons to help drive home the new and differentiate it from the old.*

**O**n 10 September 2001, the Army knew it would fight and win by conducting full spectrum operations, and in 2003, the opening of Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrated U.S.

dominance on the battlefield.<sup>1</sup> In the following years, however, the force would struggle to adapt as the operational environments changed. The introspection that eventually followed led to new doctrine.

As the pace of change increases, the tension escalates between the need to prepare for future operations and the difficulty of anticipating operational environments. Resisting change, however, is not an option; the Army must adapt at least as fast as the Nation's adversaries change their ways of conducting operations. Even though we can anticipate some changes and forecast certain trends, many characteristics of future environments are unknowable. To mitigate this uncertainty, Army forces must be able to constantly adapt and innovate so we can fight and win in the environments we could face—within the next five years, or “tonight”; within the next five to ten years, or “tomorrow”; and in the future beyond 2030.

The Army needs to forecast mid- and long-term trends and prepare for them to the best of its ability, but also it needs to develop operational principles that can help guide adaptability and innovation during operations and training today. *Multi-domain battle* bridges all these requirements.

## The Example of German Doctrinal Change in World War I

From the World War I German experience, it is clear that military success depends on an organization willing to learn, a central concept that can integrate innovation and adaptation, and the ability to proliferate and spur implementation across the force. German tactical success prolonged the war at great cost to the Allies even though German forces eventually lost.

In the summer of 1914, the opposing armies of both the Central and the Allied powers anticipated a short decisive campaign, based on their doctrine and tactics.<sup>2</sup> However, by December of that year, the doctrinal foundations of all combatants were found wanting. Armies adapted in the fight, establishing elaborate field fortifications spanning the entirety of the western front, because none of them could afford to sustain the casualty rates incurred in the first few months of the war. The race was on for new tactics and doctrine to break the stalemate—in a conflict that would claim over 8.5 million lives before an armistice ended the war.<sup>3</sup>

(Graphic on previous page courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Creating new doctrine in the midst of large-scale combat is a costly endeavor because doctrinal tactics are devised using trial and error and are paid for in blood. Among the armies of World War I, the Germans are considered the most successful in changing and implementing tactical doctrine during the war.<sup>4</sup> They applied a dynamic process that used a central concept, complemented with innovation originating at the tactical level and empowered by an organization willing to learn.<sup>5</sup>

Initially, however, German forces mired themselves in rigid doctrine. “Halten, was zu halten ist,” meaning “hold on to whatever can be held,” reflected German military theory behind an inelastic first-line defense lacking any real depth.<sup>6</sup> As the war progressed, the Allies evolved by effectively using massed artillery to support infantry assaults, with lethal results.<sup>7</sup> Leading up to the summer of 1916, despite failing doctrine and an evolving battlefield, the German military resisted doctrinal changes, and its relative combat power suffered.<sup>8</sup>

It was not that German units were not trying. The failure was one of leadership. Those who survived the front lines were innovative and adaptive. As one German general quipped, “bullets quickly write new tactics,” but those new tactics were stifled at the local levels, failing to reach an organization in desperate need of best practices.<sup>9</sup> Even senior staff in the German High Command had identified scalable examples of tactics that proved successful across the western front, but Gen. Erich von Falkenhayn, chief of staff of German forces, saw no need for such changes. It was not until Falkenhayn was removed, and Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and Lt. Gen. Erich Ludendorff arrived, that the German High Command would implement much needed change.

The leadership Ludendorff brought to the German High Command enabled the percolation of new ideas that would take hold throughout the force. By December 1916, the

**Gen. David G. Perkins, U.S. Army**, is the commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He holds a BS from the United States Military Academy, an MS in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, and an MA in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College. He previously served as commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

operations section of the German High Command had consolidated field reports and intelligence from across the western front to develop new doctrine. *The Principles of Command in the Defensive Battle in Position Warfare* established a benchmark of when the German military took on the core concept of “operational depth” and applied it as a learning organization.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout 1917, the Germans repeatedly frustrated French and British forces, who fought with dogmatic and formulaic tactical doctrine to disastrous effect. Germany’s response was the continued reexamination and evolution of its doctrine.<sup>11</sup> The learning paid off, as the first units to employ elements of *Principles* and other emerging German doctrine regained their relative fighting power advantages that had been in decline since 1915.<sup>12</sup> The Allies eventually recognized the value of Germany’s new doctrine, and they tried, without success, to incorporate aspects of it during the winter of 1917 to 1918.



## The Need to Change Army Doctrine in 2017

Current U.S. Army doctrine effectively guides the relatively familiar low-intensity hybrid fights the Army likely would fight tonight, but that doctrine does not adequately address major combat operations. For example, at the time this article was written, doctrine did not sufficiently account for how to synchronize capabilities in sea, cyber, or space domains during large-scale combat operations against peer opponents. The revision to Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Army Operations*, due to be published October 2017, will begin to correct this deficiency.

Some ideas percolate throughout the operating force and lead to change regardless of their source. An idea comes to the forefront usually because of conditions requiring urgent change. In war, as casualties

Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg (left) was appointed chief of the General Staff with Gen. Erich Ludendorff (right) as his deputy 29 August 1916, following the failure of the German attack against Verdun and the subsequent resignation of Chief of the German General Staff Erich von Falkenhayn. Ludendorff was responsible for developing and enacting the Hindenburg Program, an effort to organize what remained of Germany’s depleted material and personnel resources in a new total national war effort. As part of this process, Ludendorff took the lead in revamping the army’s tactical doctrine that had become largely ineffective. Collecting observations during frequent personal battlefield circulation tours at the front, he developed and promoted a system of flexible defense that initially battered the French and the British armies in 1917. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress)

mount and tactics fail, the urgency is clear and compelling. Generally, however, change slows down as a multitude of possibilities and probabilities circulates

in a force not engaged in major combat operations. In this murky environment, where leaders lack consensus about problems as well as solutions, change may seem less urgent and more difficult to achieve. Yet, it is in this period of possibilities and probabilities that the opportunity and utility for change exist.

*Doctrine*, as described in FMs and other doctrinal publications, guides Army forces committed to training, deploying, and operating around the world today—forces who could find themselves conducting

same time TRADOC is further developing multi-domain battle as a concept.

### How the Current Force and Doctrine Developed

On 11 September 2001, the United States was thrust into a period defined by war and persistent conflicts. From Afghanistan and into Iraq, the U.S. military employed decisive force that led to quick initial victories and resulted in overwhelming domi-

“As the dust of Baghdad settled in late 2003, the doctrine that had prepared the Army for the next fight rapidly became inadequate for the conflicts the Army faced on the ground.”

the fight tonight. *Concepts*, as described in U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) pamphlets, change the Army; the concepts TRADOC is using in 2017 represent how the Army might conduct operations in 2020 to 2040 (at the time this article was written, revisions were in development).

TRADOC concepts guide purposeful, useful, and meaningful change on a large scale to one of the biggest organizations in the world. The core groups who use TRADOC concepts for planning, however, represent less than one percent of the Total Army—people working on the Department of the Army staff, in acquisitions, or as part of the Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC). Readers should keep in mind that TRADOC normally publishes concepts more than five years before their ideas are expected to evolve into the doctrine that guides operating forces. *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0, for example, was published in 2012. It introduced a precursor to multi-domain battle that was called “cross-domain synergy,” in which forces would seek “complementarity ... in different domains [to include space and cyberspace] such that each enhances the effectiveness and compensates for the vulnerabilities of the others.”<sup>13</sup> In the case of multi-domain battle, therefore certain aspects have been studied for the past five years. These validated elements are being integrated into FM 3-0 at the

nance in all domains. However, as the dust of Baghdad settled in late 2003, the doctrine that had prepared the Army for the next fight rapidly became inadequate for the conflicts the Army faced on the ground.

The Army spent the next few years designing, implementing, and fine-tuning principles, tactics, techniques, and procedures for use against an enemy enmeshed into the population with weapons we were not prepared to face. Slowly, just as the German army in World War I, the U.S. military came to realize doctrine needed to reflect current operational environments, as well as the pace of change.

For the next decade, joint forces focused almost exclusively on defeating improvised explosive devices and building capabilities needed for countering insurgencies. In 2006, the Army published FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, to provide the doctrine operating forces needed (Army doctrinal literature consisted only of FMs until 2009; FMs now emphasize doctrinal tactics).<sup>14</sup> The doctrine in FM 3-24 gave a central framework, and a point of departure, for a situation that had been rapidly changing. New leadership and surge forces applied the new doctrine, and ultimately the government of Iraq and Multi-National Forces–Iraq gained a position of relative advantage. These actions saved American lives, as fatalities dropped from 904 in 2007 to 149 in 2009.<sup>15</sup>

It is critical to understand that during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army accepted risk to



modernization, both intellectually and financially. While the Army was growing counterinsurgency and security cooperation capabilities, our peer and near-peer adversaries were investing heavily in modernizing their capabilities to degrade and defeat the advantages U.S. forces had enjoyed since the end of the Cold War.

Starting in 2002, future Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work warned of emerging concerns over China, Russia, and Iran, which were actively modernizing anti-access/area-denial strategies.<sup>16</sup> Through these strategies, Russia and China have developed considerable capabilities for constraining U.S. military strengths.

After over a decade of counterinsurgency and nation building, the Army introduced Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations*, in 2011. ADP 3-0 set in motion a renewal for decisive action by introducing *unified land operations*, an evolutionary concept reflecting the progression from AirLand Battle and full spectrum operations.<sup>17</sup> Unified land operations allowed for a previously discarded elements to be reintroduced. For example, the operational framework reintroduced *deep, close, and support* areas, recognizing lethality as fundamental to military operations, and the doctrine added two Army core competencies: combined arms



A Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle lies on its side after a blast from a buried improvised explosive device (IED) 6 January 2007 in Iraq. The Stryker was recovered and protected its soldiers on more missions until another bomb finally put it out of action. Joint doctrine focused on defeating IEDs and conducting counterinsurgency for most of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan until the introduction of Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Operations*, in 2011 that enlarged the scope of necessary capabilities for future conflicts. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

3-0 will drive necessary changes to both ADP 3-0 and ADRP 3-0, as well as the rest of Army doctrine. Multi-domain battle will be integrated into FM 3-0 in a way that Army operating forces can apply the doctrine *without making significant changes to the current force*.

## The Force and Doctrine the Nation Needs

Multi-domain battle captures the idea that military success depends upon capabilities in the air, cyberspace, land, maritime, and space domains and in the electromagnetic spectrum. This is true for the Army and the other services, as well as our adversaries. From the perspective of U.S. forces, it is an idea that will help units avoid a position of relative disadvantage against a peer or near-peer adversary in critical geographic spaces around the world. Multi-domain battle guides closer coordination and integration of capabilities than ever before.

For example, the Army cannot depend on the Air Force to solve tactical problems in a dense, integrated air defense system environment when an enemy has superior long-range fires and capable intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Units that go to ground when making contact to await guidance or the delivery of airpower capabilities would likely be destroyed by massed artillery in a close fight.

While joint forces currently employ elements of multi-domain battle, the most egregious doctrinal void has been the lack of principles for multi-domain capabilities in large-scale combat operations. The Army and the other services must be able to converge capabilities across multiple domains in an integrated fashion to gain and then exploit the initiative. In sum, our doctrine needs to guide ready forces with converged and integrated capabilities spanning across domains, as compared to synchronizing a federated set of stove-piped capabilities.

The revision of FM 3-0 will not fill all the doctrinal gaps. Rather, it will provide guidelines to commanders,

maneuver and wide area security.<sup>18</sup> ADP 3-0 made old terms of operational art and science new and relevant again. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations*, did the same, in greater detail. However, the Army has not had an FM 3-0 *Operations* manual focused on large-scale combat operations at the theater army, corps, or division level since 2011.

Despite a few updates since 2011 and a significant revision in 2016, both ADP 3-0 and ADRP 3-0 still offer only limited principles for large-scale combat operations. The need for a new FM 3-0 to address this doctrinal shortcoming in the interim was clear. The new FM



staffs, and leaders as they employ multi-domain capabilities into training, planning, and operations. It will be up to the leaders of today to innovate, iterate, and adapt this doctrine before a major armed conflict, should it occur.

## Unified Land Operations and Multi-Domain Battle

The emerging concept of multi-domain battle, therefore, is being designed to help shape the Army for anticipated challenges. As a TRADOC concept, multi-domain battle will be about aligning requirements to develop *future* capabilities required to win in the future fight. However, what of the challenges the Army may face tonight? In Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East, our adversaries have adapted their capabilities to challenge advantages to which we have become accustomed. We must begin the process of change now by recognizing ways to improve and innovate with the technology and capabilities we currently have, and more important, we must begin to shift culturally to a new mind-set for operational problems.

Two sections of FM 3-0 will focus specifically on key elements of multi-domain battle. The first element will

Field Manual 3-0, *Army Operations*, will provide doctrine to help Army leaders anticipate requirements and synchronize capabilities in land, air, sea, cyber, and space domains during large-scale combat operations against peer opponents in the present and near future. (Graphic composite by Jim Crandell, Army University Press. Background picture of Call of Duty: Black Ops 3-OFFICIAL TRAILER & BREAKDOWN!, Flickr.com. Foreground photo by Cherie A. Thurlby, Department of Defense)

be the extended multi-domain battlefield, to be described in a section on anticipated operational environments. It will integrate space, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and the information environment into how commanders view the overall operational environment. It will say that all battle is multi-domain. The doctrine will guide commanders and staffs in how to converge and integrate multi-domain capabilities during operations.<sup>19</sup>

The second element will consist of an updated operational framework for conducting unified land operations, related to understanding an operational environment. Enemies are likely to initiate hostilities from an initial position of relative physical, temporal, and cognitive advantage, as well as other factors peculiar to the land domain

across the continuum of conflict.<sup>20</sup> The physical aspect is straightforward: geography, terrain, infrastructure, weapons ranges, and so on. The temporal aspect introduces the added complexity of wide-ranging time-based variables that affect an operation, requiring commanders to think far beyond just synchronization. Virtual aspects will include activities related to information, cyberspace, and electronic warfare. Finally, the cognitive aspect will relate to understanding the enemy and ourselves and also the perceptions and behaviors of populations. Cognitive considerations will be informed by the physical, temporal, and virtual aspects of the operational framework.

To address probable enemy positions of relative advantage, FM 3-0 will discuss the necessity of synchronization, capabilities convergence, and high operational tempo while accepting risks more substantial than those of counterinsurgency or stability tasks.<sup>21</sup> Sound methods of mission command, mobility, reconnaissance-in-depth, protection, and sustainment will be critical to the successful prosecution of large-scale operations. In addition, commanders and staff must bring innovation and flexibility to how they employ tempo and synchronize maneuver, cross-domain fires, and information actions. It is through the convergence of these effects across multiple domains that the Army will prevail against a peer enemy.

In the multi-domain battle concept, joint forces will employ speed of recognition, speed of decision, and speed of action to exploit windows of domain superiority with force-oriented operations to destroy key enemy capabilities. The requirements and considerations of multi-domain battle will provide the framework by which commanders and staffs employ these actions to defeat the enemy. A multi-domain concept emphasizing the opportunity to achieve well-synchronized, high-tempo offensive action, potentially in the form of deep maneuver, will help Army forces defeat enemies with superior long-range fires and air defense capabilities.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

We are in the fortunate position of having the humility to accept that we need to improve the way we conduct operations, even though we cannot predict the next fight with absolute certainty. We are revising our operational doctrine, beginning with FM 3-0 in October 2017, so forces can prepare to face the trends that are evident and the unpredictable changes that will arise. From here, it is up to commanders and staffs, professional soldiers, and leaders to apply and further refine doctrine so that we are all ready to fight and win. Victory starts here. ■

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# The Indo-Asia Pacific and the Multi-Domain Battle Concept

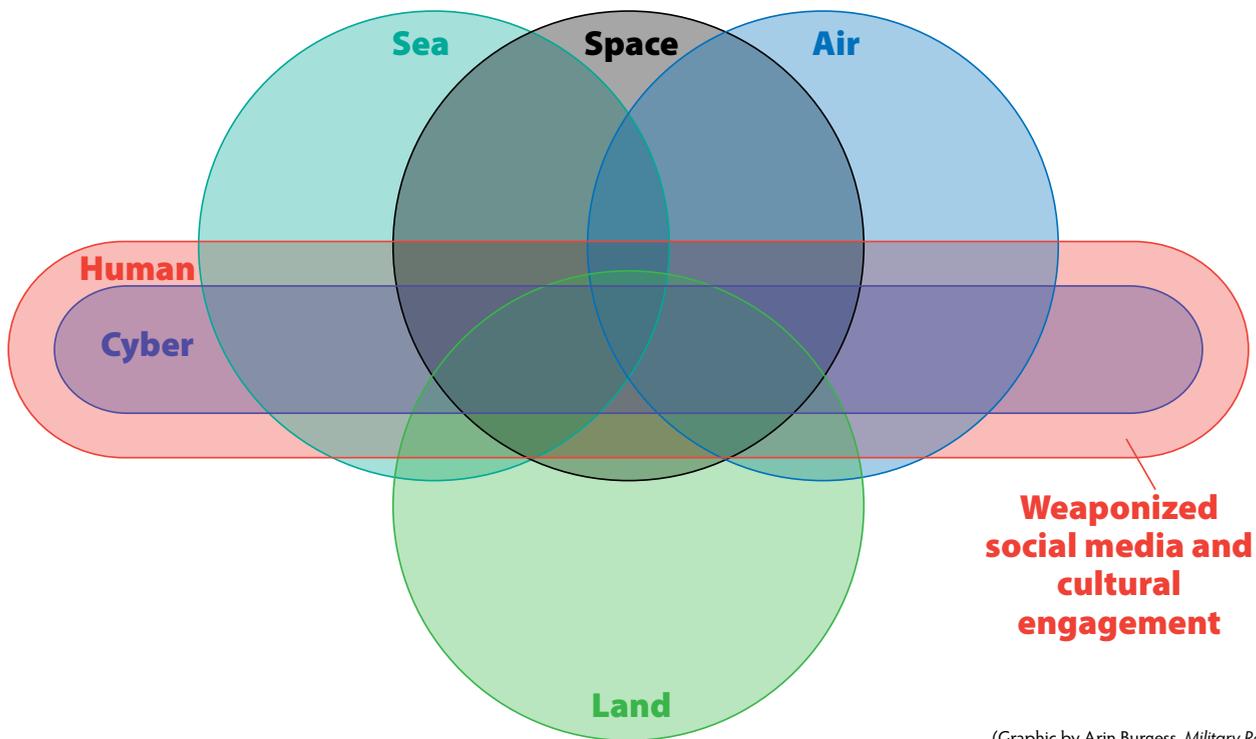
Gen. Robert B. Brown, U.S. Army

The United States Armed Forces are at a crossroads, facing both institutional and operational challenges. The character of war continues to change at a quick pace, requiring military leaders to reassess some of their core beliefs. This situation has led to the testing and refinement of concepts, capabilities, and people to ensure U.S. forces are ready for the conflicts of today and tomorrow. Without doubt, any future conflict will be increasingly complex and distributed, involving actions across multiple domains—land, air, sea, space, and cyber—by multiple military services, at

times simultaneously (see figure, page 16).<sup>1</sup> The nascent *multi-domain battle* concept, some elements of which are described in a forthcoming white paper jointly authored by the Army and the Marine Corps, addresses the increasing complexity of the battlefield and its requirement for service integration.<sup>2</sup> While still in development and experimentation, the concept is already affecting operational and resource decisions, especially in the Indo-Asia Pacific.

This article presents three topics to illustrate how we are thinking about the implementation of the multi-domain battle concept in the Pacific Command area of





(Graphic by Arin Burgess, *Military Review*)

**Figure. Multi-Domain Battlefield**

Challenges include an increasingly belligerent North Korea that is sharing its increasingly capable missile technology with Iran, a growing China that is challenging international rules and norms, a revanchist Russia that is increasingly active in the Pacific with a provocative military posture, continuing nuclear-backed friction between India and Pakistan, increasing activities by violent extremist networks operating in partner and ally nations, and political and diplomatic instability from changes in executive leadership of key regional allies and partners. The most dangerous threat in the Indo-Asia Pacific comes from regional actors with nuclear arsenals and the intent to undermine the international order. Sophisticated denial capabilities and less-than-military forces managed by the state but backed by large militaries with interior lines of communication create the danger of *faits accomplis*.

Like the international state of play, the military situation is also increasingly dangerous. Adversaries and enemies have learned from U.S. successes and failures over the last few decades. They recognize that U.S.

strengths based on power projection, joint operations, and technological overmatch led to unprecedented tactical success. As such, adversaries have developed capabilities and concepts that attempt to remove those advantages, increasing the complexity of the battlefield for the United States Armed Forces. This has led to an increasingly contested global commons, with a loss of U.S. military dominance in the air and sea due to denial technologies and tactics. Whether opponents take gradual or sudden actions, the United States needs to significantly improve its strategic advantage in the Indo-Asia Pacific, or it will risk losing ground militarily, diplomatically, and economically.

Because of these strategic trends, both positive and negative, U.S. and partner forces need to maintain current military advantages and recapture those that have been lost. Reducing the risk of conflict and ensuring the stability of the current international system depend on our ability to deter key actors from aggressive and detrimental actions. We must interrupt enemy decision cycles and present enemies with multiple dilemmas that create uncertainty and paralyze their efforts. If aggression leads

to conflict, however, we must be prepared to defeat our enemies unambiguously.

This approach is the driving force behind the multi-domain battle concept, which is designed to overcome denial technologies and jointly affect all domains to create localized areas of overmatch.<sup>9</sup> These effects will then re-enable maneuver for the entire joint force operating in any region, thereby placing an enemy in a position of disadvantage so U.S. forces can gain the initiative.

## Elements of the Multi-Domain Battle Concept

The multi-domain battle concept may at first sound like nothing more than traditional joint operations. There is some truth to this. What we are trying to achieve—cross-domain effects—is not entirely new. For example, at Thermopylae and Salamis, the ancient Greeks employed both land and naval forces to defeat the invading Persians.<sup>10</sup> Much closer to our own time, the United States of America owe their independence to the effective employment of American and French ground and naval forces against Lord Cornwallis's army at Yorktown.

Another historical example is the Vicksburg Campaign during the American Civil War. With its ability to control navigation on the Mississippi River, Confederate Vicksburg's artillery, infantry, and cavalry forces constituted a formidable anti-access and area denial challenge to Union forces. Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant overcame that challenge only by combining the capabilities and effects of his own artillery, cavalry, and infantry forces with the naval ships led by acting Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter.<sup>11</sup>

The introduction of the airplane, the submarine, and the aircraft carrier in World War I, and the incorporation of mobile radio communications and radar systems in World War II, vastly increased a strategic commander's ability to operate across several domains simultaneously. More recently, the development of AirLand Battle in the 1980s and then Air-Sea Battle in 2013 show military thinking evolving along the same general line—how to win decisively, even if outnumbered or technologically overmatched, by integrating operations in multiple domains to present enemies with multiple dilemmas. Different services have regularly supported each other in all domains. Therefore, when Harris says he wants the Army to provide effects outside the land domain, he is not asking it to do something without precedent. From

1794 to 1950, the Army was responsible for coastal and harbor defense, and later for the air defense of the homeland. The Army's Warrant Officer Corps originated from the need in World War I for technical specialists to staff the Army's undersea Mine Planter Service. The idea of or desire for cross-domain effects is not new.<sup>12</sup>

While all the services are being asked to perform their missions in a manner not terribly different from the past, there will be differences. We in the Army can no longer simply focus on the land, leaving the air and sea to other services. Nor can the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard simply focus on "their" domains. We must all better integrate our planning, operations, command and control, and effects across all the domains.

To achieve integration requires a new approach, a new mind-set. All U.S. forces must change their distinct service cultures to a culture of inclusion and openness, focusing on a "purple (or joint) first" mentality. The Army must further integrate a mission command mind-set, where every person is empowered to gain the initiative based on his or her role and function. And it must focus on developing leaders who thrive in ambiguity and chaos.

### Joint integration.

The multi-domain battle concept is expected to integrate three key areas: organizations and processes, technology, and people. Changes in organizations and processes will be designed to provide different and better-focused Army tools to joint forces to overcome the United States' loss of superiority or parity in certain domains, particularly in the air, at sea, and within cyberspace. The Army can no longer focus exclusively on the

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land domain; as part of a joint force, Army forces must provide other services effects in their domains to overcome their operational challenges, and vice versa. This means change must focus on greater ability to have cross-domain effects and more seamless and effective integration across joint forces.

In United States Army Pacific (USARPAC), we are attempting this through three areas. The first is to design and experiment with flexible command and control designs, tailorable and scalable units, and flexible policies in key areas. Second, most of this experimentation will occur as a part of a redesigned exercise program designed to make all events joint and multinational, with the aim point being the Navy's Rim of the Pacific exercise in 2018. Finally, we are supporting increased innovation across the services in cross-component and combatant-command processes.

**Technology.** Another key area is technological change. We must overcome and leverage the velocity of technological change, rather than losing our overmatch capabilities through slow acquisitions programs. The Department of Defense and the Army have already created the foundation for rapid material solutions with the Strategic Capabilities Office at the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Rapid Capabilities Office at Headquarters, Department of the Army. These offices are doing an admirable job of repurposing current technology to innovate in application, a key component of recapturing our tactical edge. USARPAC is tied tightly into these efforts. It is including every piece of equipment in exercises and experimentation. As has been the case in this theater for years, USARPAC takes advantage of the great "battle lab" culture this command has developed over the past decade or more. Technology offers key tools to support decision making, lethality, and protection. We must leverage this technology to empower our men and women and increase their lethality and effectiveness.

**People.** The final area the multi-domain battle concept addresses is people. The U.S. Armed Forces must use its people to overcome the challenges of being outnumbered, outdistanced, and "outlearned" by adversaries and enemies. People are America's greatest strategic advantage. To leverage this advantage, the Armed Forces must develop agile and adaptive leaders through education and training. Rigorous iterations of decision making, including "impossible" scenarios or "black swans" that soldiers would not expect, can help develop critical

thinking skills.<sup>13</sup> Failure must be an option, under the principle that learning exercises develop leaders who will respond better in actual conflicts. Leaders must also receive some measure of cultural education and training that would allow them to experience different ways of thinking. In USARPAC, we are addressing both critical thinking and cultural understanding through a regional leader development program run by and for personnel at the Army service component command level. As the Army's advise-and-assist brigades come online, we will also include unit personnel headed to the Pacific in this education and training pipeline to prepare them for operations in this region.

## Multi-Domain Battle in Practice

The following fictional vignette illustrates the multi-domain battle concept applied at the tactical level. This example is based on a hypothetical location in the Indo-Asia Pacific region.

Let us say there was an island chain or a coastal land mass whose location would make it decisive terrain, influencing aerial or maritime navigation or access to a strategic port. Possession of this feature by a certain hostile power would constitute a serious threat to the international order and the stability and security of the Indo-Asia Pacific region.

The hostile power then seized control of the feature and announced it would restrict commercial air and sea traffic, denying access to any nation aligned with the United States. Treaty obligations would require the United States to intervene militarily, though the enemy's arsenal of weaponry and electronics was formidable.

A military option that applied the multi-domain battle concept might include using cyber and space capabilities to temporarily blind and disrupt enemy command and control systems so special operations forces could move in and gain a foothold in the island chain. They then would facilitate Marine amphibious forces to secure the beachhead, an airfield, and other major structures required to create a secure beachhead. Immediately behind them would be Army watercraft loaded with heavy engineering equipment to repair the airstrip, if necessary, and construct hardened defensive positions. Simultaneously, Air Force C-17s and C-130s would bring in an Army Stryker battalion task force with a High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System battery,



specially equipped with anti-ship cruise missile pods and a battery of the Indirect Fire Protection Capability weapon system for short-range air defense. In addition, a battery of 155 mm howitzers with hypervelocity rounds would be offloaded as the marines retrograded in the newly empty aircraft to reconstitute for subsequent forced-entry operations, if needed.

Within ninety-six hours, the Stryker battalion task force would be dug in and ready. With Air Force manned and unmanned systems, Navy ships and underwater drones, a suite of Army radar systems (such as AN/TPQ-36, AN/TPQ-37, or Sentinel) and the aerial threat detection Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System to see over the horizon, there would be an overlapping multi-domain network of sensors that could operate indefinitely to identify, target, and employ lethal and electronic fires in *all* the domains—land, sea, air, cyber, and space—simultaneously.

The task force might be cut off from resupply or communication for indefinite periods. That is why this task force of about one thousand personnel would be able to support itself for up to thirty days—ten times

Multinational forces march in formation 15 February 2017 after the official opening ceremony of Cobra Gold 2017 in Utapao, Thailand. Cobra Gold, in its thirty-sixth iteration, is the largest theater security cooperation exercise in the Indo-Asia Pacific. This year's focus is to advance regional security and ensure effective responses to regional crises by bringing together a robust multinational force to address shared goals and security commitments in the Indo-Asia Pacific region. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Marc Castaneda, U.S. Navy)

the current doctrinal requirement of seventy-two hours for a unit of this size. But with advancements in mobile water purification, solar panels, batteries, wind turbines, and wave and tidal energy, as well as additive manufacturing printers to make repair parts, such a unit could be self-sufficient far longer than even much larger ones were in the previous century. They would still need fuel for their vehicles, but with drones and other autonomous platforms enhancing force protection, they could limit the need for fossil fuel-powered vehicles and supplement organic support assets with Air Force's Joint Precision Airdrop System.

To reiterate, these units might have to operate in extremely austere conditions with limited resources and without a constant ground, sea, or aerial line of communication linking them to other friendly forces. However, these men and women would be ready, with exceptional leaders exercising mission command.

Again, this is just a thought exercise based on how Army forces in the Pacific are thinking about and experimenting with multi-domain battle. Application of the concept may look different in other parts of the world, or even in different areas of the Indo-Asia Pacific. However, it is clear that no matter the geography or the adversary, Army units must be well led, well trained, and well equipped to operate in and across multiple domains in support of a joint force.

One way to ensure this is the case is through holistic operational testing, with Army service component command and subordinate units working hand in hand with the concepts and doctrine developers

at United States Army Training and Doctrine Command. Today in the Pacific, this is occurring. We are applying the joint integration, technology, and people aspects of the multi-domain battle concept through rigorous inclusion of concepts and capabilities in all our exercises, which will culminate in a major test at the Navy's Rim of the Pacific exercise in 2018. Moreover, we are considering how to integrate a multi-domain approach with our planning, equipping, and leader-development efforts.

The Army should not hesitate to resource and test this effort. Many of the concepts and capabilities found in the multi-domain battle concept will be needed not just for future conflict but also for near-term conflicts that might require us to be ready to "fight tonight." Make no mistake: testing and implementing a multi-domain approach will increase our readiness today, as well as prepare our men and women to win wars if the Nation requires it. ■

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A car bomb explodes next to Iraqi special forces armored vehicles 16 November 2016 as they advance against Daesh forces in Mosul, Iraq. Although nearly four hundred thousand civilians had reportedly fled the city, several hundred thousand still remained, caught in the crossfire while Daesh tenaciously defended its last major foothold in Iraq. The battle-seasoned special forces along with other coalition-supported conventional forces made slow progress inside Mosul as they conducted fierce house-to-house fighting against defensive positions that Daesh had months to prepare. (Photo by Felipe Dana, Associated Press)

# Theater Land Operations

## Relevant Observations and Lessons from the Combined Joint Land Force Experience in Iraq

Lt. Gen. Gary Volesky, U.S. Army

Maj. Gen. Roger Noble, Australian Army

**I**n 2016, the campaign to destroy the Islamic State as a fighting force while also pushing any remaining fighters out of Iraq was in full swing. The combined joint force land component command

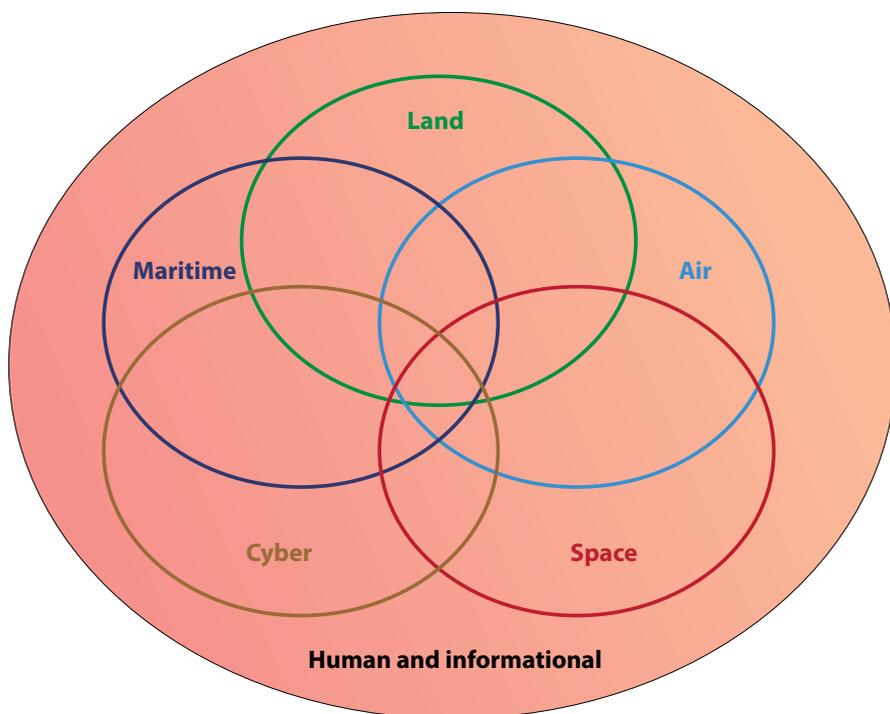
(CJFLCC) in charge of the joint fight during Operation Inherent Resolve was based on the headquarters of the 101st Airborne Division, but the mission differed notably from previous division-level efforts during

the coalition-led counterinsurgency fight in Iraq. As a combined joint land component, it was the lead agency for a nineteen-nation coalition that supported combat operations across the entire country, and it was the principal interlocutor and liaison with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) leadership. The ISF consisted of a combination of Iraqi army, air force, special operations forces, and police who together provided the essential and decisive but finite ground-maneuver component. Throughout 2016, they conducted large-scale offensive maneuver-and-hold operations to clear Daesh (a derogatory Arabic language acronym for the Islamic State) from the Euphrates and Tigris River valleys with an emphasis on the principal urban areas including Fallujah and Mosul.

The CJFLCC mission was focused on the military defeat of Daesh and required a diverse and active advise-and-assist network. Mission accomplishment necessitated the establishment of combined, joint, and supporting fires; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities; and logistical networks to enable ISF operations. This was supported by a force generation effort to prepare, train, and equip key units of the ISF for combat against Daesh. The CJFLCC was a principal integrating node at the upper tactical and operational levels inside Iraq, and it held and exercised significant authorities and influence over the coalition support to the ISF-led campaign. The CJFLCC operated across all domains and, to some extent, functioned as a key integrator across all domains. For example, even in this largely landlocked tactical fight, maritime ISR, fires, and strike effects launched from the sea made a significant and sustained contribution to the CFLCC mission.

In this situation, the CJFLCC came head-to-head with the nature of the modern battlefield as it operated against a capable, though not near-peer, enemy

whose grasp of action across domains, including cyber and human, was notably high. The year 2016 saw the marked degradation of Daesh inside Iraq as the ISF successfully retook 60 percent of the ground previously lost. This fight has significant lessons for future warfare, including some that may inform the nascent multi-domain battle (MDB) concept (see figure).



(Graphic by authors)

**Figure. Proposed Multi-Domain Model**

## Lessons Learned

Success in 2016 was in part due to MDB-style cross-domain application of capabilities integrated with “old school” ISF-led close combat. To properly share significant lessons learned from this fight, we provide the following key observations.

**Observation 1: Global capability sourcing is now the norm.** Geography is less of a constraint on sourcing capabilities than at any time in previous history. While physics still applies to constraints, particularly in air, land, and sea, the options to source a diverse range of capabilities globally is now a reality. The range and reach of the physical domain capabilities are at a historical high, and the cyber and human domains are not limited by time or space. Coalition force contributions are also

now more diverse and add value as multiple options exist across the domains. For example, some nations have different legal frameworks that enable action in cyberspace or in the information environment more quickly or with fewer constraints. This had a direct tactical and operational impact inside Iraq during 2016. Instant and ubiquitous modern communications and information technology have compressed the boundaries between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. And, in some domains such as cyber and human, the boundaries can be meaningless or at least blurred.

**Observation 2: The human domain is of preeminent importance, and it is the key to both victory and defeat.** Operations in Iraq in 2016 once again confirmed the basic observation that wars are fought by people for human ends and purposes. This has long been a central tenet in both Eastern and Western theories of war; ultimately people (on both sides) decide whether they have won or lost, not platforms or systems.<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the human relationships between the coalition force and the ISF (plus a diverse range of other stakeholders) was pivotal to mission success. While this is always important, the 2016 situation served to drive home the criticality of human relationships. This time, the ISF was unequivocally in the lead, and only the Iraqis had the means and authority to close with and destroy the enemy on the ground in close combat, arguably the priority requirement for campaign success. This time, coalition forces could not do it themselves; they had neither the force nor the authority to do so. Therefore, the coalition advise-and-assist purpose was, at its heart, designed to assist the Iraqis to grow and field the levels of organizational confidence, trust, and respect necessary to win against this enemy on this ground. This was a human/cognitive objective. The innumerable daily connections and interactions that took place around the planning and execution of the campaign against an unconstrained, ruthless enemy were absolutely central to Iraqi success and confidence. We watched and engaged at multiple levels (battalion to Army) and in many places. Over nine months, we witnessed the Iraqis begin to understand and then firmly believe that they could and would win.

The human network and the method of maneuvering and influencing across and through it to build a collective organizational outcome is dynamic and endless, and it is arguably more complex and difficult than any military technical synchronization challenge. Information and

capabilities from all domains operated together to achieve this human, cognitive, and emotional outcome. Perhaps the ultimate marker of success was the Mosul counterattack plan and orders, written and issued in October 2016 by Iraqis to Iraqis with coalition commanders sitting respectfully to the side and listening. At this moment, we clearly knew they would take Mosul—no easy challenge—and defeat this enemy. If, as Carl von Clausewitz suggested, war is an act of violence to compel our opponent to do our will, then the Iraqis had reached a tipping point in their ability to compel that had been building and growing since the recapture of Ramadi almost a year before.<sup>2</sup> The coalition contribution exercised a major influence on the rate, nature, and strength of this Iraqi human and organizational evolution.

**Observation 3: Multi-domain capabilities are now applied at every level from strategic to tactical.** Gone are the days where a localized battalion or company attack relied almost exclusively on capabilities that were provided by the parent brigade or division (e.g., infantry, armor, artillery, engineers). It was common practice in 2016 for action at the lowest tactical level to be directly supported by nationally and coalition sourced multi-domain capabilities (e.g., ISR, information operations [IO], cyber, electronic warfare [EW], military deception, and others). Often this occurred without the direct knowledge or input of the tactical maneuver force itself. In one attack against Daesh forces near the town of Sharquatt in late 2016, a multinational

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full-spectrum application of strike, IO, EW, cyber, public affairs (PA), and military deception around a small “economy-of-force” Iraqi ground maneuver force caused the enemy to break and run without fighting. Kinetic fires were comprehensively integrated, and the result approached very close to the MDB ideal. The fires solution was effectively “service agnostic,” and was often selected from a range of options sourced from across a coalition joint force.

A large scale, comprehensive, and successful example of MDB was evident in the advance to secure Qayyarah Airfield West, which involved a multidivision advance by the ISF and a contested river crossing of the Tigris using, at the time, all available Iraqi major tactical bridging assets. This advance and attack was enabled and supported by the application of capabilities in all domains drawn from organizations and sources from the strategic to tactical levels. Comprehensive IO, EW, PA, counter-improvised explosive device, and military deception assets integrated with a multitarget strike sequence, drawing on the full set of lethal and nonlethal capabilities to destroy, degrade, and influence enemy target sets in depth. This package of capabilities was integrated and synchronized around the ISF maneuver plan and aimed directly at the full range of threat vulnerabilities.

**Observation 4: Expanded capability options are now drawn from beyond traditional military and national boundaries.** The traditional military maneuver means and fires are as critical as ever, but they can now be augmented and amplified in ways that are quite literally only limited by the imagination. Many of these capabilities are delivered by nonmilitary agencies and by other countries or actors. The net effect is that options to exploit enemy vulnerabilities—directly or indirectly, lethally or nonlethally—have expanded. Their combined and synchronized application offers a way to exponentially amplify the overall effect on an adversary.

The MDB focus on joint integration is entirely correct but needs to be further expanded beyond military and national boundaries. This requires finding new ways to access and apply the full range of available capabilities. The premier example of this in Iraq 2016 was the evolution of a “new,” holistic way of looking at targeting that evolved to encompass and apply all possible means to defeat the enemy. The “old” ideas of kinetic and nonkinetic, and lethal and nonlethal, proved inadequate to capture the full range of options

available. Traditional kinetic targeting was merged with the application of “all available means” capable of informing and influencing the enemy and the operating environment. This had to be founded on a comprehensive understanding of the enemy, the operational environment, and the friendly force set. Systemically, it also led to the breaking down of traditional specialty “silos” to build an “all means” approach to targeting enemy vulnerabilities through all domains. This is likely to remain one of the pivotal skills on any future multidimensional battlefield.

**Observation 5: Federated planning, trusted information sharing, and decentralized action—is the new norm.** Most practitioners in complex, contemporary land operations can relate to the expression “herding cats.” One look at the coalition and “other” liaison officer set in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, at any time during 2016 would cement this image. There is a now a need to do even more and find a way to get those same “cats” to run as a pack of wolves.

Given the Daesh enemy, our range of modern capabilities, and the nature of the Iraq mission, a *federated* planning and *decentralized* execution model within a common mission framework proved essential.<sup>3</sup> There was no centralized, detailed control option on the table; the world was just not like that. We learned one may not own or even see those who apply a particular capability in support of an operation. They may not be military or even in your national force structure. They may not have identical mission end states but rather carry an overlap in interests or a discrete set of limited common objectives. *You may have limited or no authorities over their employment.* In this environment, it is the commander’s priorities combined with the mission objectives, extant authorities, and a federated planning approach applied around a common battlefield framework that enables effective decentralized action by multiple actors. This in turn allows for the widest range of capabilities to be applied in real time without detailed centralized direction or control. (This is not to undersell the ongoing essential requirement for command-directed, relentless synchronization and orchestration by the staff, especially in the traditional military capability lanes.)

Ultimately, all stakeholders will act either as directed or because it is in their mutual interest to do so, and they must all be enabled through federated planning, a common intellectual framework, and constant



communication and information sharing. Only then are they free and able to run as members of a pack.

**Observation 6: Nontraditional command-and-control solutions are the new way to do business, and self-synchronization is increasingly important.** Falling directly from Observation 4 is a need to rethink command and control (a military idea) for the multi-domain battlespace. The standard Army solution is to “own” a capability through traditional command and control (C2) arrangements such as operational or tactical control, or to have direct authorities over its employment. Plans are nested and initiated by formal orders based on a hierarchy of authority. Throughout 2016, this traditional approach remained critical, especially in relation to the execution of the decisive ground maneuver fight. The highest risks were incurred in the close combat maneuver fight, and the CJFLCC focus was supporting the ISF’s effective application of their finite ground combat force inside an enabling “bubble” of multi-domain shaping support. A principal function of the CJFLCC remained the careful synchronization of effects in support of the main effort ISF close combat force.

Soldiers with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Strike, execute a fire mission with an M777 howitzer 7 August 2016 during an operation to support Iraqi security forces at Kara Soar Base, Iraq. Battery C soldiers supported the Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve mission by providing indirect fire support for Iraqi security forces as they continued to combat Daesh and retake lost terrain. (Photo by 1st Lt. Daniel I. Johnson, U.S. Army)

The Iraq 2016 experience also revealed that traditional C2 is not the only way to do business in the modern multi-domain battlespace. *Unity of effort* remained the essential requirement and needed to be achieved even when traditional unity of command was incomplete, imperfect, or not possible. *Command relationships* (the human dimension) proved critical and were founded on close personal interaction and open communication between the critical actors regardless of the stated formal C2 status or line diagram. One look at most C2 diagrams of the last fifteen years tells you it is not a simple matter of “working for the boss.” For example, no tactical commander will ever own another nation’s offensive cyber capability or special IO capabilities, but you can set conditions for their integrated

employment via inclusive *federated* planning and clear communication. This allows those stakeholders with similar objectives to independently operate in a way that amplifies and reinforces your organic capabilities. In short, it allows for *self-synchronization* to achieve a unity of effort around common objectives and established priorities.<sup>4</sup> At its most limited level, it can actively defend against inadvertent friendly fratricide.

Authorities always remain critically important because they set the control and influence held by a commander by function or in time and space, and they provide great leverage to encourage and regulate the actions of other organizations over which the commander may have little or no direct control. The importance of C2 and authority design and the level of delegation cannot be overstated. For example, the vesting of deliberate strike authority inside Iraq with the CJFLCC commander served as a forcing function for cooperation and drew many actors into a conversation about objectives and mutual interest. The absence of an authority at your level does not mean that capabilities cannot be sourced but rather reemphasizes the importance of federated planning and trusted information sharing. Where authorities are held higher, work needs to be done to ensure the necessary capabilities can be accessed and synchronized in a timely manner. For example, one smart colonel observed, “It is far easier to drop a bomb in this theater than it is to send a tweet.”<sup>5</sup> He was right, and we need to work on either the delegation of authorities or establishing mechanisms where capabilities can be appropriately and effectively accessed through the directed authorities structure.

**Observation 7: A disciplined, systematic framework that binds the strategic to the tactical is as important as ever.** Given the complexity of multiple actors and capabilities operating from the strategic to the tactical levels, the importance of a clear, disciplined framework around which capabilities can be effectively and efficiently applied, organized, coordinated, and self-synchronized is paramount. This is not a new idea, but the experience of Iraq 2016 has served to reinforce this as a fundamental requirement in future multi-domain battle. There is a need to define fights at echelon and for shaping operations in a way tailored to each mission.

The development of a battlefield framework in Iraq in early 2016 based on the doctrinal close, deep, and rear

construct was central to creating a common targeting picture that enabled federated target development and the application of multiple means—lethal and nonlethal—in a coherent way. It also allowed a nesting of inform-and-influence efforts by multiple actors from across the coalition and those who were operating from both inside and outside of Iraq. Even without direct interaction between actors, the framework allowed self-synchronization and deconfliction. This also provided a mechanism through which the employment of scarce assets such as ISR and strike could be regulated and applied. Also pivotal to dealing with the complexity and range of cross-domain action by multiple actors was the development and employment of a purpose-designed assessment methodology that was tailored to mission and grounded in a systematic analysis of measures of both effectiveness and performance tied tightly to mission objectives.<sup>6</sup> This is another example of difficult but essential work that remains, probably forever, a mix of art and science.

Based on the Iraq experience, there is an unequivocally clear need for the multi-domain battlespace to operate around a battlefield architecture and systematic framework that allows and supports the effective and efficient application of all capabilities.

**Observation 8: Policy, procedures, and systems have a critical impact on mission accomplishment.** What can practically be done is heavily influenced by an organization’s policy, procedures, and systems. By their nature, these things are historical. In the case of command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence systems, they are complex, extensive, and expensive. One primary lesson from Iraq 2016 is that there is a need for a “first principles” review of policy, including doctrine, procedures, and systems in the light of the multi-domain reality.<sup>7</sup> One obvious weakness remains information sharing across organizational and national boundaries. Despite fifteen years of war, the bureaucracy remains a twentieth century design that is slow, rules based, and formulaic. This is an international problem that requires a concerted relook by multiple actors, agencies, and nations. It will certainly take hard work and may mean carrying the fight against traditional gatekeepers, but it needs to be done before the next big fight.

Shared understanding and situational awareness provide a further absolutely pivotal example of requirements that are central to allowing effective and efficient



multi-domain capability application. During 2016 in Iraq, the on-the-run development of a CJFLCC off-the-shelf, coalition-accessible, software-generated common operational picture was central to galvanizing coherent action and ensuring effective force protection. Once built, this tool spread like a positive systemic virus and grew as more and more agencies (higher, lower, and lateral) tracked it or contributed directly to it. It allowed multiple actors to “see” the fight from wherever they were located globally and to focus their efforts around friendly force “truth.” It was one simple tool that had a far-reaching positive impact because of the shared understanding it generated.

**Observation 9: The quality of people remains the most important element.** Not everyone can handle complexity, especially under pressure and in a high threat, time-constrained environment. This is not a new observation, but it remains a fundamentally important one. Iraq-style MDB in 2016 needed complex-problem solvers who were able to overcome institutional and intellectual boundaries. For example, one National Guard captain almost single handedly corralled the plethora of IO stakeholders and linked them to both the coalition plan and the Iraqi psychological operations network. There was no textbook

An Australian soldier assigned to Task Group Taji conducts bayonet training 3 January 2016 with soldiers assigned to the 71st Iraqi Army Brigade at Camp Taji, Iraq. The combined task group consisted of around three hundred Australian Defence Force personnel drawn largely from the Australian Army's 7th Brigade, alongside approximately 105 New Zealand Defence Force personnel. This training was critical to enabling the Iraqi security forces to counter Daesh as they worked to regain territory from the terrorist group. (Photo by Spc. William Lockwood, U.S. Army)

or doctrine for that. Simultaneously, more senior and experienced personnel struggled with “how to get anything done in this place.” The clear need is for resilient, critical thinkers who are good with humans and who are self-aware, determined, and output focused. People need to be adaptable (able to do new things), versatile (able to do many things), and agile (able to change what they are doing quickly). The specialists need to be more general and the generalists more interested in specialties. We need an end to silos, or at least we need permeable walls. The key is selection, training, and especially education and then experience. As stated above, not everyone is able to handle the challenges of the MDB operating environment, and the capacity to do so cannot be assumed. Such capacity is not especially resident



in any particular unit, branch, or culture. Everyone needs testing and developing in a battle-lab-style exercise and intellectual environment that will prepare them for the challenges of MDB in practice.

## Conclusion

While there are no doubt many other observations that could provide significant material for both training and education, the above nine were significant in their applicability to not only Iraq in 2016 at the theater level, but also to future warfare as seen in the evolving MDB concept. As we continue to experiment and test future concepts for use in the warfare of today and tomorrow, we must not hesitate to leverage recent

An RQ-4 Global Hawk awaits standard maintenance while a heavy fog rolls across the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing flightline at an undisclosed location in southwest Asia 12 January 2017. Global Hawks have provided coalition partners such as the Iraqi security forces with accurate intelligence necessary for precisely striking important Daesh facilities and supply routes in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

and current conflicts for appropriate lessons. While by no means is the fight against Daesh near-peer, the group's ingenuity and evolution on the battlefield no doubt mimics what more capable nation-states will employ in any future conflicts. Let us learn today's lessons and apply them for future effect. ■

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## Notes

1. Michael I. Handel, *Sun Tzu and Clausewitz: The Art of War and On War Compared* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1991).

2. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 31.

3. *American Heritage Dictionary* online, s.v. "federate," accessed 31 May 2017, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=federate>.

[html?q=federate](https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=federate). *Federate* is defined as "to cause to join into a league, federal union, or similar association." *Federated planning* is defined here as planning and analysis for the achievement of a common purpose by a diverse range of multiple actors and entities drawn from both within and without the lead planning organization. Federated planning in Iraq would regularly be led by the combined joint land component but would involve and

draw inputs from a diverse range of coalition, Iraqi, national, interagency, international, and nongovernmental actors, entities, and organizations.

4. Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Garstka, "Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origins and Future," *Proceedings* 124, no. 1 (January 1998): 28–35. The authors defined *self-synchronization* as "the ability of a well-informed force to organize and synchronize warfare activities from the bottom up. The organizing principles are unity of effort, clearly articulated commander's intent, and carefully crafted rules of engagement. Self-synchronization is enabled by a high level of [knowledge of] one's own forces, enemy forces, and all appropriate elements of the operating environment. It overcomes the loss of combat power inherent in top-down command directed synchronization characteristics of more conventional doctrine and converts combat from a step function to a high-speed continuum." Self-synchronization is defined here as doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason without having to be directed by someone higher in a chain of command.

5. J5 combined joint force land component command, comment to author Maj. Gen. Roger Noble, June 2016, Baghdad.

6. A campaign assessment methodology is the process and system designed and implemented to assemble data and input that allows for the ongoing systematic analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of campaign execution in pursuit of the specified mission objectives. A robust assessment methodology allows for a systematic ongoing review of progress and the identification of critical issues, and it facilitates and assists in the timely and targeted command-directed modification of the plan in response to the real-world outcomes of campaign execution.

7. A "first principles review" is an analysis of a policy without immediate deference to standing convention, policy, and thinking. It is a review from scratch and through an analysis of its core elements. The focus of this type of review is on the primary purpose in order to construct a solution that works in the contemporary context: what are we trying to do, why, and how do we best do it; not, what do we do now and how could we adjust? This does not mean disregarding mandated legal or policy requirements, but it can include scrutiny of those requirements and actions to modify the law or policy if this is considered essential or necessary.



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# In Defense of the Theater Army

Lt. Col. Nicholas R. Simontis, U.S. Army

*The Army's ability to set the theater is essential to preventing conflict and, if deterrence fails, allowing the Joint Force to seize the initiative while protecting the force and restricting the enemy's options.*

—The U.S. Army Operating Concept

*The theater army and its theater-assigned Army forces set the theater and the joint operations area for the employment of landpower in contingencies and campaigns.*

—Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations

Theater armies have a rich and storied history, conjuring images of Courtney Hodges commanding First Army, George Patton commanding Third Army, and Alexander “Sandy” Patch commanding Seventh Army, along with Eighth Army commanded by Robert Eichelberger in the Philippines during World War II, and later by Matthew Ridgeway in Korea.<sup>1</sup> Following combat operations, the roles of theater armies evolved to suit operational and strategic requirements, executing missions ranging from occupation duties to training Army Reserve and National Guard units. In a more recent example, Third Army served as combined forces land component command (CFLCC) during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and later as combined joint forces land component command (CJFLCC) and then combined joint task force (CJTF) for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). Despite this history and the unique role theater armies fill, these headquarters are a recurring target for reduction and possible elimination in the ongoing efforts to reduce force structure.

According to doctrine, theater army responsibilities are straightforward. However, possibly due to the fact that most officers have little experience with theater armies, there is a great deal of misunderstanding regarding their roles.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, theater armies are

a target of convenience in the quest for force reduction, but recent recommendations go too far, eliminating vital theater army roles and functions. In reality, the responsibilities of theater armies are far more expansive, requiring specialized sets of capabilities.

Contrary to misunderstandings regarding their doctrinal role in today's environment, theater armies are becoming more strategically necessary than ever. Owing to their unique capabilities, theater armies can form the backbone of joint or multinational forces, serving as a joint or multinational force integrator and providing a platform that facilitates joint force interdependence.

This article proposes that theater armies should be retained. They have provided and can continue to provide viable options for conducting significant operations using the principles of mission command. These include maintaining a vital, persistent forward presence; conducting shaping through theater security cooperation and military engagement; providing regional expertise; and laying the foundation for, and forming the gateway through which follow-on ground and joint forces can deploy and fight as necessary.

## From Reduction to Elimination

Recommendations to modify the organizational structure of theater armies/Army service component commands (ASCCs) have been ongoing for some time. Early efforts at reduction originally sought to scale down only the mission command responsibilities of theater

Cpl. Charles H. Johnson, 783rd Military Police Battalion, waves on a “Red Ball Express” motor convoy rushing priority materiel to the forward area 5 September 1944 near Alenon, France. Red Ball Express truck convoys, manned primarily by African American troops, provided rapid cargo delivery throughout the European Theater, including critical fuel and ordnance for Patton's Third Army during its attack eastward toward Germany. (Photo courtesy of the National Archives)

To-day's  
TONNAGE  
TARGET

RED BALL  
HIGHWAY

- 20,000 TONS
- 19,000 "
- 18,000 "
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STAY ON THE



KEEP 'EM  
ROLLING!



FRANCE

armies, calling into question their ability to command operational forces, particularly for extended periods. In 2011, Field Manual (FM) 3-93, *Theater Army Operations*, signaled this intent. It recommended the elimination of the operational command posts (OCPs) originally intended to form the foundational structure for joint task forces (JTFs) or joint force land component commands (JFLCCs) designated to run major operations.<sup>3</sup> In 2014, FM 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*, which replaced FM 3-93, echoed this same sentiment, stating, “theater armies have limited capabilities to serve as a JTF or JFLCC, and then for only a short duration or limited contingency operation.”<sup>4</sup> However, FM 3-94 omitted a key piece of contextual information found in FM 3-93: the proposed addition of a fourth corps headquarters to allow the theater army “to be relieved of its previous responsibility to transition to a JTF, JFLCC, or ARFOR [Army forces] headquarters.”<sup>5</sup> This fourth corps headquarters would permit a rotational mission command structure, while maintaining a corps headquarters for contingency needs. Clearly, the intent of FM 3-93 and FM 3-94 was to leave theater armies/ASCCs in place, merely removing direct mission command responsibilities

and relying instead on corps headquarters to execute those responsibilities when necessary. The Department of the Army (DA) did, in fact, eliminate OCPs in later years, but without establishing a fourth corps headquarters as originally called for. Now, some observers recommend the elimination of ASCCs altogether.

*The Elihu Root Study: The Total Army* proposed eliminating theater armies and replacing them with corps headquarters.<sup>6</sup> Several months later, David Barno and Nora Bensahel made the same recommendation,

proposing the replacement of theater armies with “dual-hatted operational headquarters that also have warfighting capabilities,” which can be translated as corps headquarters.<sup>7</sup> In reality, however, replacing theater armies with augmented corps headquarters merely shuffles the deck while actually reducing overall Army expeditionary capability unless additional corps headquarters are added, a requirement that runs counter to the current goal of reducing structure. All of these proposals are shortsighted and fail to appreciate the current and potential roles of theater armies.

## Understanding Theater Army Roles and Responsibilities

The requirements for theater armies and their several command relationships are delineated in Army Regulation 10-87, *Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, and Direct Reporting Units*, and laid out doctrinally in FM 3-94. These requirements center on providing administrative control over Army forces in theater, assuming extensive theater sustainment responsibilities, providing operational control of designated Army forces in theater, supporting theater security cooperation and theater engagement plans, and setting the theater—establishing and maintaining conditions for the employment of land forces and support to joint forces in the theater.<sup>8</sup> Yet, merely reviewing a list of these extensive and wide-ranging requirements does not lend a holistic appreciation of the unique roles fulfilled by theater armies. An alternate way to understand theater army roles is in terms of a *conduit* and *four infrastructures*, as the following paragraphs describe.

A theater army/ASCC serves two masters—the Department of the Army (DA) and the geographic combatant commander (GCC), acting as a conduit between the two headquarters. In this conduit role, the theater army strives to balance GCC theater requirements with Army capabilities, while advising the Army on theater-specific requirements that help shape the force, informing structural, manning, and equipping decisions. This input, shaped by the current and projected operational environment in theater, can then inform the development of the Army’s input to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution process. This role as a conduit between DA and the GCC is thus critical to helping the Army tailor its structure in order to execute its mission of “providing

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prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to acting as a conduit, a more practical way of understanding the roles of theater armies is in terms of their responsibility for establishing and maintaining four overarching infrastructures to support the theater; the theater army, through supporting commands, maintains the theater-wide sustainment, medical care and support, communications, and intelligence infrastructures necessary to support land forces.<sup>10</sup> These infrastructures together support the GCC's theater campaign plan and form the foundation necessary to execute the full scope of military operations, from combined exercises by rotational forces to contingency operations in response to crises or military conflicts.

In essence, these infrastructures together comprise the theater architecture that enables a wide range of options for land forces as well as supporting the joint force through Army support-to-other-service functions. Moreover, particularly in the U.S. Central Command and U.S. Pacific Command areas of responsibility, the theater-setting functions and forward platforms provide the groundwork for strategic force projection ranging

Staff Sgt. Joshua Tyree blocks the bright sunlight as Pfc. Patrick Davis scans an Afghan man's iris with a Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment device 29 April 2012 during an Afghan-led patrol in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. Tyree and Davis are paratroopers with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. A key function of the theater army is to establish the intelligence infrastructure required to support land forces. (Photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod, U.S. Army)

from special operations teams to conventional combat divisions that assure access in the face of ongoing area denial efforts to limit access to contested regions.

## Attendant Functions

Broadly speaking, the theater Army provides the four infrastructures discussed in addition to handling statutory Title 10 responsibilities and serves as a DA-GCC conduit. These activities encompass the overall theater army functions. However, there are several other more narrowly scoped specific functions wrapped into these broad functions that merit particular attention.<sup>11</sup>

**Mission command.** First and foremost among these functions is mission command. Previous and

current doctrine describe theater armies as having only limited-duration mission command capability, yet U.S. Army Central (USARCENT) has executed this responsibility repeatedly, controlling ground operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2002 as the CFLCC, then becoming the CFLCC for operations in Iraq in 2002.<sup>12</sup> More recently, U.S. Central Command designated USARCENT as the CJFLCC for operations in Iraq and Syria in September 2014, and then as the CJTF-OIR in October 2014.<sup>13</sup> While the headquarters did require joint



augmentation, the speed with which USARCENT established the CJTF was only possible due to the forward presence of the OCP in Kuwait, along with the enabling commands providing the necessary support infrastructure for the rapid reception and integration of joint and coalition partners. Contradicting doctrine, USARCENT served dual roles as the theater army and the CJTF for fifteen months until relieved by III Corps.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that a better way to think of mission command by theater armies is as a viable option for establishing a CJFLCC or a CJTF quickly, thereby providing rapid response and setting conditions for a corps or other headquarters to deploy and assume responsibility when appropriate.

**Joint security coordinator.** A second important capability of theater armies lies in their potential role as joint security coordinator (JSC) for the GCC, if so designated. The protection cell within the theater army generally has staff responsibility for this function unless a joint security coordination center is

established. The protection cell assesses risks, develops plans, and integrates and synchronizes actions and activities with a goal of protecting the force. The theater army often resources many of the necessary capabilities to meet JSC requirements, and the JSC role often

Maj. (Dr.) Thomas Wertin and Lt. Col. (Dr.) Ronald Martin, both of the 28th Combat Support Hospital out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Sgt. Jose Mendez from the 8th Forward Surgical Team out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, operate on an Iraqi soldier 1 April 2007 who was wounded in a truck bombing in Iraq's northern city of Mosul. A key function of the theater Army is to establish the medical infrastructure required to support land forces. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army)

includes responsibility for joint and multinational forces. The necessity and importance of the JSC role will likely increase as the trend toward hybrid or gray zone conflict continues and expands.<sup>15</sup>

**Fires.** A third important and often-overlooked capability of a theater army concerns fires, specifically, integrated air defense (IAD) and cross-domain joint fires. The theater army's IAD cell facilitates planning from a ground perspective in close coordination with the area air defense coordinator, supporting the joint force commander's air defense priorities. Elements of the

IAD cell, along with subordinate air defense artillery brigades, often work with regional partners (within the limits of disclosure) to ensure overall synchronization and integration of IAD capabilities, as well as to build partner capacity. This is an area of increasing concern in the face of anti-access/area denial threats and the growth in adversary missile and rocket capabilities. The fires cell and its joint fires section perform a similar role, integrating Army and joint fires capabilities focused on regional planning, supporting GCC theater and contingency planning, and availing themselves of opportunities to conduct combined and cross-domain training and build partner capacity.

The integration of Army AH-64 Apaches operating from naval surface platforms that frequently occurs in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility provides an apt example of cross-domain capability routinely practiced by USARCENT and U.S. Navy Central. This is an area ripe for further development.

**Planning.** A final important capability of theater armies concerns theater-focused planning from a land force perspective. The theater army commander and staff immerse themselves in theater events on a daily basis, interacting frequently with their counterparts from other components, GCC planners, and counterparts with regional partners, and often with division and corps planners for input to contingency plans. A theater army, by its very nature, is a planning headquarters, constantly looking at the environment and into the future, asking “what if?” This planning role is particularly important given the theater army’s conduit role described above. The interactions between the theater army, the GCC, and DA should enhance the effectiveness of planning by all three headquarters.

## Additional Thoughts

Theater army structure and organization can and should be improved, but that does not imply slashing structure across the board, as occurred with the elimination of OCPs, or scrapping the formations altogether and replacing them with augmented corps headquarters, as some recommend. In the case of USARCENT, the headquarters mitigated the elimination of the OCP through the assignment of a rotating National Guard division headquarters.<sup>16</sup> While this is a viable interim fix, there is no net savings in personnel; there is merely a change in their origin and the funding

process, shifting the burden from the active Army to the National Guard. Furthermore, there is a longer-term cost to the quality of regional relationships and military engagements due to the more frequent turnover of OCP personnel. Similarly, replacing theater armies with augmented corps headquarters merely swaps headquarters and shuffles personnel with a net effect of reducing Army expeditionary capability unless additional corps headquarters are added, which is at best an unlikely prospect. Replacing theater armies with some other headquarters is needlessly disruptive and provides no evidence of demonstrable structural improvement, efficiency, or improved effectiveness.

The alternative is to take advantage of one of the unique qualities of theater armies—the ability to tailor them appropriately to the theater in which they serve by adjusting their organization to reflect theater and GCC requirements efficiently. This already occurs, but opportunities for improvement remain. An example is to align and synchronize the various sustainment functions between G4, Theater Sustainment Command, Expeditionary Support Command, and the sustainment brigades to eliminate duplication of functions. Along the same line, sustainment functions should be integrated with other services to improve interoperability and sustainment efficiency while eliminating duplication of services across the joint force. Significant opportunities for developing such “joint force interdependence” exist and should be pursued.<sup>17</sup>

A final thought on theater armies is that they provide a unique platform for developing strategic leaders as well as for increasing the strategic and joint competence of the theater army staff. Due to the wide-ranging roles of a theater army, the commander and staff interact regularly with DA and the GCC, along with functional component commands, the other components, Army direct reporting units such as Medical Command, Network Enterprise Technology Command, and U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, as well as regional counterparts in theater. Thus, senior leaders through junior majors and captains enjoy opportunities to regularly interact with other services and headquarters that are not available elsewhere in the Army.

The broad focus required to establish and maintain the four infrastructures obliges the commander and staff to take a more wide-ranging view of these functions than is possible in most other Army assignments. The

theater army's unique role, the many niche capabilities it fills for the GCC, and the directed responsibilities and functions under Title 10 that comprise Army support to other services require staff officers in a theater army to interact regularly with higher and adjacent Army and joint headquarters. The theater army serves as a bridge from the strategic to the tactical, serving GCCs and the joint force, and providing its leaders and staff with an operational viewpoint that is unique in the Army.

## Conclusion

Recognizing the need to project forces around the world, the *Army Operating Concept* describes how the Army intends to prevent conflict, shape security environments, and win wars, all while operating as part of the joint force and working with multiple partners.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, the *Army Operating Concept* describes twenty required capabilities including functions such as developing a high degree of situational understanding; conducting security force assistance; integrating

joint, interorganizational, and multinational partner capabilities; and setting the theater to provide strategic agility.<sup>19</sup> Theater armies execute eleven of the twenty capabilities listed, and they contribute in some fashion to most of the remainder, demonstrating they are key to maintaining strategic credibility.<sup>20</sup>

Theater armies are the face of the land component to our regional partners, demonstrating U.S. commitment, assuring access through forward presence, and maintaining the ability to project land forces wherever and whenever needed. Clearly, the singular role and capabilities of theater armies will only become more important in the current and anticipated environment; they cannot be replaced, nor should they be. ■

*The author is indebted to Lt. Gen. James L. Terry, U.S. Army, retired; Dr. John A. Bonin, professor, U.S. Army War College; and Col. Jin H. Pak, U.S. Army, for their valuable insights and comments for this article.*

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## Notes

**Epigraph.** U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet (TP) 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win In A Complex World* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 31 October 2014), 23.

**Epigraph.** Field Manual (FM) 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2014), para. 2-10.

1. Regarding terminology, while many of the force structure recommendations pertain to Army service component commands (ASCCs) generally, this paper focuses more specifically on ASCCs provided by the Department of the Army to geographic combatant commands, which serve dual roles as theater armies and ASCCs. This paper uses the term "theater army" in reference to these particular headquarters.

2. Nelson L. Emmons, *Transforming the Army Service Component Command to a Theater Army* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 2013), 1.

3. FM 3-93, *Theater Army Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2011 [now obsolete]), x.

4. FM 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*, para. 2-1.

5. FM 3-93, *Theater Army Operations*, x.

6. Syed Najeeb Ahmed et al., *Elihu Root Study: The Total Army* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2016).

7. David Barno and Nora Bensahel, *The Future of the Army: Today, Tomorrow, and the Day After Tomorrow* (Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council, 2016), 18.

8. Army Regulation 10-87, *Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, and Direct Reporting Units* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2007), 1-2, 4-13; FM 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*, paras. 2-1 to 2-12.

9. "Mission," Army.mil website, accessed 24 May 2017, <https://www.army.mil/info/organization/>.

10. James L. Terry, U.S. Army, retired, used this example on numerous occasions during his tenure as commander, U.S. Army Central/Third Army, 2013–2015. Used with permission.

11. Working-Capital Funds, 10 U.S.C. § 2208 (2015).

12. "USARCENT [U.S. Army Central] Historical Summary (1918–Present)," USARCENT website, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.usarcent.army.mil/About-USARCENT/History/>.

13. James L. Terry, "Curtain's Always Rising For Theater Army," *Army Magazine* 66, no. 2 (February 2016): 49, accessed 11 July 2017, <https://www.ausa.org/articles/curtain%E2%80%99s-always-rising-theater-army>.

14. *Ibid.*

15. For additional information on joint security coordinator duties and responsibilities, see Joint Publication 3-10, *Joint Security Operations in Theater* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 13 November 2014).

16. Dr. John Bonin (professor, U.S. Army War College), e-mail to author, 7 December 2016. Used with permission.

17. Adm. Jonathan Greenert, "Navy Perspective on Joint Force Interdependence," *Joint Force Quarterly* 76 (1st Quarter, January 2015): 11, accessed 11 July 2017, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-76/jfq-76.pdf>.

18. TP 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, i.

19. *Ibid.*, 31–33.

20. *Ibid.* The eleven capabilities are [in abbreviated form]: (1) develop and sustain a high degree of situational understanding; (2) shape and influence security environments; (3) provide security force assistance; (4) prevent, reduce, eliminate, and mitigate the use and effects of weapons of mass destruction and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive devices; (5) assure uninterrupted access to critical communications and information links; (6) develop agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders; (7) project forces; (8) establish and maintain security across wide areas; (9) integrate joint, interorganizational and multinational partner capabilities; (10) set the theater; and (11) coordinate and integrate Army and joint, interorganizational, and multinational fires.

**T**he U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List is divided into six categories: Strategic Environment, Regional Studies, History and Military History, Leadership, Army Profession, and Fiction. These sublists are intended to steer readers to topics in which they are most interested. Each book is suitable for readers of any rank or position.

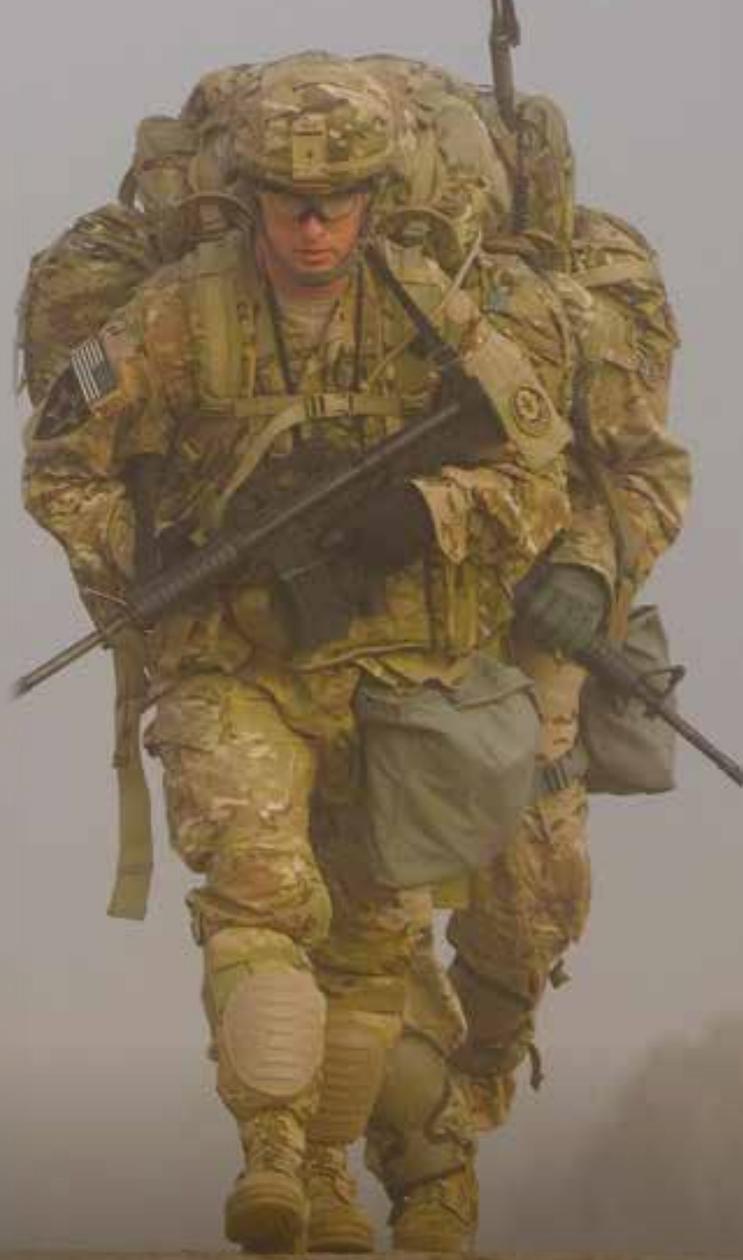
The books offer entry points into the literature discussing military art and science. They are provided as selected works that can help soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, and anyone interested in the Army to learn more about the Army profession and to sharpen their knowledge of the Army's long and distinguished history, as well as the decisive role played by land power in conflicts across the centuries.

A sustained personal commitment to critical study of a wide range of readings constitutes an essential responsibility for members of the Army profession. The U.S. Army today confronts extraordinary complexity in the strategic environment with new and emerging missions competing with core war-fighting requirements that challenge Army professionals. This reading list serves as a guide to the many topics worthy of professional consideration, contemplation, and serious discussion.

The appearance of a title on this reading list does not imply that the Chief of Staff endorses the author's views or interpretations. Nevertheless, these books contain thought-provoking ideas and viewpoints relevant to our Army. To view the reading list, visit [http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/105/105-1-1/CMH\\_Pub\\_105-5-1\\_2017.pdf](http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/105/105-1-1/CMH_Pub_105-5-1_2017.pdf).

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# THE U.S. ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF'S PROFESSIONAL READING LIST



# HOT TOPICS



In an ongoing effort to focus interest, research, and informed discussion on a discrete number of geographical areas or emerging topics of priority national security concern, the Army University Press (AUP) has established and is continuing to develop a website on which it aggregates AUP publications together with selected publications from other sources germane to each topic or area. The two purposes of this site are to provide readers with an overview of issues related to the topics or areas about which AUP authors have written thus far; and, to encourage prospective authors to contribute additional articles or larger studies to the collection. To view this website, visit <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Special-Topics/Hot-Topics/>.

*Military Review* has primary interest in the geographic flashpoints of conflict noted below:

- 1—Conflict on the Korean Peninsula
- 2—Venezuela
- 3—The South China Sea
- 4—Syrian conflict
- 5—Iraqi conflict
- 6—Russian-sponsored conflict
- 7—Russia-Baltic confrontation
- 8—Islamic State in Africa
- 9—Saudi Arabian/Iranian conflict
- 10—Islamic-extremist ideological insurgency in Europe
- 11—U.S.-Mexico contention along border
- 12—Impact of unregulated immigration on security and stability of diverse countries/regions





People hold a banner reading "We demand a referendum" as they shout slogans during a pro-Russian rally 8 March 2014 in Donetsk, Ukraine, and as Russia was reported to be reinforcing its military presence in Crimea. (Photo by Sergei Grits, Associated Press)

# Expanding Tolstoy and Shrinking Dostoyevsky



## How Russian Actions in the Information Space are Inverting Doctrinal Paradigms of Warfare

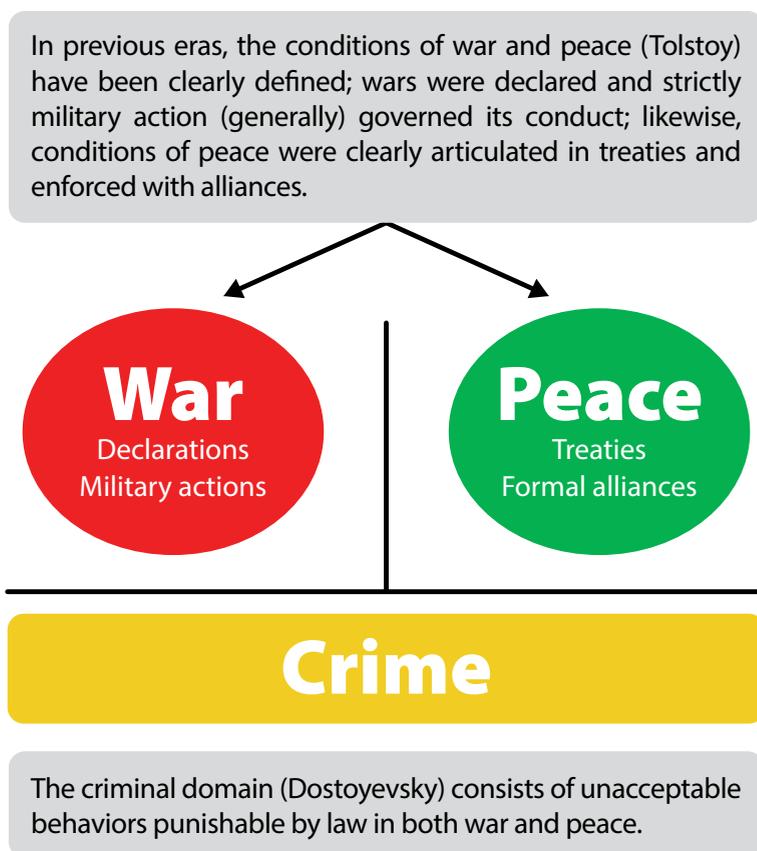
Maj. Scott J. Harr, U.S. Army

In February 2013, Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov published “The Value of Science is in the Foresight,” which describes a twenty-first century battlefield replete with new methods, capabilities, and applications of war that transcend accepted contemporary definitions and uses of military power.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent Western debate on Gerasimov’s discourse (dubbed the “Gerasimov Doctrine”) often focuses on whether Gerasimov’s ideas represent old or new ways of war and whether Gerasimov intended to describe a distinctly Russian style of warfare for the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, the evolution of military thought and science is an ongoing discussion within Russia that involves not just Gerasimov, but other prominent Russian military officers as well. So, as retired Lt. Col. Timothy Thomas points out, it is wise for Western military analysts to not exclusively categorize trends in Russian warfare.<sup>3</sup> However, the Gerasimov Doctrine represents the most powerful and relevant current adaptation of Russian military thought, and it describes a new type warfare that emphasizes Russian development of capabilities to defend and win in the cyber and information domains as the critical domains of future warfare (vice actual kinetic combat).<sup>4</sup> In any case, Russian actions on the international stage have demonstrated a style of warfare that comprehensively integrates all instruments of national power (in militaristic ways) to achieve strategic objectives countering Western influence. The title of the renowned Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy’s masterpiece *War and Peace* alludes to discrete conditions of the modern Russian approach to warfare. Like Western concepts of the “gray zone,” the Tolstoyan concept expands the spectrum between war and peace to include levels of conflict that satisfy neither of the extremes—yet remain viable arenas to promote strategic interests using force. Likewise, akin to the boundaries of criminality that timeless Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky explored in his classic work *Crime and Punishment*, current Russian modes of warfare have shrunk the criminal boundaries of

war and blended the rules of warfare to enable more interaction among the instruments of national power to pursue strategic interests.

In a metaphorical sense, depicted in figures 1 and 2 (page 41), Russian actions in warfare under the Gerasimov Doctrine have “expanded Tolstoy” (i.e., created more fluid conditions between war and peace) while “shrinking Dostoyevsky” (i.e., reducing the crimi-

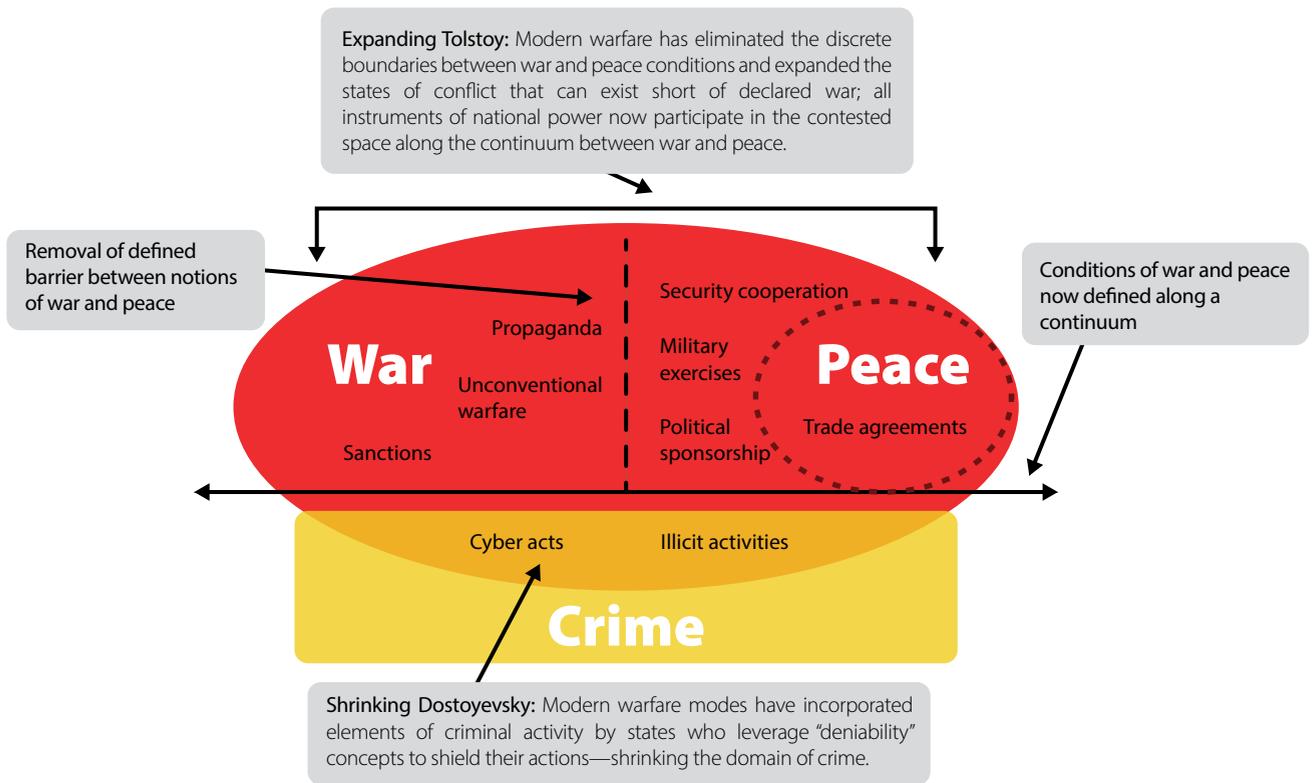


(Graphic by author)

**Figure 1. Expanding Tolstoy and Shrinking Dostoyevsky Construct Explained**

nal boundaries of national activities to prosecute war). As a linchpin that increasingly knits the contemporary modes of Russian warfare together, the broad range of information operations (IO) has played a major role in Russian actions, inverting the paradigms of warfare espoused by U.S. doctrine and thus presenting the U.S. joint force with significant challenges.

Given the above discussion, the intent of this paper is to outline the major ways that recent Russian IO



(Graphic by author)

**Figure 2. Expanding Tolstoy and Shrinking Dostoyevsky in Terms of Contemporary Understanding of War**

actions (as part of the Gerasimov Doctrine) have inverted commonly held U.S. paradigms of warfare. Upon illuminating the role of IO in forging new applications of war that depart from U.S. notions, this paper distills the major implications for the U.S. joint force in terms of policy, doctrine, and capabilities. On this basis, recommendations can be made regarding how to populate, train, and equip the joint force (especially Army forces) to counter and proactively guard against Russian IO actions that undermine or deliberately target U.S. interests in contested areas.

### Paradigm Inversions: Three Ways Russian IO Actions Challenge American Conceptions of War

One long-held paradigm of U.S. approaches to warfare necessitates that combat power be dedicated toward the destruction of the enemy. Modern joint doctrine still speaks of the Clausewitzian concept of center of gravity as the main source of an enemy’s power that should be attacked with the full force of combat capabilities to

ensure an enemy’s defeat.<sup>5</sup> This paradigm appears as simple and obvious as the front plate on a Claymore mine that reads “Front Towards Enemy.” However, Russian IO actions, as a Gerasimov Doctrine application of combat power, demonstrate that in the era of limited “wars of choice,” concerted and weaponized IO efforts can be directed toward *friendly* audiences and centers of gravity to deliver decisive effects cultivating and sustaining public opinion supporting government and/or military action. According to analyst Stephen Blank, Russia can use the decisive force of IO on its own domestic population because Russia has “securitized” the information instrument of national power.<sup>6</sup> That is, Russia has convinced its population that information is a national security matter and the government therefore has a compelling interest in controlling it. Russian actions controlling the information that it feeds to its population have been on full display during the Russian annexation of the Crimea, where political scientist Ioana-Nelia Bercean notes that domestic support of Russia’s actions remains high.<sup>7</sup> The combat potential of Russia’s paradigm inversion is clear



when juxtaposed against the influence of public opinion in recent American military efforts: while public support for American campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan dwindled over time to induce massive strategy shifts, Russia continues to target its own population with IO actions that preserve and monopolize public opinion justifying its counter-Western actions contending with American strategic objectives in Europe.

Another time-honored paradigm of Western war (from the Clausewitzian tradition) frames *war as an extension of politics*. Reflecting this dynamic, the joint force under U.S. law serves its civilian political masters in executing national strategy and foreign policy delineated by elected political elites. Russia's IO actions, on the other hand, delve into and rely heavily on political messaging and political tampering to achieve strategic ends. In this sense, its IO actions treat *politics as an extension of war*. Such actions have found fertile ground in the former Soviet states of Eastern Europe. The Republic of Moldova serves as a striking current example of the effects of Russian political IO actions. According to Moldovan military reports, many political parties in Moldova have been infiltrated by pro-Russian personalities who have overt links to Moscow and regularly visit Russian leaders.<sup>8</sup> The direct input from the Russian information machine to Moldovan politicians exerts pressure on Moldovan

Moldovans protest a NATO summit 9 July 2016 in Warsaw, Poland. Moldovans of ethnic Russian descent together with pro-Russian ethnic Moldovans increasingly act in concert in organized efforts such as demonstrations to put pressure on the Moldovan government to acquiesce to Russian government policy demands. Reportedly cultivated and supported by Russian agents, these efforts specifically promote agitation against Moldova to decrease that country's association with the European Union and NATO. (Photo by Denis Bolotsky, Sputnik)

society in the form of anti-Western statements or pro-Russia endorsements from political pulpits. Russia's treatment of politics as an extension of war has had positive effects reshaping Moldovan public opinion, as recent polling figures suggest a significant drop in support of the European Union and NATO.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps more famously (and distinctly more ominously), Russian political IO actions have been implicated and heavily investigated in the tampering and release of information associated with recent U.S. presidential election processes.<sup>10</sup> If true (or perhaps even if untrue), the inversion of the Western paradigm specifying the relationship between politics and war portends foreboding consequences for sovereign states, as IO operations can seemingly influence regime changes without the firing of a single bullet.

Finally, a paradigm of U.S. joint warfare frames all operations within the context of "legitimacy" that,

accordingly, identifies the imperative that all operations be perceived as legitimate and credible. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, elevates the concept of legitimacy into one of the principles of joint operations and defines it as a “decisive factor of operations” based on the “actual and perceived legality, morality, and rightness” of an operation.<sup>11</sup> In this paradigm, to ignore legitimacy is to sacrifice the purpose and effects of the operation. Russian IO actions have demonstrated a penchant for inverting this paradigm so that legitimacy does not validate operations, but rather operations validate their legitimacy. Russian manipulation of social media and the cyberspace realm of IO provides the most pertinent example of Russian efforts in this space. Scholar Jessikka Aro notes how a modern component of Russian information warfare consists of government paid commentators who troll social media sites and post propaganda, fake news, and overtly pro-Russian messages designed to confuse audiences or reinforce pro-Russian information themes.<sup>12</sup> This aspect of information warfare plays on the twin concepts of deniability and attribution to create chaos. As analyst Oliver Fitton puts it, efforts in cyberspace and social media are difficult to conclusively attribute to official Russian instruments of power and therefore give the Russian apparatus deniability in these operations.<sup>13</sup> Without the burden or imperative of being perceived as legitimate or credible, Russian IO actions can spin, craft, and create narratives that suit their objectives by continually flooding the information space with messages that advance their interests.

## Overmatch: The Limits of Joint IO Doctrine and Policy

Russian IO actions employ and integrate all instruments of national power to exploit seams and gaps in U.S. joint IO doctrine and overarching policy. By turning the propaganda effects of their IO actions against their own people to control public opinion, Russian actions trespass into areas of manipulation that the democratic principles that undergird joint policy and doctrine cannot (with good reason) emulate. Indeed, both policies that govern the conduct of IO—Department of Defense Directive 3600.01, *Information Operations*, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3210.01C, *Joint Information Operations Proponent*—strictly and explicitly prohibit IO activities “intended to manipulate audiences,

public actions, or opinions in the United States.”<sup>14</sup> In democracies, the ends cannot justify the means, which, while potentially ceding a critical IO advantage to Russia, actually reinforces civil society and suggests an effective counter-IO strategy that will be discussed in the next section.

JP 3-13, *Information Operations*, characterizes IO as “the integrated employment, during military operations, of IRCs [information related capabilities] [emphasis added].”<sup>15</sup> This makes it clear that, institutionally, the joint force generally views IO as a force multiplier for military actions. But Russian IO efforts, under the “securitized” concept mentioned earlier, have expanded the scope of what constitutes a “military operation” into all domains of national power that far outpaces U.S. joint doctrine conceptions of IO applications. To illustrate, the instruments of national power are doctrinally represented in JP 3-0 in terms of the separate domains of diplomacy, information, military, and economic, commonly depicted using the acronym “DIME.” For Russia, however, the separate block letters of DIME do not capture the roles and level of integration between their instruments. Rather, a cursive depiction of DIME—with connected letters—better captures the highly integrated Russian approach, and the term “national instruments of war” (not power) better articulates the blended construct of the Russian securitized environment. Figure 3 (on page 45) visually depicts the different constructs of national power. The Russian construct integrates IO actions across all instruments and provides venues for action that joint doctrine and policy cannot legally

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or operationally follow without undermining the same liberal democratic institutions and values that the joint force exists to preserve.

Russian IO actions that de-emphasize or ignore aspects of legitimacy and credibility inevitably gain degrees of speed and agility that U.S. joint doctrine and policy cannot hope to match. Confusing and disrupting adversary decision cycles (which often represent the core aim of Russian IO actions) merely requires that the volume of produced messages outpace an opponent's ability to interpret and deci-

and planning representatives to fully synchronize IO actions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, IO policy directives are teeming with mandates to coordinate actions through oversight bodies such as the Executive Steering Group that consists of joint staff members from multiple directorates.<sup>18</sup> While this architecture may emphasize and achieve IO coordination aimed at preserving whole-of-government legitimacy and credibility in the information space, in the meantime, Russian IO actions can swiftly and decisively outmaneuver such cumbersome regulations to achieve effects.

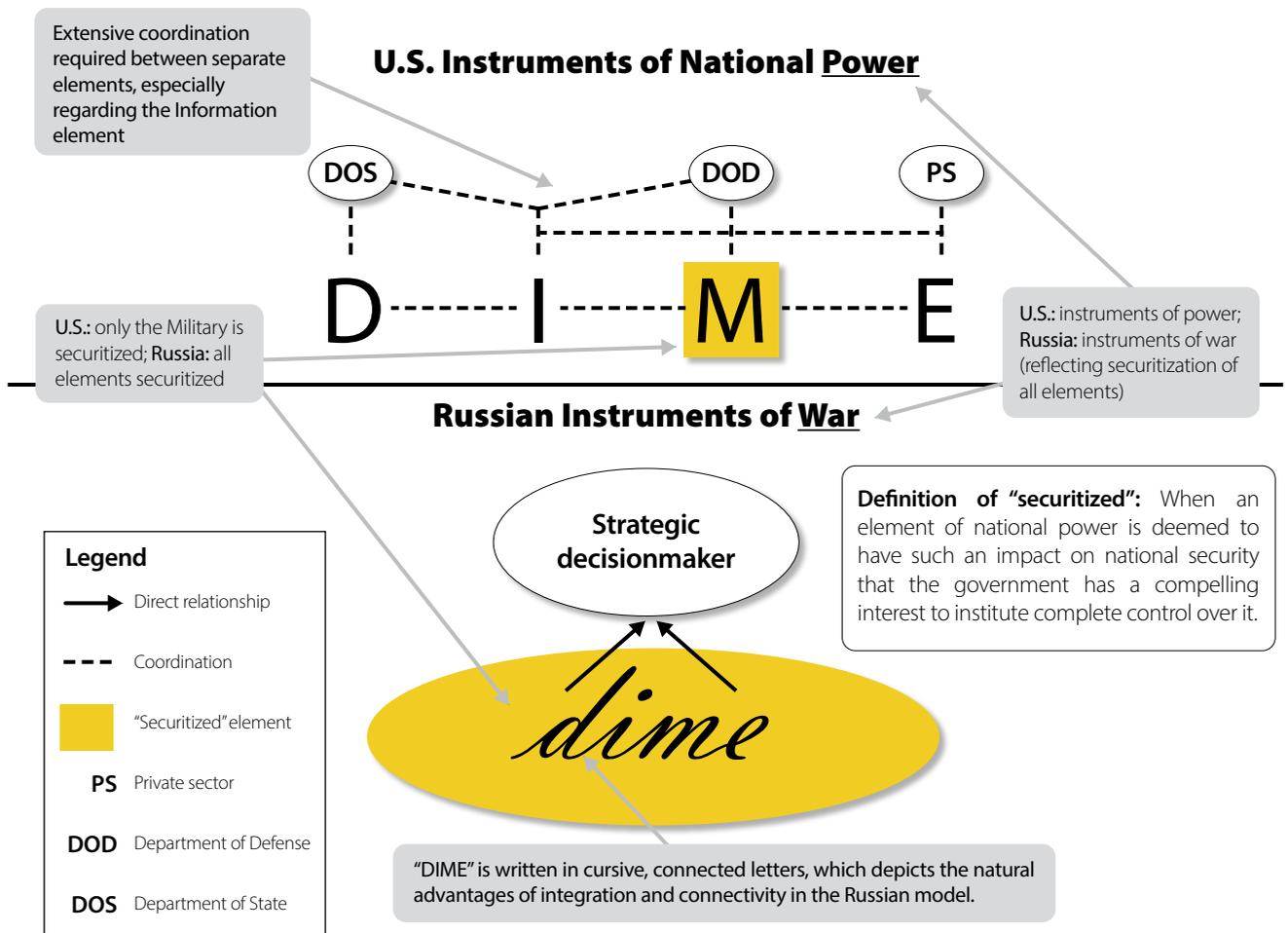


pher the true strategic intent of the message to take meaningful action. Analysts denote this characteristic of Russian IO as a doctrine of “reflexive control” and highlight how Russia has successfully used the tactic to shroud its actions in Ukraine and the Crimea, creating a paralyzing confusion that has largely prevented U.S. action.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the free-wheeling tactics of reflexive control, U.S. joint doctrine and policy demand extensive coordination for IO actions that must account for all interagency stakeholders. Figure 4 (page 46) highlights the doctrinally recommended composition of an IO joint planning cell taken from JP 3-13. The construct calls for the coordination of no less than *twenty-three* separate operational

Russian “propaganda” poster, 25 July 2010. Translation: “To find and not let go! Together against Terrorism.” (Photo by Vitaly Kuzmin, <http://www.vitalykuzmin.net>)

## The Doctrine of Contested Acknowledgment for the Joint Force

Given the areas of overmatch outlined above based on both political and institutional constraints that are unlikely to change, and given Russia's steadfast commitment to investing in and fighting according to the so-called Gerasimov Doctrine, Russia will likely maintain critical advantages in the information space



(Graphic by author)

**Figure 3. Comparing DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic) in the Russian Securitized Context**

into the foreseeable future. This admission of Russian overmatch by no means suggests that the United States should concede this domain to a powerful near-peer adversary. Rather, a doctrine of contested acknowledgment should be adopted by the joint force to counter and meet Russian IO actions that threaten or undermine strategic interests. Under this doctrine, the joint force pragmatically acknowledges Russian advantages in this domain while simultaneously contesting them to the utmost without sacrificing combined arms or joint lethal capabilities—which, despite what the Gerasimov Doctrine calls to the contrary, will remain the most decisive capabilities in exerting national power during conflicts. Implementing this doctrine against Russian actions in Europe relies on U.S. State Department

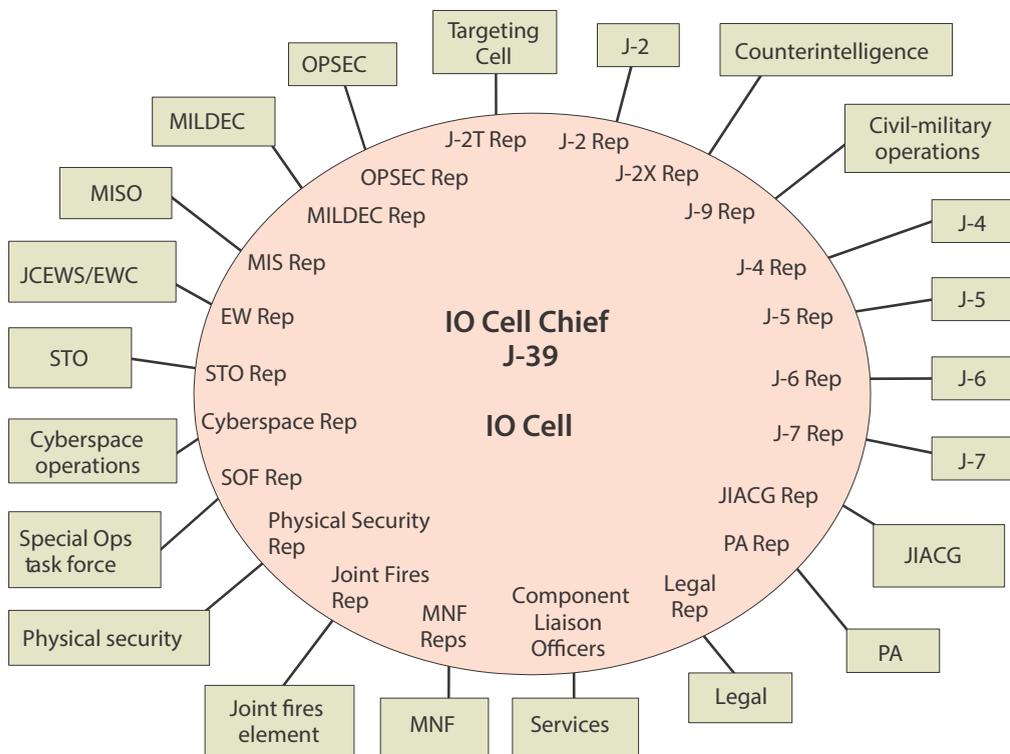
(DOS) efforts to bolster and project narratives of U.S. prosperity and freedom abroad as well as increased and sustained Department of Defense (DOD) efforts to train, advise, and assist partner nations within Russia’s sphere of influence in IO techniques and principles.

It is important to clarify here that U.S. efforts in this regard need only focus on sovereign states that are either NATO partners or have undergone steps to initiate NATO membership. U.S. assistance, then, would be invited and welcomed by states that have, in essence, declared their intentions to emulate Western-style governments and economies (a certain level of these intentions is required for NATO membership, as per its charter).<sup>19</sup> While NATO expansion, as rightly noted by Dr. John Mearsheimer, has been a key

Put bluntly, if Russia sees American efforts in eastern Europe as a threat, then there is a simple way to diffuse the tension: Russia can democratize its government or undertake other reforms to make their ideology more attractive to its former Soviet states. Clearly, no one should promote a strategy that threatens to return U.S.-Russian relations to the Cold War era. However, because states have (or should have) the right to pursue their own national interests, then those that beckon America's assistance should be heeded. While the augmented train, advise, and assist role of the United States under the doctrine of contested acknowledgment may risk more tension with Russia in the

short term, if Americans truly believe in the viability of their values, this approach is better in the long term at holding Russia accountable for its actions and preventing the dangerous spread of ideologies detrimental to the human condition.

As noted earlier, the propaganda advantages that Russia creates by securitizing its informational instrument of war for domestic support represents a double-edged sword that suggests a powerful U.S. counteraction in the IO domain. As the leading tool of diplomacy and foreign policy and part of an



#### Legend

- EW**—Electronic warfare
- EWC**—Electronic warfare cell
- IO**—Information operations
- J-2**—Intelligence directorate of a joint staff
- J-2T**—Deputy directorate for targeting
- J-2X**—Joint force counterintelligence and human intelligence staff element
- J-39**—Information operations staff
- J-4**—Logistics directorate of a joint staff
- J-5**—Plans directorate of a joint staff
- J-6**—Communications system directorate of a joint staff
- J-7**—Force development directorate of a joint staff
- J-9**—Civil-military operations directorate of a joint staff

- JCEWS**—Joint force commander's electronic warfare staff
- JIACG**—Joint interagency coordination group
- MILDEC**—Military deception
- MIS**—Military information support
- MISO**—Military information support operations
- MNF**—Multinational force
- Ops**—Operations
- OPSEC**—Operations security
- PA**—Public affairs
- Rep(s)**—Representative(s)
- SOF**—Special operations forces
- STO**—Special technical operations

(Graphic from Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations* [Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2012], II-6)

### Figure 4. Recommended Information Operations Planning Cell

agitator promoting friction in U.S.-Russian relations since 2008, it is also important to recognize that many of the eastern European nations, as free sovereign states, have chosen Western methods of government and commerce despite Russian influence and pressure to “rejoin” the Soviet Union. To concede these states to a so-called Russian sphere of influence (losers of the Cold War and purveyors of an ideology far short of the liberty and democracy valued in the West) for fear of antagonizing Russia would sacrifice American ideals for the sake of Russian appeasement.

interagency “manning” response, DOS experts should augment their embedment with current DOD personnel in U.S. European Command to lead a coordinated effort to saturate contested IO realms with images and messages of American prosperity and freedom. These messages will undermine the authoritarian mechanisms within the Russian political system that allow for total population control and manipulation. Fundamentally, if Russians begin to perceive that the “grass is greener” in America through IO campaigns ruthlessly waged by whole-of-government U.S. entities, they may push back on their government and, ideally, deny it the sustained advantages shaping public opinion that have allowed Russia to succeed in recent international conflicts at the expense of U.S. strategic interests. In this effort, the DOD plays a supporting role by assisting in the delivery of IO messages and by conducting shows of military force that propagate narratives of American confidence and invincibility.

It is also important to clarify how American messages of prosperity and liberty, propagated in Russia and eastern Europe, differ from the alleged and infuriating Russian efforts to meddle in and influence U.S. politics. Firstly, while the alleged Russian efforts to influence American politics centered on Russia providing *negative* information about the United States and candidates through cyber hacking, American efforts in the doctrine of contested acknowledgment would rely on simply advertising the *positive* benefits of a free society. So, while not directly poking holes in the Russian government, messages would simply inform the Russian population that perhaps a better, freer way of life exists. Secondly, Russian IO, due to their dubious nature, frequently rely on deniability and the impossibility of attributing such actions to the Russian government. U.S. messages as part of the contested acknowledgment doctrine, on the other hand, would welcome attribution because it would simply highlight the virtues of civil society in a democracy. So, for example, if Russia accused the United States of planting a message showing peaceful protests in the United States, the United States could simply take credit and essentially say “yes, those are peaceful protests against the government because that’s the level of freedom we enjoy in the United States.” Finally, this type of democracy promotion by the United States offers a way to spread American ideals and values without the “regime

change” model that experts like Mearsheimer have identified as both the primary Russian perception of American democracy promotion methods and a huge agitator of U.S.-Russian relations.<sup>20</sup>

The DOD assumes the lead role in the doctrine of contested acknowledgment by undertaking augmented “train, advise, assist” missions in the contested space within the European Command area of responsibility. Military information support operations (MISO) forces represent the best, if limited, manning solution for these actions. The launching of the European Reassurance MISO Program and the expansion of authorities and IO training proposed in 2016 represent prudent actions that should be approved, replicated, and expanded.<sup>21</sup> Training partner forces with expertly trained and equipped MISO soldiers yields the two-fold benefit of developing durable capabilities within partner forces while also giving countries with differing political constraints the means to (potentially) leverage IO in ways that the United States cannot organically accomplish. If the joint force expects to be adequately manned, trained, and equipped to contest the IO domain, augmenting and incentivizing MISO recruitment may be a key starting point.

## Conclusion

In April 2003, as American tanks thundered into Baghdad, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, Iraq’s information minister (derisively known as “Baghdad Bob”), vehemently broadcasted denials of an American presence in Iraq while simultaneously forecasting wild predictions of American defeat and destruction.<sup>22</sup> Obviously discredited by the reality of events on the ground, Baghdad Bob viscerally illustrates the limits of IO in the face of overwhelming combat power. While many such as Gerasimov have boldly predicted that modern forms of war will supplant decisive combat, nothing in the history of humanity and war validates this prediction. Even in the face of Russian IO overmatch, the U.S. joint force should not sacrifice lethal combat capabilities or, worse, notions of liberal democratic ideals to match Russian actions stride for stride in the information space. Rather, by steadfastly adopting a doctrine of contested acknowledgment, the joint force can pragmatically face the realities of Russian IO applications in the operational environment while simultaneously degrading them and, in this way, preserving American ideals while defending American interests. ■

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Vladimir Putin officially banned this popular meme of himself with his face painted in drag. That reaction inadvertently made the meme more popular than ever, and it became an international sensation. According to the author of this article, Putin's "thin skin" makes him an easy target for ridicule. (Artist unknown)

# Weaponizing Ridicule

J. Michael Waller, PhD

*The fifth rule: Ridicule is man's most potent weapon. It is almost impossible to counterattack ridicule. Also it infuriates the opposition, who then react to your advantage.*

—Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*

Venezuelan women stripped off their pants and threw them at riot police, taunting the already demoralized young men to “man up” and put them on. Jeering crowds laughed at the confused paramilitary forces, chanting for them to “wear some pants” and side with the people against the tottering Maduro dictatorship. Suddenly, the

truncheon-wielding, helmeted police and their armored vehicles didn't seem quite so menacing. Once the public could make fun of the repressive machine, everyone knew the police state's time was running out.

Improvised street theater across Venezuela in the spring of 2017, with the occasional Molotov cocktails adding drama to provoke overreaction among the security forces, marked the tipping point for a corrupt regime that had brought itself to the breaking point.

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The people laughed in the face of their oppressors. Their fear evaporated.

When a police state loses its ability to instill obedience or fear, it cannot long survive. When terrorists lose their ability to terrorize, they lose their most vital psychological weapon. Terrorism being by definition a form of psychological warfare—the name says it all, which is to instill terror among populations and leaders—the perpetrators cannot exist in perpetuity if they fail to cow the people.

Killing terrorists and their supporters is only part of the counterterrorism arsenal. Yet, hunting down and killing them has been the primary means of counterterrorism in a war apparently without end. Sometimes the worst thing to do to an enemy is to mock him or her. Ridicule, mockery, and their related tactics have been weapons against

evil—and evildoers' weapons against all things good—throughout recorded history.

"The devil ... the proud spirit ... cannot endure to be mocked," wrote Sir Thomas More, the closest friend and confidant of King Henry VIII, who would lose his head to the executioner's axe for being what he called "the king's loyal servant, but God's first."<sup>1</sup>

Ridicule can work when philosophy, theology, or reason fails. "The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear Scorn," said Martin Luther, a leader in what would become the Protestant Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

Authors Douglas J. Feith and Abram N. Shulsky echo Luther, writing, "One of the most potent weapons of the Enlightenment in its battle against religious fanaticism and intolerance was ridicule."<sup>3</sup>

The same can be said about most conflicts today. Ridicule has received little attention in modern military thinking. The military is not supposed to be funny. But neither are diplomats nor spies. Ridicule seldom if ever becomes a factor in military or diplomatic strategic planning, and rarely at the tactical or operational levels, even though many of our priority targets, large and small, are ripe for a good laugh.

Al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi lost his aura of invincibility in 2006 when the U.S. military released raw outtakes of a captured video showing the terrorist chief to be a befuddled, pudgy bumbler in a black ninja costume who didn't know how to operate a machine gun.<sup>4</sup> But some in the U.S. military didn't get the value of ripping down al-Zarqawi in this way, arguing that the machine gun, an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, is "complicated to master" and requires extensive training. Plus, the M249 in question was an "older variant, which makes its malfunctioning unsurprising."<sup>5</sup> Arab journalists, on the other hand, saw the value immediately. Iraqi television broadcast the video over and over for days.

Dictators, terrorists, and totalitarian ideologues, almost by definition, cannot tolerate being laughed at. Nor can anyone with an inflated ego and thin skin. Ridicule is their Achilles' heel. And, humor is a robust underground phenomenon in any society. The Soviet leadership was so fearful of humor that the KGB had what Russian comedian Yakov Smirnov called a "Department of Jokes." That was not the real name of the department, which had a more anodyne designation as a subunit of



the KGB's political enforcement section, the Fifth Chief Directorate, but Smirnov's nickname for it made the KGB look all the more weak and bizarre (although all jokes still had to be KGB approved).<sup>6</sup>

The Nazis took a different view. Early after Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the Nazis banned comments critical of the regime, but did not ban jokes. Some German historians say that the Nazis considered jokes to be an escape valve for ordinary Germans' tensions and frustrations. During the losing years of World War II, however, the Third Reich took jokes as a form of military defeatism, punishable by imprisonment or death, although historian Rudolph Herzog, author of *Dead Funny: Telling Jokes in Hitler's Germany*, found that the jokes were a pretext for purging undesirables.<sup>7</sup> A persuasive case can be made that excessive denunciation of humorists and jokers, playing up the threats they present, using shows of force, and even physically attacking them, can strengthen the purveyors of ridicule and deepen their appeal.

An antigovernment protester holds a poster with a caricature of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro 2 March 2014 during a rally against his government in Caracas. The poster reads, "What the hell does SOS mean?," "Peace no, bullets yes." Subsequently, thousands of antigovernment demonstrators marched in the capital trying to keep up the momentum during months of protests demanding Maduro's resignation. (Photo by Jorge Silva, Reuters)

## Cost Effective

Ridicule costs nothing to deploy. It requires no expensive hardware or special procurement budget. As such, it has no pork-barrel political constituency in Congress and no career path in the armed forces. Because ridicule effectively costs nothing, it cannot be accounted for as a tool or weapon. The lawyers and accountants who increasingly dominate military thinking and action cannot "bean count" ridicule the way that they can easily account for spent munitions, wrecked vehicles and gear, dead and mutilated servicemen, and

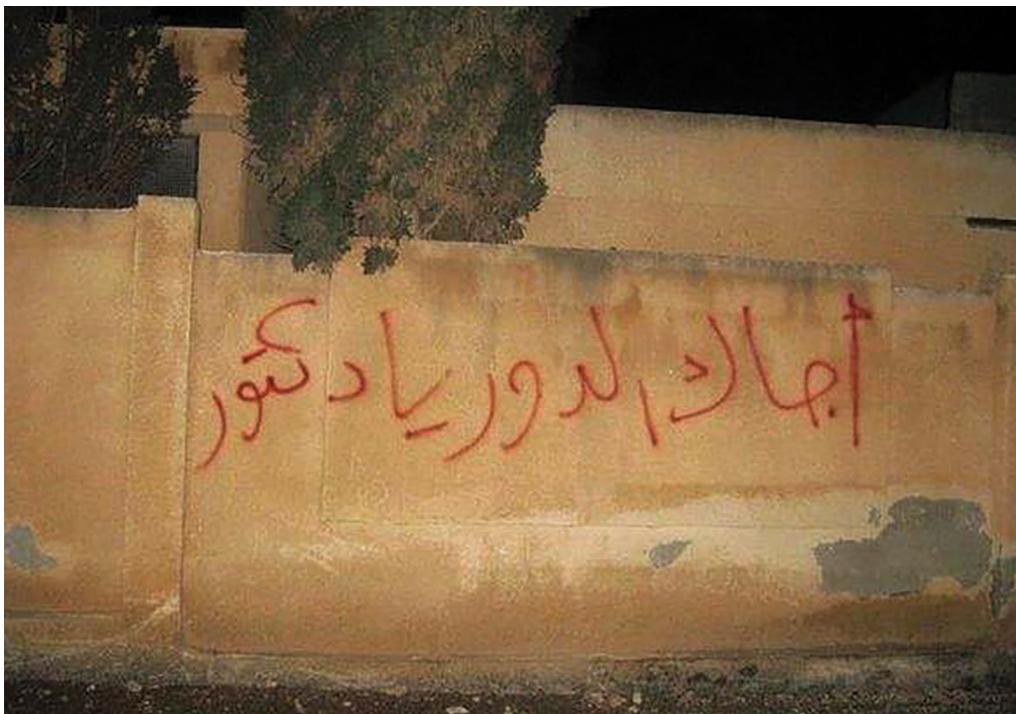
endless disability benefits. Military promotions tend to be for tangible, accountable time and actions, with occasional intangibles like gallantry and valor, not difficult-to-account-for innovations like ridicule that can weaken and destroy an enemy more effectively than kinetic, bean-countable force. So, we miss endless opportunities to take out our enemies and put our adversaries in their place.

Take an opportunity in early 2017, when Russia sent its creaky *Admiral Kuznetsov* aircraft carrier on its first-ever deployment from the Baltic to the Syrian coast. NATO maritime countries wrung their hands at the development. What if, instead, they simply made fun of the diesel-belching mon-

strosity? They could have caused an Internet sensation by dogging the *Kuznetsov* in full public view. What if, rather than marvel at Russia's new naval aviation capabilities, the alliance simply made fun of the mechanically plagued *Kuznetsov*? One wag suggested on Twitter that the British send a Royal Navy salvage tug to escort the *Kuznetsov* as it sputtered its way through the English Channel. At the time, Russian aircraft recklessly buzzed NATO warships and even reportedly penetrated NATO airspace. By making fun of Moscow's flagship on its first Mediterranean combat run, the alliance could have slapped Vladimir Putin down a few notches instead of elevating him toward his craved status as a military peer.

Such a stunt is not "information" in the informative or cyber sense of information operations (IO). It's political theater. It isn't "military information support operations," whatever that is, the awkward terminology having stripped the very essence from its former name, psychological operations (PSYOP). But political theater can be PSYOP. Without a proper name, we deprive ourselves from using what we have in hand for the psychological effect on a target. We would

never think of using a tugboat to weaken the intimidating first-ever presence of a Russian aircraft carrier. Instead, policy makers moan and groan about what to do, while bloggers and Twitter activists virtually blew the *Kuznetsov's* prestige out of the water.<sup>8</sup>



This graffiti, written on a school wall in Daraa, Syria, February 2011 reportedly by then fourteen-year-old Naief Abazid, says "Your turn, Doctor." The graffiti referred to the fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and it implied that Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad was next. In response, the government arrested and tortured Abazid and twenty-two other boys, prompting violent protests across Syria and sparking the war against Assad that continues today. (Photographer unknown)

## Vulnerable Leaders

Let's look at some examples of some vulnerable national leaders around the world, and then at some vulnerable adversaries on the tactical and operational levels. First, we must resist the urge to recoil in twenty-first-century horror at forms of ridicule that many in the modern West feel are misogynistic and bigoted, and consider the appropriateness against the relevant targets in their own societies.

**Russia.** Vladimir Putin has a thin skin. He has a crass sense of humor, but he is vulnerable when the laugh is on him. A group of psychologists and policy strategists has

argued that Putin's carefully cultivated tough-guy image is an overcompensation for his own insecurities about his personal sexual identity.<sup>9</sup> Putin is so thin-skinned that he officially banned a popular meme of him with his face painted in drag. That reaction inadvertently made the meme more popular than ever, becoming an international sensation. NATO militaries have now begun to consider memetic warfare, which employs memes as a form of psychopolitical conflict.<sup>10</sup>

**Egypt.** An indicator that a regime is ripe for a ridicule attack is when that regime passes laws and issues decrees to ban public insults against those holding political power. In the case of Egypt after the February 2011 revolution against Hosni Mubarak, the Islamist successors made such a ban part of the new constitution. The democratically elected regime of Mohammed Morsi, which quickly tried to consolidate power into a theocratic Muslim Brotherhood dictatorship, would tolerate no jokes.

That constitutional ban didn't deter Egyptian funnyman Bassem Youssef, who hosted a popular television program modeled after Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*. Youssef had aimed his merciless wit against Mubarak without reprisal, but the Islamists quickly had enough of him after Morsi became the butt of his jokes. Youssef aired a regular gag of poking fun at Morsi's repeated use of the word "love" in political speeches. To the tune of love songs, Youssef caressed a red pillow bearing an image of Morsi's face. These and other offenses were now a crime that earned international headlines. Youssef "made fun of President Mohammed Morsi on television," the London *Telegraph* reported.<sup>11</sup> International public opinion, led by Stewart himself, arguably spared Youssef from prison. The comedian now directs his wit at the Sisi government that ousted Morsi, with no repercussions.

Humor and ridicule can create a battlespace of its own. In Youssef's case, the Islamists fired back with their own acidic comedy. Abu Islam Ahmed Abdullah, whose show *Hezbollah* is aired on the Ummah Channel (these are real names, not jokes), appeared to express physical attraction to Youssef, calling him more beautiful than famous Egyptian actresses, and urging him to cover his face like a woman.

For comedic jihadists, the humor is one-way. Abu Islam said that Islamic sheikhs who have become involved in politics should be held above criticism, "because God gave them the right to enlighten people on what is right and what is wrong and that they can judge

who will go to heaven and who will go to Hell."<sup>12</sup> The Morsi regime and other Islamists called for restrictions on freedom of expression against Egyptian artists in general with high-profile intimidation campaigns.<sup>13</sup>

**Qatar.** The United States considers the dictatorial regime of Qatar a reliable friend and ally in the war against violent extremism, even though the Qatari regime and its ruling family finance the indoctrination, training, and operations of jihadists worldwide. We have conditioned ourselves to think of Qatar as a partner because Qatar "lets" us use the massive Al Udeid military base we built there, much of it at our expense. Why we consider Qatar a friend and ally when it finances the people who kill us is beyond the scope of this article, but let's look at the thin-skinned intolerance of the regime as an Achilles' heel if times get tough. Qatar can dish it out to the rest of us with its Al Jazeera television and Internet channel, but it can't take it.

The Qatari regime sentenced a poet to life in prison for the crime of "insulting" the emir. The offense: deriding the family dictatorship as a bunch of "sheiks playing on their Playstations."<sup>14</sup> The poet, Muhammad Ibn al-Dheeb al-Ajami, supported the regime-backed Arab Spring uprisings in North Africa, and seemed to call for a democratic revolution in Qatar, though he was careful not to say so specifically. Calling for the overthrow of the ruling al-Thani family is a capital crime in Qatar. In one of his poems, al-Ajami said, in Arabic, "If the sheiks cannot carry out justice, we should change the power and give it to the beautiful woman."<sup>15</sup> Such putdowns don't seem like much to people in democratic societies, and the ridicule isn't particularly profound, but it shows the weakness of jihad-exporting petro regimes and the simplicity of taking advantage of their leaders' emotional and psychological insecurities.<sup>16</sup>

**Syria.** The Syrian uprising prior to Islamic State (IS) attempts to control the country began after the Assad regime arrested schoolchildren for painting antigovernment graffiti in what appeared to have been a well-organized, low-budget provocation.<sup>17</sup> The children were not arrested for vandalism but for political crimes. Faced with no real journalism and a weak Internet presence, Syrian artists became increasingly courageous in skewering the Ba'athist Assad regime with the psychologically lethal weapon of satire.

Dictator Bashar al-Assad is said to be extremely sensitive to ridicule, in part for his own political survival

and in part because of a physical feature—an unusually long neck—that makes him an easy target for cartoonists, puppeteers, and other artists.

“From the beginning the regime has known it’s dangerous to use the image, to use art,” Syrian artist Aram Tahhan told CNN. “The camera is the equal of any weapon from the point of view of the regime.”<sup>18</sup>

Many of the authors needed no Internet. They spread their message through songs, cartoons, and poetry. They moved from their traditional skirting of social boundaries to becoming literal iconoclasts, smashing regime personalities and symbolism head-on. Others used the Internet to reach audiences both in Syria and around the world. A group of ten artists, calling themselves Masasit Mati, created cheap, easy-to-smuggle finger puppets of regime leaders to star in a video lampoon called “Top Goon.”<sup>19</sup> The very simple—and very funny—puppet show ripped down the regime’s fragile cult of personality around Bashar “Beeshu” al-Assad, his henchman, and his glamorous wife. The simple performances also heaped ridicule on the regime for its atrocities.

These short, comical puppet shows were popular in Syria and around the world, and reduced the regime to repressing puppets. The puppets themselves were an ideal format for underground video resistance. Easy and inexpensive to make, small enough to hide or discard in an emergency, and mercilessly funny caricatures of various Syrian regime figures, the puppets carried out a brilliant divisive operation to embolden the average Syrian and marginalize what was left of the regime. The short and entertaining shows are worth watching and promoting as examples of cultural resistance to dictatorship, and as ideas for battling other adversaries, such as the regime in Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Top Goon has its own YouTube channel in Arabic, and videos with English captions and subtitles.<sup>20</sup> The entire campaign was possible by a small grant from the government of the Netherlands.

Before the emergence of IS, some foreign observers urged that satirical artistic expression be supported as a tool in Syria against the well-organized, disciplined, militant, and generally unhumorous Muslim Brotherhood, which sought to take control of Syria.

“A creative and resolutely non-violent form of opposition to Bashar al-Assad’s regime has taken hold in Syria, as the country’s artists respond to the crisis with newfound boldness and purpose, despite the clear dangers in doing so,” wrote CNN’s Tim Hume.<sup>21</sup>

“Since the uprising, the artists have broken through the wall of fear in Syria and are thinking in another way,” said Syrian journalist Aram Tahhan, one of the curators of an exhibition on Syria’s creative dissent—Culture in Defiance—on display in Amsterdam. “The uprising has changed the artists’ thinking about the task of art in society, how they can do something useful for society,” Tahhan said in the CNN report. “They have rewritten everything.”<sup>22</sup>

“With works spanning from painting to song to cartoons, puppet theater to graffiti to plays, the exhibition traces the way that Syrian artists have used a range of creative techniques within traditional and new media to create political, populist art that both brooks ‘the red line’ of dissent and engages the public in unprecedented ways,” according to CNN.<sup>23</sup>

**North Korea.** The totalitarian family dynasty of North Korea may be more absorbent than it seems. The Internet has made Pyongyang acutely sensitive to satire and ridicule. After the 2004 release of the “South Park” puppetry of *Team America: World Police*, rumors circulated in Washington that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il ordered the assassination of producers and directors Trey Parker and Matt Stone.<sup>24</sup> *Team America’s* vulgar humor did no damage to American power and prestige, even though it satirized what was then the Global War on Terrorism. But, it pierced the choreographed imagery of Kim’s propagandistic persona and turned him into a global object of ridicule.

Kim’s son and successor, Kim Jong-un, is even more thin-skinned. When introduced to the world as the successor to his ailing father, South Koreans derided him as a “fat pig” and a “Teletubby.”<sup>25</sup> Apparently facing substantial opposition from the ruling elite, Kim Jong-un consolidated his domestic political power through a regime of fear, executing longtime loyalists through the most humiliating and bizarre methods and assassinating his own half-brother. A decade after the release of *Team America*, James Franco and Seth Rogen starred in the action-comedy *The Interview*, in which the CIA recruited their talk show characters to assassinate Kim under the pretext of having him on their television program.<sup>26</sup> The North Korean foreign ministry warned that release of *The Interview* would be an “act of war” that would trigger a “merciless” response.<sup>27</sup>

Bloody as he is, the chubby North Korean dictator appears intensely conscious about his hard-to-control



weight. In 2016, the Chinese government censored websites that called the 275-pound tyrant “Kim Fatty the Third.”<sup>28</sup> When U.S. Sen. John McCain referred to Kim as a “crazy fat kid,” the North Korean government called the comment “a provocation tantamount to declaration of war.”<sup>29</sup> In the bizarre world of North Korea’s hermit regime, where personal image and psychological intimidation are the only means of keeping power, playing on Kim’s obsession with his personal appearance could become an important psychological factor in bringing the regime to heel and even hastening its collapse.

**Too sensitive to employ?** Many of the real-world examples above raise policy questions for the United States and its NATO allies. Has Western society become too sensitive to find such mockery acceptable? In an absurd way, it has become politically and socially normal for the United States to kill and maim people around the world, but forbidden and even immoral to make fun of them. One of the problems to consider is, have we become too politically correct to use ridicule adroitly against targets in traditional or fundamentalist societies because of our own social prejudices and fears about offending (as opposed to killing) others?

## Terrorists: The Case for Calling Them Nincompoops

What greater prestige can we confer on a sexually confused jihadist loser than to denounce him and his cause, by name, as existential threats to the United

Russia’s only aircraft carrier, *Admiral Kuznetsov*, 2 August 2012. The mechanically plagued ship is a target ripe for public ridicule, according to the author of this article. (Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

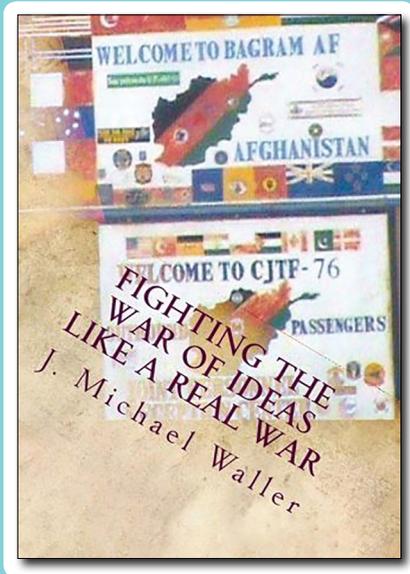
States of America? Why not just call them what they are? Or better yet, why not refrain from calling them anything at all, but let others deliver the message more effectively, without diminishing U.S. prestige?

The purpose of waging terror as a strategy or tactic of warfare is to terrorize populations and decision makers. Terror is a psychological phenomenon of electrochemical reactions within the human brain. We inadvertently assist terrorists in accomplishing their missions when we allow them to instill fear and terror in our individual minds and our societies. We confer prestige upon terrorists by building them up as worthy adversaries or existential threats. And, while concepts for tearing down the enemy’s prestige have circulated for more than a decade, there has been little result beyond isolated tactical operations in the field.<sup>30</sup>

What if we just called them out as nincompoops as a matter of national policy? “They blow each other up by mistake. They bungle even simple schemes. They get intimate with cows and donkeys,” Daniel Byman and Christine Fair noted in *The Atlantic*. “Our terrorist enemies trade on the perception that they’re well trained and religiously devout, but in fact, many are fools and perverts who are far less organized and sophisticated than we imagine. Can being more

# Military Review

## WE RECOMMEND



In *Fighting the War of Ideas like a Real War*, J. Michael Waller advances the thesis that employing propaganda and public diplomacy to fight so-called “small wars” is a vital strategic dimension upon which final success actually hinges. He asserts that the war against Islamic terrorists and jihadi insurgents should be seen as first and foremost a war of ideas; however, the author contends this assertion has been frequently overlooked by policy makers, resulting in persistent failure of war efforts. He specifically addresses what he claims are shortfalls in the U.S. strategy for coping with the current operational environment, especially with regard to effectively dealing with Islamic extremism that directly leads to international terrorism. Subsequently, the author discusses the necessity for developing a basic, but uniform and consistent, communications strategy together with a regimen of simple actions that the U.S. government might adopt to wage global ideological conflict on all fronts. He develops recommendations regarding how the United States might mobilize and synchronize its communications resources and policies in a cohesive and comprehensive strategy that aims to simultaneously divide and isolate the enemy while gaining the ideological confidence and support of allies and neutral parties. As part of that strategy, he argues that the U.S. message strategy should be shifted out of the State Department, given to the Department of Defense, and executed primarily through military combatant commands.

realistic about who our foes actually are help us stop the truly dangerous ones?”<sup>31</sup>

How afraid would we be of our enemies, then? How could we better prioritize our targets and how we hunt them down? What can we do better to provoke them into fratricide among themselves? Let’s look at highlights from Byman and Fair’s essay:

- “Even in the aftermath of the botched Times Square bombing ... the perception persists that our enemies are savvy and sophisticated killers.”
- “To be sure, some terrorists are steely and skilled—people like Mohamed Atta ... but the quiet truth is that many of the deluded foot soldiers are foolish and untrained, perhaps even untrainable. Acknowledging this fact could help us tailor our counterterrorism priorities—and publicizing it could help us erode the powerful images of strength and piety that terrorists rely on for recruiting and funding.”
- “Nowhere is the gap between sinister stereotype and ridiculous reality more apparent than in Afghanistan, where it’s fair to say that the Taliban employ the world’s worst suicide bombers: one in two manages to kill only himself. And this success rate hasn’t improved at all in the five years they’ve been using suicide bombers, despite the experience of hundreds of attacks—or attempted attacks.”
- “If our terrorist enemies have been successful at cultivating a false notion of expertise, they’ve done an equally convincing job of casting themselves as pious warriors of God. The Taliban and al-Qaida rely on sympathizers who consider them devoted Muslims fighting immoral Western occupiers. But intelligence picked up by Predator drones and other battlefield cameras challenges that idea—sometimes rather graphically.”
- “One video, captured recently by the thermal-imagery technology housed in a sniper rifle, shows two Talibs in southern Afghanistan engaged in intimate relations with a donkey. Similar images abound, including ground-surveillance footage that records a Talib fighter gratifying himself with a cow.”
- “Tawdry though this predilection for porn may be, it is not necessarily trivial. There is, after all, potential propaganda value in this kind of jihadist behavior. Current U.S. public diplomacy centers on selling America to the Muslim world, but we

should also work to undermine some of the myths built up around our enemies by highlighting their incompetence, their moral failings, and their embarrassing antics. Beyond changing how the Muslim world perceives terrorists, we can help ourselves make smarter counterterrorism choices by being more realistic about the profile and aptitude of would-be attackers.<sup>32</sup>

Byman and Fair's approach is exactly opposite the U.S. "narrative" of the past seventeen years. And, it is precisely on target, for it tears apart the pious, self-sacrificial idealism of the enemy—an idealism that the American approach, in many ways, has inadvertently reinforced—and denudes the enemy and their wealthy petrostate sponsors of their moral authority and their sense of invincibility. Furthermore, such exposure plays to social and cultural norms of pride and shame that are far more profound in Muslim states than in Western secular societies.

Some service personnel have collected prurient gun camera and drone videos from Iraq and Afghanistan and posted them online with their own comments. One shows a jihadist who mistakenly sets himself on fire after torching the American flag. Another shows Iraqi insurgents through an infrared scope as they take turns, one holding down a helpless donkey by the neck, while the other pleasures himself in it from behind. Someone created a version of the video set to the Bloodhound Gang's song "The Bad Touch," popularly known by its catchy refrain, "Let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel."<sup>33</sup> The posts are generally juvenile, crass, and unsophisticated, and apparently never directed at the necessary audiences but instead to the service member's friends. However, they give a sampling of what the United States and its allies commonly have at their disposal.

Then there is the Detroit photo of the Nigerian Christmas bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, with his explosive underwear that failed after the detonator was doused by sweat from his scrotum, and the Saudi bomber who failed to murder Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism chief but blew himself up with a pound of plastic explosives and a cell phone detonator jammed up his bottom.<sup>34</sup> These types of terrorist enemy are not invincible. They are nitwits. They are losers. We should portray them as such. We should make them too radioactive for other radicals to find attractive.

## Afghans Do It Their Way

When such themes are too distasteful or inappropriate for U.S. forces to execute, we may find willing local partners. Locals are almost always better at getting under one another's skin than foreigners are, and can be the most credible messengers for our purposes.

The Afghan military began heaping public ridicule on the Taliban for global impact around 2011, in ways acceptable to social norms and without diminution of American military prestige. In one instance, on or about 28 March 2011, Afghan troops paraded two captured transvestite Taliban members before international journalists in Meheriam, east of Kabul. The prisoners apparently had been caught dressed as women. The bearded prisoner stood dressed in a lovely purple traditional dress and green hijab, complete with delicate lace and embroidery. The other, clean-shaven, sported a beautiful tangerine-colored gown with needlepoint floral designs and a locally fashionable jangle belt. Apparently the transvestite Taliban had dressed as women to get close to Americans and kill them. If the U.S. military was involved, there was no public evidence; all credit went to the Afghan military in a story and photo gallery that the Associated Press carried worldwide.<sup>35</sup>

## Islamic State/Daesh

We find little to make fun of regarding IS. However, there are still stories and pieces of evidence that resourceful PSYOPers can use to grind down the invincible image of IS, if not through ridicule, at least through other forms of derision. Following the lead from Arab partners, more nations are referring to IS as "Daesh." This Arabic acronym translates to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in English, but the terrorist group finds the use of this moniker offensive. Daesh has threatened to cut out the tongues of people using the word.<sup>36</sup>

## Dangers of Ridicule

Used carelessly or indiscriminately, ridicule can create enemies where there were none and deepen hostilities among the very peoples whom the user seeks to win over. Weaponizing ridicule presents dangers to friendly locals who can do it best. As a testimony to both the vulnerability to ridicule and the courage of individuals who take on murderous opponents with laughter, comedians have paid with their lives.

Syria's Ba'athist regime responded to ridicule with horrific brutality. Agents broke the hands of an opposition political cartoonist, mutilated and murdered a singer, and cut out the vocal chords of a poet who recited verse that offended the government. Instead of backing down, Syrian artists ratcheted up their satirical assault on their tormenters.<sup>37</sup>

Prominent Somalian comedian Abdi Jeylani Malaq Marshale, known popularly as Marshale, was one of the fallen. He gleefully skewered Islamist extremists, impersonating al-Shabaab insurgents as part of his comedy routine until jihadists assassinated him in 2012.<sup>38</sup> He knew he was on the terrorists' death list but kept making fun of them anyway. "He had not done anything wrong to anybody, as far as we are concerned, but they shot him in the head and shoulders," a presenter at Kulmiye radio told the BBC. "This is a black day for the entire entertainment industry. He was a leader in Somalia comedy and everybody liked his performance."<sup>39</sup>

The physical dangers to courageous local comedians present opportunities for others to provide them protection—either at home or in exile—as well as studio, broadcasting, and online resources to continue to reach their audiences and targets.

## Conclusion

Satire and ridicule are effective, inexpensive instruments of psychological warfare. They require few resources and little infrastructure. Whether the situation calls for young Venezuelan women taking off their pants to taunt the manhood of riot police, sending a salvage tug to wreck the prestige of a menacing warship, waging memetic warfare with homemade memes, or launching a full-scale campaign to cause terrorists and dictators to self-destruct, ridicule is a powerful



Abdi Jeylani Malaq Marshale was a popular Somalian writer, actor, and comedian on radio and television who was known for his parodies of local Islamist militants and the Transitional Federal Government. He had been threatened by the al-Shabaab insurgent group in 2011, forcing him to hide in the northern Somaliland region for several days. On 31 July 2012, Marshale was shot by two unidentified, pistol-wielding men shortly after leaving the Kulmiye radio station and before arriving at his home in the Waberi District of Mogadishu. He later died from head and chest wounds at the Medina Hospital. (Photo courtesy of VOA Somalia)

tool to capture popular imagination and give people courage while tearing down a target.

The U.S. government, though poorly conditioned to use ridicule as a strategic tool, nevertheless has all the capabilities it needs to start experimenting. Under proper leadership, PSYOPers can begin immediately at the battalion level while others explore ridicule more deeply as a strategic weapon. We can then open our eyes to see the weapons at our fingertips all around us that we had never noticed before. ■

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# Fabian Strategy for a Twenty-First Century Hannibal

## Reinvigorating U.S. Strategy in Iraq and Syria

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After nearly sixteen years of persistent conflict, the United States has come full circle—there is yet another large, ungoverned space filled with Islamic militants intent on waging jihad against the West. The ability of the Islamic State (IS) to amass an estimated twenty thousand fighters on its way to defeating the Iraqi security forces was the final confirmation that the U.S. strategy for the Middle East has failed both to eliminate the threat presented by IS and to spread liberal democracy in that region.<sup>1</sup> An appreciation of how U.S. strategy evolved from the Bush to the Obama administrations, and why these two strategies failed, is essential to informing a new strategy for victory.

Force must play a leading role because hope of a purely diplomatic breakthrough seems naive when one side's *raison d'être* is so closely tied to the other's destruction. While a ground invasion and counterinsurgency effort may well suit such conditions, the American people

have already shunned the generational effort required.<sup>2</sup> A decapitation strategy, with its reliance on drones and special operations, has proven to be more sustainable, though the enemy's hydra-like resilience suggests the United States can do no better than share Israel's fate of endlessly "mowing the grass."<sup>3</sup> Syria's cauldron presents another way for force to take center stage.

### The Bush Administration: A Ways-Means Mismatch

The shock of 9/11 gave new life to old ideas. In the American political tradition of describing world events as the struggle of good versus evil, Islamic radicalism assumed the role communism had vacated. As with the U.S. effort in southeast Asia some five decades ago, a Manichaeian bent in U.S. foreign policy confused peripheral for vital national interests.<sup>4</sup> When Islamic radicalism anywhere became a threat everywhere, a miscalculation of the means and public will

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Illustration of George Washington in Frank Keating's *George: George Washington, Our Founding Father* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 3 January 2012). George Washington was able to defeat a larger, better equipped British force through a guerrilla-style war of attrition. This approach is known as the Fabian strategy after Roman General Quintus Fabius Maximus, who thwarted the invasion of Rome by Carthaginian General Hannibal using similar methods. (Illustration by Mike Wimmer)

necessary to defeat a global movement on the periphery of U.S. interests occurred just as it had in Vietnam. In an address to a joint session of Congress shortly after 9/11, President George Bush reintroduced this Cold War worldview to the nation: “Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”<sup>5</sup> The Bush administration’s chosen ways and means, or lack thereof, were equally clear: American military power would transform the Middle East via force, the economy would not be mobilized, and the American public would not be burdened with a tax increase to pay for the war. The Bush administration’s strategy is therefore best captured as unlimited war pursued by limited means.

An assumption of a quick military victory followed by spontaneous political revolution underestimated the probability and costs of transforming the Middle East. Although it was correct to assume U.S. military superiority, the Bush administration’s emphasis on military power prevented a clear-eyed assessment of the extent political reconciliation, let alone transformation, was even possible.<sup>6</sup> As prewar expectations of a quick victory were dashed, the realities of nation building under an insurgency exposed the limits of public tolerance for expending blood and treasure on the periphery of U.S. interests. From the beginning of the Iraq war, Baathist-enabled Islamic militant groups were in an existential fight, choosing to fight alongside jihadists rather than face a newly empowered, revenge-minded Shia majority.<sup>7</sup> In comparison, once the memory of 9/11 began to fade, and radical Islamism proved unable to threaten the American way of life, the political costs required to match the insurgency’s effort in Iraq proved to be unsustainable.<sup>8</sup>

A strategic reassessment, triggered by Iraqi domestic politics circa 2006, could have prevented this misallocation of resources. Unfortunately, the decision to surge forces was based upon maintaining credibility rather than identifying a sustainable path to victory.<sup>9</sup> Sustainability in a democracy rests on public support. Lives and money expended must roughly equate to both the public’s perceptions of the effort’s relative importance and the probability of its success. To be sure, a misalignment of this type does not doom a strategy out of hand. It does however curtail the timetable for success; victory must be swift. Otherwise, even a

correct strategic approach will be robbed of the time necessary to see it through.

Optimism does not equate to approval, tacit or otherwise. U.S. public optimism about Iraq reached 65 percent in late 2008, a year into the surge. Paradoxically, a CNN/ORC poll taken fifty times between 2006 and 2011 averaged a 33 percent public approval rating for the war effort, while never recording support above 40 percent or below 29 percent. And from 2006 to 2014, when CNN/ORC pollsters asked whether the outcome in Iraq justified the loss of American life, affirmative responses peaked in 2006 at only 29 percent and trended downward to 18 percent in 2014.<sup>10</sup>

The surge undoubtedly created the conditions by which the United States could exit honorably from Iraq; however, it also made clear that the public would deny policy makers the option of maintaining surge-level conditions indefinitely. Resolving the sectarian differences at the heart of the insurgency required an open-ended commitment of U.S. forces.<sup>11</sup> An enduring U.S. security buffer was needed for any hope of a Sunni-Shia power sharing agreement.<sup>12</sup> The United States should therefore have taken steps to drive down casualties to make a long-term U.S. troop commitment more tolerable to the American public. The inability to sustain such an effort helped cement the power of a Shia-dominated government, whose mistreatment of its Sunni population would make the Islamic State possible.<sup>13</sup>

The American experience in Iraq highlights the obstacles to waging protracted limited war in a democratic society.<sup>14</sup> Though a generational commitment, fueled by resolute public support for a counterinsurgency approach, makes for an interesting counterfactual, an open-ended commitment of blood and treasure at the periphery of U.S. interests rings incompatible with democratic society.<sup>15</sup> Advancing democracy for democracy’s sake has its limits. The lesson is twofold. First, force can only create the time for a political alternative to radical Islamism to take root—for which no timeline exists. Second, any subsequent strategic approach must account for the resolve of a war weary public.

## **The Obama Administration: A Ways-Ends Mismatch**

In contrast to the Bush approach, the Obama administration’s strategy regarding combatting Islamic extremism was best defined as a limited war pursued by limited

means. When compared to the view of his predecessor, President Barack Obama did not view the world as a zero-sum game between the West and radical Islam; consequently, there was a clear delineation between vital and peripheral interests. In 2013, in his hallmark national security speech, Obama emphasized, “Beyond Afghanistan, we must define our effort not as a boundless ‘global war on terror,’ but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of

names and faces of those threatening the United States; it does nothing to support the growth of moderate governments that can provide viable political alternatives to radical Islamism. The United States can neither kill itself out of the war nor mark time while it waits for the end to an Islamic reformation. Here the lesson is singular: a decapitation strategy expends a sustainable rate of effort to achieve proximate goals acceptable to the American public, but it fails to tackle the war’s root cause.<sup>21</sup>

“Beyond Afghanistan, we must define our effort not as a boundless ‘global war on terror,’ but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America.”

violent extremists that threaten America.”<sup>16</sup> To achieve this, the Obama administration’s strategy preference was to partner with states affected by Islamic militants to provide limited military assistance as opposed to relying on large U.S. troop deployments.<sup>17</sup>

Beginning in 2013, the crux of the Obama administration’s strategy lay in soliciting greater participation in the counterterrorism effort by legitimate governments. In theory, this would reduce political costs, shift the burden to other militaries, and bolster the legitimacy of regional allies.<sup>18</sup> But, in reality, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria together with those within the weak or failed states of Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan precluded the administration from attaining partners of consequence. With no way of stabilizing the areas where Islamic extremist groups were thriving, the de facto U.S. approach became a decapitation strategy in which the only effective strategic choice was to attrit terrorist leadership.<sup>19</sup> Though drone strikes and clandestine raids may have eked out a modicum of temporary security at a sustainable rate, societal political deficiencies at the root of insurgent motivation were left unaddressed under the somewhat delusional assumption that Islamists might reconcile their hatred of modernity once a sufficient, yet unknowable, amount had been killed.<sup>20</sup>

Subsequently, experience has shown that a decapitation strategy cannot degrade, and ultimately defeat, IS. Despite the success of drone strikes in eliminating enemy senior leaders, a decapitation strategy only changes the

The problem of addressing the root causes of insurgent wars is now exacerbated by the fact that the West has tired of seemingly fruitless interventions in the Middle East. Consequently, it is unlikely that NATO or individual U.S. allies will demand action; and, as long as the war stays confined to Iraq and Syria, it is even more unlikely that the domestic pressure to launch a ground invasion will increase to any significant level.<sup>22</sup> It would therefore appear that U.S. strategic options are limited. On the contrary, it is the very lack of a large U.S. presence in Iraq that provides the United States with a new low-cost, high-payoff strategic option.

### Turning the Tables on the Fabian Gridlock

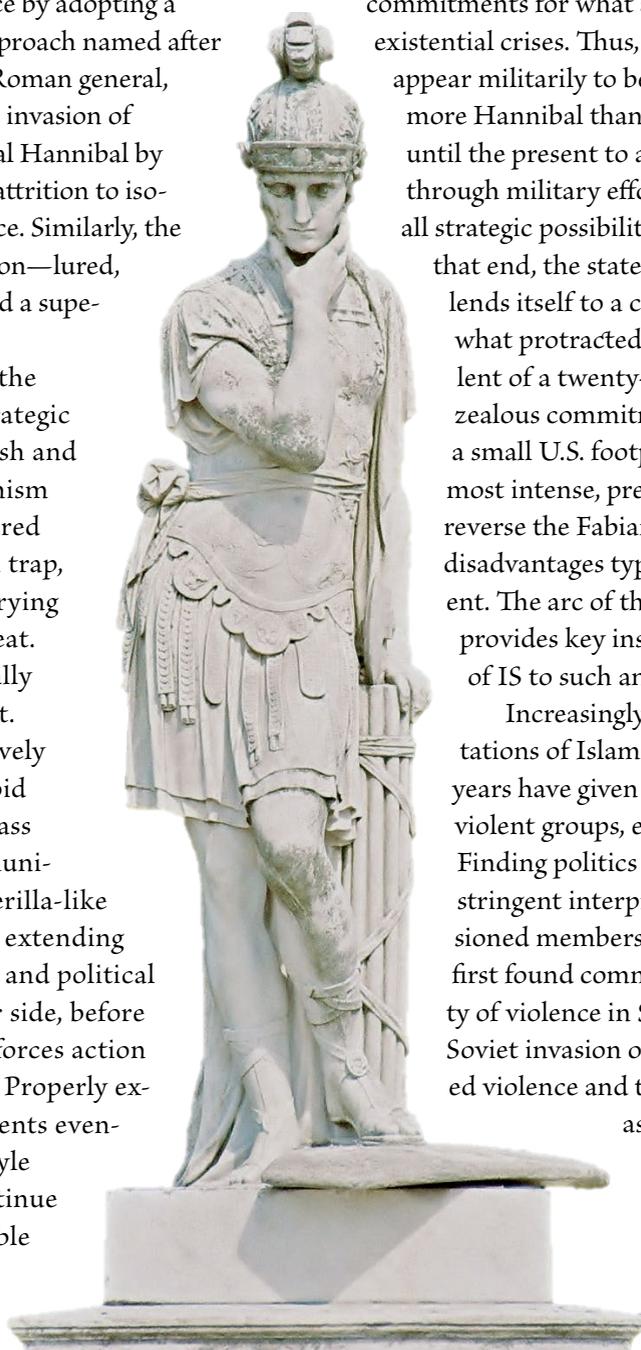
Political preferences aside, a consensus among American politicians still exists that the threat posed by Islamic extremism warrants military action. However, the political commitment required to independently bring about a military solution simply does not. The sum of events has all the hallmarks of a military misfortune, where victory seeks destruction, but the only sustainable approach accomplishes nothing beyond mowing the grass. The United States must learn, anticipate, and adapt.<sup>23</sup>

The solution lies with an innovative form of the strategy responsible for winning American independence employed by Gen. George Washington. He was able to defeat a larger, better-equipped and

better-trained British-led force by adopting a Fabian strategy, a strategic approach named after Quintus Fabius Maximus, a Roman general, who, in 221 BC, thwarted the invasion of Rome by Carthaginian general Hannibal by using a guerrilla-style war of attrition to isolate and starve the enemy force. Similarly, the American Fabius—Washington—lured, isolated, trapped, and defeated a superior British army.

The preceding survey of the twenty-first century U.S. strategic experience by presidents Bush and Obama against radical Islamism found one administration lured into the clutches of a Fabian trap, with the other desperately trying to extricate itself before defeat. A Fabian strategy traditionally favors the weaker belligerent. Qualitatively and quantitatively disadvantaged, the weak avoid decisive engagements to harass overextended lines of communication with hit-and-run, guerilla-like tactics. Victory hinges upon extending hostilities beyond the moral and political commitment of the stronger side, before an accusation of cowardice forces action the weaker side cannot win. Properly executed, the stronger belligerents eventually succumb to Fabian-style attrition as their will to continue falters long before any tangible considerations are ever in doubt. All this is predicated upon correctly predicting sustainability of the conflict: the weaker side must be able to run a carefully calculated marathon, while the domestic circumstances of the stronger require a sprint.<sup>24</sup>

As a test of wills, a Fabian strategy may seem inappropriate at first. The United States is militarily superior to any potential foe, let alone those in Syria, and its public has already shown an aversion to long-term



The marble statue of Roman Dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus Verucosus named *Statue of Fabius Cunctator* (1773–1780), by artist Joseph Baptist Hagenau, located in the Schönbrunn Garden at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. Photo taken 24 January 2007. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

commitments for what are perceived to be less than existential crises. Thus, the United States may now appear militarily to be more Carthage than Rome, more Hannibal than Fabius. However, failure up until the present to achieve political objectives through military efforts necessitates reevaluating all strategic possibilities for the future. Toward that end, the state of play in Syria and Iraq lends itself to a contrarian conception of what protracted war can offer the equivalent of a twenty-first century Hannibal. The zealous commitment of IS, combined with a small U.S. footprint where the fighting is most intense, presents an opportunity to reverse the Fabian strategy, neutralizing the disadvantages typical of the stronger belligerent. The arc of the radical Islamic movement provides key insights on the vulnerabilities of IS to such an approach.

Increasingly more dogmatic interpretations of Islam throughout the last forty years have given rise to progressively more violent groups, eventually leading to IS. Finding politics incompatible with a more stringent interpretation of Islam, disillusioned members of the Muslim Brotherhood first found common cause with the centrality of violence in Salafism in the 1970s.<sup>25</sup> The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan then cemented violence and the concept of martyrdom

as a political instrument of change for the war's Salafijihadist veterans, who later coalesced around al-Qaida's vision of an international caliphate by the 1990s.<sup>26</sup>

The cultish adherence to martyrdom in Salafism eventually superseded al-Qaida's political ends, as personified in the schism between Osama

bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who gave the Iraq War its sectarian hue in 2006. This trend toward increasingly apolitical ends culminated with rise of the Islamic State and its vision of absolute violence in pursuit of an end of times prophecy.<sup>27</sup> With IS, violence

and death have become ends in and of themselves as war simply grinds away in a perpetual march toward the prophesied Islamic apocalypse.

To be sure, planting the black flag in Syria marks a low-point in the West's struggle against radical Islamism. But for IS, geopolitical considerations are secondary to ideology.<sup>28</sup> Establishing the caliphate inaugurates the war with both nonbelievers as well as Shia Muslims that will culminate with the end time.<sup>29</sup> Syria is at the center of such prophecies.

Additionally, involvement by Iran and Russia must now be factored into the Syrian conflict. Tehran's special relationship with the Assad regime and desire for regional hegemony have made for de facto Iranian involvement in Syria. And, whether Putin's involvement in Syria is linked mainly to Russia coveting Tartus as a warm water port on the Syrian coastline, or is merely a tool for domestic distraction, IS stands in his way. Irrespective of ends, two U.S. adversaries—Russian and Syria—have willfully tied themselves to breaking the largely Sunni Islamic State's apocalyptic drive. Consequently, the time for the United States to exact a pound of flesh has come.

## A New Strategy for Victory

A new U.S. strategy is needed to simultaneously contain the war within Iraq and Syria while attempting to protract it with the aim of pitting the will of IS against Iranian and Russian regional ambitions. The United States should exert the current, sustainable rate of effort to exact incremental costs on overly invested adversaries. This new strategy would effect a reversal of the Fabian strategy (e.g., the stronger side playing not to lose, but exhausting its weaker foes in the process). As with the Anbar Awakening, political compromise could be expected to occur when the adversaries will to continue is sufficiently exhausted.<sup>30</sup>

To effect such a change in strategy, an overt operational shift would be unnecessary. A small number of U.S. special operation forces would continue to train and assist the moderate opposition, reducing U.S. exposure to the costs of direct combat. Air strikes would complement the moderate opposition's ground campaign, effectively compensating for their tactical deficiencies. Arms shipments would continue as well, in an attempt to offset Russian air and Iranian ground support. Under such circumstances, there would be no need to align with the Russian cause or

covertly support a less than moderate opposition. The distinction lies with intent.

The official position of the United States would continue to call for the destruction of IS and the removal of the Assad regime. Rather than pursue such objectives offensively, the United States would shift to a defensive mindset. The goal of which would be to deny any side a decisive advantage, thus protracting the war. By simultaneously depleting Russia and Iran, whatever political compromise emerges will have no other choice but to lean westward, leaving the United States in a position to leverage reconstruction aid for liberal reforms.

Negotiations provide the playbook for the most effective method of ensuring a protracted conflict. As they have already shown no intent of abiding by international norms, the operational pause that accompanies negotiations allows Assad and his benefactors to recover from potentially catastrophic setbacks. The military alternative, or the proactive method of ensuring a protracted conflict, would be to pursue indecisive lines of operations in the style of Gen. George McClellan, the civil war general infamous for his indecisiveness. The means of prolonging the conflict are flexible, as there are an infinite number of ways to keep an already wounded opponent bleeding.

To mitigate the risks of protracting the war in Iraq and Syria, the United States will need to sequence efforts in other theaters and account for the influence of the United Nations. First, the decapitation strategy should continue in Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan, as an attack on the U.S. homeland would end any hopes of keeping the war in Iraq and Syria at a distance. Next, the United States should sustain current troop levels in Afghanistan to maintain the status quo. Finally, the United States must control the narrative of the humanitarian crisis. The United States could either fund the \$669 million required to implement the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' plan to stem the refugee crisis in Europe or provide Turkey with direct aid.<sup>31</sup> Regardless, preventative action should be taken to fend off calls for an intervention under the Responsibility to Protect or to stem refugee flows.<sup>32</sup> If any of these efforts are compromised, there should be an immediate reassessment of whether containment and protraction remains viable.

The last sixteen years have been a referendum on wars of choice in the Middle East. The American people

appeared to have concluded that the generational effort required for democratization of the Middle East by force is unacceptable. A decapitation strategy gives all appearances of being acceptable, but is insufficient in scope to bring about a self-sustaining peace. Protracting the war merges the necessary with the acceptable, seizing upon the sustainability of a decapitation strategy to achieve ends only once thought possible with a commitment to population-centric counterinsurgency.

## Conclusion

In Syria sits a bubbling cauldron of secular interests and messianic prophecy. Iran and Russia have since leapt into the fray, seeking to prevent this witches' brew from boiling over. And, while the United States is certainly not unaffected by these developments, the changing circumstances have opened doors to strategic options heretofore inconceivable: a large contingent of U.S. ground forces no longer serves as a common target. Replaced with a mixture of proxies, special operations forces, and air power,

a light footprint pursues ends at an acceptable rate. Sustainability provides strategic flexibility.

However, despite a window of opportunity opening, strategic orthodoxy is squandering an opportunity for force to achieve universal ends against radical Islamism. The strong ought to exploit the superior will of the weak. In this reversal of the Fabian strategy, the United States permits the apocalyptic drive of IS to fuel the conflict; uses adequate military power to extend it; and traps Iran and Russia inside. The United States has waged war in the Middle East for far too long on the assumption that anything other than complete exhaustion of its adversaries could produce victory. Force has consequently blundered along unable to achieve the desired political ends for nearly a generation. In turning the tables of the Fabian strategy upon the enemy, force and policy can align to bring about a self-sustaining peace. ■

*The opinions expressed here are the author's alone and do not reflect those of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.*

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## Notes

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An Islamic State (IS) propaganda video (ca. March 2015) on YouTube reputedly shows fighters studying the Quran at an undisclosed location in Iraq. The fighters are said to be on holiday from a prolonged period of territorial conquest, which included attacks on Yazidis, Kurds, and diverse denominations of Iraqi Christians. The video was subsequently removed. (Screenshot from IS YouTube video)

# The Mission Command of Islamic State

## Deconstructing the Myth of Lone Wolves in the Deep Fight

1st Lt. Michael P. Ferguson, U.S. Army

*And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the [unbelievers] wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush.*

—At-Tawbah 5

Some in the Western world apparently have concluded that individual attackers who claim allegiance to the Islamic State (IS)—but lack formal orders from its leaders—are lone wolves or entirely self-radicalized terrorists. However, using Army doctrinal principles to conduct a careful analysis reveals that the theocratic ideology of IS influences individual attackers to consider themselves directed by IS despite their not being formally enrolled members of that militant organization. This is because IS uses a simplified but highly effective form of ideological mission command that guides such followers around the world to plan attacks that have strategic implications. Individual attackers who target civilians they likely regard as uncommitted enemy forces represent a *deep* fight that has become, in effect, IS's decisive operation.<sup>1</sup>

Downplaying the significance of such attacks for lack of the attacker's direct physical or command links to the organization is counterproductive to the effort to limit its recruiting power. By examining IS literature in the context of its apocalyptic grand strategy, we may observe how IS, sometimes called Daesh, links operational art to strategic objectives through an inherent mission command philosophy.<sup>2</sup> More important, these findings contribute to seeking a potential solution to the most pressing inquiry: How does one defeat an idea?

## Mission Command and Islamic State

Mission command is a longstanding philosophy that Army doctrine began to emphasize with the publication of Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, in 2012. This ADP was partially a response to the increased uncertainty of operating environments and the growth of transnational terror groups that benefit from a highly adaptive and decentralized composition.<sup>3</sup> In the Army, mission command empowers subordinate leaders by providing a framework for the disciplined conduct of operations. More specifically, ADP 6-0 describes how commanders, supported by their staffs, “combine the art of command and science of control to understand situations, make decisions, direct action, and accomplish missions.”<sup>4</sup>

Conversely, IS's application of a mission command philosophy relies on a shared understanding of history, theocratic jurisprudence, and fatwas issued by historical leaders such as Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), and Abdullah Yusuf Azzam (1941–1989), many of which justify the targeting of civilians, including Muslims, in war.<sup>5</sup> While living under the rule of Islamized Mongols, Ibn Taymiyyah diverged from popular Islamist thought and issued several fatwas legitimizing the killing of Muslim tyrants. Certain Salafists used these fatwas to validate the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, and they continue to cite them today.<sup>6</sup> As IS's leaders are empowering such ideas, individual terrorists, sometimes erroneously labeled in the West as “lone wolves” or “self-radicalized,” have taken initiative to operationalize their ideology.

These terms have gained such traction that politicians have been known to structure their policy proposals around tackling the “issue of self-radicalization” and “lone-wolf attacks.”<sup>7</sup> Such proposals operate under the false assumption that these problems are separate from, and should therefore be treated differently than, attacks on U.S. soil that are formally directed by a distant commander, even though

they originate from the same source: ideology. While military operations and domestic security are certainly separate affairs both politically and legally, the ideological nature of the terrorist threat to the homeland and our forces abroad is not unique to either environment. A jihadist who takes initiative based on his understanding of the commander's intent is no less dangerous and his actions are no less significant than one who receives a verbal or written order. The philosophy of mission command is driven by such initiative and carried out within the framework of a

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shared understanding. This paper addresses these misconceptions further while examining the principles.

Although IS's approach to mission command demonstrates how its followers understand situations and accomplish missions, this philosophy would be of little value were IS not able to synchronize random attacks in its deep fight with the group's strategic objectives. Before we explore the principles, we must first examine the connection between the operational art of ideologically motivated terrorist attacks and the strategic ideology of IS.

## Operational Art and the Strategic Goals of Islamic State

The Army describes operational art as “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”<sup>8</sup> Attacks conducted as guided by IS's ideology are examples of such tactical actions. A fundamental strategic objective identified in Salafi-jihadi ideology (the ideology of IS and al-Qaida) is the initiation of the prophesied Muslim Armageddon. This end-time event is supposedly triggered through a prolonged war of attrition against the West, its ideas, and its systems of governance, culminating in its destruction. All goals are supplementary to realizing the foretold defeat of a large “crusader” army in Dabiq (in northern Syria), which supposedly leads to the fall of Rome and Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

This prophecy is so central to IS's ideology that its first English language periodical is named after the city of Dabiq. The name of its other online magazine, *Rumiyah*, refers to the inevitable fall of Rome and the Vatican. Every issue of *Dabiq* magazine begins with a quote from its modern intellectual pioneer, former leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: “The spark has been

lit here in Iraq, and it will continue to intensify—by Allah's permission—until it burns the crusader army in Dabiq.”<sup>10</sup> Through the onset of widespread disorder, IS hopes to make populations more sympathetic to the absolute control of sharia (Islamic religious law), and ultimately susceptible to the imposition of a global caliphate once the West is drawn to its demise in Dabiq.<sup>11</sup>

Palestinian jihadist Abdullah Yusuf Azzam's seventy-five page fatwa, *In Defense of Muslim Lands*, declared offensive jihad the individual responsibility of every Muslim in the absence of a caliphate.<sup>12</sup> Now, with the existence of IS, that fatwa enjoys greater legitimacy in its followers' thinking as the leaders endorse global jihad in the form of attacks carried out in the deep fight.

Pakistani Brig. S. K. Malik draws similar conclusions in his popular 1979 book, *The Quranic Concept of War*. In it, he argues it is incumbent upon all Muslims to fight for God's sovereignty on earth as long as the heretical nation-state system remains in place and sharia is not universal law.<sup>13</sup>

In the twenty-first century, radicals focus increasingly on a loose interpretation of Islamic laws related to killing. Specifically, they highlight those laws that hold individual citi-

zens of democratic states responsible for the “supposed crimes of their government” because they have given the consent to govern through the democratic process.<sup>14</sup> This outlook reinforces the Salafi belief that there can be only one state and one governing system (a global IS under sharia), thereby branding the authority of any other state illegitimate. It is such ideas that lead some Islamists to regard carrying out ideologically influenced attacks as an obligation in the deep fight against secular governments and their citizens, thus functioning as the link between tactical actions and strategic objectives. Their goal is to lure the West into a close fight by way of harassing



*Rumiyah* is the current formal online magazine of the Islamic State (IS). It first appeared as a replacement for *Dabiq*, the former official online magazine of IS, in September 2016, probably due to the imminent loss of the town of Dabiq to Turkish-led forces. The town of Dabiq is the supposed site of the final battle between Islamic and non-Islamic forces at the end of the world according to Islamic prophecy and tradition. Similarly, *Rumiyah* is an allusion to the prophesied destruction of Christianity symbolized by the conquest and destruction of Rome. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia)



attacks in the deep fight, thereby enabling their apocalyptic prophecy to become manifest.

While ideologically motivated attacks may not pose an existential threat to the degree of, say, North Korea, they still influence Western policy and should therefore not be treated with misguided euphemisms such as “lone wolf” in an attempt to downplay the ideology’s reach.<sup>15</sup> As early as 2014, Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis, now serving as U.S. secretary of defense, testified that IS had “grown into a strategic threat” that would use its territory as a “launching pad for transnational attacks.” He went on to caution against patronizing or dismissing IS’s threats, even if its followers “[could] not yet carry out their grandiose pronouncements.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, how they apply an organic form of mission command is critical to how they might propagate their operational art in pursuit of their strategic goals.

## The Principles of Islamic State’s Mission Command

The mission command philosophy offers six principles, outlined in Army doctrine. Each of these is inherent within IS’s ideology. We will focus on the first

A screenshot from a surveillance camera shows Zale Thompson, labeled a self-radicalized Muslim, raising a hatchet 23 October 2014 moments before striking a group of four uniformed New York Police Department (NYPD) officers in Jamaica, Queens, New York. Thompson was shot dead by two of the officers. (Photo courtesy of NYPD)

five principles and explain why the sixth, *mission orders*, does not appear to be demonstrated.

### Build cohesive teams through mutual trust.

While trust must be nurtured consistently in a traditional Army, IS establishes this connection through allegiance to its religious ideology. Army doctrine explains there are “few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others,” and this trust is “gained or lost through everyday actions.”<sup>17</sup> Discussing the key attributes of mission command in his 2012 white paper, Gen. Martin Dempsey describes trust as “the moral sinew” that binds our joint force together, “enabling the many to act as one” in the application of combat power.<sup>18</sup> He goes on to reiterate the importance of a commander’s role in developing this trust by integrating mission command into “operational art, planning, and

execution,” a complex process that requires a breadth and depth of knowledge to be effective.

In the case of IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s alleged lineage from the *Quraysh* tribe, of which the prophet Muhammad was a member, is aimed at obligating religious allegiance among the faithful. Claiming a blood connection to Muhammad is intended to promote mutual trust and common identity among IS’s members, regardless of cultural, ethnic, economic, or geographic diversity factors, by exploiting the narrative of a shared legacy consisting of centuries of support for Islamic legal declarations.<sup>19</sup> As a result, there is no need for the command to spend time building teams outside the central leadership organization because terrorists build teams regardless of their directed or undirected status.

Terrorist attacks are global communication devices that function as vehicles for the attackers’ ideology. Communicated through modern media systems, the message reaches millions of people instantaneously and draws sympathetic individuals into radicalization.<sup>20</sup> The more shocking the attack, the larger the audience and the further the reach of the message. Inevitably, more recruits become entangled in IS’s ideological dragnet.

IS projects to its audience the impression that social inclusion, loyalty, and brotherhood personify its movement. By connecting its followers to an ancient order of allegedly pious warriors defending a golden age of religious purity, members of IS become fused in allegiance to a mutual code of conduct that supersedes all worldly relationships. Once the ideology takes hold of followers’ thinking, small cohesive teams are self-actuating, operating autonomously based on a shared understanding of their duty.

**Create shared understanding.** One of the greatest challenges for commanders and staffs “is creating a shared understanding of their operational environment, their operation’s purpose, its problems, and approaches to solving them.”<sup>21</sup> While standing armies rely on adaptable mission orders and evolving policies to establish a shared understanding of priorities, under Salafi doctrine these factors do not change.

It is easy to imagine why Islamists pursue jihad with such vigor. Narratives of the battles in which Muhammad participated—some of the most sacred references in Salafism—read like action films. Oxford historian Martin Lings’ depiction of the Battles of Hunayn and Uhud and the Siege of Ta’if are examples. Envisioning Muhammad’s washing the enemy’s blood

off his face with water that had pooled in his companion’s shield presents powerful imagery to young jihadists.<sup>22</sup> It is no wonder the followers of an ideology that demands emulation of the Prophet would be so eager to confront pagans in glorious battle.

Looking beyond historical battles, IS’s shared understanding is further supported by centuries of theocratic jurisprudence and political violence.<sup>23</sup> In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Ibn Hanbal’s disciples advocated killing those who blasphemed Islam. Caliph al-Qadir supported this stance and enforced it as law.<sup>24</sup> More than a century later, the Hanbali scholar Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (deceased in 1166) argued that heretics should be offered three chances to repent and convert before they would be condemned to death.<sup>25</sup> It is also worth noting that, in the turbulent centuries of early Islam, many caliphs were killed by sectarian insurgencies claiming the then current body of authority was impure.<sup>26</sup>

Today, the argument is sometimes made that in the absence of a Muslim empire capable of imposing such laws on mankind, modern day Islamist extremists who subscribe to such medieval interpretations of Islamic law view attacks against civilian targets as the most swift form of “justice.”<sup>27</sup>

Conventional armies require constant framing and reframing of the environment to focus efforts, dictate training priorities, and work toward a common goal. In contrast, the ideology of Salafism produces a transnational and cross-cultural unity of effort guided by the commander’s intent because it provides a shared understanding of three elements:

- The ideology defines the enemy (*kafir* [unbelievers], *taghut* [tyrants], and classic liberalism).<sup>28</sup>
- The ideology defines the operating environment (*dar-al-harb* [house of war or unbelief] and *dar-al-islam* [house of Islam]).<sup>29</sup>
- The ideology defines the desired end state (a global caliphate brought on by Armageddon).

**Provide a clear commander’s intent.** The commander’s intent—also known as “the purpose of the operation”—is usually specific to a particular mission for standing armies.<sup>30</sup> The intent of IS’s commander is unchanging and pounded into the head of interested jihadists by other IS leaders.<sup>31</sup> It is unmistakably clear to the followers of Salafi-jihadism: fight the unbelievers wherever you find them—show no mercy and strike “terror into their hearts.”<sup>32</sup>

Because, for the IS member, there is no higher authority than God and his Prophet, IS pronouncements often reference the numerous battles Muhammad waged against heretics and pagans to justify offensive jihad. Islamist scholars, such as Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, have contorted the concept of defensive jihad to depict any act of terrorism as a defense of Muslim lands. More specific were arguments made by the late Anwar al-Awlaki, who insisted an earthly caliph was not needed to declare offensive jihad if a Muslim was oppressed by unbelievers.<sup>33</sup> Malik expressed similar convictions regarding the spiritual center of gravity in war, suggesting terror is the most effective weapon against Western opponents because it erodes their will to fight.<sup>34</sup>

In the age of globalization, when Western influence is nearly inescapable, what could be considered the first jihad verse in the Quran stands out as particularly relevant: “Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they have been wronged.”<sup>35</sup> Drawing the West into a global conflagration through ideologically motivated attacks serves the strategic objectives of IS, and the ideology imparts a divine authority to its pronouncements.

One of a commander’s roles outlined in ADP 6-0 is to influence audiences by developing teams “inside and outside their organizations.”<sup>36</sup> To IS, there is no outside element. There are only those forces engaged in the deep fight (the fight against what it considers uncommitted enemy forces). Carrying out an attack after declaring loyalty to IS makes the follower as much a member of IS as any guerrilla fighting in Iraq or Syria. Ideologically motivated terrorists prosecute the deep fight while considering themselves embedded behind enemy lines, and they do not require mission-specific intent to carry out operations that promote strategic objectives.<sup>37</sup> This element is as vital to IS’s vision as any insurgent fighting in the Middle East—if not more so.

To clarify, we need to think of individual attacks as the vanguard of IS’s deep fight, not impulsive actions of wayward rogues, while Middle East guerrillas in conflict with military forces represent the *dose* fight.<sup>38</sup> Influencing this deep element to disrupt *uncommitted enemy forces* (in the case of IS, this means all unbelievers)—a function clearly conveyed by IS’s ideology—is similar to the commander’s responsibilities outlined in Army doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

The clarity of intent is simple so there need not be any contact (physical or even chain of command)

between the organization and its followers for them to pursue operational goals and fulfill strategic intent. This renders the terms lone wolf and self-radicalized inaccurate because such labels imply a detachment or even a disassociation with the group to which jihadists claim allegiance. Profession of the *shahada* (Islamic declaration of faith) and loyalty to al-Baghdadi enter radicals into an ethereal realm where they operate under a shared understanding with clear intent. This is the organization’s preferred approach because attacks on civilians in the deep fight attract greater attention and more recruits than military engagements.<sup>40</sup>

**Exercise disciplined initiative.** The U.S. Army defines initiative as taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. In this context, the entirety of IS’s deep fight relies on initiative within the commander’s intent. Because ideologically guided terrorists receive no formal orders, they operate based on a shared understanding that failing to take initiative once jihad has become an individual obligation may condemn their souls to hell.<sup>41</sup> Islamists in the deep fight are impelled to act by this hallmark of their ideology, and it is reinforced by regular calls to action.

To the jihadist, discipline when taking initiative is only relevant inasmuch as it allows an attack to come to fruition. Modern armies have myriad considerations when navigating their planning methodologies, but these factors are not inputs into the metrics that gauge degrees of success or failure in operations by terrorists. Increased simplicity and a higher threshold for operational risk present greater opportunity for the application of initiative.

**Accept prudent risk.** Prudence may be a factor in the planning phase of terrorist attacks but survivability during execution is not. Historically speaking, an Islamic martyr did not often take his own life. Rather, he opted to “place himself in a situation in which he would most likely be killed and thereby did not violate the Quranic prohibition on suicide.”<sup>42</sup>

Most jihadists operate under the assumption they will die during their attack, and for good reason. Quranic verses glorifying death and advising against clinging “heavily to earth” give license to the belief that falling in battle affords greater comfort in the “hereafter.”<sup>43</sup> Individual radicals do not need IS commanders to give them orders to assume risk because their ideology demands it. Risk becomes somewhat of a marginal planning factor when the acceptable loss



rate is one hundred percent. This expands opportunity and operational payoff exponentially, considering the “willingness to accept prudent risk is often the key to exposing enemy weaknesses.”<sup>44</sup>

The ideology of Salafi-jihadism (a combination of religious verses, historical references, and fatwas) is, in effect, a doctrine of mission command that encourages and enables decisive operations in the deep fight. Attacks are carried out not by anomalous lone wolves but, for the most part, by a centralized wolf pack with a collective mind. The only principle lacking is mission orders, because IS doctrine *is* the mission order.

## The Mission Command Systems

The economy of IS’s mission command systems plays a significant role in achieving its objectives without the need for conventional mission orders. Militaries must negotiate a delicate process of budgeting and long-term planning to secure and maintain the resources necessary for proper maintenance of the mission command systems.<sup>45</sup> These systems are provided through the initiative of the individual jihadist or cell at no cost—monetary or otherwise—to IS’s command group.

An Islamic State (IS) instructional video titled “Explanation of How to Slaughter Disbelievers” features a balaclava-wearing terrorist in a kitchen explaining how to make bombs. The video was subsequently removed. (Screenshot from IS YouTube video)

IS recruits personnel through autonomous and ideologically homogenous networks that exploit the benefits of multipurpose public information systems, such as social media. In this sense, multipurpose means IS can operationalize ideology through freely accessible public information systems that not only supply it with personnel but also help it maintain networks and distribute processes and procedures. Individual cells become responsible for resourcing facilities and equipment at their level, removing the burden of command from IS. Moreover, this allows it to highlight selectively the most effective operations, for which the leaders take credit. By making the deep fight essentially the decisive operation, the return on investment is profound, as IS may pursue its strategic objectives while assuming little risk and expending minimal resources.

As demonstrated in recent terrorist attacks in the United States, deep Islamists operate independently,

without material support from IS's leaders. They have no mission orders, yet their operations reflect IS's mission command. They only need a shared understanding that allows them to take disciplined initiative within the commander's intent based on their own assessment of risks; all these mission command elements are provided by their religious ideology.<sup>46</sup>

## Changing the Paradigm

We need to refine the public discussion on IS. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the establishment of a caliphate makes bolder the distinction between the realms of Islam and unbelievers, thus further obligating individual jihad in defense of God's lands—particularly those lands occupied by unbelievers. In this context, the term “occupied” is more inclusive than conventional wisdom assumes. IS's followers believe the world belongs to Allah; therefore, it is not only Muslim nations with foreign troops on their soil that are considered occupied and in need of liberation but also the entire world.<sup>47</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah wrote that all humans were commanded by God to abandon disbelief, while Sayyid Qutb reinforced the obligation to emancipate all of humanity from godlessness through preaching or jihad.<sup>48</sup>

No matter how much their numbers dwindle, Salafi-jihadists will continue operations, at least until they believe their prophecies are disproven. Their ideology insists that the fiercer the battle becomes, the nearer they are to “the threshold of the promised victory, aided by the Mahdi and Jesus.”<sup>49</sup> These beliefs have precedent. During the Battle of Badr, though vastly outnumbered by his Quraysh enemies, Muhammad was ultimately victorious.<sup>50</sup> One could argue that IS's true believers feel confident when surrounded by “crusader” armies.

The battle against IS is one of powerful ideas. Hoover Institution fellow and Israeli intelligence veteran Shmuel Bar articulates this succinctly:

This war of ideas is a religious war. Whether or not the West sees it as such, it has been so defined by the adversary. . . . Islamist terrorism derives legitimacy and justification from Islamic mores and legal thought, and any attempt to deal with it divorced from its intellectual, cultural, religious, and legal fountainhead will be in vain.<sup>51</sup>

The tendency to try to validate terrorists' credentials by linking them to human figures in the Middle East through

phone calls or e-mails after an incident reflects a poor understanding of their ideological inspiration. Even more puzzling is the relief presumably associated with failing to discover such connections, as if the implications of the attack are somehow lessened since no direct contacts exist.

Take, for instance, the Orlando and San Bernardino attacks. Press briefings and newspapers flooded quickly with assurances that there was no indication IS “trained or instructed” the shooters, despite their having pledged allegiance to the group and taken action in accordance with its ideology.<sup>52</sup> These attacks show that persons with no formal ties to foreign terror groups are taking initiative to realize the objectives of foreign terror groups. What, then, would be the benefit of IS leaders' assuming the risk of establishing formal, traceable connections if they can achieve their objectives without doing so? We are not fighting an incoherent and disjointed enemy; seemingly independent attackers are indeed carrying out the mission of IS despite their not having specific orders.

Nonetheless, the desire to connect attacks to physical persons is understandable, as it narrows the ways and means through which the state may pursue solutions. If a singular physical target assumes responsibility for the attack, the elimination of said target creates the temporary illusion of a remedy, but the problem will persist.<sup>53</sup>

Instead of promoting education regarding the differences between jihadists and the vast majority of practicing Muslims, some deny there is any connection between Islamic terrorism and Islam.<sup>54</sup> This is erroneous and counterproductive. Denying Islamic terrorism's clear connections to feudal Islamism breeds the very complacency such denial hopes to discourage by ensuring the ideology of our enemies remains esoteric. Restricting this ideology to the dark corners of public discourse makes it much easier for the public to unproductively channel its anger in the wake of terrorist attacks toward what many perceive as the larger and more visible target: the Muslim religion as a whole. Consequently, failing to expose the intricacies of the Salafi ideology and debate its legitimacies or lack thereof in the public sphere could lead to further dilemmas stemming from misinformation; it will not reduce them.

Followers of IS enjoy a shared conviction that, like their heroes who came before them, modern apostate Muslim leaders will brand them “un-Islamic” and persecute them for their piety. For example, the father of Hanbalism, Imam Ibn Hanbal, was imprisoned for his extremism, as was Ibn Taymiyyah and Sayyid Qutb

many generations later.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, the greater the resistance jihadists face from populist Islam, the more cohesive they may become in their sense of righteousness. This would only reinforce the binary lens through which jihadists view the world, and, in their eyes, further legitimize the indiscriminate targeting of impure nation-states and the citizens who inhabit them.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

A significant conclusion drawn from this study is the need for a disinvestment in the belief that terrorist attacks with unity of effort must be defined as the product of command-directed mission orders. The term lone wolf is a misnomer that should be discarded because it downplays the significance of such attacks. IS is capable of, and intent upon, linking operational art to strategic objectives through an ideological mission command approach that underscores the deep fight. Let us instead simply call them jihadists or Islamist terrorists.

Conversations surrounding the ideological center of gravity of IS sometimes end in a question: How does one defeat an idea? The answer is found in a process of observable repudiation of their prophecies by way of public action.

Ideologically motivated attacks are examples of operational art on a path to achieve IS's strategic goal of drawing the West into a final confrontation where the caliphate supposedly triumphs over a "crusader army" in Dabiq. The destruction of IS in Dabiq may offer a window of opportunity because it will not only nullify IS's close forces but also will discredit the ideology empowering its deep element tasked with disrupting supposed uncommitted enemy forces in the West. Discrediting this ideology will isolate it and draw clear lines of delineation between the global Muslim population and the extremists among them. This will also fix the targeted ideology, making it more vulnerable to attack from information operations and reform initiatives.

Before we can reduce the benefits of IS's shared understanding, we must first develop shared understanding of its deep operations. Testifying before a House Intelligence Committee on the threat of IS in 2014, Mattis prioritized clearly: "The robust and coherent strategy to shatter the enemy's designs must start with our comprehending their irreconcilable world view."<sup>56</sup> Understanding how IS's mission command mobilizes the deep fight by connecting operational art to strategic objectives is a step in the right direction. ■

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## Notes

**Epigraph.** Quran 9:5. At-Tawba is the ninth chapter of the Quran.

1. Throughout this study, the Islamic State's (IS) ideologically motivated attacks are portrayed as the spearhead of a *deep* fight targeting uncommitted enemy forces, as described in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], May 2012 [now obsolete; superseded November 2016 by ADRP 3-0, *Operations*]), p. 1-11.

2. IS and Daesh can be used interchangeably.

3. Numerous studies suggest that inculcating a mission command philosophy will help meet the increased demand for "decentralized initiative" from our leaders. The largely unconventional environment in which our forces have operated for the last fifteen years has underscored the need for, and at times deficit of, creative ingenuity within our ranks, per Curtis D. Taylor, *Breaking the Bathsheba Syndrome: Building a Performance Evaluation System that Promotes Mission Command* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2015), 3. Additionally, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey reinforces the heightened need for leaders who possess superior "creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, and independent, rapid decision-making," in Dempsey, "Mission Command" (white paper, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 3 April 2012), 6, accessed 18 July 2017, <http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/missioncommandwhitepaper2012.pdf>.

4. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, May 2012), ii.

5. Shmuel Bar, *Warrant for Terror: Fatwas of Radical Islam and the Duty to Jihad* (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 49–55. Numerous fatwas throughout Islam's history justify the targeting of civilians and other Muslims in war under certain conditions.

6. Mona Hassan, "Modern Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya," in *Studies in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya and his Times*, eds. S. Nomanul Haq, Yossef Rapoport, and Shahab Ahmed (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 355–56.

7. "Hillary Clinton on Tackling Self-Radicalization: 'We Need to Get to Work,'" National Public Radio transcript, 13 June 2016, accessed 18 July 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2016/06/13/481860102/hillary-clinton-on-tackling-self-radicalization-we-need-to-get-to-work>. This National Public Radio interview occurred shortly after the Orlando nightclub attack that took forty-nine lives.

8. ADP 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, November 2016), 4.

9. Patrick Sookhdeo, *Unmasking Islamic State: Revealing their Motivation, Theology and End Time Predictions* (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2015), 46–48.

10. "The Return of the Khilafah," Dabiq 1, Ramadan 1435 (July 2014), 1, accessed 27 July 2017, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/09-14/>

[isis-islam-magazine-issue-1-the-return-of-khilafah.pdf](#).

This quote appears on the first page of every issue.

11. Sookhdeo, *Unmasking Islamic State*, 18–20. IS leaders believe there is no separation between religion and state because shari'ah is the path to a utopian human existence.

12. Sheikh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, "Defence of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation after Iman," accessed 28 July 2017, <http://johnclam-oreaux.org/smu/islam-west/s/azzam-def.pdf>.

13. Sebastian Gorka, "The Enemy Threat Doctrine of Al Qaeda: Taking the War to the Heart of our Foe," in *Fighting the Ideological War: Winning Strategies from Communism to Islamism*, eds. Katharine Cornell Gorka and Patrick Sookhdeo (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2012), 199–200.

14. Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 41–42.

15. John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 69–80. The argument could be made that all terrorism is strategic to this end. The worst attacks are usually those deemed unimaginable before they occur.

16. Testimony by James Mattis (U.S. Marine Corps, retired, former commander of U.S. Central Command), *Hearings on the Threat Posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Qa'ida, and other Islamic Extremists, Before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*, 113th Cong. (18 September 2014), accessed 19 July 2017, <http://intelligence.house.gov/sites/intelligence.house.gov/files/documents/mattis-testimony09182014.pdf>.

17. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, pp. 2–3.

18. Dempsey, "Mission Command" white paper, 6. Perhaps there is no more apt depiction of how IS's mutual trust drives the commander's intent: by allowing the many to act as one.

19. For more on this, see Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

20. Scott Helfstein, *Edges of Radicalization: Ideas, Individuals and Networks in Violent Extremism* (West Point, NY: The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2012), 21. The four phases of radicalization: awareness, interest, acceptance, and implementation.

21. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, 3.

22. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2006), 193, 317–20.

23. Sookhdeo, *Unmasking Islamic State*, 18–27, 37–60.

24. Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 302. Caliph al-Qadir (991–1031) often beheaded those blaspheming the Prophet or the early caliphs (*Rashidun*).

25. *Ibid.*, 391.

26. Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 71–102.

27. The *shahada* states this explicitly, as do many *ahadith* and numerous diatribes in every issue of *Dabiq*. Furthermore, this is expressed liberally in IS propaganda; see "The Kafir's Blood," *Rumiyah* 1 (2016), 34, accessed 19 July 2017, <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/rome-magazine-1.pdf>.

28. Meijer, *Global Salafism*, xi, xiv. *Kafir*: unbelievers. *Taghut*: tyrants (usually in reference to moderate Muslim leaders).

29. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (New Delhi: Islamic Publications Ltd., 2002). *Dar-al-harb*, House of War (The U.S. and Western territories), and *dar-al-islam*, the House of Islam. Sayyid Qutb uses these terms frequently in his work.

30. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, 3.

31. Judaism is portrayed as an embodiment of the anti-Christ in certain Islamic folklore, such as Ibn Hanbal's "Long Hadith." David J.

Halperin, "The Ibn Sayyad Traditions and the Legend of Al-Dajjal," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96, no. 2, (April-June 1976): 213–25, accessed 19 July 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/599824>; see also Lizzie Dearden, "ISIS Calls on Supporters to Wage 'All-out war' on West during Ramadan with New Terror Attacks," *The Independent*, 26 May 2017, accessed 28 July 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-ramadan-2017-all-out-war-west-new-terror-attacks-manchester-suicide-bombing-islamic-state-a7758121.html>.

32. "The Kafir's Blood," 36.

33. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, 31–39.

34. Gorka, "Enemy Threat Doctrine," 199–200.

35. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, 39–40.

36. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, 10.

37. "The Murtadd Brotherhood," *Dabiq* 14 (2016), 17.

38. ADP 3-0, *Operations*, 10. The deep fight involves "efforts to prevent uncommitted enemy forces from being committed in a coherent manner." To IS, every man, woman, and child living outside sharia are uncommitted enemy forces. *Close operations* involve "operations that are within a subordinate commander's area of operations."

39. "The Kafir's Blood," 35; IS, "The Murtadd Brotherhood," 17.

40. "The Murtadd Brotherhood," 17. IS tells its followers abroad to stay in their country of residence and attack civilians "behind enemy lines" if they cannot make the *hijra* to Syria. The attacks are no longer shaping operations.

41. Bar, *Warrant for Terror*, 36–37.

42. *Ibid.*, 60.

43. *Ibid.*, 59–60.

44. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, 5.

45. *Ibid.*, 11–12. The five mission command systems are personnel, networks, information systems, processes and procedures, and facilities and equipment.

46. "The Kafir's Blood," 34–36.

47. Bar, *Warrant for Terror*, 18–19. See also Qutb, *Milestones*. Qutb believed people are born in a state of awareness that Islam is truth. Consequently, those who fail to accept this truth remain willfully trapped in a spiritual prison from which they must be "liberated."

48. For Ibn Taymiyyah's statement, see Livnat Holtzman, "Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the Fitra Tradition: The Use of Hadith in Theological Treatises by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya," in *Studies in Islamism: Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. S. Nomanul Haq, Yossef Rapoport, and Shahab Ahmen (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 177; for Qutb's statement, see Qutb, *Milestones* (1964), 20–21.

49. Sookhdeo, *Unmasking Islamic State*, 50. This is in reference to the final battle between the *mujahid* and crusaders in Dabiq, which prompts the arrival of the *Mahdi* (prophesied messiah) and Jesus's destruction of *al-Dajjal*.

50. Lings, *Muhammad*, 149–56.

51. Bar, *Warrant for Terror*, 113.

52. Lizette Alvarez and Richard Perez-Pena, "Orlando Gunman Attacks Gay Nightclub, Leaving 50 Dead," *New York Times* online, 12 June 2016, accessed 17 July 2017, <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/06/13/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting.html>.

53. The killing of Osama bin Laden is one example. His death alone could not contain the spread of his ideology.

54. Phillip Swarts, "CIA Director Echoes Obama: Islamic State is not Islamic," *Washington Times*, 14 March 2015, accessed 28 July 17, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/14/john-brennan-cia-director-backs-obama-islamic-stat/>.

55. Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism*, 31–32.

56. Mattis, *Hearings on the Threat Posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant*.

# III Corps during the Surge

## A Study in Operational Art

Maj. Wilson C. Blythe Jr., U.S. Army

The role of Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno's III Corps as Multinational Corps–Iraq (MNC–I) has failed to receive sufficient attention from studies of the 2007 surge in Iraq. By far the most comprehensive account of the 2007–2008 campaign is found in Michael Gordon and Lt. Gen. Bernard Trainor's *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*, which focuses on the formulation and execution of strategy and policy.<sup>1</sup> It frequently moves between Washington, D.C., U.S. Central Command, and Multinational Force–Iraq (MNF–I) while using tactical actions within Iraq in an illustrative manner. As a result, the campaign waged by III Corps, the operational headquarters, is overlooked in this key work.

The III Corps campaign is also neglected in other prominent works on the topic. In *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*, Thomas Ricks emphasizes the same levels as Gordon and Trainor. However, while Ricks places a greater emphasis on the role of III Corps than is found in other accounts, he fails to offer a thorough examination of the operational campaign waged by III Corps.<sup>2</sup> Kimberly Kagan's *The Surge: A Military History* delivers a predominately tactical portrait of the campaign, focusing on various brigade operations.<sup>3</sup>

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A more personality-focused account is offered in Fred Kaplan's *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*; it recounts the Army's adoption of counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine rather than the surge campaign.<sup>4</sup> And, because of his position as the executive officer to the MNF–I commanding general, Col. Peter Mansoor's *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* naturally gravitates toward Gen. David H. Petraeus.<sup>5</sup> None of these accounts examine the critical role that Odierno's headquarters played in the 2007–2008 surge campaign.

During its second tour in Iraq, III Corps achieved success in reducing the level of violence in Iraq and creating room for political progress such as the February 2008 "trifecta" package of legislation, which included the Provincial Powers Law, limited amnesty, and the 2008 budget.<sup>6</sup> Odierno's command laid the groundwork for successful campaigns in 2007 and 2008. Given the attention garnered by COIN doctrine and the Army's purported focus on the "graduate level of war," what is most striking about III Corps's operations was Odierno's use of concepts and terminology firmly rooted in conventional campaigns. III Corps's achievements as an operational headquarters were rooted in the successful application of operational art.

*Operational art* is a way to conceptualize how to fight wars using campaigns of multiple, simultaneous, and successive operations across a theater of operations to achieve a unifying goal.<sup>7</sup> While neither downplaying nor minimizing the importance of Army COIN principles, a study of MNC–I's 2007 campaign in Iraq through the neglected prism of operational art suggests that the campaign's success was due to the successful application of already established operational principles rather than from a revolution in the profession of arms.<sup>8</sup>

In December 2006, Odierno's III Corps assumed responsibility for MNC–I from Lt. Gen. Pete Chiarelli's



V Corps. The security situation in Iraq had deteriorated throughout 2006 (see figure 1, page 80). The 22 February 2006 bombing of Samara's Shia Askariya shrine, also known as the Golden Mosque, caused the nascent ethno-sectarian tensions to explode into open conflict. The bombings spurred large and violent protests throughout Shia neighborhoods in and around Baghdad as well as in other predominantly Shia cities such as Najaf, Karbala, and Basra. With this attack, the conflict devolved from an insurgency to a sectarian civil war that, in November 2006 alone, would claim 3,462 Iraqi lives.<sup>9</sup>

Odierno was charged by the MNF-I commander at the time, Gen. George Casey, with breaking the cycle of sectarian violence. The incoming corps's operational approach was different than its predecessor's. The focus of Chiarelli's V Corps was to consolidate the coalition footprint. As Chiarelli later recalled, "I

Pfc. Brandie Leon, 4th Infantry Division, pulls security 3 March 2006 while on patrol in east Baghdad to help maintain peace after attacks on mosques in the area. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Ragucci, U.S. Army)

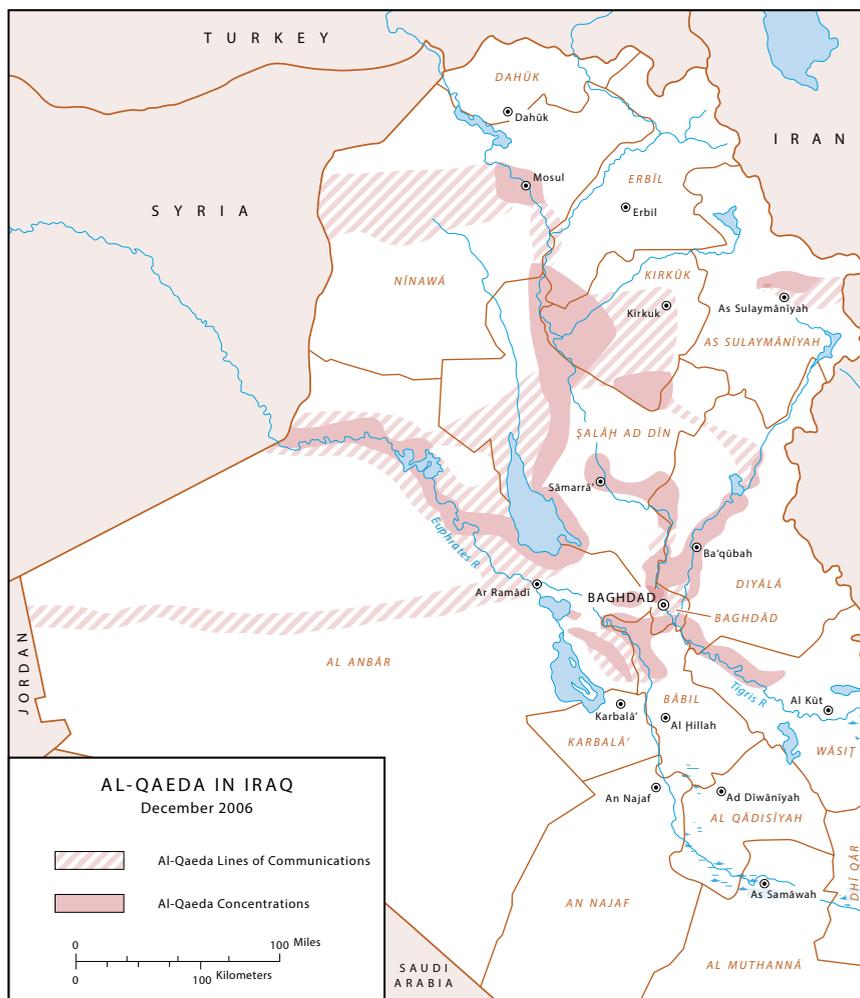
was told that my job was to get us down to fifty FOBs [forward operating bases] by the end of 2006. My instructions were pretty clear. You will not have 110 FOBs. There were 110 FOBs when I went in 2006."<sup>10</sup> The reduced U.S. presence would be accompanied by a rapid transition to the Iraqi Security Forces as the United States shifted to an overwatch role. This operational focus contributed to the V Corps campaign devolving into a series of disjointed and unconnected tactical actions. Tactically, the result was a failure to retain terrain, and it amounted to U.S. forces being forced to retake the same ground each day after

surrendering it the previous evening (see figure 2, page 81).<sup>11</sup>

Odierno defined his first priority as securing the Iraqi people, which to him meant defeating an insurgency composed of Sunni and Shia extremists, most notably al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) and Iranian-backed Shia Special Groups. The MNC-I operational concept now focused on how to seize and retain the initiative so that the coalition could defeat extremists. Though transition to Iraqi control and responsibility for security was still the eventual goal, MNC-I no longer emphasized it.<sup>12</sup>

While the difference may seem minor or semantic, the change in emphasis was profound, since it indicated that III Corps would no longer measure its progress through the reduction of the coalition footprint in Iraq resulting from the closure of bases; the off-ramping of unit deployments to Iraq; or the usage of sewage, water, electricity, and trash removal metrics. Though it continued to use logical lines of effort, under Odierno, MNC-I placed an increased emphasis on physical lines of operation.<sup>13</sup> At the tactical level, the change in emphasis alleviated the perceived pressure to concentrate onto fewer and fewer bases and allowed tactical units to live on small bases among the population as they had done in the early days of the war. III Corps took a traditional approach to its campaign in 2007 and the first two months of 2008.<sup>14</sup>

Even prior to the announced surge of five additional brigades to Iraq, Odierno planned to conduct multiple simultaneous operations throughout the country.<sup>15</sup> Past corps offensives had focused on a single problem area at a time, such as Fallujah or Najaf, and were in reality tactical battles rather than operations. These battles lacked a pursuit or exploitation phase, the absence of which allowed the enemy to retreat along its physical lines of operation in order to regroup in the safety of its support



(Graphic courtesy of U.S. Army Center of Military History)

## Figure 1. Al-Qaida in Iraq, December 2006

zones. In keeping with its objective of defeating the insurgency, Odierno's corps launched a series of corps offensives to eject the enemy from territory and to retain the liberated terrain by maintaining forces there. These sustained offensives connected tactical actions across Iraq to better attain strategic ends, a key to the successful practice of operational art.<sup>16</sup>

III Corps's first offensive operation, Operation Fardh al-Qanoon (Enforcing the Law), focused on clearing and retaining terrain throughout Baghdad and its surrounding belts—those provinces encircling the city and controlling access to the capital. Supporting divisional operations in the belts interdicted the flow of accelerants—III Corps's term for the fighters, weapons, and explosives necessary to carry out the attacks and thus trigger the subsequent reprisals—into the capital through offensive

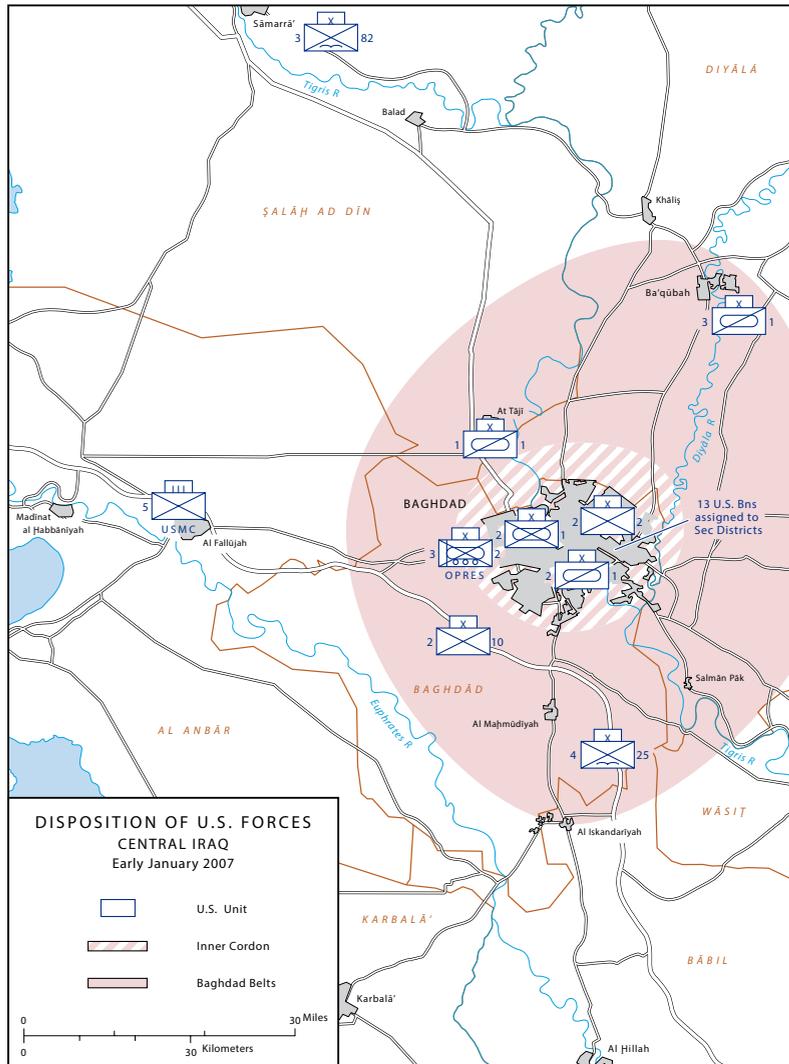
operations designed to seize and hold terrain in these enemy support zones. This was Odierno's opening gambit in an attempt to transform the insurgent support zone around Baghdad into a coalition security zone and push extremists away from the capital (see figure 3, page 82).<sup>17</sup> In June, MNC-I followed up Fardh al-Qanoon with another corps-level offensive dubbed Operation Phantom

security zone and preventing the reestablishment of extremist support zones.<sup>18</sup>

By August, it was clear that MNC-I's series of offensive operations had produced an improvement in security throughout those areas of Iraq where the coalition had been able to surge. Odierno was concerned that the extremists planned to draw the coalition away from the

areas that MNC-I had successfully cleared and secured so they could return and fill the vacuum left by the coalition. This had been the fate of previous coalition offensives, where MNC-I's failure to conduct simultaneous operations or to pursue had allowed extremists to regroup. Odierno saw that an aggressive pursuit was the best way to dismantle the extremist networks.<sup>19</sup>

In order to both disrupt an expected enemy Ramadan offensive and keep AQI and Special Groups off balance, MNC-I launched Operation Phantom Strike on 15 August 2007. Phantom Strike consisted of "a series of targeted operations designed to intensify the pursuit of extremist elements across Iraq."<sup>20</sup> With the deployment of five additional brigades, a combat aviation brigade, and division headquarters, MNC-I possessed the forces necessary to both hold the already-secured areas and to conduct targeted operations throughout Iraq (see figure 4, page 83). The nearing end of the surge limited the time that the coalition had to take advantage of its full combat potential.<sup>21</sup> Operation Phantom Phoenix carried the pursuit deep into the upper Diyala River Valley and sought to set the conditions for the planned battle for Mosul. However, this battle did not occur after III Corps was replaced by XVIII Airborne Corps in February 2008 because events in Basra necessitated a shift in focus

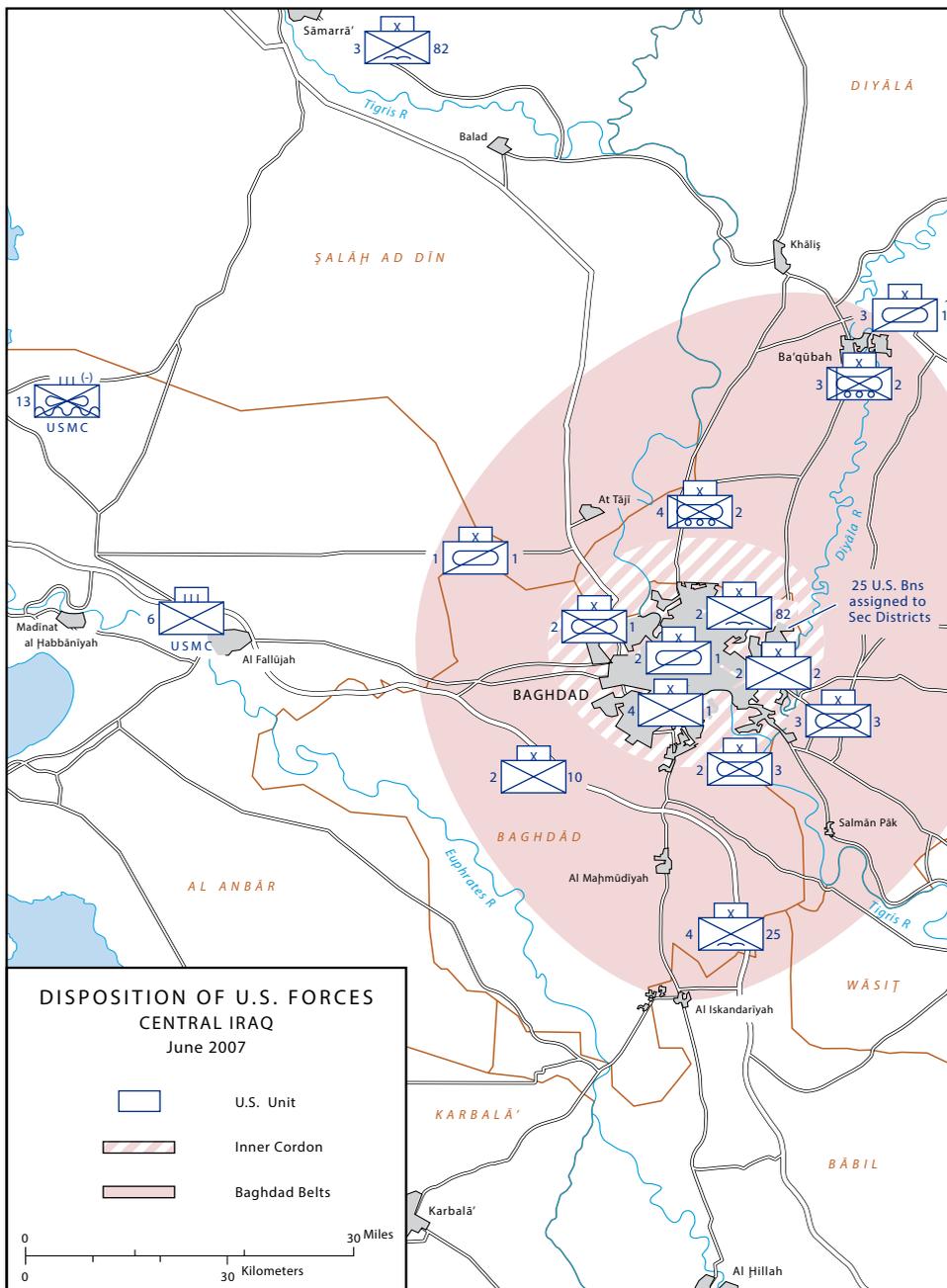


(Graphic courtesy of U.S. Army Center of Military History)

**Figure 2. Disposition of U.S. Forces Central Iraq, Early January 2007**

Thunder that consisted of simultaneous operations in Baghdad and the surrounding belts. Phantom Thunder aimed to clear extremist support zones and rear areas. It was the first operation to take place with all five surge brigades in country, and the extra combat power allowed Odierno to hold the seized terrain, thus thickening his

by the government of Iraq and MNC-I. Both of the exploitation and pursuit operations, Phantom Thunder and Phantom Phoenix, saw MNC-I take steps to extend its operational reach in order to allow it to disrupt the enemy in the few remaining areas of Iraq the coalition did not have enough combat power to control.<sup>22</sup>



(Graphic courtesy of U.S. Army Center of Military History)

**Figure 3. Disposition of U.S. Forces Central Iraq, June 2007**

Throughout all operations, a key part of MNC–I’s campaign focused on stopping the movement of the accelerants of violence into Baghdad.<sup>23</sup> Analysis by coalition intelligence indicated that the extremists in Baghdad required a constant flow of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) and other accelerants in order to maintain the average of fifty attacks per day in the city. The fight to stop the accelerants rested

on MNC–I’s appreciation of terrain. III Corps’s understanding of the enemy’s use of terrain was aided by a 19 December 2006 raid conducted by the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in the Taji-Tarmiyah area. This action resulted in the capture of over five hundred gigabytes of documents and a map that detailed AQI’s strategy to control Baghdad. It depicted an AQI battlefield architecture that was not entirely unconventional, with a support zone in the belt areas around Baghdad, a rear area, a forward line of troops, lines of communications consisting of hard-surfaced roads or improved dirt roads, and combat zones within the capital.<sup>24</sup>

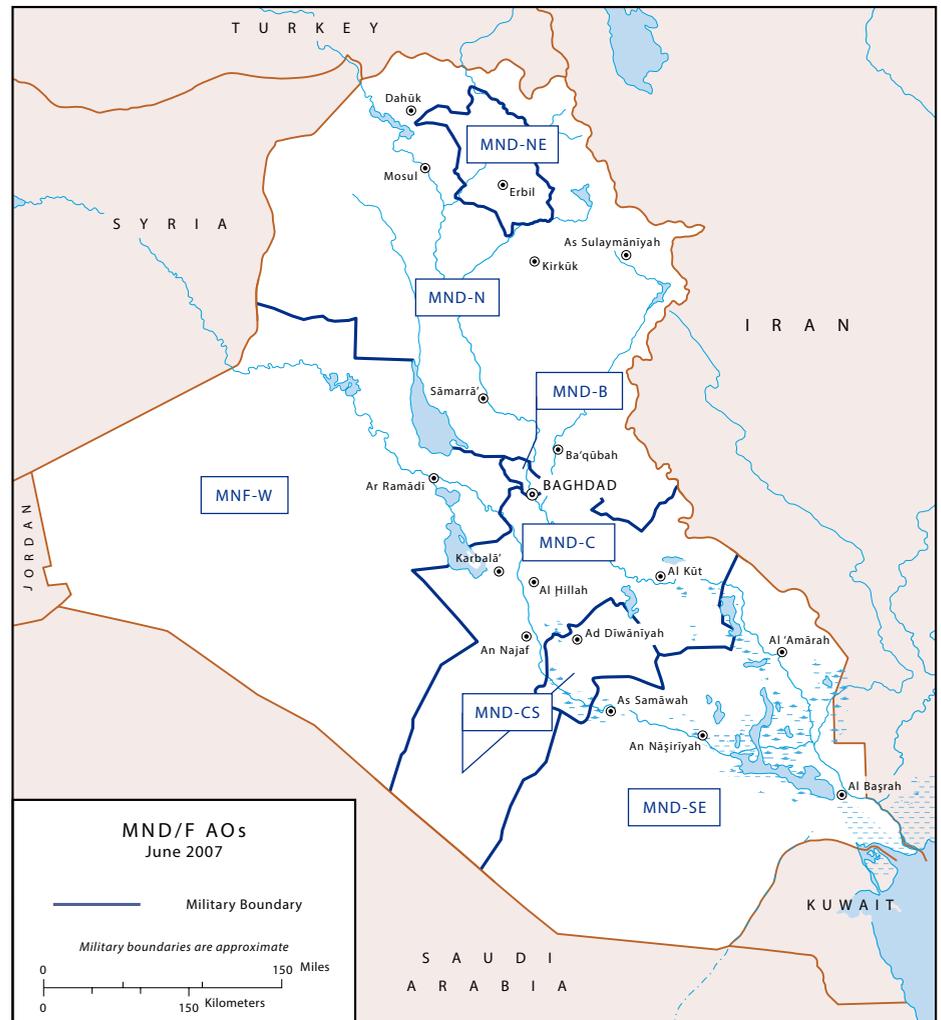
The strength of extremist groups within Baghdad depended upon their control of both the lines of communication and support zones that ran through the belts. Often, the enemy would construct obstacle belts of large buried IEDs to deny the coalition access to these areas, while others had air defense systems to keep out helicopters. While the corps’s main effort remained in Baghdad, outlying divisions mounted simultaneous sustained offensives throughout the enemy’s depth (i.e., into the belts). This was a radically different appreciation of terrain than had previously existed. III Corps did not view terrain in terms of what could be turned over to Iraqi control, but rather through the prism of an operational system.<sup>25</sup>

In order to successfully attack the enemy throughout its depth, MNC–I had to efficiently and effectively use all of the tools at its disposal. Despite the surge of forces into Iraq, the coalition presence was still not large enough to secure every area of the country. Under Odierno, MNC–I designated a Stryker brigade as the operational reserve, sometimes referred to as the “above ground strike force.” Though the designation of such a force originated with V Corps, it realized its full potential under III Corps. The strike force was not a battle-space owner but was instead used to weight the main effort, such as during Fardh al-Qa-noon when it was used to clear neighborhoods in order to facilitate the deployment of surge brigades into Baghdad, or later to conduct clearing operations in Diyala Province. The Stryker reserve added flexibility to Odierno’s operations and allowed him to achieve a decisive combat power advantage wherever he chose to commit it. Another way that Odierno weighted offensive operations was by the efficient use of enablers. III Corps effectively supported the main effort with the limited available Army

attack aviation, engineers, unmanned aerial vehicles, and intelligence assets.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the additional forces generated by the surge of the Iraqi Security Forces, along with the Sons of Iraq program, allowed MNC–I to extend its operational reach and push further into insurgent sanctuaries than would have been possible with even the additional U.S. surge brigades.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of the III Corps’s deployment in February 2008, the situation in Iraq was remarkably different than when it had assumed duty as MNC–I in December 2006.

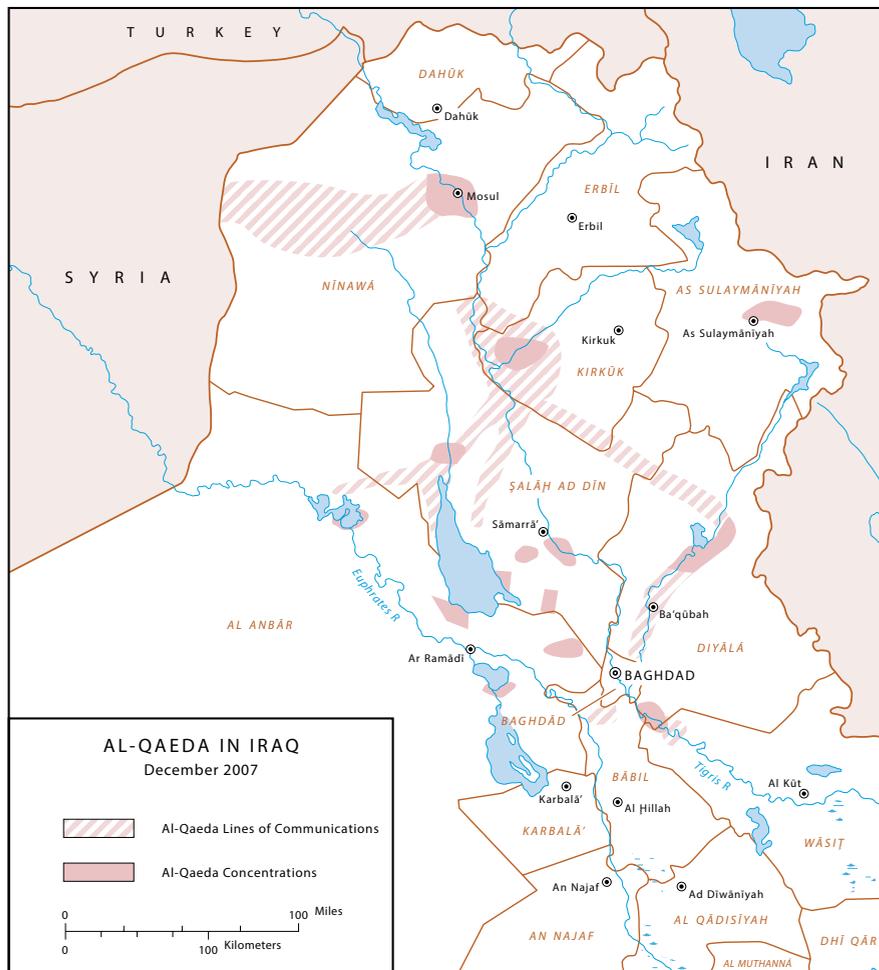
In January 2008, III Corps’s last full month in country, there were six hundred war-related Iraqi fatalities throughout the country (see figure 5, page 84). This was a dramatic reduction in violence from when Odierno’s



(Graphic courtesy of U.S. Army Center of Military History)

**Figure 4. Multinational Divisions (MNDs) / Forward Areas of Operations (FAOs), June 2007**

corps arrived in November 2006 a month that witnessed nearly 3,500 Iraqis deaths in the war. This success was rooted in the successful application of operational art. Under Odierno’s leadership, III Corps became an effective operational headquarters. It conducted a series of simultaneous and sustained offensive operations throughout the enemy’s operational depth, which fragmented enemy support zones and disrupted their operations. The tempo of these corps offensives coupled with an active exploitation and pursuit kept the enemy off balance



(Graphic courtesy of U.S. Army Center of Military History)

**Figure 5. Al-Qaida in Iraq, December 2007**

and prevented enemy forces from regrouping. Despite the focus on joint security stations at the tactical level, at the operational level, both the enemy and MNC–I viewed terrain in a conventional though noncontiguous way, with support and security zones, lines of approach and communication, rear areas, etc. MNC–I’s ability to synchronize its operations in space and time was aided by Odierno’s use of enablers, weighting of the main effort with his Stryker reserve, and extension of MNC–I’s operational reach through the use of Iraqi forces.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the focus of much of the analysis of U.S. operations during the surge on a supposed COIN-dominated revolution in the profession of arms, MNC–I built its operational concept on a solidly traditional framework and owed its success to the effective application of some of the oldest, most well-established principles of operational art, rather than to a COIN-dominated leitmotif.<sup>29</sup> ■

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2. Thomas E. Rick, *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin, 2009).
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to detainees in Iraqi custody; and the 2008 budget, which allotted \$48 billion for capital expenditures and ensured that the federal and provincial governments had the financial resources for public spending.

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14. McMaster, interview, 11 and 14–15; Odierno, "The Surge in Iraq"; Odierno, interview, 19 October 2007, 9.

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16. Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad* (Washington, DC: CMH, 2010), 21; Lt. Col. Jeff McDougall, interview by Mike Visconage, 7 July 2007, transcript, CMH, Baghdad, Iraq, 20–22.

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# Solving Deployment Challenges Using a Systems Approach to Understand the Defense Transportation System

Col. Dennis C. Major, U.S. Army

Maj. Calvin E. Townsend Jr., U.S. Army



As many biologists and organizational behavior experts have shown, events or problems rarely occur in isolation. Rather, successes or challenging setbacks transpire as interactive behaviors or patterns within systems and networks.<sup>1</sup> An understanding of how the components of systems interact is especially critical when considering how the Defense Transportation System (DTS) processes units for deployment. Because of the system's vast number of interdependent parts, solving common deployment readiness challenges depends on observing its components "from the balcony" as interrelated functions, versus attempting to evaluate individual issues as isolated phenomena while standing "on the dance floor." This type of investigation is sometimes called systems thinking. Researchers Melanie Minarik, Bill Thornton, and George Perreault, citing Peter M. Senge, suggest that systems thinking is suitable "when many complex issues surround a particular challenge, when there is a high dependence on the actions of many people, and when there is the potential for ineffective coordination among the people involved."<sup>2</sup> All these conditions apply to the DTS.

Therefore, this article examines the DTS from a systems perspective. The study identifies five common problems that hinder the readiness of Army units to deploy as well as five practical solutions that could improve the system's overall functioning: (1) ensure deployability of a unit's equipment by allowing the unit at least six weeks to prepare it; (2) ensure accurate property records by evaluating unit deployment data quarterly and by publishing orders to update organizational equipment lists (OELs) as soon as units



receive notification of deployment; (3) ensure efficient and accurate use of information systems by making them user-friendly and fully integrated; (4) ensure a unit's movement priorities are accomplished by applying command emphasis and operations staff planning; and (5) ensure effective coordination among Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) terminal brigades and battalions (i.e., ports of embarkation [POEs]), installation transportation offices (ITOs), and units by conducting meetings early and often.

## Structure of the Defense Transportation System

The DTS is the global transportation infrastructure, managed by U.S. Transportation Command. The structure consists of military and commercial resources such as aerial ports, automated information systems, highways, railways, and seaports. This infrastructure also includes essential customs, in-transit visibility, and traffic management services that enhance the Department of Defense's ability to project power around the world.

As illustrated by figure 1 (page 88), each organization interacting within the DTS is working as a gear in a synchronized effort to move maneuver forces from home station to their designated point of assembly. With that said, everything begins with a supported geographical combatant commander (GCC) generating requirements for forces. Once the capabilities are approved by the joint staff, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), as the force provider, matches Army forces to the appropriate organizations. From this point, transportation requirements are analyzed and determined by U.S. Transportation Command based on the supported GCC's timelines and mission objectives. This article considers surface and maritime assets for its transportation feasibility analysis of the interconnected components of the DTS.

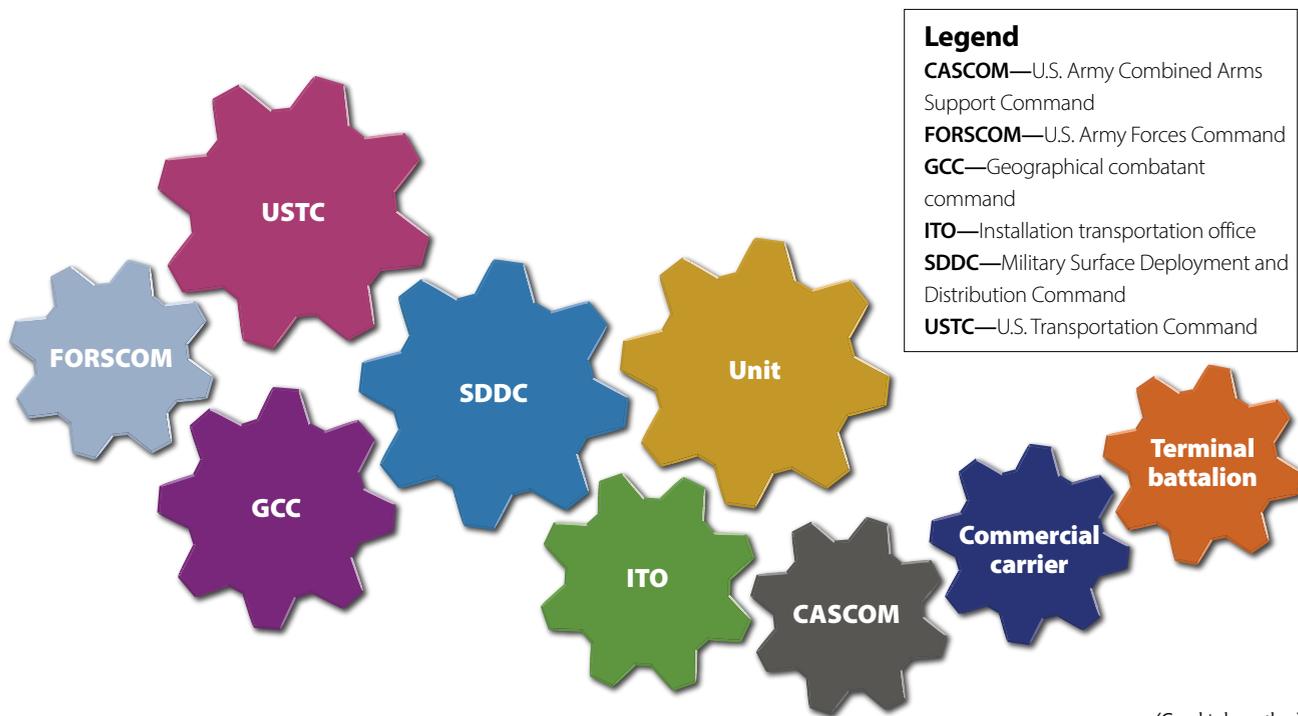
Once a GCC and the U.S. Transportation Command agree that a surface deployment meets operational requirements, the SDDC begins to identify organic (military) or commercial assets to support the operation. Afterward, FORSCOM pushes the transportation information (e.g., mode or timeline)

Soldiers with 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB), 4th Sustainment Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, provide fuel to vehicles from 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 4th Infantry Division on 2 December 2016 during rail load operations at Fort Carson, Colorado. The 68th CSSB provided logistical support to 3rd ABCT, loading its entire set of equipment onto trains to begin the movement of the brigade to Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. (Photo by Capt. Scott Walters, U.S. Army)

to the designated unit, simultaneously pushing the data to the servicing ITO.

The ITO is a critical component of this system. It is responsible for assisting units throughout the movement process while also serving as the linchpin between each unit and the servicing SDDC terminal transportation battalion. The Combined Arms Support Command is responsible for training unit movement officers (UMOs) throughout the Department of the Army.

unit is properly prepared for deployment. As illustrated in Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-35, *Army Deployment and Redeployment*, one essential aspect of deployment planning is possessing a working knowledge of the “total deployment process.”<sup>3</sup> Not only is it important for members of DTS components to understand the overall deployment process, but also FORSCOM organizations must grasp the importance of defining units’ mobility requirements and identifying critical milestones.



(Graphic by author)

**Figure 1. Agency/Organization Interconnectedness Forming the Defense Transportation System**

This overview of how the different agencies and organizations must function cooperatively with one another to deploy a unit shows the importance of taking a systems view for overcoming deployment challenges. The next section discusses five common challenges and offers recommendations for overcoming them.

### Challenge Number 1: Needing Time for Equipment Readiness

The GCCs initiate the deployment process by defining requirements and determining when resources are required in theater, also known as a required delivery date. Once a required delivery date is established, FORSCOM is responsible for “backward planning” to ensure the

unit is properly prepared for deployment. Unlike during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, when units deployed within the Army force generation cycle, now Army units must posture themselves to deploy in an expeditionary fashion with assigned equipment.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, FORSCOM planners must ensure units are given the appropriate time to achieve success. In the six to eight weeks before the assigned available-to-load date (ALD), units should be focusing on preparing their equipment to move from the fort to the port.

However, there is a growing trend of units who are about to deploy conducting major training events (e.g., Joint Readiness Training Center or National Training Center exercises, convoy live-fire exercises, and field

training exercises) with the same vehicles identified for deployment—in some instances, only one week before their ALD. The absence of ample time and space for units to prepare could lead to non-mission-capable equipment being towed onto transportation assets or shown on unit deployment lists (UDLs) without being validated promptly, which could in turn affect the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System validation process as well as the availability of adequate transportation assets.<sup>5</sup> As one can imagine, equipment being towed off a vessel does not enhance the GCC's strategic message of projecting combat power around the world.

To strengthen the GCC's messaging of showcasing force projection, units should cease using designated equipment approximately forty-five days or more before their ALD. To meet training requirements, senior commanders should task other organizations on the installation to loan deploying units the necessary equipment, if available.

### Challenge Number 2: Needing Accurate Property Books and Organizational Equipment Lists in Advance

UDLs are necessary documents to validate transportation requirements. However, before the UDLs can be developed, units must ensure OELs are created in the Transportation Coordinator's Automated Information for Movements System II (TC-AIMS II). The Center for Army Lessons Learned Handbook 15-01, *Command Deployment Discipline Program (CDDP)*, recommends that company-level commanders update their OEL semiannually or upon significant property book changes.<sup>6</sup> However, during one major deployment exercise, less than 50 percent of the subordinate organizations had created OELs in TC-AIMS II. This is a significant issue.

If units fail to reconcile their property book with their OEL on a quarterly or semiannual basis, inaccurate data probably will be transmitted to the Global Air Transportation Execution System (GATES), thus potentially impacting vessel allocation along with the overall buildup of combat power. For example, if a unit is issued mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles in lieu of up-armored high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles, and it fails to reconcile its property book and OEL, planning dimensions will not be updated in the system. This will cause the UDL

to be built with inaccurate information since the two vehicles are drastically different in size. The SDDC may not acquire the appropriate amount of space to support the deployment, thereby possibly compelling equipment to be left on the pier awaiting a follow-on move. As a result of such errors, the unit's combat effectiveness will likely be hampered.

To mitigate such a planning failure, commanders above battalion level should evaluate their subordinate organizations' deployment data on a quarterly or semiannual basis, as recommended by the CDDP. Also, upon deployment notification, commanders should publish a warning order and an operation order requiring their formations to update OELs, which will lead to accurate UDLs.

### Challenge Number 3: Needing Efficient Information Systems

As the battalion sergeant major and the authors of this article were conducting battlefield circulation within the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum area, a logical question arose as to why the TC-AIMS II rejected nonstandard or modified dimensions when creating or updating OELs. From the battalion sergeant major's perspective, this problem definitely presented second- and third-order effects, and we agreed. On the one hand, the Army directs unit commanders to build and maintain

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OELs to sustain an expeditionary posture. However, the system does not retain accurate information, forcing UMOs to reinsert actual data at the time of deployment—in essence, when populating the UDL. This network interface issue causes delays and inefficiencies at the strategic level. This is a significant matter, especially given that maintaining accurate OEL is the initial step of deployment readiness.

After conducting some analysis, the 841st team identified that the real issue resided within the Computerized Movement Planning and Status System (COMPASS). In accordance with the CDDP, UMOs are directed to submit updated OELs through their chain of command to the ITO on a semiannual basis or when significant changes to the property book occur. Here lies the issue. When a unit modifies a piece of equipment and uploads the accurate dimensional data into TC-AIMS II, if the information is two percent greater than the standard characteristics found in Technical Bulletin 55-46-1, *Standard Characteristics for Transportability of Military Vehicles & Other Outsize/Overweight Equipment*, COMPASS will return an error message, although the data were accurate.<sup>7</sup>

Sixty-eight soldiers from the New Jersey Army National Guard's 50th Infantry Brigade Combat Team load more than 170 tactical vehicles onto rail cars 2 May 2017 at Morrisville Yard in Morrisville, Pennsylvania. A total of 700 vehicles and trailers were headed to Fort Pickett, Virginia, for the Army National Guard's eXportable Combat Training Capability Exercise 17-01. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt Hecht, U.S. Air National Guard)

However—it must be noted—this default function may be in place as a precautionary factor to prevent the input of incorrect information.

Some transporters may see this as an insignificant obstacle, but this can be a frustrating experience for UMOs, who are assigned this task as an additional duty and, in most cases, are not transporters by trade. Also, OELs may then contain inaccurate information as the UMOs cannot bypass the software programming. Therefore, during a real-world movement sequence or timeline, one must ask, “In a time of haste, what is the likelihood that a UMO will input accurate data when creating their UDL when the system has already rejected the information?” In the authors' opinion, the odds are moderate, at best.

In view of this, if data inconsistent with Technical Bulletin 55-46-1 are entered during the OEL development phase, the system should generate a message to verify the provided dimensions. It should allow an UMO to verify the data and then bypass the standard when appropriate. This would lead to more accurate records.

Demonstrating the importance of data accuracy, if a deploying unit (with the assistance of their servicing ITO) loaded 965 pieces of equipment into TC-AIMS II, it is likely that no more than 350 items would be viewable in GATES. The remaining 615 would be dropped from the system. Of the 350 pieces in this scenario, only 12 items would be valid in GATES and prepared to manifest, which is less than a 1.3 percent accuracy rate. Any time this issue arises, it is classified as a “sequencing problem” between the Integrated Booking System and GATES. Resolving this issue entails days of crosstalk at the battalion, brigade, and headquarter levels at SDDC.

Ultimately, this shortcoming is creating inefficiencies throughout the DTS. (The complex relationships and inconnectivity between DTS information systems are depicted in figure 2 on page 92.) With this in mind, U.S. Transportation Command and the SDDC should lead an effort, with participation of all essential stakeholders at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, to create an end-to-end information system that ensures systems interface, booking capabilities, and in-transit visibility accessibility—all to enhance efficiencies throughout the deployment process.

### **Challenge Number 4: Needing Effective Operational Planning**

Per Field Manual 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, the staff element responsible for the movement-and-maneuver warfighting-function tasking, along with publishing orders and plans, is the operations staff officer (G-3 or S-3).<sup>8</sup> The deployment process is also considered as a major operation that requires the G-3 or S-3 to publish an operation plan or operation order. Instead, however, over several strategic deployments, we have noticed that operations sections at the division level and below are rarely involved in the deployment process. This means that when an operation order is published consisting of critical responsibilities, timelines, and milestones—which, in most cases, are not distributed—commanders and

operations staffs are pushing all the movement responsibilities onto the brigade mobility officer (BMO).

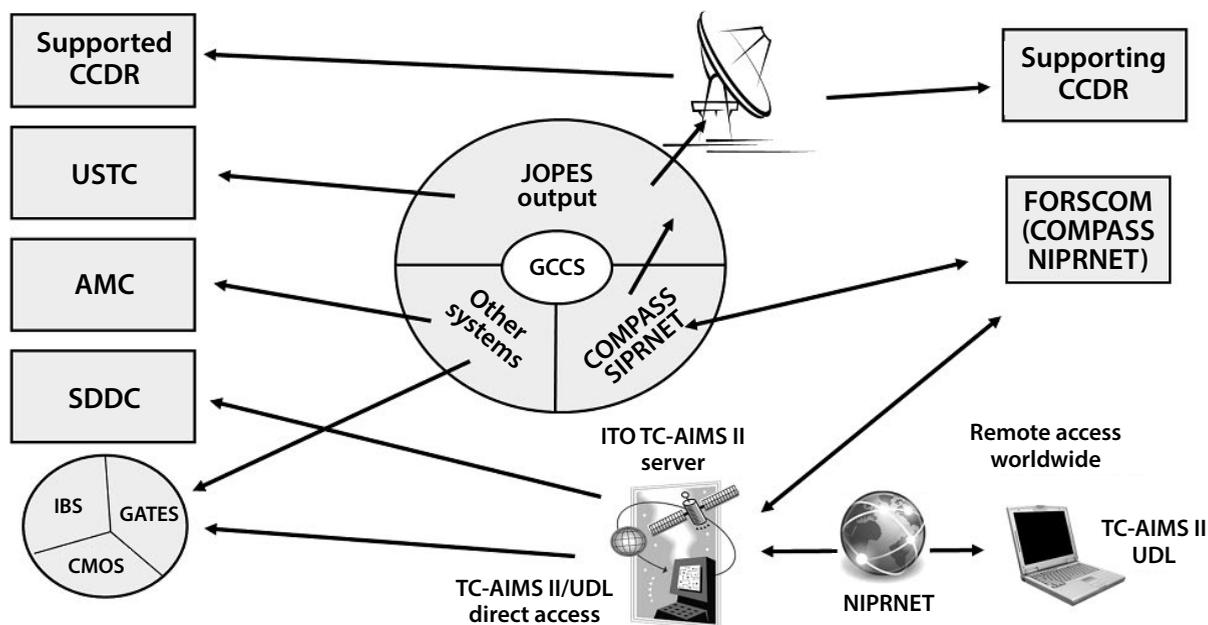
The first issue with pushing the majority of the functions onto the BMO is he or she has zero tasking authority, which means some unit commanders may place emphasis on other priorities, and they may order their UMOs to perform other tasks outside of preparing the unit for deployment. ATP 3-35 clearly highlights the need for command emphasis throughout the planning and preparation phases of the deployment process: “Without unit command involvement and emphasis ... the [BMO and] UMO will not have the resources required to accomplish [their] tasks.”<sup>9</sup>

Second, the BMO may not possess a firm appreciation for the link between the deployment and employment of forces. Because of this potential lack of expertise, the BMO may not properly prioritize equipment for shipment based on capability, especially if the equipment is required to remain on pier due to unforeseen circumstances. Moreover, the BMO may not monitor critical assets to facilitate the buildup of combat power. Having said this, one must ask, “Are we effectively mentoring these young BMOs as they are assigned to these key positions?” Schoolhouse training is not enough.

For an organization to operationalize the commander’s intent, staff personnel must have a firm understanding of the linkage between deployment and employment. The process of transitioning ideas to reality mandates that operations staffs develop feasible plans and orders with the assistance and coordination of the BMO to ensure that the right capabilities are in the right location, at the right time, and in the right quantities. This operationalizing process also requires the assistance of external partners.

### **Challenge Number 5: Needing Effective Coordination among Terminal Brigades and Battalions, Installation Transportation Officers, and Units**

The terminal brigades and battalions possess a unique skill set that has atrophied across the Army. Over a twelve-year span, operational units have deployed within an Army force generation rotational cycle, transitioning from the *train/ready* force pool through the *available* and *reset* force pools to repeat the procedures all over again. In this model, units deployed to a known location, with



**Legend**

AMC—Air Mobility Command  
 CCDR—Unified combatant commander  
 CMOS—Cargo Movement Operations System  
 COMPASS—Computerized Movement Planning and Status System  
 FORSCOM—U.S. Army Forces Command  
 GATES—Global Air Transportation Execution System  
 GCCS—Global Command and Control System  
 IBS—Integrated Booking System  
 ITO—Installation transportation officer

JOPE—Joint Operation Planning and Execution System  
 NIPRNET—Nonsecure Internet Protocol Router Network  
 SDDC—Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command  
 SIPRNET—SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network  
 TC-AIMS II—Transportation Coordinator's Automated Information for Movement System II  
 UDL—Unit deployment lists  
 USTC—U.S. Transportation Command

(Graphic modified from Army Techniques Publication 3-35, *Army Deployment and Redeployment* [Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 23 March 2015], A-4)

**Figure 2. The Interconnection between the Transportation Information Systems that Comprise the Automated Data Flow within the Defense Transportation System**

theater provided equipment in place, replacing a similar unit; with theater provided equipment, there is little requirement for units to coordinate with terminal brigades and battalions except for containerized equipment. In contrast, as we return to expeditionary deployments, terminal brigades and battalions must assist deploying units with the efficient movement of organic assets from their home station to their designated assembly area.

UMOs are now capable of accessing TC-AIMS II from their unit area home station, which should improve the property book and OEL reconciliation process. If not appropriately managed, ITOs and units may experience a breakdown in communication and coordination because units are not forced to interact

with their servicing ITO, as frequently happens. This could become a significant issue since the ITO is the linchpin between the unit and SDDC resources. This makes movement-and-support coordination ever more essential, especially early in the deployment process. However, there is a way to bridge any potential interaction gaps.

It is critical that SDDC terminal brigades and battalions (i.e., POEs) and ITOs engage with the deploying units early and often. This is particularly the case for the terminal battalions. If these organizations assist with identifying critical shortfalls at the fort versus the port, it is beneficial for all parties and throughout the DTS. Joint Publication 3-35,

*Deployment and Redeployment Operations*, calls such engagements “movement and support meetings.”<sup>10</sup> The manual suggests, “at the tactical/unit level, identifying and resolving transportation shortfalls and/or limitations must ... occur early. ... Another key interface required during these support meetings is between the deploying units and the C2 [command and control] elements of the air and sea POEs.”<sup>11</sup> These engagements are critical for successful deployments.

Although this is an unfunded requirement, the SDDC is postured to support the effort with the assistance of the Deployment Support Command. The Deployment Support Command is an Army Reserve organization aligned with SDDC. Therefore, in support of the SDDC Total Force Integration Strategy, Army Reserve deployment and distribution support teams are aligned to continental United States-based active-component terminal brigades and battalions to advise and assist units during the deployment process. These teams are ever more critical as ITO staffs are experiencing staffing deficiencies. In essence, these deployment and distribution support teams

are augmenting ITOs at coordinated times during deployment preparation.

## Summary

Having an appreciation for the interrelated parts of the deployment process reveals why deployment readiness challenges should not be evaluated as isolated phenomena. As with any system, if one component behaves differently or fails, this failure could have a cascading effect on the entire network. Components could also include current policies. To address deployment readiness issues, we must solve problems by taking a comprehensive look at how the parts of the DTS comprise the whole. Improvements in five critical areas could significantly improve the functioning of the whole: allowing units at least six weeks to prepare their equipment, updating unit deployment data quarterly and as soon as units receive notice to deploy, making information systems user-friendly and fully integrated, dedicating command emphasis and operations staff planning to movement priorities, and conducting early and frequent meetings among SDDC components, ITOs, and units. ■

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## Notes

1. Lee J. Sweetlove and Alisdair R. Fernie, “Regulation of Metabolic Networks: Understanding Metabolic Complexity in the Systems Biology Era,” *New Phytologist* 168, no. 1 (October 2005): 9–24. The authors provide a discussion of metabolism as a whole system rather than divided into its mechanistic parts.

2. Melanie M. Minarik, Bill Thornton, and George Perreault, “Systems Thinking Can Improve Teacher Retention,” *The Clearing House* 76, no. 5 (May–June 2003): 231. Minarik, Thornton, and Perreault cite Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Currency and Doubleday, 1990).

3. Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-35, *Army Deployment and Redeployment* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], March 2015), 1-3.

4. During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, units were supplied with theater-provided equipment. However, to maintain an expeditionary posture today, units must prepare to deploy with organic equipment.

5. *User's Guide for JOPES (Joint Operation Planning and Execution System)* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1 May 1995), iii,

16–17. “JOPES is a combination of joint policies and procedures (guidance), and automated data processing (ADP) support used to plan and execute joint military operations.”

6. Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Handbook 15-01, *Command Deployment Discipline Program* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, December 2014), 12.

7. Army Technical Bulletin 55-46-1, *Standard Characteristics (Dimensions, Weight, and Cube) for Transportability of Military Vehicles and Other Outsize/Overweight Equipment (In TOE Line Item Number Sequence)* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1 February 2015).

8. Field Manual 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 5 May 2014).

9. ATP 3-35, *Army Deployment and Redeployment*, 2-5.

10. Joint Publication 3-35, *Deployment and Redeployment Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 31 January 2013), B-B-5.

11. *Ibid.*, IV-3.



Brazilian police of *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais* (BOPE, a special operations unit) conduct interagency training in the Rio de Janeiro subway with members of the Marine Corps Special Operations Task Force 10 June 2016 ahead of the 2016 Rio Olympics in Brazil. (Photo by Ricardo Moraes, Reuters)

# Brazilian Organization for Combating Terrorism during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

Col. Alessandro Visacro, Brazilian Army

Major international public events, by their very nature, combine extreme vulnerability with extensive media exposure. These factors alone are enough to create favorable conditions for the convergence of a number of normally diffuse threats—primarily nonstate actors operating domestically and transnationally, ranging from what are known in Brazil as antisystemic movements (groups opposing established power structures) to extremist organizations (such as supporters of the Islamic State).<sup>1</sup> Such scenarios are attractive to neoanarchists, revolutionaries, criminals, and terrorists who are willing to exploit state weaknesses in the physical and informational domains.

Even in a context where institutions are functioning normally, events of great magnitude pose a complex security challenge, invariably requiring capabilities that are available in the armed forces. For this reason, military forces have been used recurrently throughout the world to ensure a safe and peaceful environment—without them, it would be impossible to hold a major event under the auspices of the state.

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the subsequent Paralympic Games ended a long cycle comprising eight major events hosted in Brazil.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of nine years marked by a continual process of improvement, Brazil's Ministry of Defense helped provide protection and security, and it was responsible for the joint efforts of the armed forces, in close collaboration with civil agencies, intelligence organizations, and law enforcement. It achieved extraordinary success, especially considering the magnitude of the challenges faced by the Brazilian government since 2007, year of the XV Pan American Games. Although the Ministry of Defense's involvement rightfully did not bring it any prominence or monopoly over the management of security, the armed forces' vast set of capabilities made them an actor of notable importance, even with their diligent attempts at discretion.

Because of the nation's particularities, the context in which the Brazilian armed forces were employed may be considered unique. Even so, the situation offers insights about the use of the military in a postindustrial age characterized, above all, by the prevalence of nonstate armed violence. Several fundamental characteristics—such as the ubiquity of the media, harsh public criticism, severe legal constraints, besiegement by human rights organizations, the interagency environment, and even the deployment of troops within

the confines of the national territory—create a scenario that is incongruous with the one idealized by traditional armies in a Westphalian order.

In view of the foregoing, Brazil's recent experience deserves to be considered as an interesting source of study. In order to share some of the lessons learned and best practices, this article presents a brief analysis of security provisions during the 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, focusing primarily on combating terrorism—a topic that, due to its sensitive character and growing importance, has demanded increasing engagement by the military.

## Complexity, Vulnerabilities, and Great Apprehension

Even considering the magnitude of previous major events, the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games stood out. Altogether, there were thirty days of competition events that demanded a Herculean effort from eighty-eight thousand civilians and service members involved in a robust security structure.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately eleven thousand athletes from more than two hundred countries brought roughly half a million tourists to the city of Rio de Janeiro during the games.<sup>4</sup> Twenty-five thousand accredited journalists from around the world reached an estimated one billion spectators with their continuous broadcasts.<sup>5</sup>

The athletic events took place in thirty-two venues, distributed into four clusters around the city. At the opening ceremony alone, 5 August 2016, there were approximately eighty thousand people in Maracanã

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Stadium, as well as forty foreign leaders. These included heads of state and foreign ministers, among whom were French President François Hollande and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.<sup>6</sup> The Olympic Boulevard, set up in the historic area of Guanabara Bay, was the biggest “live site” in the history of the games, with an estimated daily attendance between eighty thousand and one hundred thousand visitors.

Besides Rio de Janeiro, five other cities geographically dispersed across Brazil’s vast territory hosted Olympic soccer matches. It is worth noting, for example, that the distance between the cities of Manaus and São Paulo, both of which hosted soccer games, is nearly one thousand miles farther than the distance from London to Kiev.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Brazil’s national transportation system cannot be compared to Europe’s widespread and efficient road and rail network. To make matters worse, some sporting delegations chose accommodations in training centers away from the host cities.

The threats to the security of the games had distinct nuances, starting with a troublesome domestic situation. A severe economic crisis and a scenario of internal recession precipitated a turbulent political

A Task Force 1st Ranger Battalion detachment counters a notional CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) threat 29 July 2016 during an antiterrorism simulation at a Brasília Metro station in Brasília, Brazil, in preparation for the 2016 Rio Olympics. (Photo courtesy of Andre Borges, Agência Brasília)

process that has continued to test the soundness of Brazil’s democratic institutions. Against this backdrop, popular demonstrations and civil disturbances became a legitimate concern for government authorities. It is worth noting that during the 2013 FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*) Confederations Cup, and, less intensely, during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, street demonstrations mobilized thousands of protesters throughout the country. Spontaneous mass marches attracted violent antisystemic groups, notably, activists known as *black blocs* (criminal, anarchic demonstrators who wear black), causing protests to devolve into looting, depredation, and deliberate confrontations with police forces.

The uncontrolled spread of tropical endemic diseases caused by the government’s failure to eradicate the

mosquito that transmits the dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses also placed the success of the Olympics at risk, discouraging athletes and tourists from traveling to Brazil. In addition to the economic, political, and health crises, an acute public security crisis plagued the city of Rio de Janeiro—the metropolis was thrown into turmoil by a fratricidal dispute among armed gangs linked to international arms and drug trafficking.

Adding to all these concerns, the threat posed by international terrorism grew in importance as the opening date of the games approached. Representing a sort of countdown, a sequence of attacks throughout the world starting in November 2015 generated an atmosphere of apprehension:

- 13 November 2015 (about nine months prior to the opening of the Rio Summer Olympics), multiple attacks in Paris, including at the Stade de France and Bataclan nightclub, left 130 dead and hundreds wounded.<sup>8</sup>
- 2 December 2015 (eight months prior), fourteen people were killed and another twenty-two were wounded in an attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California.<sup>9</sup>
- 22 March 2016 (four months prior), a bomb attack at the Brussels airport left 31 dead and 270 wounded.<sup>10</sup>
- 12 June 2016 (fifty-five days prior), one shooter killed forty-nine people and wounded dozens at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.<sup>11</sup>
- 28 June 2016 (thirty-eight days prior), a bomb attack at the Istanbul airport killed 41 people and wounded more than 230.<sup>12</sup>
- 1 July 2016 (thirty-five days prior), an attack in Bangladesh left twenty-one dead and thirty wounded.<sup>13</sup>
- 14 July 2016 (twenty-one days prior), during the French Bastille Day celebrations, a truck hit more than one hundred people in Nice, and eighty-four died.<sup>14</sup>
- 22 July 2016 (thirteen days prior), an attacker at a shopping mall in Munich, killed nine people and wounded twenty-seven.<sup>15</sup>
- 1 August 2016 (just three days before the opening ceremony in Rio de Janeiro), a homemade nail bomb similar to the one used in the Boston Marathon bombing exploded at a shopping mall in Brasília without injuring anyone.<sup>16</sup>

Fortunately, events in Rio ran counter to the most pessimistic predictions. The Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games were successful, thanks largely to the well-designed and effective security structure that supported them.

## Governance of Security Operations

The multiple actors directly and indirectly involved in the security of the games resulted in a diversified task organization, as well as a complex architecture of governance, command, and control.

Brazil is a federal republic comprising twenty-six states and the Federal District. Each unit of the federation has its own public security forces, comprising the state police forces (civil and military, i.e., investigative and preventive) and civil defense—responsible for disaster prevention and management. At the federal administration level, the Ministry of Justice oversees the Federal Police Department, the Federal Highway Police, and the small National Public Security Force, formed with officers from the state-level “military” police. The Brazilian Intelligence Agency, the central body of the Brazilian Intelligence System, is subordinate to the Office of Institutional Security of the Presidency. Finally, the three military services (Navy, Army, and Air Force) operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense.

Respecting the legal responsibilities of each institution while seeking maximum synergy among them and abiding by the principles regulating the relationships among the units of the federation (the “federative pact”) required a creative arrangement for the Olympics. In addition, overcoming obstacles posed by distinct organizational cultures and moving beyond disparate interests required a lot of time and energy from all those who truly strove to build strong partnerships. An important milestone in this process was the adoption of the Strategic Integrated Security Plan for the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games (*Plano Estratégico de Segurança Integrada para os Jogos Olímpicos e Paralímpicos Rio 2016*, known as PESI Rio 2016).<sup>17</sup>

Designed to integrate public security, defense, and intelligence efforts within a centralized government strategy, PESI established the fundamental principles by which institutional relations were governed.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the plan determined that governance of the games would focus on transparency and smooth decision making at all levels, especially with regard to the

flow of technical, tactical, and operational information. To that end, it proposed the creation of the Integrated Security Executive Committee (*Comitê Executivo de Segurança Integrada*, known as CESI) at the national level, composed of officials from the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Presidency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defense, and the Brazilian Intelligence Agency, as well as representatives from the states and municipalities that hosted the games.<sup>19</sup> In order to ensure CESI's presence and reach, a network of local Regional Integrated Security Executive Committees (*Comitês Executivos de Segurança Integrada Regionais*, known as CESIRs) was created.

In order to coordinate assets and integrate available capabilities for public security, the Ministry of Justice created the Extraordinary Secretariat of Security for Major Events. The Ministry of Defense, in turn, established joint area defense commands, supported by centralized joint commands, as shown in figure 1 (page 99).

The Brazilian armed forces have a long tradition of being used in the country's internal security. Using military forces for internal security is legally supported by the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, as well as by a set of complementary laws that regulate the domestic operations of military units.

During the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, the Ministry of Defense's efforts proved decisive in enabling the country to honor its commitment to the international community. More than forty-three thousand service members were deployed to provide security during the games, and they accomplished a wide array of tasks and missions, among which the following stand out:

- conduct aerospace defense;
- conduct maritime, river, and airport operations;
- protect strategic structures;
- ensure safety of expressways and vital roads for urban outflow;
- oversee handling and security of explosives and controlled products;
- conduct cyber defense;
- collaborate with civil defense;
- provide support for the safety of dignitaries;
- provide a contingency force;
- conduct counterterrorism; and
- conduct chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense.

## Integrated Committee for Combating Terrorism

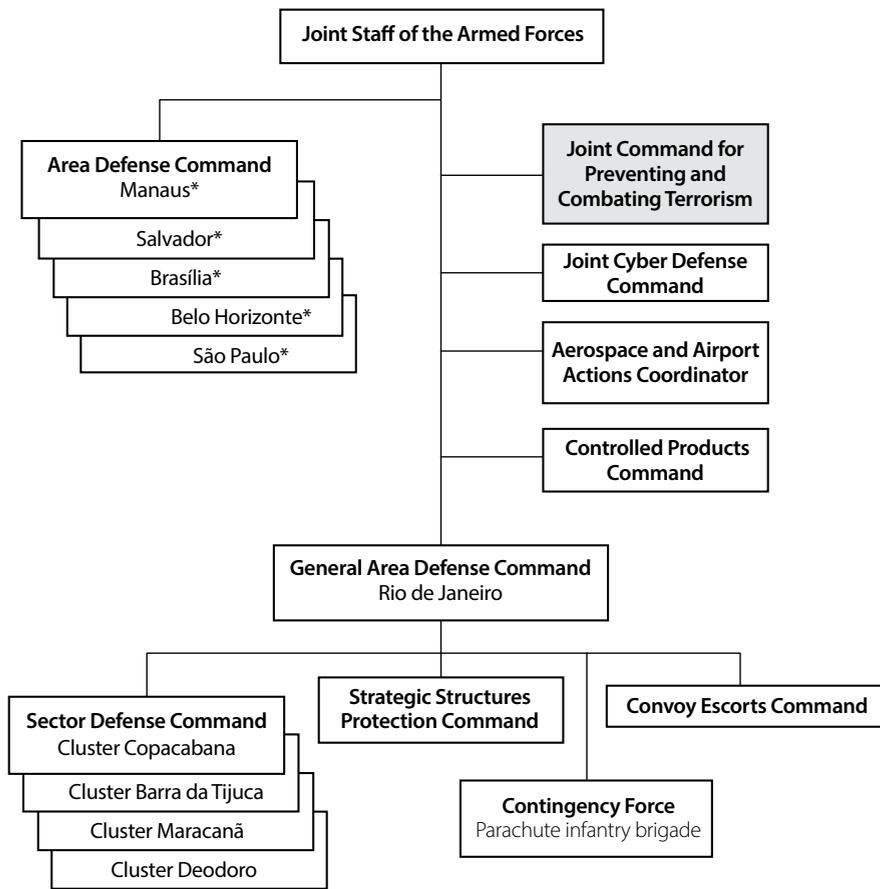
Terrorism is a complex political and social phenomenon that is hard to combat and eradicate. Understanding terrorism requires a holistic approach that must incorporate a criminological dimension but not be limited to it. Fighting terrorism requires an integrated effort since no single state agency can handle it in isolation. For this reason, interagency operations are properly considered the cornerstone of preventing and suppressing terrorism.

Encouraging interagency efforts by "promoting the integrated action of government agencies with a stake in the issue" was the main mission of the Center for Coordination of Actions to Prevent and Combat Terrorism at the Office of Institutional Security of the Presidency.<sup>20</sup> Created in June 2009 during the administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the center had a short life. It was deactivated in February 2011, during President Dilma Rousseff's first term.

Hence, as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Confederations Cup, World Youth Day, and the FIFA World Cup approached, Brazil did not have an interministerial body effectively vested with the authority and responsibility for fostering interagency cooperation. Given a wide array of sometimes disparate institutional interests, the model of governance adopted had sought to accommodate them by defining two areas of responsibility: public security and defense. A subordinate area called preventing and combating terrorism was nominally assigned to the military.

However, this arrangement proved inadequate to the Brazilian reality, because, in practical terms, it simply assigned to the Army Special Operations Command the difficult task of leading joint actions within the Ministry of Defense and, to no avail, interagency efforts at the national and local levels. Thus, as the Olympic Games approached, the model of governance adopted in previous major events became the subject of reasoned criticism and was eventually reassessed.

The heart of the problem was primarily the question of unity of command—a principle of war held in high regard by soldiers, who were unwilling to relinquish it in the name of adopting an interagency panacea. However, the Brazilian context revealed clearly and objectively that unity of command was simply not an option, since all the institutions involved refused to



Total strength of armed forces employed in providing security during the games: 43,481  
 (\*) Host city for Olympic soccer

(Graphic by author)

**Figure 1. Brazilian Armed Forces' General Security Organization for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games**

subordinate themselves to one another. Moreover, the interagency process could not serve as an excuse for removing institutional roles clearly defined in the current legal system. It was necessary to respect the calling, purpose, and legal responsibilities of the individual services, law enforcement, and other security agencies. In addition, the expertise obtained by some intelligence agencies and special operations forces (military and police) in their respective fields of action was undeniable.

According to PESI Rio 2016, the CESI and CESIRs were to devote special attention to the integration of efforts to combat terrorism, developed along three main *eixos de atuação*, loosely translated as lines of effort, which were intelligence, public security, and defense.<sup>21</sup> To achieve such purposes, a temporary advisory structure was created, the Integrated Committee for

Combating Terrorism (*Comitê Integrado de Enfrentamento ao Terrorismo*, known as the CIET), illustrated in figure 2 (page 100).

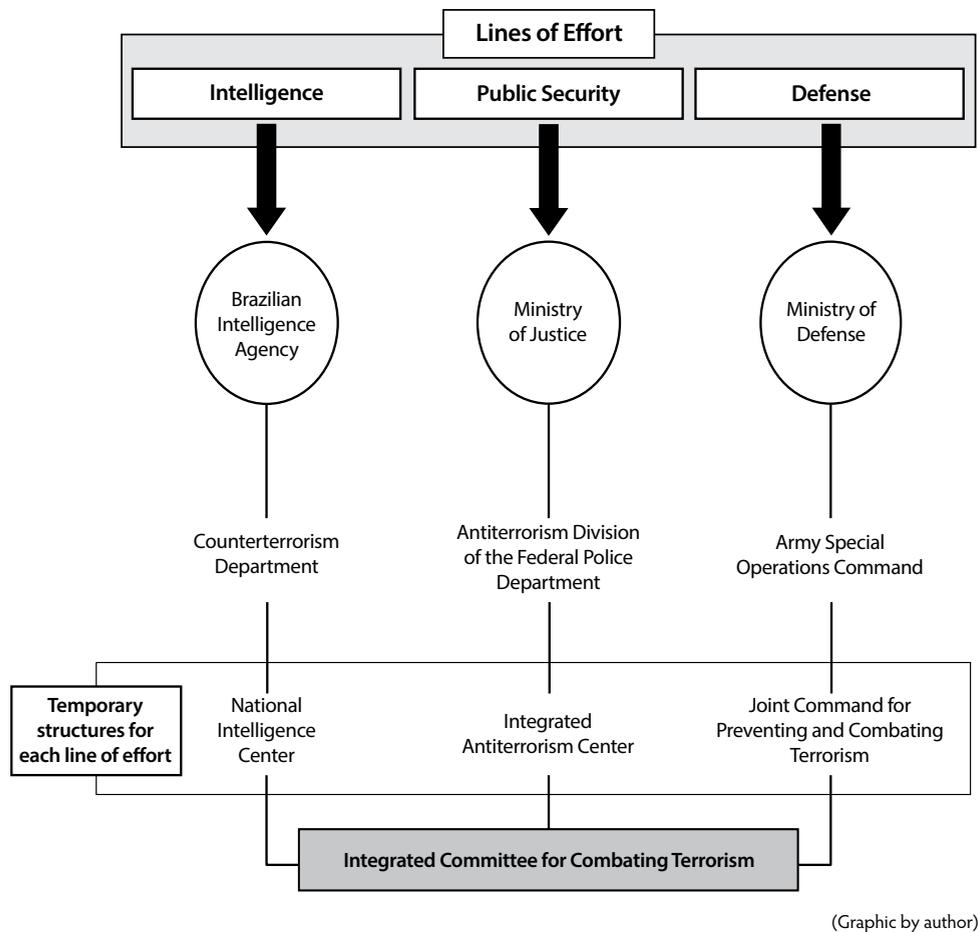
The CIET's interagency dynamics were governed by a set of strategic protocols for combating terrorism, developed based on the fundamental principles contained in the PESI Rio 2016. Over time and despite their differences, the CIET environment proved adequate for improving the mechanisms for interagency cooperation. The level of integration achieved was unprecedented. It included shared access to available databases, redistribution of targets, and emphasis on complementary capabilities. This process led to the effective engagement of the Army Intelligence Center in combating terrorism alongside the Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism and its partners.

The CIET was also responsible for conducting a national public awareness campaign

before the event, since the Brazilian population generally displays a low level of perception of terrorist threats. The campaign's results were tangible. During the Olympics, for example, seventy-eight cases of suspect materials abandoned in public places in the six host cities were reported.

### Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism

The Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism was the temporary structure created under the Ministry of Defense for the purpose of planning, coordinating, and conducting actions to combat terrorism and provide for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense. It was nothing more than a joint special operations command.



**Figure 2. Lines of Effort and Composition of the Integrated Committee for Combating Terrorism**

The Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism played an important role throughout the painful process of interagency cooperation, making significant efforts at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. From the very beginning, it engaged in negotiations with representatives from the Federal Police Department and Brazilian Intelligence Agency that culminated in the creation of the CIET and in the signing of strategic protocols that shaped the new model of governance for combating the terrorist threat.

Although it was directly subordinate to the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces, the Joint Command adopted a coordination of forces that brought it very close to joint area defense commands (see figure 1, page 99). In addition to deploying special operations task forces and CBRN-defense troops in all six cities that hosted Olympic events, it assigned liaison teams known as integrated tactical coordination centers to the other

commands that had territorial defense responsibilities (area defense commands and sector defense commands, see figure 3, page 101). This enabled it to also act at the local level, promoting interagency partnerships while maintaining a high level of readiness and rapid crisis response capabilities.

For twenty months, the Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism conducted intensive and careful preparation, drawing primarily from its own experience with the other major events that preceded the Olympics. An extensive and detailed plan guided the execution of specific training events and reconnaissance of possible soft targets in all host cities. Joint

interagency rehearsals and exercises were conducted in hotels, airports, subway stations, shopping malls, tourist attractions, and sports arenas. The troops were effectively prepared for the specific context of Rio 2016—a scenario vastly different from that experienced in 1972 during the Munich Olympics, for instance.

### Flexible Force Architecture

An act of terror is characterized, on the tactical level, by the execution of an action with “kinetic” effect such as detonating explosives in a bombing attempt or indiscriminately opening fire in a public place. However, terrorist aims go far beyond the mere demonstration of brutality through the graphic images that are instantly recorded and repeated incessantly in subsequent days. The focus of terror is, in fact, on the so-called “information environment,” as terror seeks to achieve political and strategic goals

that are far broader than the localized sacrifice of innocent lives. In other words, contrary to what it may seem, the real weapons of a terrorist are not assault rifles or explosive devices but rather the television camera and the instant media coverage generated from images captured with a simple mobile phone.

Traditionally, throughout the world, the state security apparatus has provided satisfactory responses at the tactical level—countering terrorism through actions with kinetic effect, defined by verbs such as *capture, arrest, neutralize, eliminate, or*

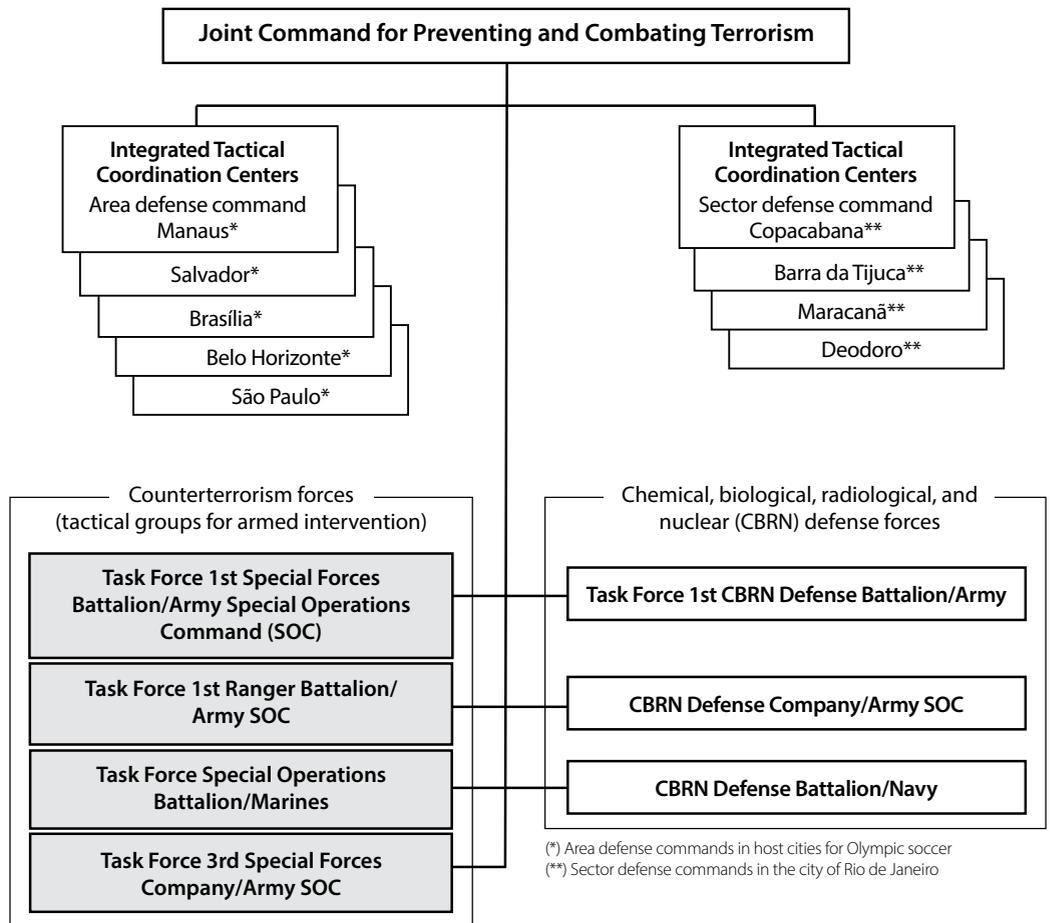
*rescue*. More often than not, however, states have failed at the political and strategic levels, demonstrating an inability to provide timely and effective responses in the information environment, in contrast to their effective actions in a narrow tactical setting. This dichotomy represents the essence of the asymmetry between terrorism and counterterrorism, as shown in the table (page 103).

The problem becomes more acute in countries such as Brazil, where, despite the innovative rhetoric, a model of reactive counterterrorism from the 1970s still prevails both in law enforcement agencies and in the armed forces—a model that is essentially based on the use of well-established tactical courses of action. However, in the information age, preventing and combating terrorism should be based on a combination of lethal and nonlethal capabilities, backed by state policies designed to shape the environment and

eradicate extremist violence at its source. Initiative, aggressiveness, and foresight should also (and above all) be employed in the information environment.

During the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, the Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism’s main goal was to ensure that through interagency cooperation, preventive and defensive measures were appropriately combined with offensive enforcement actions. While its priority was, naturally, to prevent terrorist attempts, the possibility of reacting to a successful attack was not ruled out.

According to risk assessments produced by the Brazilian Intelligence Agency, the potential threats to the security of the games did not come from sophisticated terrorist cells that infiltrated into the national territory with the purpose of transforming Brazil into



(Graphic by author)

**Figure 3. Organization of the Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism**



the scene of a major attack. Instead, the so-called “lone wolves,” or self-radicalized natives, represented a greater danger. Therefore, the degree of unpredictability of a possible attack was significantly greater. On the other hand, the expectation of lethal, but less developed or less sophisticated, actions demanded that the state’s first response also be decisive.

The solution originally conceived was based on “responses by legal layers.” In other words, responses would consist of successive measures of growing intensity, following the exhaustion of the capabilities available in law enforcement agencies. This type of approach certainly was incongruous with the nature of the threat described by intelligence analysts. Therefore, the concept of “composition of capabilities” was developed, which was designed to offer the most appropriate response for each type of scenario, through close collaboration among the various actors involved. To that end, it was necessary to carry out a detailed mapping of the available resources and to produce a realistic and detailed diagnosis of police and military special forces, identifying their main strengths and weaknesses in terms of personnel, equipment, and technical

Brazilian Army chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive defense soldiers sweep Maracanã Stadium for bombs 25 July 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. (Photo courtesy of the Brazilian Army)

and tactical training. One aim was to reduce the distance between command and control centers by reducing the bureaucracy of interagency connections in order to provide the agility required by the mission. Complementary protocols were put in place at the tactical level to ensure that the necessary capabilities would be available at critical locations and times. This process culminated in a flexible force architecture capable of responding decisively to what was considered the worst-case scenario: multiple attacks, simultaneous or successive, that were geographically dispersed, with or without the use of CBRN agents.

## Security Operations in Rio

Brazil did not have a regulatory instrument that defined the crime of terrorism until a few months before the opening of the Olympic Games. In March 2016, President Rousseff sanctioned Law No. 13.260, known

as the “Antiterrorism Law,” providing the legal basis for preventive actions to be carried out effectively. Then, on 21 July, the Federal Police’s Antiterrorism Division launched the first stage of Operation Hashtag, with the purpose of dismantling a network of individuals who called themselves “Defenders of Sharia.” In addition to supporting the Islamic State, members of the group had clearly demonstrated on social media that they intended to carry out an attack during the Olympics. Altogether,

the southern portion of the Maré complex. At dawn 11 August 2016, the Special Operations Command of the Rio de Janeiro Military Police deployed the Special Police Operations Battalion inside Vila do João neighborhood, site of the incident. The Federal Police Tactical Operations Command was also called in, and their teams entered the urban enclave with the men from the Special Police Operations Battalion. The Joint Command for Preventing and Combating Terrorism

offered help by sending the 1st Special Forces Battalion Task Force, reinforced by a company of paratroopers and nine wheeled armored personnel carriers. The operation, which brought together the best police and military special operations forces in the country, was successful, and there were no further incidents like this through the end of the Paralympic Games.

### Conclusion

Given the threat posed by extremist violence throughout the world, the recurrent use of military forces to provide

sixteen people were detained by the Federal Police at different locations across the national territory.

During the first week of the games, a serious incident involving the National Public Security Force tested the entire security apparatus gathered in the city of Rio de Janeiro. On 10 August 2016, a police car inadvertently entered one of the communities of the Maré complex of slums—a densely populated area, home to criminals and drug traffickers.<sup>22</sup> The vehicle received rifle fire. Pvt. Hélio Andrade died, and two other police officers were injured. The large presence of the national and international media gave the incident a lot of visibility and exposed the acute public security crisis established in that city decades ago.

Early that evening, the Special Operations Command of the Rio de Janeiro Military Police met at the regional integrated command and control center in order to provide an immediate and effective response. During the night, the National Public Security Force isolated

security during major international public events is a trend that is expected to last. In fact, we can further state that because of the harmful action of nonstate armed actors, there is a growing demand by governments and society for the application of available military capabilities within national territorial boundaries.

In this context, the threat posed by terrorist organizations was recognized as one of the main risks to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. To confront it, the Brazilian government was forced to seek original solutions appropriate for its domestic scenario and consistent with its own interagency dynamics. The nation’s particularities suggested caution against merely incorporating foreign dogmas and precepts or adopting predefined solutions at the risk of producing unrealistic expectations that would have been completely incongruous with the country’s reality.

The structure conceived was consistent with the nature of the threat—a flexible force architecture supported

**Table. Terrorism and Counterterrorism Asymmetry**

	Terrorism	Counterterrorism
Level	Political and strategic	Tactical
Dimension	Informational	Physical
Objective	Nonkinetic	Kinetic
Action	Extreme act of armed propaganda	By extension, this should be, in theory, an act of counter-propaganda—but that has not been the case.

(Table by author)

by partnerships established in the heterogeneous inter-agency environment. Assessments revealed that despite serious shortcomings, the state's security institutions, including the armed forces, had enviable capabilities, some of which are not possessed by many countries in the northern hemisphere. The primary challenge was to integrate, coordinate, and synchronize all the actors involved in order to ensure that the capabilities required for the satisfactory management of a crisis would be applied with precision at critical times and places.

According to the assessment of a staff officer from the Joint Command for Preventing and Combating

Terrorism, the reason why Brazil did not become the scene of a major terrorist attack during the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games was not due to an incorrect risk analysis. On the contrary, it was because of successfully executed preventive and proactive measures—such as Operation Hashtag launched by the Federal Police's Antiterrorism Division. However, it should be noted that in the current geopolitical environment, no country on the planet is immune to extremist violence. Although we acknowledge the success of the Olympics in Brazil in terms of dealing with terrorism, there is still a lot to be done. ■

## Notes

1. This paper uses *antisystemic* to describe violent criminal groups such as black blocs. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

2. The events in Brazil were the XV Pan American Games Rio 2007, the V World Military Games Rio 2011, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio + 20 (2012), the FIFA Confederations Cup 2013, World Youth Day (2013), the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, and the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Nevertheless, in Brazil, the use of troops in such missions has as a recent precedent the participation of the armed forces in the security of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Eco 92), held in the city of Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

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Sgt. 1st Class Ray Garrin, Company B (Medical), 173rd Airborne Brigade, treats Vietnamese citizens 13 June 1966 as part of a Medical Civic Action Program during Operation Hollandia in Long Hải, Vietnam, in what was then the South Vietnamese province of Phước Tuy. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage)

# Praise the Host and Pass the Fish Sauce

## Medical Advisers in the Vietnam War

Maj. Scott C. Woodard, U.S. Army, Retired

I was not sure what to expect when I was first assigned as the officer in charge of an embedded training team in support of the Afghan National Security Forces in 2006. I had once read David Donovan's *Once a Warrior King: Memories of an Officer in Vietnam*, the autobiographical story of an adviser in Vietnam, but he was a combat arms officer, and I was a Medical Service Corps officer.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing that the role of advising was not a new military mission, I wondered what the experience of medical advisers had been in our last sustained war, Vietnam.

As one reads through memoirs, reports, and analyses written before the January–February 1968 Tet Offensive, the goal of enabling a fledgling country to become self-sustaining was emerging and doing well. The medical field, in particular, benefited from dedicated advisers and other medical personnel providing education and assistance to their military medical counterparts. In addition, civilian and military patients reaped the harvest sown by the various medical assistance programs.

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The roles of advisers in Vietnam, specifically those in the Army Medical Department, are presented here as a reminder of the valuable work those individuals accomplished and as potential historical lessons for similar future counterinsurgency missions.

## The Command

The U.S. advisory effort in Vietnam began in 1950 with Military Advisory and Assistance Group–Indochina support to the French. In 1955, it then became the Military Advisory Assistance Group–Vietnam (MAAG-V) and was augmented with the Temporary

Equipment Recovery Mission the following year. It initially focused outward on fighting an invasion from North Vietnam, while other nonmilitary agencies worked internally with the Vietnamese Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps.

Beginning in 1959, MAAG–V turned toward the emerging insurgency, refocusing on counterinsurgency operations. As the situation deteriorated in South Vietnam from 1961 to 1964, adviser and combat support to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN, also known as the South Vietnamese Army) increased. Advisers, however, were forbidden to participate in direct combat alongside Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and to operate near international borders. Consequently, the advisers organized into mobile training teams that rotated throughout conventional units, ranger units, and the Montagnards in the Civilian Irregular Defense Group program. To oversee this increased adviser population and mission, the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was established in 1962.

With the chaos following the death of South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem in late 1963 and an increase of successful Viet Cong attacks in the south, Gen. William C. Westmoreland took command of U.S. forces during a tumultuous period in June 1964. American cadre assigned to ARVN units were deemed at an acceptable level, and beginning in 1965, U.S. command interest turned toward the buildup of U.S. combat forces in South Vietnam. Consequently, MACV became an operational headquarters for these forces and focused less on the advisory and counterinsurgency roles from previous years. Now, the main U.S. effort was command and control of combat units instead of embedded advisers. Because RVNAF units did not serve under U.S. commanders, unity of effort replaced unity of command and resulted in advisers having a U.S. chain of command and their advisees having a separate chain of command. South Vietnamese units answered to South Vietnamese commanders while American advisers answered to other Americans in charge of combat forces. This disjointed union created a physical battle space where U.S. and RVNAF units occupied positions near each other, but not necessarily in synchronization. American advisers would now have an even more difficult situation.<sup>2</sup>

To mitigate the risks involved in focusing primarily on the command and control of U.S. forces, the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support



Sgt. 1st Class Fred A. Edwards, a medical sergeant assigned to Special Forces Operational Detachment-A, Ha Tien, examines a patient's teeth circa 1967 in Ha Tien, approximately 150 kilometers southwest of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). Edwards operated a twelve-bed hospital in Ha Tien while training and mentoring his counterpart, Sgt. Nguyen Tong, a Vietnamese Special Forces medic. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage)



(CORDS) program was established under a civilian deputy to the commander of MACV in April 1967.<sup>3</sup> The program focused on the counterinsurgency effort and combined advisers from the Office of Civil Operations (working revolutionary development and pacification) with district and provincial advisers. As a consequence, the contentious contest for civilian control among nonmilitary pacification organizations, at times operating in the same area as military units charged with pacification, was settled. All pacification programs became unified under Westmoreland, and subsequently, civilians were fully integrated into CORDS.<sup>4</sup>

CORDS enabled a major focus on transforming the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps into regional and popular forces supported by mobile advisory teams and mobile advisory logistics teams. After Gen. Creighton Abrams took command of MACV in mid-1968, he shifted focus to improving RVNAF combat effectiveness while supporting the pacification efforts

Members of D Company, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) gather villagers for questioning 11 December 1967 while American and Vietnamese medics treat villagers during a "sweeper" mission near Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage)

of CORDS. The result of this effort was an advisory force of officers and senior noncommissioned officers numbering 11,596 in 1968.<sup>5</sup> This force of senior leaders could have filled the required officer and senior noncommissioned billets for seven U.S. Army divisions. This increased manpower was in addition to the core leadership already filling eleven U.S. Army division equivalents in combat on the ground. In still another change, as newly elected President Richard Nixon changed to a Vietnamization policy in 1969 that shifted the burden of combat operations and control to the Vietnamese military and government, the adviser

mission morphed into combat assistance teams providing combat support coordination.<sup>6</sup>

## The Advisers

In South Vietnamese divisions, U.S. advisers were assigned down to the battalion level beginning in December 1961. Since the process of conducting counterinsurgency dictated a requirement for civil-military interaction, provincial coordination was led by a province senior adviser (PSA) who was paired with the South Vietnamese district chief. When the PSA was military, his deputy was a civilian and vice versa. Medical noncommissioned officers were also a critical part of the adviser teams.<sup>7</sup>

However, the reality of this effort was that many first lieutenants with two years in the U.S. Army and no combat experience “advised” commanders twice their age with twenty-five years of combat experience. As is seen in the early advising roles, most American military advisers were unfamiliar with the society, culture, and language of South Vietnam. In fact, they were unfamiliar with the advisory role itself. According to a senior adviser in 1960, the advisory role was “entirely new and challenging to most American soldiers ... [who] spent most of their lives giving and executing orders. As advisers to South Vietnamese counterparts, they neither give nor take orders; they have a much less positive role—that of giving advice, providing guidance, and exerting influence.”<sup>8</sup>

Advisers often found themselves performing three roles: a U.S. Army officer in charge of soldiers, a fellow combatant with the South Vietnamese, and a mediator between the two forces. By March of 1965, advising became a position of tactical combat support, changing from the earlier mission of training and advising of the early 1960s. Still, these difficult duties appeared simple compared to those of the PSA advisers, who were required to juggle the former in addition to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and various other nongovernmental organizations within a given province and district.<sup>9</sup>

## The Role

In the beginning, advisory duty was sought after by soldiers desiring to perform a combat duty. As the U.S. effort in Vietnam became more involved in direct action in 1965, the enthusiasm shifted to leading the buildup of U.S. forces in combat. Additionally, the role of a provincial adviser placed a soldier into areas outside

the normal realm of his previous warfighting training.<sup>10</sup> Westmoreland addressed the role of the adviser in 1967:

You are still the ‘heart and soul’ of our total commitment to South Vietnam ... . Your job is a most difficult and sometimes frustrating task. Under any circumstances, the relationship of adviser-to-advised is a testy and tenuous one. Here, that relationship is compounded by daily decisions with life or death consequences, and by communications problems complicated by language difficulties and different national origins. The training of the U.S. military officer is characterized by conditioned traits of decisiveness and aggressiveness. The essence of your relationship with your counterpart is constituted by patience and restraint. As a threshold to development of a meaningful affiliation with your counterpart you must succeed in the reconciliation of these contrasting qualities.<sup>11</sup>

By November of 1967, assignment to the various adviser programs was backed up by preferential treatment in the form of promotion consideration, next assignment choices, family location, and advanced schooling. These improvements, however, became a moot point as U.S. forces decreased their presence in South Vietnam around 1970. Cultural and language training was incorporated into the preparations given to advisers at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, while civil affairs training was given at Fort Gordon, Georgia. Additionally, advisers might get specialized training at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C., and instructor training in South Vietnam.<sup>12</sup>

## Dai Dien and Counterpart Relationships

Former RVNAF officers remarked that the advisory movement was a synthesis of “Vietnamese experience with U.S. Army professionalism,” and the American adviser was the “representative,” or *dai dien*, of the U.S. government.<sup>13</sup> A key element of any advisory relationship is the rapport both parties have with one another. However, entrenched French influence, personal loyalties, and corruption often generated vast differences between the RVNAF officer corps and their U.S. advisers.

Among the many challenges were those that arose from the language barrier. To function optimally, those advisers assigned to regional forces and provincial forces

required some fluency in Vietnamese, but according to South Vietnamese officers, advisers “rarely achieved a desirable fluency for effective professional communication.”<sup>14</sup> Cao Van Vien, the former RVNAF chairman of the Joint General Staff, observed, “I know of no single instance in which a U.S. adviser effectively discussed professional matters with his counterpart in Vietnamese.”<sup>15</sup>

Interpreters helped to overcome some of the language barriers, but that resolution was fraught with problems due to reliance upon a third party to properly convey precise and often nuanced information in Vietnamese, negotiate meaning across cultures, and then receive and properly convey information back in equally nuanced English. Additionally, the preference for indirectness was perceived by the Americans as dishonest.<sup>16</sup> William Shelton, an adviser to the South Vietnamese from 1961 to 1962, explained how the Vietnamese would say they were going to do what they believed the Americans expected and then do something else.<sup>17</sup> The problem may have been the different style of communication or a different notion of how to express politeness, even as a lack of candor, which greatly frustrated the U.S. advisers.<sup>18</sup>

As relayed by Stuart Herrington, a former district intelligence adviser from 1971 to 1972, disdain was a two-way street, where many Americans looked down upon the seemingly uneducated “little people,” and their Vietnamese counterparts frowned upon Americans’ arrogance, waste, and lack of respect for cultural traditions.<sup>19</sup> A Vietnamese officer might display contempt for an adviser who was not of the proper rank or experience compared to his Vietnamese colleague. One U.S. Marine Corps adviser in Vietnam, John Miller, reported that within Vietnamese culture, the “cult of the commander” was alive and well.<sup>20</sup> A subtle approach was key in facilitating the environment for the Vietnamese counterpart to incorporate any recommendation. However, seemingly obvious problems and solutions faced daily screamed immediacy for the American working at full speed for one year, while the Vietnamese could never meet this expectation when working at a problem for twenty years.<sup>21</sup>

Balancing the intimacy of the relationship also created challenges. Partnering too close raised fears that familiarity would breed contempt and that the counterpart would not take advice seriously. In contrast, partnering in an aloof manner risked not developing a working relationship at all. On the one hand, maintaining a professional, detached distance left maneuverability

for the adviser to bring pressure in shaping the decision making, as might be needed.<sup>22</sup> On the other, an adviser might inadvertently diminish the commander’s authority when the Vietnamese soldiers began to see that it was the American who was able to create a victory from potential defeat with his ability to call upon helicopter and artillery assets. An effective adviser allowed the counterpart to develop his own plan based upon tactful suggestions and quiet, low-key coordination of support.<sup>23</sup>

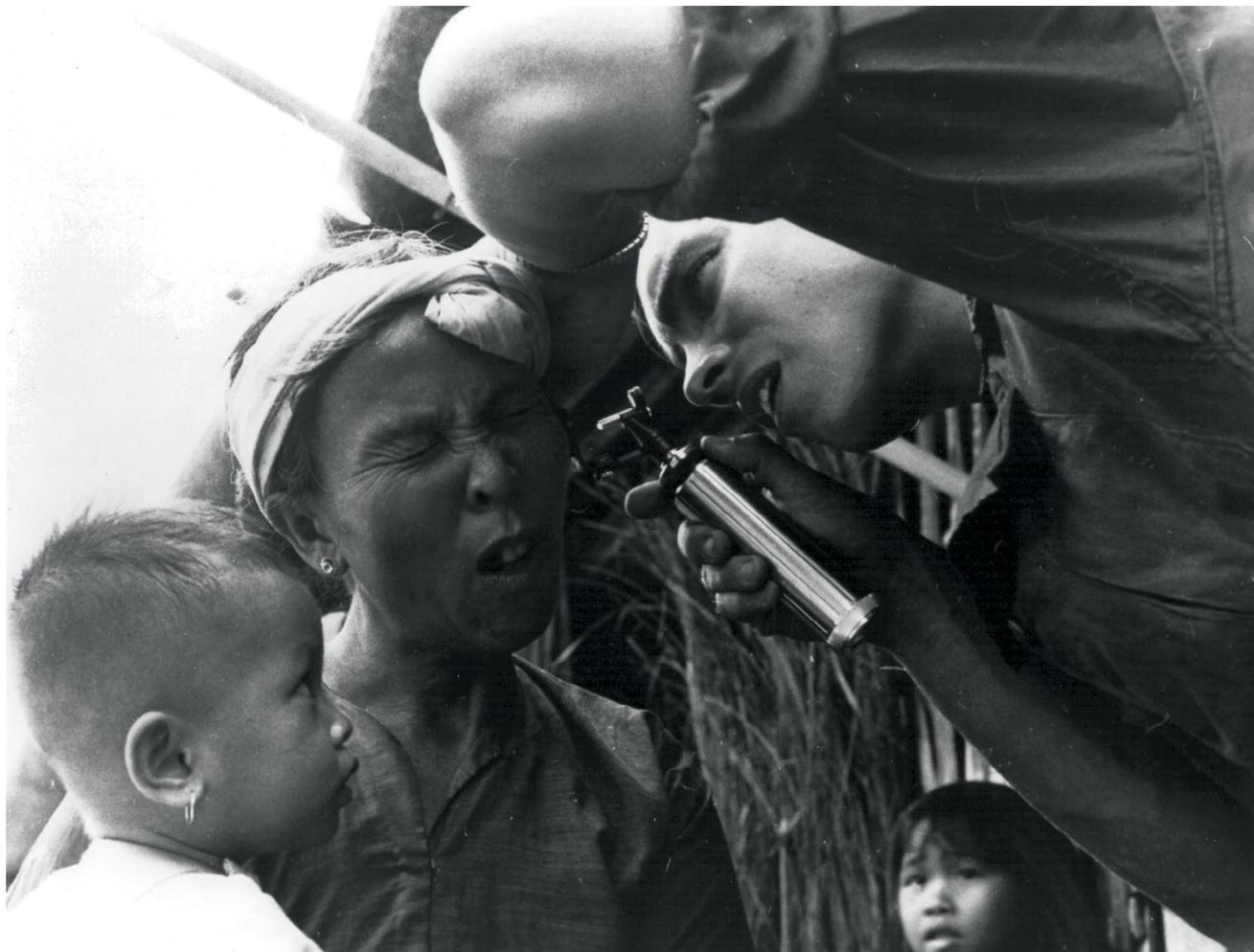
Another challenge the adviser faced was lack of time. In a culture that relies heavily upon the formation of personal relationships as a prerequisite for doing business, advisers were expected to develop effective relationships that ordinarily would have taken years to foster. For example, as a former ARVN division and corps commander describes at the tactical level, a one-year tour of duty usually became a de facto six-month tour because of the rotation policies in theater. In contrast, at the district level, advisers served for eighteen months and usually had much greater influence on locals. Success reflected the relationship built between an adviser and his counterpart. A commitment of time spent was interpreted as a sign of mutual respect, positive attitude, and genuine desire to help, which was the recipe for good relations and, therefore, better outcomes.<sup>24</sup>

## Medical Advisers in Counterinsurgency

Just as in previous wars, medical soldiers deployed into medical or nonmedical organizations. As a supporting specialty in a nonmedical unit, Army Medical Department soldiers were often one or two deep and filled critical roles. Life support for American advisers was the responsibility of the RVNAF. The MACV command surgeon was responsible for any U.S. support provided to the medical adviser under the director of the Logistics Advisory Directorate (J-46), who also served as adviser to the assistant chief of staff (J-4) on matters concerning RVNAF logistics.<sup>25</sup>

When serving in a medical unit, while primarily focused on support for U.S. troops, advising was often a collateral duty performed in support of counterinsurgency operations. Medical personnel assigned specifically to advising teams were focused solely on advising the Vietnamese in their particular medical specialty.

Maj. Robert J. Lander, of the Medical Service Corps, was assigned to MACV, Advisory Team 10 to the



RVNAF 4th Area Logistical Command in the Mekong Delta in December 1967. In this role, Lander supervised fellow U.S. medical advisers (a medical supply officer and a medical maintenance repairman) and advised three station hospitals, one field hospital, twelve sector hospitals, sixteen subsector dispensaries, a field medical depot, a veterinary detachment, and a preventive medicine unit. His RVNAF counterpart, a very competent physician and a graduate of a French medical school, was the newly appointed 4th Area Logistical Command surgeon and former 4th Corps surgeon.<sup>26</sup>

Lander recognized that a close relationship was critical in achieving good results. As a result, he described his method of advising his counterpart on implementing suggestions as “low key”; he was not demanding. A proposed suggestion might be discussed over beer or dinner two to three weeks after a specific inspection. For example, during the time period, Lander lamented the lack of funding to fully equip the subsector hospitals in his area of operations and the lack of evacuation

Capt. Edmond P. Zimsky treats a Vietnamese woman in 1968 during a Medical Civic Action Program in a hamlet of Dat Loi, Vietnam. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage)

platforms. The majority of wounded ARVN soldiers had to wait at least eight hours before getting to a hospital. In an attempt to advise his Vietnamese counterpart’s subordinates on how to rectify this problem, his approach was to not overwhelm them with too many advisers. Instead, he pressed to make the already existing Vietnamese system work for them and did not try to impose a foreign system on them. In elaborating on this approach, he observed, “We have a system—the Vietnamese have a system and if it is made to work it will work.”<sup>27</sup>

### Medical Assistance Programs

Medical units in Vietnam contributed to the various programs aimed at countering the Viet Cong threat to

the civilian population in the various hamlets and villages across the country. This support was obtained through the Provincial Health Assistance Program (PHAP), the Military Provincial Health Assistance Program (MILPHAP), the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP), and the Civilian War Casualty Program.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Provincial Health Assistance Program and Military Provincial Health Assistance Program.**

Initially begun in the early 1960s by USAID, the PHAP was intended to improve health services by training doctors, nurses, and medics. The intent of this training was to better Vietnamese hospitals and help control malaria. Although civilian surgical teams were stationed at different provincial hospitals, this task proved overwhelming, and the teams could not substantially improve the civilian health-care system due to the fighting. As U.S. forces increased, MACV directed U.S. Army medical units to begin serving in these same civilian institutions. Partnering with USAID, MACV instituted MILPHAP in 1965 with the intent to develop a sustained national health-care system for Vietnamese citizens. As teams augmented the provincial hospitals and dispensaries, they improved continuity in medical care and evacuation even though they were augmenting a Vietnamese civilian system with U.S. military assets.<sup>29</sup> At least through 1967, the teams were directed to not take over the facilities but to instead help and teach Vietnamese medical personnel.<sup>30</sup> Some U.S. teams, however, did replace the Vietnamese staff by 1970.<sup>31</sup> This augmentation of U.S. military medical assets did provide the above mentioned access and care. However, the program's intent was to institute a national health-care system. By filling Vietnamese medical gaps with U.S. medical teams, they did not fulfill the mandate of "Vietnamization" of the health-care system.

Capt. Larry P. Kammholz, Medical Corps, served as the medical officer in a MILPHAP in the Moc Hoa area of the Mekong Delta between 1966 and 1967. His unit consisted of three physicians and twelve enlisted men. Throughout his memoirs, Kammholz discusses the importance of interaction with civil authorities in coordinating medical care for so many underserved people. It was a continual process in working out who the "good guys" were and who was providing more business for the doctors. Partnering with USAID officials and local leaders became essential. Often, making do with less medicine, supplies, and translators

was a part of the job. However, successes culminated in trusting friendships with fellow providers and doing well for those who were hurting.<sup>32</sup>

**Medical Civic Action Program.** In 1963, the U.S. Army assumed control of MEDCAP, a joint program developed by the U.S. Embassy and MACV that became the most well-known medical venture during the Vietnam War. The purpose of MEDCAP was to meet civilian medical needs in the Vietnamese countryside, foster mutual respect and cooperation through partnered U.S. Army and ARVN medical teams, and build credibility for the government of South Vietnam. This partnership facilitated training in medical procedures for the Vietnamese.<sup>33</sup>

Initially, U.S. military advisory teams and Special Forces had primary responsibility for conducting MEDCAPs.<sup>34</sup> Medical stability operations through MEDCAP I (as the original mission became known) focused on Special Forces and MACV medical advisers partnering with the ARVN, with the U.S. personnel attempting to take a back seat. All pharmaceuticals were requisitioned from ARVN supply depots.<sup>35</sup>

In describing the programs following his tour as the MACV surgeon, then Col. Spurgeon Neel detailed the importance of creating self-sufficiency in the RVNAF as part of the counterinsurgency effort. Of its potential to transcend the distrust in the central government, he wrote that "medicine is a universal language, and provides immediate high-impact communication within any culture, anywhere in the world."<sup>36</sup>

Capt. James Erwin Anderson Jr., Medical Corps, was a physician assigned to Medical Civic Action Team 20, a component of MAAG-V in 1963, and served in the Da Nang area of operations. He recorded that his six-man team (one to three were American advisers, and the rest were Vietnamese soldiers) would visit different villages throughout the area conducting sick call and provide follow up during return visits. As stated earlier, apart from providing medical relief, the additional intent of this program was to foster credibility for the government of South Vietnam. Consequently, highly visible participation by Vietnamese counterparts was critical to its success. Thus, it was standard procedure that two medics conducted screening and examination, two performed dispensing and treatment, and two maintained the medical records, with the Vietnamese medical personnel prominent. However, there was rarely an ARVN

physician available, so training and scope of practice focused at the senior noncommissioned officer level.<sup>37</sup>

Treatment of the most common diseases was not hampered by this lack of a physician, since two-thirds of all patients presented with arthritis, bronchitis, pyoderma (skin disease characterized by pus), helminthiasis (worm infection), and headache. Most surgical requirements involved draining skin infections. In accomplishing those missions, the language barrier was again an impediment. Any interaction using an interpreter doubled the time required to accomplish a conversation; consequently, sick call procedures took twice as long with interpreters.<sup>38</sup>

In deploying to outlying villages, a field ambulance or helicopter would carry all the equipment for the team. The supplies came from an official list of medicines that could be requisitioned through the ARVN medical supply system and funded by USAID. Additionally, the team distributed training booklets produced in English and Vietnamese that laid out common procedures, diagnosis, and treatments, and maintenance of supplies.<sup>39</sup>

In evaluating his experience as a lesson for future medical advisers, Anderson observed the dilemma of seemingly short-term solutions for chronic illnesses and the inability for patients to even increase their standing by allowing them to pay something for the services if they chose.<sup>40</sup>

As U.S. Army forces were built up in 1965, conventional forces began participating in the program. Though the original MEDCAP I program continued, the MEDCAP II program allowed for rotating teams from large medical units to service remote hamlets where permanent care was not available. This filled the gap created from MILPHAP services at permanent sites. By working through members of the RVNAF, the way was intended to have medical care continued by the Vietnamese themselves.<sup>41</sup>

By 1967, supplies were soon obtained through normal U.S. supply channels. Building upon the success demonstrated in medical programs, dental and veterinarian services were incorporated.<sup>42</sup>

**Civilian War Casualty Program.** As the Vietnam conflict became more violent and expansive, the Department of Defense was tasked to provide care for civilian casualties of the war. As a result, the Civilian War Casualty Program (CWCP) was established, and it began operating in earnest in late 1967. The original concept was to build two separate

systems: one for civilian Vietnamese patients and one for U.S. military patients. However, this eventually merged into a “joint occupancy” system rather than entirely separate CWCP hospital systems.<sup>43</sup>

Consolidation of the programs streamlined construction and evacuation coordination, and allowed civilians to have treatment closer to their homes. Eventually, all Vietnamese military hospitals and civilian hospitals merged into a common system, thus providing a better system of care for all of Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

## End State

As discussed in the introduction, advisory efforts and the medical portion of the strategic counterinsurgency were working well before the Tet Offensive in 1968. Reports touting the amount of vaccinations given, the numbers of patients seen, or other metrics all measured input into an evaluation of a medical system. While a measure of disease reduction is an outcome, in American reports it was often measuring the results of U.S. efforts. Any truly effective counterinsurgency stability operations program must measure the outcomes derived from the host nation. The student must show the teacher that he has mastered the subject. Instead of reporting the number of classes taught to ARVN medics, the real measure is how many patients were treated and evacuated by those ARVN medics. The bureaucracy of MACV and the U.S. Army seemed to only measure effectiveness by the quantity of “inputs” during a six- to twelve-month officer evaluation report. The lag time from an academic theory of effectiveness to real-world application may be longer than a twelve-month tour.

What happened? In 1975, the Republic of Vietnam fell despite having received years of advice and material aid. In hindsight, the previous 1st Division, IV Corps, and the last I Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Ngo Quang Truong remarked, “The advisory effort should have endeavored first to bring about an effective command, control, and leadership system for the ARVN before trying to improve the combat effectiveness of small units.”<sup>45</sup>

As revealed in a critique of the adviser role of U.S. personnel in Vietnam, part of the Indochina Monographs series, former senior RVNAF officers wrote that U.S. advisers did remarkable work. However, the inability to instill motivation and leadership into the officer ranks ended up reflecting the political regime plaguing the struggling country and ultimately led to its end.<sup>46</sup> Those

former senior leaders in the RVNAF (chairman of the Joint General Staff; commander of the 1st Infantry Division, IV Corps, I Corps; chief of intelligence; commander of the Central Logistics Command; and Joint General Staff Chief of Staff, to name a few) praised the tough mission accomplished by U.S. advisers:

The success of giving advice or receiving it is an art that depends a great deal on personal virtues and the individual's approach to human relationships. Professional competence and experience did not always make a good adviser if he was not at the same time a man of tact and good manners. Irrascibility and haughtiness would not solve problems, but only make them worse. The key to success depended on flexibility, restraint, and understanding. A good adviser was neither too passive nor too aggressive. He would accomplish little if he waited for his counterpart to

come to him for advice and only provided it when asked. On the other hand, if by overzealousness, he flooded his counterpart with a cascade of problems, real or imagined, and aggressively told him to do this and that or tried to do everything by himself, his good intentions would be defeated. For unmeasured aggressiveness sometimes gave a counterpart the impression that he was being spied on or under scrutiny or surveillance. His self-preservation instincts would prevent him from cooperating wholeheartedly or worse, push him into rebellion and he would refuse to cooperate and let the adviser do it all.<sup>47</sup> ■

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army Medical Department, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.*

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## Notes

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9. Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, 35–37.
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12. Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, 39–43.
13. Cao Van Vien, "The U.S. Adviser," *Indochina Monographs series* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army CMH, 1980), v; Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, 53.
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16. Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, 44–45.
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19. Ramsey, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, 44.
20. *Ibid.*, 49.
21. *Ibid.*, 48–51.
22. Spector, *Advice and Support*, 293.
23. Vien, "The U.S. Adviser," 58, 61–62, 156.
24. *Ibid.*, 69–73.
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26. Robert J. Lander, interview by Charles C. Pritchett, Center of Military History Oral Interview Transcript, 22 September 1968, 4–5, 12.
27. *Ibid.*, 6–14.
28. Spurgeon Neel, *Medical Support of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, 1965-1970* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1991), 163–64.
29. *Ibid.*, 162–64.
30. Spurgeon Neel, "The Medical Role in Army Stability Operations," *Military Medicine* 132, no. 8 (August 1967): 608.
31. Neel, *Medical Support of the U.S. Army in Vietnam*, 163.
32. Larry P. Kammholz, *Moc Hoa: A Vietnam Medical-Military Adventure* (Oshkosh, WI: Starboard Publishing, 1990).
33. Neel, *Medical Support of the U.S. Army in Vietnam*, 164.
34. *Ibid.*, 164–65.
35. Neel, "The Medical Role in Army Stability Operations," 606–7.
36. *Ibid.*, 605.
37. James Erwin Anderson Jr., "The Field Experience of a Medical Civic Action Team in South Viet Nam," *Military Medicine* 129, no. 11 (November 1964): 1052–56.
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39. *Ibid.*, 1052, 1056.
40. *Ibid.*, 1056.
41. Neel, *Medical Support of the U.S. Army in Vietnam*, 165.
42. *Ibid.*, 165–66.
43. *Ibid.*, 166–67.
44. *Ibid.*, 168.
45. Vien, "The U.S. Adviser," vi, 76.
46. *Ibid.*, 197–8.
47. *Ibid.*, 113.

# MILITARY REVIEW

MAY 1944 · VOLUME XXIV · NUMBER 2



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COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL  
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

A MONTHLY REVIEW OF MILITARY LITERATURE

## A Look Back in Time

During periods of conflict, *Military Review* has often been used as a venue to pass along lessons learned from the field, especially through the medium of short entries. The featured short extract below provides insights and recommendations to field surgeons deploying to the war in Europe during World War II. To view the entire May 1944 edition of *Military Review*, Volume XXIV, Number 2, visit <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p124201coll1/id/1138/rec/9>.

### Hints for Battalion Surgeons

A MEDICAL officer, battalion surgeon for an artillery battalion in Italy, writes:

#### SUPPLIES

"Bring from the States an ample supply of practical, everyday drugs, especially cough syrups, gables, adrenalin, and coramine in 1-cc ampules. If you can manage it, keep them in a chest with a large flat top and doors opening outward, which will be handy not only to store them in but to facilitate their transportation and immediate access to them. An electric otoscope and hot water bottles are worth bringing. "Get plasma as soon as possible. It is invaluable, as are the morphine Syrettes.

#### TRAINING

"Training at home should emphasize that the functions of an aid station in the field are identical with those of a dispensary in garrison. Train personnel to give immunizations; it will save valuable time. Practice moving around at night in blackout so that strangeness and fear of dark are eliminated.

#### LOCATION OF AID STATION

"Battalion Surgeons will find that a personal reconnaissance of forward positions is essential. "The aid station must be located as close to all batteries as possible. This eliminates long litter carries and the waste of valuable time. A house should be

used as a station if possible but don't pick one the enemy will think is a CP or OP. Tents are impractical in a forward position. Setting up a station in a vehicle is unsatisfactory because of vulnerability to shell fire and lack of space. Proximity to a road where find is the most valuable adjunct to an aid station.

#### THE AID STATION IN ACTION

"We feel our treatment here in the forward area should anticipate definitive treatment later and should prepare the patient as much as possible along those lines.

"X-ray all patients injured by flying bodies. Apparently slight wounds have revealed the presence of foreign bodies at a distance from the point of penetration.

"Be ultraconservative in the initial treatment of all battle casualties when in a position where an evacuation hospital or surgical group can be reached within one to two hours.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

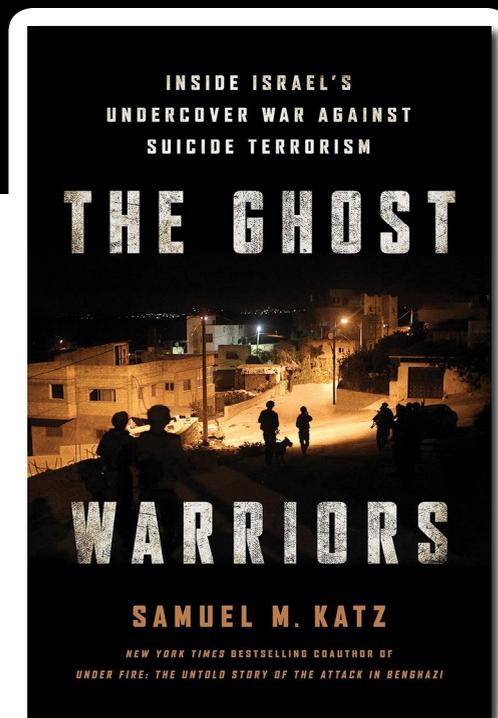
"Telephone communications to the gun batteries and CP are essential.

"Excellent lighting can be obtained from a 'Seal-beam' headlight and a vehicle battery. Coleman lanterns are unsatisfactory because of lack of 'white' gasoline. Kerosene lanterns can be used as night lights, but kerosene is relatively scarce."

## The Ghost Warriors

Inside Israel's Undercover War against Suicide Terrorism

Samuel M. Katz, Berkley Caliber, New York, 2016, 432 pages



Lt. Col. John H. Modinger, PhD, U.S. Air Force, Retired

Samuel Katz, an internationally recognized Middle East expert and bestselling author, creates a true tour de force with *The Ghost Warriors*. Katz masterfully weaves together a patchwork of political drama, resilient and dastardly characters, innovative methods, hastily organized operations, and the inevitable fog and friction accompanying any violent conflict into a gripping, gruesome, yet easy-to-read testimony to the daily bravery and ingenuity of Israeli counterterrorism operatives.

These operatives are tasked with infiltrating terrorist networks and stopping them—on a shoe-string budget—with little or no time to prepare, leveraging actionable intelligence, keen insight, and hunches honed over decades.

One Israeli counterterrorism group in particular, *Ya'mas*, is the focus of Katz's extraordinarily detailed exposé—an exposé done with the direct assistance of many former and active members, along with members of other elite units who worked side by side with them. *Ya'mas* remains a stealthy organization, albeit not as much after the publication of this work. The organization is comprised of Arab-speaking Jewish, Druze, and

Muslim citizens of Israel who convincingly masqueraded as Palestinians to infiltrate and seize high-value targets associated with the bombing spree accompanying the Second Intifada (or Second Uprising), an explosion of violence that began in 2000 and lasted until about 2008.<sup>1</sup> Its chief goal was (and still is) to eliminate not just trigger pullers but the multilayered infrastructure supporting them. As Katz points out, few of the world's elite counterterror units maintain a continuous plainclothes undercover capability, and none possesses cultural and language capabilities to mirror *Ya'mas*.

Having traveled throughout Israel many times myself, when I saw the terrain and the proximity of Arab and Israeli communities against the backdrop of a tortured, tumultuous past, I was always struck by the relative tranquility despite unending reports about regional volatility. Of course, that seeming tranquility is deceptive. It is maintained (most of the time) thanks to unrelenting, often tedious, work nearly always executed behind the scenes by shadowy figures. These stalwart sentinels—tireless *Shin Bet* (Israel's General Security

Service) intelligence officers, nerves-of-steel field operatives with more coffee coursing through their veins than blood, and seasoned team chiefs juggling innumerable variables at a frenetic pace, in crowded cafés, congested streets, and the bowels of hot, dank, cramped spaces filled with smoke—patiently wait to pounce on targets with honed, cat-like senses. At once, their mandate is both simple and complicated: track, target, and eliminate the violent zealots taking refuge within the Palestinian communities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, often aided and abetted by the infamously corrupt and morally bankrupt Palestinian National Authority (Fatah) and Israel’s nemesis in the Gaza Strip, Hamas.

The work of these units has largely gone unreported and unnoticed—until now. While this makes for a riveting read, it remains to be seen whether such disclosures are a good thing. Accounts like those detailing the operational aspects of, say the Osama bin Laden raid, are fascinating but may undermine future operations by revealing tactics, techniques, and procedures that afford special operations forces advantages in the field until the enemy learns how to adapt to them.

Surprisingly, Katz says getting the story did not involve exhaustive prying—members of these units wanted the story to be told.<sup>2</sup> Katz confides his biggest challenge was deciding which operations to include, which makes one wonder if a sequel is in the works. One can only speculate as to why these Israeli operatives (and maybe the Israeli government) felt this story had to be told now.

According to his investigation, over the course of the Second Intifada, Ya’mas units participated in thousands of missions—testimony to the scale of the threat. For perspective’s sake, he notes that crack counterterrorist teams such as the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team or Germany’s GSG 9 might carry out ten to twenty operations per year.

Many human rights groups allege Ya’mas and other counterterrorism units are nothing more than “hit teams,” circumventing due process. That is a problematic assertion, though, since Ya’mas’s motto is, according to Katz, “We’d rather snatch you than scratch you.” Basically, there is more to be gained from apprehending the targets than killing them, because the strategic goal is to take down the entire network versus individual operatives. Unraveling the threads making up the terrorist tapestry is a painstaking process dependent upon precise intelligence obtained through a variety of means, including interrogation of arrested subjects. Katz contends such self-restraint on

the part of Ya’mas and other counterterrorism units was quite amazing given the carnage and frequency of attacks across Israel during the period in question. That may be true, but such restraint was also self-serving.

The book is a severely truncated collection of fascinating, often heart-pounding, and sometimes almost comical snippets from Ya’mas exploits in the three sectors it works: the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Their work is deadly serious and often carried out with little time for preparation and planning. Their stunning successes, despite the hurdles, is most assuredly due to the fact members of these units are among the most elite cadre within the Israeli counterterrorism effort, who, according to Katz, think little of the long-term health and psychological consequences of perpetually living on a knife’s edge.

It would have been interesting to get more insight into their personal lives—and the stresses the career puts on them and their families—but the author may have been astounded by his good fortune and, thus, opted not to press into largely unexplored territory more aggressively. For those energized by thoughts of such a life, a closer look into their private lives—if you could call their lives private, given how much they invest in the job—would likely give many pause and raise the inevitable question: “Could I do it?”

These men (sometimes dressed as women), “walk as if between rain drops—able to understand the customs, mindset, nuances, and vulnerabilities of the Palestinian communities, and to move within them undetected.”<sup>3</sup> Unlike more conventional counterterrorism forces, their battles revolve almost exclusively around face-to-face encounters and hand-to-hand combat, utilizing a skill set whereby they “think, look, speak, and act like the enemy they hunt.”<sup>4</sup>

For the American military, especially its Special Forces, there may be a lesson within these pages, but it comes with certain caveats. In the current struggle with the Islamic State, greater emphasis on co-opting local minorities, thoroughly trained and equipped, to infiltrate deep within the Islamic State

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ARMY UNIVERSITY PRESS

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## Multi-Domain Battle



The U.S. Army is a learning organization, and it is constantly adapting to the technological, military, and strategic conditions of our times. Occasionally, conditions shift to the extent that the character of war changes and we must invest significant intellectual energy to reimagine how we fight. This is such a time.

As AirLand Battle shaped the force of the 1980s and beyond, the critical analysis and creative thinking we apply today toward developing a new operational approach will drive our Army's organization, doctrine, training, equipment, and posture for decades to come. It is incumbent upon us, the practitioners of the profession of arms, to apply our knowledge and experience to this challenging task.

To participate in the professional discourse,

- familiarize yourself with the context, perspectives, and arguments of multi-domain battle and other alternative assessments;
- identify vital questions and problems, and envision potential solutions;
- engage in discussions with colleagues to test your ideas and clarify your thinking; and
- refine your argument, write an article, and submit it to Army University Press. For submission guidelines visit <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Publish-With-Us/#mr-submissions>.

We encourage ideas from all viewpoints—military and civilian; private to general officer; company to theater army; tactical, operational, and strategic; land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace domains; operational warfighting functions; institutional force management, development, and acquisition functions; Active and Reserve Components; Army and other service; and joint, interagency, and multinational.

Access our website on multi-domain battle, "New Extended Battlefield: The Future of War," by visiting <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Online-Publications/New-Extended-Battlefield/>.

"safe havens" might prove very fruitful. However, given the global nature of U.S. commitments versus the regional focus of Israel, such expertise, as shown by Ya'mas operatives—fighting on home turf, with their own families and friends in the crosshairs, and a deep, some would argue sacred, commitment to Israel—is not likely to be developed in considerable depth by an American force fighting in one place today and another in the not-too-distant future.

Katz asserts that the Second Intifada was actually a full-on war by Palestinian terrorist groups against Israel, despite the fact Western news organizations did not treat it as such. Thus, he characterized it as a "war" fought in the shadows. No doubt, for the people involved, the families forever scarred, and the intensity of it all, it probably did rival war. Yet, in terms of lives lost and such, and with terrain changing hands, it probably would not.

This is an outstanding work, both for the story it tells and its readability. While there is a discernible pro-Israel lean to this nonfiction tale, *The Ghost Warriors* provides readers an excellent look inside a previously unknown but very potent counter-terrorism unit that saved, and no doubt continues to save, myriad lives, both Israeli and Palestinian. The nuanced descriptions, harrowing details, and fast-paced narrative combine to deliver a genuine page-turner. This is a worthy addition to any professional reading list or library. ■

## Notes

1. It may not be so surprising, given the voracious global appetite and fascination with the doings of special operators whose assignments tended to remain in the shadows until more recent times.

2. The First Intifada was the first major large-scale Palestinian insurgency in the West Bank and Gaza. It lasted from December 1987 until the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Second Intifada is usually dated from September 2000 when Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount to the Sharm El Sheikh summit in February 2005. Intifada is derived from the Arab word meaning to "shake off," which can be thought of as synonymous with "insurrection."

3. Berkley Publishing Group, "The Ghost Warriors: Inside Israel's Undercover War Against Suicide Terrorism," press release, 12 January 2016.

4. Ibid.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## NORTH KOREA: IS ICBM A THREAT?

**T**he North Korean nuclear program is a horrible example of the results of American leadership failure, deferring action to the next administration.

As to China's role in deferral, it is an open question.

Agreements were signed but were violated immediately, so we seek new agreements. Sanctions are not a policy, just a pretense of policy. All they have accomplished is starvation of millions of North Koreans. China has never enforced sanctions and will never dare to do so. They have not worked elsewhere either, so we seek more sanctions.

Now North Korea claims it has an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). What to do? The United States has basically one option; China has several options. By stopping all imports and exports through or from its territory, China could collapse the North Korean economy quickly. It could attack the nuclear facilities, also an American option. It could simply invade and occupy the country. It may have means of bringing about a change of regime. Does it really care enough to do anything? Perhaps, to induce regime change, but not to block trade, destroy, or invade after all. North Korea is not threatening to attack China with its ICBM. The United States as far as we know has only considered a military attack on nuclear facilities. Think again.

Chinese culture is horrified at the prospect of uncertainty and chaos. Now, there is no alternative. Its apparent plan to replace Kim Jong-un with a relative ended with the relative's murder in Malaysia. But even a palace coup or massacre was unlikely to go smoothly, nor was there a guarantee that a new ruler would behave as hoped for; South Korea might have its own candidate among the refugees.

The panic reaction to the successful launch of an alleged ICBM is unwarranted. It is irrelevant at this time, perhaps a diversion. North Korea is not going to attack the United States. It is homicidal, but not suicidal. Nor is it going to invade South Korea unless it is convinced that the United States will not retaliate.

The current North Korean strategy is about money to keep its elite happy. It is more afraid of internal unrest than of foreign attack. Counterfeit currency, drugs, and ransom have all been tried. It is a criminal administration. Other nations have better missiles for sale, at low prices. It is exporting labor, possibly draining its armed forces. What else? North Korea has a lot of uranium-238 and plutonium in various

packages—compact, portable, extremely valuable. Does it have a paying customers already? I am sure it is in the market. That is the current threat, and it is insurgent. Destroying missile launching sites will not end it.

The ICBM program is a long-run strategy. The objective is the looting of South Korea by conquest. To achieve this goal it is necessary to prevent intervention by the United States in South Korea's behalf, as it did once before. The thinking is that a threat to destroy Los Angeles will do the job. This strategy is behind schedule and cannot succeed because no president I can think of in the present or future would stand by idly. It is a coercion strategy. However, the strategy could be implemented anyway; North Korea is capable of wishful thinking and risk taking. It will not have a credible capability to attack the continental United States for a number of years, so let us leave this legacy to the future. Meanwhile Kim Jong-un has uranium-238 to sell.

China, South Korea, perhaps other nations might have secret agents in the palace of the Kims. The chaos following a coup is preferable to a military attack on nuclear facilities. A change of regime is also needed to rescue Seoul from its current role as a potential hostage. First conduct a coup, then deal with the nuclear issue while retaining the option of attacking missile sites. And keep in mind that China, not just North Korea, is anxious to have the American military out of South Korea, one way or another.

There is need for Chinese-American cooperation following a regime collapse in North Korea. Humanitarian aid for the people should be relatively easy. Establishing a stable and peaceful regime acceptable to both nations would be more difficult. That job would best done by South Korea. It is no business of America, beyond the nuclear threat. But the imperial ambitions of the Chinese leadership are unpredictable. That is another story.

There is a third Korea which might be a factor in Chinese thinking. It is the millions of ethnic Koreans living close to the Korean Peninsula. What if North Korea were a decent place, or offered easy access to South Korea or the first two Koreas were united? It is one ethnic minority that would have a place to go. Leave that to future generations of Koreans.

**Charles T. Stewart Jr., Washington, D.C.**



Painting of the Rev. Jacob Duché as he offers the first prayer for the Continental Congress 7 September 1774 in Philadelphia. Original painting by Tompkins Harrison Matteson, 1848. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

# The Birth of the U.S. Army

In its first session in the summer of 1789, Congress faced numerous decisions regarding the administration of policies granted in the recently ratified U.S. Constitution. These included approving President George Washington's cabinet appointees and federal judges, setting up the federal treasury, writing the Bill of Rights and further amending the Constitution, determining how to deal with Native American neighbors, preparing a plan to reduce the Revolutionary War debt, and deciding on a location for the U.S. capital. Lastly, it needed to come to terms on the creation of one national, professional U.S. military.

While vestiges of the Continental Army still remained from American Revolution, there was no official U.S. army.

Under the Articles of Confederation (the precursor to the Constitution, ratified in 1781), individual states had the power to organize civilian-soldier militias, but the Articles held no real long-term solutions for a professional national military. Recognizing this as a serious shortfall to the security of the new Nation, Washington wrote a letter to the members of Congress on 7 August 1789 urging them to authorize an official U.S. military.

Washington wrote, "It may not be amiss to observe that I am particularly anxious it should receive an early attention as circumstances will admit, because it is now in our power to avail ourselves of the military knowledge disseminated throughout the several States by means of the many

well-instructed officers and soldiers of the late Army, a resource which is daily diminishing by death and other causes.”

Secretary of War Henry Knox read Washington’s letter to Congress on 7 August. After the reading, the House of Representatives “ordered” that creating a military would be added to their agenda, and members began discussing the budget for maintaining this then-theoretical military as well as how much to spend on Native American encounters. However, the Senate necessitated a second letter from the president before it took action on the matter.

A 10 August letter from Washington urged the Senate to create an army, since both the House and Senate had passed legislation that stated Native American encounters were a matter of the federal government, not individual states. Without having a professional military working for the federal government, he reasoned, Congress has no way of enforcing their Native American policies. The members of the Senate agreed to add creating the military to the end of its agenda and to consider the measure before Congress broke. On the last day of session, 29 September, the Senate, after returning it to the House twice, passed the bill that established the armed forces of the United States of America. This created the base for the current professional military, the largest employer in the United States. ■

## Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States

Tuesday, September 29, 1789

*The House proceeded to reconsider the last amendment proposed by the Senate to the bill, entitled “An act to recognize and adapt to the Constitution of the United States, the establishment of the troops raised under the resolves of the United States in Congress assembled, and for other purposes therein mentioned:” Whereupon,*

*Resolved, That this House doth recede from their disagreement to the said amendment.*

*Ordered, That the Clerk of this House do acquaint the Senate therewith....*

*Mr. Partridge reported, from the Committee for Enrolled Bills, that the committee had examined two enrolled bills, one, entitled “An act to recognize and adapt to the Constitution of the United States, the establishment of the troops raised under the resolves of the United States in Congress assembled, and for other purposes therein mentioned;” the other, entitled “An act to allow the Baron de Glaubeck, the pay of Captain in the Army of the United States;” also, an enrolled resolve for continuing John White, John Wright, and Joshua Dawson, in office until the fourth of February, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine, and had found the same to be truly enrolled: Whereupon,*

*Mr. Speaker signed the said enrolled bills and resolve.*

*Ordered, That the doorkeeper of this House do provide one or more stoves, and necessary fuel, for the accommodation of the House at its next session.*

*Ordered, That a message be sent to the Senate, to inform them that this House, having completed the business before them, are now about to proceed to close the present session, by an adjournment on their part, agreeably to the order of the twenty-sixth instant; and that the Clerk of this House do go with the said message.*