THE MILITARY APPLICATION OF NARRATIVE: SOLVING
ARMY WARFIGHTING CHALLENGE #2

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by

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This paper attempts to answer Army Warfighting Challenge #2. It presents the research with the following understanding: The U.S. Army has a problem, namely, in the narrative space. The narrative space has always existed within warfare and to effectively engage the enemy where it is actively manuevering requires a syncronized mission narrative capability. This paper defines what narrative is, why it matters to warfare, and how the Army can begin to develop narrative capability across the force.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or
any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE MILITARY APPLICATION OF NARRATIVE: SOLVING ARMY
WARFIGHTING CHALLENGE #2, by Major Robert D. Payne III, 98 pages.

This paper attempts to answer Army Warfighting Challenge #2. It presents the research
with the following understanding: The U.S. Army has a problem. This problem is made
evident by 14 years of sustained combat and no victory in sight. The problem is that the
Army lacks any significant means of engaging its enemy where the enemy is fighting,
namely, in the narrative space. The narrative space has always existed within warfare.
The difference today is that western societies are adamantly opposed to the violence
caused by war since WWII and in representative governments the passion of the people
impact the conduct of the war. The U.S. Army has acknowledged it has a problem
evident by multiple studies concluded and ongoing. It is currently working on identifying
what capability is needed to be successful in future conflict. These efforts, while
including some aspects of narrative, are failing to identify the significant impact narrative
is having now and thus they are unable to accurately predict how the use of narrative in
the future is needed. The U.S. Army could mitigate this by adopting new doctrinal terms
that provide a solid understanding of how narrative is applicable to military operations. It
could also make small adjustments in its professional military education curriculum in a
way that informs soldiers what narrative is, why it is applicable to warfare, and how it is
used to achieve the commander's intent. If changes like these are not made it is difficult
to see how the U.S. will achieve any greater margin of success against an enemy in a
foreign land that is drastically different from the success (or lack thereof) that has been
achieved across the Middle East today.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the love of my life and wife, Bruna and our children, Robert and Gabriella who endured as much difficulty as I did in the labor to produce this paper. Without their support and understanding I would have never started this paper, let alone finish it.

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ACRONYMS

AWfC	Army Warfighting Challenge
AWG	Asymmetric Warfare Group
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officer Course
FNA	Functional Needs Analysis
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MDMP	Military Decision Making Process
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
RC	Required Capability
TA	Target Audience
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
WfF	Warfighting Function

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER1

INTRODUCTION

In May 2009, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team was preparing for its next deployment in Afghanistan. Its commander, Colonel Johnson[1] directed his staff to make the radical suppressive ideology of their enemy less relevant. The enemy was effectively using a "crusader" narrative to describe coalition partners, telling everyone that the coalition was in Afghanistan to destroy Islam and spread Christianity. This narrative was preventing coalition partners from gaining the trust and-or support of the ambivalent population. The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team devised a plan to challenge the prevailing narrative. It was determined that the only way to defeat the ideology was with a countervailing ideology. The 173rd, with support from the Department of State, non-government agencies, and international allies, would take 35 individuals from various professions, villages and of various ages on a pilgrimage to Mecca allowing them to complete the fifth and most difficult pillar of Islam, the hajj. This would be a great honor for these men because no one had ever completed the hajj in their village or from their family. These men returned with pictures of their journey, stories to share with their entire village, and a new belief; how can the coalition be out to destroy Islam and spread Christianity if they just aided these men on the most sacred Islamic journey a Muslim could make? (Yandura 2011). What this mission by the 173rd demonstrates is the ability to execute a narrative-led operation as a means to change the belief system of a population.

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[1] First name not made available in the article.

In its effort to prepare for future conflict the United States (U.S.) Army (hereafter referred to solely as the Army) had identified twenty Warfighting Challenges. The Army Warfighting Challenges are enduring first order problems, the solutions to which will improve current and future force combat effectiveness. These challenges are reviewed and updated as needed to remain applicable for the future force (TRADOC 2016). The purpose of this study is to inform the Army Warfighting Challenge (AWfC) #2, which asks the question: "How does the U.S. Army shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint requirements?" (TRADOC 2016). Currently, it is presumed the enemy has an advantage in that it has demonstrated itself to continue fighting despite Army technological advantages. My hypothesis is: the Army's problem is that it is not fully developing capabilities that match or overmatch the capabilities in which the current enemy has gained dominance with. Specifically, the Army is not adequately addressing the increased significance of narrative in warfare and, as a consequence, the enemy is dominating the narrative space.

The Army is allocating significant financial resources and time to technological advancements to provide significant overmatch of U.S. forces in future conflicts under the effort called The Third U.S. Offset Strategy (Work 2015). As summarized by Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work: "So to maintain our warfighting edge, we're trying to address this erosion—our perceived erosion of technological superiority with the Defense Innovation Initiative and the third offset strategy" (Work 2015). Much of this work is highly classified because it is the development of new military hardware. For this reason specifics are not greatly known by those outside the projects. However, the current

enemy that is killing U.S. service members and disrupting U.S. interests in the Middle East—and still not defeated—is far from a technological peer yet that enemy is eroding U.S. technological superiority significance in the conflict. This suggests that technological superiority is not the U.S. military's problem.

Research Question

The primary research question of this paper is: how can a mission narrative help shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant commands and Joint Requirements? This question is an adaptation of AWfC#2 specifically focused on mission narrative as a means to inform AWfC#2.

The paper has two supplemental research questions that must be answered in the course of answering the primary research question. They are:

1. How must the Army synchronize non-government organizations; other government agencies; and joint, interorganization, and multinational efforts to shape the security environment with military operations to support shared understanding and build trust? This question is also AWfC#2 learning demand #2.7.[2] Of all the learning demands associated with AWfC#2, #2.7 is directly impacted by a mission narrative.

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[2] Each AWfC has associated learning demands that are designed to guide the discovery of solutions to the challenge. AWfC learning demand 2.7 is just one of those learning demands.

2. What are the components of narrative that must be understood as they relate to warfare? This question is central to developing changes to doctrine, training, leadership, and education.

<u>Assumptions</u>

As the last fourteen years can attest, when the U.S. military goes into combat it does not employ lethal fire specifically against a culture, religion, or even the population of a nation. The U.S. military conducts exhaustive analysis to identify targets that will be affected by particular means, notably when deadly force is used, before conducting lethal fire operations. However, once the U.S. Army is on the ground it is fighting within the narrative space of a culture, religion, and the entire population. Therefore, it must have the weapons to engage these targets precisely where they are found, within this very same narrative space. This thesis posits the weapons needed to engage in the narrative space exist within a mission narrative. Before solutions can be offered several assumptions to fill the void of facts not known about future conflict must be addressed:

1. Because of technological asymmetries, any enemy of the U.S. will make narrative warfare a critical component of their strategy to defeat the U.S.

2. The U.S. Army acknowledges that after more than fourteen years of sustained combat it is not achieving advancements of the U.S.'s influence or interest in Iraq and Afghanistan at the strategic level.

3. In Iraq and Afghanistan the U.S. has been losing influence and undermining its national interests in Iraq and Afghanistan by failing to effectively maneuver in the narrative space. At the same time, the enemy maneuvers are performing successfully in the narrative space.

4. The U.S. will continue to lose influence and interest in dynamic areas of operation until it synthesizes dominant combat firepower with dominance in the narrative space.

5. There is a disconnect between operational echelons and tactical echelons on the details and delivery of the commander's narrative, as well as how it supports the commander's intent, which renders narrative combat ineffective across the range of military operations.

6. Soldiers from the rank of Private to General are capable of executing a synchronized mission narrative with proper training and planning.

<u>Terms</u>

These terms provide a clear, concise understanding of narrative in relation to its combat application as a force multiplier. Only the first term, narrative, in the list below is defined in doctrine. All others are proposed terms and definitions by the author:

<u>Narrative</u>: (current Army Definition, but missing from ADP 1-02 operational terms and military symbols) A brief description of a commander's story used to visualize the effects the commander wants to achieve in the information environment to support and shape their operational environments (Headquarters Department of the Army 2013, 1-20).

<u>Local Narrative:</u> These are more geographically represented as they provide more specific context to the immediate surroundings a population center lives in (Halverson, Goodall, and Corman 2011).

<u>Master Narrative</u>: A prevailing narrative that spans a very broad population base from which multiple local narratives emerge (Halverson, Goodall, and Corman 2011).

Mission Narrative: The commander's externally focused narrative, intended to be credible, logical, and emotionally relevant to a target audience (TA) by synchronizing the words, deeds, and image context of U.S. Army operations within the local environment in a way that supports the commander's intent.

Narrative Space: The cognitive context of understanding a collection of words, deeds, and images provide and where human interaction takes place.

Narrative-led Operations: Operations that are planned, resourced, and executed with the specific intent of delivering a mission narrative to a target audience. The mission narrative must be internally accepted by each soldier, as one of the critical tasks of the mission to achieve the commander's intent. Furthermore, all soldiers must know this narrative is externally focused for the intended target audience. Soldiers are not the intended audience. The principle of synchronizing words, deeds, and images define how narrative-led operations are executed. This means the entire chain of command from the lowest ranking soldier to the most senior commander must say, do, and conduct him or herself in a manner that reinforces, without contradiction, the basic principles of the mission narrative to the target audience. A contradiction in the words, deeds, and images creates enemy maneuver room within the narrative space to exploit and defeat the mission narrative. This exploitation is evident in instances used by the current enemy such as Abu Ghraib, the urination on Muslim bodies, burning of Korans, etc. Each of these incidents yielded detrimental narratives that were exploited by the enemy to disrupt U.S. military efforts.

Personal Narratives: These are the stories every individual tells and is expressed through the medium of local and master narratives (Halverson, Goodall, and Corman 2011).

Components of Narrative

Credible: A narrative that is received by a TA from a credible source.

Logical: A logical narrative falls within the belief system of the target audience: linguistically, culturally, socially, etc. This does not imply facts to be necessary, only that the narrative is believable.

Emotional: An emotional narrative that appeals to TA social norms.

Limitations

This paper is limited to qualitative analysis. This is the result of the limited time for the thesis, preventing a quantitative study being approved and conducting said study of human subjects data. To try and mitigate this limitation, other researcher's quantitative research is presented in support of the hypothesis, but even this mitigation is limited in scope and depth as it relates to the military application of narrative. Additionally, there is significant bias on the subject matter due to the researchers past experiences in combat and previous work done on the development of narrative capability with in the U.S. Army. Thus, this paper will not present original quantitative data that can directly support a hypothesis. One could collect such data in the form of an experiment involving human subjects, organized into experimental and control groups. The experiment would observe the insertion of a mission narrative into its environment observing for natural emergence within the groups, and the dependent measures would be the extent of narrative's

effectiveness and the performance of the different groups. In spite of these limitations, the author will present an argument for the need to develop effective military applications of narrative. This is because, as stated previously within the assumptions, the narrative space will likely continue to increase in significance to future conflicts.

Current U.S. enemies have demonstrated their ability to exploit the narrative space to the detriment of U.S. interests, even in the face of technologically superior capabilities. This Thesis will define what narrative is and present evidence as to its impact on military operations. The researcher will demonstrate where narrative is currently found within doctrine, primarily focusing on U.S. Army doctrine. Along with demonstrating what the Army has done to identify the need for greater narrative capability, as well as what the Army is doing to develop that capability. Finally it will be shown why the Army's effort have not yet been successful and possible short-term solutions will be offered, until the Army works through the capability development process and solidifies enduring capability gains.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> There are no limits as to who can be recruited and deployed against us. The only requirement is that they subscribe to the religious ideology that is global jihad.
> — Dr. Sebastian Gorka, *Joint Force Quarterly*

The purpose of this literature review is two fold. First, it presents the current state of AWfC#2 to include scope in the form of learning demands, recommendations, and studies. Second, is an a-typical presentation of selected author's research that has been identified to be relevant to the military application of narrative. This method of literature research is specific to informing this paper's effort to answer AWfC #2. The literature review is organized as follows: (1) Army Warfighitng Challenge #2 overview, (2) Defining narrative, (3) Admitting the military has a problem, (4) Identifying the problem, (5) What the Army agrees on so far, and (6) What the Army is doing about it.

Army Warfighting Challenge #2

The Army Warfighting Challenges are an initiative of the Army Capabilities Integration Center within the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. Warfighting Challenge #2 (AWfC#2) asks the following question: How (does the Army) shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint requirements (TRADOC 2016). The challenge is founded in those requirements of the Army laid out in the Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, the Army Strategic Planning Guidance for 2014, and the Army Operating Concept (TRADOC 2016). Specifically within the Army Operating Concept is the added core competency for

the total Army to, "Shape the Security Environment as a core Army competency"

(TRADOC 2016). Currently the Army has two core competencies: combined arms

maneuver and wide area security (Headquarters Department of the Army 2011).

AWfC#2, being the question of how to achieve an additional core competency, is thus a

significant effort for the Army to execute. It desires to achieve two future operational

capabilities:

> 1. (The) Army forces must develop critical capabilities and associated doctrine to prepare soldiers to work among diverse populations in a culturally and regionally attuned manner the success of any future military operation or campaign depends on the application of capabilities designed to influence the physical, cultural, psychological, and social elements of human behavior to prevent, shape and win in population-centric conflicts.

> 2. Future Army forces will operate as part of a larger joint, interagency and frequently, multinational effort. Army capabilities will complement or supplement those of their unified action partners. Future operations will require collaboration with all elements of the friendly force. Commander emphasis on interdependence will facilitate effective coordination, synchronization, and integration during unified land operations. (TRADOC 2016)

AWfC#2 has ten associated learning demands designed to guide the development of

capability associated with addressing the new core competency. Each learning demand

has sub-learning demands totaling more than thirty questions for the Army to address.

The AWfC#2 currently has seven ongoing initiatives. The first is a RAND study

aimed at delineating language sustainment resource requirements. This initiative is

seeking to inform those learning demands asking questions regarding the needed

language competency associated with operating in a foreign country in order to

effectively shape the security environment (TRADOC 2016). Another ongoing initiative

is the appropriation of funds request for a Global Theater Security Cooperation

Management Information System that began in fiscal year 2014 and is scheduled to

continue to 2018 (TRADOC 2016). The total cost of the system is estimated at around $37 million (Defense Security Cooperation Agency 2013). Its aim is to "develop and deploy a common web-based, centrally hosted management information system that will serve as the information focus point for the Nation's security cooperation efforts" by providing security cooperation activities and event situational awareness (Defense Security Cooperation Agency 2013). A third initiative underway is the Army Research Institutes delineation of competencies required to shape the security environment (TRADOC 2016). The forth, fifth, six, and seventh initiatives are all focused on developing training and simulation efforts to define and assess capabilities deemed supportive of AWfC#2 in a virtual environment (TRADOC 2016).

Currently, there are twelve recommendations that have survived Army Capabilities Integration Center's pursuit of answering AWfC#2. Of those twelve, two are "overarching recommendations" and one has to do with narrative. It is titled, "Branding and narrative development" and reads: "It is critical to establish an effective and compelling narrative that covers the context of who we are, why we do what we do, and ideally something about how we do it. This narrative can and should be tailored to local conditions and support command priorities and efforts across the Army" (TRADOC 2016). The only other overarching recommendation has to deal with the capture of data of knowledge, skills, and attributes plus experiences, training and education of personnel (TRADOC 2016). This recommendation is also in support of the "Engagement" Warfighting Function (WfF) currently in development and there is more on this subject later, but because it is not directly related to the AWfC#2 it will not be discussed further

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here. The remaining recommendations are titled "persistent Engagement recommendations" and are as follows:

Incorporate Engagement Function Command Design;

Assign Division Headquarters to Geographic Combatant Command;

Perform Analysis of Liaison Officers;

Designate DA G-3/5/7 as the proponent for security cooperation;

Establish a security cooperation management group under Forces Command;

Pilot a multi-functional institutional assessment team;

Re-evaluate and expand military personnel exchange program;

Survey the force to identify current inventory of language proficiency within the Army;

Increase Language REC (Regional Expertise Culture) skills in the basic branches through training and successive assignments;

Match Billets to required Language Regional Expertise Center level. (TRADOC 2016)

These several recommendations and the current initiatives have yet to produce significant or lasting changes yet, but one report submitted shows promise. It is Technical Report 1259, "Social Perspective Taking" by Linda Roan, Beret Strong, Paulette Foss, and Mark Yager from the eCrossCulture Corporation with Hunter Gehlbach from Harvard and Kimberly Metcalf of the U.S. Army Research Institute (Roan et al. 2009). The research conducted by this team led them to conclude that the Army would benefit from a four-step curriculum by teaching soldiers to learn Social Perspective Taking skills. Social Perspective Taking was defined as, "a skill requiring a combination of cogitative and

affective/emotional skills and the propensity or motivation to engage in the activity"
(Roan et al. 2009, 2). The training steps and a brief summary of their main point are as
follows:

Step 1 "You don't know what you don't Know" focused on soldiers learning
culturally sensitive questioning, deep listening, mirroring, and verification of information
skills.

Step 2 "Consider self, then other" focused on soldiers learning to self-check
emotional regulations by adjusting for cultural differences and creating hypotheses about
the other person's perspective.

Step 3 "Check In" focused on teaching soldiers to communicate through questions
and modify their hypotheses as needed.

Step 4 "Invest in outcomes" focused on accomplishing mission goals by
confirming hypotheses and then adapting behavior to increase the likelihood of mission
success (Roan et al. 2009, 21-22).

In summery, AWfC#2 is a significant challenge that is seeking to inform a soon-
to-be Army core competency. It is investing tens of millions of dollars in the
development of technological tools to aid decision makers, and multiple research
initiatives by multiple organizations to identify how much language skills soldiers need,
how can the army train these skills, and how can the army test these skills in a virtual
environment. Language skills and cultural understanding are a constant concern brought
up by the challenge. The need for increased narrative capability has been acknowledged,
but it is just one of many recommendations and little research or development has been
made available in pursuit of satisfying that recommendation.

The following portion of the literature review will focus on narrative. It is intended to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of narrative and its relation to military operations. This includes defining narrative, presenting evidence that suggests the military has a problem with regard to narrative application, presenting what the Army agrees the problem is, and presenting what the Army has done to date about the problem.

Defining Narrative

Dr. Gregory Seese, (Psy.D.) an Army Psychological Operations officer, and Dr. Kendall Haven, an author of thirty four published books, state that within neuroscience lies the key components to understanding the impact of narrative on human behavior. They write:

> For 150,000 years before writing existed, humans relied on story and on storytelling to convey and to archive essential histories, concepts, facts, beliefs, and attitudes. That long-term dependency has evolutionarily hardwired human brains to understand, and to make sense of, incoming narrative and experiential information in specific story terms. The story-creating/understanding region of the human brains is linked from before birth into a fixed neural net tasked with interpreting incoming narrative and experiential information. (Seese and Haven 2015)

Seese and Haven refer to the historical evidence of narrative defined by biologists and psychologists as the "Neural Story Science." It is important to understand the origin of narrative in order to frame its impact upon behavior, including behavior in warfare. It does not matter if the operational environment is in a poorly developed part of the world dependent on word-of-mouth stories to remain informed on current events, or in a highly sophisticated technologically connected environment: narratives will have a significant

effect on human behavior. Thus it can be assumed that dominating the narrative space should be a priority for the military planner.

Fast forward to today and the pursuit of artificial intelligence. The concept of artificial intelligence has been a favorite among science fiction fans for generations, the idea of a machine thinking, feeling, and acting like a human only faster. Recently a team of researchers at the Air Force Institute of Technology and Air Force Research Laboratory, Sandra Vaughan, Robert Mills, Michael Grimaila, Gilbert Peterson, and Steven Rogers, presented their findings identifying why artificial intelligence was so difficult to develop. The paper, *Narratives as a Fundamental Component of Consciousness* (Vaughan et al. 2014), demonstrates that there is a fundamental limitation in the ability to develop more efficient artificial intelligence because of the way the human mind depends on narratives to make decisions.

Artificial Intelligence systems lack the ability to compute narrative based thinking vitally fundamental to human cognition. Systems are restrained because they are preprogrammed to produce outcomes based on inputs while the human mind is not. Human decision-making includes something the paper refers to as qualia. The authors state, "We humans process information in terms of conscious narratives which allow us to generate a stable, consistent and useful representation of reality" (Vaughn et al. 2014, 247). The implication is that any input eliciting a human reaction, such as a military operation, but fails to account for narratives will not be able to accurately anticipate or calculate the human responses. "Humans reason in event space, by creating a cohesive narrative, a hypothetical explanation of observations. Narrative creation is an adductive process and inference to a stable, consistent and useful explanation which accounts for

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goals and motivations" (Vaughn et al. 2014, 247). Military planners who fail to provide a narrative in an environment shared by a third party or ambivalent observer will allow those observers to use their own narratives to explain the military events around them. This explanation may or may not advance the commander's overall intent, depending on factors ultimately beyond the commander's control, either unintentionally or at least somewhat due to negligence since the commander failed to account for this inevitability. Thus it appears necessary to account for this narrative variable in the environment and furthermore to attempt to directly influence it by fixing it to a narrative beneficial to the military purpose at hand. Vaughn et al. identify a cognitive framework—a conception of the way the mind processes information—comprised of three layers that work in conjunction with each other. They define these layers as follows:

1. The autonomous—reactive mind is the lowest layer, and is characterized by simple reactivity to external stimuli.

2. The algorithmic mind is the middle layer, and is responsible for cognitive control, sequencing behaviors and thoughts.

3. The reflective mind is the highest layer, and is responsible for deliberative processing and rational behavior. It accesses general knowledge structures, personal opinions and beliefs, and reflectively acquired goal structures, resulting in behavioral outputs. This is where narratives are generated (Vaughn et al. 2014, 248). The authors account for this by identifying how the mind recalls memories and processes them into a narrative: "Our memories are not based on raw sensory input, but rather stored representations of qualia that were evoked by the sensory data, and we construct narratives based on the stored qualia. . . . When humans lack full information they use

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narratives . . . to fill in the knowledge gap" (Vaughan et al. 2014, 247). This is suggesting

truth (memories) does not equal facts (input). Truth is a matter of what one believes

(qualia). During a military operation (sensory data), its cause and purpose are matters of

truth to the observer. The manner in which that truth interacts with the belief system

(narrative) of the observer will determine the behavioral outcome of the observer. Will he

or she accept the military operation as an act of good, bad, or something else?

Understanding the limitations of computer-based capabilities we can challenge the value

of developing a system for $37 million dollars that will likely be void of narrative

understanding as is currently under way in support of AWfC#2.

Returning to Seese and Haven, they present three aspects of narrative from the

perspective of supporting Psychological Operations (PSYOP) planners in *The

Neuroscience of Influential Strategic Narratives and Storylines* (Seese and Haven 2015).

PSYOP is a branch of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command dedicated to

impacting human behavior in support of military operations. Although the authors claim

their work is specific to PSYOP, it's nonetheless quite relevant for generally applying

narrative to military operations extremely informative regardless of one's profession. The

three aspects of narrative they address are the effectiveness of story structure, the eight

elements of story structure, and a method to deliver the story itself (Seese and Haven

2015, 33). The authors' premise is that the TA is the key to delivering a powerful

message that impacts behavior. They state, "only a tiny few stories are likely to have any

lasting impact on listeners—to change beliefs, attitudes, and behavior" (Seese and Haven

2015, 33). Assuming this is true, this highlights the difficult work ahead for military

planners. They might create multiple mission narratives but few, if any, will work.

Developing a single, powerful mission narrative that resonates, though more difficult and time-consuming, is probably a better approach. There are eight essential elements to effective story structure according to Seese and Haven. Those elements are: characters, traits, goals, motives, conflicts and problems, risk and danger, struggles, and details. What this reveals, though unstated, is that every U.S. soldier is part of a story in the operational environment. To the passive observer, there is virtually no difference between the private from the 101st Airborne Division and the private from the 1st Calvary Division, but each have a unique chain of command with a unique approach to the mission and a unique way of training to execute the mission. The observer only knows the story of the "soldier" or "occupier," which is part of a larger and lasting narrative in that observer's mind. Seese and Haven believe there is a specific method for delivering a story that entirely depends on the target audience. They state that:

> [E]ffective stories are audience specific. That is, the prior knowledge, the shared beliefs and attitudes, and the common issues and concerns of a specific Target Audience (TA) will affect the way in which their Natural Story Net (how a person makes sense of incoming narratives) will interpret and make sense of an incoming story delivery vehicle. The elements of a story must be tailored to engage, and to create relevance for, each specific audience . . . the story cannot be delivered until a TA and specified messaging (the payload) have been articulated and developed. The story will then surround and carry that messaging. (Seese and Haven 2015, 35)

Here they present a critical, but not fully developed, point, that messaging is not the "ends" but the "means." Military planners are familiar with the development of themes and messages because those things are specified aspects of the planning process. Themes and messages must be a combat multiplier and their effect should be a quantifiable change in the behavior of its targeted people. However, it can be speculated that their use in operations without a synchronized mission narrative, or the guidance system of the

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payload, is likely to fall short of their intended purpose. Seese and Haven's methodology for delivering the story is a seven-step process:

1. Target Audience Analysis: the process of identifying a demographic based on psychographics (attitudes, values, interests, goals, needs, wants).

2. Influence Message: A five-step process.

a) Identify the desired outcome—behavior.

b) Identify the existing knowledge and beliefs.

c) Identify the primary theme of the message(s).

d) Identify the Residual Resolution Emotion or identify how you want the TA to feel.

e) How does the theme address the TA vulnerabilities?

3. Metaphoric Image: a powerful and emotional image that captures the essence of the desired effect.

4. Context and Relevance Check: Why does the TA care about the theme, what makes it credible to them.

5. Real World Constraints: consider time, knowledge, and legal limitations.

6. Identify Key Character Positions: is the character credible to the TA based on the story, which is the main character, the antagonist, what's the climax.

7. Build the story: merging everything into a cohesive story (Seese and Haven 2015, 35-36).

8. Delivery of the story.

9. Assessment of its associated measures of performance and effectiveness.

Step eight is implied rather than specifically addressed. Step nine is author added as it is believed essential to any effort of type.

Imagery is a key aspect presented in these steps for delivery of the story. Imagery is critically important to narrative because of its lasting impact. Seese and Haven state: "We humans don't remember text very well. We do, however, vividly and accurately remember pictures and the emotions that (we associate) with them" (Seese and Haven 2015, 33). Imagery is not just a printed picture or full motion video, but rather within imagery in the context of human cognition it is those vivid memories a person can recall at any given moment based on, including especially their own life experiences. The image of a soldier burned into the memories of a shepherd does not need to come from a printed picture if the shepherd can recall it happening. Hence, the military planner needs to anticipate what imagery his or her operation will burn into the minds of observers, forever impacting the observers' narrative understanding and behavior.

In 2012, four authors, Dr. Daniel Bernardi of San Francisco State University, Dr Pauline Cheong of Arizona State University, Dr. Chris Lundry of Arizona State University, and Dr. Scott Ruston of Arizona State University, produced results of their research on narrative in *Narrative Landmines: Rumors, Islamist Extremism, and the Struggle for Strategic Influence* (Bernardi et al. 2014). The premise of the book is that narratives and rumors have significant consequences on a population's beliefs and actions. Chapter 3 includes research on the impact of narratives and rumors in Iraqi battlefields. According to the authors, the function of narrative:

> [I]s to make sense of a body of data, whether it is a scene in a movie, a passage in a novel, or the elements of information an individual collects about local, regional, or world events. Narrative offers a means of uniting culturally provided templates to include story forms and archetypes with data such as stories, rumors, histories, and the like . . . 'truth' becomes less about facts and evidence and more about coherence with pre-existing and prevailing understanding. (Bernardi et al. 2014, 3)

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They go on to metaphorically define rumors in the operational environment as "narrative IED's . . . lying unseen . . . until exploding and disrupting expensive and highly sophisticated communication campaigns" (Bernardi et al. 2014, 4). The authors' opinion is that narratives are the primary driver of human behavior. "The people as a political entity, will pledge allegiance and, potentially, life and limb to a cause in which they believe. People's beliefs are shaped by what they know, what they think they know, and how they know it" (Bernardi et al. 2014, 3). This is a critical understanding of narrative with profound consequences in Iraq and Syria today, where factions, proxies, and nation-states interact with a common cause, be it counter-terrorism or anti-Assad, but independent agendas and political objectives. As previously stated, chapter three in their work focuses on operations in Iraq. The research looks at how narratives and rumors impacted coalition operations between 2004 and 2010 in relation to establishing a self-sustaining Iraq that is friendly to U.S. interests. Leveraging a report of 966 rumors collected in Iraq by Air Force officer Stephanie Kelley (Bernardi et al. 2014, 77-78), the authors develop an argument for the need to understand "Narrative Networks." This network was seen as a means for Iraqis to gain situational understanding of the events taking place around them. The networks are part of their culture and were not the result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, but they continued to operate and even flourish during the U.S. occupation.

"During periods of heightened social anxiety . . . rumor-mongers have a greater chance to advance their strategic communication agenda effectively if they can make plausible connections between otherwise distinct events, offer an explanation that reflects

social anxiety, and predict a resolution that promises to allay those anxieties" (Bernardi et al. 2014, 81).

Facts become less important than truth in a narrative-dominated environment, and Iraq proved no exception. Counterinsurgency forces and their strategic communications plans were viewed with less truth regardless of the facts presented. This prevented significant challenges to forming any lasting credibility with locals. Strategic communicators would also do well to remember that the narrative systems circulating in a culture define what is "truth" for local constituents far more reliably than what is labeled as truth by counterinsurgency forces (Bernardi et al. 2014, 86).

The narrative Improvised Explosive Device's are not limited to a military operational environment, but chapter three is focused on that environment due to its observable implications to U.S. Army operations. The first narrative addressed in Iraq by the authors was the bovine inoculation campaign that began in 2005. The intent of the campaign was to provide Western veterinarian care to Iraqi cattle in an attempt to show goodwill through bolstering that industry. The results proved counter-productive to U.S. efforts, however. A rumor emerged that Americans were poisoning the livestock. The bovine poisoning rumor explained the deaths of herds, predicted future loss, and gloom, and linked the cause of their current woes to the U.S. invasion and occupation. It provided a target for pent-up frustration, anxiety, and fear that led some farmers to turn a blind eye to insurgent activities and others to participate in violence. Multi National Forces-Iraq's information operation and civil affairs mission backfired. The insurgents gained the narrative ground at a critical juncture in the war effort . . . two significant factors led to these rumors making sense: first, recent experience had created a population

filled with anxiety over safety, access to resources, and economic stability; second,

official and trustworthy communications keeping the populace informed about

government progress was inconsistent to non-existent. In this anxiety-ridden information

vacuum, the story presented by the bovine poisoning rumor made sense: "U.S. forces in

Iraq are engaged in a crusade, destroying our land and livelihood, and something, even

violence, has to be done to stop it lest our families go hungry and our country fall

permanently into the hands of infidels" (Bernardi et al. 2014, 74-75).

Another prevailing narrative in Iraq is the *Hulagu*, which draws on a historical

legacy dating back to 1258 when the Mongols destroyed Baghdad and killed hundreds of

thousands of Mesopotamian residents. It is therefore a classic anti-invader narrative, only

now Americans were the Mongols: "American occupiers are interested only in Iraq's

resources to the peril of its people (colonizer); they engage in torture and support Israeli

interest in keeping Iraq weak (Crusader); and the government of Iraq is ineffective in

combating American interests or, worse, is merely a puppet government (apostate

force/traitor)" (Bernardi et al. 2014, 84-85). This narrative was later used by Abu Musab

al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian, founder of Al Qaeda in Iraq and ideological father of the Islamic

State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as a means to justify the killing of other Iraqis. Zarqawi

wrote to bin Laden explaining how this narrative would be used:

> The Qur'an has told us that the machinations of the hypocrites, the deceit of the
> fifth column, and the cunning of those of our fellow countrymen whose tongues
> speak honeyed words but those hearts are those of devils in the bodies of men–
> these are where the disease lies, these are the secret of our distress, these are the
> rat of the dike. 'They are the enemy. Beware of them.' Shaykh al-Islam Ibn
> Taymiyya spoke with truth and honesty when he said. . . . For this reason, with
> their malice and cunning, they help the infidels against the Muslim masses, and
> they are one of the greatest reasons for the eruption of Genghis Khan, the king of
> the infidels, into the lands of Islam, for the arrival of Hulagu in the country of

Iraq, for the taking of Aleppo and the village of al-Salihiyya, and for other things. (Bernardi et al. 2014, 93)

Zarqawi became the primary target of U.S. operations in Iraq until his death. The civil strife that engulfed Iraq as a result of Zarqawi's efforts was not discussed in this book, but is generally well-known. Zarqawi's use of a narrative, which called for the killing of neighbors and countrymen by labeling them apostates, is arguably the most important narrative countering U.S. forces in Iraq, further demonstrating the significant impact of narratives in warfare. In addition to its impact on how Americans and Iraqis viewed events, Zarqawi's narrative had profound impacts on other senior al-Qaeda members. As Graeme Wood writes in "What ISIS Really Wants," published in *The Atlantic*, Zarqawi's mentor, the Jordanian Maqdisi, wrote Zarqawi to caution him from proclaiming people to be apostates because of their sins. In Maqdisi's understanding of the Koran there is an important distinction between a sin and an apostate. Zarqawi used a narrative that allowed him to identify thousands as apostates and justify their deaths, whereas Maqdisi and al-Qaeda disagreed. This rift still embattles ISIS and al-Qaeda today. The authors of *Narrative Landmines* make no claim on how to address their "Narrative Improvised Explosive Device's," but rather exhaustively demonstrate the profound impact they have on daily life.

<u>Admitting the Military has a Problem</u>

The purpose of this section is to present evidence that supports the paper's premise, that there is a problem of combating the current enemy where the enemy is fighting best: the narrative space. It will present an abbreviated update on the current

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state of fighting in the Middle East to demonstrate that after fourteen years of fighting the enemy is still quite strong.

On May 1, 2011 President Obama announced to the world that the most wanted man on earth was dead, his punishment for crimes committed against the U.S. Obama stated, "Shortly after taking office, I directed Leon Panetta, the director of the CIA, to make the killing or capture of bin Laden the top priority of our war against al Qaeda" (Obama 2011). In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001 Osama bin Laden was the most discussed and wanted international criminal. The U.S. made an overt effort to inform the world about bin Laden and his culpability for the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The message was clear: the U.S. beat bin Laden (Obama 2011). The emergence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, once referred to as a "JV" [junior varsity] team by the President when comparing ISIS to al Qaeda (Sinha 2015), has become even more challenging due to ISIS' effective global propagation of their narratives (ISW Research Team 2015). ISIS' rapid growth forced the President, coming out of a G7 summit meeting in June 2015, to confess, "We don't have yet, a complete strategy" (Sinha 2015).

> Today it is difficult to deny that Iraq and Afghanistan are failures of U.S. policy:
>
> About 2,000 of the U.S. contingent are involved in combat against Al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups, including the Afghanistan branch of the Islamic State organization (ISIL-Khorasan), under U.S. 'Operation Freedom's Sentinel.' Amid assessments that the ANDSF [Afghanistan National Defense Security Force] is having difficulty preventing gains by the Taliban and other militant groups— exemplified by the insurgent overrunning of the northern city of Konduz in late September 2015 and major insurgent gains in Helmand Province. (Katzman 2016)

According to Jessica Stern of Harvard's Task Force on National Security and Laws, America is plagued with more terrorism than before Obama took office (Stern 2015, 62). Clearly, there is another component to warfare in which the U.S. military does

not have an advantage. The national strategic level message of bin Laden's death has not elicited significant effects at the tactical level where combat formations face more insurgents today than before bin Laden was killed. Bernardi et al. make the following statement in *Narrative Landmines*, "The continued failure of the United States and its allies to garner widespread local support for their efforts to quell sectarian violence in Iraq and supplant Taliban rule in Afghanistan exemplifies the importance of communication in affecting sociopolitical change" (Bernardi et al. 2014). This suggests there is a gap somewhere between the strategic and tactical level to identify, combat, and-or defeat this enemy's center of gravity. Combat firepower must not go away, but it also has not won the current war. We need a new way of thinking about how to conduct warfare.

<u>Identifying the Problem</u>

Now that the problem is known, this section seeks to identify what the problem is. Only in knowing what the problem is can an effective solution be discovered. This section focuses on writings from contemporary military theorist and think tank publications.

In the 2010 publication by the National Strategy Information Center, *Adapting the Paradigm* (Godson et al. 2010)*,* the authors, Dr. Roy Godson of Georgetown University, Dr. Richard Shultz of Tufts University, Dr. Querine Hanlon of National Defense University, and Dr. Samantha Ravick former Deputy National Security Adviser to Vice President of the United States, painstakingly demonstrate that the ways of preparing for, deterring, and winning conflicts in the 20th century will not work as we move forward in the 21st century. The authors link the rise of non-state actors across the world to an

evolving geographical reality that is redefining the future of armed conflict. Of the eight

key findings[3] from their study finding number six states: "The key capabilities that we

will need are NOT super-enhanced technology and more divisions and firepower"

(Godson et al. 2010, 4). This statement is in direct conflict with the strategy expressed by

Deputy Secretary of Defense Mr. Work and the Third Offset. Key finding number eight is

a list of five recommendations for future force development with the fourth

recommending: "Strategic communication principles becoming a major component of top

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[3] Key findings of Adapting the Paradigm are as follows:
1. Although the 21st-century environment is more complex, some patterns are discernable. Among them are the predominant security challenges arising from weak states, armed groups (even without weapons of mass destruction), other super-empowered non-state actors and authoritarian regimes using irregular techniques.
2. These are certainties of the security landscape, and they will persist for years to come.
3. The seriousness of these challenges is further magnified by the fact that these state and nonstate actors often do not act alone. Rather, they develop cooperative relationships ranging from de facto coalitions to loose affiliations.
4. These challenges cannot be managed if we remain diverted by 20th-century, state-centric mindsets and capabilities.
5. There is a creative, relatively inexpensive 21st-century security agenda available that, if adopted, can make a difference–and save U.S. lives and treasure.
6. The key capabilities that we will need are not super-enhanced technology and more divisions and firepower–although we do need to retain robust U.S. conventional and nuclear forces.
7. The U.S. now needs dedicated units of civilian and military professionals with skill sets focused on the certain challenges. There are creative public servants and soldiers with these exceptional skills. We need many more.
8. Among the highest priorities are: (a) Reoriented and restructured military units whose primary mission is to prevail in these nontraditional irregular conflicts that the U.S. most likely will face. (b) Intelligence dominance through collection, analysis, and exploitation derived from local knowledge and operations in conflict zones. (c) Civilian and military stability units, trained, dedicated, and resourced to assist indigenous leaders by bringing security, development, and rule of law principles to local areas.(d) Strategic communication principles becoming a major component of top down driven policy, implemented by career specialists educated for this purpose.(e) Political capabilities performed by small corps of trained professionals – military and civilian–with authorities, skills, and resources to forge coalitions among foreign state and nonstate actors.

down driven policy, implemented by career specialists educated for this purpose" (Godson et al. 2010, 4). Combined, these two key findings echo the reason for narrative operations to play an increasing role in future conflict. The authors point to weak and fragile states as the root cause of many groups that currently threaten global affairs. They argue that stable democracies can overcome these threats by positively influencing those weaker states' rule of law and government institutions. The authors describe "tools" the U.S. needs to develop, and thus implying that the U.S. does not have these tools or if it does, not to a sufficient capability. The "tools" identified by the authors are:

1. A reoriented and retrained military better able to deal with irregular challenges.

2. More effective intelligence collection, analysis, and exploitation derived from local knowledge in conflict zones.

3. Military and civilian teams comprised of well-trained professionals to assist indigenous leaders, to bring stability, development, and rule of law culture to local areas.

4. Strategic communications that supports these goals.

5. Corps of political entrepreneurs, civilian and military, skilled at building coalitions at the local, national and transnational levels to prevent and prevail in irregular conflicts (Godson et al. 2010, 4).

It can be argued that these skills already exist within current military capability sets of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. However, this fails to understand that the authors are recommending a significant increase in the volume of people necessary to perform these skills. This volume exceeds the current capability of U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

The authors make a point not to call for a new strategy, but rather to argue for the development of new capabilities that will be needed regardless whoever controls the White House or Congress. This is important because it places the authors in the position of arguing for objective realities the U.S. will have to deal with, as well as objective truths for how it should deal with those realities. The fact that strategic communications is a specified tool demonstrates that despite past efforts, current doctrine, and current training scenarios, the authors are convinced the U.S. does not currently have the capability to strategically communicate effectively to a foreign local populace.

In "The age of irregular warfare: So what?" Vol. 58. 3rd QTR vols. *Joint Force Quarterly*, 2010 (Gorka 2010) Dr. Gorka of the Marine Corp Staff College and key-contributing writer with the Threat Knowledge Group presents an argument that war has changed for the West as a result of recent adversaries. He challenges the reader to answer several questions:

> Fundamental questions remain unanswered. What is the nature of the enemy? Is it an organizational, network, movement, or an ideology? What are the long-term objectives of this enemy? Does it have a Clauswewitzian center of gravity? Should we even use the term enemy, or should the vast resources that Washington dedicates to national security be spent instead on ameliorating the 'upstream factors' behind violent extremism? (Gorka 2010, 32)

Gorka articulates all the things that must become "known" by strategic policy makers if they hope to develop a strategy to advance U.S. interests. He goes on to assess today's conflict using Clausewitz's trinity of war, going through each of the three principles in a contemporary sense. Gorka also looks at the principles of Sun Tzu and lessons from Mao Tse-tung in order to present a well-rounded view of irregular enemies and their characteristics of warfare that help define today's conflicts. He also presents a significant

contrast to the enemy of the day, bin Laden, and the challenges facing U.S. policy and

military professionals:

> Bin Laden is measured less by his success on the battlefield—which has been
> minimal since 9/11—than by his authenticity as a 'true believer.' He is an
> example of a holy warrior, prepared to die not for a political end state but for a
> transcendental truth, judged by his capacity to inspire other violent non-state
> actors. . . . Potential irregular warriors may be recruited from Algeria, Somalia, or
> Michigan, for al Qaeda's definition of population is not territorially bound, but
> religiously defined by the idea of the ummah, or global Islamic community.
> (Gorka 2010, 35)

Bin Laden is dead, but the overall enemy most certainly is not. Therefore, Gorka speaks

to those policy makers and military professionals who believed the U.S. would be closer

to victory in the Middle East as a result of bin Laden's death. Five years later, Gorka's

concerns still hold true.

David Kilcullen agreed that the future of conflict will be drastically distinct from

warfare conducted prior to 2003. Kilcullen is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the

Australian Army, former civilian staff member to General David Petraeus in Iraq and

Afghanistan, and an accomplished author. In his recent work, Out of the Mountains, he

presents an argument for the need to change the way military's prepare for future

conflict. Combat firepower is the U.S. military's major approach to winning wars.

However, combat firepower has proven insufficient to win today's wars: "America's

unprecedented military supremacy means that no enemy in its right mind would choose

to fight the United States conventionally . . . (it) pushes all potential adversaries—state or

non state—in the direction of irregular methods" (Kilcullen 2013, 103). Kilcullen argues

that most conflicts will occur in and around littoral cities due to their rapidly increasing

populations, network infrastructure access, and limited resources for the local population

to compete for (Kilcullen 2013, 42). Kilcullen argues littoral cities should be viewed as a

biological system, asserting that cities have their own metabolism where resources are brought into the system, distributed, used, and excreted as waste (Kilcullen 2013, 44). All this leads Kilcullen to believe, "Irregular warfare . . . will probably continue to be the main form of organized violence across the planet" (Kilcullen 2013, 103).

While Kilcullen does not specifically state the impact narratives will have in his prediction of future conflict, he implies it multiple times, as when he emphasizes the importance of the Internet and social interconnectedness. Cities are major sites from which people gain access to the Internet; to summarize chapter 4, the world's newly urban populations are highly connected and networked (Kilcullen 2013, 169). Kilcullen makes several references to beliefs shaping behavior in urban centers and makes a strong case for thinking about and preparing for future conflicts very differently than has been recently done. However, he fails to address that the connected urban environment will help rapidly spread narratives impacting beliefs and thus driving behavior. It's unclear whether Kilcullen accepts the roles and significance of narratives in conflicts of the foreseeable future as compared to past conflicts. Nonetheless, he clearly states that military professionals must prepare for conflict in an environment very different from the way they have been taught in military educational institutions. Soldiers need to prepare for conflict in a heavily populated, technologically enabled, and socially interconnected environment.

In 2012 Dr. Jack Kem of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College wrote *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts and Tools* (Kem 2012). In chapter 8 of this book, Kem informs his readers how to leverage narrative as a capability on the battlefield. He also states, "The initial definition of the mission narrative was developed

for a draft doctrinal publication from 2009" but did not survive the editing process (Kem 2012, 104). The 2009 proposed definition was:

> A mission narrative is a single narrative statement made by the commander, published within base plans, articulating the conditions, opportunity, key actions and payoffs associated with a particular mission. The mission narrative is constructed for the purpose of providing common 'azimuth' for subordinate Army forces and Soldiers to communicate effectively and accurately to critical publics and actors. Mission Narratives ideally arise from a collaborative effort that truthfully and accurately reflects what the mission itself is likely to communicate or signal to those publics observing it. Since any mission's success is largely dependent on the 'story' it communicates, prospective mission narratives may be used as criteria on which to evaluate the feasibility, suitability, acceptability, and distinguishability of specific courses of action. At the operational level, the mission narrative is expressed as the campaign narrative. (Kem 2012, 105)

This definition summarizes the primary aspects of narrative as it relates to warfare. It provides a context to understand the mission narrative, how it is used, and what it does. This definition was proposed for doctrine but not accepted, further demonstrating the challenge the Army faces in accepting narrative's role in warfare. Whether that challenge is a cognitive bias of senior leaders who approve doctrine or the result of not fully understanding or appreciating narrative's role in warfare, the fact remains that a well-defined mission narrative remains beyond doctrine thus limiting the Army's ability to exploit its full potential.

What the Army Agrees on so Far

The purpose of this section is to capture what is agreed upon within the Army regarding the future military application of narrative. While it lacks the breath of other sections, it is intended to provide sufficient depth of the Army's current state of agreement regarding narrative. It is important to note that while agreement may exist,

action is separate and not until the following section will the Army's actions be discussed.

In 2012 the Army published, *Decade of War, Volume 1:Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations* (Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (JCOA) 2012), which shared results from a study that was directed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Decade of War* reviewed military operations from 2003 through early 2012 and greater than 400 findings, observations, and best practices to identify enduring lessons for future force development. Eleven lessons were identified; number three was, "Battle for the Narrative." The document makes a distinct identification that the U.S. was successful when employing military power in a force-on-force setting. On the other hand, the U.S. was challenged by operations dependent upon diplomatic, information, and economic elements. "The U.S. did not appear to apply necessary resources and leadership emphasis on this aspect of operations (battle for the narrative)." One reason for this shortcoming was the paradigm shift and growth in communications capability. While U.S. forces were slow to integrate social media and personal electronic devices into operations, the enemy was not. The document makes a point to acknowledge that truth did not constrain the enemy, in contrast to U.S. forces. The document fails to identify the difference between fact and "truth," as was done in *Narrative Landmines*, but it is clear the document addresses the same fundamental aspect of the operating environment. The enemy could feed false information through communication platforms and increase its influence while

the U.S. with all of its facts could not. Of the document's ten recommendations[4] for

developing capability to address the failure to win narrative battles, the first and fifth

recommendations particularly stand out. The first is a comprehensive examination of

force structure, actors, and tools with regard to communication strategy. The fifth is a

coordinated communication strategy between interagency, coalition, and host-nation

participants.

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[4] The "Way Ahead" recommendations presented to win the Battle of the Narrative:
1. Assess our ability to use information: Conduct a comprehensive examination and assessment of force structure, actors, and tools with regard to communication strategy.
2. Update policy and doctrine: Expand policy and doctrine to encompass best practices and recent challenges. This should include an approach that leverages technology and new advances in social media.
3. Tailor the communication strategy: Ensure communication strategy considers all relevant actors' instruments of power; cultural, religious, and other demographic factors; and employs innovative, nontraditional methods and sources.
4. Increase transparency: While observing necessary OPSEC, aggressively share information with host nations, NGOs, and others to increase transparency and understanding of US positions.
5. Coordinate approach: Develop and execute a communication strategy with interagency, coalition, and when possible, host-nation participants
6. Anticipate consequence management: Develop the communication strategy at each level for the plan, branches, and sequels, anticipating the requirement for consequence management to mitigate actual and alleged negative incidents.
7. Resource the IO effort: Ensure the right equipment and experienced, trained personnel are available to conduct information operations.
8. Proactive messaging: Develop innovative, nontraditional sources to "keep a finger on the pulse" of the operating environment and maintain an aggressive information assessment and analysis cycle.
9. Be fast and not wrong: Be "first with the truth" by using pre-planned messages and streamlined authorities for communication; at the same time, only report confirmed details to avoid retractions and a loss of credibility.
10. Build partner capacity: Help partners develop the capability to report responsibly in the media and provide key enablers to help them execute this mission.

<u>What the Army is doing About It</u>

The purpose of this section is to present what the Army is currently doing with regard to addressing the capability gap associated with the military application of narrative. It will present the current state of ongoing capability development efforts, research efforts, and steps taken by organizations within the Army to mitigate this gap.

In 2012, the Joint Chiefs of Staff initiated a study to explore a potential new WfF. The significance of this study speaks volumes to the capability gap between current and future military force capability. Current functions are how the military organizes combat power. There are six functions at the joint level (Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines): Command and Control, Intelligence, Fires, Movement and Maneuver, Protection, and Sustainment (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2011). The U.S. Army has mirrored these joint functions with six Warfighting Functions: Mission Command, Movement and Maneuver, Intelligence, Fires, Sustainment, and Protection (Headquarters Department of the Army 2011). By conducting a study to create a new function, the Joint Staff acknowledges existing critical gaps. As things now stand, the new function is titled "Engagement," and is in the Capability Based Assessment phase of development.[5] The United States Special Operations Command is the lead organization for this effort. This new WfF, Engagement, will focus on ameliorating the effects of military operations on

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[5] The Capability Base Assessment is the congressionally mandated process of developing new military capability associated with the Joint Capability Development (JCIDS) process. It requires that all capability gaps identified by any one service branch to be reviewed by all other service branches. If the gap is agreed to impact more than one service branch is becomes a Joint gap, a single service branch is appointed the lead branch to address it with input from each service branch effected by it.

human behavior within the operating environment. The Functional Needs Analysis (FNA) is part two of the three-part Capability Based Assessment process. As of November 2015, the completed FNA report was signed and the Capability Based Assessment is currently in its third phase. The purpose of the Engagement WfF is defined as, "the related tasks and systems that influence the behaviors of a people, security forces, and governments" (Special Operations Center of Excellence 2016, i). Leaders intend for that the seventh WfF to, "provide commanders tools necessary to mitigate complex, irregular, and hybrid challenges through flexible, persistent, small footprint operations which leverage joint forces, interorganizational and multinational partners, as well as indigenous persons and populations to prevent, contain, or deter conflict, as well as shape the operational environment to set conditions for future operations and contingencies" (Special Operations Center of Excellence 2016, i).

The efforts to identify a new WfF are predicated on two key assumptions. The first is that, conventional Army forces have limited experience in engagement activities tied to long-term human focused operational effects. The second, and more importantly to the capability development process is, human complexity resulting from U.S. Army intervention lacks sufficient quantifiable data, and therefore determinations throughout the FNA process relied on qualitative data that shows the relevant correlation.

The FNA analysis identified 10 "macro-level" causes of capability gaps. According to the study, addressing these causes would mitigate or eliminate 97 percent of the capability gaps. These causes resulted from a survey completed by 1,731 participants from the Army Conventional Force (41 percent of participants) and Special Operations

Force (59 percent of participants). Five causes contribute to the need for narrative in military operations:

1. Commanders and decision makers focus on the threat and prioritize lethal capabilities while marginalizing human aspects of the operating environment;

2. Contingency-based planning and force generation models create episodic readiness vice a persistent regional focus and sustained engagement strategy;

3. Conventional campaign and operations design methodology is rooted in a functional, rigid, and linear paradigm limiting strategic approach and focusing on military vice human and civil end-states;

4. Current models (i.e. Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Information, Physical Environment, and Time; Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events) that are used to frame and characterize human aspects of the operating environment are inadequate to comprehensively depict the complex interrelated variables influencing human perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors; and

5. Soldiers and leaders are not culturally attuned in the regions to which they are deployed or assigned.

Respondents were asked to respond to the Army's ability to execute the following task: "Collect information on Public sentiment in order to understand current attitudes of the population." Respondents agreed that Army units are mostly capable to complete the task, and that the task itself is necessary. Therefore, identifying culturally and geographically specific prevailing narratives from the local populace is a probable and acceptable task for Army units. The next logical step would be for the same units to generate personal and-or tactical narratives that resonate with the local population,

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synchronize higher echelon's mission narrative, and impact the behavior of locals in a way that helps to achieve the commander's intent. The following are excerpts from Annex G of the FNA report:
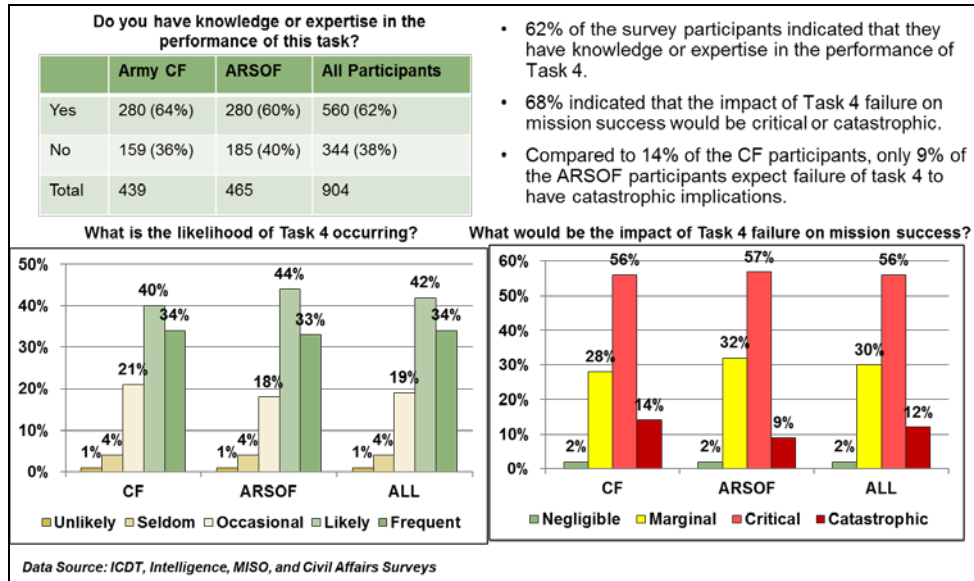

Figure 1.   Task 4 Analysis Overview

Source: Special Operations Center of Excellence, *Functional Needs Analysis for the Engagement Warfighting Function Capabilities-Based Assessment* (Ft Eustis, VA: Army Capability Integration Center, 2016), G-2.

Figure 2.   Task 4 Supporting Statements Engagement WfF FNA Report

Source: Special Operations Center of Excellence, *Functional Needs Analysis for theEngagement Warfighting Function Capabilities-Based Assessment* (Ft Eustis, VA: Army Capability Integration Center, 2016), G-2.
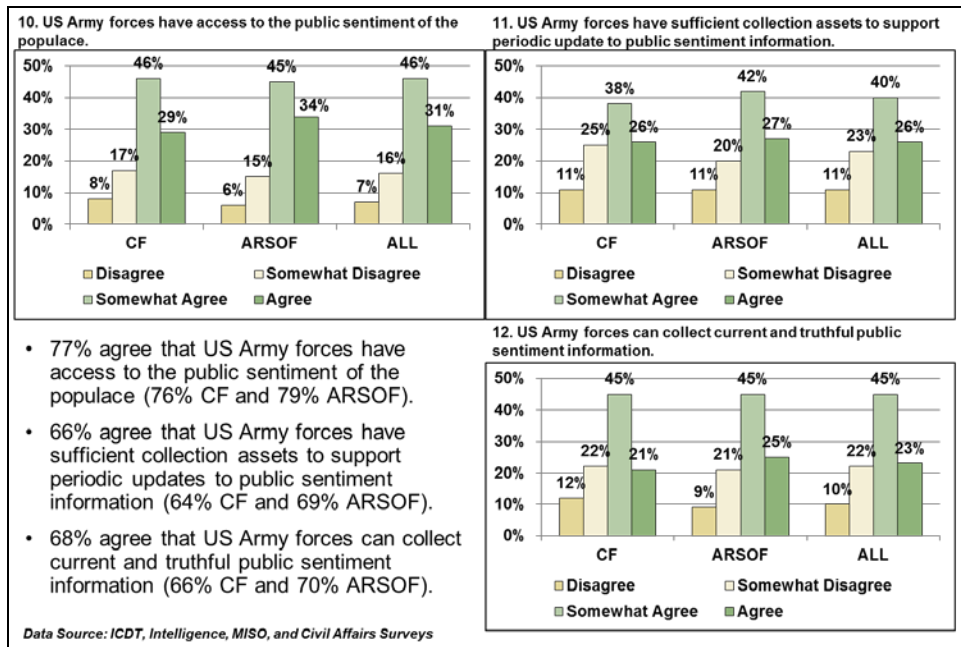
These two figures are taken from the Engagement Warfighting Function Survey Results of task 1-30, but specifically task 4, "Collect Information on Public Sentiment." What this data demonstrates is that Army leaders have a heightened level of confidence in the current ability of soldiers to preform a task they currently are not expected to or trained to do so. This allows the reader to assume the training necessary to preform the new task will not be overly burdensome. Additionally, this data demonstrates that a majority of Army leaders believe failure to preform this task is critical to catastrophic with regard to mission success. It begs the question than, why are units not already training and executing the task?

In addition to the survey, the Initial Capability Development Team conducted six key leader interviews to ascertain symptoms and issues hindering the Army's efforts in combat operations. These six interviews illuminated eleven commonalities. At the conclusion of the FNA report the eleven commonalities supported four required capabilities associated with the Engagement WfF. Below are those eleven issues are organized by required capability (RC). It must be stressed here that these symptoms are what Army leaders have identified in parallel discovery, meaning each of them identified these symptoms independent of each other. Of these issues the second, third, forth, fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh are impacted by a lack of narrative capability–either synchronizing a mission narrative, assessing a mission narrative, or propagating a mission narrative.

RC	Symptom/Issue
1	Stored data is stove-piped, incompatible across army programs, and not available for data mining
1	Civil information gathering not centralized which would consolidate all sources required to have full picture
1	Undisciplined reporting into known repositories, so tools are not able to mine information
2	The Army is not purpose built for widely distributed small scale operations
9	Need for a more centralized approach that lashes up civil information from all sources required to have full picture
9	Data mining tools are not sufficient
9	No social modeling tools
9	Disparate repositories and databases for civil information make aggregation and analysis difficult. Cannot answer the "so what" for the commander; damages perceived CA contributing value to operational commanders
9	Data mining tools are not sufficient
14	Timeliness not achievable because legal construct and message approval processes are not tuned to the operating environment
14	Timeliness not achievable because legal construct and message approval processes are not tuned to the operating environment

Figure 3.   Salient Symptoms Derived from Key Leader Interviews
(Engagement WfF Capability Based Assessment FNA Report)

Source: Special Operations Center of Excellence, *Functional Needs Analysis for theEngagement Warfighting Function Capabilities-Based Assessment* (Ft Eustis, VA: Army Capability Integration Center, 2016), F-1.

Once all the data was collected and the FNA concluded, rank and weight scales were used to prioritize the identified gaps. Controlling the narrative is ranked eighth. Proficiency to develop a credible and coordinated narrative was ranked twenty-second. Proficiency to deliver the narrative was ranked sixty-fourth. The identification of these

three clear shortcomings in Army capability clearly shows that this group believes that

controlling the narrative, developing narratives, and delivering the narratives have proven

adversely consequential to operations and should be mitigated. The Initial Capability

Development Team identified two required capabilities to address the three narrative

gaps. The first is the requirement to "develop the narrative." This requirement supports

line of effort one: "Understand human aspects of the operating environment and

incorporate human aspects into campaign and operations planning." The next identified

narrative requirement is "deliver the narrative." This requirement supports line of effort

three: "Operate with and through joint, interorganizational, and multinational partners

and indigenous populations to shape the operating environment and conduct Theater

Security Cooperation activities."

    There are two key takeaways from this report. First, the Initial Capability

Development Team recognizes that the use of narrative in military operations lacks

sufficient capability.[6] Second, the Initial Capability Development Team has identified

two specific narrative requirements for the future force. In spite of these positive

outcomes, what the report fails to identify, whether through oversight, lack up supporting

evidence, or some other unknown factor, is the requirement to assess the effects of a

"developed" narrative after it has been "delivered." Without such a requirement it is

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[6] Credit for the inclusion of narrative tasks needs to be given to the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group. AWG is the organization that first proposed any narrative related tasks to the *Engagement* WfF working group and has been the most adamant supporter of those tasks. However, not every narrative related task proposed by AWG was adopted due to insufficient support for such tasks. This could indicate a lack of understanding narrative's role in warfare, a perception by the ICDT, identification that narrative's role in warfare is limited, or some other indicator.

possible to envision multiple failed narratives being developed without understanding why they are failing. Fortunately, assessments are inherent aspects of Army targeting practices and will likely be addressed if the narrative requirements make it to doctrine. However, the exemption of a requirement to assess the delivered narrative is evident.

In addition to the Engagement WfF development other research initiatives are being funded by the Department of Defense to discover what aspects of the current conflict are hindering military operations to achieve their objectives. Since 2006, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have sponsored a program called the Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment, which is intended to provided Combatant Commanders and the Joint Services multi-disciplinary expertise from outside the Department of Defense. This organization has published numerous papers on neuroscience as it relates to warfare. Their most recent publication, *A Bio-Psycho-Social Science Approach for Understanding the Emergence of and Mitigating Violence and Terrorism*, was published in March of 2016. The purpose of the publication, written by General Joseph Votel, is to "cultivat(e) a shared understanding of the foundational aspects of human behavior" to meet the growing challenges identified as the "human domain" (Department of Defense 2016b, 1). The total publication is the collective written work of more than a dozen scientists, organized into five topics: Biological Perspectives on Behavior, Psychological Perspectives on Behavior, Social Perspectives on Behavior, Predicting Hostility, and Operational Perspectives. The majority of the report presents findings in relation to combating ISIS. As it so happens, ISIS provides a significant amount of study material in the areas of sociological, psychological, and biological human behavior, defined in this paper as the narrative space. Again, narratives are not based in facts, but beliefs:

"Ideologies, articulated in narrative form, attempt to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity and reinforce in-group biases" (Department of Defense 2016b, 8).

The most insightful section in this report comes from Dr. Pamela Rutledge and Dr. Jerri Lynn Hogg of Fielding Graduate University. In *Bridging Research and Practice: Using Proactive Narratives,* they present why the narrative space has grown in its significance to the operating environment and why soldiers need to understand this growth. "The message space is fluid, moving on and offline, amplifying voices and changing perceptions of individuals and collective strength, and enabling expression of bio-psychological factors and content into an expanded and highly accessible social space" (Department of Defense 2016b, 154). It is important to note here that "offline" is presented because oftentimes only the online aspect of narratives gets the attention. Narratives will spread in the absence of the Internet; how far they spread becomes the distinguishing variable. Regardless, social media is a catalyst for narratives impact:

> Social media allows an organization like ISIL to not only recruit, but also provides a nexus for current and potential members to engage, creating a relationship independent of geography, crafting connections that create social validation and psychological attachment. When people believe they can produce desired effects through their own sense of agency or by observing the agency[7] actions of others, they have incentive to take action. (Department of Defense 2016b, 154)

This is the authors' most important point. Human interaction via social media is the primary tool that enables narrative space to grow in its significance. This point must be

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[7] Social cognition theory perspective in which people are producers as well as products of social systems. Milgram's theory about the **argentic** state which is the psychological state the obedient subject is in when he or she is obeying authority (Your Dictionary 2016).

understood within the context of the whole report. People's behavior is shaped by the narratives they share regardless of the platform used to share them. The author is suggesting social media may be the primary means today, but it could disappear tomorrow and narrative's impact will still be significant in the future operating environment.

The Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment report is an excellent tool for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to predict the future operating environment. It connects subject matter experts outside the Department of Defense with strategic leaders who develop policy changes and dictate resources in order to develop the future force. However, someone must translate these conceptual ideas from observations into actionable tactics, techniques, and procedures or else this work will be of little consequence to actual battlefield gains. In 2014, the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG), in support of elements in Special Operations Command CENTCOM, took on the challenge of turning narrative subject matter expertise into a 40-hour block of instruction on the tactical application of mission narrative. Instruction was broken down into six modules, each with learning objectives and practical exercises for the students (Asymetric Warfare Group 2014). The intent of the course was for students to gain the ability to assess an environment's prevailing narratives, receive and understand a higher command's mission narrative, and then develop a mission narrative for use by brigade echelons and below. The primary planners for the mission narratives were a collection of PSYOP, Public Affairs, and Information Operations officers. The primary executors of the mission narrative were maneuver soldiers who routinely interact with the local populace. These are AWG's six modules:

1. Understanding Story Structure.

    a. Identify the elements of a story and apply them to a personal or mission narrative.
    b. Learn story acceptance techniques and apply the techniques to increasing acceptance of the personal or mission narrative.

2. Narrative Understanding.

    a. Identify levels of social-cultural narratives.
    b. Develop contextually appropriate socio-cultural narratives at all levels.
    c. Describe a master narrative.

3. Narrative in the Military Context.

    a. Understand what is and is not narrative.
    b. Identify where narrative applies in U.S. Army Doctrine.
    c. Understand narrative theory and how narrative can be used to obtain an operational advantage.

4. Narrative and the Operations Process.

    a. Identify the levels of mission narrative as an analog to social narratives.
    b. Identify the commander's role in the operations process.
    c. Describe the relationship of "it" provides a context to understand what the mission narrative is, how it is used, and what it does.

5. Social Media Analysis tools for Narrative Engagement.

    a. Identify the applications of Social Network Analysis and Social Media Analysis.
    b. Determine the capabilities of individual tools.

6. Visual Storytelling.

    a. What makes a good image?
    b. How to use images to tell a story.
    c. How to keep the audience engaged.

The AWG training material has flaws, but it addresses the conceptual ideas strategic leaders and supporting researchers are writing about. It is a solid step forward in the development of narrative capability, from the strategic to the tactical level.

Summary of the Review

       The Army is tasked to develop a new core competency and AWfC#2 is a critical tool in the achievement of this task. AWfC#2 is looking at a multitude of ways to achieve this task, but the military application of narrative, while acknowledged as necessary, has yet to be addressed in any comprehensive way. The narrative space is a real domain in which soldiers fight every day. Narratives rely on beliefs or perceived truths rather than facts. Narratives are drivers of human behavior. Narratives are independent of social media to thrive in an operating environment, though social media is a catalyst for their propagation and impact. The Army has acknowledged it has a capability gap in this regard and is pursuing new capability to address the gap. Strategic leaders are leveraging subject matter experts from outside the Department of Defense to help with this capability development. It is very important to connect strategic understanding of the gap and capability to tactical level training and implementation. In 2014, the AWG completed a blueprint for how that can be done. This paper was needed to present these major points in a single document and advance the ongoing capability development process by informing capability developers what has been done regarding mission narrative. Narrative is a factor in warfare according to the Army. This paper is intended to inform how the Army can leverage narrative to achieve the commander's intent and deny its enemy's the current advantage they hold in the narrative space.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to answer the question: how can a mission narrative shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint Requirements? I chose this question because it mirrors AWfC #2 and because relevant capability gaps within the Army have already been acknowledged elsewhere. The purpose of this research is to inform AWfC #2. In order to effectively research this question, I needed to address two other questions. First, AWfC #2 learning demand #2.7 asks how must the Army synchronize non-government organizations, other government agencies, and joint, interorganization, and multinational efforts to shape the security environment with military operations to support shared understanding and build trust? The second question asks what are the essential components of narrative related to warfare? By addressing these two sub-questions, I should be able to partially, if not totally, answer my primary research question. My methods for researching these questions were as follows:

1. Qualitatively analyze how narrative relates to warfare historically.

2. Qualitatively analyze the major Army planning tool, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) with respect to narrative application.

3. Qualitatively analyze the current contact hours and curriculum provided to students at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas with regard to narrative.

Regarding the first qualitative analysis, how narrative relates to warfare determines which components of narrative truly matter to warfare. A significant part of this research depends on identifying the precise effects and results of narratives regarding warfare. Because narrative has always been a part of human consciousness it has, by association, always been a part of warfare. This is not new nor does this understanding help to inform any of the research questions. However, if narrative has grown in significance to the conduct of war there should be evidence that demonstrates or at least suggests why that significance has increased. That reason for increased significance can then inform how to apply narrative in a way that enables the U.S. Army, or larger joint force, to more effectively shape the security environment more effectively. This is why a qualitative analysis of historical events is necessary to address the research questions.

Second, a qualitative analysis of the Army MDMP identifies where narrative already exists in Army planning considerations, the planning process outputs that are necessary to develop an effective mission narrative, and a logical place for effective incorporation of narrative into the planning process. Logically, this assumes for mission narrative to become a specified output requirement, it must be included in the formal planning process.

Third, a qualitative analysis of the current contact hours and curriculum provided to students at the U.S. Army CGSOC, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas will identify if there is a Professional Military Education gap in Army field grade officers' education. As the primary planners for most military operations, Command and General Staff College graduates will presumably plan military operations based on the education they receive while at Fort Leavenworth. Therefore, any education they receive with regard to

accounting for narrative in military operations will inform, where current gaps as identified by AWfC #2, exist, and potentially where solutions may be identified.

Finally, I selected qualitative analysis as the most effective means available for this research because human behavior studies, which of course include the effects of narrative, are inherently complex. Furthermore, human behavior within warfare is a unique and focused subject topic. The ability to create a controlled environment that represents war-like conditions, study and analyze human behavior in that environment, and conduct analysis within a controlled war-like environment was too complex for abilities of timeline and resources afforded to this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The analysis of research presented here begins with providing a historical

understanding of how the narrative space has previously played a role in warfare, as well

as providing context to its increased significance on the battlefield today. The chapter

will then move on to explaining why the Army's current efforts to develop narrative

capability, as presented in chapter 2 will be insufficient. It will conclude with an analysis

of how the research conducted thus far can inform the Army Warfighting Challenges.

<u>What Historical Evidence is there</u>
<u>for Narrative in Warfare?</u>

What is the power of a personal narrative in warfare? In 2011 the world witnessed

the popular uprising against several Middle Eastern and North African regimes. This

event has since been labeled "the Arab Spring." These groups were not organized

militias, but rather the civil body who leveraged their social networks to unite and

mobilize:

> Tunisia's 'Jasmine Revolution' is the first popular uprising to topple an
> established government in the Middle East and North Africa since the Iranian
> revolution of 1979; it's also the spark that ignited and inspired other
>   Revolutions in the region. It unfolded in three phases: First, on December
> 17, 2011, a young Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire
> in hopelessness and to protest his treatment at the hands of the authorities. . . . A
> brutal security crackdown followed, reported in chocking details by online social
> media. Second, when protests reached the capital, Tunis, the government
> responded with even more brutality. . . . Lastly, the President, Zine el-Abedin Ben
> Ali . . . promised to create 300,000 jobs, but it was too late; protesters now just
> wanted the regime to fall and its President stripped of any power. On January 14,
> Ben Ali and his family fled the country taking refuge in Saudi Arabia. This act
> marked the end of one of the Arab world's most repressive regimes. It was a
> victory for people power and perhaps the first time ever in history that an Arab
> dictator has been removed by a revolution rather than a coup d'état. (Cornell
> University Library 2015)

The key takeaway is that a lightly armed popular uprising overthrew an oppressive

government. What was the catalyst for this action? What drove the behavior of so many

people to change their daily actions from accepting or tolerating the government's

control? While there were surely multiple factors, the narrative of one common man's

tragic end was the spark. It was a credible story of an oppressed man's unwillingness to

take more oppression. It was logical that he was incapable of fighting the government. It

was an emotional story of a man who sought a painful death rather than subject himself,

to the pain of government oppression. That powerful narrative lit the region on fire.

What is war? Carl Von Clausewitz described war as a paradoxical trinity whose

and its first component is primordial violence kindled by the passion of the people

(Clausewitz 1984, 89). For the U.S. and Western societies this passion for violence was

drastically diminished following August 1945. The Enola Gay dropped the first atomic

bomb on Hiroshima on August 6th killing 70,000 people followed by the Bockscar,

which dropped the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, August 9th, killing 80,000 more

people. In the coming years, tens of thousands of people died from the radiation fallout

and exposure to the blast. Subsequently, not a single nuclear weapon has been employed

against another state or non-state actor. The social order and tolerance for war changed as

a result of nuclear weapons, raising the significance of narrative space[8] in warfare.

Following World War II, the following three societal changes set the stage for the rise of

importance of narratives space in warfare: the threat of nuclear war, a change of political

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[8] The use of the term narrative space here refers to a collection of words, deeds, and images that provide cognitive context to events seen by individuals resulting in behavioral outcomes.

representation, and the desire to contain the violence of nuclear weapons through the practice of limited war. Today, the current conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria demonstrate narrative's importance to the state of warfare.

Prior to the use of atomic bombs, total war theory (meaning civilians are legitimate targets with the intent of breaking their will to end the war quickly and the accepted use of all available weapons to achieve the desired end of the war) dominated military thought. The theory of total war for the following discussion is not attributed to any single theorist's prescription of total war, but rather accepts that whole societies are an acceptable target for military gain. The U.S. Civil War is one conflict that illustrates total war. General Ulysses S. Grant directed General William T. Sherman to attack the Confederacy's heartland and cut off their lines of communication to deny the Confederates desperately needed war resources. When marching into Alabama, General Sherman issued a warning to the residents:

> The government of the United States has in North Alabama any and all rights which [it chooses] to enforce in war, to take [Confederate] lives, their houses, their lands, their everything, because they cannot deny that war exists there, and war is simply power unconstrained by constitution or compact. (Murray 2005a, 236)

Following the American Civil War, the Industrial Revolution continued to increase war's destructive capability. Likewise, military theory in Western nations continued to accept little distinction between civilians and soldiers during war. When World War I occurred it too embodied the notion of Total War. When the war ended, there were roughly ten million civilian deaths (Mougel 2011). Despite this monumental loss of life Total War theory did not drastically change as the dominant way to execute warfare following World War I.

Italian General Giulio Douhet wrote his theoretical work on the potential impact

of aerial capabilities in war titled, *Command of the Air*. Douhet's predictions of air

power's effects were largely validated during World War II in the aftermath of the atomic

bombs. As Douhet wrote: "aerial warfare admits of no defense, only offense. We must

therefore resign ourselves to the offensives the enemy inflicts upon us, while striving to

put all our resources to work to inflict even heavier ones upon him" (Douget 2016, 55).

Although Douhet did not discernibly foresee nuclear bombs, they nonetheless personified

the formidable power he predicted:

> [T]ake the center of a large city and imagine what would happen among the
> civilian population during a single attack by a single bombing unit. For my part, I
> have no doubt that its impact upon the people would be terrible. . . . What could
> happen to a single city in a single day could also happen to ten, twenty, fifty
> cities. And, since news travels fast, even without telegraph, telephone, or radio,
> what, I ask you, would be the effect upon civilians of other cities, not yet stricken
> but equally subject to bombing attacks? What civil or military authority could
> keep order, public services functioning, and production going under such a threat?
> (Douget 2016, 58)

Douhet was able to envision this because he, like his peers, accepted civilian populations

as necessary military targets. Douhet also believed cities are hubs of everything a nation

needs to conduct war: industry, productivity, finance, and population. Those who

witnessed the aftermath of Little Boy and Fat Man around the world realized Douhet's

prediction. Douhet predicted that air power would change the way societies endured

warfare by breaking societal resolve: "A complete breakdown of the social structure

cannot but take place in a country subjected to this kind of merciless pounding from the

air. The time would soon come when, to put an end to horror and suffering, the people

themselves, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, would rise up and demand an end

to the war" (Douget 2016, 58). As Douhet predicted, the entire social structure of the

world arguably did break down after 1945. The U.S. had never been considered a world leader, but after dropping the atomic bomb and declaring itself the sole arbiter of nuclear warfare, the U.S. unabashedly assumed the mantle of leadership directing the creation of the United Nations.

The United Nations (UN) formed out of the ashes of World War II and warfare was summarily outlawed. Article 1 section one of the UN charter reads:

> To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.

In 1944, there were seventeen democracy-based governments, thirty-two anocracies,[9] and twenty autocracies (Roser 2016). Democracy was the least used, and also the least populated form of government. In effect, this equated to less than two thirds of the world population actively participating in their political bodies.[10] However, this began to change drastically after World War II. In 1948, there were twenty-four democracies and by 2009 there were eighty-seven, an increase of over 350 percent (Roser 2016). Societies who were now living in fear of nuclear annihilation, did not want to

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[9] Despite its popular usage, anocracy lacks a precise definition. Anocratic regimes are also loosely defined as part democracy and part dictatorship, or as a "régime that mixes democratic with autocratic features."

[10] This does not mean that a nation who claims to be a Democracy is actually considered one. The Democratic Republic of Korea is an example of a "Democracy" in name only and not counted among the actual Democratic nations. It is also important to note that not all counted democracies practice absolute "fair" election practices. Such a standard might discount all Democratic nations if it was the standard in the opinion of the author.

engage in war. Joining the UN was therefore believed to be a logical way to prevent war. When the UN was founded in 1945 as an international body dedicated to maintaining peace there were just fifty-one member nations (United Nations 2016a). The permanent members of the Security Council, the U.S., France, Great Britain, Russia, and China collectively influenced forty-six other nations in order to pass a resolution. As of 2011, there are 193 member nations (United Nations 2016b), each one self-interested, self-determined and influencing every international law brought forward. Each UN member nation is also entitled to their own sovereignty, protection of human rights, and ability to dictate terms to the international community on various legalities to international treaties. Therefore the desire of the people, who now have a monumentally greater say in the global political process, began to change the conduct of war itself.

A third significant change impacting war today is the global spread of individualism. According to Dr. Jay Ogilvy, "day by day, week by week, year by year we are experiencing a gradual but pervasive spread of individual autonomy and increasing confidence in personal judgment" (Ogilvy 2015). Ogilvy draws his conclusions from multiple studies, but specifically identifies Ron Inglehart's global values survey data and Moises Naims' book, *The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What It Used to Be*, as primary sources. Ogilvy presents three trends, the more revolution, the mobility revolution, and the mentality revolution, that are causing the global rise of individualism:

> The More Revolution is based on the fact that there are simply so many more people who have risen from poverty and servitude to join the middle class, such as the 660 million Chinese who have escaped poverty since 1981. . . . When people are more numerous and living fuller lives, they become more difficult to regiment and control. . . . The Mobility Revolution makes all those people harder to control. It also changes the distribution of power within and among

populations, whether through the rise of ethnic, religious, and professional diasporas or as individual vectors of ideas, capital, and faiths that can be either destabilizing or empowering. . . . The Mentality Revolution: People who get more tend to want still more again: the effect of the More and Mobility revolutions has been to vastly broaden the cognitive, even emotional impact of more access to resources and the ability to move, learn, connect and communicate. (Ogilvy 2015)

This rise of individualism describes what soldiers encounter every day in the operating environment. Individuals who know more is available to them, individuals who can rapidly travel to join a cause and fight or flee a war-torn environment, and individuals who are being cognitively impacted by exposure to more things. These same individuals are also increasing their roles in the political process, as democratic principles continue to spread. The battlefield is changing and soldiers deal with this change every day.

Now, with this understanding of the big social changes a look at some individual events can be made to see narrative's rising application. The spreading idea of political equality resulted in the collapse of a centuries-old practice by Western societies, colonialism. India's unique approach to independence through non-violence should not be overlooked as a military revolution as it reflects the principle of supreme excellence defined by Sun Tzu, breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting (Tzu 2004, 15). Following World War II Great Britain was a skeleton of its former glory and while perhaps counterintuitive based solely on technological disparity, it is actually not difficult to imagine the massive population of India overwhelming the entirety of the British Colonial forces in an armed revolution. However, Mahatma Gandhi presented a narrative of non-violence by speaking and practicing non-violence. Images of his non-violent protests legitimized his words and deeds, spreading his narrative of non-violence globally as an important means to securing India's independence. Great Britain's concession to a non-violent movement, one that never challenged the military capacity of Britain's

forces, is a strong statement in the affirmative that Western societies had changed their view of warfare following World War II.

The Korean War is another example where a strategic narrative set the geopolitical stage for the Cold War to remain "cold" in terms of nuclear weapons. The U.S. limited the aims of the war by leading a UN coalition to, "call for the immediate cessation of hostilities; and calls upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel; (and for the) United Nations Commission on Korea to . . . observe the withdrawal of North Korea forces to the 38th parallel" (United Nations Security Council 1950) limiting the aims of the war. The aim of the war referenced here was not to defeat or destroy any opposing force, but rather to return the status quo of a divided peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur chose to ignore this, of course, and fought the war in the only way that made sense to him. He allowed the UN forces to move past the 38th parallel and threatened to widen the war into China while advocating for the use of nuclear weapons. In response to a request from the President on the subject of MacArthur's command as a result of his actions in Korea, the Joint Chiefs sent the President the following statement:

> In the very complex situation created by the decision to confine the conflict to Korea and to avoid the third World War, it was necessary to have a Commander-in-Chief more responsive to control from Washington. He (MacArthur) failed to comply with directives requiring that speeches, press releases, or other public statements concerning military and foreign policy be cleared by the appropriate department before being issued, and for officials overseas to refrain from direct communication on military or foreign policy with newspapers, magazines, or other publicity media in the United States. (Lewis 2012, 130)

MacArthur's command contradicted the strategic narrative and it had to be dealt with. President Truman agreed and because of this MacArthur was fired. When that happened the U.S. effectively told the world that it would seek to contain the violence of war, by

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not widening it, and would not use nuclear weapons even when U.S. soldiers lives were at great risk. In other words, Truman and the U.S. crafted a new strategic Cold War narrative. The front page news of General MacArthur's farewell address, along with his picture and the crowds greeting him as he faded away solidified this new narrative: out with the old, in with the new.

As anti-colonialism spread in the mid 1950s and onward, some colonies chose violent revolutions and tested the strategic Cold War narrative. There were no less than thirty-one guerrilla wars between 1945 and 1972 (Laqueur 1998). Limited war continued through limited means, absent nuclear weapon use, over the decades as a means of combating the guerrilla forces. Within Vietnam there was a clear distinction of warfare from the strategic to the tactical level impacted by the narrative space. On January 31, 1968, some 70,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces launched the Tet Offensive (named for the lunar new year holiday called Tet), a coordinated series of fierce attacks on more than 100 cities and towns in South Vietnam. The Communist People's Army of Vietnam planned the offensive in an attempt both to foment rebellion among the South Vietnamese population and encourage the U. S. to scale back its support of the Saigon regime. Though U.S. and South Vietnamese forces managed to hold off the Communist attacks, news coverage of the offensive (including the lengthy Battle of Hue) shocked and dismayed the American public and further eroded support for the war effort:

> Tactically and operationally, Tet was a major victory for the US and SVN . . . the South Vietnamese government was intact and stronger; the armed forces were larger, more effective, and more confident; the people had rejected the idea of a general uprising; and the enemy forces . . . were much weaker. . . . Paradoxically, Tet was a major political psychological, diplomatic, and strategic defeat for the armed forces of the (U.S.) . . . Tet and the events that followed destroyed the will of the American people and the Johnson Administration . . . the media portrayed the campaign as an overwhelming defeat. . . . At Hue the destruction caused by

> Marines and US airpower were shown without the context of the stubborn tenacity of the enemy and without stories of the atrocities of the NVA and VC, who killed thousands of unarmed people, including women and children. . . . This was dishonesty. In the aftermath, the press did little to correct the views it had created
> . . . . Americans watched other Americans being killed and wounded. They observed the behavior of the South Vietnamese. And they concluded that their government was lying to them, that Vietnam was not worth saving, and that the war could not be won. (Lewis 2012, 276-278)

Despite heavy casualties, North Vietnam achieved a strategic victory with the Tet Offensive, as the attacks marked a turning point in the Vietnam War and the beginning of the slow, painful American withdrawal from the region.

The U.S. was a nuclear society fully capable of destroying the North Vietnamese within days, yet they rejected this extreme violence of warfare at its own peril not because they were losing, but because the story coming out of Vietnam was too contradictory to what the average American believed was happening. General Vo Nguyen Giap is credited as stating that the North Vietnamese were preparing to negotiate peace following his defeat during the Tet offensive, but it was the American media that presented the outcome of the battle as a loss by America giving him and the North hope. "After Tet, the U.S. reexamined and then changed its military policy, placing new limits on American participation and setting the stage for the withdrawal of American troops" (Levanger 1973). President Lyndon Johnson withdrew his re-election efforts just a few months after Tet. Guerrilla fighters around the world noticed. "As an Algerian militant put it, if his fighters killed thirty soldiers in a village, this would be reported in a few lines on the back page of the world press whereas the noise of even a small bomb in a big city would reverberate throughout the world and make headlines" (Laqueur 1998). It is within the headlines that narrative dominates more than weapons.

Today, the U.S. military has the ability to strike against enemy combatants by delivering precision munitions with greater accuracy than ever before. With its ability to project combat power, Precision Guided Munitions can be fired from land, air, or sea, drastically reducing any unintentional loss of life due to indiscriminate fires. This capability has enabled the U.S. to continue to be the dominant global military force, as evident by its complete destruction of the Iraqi Army both in 1991 and in 2003. Since 2001 the U.S. has been in a constant state of conflict with non-state actors in the Middle East. The military presents a narrative of precision warfare: the words—targeting only violent belligerents actively participating in war; the deeds—Precision Guided Munitions never seen by its victims; the images—black and white targeting videos where Precision Guided Munitions strike their target. Between 2001 and 2014 the U.S. spent $7.7 trillion on its military (SIPRI 2016). In spite of this capability and financial investment, the U.S. has been unable to decisively end its conflicts in the Middle East.

The inability to end these conflicts reflects a fundamental change in human interaction that is impacting the operational environment. It is through this conflict that the collective social changes, Western societies' desire to limit war's violence, the rise of democracies, and the growth of individual actors, can be seen as merging into a new form of warfare where firepower plays a less significant a role in achieving victory than in past generations. The narrative space is growing and redefining how people interact during times of war.

> The media landscape has changed from a uni-directional to a peer-to-peer environment. The participatory nature of social networks, real time connectivity, and mobile devices have changed the psychological assumptions and actions of media users–they are not just consumers, they are also producers and distributers. The power of social networks and mobile connectivity creates a myriad opportunities that facilitate motivation and encourage persistence, such

opportunities foster empowerment, agency, social validation, affiliation, and a sense of mastery. (Department of Defense 2016b, 154)

On January 27, 2011 more than a hundred thousand individuals gathered in Cairo, Egypt to demand an end to the Hosni Mubarak presidency. These individuals had no military grade weapons, no formal chain of command, no training, and no organization. However, sending the Army out as the trusted protector of Egypt was not enough for Mubarak to quell the uprising. By mid-day Mubarak contacted the three largest cellular companies, Vodafone, Mobinil, and Etisalat, in Egypt and requested they shut down all cell towers around Tahrir Square (Muller and Pandit 2014, 1-2). Mubarak recognized what the people of Egypt recognized: this was the time for change and social media was a powerful tool to spread the narrative and organize the action.

Just a week earlier a twenty-six year old blogger named Asma Mahfouze, referred to as, "the girl who helped start a revolution," posted a video blog on YouTube that went viral (Muller and Pandit 2014, 8). She stated:

> Four Egyptians have set themselves on fire to protest humiliation, and hunger, and poverty, and degradation they had to live with for thirty years. Four Egyptians have set themselves on fire thinking maybe we can have a revolution like Tunisia; maybe we can have freedom, justice, honor, and human dignity. I am making this video to give you one simple message: We want to go down to Tahrir Square on January 25. If we still have honor, and want to live in dignity on this land, we have to go down on January 25. (Mahfouz 2011)

In a short time Mubarak was gone. There was nothing he could offer the protestors to change this fate. What began as an isolated event in Tunisia became a political movement across a region. What happened in Tunisia told the rest of the Arab world that it was possible to overthrow an all-powerful repressive government. This made the idea of a popular revolution credible to the mass population because the unarmed, unfinanced, and poorly organized Tunisians were just like the people of Egypt and elsewhere. According

to this narrative, if Tunisians could do it, why not us? The narrative empowered people to assert that their governments did not deserve to rule. The desire for change, for an end to oppression, humiliation, and corruption was an emotionally pleasing idea. The narrative of revolution gave them something to care about. The images of Tunisians mobilized in the streets and the government falling apart validated the credibility, logic, and emotions of the narrative. The images were proof that the narrative was real and could be embraced. Social media was the tool that spread the narrative. Limited violent acts during this process were purposeful messages to heighten the narrative's effect. For example, the four men in Egypt Asma Mahfouze spoke of lighting themselves on fire in solidarity with Tunisia to inspire a unifying call to action in Egypt. Their story spread and others received their message. There was no armed *coup d'état*. A unified belief that the people had the power to demand an end to their governing body mobilized them to take action.

Narratives are stories communicated from one person to another. In order to be of any significance they must propagate. The Arab Spring illustrates that the increased capability to share narratives via mobile technology is increasing the impact of narratives, including their impact on warfare. It is apparent that over the last few years ISIS has studied the use and effectiveness of communication technology, as well as understanding what it takes to spread an idea. ISIS has Twitter accounts, Facebook accounts, and other social media platforms it uses daily. It has publicized executions for a global audience. James Foley was beheaded and Muath Al-Kassabeh was burned to death in a cage. Even children shot captives in the back of their heads. These acts were recorded and posted online because ISIS is delivering a narrative: the act of killing is a righteous necessity, the words; executions are purposeful, the deeds; ISIS then publishes their acts to send a clear

message legitimized by the graphic images accessible on every networked device to a global audience. They are operating in the narrative space because they understand its value to achieving their strategic goals. The propagation of ISIS narrative is not just impacting Middle Eastern nations. Even in the U.S., middle class college educated youths have been inspired by ISIS narrative. The Threat Knowledge Group reported in their November 2015 publication *ISIS: The threat to the United States*:

> Between March 2014 and November 2015, 82 individuals in the United States affiliating with ISIS have been interdicted by law enforcement, whether traveling to fight, recruiting, fundraising, planning to travel, promoting ISIS, or initiating or carrying out attacks (including 7 unnamed minors and 4 killed in the course of an attack). This is an average of 4.1 ISIS arrests per month on American soil.

Narratives enable radicalization's effects across continents. Regardless of whether the narratives are a larger master narrative, a dominant or minority local narrative, or the personal narrative from a trusted mentor, friend, or family member, they impact the threat environment future U.S. military efforts will face.

The threat of nuclear weapons, the change of political representation alongside the rise of individualism, and the containment of violence through limited war has collectively elevated the importance of narrative in 21st century warfare. Simply put, the trinity of war has changed. The prospect of nuclear annihilation concerns the world to such an extent that non-proliferation treaties, resolutions, and initiatives have been enacted several times since their sole use in Japan. Since World War II, the physical destructive potential of nuclear warfare has not been released again, in spite of nuclear weapons proliferation to no less than nine nations in possession of 15,800 nuclear warheads (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons 2016). The use of the atomic bombs in 1945 pushed Western societies to their capacity for tolerating violence

in warfare. Western society's rejection of Total War theory has dulled one of Clausewitz's three principles of war, the passion of the people to perform violence. This has aided the rise of narrative space, and it is likely to significantly impact warfare for the foreseeable future.

<div align="center">The Military Decision Making Process</div>

Now that it is established that the narrative space is an active component of warfare, addressing how military planners prepare for operations today can be examined. The purpose of this analysis is to identify where the most appropriate place for narrative application resides, why, and how.

The MDMP is one of three Army planning tools and its primary tool for tactical formations. For this reason, MDMP was identified as the primary planning tool to analyze because the majority of narrative space interaction on the battlefield occurs at the tactical level. MDMP is a seven-step process with sub-steps dependent on key inputs and key outputs. The analysis will focus on key MDMP inputs and outputs specified in Army Field Manual 6-0. Step 2: Mission Analysis, is when the staff and Commander set the foundation for executing the operation. Mission Analysis is the process of identifying every consideration that can be identified in the allotted time. Among its key inputs are: the commander's initial guidance, higher headquarters' plan or order, higher headquarters' intelligence and knowledge products, knowledge products from other organizations, and any existing Army design methodology products (Department of the Army 2015, 9-82). During this step, specified, implied, and essential tasks are identified by Army Warfighting Function so the staff can begin synchronizing the requirements to accomplish the mission. Among the most strenuous tasks is the intelligence preparation

of the battlefield, or IPB. This is the process of understanding the operating environment in which the organization will conduct their mission. Understanding the current narrative space should exist within this step of Initial Preparation of the Battlefield. However, there is no mention of understanding narrative in doctrine. Common planning tools in the Initial Preparation of the Battlefield are PMESIIPT, ASCOPE, and SWEATMUD.[11] These tools guide staffs through the difficult process of understanding their operating environments. Within all of this information it is possible to extrapolate prevailing narratives. Unfortunately, because staff planners are not trained on the particulars of a prevailing narratives and why it matters, the staff planners are unlikely to consider the narrative space in which they will operate.

The nearest applicable specified task is found in paragraphs 9-58 through 9-60, "Develop Initial Themes and Messages." While these products are important, they are insufficient. Themes and messages make up the words of the operation that will be presented to the operating environment. "Commanders and their units coordinate what they do, say, and portray them through themes and messages" (Department of the Army 2015, 9-59). While this is true, it nonetheless falls short. There is no mention of identifying a credible messenger to deliver the themes and messages. As demonstrated in *Narrative Landmines,* a U.S. soldier is not necessarily a credible source to the target audience. Without credibility, themes and messages will invariably fail to support the

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[11] Respectively, these stand for Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure, Physical Terrain, and Time (PMESII-PT); Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events (ASCOPE); Sewer, Water, Electricity Academic, Trash, Medical Unemployment, and Security (SWEATMUS).

commander's intent. The execution of the mission will be the deeds of the mission. The

pictures, videos, and individual perspectives of events in the operating environment will

be the images. These aspects of the operation have to be presented from a credible source

in a sensible way that makes sense to the audience, in a way that causes the audience to

care. In short, this comprises the narrative of the operation. If the themes, messages,

operations, and imagery (aka words deeds and images) are not synchronized,

contradictions may emerge and can be exploited by the enemy.

Command and General Staff College Curriculum

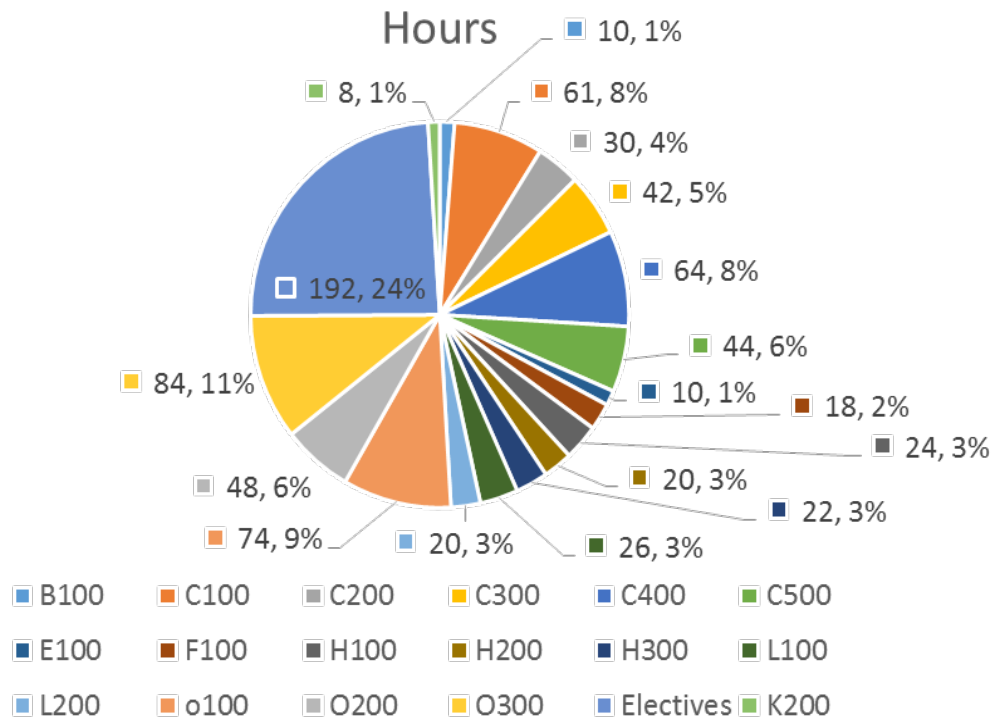The following is a brief description of the contact hours associated with CGSOC:

Figure 4.   Hourly breakdown by course of CGSOC

Source: Created by author.

The total number of contact hours students are expected to complete is 791. Of those 791 hours, there are thirty-six hours where the concept of narrative may or may not be presented to the class, depending on the instructors' familiarity with the subject. Those hours are in O300, which focuses on Army Design Methodology and MDMP at the Brigade Combat Team Level, and in C300, which discusses Joint Publication 3-13 and the effects achieved through lethal and nonlethal means. There are two elective courses where narrative is likely to be instructed, but those courses are generally only for the PSYOP and IO officers who are required to take the course as part of their branch requirements. The final outcome for the typical student is that zero hours will used to instruct future military planners on what narrative is, how it impacts military operations, how to plan and resource a narrative, or how to assess a narrative.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> This is a different kind of fight. . . . Our strategy cannot be focused on . . .
> destroying insurgent forces; our objective must be the population. In the struggle
> to gain the support of the people, every action we take must enable this effort.
> — General (Ret) Stanley McChrystal, *COMISAF'S Initial Assessment*

This chapter includes concluding remarks and recommendations based on the research presented. The purpose of this chapter is to offer courses of action to facilitate a greater effort by the Army regarding narrative capability development. It is organized into two parts. Part one articulates why the Army's current efforts are falling short. Part two is recommendations divided three subsections: (1) Addressing AWfC#2, (2) Quick Wins, and (3) Enduring Changes to doctrine, training, leadership, and education.

Why the Army is falling Short

The current military application of narrative comes from Field Manual 3-13: "A brief description of a commander's story used to visualize the effects the commander wants to achieve in the information environment to support and shape their operational environment" (Headquarters Department of the Army 2013). This description highlights why narratives are usually ineffective in the operational environment. The narrative as it exists in Field Manual 3-13 does not provide any guidance on how it should be developed, what considerations need to be made when constructing it, or how it applies to any population beyond the commander in a way that supports the commander's intent. Simply put, Field Manual 3-13 acknowledges that the narrative is a part of the operation, but does not incorporate it as a formal step in MDMP. Additionally, there is nothing to suggest that every soldier should understand the mission narrative even though every

soldier plays his or her own part in disseminating the narrative. If soldiers act in a way that contradicts the commander's narrative then the enemy will exploit the contradiction rendering the commander's narrative non-credible and equally ineffective.

In spite of all its research into filling capability gaps, the Army has not gone far enough. The military application of narrative might be the least cost-intensive capability development effort needed based on how narrative space is being used today. The time between recognizing the deficiency of narrative capability, from the most senior echelons down to the smallest tactical formation, is allowing the enemy to outmaneuver the U.S. Army in the narrative space. This will be the case for as long as the U.S. Army remains focused on dominant firepower. It should not be inferred that simply realizing the importance of narrative capability development must diminish the importance of traditional firepower. This is not a zero sum game between the types of approaches to warfare. On the contrary, traditional firepower should continue to increase in terms of lethality, accuracy, and range so that our enemies cannot engage us effectively in this very manner. The flip side of our continued technological superiority is that the enemy will not engage us in a direct test of firepower. Therefore, the Army must engage the enemy where they maneuver, in the narrative space. Therefore, the Army needs every echelon of command to produce a synchronized mission narrative targeting an external audience to exist. When planning to conduct military operations, Sun Tzu states that a general must consider who has the moral law on their side because, "The moral law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger" (Tzu 2004, 7). The narrative space

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is where the moral law is generally contested and won: the morality of the words, the morality of the deeds, and the validation of both with images.

The U.S. Army Staff Officers are trained to gather information, analyze it, derive enemy and adversary centers of gravity, and to develop courses of action that target those centers of gravity. Traditionally, centers of gravity have been command and control nodes, supply and communication lines, and military formations. Since World War II, the U.S. Army has demonstrated that it is a superior force at conducting these types of operations when the center of gravity has been a tangible target to strike with violent force. However, today the U.S. Army finds itself fighting an enemy whose center of gravity is an ideology, and there are no traditional military targets to strike that would significantly change the war efforts. This raises the question: how does the U.S. Army defeat a center of gravity that cannot be targeted with missiles, bombs, or small arms fire? Behavioral change is one reason why stories are told. Dr. Seese and Dr. Haven are clear in their scientific understanding of stories and the elemental parts of them. They are also clear about why these stories, which make up lasting narratives, impact human behavior. However, left unaddressed are critical questions that have wider implications to military operations, such as the importance of an external focused mission narrative handover between units and the role every soldier plays in the delivery of the narrative.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Addressing AWfC#2

At the beginning of this project it was determined there was a need to answer the following question: How must the Army synchronize non-government organizations; other government agencies; and joint, inter-organization, and multinational efforts to

shape the security environment with military operations to support shared understanding and build trust? After conducting the research it is clear that a formalized mission narrative, beginning at the strategic level and synchronized down to the tactical level is how the Army synchronizes non-government organizations; other government agencies; and joint, inter-organization, and multinational efforts to shape the security environment with military operations to support shared understanding and build trust. There is also a need to identify what the components of narrative are, so that they can be leveraged into a military applicable capability. These components are characters (soldiers), plots (missions), goals (commanders intent), conflict (combat), and conclusions (end state) discovered through words, deeds and images and are propagated by a credible source who makes logical sense within the cultural belief system, and is emotionally relevant. Having answered these two questions I feel confident to an answer to my primary research question. That answer is: A mission narrative is an effective means of shaping the security environment, engaging key actors, and consolidating gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint Requirements. With that understanding all recommendations presented here are intended to inform the capability necessary to execute an effective mission narrative.

Psychologists have already established that narratives shape behavior. It can therefore be reasonably assumed that executing a personal narrative with a key actor will help shape the environment. Moreover, a mission narrative would help shape the efforts of every coalition partner in the operational environment through shared understanding and unity of effort. Likewise, operational level and tactical narratives would facilitate

operational cohesion. If a Joint Force Commander were to issue a mission narrative providing a clear, externally-focused narrative for every subordinate and partner (to include multinational, interagency, and non-government organization), it is difficult to imagine the narrative "not" shaping the security environment in a way that supports his or her desired end state.

A problem statement and mission statement should be key outputs of step two in the MDMP planning process. Because of its prevailing impact today, mission narratives should be a key output as well. The mission narrative statement will define what themes and message the commander wants the TA to receive, who is the credible source for spreading the themes and messages, what actions and deeds support the narrative or what actions and deeds contradict the narrative. Finally, the mission narrative statement should define the images necessary for its validation.

Commanders and their staffs already perform the necessary work to identify what impacts the narrative space in their areas of operation. What they lack is an understanding of how the narrative space impacts them, how their operations will impact the narrative space, and how to maneuver in the narrative space. The mission narrative statement will provide this understanding, just as the mission statement defines who does what, when, how, and why during the mission. And just as the mission statement is assessed throughout MDMP, the mission narrative statement should also be constantly scrutinized. It should be wargamed and resourced, with assigned main and supporting efforts, and validated by the commander and staff to ensure it effectively supports the commander's intent.

Quick Wins

A primary location for introducing how to perform narrative-led operations and plan for mission narratives is the U.S. Army's CGSOC. This course is the primary professional military education institution for field grade officers who will become the primary planners of operations within the Army. If mission narratives are going to be planned, they must be taught at CGSOC. If narrative-led operations are going to be executed, they must be taught at CGSOC. The U.S. Army War College is another institution that should be targeted for change. The majority of military operations are led by the graduates of this course and if they are going to be effective at leading and winning in the narrative space, then they must be educated on what it means to operate in the narrative space.

The AWG's training material on mission narrative lacks the professional development and crafting of a Training and Doctrine Command approved program of instruction, but is a solid start to building a tactical block of instruction regarding the application of narrative in military operations. There are no terminal learning objectives, minimal homework readings to reinforce the lessons, and no tests to measure comprehension. Nevertheless, this training material provides a means of translating what is known and understood by strategic leaders down to brigade and battalion staff officers and non-commissioned officers. With this shared understanding between strategic planners and tactical planners, a synchronized mission narrative is a plausible output of a mission order, similar to a mission statement. Additionally, it is not difficult to extrapolate those training concepts necessary for junior soldiers: lessons one, two, and three. Soldiers should understand that they are part of an operating environment's

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narrative as soon as they arrive in theater. The Army should have soldiers understand

prevailing existing narratives in the same way it stresses the importance of cultural

awareness. Soldiers should know how their words, deeds, and images impact the mission

narrative. And finally, soldiers should know how to deliver a credible, logical, and

emotional mission narrative in the most basic way possible. AWG's course is a big step

forward in making this possible.

At CGSOC, the opportunity exists within the leadership lessons and history

lessons to reinforce the tactical lessons offered in the AWG training material. If these five

core modules (L100, L200, H100, H200, and H300) were refined to extract their existing

aspects of narrative, students could gain a solid foundational understanding of the

narrative space at CGSOC.

The following is how CGSOC could easily advance their courses to instruct

narrative application. There are two leadership modules of instruction. The classes are

designed to inform field grade officers how to combine the art and science of leadership

in preparation for future duties where their ability to lead organizations will have greater

impact on military operations outcomes. The link between these leadership lessons and

narrative is that the courses instruct students how to get others to behave in a way that is

conducive to mission accomplishment. The means of instructing the students relies

heavily on the social sciences, especially learning how culture and behavioral norms are

developed. Without saying it, these lessons routinely inform leaders how to construct a

narrative that enhances their leadership ability in an organization. "Myth Busting:

Coming to Grips with Organizational Culture and Climate" is one of many readings that

present the elements of narrative in the CGSOC course. The premise of the article is to

inform readers how to develop a culture that is conducive to one's goals by assessing and

addressing the organizational climate (beliefs). In short, the paper tells the reader what

happens after narrative acceptance, specifically the acceptance of a culture and behavior

that results from it. This article states "culture shapes organizational thinking, feelings,

and behavior. . . .Culture is the shared beliefs of a group used to solve problems and

manage internal anxiety" (Bonnot 2015). The article goes on to state how culture is

developed. It says, "members learn the norms governing behavior and the pecking order

for moving up. To build trust and confidence within the organization, leaders allocate

awards and punishments" (Bonnot 2015) Thinking, feeling, and behavior are the outputs

identified by this article, while learning norms is the input. Therefore, the norms,

presented through narrative, create the desired culture. The article continues by

presenting a six-step framing method for building culture that contains several of the

same elements presented in Seese and Haven's paper. Step one is conducting research to

understand the most important shared beliefs. Step two is setting conditions by knowing

where to concentrate effort, shift focus, and frame the climate in the organization. Step

three is to identify organization norms. Step four is identifying the organizational values.

Step five is confirming the findings through interviews and follow-up engagements with

members of the organization. Finally, step six is finalizing the cultural frame by

identifying the critical shared beliefs within the organization that guide the collective

thinking, feelings, and behavior (Bonnot 2015) If the word organization is changed to

target audience, you will see that there is little difference in the concept of building

organizational culture and building narratives through story development. Some terms are

unique, but the output is the same: changing human behavior. This allows me to conclude

that the development and delivery of mission narratives is not beyond the comprehension of every field grade officer trained at CGSOC. The fact that two branches, IO and PSYOP, are singled out as the practitioners of narrative for Army units limits staffs and commanders to fully realize the potential impact they can have in an operational environment with mission narratives.

History is a composition of characters, goals, plots, conflicts, and outcomes, all of which are the elements of narrative. History lessons could present lessons through the lens of words, deeds, and images because those three aspects of narrative are the necessary planning considerations with which field grade officers need to be concerned with. To illustrate how CGSOC history instructors could present lessons that instruct students on narrative's impact, class H303 lesson on the Korean War, "Rebirth of limited war." As previously discussed, the Korean War is a pivotal historical moment that showcases the emerging significance of narratives role in warfare. The following discussion of the H303 lesson will illustrate this in greater detail. In order to instruct this class in a way that informs students on narrative's impact in warfare, students should be able to identify (1) what is said about the war, (2) what is done in the war, and (3) how the images resulting from the war coincide to tell the war story. When contradictions are evident, students should be able to identify how the enemy exploited the contradictions. The Korean War and H303 provide an excellent means of doing this. When field grade officers leave their history class knowing narrative's impact on past warfare, they should be more cognitive of it in their own future planning efforts.

The H303 lesson material learning objectives are:

TLO-AOC-7: Use historical context to inform professional military judgment.

ELO-AOC-7.1: Analyze the development of modern warfare using major concepts of key theorists.

TLO-AOC-9: Explain the historical trends that have shaped today's operational environment.

ELO-AOC-9.1: Interpret revolutionary warfare theory.

ELO-AOC-9.2: Interpret the American experience in small wars.

ELO-AOC-9.3: Examine the waging of limited war in the late twentieth century.

TLO-AOC-11: Communicate effectively.[12]

Specifying a Terminal Learning Outcomes (TLO) such as, "Interpret what the strategic narrative for America in the conflict was" should sufficiently account for this learning concept about narratives. The lesson's instruction already presents how the Truman Administration sought to limit the Korean War through UN resolutions that called for the achievement of the status quo divided peninsula (the words), the refusal to use all weapons available to win the war and spare soldiers lives during the fighting–specifically nuclear weapons (the deeds), and the picture on the front page of major newspapers illustrating the firing of General MacArthur when he exceeded President Truman's guidance (images). The outcome was a narrative that set the framework for the Cold War dominating U.S. policy for the next thirty years.

As previously presented, course material already exists within CGSOC curriculum. With minor refinements and the adoption of the AWG's narrative training

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[12] TLO stands for Terminal Learning Outcomes and AOC stands for Advanced Operations Course. Every CGSOC course is defined by TLO's and AOC's.

material or a similar model, this curriculum can start instructing field grade officers about narrative's role in warfare and the elements of narrative itself. This is a quick win for the Army while it works through the longer capability development process and solidifies changes in doctrine to account for mission narrative.

Enduring Solutions

Regarding long-term solutions, the Army needs to fully explore and define how it wants to account for narrative in the operating environment. It is clear that the narrative space will continue to impact all operations and any continued failure to understand, plan, and execute synchronized maneuver in the narrative space will allow our enemies continued advantages that are detrimental to achieving victory. This will require quantitative analysis most likely needing human experiments with human subjects, in order more conclusively provide the strategic through tactical means of applying narrative in military operations. The Army must write doctrine that defines a mission narrative and how every soldier on the battlefield impacts the narrative space. Primary training programs from Basic Training to the Army War College should be evaluated to identify how to train soldiers and leaders to execute and plan operations in the narrative space.

Most importantly, senior Army leaders need to openly acknowledge that the narrative space is precisely where our enemy dominates, and no amount of superior firepower will change this. War is a clash of wills; narratives ensure that the will of one person to fight is transferred to another. This allows a society to maintain the will to fight for generations regardless of how many bombs are dropped. The North Vietnamese never equaled the combat firepower of the U.S., nor does ISIS today, and yet both survived

U.S. bombings and continued to challenge the U.S. military. In fourteen years ISIS may no longer be a threat just as North Vietnam is no longer a threat today. That does not change the fact that by transferring the will to fight via narratives the U.S. will cease to be confronted with enemies capable of defeating it at the strategic level where victory is achieved.

Conclusion

This research aimed to answer the question: how can a mission narrative shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and Joint Requirements? Having concluded the research it is the opinion of this author that mission narrative will serve as a unifying and synchronizing tool for the Geographic and Functional Combatant Commands and enhance their ability to influence the security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate their gains. This is because narratives produce human behavior, the ultimate driver of conflict and thus the primary target of military operations. By effectively maneuvering and dominating in the narrative space, our military forces will be capable of greater influence within their own formations and with the external actors they target.

A synchronized mission narrative that results from Combatant Commands translating National Mission Strategy and Policy into military operations is possible. It requires narrative training at every significant training platform from the War College down to Basic Training. While this task will not be easy, it should not be as cost-intensive as the Army's other ongoing technologically-focused capability development efforts. Paradoxically, this presents another challenge. The relative absence of financial

requirements makes this capability development more difficult to sell to Congress because there is no immediate tangible benefit, either in the form of the latest, greatest piece of military hardware or the potential jobs such efforts inevitably create within particular Congressional districts. There are no plants that are needed to produce equipment, no new bases that need to be stood up, no significant increase in jobs. What the Army needs most to develop its narrative capability is time. We need time to train soldiers in the skills they need to be successful combating the threats of tomorrow.

The U.S. Army has a problem. This problem is made evident by fourteen years of sustained combat and no victory in sight. The problem is that the Army lacks any significant means of engaging its enemy where the enemy is fighting, namely, in the narrative space. The narrative space has always existed within warfare. The difference today is that western societies are adamantly opposed to the violence caused by war since World War II and in representative governments, the passion of the people impact the conduct of the war. The U.S. Army has acknowledged it has a problem evident by multiple studies concluded and ongoing. It is currently working on identifying what capability is needed to be successful in future conflict. These efforts, while including some aspects of narrative, are failing to identify the significant impact narrative is having now and thus they are unable to accurately predict how the use of narrative in the future is needed. The U.S. Army could mitigate this by adopting new doctrinal terms that provide a solid understanding of how narrative is applicable to military operations. It could also make small adjustments in its professional military education curriculum in a way that informs soldiers what narrative is, why it is applicable to warfare, and how it is used to achieve the commander's intent. If changes like these are not made it is difficult

to see how the U.S. will achieve any greater margin of success against an enemy in a foreign land that is drastically different from the success (or lack thereof) that has been achieved across the Middle East today.

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