

# **Military Review**

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

September-October 2015



**Globally Integrated Operations—Horn of Africa p8**

**NATO Special Forces—Protecting the Achilles' Heel p27**

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COMBINED ARMS CENTER, FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS



As we ease into the fall months, the staff at *Military Review* is in the process of transitioning to the Army Press, a joint effort between *Military Review* and the Combat Studies Institute. The intent of this enhanced organization is to effectively identify, encourage, and support authors who want their articles, books, and monographs published in Department of Defense and Army center of excellence publications, such as *Military Review*, or other military-related publications, blogs, or websites.

Many talented individuals worked long and hard to turn the Army Press concept into reality. I am confident this organization will be a highly valued asset to the recently announced Army University and a great resource for the entire Army. Look for more information on the Army Press in future issues of this journal.

In this edition of *Military Review*, Maj. Gen. Wayne Grigsby and a team of subject matter experts discuss how using good judgement in the application of Army mission command principles provided unique solutions to the unique problems faced by Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa while conducting theater security cooperation missions.

Also in this issue, Maj. Theresa Ford demonstrates how applying the Army's seventh warfighting function—engagement—will help soldiers work more effectively with nations, regional partners, and indigenous

populations. She discusses the need for soldiers to understand religion's importance and to develop skills for building relationships in communities where religion plays a central role. Ford feels religion remains one of the most important elements of the human domain in Afghanistan, and she relates some fascinating stories of how she successfully used what she calls religious engagement to build relationships with key individuals in that country.

Another article, authored by one of our own editors, Desirae Gieseeman, is a must read for all Army writers. In it, she explains why Army writing is effective when it is functional. She discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional Army writing standard and describes the critical role of purpose for Army writers and for Army readers. She also introduces processes writers can use to write effectively—with a focus on planning—and proposes a practical approach for the Army to achieve accountability for writing standards.

The *Military Review* staff appreciates your support for our publication and your consideration of our journal as a reliable source for research, debate, and discussion of the latest in Army concepts and doctrine. Please share our journal with friends, colleagues, and other organizations. You can find it online at <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/>. Send us your feedback in a letter, an email, or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/OfficialMilitaryReview>. ■



Team leader Staff Sgt. Josh Tobin and his team of cavalry scouts from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, carry a log on their shoulders during the Gainey Cup 5 May 2015 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

(Photo by Patrick A. Albright, Maneuver Center of Excellence PAO)

## ***Military Review* is seeking volunteer book review authors to join its group of distinguished book reviewers.**

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# Themes for Future Editions

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### **The Human Dimension and Technology** November-December 2015 (Closed for new submissions)

### **The Future of War** January-February 2016

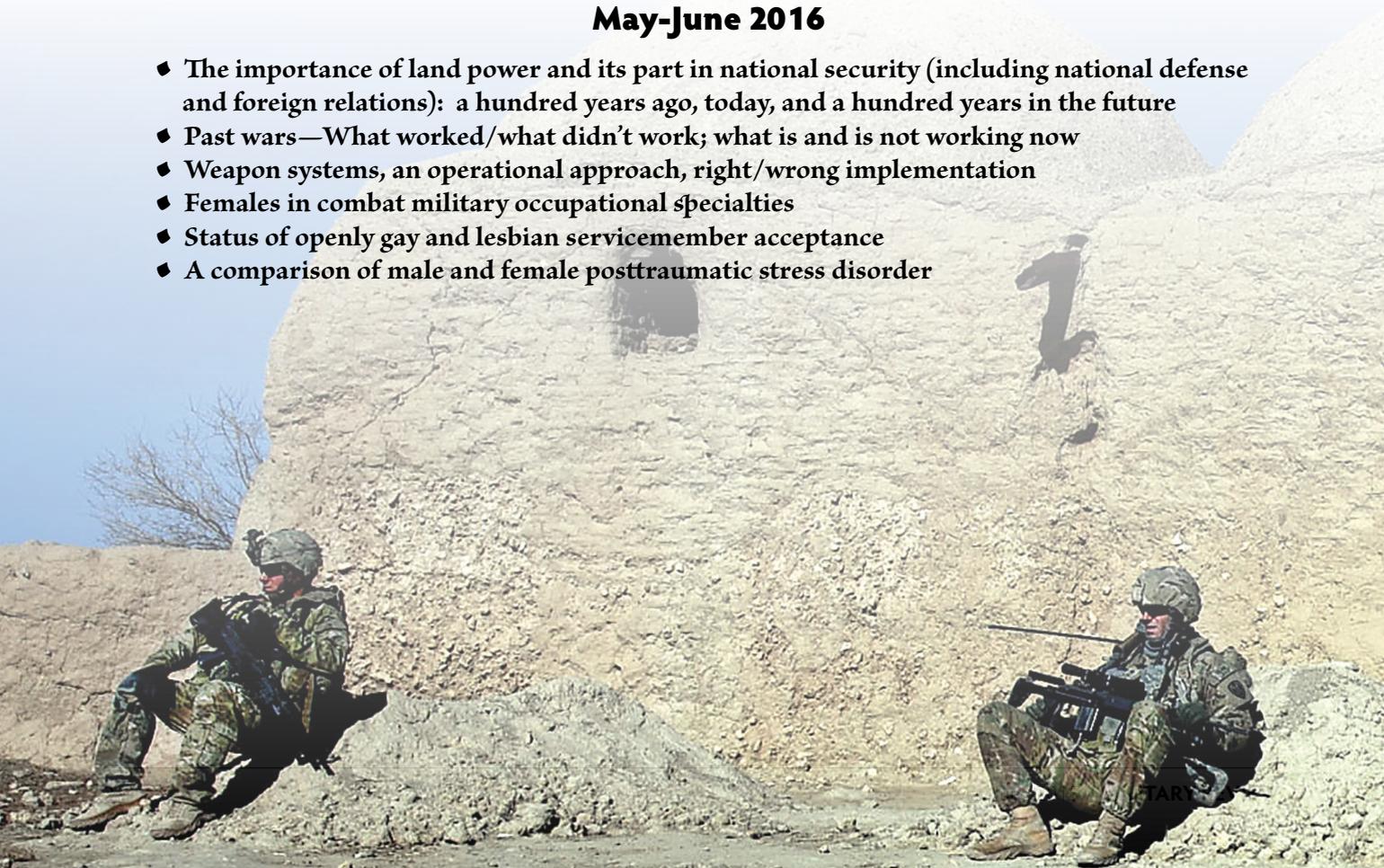
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- ◆ Impact of regionally aligned forces—present and future
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### **Army Firsts** May-June 2016

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- ◆ Past wars—What worked/what didn't work; what is and is not working now
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- ◆ Females in combat military occupational specialties
- ◆ Status of openly gay and lesbian servicemember acceptance
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- ◆ Historical examples of institutionally fostered innovation
- ◆ Institutional and cultural obstacles to innovation in the U.S. Army of the twenty-first century

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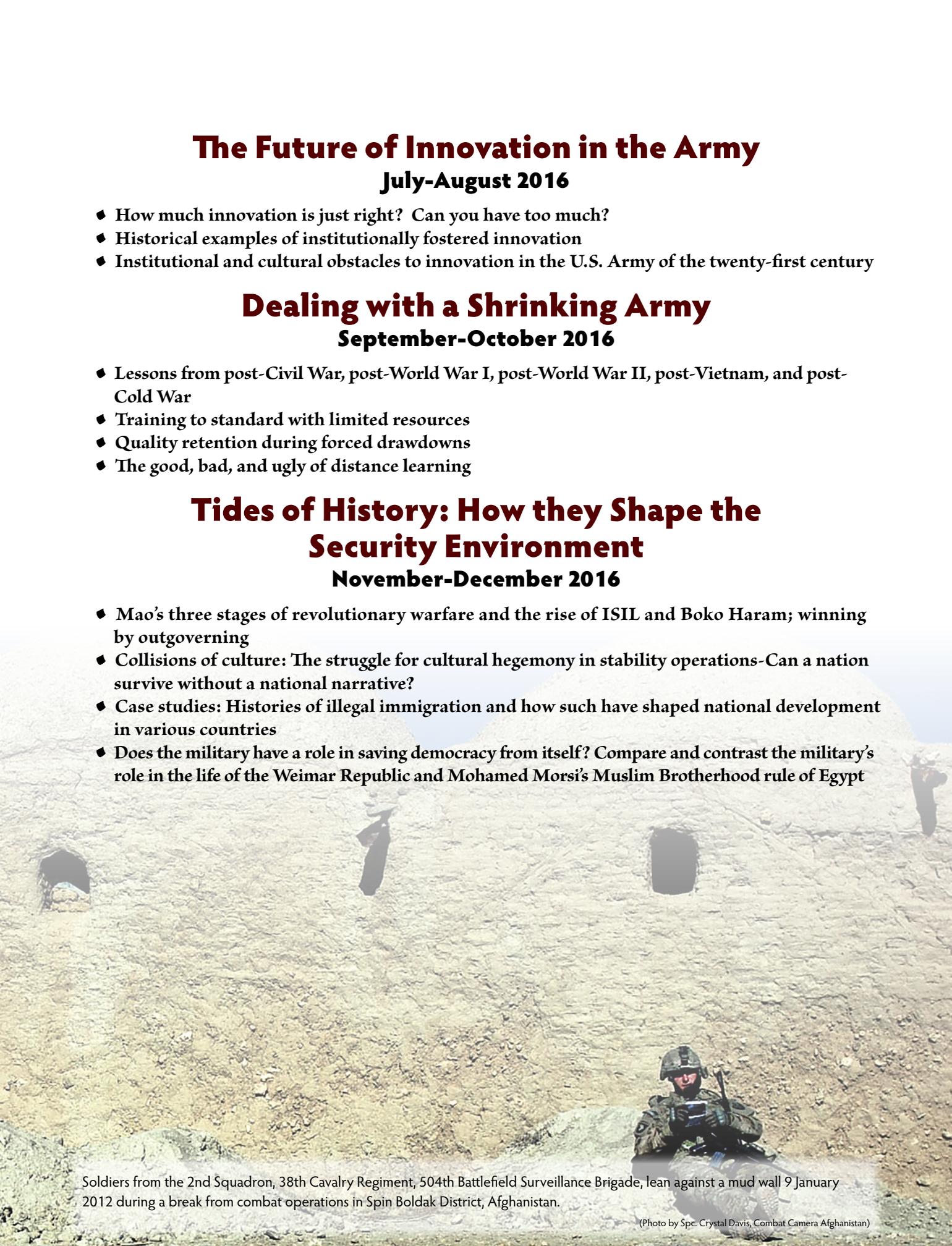
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- ◆ Training to standard with limited resources
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- ◆ Collisions of culture: The struggle for cultural hegemony in stability operations-Can a nation survive without a national narrative?
- ◆ Case studies: Histories of illegal immigration and how such have shaped national development in various countries
- ◆ Does the military have a role in saving democracy from itself? Compare and contrast the military's role in the life of the Weimar Republic and Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood rule of Egypt



Soldiers from the 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, lean against a mud wall 9 January 2012 during a break from combat operations in Spin Boldak District, Afghanistan.

(Photo by Spc. Crystal Davis, Combat Camera Afghanistan)

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Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr.,  
U.S. Army

Col. Todd Fox, U.S. Army

Lt. Col. Matthew F. Dabkowski,  
U.S. Army

Cmdr. Andrea N. Phelps,  
U.S. Navy

*The commander of the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa created solutions for complex problems by applying Army mission command principles to theater security cooperation missions. The task force adapted its organization in unusual ways to conduct unified action effectively with many diverse partners.*

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Lt. Col. James N. Krakar,  
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Capt. Sampsa Heilala,  
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Master Sgt. Giovanni Santo Arrigo,  
Italian Special Forces

*Four European special operators discuss the need for NATO to use a bottom-up approach during irregular warfare conflicts to establish a governance authority considered legitimate by the populace within a reasonable timeframe; special operations forces are the key to success in this endeavor.*

*\*Principal Author*

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Bernard B. Fall, PhD

*Based on a 1964 lecture, this article still has relevance today. The author provides numerous examples of revolutionary wars, and discusses the challenges inherent in revolutionary war and the need for continued evolution of counterinsurgency tactics and doctrine.*



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet)

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Soldiers from the 350th Tactical Psychological Operations, 10th Mountain Division, drop leaflets 6 March 2008 over a village near Hawijah in Kirkuk Province, Iraq. The leaflets are intended to promote the idea of self-government to area residents.

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*The Army's seventh warfighting function—engagement—proposes ways to ensure soldiers work with partners and populations in a culturally attuned manner. The author describes how she conducted religious engagement to build relationships while serving with the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands Program.*

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Soldiers from the 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, 4th PSYOP Group, conduct a leaflet drop 26 October 2009 over a village in Iraq. PSYOP soldiers use leaflets to disseminate important information to the local populace, including information about upcoming humanitarian assistance missions.

(Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Special Operations Command)

# Military Review

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

September-October 2015 Vol 95 No. 5

Professional Bulletin 100-15-9/10

Authentication no.1515402

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Stimson Avenue, Unit 2, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1254.

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*Military Review* (US ISSN 0026-4148) (USPS 123-830) is published bimonthly by the U.S. Army, CAC, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1293. Paid subscriptions are available through the Superintendent of Documents for \$42 US/APO/FPO and \$58.80 foreign addresses per year. Please call GPO sales at 1-866-512-1800. Periodical postage paid at Leavenworth, KS, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Military Review*, CAC, 290 Stimson Avenue, Unit 2, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1254.

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

Raymond T. Odierno—General, United States Army Chief of Staff

Official: 

Gerald B. O'Keefe—Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army

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Spc. Thomas White, an infantryman with Company A, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, climbs a ladder to set up a defensive watch position during an air assault mission 21 March 2012 in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan, while two Afghan children watch.

(Photo by Spc. Robert Holland, 172nd Infantry Division PAO)



# Globally Integrated Operations in the Horn of Africa through the Principles of Mission Command

Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., U.S. Army

Col. Todd Fox, U.S. Army

Lt. Col. Matthew F. Dabkowski, U.S. Army

Cmdr. Andrea N. Phelps, U.S. Navy

**I**n the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff focuses on the future security environment and how it will affect the manner in which U.S. forces operate. Of concern, he notes that while the world is “trending toward greater stability overall,” our enemies are becoming “potentially more dangerous” as many gain access to deadly weapons and destructive devices.<sup>1</sup> To prepare the joint force, the chairman discusses a concept called *globally integrated operations*, in which

U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Alex Krongard, the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa deputy commander, and Col. Youssouf Idjihadi, chief of staff of the Comoran National Army of Development, sign an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement 6 July 2014 at the Armée nationale de développement in Kandani, Union of Comoros.

(Photo courtesy of CJTF-HOA PAO)

“Joint Force elements, globally postured, combine quickly with each other and mission partners to integrate capabilities fluidly across domains, echelons, geographic boundaries, and organizational affiliations.”<sup>2</sup>

In many ways, the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), which is part of the only permanent U.S. military presence on the African continent, is realizing this vision today. Based out of Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on the Gulf of Aden, CJTF-HOA conducts theater security cooperation (TSC) activities that enable African regional entities to neutralize violent extremist organizations. CJTF-HOA facilitates regional access and freedom of movement for U.S. forces and, on order, executes crisis response.<sup>3</sup> Set against the backdrop of East Africa—a mosaic of diverse nations and peoples with vast resources yet

tremendous needs—the solutions here are not off-the-shelf. To meet its mandate, between January 2014 and April 2015, CJTF-HOA fundamentally changed its manner of operating and its structure.

This discussion covers the adjustments made, more or less in the order of their development, and highlights some U.S. policy changes needed. The exposition is specific to CJTF-HOA's operational area: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. The principles of innovation and organization could be applicable to other combined joint forces operating with limited resources, over extended distances, alongside many types of unified action partners, and in complex environments. However, the intent is not to establish a reusable template for organizing complex partnerships. Instead, this article describes how one commander used judgment to apply mission command principles so he could create unique solutions for unique problems.

## Building a Network within the Unified Action Team and with Supporting Organizations

The CJTF-HOA's U.S. staff includes members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines Corps. After fourteen years of persistent conflict, most of its service members have served multiple operational tours, including previous assignments in the Horn of Africa. To be sure, their collective experience in counterinsurgency operations and nation building is invaluable. Additionally, more than half of CJTF-HOA's U.S. staff is from the Reserve Component, enhancing the command's military expertise with years of civilian experience in areas such as business, construction, consulting, education, law, and politics.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond its assigned personnel, CJTF-HOA has worked hard to augment its joint network (U.S. Department of Defense partners) by developing informal relationships with special operations forces within its operational area. The resulting relationships are symbiotic. In particular, while tactical special operations forces have special authorities and capabilities, CJTF-HOA has excellent access to high-level liaisons and decision makers. This allows all parties to execute their individual missions more effectively.

Nonetheless, East Africa's complex and dynamic environment demands more than a unilateral effort,

and more than a collection of bilateral efforts, a reality echoed by President Barack Obama during his 2014 commencement address at the U.S. Military Academy. First, the president reminded the audience that the United States is the one “the world looks to for help” during disaster relief (e.g., the typhoon in the Philippines) or terrorist attacks (e.g., the Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria).<sup>5</sup> He then went on to express the need for the United States to have a long-term strategy to counter these kinds of threats—a strategy that includes U.S. leadership functioning through partnerships as the means to engage and defeat violent extremists:

We have to develop a strategy that matches this diffuse threat—one that expands our reach without sending forces that stretch our military too thin, or stirs up local resentments. We need partners to fight terrorists alongside us.<sup>6</sup>

The United States cannot fight terrorism alone; no nation can. Nations need to cooperate as teams through *unified action*, defined as “the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.”<sup>7</sup>

With approximately two thousand U.S. service members serving in an operational area nearly half the size of the continental United States, CJTF-HOA is a case in point not only with respect to numbers but also with respect to authorities. The U.S. Department of State has the lead in U.S. operations in East Africa, with the Department of Defense serving in a supporting role. As noted in the U.S. Department of State's *Post Management Organization Handbook*, the chief of mission (COM) “has authority over every executive branch employee in the host country, except those under the command of a U.S. area military commander,”<sup>8</sup> and “all executive branch agencies with employees in the host country must keep the COM fully informed at all times of their current and planned activities.”<sup>9</sup> Put another way, while CJTF-HOA does not directly work for the ambassadors and *chargés d'affaires* in its operational area, those U.S. civil authorities ultimately control the task force's ability to perform TSC missions, and it must defer to them.

This is a change in mindset for many of the service members who have participated in operations led by Department of Defense forces in other parts of the world, notably Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, most of



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie)

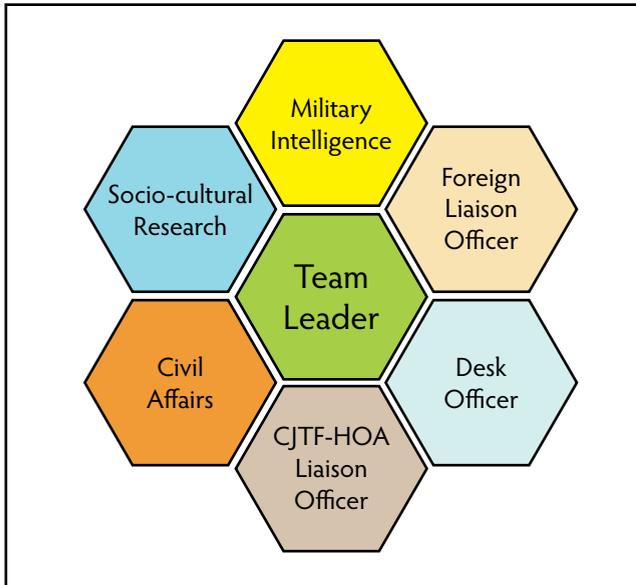
Cadets attend a briefing by Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., commander, Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, 27 December 2014 at the Joint Military Academy, Arta, Djibouti. Grigsby discussed the six principles of mission command and provided the CJTF-HOA perspective on the importance of building a better leader and promoting joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational teammates.

CJTF-HOA's service members have never been inside a U.S. embassy let alone become acquainted with the functions of an embassy's myriad sections. With this in mind, CJTF-HOA has worked closely with the COMs in its operational area to establish and to staff liaison officer positions inside the embassies. With military liaisons in Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, and the Somalia Unit—located in Nairobi (Kenya), Uganda, and the U.S. diplomatic mission to the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa—CJTF-HOA has increased its institutional knowledge and has become more responsive to the concerns and needs of the U.S. country teams.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, from a multinational perspective, CJTF-HOA is privileged to have a strong contingent of embedded staff and foreign liaison officers from partner-nation militaries assigned to its headquarters at Camp Lemonnier. Established through memoranda of understanding between the African nations' militaries and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), these officers provide a level of understanding that would be impossible to achieve otherwise. With representation from

Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Spain, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and Yemen, the embedded staff and foreign liaison officers' unique perspectives and contacts help to ensure that military-to-military training is meeting legitimate needs in a manner appropriate for its intended audience. With its network built, CJTF-HOA can leverage small elements, reinforced by members of the unified action team, to achieve outsized results, especially in support of the AU mission in Somalia.<sup>11</sup>

CJTF-HOA often finds itself operating in situations where defense, diplomacy, and development are merged. Traditionally, these functions are relegated to the Department of Defense, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development respectively. However, at the tactical level, these roles are often blurred as our partners typically interface with a single U.S. official or organization that, in effect, represents all three. In these circumstances, having an awareness of partner capabilities and the personal relationships to access them is invaluable. In an era of constrained



**Figure 1. Fusion Action Cell Structure**

resources, building a network and operating by, with, and through the unified action team is no longer an interesting idea—it is an imperative.

### Empowering the Staff: Army Mission Command Principles

While building a robust network among unified action partners is necessary, it is not sufficient. In particular, with widely dispersed small groups of personnel operating throughout the operational area, maintaining unity of effort and purpose is challenging. Accordingly, CJTF-HOA focuses on mission command principles to empower its members and to drive toward the mission's end state. The CJTF-HOA applies the Army's principles of mission command to guide operations, striving to "build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, [and] accept prudent risk."<sup>12</sup> By encouraging the use of this doctrine throughout the staff, all levels of the organization can achieve tactical agility, which allows CJTF-HOA to move faster than its adversaries do.

For many service members assigned to CJTF-HOA, Army mission command principles are new. Using these principles has energized the task force staff to conduct TSC activities effectively and efficiently and to enable their partners. On any given day in CJTF-HOA,

it is common to see operational planning teams with members from several different countries collaborating and sharing cultural insights, social norms, and customs. This partnered, decentralized execution not only builds depth across the staff but also efficiently improves understanding among all partners, allowing the commander to make informed decisions on myriad issues across the operational area.

### Reorganizing to Match the Environment: Fusion Action Cells

CJTF-HOA's use of mission command is consistent with the key elements of globally integrated operations, which include flexibility in establishing and employing joint forces.<sup>13</sup> As the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* states,

In the years to come, security challenges are less likely to correspond with, or even approximate, existing geographic or functional divisions. Future Joint Forces might therefore be increasingly organized around specific security challenges themselves.<sup>14</sup>

In this regard, the future is now at CJTF-HOA.

Prior to November 2014, a single desk officer managed each country within CJTF-HOA's operational area. Each desk officer interacted with staff directorates, liaison officers, USAFRICOM and its components, and U.S. embassy personnel. Although this structure built tremendous depth of knowledge in individual officers, it was vulnerable to personnel transitions and had limited capacity. Therefore, the CJTF-HOA commander, Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., U.S. Army, created a cross-functional team structure based on his experience in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The innovative structure flattened the staff organization (reduced hierarchical layers) and allowed for increased information sharing, open communication, and timely and precise staffing vertically and horizontally.<sup>15</sup>

This reorganization formed six country-focused teams (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda) known as fusion action cells (FACs). A lieutenant colonel or a major (or service equivalent) led each team of six functional specialists, which included, notably, a foreign liaison officer representing that team's country (see figure 1). Instead of a single desk officer for each country, a seven-person team worked toward common goals, building a shared understanding of the country.

Looking to capitalize on its foreign liaison officers, CJTF-HOA took this initiative to the next level by moving the majority of the TSC planning activities into an unclassified environment known as the Hive (see figure 2), which placed the FACs into a large, open room without walls or cubicles. Within the Hive, foreign liaison officers sit side-by-side with service members from the United States and African partners to gain a greater understanding of East African issues, plan TSC activities, and build trust. Each FAC can perform long-term planning and coordination of TSC activities (e.g. counter-improvised explosive device training in Burundi or developing and analyzing lessons learned in Uganda) that will identify and mitigate gaps across the region rather than solely concentrating on administrative duties (e.g., submitting Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance Systems requests).

Within the Hive, cohesive teams interact daily—*not just as needed*—with their East African foreign liaison officers, with one another, and, in effect, with the regional coalitions to which their African nations belong. The foreign liaison officers help CJTF-HOA understand the cultures and customs of the nations with which U.S. forces partner while also providing insight into the security threats and concerns of the countries from an African perspective.

### Pushing for Transparency: Unclassified Environments

Introducing the foreign liaison officers as permanent members of the Hive brought to light the need to operate in an unclassified environment as much as possible. This is a fundamental shift in culture for many service members, who are comfortable working in classified environments in

other theaters. The move has led CJTF-HOA’s staff members to learn how to share information with partner nations and the regional coalitions to which they belong, bringing new perspectives and sources of information into the planning and execution of TSC activities. Moreover, the unclassified environment has helped simplify communications with partners, allowing CJTF-HOA to be more responsive to their needs. By sharing the purpose of activities, the desired end state of events, and the resources available to accomplish missions, CJTF-HOA maintains transparency and strengthens relationships.

To be sure, the shift to an unclassified environment has not been easy, and it has engendered some suspicion among U.S. service members. Nonetheless, by accepting the prudent risks of operating in an unclassified, collaborative environment, CJTF-HOA is opening lines of communication with countries in the region, increasing commitment to the sharing of best practices between countries, creating camaraderie, and

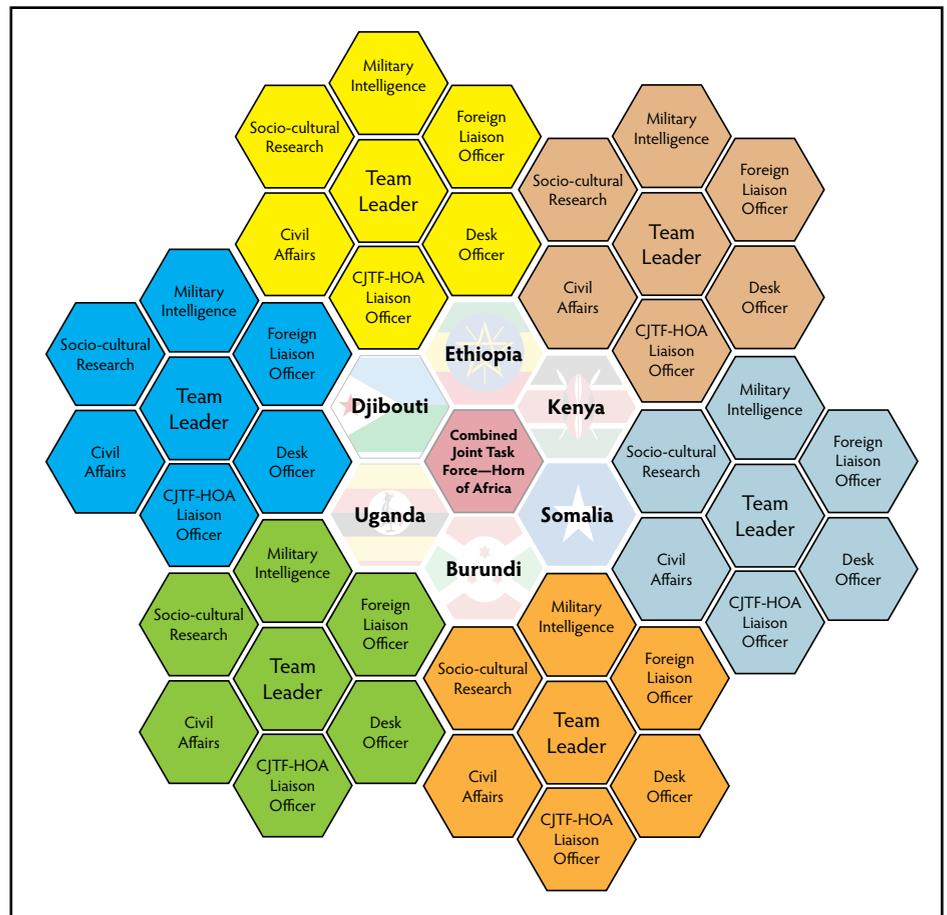


Figure 2. Hive Structure



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Nesha Humes)

Col. Dan Taylor, security force assistance director for Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, speaks to the “Hive” 17 July 2015 at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The Hive is a unique staff organization comprised of U.S., East African, and European service members, who are separated into country fusion action cells that work together to plan military-to-military projects and support security initiatives in partner countries throughout the Horn of Africa.

establishing mutual respect and trust among all partners. Given that globally integrated operations require partnering, flexibility, and agility, CJTF-HOA’s shift to an unclassified environment seems on target.

## Synchronizing Activities: East Africa Theater Security Cooperation Planning Conference

Conducting staff operations in an open environment without physical boundaries encouraged cross-talk and idea sharing between the FACs. As these discussions continued, the Hive’s leadership recognized a need to understand and align activities, exercises, and conferences across the Horn of Africa to form an overall TSC common operating picture (COP). Each FAC created a country-specific COP based on CJTF-HOA TSC activities and key leader engagements, but the country COPs captured only a small subset of the defense, diplomacy, and development activities taking place across East Africa. These COPs were bilateral due to the nature of interactions between U.S. team members and each East African country. Therefore, the overall TSC landscape was not being captured, which created the potential for missed opportunities or overlapping efforts.

To remedy this problem, CJTF-HOA hosted the East Africa TSC Planning Conference in January 2015, bringing together representatives from USAFRICOM

and its components, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and academia.<sup>16</sup> This collaborative forum aligned complementary U.S. government activities across East Africa through a combination of structured presentations and open dialogue. The event advanced TSC planning for all involved. It enhanced regional security by providing an understanding of diplomacy while identifying and mitigating partner capability gaps in defense and development from a regional perspective. Feedback from participants showed that the conference was a success. It culminated with a distinguished visitor day, when U.S. ambassadors, *chefs d'affaires*, and deputy chiefs of mission from across the region came together to discuss issues and solutions for a secure East Africa.

## Exploiting Shared Interests: Regional Synchronization Branch

While preparing for the East Africa TSC Planning Conference, CJTF-HOA began to appreciate the value of understanding regional coalitions to which various African nations belong. For example, all of the countries in CJTF-HOA’s operational area belong to the AU, a coalition that supervises the employment of Burundian, Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, and Ugandan peacekeepers in Somalia. As a regional entity, the AU exerts substantial influence, and it binds its members together through initiatives and agreements.

Similarly, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda constitute the East African Community, an organization that “aims at widening and deepening cooperation among the partner states in, among others, political, economic and social fields.”<sup>17</sup>

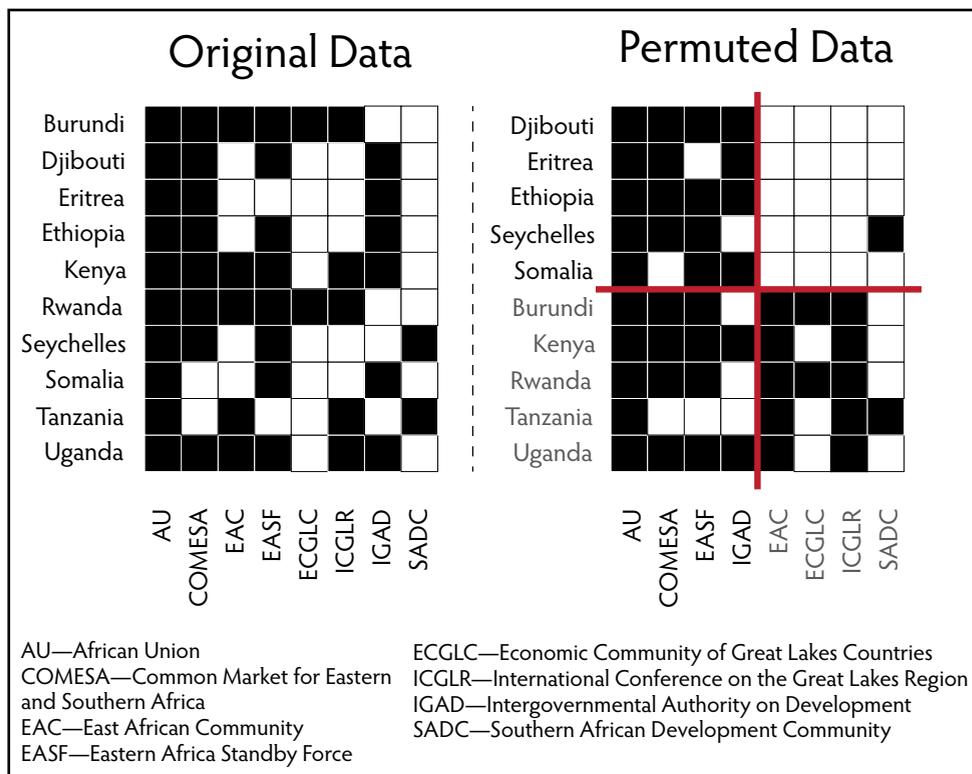
As a regional entity, the East African Community advances the shared interests of its member nations; understanding its mandate provides valuable insight into the region. Given these regional linkages, CJTF-HOA’s leadership began to think that a collection of bilateral relationships between the United States and each nation was not sufficient, or efficient, for supporting its African military partners because each military was not working independently on security issues that crossed borders.

When CJTF-HOA’s leadership realized the significance of the relationships within various African coalitions and organizations, it began to study them. These regional organizations are visually depicted in the left matrix of figure 3, where the shading of a square in a specific row and a given column indicates the country in the specific row is a member of the organization in the given column. For example, moving across the first row (Burundi) of the matrix, all the columns are shaded except the last two (IGAD and SADC), indicating Burundi is only a member of the first six regional organizations.

While shared membership in a single organization is interesting, shared membership in numerous organizations is more compelling as this may imply closer alignment between given countries. To illustrate this, the right matrix in figure 3 shows the original data permuted (or reordered) based on the results of blockmodeling—an analytical method from computational sociology designed to identify hidden structure in

networks.<sup>18</sup> Although the details of this analysis are beyond the scope of this work, a key result is worth mentioning. Specifically, all countries in CJTF-HOA’s operational area are broadly linked through the AU, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. The southwestern states (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) share additional memberships that indicate the presence of a subregional block. Treating the operational area as a whole would ignore this nuance. As CJTF-HOA’s planners look to design multilateral TSC activities to produce regional effects, understanding this underlying sub-regional alignment is important.

Accordingly, CJTF-HOA created the Regional Synchronization Branch (RSB) to work alongside the country FACs and use relationships already in place across the region. To promote additional engagement with its European partners, CJTF-HOA’s leadership assigned a British officer to lead the RSB, with support from the foreign liaison officers and other members of the headquarters staff. The RSB strives to understand and engage regional organizations



**Figure 3. Regional Organizations and Member Countries**

within the operational area, and it helps to shape bilateral TSC activities to achieve regional effects. Countries develop subject matter experts to train their own soldiers (train-the-trainer) as well as soldiers from neighboring countries at the same time. The RSB encourages coalition partners operating in the region (e.g., the British Peace Support Team—East Africa) to use similar programs of instruction when training the militaries of individual countries. Continued work to strengthen existing regional organizations formed by countries in East Africa is essential for security and stability, and CJTF-HOA is committed to this effort.

## Making the Problem Bigger: A Multilateral Approach

The country EACs and the RSB understand the need to work across borders multilaterally to accomplish CJTF-HOA's mission and enable the long-term security strategy of the United States. However, the current U.S. legal and fiscal authorities that govern TSC activities in East Africa are bilateral, which limits CJTF-HOA's ability to establish interoperable capabilities across the region. Nation-to-nation interactions are only a piece of the larger efforts needed to continue to advance defense, diplomacy, and development across East Africa.

Accordingly, the United States needs to develop a complementary regional approach to diplomacy and security cooperation, with legal and fiscal authorities, that would permit the direct allocation of TSC resources to multinational organizations and cross-nation peacekeeping training and capacity building. This assertion is echoed by President Obama in Presidential Policy Directive 23, which urges “cross-border program coordination [and] support for regional organizations.”<sup>19</sup> More recently, the need for the United States to establish regional authorities was front and center during the 9 December 2014 staff talks between the AU and USAFRICOM in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Grigsby recounted the difficulties of signing over mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles to Ugandan soldiers:

Since the first Ugandan and Burundian peacekeepers arrived in Mogadishu, there has been a pressing need for armored vehicles. The U.S. government identified “Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected” vehicles, or MRAPs, that were no longer being used in

Afghanistan and brought them to Mogadishu to hand over to the Uganda People's Defence Force ... . However, prior to handing them over, they needed some repairs. How long do you think this should take? One month? Eight weeks? A year? How about another metric? One more dead or wounded soldier? Two? Twenty? Frankly, I can't tell you today when those MRAPs will be available because my government's programs are designed to work bilaterally, and sending this equipment directly to Mogadishu—where it is needed—is uncharted territory ... . The UPDF [Uganda People's Defence Force] leadership is so frustrated by this situation that they have now suggested that we transport the MRAPs 900 miles away from the front—to Uganda—where we have a long-established, bilateral security cooperation relationship in place that allows for the repairs.<sup>20</sup>

Due to the Herculean, ad hoc efforts of Department of State and Department of Defense personnel, in late January 2015, six months after their arrival in Mogadishu, the U.S. government signed the MRAPs over to the UPDF. Ultimately, the MRAPs were repaired on-site, avoiding a costly and time-consuming round-trip journey to Uganda. Today, these MRAPs are saving lives. Providing this kind of support should not be this hard.

Simply put, as U.S. military forces find themselves working more frequently by, with, and through regional multinational coalitions to which they do not belong, the lack of U.S. authorities configured to allow regional support represents a significant capability gap. Until the United States establishes regional authorities, CJTF-HOA will continue to work toward security and stability of the region using existing bilateral mechanisms to achieve regional effects.

## Conclusion

Between January 2014 and April 2015, CJTF-HOA adapted to its environment:

- ◆ Achieving security in East Africa depended on unified action among governments, militaries, and other entities, so CJTF-HOA built relationships.
- ◆ The variety of CJTF-HOA's partners and the tyranny of distance prevented the application of off-the-shelf solutions and real-time command and control so

CJTF-HOA applied Army mission command principles to conduct unified action.

- ◆ The security challenges did not lend themselves to functional directorates so CJTF-HOA established fusion action cells, arranged in a setting called the Hive.
- ◆ The integration of partners made planning difficult, so CJTF-HOA moved into an unclassified environment.
- ◆ Collaboration highlighted that activities are often unsynchronized, so CJTF-HOA brought interested parties together in a planning conference.
- ◆ A focus on regional actors reflected shared bilateral interests, so CJTF-HOA developed the regional synchronization branch.
- ◆ Although threats in East Africa are often regional and demand regional solutions, the authorities that govern TSC activities are bilateral and restrict U.S. support to multinational organizations, so CJTF-HOA supports the establishment of regional authorities.

These adjustments were not part of a carefully orchestrated plan. They were born on the fly, out of necessity, and from instinct and creativity as much as from analysis and doctrine. Nonetheless, given the nature of its operational environment and mission, CJTF-HOA's evolution demonstrates how

leaders can find innovative ways to conduct unified action effectively.

As the U.S. military continues to move from the chairman's *Joint Force 2020* to "subordinate concepts, force development guidance, and follow-on doctrine," the importance of flexibility and judgment in the application of mission command cannot be overstated.<sup>21</sup> In particular, when confronted with a complex problem, success is often less about applying the best existing template, taxonomy, or wiring diagram, and more about building a good solution tailored for the environment. *Joint Force 2020* affirms as much by stating, "standardization may lead to decreased diversity, flexibility, versatility and, ultimately, effectiveness."<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, overgeneralizing CJTF-HOA's adaptations carries risk. It is the process of adaptation, not the adaptations themselves, which bear careful consideration. In a future characterized by growing uncertainty and evolving threats, may we adapt well. ■

*This article presents the views of the authors and does not reflect the policy of U.S. Africa Command, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, or the United States Government.*

*Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., U.S. Army, is the former commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa. His recent assignments include director for Army training, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7 (operations and plans); deputy commanding general of operations, 1st Armored Division; and director of the Mission Command Center of Excellence, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds a bachelor's degree from Salisbury State University, an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies, and an MS in national security strategy from the National Defense University. He is currently serving as the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas.*

*Col. Todd Fox, U.S. Army, is an armor officer and former director, CJ-3/5/7 (operations and plans) for Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa. He has a BS in chemical engineering from the U. S. Military Academy, a master of policy management from Georgetown University, an MA in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College, and an MA in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.*

*Lt. Col. Matthew F. Dabkowski, U.S. Army, is an operations research analyst and the former military assistant to the commanding general, Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa. He holds a BS in operations research from the U.S. Military Academy and an MS in systems engineering from the University of Arizona.*

*Cmdr. Andrea N. Phelps, U.S. Navy, is a surface warfare officer and the former lead for the Theater Security Cooperation Division Fusion Cell, Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa. She holds a BS in biochemistry from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and an MS in forensic science from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.*

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## When Failure Thrives

**W**hen *Failure Thrives* suggests that the continued existence of large parachute-delivered combat formations is the result not of reasoned analysis but of political connections and nostalgia. University of St. Andrews scholar Marc Devore's provocative study, the inaugural publication of The Army Press, traces the development airborne organizations in the 20th century and argues that the idea of a successful forced-entry-through-parachute assault is a dangerous myth. Whether you agree or disagree, *When Failure Thrives* is an outstanding example of relevant scholarship designed to inspire professional discussions throughout the force. To download this work, go to <http://1.usa.gov/1KWuNnd>.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kenny Holston)

Pfc. Michael Elliott, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Task Force Fury, talks with Mohammad Dode, a village resident, 5 February 2010 in Southern Afghanistan. The unit worked with members of the Canadian Armed Forces to mentor forces from the Afghan National Army 205th Corps during Operation Mesmar.

# The Civil Engagement Spectrum

## A Tool for the Human Domain

Lt. Col. James N. Krakar, U.S. Army Reserve

*An eager twenty-three-year-old “All-American” lieutenant, full of energy, would be trying to talk to a local villager through an interpreter. Inevitably, the conversation starts sounding like a tactical interrogation: “Hello I am Lieutenant Jones; I am from America. Can you tell me where the Taliban are? Have you seen any IEDs? Have you seen any suspicious people?” We don’t do small talk. And of course the patrol doesn’t get any useful information.*

—Maj. Fernando Lujan, COMISAF Advisor

The U.S. Army lacks sufficient doctrine and training on how conventional forces should productively engage with, or talk to, local populations across the range of military operations. This lacuna is due to unsynchronized doctrine, common key terms that are inconsistently used or undefined, and the lack of a methodology designed to meet conventional-force needs. Units have attempted to bridge this gap by improvising a multitude of civil engagement tactics, techniques, and procedures, without an institutionalized approach to civil engagement, driving a cyclical process in which units learn through casualty-producing trial and error. The result is units that are unable to effectively interact in the human domain and unable to understand and influence their area of operations. This article will examine the civil-engagement capability gap for conventional units and propose the *civil engagement spectrum* as a starting point for discussion on how to fill this gap.

## Requirements of the Human Domain

The idea that focus may be shifting away from counterinsurgency training with the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan does not obviate the requirement to document the lessons that the U.S. Army has learned concerning the importance of the civilian environment in which it conducts operations. Rather, the rise of the regionally aligned forces concept mandates that conventional units be able to quickly and effectively operate in numerous capacities across the human domain. Army Doctrine Publication 1, *The Army*, the Army's core doctrinal document, recognizes the complexity inherent in land operations by stating that "the land domain is the most complex of the domains, because it addresses humanity—its cultures, ethnicities, religions, and politics."<sup>1</sup> This is echoed by Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army chief of staff; Gen. James Amos, commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; and Adm. William McRaven, then commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, in their white paper, "Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills." The authors write that "the success of future strategic initiatives and the ability of the U.S. to shape a peaceful and prosperous global environment will rest more and more on our ability to understand, influence, or exercise control within the 'human domain.'"<sup>2</sup> In order to reduce the complexity engendered by humans, the Army fielded

various systems to make sense of the chaos inherent in the human domain.

During recent operations, the Army implemented various solutions to improve its understanding of the human domain; these efforts have included human terrain teams, fusion centers, atmospheric programs, cultural support teams, and stability operations information centers. These initiatives experienced varying levels of success, but the one common denominator of this veritable alphabet soup is, the majority of the time, these entities operated at higher echelons; flag officers had cultural advisors, key leader engagement cells, and Department of State political officers. However, very little of the expertise resident in such staff elements trickled down to the lower levels where the majority of the war was actually being fought.

After the publication of the revised counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, in 2006, platoon leaders knew that they were supposed to operate in the human domain but were not instructed on how to do so productively.<sup>3</sup> This lack of instruction and training resulted in unit leaders conducting "movement to *Shura*" (meeting with local leaders) without specific benchmarks, guidelines, or standards.

The lack of unified doctrine for interactions within the human domain springs from the multitude of doctrinal stakeholders for this issue and their respective parochial perspectives. Because civil engagement—the process of interacting within the human domain—crosscuts propensity and affects the Army at large, it is essential that the Army standardize doctrine amongst its stakeholders.

## Civil Engagement Proponents

The two main proponents of civil engagement are information operations (IO) and civil affairs (CA). Each group practices civil engagement from a different perspective. In IO doctrine, the purpose of civil engagement is to convey information to a population to induce behavioral change. In contrast, CA doctrine practitioners use civil engagement to gather information to populate various surveys and databases in order to help plan civil support operations. In short, IO is essentially concerned with messaging a population to shape attitudes, while CA is more concerned with collecting information about a population's needs.

Currently, because IO and CA each have different approaches to obtaining information but may, by necessity, be targeting the same population, their efforts may compete and overlap, often spelling confusion for outside units that try to adapt their procedures to support both endeavors. Consequently, for many small-unit leaders, the lack of a coherent engagement framework causes many civil engagements to drift unproductively into the realm of tactical questioning, as illustrated in the introduction.

## Doctrinal Shortfalls

At present, the cornerstone of IO doctrine is FM 3-13, *Inform and Influence Activities*. IO doctrine divides civil engagement into *inform* and *influence* activities (IIAs), and identifies *soldier and leader engagement* (SLE) as the key subcomponent. FM 3-13 defines SLE as “interpersonal interactions by soldiers and leaders with audiences in an area of operations ... to provide information or to influence attitudes, perception, and behavior.”<sup>4</sup> Note the fundamental nature of both the IIA and SLE is disseminating, not gathering, information.

This framework makes sense from a pure IO perspective, but its implementation by units poses two major challenges. The first is that, paradoxically, in order to effectively inform and influence, it is necessary to have a detailed understanding of the target audience (the human domain). FM 3-13 recognizes that preparation is required to properly conduct SLE by stating, “critical to this process is the social and link analysis to determine the scope of influence that each engagement target may have.”<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Special Operations Command Socio-Cultural Awareness Section recognizes this need and states that “the cultural, identity, and normative elements of a battle space cannot be discerned in any other way than through direct, interpersonal engagement.”<sup>6</sup> This places leaders in a conundrum: they require information to properly conduct a civil engagement, but the only way to gather information is from a civil engagement.

The second challenge that FM 3-13 poses is the paucity of applicable doctrinal SLE guidance for the small-unit leader. FM 3-13 states that for deliberate (preplanned) SLEs, it is important to “integrate other sources of information-related capabilities,” and that



(U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Dustin Hart)

Members of the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Chaparhar Police Mentor Team meet with village elders 24 December 2008 at a school in Terelay Village, Chaparhar District, Afghanistan, to discuss conditions in the village and to pass out school supplies and clothing for students.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Technical Sgt. Dawn M. Price)

A village caretaker hands a baby goat to Spc. Janet Peace, a medic with the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, 22 April 2009 in the village of Chabellier, Djibouti. Members of the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion interact with local key leaders and villagers to foster better understanding and communication while building relationships that allow Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa forces to partner with the host nation.

“military information support soldiers are trained, educated, equipped, and organized to plan, monitor, and assess engagement with foreign populations and select audiences.”<sup>7</sup> Problematically, military information support operations (formerly PSYOP) soldiers are rarely found at company and platoon level, leaving the small-unit leader, again, on his own with few specifics.

The guidance provided by FM 3-13 for dynamic (impromptu) SLEs is even vaguer, stating that preparation for these engagements “starts as early as initial entry training when soldiers begin internalizing the Army Values found in ADP 1.”<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly true; however, this guidance provides few tangible suggestions to the twenty-three-year-old lieutenant who must conduct his first engagement with an unhappy local leader.

The other main proponent of civil engagement doctrine is civil affairs. FM 3-57, *Civil Affairs Operations*, lays out doctrine for U.S. Army civil affairs and labels civil information management (CIM) as one of the five core CA tasks. FM 3-57 defines CIM as “the process whereby data relating to the civil component of the operational environment is collected, collated, processed, analyzed, produced into knowledge products, and disseminated.”<sup>9</sup> Again, the devil is in the details. At no point do the CA manuals fully detail a methodology for actually collecting this information.

FM 3-57 does address the role of conventional units by stating, “the heart of collection is the daily

interaction between U.S. forces and the myriad of civilians in the supported commander’s AO [area of operations], and the capture of these contacts and data points. Every soldier who encounters the civilian elements of an AO is a potential sensor of civil information.”<sup>10</sup> The manual does not provide guidance on how this collection is supposed to occur. This may not be as critical for CA units as most develop these skills over time, but it is critical for the non-CA units that

conduct the majority of the daily interactions. Early in their tours, non-CA units often lack experience in how to conduct these types of interactions in a logical and sequential manner.

One group that appears strangely silent on the debate over how to interact in the human domain is the military intelligence community. In 2010, then Maj. Gen. Michael T. Flynn published his widely read article “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan,” which bluntly assessed the capability of military intelligence in understanding the human domain. He wrote, “Having focused the overwhelming majority of its collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade.”<sup>11</sup> By 2012, when the Army published FM 3-55, *Information Collection*, this interest in operating in and understanding the human domain seemed to have completely evaporated.<sup>12</sup> Not only does the latest intelligence manual not address how a small-unit leader can gather this information, it does not address any type of information regarding the human domain.

The Army last provided guidance regarding the specifics of civil engagement in the 2008 edition of FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*. This edition—since

superseded—presented the *Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework* (TCAPF). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) created TCAPF to “assist commanders and their staff to identify the causes of instability.”<sup>13</sup> While not included in the 2014 edition of FM 3-07, TCAPF still remains a good start point for developing a framework for solving the civil engagement capability gap for conventional units.

The first phase of TCAPF—collection—actually laid out specifics of how leaders and units are supposed to gather relevant sociocultural information. As described in 2008 edition of FM 3-07, the collection portion of TCAPF consisted of four questions:

- ◆ Has the population of the village changed in the last twelve months?
- ◆ What are the greatest problems facing the village?
- ◆ Who is trusted to resolve problems?
- ◆ What should be done first to help the village?<sup>14</sup>

The major advantage of the TCAPF collection process was that it was simple enough that, with a modicum of training, almost any soldier had the ability to effectively collect information in the human domain. This process guided soldiers and assisted them from drifting into *a priori* tactical questioning as described in the introduction to this article. The key to TCAPF was that it focused on gathering information rather than disseminating information. This process provided a start towards gathering the sociocultural background information that any small-unit leader would require. However, TCAPF lacked context in how to integrate these street-level engagements with other civil engagement efforts, such as meetings and individual engagements.

## Civil Engagement Spectrum

To address the lack of common terminology and structure in civil engagements, I am proposing a civil engagement spectrum (CES)—a framework that expands TCAPF to comprehensively address all forms of civil engagement. The CES framework contains nested steps and objectives that allow leaders to track their units’ progress during the civil engagement process, as well as during subsequent steps if necessary. The end state is understanding the key grievance, sociocultural factors, and significant battlespace

influencers. This knowledge will increase small-unit leaders’ effectiveness by improving both their understanding of their battlespace and their ability to influence their battlespace.

The CES is composed of three types of engagements: street-level engagements (S-LEs), meetings, and individual engagements (see the figure on page 25). These steps do not have to dogmatically take place sequentially, but this flow will meet most units’ needs. Each unit’s mission and situation will determine where they start on the CES; a unit conducting stability operations would start with S-LEs, while a unit conducting security force assistance would start at individual engagements.

**Street-Level Engagements.** S-LEs are generally the first step in the CES. They are the initial engagements that take place between soldiers and local people when a unit enters a new area or when the soldiers feel that their knowledge of the battlespace may be incorrect. The purpose of the S-LE is to gain initial information about an area, with a focus on tentatively identifying local leaders for subsequent engagement. U.S. forces can engage in an S-LE as the focus of a mission or as opportunity presents itself during the execution of other missions. As seen below, the S-LE consists of a modified TCAPF collection; the difference is two additional questions asking the name and boundaries of the area where the exchange is taking place and what group (tribe, ethnicity, etc.) occupies the area:

- ◆ What is the name of this village/area?
- ◆ What group occupies this area? Nearby areas?
- ◆ Has the population of the village changed in the last twelve months? If so, why?
- ◆ What are the greatest problems facing the village?
- ◆ Who is trusted to resolve problems?
- ◆ What should be done first to help the village?

The initial S-LE should take approximately ten minutes per iteration. Ideally, multiple teams will conduct S-LEs, simultaneously providing more data points for cross-checking and verifying information. While the concept of *every soldier as a sensor* is useful, the linguistic reality of most operational environments limits the amount of personnel who conduct S-LEs to those who have an interpreter. A critical issue that is beyond the scope of this article is data and knowledge management. Despite the introduction of

numerous tools, there currently is no industry standard, and units use whatever system is standard for their unit or follow-on units.

The desired end state of the S-LE is basic situational awareness of an area and the ability to set up or attend a meeting with local leadership, as leaders are unlikely to meet units during initial S-LEs. At the conclusion of the S-LE, a skilled team should have obtained the name and boundaries of the local village or area; the population of the area; the basic demographics, ethnicity, and tribal information of the area; the construct of the local economy; any local problems and grievances; and the local power structure, including tentatively identified local leadership.

**Meetings.** Meetings are the second step of the CES. Meetings are where a unit engages with multiple representatives from one or more geographical areas. The purpose of a meeting is to validate the key-leader structure of an area in order to facilitate subsequent individual engagements and also to refine the information gathered in S-LEs. Meetings enable a two-way flow of information. U.S. forces can gather information while also highlighting key talking points to support IO objectives. Meetings are composed of two subtypes: primary and ancillary. Primary meetings are called by U.S. representatives, while ancillary meetings are called by someone else without U.S. prompting.

U.S. personnel initiate primary meetings with a specific end state in mind. The purpose of primary meetings is usually to set the stage for engaging with local leaders in individual engagements, thus providing the link between the S-LE and the individual engagement.

Ancillary meetings are those attended by U.S. representatives that would have occurred without U.S. involvement, such as between local people and their police forces. The purpose of U.S. attendance at ancillary meetings is to show support for local leaders and institutions, and to gain knowledge of the local power structure and events, not to take center stage or project any type of information. While gathering information is not the primary purpose for attendance at an ancillary meeting, careful observation can help develop details regarding host-nation information requirements. Ancillary meeting attendance also allows U.S. forces to conduct sidebar discussions with a broad variety of attendees and to set up future individual engagements. Leaders need to remain cognizant that attendance at a

meeting can connote tacit support for the organization or individual hosting the meeting or the process that the meeting covers.

**Individual Engagements.** Individual engagements are the final stage of the CES. This is where unit representatives meet with one or two key individuals—and potentially with the entourages of those individuals—in a relatively closed setting. The term *individual engagement* is the replacement for the ubiquitous catch-all term *key leader engagement*. The often-used and seldom-defined term key leader engagement is a catch-all for meetings with groups, meetings with individuals of any stripe, and, generally, any type of nonkinetic interaction with locals. Since key leader engagement can mean S-LE, meeting, or individual engagement to different people, leaders should substitute the term individual engagement instead of key leader engagement.

Individual engagements fall into four main subtypes: informative, negotiations, maintenance, and information gathering. Usually, individual engagements will include elements of each subtype with one being predominant.

The first category of individual engagement is the *informative engagement*. This corresponds to the previously discussed soldier and leader engagement from FM 3-13. An informative engagement occurs when a unit has specific information or talking points to disseminate to a specific individual. The choice of whom to conduct an individual engagement with is important due to that individual's sphere of influence and also for the second-order effect of potentially adding to his or her legitimacy.

The second category of individual engagement is *negotiations*. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership*, defines negotiation as “a problem-solving process in which two or more parties discuss and seek to satisfy their interests on various issues through joint decisions.”<sup>15</sup> There has been a tremendous increase in the amount of negotiations that small-unit leaders conduct due to the nature of the wars we have been involved in over the past fourteen years. Leaders now routinely negotiate with parties that range from partnered host-nation units, to local leaders, to nongovernmental organizations.

The third category of individual engagement is *maintenance engagements*. In a maintenance engagement, a leader maintains rapport and access with an individual for potential future engagement. There is no set agenda for maintenance engagements; the U.S.

representative may lightly review any pertinent talking points, but the majority of the time is spent developing the relationship between the individual and the U.S. representative. The maintenance engagement may also provide an opportunity to passively collect information about what is locally occurring. Maintenance engagements are important across the spectrum of conflict but are especially critical during partnered operations or security force assistance missions.

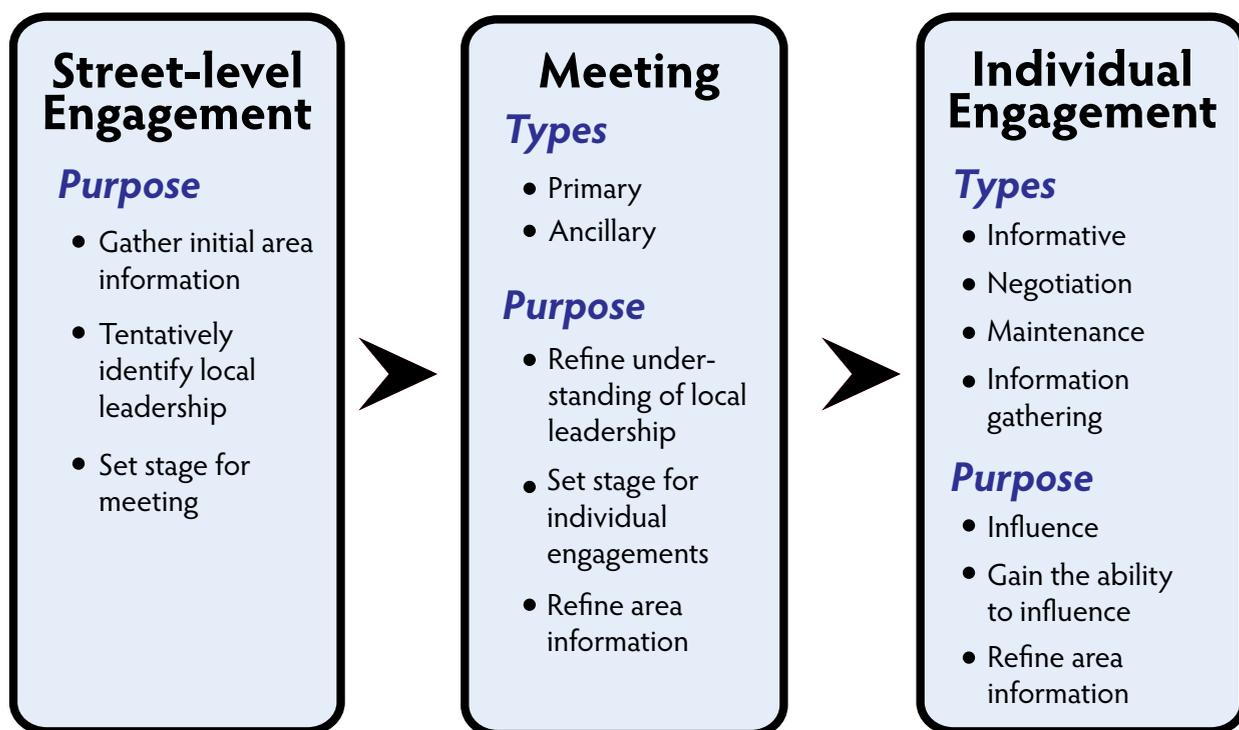
*Information-gathering engagements* is the fourth and final category of individual engagement. This type of engagement entails unit representatives conducting detailed discussions with a local person in order to better understand the local culture, power structure, and history. A key point to remember about information-gathering engagements is that host-nation leaders often stick to their talking points, just as a U.S. leader would. Their information needs to be constantly analyzed, and divergent local individuals must also be engaged. Historically, relying on too few individuals to gain local understanding has allowed the manipulation of units into involvement with, and settling of, local grievances. This has predictably led to poor second- and third-order effects. While most retrospective combat leaders can cite examples of these effects from experience, the most notorious example of

this phenomenon would be Ahmad Chalibi; described by the *New York Times* as “a merry-eyed dynamo [who] tirelessly connived and schemed on behalf of two dreams: for American military might to drive Saddam Hussein from power and to install himself in the dictator’s place.”<sup>16</sup>

One variable that leaders need to factor into their execution of the CES process is partnering with host-nation personnel. Realistically, some partners will be much more skilled and inclined to participate in this type of activity than others. Additionally, the presence of host-nation governmental or security-force personnel may stifle local civilian participation in S-LEs. However, U.S. forces should strive to include host-nation personnel in the CES process as much as possible.

### Conclusion

The U.S. Army has recognized the importance of the human domain and the necessity to codify it within doctrine. Gen. Robert Cone, then commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), stated in 2013, “Our experiences in these conflicts demonstrate the importance of investing in language, culture, advisory, and other specialized ‘people’ skills. ... These new skill-sets are fundamental to our profession and can only be retained if they



**Figure. Civil Engagement System**

are codified within our doctrine as a warfighting function.<sup>17</sup> TRADOC is currently conceptualizing adding the human domain as the seventh warfighting function.<sup>18</sup> The CES provides a simple framework that allows leaders to train and conduct operations across the human domain, to establish a viable process for civil engagement, and to avoid the problems that

they have been victim to in the past. The development of regionally aligned forces has accelerated the need for conventional forces to understand and leverage the human domain. The civil engagement spectrum provides a start point to begin the conversation of how the Army can fill the civil engagement gap that currently exists. ■

*Lt. Col. James N. Krakar, U.S. Army Reserve, is a civil affairs officer assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command. He has a BS in military history and an MS in intelligence, and he graduated the Defense Language Institute as a basic Arabic linguist. He has deployed once to Somalia, once to Iraq, and twice to Afghanistan. His civilian job is as a contractor supporting the U.S. Army at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.*

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(U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Gregory N. Juday)

Members of coalition special operations forces meet with Afghan Local Police and Afghan National Army representatives 19 April 2012 to discuss village stability in Khakrez District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. The three forces routinely work together to monitor local villages for insurgent activity and to ensure the safety of the local population.

# NATO's Approach to Irregular Warfare

## Protecting the Achilles' Heel

Lt. Col. Christian Jeppson, Swedish Special Forces

Capt. Sampsa Heilala, Finnish Special Forces

\*Capt. Jan Weuts, Belgian Special Forces

Master Sgt. Giovanni Santo Arrigo, Italian Special Forces

*Presence without value is perceived as occupation.*

—Adm. (retired) Eric Olson

The Achilles' heel in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) involvement in twenty-first century irregular warfare (IW) conflicts has consistently proven to be failure to effectively promote establishment of a governance authority considered legitimate by the populace of a nation within a reasonable time frame. This article proposes a paradigm shift in NATO's approach to establishing legitimacy of governance. To gain and maintain the support of the population in IW conflicts, NATO should apply a bottom-up—rather than a top-down—approach to establish legitimacy. Moreover, to implement this approach most effectively, NATO should change how it employs NATO special operations forces (SOF).

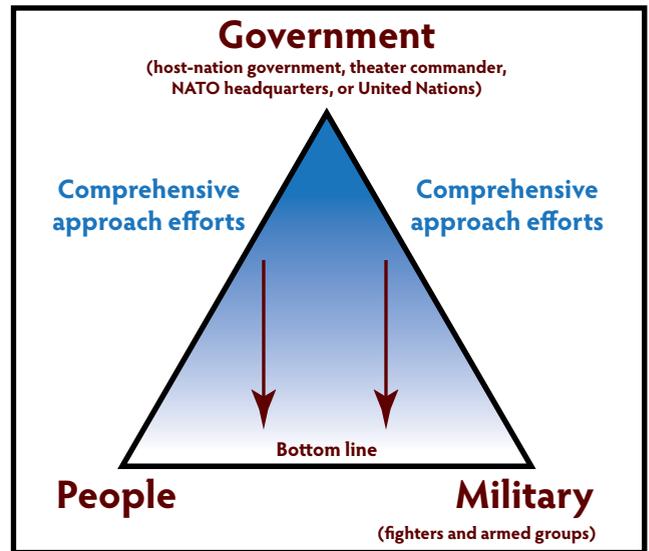
## Evolution of Change in Strategy

NATO adopted a *comprehensive approach* (CA) strategy in 2010 that places emphasis on resolving conflicts through promoting the development of legitimate governance.<sup>1</sup> The strategy is based in part on the assumption that resolution of most modern conflicts will require efforts that go outside the employment of purely military measures. As a result, to unify any future combined effort, potential CA NATO partners must seek a common understanding of how diverse nonmilitary measures can be operationalized since there is universal agreement that designing and implementing CA campaign plans remains complex and challenging.<sup>2</sup>

This article contends that the prudent application of SOF to promote bottom-up development of governance provides the most logical and effective means to address and synthesize approaches to the many complexities and challenges attendant to accomplishing the overall objective of establishing government legitimacy among a populace in IW operational environments.

## Old Paradigm: the State-Centric Approach

Unfortunately, most current IW strategies identify, frame, and address problems within the legacy theoretical framework of the Westphalian state model.<sup>3</sup> According to this model, states are sovereign, and power over a state is projected top down from the



**Figure 1. Modified Clausewitzian Trinity Model**

government to the populace to control the sociopolitical order. Therefore, according to state-centric theory, in circumstances where the state has a monopoly on organized violence aimed at maintaining sovereignty, strategies formulated to either challenge or change the overall sociopolitical order in any way must do so mainly by effecting change in the top layer of governing authority. This approach is established on, and is the continuation of, long-standing state-centered thinking inculcated in Eurocentric NATO culture. One result is that NATO planners tend to operate under the general assumption that state-centric political factors also have primacy in IW in exactly the same way they do in conventional conflicts between autonomous, established political states.

Attendant to the Westphalian state-centric approach characteristic of conventional warfare, current IW strategies tend to identify, frame, and address problems within the theoretical framework drawn from Carl von Clausewitz, the Prussian philosopher general in his seminal book *On War*. Clausewitz called the forces that define war a "paradoxical trinity," which he described as a phenomenon composed of three elements: reason, hatred, and chance.<sup>4</sup> These abstract elements are commonly equated with the "government, the people, and the military," respectively. Consequently, the influence of Westphalian state-centric thinking and the Clausewitzian trinity on NATO results in efforts to establish governance in an IW

operational environment that are led, coordinated, and deconflicted from the top, mostly by, with, and through what is identified as an existing host-nation government.<sup>5</sup> Figure 1 illustrates NATO's current comprehensive approach to IW conflicts using a modified Clausewitzian trinity model.

The state-centric mindset is also reflected in figure 2, which has been extracted from the U.S. Department of Defense publication *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*.<sup>6</sup> The models depicted in the Department of Defense figure ostensibly illustrate the difference between conventional warfare and IW. However, what they really depict is the prevailing, and highly misleading, state-centric mind-set of those who developed figures that erroneously depict the main dynamic of the IW effort as a line between the central government and the population.

Contrary to the underlying assumptions stemming from state-centric thinking, recognition of central state authority as legitimate by a given population in an IW environment is often illusory. This begs the question, "How then should NATO proceed if it becomes involved in IW in areas where there is no broad recognition of any central state authority among the populace?" In such circumstances, the consequences of false assumptions would be counterproductive as a state-centric mind-set among conventional-war strategic planners would have the effect of obfuscating clear understanding of the differences between conventional warfare and IW. Thus, a state-centric, top-down perspective that distorts alliance decision making in IW has an adverse impact on both strategic- as well as tactical-level planning and operations.

Among other flaws in the state-centric thinking reflected in figure 2 is that the relationship of the population and the fighters in the supposed IW trinity (shown on the right side) is not the equivalent of the population and military relationship in the conventional warfare portion of the figure (shown on the left side) derived from Clausewitz. Unlike the military entity Clausewitz describes, IW fighters do not constitute a separate state military (i.e., a social group discrete from the civilian population within the construct). Instead, they are likely to be an entity intermingled with, and generally indistinguishable from, the population.

## The Bottom Line and the Achilles' Heel

Therefore, a recast version of the Clausewitzian trinity, shown in figure 3, more accurately depicts the key dynamic of IW conflict as between a population and what are better characterized as fighters, or armed groups, together with supporters.

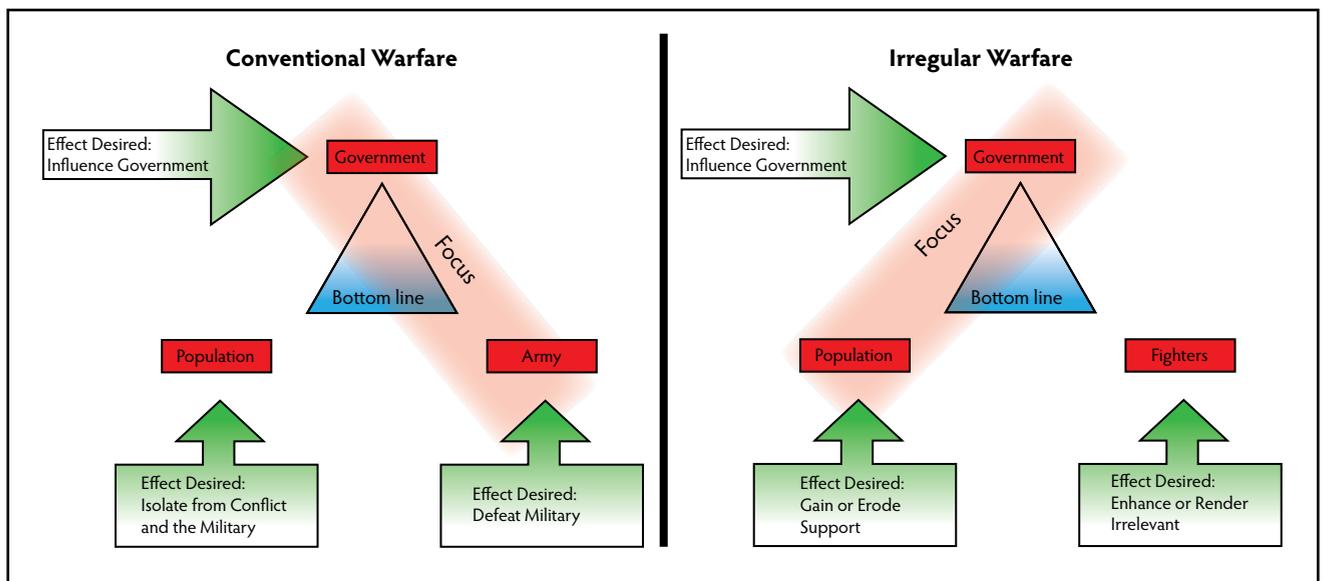
For purposes of this article, the connecting line between these two groups is defined as the "bottom line" because of its importance to the proposed paradigm shift depicted in the model. However, the relationship indicated by the connecting line should not be seen as intended to accurately depict some absolute value. Instead, it is only a general characterization of the nature of complex environments in unstable circumstances where competing efforts among many constructive and destructive *prototrinitities* can be expected to be occurring.

*Prototrinitities* are defined here as emerging and politically immature locally or nationally grown entities that compete to establish relationships between the population and fighters in an effort to gain ascendancy of governance over the population. As such, they are aspiring, embryonic movements that may eventually achieve enough sophistication to ascend to hegemonic dominance within a forming state, ultimately obtaining a local, national, or perhaps regional, identity. Consequently, the relatively unfocused elements in prototrinitities will, with growth and maturity, assume the character of *protogovernments*.

For purposes of this article, a *protogovernment* is defined as a weak and emerging form of government with the potential to either become stronger and emerge as a broadly accepted legitimate government or to break down completely. The common primary concerns of competing protogovernments are to find ways of enhancing their legitimacy, authority, and capacity.

From the perspective of an outside entity such as NATO, prototrinitities evolving into protogovernments are of two types: *desired* or *undesired*. Both types have the potential for establishing themselves as the prevailing government entity. Irrespective, both need to be nurtured to become complete and hegemonic.

*Desired governance*, for purposes of this article, is a form of civil administration that is sympathetic to United Nations or NATO coalition objectives, that enjoys local or national legitimacy, and that has



**Figure 2. Contrasting Conventional and Irregular Warfare**

sufficient capacity for providing security and services. Furthermore, desired governance is broadly in line with the policy objectives of the governments of the troop-contributing nations of a coalition or alliance that have chosen to intervene in an IW conflict.

In contrast, *undesired governance* is a form of civil administration that is not sympathetic to United Nations or NATO coalition objectives, and antithetical to its interests. A good example of an emerging *undesirable* prototrinity or protogovernment is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is currently attempting to establish itself as a recognized state with territorial boundaries. Of note, ISIS relies on terror to impose its authority instead of seeking a popular mandate through nonviolent means, and its apparent ultimate objectives are potentially threatening to NATO interests.

In contrast, such undesired governance may also enjoy local, or even national, legitimacy, as in the case of Hamas in Gaza, which came to power through popular mandate. However, from the perspective of NATO, it also is undesired because its political objectives are likewise antithetical to those of NATO.

In contrast, a desired local form of a prototrinity can be found in the local governance projects fostered by village stability operations in Afghanistan, where vetted local, village, or tribal leaders were politically empowered, controlled their local forces, and enjoyed both respect and support from their people.

With the above in mind, it is important to point out that the bottom line in the trinity models shown in figures 1, 2, and 3 actually depicts a relationship that represents a much more intimate and closer relationship between the “people” and the “fighters”—a metaphorically *shorter* distance between them—than in the similarly aggregated groups noted in the conventional warfare model where the population and the military are construed to be entities largely separate, distinct, and even alienated from each other. For example, the central Congolese government, for a variety of reasons, might be physically as well as psychologically or culturally distant from both the population as well as its own military in a region of unrest inside its physical borders, such as in its Kivu region.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, adverse actions of the Congolese military affecting the local population broaden the distance between the population and the military.

In such IW circumstances, the fighters are not necessarily members of formally organized armed groups, and the armed groups are not necessarily allied with each other. Therefore, unlike the state-centric conventional warfare version of the prototrinity, fighters involved in IW often fight intermittently against perceived enemies and on an ad hoc basis while remaining members of the group theoretically identified as the “population.”

Consequently, efforts aimed at engaging the population will also impact, directly and indirectly, the

fighters and the armed groups because their membership in both groups overlaps. Additionally, vice versa, efforts aimed at the fighters will impact the population directly and indirectly. Therefore, the model depicted in figure 3 helps explain why IW insurgent or guerrilla groups often place great primacy on establishing a shadow government that aims to supplant in the minds of the population the legitimacy of the central government against which those groups are fighting.

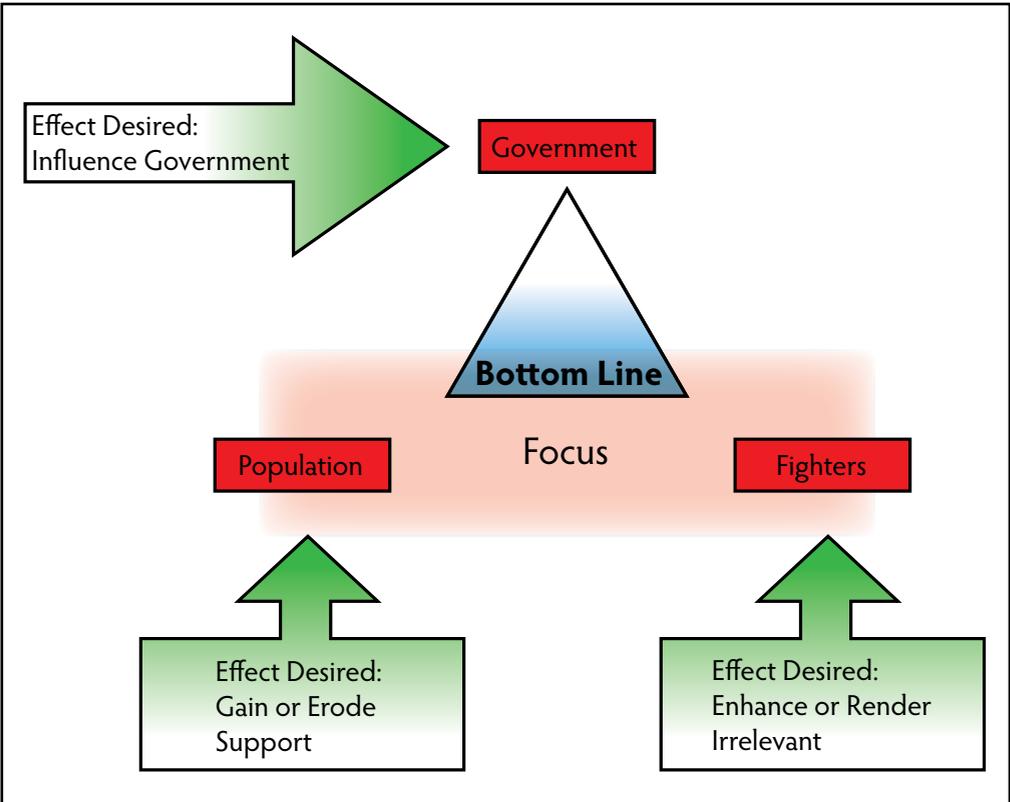
As a result, comparing figure 2 with figure 3, the decisive area in IW and the major target for the main effort is the linkage labeled in the figures as the bottom line, that connects the population and the fighters. Figure 4 further illuminates why this area of the model is the most essential area for focusing effort in IW operational environments because it shows that the interface of factors generating the most friction between prototrinities competing for hegemony over a population is the same bottom line. Consequently, as these models indicate, a key feature distinguishing IW from conventional warfare is that, to a large extent, IW can be effectively defined not as a struggle between a population and a central government but as a myriad of local struggles for domination of the bottom line connection between fighters and the population. This is the key interface between opposing trinities contesting control.

Using the model to analyze activities in IW helps illuminate why historically ill-advised coalition or host-nation actions have so often undermined attempts to promote central government legitimacy. Well-intentioned but ill-thought-through degrading actions of a hostile nature aimed at fighters are, by necessity,

typically performed among the populations represented along the bottom line. As a result, these actions might adversely impact both the general population and the fighters against whom the targeted actions were intended. Additionally, culturally inappropriate or clumsy actions by outside actors such as NATO pose great risk of, and often have resulted in, alienating the population as a whole and exacerbating splintering along religious, ethnic, or tribal fracture lines. Therefore, such actions not only alienate central government authority attempting to establish legitimacy from the general population but also groups within the population from each other.

**Time: The Decisive Factor**

Added to the risk of ill-advised martial actions affecting the populace and antagonizing the fighters within it is the pervasive challenge of limited time available. Under the best of circumstances, effectively building adequate top-down governance characteristic of state-centric conventional methods is time consuming, often requiring years or even decades. However, in IW, there is little luxury of time. Attempts



**Figure 3. Clausewitzian Trinity (Recast)**

at trickle-down legitimacy and effective central governance inevitably will be hampered and delayed by all kinds of friction, not to mention staunch resistance and opposition from opposing forces.

Therefore, time management is, arguably, the most important factor in IW. This is because a restive population in an unstable sociopolitical environment will likely not have the patience or tolerance to wait years for the benefits of trickle-down governance to take effect.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, an essential dynamic of the Achilles' heel of current NATO approaches to IW is a failure to appreciate the primacy of time. The limit of a population's patience and expectations dictate an essential need to expedite establishing some sense of effective governance rapidly at local and regional levels.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, to address the Achilles' heel, this article proposes a strategic concept that anticipates the unforgiving nature of time and emphasizes the primacy of taking action opportunistically and expeditiously along the bottom line ahead of opponents to influence developments along the interface between competing prototrinities. The concept proposes expediting the establishment of *good-enough* governance at a local level as a remedial measure. This provides better prospects for achieving rapid local sociopolitical stability. This stability, if properly nurtured over the long term, can become the foundation for more sophisticated later action aimed at expanding central government authority (hopefully in a democratic mold). However imperfect, such a bottom-up approach will more effectively create the conditions for eventual expansion of central government authority in the face of challenges by other competing entities fighting to do the same than the ponderous and slow conventional top-down approach currently favored by NATO.

## The New Paradigm: The Bottom-Line Concept

The broader goal of the bottom-line concept is nested in the overall objective of establishing legitimate and stable national governance; this should be the main long-term goal of any theater-level CA effort in IW. However, the proposed concept aims to achieve such governance by first enabling and strengthening local governance, rather than

by focusing on time-consuming efforts to build an artificial nation-state and then striving to impose central governance from the top down.

Within the concept, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *Lex Naturalis* (the law of nature), and customary regional law (paired with common sense) are applied within the parameters of local culture and mores.<sup>10</sup> The purpose is to identify, cultivate, and help empower desired local leadership ahead of undesired leadership taking root to contest local control.

Additionally, within the bottom-line concept, the best-prepared forces to take the lead as facilitators and mentors are SOF. Within all NATO armies are seasoned SOF operators with the kind of language and cultural training, as well as deployment experience, needed to effectively organize and lead or facilitate local efforts to establish local governance.

## Why Special Operations Forces?

Of all the forces available, only SOF are specifically trained to perform the necessary kinds of local engagement missions required. Consequently, they are the logical force of choice for the following reasons:

- ◆ A persistent, light footprint is an SOF trademark. This is an advantage because there is an inverse relationship between the number of foreign soldiers deployed to an area and their efficiency in nation-building deployments; the larger number of foreign warfighters on the ground, the more likely an "autoimmune response" from the population in the local environment, manifest by increasing resentment of, and openly expressed desire to expel, foreigners.
- ◆ SOF possess highly practiced skill sets across the civil-military operations spectrum.
- ◆ SOF have cultural and language expertise. As a matter of course, they have become experienced operating in human domain environments unfamiliar from their own.
- ◆ As needed, SOF have high tactical proficiency and sophisticated combat skills.
- ◆ SOF practice a networked approach to information collection and operations that is better adapted to an IW environment; it provides superior situational awareness compared to that of less human-intelligence-oriented collection processes employed by conventional units.

## Flexibility in Employing SOF

Additionally, there is high probability that NATO SOF entities deploying on such missions will already have acquired specific regional expertise and experience in given areas of operations before deploying. In such circumstances, and in some cases, single, highly experienced, and culturally astute SOF operators might even be able to perform the required duties alone. Such individuals would live and network at the bottom line, attempting to influence the situation positively while also providing *ground truth* and situational awareness from unstable areas to higher headquarters.

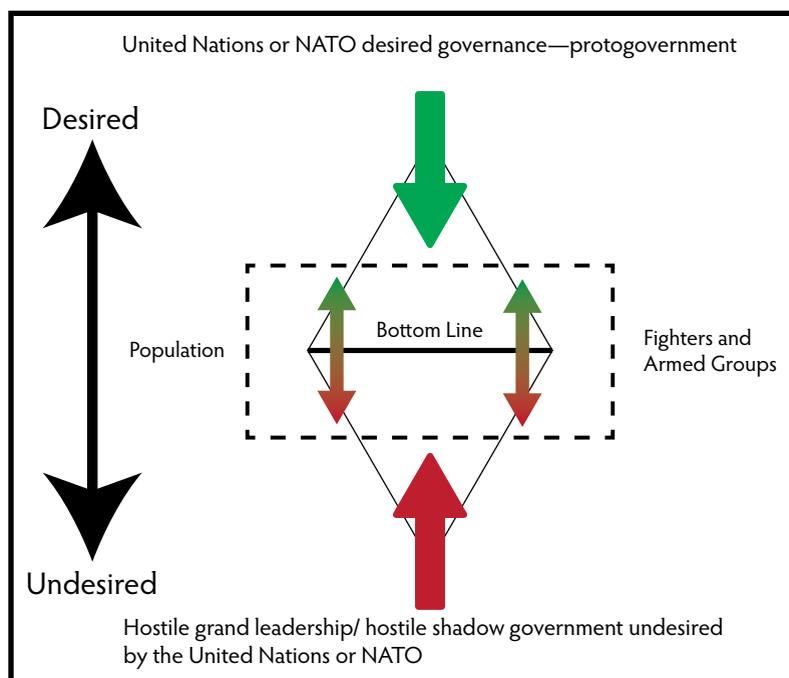
Additionally, after a conflict, there might be a requirement for operators to remain for years in sensitive areas to serve as a catalyzing element for promoting continued stability operations, something for which most unconventional forces are ill-equipped and temperamentally unsuited.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, having the flexibility to provide such a persistent presence could be strategically essential for demonstrating to the people of an area the good will of the international community and a sincere commitment to “see it through.”

Therefore, the combination of clear NATO or coalition focus in terms of agreed-upon objectives together with SOF competencies has great prospect of producing in a much shorter time frame local stability in IW situations than has previously been experienced elsewhere. This stems from early establishment of an interim “better” governing authority rapidly as opposed to the current approach

that results in a population having to live through a period of prolonged lack of governance amidst the slow-rolling turbulence and uncertainty that now characteristically exist when local populations are asked to await the development of more time-consuming formal, national authority in the face of

enemy threats. Early experiences of popular rejection during coalition attempts to impose central governance on the populations of both Iraq and Afghanistan highlight the problems with the top-down approach.

Moreover, in the long term, the bottom-up approach recommended will provide a firmer foundation for later follow-on efforts to broaden the influence of



**Figure 4. Competing Dynamics between Prototritinities**

centralized governance and promote democratization at a national level than the methodology currently practiced. The bottom-up approach suggested would utilize Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to expedite formation of local, respected, and desired governance that also promotes the legitimacy of, and confidence in, civil government in general.<sup>12</sup>

## Deconfliction

The conventional approach to promoting national governance and implementation of the proposed use of SOF to promote local solutions to governance may tend to be at odds and will have to be closely synchronized. During the initial stages of previous efforts to foster local governance, the bottom-up efforts of SOF working at the same time as the top-down efforts by conventional forces to establish national sovereignty were not necessarily linked and,

unless carefully deconflicted, actually worked at cross purposes.

Bearing past experience in mind, unstable circumstances in IW situations of the future might make an initial connection between the two efforts impossible, or even undesirable. Factors at odds may include conventional approaches that emphasize undue haste to establish immediate stability, resulting in imprudently providing support to weak or corrupt governments that have already lost the confidence of the people they are supposed to be governing. Such loss of legitimacy for a central government in the eyes of the people might result from illegitimate, counterproductive, or corrupt behavior of national agencies, armies, and police forces. It might also result from the physical inability of a nominal central government to exercise sovereignty, provide security, or provide services due to such factors as a lack of resources, infrastructure incapable of providing internal transport, or a weak national communications network.

Therefore, imprudent hastiness in providing support to prop up unpopular regimes may undermine the population's confidence in the government together with the intentions of NATO, as the population may see NATO forces as complicit in supporting an ineffectual, or even oppressive, central government.

Consequently, the deconfliction and synchronization of conventional national-level, top-down activities with SOF networked efforts being applied at the bottom line are essential. Such coordination would best be performed at theater level through the Special Operations Component Command or a comparable architecture. The role of the Special Operations Component Command in this process should entail the following:

- ◆ working to clarify overall strategic objectives and milestones
- ◆ synchronizing and deconflicting efforts executed at the bottom line with national-level initiatives to achieve overall strategic objectives
- ◆ augmenting entities dealing with bottom-line initiatives with theater or specialist support
- ◆ coordinating the exchange and dissemination of intelligence, as well as population atmospheric, to ensure top-down, lateral, and bottom-up situational awareness

- ◆ integrating efforts: closely evaluating and tying top-down, pyramidal-structure, government-building efforts to the SOF-networked local effort directed at influencing governance being formed at the bottom line

In doing such deconfliction, the theater-level command should carefully consider second- and third-order effects before executing operations. Preparation should include negotiating prospective bottom-up, lateral, and top-down efforts. This process is critical, with patience and diplomacy of paramount importance. As noted, uninformed or ill-conceived conventional, top-down approaches too often have ignored the counterproductive effects of trying to bolster what the populace views as an illegitimate political regime.

In contrast, the recommended SOF approach functions on the premise that local governance does not initially require the same infrastructure or mechanisms of control that national governance requires. Consequently, SOF would aim to focus their efforts on reconciling simultaneously the bottom corners of the triangle connected by the bottom line, the populace and fighters. Thus, the concept operates under the critical assumption that SOF efforts must be a symbiotic *whole community* approach open to adjustment, flexibility, and compromise. This is so that efforts can remain balanced, promoting constructive local governance that incorporates the views, concerns, and participation of the local population while co-opting—or neutralizing entirely—the influence of fighters within that population.

In this way, the elements in the trinity model depicted in figures 2, 3, and 4 are ultimately reconciled, brought back into equilibrium, and stabilized. Furthermore, this SOF modus operandi transparently communicates the friendly and constructive intent of the presence of NATO forces to the local population, acting in a de facto manner as a kind of promotional information operation effort in its own right.

## Opportunity-Exploiting Networked Operations

Since there may be no other CA actors in any given IW operational environment to which SOF may be deployed, the SOF elements have the capability of adopting an opportunity-exploiting mind-set. This approach may require a mix of constructive

and destructive actions guided by direct and indirect approaches in an environment constrained by very limited resources.

The *opportunity-exploiting networked operations* of SOF in such environments employ connectivity and synchronization among local social, political, and economic SOF lines of effort, augmented by additional outside support. Capitalizing on SOF cultural training, linguistic training, and personal engagement experience, required actions identified in lines of effort are effected primarily through a SOF specialty skill: interpersonal face-to-face engagements. However, in executing such engagement missions, SOF may also need back-up support from heavier military forces, as well as from all available forms of communication and web-based means, including reach-back to subject matter experts and provision of various resources that can be leveraged for developing interpersonal relationships.

Opportunity-exploiting networked operations can therefore be defined as a network-heavy form of SOF operations that combines constructive and destructive actions. These actions are determined by balancing direct action and indirect action thinking within a comprehensive approach mind-set. Elements of opportunity-exploiting networked operations are further described as follows:

- ◆ Direct action destructive operations imply the use of, or threat of using, weapons; the objective warrants the use of weapons.

- ◆ Indirect action constructive operations are traditionally the realm of “soft” forces such as civil-military operations, psychological operations, information operations, and military humanitarian missions. In constructive operations, the objective precludes the use of weapons.

- ◆ Direct operations are performed by the SOF direct action entity proper.

- ◆ Indirect operations are performed by SOF entities applying effects and influence “by, with, and through” others.

Superimposing the direct, indirect, destructive, and constructive options on a graph results in four quadrants, each containing an option set. These option sets are depicted in figure 5, the Special Operations

Forces Options Box. Examples of activities in each quadrant are noted below.

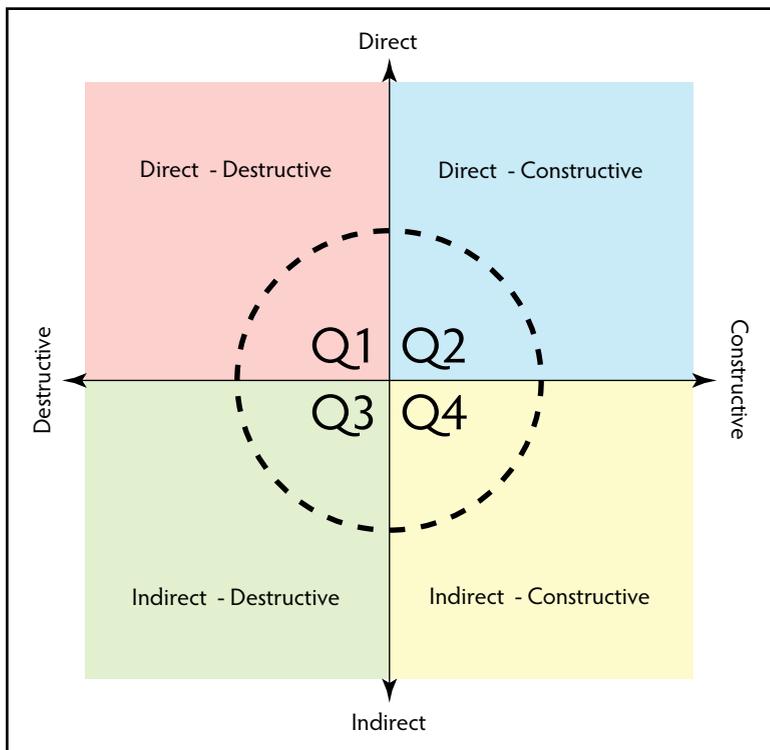
**Q-1 (Direct-destructive).** A SOF entity could conduct a direct action mission on a target to destroy an undesired group of fighters or a deliberate detention operation to arrest a wanted war criminal.

**Q-2 (Direct-constructive).** A SOF entity might perform key leader engagements or medical outreach programs.

**Q-3 (Indirect-destructive).** A SOF entity could train and equip local armed forces so those forces became capable of fighting insurgents unassisted.

**Q-4 (Indirect-constructive.)** A SOF entity might use its influence to address local governance issues or to address an issue of humanitarian concern with a nongovernmental organization.

To accomplish the mission of promoting local governance, SOF will project and transplant their existing network where needed, tie it to local networks, and then expand it. This approach adopts and modifies what is commonly referred to as *ink spot* strategy, which strives to establish a number of small safe areas dispersed over a given region of instability



**Figure 5. Special Operations Forces Options Box**

and then expand their influence. The application of SOF at the bottom line provides ink spots of local stability over a wide geographical area, developed with an emphasis on local governance. This strategy then extends local governance out from each area, enabling the establishment of local government control together with locally organized security to establish stability. The eventual goal of the strategy is to consolidate and pacify large areas by first connecting established ink spots, leaving progressively fewer pockets of resistance to be dealt with individually as broad regional stability is established. Thus, conceptually, successful SOF efforts at the bottom line provide the basis for rapid proliferation of such ink spots of local stability. These spots create a degree of strategic resilience, becoming especially important if slowly developing top-down efforts are for whatever reason stymied.

## SOF Applied at the Bottom Line: A Hypothetical Diamond Model of Competing Dynamics

The diamond model of competing dynamics, depicted in figure 6, expands upon the previous graphics that highlighted the necessity of focusing on the bottom-line interface between prototrinities.

The diamond shape created depicts two opposing triangles that mirror competing protogovernments, or prototrinities, vying for hegemony over the entities and interactions at the bottom line, which is shown horizontally across the center of the image, between the two triangles. The top triangle depicts the emerging governance that would be desired by NATO and coalition forces; the bottom (inverse) triangle depicts the undesired governance.

The entities and relationships within each triangle are competing with those in the other triangle, to take control over the whole. The concept proposed in this article suggests that SOF act at the interface of *both* triangles in a symbiotic and balanced manner that simultaneously addresses both the fighters and the population along the bottom line.

At the right of the diamond is a line representing *time and effort*. This line is key to the concept. A small triangle inside each large triangle indicates a local form of governance (desired or undesired), with the numeral 9 placed at the vertex angle (the top). The local nature of

the protogovernment represented by the small triangle means that this form of governance can be established rapidly and relatively easily. The time and effort line illustrates that SOF applied at the bottom line can therefore quite rapidly—within months—achieve local stability and *desired* local governance.

The larger triangles reflecting desired or undesired national governance would typically take much longer (years to decades). As previously noted, the relatively unfocused elements in prototrinities with the passage of time are redefined in this figure as protogovernments. Figure 6 briefly depicts the dynamics that can happen in the diamond model in IW. As such, it can be regarded as an analytical tool to depict a given situation.

The numbers refer to locations on the graphic that describe the different dynamics that might occur simultaneously. Some also describe what lines of effort for SOF should relate to conventional lines of effort.

**1. Locally championed initiatives, receiving SOF advisory, financial, and labor support.** These are integrated civil-military efforts applied at the bottom line, fostering legitimacy and creating the potential for local governance. They have significant potential for quick success. For example, in an effort to improve hygiene conditions, a latrine-digging program is set up, with consent and support from the population and the fighters. Local assets suffice for such projects. As a result, the population and some fighters are more likely to “buy in,” as they own the project.

**2. Fostering national government legitimacy.** This refers to integrated efforts applied at the bottom line that are specifically intended to foster national legitimacy and increase the potential for national government acceptance at the bottom line. These will typically take a good deal of time and effort. For example, in an effort to improve hygiene conditions, a sewer system is built with national support and the consent of the population and the fighters. Successes in this area open the possibility of longer-term effects as growing acceptance of outside central government involvement in local affairs overcomes even entrenched resistance.

**3. Unsolicited outside efforts applied at the population.** Although potentially effective, unsolicited efforts to help the population do not necessarily lead to legitimacy of the effort, nor do they increase the potential for local or national governance. Unsolicited effort has the

potential to be effective, but it is not efficient. For example, a nongovernmental organization vaccinates cattle without leaders' or owners' consent. Although this measure is effective—fewer cattle will become sick or die—it does not add to legitimacy to local governance.

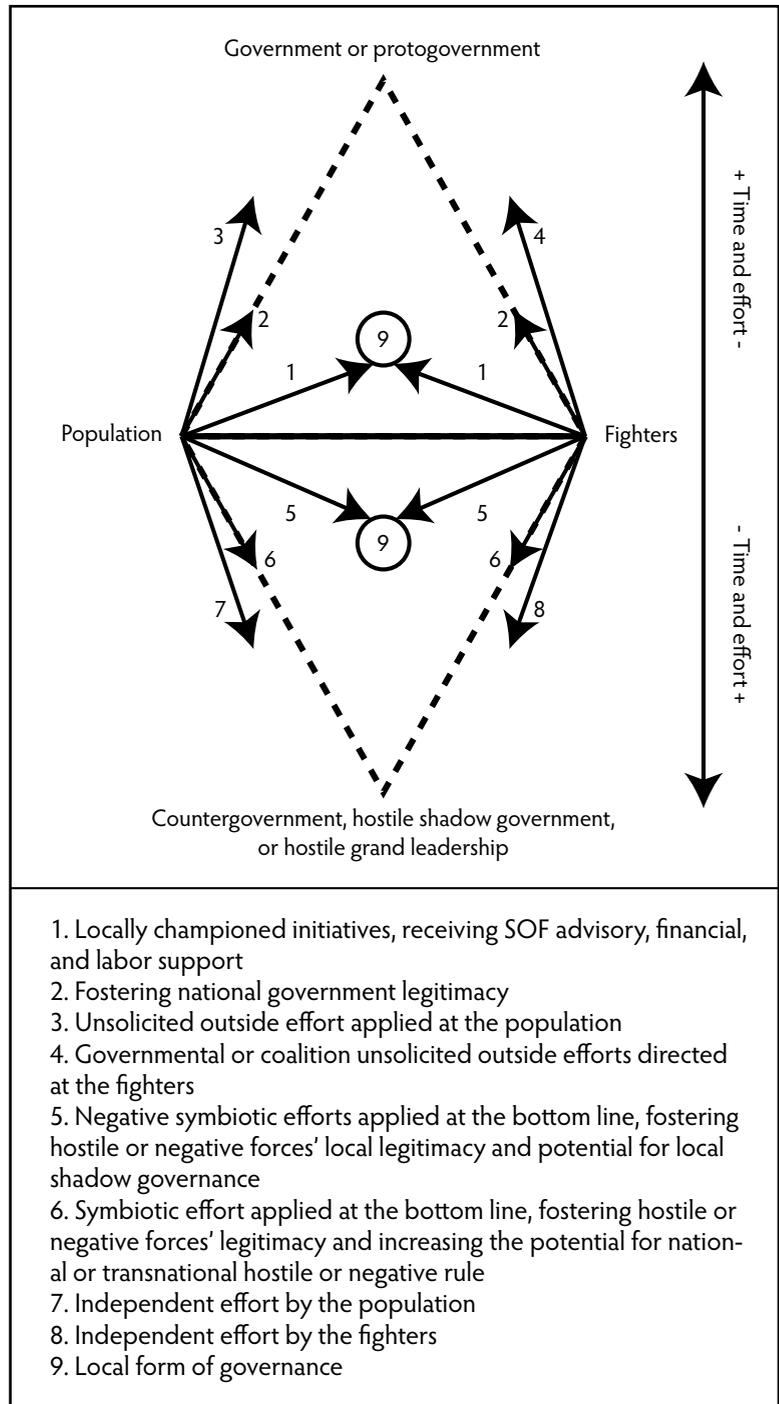
**4. Governmental or coalition unsolicited outside efforts directed at the fighters.** Although potentially effective in the short run, unsolicited efforts to help fighters may not necessarily lead to legitimacy of the effort in the eyes of the local populace. Nor do they increase the potential for local or national governance. For example, a coalition Army unit trains and equips a local police unit without consulting with local leaders or vetting training candidates. The effort risks being inefficient if the wrong candidates are selected, and it could be counterproductive if the new police force misuses its newly acquired capabilities to favor one group over another or engages in corruption backed by its new weapons and policing systems. Such a circumstance degrades the central government's legitimacy and fosters resentment, which is easily translated into defiance or even violent rebellion.

**5. Negative symbiotic efforts applied at the bottom line, fostering hostile or undesired forces' local legitimacy and the potential for local "shadow" governance.** Symbiotic efforts are efforts applied in a balanced way on both the population and the fighters. For example, hostile warlords provide economic incentives to win over large parts of the population. This bolstered, but undesired legitimacy, when combined with the military power of undesired armed groups, increases the likelihood of undesired local governance.

**6. Symbiotic efforts applied at the bottom line, fostering hostile or undesired forces' legitimacy and increasing the potential for national or transnational hostile or negative rule.** Good examples of this are the successful, symbiotically addressed, comprehensive

approach of Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and the Gaza strip respectively.

**7. Independent efforts by the population.** Individuals or small groups of people, whose intention is only survival, sometimes act in ways, often



1. Locally championed initiatives, receiving SOF advisory, financial, and labor support
2. Fostering national government legitimacy
3. Unsolicited outside effort applied at the population
4. Governmental or coalition unsolicited outside efforts directed at the fighters
5. Negative symbiotic efforts applied at the bottom line, fostering hostile or negative forces' local legitimacy and potential for local shadow governance
6. Symbiotic effort applied at the bottom line, fostering hostile or negative forces' legitimacy and increasing the potential for national or transnational hostile or negative rule
7. Independent effort by the population
8. Independent effort by the fighters
9. Local form of governance

**Figure 6. The Diamond Model of Competing Dynamics**

criminal, that are counterproductive to the formation or establishment of local or national governance. For example, a father desperate to feed his family resorts to smuggling drugs.

**8. Independent efforts by renegade groups of fighters.** Small numbers of fighters sometimes break off from the larger countergovernment groups, or arise from disparate factions, to fight for survival under renegade leadership. For example, fighters who find that they cannot meet the personal needs of their own families, while in league with larger countergovernment organizations, resort to gang activity.

**9. Local form of governance.** Either desired or undesired, because of its local nature, fledgling local governance can be established rapidly and relatively easily.

## Conclusion

In IW, failure to expeditiously build government legitimacy to speed stability is indeed the Achilles' heel of NATO. The proposed IW strategy shifts the focus for SOF from the government-population line toward the population-fighters' line, which has been labelled the *bottom line*. The proposed paradigm shift for NATO SOF is

rooted in the premise that IW will be won or lost at the bottom line connecting the population with the fighters or armed groups. Success in such conflicts will depend on rapid establishment of effective local governance recognized as legitimate by the local populace.

SOF provide a unique capability to protect the Achilles' heel by affecting the relationship of the people and armed groups, within the context of authority the people consider legitimate, all within the critical constraints of time. SOF capabilities employed according to a bottom-line concept enable NATO to address irregular conflicts with a much smaller footprint, thus taking into account the decreased tolerance for major deployments by political leaders and public opinion. Additionally, the bottom-line concept provides a strategic framework drawing from proven historical examples of SOF such as U.S. Special Forces engagement with Montagnards in Vietnam and, more recently, village stability operations in Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> Using SOF to build government legitimacy from the ground up generates a great operational effect; in some cases, the effect achieved can even have strategic results.

The bottom-line concept is a true policy alternative for strategic decision makers and should be formally incorporated into NATO's strategic thinking for the future. ■

*The authors were students in the newly created NATO SOF Catalyst for Change course conducted annually at the NATO Special Operations School at Chievres Air Base, Belgium.*

*Lt. Col. Christian Jeppson, Swedish Special Forces, has served in special forces positions from team level, through squadron commander, to unit and task group commander. He has several deployments in various international operations with the European Union and NATO, such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the Congo.*

*Capt. Sampsa Heilala serves in the Finnish Army Special Forces as executive officer in the Special Forces Battalion. He is a 2003 graduate of the Finnish National Defense College and has served as a platoon leader, second-in-command, and company commander in the Parachute Jaeger Company, and as a staff member in the Special Forces Battalion.*

*\*Capt. Jan Weuts, Belgian Special Forces Group, is the Belgian representative in the Dutch "Center of Expertise for Special Operations." He has served in various positions as a noncommissioned officer and as a junior officer in the Congo, Somalia, Albania, and Chad. Capt. Weuts was the principal author of this article.*

*Master Sgt. Giovanni Santo Arrigo has been in the Italian Army Special Forces since 1995 and has served as an operator numerous times in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. He is currently an operations noncommissioned officer for 1st Battalion, 9th Parachute Assault Regiment "Col Moschin."*

## Notes

**Epigraph.** Eric Olson, opening address during the first itinerary of the Catalyst for Change Course, NATO SOF School, Chièvres, Belgium, 2013.

1. NATO Summit in Lisbon, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 19-20 November 2010, para. 21, accessed 9 July 2015, [http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat\\_Concept\\_web\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf).

2. Julian Lindley-French, Paul Cornish, and Andrew Rathmell, *Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach*, Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, Commander's Initiative Group (London: Chatham House, 2010), accessed 9 July 2015, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/109288>. This paper lists some of the difficulties and challenges of designing and implementing comprehensive approach campaign plans; see also Cécile Wendling, *The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Military Crisis Management* (Paris: Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire [IRSEM], 2010).

3. University of South Africa, *Understanding the State*, study guide to PLC 102-S, 2002, xvi. To be considered a state, an entity must have sovereign authorities (government), a permanent population, and a territory. The Westphalia model of a state-centric world has been in existence since 1648.

4. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, ed. and trans. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

5. N.X. Ngwenya, *Fundamentals of International Politics*, study guide to IPC 101-Y, University of South Africa, 2002, 11.

6. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, Version 1.0 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 11 September 2007) accessed 9 July 2015, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/joint\\_concepts/joc\\_iw\\_v1.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/joint_concepts/joc_iw_v1.pdf).

7. Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymakers, *Conflict and Social Transformation in Easter DR Congo* (Gent, Belgium: Academia Press Scientific Publishers, 2004), 158-159.

8. Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War: Combat from*

*the Marne to Iraq* (New York: Ballantine, 2008), 229-230. The author identifies time as the most important factor.

9. The available time is typically unknown and depends somewhat on domestic political support. Furthermore, the mere presence of a published schedule provides a definitive strategic advantage to hostile elements, who can exploit it to their advantage. NATO therefore needs a theory that would allow an engagement for as long as necessary.

10. United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, United Nations website, accessed 9 July 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>; Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th ed., s.v. "natural law." *Lex Naturalis* (natural law, or the law of nature) is defined as a body of law or a specific principle held to be derived from nature and binding upon human society in the absence of or in addition to positive law.

11. Jim Gant, *A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan: One Tribe at a Time* (Los Angeles: Nine Sisters Imports, Inc., 2009), accessed 9 July 2015, [http://www.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/one\\_tribe\\_at\\_a\\_time\\_ed2.pdf](http://www.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/one_tribe_at_a_time_ed2.pdf).

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**MR We Recommend**



## Buying Time, 1965-1966

**B**uying Time, 1965-1966, by Frank L. Jones, begins with President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to commit the U.S. military to an escalating role in the ground war against the Communist government of North Vietnam and its allies in South Vietnam known as the Viet Cong. Beginning in 1965, William C. Westmoreland, the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, sent large numbers of soldiers on search-and-destroy missions against Viet Cong forces. His strategy in Vietnam depended on the superiority of U.S. firepower, including intensive aerial bombardments of regular enemy units. The goal was to inflict more losses than the Communist forces could sustain. During 1966, the United States gradually built up not just its forces, but also the logistical and administrative infrastructure needed to support them. Pacification, which took a lesser role during the military buildup, remained central to the allies' approach to the war, with the White House taking additional measures to elevate its importance.

# The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counter-insurgency

Bernard B. Fall, PhD

*E*ditor's note: Due to the events of 9/11, the U.S. Army was forced to undergo a major retooling of its doctrine, practice, and support systems in order to deal with a plethora of unconventional adversaries that have subsequently not gone away. Part of this retooling was resuscitation and revitalization of counterinsurgency doctrine, largely moribund since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Among the hard lessons relearned over the last fifteen years is that the outcome of counterinsurgency largely depends on a range of political, economic, and cultural factors over which the U.S. military, or even the U.S. government, has marginal control. For example, most observers appear to agree that the highly successful counterinsurgency campaign that exploited the "Awakening" in Anbar Province, Iraq, from 2005 to 2008, which pitted largely Sunni tribes against al-Qaida operatives, opened a window of national reconciliation that was then completely undermined by the Shia parochialism of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's administration. As a result, many tribal members who had fought against al-Qaida joined with the Islamic State starting in 2013 to fight the Shia-dominated army and government, resulting in



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps)

Dr. Bernard Fall, author of *The Street Without Joy*, takes a break 20 February 1967 with Company C, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, on Operation Chinook II. Fall was killed by an enemy booby trap the following day.

regional chaos and laying waste to what was formerly regarded as a U.S. counterinsurgency success.

It is against the backdrop of the current situation in Iraq, as well as similar setbacks in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, and elsewhere, that the observations Bernard Fall made fifty years ago concerning a similarly unraveling situation in South Vietnam still apply. "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," which attributed strategic as well as tactical counterinsurgency failure to the alienation of the people from central government due to the parochial hubris of those in power, rings with particularly disturbing familiarity. His essay unmasks a prerequisite for counterinsurgency success encapsulated by the timeless observation that "when a country is being subverted it is not being outfought; it is being out-administered."

Fall's work, based on a lecture delivered at the Naval War College on 10 December 1964, was originally published in the April 1965 issue of *Naval War College Review*, then republished in the Winter 1998 edition of that same journal. Minor edits have been performed here only to reflect *Military Review* style.

If we look at the twentieth century alone, we are now in Vietnam faced with the forty-eighth “small war.” Let me just cite a few: Algeria, Angola, Arabia, Burma, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cuba, East Germany, France, Haiti, Hungary, Indochina, Indonesia, Kashmir, Laos, Morocco, Mongolia, Nagaland [an Indian state on the Burmese border], Palestine, Yemen, Poland, South Africa, South Tyrol, Tibet, Yugoslavia, Venezuela, West Irian [Indonesia, on New Guinea], etc. This, in itself, is quite fantastic.

## The Century of “Small Wars”

In fact, if a survey were made of the number of people involved, or killed, in these forty-eight small wars it would be found that these wars, *in toto*, involved as many people as either one of the two world wars, and caused as many casualties. Who speaks of “insurgency” in Colombia? It is mere banditry, apparently. Yet it has killed two hundred thousand people so far and there is no end to it. The new Vietnam War, the “Second Indochina War” that began in 1956–57 and is still going on, is now going to reach in 1965, according to my calculations, somewhere around the two hundred thousand-dead mark. Officially, seventy-nine thousand dead are acknowledged, but this is far too low. These may be small wars as far as expended ordnance is concerned. But they certainly are not “small wars” in terms of territory or population, since such countries as China or Algeria were involved. These wars are certainly not small for the people who fight in them, or who have to suffer from them. Nor are they small, in many cases, for the counterinsurgency operator.

One of the problems one immediately faces is that of terminology. Obviously “sublimated warfare” is meaningless, and “insurgency” or “counterinsurgency” hardly define the problem. But the definition that I think will fit the subject is “revolutionary warfare” (RW).

Let me state this definition:  $RW = G + P$ , or, “revolutionary warfare equals guerrilla warfare plus political action.” This formula for revolutionary warfare is the result of the application of guerrilla methods to the furtherance of an ideology or a political system. This is the *real* difference between partisan warfare, guerrilla warfare, and everything else. “Guerrilla” simply means “small war,” to which the correct Army answer is (and that applies to *all* Western armies) that everybody

knows how to fight small wars; no second lieutenant of the infantry ever learns anything else but how to fight small wars. Political action, however, is the difference. The communists, or shall we say, any sound revolutionary warfare operator (the French underground, the Norwegian underground, or any other European anti-Nazi underground) most of the time used small-war tactics—not to destroy the German army, of which they were thoroughly incapable, but to establish a competitive system of control over the population. Of course, in order to do this, here and there they had to kill some of the occupying forces and attack some of the military targets. But above all they had to kill their own people who collaborated with the enemy.

But the “kill” aspect, the military aspect, definitely always remained the minor aspect. The political, administrative, ideological aspect is the primary aspect. Everybody, of course, by definition, will seek a military solution to the insurgency problem, whereas by its very nature, the insurgency problem is military only in a secondary sense, and political, ideological, and administrative in a primary sense. Once we understand this, we will understand more of what is actually going on in Vietnam or in some of the other places affected by RW.

## Recent and Not-So-Recent Cases

The next point is that this concept of revolutionary war can be applied by anyone anywhere. One doesn’t have to be white to be defeated. One doesn’t have to be European or American. Col. [Gamal Abdel] Nasser’s [president of Egypt, 1956–1970] recent experience in Yemen is instructive. He fought with forty thousand troops, Russian tanks, and Russian jets in Yemen against a few thousand barefoot Yemenite guerrillas. The tanks lost. After three years of inconclusive fighting, the Egyptian-backed Yemen regime barely holds the major cities, and Nasser is reported to be on the lookout for a face-saving withdrawal.

Look at the great Indian army’s stalemate by the Nagas. And who are the Nagas? They are a backward people of five hundred thousand on the northeastern frontier of India. After ten years of fighting, the Indian army and government are now negotiating with the Nagas. They have, for all practical purposes, lost their counterinsurgency operation. In other words (this is perhaps reassuring), losing an insurgency can happen to almost anybody. This is very important because one

more or less comes to accept as “fact” that losing counterinsurgency operations happens only to the West.

Very briefly, then, let me run through the real differences between, let us say, a revolutionary war and any other kind of uprising. A revolutionary war is usually fought in support of a doctrine, but a doctrine may be of a most variegated kind. It could be a peasant rebellion or it could be religion. For example, in Europe between the 1300s and the 1600s, as the feudal system evolved and then disappeared and was replaced by the early stages of the capitalist system, there were many peasant rebellions. Those peasant rebellions were fought, even though the people did not know it, for economic and social doctrines. The peasants were sick and tired of being serfs and slaves working for a feudal lord. Those peasant rebellions were in line with later socioeconomic movements. This is why the communists, of course, retroactively lay claim to the European peasant rebellions.

There were, of course, the religious wars in Europe—Protestant versus Catholic. Their doctrinal (ideological) character was self-explanatory. As soon as we run into that kind of war, not all the rich and not all the poor will stick together with their own kind. Doctrine somehow will cut across all social lines. This is often misunderstood. We look, for example, at the Viet Cong insurgency in Vietnam, and expect that all the Viet Cong are “communists” of low class. Then we find out that there are intellectuals in the Viet Cong. There are Buddhist priests, Catholic priests, and minority people. Hence, this very oversimplified view of the enemy falls by the wayside; we are now faced with something which is much more complicated and multifaceted, and the enemy, of



(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

French troops seek cover in their trenches as Viet Minh forces attack with artillery, mounted on the hills in the distance, during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. The battle, fought March–May 1954, ultimately culminated in defeat for France by the Viet Minh revolutionaries in Vietnam.

course, thanks to doctrine, cuts across all classes. Pham Van Dong, the prime minister of Communist North Vietnam, is a high-ranking Vietnamese nobleman whose father was chief of cabinet to one of the late Vietnamese emperors. One of his colleagues at school was Ngo Dinh Diem [president of South Vietnam, 1955–1963], a high-ranking nobleman whose father also had been chief of cabinet to one of the Vietnamese emperors. Ho Chi Minh [founder of the Viet Minh and leader of North Vietnam, 1945–1969] was not exactly born on the wrong side of the tracks. His father had a master’s degree in the mandarin administration. This is very important.

In a doctrinal conflict there are people on both sides who probably embrace the whole social spectrum. Although communists will always claim that all the peasants and workers are on their side, they find out to their surprise that not all the peasants or workers are on their side. On the other hand, neither are all the elites on our side.

Finally, we have the French Revolutionary War and the American Revolutionary War. There is a difference between the two. The American Revolutionary War was literally a “national liberation war.” It did not advocate the upsetting of the existing socioeconomic structure in this new country called the United States. But the American Revolutionary War brought something into this whole field which nobody really studied, and that is the difference in certain types of foreign aid that the United States received during its liberation war. What basically made the difference between, say, [the Marquis de] Lafayette and [the Comte de] Rochambeau? Lafayette was an integrated military adviser, but Rochambeau commanded a separate military force. He commanded French forces fighting alongside the United States forces, whereas [Tadeusz] Kosciuszko, [Baron Friedrich] Von Steuben, and Lafayette were actually the allied parts of the army that were sandwiched in (the new word for this in Washington is “interlarded”) with the United States forces.

What would happen if American officers actually were put into the Vietnamese command channels—not as advisers, but as operators; or if a Vietnamese officer were to serve in the American Army like the Korean troops in the U.S. Army in Korea? Perhaps this is one approach to the problem of “advisersmanship.” There was a whole group of foreign officers in the American Revolutionary War army. Were they “mercenaries,” and if so, who paid them? I don’t know. Were they Rochambeau’s men or not? Or, what was the difference

between Lafayette and the mercenaries of the Congo? I don't quite know. It would be interesting to find out.

The American Revolutionary War was a national liberation war in present-day terms. The French Revolution was, again, a social, economic, doctrinal war—a doctrinal revolution. In fact, it is amazing how well the doctrine worked. The French had developed three simple words: “*Liberté! Égalité! Fraternité!*” And that piece of propaganda held an enormous sway. For ten years after the French Revolution was dead and gone, French imperialism in the form of Napoleon marched through Europe taking over pieces of territories in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Millions of people throughout Europe turned on their own natural or home-grown leaders believing that this French concept of liberty, equality, and fraternity was carried around at the point of French bayonets.

To be sure, in many cases, Napoleon left behind a legacy of orderly administration, of such things as the Napoleonic Code, but certainly Napoleon did not bring independence any more than the communists bring independence. He did bring a kind of Western order which was highly acceptable. To this day there are slight remnants of Napoleon's administration in the Polish Code. The streets are lined with poplar trees in Austria because Napoleon lined such streets 167 years ago.

One thing that Napoleon also brought with him was French occupation and the first true, modern guerrilla wars against his troops. For example, the word “guerrilla,” as we know it, comes from the Spanish uprising against the French. There were similar wars, for example, in Tyrol. The Tyroleans rose up under Andreas Hofer against the French. There were such uprisings in Russia also, although they were in support of an organized military force, the Russian army. In that case we speak of partisan warfare. We also had such things in Germany, the *Tugend-Bund*, the “Virtue League.” This was sort of a Pan-Germanic underground which got its people into the various German states to work for the liberation of the country from French occupation.

Very interestingly, we see the difference between Napoleon and some of the other leaders in the field of counterinsurgency. Napoleon tended to make his family



(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Royalist Yemeni forces attempt to repel an Egyptian armored attack during the North Yemen Civil War. The conflict pitted semi-regular partisans and traditional tribesmen who supported the king of Yemen in a war against the conventional forces of the Yemen Arab Republic and its allies following a coup that had deposed the king in 1962. The war ended in 1970.

members and his cronies kings of those newly created French satellite states. One of his brothers, Joseph, got Spain, and Jerome got Westphalia, a French puppet state cut out in the Rhine area. The population of Westphalia rose up against Jerome. He sent a message to his brother saying, “I'm in trouble.” The answer returned was typically Napoleonic. It said, “By God, brother, use your bayonets. (Signed) Bonaparte.” A historic message came back from Jerome to his brother saying: “Brother, you can do anything with bayonets—except sit on them.” In other words: One can do almost anything with brute force except salvage an unpopular government. Jerome Bonaparte had the right idea, for *both* the right and wrong ideas about insurgency are just about as old as the ages. We have always found somebody who understood them.

What, then, did communism add to all this? Really very little. Communism has not added a thing that participants in other doctrinal wars (the French Revolution or the religious wars) did not know just as well. But communism did develop a more adaptable doctrine. The merit of communism has been to recognize precisely the usefulness of the social, economic, and political doctrines in this field for the purpose of diminishing as much as possible the element of risk inherent in the military effort. But if one prepares his terrain politically and organizes such things as a fifth column, one may reduce such risks by a great deal.

## Insurgency Indicators

The important thing is to know how to discover the symptoms of insurgency. This is where I feel that we are



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force)

Viet Cong terrorists exploded a bomb at 5:55 p.m. on 24 December 1964 in the garage area underneath the Brinks Hotel in Saigon, South Vietnam. The hotel, housing 125 military and civilian guests, was being used as officers' billets for U.S. Armed Forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

woefully lagging in Vietnam. I will show you how badly mistaken one can be in this particular field. For example, I have a Vietnamese briefing sheet in English which the Vietnamese government used to hand out. It is dated 1957 and is called *The Fight Against Communist Subversive Activities*. At the end of the last page it says: "From this we can see that the Viet Minh authorities have disintegrated and been rendered powerless." Famous last words!

Here is a communication by Professor Wesley Fishel, who was the American public police adviser in Vietnam in the late 1950s. He said in August 1958, "Indeed, Vietnam can be classed as about the most stable and peaceful country in all of Asia today." I would underline the fact that in 1958 the Vietnamese were losing something like three village chiefs a day. But village chiefs were not considered a military target. They were not considered part of our calculations with regard to what makes a war. For example, the *Infantry Journal* of August 1960 stated:

The Communist objectives, for the most part, have been thwarted by South Vietnamese military strength. Threats and actual attacks have been made on American advisers through their armed forces. The fact that

these attacks have been made is a good indication that the American aid is effective.

What this seems to mean is that if American advisers get killed in Vietnam we are doing fine. *The Air Force and Space Digest* of June 1962 stated:

There are a few things about the insurgent warfare that favor the use of air power and one of them is that the jungle rebels are not equipped with anti-aircraft, so that air superiority is practically assured.

That would be good news to the helicopter pilots, who represent the bulk of our casualties. In another *Air Force and Space Digest* article of August 1964 the following statement is made:

The figures of 1963 in the Vietnamese theater indicate that the cost/effectiveness of the air effort is high. It is estimated that the Vietnam Air Force uses less than 3 percent of the total military personnel. ... These planes account for more than a third of the total Viet Cong killed in action; that is 7,400 out of 20,600.

The joke, of course, if you can see the point, is that if 3 percent of the Vietnamese personnel effects 33 percent of the casualties, a simple tripling of that 3 percent of Air Force personnel would effect 100 percent of the casualties. Therefore, we need not send anybody else. But no one has considered that in all likelihood, of the 23,500 killed, a large part are noncombatant civilians. It is pretty hard to tell a Viet Cong [when you are] flying at two hundred fifty knots and from five hundred feet up, or more. This leads to the completely incongruous reasoning that if there are one hundred thousand Viet Cong in South Vietnam and the ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] kills 23,500 a year and maims perhaps another 25,000, and if we divide 100,000 Viet Cong by 50,000 a year, the war should be over in two years. This meaningless equation probably accounted for 1963 estimates of victory by 1965. This is precisely where "cost/effectiveness" has its limitations.

Such reports point to a phenomenon which seems to conform to a pattern. Allow me to cite a report on the subject:

There was little or no realism in the sense of appreciating facts and conditions as they really were or were going to be, instead of what was imagined or wanted to be. The cause was fundamental, consisting of an academic bureaucratic outlook, based on little realistic practice and

formed in an environment utterly different to what we experienced in the war.

In the case of the staff this environment was in the cool of an office or the comfort of the road, scarcely ever the rubber jungle with its storms and claustrophobic oppressiveness. All seemed good in a good world. There was no inducement to look below the surface or to change our appreciations.

The document is declassified now. It is a report of a British colonel whose regiment was destroyed in Malaya by the Japanese in 1941. This document is twenty-three years old. Yet it sounds like a U.S. adviser from yesterday. Then as now everybody likes to fight the war that he knows best; this is very obvious. But in Vietnam we fight a war that we don't "know best." The sooner this is realized the better it is going to be.

When I first arrived in Indochina in 1953, the French were mainly fighting in the Red River Delta. This was the key French area in North Vietnam ... [with a] fortified French battle line. The French headquarters city was Hanoi. When I arrived I checked in with the French briefing officer and asked what the situation was in the Delta. He said:

Well, we hold pretty much of it; there is the French fortified line around the Delta which we call the "Marshal de Lattre Line"—about 2,200 bunkers forming nine hundred forts. We are going to deny the communists access to the eight million people in this Delta and the three million tons of rice it produces. We will eventually starve them out and deny them access to the population.

In other words, this was the strategic hamlet complex seen five thousand times bigger. There were about eight thousand villages inside that line. This fortified line also protected the rice fields then, whereas now the individual strategic hamlets do not protect the same fields. "Well," I said, "do the communists hold anything inside the Delta?" The answer was, "Yes, they hold those five black blotches" [on a map]. But at the University of Hanoi, which was under national Vietnamese control, my fellow Vietnamese students just laughed. They said that their home villages inside the Delta were communist-controlled and had communist village chiefs, and just about everybody else said the same thing: that both the French and the Vietnamese army simply did not know what was going on.

Most of these villages were, in fact, controlled by the communists and I decided to attempt to document that control. It was actually very simple. To the last breath a government will try to collect taxes. So I used a working hypothesis; I went to the Vietnamese tax collection office in Hanoi to look at the village tax rolls. They immediately indicated that the bulk of the Delta was no longer paying taxes. As a cross-check on my theory I used the village teachers.

The school teachers in Vietnam were centrally assigned by the government. Hence, where there were school teachers the government could be assumed to have control. Where there were none, there was no government control. [I produced a map that showed] the difference between military "control" and what the communists controlled *administratively*, which was 70 percent of the Delta inside the French battle lines! This was *one year before the Battle of Dien Bien Phu*, in May 1954. In fact, the [official military situation maps—showing only small, isolated areas believed to be less than 30 percent French-controlled—were] complete fiction and had absolutely no bearing on the *real* situation inside the Delta. Of course, when regular communist divisions became available to attack the Delta in June 1954, the whole illusion collapsed. ... The last French battle line before the ceasefire [lay deep in a zone that was, in fact, solidly] communist-infiltrated and, of course, it collapsed overnight. That is revolutionary warfare. You now have seen the difference between the two.

## Revolutionary Warfare in South Vietnam

When I returned to Vietnam in 1957, after the Indochina War had been over for two years, everybody was telling me that the situation was fine. However, I noticed in the South Vietnamese press obituaries of village chiefs, and I was bothered. I thought there were just too many obituaries—about one a day—allegedly killed not by communists, but by "unknown elements," and by "bandits." I decided to plot out a year's worth of dead village officials. The result was that I counted about 452 dead village chiefs to my knowledge at that time. Then I also saw in the press, and here and there in Vietnam heard, discussions about "bandit attacks." These attacks were not made at random, but in certain areas. That too worried me, so I decided to plot the attacks. I immediately noted in both cases a very strange pattern. The attacks on the village chiefs were "clustered" in certain areas.

I went to see the Vietnamese minister of the interior, Nguyen Huu Chau, who then was, incidentally, the brother-in-law of Madame Nhu [Diem's sister-in-law], and I said to him: "Your Excellency, there is something I'm worried about. You know that I was in the North when the French were losing and I noticed the village chiefs disappearing and I think you now have the same problem here." He said, "What do you mean?" So I just showed him the map. He said, "Well, since you found that out all by yourself, let me show you *my* map." And he pulled out a map which showed not only the village chiefs but also the communist cells operating in South Vietnam in 1957–58, when Vietnam was at peace and there was supposedly nothing going on. It was wonderful. We all congratulated each other. Yet, very obviously, to use a somewhat unscientific term, the whole Mekong Delta was going "to hell in a basket," and much of South Vietnam with it.<sup>1</sup>

The insurgency cross-check was unexpectedly provided to me by the International Control Commission (ICC). They get reports from the communists as well as from our side, but in this case what interested me was the alleged incidents inside South Vietnam. The communists would report from Hanoi, through the ICC, that Americans or Vietnamese were doing certain things out in the villages which Hanoi alleged were "violations" of the ceasefire agreement. I said to myself, "If I plot out all the communist reports about alleged violations on a map, and if they match high-incident areas, there may be a logical connection between the guerrilla operators and the intelligence operators who provide the basis for the

ICC reports." Sure enough, the same areas with the high incidents also had high reports. As of early 1958, I knew we were in deep trouble in Vietnam and I kept saying so.

In 1959 the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization gave me a research grant to do a study on communist infiltration in the area. One of the results of the study: Saigon was deliberately encircled and cut off from the hinterland with a "wall" of dead village chiefs. President Kennedy, in his second State of the Union message on 25 May 1961, stated that during the past year (meaning April 1960–61) the communists killed *four thousand minor officials* in Vietnam! This was one year before the [Maxwell] Taylor Report which got the whole American major effort going. In other words, in 1960 and 1961 the communists killed *eleven village officials a day*. By the time we woke up and learned that we had a problem, the communists had killed about ten thousand village chiefs in a country that has about sixteen thousand villages. This, gentlemen, is "control"—not the military illusion of it.

From then on, it was open and shut. One year later, in 1963, somebody discovered that my system of judging insurgent control from tax returns was applicable to South Vietnam also. ... [The U.S. Agency for International Development, or AID, produced figures that] reflected the situation for March–May 1963, six months before Diem was overthrown, and four months before the Buddhist outbreaks. To make a long story short, in twenty-seven provinces the communists ... were formally collecting taxes with bonds, receipts, and tax declarations. In [ten more areas] they were collecting taxes on an informal basis. There were only three provinces out of forty-five which reported no communist tax collections!

## The Erroneous Criteria of "Success"

I have emphasized that the straight military aspects, or the conventional military aspects of insurgency, are not the most important. Tax collections have nothing to do with helicopters. Village chiefs have nothing to do with M-113s [armored personnel carriers] except in the most remote sense, nor with the aerial bombardment of North Vietnam. What we are faced with precisely is a communist, military-backed operation to take over a country under our feet. I would like to put it in even a simpler way: *When a country is being subverted it is not being*



(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Viet Minh communist-nationalist revolutionaries plant their flag over a captured French position in Vietnam during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954.

*outfought; it is being out-administered.* Subversion is literally administration with a minus sign in front. This is what I feel has to be clearly understood. Whether it is the Congo, Vietnam, or Venezuela is totally irrelevant. Whether we have the “body count,” the “kill count,” the “structure count,” or the “weapons count”—these are almost meaningless considerations in an insurgency situation. We can lose weapons and still win the insurgency. On the other hand, we can win the war and lose the country.

We always hang on for dear life to the Malayan example, which, of course, is totally unworkable. The only thing that Vietnam has which resembles Malaya is the climate. We don't give the communists credit for making mistakes, yet Malaya was one of their big mistakes. They actually decided to take on the British in a straight-forward military operation and, predictably, failed.

If revolutionary war simply were jungle war, every regular force could win it. Americans know how to fight jungle wars. One can fight a revolutionary war in Norway, or fight a revolutionary war in France. It doesn't take a jungle to fight a revolutionary war. One can take over villages not only in the highlands of Vietnam, but in the lowlands of Belgium the same way. This is, of course, the key point. Remember that the British fought in Cyprus, and seemingly had everything in their favor. It is an island half the size of New Jersey. The Royal Navy, which can be trusted to do its job, sealed off the island from the outside. There were forty thousand British troops on Cyprus under Field Marshal Sir John Harding, and his opponent, Col. [George] Grivas, had three hundred Greeks in the EOKA [National Organization of Cypriot Struggle]. The ratio between regular troops and guerrillas was 110-to-1 in favor of the British! After five years the British preferred to come to terms with the rebels.

The French in Algeria learned every lesson from the French in Vietnam. The troop ratio there was a comfortable 11-to-1; the French had 760,000 men, the Algerians

had 65,000. The French very effectively sealed off the Algerian-Tunisian border, and by 1962 had whittled down the guerrillas from sixty-five thousand to seven thousand. But the French were winning at the expense of being the second-most-hated country in the world,



(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

An Algerian Armée de Libération Nationale insurgent fires a mortar across the Morce Line from inside Tunisia at French positions in Algeria (circa 1958). The Morce Line was a narrow 320-mile stretch of territory along the border between the two states fortified by an electrified fence, barbed wired, and mines.

after South Africa, in the United Nations. They were giving the whole Western alliance a black name.<sup>2</sup> At what price were the French winning? Well, 760,000 men out of the about one million men of the French armed forces were tied down in Algeria. It cost three million dollars a day for *eight years*, or \$12 billion in French money. No American aid was involved. The “price” also included two mutinies of the French army and one overthrow of the

civilian government. At that price the French were winning the war in Algeria *militarily*. The fact was that the military victory was totally meaningless. This is where the word “grandeur” applies to President de Gaulle: he was capable of seeing through the trees of military victory to a forest of political defeat and he chose to settle the Algerian insurgency by other means.

Some of these wars, of course, *can* be won, as in the Philippines, for example. The war was won there *not* through military action (there wasn't a single special rifle invented for the Philippines, let alone more sophisticated ordnance) but through an extremely well-conceived civic action program and, of course, a good leader—[Ramon] Magsaysay.

Civic action is not the construction of privies or the distribution of antimalarial sprays. One can't fight an ideology; one can't fight a militant doctrine with better privies. Yet this is done constantly. One side says, “land reform,” and the other side says, “better culverts.” One side says, “We are going to kill all those nasty village chiefs and landlords.” The other side says, “Yes, but look, we want to give you prize pigs to improve your strain.” These arguments just do not match. Simple but adequate appeals will have to be found sooner or later.

## Conclusion

What, then, can be done in a war like Vietnam? Does the West have to lose such wars automatically? I said at the beginning that even the non-Westerners can lose those wars. But, either way, one must attempt to preserve the essentials. The question in my mind is this: Can we in Vietnam, or anywhere else, save (or improve) the administrative or governmental structure? The answer is obvious, and there is no other effort really worth doing. We have tried this with the “strategic hamlets” and that literally failed. Out of 8,500 strategic hamlets, about 1,400 survived the effort. Some people have spoken of what is called the “oil-slick principle,” which has been described as the holding of one particular area, one central area, and working one’s way out of the center. That was fine when the French developed the concept for the Sahara, because in the Sahara there are obligatory watering points. If they have all the oases, those outside have to come in and get water. But Vietnam doesn’t happen to be the Sahara or an oasis. Thus, the oil-slick method succeeds mostly in pushing the Viet Cong units into the next province. Of course, it looks good, at least, because

for one week there will be a “cleared” province. For the time being this is considered adequate until something more imaginative is discovered.

The actual thing that can be done, and is also being done, is what the French call *quadrillage* (gridding). One doesn’t start from the center of something and work one’s way out, but he starts from the periphery and works one’s way *in*. The chances are that if it is done right, and if it is done in enough places at once, some communist units will finally get fixed (as the army says) and caught. This may yet work, but this requires a high degree of manpower saturation not available in Vietnam.

There are no easy shortcuts to solving the problems of revolutionary war. In fact, I would like to close with one last thought, which applies, of course, to everything that is done in the armed forces, but particularly to revolutionary war: *If it works, it is obsolete*. In Vietnam and in many other similar situations we have worked too often with well-working but routine procedures and ideas. It is about time that new approaches and—above all—ideas be tried; obviously, the other ones have been unequal to the task. ■

*Bernard B. Fall was born in 1926 in Austria to Jewish parents but escaped temporarily with his family to France after the Nazi annexation of that country. His parents were later captured and killed as part of Hitler’s “Final Solution.” At age sixteen, he joined the French Resistance and fought in the French underground from 1942 to 1944. He then joined the French 4th Moroccan Mountain Division, in which he served until 1946. After resigning from the French army, he served from 1946 to 1948 as a war crimes investigator at Nuremberg. Subsequently, he was educated at the University of Paris, the Ludwig-Max University (Munich), and Syracuse University, where he began his field research in Indochina in 1953. He later joined the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University in 1954, and completed a PhD from Syracuse in 1955. He then moved to Howard University in 1956, where he became a professor of international relations and spent the remainder of his academic career. During the course of his research through the 1950s and 1960s, he made frequent trips to Southeast Asia to collect information and observe first hand unfolding events. He was among the first to predict the failure of France in its efforts to retain colonial control over Indochina, as well as the failure of the United States in its prosecution of the war in Vietnam because of what he noted were tactics formulated without an understanding of the societies in which the conflict was being fought. He was widely known for his writings on the French and American experiences in Vietnam. He died in Hué, South Vietnam, in 1967, patrolling with U.S. Marines on Highway 1 as part of a writing research project.*

## Notes

1. Cf. Bernard Fall, “South Viet-Nam’s Internal Problems,” *Pacific Affairs*, September 1958.

2. For example, when the French effected a reprisal raid on rebel bases in Tunisia on 8 February 1958, several senior U.S.

leaders expressed shock and demanded the return to U.S. control of American-made aircraft used by the French.



(Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)  
*Scheherazade and Sultan Schariar* (1880),  
oil on canvas, by Ferdinand Keller.

# INTERPERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

## The Indispensable Warrior Skill

Lt. Col. Robert M. Hill, EdD, U.S. Army, Retired

**T**he story of *The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights* is as simple as it is timeless.<sup>1</sup> In it, a Persian king, betrayed by an

unfaithful wife, swears that the only way to ensure complete devotion is to marry a virgin every night and kill her the next morning. After killing three thousand wives, he

marries the daughter of a trusted advisor who believes she can end his reign of terror. Her name: Scheherazade.

The night of the wedding, Scheherazade's sister begs the king to let Scheherazade finish a story she had started the night before. So, in his presence, Scheherazade commences in telling her sister the rest of the story, unraveling it so that its climax occurs just before dawn, the time set for her execution. The king is so enthralled that he spares her with the caveat that she finish the story that evening. She follows the same pattern for 1,001 nights, holding the king rapt through the night and leaving him begging for more each morning. Hers is, in essence, the ultimate information operation, in which she averts death through the use of powerful narratives that change the king's attitudes and perceptions, and, ultimately, his behavior.

After more than four thousand nights of war in the lands of Scheherazade's tales, we have learned much about the power of informing and influencing or, conversely, the consequences of not employing synchronized information-related capabilities effectively. These lessons have been hard-won, and we are still learning. One critical lesson is how essential face-to-face, interpersonal engagement is to mission success. Despite this realization, we are not doing nearly enough to develop interpersonal engagement skills and to make soldiers and leaders experts at them. In truth, we never have.

## The Human Domain

In their preface to the white paper *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, Gen. Raymond Odierno, Army chief of staff; Gen. James Amos, Marine Corps commandant; and Adm. William McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, argue that national objectives cannot be achieved through technical and technological solutions alone. The white paper states, "time and again, the United States has undertaken to engage in conflict without fully considering the physical, cultural, and social environments that comprise what some have called the 'human domain.'"<sup>2</sup> The significance of the human domain is only becoming more pronounced in an increasingly complex, interconnected, asymmetrical, multipolar world, and it drives the need to achieve human objectives as well as physical ones. As the senior officers say in their white paper—

As important as the military's lethal power is to coerce within the international arena, it is

not the only or often the most effective way the United States has to deter war and meet the nation's other strategic goals. If one accepts that the capacity to avoid or prevent a conflict is at least as important as waging war, then it is easy to see that the use of military power across a wide range of situations does not fundamentally weaken or imperil the nation's security. Rather, it strengthens it.<sup>3</sup>

Given this premise, the paper asserts that "the success of future strategic initiatives and the ability of the United States to shape a peaceful and prosperous global environment will rest more and more on our ability to understand, influence, and exercise control within the 'human domain,'" ideally by shaping conditions through proactive and persistent engagement at all levels, including one-on-one, face-to-face engagements between individual soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen and indigenous populations.<sup>4</sup>

The white paper raises an important question: are our soldiers and leaders sufficiently skilled in engagement, especially of the interpersonal variety, that they could decisively change the outcome of conflict or even prevent it in the first place?

## Nonlethal Marksmanship

An essential task of every soldier, sailor, Marine, and airmen is the ability to qualify with his or her assigned weapon; in other words, to engage targets with lethal accuracy. Yet, the parallel task of engaging nonlethal targets, especially other humans, does not get the same emphasis. Qualifying with one's weapon results in a badge, medal, or ribbon and, possibly, promotion points; in contrast, a common qualifying process to train and test interpersonal engagement, negotiation, or diplomacy does not exist. Perhaps such formal recognition is deemed unneeded because it is tacitly assumed that either soldiers and leaders already have developed competence for engaging with others as a natural extension of having discharged their regular duties, or that such training is subsumed within the Army's normal progression of developmental leadership training and practice in general. Such assumptions fail to account for the complex and challenging nature of truly effective human engagement, which requires mental deftness and intelligence, the capability of observing and understanding nuanced expressions of voice and body language, and the

ability to respond in unambiguous ways—all skills necessarily honed by practice and scenario rehearsal.

Interestingly, if you Google “interpersonal” or “social” engagement, the top results typically include topics on ways to enhance social engagement for those diagnosed with autism. One way to explain this outcome is that social engagement effectiveness is presumed innate among the general population. However, the practical experience of the Army reveals that such effectiveness is elusive for many.

These faulty assumptions have resulted in a glaring lack of initial and sustainment training for this increasingly essential skill set. The central premise of this article is that interpersonal engagement is *sine qua non* for all members of the Department of Defense and must be taught, cultivated, practiced, and assessed continually throughout our careers because our lives, the lives of others, and mission success will increasingly depend on it.

The evolution of mission command strengthens this assertion, but only if there is universal acceptance of the idea that interpersonal engagement is not solely the unit commander’s responsibility. Instead, there needs to be cultural acceptance within the military that informing and influencing diverse audiences, internal and external to the unit, is a universal duty that requires everyone within the command to become highly proficient at interpersonal communication, just as each soldier must be proficient with a rifle or a pistol.

## A Culture of Engagement

It is important to understand what interpersonal engagement means, and what is expected of those who practice it habitually. This understanding will enable the Army and, more broadly, the Department of Defense to formulate the education and training necessary to produce nonlethal engagement experts.

Field Manual (FM) 3-13, *Inform and Influence Activities*, codifies soldier and leader engagement (SLE) as an information-related capability that commanders and staffs can employ in integrated fashion—along with



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann, 23rd Infantry Regiment PAO)

Capt. Troy Yoho, the commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, exchanges greetings with an Afghan farmer while his unit conducts a dismounted presence patrol near Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, 2 June 2013.

military information support operations, public affairs operations, civil affairs operations, and cyber electromagnetic activities, among others—to shape the information environment to operational advantage.<sup>5</sup> Defined as “interpersonal interactions by soldiers and leaders with audiences in an area of operations,” SLE has the value of being the most readily available and often most potent tool in a unit’s quiver of information-related capabilities, particularly at the tactical level.<sup>6</sup> What FM 3-13 makes

clear, however, is that SLE cannot, or should not, be left to chance.

The FM states that SLE is characterized by six principles:<sup>7</sup>

- ◆ Consistency. SLE must communicate the same essential meaning as other operational activities.
- ◆ Cultural awareness. SLE is conducted in the context of local customs, beliefs, and ways of communicating.
- ◆ Adaptability. SLE must shape conditions and respond to a changing operational environment with appropriate, flexible, and timely actions.
- ◆ Credibility. Successful SLE requires the trust and confidence of the population in the Army forces with whom they interact.
- ◆ Balance. Soldiers and leaders must balance their engagement efforts between the inclination to achieve the desired effect and the requirement to actively listen and understand another's point of view.
- ◆ Pragmatism. Soldiers and leaders must accept the unpredictable, often opaque, nature of communications and operate with realistic expectations of message formulation and control.

While logical, these principles are not necessarily intuitive. Conducting SLEs that reflect these characteristics requires more than the presumption that soldiers and leaders are SLE-ready merely as a consequence of their career progression, their education, or other training, or even as a result of deliberate planning; it requires ongoing practice, reinforcement, and refinement.

Ultimately, interpersonal engagement proficiency requires a shift within the Army that creates a pervasive culture of engagement, not just within a given command but also, just as importantly, across the Army, the Department of Defense, and the Nation. As will be explored later, the benefits for creating and nurturing a culture of interpersonal engagement where skills are practiced daily are vast: from diminishing the potential for soldier suicides, to thwarting extremist behavior, or to improving the social enterprise that undergirds human progress and achievement.

## Rules of Engagement

Those who have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality inventory, or similar psychological test instrument gain an understanding that humans have innate behavioral preferences or patterns derived

from four dichotomies.<sup>8</sup> The first of these dichotomies is extroversion-introversion. It seeks to explain the preference for focusing one's attention outwardly or inwardly when making decisions or forming judgments. While extroverts may have an initial advantage when it comes to interpersonal engagement, they are fundamentally no more likely to succeed at it than are introverts.

Success at interpersonal engagement depends on knowing one's strengths and weaknesses, as well as one's innate preferences, and learning to adapt them to the present moment. The value of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or similar instruments is the forced realization that one is not doomed to innate preferences; one may learn to act "against type" when it benefits the situation at hand. The ability to shift between extroversion and introversion, forcefulness and calm, bold action and methodical implementation, does not mean that one abandons core values or principles in the name of expediency. SLE demands that all engagements be highly principled; otherwise, they cannot be either consistent or credible.

In other words, SLE demands that soldiers possess the ability to adapt their presence, posture, and profile nimbly in order to inform or influence with maximum effect. This simple requirement is not easy to achieve, however. While soldiers are not doomed to innate preferences, they are sometimes enslaved by them. Identifying and learning to master their habits, preferences, and styles of interpersonal interaction requires a conscientious and willing mindset. Mastery begins with the realization that effective communication operates on three levels simultaneously: physical, emotional/rational, and spiritual/conceptual.

**Physical.** Engagements occur in real time and space and affect real lives. They are ritualistic in nature and involve visible protocols, procedures, and practices. Effective communication is enhanced when engagers are mindful of—and shape—the reality in which engagements occur.

**Emotional/Rational.** Engagements affect the hearts and minds of those engaged and engaging. Mastering the ability to appeal to one, or the other, or both is essential to effective engagement.

**Spiritual/Conceptual.** Engagement, communication, and dialog occur between and among individuals rooted in specific ways of believing and knowing. Ultimately, engagement is a shared process of constructing meaning among all involved. The ability to inform and influence effectively requires the engager

to appreciate and acknowledge the foundational belief system of those being engaged, as well as his or her own, and to navigate skillfully through those systems to construct bridges of meaning that support the commander's intent and operational and strategic objectives.

Engagement mastery also requires the development and refinement of the following traits: authenticity, presence, openness, and discernment. These traits can, and must, be repeatedly practiced.

**Authenticity.** To be authentic is not only to be perceived as the “real deal” but to be in fact genuine. It is vital to become comfortable in one's own skin so that engaging others is not forced or contrived. Rather, authenticity is an effortless and genuine extension of concern for others' well-being. One might be tempted to believe that it is an innate quality reserved only for a few, but it is not. One becomes authentic by practicing being authentic, to the point that it becomes second nature.

**Presence.** Think of any number of recent encounters you have had. How often did you find yourself wondering if you were essentially talking to yourself? How often were you or your target audience distracted by other things, such as your phone?

Engagement, by definition, requires active involvement and listening as well as commitment on both sides. For this commitment to be meaningful, however, engagers must be fully present in each and every moment of the engagement.

**Openness.** There is often the mistaken notion that engaging audiences, particularly foreign audiences, requires a guarded, selective, self-interested, or even cagey approach. Such approaches invariably backfire. Guardedness and selectiveness are likely to be misjudged as distrust, self-interest as arrogance, and caginess as manipulation. Certainly, measured caution and principled calculation are appropriate when entering into new or uncharted engagements, but developing confidence in one's ability to engage others translates into openness, honesty, and trustworthiness.

**Discernment.** This trait results from heightened awareness. It is the ability to differentiate one actor or audience from another; to understand subtle undercurrents shaping a given engagement; to read between the lines of a conversation; and to reconcile physical or facial gestures with spoken words to understand what is really being said. Most important, it is the ability to see each person being engaged as a unique individual worth one's time and attention. This last point is especially important when dealing with any actor or audience outside the engager's comfort zone, such as those encountered in foreign areas of operations.

Of course, these four attributes continually interact and interweave. The more authentic one is, the more present and open one becomes. The more present and open, the more one is able to discern and, as a result, the more authentic one becomes, and so on.

In early 2013, a short video titled *This is Water* made a splash on the internet. It was based on a commencement speech by writer David Foster Wallace to the graduates of Kenyon College in 2005. Due to rights issues, it was removed, although it has been restored, and the text of Wallace's speech remains in print and online.<sup>9</sup> It is worth reading because it discusses the power these attributes provide for navigating existence and human interactions with empathy and compassion. These may seem odd, even counterintuitive, terms to use when discussing military operations; but, after



(Photo by Spc. Samantha R. Ciaramitaro, Joint Combat Camera Iraq)

Soldiers from the 1314th Civil Affairs Company, 17th Fires Brigade, meet with a sheik 10 September 2009 in Karmat Ali, Iraq, to inform him that the Al-Hajrat grammar school in his village was chosen to be refurbished.

centuries of conflict, we are discovering (or rediscovering) the ancient truth that all activity is fundamentally human-centered. The more we maneuver successfully in the human domain, the more likely we are to positively affect the outcomes of lethal and nonlethal conflicts. In fact, so critical is this truth that one more attribute is added to the list above: *humanity*.

Wallace concludes his speech by saying that we possess great freedom to choose what we think about. Either we can be “lords of our tiny skull-sized kingdoms, alone at the center of all creation,” or attentive, aware, and disciplined enough “truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day.” In other words, humans are the water that surrounds us: so obvious and pervasive that they become “hidden in plain sight.”<sup>10</sup>

The power of effective engagement is the ability to re-see the people around us and to recalibrate our thinking about what is important and what is not. Ultimately, unless we live alone on an island, everything involves interpersonal relationships. We simply must be more conscious of, and conscientious about, this reality and its implications.

## Engagement Development, Education, and Training—A Way Forward

Becoming more conscious and conscientious about engaging others starts with a more proactive, explicit, and deliberate approach to educating and training the force on interpersonal relationships and engagement. Authenticity, presence, openness, discernment, and humanity are learnable traits that can only be realized through repeated, rehearsed application, reflection, and reapplication. The Army, through its enlisted, warrant officer, and commissioned officer training and education programs, needs to increase both the study and practice of interpersonal communication and to make it a mandatory subject area that does not get squeezed out by other priorities.

In terms of subject matter, the professional military education system, as well as unit and individual training, needs to address the following topics, among others, iteratively and developmentally:

- ◆ Self-awareness
- ◆ Awareness of others

- ◆ The information environment in which communication occurs

- ◆ Communication art and communications science, to include intracultural and intercultural communication, and the means or media through which distinct audiences receive information

- ◆ Attitudinal-based versus behavioral-based influence techniques and the role motivation plays in changing behavior

- ◆ Conflict resolution

- ◆ Diplomacy

- ◆ Strategic communication

To engage successfully, one must know oneself: one's own strengths, weaknesses, and behavioral preferences. Armed with this knowledge, soldiers at all levels are better able to make informed decisions about how to reach out to—and how to inform or influence—specific actors and audiences. At the same time, key audiences can better anticipate how they might be engaged and adjust the way they receive others, listening and responding so the ensuing conversation becomes more meaningful and productive. In addition to a range of tools such as Myers-Briggs, Clifton StrengthsFinder, emotional intelligence assessment, and the Dominance-Influence-Steadiness-Conscientiousness profile, which assess how and why we act and react the way we do, simpler and less costly ways are available, such as facilitated or guided journaling, which asks individuals to reflect in writing on a range of issues or hypothetical situations. Reflective journaling enables individuals to record their behaviors and preferences and then, guided by an instructor's or leader's questions, analyze them in such a way that they achieve breakthrough insights that lead to more competent and nuanced communication.

Awareness of the information environment is cultivated chiefly by placing soldiers in a variety of actual and virtual environments and asking them to observe, analyze, and synthesize what they see and hear. Because every area of operations will have its unique attributes, soldiers must learn to see their operating environments through both external and internal lenses—and to view them as do members of the indigenous populations.

More than a decade of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan has taught us much about the need to engage foreign and indigenous audiences in culturally nuanced ways, ideally by integrating native communicators

into operational planning and execution efforts whenever feasible.<sup>11</sup> This important lesson explains, in large part, the creation of regionally aligned brigades. All soldiers must be trained in ways that enhance their appreciation and understanding of other cultures through research, studious observation, and ongoing dialog. It is important to recognize, however, that engagement training must go beyond noting differences and, instead, focus on commonness. The more that soldiers recognize the common humanity between them and those they engage, the more successful they will be in their efforts to inform and influence.

The remaining subject areas should be integrated into programs of instruction at the intermediate and advanced levels, such that mid- to senior-level soldiers and leaders can continue to refine their engagement skills and apply them to ever more complex scenarios and situations. But even as these advanced skills are being applied and developed, the basic skills need to be reiterated and practiced to ensure the attributes undergirding them become what the Italian Renaissance writer Baldassare Castiglione termed *sprezzatura* (practiced grace)—the ability to accomplish difficult tasks or actions while hiding the conscious effort behind them.<sup>12</sup> The end goal is to create expert practitioners completely at ease when engaging others, who are understanding of their environment, genuinely caring of those they are engaging, and wholly focused on achieving outcomes that accomplish the mission at hand while also promoting the common good.

### ... And World Peace

In the film *Miss Congeniality*, FBI agent Gracie Hart, played by Sandra Bullock, is asked during the question-and-answer portion of a beauty pageant, “What is the one most important thing our society needs?” She replies, “That would be harsher punishment for parole violators, Stan,” (pregnant pause) “and world peace.”<sup>13</sup> Of course, the humor here is that every other contestant has also answered “world peace,” which, like “solving world hunger,” pokes fun at our very human tendency to want to solve the unsolvable.



(Photo by Sgt. Jaime Deleon, Combined Joint Task Force 82 PAO)

Cpl. Jonathan Irwin (left) and Staff Sgt. Dwaine Hood, both with the 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, relax with local mullahs (religious leaders) and villagers 16 September 2009 at the Baraki Barak District Center while they wait for the last of the mullahs to arrive. The soldiers of Task Force Spartan delivered mosque refurbishment supplies and humanitarian aid packages to the mullahs to distribute to local families.

While we do not claim that enhanced interpersonal communication skills will lead to world peace, we do believe they can go a long way toward solving many of the challenges that we—as an Army and a society—face. For example, take the issue of soldier suicides. Those at risk for suicide sometimes feel socially isolated and unable to share their thoughts or feelings with others. Even if they are socially connected, they tend to withdraw as ideations of suicide grow stronger.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the Army’s intervention, Ask-Care-Escort, essentially requires interpersonal engagement as the means to thwart possible suicide.<sup>15</sup> The intervention to prevent sexual harassment or assault, Intervene-Act-Motivate, similarly depends on direct, person-to-person engagement.<sup>16</sup> In each case, the ability and willingness to engage others requires a level of competence and confidence that many find daunting. The verbiage that accompanies the act of intervening states, “I will have the personal courage to intervene and prevent sexual assault.”<sup>17</sup> Personal courage is definitely required, but such courage can be greatly facilitated when one is highly practiced at engaging others, just as the courage to jump out of an airplane is dramatically enhanced when one has one thousand jumps under his or her belt instead of just one.

If there is a contemporary cautionary—and extreme—example about the consequences of not creating a force of expert interpersonal engagers, whether across cultures or within one’s organization or team, it is found in the book

*Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent Into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death*, by Jim Frederick.<sup>18</sup> Essentially left to its own devices, a platoon spiraled out of control, and several of its members committed an atrocity as brutal as it was callous. More than a century earlier, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* captured the same kind of insidious consequences of disengagement and isolation, among them the myopic inflation of one's self-importance and the dehumanization of others.<sup>19</sup> Bad people will do bad things, but the chances are significantly lowered when the individuals are routinely engaged eye-to-eye, looked after, and are themselves trained in the skills and traits of interpersonal engagement, especially the ability to recognize the humanity and cultural uniqueness of those they engage. At the very least, such training will help reveal antisocial behavior and enable leaders to take appropriate corrective action.

## Conclusion

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, said, "We've been reminded that wars are a fundamentally human endeavor and always require interaction with a broad range of actors and potential partners."<sup>20</sup> In a complex world with complex problems, these interactions demand that soldiers be experts at interpersonal engagement. To become experts, they must qualify in a manner akin to qualifying with their weapons. With those, they are not allowed to just say, "I shot a lot growing up," or "Trust me, I'm really good at shooting," to become qualified. Rather, they must learn, zero, practice, and demonstrate proficiency on a qualification range annually. The same must be required of interpersonal engagement. Otherwise, unlike Scheherazade, they might wake up one day and find it their last. ■

Lt. Col. Robert M. Hill, EdD, U.S. Army, retired, is a military analyst and doctrine writer with the Information Operations Proponent Office. After twenty years on active duty in field artillery and public affairs assignments, he worked in the private sector for a decade in broadcasting and education. He holds a BS from the U.S. Military Academy, an MA from Duke University, and an EdD from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

## Notes

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2. Raymond Odierno, James Amos, and William McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command white paper (28 October 2013), 4, accessed 28 May 2015, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/FrontPageContent/Docs/StrategicLandpower-WhitePaper.pdf>.

3. Ibid., 6.

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7. Ibid., 8-1 and 8-2.

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12. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002).

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14. I acknowledge the assistance of John W. Stump, licensed marriage and family counselor and director, Psychological Health, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve for Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, in developing these statements concerning soldier suicides.

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(Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Matson, 34th Infantry Division PAO)

Capt. Joshua MacLean shakes hands with Abdul Rahim Mazai, *malik* (town leader) of Bajawri, outside a village mosque 6 December 2010 in Afghanistan's Parwan Province. MacLean served as an information officer with 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division.

# Religious Engagement and the Seventh Warfighting Function

## Time to Stop, Listen, and Engage

Maj. Theresa Ford, JD, U.S. Army

Why would you care about our religion?

—Afghan prosecutor, Helmand Province

Imagine yourself at a combat outpost in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in late March 2013, serving as an advisor to the local district prosecutor. One morning, you hear a barrage of gunfire. After the dust settles, you learn militants fired on villagers who were holding a peaceful protest to demand punishment for an Afghan police officer who had desecrated copies of the Quran at a local mosque days before.<sup>1</sup> You are concerned that anger over disrespect of Islam and the Taliban's blaming of U.S. forces for the incident could lead to violent mob justice.<sup>2</sup> How do you proceed?

Religion remains one of the most important elements of the human domain in Afghanistan and in many other regions where U.S. forces operate. Soldiers need to understand religion's importance and develop skills for building relationships with communities where religion plays a central role. The U.S. Army needs to teach soldiers how to engage people effectively on this important topic.<sup>3</sup> The Army's *engagement warfighting function* concept is a step in the right direction. According to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, the functional concept for engagement will help "institutionalize into Army doctrine, training, education, and leader development the capabilities and skills necessary to work with host nations, regional partners, and indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner."<sup>4</sup>

This article endeavors to promote this change in the Army's approach to working with nations, partners, and populations by showing how religious engagement was used to build relationships through the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands Program. It provides recommendations that could help soldiers conduct this type of engagement in the future.

In September 2014, the U.S. secretary of state announced a new maxim for foreign policy: "religion matters."<sup>5</sup> Religion matters for the work of soldiers as well as diplomats. Soldiers need to know not only how to "shoot, move, and communicate" but also how to "stop, listen, and engage," especially when dealing with religious issues.

It is immaterial whether soldiers themselves be religious or have any personal interest in religion. What is important, however, is that they know that in many parts of the world, religion does matter—it can affect the operating environment, just as it did in Helmand in March 2013.

Understanding the religious beliefs of the people whom U.S. forces endeavor to influence through training, advising, or assisting is imperative in places where religion matters to those people. Engaging in religious dialogue, not to be confused with proselytizing, can create a vital bridge between cultures. It can show a desire to learn about and understand others, which is vital for building trust and respect—the pillars of any enduring relationship.

## Breaking the Ice over Zam Zam

*Religious discussions will be frequent.*<sup>6</sup>

—T.E. Lawrence

I arrived at the district of Musa Qala (Fort of Moses) in northern Helmand Province on 19 February 2013.

A week later, I conducted a key leader engagement as a rule-of-law attorney with the deputy chief of police.<sup>7</sup> I greeted him in my limited Pashto.<sup>8</sup> I was unsure how to break the ice, but I knew he had performed the *hajj* because he carried the honorific *Hajji* in his name. Therefore, I asked him, continuing through an interpreter, how the water tasted at Zam Zam.<sup>9</sup> His face broke into a smile, and he asked how I knew about Zam Zam. I said I had read about Hagar, Ishmael, and the Prophet Mohammad, and that I respected his religion.<sup>10</sup>

The criminal investigative chief joined the meeting, and the conversation continued. I mentioned that Muslims and Christians shared many of the same prophets, including Musa (Moses), Ibrahim (Abraham), and Isa (Jesus). I said I was *ahl al-kitab*, or a "person of the book," to which the chief replied that the Quran said they were to treat *ahl al-kitab* well, and that I must read many books.<sup>11</sup> The conversation continued over kabobs. When the meal and conversation ended, I thanked them for their hospitality and departed.



(Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

A depiction of the archangel Gabriel from *The Wonders of Creation and the Oddities of Existence* - Egypt/Syria c.1375-1425 ACE.

## War Comes to Musa Qala

*The eyes of the world will be on Musa Qala.*

—Then U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood<sup>12</sup>

A few weeks after my key leader engagement with the deputy chief of police, the Quran desecration incident occurred in Helmand Province. The deputy was now trying to restore order to the district as residents called for the execution of the suspect. One day after the gunfight, I met with the prosecutor and told him in Dari that I was sorry to hear what happened to the holy books, to which he turned to me and asked why I would care about his religion.<sup>13</sup> Again, I mentioned Zam Zam, the prophets, and the fact that we shared many of them. I told the prosecutor that I respected his religion. He then appeared to realize that we had more in common than he thought; he said none of his advisors ever mentioned these things, and he thought Americans did not care about religion or Islam.

A few hours after our meeting, the prosecutor called and asked if I wanted to see the suspect, who was at the district governor's compound. As the prosecutor led me into the room where the suspect was held, I saw the deputy chief of police standing nearby. I placed my hand over my heart to greet him and, with a smile, he pointed toward the suspect. I thought about the discussions we had a few weeks before; I believe they might have contributed to the willingness of the deputy to work with the prosecutor and to safeguard and deliver the suspect for me to see.<sup>14</sup> The suspect later faced trial and received a seventeen-year sentence.<sup>15</sup>

As security improved, the number of cases the prosecutor handled increased.<sup>16</sup> He visited the prison daily to check with the deputy on new arrests. Eventually, a judge arrived, and he presided over the first trial ever held in the district. Word reached the Taliban that more people were coming to the prosecutor with their legal



(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Islamic pilgrims fill up water containers with water from the Zam Zam well 11 February 2012. The well, located within the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is believed by many Muslims to have been miraculously created by God approximately four thousand years ago to save the life of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, a concubine of the biblical prophet Abraham, and progenitor of the Arabic people. It is co-located with the Kaaba in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, a compound regarded by Muslims as the most sacred of all Islamic holy places to the direction of which all Muslims pray on a daily basis. Water from the Zam Zam well is believed by many to have special spiritual as well as health-related properties and is bottled for sale in Saudi Arabia.

complaints—instead of going to the Taliban. One woman even traveled by taxi from the provincial capital to see the judge.<sup>17</sup> These events meant the Taliban were losing some of their power; they issued a letter to a party in a certain case telling him to bring his case to them instead of the Afghan court.

## Noah and Rainbows

*He will send down on you (rain) from the heaven showering plentifully.*

—Quran 71:11, Muhammad Mahmud Ghali trans.

I remained at the combat outpost from February to late May 2013. While there, I tried to build friendly relationships with some of the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers. One day I spoke to a soldier preparing to go on leave. He asked if I would have an opportunity to go on leave, and I told him I would.<sup>18</sup> I mentioned that I had to wear identification tags while on leave. I asked him if he had identification tags, and he said the ANA did not use them. He asked about their purpose. After I explained that my name and religion were on them, he asked about my religion.

I told him “man eesowee astum,” or “I am a Christian,” in Dari, and I said that I had read many things about Islam. I

had read about the life of the Prophet Mohammad, including how his father died and that he was raised by his grandfather after his mother died. The soldier was familiar with every detail of the Prophet Mohammad's life—information in sources other than the Quran.<sup>19</sup> We discussed Khadija, the Prophet Mohammad's first wife, and then Aishah, believed to have been his favorite wife after Khadija.<sup>20</sup> I told him I read that Aishah fought alongside the Prophet Mohammad, to suggest similarities with women serving in the U.S. military.

We talked about Noah and the great flood, an event also discussed in the Quran. I told him that Christians believe the rainbow was a sign from God, and he said God gives us many signs like the rainbow.<sup>21</sup> We then discussed the differences between Islam and Christianity, and he said Muslims do not believe God had a son. He brought up the topic of Mary (Miryam), also mentioned in the Quran. I told him there were religious differences but that I felt we believed in the same God.

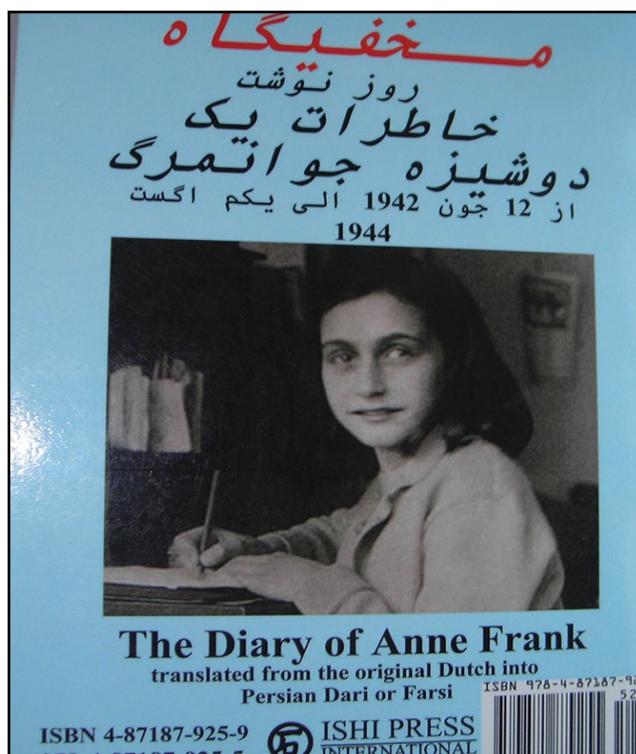
We then discussed suicide attacks, and I asked why the Taliban conducted suicide attacks if suicide was forbidden in Islam.<sup>22</sup> He said they did not know Islam and that they conducted jihad for no valid reason. Before I knew it, two hours had passed. Finally, I asked him why one of the chapters (called *suras*) in the Quran was missing the interjection known as a *bismillah*.<sup>23</sup> He could not provide a clear answer. To avoid embarrassing him, I said that maybe it was a mystery, like the verse *alif laam meem*, with the meaning known only to God, and he agreed.<sup>24</sup> Like all the other Afghans I met, he was surprised that I believed in God—and even more surprised that I knew anything about Islam.

## The Afghan National Army and Anne Frank

*Why don't the Americans talk to us?*<sup>25</sup>

—Afghan National Army soldier to the author

After a few months in Musa Qala, I transferred to the Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP), where I advised Afghan prosecutors. I noticed that the ANA soldiers kept to themselves, and I made a point of speaking to as many individuals as I could, roughly twenty to twenty-five soldiers. I continued to cover my hair, as several ANA soldiers commented that they appreciated how this showed respect for their culture. After a few weeks, a soldier asked me why the Americans did not talk to them. I could tell



(Image courtesy of Maj. Theresa Ford)

Maj. Theresa Ford, U.S. Army, provided a copy of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, translated from the original Dutch into Persian Dari or Farsi, to interested members of the Afghan National Army while she served in Parwan, Afghanistan, 2013.

by his facial expression that this bothered him, and, no doubt, it bothered other ANA soldiers as well.<sup>26</sup>

I taught English classes to ten members of the ANA and Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), and one asked me in Dari if I knew of any famous books that were translated into Dari. I only found one, the diary of Anne Frank (*Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*). I told him about the story of Anne Frank, about the Holocaust, and about how Anne was killed because she was Jewish. He had heard of the Holocaust and thanked me for the book. A few days later, he said he could not put it down and asked if I had any more famous books in Dari. He said he knew the translator of the book, who was from his village in the Panjshir Valley, northern Afghanistan, and he said other soldiers in his barracks wanted to read the book.

During Eid al-Adha (a holiday that followed Eid al-Fitr, after Ramadan—a month of fasting and religious observance that started in July that year), I gave some of my English students small gifts of sweets, and they seemed moved by the gesture. After I gave them the gifts, I mentioned that as a Christian, I celebrated Christmas by giving gifts, and I discussed the importance of Jesus in both Christianity and in Islam.

## A Jordanian Thanksgiving

*There are many incidents in the history of Islam where Christians helped Muslims, and Muslims helped Christians.*<sup>27</sup>

—Islamic scholar

One evening in early October 2013 while I was standing in line at the dining facility at Camp Sabalu-Harrison, located adjacent to the JCIP, a Jordanian officer struck up a conversation after hearing me speak Arabic with his men. We became friends. Over the next few weeks, the Jordanian officer and I would see each other at the dining facility and talk about our histories, our countries, and our religions. When Eid came, I gave him a box of chocolates, and he thanked me profusely. Not long afterward, he gave me a bottle of holy water from the Jordan River because he knew I was a Christian.

On 16 October, he told me his commander wanted to meet me and invited me for tea. When I arrived, the first thing the commander said was that I did not know how much it meant to him to see that I covered my hair as a show of respect for his culture and religion.<sup>28</sup> I told him this was proper *adab*, or good manners, a subject mentioned in various *hadith* (narrative records of the sayings or customs of Mohammad and his companions).<sup>29</sup> I told him I studied the hadith because I was a lawyer. After tea and a large meal, I thanked him for his hospitality.

Wanting to reciprocate the gesture of good will, I invited the commander and his staff to attend a Thanksgiving dinner.<sup>30</sup> Before eating, we watched a movie about the pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving. The commander asked various questions during the movie, including why turkey was eaten and why the passengers on the Mayflower drank beer. After I explained that beer was safer to drink than water, he interpreted this for his staff, including his imam, and everyone laughed. After the movie, we ate a traditional Thanksgiving meal, with the imam saying a prayer and the Jordanian commander saying that now he knew what Thanksgiving was all about.

The dinner was important for another reason: an Army chaplain was present, and she was introduced to the imam. The two had not met before, and the occasion allowed these two spiritual leaders of different faiths to forge a relationship. Moreover, the imam became acquainted with an important American holiday with spiritual values that resonate with Muslims—giving thanks to God for family, friends, and good health.

## Fingerprint Evidence and the Quran

*Fingerprints are the stamp of God.*<sup>31</sup>

—Afghanistan Supreme Court Justice

Mohammed Babrakzai

Fingerprint evidence is a relatively new concept in criminal cases in Afghanistan. Thanks to an Afghanistan supreme court justice named Mohammed Babrakzai, the leading authority on forensics in Afghanistan and author of a treatise on forensics, fingerprint evidence is slowly gaining acceptance. I saw this firsthand working at the JCIP; in almost every criminal case, the prosecutor and judge asked if there was any fingerprint evidence. The reason for their interest and amenability to this type of evidence is related to their religion.

A verse in the Quran discusses the ability to re-assemble a body at the time of resurrection, and it mentions “fingertips” being used for this purpose.<sup>32</sup> This verse has been understood to mean that fingerprints, or fingertips, can be used to identify an individual while alive. For legal advisors, this illustrates that



(Photo by Ed Drohan, Combined Joint Task Force Paladin PAO)

Abdul Kaisken thanks Staff Sgt. James Hieb for delivering *naan* (bread) 12 July 2013 that Muslim base workers will use to break their Ramadan fast. Kaisken serves as a Department of Defense civilian linguist and volunteer imam for the Mosque of Sayed Jamaludia Afghani on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Hieb serves as a chaplain assistant with Combined Joint Task Force Paladin.

understanding the Quran and presenting information in a religious context can make their messages more credible and persuasive. In an Afghan court of law, people will listen to cases supported by religious principles.

## Recommendations

*Sheiks from all around Ramadi, east, west, north, south, it didn't matter, their eyes would all brim with tears whenever you mentioned his name.*<sup>33</sup>

—Lt. Col. Sean MacFarland, referring to the death of U.S. Army Capt. Travis Patriquin

Two relatively simple recommendations could help soldiers become more adept at religious engagement:

- ◆ Learn the characters of the Arabic alphabet.
- ◆ Learn about Islam.

### Learn the characters of the Arabic alphabet.

Learning the Arabic alphabet, and how words are formed with it, will help soldiers understand some of the complex features of Islam, as the language is inextricably linked to the religion, and the religion to the culture. Unlike English, words are formed using three- and four-character roots, with roots relating to particular subject matter. The twenty-eight Arabic characters represent consonants, and many of the sounds are similar to consonants in the English alphabet. Other marks represent short vowels.

For example, words that contain consonants similar to the sounds represented by the English letters *d*, *r*, and *s* relate to the subject of education. The word transcribed in English as *madrassa* refers to a school, specifically a religious boarding school associated with a mosque (English transcriptions add vowels). Similarly, the word *dars* means lesson, and *mudaris* means teacher. The word *salam* contains Arabic characters similar to the English letters *s*, *l*, *a*, and *m*, and it is defined as peace, peacefulness, soundness, or well-being. Similarly, the word *islam* shares the same four-character root and is related to the word meaning submission. This is why Islam is said to be a religion of peace, and it involves submission to God. The word *Quran* is derived from the same three-character root—*q*, *r*, and *a*—as the word *qara'a*, to recite or read. Muslims believe the angel Gabriel said to the Prophet Mohammed “*iqra*” (read) when he received his first revelation.

**Learn about Islam.** Knowledge of the Prophet Mohammad’s life as contained in the early biographies, and stories contained in the hadith, such as the five

pillars of Islam and Zam Zam, is a good starting point.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the similarities between religions should be studied. For example, Muslims believe that at the end of days, a figure called the *Mahdi* will appear, and Jesus will appear with him.<sup>35</sup> Being familiar with the people and the stories contained in Islamic sacred texts will give soldiers a better understanding of the themes and ideas that they can then use in their engagements.

## Conclusion

*Machines don't fight wars. Terrain doesn't fight wars. Humans fight wars. You must get into the mind of humans. That's where the battles are won.*<sup>36</sup>

—Former U.S. Air Force Col. John Richard Boyd

This article briefly illustrated how religious engagement was used as an effective means to build relationships with Afghan and coalition partners. Religious engagement allowed me to tap into a wellspring of tradition, history, and emotion at the heart of Afghan society: Islam. I received respect because of my understanding of, and respect for, Islam. I made connections with people such as an Afghan deputy chief of police and a prosecutor, which otherwise would have been a difficult task, especially as a female in a conservative part of the country. I earned the trust and respect of ANA and AUP personnel, making a “green-on-blue” attack less likely. In addition, I forged relationships with coalition partners from Jordan.

Soldiers do not have to be religious in order to be effective with religious engagement. All that is required is that they be respectful of others, regardless of whether they personally agree or disagree with the beliefs of host-nation or coalition partners. Showing respect for others is a fundamental principle and one of the core Army values. One need not be a “person of the book” in order to be effective in building relationships with those like Hajji Agha. Simple knowledge, such as some Islamic history and the role of Zam Zam, was all that was required.

The Army’s functional concept for engagement recognizes that soldiers will continue to have more interaction with host-nation forces and coalition partners. The most effective way to interact with others is to “stop, listen, and engage” through exchanging views with partners on subjects that matter to them—especially religion. ■

Maj. Theresa Ford, U.S. Army, is a legal advisor with U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. She holds a BA from Thomas Edison State College, an MA in international relations from St. Mary's University, and a JD from the University of Maine. She has studied Dari, Arabic in Egypt, and conflict resolution in Israel. She deployed during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

## Notes

**Epigraph.** Afghan prosecutor Neek Mohammad, conversation with author, 21 March 2013, Musa Qala, Afghanistan.

1. Pajhwok Afghan News, "Elders Want Cop Executed for Quran Desecration," Pajhwok Afghan News website, 29 March 2013, accessed 6 July 2015, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/03/29/elders-want-cop-executed-quran-desecration>, asserts, inaccurately, that "policemen ... killed five civilians."; Naweed Ahmad Sapand, "Desecration of Holy Quran, Protesters Clash With Police Leaves Casualties," Bokhdi News Agency website, 20 March 2013, accessed 6 July 2015, <http://www.bokhdinews.af/english/social/8843-Desecration-of-holy-Quran,-protesters-clash-with-police-leaves-casualties>, states, "pro-Taliban elements from among the protesters opened fire killing four civilians and injuring seven others." Neither report mentions that the mosque had been desecrated, with windows smashed and equipment broken, as seen in photographs provided to the author by the district prosecutor.

2. Mike Edwards, "Kabul, Afghanistan's Troubled Capital," *National Geographic Magazine* (April 1985), 494–505. Similar to the Taliban, the Soviets used deceitful, manipulative tactics after invading Afghanistan. Reporter Mike Edwards comments, "with the 1978 coup came a massive campaign to win hearts and minds to communism. In public buildings I saw cartoons of Uncle Sam handing money to mujahidin and instructing them to blow up Afghan mosques."

3. Jeffrey Bordin, *A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility: Red Team Study of Mutual Perceptions of Afghan National Security Forces Personnel and U.S. Soldiers in Understanding and Mitigating the Phenomena of ANSF-Committed Fratricide-Murder*, N2KL Red Team Study, prepared for the U.S. Army, 12 May 2011, 45 and 50, accessed 23 April 2015, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB370/docs/Document%2011.pdf>. A study of "green-on-blue" attacks found U.S. personnel "generally were not satisfied with the quality or comprehensiveness of the cultural training they received." One recommendation was to "better educate U.S. soldiers in the central tenets of Islam as interpreted and practiced in Afghanistan."

4. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-8-5, *U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement* (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army TRADOC, 24 February 2014), iii, accessed 23 April 2015, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-8-5.pdf>.

5. Shaaraik Zafar, Special Representative for Muslim Communities, quoted by John Kerry, U.S. secretary of state, "Remarks at Ceremony in Honor of Special Representative to Muslim Communities Shaarik Zafar," (speech, Dean Acheson Auditorium, Washington, DC, 3 September 2014), accessed 5 June 2015, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/09/231245.htm>.

6. T.E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles," *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917, article 21.

7. Stephen Grey, *Into the Viper's Nest: The First Pivotal Battle of the Afghan War* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2009), describes Musa Qala, including an important battle that took place there in 2007; Field Manual (FM) 3-53, *Military Information Support Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2013), 1-8, defines key leader engagement as "a planned meeting(s) with an influential leader with the intent of building a relationship that facilitates communication and cooperation across a wider population."

8. I studied Dari as part of the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands Program. I can read, write, and speak on a variety of subjects. I studied basic Pashto and knew basic pleasantries and some proverbs. I have studied Arabic, and I can read, write, and speak at a basic level.

9. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, trans., *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), vol. 4, Book 60, hadith 3364, 351. Bukhari explains the significance of Zam Zam, where water appeared in the desert after Hagar pleaded to God for water. The story is in a hadith, or saying of the Prophet Mohammad. Muslims reenact Hagar's search for water as part of the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca; see *Good News Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1976), Gen. 21: 17-18. See also Erich Follath, "Assad's Secret: Evidence Points to Syrian Push for Nuclear Weapons," *Der Spiegel Magazine* website, 9 January 2015, accessed 16 June 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/evidence-points-to-syria-still-working-on-a-nuclear-weapon-a-1012209.html>, "A high-ranking Hezbollah functionary ... mostly uses a code name for the [Syrian nuclear] facility: 'Zamzam,' a word that almost all Muslims know."

10. Conversation between the author and Hajji Agha, 26 February 2013, Musa Qala, Afghanistan.

11. Quran 29:46, Muhammad Mahmud Ghali, trans., in *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Quran* (Cairo: Dar An-Nashr Liljamiat, 2008). The Quran refers to "people of the book," meaning Christians and Jews. The conversation between the author and Lash Mohammad, Criminal Investigation Division chief for Musa Qala District, occurred 26 February 2013.

12. U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood, quoted in Grey, *Into the Viper's Nest*, after U.S. and British forces captured the town of Musa Qala in 2007. Eyes are still on Musa Qala and Helmand Province as the Taliban continue to launch attacks. Twenty police officers were killed 13 June 2015, according to a report by Mirwais Khan and Rahim Faiez, "Afghan Official: Taliban Kill 20 Police Officers in Attack," 13 June 15, *ABC News* website, accessed 16 June 15, [abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com); Joseph Goldstein and Taimoor Shah reported an attack 18 June, in "Taliban Stribe Crucial District in Afghanistan," 18 June 2015, the *New York Times* online, accessed 18 June 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/asia/taliban-helmand-province-afghanistan.html?ref=world&r=0>; Nathan Hodge and Habib Khan To-takhlil, "Afghan Troops Struggle to Retake Parts of Key Province

from Taliban," 6 July 2014, *Wall Street Journal* online, accessed 16 June 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/afghan-troops-struggle-to-retake-parts-of-key-province-from-taliban-1404670052>, report that the Afghan army was sent to the area in July 2014 to regain control of the district centers in Sangin and Musa Qala.

13. Conversation between the author and prosecutor Neek Mohammad, 21 March 2013, Musa Qala, Afghanistan. After I expressed my sympathy, he expressed surprise that I would care about what had happened.

14. I was issued a cell phone during the deployment for staying in touch with justice officials in the districts where I worked, including Now Zad and Sangin. Neek Mohammad called me and asked if I wanted to see the suspect so I could take a picture of him. I told him I did not want a picture, but would like to see him. I was concerned that he might have been beaten and wanted to make sure he was alright.

15. The district did not have a judge at the time, and the suspect was sent to the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, for trial. Under Afghan law, apostasy normally carries a death sentence, unless the suspect has a mental defect. In this case, the court likely found the accused had a mental defect and gave a lesser sentence.

16. After the gunfight, the bazaar (the lifeblood of the district) shut down as the Taliban threatened shopkeepers and even slit the throat of one that traveled to the provincial capital to get food. Department of Defense (DOD), "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, July 2013, 21, accessed 16 June 2015, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Section\\_1230\\_Report\\_July\\_2013.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf), states that Musa Qala was one of "the most violent districts in Afghanistan"; DOD, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, November 2013, 18, accessed 16 June 2015, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/October\\_1230\\_Report\\_Master\\_Nov7.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/October_1230_Report_Master_Nov7.pdf), states that a month after the gunfight, Musa Qala was the fourth most violent district in the country. As security improved and villagers felt more secure, the bazaar reopened. People also felt safe to come to the district center with their legal problems. By October 2013, Musa Qala was considered the ninth most violent district in the country.

17. A widow and mother of nine (name withheld) traveled eighty miles by taxi, a three-and-a-half-hour ride one-way from the provincial capital, to see the prosecutor and judge 17 May 2013 regarding an arranged marriage for her daughter. She traveled with her minor daughter instead of with a male escort, which was very dangerous. Most women in southern Afghanistan never leave their homes, and few would dare to do so without a male escort for fear of Taliban reprisal.

18. The conversation described was in Dari between the author and ANA Sgt. Nasrullah, May 2013, Musa Qala, Afghanistan.

19. Sources other than the Quran include hadith collections such as: Muhammed Ibn Ismaiel Al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad M. Khan (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 1997); Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, Volume III, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya, trans. Trevor Le Gassick (West Berkshire, United Kingdom: Garnet Publishing, 2005).

20. Nabia Abbott, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944). Based on original Arabic sources, this is a great source of information not only about Aisha's life but also the early history of Islam, as she outlived the Prophet Muhammad by fifty years.

21. Quran 71:11, Ghali trans., *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Quran*.

22. *Ibid.*, 4:29.

23. The Bismillah is the introductory language contained in every sura of the Quran except the ninth. Bismillah literally means "in the name of God." The ninth sura is commonly referred to as the "jihad" sura. The fact that this is the only sura in the Quran to not invoke God's name and blessing could be construed to mean that God did not want His name associated with the acts mentioned in the sura. Other explanations commonly considered include that the sura was revealed shortly before the Prophet Muhammad died, so he did not have time to expound on the revelation, or that this was originally part of another sura.

24. Quran 2:1, Ghali trans., *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Quran*. This verse consists of three Arabic characters equivalent to a, l, and m, which do not form a word. Muslims believe the meaning is known only to God.

25. Conversation between the author and an ANA soldier in Dari at the JCIP on 11 September 2013.

26. Bordin, *Crisis of Trust*, 20. ANA soldiers surveyed voiced similar concerns in the Red Team Study, such as "Most U.S. soldiers don't bother socializing with us."

27. Anonymous Islamic scholar, quoted in William Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream: Captain Travis Patriquin and the Awakening of Iraq* (New York: New America Library, 2011), 134. According to Doyle, Patriquin first told the scholar, "I respect Islam as a religion. I respect Muslims and I have worked with Muslims throughout my life and career ... we're not here to fight Islam."

28. Conversation between the author and a Jordanian commander 23 October 2013 at Camp Sabalu-Harrison, located adjacent to the JCIP on Bagram Air Base.

29. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "hadith."

30. I hosted a dinner 24 November 2013 at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facility, Camp Sabalu-Harrison, Bagram Air Base. The Jordanian commander, his imam, my Jordanian friend, and about four other Jordanian staff officers attended. A U.S. Army chaplain was in attendance as well as three other U.S. soldiers. While the Jordanian commander and my Jordanian friend spoke English well, the others did not. The movie about the Mayflower was in English; at various points in the film, the Jordanian commander would interpret for his men.

31. Afghan Supreme Court Justice Mohammed Babrakzai gave a talk at the JCIP 26 August 2013 about forensics to more than one hundred fifty provincial lawyers and judges throughout Afghanistan. His book on forensics was distributed at the conference. He spoke Dari throughout the conference, and headsets were provided with English interpretation.

32. Quran 75:4, Ghali trans., *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Quran*.

33. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Sean MacFarland, quoted in Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream*, 285. U.S. Army Capt. Travis Patriquin helped spark the Anbar Awakening in Iraq, 2006, using his knowledge of Arabic and Islam to build relationships with Iraqi sheikhs. Patriquin was killed when his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

34. Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith: An Anthology of the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* (Islamic Texts Society: 1997). The five pillars of Islam are contained in this hadith collection.

35. Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 257-58. "At the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will without fail make his appearance ... and will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi. ... After the Mahdi, Jesus will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or, Jesus will descend together with the Mahdi, and help him kill the Antichrist."

36. Former U.S. Air Force Col. John Richard Boyd, quoted in Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2002).



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christine Jones)

Lt. Col. Burton Shields, commander of 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 5th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and his translator conduct a key leader engagement 31 October 2009 in Karezgay, Afghanistan. The objective of the meeting was to assure town elders of continued U.S. military and Afghan National Police support in the fight against the Taliban. Shields was deployed to Forward Operating Base Wolverine in Zabul Province, Afghanistan, to conduct counterinsurgency operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

# Army Translator and Interpreter Companies A Wasted Resource

Capt. Jessica L. Cook, U.S. Army

**I**n February of 2003, a shortfall in the U.S. military's ability to communicate in languages other than English caused senior military leaders to reevaluate the command language program.<sup>1</sup> Most U.S. operators in the Middle East could not communicate with the populations they hoped to influence because

few spoke any of the languages and dialects native to the region. Moreover, the language deficit hindered operations and the ability of U.S. military personnel to form deep and lasting relationships with friends and allies from countries such as Jordan, Qatar, and the Sultanate of Oman.

Potential solutions for overcoming the military language barrier were to teach soldiers the languages needed or to hire native speakers and train them as soldiers. Neither solution would be quick or easy; both would have their merits and pitfalls. However, because language is intricately tied to culture—both best taught through immersion and experience—and nonnative speakers need many years of study to reach fluency in the languages and cultures they study, the Army's preferred solution was to enlist bilingual (or multilingual) native speakers of other languages to train as soldiers, translators, interpreters, and cultural emissaries. Therefore, in 2003, the Department of the Army directed the creation of the military occupational specialty (MOS) 09L, translator and interpreter.<sup>2</sup>

Recruitment for the program began with program managers scouting out local civilians already providing translation services as contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Then, Army recruiters across the United States began campaigns in places with dense populations of people with Middle Eastern and North African heritage, such as New York, Michigan, and California. The result was establishment of a robust translation capability with representatives from nearly two dozen countries speaking almost twenty languages and dialects, an asset that could not have been remotely paralleled by training U.S.-born native English speakers.<sup>3</sup>

Despite a promising start and many accomplishments, the program is far from meeting its potential. A flawed design limits its effectiveness. Consequently, the Army should modify the 09L MOS program in three major ways to ensure the maximum benefit to the force:

- ◆ Create additional skill identifier codes for different languages.
- ◆ Station the 09Ls at installations such as Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Lewis, Washington.
- ◆ Establish a centralized staff support element for training, funding, sourcing, recruiting, and deploying.

First, this article gives a short history of the 09L MOS program. Then it explains the flaws that are hindering its effectiveness. Finally, it shows why implementing these three recommendations would help the program achieve its potential.

## History of the 09L Program

In the program's early days, 09Ls completed an English language immersion course, Basic Combat Training, and Advanced Individual Training. Then, they were discharged

to the Individual Ready Reserve to wait for deployment orders. Within a few years, the program's success warranted expansion; so, in 2008, two translator interpreter companies (TICOs)—the 51st TICO at Fort Irwin, California, and the 52nd TICO at Fort Polk, Louisiana—were activated to train and deploy nearly three hundred active duty 09Ls in support of contingency operations and joint exercises around the world.<sup>4</sup>

By placing the TICOs at Combat Training Centers (CTCs), the Department of the Army hoped to further train the 09Ls in Army doctrine and English by giving them the opportunity to interact with soldiers from across the Army who came to participate in training rotations. In turn, the rotational-training-unit soldiers were expected to benefit from interacting with the 09Ls who would staff mock towns and replicate conditions in overseas operational areas.

## Major Flaws in the 09L Program

The placement of the TICOs at the CTCs in 2008 was well intentioned, but by 2013, the program was rife with problems because of the companies' locations. Limiting assignments to the TICOs at these two installations means that 09Ls and their families can only permanently change station between Fort Irwin and Fort Polk.

As a result, 09Ls face the grim prospect of entire careers stationed in the Mohave Desert or the backwoods of Louisiana, excluded from other stations where personal cultural, religious, and language needs could be better met. For example, the nearest religious services conducted by legitimate imams for Muslims stationed at Fort Irwin are more than one hundred miles away. In addition, other challenges impede recruits from choosing to remain with the Army as translators and interpreters. For example, the commissary stocks food products that are unfamiliar to their families, many spouses remain jobless and face complete social isolation due to the remote locations, and families whose members have severe or chronic medical conditions have to travel up to six hours round-trip for specialized or emergency medical care. At the time this article was written, some soldiers and their families serving in TICOs at Fort Irwin had been living this way for seven consecutive years. These living conditions no doubt contributed to low reenlistment rates across the entire 09L program.<sup>5</sup>

Limiting the TICOs to Fort Irwin and Fort Polk not only negatively affects the quality of life for 09Ls but also hinders the Army's ability to train and employ them for

their intended purposes. They need to be where they can have more interaction with Army and civilian communities, for their own professional growth and for supporting other language learners.

As a practical matter, high-quality translation and interpretation are not rendered merely by assembling words literally translated from one language into another. To be effective, professional translators and interpreters need a comprehensive understanding of the cultural backgrounds, languages, and motivations of all parties for whom they are translating. Just as native English-speaking soldiers studying other languages need to interact with native speakers of the languages studied (preferably through language immersion), so do U.S. Army translators, who are not native speakers of English, need to interact with English-speaking Americans. They need extensive social interaction with other soldiers and other U.S. civilians, more than Fort Irwin or Fort Polk can provide through training rotations, so they can improve their proficiency in idiomatic American English and gain intimate familiarity with American cultures.

To illustrate the challenge of rendering an idiomatically correct translation, consider a word-for-word translation of the English language statement “I made a friend today” into German. The phrase would have the awkward literal meaning of “I constructed a new friend today.” Other examples of idioms in English that might cause problems if only rendered as literal word-for-word translations into another language come from a cultural tradition of British naval dominance that has filled the English language with metaphors about seafaring: “That ship has sailed;” “This ship sails itself;” or “She runs a tight ship.” In practice, these phrases are commonly used metaphorically in circumstances that have nothing to do with ships or sailing. If a translator comes from a historically landlocked culture unfamiliar with the intent of the metaphor, rather than its literal meaning, these idioms make no sense. All known languages are filled with such metaphors, the meaning of which can only be learned with time and experience by intimate and constant exposure to a language even as it is evolving.

Skilled translators and interpreters need sufficient familiarity with U.S. cultures and routine exposure to American



(Photo courtesy of Capt. Jessica L. Cook, U.S. Army)

Family members of Army translators assigned to the 51st Translator Interpreter Company, Fort Irwin, California, enjoy each other's company during a unit event in 2014.

English so they can master the nuances of American jargon. They need practice hearing and using American English and choosing just the right way of interpreting meaning to achieve the intentions of both parties. During operations, they often interpret language without the benefit of time for research or reflection. They need practice applying critical and creative thinking skills to render precise interpretations of meaning. This is a serious matter. In many situations, the stakes for misunderstanding or misinterpretation due to the inability of interpreters to properly phrase and communicate shades of meaning are high. In a tenuous situation, such as a first meeting after hostilities, one communication misstep could spell disaster for all involved.

Thus, translation can be viewed as a microcosm of diplomacy that requires frequent, lifelong, specialized training as well as ongoing meaningful exchanges with a variety of people from all walks of life. Staffing a town in the CTC training areas or completing online writing classes at the education center looks great on paper but in no way prepares translators for the intricacies involved in their craft. However, despite the critical need, the CTCs do not have the personnel, systems, or facilities to provide the services needed by the 09L MOS for professional development. As a result, the Army is inadequately resourcing this precious and highly perishable capability. With limited investment in resourcing and managing the program, the Department

of the Army will get only limited—if not diminishing—returns on its investment.

During their tenures at Fort Polk and Fort Irwin, in spite of limitations and hardships, the O9L soldiers have provided dedicated support to operations all over the world. In the fifteen months before the writing of this article, the TICOs provided translators for more than a dozen overseas joint exercises with strategic ally nations (to include supporting a multitude of conferences leading up to the exercises). They deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, helped validate language training and tests for the Defense Language Institute, and provided support to Special Forces field exercises—all in addition to maintaining regular soldier skills and supporting CTC operations.

### Ways to Improve the O9L Program

The first major change in the O9L program should be to create additional skill identifier codes that would give Human Resources Command managers, recruiters, commanders, and operations and exercise planners more control over matching operational language needs with recruiting and staffing. For instance, an Arabic speaker should have different coding than a Dari speaker. This would open the doors for assigning O9Ls with regionally aligned units, where they would be gainfully employed. One result of less than optimal efforts to manage translators and interpreters is that, as of 2015, fewer than 50 percent of the available TICO language capabilities were being employed.<sup>6</sup> Historically, mission requirements have called mainly for Arabic speakers, leaving many Farsi, Dari, Urdu, Pashtu, and Tajik speakers available to the force otherwise unemployed.

The second major change to the O9L program should be to station translators and interpreters at locations with facilities and units capable of supporting their training and deployment needs. Fort Lewis, Washington, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina, would be good candidates for locations to which O9Ls and their families could be assigned. Both have robust language centers, fully staffed deployment apparatuses, and adequate

medical facilities. Both are near airports and are home bases for other Army units, such as civil affairs and Special Forces—whose own foreign language-trained soldiers would benefit from regular interactions with native speakers. Additionally, both are near large, cosmopolitan civilian communities that can accommodate family needs.

Just as important, relocation of the TICOs would broaden training opportunities for O9Ls and give commanders more flexibility and control over deployments. Moreover, it would improve the quality of life for O9Ls and their families, increasing prospects for reenlistment and continuity of continued regionally oriented service.

The third major change would be to create one centralized staff support element to manage and coordinate all aspects of training, funding, sourcing, recruiting, and deploying O9Ls. At present, the Army has no centralized system of O9L management. The U.S. Army Forces Command G-2 (intelligence element) manages exercises and deployments. Language training and testing receive occasional support by an office at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center in San Antonio, Texas, and another at Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California. Human Resources Command manages recruitment and promotion



(Photo by Sgt. Zachary A. Gardner, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment PAO)

Capt. Mohammed Muqsood Ali Khan, a Muslim chaplain with the 18th Airborne Corps, visits with Muslim soldiers and civilians 23 March 2015 after a Jum'ah, a Friday prayer service, at the Center Chapel at Fort Irwin, California. Khan also visited with the leaders of the 51st Translator Interpreter Company, Regimental Support Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, to discuss cultural awareness and understanding. The unit has one of the highest concentrations of Muslim soldiers in the Army.

decisions. Commands at Fort Irwin and Fort Polk train, employ, and care for individual O9L soldiers, but these installations' attention and priorities ordinarily focus on training of rotational units rather than O9Ls. The lack of an entity responsible for coordinating all aspects of lifecycle career management of O9Ls, more than any other shortcoming, is costing the Army time and money and causing the pointless waste of a very valuable asset.

## Translators and Interpreters as Soldiers

Caught in the middle of the O9L program's flaws are the Army's translators and interpreters. They are soldiers who have chosen to serve and protect the interests of the United States of America. Often, their

service places family members who remain in their native countries at great risk. Family members who accompany them also sacrifice much. Translators and interpreters have chosen military service for many reasons that include embracing the American dream of opportunity, supporting the American mission in the Middle East, or simply expressing gratitude to a nation that has embraced them and restored their sense of hope and given them a new life.

The Army needs O9L capabilities. Consequently, the Army should properly manage and develop the capabilities of these soldiers. It should appropriately accommodate their families and adequately address their concerns and issues. It should ensure their services are fully and gainfully employed in assisting the United States with its missions around the world. ■

*Capt. Jessica L. Cook, U.S. Army, is the former commander of the 51st Translator Interpreter Company at Fort Irwin, California. She currently is a graduate student at the University of Virginia, funded by the Army's Advanced Civil Schooling Program. Upon completion, she will teach history at the U.S. Military Academy.*

## Notes

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5. Paul F. Hogan et al., "Chapter 4—Analysis of Staffing and Special and Incentive Pays in Selected Communities," *The Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation*, June 2012, 134–135, accessed 4 August 2015, [http://militarypay.defense.gov/reports/qrmc/11th\\_QRMC\\_Supporting\\_Research\\_Papers\\_\(932pp\)\\_Linked.pdf](http://militarypay.defense.gov/reports/qrmc/11th_QRMC_Supporting_Research_Papers_(932pp)_Linked.pdf). The report states, "first-term retention rates average around 50 percent across the services"; Sarah O. Meadows, et al., *Exploring the Association between Military Base Neighborhood Characteristics and Soldiers' and Airmen's Outcomes*, RAND Corporation technical report, 2013, 48, accessed 4 August 2015, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR1200/TR1234/RAND\\_TR1234.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/TR1200/TR1234/RAND_TR1234.pdf). The study rated thirty-six Army installations on the quality of their neighborhoods, considering the domains of social, housing, employment, income and poverty, and transportation. Fort Irwin was ranked 33rd overall and Fort Polk was ranked 23rd; At the time this article was written, representatives from the Department of the Army G-2, the U. S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence O9L Initial Entry Training Program Office, and the O9L Human Resource Managers were discussing low retention concerns with TICO commanders. According to an August 2014 Human Resource Command MOS manning brief, in this author's possession, the O9L MOS was over-strength for E4s (corporals and specialists), but significantly understrength for noncommissioned officers.

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# The Case for a National Information Strategy

Col. Dennis Murphy, U.S. Army, Retired

Lt. Col. Daniel Kuehl, PhD, U.S. Air Force, Retired

**A**t the end of the previous century, a group of respected analysts and former policy makers called the U.S. Commission on National Security Strategy in the 21st Century, but better known as the Hart-Rudman Commission, produced a series of reports that analyzed the implications of some evolving global forces and trends. The commission's first report,

*New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century*, published in 1999, was clearly influenced by what many would call the *information revolution*.<sup>1</sup> The report was laced with references to “a world brimming with free-flowing information,” “deluged with information,” and “less hospitable to tyranny” because of that revolution. It pointed out some of the simultaneous



(Image courtesy of Paul Bitler, Facebook intern)

A computer-generated visual representation of raw Facebook data from December 2010 shows the myriad connections among users around the globe. Each thread shows the virtual connection of one “friend” to another.

opportunities and vulnerabilities that this information revolution was presenting to the shapers of national security strategies. The commission’s second report, *Seeking a National Strategy: A Concert for Preserving Security and Promoting Freedom*, published the following year, expanded the discussion into a detailed commentary on the importance of cyberspace.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequent to that time, the United States has developed multiple national strategies, including one for information sharing. Ironically, however, there is still no national strategy for information content.<sup>3</sup> While there are likely myriad reasons for this, it is the authors’ intention to recommend just such a strategy. For anyone attempting to develop an approach to the role that the information revolution could play in national security strategy, the Hart-Rudman Commission’s work is a critical resource. But if one starts there, one also realizes that more groundwork is required. In fact, one would need to explore in much greater depth the nature of information

as an instrument of national power and its historical evolution before attempting to offer a conceptual and organizational model to develop what could be called a national information strategy adequate for U.S. national security requirements in the Information Age.

Probably every curriculum taught at military staff and war colleges around the world attempts to explain and analyze the elements and instruments of national power using a model of some kind. The United States military employs a framework sometimes identified by the simple acronym DIME, representing the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic *instruments of national power*.<sup>4</sup> While the “D, M, and E” instruments are obvious and almost self-defining, such is not the case for the “I” instrument. The proposed definition used here is based on the national security strategies that President Ronald Reagan issued in the late 1980s, to include earlier work of his administration. Simply put, *information power* is the use of informational content and the technologies and

capabilities that enable the exchange of that content, used globally to influence the social, political, economic, or military behavior of human beings, whether one or one billion, in the support of national security objectives.<sup>5</sup>

Every nation-state and strategically important political entity on the face of the earth—including nonstate actors such as Hamas, Greenpeace, or the United Nations—strives to use information as an instrument of power, regardless of how technologically sophisticated or *connected* it might be. Information is used to spur economic productivity and develop new ways of making wealth; to improve the command, control, and effectiveness of military forces and operations; and to conduct diplomacy, both public and traditional. Information power is, and always has been, an essential, perhaps indispensable, foundational component and enabler for the creation and exercise of all other forms of power. Yet, this fact seems to have escaped the attention of most national security strategists in the United States and abroad.

The formal *National Security Strategy [NSS] of the United States*, signed May 2010 by President Barack Obama, is another example of national guidance that is perhaps one-quarter full but three-quarters empty, providing but a glimmer of hope.<sup>6</sup> While this NSS does contain repeated references to information in regard to the need to both share and secure it, there is little if any sense of the power of information content linked to modern information-communication technologies (ICTs) to sustain and grow economic power, which was an important segment of Reagan's first NSS in 1987.

The NSS speaks repeatedly about the right of people to access information, yet there is little if any sense of the power of information to influence populations via public diplomacy as, for example, to sustain America's struggle against violent extremism, and there is no mention at all of the ways that information power and its related ICTs can enhance and magnify American military power and capability. A coherent, comprehensive national information content strategy is needed to provide the focus currently lacking.

## The Information Environment: Connectivity, Content, Cognition

Just as nations describe and assess air power or sea power as the ability to use those environments, one measure of information power might be the ability to use the information environment, described as the integration

of the three dimensions of *connectivity* (the ability to exchange information), *content* (the actual information), and the *cognitive effect* (the impact of human beliefs and behaviors) resulting from the use of connectivity to deliver the content. Since understanding the information environment is essential to the approach espoused here for information power and an information strategy, the environment itself needs to be explored in more detail.

The first C, connectivity, is most visible in the myriad forms people employ to send, receive, broadcast, disseminate, and share information. Although humans have used various methods throughout history to exchange information—signal fires, smoke signals, semaphore flags, newspapers, even the fabled (although short-lived) Pony Express—modern technology-based connectivity that exploits the electromagnetic spectrum started with the introduction of the telegraph in the mid-1800s. In relatively rapid succession, the telegraph was followed by wireless telegraphy, the telephone, radio, television, and so on to the present. Today, in a world with universally connected cyberspace, people can watch—on a device held in the palm of the hand—the live broadcast of an event on the other side of the world, whether it be sports (e.g., World Cup soccer) or terrorism (e.g., the Mumbai attacks of November 2008 in which hostages were tweeting details while the attacks were underway). This is what modern information technology, the ubiquitous *IT*, has brought us. It is also important to add, however, that the nontechnological forms of connectivity remain critical as well—and are sometimes even more important. In any event, technological and nontechnological connectivity are both crucial components of the modern day information environment.

So what does connectivity offers us without the second C: *content*? Very little. Ultimately, the utility of being able to exchange information depends on what is being exchanged. This is another area in which the impact of modern IT has been profound, sometimes transforming the very way people construct and present complex intellectual and technical information. Gutenberg's printing press began the revolution by enabling the mass production of standardized information, whether as the Bible, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, or the famous World War I poster of Lord Kitchener with the words "Your Country Needs YOU!"<sup>7</sup> Later, still and then video photography expanded visual content into seemingly exact reproductions of events, from the horrors of

the battlefield to the explicitness of adult movies. Still later, television expanded photography's effect vastly through its ability to broadcast entire events.

The digital revolution brought by the Internet and the World Wide Web has expanded this still further, with content in online virtual worlds, such as Second Life, which can create synthetic environments where humans do everything from taking on entirely new personalities and persona to training virtually for terrorist acts.<sup>8</sup>

However, setting aside the effects of technological advances on information exchange, it is still crucial to remember that an enormous amount of information content is transferred through nontechnological means in high-context cultural situations. For example, a raised eyebrow during a conversation in some cultures may convey more content than the actual conversation, and roses delivered to one's lover may express messages from "thank you" to "I'm sorry."

Regardless, whether in a technological or nontechnological realm, the most important form of content is, in fact, an action. The old cliché "actions speak louder than words" comes from this principle, as does the chagrin of parents at hearing their children do or say things that make them wonder, "Where did they learn *that* from?"

Finally, *content* delivered by *connectivity* enables the third and most important C: *cognitive impact*. This is where the human mind applies meaning to the information it has received, where beauty is appreciated, persuasion is accomplished, loss is mourned, and decisions are made. However, this dimension of the information environment is the most difficult to influence because it is rarely quantitatively calculable, and therefore it is difficult to manipulate or even predict. Audiences will respond to information content in ways shaped by cultures, backgrounds, experiences, emotions, and myriad other factors. As former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes once told a gathering of members of the military's information operations community, audiences may hear meanings other than intended if their perspectives are very different from those who prepared the content.<sup>9</sup>

One example should make this clear. In 1934, the brilliant young German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl produced a purported documentary of the Nazi Party congress held in the sports ground in Nuremberg. That film, *Des Triumph des Willens* (The Triumph of the

Will), was a masterpiece of propaganda, but it obviously affected different audiences in different ways. German audiences saw it as evidence of the rebirth of German strength and pride after the disasters and humiliations of World War I and life in the 1920s under the demeaning terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Audiences in the countries bordering Germany saw a different, more threatening message; to the more perceptive, it was a dire warning of rising German aggression.

## The 3C Model of Information Power

Hence, the medium of connectivity may be technological or human-to-human nontechnological, and the content visual or audio or a deed, but the end result is the same: a human being is affected, internalizes the information, creates a belief, and then behaves a certain way because of it. When the cycle culminates in an observable behavior, it begins anew.

A generation of students has come to know these—connectivity, content, and cognitive impact—as the "3C" model of information. This approach has several attractive aspects. First, it is solidly based on accepted U.S. military information operations doctrine.<sup>10</sup> Second, the three dimensions are surprisingly measurable. Third, it is not totally dependent on technology. Examples of the three Cs can be seen as far back as the Assyrians' use of terrifying stone depictions of the treatment of rebellious prisoners to politically cow their subjects. Fourth, the explosion of modern ICTs has made the use of information power central to the functioning of all other current forms of power. Not only can we identify the organizational aspects of each C, we can also clearly describe some of the partnerships that must be created between the public (government) and private (business and society) sectors.

Therefore, the 3C model demonstrates that information power does not—and cannot—come exclusively from the government or private sector, it must come from both, which suggests an organizational model for how we can best develop a strategy and then operationalize it by employing information power to achieve behavioral change.

Seeking a synergistic balance between securing connectivity and exploiting content to achieve cognitive dissonance leading to behavioral change is not new.

However, efforts to achieve such balance have ebbed and flowed in effectiveness and emphasis in the history of information power as employed by the United States.

## An Enduring Problem

One might assume that the issue of securing connectivity while employing it as a means to influence by creating cognitive awareness or change is a recent phenomenon, spurred by the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web. However, a brief historical look at the industrial age leading up to current issues indicates that the need to balance protection while exploiting the same means to communicate is not new.

At the outset of World War I, both the United States and Germany were already largely dependent on transoceanic telegraph cables for commerce in a rapidly expanding global marketplace. Consequently, these cables, controlled and owned by Britain and Germany respectively, were targeted for exploitation and

destruction by both sides. This led the United States to develop an alternate command and control means, the radio, toward the end of the war.

The problems the United States faced in terms of maintaining connectivity through both means are eerily familiar to those we face today. The capacity to move and establish a priority for information content over the limited cable system became strategically significant. Today we face limits on capacity bandwidth. Similarly, the nascent development of radio encountered electromagnetic-spectrum issues in terms of usable and deconflicted frequencies; this is another issue of importance today. And of course, the significant dependency on transoceanic telegraph lines to daily business and economic intercourse became a vulnerability. All of these challenges have significant parallels to Internet capacity and vulnerability issues today.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, during that time, President Woodrow Wilson saw the benefit of persuasion and influence in employing information as an instrument of national power in the war. As a result, Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to inform and engage the world while influencing enemy publics, leaders, and militaries. CPI, led by journalist George Creel, met with mixed results, but it was clear that Wilson could see the great benefit of using the same global information means—the transoceanic telegraph—to rapidly disseminate his diplomatic messages worldwide. In their *Parameters* article “Propaganda: Can a Word Decide a War?” Dennis M. Murphy and James F. White describe Wilson’s reaction:

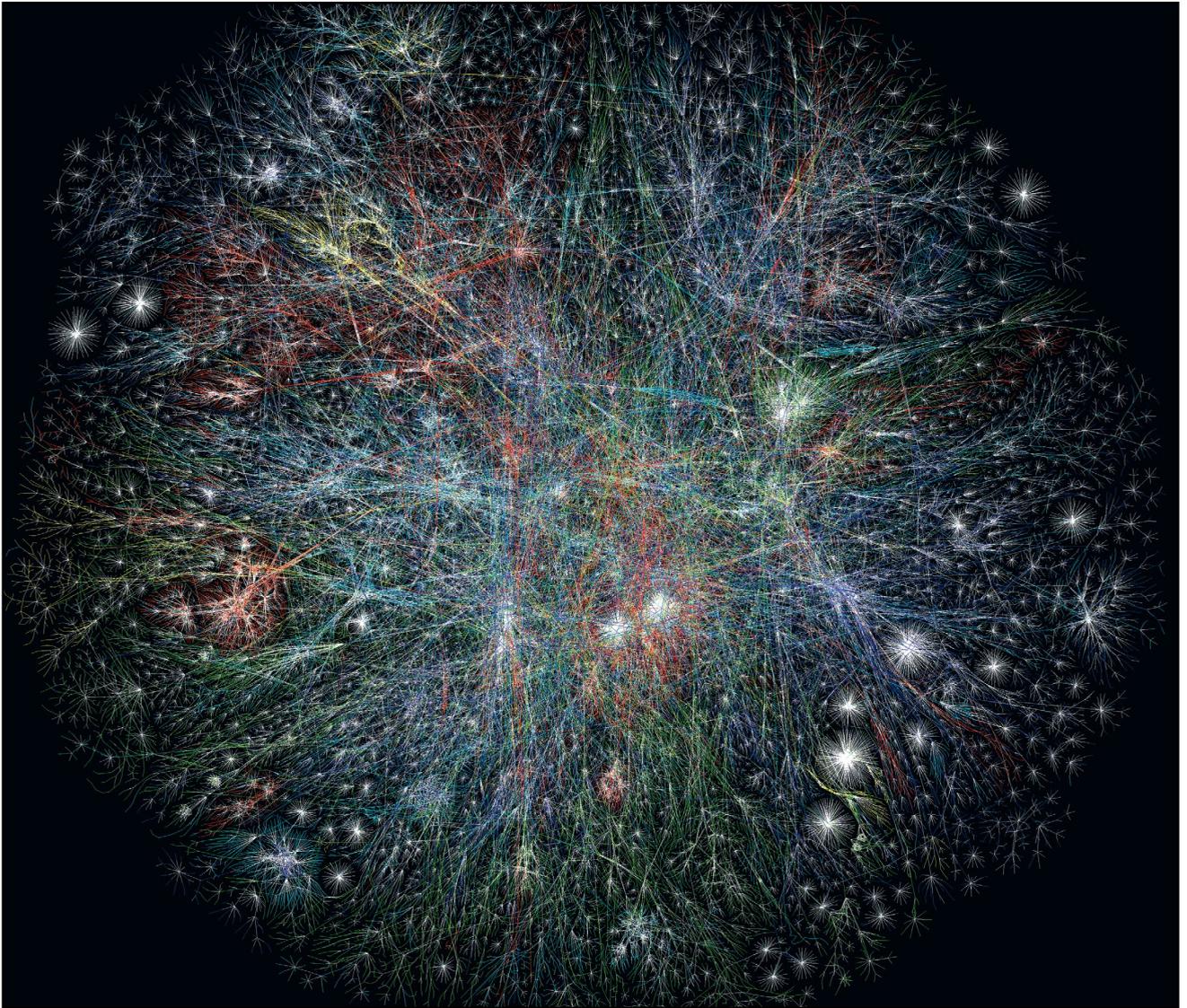
When Wilson gave his “Fourteen Points” speech in January 1918, CPI representatives in Saint Petersburg and Moscow received the text by way of transatlantic radio and telegraph, and were able to pass it to the Russian man on the street via posters and handbills just four days later .... Wilson was taken aback by this effective dissemination of his peace aims and the world’s reaction. He remarked to George Creel in December 1918, “I am wondering whether you have not unconsciously spun a net for me from which there is no escape.”<sup>12</sup>

In Wilson’s time, much as today, the reliance of the United States on one vulnerable connectivity system for command, control, and economic prosperity,



(Associated Press photo by Subel Bhandari, AP Images)

Afghan cleric Sadschad Mohsini holds a smartphone 24 October 2014 in Bamian, Afghanistan. Mohsini routinely uses social media to advise young people in matters of faith and religion. Mohsini’s son taught him how to navigate search engines and explained how Facebook works.



(Graphic courtesy of Barrett Lyon, LyonLabs, The OPTÉ Project)

A computer-generated map is overlaid on a picture of the world, depicting Internet connections on 23 November 2003 emanating from regions around the globe. They are coded by color: Asia Pacific—red; Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa—green; North America—blue; Latin America and the Caribbean—yellow; other regionally localized concentrations—white.

while at the same time using it as a means for achieving cognitive effects among both allies and enemies, became evident. Even then, many asserted a need to develop a holistic national information strategy—one that considered both the protection of that connectivity and the exploitation of it to influence a targeted audience—to manage and direct this new technology effectively. However, no comprehensive policy was fully developed either in Wilson's time or thereafter. Consequently, the United States stumbled along for the remainder of the twentieth century with piecemeal policy efforts largely resulting from Cold War competition with the Soviet Union.

## Information Power during the Cold War

At the outset of the Cold War, U.S. policy makers broadly conceived of it as a competition between ideologies to be contested primarily through information power, albeit strategically supported by the threat of military force and mutually assured destruction. Recognizing this, the Smith-Mundt Bill of 1948 established the United States Information Agency (USIA). The purpose of the law was to “promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations.”<sup>13</sup> USIA was to act as the agency responsible



(Photo courtesy of the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library)

Carl T. Rowan, then director of the U.S. Information Agency, discusses support of U.S. involvement in Vietnam at a National Security Council meeting in the Cabinet Room at the White House in July 1965. At that time, USIA had more than thirteen thousand employees. It coordinated and distributed strategic themes and information through the international Voice of America broadcasts together with daily communiqués to U.S. embassy personnel. USIA also maintained a system of libraries in foreign countries featuring American literature and philosophical thought pertaining to democracy throughout the world.

for achieving strategic cognitive information effects globally in support of U.S. strategy and policy.

USIA was organized during a time when the means to connect globally in the post-World War II world was rapidly expanding with technological advances. While television was still emerging as a technology, radio became the dominant global capability to transmit the U.S. message to targeted audiences. One result was that *Voice of America* became the preeminent program of USIA during the Cold War. It exploited the reach of radio technology to communicate effective messages aimed at influencing and persuading intended audiences behind the Iron Curtain.

Recognizing the necessity of competing effectively in the ideological struggle, the Reagan administration made the first attempt to develop a comprehensive national security document on information in 1984, with National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 130, *U.S. International Information Policy*. The focus of this directive is what today could be called strategic communication, but there is discussion within the document of securing and using the connectivity aspects of the information environment as well. The document states, “More systematic thought needs to be given to the opportunities offered by international television broadcasting .... New technologies (particularly in the area of audio and video tape cassettes) have created

new instruments whose potential should be explored.”<sup>14</sup>

NSDD 45, released in 1982, also recognized the overarching requirement to balance expansion and protection of connectivity to allow transmission of the message: Acquisition of new transmitting sites and facilities should be a priority matter ... [with] priority given to protecting and where possible expanding the frequencies available to the U.S. for international short wave broadcasting .... A major coordinated effort should be undertaken to press the jamming issue diplomatically in all appropriate international and bilateral fora.<sup>15</sup>

The last sentence refers to countering Soviet activity to electronically jam *Voice of America* signals to prevent the programs from reaching the intended audiences behind the Iron Curtain. This Russian desire to control the flow of information can be seen in the strategic policy issued by the Kremlin in late 2011, which aims first and foremost to use that control of information to achieve political effects—both domestically and internationally.<sup>16</sup>

The next major advance toward a U.S. national information power policy came in during the second Clinton administration with recognition of the exponential growth of the Internet in the United States.<sup>17</sup> In a press release in September 1998, the White House hinted at the increasingly apparent importance of the Internet to commerce and the economy as well as its vulnerability to criminal elements. The administration would “strengthen its support for electronic commerce by permitting the export of strong encryption when used to protect sensitive financial, health, medical, and business proprietary information in electronic form.”<sup>18</sup> In 1999 Presidential Decision Directive 68, *Concerning International Public Information*, separately recognized the need to influence foreign audiences in support of policy.<sup>19</sup> However, as the twentieth century ended, there was no indication of a requirement to provide a strategic linkage to protect the Internet while exploiting it to influence and persuade in an ever-increasingly transparent world. This was the situation as the United

States sluggishly transitioned to the information age during the George W. Bush administration [not to be confused with the administration of his father, George H.W. Bush].

## The Twenty-first Century Dilemma: Achieving Balance

George W. Bush, throughout his two terms, recognized the strategic impact of the Internet and the World Wide Web across all instruments of national power. Perhaps this was in part because of the effective use of these technologies by emergent adversaries, but also it was because of the significant reliance on the Internet that U.S. business and government interests had developed for daily business, commerce, and command and control.

Additionally, information as a strategic tool of influence or as a weapon was no longer the exclusive province of government. Where technological costs and infrastructure formerly limited information power to the purview of nation-states, multinational corporations, and global nongovernmental organizations such as the Red Cross, which had sufficient resources to operate information systems, the power of the low-cost, ubiquitous Internet and World Wide Web could also be wielded by individuals or small groups of people. Therefore, policy makers were forced to recognize that strict government control of a message was no longer possible. They were compelled to recognize that careful management of the information environment was henceforth essential to proactively compete with adversaries who exploited the Internet to disseminate their messages.

Just as important, the economic dependency due to extensive use of the Internet by business concerns to conduct daily commerce made the economy of the United States increasingly vulnerable and subject to attack.

## Cognition, the Internet, and Strategic Focus

The attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 further shaped George W. Bush's information power strategy. No one could argue that the attacks were not



(Image courtesy of Michael Hogg, Visual Information Specialist)

An Islamic State recruitment and funding website found in the *darknet*, the portion of Internet content that cannot be indexed with standard search engines. ISIS has also been known to use other social media, such as message services WhatsApp and KIK, to solicit donations in the form of what it calls "humanitarian charity."

lethally devastating of themselves. However, the almost instantaneous exploitation of the images and subsequent global propaganda communications by U.S. enemies became the loud and clear precursor to the nature of war in the information age. Exploitation of this event by perpetrators signaled the beginning of the extensive use of the Internet to conduct warfare in the era of "new" media.<sup>20</sup> The psychological impact of the images of airplanes striking U.S. symbols of economic and military power spread instantaneously and globally, received in different ways by various audiences—some with shock and horror, others with adulation and praise; it was a sober indication of the increasing power of information to achieve strategic ends using the ICT, such as satellite and cable television and the Internet, as a means.

Moreover, rapid exploitation of the images of the attacks by adversaries revealed that the United States was not prepared to deal effectively with the exigencies of warfare in the new dimension of the global information battlefield. The bureaucratic nature of government was shown to be an impediment to strategic policy regarding information in an era where speed and nimbleness were essential to compete proactively and responsively.

Just two years earlier, in 1999, USIA had been dismantled as a "peace dividend" following the Cold War, and its activities parceled out across the State Department. Nominally, the position of under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs had assumed the responsibilities for international

information programs, while the international broadcasting efforts of the U.S. government had been transferred to a semi-independent Broadcasting Board of Governors.<sup>21</sup> This greatly diminished, decentralized, and politicized arrangement proved to be inefficient and ineffective following the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, the problems of policy and a clunky process were compounded by a lack of continuity in leadership as four under secretaries of state for public diplomacy and public affairs were appointed during the eight years of George W. Bush's presidency—and, more telling, the position was vacant for more than one-third of that time.<sup>22</sup> It was not until 2007 that Karen Hughes, the third of Bush's four under secretaries and a close confidante of the president, published a *National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*. While this document focused on informing, engaging, and influencing, it recognized the importance of the Internet to that effort:

All agencies and embassies must ... increase use of new technologies, including creative use of the Internet, web chats, blogs, and video story-telling opportunities on the Internet to highlight American policies and programs.<sup>23</sup>

During the same period, terrorists, recognizing the strategic importance of communication to achieve their objectives through influence, increased their numbers of sponsored websites from twelve at around the start of this millennium to more than seven thousand as of May 2010.<sup>24</sup>

In the absence of a process of effective policy formulation and a mechanism for central management, other agencies of the executive branch of the Bush administrations filled the policy vacuum by acting independently in accordance with their missions and priorities. The Department of Defense (DOD) in its 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review highlighted strategic communication as a key wartime effort, spinning off a separate study to consider how best to inform, engage, and influence while establishing a DOD-level office to spearhead the effort.<sup>25</sup> Less than a year later, the same office within DOD published an extremely limiting policy on the use of the Internet as a means for this purportedly important strategic communication effort.<sup>26</sup>

Later, Bush's *National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace*, published in 2003, focused exclusively on the need to protect the Internet and the associated critical infrastructure dependent on it. While recognizing the critical



interdependencies of both the public and private sectors in the security effort, it provided a framework for information sharing, a means of responding to incidents after the fact, but no standards for creating a more secure system that would be less vulnerable to the increasing threat. Additionally, there is no mention of the Internet as a means to influence through using strategic communication or public diplomacy. In fact, the word “influence” is not mentioned at all in the document, since it was focused on connectivity, not the cognitive impact of information.<sup>27</sup>

While these efforts recognized the necessity of competing in the information environment to achieve cognitive effects while protecting the connectivity to communicate, they also reflected a dichotomy in purpose, which is not surprising given the lack of any overarching national information strategy. The result was different agencies of government—and different offices within the same agency—focused on different dimensions of the information environment. This trend continues today with the Obama administration.

## The Obama Administration: More of the Same ... but a Glimmer of Hope

If any group should understand the power of the Internet to communicate and influence audiences, it is



(Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

President Barack Obama discusses strategy on Syria with his national security advisors 31 August 2013 in the White House Situation Room.

the Obama administration. As a presidential candidate, former Senator Obama adroitly used the Internet to raise funds and spread his political message as never previously seen in the lead-up to his first-term presidential election. This carried over into his administration when the traditional weekly address moved from radio to streaming Internet video. Obama used short-message service text messaging, podcasts, and online transcripts in a variety of languages to communicate his landmark “New Beginnings” Cairo speech in June 2009 throughout the Middle East and Africa.<sup>28</sup> He also understood the significant requirement to protect the Internet by calling for a cyber security review within three weeks of assuming office.<sup>29</sup>

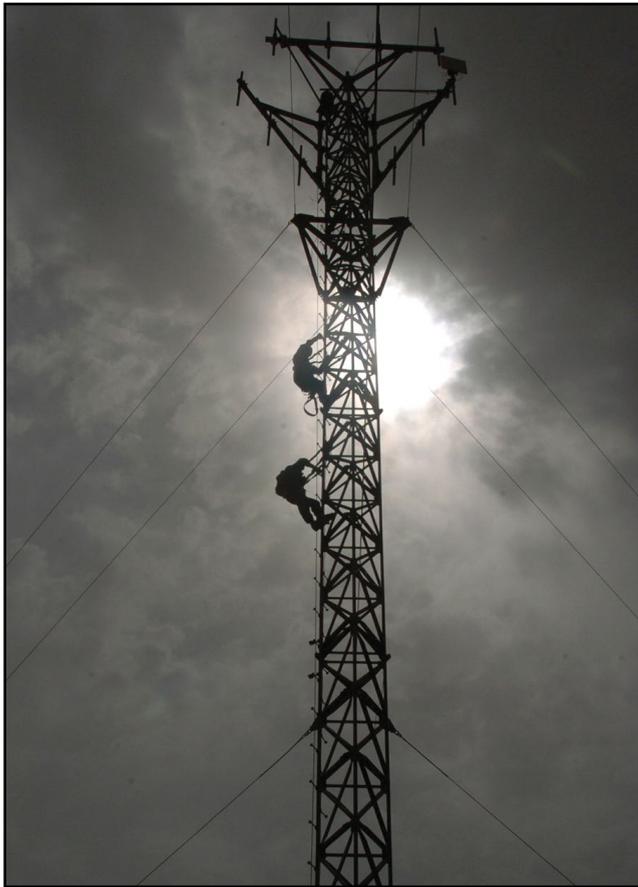
Later in Obama’s administration, the White House responded to a congressional requirement by providing the *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, which focused on the cognitive aspects of information as power but principally covered the mechanisms used to coordinate that effort.<sup>30</sup> The White House also announced a program to build upon the Bush administration’s “Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative.” This effort focused entirely, however, on securing the

Internet—with no mention of its use as a means to strategically communicate.<sup>31</sup> These documents and policies approach content and cognition separately and apparently toward distinctly different ends: to protect the connectivity (Internet) or to exploit it to leverage cognitive effects. However, there are indications that the Obama administration understands the need to achieve balance toward both objectives. The Department of Defense released a social media directive in February 2010 ordering military commands to open access to social media sites and to allow individual service members to inform and engage while simultaneously cautioning leaders to “continue to defend against malicious activity.”<sup>32</sup> As previously stated, the overarching *National Security Strategy* of 2010 provided a glimmer of hope by addressing both cybersecurity and strategic communication. While strong calls for security of the Internet abound in this strategy, there is also recognition of the need for balance so that communication can be exploited:

We support the dissemination and use of these technologies [the Internet, wireless networks, mobile smart-phones] to facilitate freedom of expression, expand access to information, increase governmental transparency and accountability, and counter restrictions on their use. We will also better utilize such technologies to effectively communicate our own messages to the world.<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly, in January 2010, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave a highly touted speech on Internet freedom, offering that the freedom to connect is like the freedom of assembly. Continuing, she said, “It allows individuals to get online, come together, and hopefully cooperate. Once you’re on the Internet, you don’t need to be a tycoon or a rock star to have a huge impact on society.”<sup>34</sup> Events in the Middle East, popularly dubbed the “Arab Spring,” seemed at first glance to support this position. But the continuing turmoil in that region offers a cautionary tale about any attempt to establish a monocausal explanation for meaningful political change, especially when that single focus is information technology.<sup>35</sup> This points to the complexity and interrelationship of connectivity, content, and cognition.

Perhaps the best way forward yet published by the Obama administration is its *International Strategy for Cyberspace* that the president signed in May 2011 and



(Photo by Spc. Evan D. Marcy, 44th Signal Battalion PAO)

Pvt. Justin Hill, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, climbs a training tower 23 August 2008 while Sgt. Joseph Raymond Chavis waits above at Camp Victory, Iraq. Hill and Chavis are part of a cable team training to install Radio over Internet Protocol equipment on top of towers to improve military communications in Iraq.

publically released at the State Department. This is the most comprehensive approach yet seen towards the strategic implications and use of this new domain. It cites key objectives in economic development, Internet freedoms, network governance, and other wide-ranging areas that are being dramatically shaped by cyberspace, and thus it establishes links to information power.<sup>36</sup>

However, the fact remains that no single executive government agency is in charge of the information instrument of national power overall. Therefore, there will continue to be conflict between agencies seeking to protect the technology and agencies seeking to exploit it to compete cognitively on the world stage. Exacerbating the problem is that the information environment—in its connectivity, content, and cognitive dimensions—is wholly shared, and sometimes dominated by, the private sector. Nor is this dilemma limited to the connectivity represented by information-communication technologies.

The executive branch does not control what a senator says ... or what an entertainer such as Lady Gaga does.

Having evolved little in terms of policy toward content from where it was in World War I, the United States remains at a crossroad that requires an overarching national information strategy incorporating connectivity, content, and cognition in all its forms. As Bruce Hoffman, a professor at Georgetown University, notes, “Our adversaries have a communications strategy. We, unfortunately, don’t.”<sup>37</sup>

## Strategic Modeling, Organization, and the 3Cs: An Approach to a National Information Strategy

Author Harry Yarger, in *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, describes strategic thinking as “a sophisticated intellectual process seeking to create a synthesis of consensus, efforts, and circumstances to influence the overall environment favorably while managing the risks involved in pursuing opportunities or reacting to threats.”<sup>38</sup>

This intellectual process, as related to an information strategy, is best considered by reviewing the definition of the information instrument of national power, which we previously described as “the use of informational content and the technologies and capabilities that enable the exchange of that content, used globally to influence the social, political, economic, and/or military behavior of human beings, whether one or one billion, in the support of national security objectives.” From this definition, the *ends*, *ways*, and *means* are evident, and the opportunity to examine them from the perspective of connectivity, content, and cognition emerges.

*Ends* are the desired effects that enable achievement of objectives. Consequently, a national information strategy should seek to “influence the social, political, economic, and/or military behavior of human beings, whether one or one billion, in support of national security objectives.”<sup>39</sup>

*Ways* reflect the processes applied that most efficiently support achievement of the ends, while *means* are the capabilities and resources synergistically employed by the processes that are inherent to the ways.

In the case of a national information strategy, this paper argues that the 3C model must be applied considering connectivity, content, and cognition to provide strategic focus and to wholly address the application of information power by the United States.

The key words “influence ... the behavior” within our definition point to the cognitive nature of the ends. The connectivity necessary to influence human behavior in support of national security objectives runs the entire gamut from the personal interaction of soldiers on the ground to the use of social media by the Departments of State and Defense. Any information strategy must consider all of these possibilities when resourcing and integrating capabilities.

For example, while funding of the DOD’s transregional web initiative is important, so are cultural and educational exchanges sponsored by the Department of State.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, given the decentralized execution of these programs and interactions, a key to success is defining a process (a way) to ensure that a lead U.S. government agency provides broad guidance that allows the application of information power while ensuring communication occurs at all levels in ways that enable the stated ends. This approach will drive the appropriate content that, in turn, will impact cognition by influencing to affect behavior.

As previously noted, the power of information and modern information-communication technologies sustains and grows economic power, while enhancing and magnifying American military power and capability as well. The United States is dependent upon that power for success, yet extremely vulnerable to attacks against it based on that very dependency. Thus, cyberspace strategies understandably stress the security aspects of the connectivity without addressing a balanced approach to exploiting it to provide content that affects cognition.

Since information as power is woven through and enables the diplomatic, military, and economic instruments of national power, failure to define a lead U.S. government agency for the information instrument becomes problematic at best. Exacerbating the problem is that, for the most part, private industry controls the connectivity and is not necessarily open to sharing vulnerabilities with the government. This is above and beyond a national psyche that equates information power to propaganda and its pejorative implications, and thus the Nation is unlikely to allow a “Department of Information.”<sup>41</sup> However, an extant model may hold the key to the successful development of a holistic U.S. information strategy and any subsequent policy implementation of that strategy.

Similar to information power, the economic instrument of power straddles the private and public sectors.

Thus, the National Economic Council, established in 1993 within the executive office of the president, may provide a useful model to emulate in developing a similar system of managing national information power. The council’s four principal functions are “to coordinate policy-making for domestic and international economic issues, to coordinate economic policy advice ..., ensure that policy decisions ... are consistent with the president’s economic goals, and to monitor implementation... ”<sup>42</sup> The council consists of numerous department and agency representatives within the administration whose policies affect the U.S. economy.

Establishing a national information council with a similar mandate seems a reasonable approach to strategy development and subsequent policy implementation based on the previous discussion. The council would engage and involve the private sector, bring together all executive agencies with a stake in the strategy and policy, and develop a holistic and balanced approach that considers connectivity, content, and cognition. It would employ the ways and means that most effectively and efficiently allow achievement of defined ends in support of national security objectives while considering and mitigating risk. Importantly, it would directly advise and answer to the president. The composition of such a council would, of course, be up to the president and could easily grow so big as to be unmanageable but, at a minimum, should include representation from government, business, and from all three Cs of the information environment. Its work would emphasize cooperation and coordination toward common national security and strategic goals as expressed in the *National Security Strategy*.

## Conclusion

In the past, the United States was able to muddle along using information as power without a strategy to define and direct its use. However, an increasingly connected and complex world demands a national information strategy. Information power is woven throughout the diplomatic, military, and economic instruments of national power as a key enabler of their synergistic success. The obvious importance of information as power demands that the United States develop a holistic national strategy that considers all aspects of the information environment: connectivity, content, and cognition. Only when this occurs will

the United States effectively and efficiently manage and compete in an increasingly muddled and complex information environment. ■

*Author's note: Dan Kuehl passed away on 28 June 2014. He was the consummate selfless educator and leader.*

*He taught and mentored thousands of senior leaders of the U.S. government and its allies on the information element of national power. I was proud and honored to be his friend.*

—Dennis Murphy

*Col. Dennis Murphy, U.S. Army, retired, is a senior analyst for cyberspace operations at IHS Jane's. He previously served as director of the Information in Warfare Group at the Center for Strategic Leadership, U.S. Army War College. He served in a variety of command and staff positions over his twenty-seven years of U.S. Army service and as the George C. Marshall Fellow for Political-Military and Diplomatic Gaming at the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute. He is accredited in public relations and military communication by the Public Relations Society of America.*

*Lt. Col. Dan Kuehl, PhD, U.S. Air Force, retired, was a professor of information operations at the National Defense University for eighteen years. At NDU, he helped create the Department of Defense's first major educational effort in what was then called information warfare and, until his retirement in June 2012, served as the director for NDU's program on information operations. Dr. Kuehl received his PhD from Duke University.*

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(Photo by Michael Abrams, Stars and Stripes)

Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, U.S. Army Europe commander, is interviewed by the Romanian media at the Smarden Training Area in Romania, on Tuesday, 24 March 2015, after watching the 173rd Airborne Brigade parachute into the training area.

# Commanders and Communication

Lt. Col. David Hylton, U.S. Army

*That's the essence of good communication: having the right intent up front and letting our actions speak for themselves.*

—Adm. Michael Mullen

**I**t is impossible to not communicate in one form or another. Every word, image, and action taken—or not taken—sends messages to various audiences,

and globalization of the media has created a security environment where messages can have a swift and potentially decisive impact. In current conflicts, the

perceptions of the interested populations have become, in some cases, as important—or more important—than the activities and operations conducted on the ground. Consequently, leaders at all levels have come to recognize the need to consider and incorporate public communication in their activities.

The importance of public communication with regard to its potential impact on military operations is difficult to overstate. Now retired Adm. James Stavridis described the primacy of communication as a tool he had for dealing with issues in Latin America while serving as commander of United States Southern Command, saying, “Strategic communication is our main battery. We’re in the business of launching ideas, not Tomahawk missiles.”<sup>1</sup>

Communication may be the only tool the commander has available to respond to a developing situation impacting U.S. interests. Effective communication often sets the conditions for future operations and, in some cases, may even be used to prevent future conflict.

## Toward Defining Public Communication

Communication is often misunderstood for many reasons. It is not defined in doctrine, even though the term has been recurrently used in recent history. Complicating the lack of an official definition has been the conflicting uses and definitions of communication put forward and implemented among various commands and agencies. Additionally, many of the diverse proponents involved in the use of communication—such as public affairs, military information support operations (formerly psychological operations), and information operations—have put forth their own definitions based on their own perspectives, interests, and agendas. This confusion, along with other conflicting definitions formulated by the Department of Defense and other U.S. government agencies such as the State Department, has negatively impacted communication efforts.

## Clarifying the Meaning

In its simplest form, communication is the exchange of ideas between two parties. The sender sends a message to a receiver, who interprets the message through cultural, political, and societal filters. The receiver then provides feedback to the sender, who interprets the feedback through another set of filters. The concepts of

communication are found throughout strategic communication, communication strategy, and, most recently, communication synchronization. All of these terms are interrelated but may apply to the different levels of communication to be considered by the commander.

For this article, communication is used as an overarching term to refer to all of the various forms of external communication a leader may conduct.

## Strategic Communication

Strategic communication (STRATCOM) was the first term adopted by the government (popularized following 9/11) that attempted to provide a working definition for synchronized strategic-level activities aimed at communicating a unified message supporting strategic objectives. STRATCOM was initially viewed as the guiding force behind alignment of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power to achieve national goals and objectives—a complex and daunting undertaking. Conceptually, STRATCOM was conceived as being formulated at the highest levels of government power and then permeating all levels of government activities to create a unity of messaging that harmonized and supported all other strategic activities.

Subsequently, STRATCOM became primarily focused on public communication activities. It is now recognized that while communication activities at all levels have different challenges, the activities are based on a central set of concepts and principles generally conceived as steps taken to align the actions, words, and images of an organization. Uniform acceptance of this general concept appears in various definitions of STRATCOM. For example, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defines strategic communication as—

focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.<sup>2</sup>

The 2010 *Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy* uses the

same definition but adds, “Further and more specifically, effective SC [STRATCOM] requires synchronization of crucial themes, messages, images, and actions with other nonlethal and lethal operations.”<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere, scholar Christopher Paul suggests a working definition of strategic communication: “coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.”<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, a 2009 Department of Defense report on STRATCOM offers a somewhat more elaborate explanation:

Strategic communication is the alignment of multiple lines of operation (e.g., policy implementation, public affairs, force movement, information operations, etc.) that together generate effects to support national objectives. Strategic communication essentially means sharing meaning (i.e., communicating) in support of national objectives (i.e., strategically). This involves listening as much as transmitting and applies not only to information, but also [to] physical communication—action that conveys meaning.<sup>5</sup>

Regardless of the great effort expended among many agencies to clarify and refine the concept for use at the policy level, many object to applying the term STRATCOM to the military, for two primary reasons. First, the military commander does not have control over all the instruments of national power. Although it is recognized that the commander is a contributor to the informational instrument and the majority stakeholder in the military instrument, it is also apparent that commanders must rely on, and coordinate with, the rest of the government for employment of the other instruments of national power to achieve a STRATCOM effect. Such coordination is routinely dogged by internal policy disagreements and bureaucratic foot dragging that often inhibit formulation and execution of national STRATCOM. Nevertheless, at lower levels, commanders should remember that they do have tools that mirror, to some degree, other instruments of national power. For example, in a given situation, the commander’s key leader engagements clearly have the potential for complementing regional diplomacy, while targeted

spending by a commander’s forces can complement the government’s overall employment of the economic instrument for a strategic purpose.

The second disagreement with the term is based on the word *strategic* itself. Though a tactical commander will usually have little direct opportunity to engage with the other instruments of national power at the strategic level, globalization of communication has resulted in a situation where tactical actions may have a strategic effect. Therefore, commanders at all levels may make decisions that have effects and repercussions that reach far beyond their formally assigned areas of operation. Commenting on this modern development, Adm. Michael Mullen, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff observes,

It is time for us to take a harder look at “strategic communication.” Frankly, I don’t care for the term. We get too hung up on that word, *strategic*. If we’ve learned nothing else these past eight years, it should be that the lines between strategic, operational, and tactical are blurred beyond distinction.<sup>6</sup>

## Communication Strategy

Communication strategy, COMMSTRAT, also known as commander’s communication strategy, is an attempt to refine and adapt the concept of STRATCOM for communication efforts at the level of combatant command or military service and at operational or regional level. Combatant commanders use COMMSTRAT to align the activities they control to achieve their objectives and goals within their areas of responsibility. As with STRATCOM, a commander employing COMMSTRAT does not have control of the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments within the operational area, so the command must coordinate with agencies responsible for the other instruments of national power to synchronize planned actions with words in order to achieve the commander’s objectives.

Thus, by its nature, COMMSTRAT is inherently difficult to coordinate. The different goals, objectives, priorities, opinions, and agendas among all of the parties involved are often contrary to those of the commander. Additionally, COMMSTRAT relies on the guidance from high-level, whole-of-government STRATCOM policy makers at the Department of



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Adolf Pinlac, Washington National Guard)

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tim Reeves and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kevin Crisp, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, Washington National Guard, perform a "flag drag" high above Puget Sound 4 July 2014 on their way to Gas Work Park in Seattle as part of the Seattle Seafair 4th of July celebration.

Defense or Joint Staff to guide and align its efforts with other government players.

### Communication Synchronization

The latest guidance for such communication activities appears in the relatively new communication synchronization process discussed in Joint Doctrine Note 2-13, *Commander's Communication Synchronization*, published in 2013. The publication defines communication synchronization as—

a joint force commander's process for coordinating and synchronizing themes, messages, images, operations, and actions to support strategic communication-related objectives and ensure the integrity and consistency of themes and messages to the lowest tactical level through the integration and synchronization of all relevant communication activities.<sup>7</sup>

Commanders use communication synchronization (a process) to coordinate the actions of their commands to achieve mission success. Communication

synchronization is more narrowly focused than COMMSTRAT but does not operate in a vacuum. It is nested within COMMSTRAT just as COMMSTRAT is nested within STRATCOM.

### Recurring Communication Themes

Though not all military definitions of communication agree on all aspects of communication, they universally agree on the need to plan and coordinate communication efforts. As a result, there are recurring themes common to the definitions. These themes are essential to communication activities, and many are based on the commander and his or her leadership.

**Communication through action.** The first common theme is that actions communicate. This reflects the old adage that "actions speak louder than words." The 2008 International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) theater strategic communication strategy says,

Ensure actions match words. We must ensure we do what we say we do. Our actions will invariably have a greater impact than what

we communicate verbally or in writing. Consistency between “video” and “audio” will reinforce our STRATCOM messages and maintain ISAF credibility.<sup>8</sup>

Actions are often the most visible aspect of an organization’s policies and goals. All actions—such as leader engagements, military-to-military engagements, movements on the ground, visits by leaders, overflights of aircraft, and transits of ships—send messages. In the Internet age, reports of actions taken and the results of those actions are quickly spread across the globe; they affect the perceptions of the audiences the commander is trying to engage. It is important to envision how the actions will be perceived by the different audiences and what message they will deliver. It is also important to recognize that there is risk that actions taken may not deliver the desired messages or may conflict with words and images used. Moreover, inaction is a form of communication since not acting can also send a message, which may also pose considerable risk.

From a strategic perspective, planning a communication strategy should emphasize not permitting a *say-do gap* to emerge. A *say-do gap* arises in the minds of the targeted audiences when an organization’s statements conflict with the actions it takes. Saying one thing while doing another sends conflicting messages and destroys credibility. Recent examples of a *say-do gap* came from operations in Afghanistan, where NATO forces proclaimed respect for the Afghan people and Islam, a verbal message that appeared contradicted by images and incidents of civilian casualties and military operations in and around mosques. Such apparent inconsistencies were successfully exploited by the Taliban via globally distributed images on the Internet.

Leaders at all levels can reduce the *say-do gap* by establishing an organization or process to examine planned actions and determine if they potentially conflict with the command’s words. This allows the commander to make a more effective risk analysis when making a deliberate decision to conduct or modify an operation. It also allows the organization the opportunity to anticipate



(AP photo by Rahmat Gul)

Afghans shout anti-United States slogans during a demonstration 23 February 2012 in Mehterlam, Laghman Province, east of Kabul, Afghanistan. Afghan police fired shots in the air to disperse hundreds of protesters who tried to break into an American military base in the country’s east to vent their anger over a Quran-burning incident.

possible adverse consequences of actions and to be proactive in postoperation damage control. As noted by Adm. Mullen,

We hurt ourselves more when our words don't align with our actions. Our enemies regularly monitor the news to discern coalition and American intent as weighed against the efforts of our forces. When they find a "say-do" gap—such as Abu Ghraib—they drive a truck right through it. So should we, quite frankly.<sup>9</sup>

**Establishing a communication mindset.** Commanders set the conditions for preventing the pitfalls of a say-do gap by establishing a *communication*

*mindset* within the unit. Commanders do this by including communication objectives as part of their vision and the overall objectives. If communication is part of the commander's objectives, the staff and subordinate leaders are forced to consider and include communication in their formulation of objectives and operational planning. With a communication mindset, the staff and subordinate commanders become habituated to automatically considering the effects of their actions in terms of public perceptions and potential reactions. Consequently, they include communication at the beginning and in all subsequent stages of planning.

Establishing a process and organization responsible for communication is also part of establishing the necessary communication mindset. The process and organization are used to identify new communication opportunities and to work within the staff to make recommendations to the commander. They also work to deconflict messaging and to prioritize engagements with outside organizations. This helps prevent counterproductive audience saturation and the useless expenditure of effort on unpromising, cost-ineffective communication endeavors. The process and organization also help to establish priorities for communication within the commander's guidance and objectives. This prioritization seeks to achieve the maximum possible benefit from

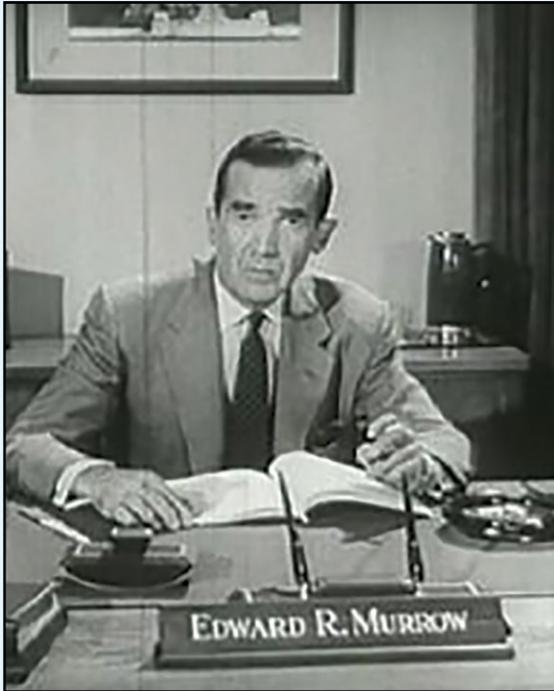


(Photo by Spc. Joshua Kruger, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera))  
An Afghan child waves a flag at a coalition forces' member as he travels to an Afghan National Security Forces-led medical clinic 12 March 2013 in Panjwai District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. The clinic was held to enable conditions for improved security, governance, and development.

communication efforts, given the resources available, while identifying potential seams and gaps in the efforts. The coordination process may be formal through regularly scheduled meetings or informal using an ad hoc process to coordinate communication as the need arises; a combination of the two is often most effective.

A communication mindset includes consideration of the communication effects of tactical maneuver, logistic, and contracting operations. By creating a communication mindset, the staff learns to consider the communication effects of all planned actions. Every action performed, dollar spent, or contract approved sends a message to someone, somewhere. The communication mindset takes such into consideration as well as the cultural, political, and societal filters that the interested populations will use to view the actions.

A key benefit of inculcating such a communication mindset is that it promotes recognition and consideration of the potential second- and third-order effects of the actions taken by the organization, including the unintended consequences that may arise from those actions. All of the staff members should therefore adopt a communication mindset through which they provide input into planning campaigns and operations. One effect of adding communication to the commander's objectives is that it expands communication considerations beyond the perspective of



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Pictorial Center)

Edward R. Murrow, then U.S. Information Agency director, appears in the 1961 Cold War counterpropaganda film *The Challenge of Ideas* to discuss the ideological battle between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Edward R. Murrow was a noted American journalist who came to prominence as a radio broadcaster during World War II. After the war, he garnered international attention by producing a series of investigative reports that led to the censure of U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, who had reputedly been using smear tactics to root out and stigmatize persons in the government and media he regarded as communist agents. Murrow was appointed in 1961 by Pres. John F. Kennedy to head the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Murrow accepted the appointment on the condition that he be included in all cabinet and National Security Council meetings so that policy would be synchronized with official press releases from the government, especially during times of crisis. He served in that capacity until 1964.<sup>10</sup>

traditional communicators, such as public affairs, military information support operations, and information operations, and it widens the aperture to solicit perspectives from staff sections such as civil affairs, the political advisor, and the chaplain. As a result, operational planners receive the benefit of insight from many different and useful perspectives regarding communication effects of planned operations.

A resulting second benefit of such a communication mindset is enhanced speed and agility in responding to negative messages and opponent communication actions.

Additionally, since commanders are already responsible for examining the higher headquarters' objectives and supporting the portion appropriate to their organization, a well-established formal synchronizing process will help commanders execute the command responsibility of nesting organizational communication objectives with higher headquarters' communication objectives. For example, as higher headquarters' objectives may address issues at a national level, subordinate objectives must necessarily be tailored to address issues mainly associated with subordinate areas of operations.

**Necessity for establishing clear communication guidance.** Commanders must support communication efforts and provide clear and substantive guidance for them to be effective. Without commander support and emphasis, communication efforts will die on the vine, and the staff will return from a communications mindset to a traditional operational focus without sophisticated anticipation of the communication aspects of planned operations.

To cultivate the communication mindset, leaders must produce clear communication guidance that aligns communication efforts across the staff and with that of subordinates. The best guidance is not strict guidance in which everyone is expected to parrot the exact same words and phrases. Rather, it is guidance that establishes the commander's communication vision and intent within a communication framework that allows the staff and subordinates to adapt the intent of guidance to a specific task, while supporting the commander's communication objectives.

Though some issues and audiences may be reserved for commanders to discuss or engage, the most effective approach may be for commanders to delegate authority to the staff and subordinates to creatively adapt communication guidance to use in their respective lanes. With such a communication mindset, the commander empowers everyone to be a spokesperson for the command.

Having the people on the ground telling and demonstrating the command's story lends credibility and depth to the communication effort. This delegation manifests itself in the concept of the strategic corporal:

A strategic corporal is a soldier that possesses technical mastery in the skill of arms while being aware that his judgment, decision making, and action can all have strategic and political consequences that can affect the outcome of a given mission and the reputation of his country.<sup>11</sup>

Possibly as important, the strategic corporal avoids tactical-level actions that could have strategic-level effects by acting professionally, understanding the importance of his or her actions, and understanding the commander's communication guidance.

Providing communication guidance at the outset of staff planning ensures staffs consider communication early. Without early guidance, communication will not be woven into planning from the outset but will likely be added on as an afterthought. As a result, particularly in the event of a crisis, the messages among the various staff elements involved in complex operations will be discordant, confused, and in some cases contradictory. Poorly conceived ad hoc communications have great potential for making things worse, as happened after the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs, Cuba, in 1961. A statement often attributed to Edward R. Murrow, when asked to deal with the ensuing public relations debacle, illustrates the need for synchronized communication guidance from the outset of planning: "If they want me in on the crash landings, I better damn well be in on the takeoffs."<sup>12</sup> Murrow, then director of the United States Information Agency, had not been told of the invasion—sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency—until after it failed.

Similarly, the commander's guidance will also help prevent the appearance of the "strategic knucklehead." The strategic knucklehead arises from "an absence of judgment, leadership, decisiveness, and moral courage [that] can produce outcomes or reactions that have a negative strategic effect."<sup>13</sup> Such an individual causes a strategic problem through negative actions at the tactical



(Photo by Maj. Edward Hooks, U.S. Army Pacific Contingency Command Post PAO)

Soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army Pacific Contingency Command Post conduct a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief coordination meeting during a readiness exercise 25 September 2012 on the Taliai Military Camp, Tonga. The exercise is part of Coral Reef—a multinational emergency deployment and readiness exercise with partners in Australia, New Zealand, and Tonga. Such staff planners should incorporate a communications mindset that anticipates second- and third-order effects among populations as a result of operations.

level. Often, the problems are far larger than the tactical operations that cause them. Religious or cultural carelessness, or any neglect of professionalism demonstrated through actions such as desecrating Qurans, needlessly damaging mosques, or mistreating prisoners, have had long-lasting effects that remained well after the tactical operation was complete.

Leaders also must recognize their special roles in communication. There are times when the commander is best suited to be the organization spokesperson because of the commander's position and responsibility. The same goes for key leader engagements. The commander is the best person to conduct certain engagements with certain other leaders, such as senior military leaders or senior political leaders. The commander speaks with an authority that other people do not possess.

**Feedback for communication.** Like all other operational endeavors, communication can always be improved upon. Therefore, feedback on communication efforts is an essential part of the effort. However, it is often difficult to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between words, images, and actions and the perceptions of a population. Feedback may come from the intelligence system, public affairs reports, or general-perception "atmospheric" reports from the soldiers in the field. To make an assessment regarding the impact of communication efforts,

the commander will have to direct resources to gathering feedback. Commanders then must assess this information and make their decisions based on previous experience, the recommendations of their staffs, and their own instincts. Notwithstanding, it should be understood that influence achieved through communication is an investment that usually requires a thorough, time-consuming, coordinated effort to achieve the commander's objectives.

## Conclusion

To reap the benefits of a staff imbued with a communication mindset, commanders must support communication efforts so those efforts can be effective. Communication is commanders' business. If a commander does not recognize its importance, buy in to it, and support it, an essential tool will go unused, which in some cases could mean mission failure. It is the

responsibility of the commander to establish a communication mindset that permeates the command. The mindset must assimilate the operators as well as the organizations that are normally recognized as communicators. Staff sections that recognize and consider the importance of the communication aspects of their actions will help eliminate the say-do gap potentially generated during planning for operations. Additionally, a commander who empowers subordinates to communicate, while also recognizing when and where his or her special role in communication should be used, will be more effective than a commander who disregards his or her communication responsibilities. In sum, a commander who effectively uses communication will be able to more effectively set the conditions for future operations and may even be able to prevent needless conflict in the future. ■

*Lt. Col. David Hylton, U.S. Army, is a public affairs officer assigned to U.S. Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. He holds a BS from West Virginia University and an MA from Regent University. His previous assignments include communication strategy and public affairs observer-trainer for the Joint Staff J-7 (Joint Force Development), Deployable Training Division; chief of public affairs for NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan; and chief of public affairs, First Army.*

## Notes

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(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Wyatt, Joint Task Force Jaguar PAO)

Maj. Mike Nicholson, public affairs officer for 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, helps Pfc. Kyle Ingle update the "Iron Brigade" blog on the hood of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle 5 November 2009 at Camp Red Cloud, South Korea. Ingle maintained a small digital camera to shoot photos and videos for a week during a field exercise and provided an update to the brigade's website.

# Public Opinion

## A Center of Gravity Leaders Forget

Col. Steve Boylan, U.S. Army, Retired

*The moral elements are among the most important in war. They constitute the spirit that permeates war as a whole, and at an early stage they establish a close affinity with the will that moves and leads the whole mass of force ... . The effects of physical and psychological factors form an organic whole, which, unlike a metal alloy, is inseparable by chemical processes. In formulating any rule concerning physical factors, the theorist must bear in mind the part that moral factors may play in it ... . Hence most of the matters dealt with in this book are composed in equal parts of physical and of moral causes and effects. One might say that the physical seem little more than the wooden hilt, while the moral factors are the precious metal, the real weapon, the finely-honed blade.*

—Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

The military has long employed the center of gravity (COG) concept as an analytical tool for assessing both enemy and friendly vulnerabilities during strategic and operational planning as well as for the study of past wars and conflicts. The COG concept is attributed to Prussian Gen. Carl Von Clausewitz as described in his theoretical treatise, *On War*. In that master work, albeit unfinished, Clausewitz described a COG as an emerging confluence of certain key factors from among a complex web of interrelated and interdependent components within an entity at war that, during a certain window of time, forms “the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends.” He goes on to say that it is this hub against which the friendly major offensive effort should be directed in order to upset the coherence and equilibrium of an adversary’s war effort.<sup>1</sup>

Though there has been intense and oftentimes emotional debate within the military regarding exactly what Clausewitz had in mind by this description, interpretations of his thoughts on the COG concept (especially since the post-Vietnam era of the late 1970s) have had a deep and lasting influence on U.S. doctrinal thinking. Such influence is on display in Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, which recasts the COG concept in somewhat different language as “a source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.”<sup>2</sup>

The pre-9/11 Army was initially inclined to interpret the COG as primarily a physical attribute or entity (e.g., an army, a key logistical point, a vital political center such as a capital city, or a port, etc.). However, the lingering legacy of the Vietnam War, where public opinion played a decisive role in U.S. moral commitment to the conflict, combined with similar challenges in maintaining national moral commitment to conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last fifteen years, caused Army doctrinal thinkers to revisit Clausewitz’s theoretical assertions about COGs. Such deliberation has resulted in increased awareness of the preeminence of moral factors within the context of his overall theory of war. The influence of Clausewitz on U.S. Army thinking is clearly evident in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, which states that “centers of gravity are not limited to military forces and can be either physical or moral. They are a part of a dynamic perspective of an operational environment.”<sup>3</sup>

However, irrespective of having admitted the plausibility of moral factors becoming, in fact, the main hub of power upon which the outcome of an entire conflict may be decided, ADRP 3-0 gives short shrift to stipulating just how a moral COG should be attacked or defended. Instead, the doctrine writers of ADRP 3-0 appear to have contented themselves by merely noting that moral COGs are difficult to identify and influence.<sup>4</sup>

The vague admission and lack of detail begs the question: precisely how does a friendly power or force go about attacking something identified as the moral hub of an adversary’s war effort?

## Information as a Key Component of the Moral Center of Gravity

Among the most important factors that directly impact moral convictions and commitment on all sides of a conflict is targeted information packaged to



be persuasive in content and rapidly disseminated in many venues. Yet, despite apparently broad appreciation for the potential influence of information within the military, what guidelines there are in ADRP 3-0 for effectively developing and discussing targeted information transfer do not as yet identify information as a center of gravity. It is only cryptically alluded to in the “Unified Action” chapter, mentioned but once as the necessity for the Army to participate in interagency coordination to formulate strategic communication for support of defense and public diplomacy.<sup>5</sup>

This article contends that such a lack of doctrinal emphasis—acknowledging the necessity for developing and distributing information aimed at influencing various audiences as a decisive component of modern warfare—is a key indicator of a dangerous deficiency in military thinking. Our recent experience in conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan reveal

that failure to recognize public opinion as a center of gravity, and the intrinsic role that effective public communication now has for shaping public opinion in the information age, risks failure to win wars.

It is still true that the U.S. military has the conventional technology, training, and equipment to defeat any known single conventional enemy in the field. In conjunction, operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locations during America’s longest period of war have provided the most experienced warfighting force the U.S. military has ever had. However, as recent (and not so recent) experience suggests, the physical means to win wars in today’s political and security environment is clearly not enough.

Experience has shown that the court of domestic public opinion, driven by modern communications, can have a dramatic impact on military decisions, generally at the strategic and operational level, but also down to the tactical level. Information conveyed to the public has the capacity to push us just as quickly out of a war as it can push us in, however unwisely in either case. Therefore, it is imperative that military decision makers acquire a higher level of sophistication when working through the many new dimensions of modern warfare’s public information component that impact the moral center of gravity so dramatically on either side of a conflict. Such must be dealt with effectively and cannot be wished away. Some of the most significant of these dimensions are addressed below.

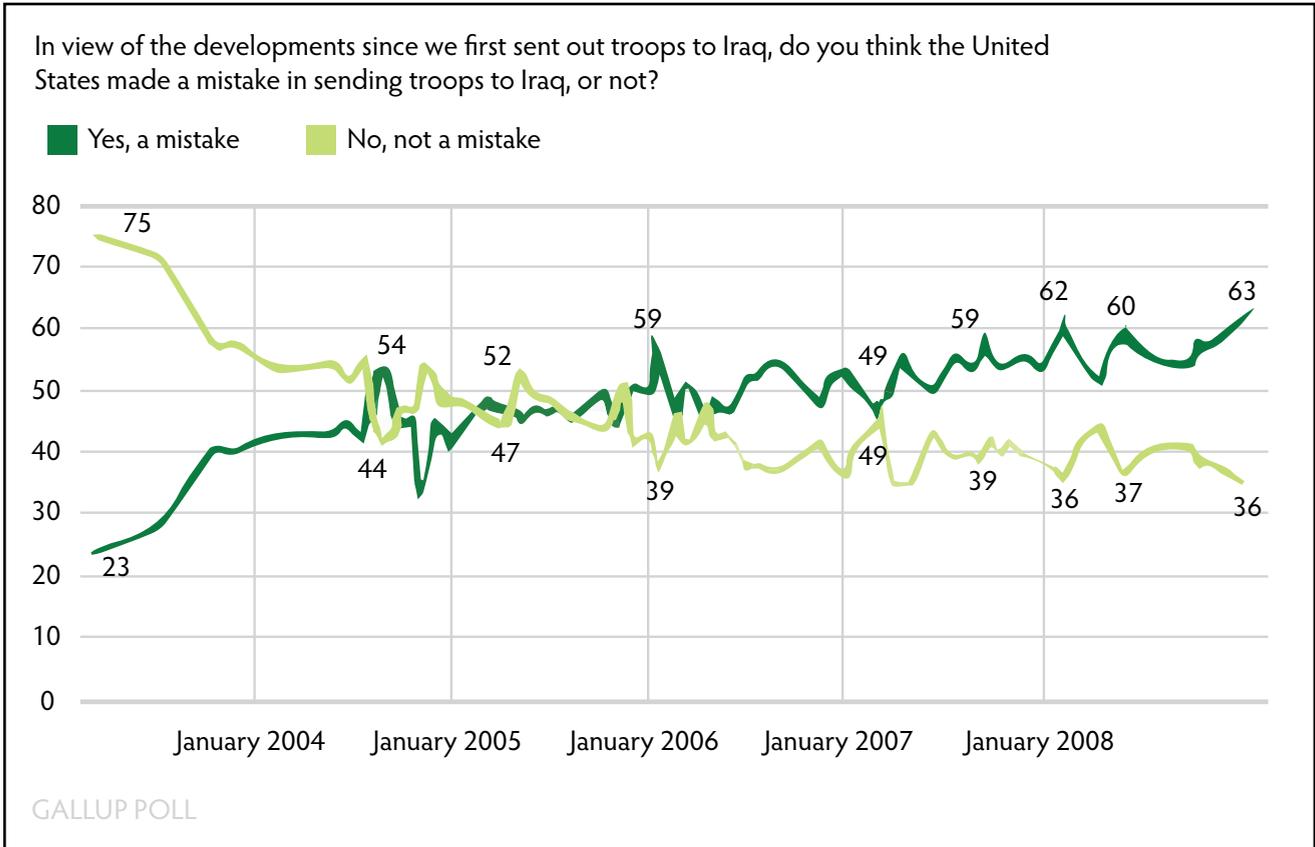
## Public Opinion Polling as a New Dimension of War

It is important to observe that future conflicts waged by democracies—like it or not—will be driven in large measure by extensive near-real-time media exposure shaped by pundit and so-called expert analysis whose commentary will be linked

Stephen Colbert interviews special guest Gen. Ray Odierno, commanding general of the Multi-National Force—Iraq 7 June 2009 during an episode of *The Colbert Report* filmed in Baghdad, Iraq. Once thought by many to be an inappropriate, and even demeaning, venue for policy discussion by those holding high government office, so-called entertainment media have evolved to become a powerful and influential channel of information to large, mainly youthful audiences that have little interest in traditional news programs. Subsequently, U.S. government and military officials have sought to participate in such programs to convey information to publics that traditional media do not reach.

(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)





(Reproduced by permission from Gallup)

**Figure 1. Gallup Poll**

to public-opinion polling. This is a direct result of advances in communications technology that created the information age in which we now live. Such are likely to be a permanent feature of future conflict pending the unlikely emergence of an as yet undeveloped technological innovation that somehow replaces the influence of public opinion polling on decision makers.

History shows that U.S. wartime policy makers since at least the Civil War have obsessed over public opinion and attempted to gauge the impact of contemplated wartime decisions based largely on anticipating how domestic public opinion might react. For example, both the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania leading to the battle at Gettysburg and the Emancipation Proclamation were arguably the products of just such U.S. Civil War gambits directly aimed at shaping public opinion by attacking the adversaries' perceived moral centers of gravity.

However, the difference in dynamics between pre-information age and today is that modern polling

techniques convey public attitudes within hours of actual or anticipated events that concentrates the enormous stress, uncertainty, and anxiety generated by war into vastly shortened decision cycles as compared to those longer timelines enjoyed in the past. This has forced decision makers to make decisions within timeframes measured in hours rather than days, weeks, or even months. One consequence of this development is that decision makers now increasingly demand evidence of supportive public opinion through polling as a precondition for decisions they consider regarding the use of military force—sometimes even as a factor or decision at the tactical level.

This increasing trend was observable in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on 11 September 2001—the worst single-day attack by a foreign power against the United States since Pearl Harbor. Almost immediately, polling linked to punditry placed great stress on the Bush administration and military advisors as public opinion data regarding the potential options for dealing with those who had planned and conducted

the attacks were collected, analyzed, and debated in the public media.<sup>6</sup> Counterintuitively, one finding identified in such early polling was public reticence for committing immediately to a strong military response. Consequently, as Louis Klarevas observed, public opinion polling actually appeared to impede policy makers from taking immediate action. The subsequent delay in planning and conducting a military response until much later appeared to enable U.S. adversaries by providing additional time to prepare for a U.S. attack. “The military issues are more highly constrained,” he wrote, “because they are inherently more threatening to the public, are more often the object of media coverage, and are generally more salient in the mass public’s mind.”<sup>7</sup>

Based on numerous subsequent studies and indications from polling data, the public in general appears to support a perceived necessity for conducting military operations—whether inside or outside of the U.S. borders—to achieve national goals when faced with adversaries that threaten national interests.<sup>8</sup> However, as demonstrated in figure 1, public opinion polling also consistently shows limited public tolerance—and little patience—for military operations that show no immediate progress or that suffer significant setbacks.

For the above reasons, public opinion polling has evolved to be an important factor influencing strategic decisions as well as shaping communication strategies for U.S. administrations and elected officials. Additionally, such constant polling during times of conflict directly influences the military leadership in its daily operational and tactical decisions in a formerly unheard of way as policy guidance from the national civilian leaders and strategic objectives vacillate in response to trending opinion data.

Whether military commanders and subordinate leaders sufficiently understand and appreciate the impact of greatly speeded public opinion data on their decisions is not clear and is consequently an area that requires further research. However, what is known, based on U.S. Army and joint doctrinal publications, is that relatively little education and training is given to leaders to adequately prepare them for command decision making in an environment of real-time, globally distributed polling data.

Quite the contrary, there is a fair amount of anecdotal information indicating that many commanders

and leaders continue to live in denial that the public information domain and public opinion are either “key terrain” or critical centers of gravity. As a consequence, there is a real danger that in the future, military leaders who decline to consider the impact of public opinion polling on their operations, and who make no plans to address what they may wish to dismiss as disproportionate public reaction to minor adverse events, place themselves and their operations at much greater risk of failure.

A historical example is reflected in events associated with Operation Restore Hope, the follow-on mission to Operation Provide Relief, part of the United Nations multinational relief operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I and II) that began in August 1992. Operation Restore Hope was initiated under United Nations Security Resolution 794 with the United States in the lead. After success in reestablishing a measure of order and relieving famine under UNOSOM I, UNOSOM II was initiated on 26 March 1993. UNOSOM II changed the objectives of the mission from relieving famine to confronting militias in order to establish political order.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, the mission evolved quickly into a situation that saw U.S. forces become involved in almost daily combat operations over a period of many months. One event that completely changed the mission, largely due to public opinion shaped by coverage from CNN and other media, involved the aftermath of the Battle of Mogadishu, an action fought in the Somali capital from 3 to 4 October 1993. This battle, which resulted in the loss of two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters and eighteen special operations soldiers, became widely known as “Black Hawk Down.” It was unique in U.S. Army history because of the global transmission of imagery showing the bodies of several special operations soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu by mobs within hours of the event together with video of a captured helicopter pilot being interrogated.

For comparison’s sake, it is useful to note that approximately twenty-three thousand soldiers were killed at Antietam, Pennsylvania, on 17 September 1863; eight thousand American soldiers were killed during the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944; and 275 American soldiers were killed in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, Vietnam, from 14 to 18 November 1965. Yet, none of these, or other large-scale battles

with vastly more casualties and much greater loss of materiel, were impacted so quickly and dramatically by public opinion in so short a timeline as the Battle of Mogadishu with its comparatively light loss of life and materiel. In response to the dramatic dip in public support for operations in Somalia, largely attributed to images broadcast on cable television, then Pres. William J. Clinton directed that operations be immediately curtailed. Within a week, negotiations were begun with the militia leaders with whom U.S. forces had just been fighting, followed by an order that all U.S. forces be withdrawn from Somalia no later than 31 March 1994, irrespective of having not achieved the stated political objective of establishing stability.<sup>10</sup>

This dramatic disengagement from Somalia in direct response to what can only be perceived as political concern for adverse public opinion had far-reaching policy implications that profoundly influenced later Clinton administration decisions regarding use of the military. These included: declining to send troops to stop the genocide in Rwanda; trying to put an end to the Balkan civil war mainly through air strikes instead of with troops on the ground; and, slow and ineffectual responses to attacks against the United States and its allies by a newly emerging al-Qaida, which encouraged and emboldened it to eventually conduct the 9/11 attacks against targets in the United States on the

apparent assumption that the United States would be slow to respond if at all.

In another example, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005—in the face of growing political opposition to involvement in Iraq—a *Washington Post*/ABC poll in June showed a distinct downturn in public support for U.S. involvement in the conflict in Iraq. The poll analysis showed that, for the first time, a majority of the American public believed that the war was not making the United States any safer than it was previously.<sup>11</sup> Similar results were reflected in Gallup polling (see figure 1.) Interpreted from a Clausewitzian perspective, the need to continue with Operation Iraqi Freedom with the stated objective of establishing democracy and stability in Iraq had soured in the public mind. In other words, the Bush administration recognized that the moral center of gravity of the U.S.-led counterinsurgency war in Iraq was deteriorating as public opinion polls reflected frustration with constant setbacks reported in the media. This led to decisions that included replacing or marginalizing a large number of senior advisors, the introduction of a new counterinsurgency doctrine together with a new strategy, and a decision to “surge” additional units to the war front in an effort largely aimed at restoring equilibrium and resilience to the U.S. moral center of gravity.

Among the most salient lessons learned from both sets of experiences above are the following:

- Demonstrable success is the only sure way to sustain one’s own moral center of gravity and to degrade that of an opponent.
- U.S. public opinion support at the core of this center of gravity has a limited shelf life and is highly sensitive to indications of failure as revealed in polling.
- The equilibrium of a moral center of gravity can be restored, even if incrementally, by effective changes in policy that lead to success, supported by effective use of information to promulgate public awareness of success.

Another major lesson learned is that—in the crowded information environment among an overabundance of competing media venues—commanders cannot be complacent, contently believing that success will speak for itself. Quite the contrary, leaders who do not aggressively push awareness of battlefield successes to the



(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Joseph McKee)

A local villager and his camel pass in front of the nearly complete eco-dome project 1 November 2012 in Karabti San, Djibouti. U.S. service members assigned to Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa worked with local villagers to build the twenty-one-foot-tall structure, which will serve as the village’s community building. After three years of working on the project alongside CJTF–HOA service members, Karabti San residents acquired the skills to build an eco-dome on their own.

top of the domestic or global information agenda, using all available information venues at their disposal, are derelict in allowing the positive moral influence of such stories to disappear, which effectively cedes the information battlefield to narratives promoted by more aggressive information adversaries. Promoting public awareness of mission successes may be possible well after events, but at considerable risk of having to divert precious time and greater numbers of resources than would have been required by acting promptly, or preemptively, to counter enemy narratives, adverse public perceptions, and inappropriately elevated expectations among allies or “fence sitters.”

By promoting their success stories and using transparency effectively, commanders and other leaders complement their overall operational efforts by “seizing the high ground” in the battle between opposing moral centers of gravity, keeping their own public informed at the same time they marginalize or entirely undermine the impact of information from adversarial sources. The best-case scenario for winning the contest of moral centers of gravity results from enlightened commanders who anticipate the impact that polls, as well as media punditry and criticism, will have on public opinion. Such commanders invest time to understand what factors engender domestic support for conflicts, and conduct detailed planning in advance to either immediately exploit success to bolster moral support or counter the moral effects of adverse media coverage if things go other than planned in the battlespace.

Such planning should anticipate exploiting the moral impact of all available warfighting functions, if possible, including those not ordinarily considered as such. For example, one might aggressively publicize some particular success of drone strikes (which our enemies constantly malign in a global drumbeat aimed at fostering broad international opposition to their use) by highlighting in detail the vile backgrounds of those killed in such strikes for the purpose of informing public opinion prior to polling among external publics regarding drone use.

## Impact of New Social Media

A second phenomenon commanders need to understand and master, however reluctantly, is social media. Instantaneous communication on a global

scale is now a feature of the battlefield. The days of censorship, or technological challenges to communications that caused long delays in information and imagery leaving the battlefield, are gone. As a result, commanders must make a key assumption in their planning that everyone is potentially connected, even in the most remote locations, via satellite or cellular infrastructure. This certainly means that those with positive, nefarious, or somewhere-in-between intentions have the ability to collect information and disseminate it globally. It should be clear such capability enables a wide spectrum of players to repackage what is collected to support parochial objectives, including targeting audiences to shape public opinion affecting a commander’s specified mission.

The use of social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Buzz, Bebo, and Chatter) has provided worldwide instantaneous communication and created a new dimension of conflict. For example, on 18 November 2011, CNN reported on the first known “Twitter battle,” describing it as a war of words online between NATO and Taliban spokespersons.<sup>12</sup> This type of engagement sounds to the uninitiated as almost comic book science fiction. In reality, however, such engagement is deadly serious, with potentially grave consequences in terms of the influence such exchanges can have on global audiences deciding on their loyalties. Leaders must be adaptive and agile regarding social media. They must trust their staff—public affairs and other advisors—and be willing to take prudent risks in terms of information release aimed at promoting mission objectives.

Knowing how to operate in, and take advantage of, social media venues is becoming increasingly critical with regard to the battle between moral centers of gravity. Gaining supremacy in this conflict is accomplished by maintaining the organization’s credibility through being first with the truth, being as transparent with information as possible based on operational security and classifications, and being consistent and confident in one’s own narrative.

It is also important to note that social media to a large extent has gained credibility comparable to traditional mainstream news media (print, wire, or electronic) through blogs, twitter, and smart phones. The result is a greatly expanded suite of media focus on

various publics to inform and influence their opinions, perceptions, and actions. In a wide variety of cases, such new media are specifically engineered to expand the influence of specific institutions. For example, scholars, academic institutions like universities, and think tanks have greatly increased their influence over governance through social media, bringing almost immediate pressure on the political process that can profoundly influence military decisions as events unfold.

Additionally, social media have now been broadly incorporated into the traditional institutional avenues of the military's own external communication outlets (as exemplified in figure 2). These include inform-and-influence activities, public affairs, military information support operations, and other areas that military leaders determine to be critical to mission accomplishment, such as key leader and soldier engagements.<sup>13</sup>

The quickest and most effective way to deal with the impact of the rapidly expanding venues of social media is to anticipate possible scenarios that might occur, ensure contingency plans are made to counter adverse narratives as quickly as possible, and exploit successes by rapid dissemination of information through them. This requires that commanders keep up with developments in the world of social media for situational awareness. It also requires establishing and maintaining subject matter experts on the staff who are able to plan and coordinate with higher and lower headquarters in anticipation of the impact of social media on various operations.

## **Necessity for Engaged Leadership**

Polling, punditry, and social media have proven to have a great impact on modern war. However, more than ever, modern war also demands person-to-person engagements with key personnel. Gone are the days when commanders could hand off their responsibility for personal engagement to the public affairs officer or another staff officer. In this day and age, personal networking is a key factor in conducting successful operations; development of trust through personal engagement has become an essential factor for operational success. As a result, commanders and other leaders must understand that now, more than ever, it is a leader responsibility to learn and practice the social skills of personal engagement with key audiences, including acquiring competence in interfacing with the

members of the media as well as engagement across cultural divides.

Some may argue that acquiring such skills constitutes an illegitimate effort to inappropriately sway domestic public opinion for political purposes. However, on the contrary, Clausewitz says all wars can be considered acts of policy.<sup>14</sup> In the current security environment, it is incumbent upon leaders to understand that the commander has evolved to be not only the principal leader and warrior but also the principal diplomat in the field until civil stability is restored in an area of operations. Consequently, it is requisite that military leaders see it as a professional obligation to master interpersonal communication skills at a high level of sophistication to convey to key figures as well as to the general public what their units are doing and how effectively such actions are accomplishing the missions given them.

In an information age, clumsy communicators degrade what should be communicated and undermine listener confidence in the leadership expertise, mission, and competence of the Army as a whole. According to the Department of Defense Principles of Information,

It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requisitions for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered in a timely manner.<sup>15</sup>

## **Maintaining the Moral Center of Gravity—The Media is Essential**

Having touched upon what is new about the modern information environment, it is important to review what is not so new but continues in force: the often tenuous military-media relationship. Frequently, the two entities seem to be polar opposites at odds. Journalists have reported on all modern conflicts the U.S. military has been involved with, either on the scene or from afar, based on their ability to gain access to the operations ongoing at the time. They have also covered the military outside of conflict during training events, such as Jade Helm 15 in Texas, based on the news value of those events.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, they have reported on significant policy changes, such as the

rescinding of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and the integration of women in combat and in combat operational specialties, as well as on the defense budget and its impact on readiness. In all these actions, both in and out of conflicts, at some point the same complaints, charges, and countercharges have emerged. These include accusations of inaccurate reporting and bias leveled at the media by members of the military, paralleled by media complaints over the military providing misleading or inaccurate information and attempting unjustified censorship.<sup>17</sup>

However, due in large measure to the emergence of instantaneous global communications technology, coverage of conflicts and wars has changed dramatically since Somalia and Desert Storm. One response to this change by the military was the introduction of the *embedded* reporter. Such embeds in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom significantly changed how the public heard, saw, and understood the conflict, coloring public perceptions of the military and the very nature of the military-media relationship.<sup>18</sup>

## The Media Embed Experiment

Since 2001, perhaps the most effective experiment to come out of the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq was the media embed program. This forward-thinking program has had a very positive impact on the military-media relationship. By embedding journalists with the military at various levels, it provided the media with unprecedented access to operations and military personnel. This type of reporting enabled the military to work closely with the media and allowed the journalists to learn about the military as an organization and as individuals, providing a learning experience for both groups. The journalistic reporting of both conflicts was markedly similar to that of Joe Galloway, a prominent reporter for United Press International (UPI) during the Vietnam War who famously reported while living with soldiers in the field.<sup>19</sup>

With any experiment, there are positives and negatives, successes and failures. This is true of the media embed program as well. Many have debated

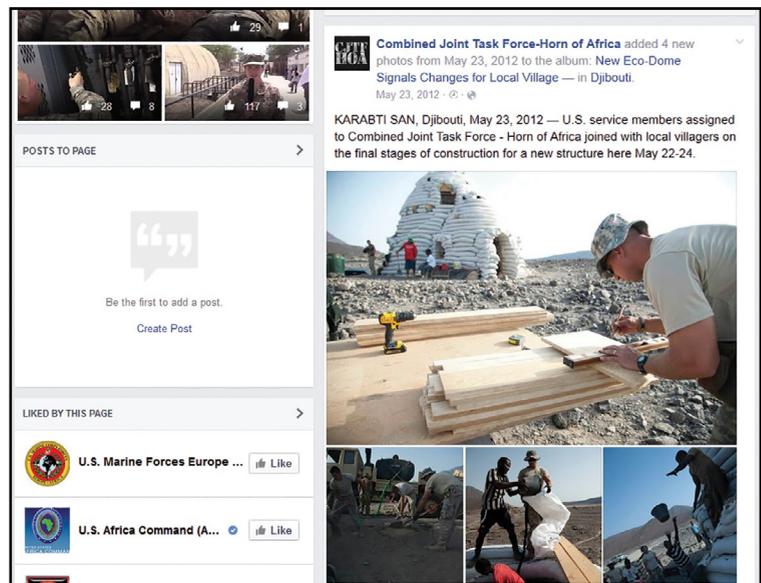


Figure 2. CJTF-HOA Facebook Page

the purpose and reputed outcomes of the program. Some claim that the journalists’ objectivity is compromised by getting too close to those they are covering. Some claim there is a loss of balance when shared experiences—such as combat—occur, those shared experiences creating a skewed positive bias that colors a journalist’s reporting. Others have claimed just the reverse to be true; that embedding causes a negative bias in reporting.<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, the embed program has its problems. There continue to be instances where neither party is satisfied with the access requested or allowed; the personalities involved may not work well together; transportation will not always be able to get journalists to the right place at the right time, and the final outcomes may not meet the expectations of either the military and its leaders or those of the journalists and their organizations.

To gain the most effective outcomes possible for all involved, military leaders must do what they can to ensure reporters have the greatest access possible. In this way, there is at least some chance for the stories to include the military’s information and perspectives. At the same time, the media must be flexible; reporters must understand that, during operations, nothing is a given. Both groups must work together to obtain an effective outcome. This supports perception and expectation management from the perspective of the military and its leadership, the media, and the public.

Irrespective, leaders at all levels should understand that few operations in the future will be conducted in an information vacuum without the scrutiny of the media. For better or worse, the media continue to be key “avenues of approach” in conversing with and informing the public as to our intent, objectives, and operational outcomes. Though important, official Army or other government outlets for information are simply not enough. Government media representatives are almost always viewed with at least some measure of suspicion by the public. As a result, though many in the military lament that this is so, it is a simple fact that the public trusts government information only to the point it has been examined and screened by disinterested third-party *gatekeepers*, such as reporters in the media. Moreover, the public prefers independent reporting altogether disassociated from official government sources.

Consequently, it is imperative that military leaders continue to learn about the media and acquire the skills to understand how to operate with and through them. This requires an understanding of how the media determine what is newsworthy and how subsequent news coverage impacts public opinion.

## Expectation Management

One aspect that leaders must improve upon is expectation management within the Army and services as a whole as well as with the media and the public at large. In general terms, those within the military have an expectation that the media will accurately report events they witness as part of the military operations or via information provided by the military. In addition to accuracy, the military also expects the media to provide the proper characterization of events as they occurred as well as the contextual narrative.

For their part, in order to accomplish their task of reporting, the media have an expectation of the military to be transparent in providing accurate information in a timely manner. This includes not only access to operations as permitted but access via other means of communication to obtain needed information to support the media’s position of reporting military operations.

One dynamic that military leaders need to understand is that the media world is extremely competitive—even cutthroat. The Holy Grail of reporting is to be the first to report on a particularly newsworthy item, the more sensational the better; success in such

reporting translates into both recognition for the reporter and the media outlet, and as revenue dollars for the media business from advertising to larger audiences attracted to stories.

Unfortunately, new technology, combined with extreme competition, results in media reports on complex and dynamic issues that cannot help but have errors in them. This frustrates and annoys members of the military, who are often products of a zero-defect mentality culture that sees inaccuracy as dishonesty or laziness. It needs to be understood that the majority of mainstream media in general, to their credit, do not make errors on purpose. However, due to the dynamics of combat or crisis events, errors will occur when information is provided in a hurry to meet deadlines without the benefit of thorough fact-checking that a less competitive environment might provide.

In such a situation, commanders must enable their staffs and designated spokespersons (if the leaders are not speaking themselves) to ensure the most accurate information is provided to media representatives as quickly as possible, and the media must be aware that inaccuracies in initial official releases might be identified as more becomes known about events. Military leaders as well as their public affairs officers must spend time developing relationships of trust with reporters, especially those commanders in charge of units most likely to draw media attention, such as prominent combat brigades or divisions. For their part, reporters must have confidence that the military is making a good-faith effort to put out the best information it has at any given time.

One recent event provides an example of when the narrative changed, and it was clear that the various elements of governmental power had not coordinated or synchronized the information publicly released: the effort to locate Osama Bin Laden in 2011 and his subsequent death during the operation to capture him. The president provided the initial report to the public on the specifics of the operation that were deemed releasable. During the hours and days that followed, conflicting information arose on the manner and type of operation that was conducted; specifics changed, and thereby perceptions changed as questions arose concerning what was ground truth. The military aphorism that “first reports are usually wrong” held true in this case.

In practice, the more time between the actual operation and the public information release, especially if



(Photo by Sgt. Sean Casey, Combat Camera Afghanistan)

Soldiers with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and embedded *Stars and Stripes* reporter Martin Kuz (right) take cover from enemy fire outside the village of Mereget, Kherwar District, Logar Province, Afghanistan, 10 May 2011.

an operation involves unusual complexity, the greater the clarity and maturity of information made available. In this case, the reporters were largely receptive to correction of the changing narrative because of the trust that had been developed over a long time between the spokespersons and the media.

This example helps illustrate that the military must be the most reliable, truthful, and forthcoming source of information available in order to effectively inform the public. Being the most trusted source of information serves to sustain the strength of the national moral center of gravity as reflected in the public's commitment to the national military objectives.<sup>21</sup>

## News?

So what is news? The answer depends upon the perspective of the person, group, or organization answering the question. What the military considers news, what the public considers news, and what the media consider news

can be, and often are, widely different. This again leads to expectation management. At a minimum, the military and the media require a common understanding of what is news and what the public deems newsworthy.

According to "Top Stories of 2010: Haiti Earthquake, Gulf Oil Spill Summary of Finding" by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, the number-one news story of 2010 was the earthquake in Haiti, with 60 percent of the public following the story "very closely." The oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico was second, followed by 59 percent of the public, and followership of the economy was third at 52 percent. Tied at number fifteen with 36 percent was the U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. Does this mean the news coverage of the military was unimportant? No. However, it does highlight the challenges the military faces in competing with other types of news coverage.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, it is important that leaders know that changing the public's perceptions or expectations on some

issue of concern may take a quite a bit of time; there is no silver bullet to make a perception change as fast as commanders or other senior leaders might want it to.

## Recognizing that the Media Cannot be Controlled

Owing to the frustration that is generated by some reports appearing in the media, there are those serving in the military at all ranks who have asked, and continue to ask, why the media cannot be controlled in what it reports. When the military or any organization attempts this level of control, this is called censorship, which then becomes the focus of the media. The military's desire and, on occasion, actual efforts to control information have historically engendered a strained relationship between the media and the military. In his article "No Bad Stories: The American Media-Military Relationship," Douglas Porch explains the clash as two organizations in a constant state of tension in part due to their distinct differences in organizational cultures and missions. The military tends to keep information close to the chest due to the nature of military operations and the desire for secrecy to protect its forces and not telegraph its moves to an opposing force. In contrast, the media sees its role in the U.S. democracy as a check on government, including the military. As such, focusing a spotlight on the military to highlight errors or problems may cause adverse reactions on the part of the military bureaucracy that result in increased tension between the two.<sup>23</sup>

Given this premise, commanders and leaders must understand that in a society that has enshrined freedom of speech and freedom of the press as elements of its foundational principles, attempts to outright control the media will backfire. Such will only spark outrage among the media members, who can be expected to join together to decry attempted government censorship and call into question the motives of such an attempt. In such circumstances, the news may very well change from the story and the information you are trying to provide to a focus on alleged infringements on freedom of speech and freedom of the press through attempted control and censorship.

## Moving Forward—The Military Starts with an Advantage

Unlike the militaries of many other nations, the U.S. military starts with a credibility advantage. According to Gallup's annual "Confidence in Institutions" public-opinion poll, the military has been ranked number one in

public confidence among rated institutions continuously since 1998 and has ranked first or second in almost every year since Gallup began this poll in 1975.<sup>24</sup> Armed with this information, commanders can take one of three approaches to the dilemma of communicating to the public: avoid it, embrace it, or take a wait-and-see attitude.

Leaders who embrace as a duty communicating to the public need to ask themselves and their staffs what key and essential considerations should be made during planning to sustain the Nation's moral center of gravity and achieve desired outcomes. Commanders and leaders must understand that careful and deliberate planning for public information dissemination is essential for successful mission accomplishment in modern wars. Not unlike any other mission-related activities, such should be included in rehearsals going into the execution phase and, finally, critiqued during after action reviews.

Planning should also include development of essential task-and-purpose checklists. Though not everything can be covered in such checklists, some common tasks are an essential starting point. The questions that follow comprise suggested items that should appear on a checklist for leaders to initiate planning. The questions may serve to help anticipate immediate missions as well as shape the understanding of junior military leaders.

- ◆ What is your intent for the information line of operation or effort?
  - ◆ How will you condition your team, get feedback, provide feedback, and gauge levels of effort?
  - ◆ How personally involved will you be?
  - ◆ How will you create a climate where speed of action is the focus?
    - ◆ Will the leadership be personally and continuously involved (not micromanaging)?
    - ◆ Will leaders be willing to accept risk (not everyone will get it right all the time)?
  - ◆ Does the plan consider—
    - » the adversary's use of information?
    - » the speed of information dissemination?
    - » media expectations?
    - » public expectations?
    - » certainty, risk, opportunity?
  - ◆ Does the plan nest within the strategic communication plan?
  - ◆ Are leaders, spokespersons, and subject matter experts trained and prepared for media interviews?<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

An essential element of the moral center of gravity for any conflict is public support. To engender the necessary public confidence and support, especially in the face of hardship and setbacks, leaders at all levels must effectively communicate to the public what is happening to their sons, daughters, husbands, wives, and neighbors. To do so effectively requires a willingness to engage both the media and the public in order to inform the U.S. public

and other critical audiences through stories and events concerning soldiers and their organizations. Experience in war has shown that failure to do so will cause public opinion (and support) to deteriorate, threatening mission failure. Additionally, failing to meet the obligation to inform the public cedes the information environment and the public opinion center of gravity to those who will attempt to influence it negatively by taking the initiative to advance their own narrative. ■

Col. Steven A. Boylan, U.S. Army, retired, is an associate professor in the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College's Department of Command and Leadership, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds a BA from Mercer University and an MA from Webster University, is a certified advanced facilitator, and is attending a doctoral program with the University of Phoenix. He served as an aviation officer and public affairs officer for senior commanders at all levels of command in combined, joint, and multinational assignments.

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(Photo by Kirsty Wigglesworth, Press Association Images)

As part of international ceremonies in Ukraine commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Crimean War, reenactors wearing uniforms of the era ride into the infamous Valley of Death 4 October 2004 to recreate the "Charge of the Light Brigade," one of the most famous incidents in British military history. Many historians agree that poorly constructed and delivered orders contributed to the attack's failure.

# Effective Writing for Army Leaders

## The Army Writing Standard Redefined

Desirae Gieseaman

**D**ay after day, the inexperienced commanders of a cavalry division and its small light cavalry brigade wait impatiently for the order

to attack. The written order finally arrives, but to the division commander, it seems "utterly obscure."<sup>1</sup> The situation becomes urgent. With relationships in the

chain of command strained and the means of communication severely limited by the austere environment and the hilly terrain, efforts to gain clarification only increase the confusion.

Finally, the division commander believes he understands which target to attack and passes on the order. Then, the light brigade's commander leads over six hundred brave cavalry soldiers in a charge from which less than two-thirds will return. The brigade's "noble six hundred," later commemorated in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's beloved poem *The Charge of The Light Brigade, Memorializing Events in the Battle of Balaclava, October 25, 1854*, attack the wrong target.<sup>2</sup>

While Tennyson's poem celebrates the light brigade's courage and sacrifice, it also alludes to leadership failings that led to the tragedy, with the phrase "someone had blundered."<sup>3</sup> Among those failings were poorly written orders. The intended readers—the division and brigade commanders—could not understand the mission or the commander's intent:

Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front — follow the enemy and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troop Horse Artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate.  
[Signed by Gen.] Airey.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, this concise order—the last of four, all ambiguous—seems reasonably consistent with the U.S. Army's definition of *effective writing*: "writing that can be understood in a single rapid reading and is generally free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage."<sup>5</sup> The order is a quick read, and the text appears generally free of errors. A style check shows no passive verbs. The meaning of the individual words, the phrases, and the sentences seems clear enough—even with a sentence fragment and some nonstandard punctuation. The order even seems consistent with the U.S. Army's notion of *mission orders*: "directives that emphasize to subordinate the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them."<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, the order's failure to fulfill its communication function demonstrates that rapid readability—supposedly achieved through conciseness and generally error-free grammar, mechanics, and usage—does not necessarily add up to effectiveness, let alone comprehensibility. The U.S. Army's writing standard could not have helped make the light brigade's final

order effective despite its worthwhile elements—even if British military leader competencies at the time had been more satisfactory.

Nor can the U.S. Army's writing standard provide twenty-first century soldiers and Army civilians the kind of guidance they need and deserve so they can become effective writers. The Army needs a new writing standard, one that would emphasize the functions of writing over its forms, one that would account for the effective thinking and reasoning that must underlie effective explanations.

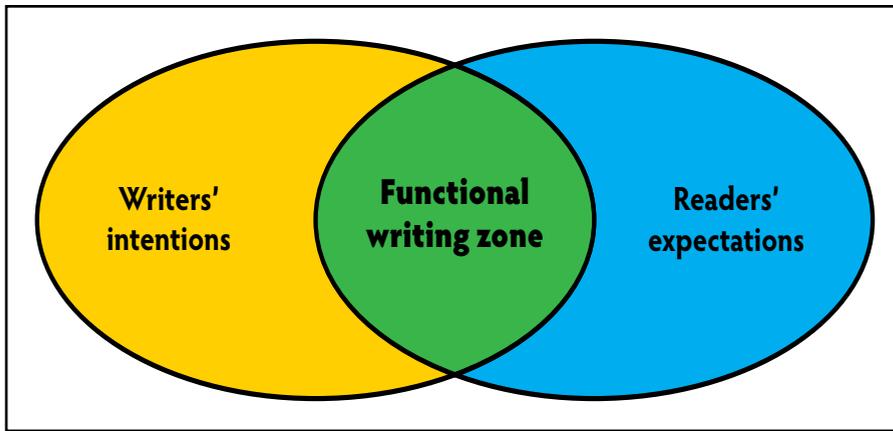
A functional standard would emphasize the reasons Army leaders write and the processes they use to develop and express their ideas to their intended readers. It would integrate the conventions for various types of written products—their forms—in a way that helps writers learn to apply those conventions proficiently. A functional writing standard would help writers become skilled thinkers and communicators because it would help them profit from the unparalleled power of writing to enhance their critical and creative thinking.

Not all aspects of the traditional Army writing standard should be discarded. Its enduring elements simply need to be understood in terms of how they support a greater whole, and then updated based on modern writing situations and research on the nature of writing and functional communication.

This essay describes why Army writing is effective when it is functional. It discusses some of the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional Army writing standard and describes the critical role of *purpose* for Army writers and for Army readers. It briefly discusses processes writers can use to write effectively—with a focus on planning, and then it surveys some of the writing genres for which Army writers apply conventions from various authorities. Finally, it proposes a practical approach for the Army to achieve accountability for writing standards.

## Functional Writing

The plain English meaning of *effective* can provide a starting point for redefining effective Army writing. *Effective* means "adequate to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result."<sup>7</sup> On one hand, a writer might consider a product effective if it was adequate to accomplish *the writer's purpose*—if it satisfied the writer's reason, or reasons, for writing.



**Figure 1. Where Writers' Intentions and Readers' Expectations Converge**

On the other hand, a reader might consider a product effective if it supplied *the reader's expected result*—if it satisfied the reader's reasons for reading. Functional writing accomplishes both by joining writers' intentions—their reasons for writing—with their intended readers' expectations—their reasons for reading—with in a notional *functional writing zone* (see figure 1).

Army writing is effective when it is functional, when it satisfies the writer's and the intended readers' purposes and meets appropriate standards for writing processes and writing conventions. In the functional writing zone, writers use the steps of writing *processes* and the conventions of written *products* to achieve effectiveness, while products and processes remain subordinate to meaningful *purposes*. When Army writers bring together their intentions and their readers' expectations within the functional writing zone, they are much more likely to think, reason, and write effectively.

Based on this functional concept, table 1 summarizes the essential elements of effective Army writing. It lays a foundation upon which Army leaders could build assessments appropriate for various types of documents, publications, or genres.

Similar to the joint term *measure of effectiveness*, truly effective written products should support “attainment of an end state or achievement of an objective” that is determined mainly by readers' expectations—their reasons for reading.<sup>8</sup> For example, in the course of performing an assigned writing task such as a report, the writer's purpose should become a refined version of the purpose given by the person who will become

the reader. If a supervisor or instructor assigns a report that should identify and describe a solution to a problem, the reader's purpose for reading will be general—to learn about a workable solution. The writer's purpose will be more specific—to create and describe a well-reasoned solution with clarity and precision, after reflecting on the writing situation, the problem, and potential ways to solve it.

Similar to the joint term *measure of performance*, the old Army definition of effective

writing tends to lead writers to focus on “task accomplishment.”<sup>9</sup> Typically, Army writers care about completing their assigned tasks. Some, however, define task accomplishment in terms of the final product's specific outward characteristics of form instead of how effectively the product communicates a focused message that will support accomplishing a mission. Indeed, readers expect certain conventions of form, which contribute to effectiveness and are relatively easy to assess, but readers care mainly about what they can learn by reading. This principle should liberate aspiring writers from paralyzing anxiety about conventions of correctness.

## The Traditional Army Writing Standard

The Army demonstrated its commitment to good writing in 1985 when it tried to achieve the “elimination of poor writing within the total army.”<sup>10</sup> Army Regulation (AR) 600-70, *The Army Writing Program* (superseded in 1988 by a regulation on correspondence) formalized the definition of *effective writing*. In 1986, a Department of the Army Pamphlet named *Effective Writing for Army Leaders* (DA Pamphlet 600-67) detailed guidelines for implementing the writing program introduced by the concise (four-paragraph) regulation.<sup>11</sup> This pamphlet coined the phrase “the standard for Army writing” and justified its adoption by framing writing as a leadership skill. It added, “Good Army writing is clear, concise, organized, and right to the point.”<sup>12</sup>

**Bottom line up front.** Among its many common-sense rules, the now-rescinded DA pamphlet mandated structuring written staff products with the main point, or bottom line, at the beginning. The pamphlet said Army writers should give the *bottom line up front*, or *BLUF*, because “the greatest weakness in ineffective writing is that it doesn’t quickly transmit a focused message.”<sup>13</sup>

**Active voice.** Another virtue of the DA pamphlet was its emphasis on preferring the active voice (subject-verb-object sentence structure) to enhance clear communication:

Many Army writers overuse the passive voice and create sentences that are indirect and unfocused, and that slow communication. The passive voice hides the doer of the action, blocking communication. Active example: Army beat Navy. Passive example: The Navy has been beaten by Army. ... The active voice is direct, natural, and forceful. ... The passive voice is abused in Army writing.<sup>14</sup>

English teachers, experienced writers, and especially readers weary of slogging through poorly written Army products still prefer active voice. Unfortunately, Army writers still routinely overuse passive constructions.

**Coaching and accountability.** The Army’s passives problem, along with many others, continues partly because focusing on form does not work, and partly because the Army neglected the pamphlet’s chapter on coaching writers (called “mentoring” by the pamphlet) and holding them accountable.<sup>15</sup> Instead, the policy’s emphasis on form over function and the force’s lack of coaching and accountability, along with overapplication of a narrow standard to all manner of products,

have ensured “the total Army” would, for the most part, continue writing poorly. The solution begins with writers’ and readers’ purposes.

## Purposes—The Reasons for Writing and the Reasons for Reading

Since the mid-1980s, many applied linguistics researchers have moved away from linguistic theories that try to understand language by understanding patterns in grammar. Instead, linguists try to understand language through functional linguistic theories that emphasize context, relationships, and communication functions.<sup>16</sup>

**The importance of meaning.** Research in applied linguistics and English education, as well as new technologies used for teaching, has profoundly influenced approaches to teaching English composition. Researchers have found that functional, contextual approaches are much more effective than traditional “drill-and-kill” techniques focused on structure.<sup>17</sup> Granted, researchers have, primarily, studied high school and college learners. However, functional approaches for teaching writing are suitable for learners of any age because they provide meaningful learning experiences.<sup>18</sup>

**Reading and writing as learning.** The primary value in Army written products is the learning they provide for readers. Army readers, for the most part, naturally and legitimately expect to learn when they read Army written products—official correspondence, reports, manuals, or orders; academic writing projects; contracts; blog posts; news articles; and many other genres. In the functional writing zone, writers aim to provide content that causes their intended readers to

Essential Elements of Effectiveness	General Descriptions of Measures
Purposes	How written products satisfy the reasons intended audiences read and the reasons authors write for them
Processes	How writers perform writing tasks
Products	How texts present their messages and demonstrate appropriate writing conventions

**Table 1. Measures of Effective Army Writing**

learn. Writers can do this effectively by asking themselves what they need and want to learn as they write, and what their intended readers need and want to learn by reading. Then, writers can incorporate appropriately complex cognitive processes into their writing processes. They can conceptualize cognitive learning using the cognitive processes in “Bloom’s taxonomy for teaching, learning, and assessing,” as revised by editors Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl in 2001.<sup>19</sup>

A team of educational researchers led by Benjamin Bloom developed the original, now-obsolete, Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives in 1956. Educators around the world have used the 1956 version to improve curricula and assessments. However, the body of research in cognitive psychology since the 1950s and changes in the practice of education necessitated a revision. Anderson and Krathwohl made significant improvements, although many educational institutions have yet to adopt the revised taxonomy (illustrated in table 2, page 111), with empty cells where users would write in learning objectives.<sup>20</sup>

The taxonomy’s main intended audiences are teachers and test designers writing learning objectives and assessing learning. However, its cognitive

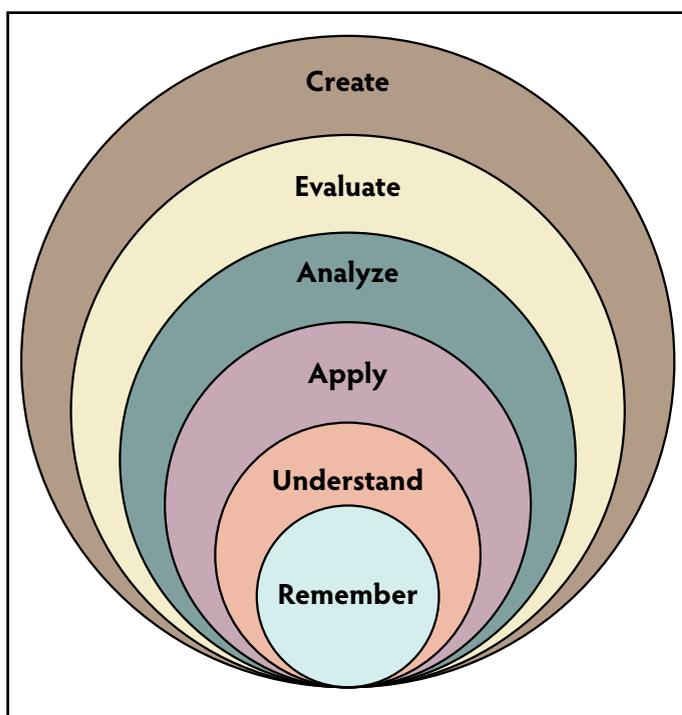
process dimension, which has a sound basis in cognitive psychology research, is a powerful aid for writers aiming to enhance learning. Cognitive processes fall within the six categories listed horizontally in table 2, from left to right *in order of increasing complexity*. The taxonomy organizes nineteen processes within the categories:

1. Remember—recognizing and recalling
2. Understand—interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining
3. Apply—executing and implementing
4. Analyze—differentiating, organizing, and attributing
5. Evaluate—checking and critiquing
6. Create—generating, planning, and producing<sup>21</sup>

It is important to understand that this is not a tidy hierarchy where every learning task fits neatly in a box, and that the cognitive process categories are not a ranked list of cumulative behaviors.<sup>22</sup> For instance, Anderson and Krathwohl explain, “critical thinking and problem solving tend to cut across rows, columns, and cells of the Taxonomy Table.”<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, other than the two-dimensional table, Anderson and Krathwohl do not offer a visual representation such as a pyramid; this would misrepresent their intent. With that in mind, a simple stacked Venn diagram is helpful for illustrating that more complex processes overlap with less complex processes (see figure 2).

Writers can refer to Bloom’s revised taxonomy as they aim to use the processes appropriate for their writing situation. In many writing situations, they can think of themselves as problem solvers who develop creative solutions for complex problems by aiming for processes in the most complex cognitive learning category: create. Writers using processes within the *create* category do not exclude less complex, or less cognitive, processes; they integrate them. Unfortunately, Army writers often settle unnecessarily for merely *analyzing* their topics when their writing situations call for evaluating or creating. Moreover, writers’ overall processes need not be strictly cognitive; they can integrate affective and psychomotor processes as well.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 2. Overlapping Cognitive Processes from Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy**

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyze	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual						
B. Conceptual						
C. Procedural						
D. Metacognitive						

**Table 2. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of Educational Objectives**

**Writing as critical and creative thinking.** The act of writing provides numerous ways to evoke creative thinking and integrate it with critical thinking. Through writing, Army problem solvers can use creative processes relevant for doctrinal processes typically considered analytical, for instance. Even the Army's *military decision making process* (MDMP) depends on a considerable amount of creativity, particularly in the "generate options" step (for which doctrine provides few creative techniques). Placing various MDMP steps in the appropriate cognitive dimension categories suggests the types of cognitive processes suitable for each step. It also suggests that creative thinking is integral to the MDMP.

Most U.S. higher learning institutions offer a class on "applying both critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe problems and approaches to solving them."<sup>25</sup> All students can sign up for this class—which will help them elevate their cognitive processes and their communication skills. Typically, it is named English Composition, and the instructors teach many techniques known to help with creating and developing ideas, as part of processes for writing.

### Processes—The Ways Writers Perform Writing Tasks

There is no single writing process that all writers use in all situations. English educators using research-based approaches for teaching are not likely to insist on strictly defined and sequenced steps. They may propose variations on writing processes with as few as three parts or as many as ten.<sup>26</sup>

Numerous writers' handbooks, composition classes, and online sources discuss processes for writing. Therefore, this article mentions the parts of writing

processes only briefly. Because of the importance of starting well, this discussion emphasizes planning for longer and more complex Army products. However, even relatively short products such as e-mails can benefit from many of the principles given.

Major writing process activities typically include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading, but writing guides disagree on where to place various subtasks because few fit neatly into a single activity. Each writer works differently. As with the major Army operations process activities, all the major writing process activities "are not discrete; they overlap and recur."<sup>27</sup> Proficient writers use good writing processes and adjust them "to suit their personalities as well as specific writing situations."<sup>28</sup>

In the operations process, planning, "the art and science of understanding a situation, envisioning a desired future, and laying out effective ways of bringing that future about," represents the beginning.<sup>29</sup> To facilitate good beginnings for writing projects, Army writers can consider several planning tips:

- ◆ Use creative prewriting activities to move beyond the natural urge for self-expression.
- ◆ Use copious amounts of questions to understand the writing situation and imagine possibilities.
- ◆ Take advantage of the power of writing, and other techniques, to stimulate creative thought.
- ◆ Incorporate collaboration as early as possible, and allow time for drafting and further development based on feedback.
- ◆ Set out to embrace and enjoy drafting and re-writing as ways to raise learning levels and to improve mastery of writing conventions.

While good operational planning is critical to accomplishing missions, considerable strategic work needs to occur in advance. In other words, the



(Photo by Sgt. Justin Naylor, 1st Cavalry Division PAO)

Pfc. Adrian Mack, a supply specialist with 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division–North, talks about the different styles of communication 28 June 2011 with Spc. James Taylor, a heavy vehicle operator with 2nd AAB at Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq.

beginnings of successful operations encompass activities that occur before operational planning. A similar principle applies to writing.

**Creative prewriting activities.** Writers' handbooks present numerous creative prewriting activities as ways to develop ideas. Their names vary, but suggested activities typically include the following techniques, compiled from Lynn Quitman Troyka and Douglas Hesse, *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, and Jean Wyrick, *Steps to Writing Well*:

- ◆ *Journal writing*—writing private, short, daily entries in a notebook kept within easy reach
- ◆ *Freewriting*, including variations called *looping* and *the boomerang*—writing uninterrupted text rapidly for ten minutes or more
- ◆ *Brainstorming*, also called *listing*—quickly writing down ideas without screening, organizing, or developing them
- ◆ *Structured questioning and answering*, including variations called *cubing* and *cross-examination*—asking categories of questions such as who, what, where, when, why, and how; or asking questions about definitions and characteristics,

comparisons, relationships, circumstances, or evidence

- ◆ *Clustering*, also called *mapping*—drawing a circle with the main topic written inside, and then drawing lines from it to more circles with related topics written inside them, and drawing lines to still more circles with more subtopics
- ◆ *Talking*—chatting informally or inviting a friend to ask questions about the topic
- ◆ *Reading*—reading or browsing to learn how others are discussing the topic
- ◆ *Drawing or dramatizing*—creating diagrams, pictures, models, scenarios, or even songs or raps to stimulate ideas.<sup>30</sup>

Prewriting to develop ideas—regardless of the technique—can serve another critical function.

Writers can use prewriting to satisfy and move beyond their natural desire for self-expression and into the functional writing zone. In this way they can more easily identify their target readers and create value for them. Writing is a great tool to develop and clarify one's thinking and reasoning, but this function differs from writing directly for the benefit of other readers. Journal writing, stream-of-consciousness freewriting, brainstorming, questioning, clustering, talking, reading, or drawing while considering a topic help open a valve from the psyche. Mature writers use these types of techniques to nurture themselves and their ideas, to increase their learning, and then to develop and organize focused messages that will satisfy their readers' reasons for reading.

**Copious amounts of questions.** The second planning tip is to use copious amounts of questions. All writers should front-load questions during early planning and pursue answers doggedly.<sup>31</sup> They should write down practical and intellectual questions such as these to help them understand their *writing situation*:

- ◆ What is the purpose of this writing task, according to the person who assigned it or the intended readers?

- ◆ What will be my purpose for writing—what do I want to achieve, solve, or demonstrate for the intended readers?
- ◆ What characteristics of the intended readers do I need to consider?
- ◆ What makes this project important?
- ◆ What are my biases and limitations, and how can I overcome them?
- ◆ What authorities do I need to consider about the format, topic, process, or any other conventional standards for the task?

As with any task, writers should understand the overall picture before they start drafting.

**Ways to stimulate creative and critical thinking.** The third planning tip is to take advantage of the power of writing—and drawing or other visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or collaborative techniques—to stimulate thought. Some writers use note cards or sticky notes they can move around as parts of a storyboard. Some work with images or three-dimensional models. With a pen and paper, it is easy to sketch relationships as diagrams, outlines, or pictures. For some writers, using a pen and paper with cursive handwriting is more stimulating than writing with a computer. This makes it easy to set aside concerns about typing words correctly. Moreover, questioning tends to work best when authors write down their questions—and their tentative answers—as they arise. Writers who need to overcome inertia or uncertainty often find that journaling, brainstorming, or extended freewriting (thirty minutes or more) helps jumpstart ideas. Working quickly enhances these techniques—using touch typing or cursive handwriting is helpful.

The ability to use writing to stimulate thinking and reasoning improves with repetition.<sup>32</sup> With each subsequent journal entry, iteration, or draft, ideas develop further as written words develop on the page. Rare is the writer who can produce a fully developed concept or product, or solve a complex problem, in a single pass. When supervisors, commanders, or instructors assigning writing projects insist on a good process and allow time for it, they will be more likely to receive well-crafted products.

**Collaboration and feedback.** The fourth planning tip is to incorporate collaboration with peers and subject matter experts as early as possible, and to allow enough time for drafting and rewriting based on their

feedback. Writers should avoid the mistake of referring only to experts and sources whose points of view support their own. Collaboration with peers is helpful; engaging with sources and people whose points of view, knowledge, and strengths differ from the writer's is vital.

Critical thinking and reasoning should not be performed entirely in isolation; neither should writing. Even the best writers cannot see every instance in which their thinking, reasoning, or writing could use improvement; they need test readers who can provide feedback during development. Getting feedback near the end is too late. (Some formal processes for Department of the Army publications build in peer review and drafting; truncated time lines, along with other issues, can interfere with effectiveness.)

**The benefits of drafting and rewriting.** The final planning tip is for writers to embrace and enjoy drafting and rewriting as ways to raise learning levels, focus their message, and improve their mastery of writing conventions. To solve complex problems, writers concentrate on and revisit their work repeatedly and persistently, over time. They seek feedback along the way.

Writers learn writing skills, including specific conventions—grammar, mechanics, style, organization, or formatting—as they receive feedback on their drafts and then rewrite. Writing formal products does not come naturally to anyone, any more than higher-level thinking comes naturally, but this is a blessing in disguise. Writers can benefit from regarding their first drafts as developmental rather than as containing errors of sentence or paragraph structure that others might criticize. Their test readers can adopt a similar view. Usually, test readers can better serve writers by providing questions, guidance, and recommendations rather than outright corrections.

Among the reasons writers should make their own changes is that even recasting elements of grammar or style can engage writers' thinking, reasoning, and communication skills. The early drafts of sentences, paragraphs, essays, letters, or reports likely will need development in their messages, not just in their use of conventions.

## Products—The Conventions of Written Texts

Specific purposes, processes, and conventions appropriate for Army writing differ ad infinitum for the

topics, the genres, the intended audiences, and many other factors. The traditional Army writing standard could not encompass every kind of Army writing any more than Cinderella's slipper could fit her stepsisters.

**Army authorities on written products.** The Department of the Army has seventeen regulations just on information management. The Department's main publishing regulation lists over forty kinds of official Army publications and numerous types of media for them.<sup>33</sup> Many Army publications and documents are subject to Department of Defense and U.S. Government Printing Office standards as well.

The Army regulation on correspondence alone contains over twenty tables and over sixty figures illustrating how to apply the rules.<sup>34</sup> FM 6-0 establishes conventions for staff studies, decision papers, running estimates, briefings, after action reviews, schedules, plans, orders (with up to twenty-one types of annexes), and various matrixes.<sup>35</sup> Various policy documents establish standards for web content and public affairs publications. In addition to Department of the Army, TRADOC establishes numerous requirements. Official administrative publications of TRADOC include a multitude of circulars, memorandums, pamphlets, regulations, supplements, and forms—all governed by various regulations.<sup>36</sup> Other subordinate Army organizations establish their own writing requirements, many drawing on Standard English authorities as well.

**A move to consolidate and simplify.** Proponents for specific Army writing standards established in Department of the Army and TRADOC information management (25-series) administrative publications, in doctrine, or in any other authorities could serve the force by consolidating, reducing, and simplifying their conventional standards. Authorities that have not already done so should articulate their standards in plain English and provide meaningful contexts that illustrate how to apply them. Moreover, they should consider ways to achieve accountability and consistency, starting with ensuring the writers they intend to apply their standards receive effective instruction and coaching on using them in context. Army writers need to become proficient in the rules pertinent to their particular writing tasks, but they need to put the rules in their

place—subordinate to a functional standard of effectiveness.

**Standard English.** Along with administratively or doctrinally defined Army standards, commonly accepted principles for English writing apply to most kinds of Army writing. Individual writers within any Army organization have numerous tools available to help them apply Standard English conventions. It should go without saying, but for products prepared in Microsoft Word, supervisors and instructors should not accept writing for which authors have not used a process that includes drafting and re-writing, developmental feedback if appropriate for the situation (substantive and proofreading), and systematic use of Word's proofing options set for checking both grammar and style. Moreover, even e-mails can be spell-checked, and reviewed by a test reader if appropriate.

**A process for accountability.** Commanders, instructors, leaders, and supervisors should refuse to accept substandard writing, and they should avoid inadvertently perpetuating it. AR 600-70 declared that “commanders at all levels” were responsible for “upholding the common standard, working actively to eliminate poor writing in their commands, and providing poor writers opportunities to improve.”<sup>37</sup> For Army writers to improve, this aspect of the old policy needs to be revived. DA pamphlet 600-67 outlined a process for supervisors to give developmental feedback on writing, and for writers to self-monitor, self-correct, and assess and improve clarity, packaging, and major style elements (such as unnecessary passive voice).<sup>38</sup>

The Army was to conduct diagnostic testing, establish writing core curricula in Army schools, and provide options for remedial work. Supervisors were to review paper drafts of staff products in detail, mark up errors, and send the drafts back for corrections so writers could make their products consistent with the standards. In effect, supervisors were to edit all staff products—not by making corrections, which perpetuates problems, but by identifying errors in a way that writers would understand how to fix them before they submitted a final version. This might have been an effective approach for helping writers improve their proficiency in the limited conventions DA Pam 600-67 articulated.

However, just three years after the Army Writing Program was created, a new regulation on preparing and managing correspondence (AR 25-50) superseded it.<sup>39</sup> By the 1990s, the age of personal computers had arrived. The Army writing standard became separated from its context and intent, the categories of Army writing expanded, the volume of Army writing increased exponentially, and a practical means for accountability and writing improvement seemed to disappear.

## Implementation of a New Army Writing Standard

Army writing is effective when it satisfies the writer's and the intended readers' purposes and meets appropriate standards for writing processes and writing conventions. To implement this functional standard effectively, the Army must avoid reverting to traditional approaches for teaching English composition, which remain all too common.

Former Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John A. Wickham's vision for establishing "a common standard, ... goals, ... and ... responsibility" for Army writing

remains relevant.<sup>40</sup> However, the approach introduced in 1986—predating the computer age and based on a traditional understanding of writing—remains overly focused on correcting discrete points of grammar, mechanics, and usage, and facilitating rapid reading of limited document types.

Instead of trying to achieve the "elimination of poor writing within the total Army," a new Department of the Army writing policy should inspire Army leaders to write well and to think well. It should inspire effective teaching and coaching. As with Wickham's policy, the new vision should be rooted in Army leadership principles. It should encompass the act of writing not only as a way of communicating "focused messages" but also as a way of developing those messages for targeted readers. Placing a new writing policy in the Army's leadership regulation—AR 600-100, *Army Leadership*—could help banish any latent doubt that the Army considers writing a critical leadership competency.<sup>41</sup>

**Writing teachers and coaches.** Writing teachers and curriculum developers at Army training and education institutions should have appropriate



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy R. Koster, 362nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Soldiers from the 302nd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and its subordinate units complete a written examination during the Best Warrior Competition 23 March 2014 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts.

credentials or professional development. Ideally, their expertise should include familiarity with writing theory and research-based English teaching methods developed after the mid-1980s. The “NCTE [National Council of Teachers of English] Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing” and “Guiding Principles [for] Sound [Postsecondary] Writing Instruction,” summarized here, express the major principles that teachers, coaches, and institutions should follow.

The NCTE believes—

- Everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught, and teachers can help students become better writers.
- People learn to write by writing.
- Writing is a process.
- Writing is a tool for thinking.
- Writing grows out of many different purposes.
- Conventions of finished and edited texts are important to readers and therefore to writers.
- Writing and reading are related.
- Writing has a complex relationship to talk.
- Literate practices are embedded in complicated social relationships.
- Composing occurs in different modalities and technologies.
- Assessment of writing involves complex, informed, human judgment.<sup>42</sup>

According to the NCTE guiding principles, sound postsecondary writing instruction—

- Emphasizes the rhetorical nature of writing
- Considers the needs of real audiences
- Recognizes writing as a social act
- Enables students to analyze and practice with a variety of genres
- Recognizes writing processes as iterative and complex
- Depends upon frequent, timely, and context-specific feedback from an experienced postsecondary instructor
- Emphasizes relationships between writing and technologies
- Supports learning, engagement, and critical thinking in courses across the curriculum.<sup>43</sup>

Any soldier seeking a writing class through a civilian institution should obtain a syllabus and a textbook or materials before registering—regardless of how the instruction is

delivered. If the approach seems dated or inconsistent with the NCTE principles, the soldier should keep shopping; the same goes for software programs for writers.

In addition to making sure Army writing teachers have appropriate credentials or professional development, the Army should establish an Army-wide volunteer writing-coach program. A writing-coach program would require a relatively small investment in training and administration. With about three weeks of training from a qualified teacher trainer—an English teacher with advanced expertise in using and in training others to use English composition teaching techniques—soldiers and Army civilians who already were proficient writers could become proficient coaches. Three weeks could allow enough training time to introduce Army and Department of Defense authorities that govern specific genres. Over time, more and more Army organizations could have resident writing coaches.

**Institutional leader training and education.** Based on a new Army writing policy and research-based principles on teaching writing, TRADOC Regulation 350-10 could follow through with an updated approach to training and educating officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and civilians in effective writing.<sup>44</sup> Proponents for all courses identified in TRADOC Regulation 350-10 should specify the types of writing for which their participants need to be proficient, the appropriate authorities, and, as much as possible, the optimal ways to ensure their participants know how to produce the standards. The Action Officer Development Course—the only course expressly required by the regulation to teach writing—needs to replace its woefully obsolete distributed learning writing lesson.

Early in 2015, the Army instituted a writing assessment for noncommissioned officers, intended to lead to opportunities for nearly one hundred thousand soldiers to take English composition courses at civilian institutions.<sup>45</sup> The success of this initiative will depend on leaders paying attention to the assessment results and ensuring their soldiers follow through by enrolling in and completing appropriate courses (courses consistent with the NCTE guidelines and the soldiers’ needs).

**Ours to reason why.** The U.S. Army no longer needs to settle for the mindless overapplication of a narrow, obsolete standard of limited value for helping leaders write well. The types of Army writing have evolved substantially, technologies have changed

radically, and decades of research have revealed much about the nature and power of writing. In light of these developments, maintaining the old writing standard would be inconsistent with Army leadership principles.

In *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, Tennyson describes cavalry soldiers riding to their deaths because of their leaders' mindlessness and poor communication skills. Of the soldiers, he writes, "theirs not to reason why."<sup>46</sup> Perhaps that was true—it was theirs to

obey. However, the twenty-first century U.S. Army wants leaders who do reason why—it calls them strategic thinkers. A better approach to Army writing will help the Army develop them. ■

*Acknowledgment.* The author is indebted to Mr. Steve Capps, Lt. Col. Brian Ray, Dr. Bill McCollum, and the editorial team at Military Review for their invaluable feedback and support during the development of this article.

Ms. Desirae Gieseman is an editor for Military Review. She holds a BA from William Woods University with majors in French, business administration, and economics, and a master of education from the University of Missouri, Columbia, in curriculum and instruction, which includes graduate study in linguistics. She studied French at the University of Caen, France, through the Experiment in International Living's School for International Training; at Eurocentre in La Rochelle, France; and at Middlebury College's summer immersion program in Vermont. She is the author of *A Simple Instructional Guide for the Global Classroom*.

## Notes

1. Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why: The Story of the Fatal Charge of the Light Brigade* (London, England: 1958), 232. Woodham-Smith discusses the causes of the disaster in detail. "British Battles, Crimea, 1854," British National Archives online, accessed 30 April 2015, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/battles/crimea/charge.htm>, gives an informative summary.

2. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Charge of The Light Brigade, Memorializing Events in the Battle of Balaclava, October 25, 1854*. Accounts differ of the number of soldiers conducting the attack and the numbers killed, wounded, or captured. See "British Battles, Crimea, 1854" for the official casualty report.

3. Tennyson, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

4. Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why*, 231; see also the United Kingdom's National Archives website, accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/battles/crimea/charge.htm>.

5. Army Regulation (AR) 600-70, *The Army Writing Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 5 April 1985), superseded November 1988 by AR 25-50, *Preparing and Managing Correspondence*; the current AR 25-50 is dated 17 May 2013. A derivative of the Army writing standard, as applied to Army correspondence, survives in paragraph 1-10, "Writing Quality," and chap. 1, section IV, "Effective Writing and Correspondence: The Army Writing Style."

6. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, May 2012), 5.

7. Dictionary.com, s.v. "effective."

8. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, August 2011), GL-13. *Measure of effectiveness* is defined as "a criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect."

9. *Ibid.* *Measure of performance* is defined as "a criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment."

10. AR 600-70 (obsolete), *The Army Writing Program*, 3.

11. Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet 600-67, *Effective Writing for Army Leaders* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2 June 1986), obsolete since 15 January 2013 although unofficial copies survive on the Internet. Former Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John A. Wickham, Jr., referred to the communication breakdown at the Battle of Balaclava in the foreword to illustrate the importance of clear communication in the Army.

12. *Ibid.*, 1.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 2.

16. Carol A. Chapelle, "Some Notes on Systemic-Functional Linguistics," Iowa State University website, 28 October 1998, accessed 13 April 2015, <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~carolc/LING511/sfl.html>, gives a short summary of functional approaches to linguistics; Scott DeLancey, "On Functionalism," (lecture 1, Linguistic Summer Institute, Santa Barbara, CA, 2001), accessed 13 April 2015, <http://pages.uoregon.edu/delancey/sb/LECT01.htm>, provides a more detailed explanation of structural versus functional linguistic theories.

17. Michelle Navarre Cleary, "The Wrong Way to Teach Grammar," Atlantic.com, 25 February 2014, accessed 13 April 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/02/the-wrong-way-to-teach-grammar/284014/>. Cleary cites Diane Lapp and Douglas Fisher, eds., *Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 2011); George Hillocks, Jr., "What Works in Teaching Composition: A Meta-analysis of Experimental Treatment Studies," *American Journal of Education* 93, no. 1 (November 1984): 133-170; Steven Graham and Dolores Perin, "A

- Meta-Analysis of Writing Instruction for Adolescent Students," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 99, no. 3 (2007): 445–476; Steven Graham et al., "A Meta-Analysis of Writing Instruction for Students in the Elementary Grades," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 104, no. 4 (2012): 879–896; W.B. Elley et al., "The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School Curriculum," *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 10 (May 1975): 26–42; and Thomas Flynn and Mary King, eds., *Dynamics of the Writing Conference: Social and Cognitive Interaction* (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993).
18. Alice Omaggio Hadley, *Teaching Language in Context*, 3rd edition (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2001), chap. 2, "On Learning a Language: Some Theoretical Perspectives," and chap. 3, "On Teaching a Language: Principles and Priorities in Methodology." Omaggio Hadley does not distinguish between research into first and second language learners; nor does she identify the age of learners studied. Principles are similar—see the National Council of Teachers of English, "Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing."
19. Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl, eds., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman, 2001). Many U.S. learning institutions, including those in the Army, still use the obsolete 1956 version; Anderson and Krathwohl summarize the changes in appendix A. See also Leslie Owen Wilson's "The Second Principle" website, accessed 15 May 2015, <http://thesecondprinciple.com/teaching-essentials/beyond-bloom-cognitive-taxonomy-revised/>. Keep in mind, however, that some Internet sources are not reliable for understanding the revised taxonomy.
20. *Ibid.*, 28–30.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 267.
23. *Ibid.*, 270.
24. Leslie Owen Wilson, "Three Domains of Learning—Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor" website accessed 9 April 2015, <http://thesecondprinciple.com/instructional-design/threedomainsoflearning/>. Wilson offers an interesting perspective on how some teachers are blending cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning.
25. ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army GPO, 2012), 7. The Army design methodology is defined as "a methodology for applying both critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe problems and approaches to solving them."
26. See Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-90.90, *Army Tactical Standing Operating Procedures* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, November 2011), chap. 2, for a three-stage writing process for developing effective tactical standard (formerly called *standing*) operating procedures.
27. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, May 2012). The major operations process activities are plan, prepare, execute, and assess; ADRP 5-0 avoids calling them phases or stages.
28. Lynn Quitman Troyka and Douglas Hesse, *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 10th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 61. *Note:* Writers should replace very old writing handbooks and style or grammar guides with up-to-date and authoritative sources that reflect current standards and suit their learning styles.
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(Photo by Sgt. Jon E. Dougherty, 203rd Engineer Battalion)

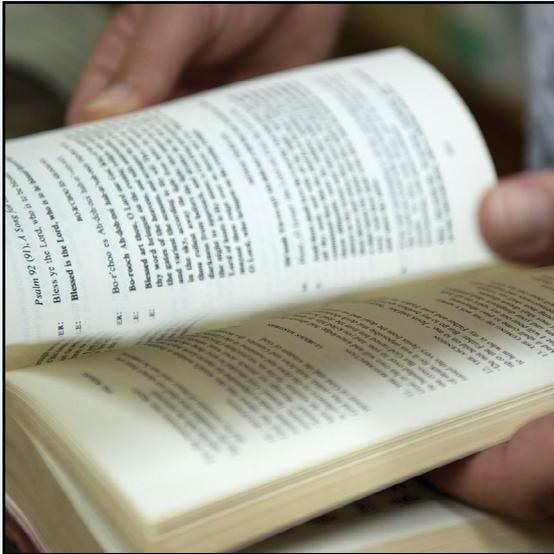
Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 211th Engineer Company, attached to the 203rd Engineer Battalion, Missouri Army National Guard, bow their heads in prayer prior to departing on a route clearance mission 30 November 2009 in Sharana, Afghanistan.

# Religious Participation The Missing Link in the Ready and Resilient Campaign

Chaplain (Maj.) Brian Koyn, U.S. Army

**I**magine you are taking command of a battalion. Your selection for command is the culmination of many years of hard work, dedication, and accomplishment. You feel it a great privilege to receive the opportunity to serve at the battalion-level as leader of some of America's best and brightest. However, your elation quickly dims as the heavy burden of command begins to present unwelcome challenges.

In your first month of command, myriad problems raise their nasty heads, and not one seems remotely related to tactical decision making or combat leadership. The first problem occurs within the first week when an early morning phone call startles you awake with the bad news that a sergeant in Bravo Company has taken his own life. The memorial service is hardly complete when another company



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Iinuma)

A Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa chaplain looks through his Bible prior to a Catholic service 28 March 2015 at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The chaplain's priorities are to enhance service members' readiness by preparing them with spiritual resiliency, engaging them through a ministry of presence and spiritual care, and ensuring worship and religious education opportunities are available to all.

## Spiritual Fitness Outcomes

- Values-based behavior
- Strength of will
- Resilience
- Purpose and meaning in life
- Uplifting relationships
- Openness and acceptance
- Quest for knowledge and truth
- Enhanced motivation to leverage skills to realize potential
- Greater satisfaction and commitment
- Increased happiness

Adapted from Patrick J. Sweeney, Sean T. Hannah, and Don M. Snyder, "The Domain of the Human Spirit," in *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Don M. Snyder and Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008)

reports an attempted suicide. Within the next two weeks, late night phone calls notify you of a domestic violence allegation against one of your soldiers, the arrest of two others for getting into a fight while downtown during a night of drinking, and the detention of an officer from Alpha Company for driving under the influence of alcohol. Your command tour appears to be off to a bad start, and the battalion has not even gone to the field yet.

After consulting with your command sergeant major and investigating the incidents with your staff and affected subordinate commanders, it seems as if the chain of command has done everything right. Command-climate surveys indicate a generally positive climate in the companies; required instruction is current; master resilience trainers are appointed and active, and other required programs seem to be in place.

In a moment of exasperation, you pull out the Ready and Resilient Execution Order (EXORD) and subsequent campaign documents to see if there is anything you may have missed. However, you are disappointed. You discover that although the Army has devoted much time, talent, and money to the Ready and Resilient Campaign, you find barely a mention in campaign documents of one definitive way to help improve resilience and personnel readiness.

What you will not find in any of the Ready and Resilient literature is the vast body of research (identified throughout this article) that reveals active participation in religious communities leads to better overall physical, emotional, and mental health. Unfortunately, the EXORD appears to provide minimal acknowledgment of the power of such participation in religious groups to build and sustain personal as well as unit readiness and resilience.

## Ready and Resilient Campaign

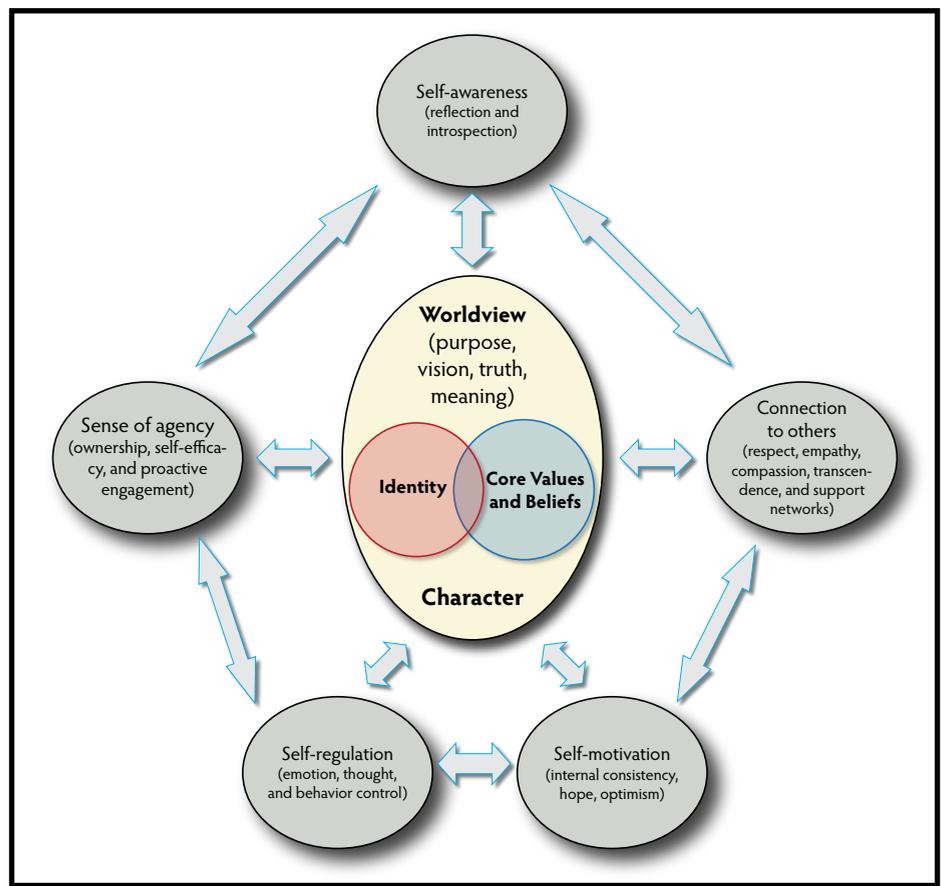
When the chief of staff of the Army established his strategic priorities in 2013, the priorities included goals under the heading "Soldiers Committed to Our Army Profession." One goal was to "build the comprehensive physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual resiliency of our soldiers, civilians, and their families to enable them to thrive personally and professionally."<sup>1</sup> Yet, in the subsequent EXORD, which outlines the specific actions necessary to attain

this goal, there is only one passing mention of spirituality. There is no direct reference to involvement in organized religious groups even though the need to build physical, mental, and emotional resilience appears numerous times. The Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) sub-component of the program nominally incorporates a spiritual aspect to overall fitness, but the resulting definitions and associated questions on the Global Assessment Tool do not ask about religious faith; they instead employ language seemingly adapted to the tastes of secular humanists that avoids direct reference to religion.<sup>2</sup>

Should the complete absence of religion be troubling to Army professionals interested in strengthening the resilience of their troops?

Absolutely. Failure to include religious observance as a tool for building individual and unit resilience should be very troubling since the body of peer-reviewed research on the positive link between active participation in religious observance and overall physical and mental health is abundant and compelling.<sup>3</sup> Leaving out religion from efforts to build and sustain resilience is comparable to leaving out nutrition in discussions about physical fitness.

Moreover, omission of such references seems to run counter to the EXORD directive itself, which states, "Evidence-based health promotion programs are those that are founded on the best available research and are recommended on the basis of a systematic review of the published, peer-reviewed research."<sup>4</sup> Setting aside the asserted validity of research on the efficacy of Master Resilience Training, which is still the subject of lively debate, the drafters



**Figure. Conceptualization of the Domain of the Human Spirit**

of the EXORD in question seem to have been either unaware of, or to have simply disregarded, overwhelming research showing the strong correlation between active involvement in religion and its beneficial effects on all aspects of health.<sup>5</sup>

With the above in mind, the point of this article is certainly not to disparage or criticize other program initiatives of the resilience campaign but to protest exclusion of what can fairly be called a historically recognized key component of military resilience that has recently gone missing in action. It is also fair to observe that if any other component of resilience development had a similarly compelling body of research, in the same quantity, validating its record of salutary effects on the health of soldiers, the Army would be unabashedly trumpeting the information far and wide in an effort to widely promote the advantages detailed in the research findings. Downplaying religious influence in the

EXORD is no doubt a by-product of contemporary hypersensitivity to all things having the word *religion* attached to them, which is now all too often considered politically incorrect—to the detriment of those who would most benefit from them.

The above noted, it is exceptionally important to observe that religion matters to the Army as an organization because a majority of its members claim some level of religious identification and practice, and that marshalling such to achieve the Army’s readiness and resilience objectives is not only prudent and appropriate, it is also very cost effective.<sup>6</sup>

## Benefits of Religion

In an effort to encourage those in the Army responsible for building resilience to closely examine and publicize the readiness advantages that stem from individual involvement in religious activity, this article provides an overview of research that appears to establish a strong link between involvement in religious activities and improved levels of mental, emotional, relational, and physical fitness. It touches upon some especially salient examples of research in the areas of suicide prevention, mitigating substance abuse, and promoting marital stability.

Among the more notable examples of research are those found in the landmark editions of the *Handbook of Religion and Health*, collected by Dr. Harold Koenig and colleagues. These collections comprehensively examine peer-reviewed research

studies relating to religion and health dating from the 1800s to 2010. The results may be surprising to some. According to this research, “at least two-thirds of these studies report that religious/spiritual people experience more positive emotions (well-being, happiness, life satisfaction), fewer emotional disorders (depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse), more social connections (social support, marital stability, social capital), and live healthier lifestyles (more exercise, better diet, less risky sexual activity, less cigarette smoking, more disease screening, better compliance with treatment).”<sup>7</sup> It is also worth noting that the research is not limited to one particular faith; similar findings are reported among many disparate religious groups.

Obviously, the beneficial effects attributable to becoming actively involved in religious groups are exactly what the Army is attempting to achieve with the Ready and Resilient Campaign. Unfortunately, I am unaware of any mention of the results of such comprehensive and easily obtainable research in any of the information promulgated through the current campaign.

## Religion vs. Spirituality

This article focuses solely on the overall health benefits from participation in organized religion and not on the broader subject of health-related aspects of the more nebulously defined spirituality. This is not

Faith Group	Active	%	ARNG	%	USAR	%	Total	%
Atheist	3,283	0.7	1,775	0.5	935	0.5	5,993	0.6
Buddhist	2,231	0.4	942	0.3	949	0.5	4,122	0.4
Protestant	270,458	53.6	166,995	47.2	93,069	47.6	530,522	50.3
Catholic	96,012	19.0	56,292	15.9	34,752	17.8	187,056	17.8
Othodox	731	0.1	394	0.1	318	0.2	1,443	0.1
Hindu	673	0.1	193	>0.1	283	0.1	1,149	0.1
Jewish	1,806	0.4	862	0.2	755	0.4	3,423	0.3
Muslim	1,867	0.4	647	0.2	725	0.4	3,239	0.3
Other religions	3,820	0.8	9,201	2.6	870	0.4	13,891	1.3
No preference or unknown	123,449	24.5	116,771	33.0	62,782	32.1	303,002	28.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>504,330</b>		<b>354,072</b>		<b>195,438</b>		<b>1,053,840</b>	

(Data sourced from Dr. Betty Maxfield, chief, Office of Army Demographics)

**Table. Fiscal Year 2014 Army Religious Affiliations**



(Photo by Sgt. Arlenia Billingslea, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Oklahoma Army National Guard)

Maj. Brad Hanna, chaplain for the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma Army National Guard, opens a farewell ceremony with a prayer 16 February 2011 in the Oklahoma City Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, prior to the unit's deployment to Afghanistan.

to assert that spirituality unrelated to involvement with organized religion—whatever this is interpreted to be in practice—has no health benefits. Only that, currently, the research is abundant with regard to the link between health-related issues and involvement in organized religion, while research on the connection between health and practice of individually defined spirituality unrelated to organized religion is harder to find. Obviously, one obstacle to such research is building consensus on how such spirituality is described and defined, which would be the first necessary step to formulating a legitimate research hypothesis.

Currently the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) program definition of the spiritual dimension is “solidifying one’s purpose, beliefs, values, identity, and life vision in order to live with integrity, persevere in responsibilities, create a life of meaning, and grow through adverse experiences.”<sup>8</sup> Obviously, spirituality under this definition may not necessarily involve membership in an established religious denomination.

In contrast, most researchers distinguish the broad definition of spirituality from the narrower concept of religion, which is defined as “a system of spiritual beliefs, practices, or both, typically organized around the worship of an all-powerful deity and involving such practices as prayer, meditation, and participation in public rituals.”<sup>9</sup>

Simply put, spirituality may be a part of religious action, but organized religion is not necessarily a part of spirituality. It is important to note that an expanded definition of spirituality by CSF2 includes the mention of religion as one way to achieve spiritual fitness. However, this definition is not easy to find in any literature or even on the CSF2 website.<sup>10</sup>

A quick look at the figure depicting the framework of the “Domain of the Human Spirit” developed by the staff at the United States Military Academy (who were among the original proponents of what has become CSF2) will show that religion



(Photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod, 82nd Airborne Division PAO)

Sgt. Jerry Franklin and his wife Catherine complete an exercise on the different ways people express love 14 May 2011 during a Strong Bonds Retreat at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. "Whether your marriage is in trouble or not, it will do you some good," said Franklin, a communications specialist with 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

actually fits neatly over this humanist construct and provides an answer to the needs promulgated in the Ready and Resilient Program.<sup>11</sup>

### Specific Examples of Positive Links

Dr. Koenig and his colleagues collected and analyzed hundreds of published studies demonstrating the positive link between religion and health. This is true across numerous categories, including lower rates of depression, better physical health, and lower overall youth delinquency.<sup>12</sup> Since the number of studies is overwhelming, I have limited examples of the positive benefits of religious participation to a selection of studies in three specific categories: suicide ideations and gestures, marital stability, and substance abuse.

**Suicide ideations and gestures.** At this point in time, no one in the Army should need any more education or motivation as to why we need to deal with this problem. Far too many of our soldiers have taken their own lives, devastating their comrades and families. The question before us is, "How

do we reduce these tragic losses?" Current research shows that 75 percent of peer-reviewed, quantitative studies found lower suicidal ideations and attempts among those who were more religious.<sup>13</sup>

One study is illustrative of the type of research summarized above. A team looked at 15,034 adolescents over a six-year period and found that those who claimed religion was either very or fairly important were 57 percent less likely to make a suicide attempt that required medical care.<sup>14</sup> Another study of young adults in Utah found that between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, the rate of suicide for those who were less religious or nonreligious was more than five times higher than that of their more religious peers.<sup>15</sup>

How does religion act as a protective buffer against suicidal behaviors? Primarily, religious communities provide adherents with a sense of belonging and value to the group that discourages suicide on theological grounds. Lack of belonging, feelings of burdensomeness, and overcoming the resistance to self-harm are the key reasons why people end their

own lives.<sup>16</sup> Communities of faith can serve as powerful protectors against this behavior.

**Marital stability.** Marital stability can be loosely defined as less divorce and separation, greater commitment to the marriage, less spousal abuse, and less infidelity. As an Army, we have appropriately spent millions of dollars on programs like Strong Bonds, which provides research-based training on healthy marital relationship skills. Strong Bonds, as valuable as it has been to the force, is neither a religious program in form or function nor a cure-all for relational resiliency. What follows is a sampling of some of the helpful effects of religiosity on marital stability.

Since 2000, 87 percent of higher-quality studies found significant positive correlation between participation in religious communities and marital stability.<sup>17</sup> (The major exception appears to be when a husband and a wife are from very different beliefs or levels of religious involvement.) These studies strongly suggest that participation in religious communities leads to a much lower rate of infidelity, less domestic violence, less marital conflict, and less frequent instances of behaviors that lead to instability and divorce.<sup>18</sup> Among the many possible explanations for this correlation is that religious affiliation often provides a community of faith, which provides support during stressful times, including increased emotional and physical support, encouragement of conflict-reducing behaviors, and peer group discouragement of divorce.

**Substance abuse.** Abuse of both alcohol and illegal drugs is a constant source of concern for Army leaders. The Department of the Army reported that “soldiers who abuse alcohol or other drugs are more likely to have financial, marital, legal, and social problems. More than 50 percent of the soldiers discharged for misconduct for other than drugs or alcohol actually had a drug- or alcohol-related incident within the year prior to discharge.”<sup>19</sup> These astounding effects on Army readiness and retention should further encourage us to figure out ways to apply the results of research on religion to substance-abuse prevention and treatment.

The highest quality original research reports prior to 2010 appear to support this contention. These reports show that 90 percent of research subjects

reported that as religious involvement increased, alcohol abuse decreased; 86 percent found the same correlation for drug abuse. Many studies since then continue to report similar findings. Again and again, the research strongly suggests that those involved in religion were more likely to stop drinking heavily, less likely to drink underage, less likely to self-report frequent intoxication, and, in general, less likely to have substance abuse problems.<sup>20</sup>

## Why Religion?

“Why look at religion in the first place?” some may ask. “Despite the positive effects, is this focusing on a small minority at the expense of everyone else?” Nothing could be further from reality. A quick look at the latest Army demographics depicted in the table shows that a vast majority—more than 74 percent of the active-duty force—claims a definite religious preference; up to 8 percent of those in the “no preference or unknown” category are actually unknown and could fall anywhere on the spectrum (see table for numbers of all Army components on page 7).<sup>21</sup> Given that up to three-fourths of the force claim some sort of religious affiliation or predilection, common sense would indicate that the institution should provide them at least the same level of promotional information, notification of opportunities, and encouragement as if this research were about opportunities for medical or behavioral health treatment.

While this particular research does not directly address the members of the force who claim atheism, humanism, or agnosticism, it does have immediate impact on those who claim religious affiliation.

In no way does this research seek to authorize commanders or any other member of the Army to proselytize or coerce soldiers into participation in any specific religious activity or denomination. However, the fact remains that the U.S. Army is composed of a large number of religious people who would most likely see great benefit from significant increases in funding for religious education and programs—as identified by a large body of persuasive research over a long period of time.

## Constitutional Issues

As those who have sworn an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against

all enemies, we must be careful to appropriately exercise the great power of leadership entrusted to us, especially as it relates to religion. The Establishment Clause in the First Amendment states very clearly that the federal government will not pass any laws promoting the establishment of a state religion.<sup>22</sup> Subsequent constitutional jurisprudence has interpreted the Establishment Clause as to prohibit any action of the government favoring one religion over another or even the elevation of religion over non-religion. The Army must therefore proceed carefully on any action dealing with the convergence of government and religion. However, as demonstrated by previous legal challenges, the courts have consistently viewed the military as a unique institution, regulated under congressional war powers authority, and given some latitude to, among other things, ensure the free exercise of religion by every soldier.<sup>23</sup> Given the unique needs of soldiers as they relate to resilience and readiness, together with the apparent positive impact organized religion has on mitigating social problems within the military, providing information and supplementing current programs would be a prudent accommodation to allow soldiers the full free exercise of their particular religions.

## Recommendations

**More research.** The Army Research Institute, Walter Reed Institute of Research, and Research and Facilitation Teams are all tasked to conduct research in order to inform Army leaders, facilitate policy decisions, and refine programs.

In many cases, existing research results, which appear to demonstrate a strong positive correlation between religious involvement and positive personal resilience, do not adequately attempt to explain why there is such a positive correlation. Is the reason purely divine influence, or does the beneficial involvement in religion relate more to the positive effects of a community that calls a person to a higher level, that offers encouragement as well as accountability, and that provides models of positive suffering? Once these issues are researched, the results may indeed be applied to nonreligious communities as well, which ultimately will benefit the religious and the nonreligious alike.

On the other hand, some studies do show a negative effect on various aspects of health as a

result of participating in religious events. While we can speculate that negative effects may result from participation with religious groups that foster crime, terrorism, or abuse, not enough research is available to understand exactly what behaviors cause lesser degrees of harm.

As a matter of interest in contributing to the study of human sociology in general, thorough research on religious issues can be expected to benefit nonreligious communities as well by contributing to the knowledge base that all may use for developing understanding of the psychology of soldiers. Much more research is therefore required in the field of religion as it impacts health and, specifically, as it relates to the Army community.

**Reinforce existing religious support efforts.** On every post in the Army, people from multiple faiths gather regularly in chapels under the leadership of chaplains. Given the great correlation between active participation in communities of faith and greater resilience, it would only make sense to devote more time, money, and personnel to these services.

Every garrison in the Army provides a robust system of faith-group-specific religious support. Although many of these congregations gather in buildings designed to accommodate their grandparents, or even their great-grandparents, the religious landscape has changed in the country over the last forty years, and resources should be provided to ensure facilities and services are able to meet the needs of our soldiers and their families.

Just as other garrison support activities, such as Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation or Army Community Services, have evolved and expanded over the years, so too the chapel system must be resourced to allow it to adapt. One example of how to quickly respond is to authorize and fund the Army Chief of Chaplains to write central contracts to provide services such as music support and child care to chapels—services that are critical to many faith groups but currently funded locally from chapel tithes and offerings.

Personnel resources are always an indicator of what the Army believes is important. Current Army chaplains perform a myriad of functions in their units, leaving little time for providing religious support to garrison ministries, and most Army congregations are led by part-time chaplains on loan from their



(Photo courtesy of the New York National Guard PAO)

Col. Frank Kestler, United States Army Reserve, of Shelter Island, New York, prays 29 October 2012 at a field near Arif Kala, Afghanistan. The field was where his stepson, 1st Lt. Joseph Theinert, was killed in combat in June 2010. In addition to saying a prayer with the other soldiers there, Kestler gathered some earth and blessed the ground with holy water given to him by Chrys Kestler, Theinert's mother.

units. Reinforcing the number of chaplains providing dedicated religious support to chapels and ensuring those chaplains have the right skill sets will serve to build a system, regardless of religious denomination, where the organization lives up to the Army Family Covenant and enhances resilience across the force.

The great advantage that Army chaplains have over their civilian counterparts is the ability to take prudent risks in order to meet the needs of their congregants. Civilian congregations are pragmatically tied to filling pews in order to pay salaries and to keep the lights on. For example, an Army chaplain could look at the demographics of a community and could cater a service to the youngest and lowest paid members of our culture without worrying that they will not donate enough to take care of the overhead.<sup>24</sup> The

Army Chaplain Corps can develop great programs, evaluate their effectiveness, and quickly adapt to meet the needs of the military community.

**Provide medical treatment.** Medical providers should implement procedures that enable them to consider the effect of religion on both individual treatment plans and the various programs managed by the U.S. Army Medical Command. The Medical Command and the Office of the Surgeon General are tasked in the EXORD to coordinate the effort to provide data to target specific health-and-wellness needs in the community. Incorporating religion into this data collection picture would allow for better treatment and programs for soldiers and their families.

When entering an Army medical facility, it is now normal to hear questions about smoking and drinking

habits, depression, and posttraumatic experiences. If our providers ask about these important health issues, then why do we not ask about the nature of a patient's religious observance? It is not just the purview of the hospital chaplain to deal with religion; it is a health issue that has a bearing on mental and physical treatment across the board.

However, one study found that 45 percent of physicians surveyed stated it was inappropriate to even inquire about a patient's spiritual history. This does not seem to meet the common-sense test since a great deal of research appears to show that religion greatly affects overall health, behavior, and even adherence to treatment plans.<sup>25</sup> A change in policy, and in the medical culture itself, should be made to accommodate such questions for research and diagnostic purposes.

A provider asking about religious involvement is not fostering religious observance in the treatment room. The provider is inquiring about a significant dimension of patient behavior that affects health issues; moreover, we know through surveys of religious preference that religion is very likely to be already present. If a patient describes himself or herself as religious, then the provider should definitely consider this factor in patient care and treatment. Consequently, the medical community must train and encourage providers in the proper and ethical use of this valuable information with direct relevance to whatever behavioral-health steps a physician might consider prescribing.

**Educate the force.** Many soldiers and family members have no idea of the copious research on religion and health that exists. While it is unethical to coerce or manipulate individuals into religious observance, it is ethical to provide them the same sort of research-based information on the positive effects of religious practice that we provide about depression, nutrition, and other categories of wellness.

Unfortunately, the Global Assessment Tool, a key mechanism used to educate and assess the force, no longer uses any questions that relate to religion; instead, it uses insipid, politically correct language

in reference to a respondent's spirituality. If this assessment, as stated by CSF2, is really "a survey tool through which individuals are able to confidentially assess their physical and psychological health based the five dimensions of strength: social, emotional, spiritual, family, and physical," then specific questions should be included that will enable each soldier and family member to confidentially assess if religion is an area in his or her life that needs reinforcement to affect overall fitness and resilience.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

The recommendations noted are not offered as a panacea to solve all the Army's human-dimension ills. As stated in the Ready and Resilient EXORD, "Science will improve our understanding of resilience and assist us in determining best practices for developing and maintaining resilience, but it cannot, by itself, create or sustain resilience."<sup>27</sup> At the end of the day, people will make the difference in the lives of our soldiers. There is great work being performed by so many in researching the effects of religion; their findings appear to have corroborated the many positive effects of religious activities. Soldiers should be made aware of such to enable them to make informed life choices with a totality of information. In the rest of the Army, proven research leads to more resources, time, and personnel, yet just the opposite has occurred at the intersection of religion and health.

When a new battalion commander opens the Ready and Resilient Campaign documents, the commander should be able to read about the scientific research that strongly correlates the positive effects of religion on resilience; thus, he or she will immediately see the opportunities available for the command's soldiers to strengthen their resilience and well-being through their personal faith. The command would be enabled, through readily available resources, to provide robust religious support to those who conclude they need and want it. ■

*Chaplain (Maj.) Brian Koyn, U.S. Army, is the deputy chaplain, 7th Infantry Division, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. He holds a BS in military history from West Point and a Master of Divinity from Columbia International University. His assignments include the 75th Ranger Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and the United States Military Academy.*

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## Two Responses to Robert Hynes' "Army Civilians and the Army Profession" (*Military Review*, May-June 2015)

I appreciate Lt. Col. Robert Hynes, retired, providing his recent article, "Army Civilians and the Army Profession," in the May/June issue of *Military Review*, creating the opportunity to engage in a professional dialogue on the membership of the Army civilian within the Army profession. As a discussion focused on the validity of the academic research underpinning the inclusion of Department of the Army civilians in our doctrinal discussions on the profession, I am sure he will find a small minority of supporters. My personal experience—after many years as an Army professional and from exposure to a majority of the Army's uniformed and executive senior leaders—is that most Army soldiers and civilians would find the academic discussion mildly interesting yet reject the article's conclusion within their normal framework of never wasting talent, soldier or civilian, and fully accept the definitions in our Army doctrine.

ADRP 1, *The Army Profession*, defines the Army profession as "a unique vocation of experts certified in the ethical design, generation, support, and application of landpower, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people;" whose members, (1) provide a unique and vital service to society, without which it could not flourish, (2) provide this service by developing and applying expert knowledge, (3) earn the trust of society through ethical, effective, and efficient practice, (4) establish and uphold the

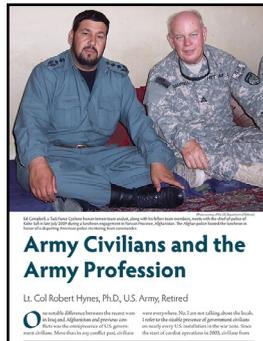
discipline and standards of their art and science, including the responsibility for professional development and certification, and (5) are granted significant autonomy and discretion in the practice of their profession on behalf of society. Two of Hynes' arguments focus on a profes-

sional ethic and certification. The Army Civilian Corps easily meets his objections. First, the code of ethics can be found in the Civilian Oath of Office, a legally binding (i.e., can serve as a basis for criminal prosecution) affirmation that significantly mirrors their soldier counterparts as set out by the United States Code (U.S.C.), in their annual evaluation, and in the Civilian Corps Creed. Second, concerning certification, every civilian is hired under the merit system principles

defined in Sections 2301 and 2302 of Title 5 U.S.C. In contrast to their soldier counterparts, civilians meet their very first certification by proving the commensurate level of education, experience and competency defined in the documented position description.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I would close with saying that the thousands of Army civilians I work with think of themselves as professionals, a part of the Army profession, trying our best every single day to conduct business as experts in our fields, practice our craft ethically, portray the Army Values and ensure the Army remains preeminent in land power application for our Nation.

**-Kirby R. Brown, Army Professional**



### "Army Civilians and the Army Profession"

Lt. Col. Robert Hynes, Ph.D., U.S. Army, Retired

*The author holds that while they fill an important role, Department of the Army civilians do not, by definition, meet the requirements to be considered members of the Army Profession.*

The original article can be found in our May-June 2015 issue on page 71 by clicking on the link for the electronic version or by clicking on the article cover for the Joomag version.

[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20150630\\_art015.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150630_art015.pdf)

What is a profession, and what is a professional? These questions occurred to me as I read the article “Army Civilians and the Army Profession” by Lt. Col. Robert Hynes, retired. The terms *professional* and *profession* have many definitions. One definition comes from the Society of Human Management, which defines a profession as “an occupation or practice that requires expertise, complicated knowledge and skills—acquired through formal education and follow-on practical experience.” Organized professions are also governed and policed by a recognized and associated body. An additional attribute has been assigned to the professions—the capacity to self-practice. If we look at aviation, music, law enforcement, and many other fields, they would meet some but not all of these criteria. Lawyers, physicians, attorneys, engineers, and architects have long been considered as professionals using these very strict criteria. For about the last twenty years, the term professional has been used to describe people from many occupations in order to underscore the quality of work performed by its members. The terms *profession* and *professionals* have, to some extent, become ill-defined labels.

As a matter of practicality, soldiers do not practice their profession alone. On the contrary, there is almost no other field that requires more support to perform its mission. If it is the writer’s intention to apply the strictest interpretation of professional and profession to Department of the Army civilians to determine if they are professionals or members of a profession, we should measure our Army in the same way. We either apply all the criteria or none to determine whether uniformed personnel are part of a profession in the traditional terms. If we alter our frame of evaluation to

view chains of command as external bodies of certification, then the argument can be made that Department of the Army employees meet some of these criteria but not all, just like uniformed military personnel. Governing bodies like the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Osteopathic Association are not part of a medical professional’s work reporting chain; they are separate bodies. There is no separate body that can attest to the level of competence that a soldier has. This is the responsibility of their chain of command.

The leadership of our Army has worked hard over the years to support the technical and leadership development of department of the Army civilians. Civilians and soldiers have different roles, so comparing the types of background and training would not be useful. They do not practice alone but vary by field of expertise and technical focus. This letter does not attempt to make a case that the type and amount of training civilian employees receive is the same as that experienced by soldiers; however each makes critical contributions to the Army mission and our national defense. Just as our military force comes from different walks of life, so do our civilians. During overseas contingency operations, over eleven thousand Army Corps of Engineers civilians deployed to dangerous areas of operation. In all cases they were volunteers, just as every soldier in our Army is a volunteer. There are no easy criteria to compare these two groups of men and women. Each is committed to the welfare of the nation, and each role is important. Our focus must be on what we can accomplish together.

**Sue Englehardt, Director of Human Resources Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

## Response to Capt. Sharbo, “The First Regionally Aligned Force: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead” (*Military Review*, July-August 2015)

Captain Scharbo’s article, “The First Regionally Aligned Force: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead,” in the July-August issue of *Military Review* provides a number of recommendations for improving the RAF, including changes to personnel management procedures.

Perhaps the Army’s conventional forces (CF) should look to Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) as a successful model. The reason ARSOF has been successful in developing regional expertise is that, for the most part, each unit has maintained its area of responsibility (AOR). Furthermore,

ARSOF soldiers traditionally spend the vast majority of their careers in the same unit, focused on the same AOR, and are therefore truly able to become regional experts.

The Army's current model for developing regional expertise within CF is flawed. For CF to truly succeed in the RAF mission, they need to generate units and individual soldiers with foreign language skills, cultural awareness, and regional expertise. However, the fact that CF brigades rotate RAF responsibilities after each Army force generation cycle will make it difficult to develop regional expertise. The high turnover of personnel as soldiers routinely PCS in and out of CF formations will further hinder CF's ability to generate regional expertise.

To enable the Army's shift to the RAF concept, brigades need to maintain their regional orientations like ARSOF units do. To manage personnel, Human Resource Command (HRC) should develop a means of

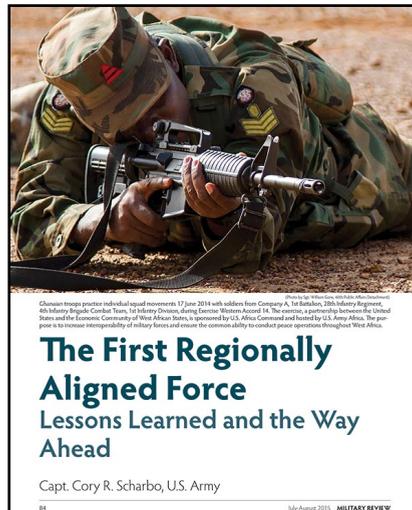
identifying and tracking soldiers with regional expertise, similar to how it identifies foreign area officers by geographical orientation. HRC should also develop a series of CF career tracks based on regional orientation

to develop and manage regional experts within the Army's basic branches. Soldiers within these career tracks could attend language training and civilian education programs based on their regional orientation. These soldiers would then spend their careers in organizations aligned or committed to the appropriate geographic combatant command (GCC).

While the Army's RAF concept may brief well, it will not achieve its full potential without taking appropriate action to develop soldiers and units with true regional

expertise. By maintaining units' regional alignment and developing means of identifying and managing regional experts, the Army will be better prepared to execute its RAF commitments and support the GCCs.

**Maj. Kenneth A. Segelhorst, SF**



***"The First Regionally Aligned Force: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead,"***

Capt. Cory R. Scharbo, U.S. Army

The author presents lessons learned from the first regionally aligned force to support U.S. Africa Command. His intent is to provide a base of knowledge to assist other units preparing for similar missions and to recommend changes to the process for supporting future regionally aligned force deployments to Africa.

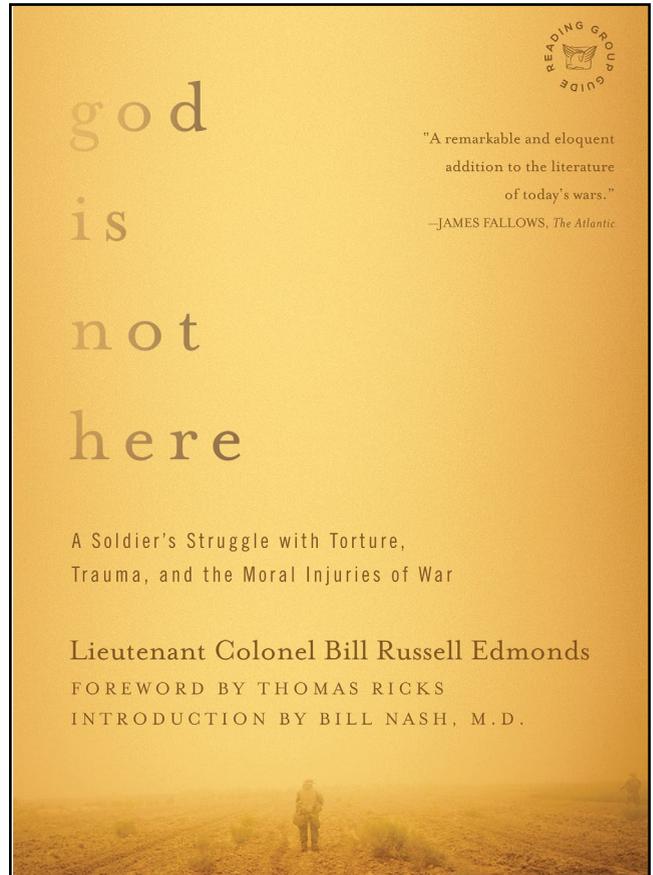
The original article can be found in our July-August 2015 issue on page 84 by clicking on the link for the electronic version or by clicking on the article cover for the Joomag version.

[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20150831\\_art016.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150831_art016.pdf)

**Editor's Note:** *Military Review* has a long history of publishing articles that provide an alternative view of military-related issues with which many may disagree. Articles published go through a peer-review process that emphasizes giving voice to differing perspectives on matters of vital interest to our military readership to stimulate further research and debate. Submissions are evaluated based on depth of research and coherence in logical development of arguments to support assertions rather than whether board members agree with the conclusions reached.

# GOD IS NOT HERE

## A Soldier's Struggle with Torture, Trauma, and the Moral Injuries of War



Bill Russell Edmonds, Pegasus Books, New York, 2015, 312 pages

Lt. Col. Douglas A. Pryer, U.S. Army

*Remembering speechlessly we seek the great forgotten language, the lost lane-end into heaven, a stone, a leaf, an unfound door. Where? When?*

—Thomas Wolfe

In the quote above from the opening of his classic autobiographical novel, *Look Homeward Angel*, Thomas Wolfe describes both the ineffability of truth and how a single moment can lead us to glimpse it.

For Lt. Col. Bill Edmonds, an active-duty Special Forces officer, such a moment came a decade after the start of America's "War on Terrorism." During a visit to a mental health professional, he finds himself struggling to communicate his thoughts and feelings. He feels like

shouting but, instead, speaks softly, politely, unsure how to proceed. Suddenly, the words rush out, and he tells the doctor about his year in Iraq, and how memories of that time have begun to profoundly affect him.

The doctor is unimpressed. Edmonds' stories and symptoms do not "fit the profile" of someone afflicted with posttraumatic stress disorder. The doctor says Edmonds' only problem is his inability to handle stress, effectively blaming Edmonds for his psychiatric symptoms. "Listen to relaxing music," the doctor says. "Do some deep-breathing exercises."

This is the first and last time Edmonds visits a mental-health professional. Instead, he chooses to write, and *God is Not Here* is the result. Within its pages, Edmonds attempts to express the ultimately unknowable truth of that moment in the doctor's office, that is, to comprehend and communicate as well as he can what led him there. The memoir's reader assumes the role of listener, of therapist, as Edmonds relates two interwoven tales—that of his year in Iraq and of his breakdown six years later in Germany.

Edmonds deployed to Mosul in 2005; it was a place spiraling out of U.S. control, with greater depths of violence reached each month. His mission: to oversee operations at an Iraqi prison and to ensure these operations stay on the right side of the law of armed conflict. It is a job for which he is inadequately trained. Yes, he understands what is illegal; however, since he is not an intelligence professional, he is ill-equipped to deal with "Saedi," the crafty, manipulative Kurdish torturer he is supposed to "mentor."

Saedi has employed tactics such as Chinese water torture, electroshock, waterboarding, and the use of a drill. Edmonds, a hooded observer at Saedi's interrogations, does not allow Saedi to go to these extremes. Saedi convinces him, though, that hard measures are needed to force confessions because their prisoners are all "killers" and "rapists" and, without a confession, Iraqi courts will let them go. Other evidence, such as witness testimony and fingerprints, simply cannot be collected in their violent environment. So, Edmonds allows Saedi to violate the law of armed conflict: prisoners are kicked and slapped, forced to drink large quantities of water and kept from urinating, deprived of sleep, and whipped with cables.

Quickly, their roles reverse. Saedi becomes the mentor and Edmonds the conflicted acolyte—conflicted because Saedi wants to employ even harsher tortures, and Edmonds is increasingly unsure whether he should

stop the torturer. In fact, before his deployment is over, Edmonds will want to do even worse things to a prisoner than Saedi does.

In perhaps the memoir's most memorable passage, a prisoner is beaten and confesses to the beheading or shooting of ten Iraqis for an insurgent who pays him \$50 for each murder. When the prisoner pleads to Allah to save him, Edmonds looks at the man with disgust and thinks "God is not here." He feels an almost irrepressible urge to murder the man. Feeling he "will become lost" if he does not escape, Edmonds leaves the dank basement room and climbs stairs—both literal and allegorical—to the light above. Seeing the sunrise, he recoils in horror at the thought of the man he is becoming.

After this incident, Edmonds stops attending interrogations. He is certain Saedi is taking advantage of his absence to employ harsher tortures, but he feels too morally paralyzed to do anything about it. He sees only terrible choices, and he is afraid of what he, himself, may do to prisoners.

To understand what happens to Edmonds six years later, you have to understand the concept of "moral injury." Although ancient, this concept has only in the last decade gained traction in America's mental health community. Unlike posttraumatic stress disorder, moral injury concerns questions of identity rather than physical trauma. According to psychologists in a seminal article, it is caused by "perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations."<sup>1</sup> Symptoms can show immediately or can take years to manifest—however long it takes for the person's thin self-protective narrative about the past to collapse under the growing weight of cognitive dissonance.

Edmonds' breakdown could be a case study on the effects of moral injury. He becomes wracked with guilt. He struggles to believe that he is a good person. He cannot sleep. He cries often. He is manic-depressive and suicidal. He seems to shuffle through selves like a deck of cards.

His chain of command offers him no help, dismissing him as a "malingering drama queen." This is unsurprising. Our military's institutional preferences leave little room for personal conscience. Military culture expects service members suffering from moral distress to "suck it up and drive on." Doctrine does not mention conscience. "Resilience" training prepares soldiers to cope with bad experiences—even if these future experiences involve their doing, or witnessing, something that they *should* feel bad about. Technology enables service

members to kill our nation's enemies at increasingly greater distances and thereby avoid the fact that they are killing human beings.

Nonetheless, as Edmonds' memoir shows, conscience remains a powerful force that cannot be denied. First, Edmonds' conscience leads him to allow Saedi to violate the law of armed conflict because Edmonds believes great harm will happen if forced confessions are not obtained and "killers" and "rapists" are released. Conscience can trump training, it seems. Then, his conscience brings him back from the brink of personally committing atrocities.

Edmonds' memoir, therefore, makes the compelling case that our military needs to pay much more attention to conscience. Adding weight to this case is the current operational environment. Today, military operations increasingly involve tiny, semi-autonomous units, and, thanks to the information superhighway, the actions of these small units can have strategic effects. In this environment, if Edmonds' conscience had failed him, if he had murdered and tortured Iraqi prisoners, and if this story had made the news, it might have become an insurgent propaganda coup to rival that of the Abu Ghraib scandal.

Hopefully, *God is Not Here* will inspire debate within our military. This is not to say that the book does not have drawbacks. It does. Historians, for example, can make little use of the memoir. Like Wolfe's autobiographical novels, it is mostly, but not entirely, historically accurate. Or, as Edmonds writes, "names have been changed" and "some experiences and characters are composites."

Especially maddening is Edmonds' use of perspective. He presents at least three identities: who he is as a captain in Iraq, who he is as a major in Germany, and who he is as a lieutenant colonel today. Due to his sometimes unskillful handling of these identities, it is

often tough for the reader to distinguish between what is supposed to be accepted as fact and what could be fiction (the delusions of an earlier identity).

When, for instance, Edmonds repeatedly states that all Saedi's prisoners are "killers" and "rapists," the reader does not realize that this is not necessarily fact until the book is nearly over and Edmonds expresses the suspicion that many of these prisoners were actually innocent. Similarly, much of the book conflates torture's undeniable utility in getting confessions—true or not—with extracting reliable intelligence from prisoners. Only near the end of the book does Edmonds reveal that he believes torture is a poor means for collecting accurate intelligence. The key to collecting good intelligence from prisoners, he writes, is "perfecting the battle of wits, knowing every personal detail of the prisoner ... and then building a relationship with a prisoner." Nonetheless, the strengths of the book far outweigh its weaknesses.

What will the reader remember most about this time spent in a doctor's office in Germany, listening to Edmonds' two awful tales? One memory will be of how uncomfortable the experience was. Pain, whether it belongs to Edmonds or a prisoner, permeates this memoir's pages. Another will be how close Edmonds comes to capturing the truth of that moment in this office, to seeing more in it than "a stone, a leaf, an unfound door." Indeed, this memoir is a doorway found, a dissonance-proof, authentic framework that Edmonds has constructed to move through and beyond his past. Its truth does not belong only to this Special Forces officer, though. Those readers who suffer deep moral wounds themselves will hear in this book the familiar, haunting echoes of their own thoughts and feelings. Through these echoes they may realize, if they do not already: they are not alone. ■

*Lt. Col. Douglas A. Pryer, U.S. Army, is a J-5 planner in the Middle East Directorate of the Joint Staff. He holds an MMAS in military history from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and has published one book and numerous essays regarding warfare's human domain.*

## Notes

**Epigraph.** Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward Angel* (New York: Scribner, 2006), 3.

1. Brett T. Litz, et al., "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," *Clinical Psychology Review* (December 2009): 695-706.

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**THE DOLLAR AND NATIONAL SECURITY:  
The Monetary Component of Hard Power**  
Paul R. Viotti, Stanford University Press,  
Stanford, California, 2014, 248 pages

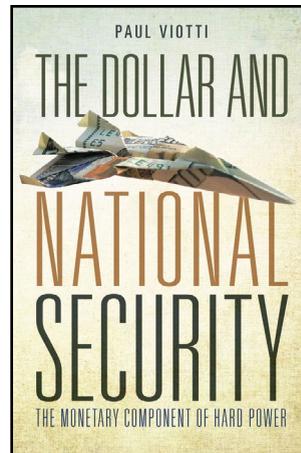
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**P**aul Viotti, professor of international studies at Denver University, writes an insightful book detailing the historical role and importance of the monetary component, of the economic instrument, and of national power in providing for national security. His premise is that sound monetary policy is fundamental to a nation's economy, its participation in international commerce, and the international monetary system. It is also critical to national security because it affords a nation the ability to provide for its defense through military means. In other words, money, the economy, and security are fundamentally interlinked. Currently, the United States is in an advantageous position having the most readily accepted and exchanged currency internationally.

The author begins with a comprehensive contextual overview of the relationship between economic "hard power" components—a descriptive term credited to Joseph Nye. Viotti illustrates relations among such things as U.S. foreign policy, exchange rates, and the privilege and burden associated with the U.S. dollar as the world's principle reserve currency. This introductory chapter sets an appropriate stage for the historical linkages and their impacts as outlined in subsequent chapters.

Beginning with the nineteenth century, the author analyzes the rise and subsequent demise of the British sterling, the primary vehicle and reserve currency of the time. He adeptly uncovers its long-term economic and military defense consequence to Britain. Viotti also accounts for the international geopolitical and economic interplay of rival currencies. Specifically, he focuses on the French franc and the German mark as these nations emerged as economic powers and formed their own political and trade alliances with like-minded nations. He amply addresses the consequences of war on warring nations' gold reserves and fiscal and monetary policy. He

draws a noteworthy example using Germany after World War I—left financially broke and heavily burdened with



war debt, hyperinflation, and a worthless currency. Viotti also highlights the evolution of the most important international currency arrangements that shaped international commerce over the years. He keenly explains the importance of maintaining strong and stable currencies amongst nations in order to facilitate international trade, lending, and debt financing.

The remainder of the book is predominantly focused on the rise and implications of the U.S. dollar's eventual replacement of the British sterling as the primary reserve and vehicle currency for international commerce. Viotti smartly details the critical role the United States played in promoting post-world war economic reconstruction and development through the Marshall Plan, beginning with the adoption of the Bretton Woods regime at the end of World War II. Reestablishing the gold standard—which made the U.S. dollar interchangeable with gold—and establishing the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, were all significant to both the economic success and the security of Western European allies during the Cold War.

Viotti details the subsequent demise of the gold standard due to such things as the prevailing U.S. fiscal and trade deficit and a less-than-ideal monetary policy. He describes how problematic these same issues are to the U.S. economy and national security under the floating exchange system now in place. His analysis includes the effects of the emergence of the euro and the economic rise of China and its currency, the yuan.

Viotti reemphasizes the value of being the most renowned currency internationally and ends by stating

it is critical to the U.S. economy and national security that the dollar remains the primary reserve currency of the world. In order to do so, the United States must get its economic, international trade, and financial house in order or it will go the way of the British sterling.

The book is unique in its subject matter and scholarship. It is superbly researched, persuasive, and thought-provoking. Tables correlating such things as historical currency reserve and trade balances, currency valuations, and interest rates, were very useful and effectively interwoven throughout the book. Finally, Viotti does a noteworthy job in simplifying some very complex topics and issues, making the book easy to read and understand by those outside the field of economics and finance.

This book is a must-read for security studies/affairs professionals and scholars, those involved in state-building, international financial institution professionals, government policy makers, senior military professionals, and anyone else interested in learning about the importance of monetary arrangements in relationship to national security.

**Dr. David A. Anderson, Lt. Col., U.S. Marine Corps, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE LAST ESCAPER: The Untold First-Hand Story of the Legendary World War II Bomber Pilot, “Cooler King” and Arch Escape Artist**  
**Peter Tunstall, Overlook Press, New York, 2015,**  
**368 pages**

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Reflection time is something you do not often see in a personal memoir. Consequently, when someone deliberately takes seventy years to reflect on his life before releasing his memoirs, you take notice. This is the case with Peter Tunstall, who penned his memoirs prior to his passing in July 2013. In his superb volume, *The Last Escaper*, Tunstall focuses on his time as a British Royal Air Force pilot during World War II. It was a period highlighted by his captivity as a prisoner of war—for nearly the entire war.

For those who have read other books focused on the incredible experiences of Allied POWs during World War II, the name Peter Tunstall, a POW for nearly five years, should be extremely familiar. During that time, he attained legendary status for his innovative escape

attempts and his uncanny ability to torment his German captors—both physically and mentally. Tunstall’s passion for escape and intense desire to be an irritant to his captors resulted in his spending more than four hundred days in solitary confinement. It led him to being dubbed “The Cooler King of Colditz,” which was the last camp he was held in prior to his release.

He structures his memoir into three distinct parts. In the initial chapters, he addresses his childhood years, where he developed an intense desire to fly. He then talks about his pilot training in the RAF.

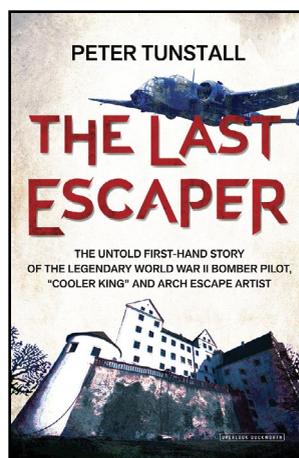
The second part, and the focus of the volume, concerns Tunstall’s years as a POW. The theme of the content is tied to advice he received in his initial RAF training by A.J. Evans, a World War I two-time prison escapee. Evans was emphatic that any POW had two responsibilities: “Your first duty was to try to escape. Your second duty was to be as big a bloody nuisance as possible to the enemy.” Tunstall unquestionably heeded the counsel of Evans, which is clearly evident as he highlights his numerous escape attempts and the ways he irritated his captors.

Interestingly, Tunstall uses his final pages as a dialogue with younger generations as he opines on the Allied bombing offensive during World War II. He strives to clear up misconceptions on the offensive, which he feels are held by younger generations.

The author’s informal writing style is completely engaging; at times, you find yourself believing Tunstall is actually talking to you face-to-face. Personally, it has been quite some time since I had that experience.

In Tunstall’s introduction, he concedes that the market has seen its share of escape books. He also emphasizes that his book is far different than others they may have read. He states “... it’s the product of a lifetime of reflection.

Had I written it fifty or sixty years ago, it would, perhaps, have had the immediacy and fine detail of recent memory and experience. But, it could not have included the sense of perspective or quality of judgment that only comes with age and distance from the events of one’s



own life.” It is this perspective—combined with superb readability and the experiences of a remarkable man—that distinguishes *The Last Escaper* from other books in this genre.

**Rick Baillergeon, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE EFFECTS-BASED BOARD: An Effects-Based Approach to the Joint Operations Planning Process**

**Colin B. Marcum, American Military University,  
Scotts Valley, California, 2014, 104 pages**

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This document is not a book but rather a print of the master’s thesis of Army Capt. Colin Marcum, printed for distribution by the American Military University. As such, it is intended to be read by academics to satisfy the requirements for a master of arts in military studies and may not necessarily be of great interest outside academic circles. The author pulls together some historical vignettes to support a case that each combatant command should establish an independent planning group to improve the joint operation planning process (JOPP). He names this new group the effects-based board (EBB). The purpose of the EBB is to ensure that courses of action (COAs) developed by the JOPP will bring about a desired set of effects and a desired end-state.

The author contends that the joint operation planning process may not produce correct orders that lead to the desired end state primarily because it is too focused on military inputs and military outputs to develop anything but limited military solutions to problems. Additionally, he feels the process is focused on the means available to planners, and that focus will limit COAs that are developed. Marcum opines that if the JOPP focused on the ends instead of the means available, it would develop better COAs. He reasons that the primary input to the JOPP is the joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment (JIPOE), which may be narrowly concentrated toward military issues, stating: “When the JIPOE helped develop the COA during the JOPP, they created a COA that was focused on military matters instead of a holistic analysis of the operational environment in which all the conditions are interrelated.”

To overcome these perceived JOPP deficiencies, Marcum proposes two solutions. He envisions a way to

create greater certainty and inject nonmilitary inputs for planning operations in the operational environment (OE). This is done through the creation of a sophisticated operational environment link diagram (OELD) system that models the real world in a complex system of linkages. He describes this as looking like a dodecahedron, filled with linkage lines on the inside, connecting elements of the OE in a web-like structure. Once the OELD is up and running, the planner would simply perturbate a link, and the OELD output would show all the ripple effects and second- and third-order effects so planners can make a decision—with certainty—in the operational environment.

Additionally, he recommends every combatant command establishment its own EBB. This board would be comprised of more than seventy people taken from all aspects of the U.S. government—both military and civilian. The goal is to have a group that encompasses the “full breadth of the United States government.” This board would not be composed of planners but would be advisors to the combatant command planners as they vetted COAs through the EBB for advice.

Marcum has worked hard to envision problems with JOPP and to suggest solutions. However the problems he delineates may not be problems at all. The JOPP is not as narrowly focused on military solutions as the thesis implies. One can look at joint publications and see the evidence of this. Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, for example, has an entire appendix devoted to nonmilitary flexible-deterrent options to incorporate into COAs. Initiatives, to include a whole-of-government approach to problems, abound in the current literature. As to the problem of uncertainty in the OE, that is intractable. Development of an OELD modeling tool is unlikely to ensure certainty for planners. Marcum himself recognizes this as he quotes retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis discussing the effects-based approach as requiring an “unachievable level of predictability.” And finally, the addition of a seventy-member board at each combatant command is impractical. The combatant commands are working with interagency partners via existing organizations, such as the Joint Interagency Coordination Group. Although these joint groups are notoriously difficult to staff and to fund, they do accomplish the same functions that are postulated for an EBB.

**Lt. Cdr. Harold A. Laurence, U.S. Navy,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## WASHINGTON'S REVOLUTION: The Making of America's First Leader

Robert Middlekauff, Knopf, New York, 2015,  
384 pages

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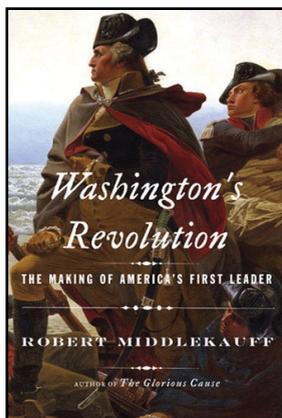
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Robert Middlekauff's *Washington's Revolution* provides an in-depth examination of George Washington's transformation from a provincial militia officer to the leader of a new nation. According to Middlekauff, Washington was more than the commander of the Continental Army, he was the American Revolution in its truest sense. During the darkest days of the revolution, Washington's strength, vision, and character impelled the perseverance of the cause for freedom.

Washington's formative years as land surveyor, planter, and militia officer were critical in honing his skills as an administrator, manager, strategist, and visionary. The author reminds us that the odds were stacked against Washington when he assumed command of the Continental army following the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The army, more accurately a mob, simply lacked the leadership, equipment, weapons, uniforms, and discipline required to meet the British army in battle. Washington quickly implemented changes in training, discipline, and organization in realizing his vision for the Continental army. It was at Valley Forge that Washington's vision was realized and the Continental army began to develop into the professional army we know today. He was able to transform a mob into a viable fighting force—all the while engaged in combat with the British army and its Hessian mercenaries.

Middlekauff challenges the assertion of other historians that Washington was marginal as a field commander by demonstrating his adroit war of maneuver that enabled him to keep his weak army intact while wearing down his enemy. Washington's audacity and strategic sense are reflected in his victories at Trenton,



Princeton, and Yorktown. The author states that it was Washington's reputation and character that won over the French and led to their joining the Continental army's side. Washington lost more battles than he won—yet he prevailed. Middlekauff states Washington's strong will and belief in the cause of freedom enabled him to endure when Congress and others had lost hope.

The strength of *Washington's Revolution* is Middlekauff's exhaustive research of Washington's correspondence and personal memoirs, coupled with the author's writing style, that breathes life into a man larger than myth. *Washington's Revolution* is more than Washington's transformation as a leader—it describes the birth of our nation and the essence of a people. It is for this reason that George Washington is rightly celebrated as the father of our country. This book is for military professionals and historians; it would be a great addition to any professional leadership reading list.

**Jesse McIntyre III, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## A STREET IN ARNHEM: The Agony of Occupation and Liberation

Robert Kershaw, Casemate, Havertown,  
Pennsylvania, 2014, 336 pages

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Author Robert Kershaw follows up his classic work on the battle of Arnhem, *It Never Snows in September*, with a more detailed examination of the fighting for one critical street—Utrechtsweg—which runs through Oosterbeek to Arnhem. The author concludes that many of the critical moments of the nine-day battle occurred on or around this one street. By examining the battle on and around Utrechtsweg, the author hopes to “unveil aspects of the battle not considered before.” In this goal, the author succeeds. *A Street in Arnhem* offers a perspective of the battle not found in many histories of Operation Market Garden.

The book looks at the battle through three perspectives—Dutch, German, and British. Every event, from the movement to reach the Arnhem Bridge to the final destruction of the Oosterbeek perimeter, is told in graphic and tragic detail. Kershaw manages to provide a clear understanding of the battle, which mainly consisted of confusing

small-unit actions and close-quarters combat. The maps included in the book are an excellent resource to help the reader understand where the events are occurring in relation to each other. He weaves first-person accounts to not only provide a feeling for the events but also to give context to the larger picture. Concentrating on a single street provides a much more personal feel to the fighting and allows the author to avoid having to include the many other facets of Operation Market Garden.

One of the true strengths of this book is the author's analysis. Kershaw, a retired British army officer, uses his military experience to provide a good tactical analysis of the fighting. He lays blame squarely where he sees it. For example, he concludes the British failed to reach Arnhem Bridge because they mounted a series of hasty attacks instead of deliberately planning and conducting their assaults, which are necessary for modern urban combat.

In regards to the airborne drop of the Polish Parachute Brigade, he concludes "They were harshly inserted into a suspected trap. Then they were suddenly launched into a hotly contested perimeter following an ineptly conducted and costly river crossing. Little wonder that the Poles hardly felt reassured that they were part of a considered team enterprise."

The author's admiration for the Dutch people is evident in his writing. He describes, in vivid detail, what it was like to be a civilian caught between the two combatant forces—and also what it was like to live underground.

Many of the Dutch eventually had to move into, and live in, their cellars. Even more telling are the Dutch emotions once the battle is over and they discover what is left of their homes and street. The anxiety, fear, and emotional roller coaster of occupation, liberation, and occupation again is evident in the stories the author shares.

I recommend this book to those readers interested in World War II and in Operation Market Garden because of the insights Kershaw provides. The author promises examining one street will offer new insights—and he delivers. I also would recommend the book to readers interested in modern combat because of the lessons the author reveals about urban warfare.

**Robert J. Rielly, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## **WATERLOO: Wellington, Napoleon, and the Battle that Saved Europe**

**Gordon Corrigan, Pegasus Books, New York, 2014, 368 pages**

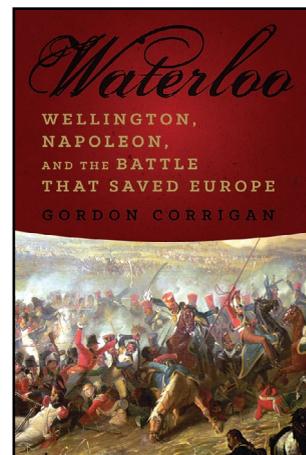
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**T**here is no shortage of materiel on the battle of Waterloo, one of the most extensively studied battles in history. With 2015 marking the

battle's bicentennial, the market is flooded with a collection of new works. In *Waterloo: Wellington, Napoleon, and the Battle That Saved Europe*, Gordon Corrigan makes his contribution to this collection. Regrettably, his book contributes nothing particularly new to understanding the battle.

It is a general history, not a well-documented scholarly work useful for further research. Corrigan recognizes the challenge of producing another work on Waterloo. In his introduction, he answers the question of why another book on Waterloo by asserting that the participants "continue to fascinate" and, despite a multitude of research, the interpretations of the battle "vary widely." More importantly, he attempts to demonstrate Waterloo's importance in establishing Britain as a dominant world power.

Corrigan blends a thematic and chronological approach to telling the story of Waterloo. He opens his work with a concise chronological summary of the major events of the Napoleonic Wars leading to the Waterloo Campaign, and then he transitions to a thematic approach discussing the commanders, officers, and soldiers of the major belligerents. He concludes with an account of the battle, which provides a clear narrative of the major activities of all three armies. The highlights of this work include the author's comprehensive discussion of the purchasing system of the British army, his soldier's eye for the influence of the terrain on the battle, and his effective analysis of the influence Wellesley's service in India had on his development. He



also provides a very strong conclusion about the legacy of Waterloo and the Duke of Wellington within the British army.

One of the shortfalls in this book is Corrigan's approach to his sources. He provides only forty-three endnotes to support more than three hundred pages of content, while using explanatory footnotes to provide additional clarity, and the occasional humorous quip, in the body of the book. This is the most serious flaw in the work as far as scholarship and restricts the utility of the book to support further research. Throughout the book, Corrigan raises and attempts to debunk some of the myths of Waterloo but does not provide enough depth in his discussions or evidence in sources to meet this objective. He makes numerous assertions and conclusions throughout the work without citing the sources of his evidence.

Another book about Waterloo should provide something unique to set the work apart—a new perspective, original research, or a comprehensive, well-documented study. This book does not meet that standard. There is not much original here for specialists or serious scholars of the Napoleonic Wars. Corrigan provides a cursory overview of this important campaign, but he does not deliver a major contribution to the field of Napoleonic studies. Despite this shortfall, Corrigan is successful in his stated attempt in providing a general history that describes the importance of Waterloo in establishing Britain as a world power. This work is best suited for the newcomer to the era who wants an overview of the battle. If you are looking for an entry-level book as an introduction to a fascinating period or a casual weekend read, this book serves that purpose.

**Col. Ken Turner, U.S. Army, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**SKY PILOTS: The Yankee Division Chaplains  
in World War I**

**Michael E. Shay, University of Missouri Press,  
Columbia, Missouri, 2014, 240 pages**

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**A**n old adage holds there are no atheists in foxholes. While the accuracy of the statement is debatable, the presence of military chaplains on the battlefield is a certainty. Chaplains fill

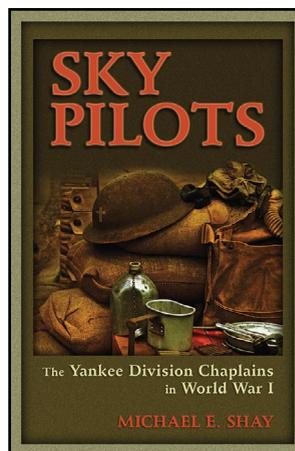
a unique and vital role in war that is frequently overlooked in the study of military history. Author Michael E. Shay's latest work, *Sky Pilots: The Yankee Division in World War I*, is a detailed examination of that famed unit's chaplains in the Great War. These men, bereft of earthly weapons, served at the front throughout the 26th Yankee Division's brief but bloody deployment on the Western Front during World War I. Not content to remain in rear areas, the chaplains saw their duties as ministering to the front-line soldiers, facing the same hardships and even accompanying the infantrymen during combat operations. Their bravery came at a cost as several Yankee Division chaplains were wounded, and two were killed during the war.

*Sky Pilots* opens with a terse overview of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps; just two paragraphs are dedicated to covering the history of American military chaplains from 1775 to 1917. While focused specifically upon the Yankee Division's chaplains, Shay also provides some detail on the Army's larger efforts to recruit and train ministers for the entire American Expeditionary Forces. Shay's story generally follows the Yankee Division's campaign across France, to the armistice, and the men's eventual return home to America. The penultimate chapter details the chaplains' post-war lives as civilian or military pastors. Shay is a dedicated researcher, and his work is broad in scope and rich in detail. The book's narrative, however, follows a meandering course that too often jumps from subject to subject. The author weaves vignettes on individual

chaplains with randomly interspersed descriptions of life in the trenches. No doubt both are interesting topics, but the book's pacing suffers from the frequent interruptions.

Shay includes numerous black-and-white photographs of the chaplains themselves, often taken during their ministerial duties in the field. While most military history buffs

are familiar with the iconic images of the Great War, these photographs further reveal a hitherto overlooked facet of the conflict. Sadly, there is but one simple map



depicting the Yankee Division's locations and movements across France. While *Sky Pilots* is not a book of commanders and maneuvers, it would benefit from a more detailed set of maps placing the story within the context of the larger war. Given the recent controversies regarding religion in the military, it is worthwhile for professional soldiers to examine the benefits chaplains provide to those in uniform. *Sky Pilots* provide a valuable, and often touching, look into the critical role chaplains fulfill. Shay makes extensive use of personal letters and diaries, citing the chaplains' enormous positive impact on their units—from providing the simple comforts of home at mobile canteen trucks to tending to the men's spiritual needs. This alone makes *Sky Pilots* worthy of professional study and debate.

**Lt. Col. Chris Heatherly, U.S. Army,  
Washington State University,  
Pullman, Washington**

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**COMICS AND CONFLICT: Patriotism and  
Propaganda from WWII through Operation  
Iraqi Freedom**

**Cord A. Scott, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis,  
Maryland, 2014, 224 pages**

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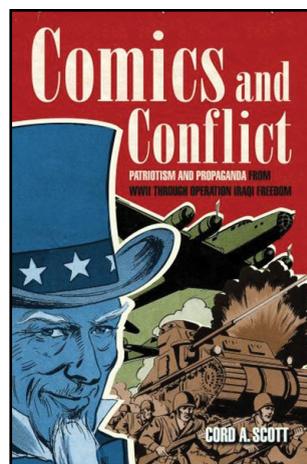
**C**omics and Conflict begins with a brief recapitulation of the history of the comics from the Gilded Age (the late nineteenth century). Then it concentrates on war comics, a category distinct from other subgenres such as action-hero or talking animal comics. This type of comic arose in the World War II era and continues to the present day—or as close as a scholarly work by a scholarly press can get—to the Nation's disillusionment in the aftermath of the Iraq venture. Scott's periodization is the not standard used in general American history—the chapters after World War II span respectively 1945–62, 1962–1991, 1991–2001, 2001–2003, and 2003–2010—but the coverage is comprehensive and appropriate to the topic.

One may wonder why anyone would bother writing a history of war comics. Perhaps it is because American forces read them—and even have special series available only at military facilities. And the services, as well as civilian institutions, still use cartoons and comic books as training devices.

More to the point, as the author argues so ably in this short but tight work, comics are like movies and other popular media in that they reflect not only current events but popular perceptions. Specifically, the “good war” comics were much more patriotic and harmonious than, say, the storylines of the Vietnam era. There is an ebb and flow that corresponds to the fluctuating public support for American military ventures, and the comics reflect the mood.

In fact, like other media, they may even play a role in defining that mood. Furthermore, over time, the comics become more reflective, more realistic, and more grown up. Just as the readership shifts from preteen and teenager to young adult to soldier, the age group of the readership currently stands at late teens to early twenties. There were no comic treatments of shell shock or battle fatigue, but now comics sometimes address posttraumatic stress disorder and the internal conflicts between what combat really entails and what the civilian norm accepts.

What the work could use is more illustrations.



Although the text is clear about the story lines, costuming, and colors, the illustrations consist of covers only, no panels, and the illustrations are black and white. I suppose cost is a consideration, this being a short-run volume that is already relatively expensive rather than a lavish commercial production at half the cover price.

To be clear, this is not a light-hearted romp through everyone's childhood memories but rather a serious scholarly study of one neglected medium—the war comic book; it includes comic strips and graphic novels only in passing. Indirectly, it is a work about America's wars, from World War II on, and about American support or opposition for those wars, or simple questioning. It is also a story indirectly of American GIs and their civilian peers becoming more sophisticated and questioning about their country's military involvement in combat or in support. Although by no means essential to the

warrior's bookshelf, it is a good supplement to the more orthodox studies of America's military ventures over the past seventy years.

**John H. Barnhill, PhD, Houston, Texas**

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**SMALL NAVIES: Strategy and Policy for Small Navies in War and Peace**

**Edited by Michael Mulqueen, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller, Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, Vermont, 2014, 247 pages**

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**A**s *Military Review* is “the U.S. Army’s cutting edge forum for original thought and debate on the art and science of land warfare,” the review of a book such as *Small Navies* on naval forces—insignificant naval forces at that—might appear out of place. However, as the security environment becomes more complex, knowledge of the other warfare domains increases in importance.

The anthology *Small Navies* demonstrates that size really does matter, particularly when it comes to the role and function of navies in global security. This up-to-date compendium includes thirteen of the essays presented at a recent international conference examining small navies, from the past and present, using interdisciplinary approaches. While interdisciplinary, *Small Navies* is more suited towards analysts as the papers that make up the various chapters are focused more on an analytical approach towards naval warfare than an operational one.

Analysts will find that the most valuable section of the anthology is the chapters by Grove, Till, and Germond, which develop classifications for small navies based on quantitative, qualitative, and perceptive data. One of their schemes is a global naval hierarchy with nine rungs—starting with the U.S. Navy, continuing through the navies of the United Kingdom, Japan, and Singapore, and ending with token navies, such as the one in Belize. Another is a six-tier ranking of small navies—with token navies on the first tier, navies capable of performing defensive combat tasks in coastal zones on the third tier, and navies capable of conducting operations in the regional theater on the sixth tier.

Although written primarily for naval professionals, *Small Navies* provides some insight for all members of

the security community on a subject that has received relatively little scholarly attention. For example, an essay by Giacomello and Ruffa, “Small Navies and Border and Immigration Control: Frontex Operations in the Mediterranean,” describes how small navies—similar to U.S. and allied armies—have been expanding their missions beyond traditional warfighting. Further similarities between land and naval forces can be found in issues of logistics, training, equipping, efficiencies, and command and control. Knowledge of these changing missions of another service as described in *Small Navies* primarily helps analysts but is also of value to operators.

**Karsten Engelmann, PhD, Stuttgart, Germany**

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**DEMOCRATIC MILITARISM: Voting, Wealth, and War**

**Jonathan D. Caverley, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2014, 326 pages**

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**H**ave you ever wondered why democracies go to war? In *Democratic Militarism: Voting, Wealth, and War*, Jonathan D. Caverley, professor at Northwestern University, distills the answer for the average voter—me and you—in the democratic process. This scholarly, international-relations monograph asserts that median voters are instrumental in a democracy’s willingness to engage in international pugnacity.

Caverley claims it is the median voters’ complicity in enabling civilian and military leaders to engage and execute strategies that produces minimal gains. The book focuses on the “average voter’s assessment of the costs and benefits of arming and aggression.”

The initial chapters provide theories and hypotheses as to why and how democracies fight wars. Overall, the analysis reveals median voters are more likely to accept war when they’re nominally impacted. They prefer capital-intensive militaries—focusing on technology and minimal casualties—rather than labor-intensive forces. This apathy and bellicosity lead to outsourcing wars to natives, futile air-bombing campaigns—Vietnam and bankrupt strategies yielding marginal returns—think most wars.

These assertions undergo rigorous statistical analysis, covering the first five chapters. Final chapters present

case studies across three historical events and describe median voter influence on military strategies.

First, the British Empire is examined in relation to “electoral reform and imperial overstretch.” Caverley investigates median voters influence on the empire’s growth and its use of natives in wars. Next, the Vietnam War is reviewed. He asks why “... a democracy would spend such vast resources to conduct a flawed counter-insurgency.” Spoiler alert: it’s the median voters’ impact on civilian leaders. Decisions made during the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations are analyzed.

Third, Caverley assesses Israel’s Second Lebanon War of 2006. Most notably, in this chapter, cost distribution theory is scrutinized. He emphasizes that “the [Israeli] civilian leaders are more sensitive to public opinion than the Israeli Defense Forces,” which, in this engagement, had significant impact on the strategic gains that could or could not be achieved. Caverley closes with a summary of his findings, some final thoughts, and recommended future analysis.

To be clear, this is a wonky book! It is chock full of graphs, charts, and tables; a quick stats refresher is required. Getting through the initial chapters can be challenging; nonetheless, once beyond the quantitative parlance, readers are able to understand the assertions presented across the case studies.

Because this monograph illuminates the responsibilities, consequences, and impact voting has on war, it’s recommended for defense policy analysts and all military members. Casting a vote may determine whether you cast a bullet.

**Maj. John L. Hewitt III, U.S. Army,  
Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina**

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**NETWORKS OF REBELLION: Explaining  
Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse**

**Paul Staniland, Cornell University Press, Ithaca,  
New York, 2014, 312 pages**

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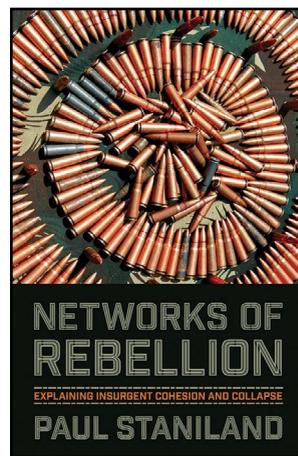
**T**he fundamental question Paul Staniland asks in his book is “why some insurgent groups are unified and disciplined while others struggle with splits and feuds.” Instead of treating the structure of insurgent groups as universal and static, the author provides a detailed and useful theory of how insurgent

groups’ organizational cohesion determines how insurgents use violence, how they fare under counter-insurgent pressure, and their long-term prospects for survival—and even victory.

*Networks of Rebellion* has sound organization with an opening chapter and three major parts. The first explains Staniland’s theory in detail; the second consists of three case studies that serve as comparative evidence for the theory; and the final part explores implications.

Staniland’s overarching theory is that insurgent cohesion “shapes how wars are fought, how wars end, and the politics that emerge after the war.” Cohesion includes internal insurgent discipline and organizational control, which greatly affects the group’s ability to effectively wage warfare and, ultimately, win a war. Cohesion impacts the conclusion of conflicts as groups with poor cohesion can split due to subgroup objectives, much as coalitions of nation-states can split due to differing national objectives. Staniland’s theory also provides insight into why some victorious insurgent groups become successful post-war regimes and why others fail as ruling governments.

To underpin his theory, the author uses a new



typology of insurgent groups, which has four categories of insurgent organizational structure: integrated, vanguard, parochial, and fragmented. This typology provides insight for examining insurgent groups and understanding their behavior. However, the group’s desired ends, the scope of the insurgency, the level of mass support, cultural

context, and other characteristics can also aid in understanding and predicting insurgent behavior.

“Insurgent groups are born from prewar politics” is another of Staniland’s key points. The origins of insurgent groups matter. For example, were they a politicized opposition group? Or, did they plan on using violence from the outset? The answer to this and similar questions shape both the initial and enduring organization.

Staniland’s three case studies serve as comparative evidence to test the author’s theory. Additionally, the

case studies make valuable contributions to the study of Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. The author's personal field research supports each of the three case studies, which adds to their overall value and lends support to his argument. The author convincingly evaluated his theory and properly pointed out its limitations.

Although not for the casual or general military reader, serious students of insurgency, irregular warfare, strategy, international relations, and Southern Asia will value this groundbreaking study. Staniland's work is very much worth reading, especially for those who wish to understand insurgent organizations, particularly insurgent organizations in Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.

**Lt. Col. Jonathan P. Klug, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**AFRICAN CANADIANS IN UNION BLUE:**

**Volunteering for the Cause in the Civil War**

**Richard Reid, Kent State University Press, Kent,  
Ohio, 2014, 320 pages**

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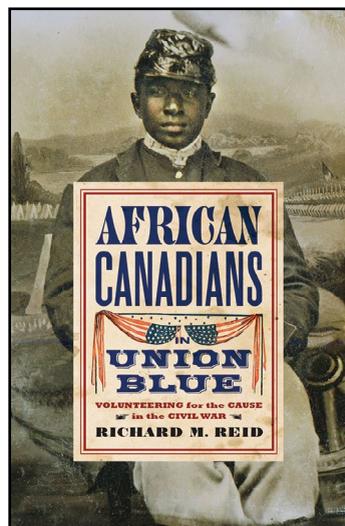
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**A**frican Canadians in *Union Blue* is an excellently written historical monograph exploring the lives of African Canadians who served in the Union army during the Civil War. While the work is a much-needed study that should influence the way that academic historians understand the Civil War, it is still a valuable and readable text for any military professional. His principal argument is that African Canadian soldiers fought for the Union because emancipation “generated new social and economic opportunities for them” rather than the widely believed notion that most African Canadians serving in the Union army were slaves freed through the Underground Railroad. His use of census records and enlistment documents quickly illustrated how Canadians served in the Union army in order to fight for more rights for Africans in North America.

While the book is an excellent contribution to the historiography of the Civil War, it is most useful to members of the U.S. military because of its focus on the motivations for service amongst African Canadian soldiers. His study described how African Canadian soldiers deserted the Union army in large numbers until they were they were used in the combat roles they

volunteered for. All African soldiers would either be executed or placed into slavery upon capture, so their service—regardless of early desertion rates—was highly courageous. Many of the soldiers chose to remain in the U.S. Army and served on the frontier after the war because the United States was offering more rights through military service than Africans could receive in newly confederated Canada.

The last section of Reid's book focused on African Canadian doctors, who served during the Civil War as well as the war's aftermath. This group represent-



ed one of the only cohorts that went to British North America, from the United States, because African doctors were able to practice medicine on indigenous groups in the Canadian West and could officially certify in the British North American system. The role played by African contract surgeons represents

a key addition to an already high volume of literature on woman caregivers in the Civil War.

They were forced to serve as contract surgeons, and when they wore the rank of a major as a result of their contracted commissions, their lives were now endangered to an even greater extent. They were later key physicians for the Freedmen's Bureau, and some played prominent leadership roles in the Grand Army of the Republic. The section on the Grand Army of the Republic was the most uplifting in the book. Although all the soldiers experienced racism, once the Grand Army of the Republic became a veterans group, the segregation of the group provided them the opportunity to become chapter presidents and to assume other major leadership roles. The book's most uplifting message captured how the Civil War's shift towards the ennobled cause of emancipation influenced brave African North Americans to serve—regardless of their national origins.

**Joseph R. Miller, Orono, Maine**

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**THE SECRET WAR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST:  
The Influence of Axis and Allied Intelligence  
Operations during World War II**

**Youssef Aboul-Enein and Basil Aboul-Enein,  
Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland,  
2013, 256 pages**

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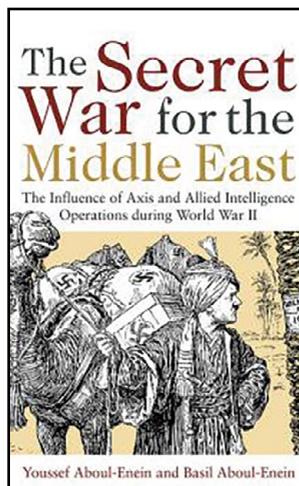
Capturing the hearts of the populace by outlining the plight created by foreign powers seeking to undermine one's own interest may sound like a story from Twitter but, instead, it was heard over radio broadcasts from places such as Berlin and Baghdad in the late 1930s. Harnessing the media of the day—and skillfully embedding messages into propaganda that compared the plight of Germany to that of Palestine—the Axis powers intertwined fascist ideology with the growing Arab Nationalism movement during this period in an effort to influence the population. This history to gain influence and control the Middle East during World War II is exquisitely recounted by Youssef and Basil Aboul-Enein in *The Secret War for the Middle East: The Influence of Axis and Allied Intelligence Operations during World War II*.

The authors detail the saga to gain influence over the masses through in-depth research based on Western and Arab sources, supplemented by first-hand sources that detail the strategies employed by both the Axis and Allied powers. Building on lessons learned from World War I and the Great Arab Revolt of 1916, the Axis powers worked to capitalize on the victimization produced by the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and the growing “Palestine Question.” What started as an attempt by Germany to gain allies in the Middle East in the 1930s, supported by individuals like Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, may have set the foundation that helped inspire the nationalist ideals of individuals such as Nasser Hussein, the Ba’ath Party, and Saddam Hussein, and continue to influence today’s extremists. Saddam, for example, viewed former Iraqi prime minister Rashid Aali al-Gaylani as a national hero for his attempts to overthrow the British in the 1940s.

This book should be required reading for anyone interested in the Middle East as it is laced with sources and references that provide readers an opportunity to conduct their own focused historical research to expand

their knowledge and understanding. Youssef and Basil set out to write a book designed to introduce a nonspecialist to the ideas of how “influence operations, strategic communication, and the use of intelligence in strategic planning” can shape the environment, and they have clearly accomplished this goal.

Insight into these operations illustrate how the Allies secured the region, which allowed them to maintain control of the Suez Canal and the Persian Corridor. This



is in stark contrast to the German war plans, which were never fully acted upon by Adolf Hitler. The reader can easily associate with the locations and operations from the 1930s and 1940s, which correlate with similar operations that have occurred over the past fourteen years. These insights can also be used to scrutinize why insurgent groups today are seeking to control

these same key lines of communication and are using similar messages to inspire the population. It is through the understanding of this historic precedence to gain control of the populations that one can better comprehend the messages being employed today to influence the population.

**Lt. Col. Karl Ledebuhr, U.S. Army, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**FIRST TO JUMP: How the Band of Brothers  
Was Aided by the Brave Paratroopers of  
Pathfinders Company**

**Jerome Preisler, Berkley Publishing Group,  
New York, 2014, 288 pages**

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Deservedly, a great deal of study has been devoted to the storied paratroopers of World War II. The exploits of the American paratrooper in Normandy and Bastogne, to mention a few, holds a special place in history. In reflection, airborne operations in World War II were truly a revolution in warfare. Merely

thirty years before, Gen. John “Black Jack” Pershing supplied his horse cavalry in new fashion—by motorized vehicles—during the Pancho Villa Expedition. A generation later, rapid advances in aviation, wireless communications, and mass manufacturing gave way to airborne armies vertically enveloping the enemy deep in rear areas. Jerome Preisler adds to the historical narrative in his book *First to Jump: How the Band of Brothers was Aided by the Brave Paratroopers of Pathfinders Company*.

*First to Jump* is about the Pathfinders Company of the 101st Airborne Division and about the pilots of the IX Troop Carrier Command who flew the pathfinders into battle, as told by the men who manned those units. The book is a series of firsthand historical accounts loosely interwoven around three major battles, each represented by a section in the book.

The first section, “Normandy,” starts off on 5 June 1944. Here, the reader gets a respectable recounting of pathfinder tactics, equipment, and procedures used to establish the drop zones—in the mere one hour prior to the mass jumps. Beyond that, the pathfinder’s story becomes like most of the paratroopers that night: small bands of soldiers joining together into ad hoc units to raise havoc with the enemy and seize the initiative.

The next section, “Market Garden,” recounts the difficulties of getting the eight- to twelve-member pathfinder teams through, in daylight, with only thirty minutes to establish drop zones. From that point on, the stories vary from hard fighting to the soldiers being greeted—with sheer euphoria—by the Dutch people.

The book’s final section: “Bastogne,” is perhaps the most interesting as it describes the chaos, the uncertainty, and the sense of urgency in the early days of the Battle of the Bulge. Here, the story of the Pathfinders Company is entirely its own. From the pathfinders’ risky airborne insertion, to how pathfinders guided allied aircraft laden with critical supplies into extremely tight drop zones, it tells of their finest hour.

*First to Jump* is an enjoyable, folksy, and informative collection of stories told through the voices of the men who were there on the ground. Preisler succeeds in the telling of their stories as a result of his thorough research of primary sources, which includes interviews with veterans.

A few cautionary notes are warranted. *First to Jump* is not a historical analysis. For starters, it does not contain maps or sketches. Additionally, even though Preisler spins

a good yarn, his over-characterization of the pathfinders as a bunch of misfits doomed to jump into the jaws of death becomes a bit tiresome. Also, beware—it is rife with errors ranging from spelling, grammatical, and narrative inconsistencies to a few historical inaccuracies. Beyond these distractions, *First to Jump* certainly can enrich your knowledge and deepen your respect for the “Beacons” of the Airborne.

**Lt. Col. Ronald T. Staver, U.S. Army, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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### **EUROJIHAD: Patterns of Islamist Radicalization and Terrorism in Europe**

**Angel Rabasa and Cheryl Benard, Cambridge  
University Press, New York, 2015, 246 pages**

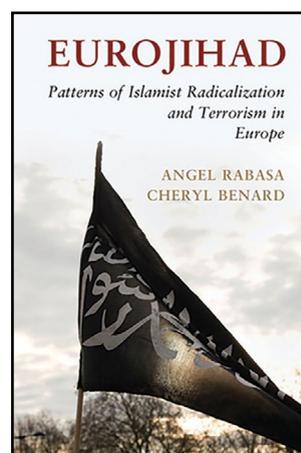
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Two RAND terrorism experts have produced an important work about how European nations are dealing with the paradox of radical Muslims wishing to put an end to democracy while they are using the benefits of living within this same European democratic society. It is a complex narrative surveying a central theater for Islamic terrorist operations. Rabasa and Benard offer key judgments that may not be obvious to the casual observer. Jihadism is a self-limiting extreme exception in Europe, but it is still a contentious issue in

France and other states struggling with the social integration of an expanding portion of their populations. Although Muslim integration is central to government approaches, the authors realistically assess that alienation is rarely the proximate cause of terrorism.

*EUROJIHAD* is well documented, especially concerning the United

Kingdom. It dissects patterns, nodes, operations, and tactics of Islamic radicalization in a manner similar to Edwin Bakker and Marc Sageman’s classic studies of terrorist networks. Many of the facts about the importance of personal relationships seem similar:



concentrated urban areas, radical mosques, and prisons ignite extremism. Europe's favorable legal regimes, easy movement across borders, Internet access, community tolerance, and target-rich environment fan the flames.

There are significant differences noted between the movements found in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Spain. Young North Africans around Paris, descendants of politicized refugees from earlier Algerian conflicts, have been involved in some high-profile incidents lately. Germany's Turkish community members are usually economic refugees who are also largely not integrated. Although most of the Turkish population have lived in Germany for eight years or longer, Turkey is still a major factor in their lives through the administration of hundreds of mosques on German soil. British Muslims are generally from South Asia and East Africa. Their active faith practices and high birthrate show a vibrancy that alarms and challenges the fading traditional Anglo-Saxon urban culture. Rabasa and Benard conclude radicalization "does not advance uniformly across Europe's diverse Muslim populations."

This book should be studied by U.S. security professionals interested in current major European issues. Its strength is as a detailed examination of European national environments, from a Western perspective, using many intelligence analysts as sources. Its weakness is the lack of insight into high-level security policy despite the extensive connections to Zalmay Khalilzad and others. On balance, it is a strong American contribution to a timely topic. With ISIS inspiring new radicalization among established European populations, the true terrorism problem should be correctly identified before vast resources are paid in attempts to stem it.

**James Cricks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**NEGOTIATING ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI  
PEACE: Opportunities, Obstacles, Prospects**

**Ohannes Geukjian, Ashgate Publishing,  
Burlington, Vermont, 2014, 286 pages**

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**I**n February 2015, mediators from the United States, France and Russia—the so-called Minsk Group co-chairs—warned of a deteriorating situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The cause for this angst?

The loss of approximately sixty lives, the downing of an Armenian helicopter by Azerbaijani forces, and bellicose statements from Baku and Yerevan during 2014. Lost in the world's fixation on Ukraine and ISIS were increasing signs of thawing of this so-called "frozen conflict" between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The arrival of Ohannes Geukjian's *Negotiating Armenian-Azerbaijani Peace: Opportunities, Obstacles, Prospects* is therefore timely as a reminder of this long-running conflict and the continuing need for creative approaches to its resolution.

Geukjian, of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, is no stranger to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, having published an earlier book, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in the South Caucasus: Nagorno-Karabakh and the Legacy of Soviet Nationalities Policy* (2011). The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of the author's portfolio as a military adviser to the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe from 1998 through 2002.

Geukjian focuses not on a narrative of the conflict but on an understanding of it and the as-yet-unsuccessful efforts at negotiating its resolution. Geukjian approaches the conflict as a case through which to test three hypotheses about protracted social conflicts. The hypotheses have negotiations deadlock as their dependent variable. Their independent variables include best alternatives to a negotiated agreement, bluffing and lying by disputants, and ideas—fairness and justice. The failure of official diplomatic negotiations, primarily by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group co-chairs, to achieve resolution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh points to the need to involve the peoples concerned, and leaders below the national level, to address "basic human needs, like identity, recognition, security, and participation."

Geukjian organizes the book well, opening with two chapters in which he explains his approach and conceptual framework. Readers with an interest in theories of conflict management and resolution will want to devote attention to the conceptual framework in chapter 2. Those less enamored with social science studies, but having an interest in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, may choose to read the comprehensive account of the conflict in chapter one and then proceed to chapters 3 through 7, which describe negotiations from 1991 to 2012. Each chapter consists of a brief introduction, a discussion of the efforts at conflict resolution—to

include the positions of the belligerents and the involvement of outside players like the Minsk Group co-chairs, Turkey, and Iran—and a summary conclusion. Within the discussion, Geukjian presents evidence and assesses his hypotheses. In the penultimate chapter, he returns to the conceptual framework from chapter 2 to provide conclusions about the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and draw some broader inferences about management, resolution, and transformation of conflicts. The book closes with an epilogue that covers developments in 2013 and 2014, appendices with the texts of key documents, and a detailed bibliography.

*Negotiating Armenian-Azerbaijani Peace* is a valuable contribution to the literature on conflicts, frozen and otherwise, in the former Soviet Union. It is also a worthwhile read for students and practitioners of conflict management and resolution, particularly those in which territory, ethnicity, and identity are relevant factors.

**Mark Wilcox, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**OPERATION STORM: Japan's Top Secret Submarines and Its Plan to Change the Course of World War II**

**John J. Geoghegan, Crown Publishing Group, New York, 2013, 496 pages**

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**A**s a writer for the *Huffington Post* and the *New York Times* science sections, John Geoghegan is known for examining technologies that, while innovative, do not pan out in the marketplace. He served as the writer and technical consultant for the PBS documentary *Japanese SuperSub*—the story of the Japanese I-400 class of submarines that carried the specially designed Aichi M6A Seiran attack aircraft.

The book *Operation Storm* came about when the author wrote an article entitled “Japan’s Panama Canal Buster” for *Aviation History* magazine in 2008. This article was the genesis for the PBS documentary in 2010 and, finally, the book *Operation Storm*.

How does a nation in the early to mid-1940s develop an ability to threaten the homeland of a hostile power across the vast Pacific Ocean when it does not expect to have control of the seas? This is the strategic question the Adm. Yamamoto pressed the Japanese navy and industrial base to resolve. The solution chosen

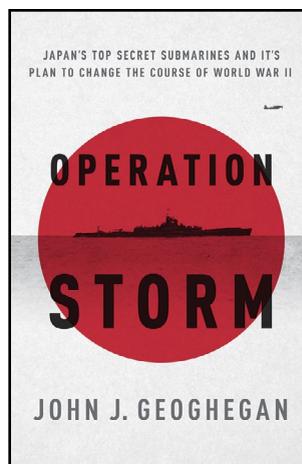
was the development of the I-400 class of submarines and their Seiran attack aircraft.

Geoghegan traces the development of the submarines and the aircraft from the requirement to mass airpower against major American coastal cities through their development and fielding. They were many technological obstacles to be overcome. The Japanese solved each of the challenges with innovative thinking. In the final analysis, while the capability was exceptional, it was developed too late, and with too few submarine-aircraft combinations produced, to have any strategic effect on the U.S. war effort against Japan. Interwoven throughout the I-400 story is a second story of the *USS Segundo*, a Balao-class submarine that captured a Japanese I-401 submarine in August 1945 after Japan’s surrender.

A military officer serving today can learn valuable lessons in reading this book and in examining the Japanese development of the I-400 class of submarine in relation to the tasks for which it was developed. *Operation Storm* can teach readers the criticality of the commander’s understanding and strategic vision of the war in which

the nation is engaged and the challenges that must be overcome to achieve the strategic end state. Second, the book can show readers the importance of the synthesis of requirements to resolve the strategic challenges. Third, it demonstrates the significance of understanding the time required, with competing requirements, to develop and field the operational capabilities required to achieve this strategic vision. Finally, it teaches readers to ask an important question: As circumstances change, do operational capabilities remain viable solutions to the strategic needs of a nation? Or, do they need to change as well?

The book is well researched, organized, and written. Free of difficult military language, it does not require the reader to be an expert in naval warfare. My only criticism of the book is that much of the history of the *USS Segundo* was irrelevant to the story of the



development and fielding of the I-400 submarines. *Operation Storm* is supported by extensive research, which includes many primary and secondary sources. Ninety of the 478 pages document the sources that were used.

*Operation Storm* has applicability to those studying change in the midst of conflict. This book is also for naval and WWII enthusiasts, novices, and scholar alike.

**Lt. Col. Terrance M. Portman, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**GAME CHANGER: The Impact of 9/11  
on North American Security**

**Edited by Jonathan Paquin and Patrick James,  
University of British Columbia Press,  
Vancouver, British Columbia, 2014, 288 pages**

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**G**ame Changer is an assortment of essays by a group of notable scholars, edited by Jonathan Paquin and Patrick James, which provides a good understanding of twenty-first century North American hemispheric security integration. While also addressing the important issues of continuity within North American relations, it examines how and why security changes have taken place since 9/11. The main themes, threaded throughout the book, focus on the different threat perceptions between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and how the varying degree of differences in both interests and priorities of their respective governments play a vital role in diplomatic relations.

The fateful events of 9/11 changed the landscape in terms of security and trade within the North American continent. The themes of security and sovereignty took precedence over the themes of free trade and integration of economic enhancement between the three countries. The hegemony of the United States within the region allowed it to focus its efforts and policies by transforming the security environment. These efforts have had a pronounced impact on the ongoing North American Free Trade Agreement partners' efforts to coordinate their economic integration. These new security efforts led to cooperation as well as political tensions between the three North American partners.

The book is divided into two parts and is finished off with a conclusion that integrates answers and, at times,

innovative recommendations derived from a number of security questions posed to the writers. The first part provides explanations of the differing changes in state behaviors after the 9/11 events. The second part focuses more on analyzing the primary developments in overall continental security and defense since 2001. The last chapter in part 2 postulates the unique idea of increasing continental cooperation between all three North American countries by integrating Mexico into NATO.

This book adds to current scholarly contributions that highlight a number of North American relationship issues, and it provides possible answers to various subsets of the posed initial questions. These answers focus on international relations theory and continental security, how to avoid future irritants, factors shaping security and trade policies, differing threat perceptions, and how those perceptions relate to linkage politics. Though the topics are well written, they seem to weigh more heavily on a Canadian perspective and less on a Mexican one. One topic that stands out is the inability to establish a trilateral approach in responding to security integration after 9/11. Another topic of interest is the security situation both Mexico and Canada had to negotiate with the United States in order to benefit economically.

*Game Changer* is highly recommended to all those who are currently assigned or soon-to-be assigned to a joint or combatant command as it highlights the different perspectives of security and trade between NAFTA members and how being politically sensitive to the other members relates directly to achieving one's own political and economic agendas.

**Lt. Col. Stephen Harvey, U.S. Army, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE FOURTH ARMY**

**L. Craig Williams, Xlibris Corporation,  
Bloomington, Indiana, 2013, 156 pages**

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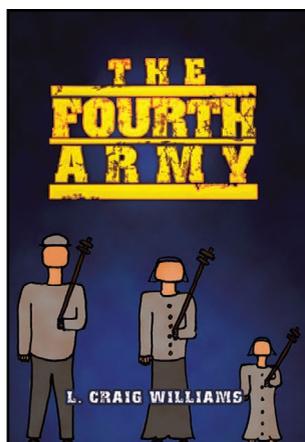
**T**he *Fourth Army* details the assets Hitler's Germany dedicated for the Holocaust, as well as lessons to be learned from these horrors, through the accounts of a *Shoah* survivor. *Shoah* is Hebrew word for the Holocaust, which translates to "the catastrophe." The title *The Fourth Army* refers to the millions of Jews and other victims of the Nazi

regime—not as combatants, but as a result of labor economics. The author highlights the prioritization, materiel, and manpower utilized by the Third Reich in carrying out the “Final Solution” in lieu of the war effort against the Allies. The book concludes with the main character’s (Max Rosenthal’s) post-war life, living by himself after having lost his entire family during the Holocaust, and his desire to improve mankind through peace and good works.

The story is set in 1991, and Max Rosenthal is a one-hundred-year-old man, the last Holocaust survivor living in the German village of Bovenden, near the university town of Gottingen. Due to Max’s personal experiences, Dr. Kimmeler, on faculty at Gottingen University, encouraged Herwig Braun to write of Max’s personal experiences and insight for Braun’s doctoral thesis. The book’s setting focuses on the numerous meetings between Max and Herwig. Because of Max’s failing health due to old age, the two often met in the mornings when Max was more alert and active.

Max, a gentle, deeply religious man with much wisdom, had previously chosen not to share his experiences; however, Kimmeler convinced him that he needed to share his story for the good of mankind—and for history. Max was a German war veteran of World War I. During the war, he lost a leg at the knee and received the Iron Cross for his heroism. The medal, and the accompanying paperwork, provided some level of protection as Hitler’s Germany and the Nuremberg Laws took effect but, at some point, his heroism was no longer recognized.

The book provides accounts of the experiences of non-Jewish Germans during the war that Max garnered during the post-war years. Among his findings was that German citizens largely understood the real purpose of the camps in the east through the accounts of German soldiers returning home on leave, who passed the purpose of the camps along to families, friends, and clergy. Though labeled as work camps,



the shipments going east did not include the type of materiel for manufacturing but rather for basic concentration camps—along with basic requirements for the guard forces. The author also weaves in the massive rail requirements and manpower needs for the transportation of the Holocaust victims to the east from their point of capture to their final destinations.

In addition to the resources required for the massive undertaking of capturing, holding, and killing millions, Max also provides accounts of the loss of human capital. His stories relate the loss of Jewish store owners who supported local economies as well as the loss of those Jews who worked in the medical profession. Many top doctors, who happened to be Jewish, no longer contributed to the profession due to the Nuremberg Laws; its statutes effectively removed Jews from the work force beginning in 1935. As a result, Germany suffered on the world stage due to the dearth of leadership in its professional fields this caused—and, it continued well after the war’s end due to what the author described as the “brownshirt effect.”

Max’s testimonials include recounting when he and his family were apprehended by the Nazis and how, tragically, after being separated soon after they left their village, he never saw them again. He also shares his experiences of suffering in the concentration camps—the horrific conditions, the treatment within the camps, and how his survival forged the path in which he chose to live the rest of his life.

The remainder of the book explains Max’s views on peace and understanding. Max was a true believer in helping out one’s fellow man in order to better mankind. He was very concerned about how bloodlust sports, violent video games, and action movies negatively influenced the goal for a better world. He also advocated for noncooperation with those state actors that are not in tune with human rights. He believed that a “plowshare” mentality would help a society flourish and that each person must do his or her part in making the world a better place.

In fact, while in his 90s, Max frequently assisted Turkish immigrants in learning German. He volunteered his time, for no charge in the evenings, in the hope of aiding their inculcation into the German society.

As the interviews progressed, Max’s health continued to fail. While the series of interviews regarding his views on how to live a better life concluded, Max was

hospitalized and died several days later—with Herwig at his side.

The book provides a great amount of information seldom seen regarding the cost to the Nazis in carrying out Hitler's plan to capture, transport, clothe, feed, and, ultimately, to eliminate the Jews and other Nazi victims from Europe. The author makes a case that *The Fourth Army* enabled the Allies to reign victorious due to Germany's prioritization of the Final Solution.

Max's viewpoints toward the end help highlight the lessons learned due to the inhumanity displayed throughout the Shoah, a twentieth century tragedy by a Western culture. Though a devout Jew, Max recognized that all religions preach peace and goodwill to mankind in their own ways.

**Lt. Col. Steven C. Wieggers, U.S. Army,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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### COMBATANT COMMANDS: Origins, Structure, and Engagements

**Cynthia Watson, Praeger, Santa Barbara,  
California, 2010; 257 pages**

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Writing as part of the Praeger Security International series, Cynthia Watson sets out to fill a "void" in the American public's understanding of U.S. combatant commands. Her goal, as stated in the preface, is "to provide a basic reference in hopes of spurring much greater public debate, as I believe this debate to be not only essential to our form of government, but because parents and loved ones deserve to know who is supporting as well as commanding those women and men who go to war." To these ends, she is successful in analyzing, organizing, and presenting information about the geographic combatant commands.

The author begins with an introductory chapter on the origins of the combatant command "system," including a review of statutory provisions, Department of Defense reorganization efforts, the Unified Command Plan, and trends in the leadership of these organizations.

These passages set the stage for an overview of the six U.S. geographic combatant commands: Pacific

Command, European Command, Southern Command, Central Command, Northern Command, and Africa Command. Using public sources, Watson analyzes each command's history, treaty obligations, mission, structure, engaging institutions, and future challenges.

Watson is at her best in presenting the history and defense obligations associated with each geographic command. She explains how the strategic environment—both historically and contemporarily—influenced the genesis of these commands as well as their most recent challenges.

She shows how each command is uniquely different from others and how the traditional missions of some are evolving into nation-building, humanitarian assistance, counterdrug, and homeland security. Subordinate commands, multinational connections, interagency links, and "hot spots" are also described in some detail.

While one learns much about each geographic combatant command, the reader is left wanting more detail about functional combatant commands, such as Special Operations Command, Transportation Command, and Strategic Command. Watson chose not to analyze these commands. In her words, they "do not engage in operations overseas, themselves, but provide the forces that allow the geographic combatant commands to exercise their operations."

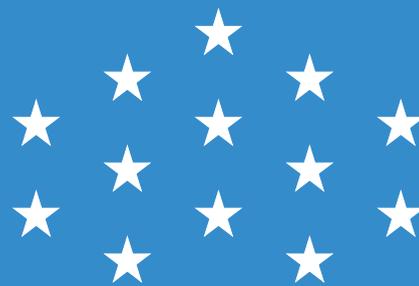
Additionally, her analysis, at times, seems unduly repetitive, albeit in several areas deliberately so. Her work would also have benefited from sharper editing (e.g., "General McArthur's," an endnote missing in chapter 5 text, and "Joint Ask Force").

While these shortfalls somewhat diminish the quality of the work, her greatest challenge would be hard for anyone to overcome: currency. An author who chooses to write on the contemporary commands runs the risk of being outdated at the point of publication. As Watson describes, the geographic combatant commands are evolving organizations, working to adjust and be relevant as the environment changes. As we have seen and experienced, those changes can occur rapidly and can prompt our security institutions to adapt accordingly. Nevertheless, her work is well worth the read for an understanding of each command's history and focus.

**Stephen D. Coats, PhD,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

# Sgt. Henry L. Johnson and Sgt. William Shemin

## MEDAL OF HONOR WORLD WAR I



Sgt. Henry L. Johnson and Sgt. William Shemin, veterans of World War I, were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama during a ceremony held 2 June 2015 at the White House. Johnson's award was accepted on his behalf by Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson, the New York National Guard's senior enlisted advisor. Elsie Shemin-Roth and Ina Bass, the daughters of William Shemin, accepted Shemin's award.

Johnson deployed to France's Argonne Forest region with the 369th Infantry Regiment, an all-black unit more famously known as the "Harlem Hellfighters." His award came as a result of his actions 15 May 1918, when a German raiding party of at least a dozen soldiers conducted a night attack on a position he shared with another soldier, Needham Roberts. Johnson and Roberts repelled the attackers with rifles and grenades. When Roberts was rendered unconscious, Johnson fought off the Germans with his knife, refusing to let Roberts be captured by the enemy. He held off the Germans but was wounded twenty-one times during the fight.

For his bravery that night, Johnson was awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme, France's highest award for valor, but received no award from his own government. Returning to the United States, he could not work due to his combat injuries and died in 1929 at a veterans hospital.

Shemin deployed to France with the 47th Infantry Regiment, lying about his age to enlist. His award was for his actions during combat operations 7-9 August 1918 near the Vesle River, southeast of Bazoches, France. Fighting from trenches, U.S. and German forces were separated by less than 150 meters of open space. When several soldiers were wounded trying to cross the area, Shemin

left the relative safety of the trench to attempt their rescue. He did this three times, facing heavy enemy machine gun fire, but carrying his wounded comrades to safety. When his platoon's leadership was attrited by enemy fire, Shemin stepped in and took charge of the platoon, effectively leading the unit until he himself was wounded on 9 August.

President Obama said of the two soldiers, "America is the country we are today because of people like Henry and William—Americans who signed up to serve and rose to meet their responsibilities—and then went beyond. The least we can do is say we know who you are, we know what you did for us. We are forever grateful."

The awards came as a result of years of work by family members and other supporters who felt the two had been discriminated against due to prejudices of that time; Johnson was African-American and Shemin was Jewish. The president recognized those efforts, saying, "Some of you have worked for years to honor these heroes, to give them the honor they should have received a long time ago. We are grateful that you never gave up. We are appreciative of your efforts."

Johnson and Shemin were also inducted into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes on 3 June by Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work. Work commented on the length of time it took to approve and present the awards, blaming it on past racism and anti-Semitism. "This ceremony is a reminder that we redress

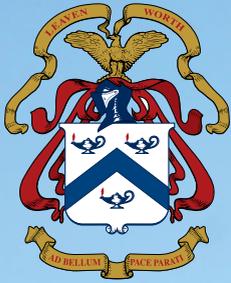
the prejudices of the past and appropriately honor our nation's heroes," Work said. He added, "It is important that we acknowledge the injustices and mistakes of the past and rightfully honor those who have given so much on behalf of their country."



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)  
Sgt. Henry L. Johnson



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)  
Sgt. William Shemin



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PB-100-15-9/10

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