

Personality's Relation to Risk in Operational Planning

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Personality's Relation to Risk in Operational Planning, by MAJ Brent P. Nowak, 34 pages.

This monograph seeks to understand the link between personality and risk propensity in military operations. The research aims to help leaders determine individual personalities that are risk accepting and their impact on planning. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) examines personality through the characteristics of openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism. These core traits allow for the comparison between groups of individuals in studies to determine patterns of personality. Military leaders have continually accepted risk in mission and to forces at the operational and strategic levels. Risk propensity varies amongst individuals by personality and can affect the amount of risk accepted within operational planning. A closer look into General Douglas MacArthur's personality will seek to understand his personality type concerning his willingness to undertake risks. Using a historical investigation into his activities during the planning of Operation Chromite, this monograph will illustrate the link between personality to risk. By examining personality's relation to risk, the Army might better utilize these individuals at the operational or strategic level when needed.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Contents.....	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	vi
Figures.....	vii
Introduction	1
Methodology	3
Risk in Doctrine.....	5
The Five-Factor Model.....	7
MacArthur's Personality	15
Operation Chromite.....	21
Conclusion.....	32
Bibliography.....	35

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Abbreviations

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ATP	Army Techniques Publication
BCAP	Battalion Commander Assessment Program
FFN	Five-Factor Model
FFT	Five-Factor Theory
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JP	Joint Publication
LSCO	Large-Scale Combat Operations
NBEC	National Bureau of Economic Research
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
ROK	Republic of Korea
TAPAS	Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System
TM	Talent Management
UN	United Nations
USAFFE	United States Army Forces in the Far East
USMA	United States Military Academy

Figures

Figure 1. Operation of the Personality System, According to FFT	13
Figure 2. Hierarchical Representation of Personality from NEO Sub Facets to DeYoung, Quilty, and Peterson Facets to the Big Five Traits.	14
Figure 3. Planning for the Landing: The Pusan Perimeter and the Potential Landing Sites for Operation Chromite.....	30

Introduction

Operational leaders must manage and make risk-related decisions to win in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). In the Global War on Terror, the Army fought hunkered in bases choosing risk aversion to minimize the consequences.¹ Over time operational orders added more details, relying heavily on subordinates to adhere to specifics instead of giving them the clarity and conciseness needed to take bold and audacious action.² Leaders might fear that they will lose their position to too severe a risk instead of capitalizing on a situation when planning for operations.

A leader's personality interacts with the environment according to their inherent tendencies. US military members have varying personalities that influence their emotions, behaviors, and ways of thinking. Current psychological practice uses the Five-Factor Model (FFM) to categorize personality. The FFM examines personality through the characteristics of openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism. These core traits allow for comparing groups of individuals to determine personality patterns. The Army currently measures personality through the FFM to help determine positions for some recruits and select effective future battalion commanders.

The Army is working to reform how it maintains and selects recruits' occupations using a personality assessment. A recent information paper explained that "the Army People Strategy, with an emphasis on Talent Management and policy changes supporting the wider Army Campaign Plan, is establishing ways to improve all aspects of developing and maintaining the

¹ Brendan Gallagher, "Managing Risk in Today's Army," *Military Review* (Jan.-Feb. 2014): 94.

² William Bell, "Risk Aversion in the US Army Officer Corps" (Texas A&M University Department of Philosophy., 1999), 1, accessed August 17, 2020, <http://isme.tamu.edu/JSCOPE99/Bell99-2.html>.

force at the individual Soldier level.”³ The Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) is a screening tool in preliminary examination for recruits to test their personality for best placement within the Army. TAPAS examines Soldiers by employing the FFM with factors expanded to 21 traits for increased fidelity and a physical fitness assessment.⁴ TAPAS hopes to identify a soldier’s personality dimension without lowering standards while maintaining the number of applicants.⁵ TAPAS measurements are “useful predictors of can-do, will-do, and attrition outcomes.”⁶ With the data from the individual assessment, the tool has the potential to predict which occupations an enlisted soldier may better perform and serve in for the Army.

For officers who are competing for battalion command, the Army requires them to undergo the Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP) designed “to assess each officer's fitness for command and strategic leadership potential.”⁷ The BCAP measures multiple aspects of a potential battalion commander to include cognitive, fitness, and psychological qualities.⁸ An analysis of an officer’s personality traits, like those in the FFM, allows individuals to understand their tendencies. The Army selected Lieutenant Colonels for battalion command previously based on individual potential. With the introduction of the BCAP, potential battalion commanders receive a psychological examination, among other tests. The basic principle of

³ Assistant Secretary of the Army - Manpower and Reserve Affairs, “Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System,” *Stand-To*, January 10, 2020, accessed July 8, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2020/01/10/>.

⁴ U. Christean Kubisiak, et. al., *Assessing the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) as an MOS Qualification Instrument* (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G1, August 2012), 1, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a566090.pdf>.

⁵ “Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System.”

⁶ Kubisiak et al., *Assessing the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) as an MOS Qualification Instrument*, 68.

⁷ “Battalion Commander Assessment Program,” Military, *U.S. Army Talent Management- BCAP*, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://talent.army.mil/bcap/>.

⁸ Army Talent Management Task Force, “Army Announces New Battalion Commander Selection Program” (US Army Press Release, November 6, 2019), accessed September 4, 2020, https://www.army.mil/article/229500/army_announces_new_battalion_commander_selection_program.

BCAP is that more relevant information on an officer leads to better decisions about who the Army selects for battalion command.⁹ Furthermore, the Army's ultimate objective is to choose the most qualified individuals for battalion command.

Incorporating personality testing into recruits' occupational placement and selecting battalion commanders offers a glimpse into how it can choose individuals for possible future outcomes. This monograph attempts to answer how a US military leader's personality impacts their propensity to accept or avoid risk during operational planning. Military leaders have continually accepted risk in mission and forces at the operational and strategic levels. Risk propensity varies amongst individuals by personality and can affect the amount of risk taken within operational planning. People are the Army's core, and assessing them accurately to place them into positions that provide the Army success is key to fighting in LSCO. Seizing the operational initiative usually requires accepting risk.¹⁰ Risk seeking and aversion in leaders' personalities inform our understanding of how they might achieve operational results. The research aims to determine the link between personality and risk propensity in military operations. This research proposes to help leaders determine individual personalities that can better assess risk during planning. Furthermore, a look into the concepts concerning risk allows for a basis of understanding for further analysis into personality.

Methodology

This monograph will answer the proposed research question utilizing theory, research, doctrine, and a historical case study. Personality influences risk acceptance in planning for LSCO. The first part of this monograph introduces Army doctrine concerning risk to provide a basis for analyzing a historical event or comparing it to personality. Army doctrine's risk concepts provide

⁹ "Battalion Commander Assessment Program."

¹⁰ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2019), 1–11.

an analytical process that fails to account for a leader's personality. The next section will review essential ideas developed in the field of psychology that inform our understanding of personality and risk. In the 1980s the FFM enabled the field to standardize personality traits into a logical hierarchy for cohesiveness and cross-comparison examination.¹¹ Since then, its literature has described personality's effects on an individual's potential outcomes, behavior, health, and (most importantly for this topic) on an individual's risk proclivity.

A review of General Douglas MacArthur's personality will demonstrate the utility of FFM for assessing proclivities for operational risk. With personality residing in a system that encompasses a person, Five-Factor Theory (FFT) discerns the basic tendencies of personality from the external influences of socialization and experience. The further breakdown of the FFM factors into sub-categories provides the detail needed to examine MacArthur's personality. After age 30,¹² an individual's personality has minimal fluctuation, so this monograph will focus on the period after MacArthur's 30th birthday. Understanding MacArthur's personality will help analyze his risk acceptance level in a historical case study, specifically his actions in planning Operation Chromite during the Korean War. His personality led him to see an opportunity because of his tendency as a stimulation seeker and goal achiever, while other experienced amphibious planners saw only perils. MacArthur's personality was accepting of risk while others were risk-averse and recommended landing at sites other than Inchon. In the end, his personality guided the planning and convinced his superiors to believe in the operation.

The last section will consider the implications of understanding an individual's personality towards managing talent. Personality's influence on risk has implications on leaders decisions, and understanding personality individually matters when placing those leaders into an operational or strategic position.

¹¹ Robert R. McCrae and Paul T. Costa, *Personality in Adulthood: A Five-Factor Theory Perspective*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2006), vii.

¹² *Ibid.*, 78.

Risk in Doctrine

This section examines risk concepts within Army doctrine concerning planning and operations. The purpose is to provide a framework for assessing risk in a historical case study and illustrate risks function within LSCO. The use of the current risk doctrine will help form conclusions concerning personality and forms a basis of understanding. Doctrine does not critique if an individual or plan's use of risk was appropriate or not, but helps identify the main elements of risk that can be employed in historical examples. The risk concepts found in Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-19, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, and ADP 3-0 allow for greater efficacy when applying risk to personality.

In ATP 5-19, *Risk Management*, the Army defines risk as “probability and severity of loss linked to hazards,” which mimics the definition in Joint Publication (JP) 5-0.¹³ Risk has “vulnerabilities” and “opportunities” associated with it when a leader assesses a situation. Individuals should take a hard look at the probability of loss versus the potential for gain and then identify the plan's hazards. “A hazard is a condition with the potential to cause injury, illness, or death of personnel; damage to or loss of equipment or property; or mission degradation.”¹⁴ Hazards can harm the mission or the people executing, and a commander must weigh the probabilities when making a risk decision. Described as a “risk decision,” an individual leader is responsible for determining which actions to undertake based on their best judgment of the level of risk.¹⁵ Commanders and leaders must effectively communicate the level of risk they are willing to accept to their subordinates. Every commander has differing risk tolerance levels, which requires the implementation of mitigations and controls. The commander is responsible for

¹³ US Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-19, *Risk Management* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2014), Glossary-3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–1.

determining acceptable risk to ensure mission success. When a leader cannot tolerate the risk level, they must communicate the residual risk to their superior or look for alternative ways to implement appropriate controls. Forces may decide to accept greater risk in their operations when leaders assess that the opportunities outweigh the alternative action.¹⁶ When considering risk within planning, leaders and their staff should iteratively and continuously update estimates to predict loss and opportunities.

In ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, provides insights on the expectation of leaders considering risk. ADP 6-22 states that “leaders must instill agility and initiative within subordinates by creating a climate that encourages risk taking within the commander’s intent.”¹⁷ Leaders should judge risk in ambiguous and non-linear situations appropriately and balance risk to retain the initiative and support subordinates' risk through empowering them.¹⁸ An individual's risk tolerance level will determine the level of risk accepted for a subordinate, and risk acceptance should allow forces to retain the initiative.

ADP 3-0, *Operations*, offers a look at risk concerning operational art. ADP 3-0 describes operational art as “the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.”¹⁹ Commanders and their staff use the elements of operational art to develop an operational approach concerning the environment that connects military actions with strategy and tactics. In understanding and balancing efforts with the environment, leaders should pursue risk instead of

¹⁶ Ibid., 1–2.

¹⁷ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2019), 4-1.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations*, 2–1.

avoiding it.²⁰ Utilizing a staff to assess and understand the situation through analysis and mutual efforts enables the synthesis to foresee opportunities and risk.²¹ By managing the risk and opportunities through the application of operational art, units can generate the “conditions necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and achieve decisive results.”²² Operational planners and leaders must anticipate opportunities associated with the risk to enable successful operations down to the tactical level.

ATP 5-19, ADP 6-22, and ADP 3-0 provide a base for understanding how to describe risk using a historical case study. Doctrine identifies that commanders determine the acceptable benefits from risk to determine mission success through an ambiguous and changing environment with a planning team's aid. The current risk doctrine will help inform conclusions concerning personality by using a case study on Operation Chromite.

The Five-Factor Model

Many theories have sought to differentiate between the characteristics that mark an individual's nature and nurture and how they influence human behavior. In relatively recent psychology developments, personality traits may explain an individual's possible actions or behaviors. The characteristics found in the FFM help to explain personality's relationship towards risk and offer valuable insights toward understanding potential paths an individual is more likely to choose. Although the literature on personality psychology covers a wide variety of material, this section will focus primarily on personality traits and their relation to risk through the Five-Factor Theory. Personality psychology literature offers a wide selection through books on the

²⁰ US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 6, 2017), B-1.

²¹ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations*, 2–2.

²² US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, 1–21.

FFM, broad-based human research studies on risk, and the application through Five-Factor Theory (FFT).

Trait psychology is the current standard in personality psychology, allowing for categorizing individuals, but in the 1970s, it lacked the tools to enable prediction and was regarded as obsolete.²³ With FFM, individuals and researchers have a shared language to categorize personality aspects allowing for the analysis of studies and theories across numerous disciplines.²⁴ Daniel Nettle describes the confusion that occurred in the field by stating that “formally, one psychologist might give you a score for Reward Dependence and Harm Avoidance, whilst another might classify you as a Thinking, Feeling, Sensing, or Intuiting type.”²⁵ The FFM examines personality through the characteristics of openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism. Every element exists on a continuum from high to low, describing a person's personality. The FFM enables the field to standardize personality traits into a logical hierarchy for cohesiveness and cross-comparison examination.

The first factor in the FFM is openness. Robert R. McCrae and Paul T. Costa, Jr. explain that “we measure openness to experience in six different areas (fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values).”²⁶ They describe open people as “curious and valuing of knowledge for its own sake.”²⁷ Individuals with a high predisposition towards openness tend to think through situations as possibilities and probabilities, seeing multiple perspectives that allowing them to empathize more with others while “admitting that what is right and wrong for one person may not

²³ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 3.

²⁴ Daniel Nettle, *Personality: What Makes You the Way You Are* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 9.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 49.

²⁷ Ibid.

be applicable in other circumstances.”²⁸ Their definition encapsulates how a scientist should quantify an individual and elaborates on what makes a person open. Daniel Nettle describes a person with high openness as one who uses a “core mechanism consisting of a breadth of mental associations to benefit in artistic sensibility and divergent thought at the cost of possible unusual beliefs and proneness to psychosis.”²⁹ Both books help understand openness by providing a fuller description and showing that it exists in a range of possibilities within the category.

Conscientiousness is the second personality trait in the FFM. McCrae and Costa describe a person high in conscientiousness as “rational, informed,” and as one who has a self-conception of themselves as highly “competent.”³⁰ These individuals owe some of their success because they are systematic and organized, increasing their work efficiency.³¹ Individuals high in conscientiousness commit to high moral principles, “and they have a strong sense of doubtfulness.”³² Conscientious people display the qualities of “achievement striving” and “self-discipline,” allowing them to complete their aims at high standards.³³ Finally, they exhibit deep thinking, empowering them to plan for the future while taking cautious or less risky actions.³⁴ In comparison, Nettle describes a person high in conscientiousness as one who has a “core mechanism consisting of response inhibition with the benefits of planning and self-control at the cost of fidgety and lack of spontaneous response.”³⁵ The sources highlight how individuals high in conscientiousness are detailed planners who display the uppermost amounts of self-control.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Nettle, *Personality*, 208.

³⁰ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 50.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae, “Six Approaches to the Explication of Facet-Level Traits: Examples from Conscientiousness,” *European Journal of Personality* 12 (March 1, 1998): 129.

³³ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 50.

³⁴ Ibid., 51.

³⁵ Nettle, *Personality*, 208.

Extraversion is the next personality trait. Costa and McCrae illustrate how a person high in extraversion is “warm, gregarious, and assertive.”³⁶ Extraverts like to keep busy, acting vigorously and talking rapidly; they are energetic and forceful.³⁷ A person high in extraversion is “outgoing and enthusiastic,” whereas a person who is considered low is “aloof and quiet.”³⁸ Nettle further describes an individual high in extraversion as one who exhibits a “response to reward with the advantage of increased reward pursuit and capture with the disadvantage of physical dangers and family instability.”³⁹ Together, the descriptions provide a definition of extraversion that shows how a person can exist on a broad range of possibilities.

The fourth personality trait in the FFM is agreeableness. A person who is high in agreeableness trusts others and does not assume ulterior motives while choosing to view the most exemplary aspects of another.⁴⁰ These individuals tend to see others' choices or actions as a consideration of their mental state. Costa and McCrae explain that an individual high in agreeableness is “trustworthy, straightforward, considerate, selfless, altruistic, humble, modest, sentimental, tender-minded, and typically defer to others rather than pushing their agenda.”⁴¹ Nettle describes agreeableness as a “spectrum consisting of one who has a regard for others with the benefit of harmonious social relationships at the cost of not putting themselves first and will act in a manner that generally loses them status.”⁴² Both descriptions provide the means to understand the spectrum of agreeableness.

³⁶ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Nettle, *Personality*, 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴⁰ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 50.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Nettle, *Personality*, 208.

The last personality trait in the FFM is neuroticism. Costa and McCrae illustrate people who are high in neuroticism as those who exhibit “anxiety, anger, hostility, ill-tempered, irritable, depressed, self-conscience, impulsive, and inadequacy to deal with stress.”⁴³ Nettle explains that a person high in neuroticism focuses on a “response to a threat with the advantage of vigilance and striving and the disadvantage of anxiety and depression.”⁴⁴ Those individuals considered low in neuroticism are generally “emotionally stable.”⁴⁵ As with the other facets, an individual’s value of neuroticism exists on a continuum.

Researchers have considered the impact of age and the possibility of shared traits within families on individuals. Costa and McCrae conclude with “confidence that there are no large-scale effects after 30.”⁴⁶ Nettle adds that “what studies have shown is that across a range of normal family-to-family variation, shared family factors have no effect on adult personality.”⁴⁷ Nettle further states that “when we think about environmental influences, then, we need to remember that adult form can only be influenced by environment to the extent that there is an evolved mechanism to map that specific cue to that specific outcome, and there will only be in an evolved mechanism where the cue is a good predictor that the form will be useful.”⁴⁸ Adults at or above the age of 30 have relatively stable personalities that change very little as they age.

The literature also discusses personality traits' relationship to a person's acceptance of risk through numerous studies. Such a relationship can predict risk by identifying an individual's

⁴³ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 47–48.

⁴⁴ Nettle, *Personality*, 208.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 78.

⁴⁷ Nettle, *Personality*, 216.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 221.

personality report through factor analysis.⁴⁹ A joint study conducted by London, Open, and Oxford Universities described the FFM profile of an individual who accepts risk as “high extraversion (especially sensation-seeking) and openness supply the motivational force, low neuroticism and agreeableness supply the insulation against concern about negative consequences, and low conscientiousness lowers the cognitive barriers.”⁵⁰ Another study concluded that “risk has a strong and highly interpretable relationship with biographical factors, personality profiles, and occupational/industrial category membership.”⁵¹ Furthermore, the study established that “risk takers accept greater risk when individuals act as either stimulation seekers, goal achievers/loss avoiders, and risk adaptors.”⁵²

FFT allows for an individual's characterization in terms of patterns of thought or actions utilizing the FFM to place them on an empirical scale. Figure 1 shows the relationship of FFM to FFT and how they interact within a personality system. Central components are “Basic Tendencies,” “Character Adaptations,” and “Self-Concept.” Each of the five facets in the FFM are “Basic Tendencies” that are ingrained within biology and not easily detected through observation. Basic Tendencies are the individual's abstract capacities and tendencies, whereas Character Adaptations are the concrete acquired structures that develop as the individual interacts with the environment. Character Adaptations represent the “habits, interests, attitudes, beliefs, and relationships.” They are also tendencies and aspects of individuals that form patterns of response in certain situations, such as mindsets and cultural socialization. Within Character Adaptations is an individual's Self-Concept, which is their personal view of themselves.

⁴⁹ Nigel Nicholson et al., “Risk Propensity and Personality” (London Business School, Open University Business School and Said Business School Oxford, January 2001), 18, accessed August 20, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229003770_Risk_Propensity_and_Personality.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Nigel Nicholson et al., “Personality and Domain-Specific Risk Taking,” *Journal of Risk Research* 8, no. 2 (March 2005): 169.

⁵² Ibid., 171.

Objective Biography represents a person's life narrative and is their subjective, individual reality. “Biological Bases” and “External Influences” are the inputs, representing interaction of personality with the physical body and the environment.” FFT provides the structure to identify the difference between personality and environment when assessing an individual that enables the classification of their patterns of thinking or potential performance.⁵³

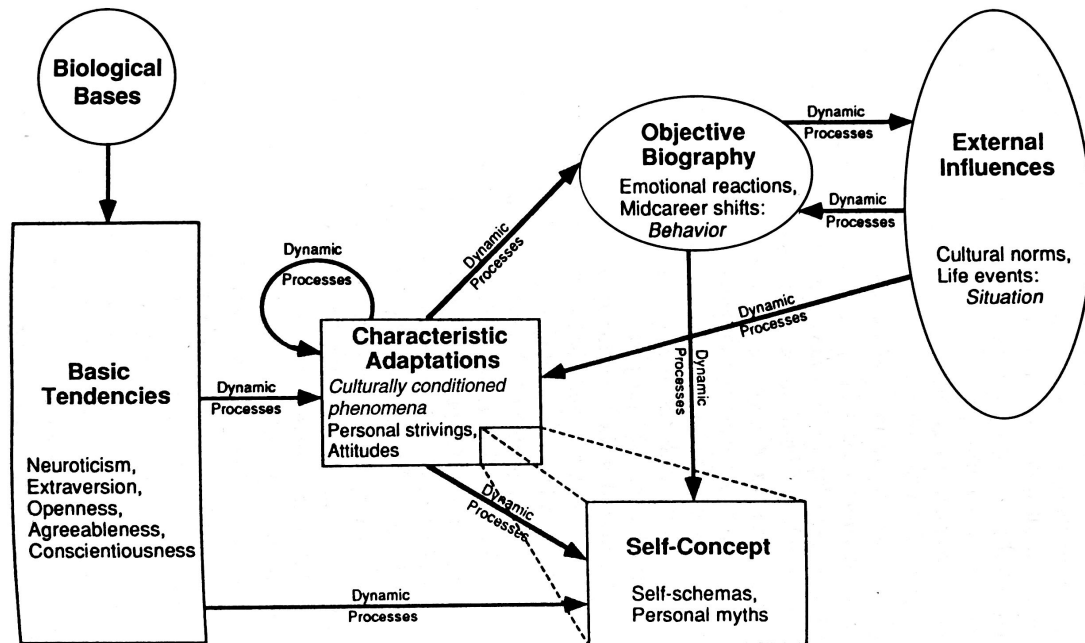


Figure 1. Operation of the Personality System, According to FFT. Arrows indicate the direction of causal influences, which operate through dynamic processes. Robert R. McCrae and Paul T. Costa, *Personality in Adulthood: A Five-Factor Theory Perspective*, 2. ed. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2006), 192.

Multiple tests are available to measure personality. But to do so for individuals who lived and died prior to the existence of these theories, one must break down the FFM into sub-factors to identify how to assess them. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship connecting the FFM to the DeYoung et al. facets down to the NEO sub-facets. DeYoung et al. facets offer a contrast with the main FFM facets, and the NEO sub-facets provide further fidelity to help distinguish the juxtaposition of an individual personality. The Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R)

⁵³ McCrae and Costa, *Personality in Adulthood*, 187.

is a survey intended to test an individual's personality using the FFM.⁵⁴ The NEO sub-facets will aid in determining where MacArthur might fit within the main facets of the FFM.

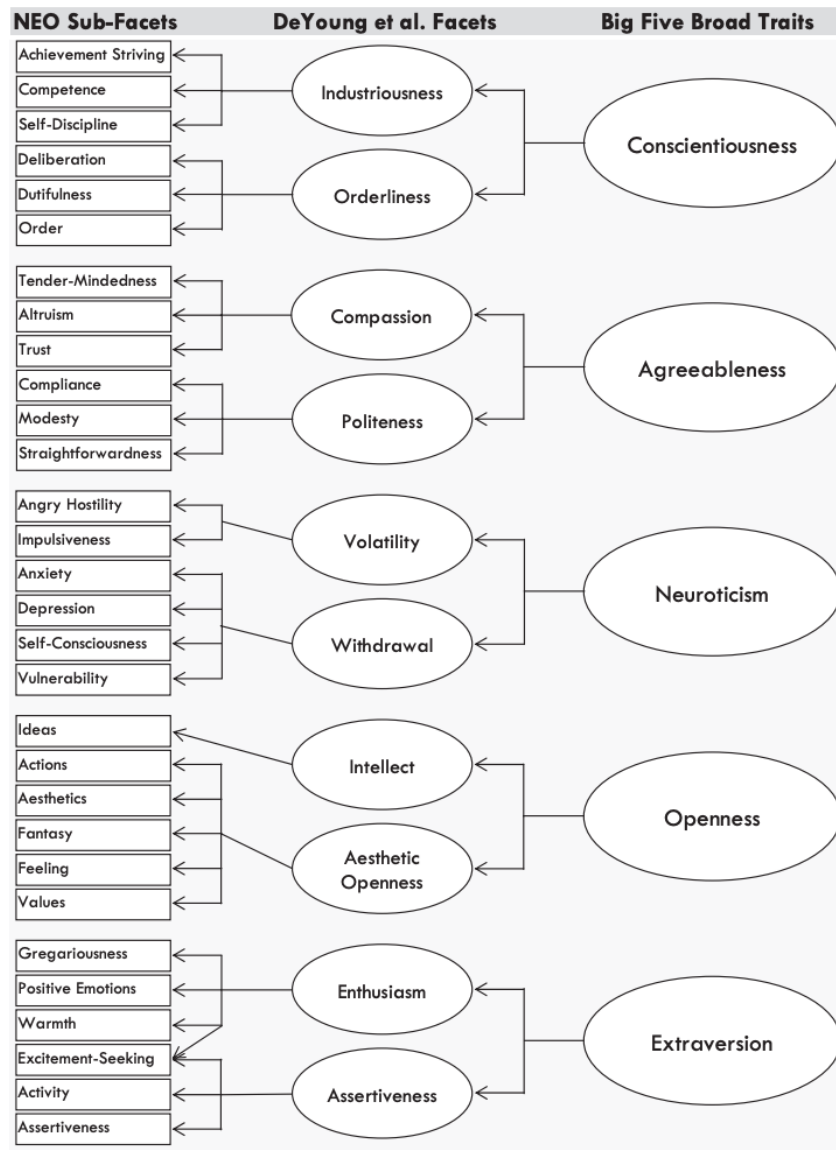


Figure 2. Hierarchical Representation of Personality from NEO Sub Facets to DeYoung, Quilty, and Peterson Facets to the Big Five Traits. Timothy Judge, et. al., "Hierarchical Representations of the Five-Factor Model of Personality in Predicting Job Performance: Integrating Three Organizing Frameworks With Two Theoretical Perspectives," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 98, no. 6 (2013): 878.

⁵⁴ Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae, "Domains and Facets: Hierarchical Personality Assessment Using the Revised NEO Personality Inventory," *Journal Of Personality Assessment* 64, no. 1 (1995): 21.

Setting a base with the FFM on which personalities are more risk accepting will help define set characteristics. Several highly cited risk studies relate an individual's personality to their acceptance or aversion to risk. A combined analysis of risk from London Business School, Open University Business School, and Said Business School Oxford concerning managers and professionals concluded that “a strong Big Five pattern emerges for overall risk propensity comprising high extraversion and openness, and low neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.”⁵⁵ The study additionally found a strong correlation to sensation-seeking in individuals who generally accept risk. Another study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBEC) examined the difference in risk aversion in gender and concluded that women are more risk-averse than men.⁵⁶ With an agreed FFM range for individuals who accept more risk, a closer inspection into MacArthur's Big Five values helps see how personality might influence decisions.

MacArthur's Personality

General Douglas MacArthur was born into an Army family in 1880 and died at Walter Reed Hospital in 1962.⁵⁷ He lived a life dedicated to the military that brought him a wide range of experience fighting in Vera Cruz during the Mexican Revolution and participating in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.⁵⁸ The accumulated material on and about MacArthur offers possibilities of assessing how his personality affected his risk propensity. As a commander, he won many battles at the operational level. At the end of his career during the Korean War, he was crucial in pushing for and planning the Inchon landing, a high-risk and high-reward operation that many leaders believed hazardous and arguably changed the war's course. Using the FFM to

⁵⁵ Nicholson et al., “Risk Propensity and Personality,” 2.

⁵⁶ Lex Borghans et al., “Gender Differences in Risk Aversion and Ambiguity Aversion - Working Paper 14713” (National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper Series, 2009), 8.

⁵⁷ William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, 1st Back Bay pbk. ed. (New York: Back Bay Books, 2008), 12-15.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

analyze MacArthur's personality with respect to Inchon can highlight his inbuilt risk-accepting tendencies. This section covers MacArthur's personality and seeks to determine its relation to behavior-psychology outcome studies on risk using the FFM by looking at consistencies throughout his life prior to the Korean War.

If MacArthur accepts risk, his FFM correlation should match the combined and NBEC studies. Authors in both history and psychology have reviewed MacArthur's life and taken closer looks into his personality. Lowell L. Snitchler, a licensed psychologist, wrote in *Douglas MacArthur Upon Reflection* that "this history of the gifted child turned narcissistic adult bears uncanny likeness to the developmental history of General-of-the-Army MacArthur."⁵⁹ Snitchler argued that MacArthur fit the description of a narcissist. Another author, Robert Gilbert, conducted a psycho-historical examination of MacArthur's personality and concluded "that his actions and attitudes fit the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder and that this disorder led to his eventual firing."⁶⁰ Like Snitchler, Gilbert uses historical examples to analyze MacArthur's life, determining that he has a narcissistic personality. In his biography of MacArthur titled *Douglas MacArthur: Statecraft and Stagecraft in America's East Asian Policy*, Russell D. Buhite wrote, "but it is necessary to go beyond mere ego in understanding what motivated him- to see him, in fact, within the context of a personality disorder referred to by psychologists as narcissism of the most malignant sort...."⁶¹

If MacArthur had a narcissistic personality, then the FFM characteristics ranges should also match that of the risk-taker and suggests that he had enate tendencies that stem from his nature concerning risk. Grandiose narcissism correlates mostly positively with extraversion and

⁵⁹ Lowell Snitchler, "Douglas MacArthur Upon Reflection" (Air War College, Air University, 01APR1998), 25.

⁶⁰ Robert Gilbert, "Douglas MacArthur: Disordered Narcissist," *Constructing the Past* 15, no. 1 (2014): 2.

⁶¹ Russell D. Buhite, *Douglas MacArthur: Statecraft and Stagecraft in America's East Asian Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 164.

openness and negatively with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.⁶² The FFM traits that describe narcissism closely match that of a risk-taker. Narcissists tend to display boldness and take risks, developing from an overconfident view of themselves, and they do not seek attention from others for reaffirming successes.⁶³ MacArthur had a theme of emphasizing his skills and talents throughout his life, which mirrors narcissistic behavior and a risk acceptor.

Long before the Korean War, MacArthur demonstrated his commitment to military service. Earning his commission from the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point in 1903, he initially served as an engineer officer until attaining the rank of Brigadier General during WWI. During the interwar period, he served as the Superintendent of the USMA and as the Army Chief of Staff. Before the invasion of the Philippines by the Japanese, he served as the commanding general of United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). Earning the rank of General of the Army during WWII, he presided over the Japanese's surrender. He then served as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers during the occupation of Japan. He maintained his command of the USAFFE through to the outbreak of the Korean War. His life experiences are vast and provide enough detail for his personality analysis, but some need highlighting to show his FFM personality ranges.⁶⁴

As Superintendent of West Point from 1919-1922, MacArthur instituted changes that sought to modernize the academy. While he sought the agreement of academy board members, he ignored the opinions of the professors, and otherwise failed to interact with them respectfully.⁶⁵

⁶² Marcin Zajenkowski and Kinga Szymaniak, "Narcissism between Facets and Domains. The Relationships between Two Types of Narcissism and Aspects of the Big Five," *Current Psychology* (January 23, 2019): Abstract, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12144-019-0147-1>.

⁶³ W. Keith Campbell, Adam Goodie, and Joshua Foster, "Narcissism, Confidence, and Risk Attitude," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 17 (2004): 2.

⁶⁴ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 12-15.

⁶⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 266.

Seeing the professors as an obstacle to achieving his goal of reforming the academy, he chose to pungently deliver courses of action without engaging them and undermining his relationship with them.⁶⁶ Through the lens of FFM, MacArthur's possible personality while he was the Superintendent displays high levels of instituting new ideas and intellect through the reforms. However, he also shows high impulsiveness through his disregard of the professors, who were to play an integral part in implementing his changes. MacArthur incurred risk by forcing the changes onto his organization, but for the opportunity to modernize the processes of producing trained officers. In this instance, MacArthur exemplified in the positive direction the facets of openness in instituting new ideas while displaying low agreeableness by ignoring the professors' concerns. Likewise, his enthusiasm for changes as he asserted his positions illustrates a mainly high level of extraversion. He has many moments in his life where he typified these facets but to correlate them precisely requires additional examples.

Another incident that highlights MacArthur's personality occurred during his handling of the Bonus Army in Washington, DC in 1932, while he served as the Army Chief of Staff. Due to the increased hardships of the Great Depression, the Bonus Army was a group of World War I veterans who had gathered to protest in the nation's capital for bonus payment for their wartime services. William Manchester wrote about the incident in the book *American Caesar*:

As [General Dwight] Eisenhower "observed of his chief, the General" had an obsession that a high commander must protect his image at all costs and must never admit his wrongs." In addition he felt an ideological bond to [President Herbert] Hoover, and on July 28, when Hurley told him that the President wanted the Bonus Army evicted, he proceeded with enthusiasm. What was really needed was tact. That morning police scuffling with an encampment of vets at the foot of Capitol Hill had shot two of them. Eisenhower, a better public-relations man than MacArthur, begged the General not to take personal command of the eviction. It would only offend congressmen, he argued, and make approval of military budgets that much harder. The Chief of Staff thought he

⁶⁶ Ibid.

had a better idea. "MacArthur has decided to go into active command in the field," he told the major. "There is incipient revolution in the air."⁶⁷

MacArthur sanctioned the plan, also ensuring that two experienced general officers, a division and a corps-level commander, oversee the removal force; however, he still decided that he, as the Army Chief of Staff, needed to be present and direct forces.⁶⁸

In the end, MacArthur disobeyed President Hoover's order to not cross the river into the Bonus Army encampment, which he burned to the ground. Defying an order from a superior is a low-level on the factor of agreeableness that illustrates a lack of compliance. MacArthur displayed his high extraversion through his excitement to rid his Bonus Army problem but added risk by violating an order from the President. MacArthur showed low conscientiousness when he disobeyed an order from a superior and low agreeableness in his lack of compassion for the Bonus Army and their families when superseding the commands of those placed below him. MacArthur escaped removal by calling a "midnight press conference, disclaimed responsibility, and praised Hoover for shouldering it."⁶⁹ MacArthur's quick thinking and actions to put a positive view on himself during the Bonus Army incident saved his position. This situation illustrates his high openness level while showing his sensation seeking tendency. He had a goal of removing the Bonus Army, and his actions led him towards it. Both these events and those during his tenure as the Superintendent of USMA indicate MacArthur was an individual who naturally accepted risks.

Not long after the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, MacArthur was ordered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to leave his island headquarters on Corregidor to reestablish his command in Australia. In front of reporters while at Adelaide, he passionately gave remarks

⁶⁷ William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*, 1st Back Bay pbk. ed. (New York: Back Bay Books, 2008), 373; William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1979), 12–16.

⁶⁸ William J. Tehan III, "Douglas MacArthur - An Administrative Biography" (Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2002), 201, accessed August 28, 2020, https://pymblelc.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=48223022.

⁶⁹ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 376.

saying, “I shall return.”⁷⁰ MacArthur was making a statement to the press that he would not forget about his forces in the Philippines and the Filipino people, giving them both hope for their liberation. These words are interesting because they invoke the singular form and not the plural. Using the FFM, his assertiveness in this statement illustrates a high level of extraversion. Additionally, he creatively used the statement to further his aims of returning to the Philippines during a meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to determine military strategy. Admiral Chester Nimitz argued that they could bypass the Northern portion of the Philippines and use forces to take the island of Formosa. At the same time, MacArthur recommended taking the whole of the Philippines. MacArthur invoked his previous press statement of “shall return” to the President, explaining that the Filipino people would not accept a broken promise from the American people.⁷¹ By neglecting to inform the President that his comment was about him returning, he shows a low level of conscientiousness and agreeableness through his lack of straightforwardness. Ultimately the President approved MacArthur’s plan. Again, General MacArthur valued the promises he made, which would place him towards the higher end of openness. MacArthur took a risk by focusing on the human aspect of recapturing the Philippines and what that meant to Filipinos, which fueled his narcissism of seeking their admiration. His personality shows consistency with a broad range of possibilities and narrows to show he is high in openness and extraversion and low in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Douglas MacArthur’s personality fits the profile facets of both an individual that accepts risk and is narcissistic. His socialization and characteristic adaptations have been separated from his basic tendencies to show high openness and extraversion, low conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. His personality interacted with the world to take more significant risks based on his characteristic adaptations as a stimulation seeker and goal achiever. The

⁷⁰ Ibid., 691.

⁷¹ Buhite, *Douglas MacArthur*, 58.

following section will focus on how his personality influenced risk, as seen in a case study of Operation Chromite.

Operation Chromite

Before the Korean War, General MacArthur commanded the Far East Command at its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. Korea and the American forces located there resided in his area of responsibility. The United States retained influence over Korea south of the 38th parallel and the Soviet Union the North. With little understanding of how to handle Korea's situation, MacArthur established military control over the country until the formation of a provisional government. Koreans viewed the American forces on the peninsula as an occupation force, and sought independence and sovereignty. At first, MacArthur relied on the Department of State to handle most issues. His only trip to Korea before the war was in 1948 when he attended the inaugural ceremony of Syngman Rhee as the President of Korea.⁷² He seemed not to anticipate events escalating in Korea, nor did he take an interest in understanding the situation until actions forced him.⁷³

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, with the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossing the 38th parallel into the south. Their immediate goal was to secure Seoul and thrust further south the combined forces of the US and Republic of South Korea (ROK). On June 26, in a teleconference, President Truman authorized MacArthur to use US Naval and Air Forces to assist South Korean forces in South Korea fighting the NKPA and to support with resources and supplies.⁷⁴ MacArthur held responsibility for defeating the NKPA as the theater commander and controlled the troops on the Korean peninsula. He saw the South Korean forces and 8th Army

⁷² Ibid., 99.

⁷³ Ibid., 98.

⁷⁴ Truman Papers, "Notes Regarding June 26, 1950 Teleconference with General Douglas MacArthur" (Harry S. Truman Library, June 26, 1950), 1, accessed October 23, 2020, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/notes-regarding-june-26-1950-teleconference-general-douglas-macarthur>.

driven back to the Pusan perimeter and understood that countless lives hung in the balance to prevent the collapse and defeat of the ROK. However, an opportunity residing in a bold amphibious landing held a chance for repulsing the NKPA while minimizing loss of life to ultimately reestablish South Korea, thus providing the impetus for Operation Chromite.

General MacArthur's personality aided in accepting the risk to both mission and forces for the Inchon landing during the Korean War, as seen through his initial reconnaissance of the front, Operation Bluehearts, and planning for Operation Chromite. Personalities that accept more risk are stimulation seeking and or focus on achieving a goal. These instances will illustrate his interactions and decisions before the execution of Chromite and how he viewed and influenced operational planning. His personality led him to understand the opportunities of conducting a landing at Inchon, whereas others did not.

MacArthur's first task was to reconnoiter the front to increase his situational awareness of the war and determine potential future actions. Four days after the NPKA crossed the border, MacArthur traveled to the front lines near Seoul.⁷⁵ With most of the airports near Seoul captured by the NKPA, MacArthur's staff urged him to land at Pusan, far from the front lines, but he decided that he and the reporters, brought along to cover the journey, would relocate to an alternative site.⁷⁶ MacArthur's personality drove him toward a sensation-seeking approach to land as close as possible to the front and use the reporters to record his actions once there. After all, MacArthur's survey of the frontline battles needed the reporters to record his experience. It was a task that involved risk not only to his life but also to the reporters traveling with him.

The opportunity to travel to the front lines provided MacArthur a clearer picture of the situation to visualize his and the NKPA's possible lines of operations or basing more accurately. The plane landed to the south of Seoul at an already attacked and cratered airport where

⁷⁵ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1437.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

MacArthur then grabbed some ground transportation.⁷⁷ MacArthur then traveled to the Han River, where he observed the conflict and immediately understood the dire situation. He determined that the enemy would eventually overextend their logistic capabilities as they continued to attack 8th Army, commanded by General Walton Walker.⁷⁸ MacArthur's risk-taking personality provided him the extraversion needed to travel into a combat zone and the openness to see a potential node that could cause the NPKA to culminate if neutralized. MacArthur saw that the 8th Army and South Korean forces would not have the mass to counter the NKPA attack immediately. Additionally, he understood that reinforcing 8th Army would only cause stalemate and attrition. He knew an amphibious landing to destroy the NKPA supply node at Seoul would allow his forces to reestablish the border or unite Korea. His sensation seeking of traveling to the front with reports to record his actions gave him a goal to pursue. General MacArthur would have to overcome many challenges to conducting operations on the peninsula. He now saw a way of attacking a point in the enemy lines that would potentially force them to culminate. Through his personality, he fixated on his objective, and he set out to attain victory.⁷⁹

In the initial week of July, MacArthur oriented his staff to begin planning an amphibious operation focusing on the NPKA supply node within Seoul.⁸⁰ His chief of staff, General Ned Almond, would need to motivate the staff to study possible landing sites and draft initial plans for the landing. The United Nations (UN) on July 7th, with the passing of Resolution 84, authorized the use of UN forces for operations on the Korean peninsula and requested that the US designate a commander.⁸¹ The next day President Truman selected General MacArthur as the commander-

⁷⁷ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 641.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 545.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 545-566.

⁸⁰ Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, 1961), 488.

⁸¹ "Resolution 84 (1950)" (Adopted by the Security Council at its 476th meeting, July 7, 1950), accessed October 7, 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112027?ln=en>.

in-chief for the troops fighting in Korea.⁸² MacArthur now had the authority to lead operations on the Korean peninsula. He steered his staff into using Inchon to conduct an amphibious landing because he saw an opportunity to surprise the NKPA. Inchon, the closest landing site to MacArthur's goal, incurred high risk because of the narrow port channel and extreme tides. Still, his personality dismissed the hazards, understanding that the enemy would overlook a landing allowing his forces surprise and audacity. Completing the plans for Operation Bluehearts on July 10th, his staff presented an amphibious landing at Inchon, about 25 miles from the objective in Seoul, with a start date of 22 July.⁸³

During the month of July, 8th Army engaged in a series of delaying actions and battles with the southward advancing NKPA forces until they formed the Pusan perimeter at the beginning of August. 8th Army had three preplanned defensive lines: "Sobaek-Taebaek," "outer Pusan," and "inner Pusan." The first two perimeters were attempted but failed because the fronts were too broad, at 162 miles and 144 miles respectively; these created gaps that 8th Army did not have the troops to fill. By the end of July, 8th Army was trying to establish the "inner Pusan" line (100 miles by 50 miles) which was anchored by the Sea of Japan on the south and east, the Naktong River on the west, and ran along natural mountains on the north. More forces were needed to ensure that 8th Army did not lose this final defensive line because the NKPA greatly outnumbered them and had not stopped advancing south.⁸⁴

MacArthur concentrated on stabilizing 8th Army's perimeter because they could be pushed into the sea by the NKPA. The loss of 8th Army on the peninsula had the potential to force MacArthur to cancel Operation Bluehearts. If he reinforced his forces in Korea, the plan would lack sufficient units to conduct an immediate landing, but this did not dissuade him.

⁸² MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 645.

⁸³ Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc, 2020), 184.

⁸⁴ Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North*, Modern war studies (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 187.

MacArthur focused on his goal of severing the NKPA supply lines in Seoul and understood that an amphibious landing at Inchon would enable him to get troops onto this objective. The landing would create another line of operation, allowing him to attack NPKA basing at Seoul. His high openness, as seen through his idea of an amphibious landing at Inchon, allowed his high extraversion to assert his decisive point near Seoul. MacArthur understood that NKPA troops might transition troops from fighting 8th Army and direct them towards his landing force and wanted to slow their tempo as much as he could. He needed to maintain 8th Army on the Korean peninsula.⁸⁵

MacArthur knew he needed more forces to both stabilize 8th Army and also conduct Operation Bluehearts. Massing forces at Inchon would require him first to reinforce 8th Army and then execute the amphibious landing. 8th Army had four US divisions, 7th, 24th, 25th, and the 1st Cavalry, operating at reduced capacities.⁸⁶ His staff assumed that the 24th and 25th divisions, fighting along with ROK forces on the peninsula, would reinforce 8th Army with enough troops to effectively defend against the NKPA's continued attacks. Still, as their perimeter shrunk towards Pusan, they required more soldiers to fill gaps in their line.⁸⁷ Operation Bluehearts required the 1st Cavalry division, the only division within 8th Army not involved on the peninsula, to conduct an amphibious landing into enemy-held territory where the bulk of the 8th Army forces would counterattack to neutralize the NKPA.⁸⁸ MacArthur needed more time to prepare his landing and maintain basing at Pusan.⁸⁹ His personality fixated not only on the goal of destroying the enemy's supply lines at Seoul but sought the sensation of eliminating the majority of the NKPA. MacArthur would not sway in his focus as he dispatched additional troops

⁸⁵ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1297-1299.

⁸⁶ Charles R. Smith, ed., *U.S. Marines in the Korean War* (Washington, DC: History Division, US Marine Corps, 2007), 74.

⁸⁷ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)*, 195.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Smith, *U.S. Marines in the Korean War*, 74.

to 8th Army and worked to guarantee a transition to offensive operations. He did not know how many troops he would need to commit to his reinforcing action, but understood the need to maintain a capable land component presence on the peninsula. MacArthur saw the risk to his forces near Pusan and required the enemy to continue its fixation on the 8th Army for the amphibious landing to have the element of surprise. With the front stabilized, he could transition to conducting the landing, which best helped achieve his goal.⁹⁰

The Navy and the Marine Corps had the most concerns during the planning for Operation Bluehearts. On July 7th, Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd, the commanding General of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and his operations officer, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, traveled from Hawaii to meet with General MacArthur in Tokyo.⁹¹ General Shepherd wanted to understand what the amphibious landing at Inchon entailed. MacArthur told Shepard that “If I only had the 1st Marine Division, I would land them here at Inchon.”⁹² Again, MacArthur’s personality worked to further his aim. He sought to garner additional forces needed for the landing, which would allow him to create another line of operations. Unfortunately, the 1st Marine Division was not immediately available to execute the operation until September, so MacArthur immediately convinced Shepherd to request a marine division from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).⁹³ Shepherd later remarked, “Here I was, recommending that a marine division be sent to Korea, and the Marine Corps commandant didn’t know anything about what I was doing.”⁹⁴ MacArthur employed his extraversion to convince Shepherd to commit to his plan because he needed to ensure he had the necessary forces. Risk in MacArthur’s planning revolved around his objective of Seoul. He assumed that an 8th Army advance northward would cost many lives.

⁹⁰ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1297-1299.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹² Goulden, *Korea*, 75.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The Marines had the additional forces MacArthur needed for an amphibious landing because he committed most of his reserves to the front. MacArthur actually canceled Operation Bluehearts because he lacked the troops for an immediate landing, but soon the Marines would give him the numbers he needed.⁹⁵ This allowed him to preserve 8th Army as a fighting force in Korea. MacArthur would then conduct a landing at Inchon to destroy the enemy supply lines, allowing for the sensation of decisively defeating the NKPA by neutralizing them as a fighting force. He would not accept any other type of victory with North Korea.

MacArthur's focus on the possibility of a landing at Inchon illustrated various aspects of his personality. His high openness allowed him to use his creativity to visualize the current situation and appreciate the NKPA supply base at Seoul exposed on their flank. The opportunity to attack this location did not outweigh the risk of mission failure, given to his lack of much-needed forces for Bluehearts. MacArthur understood that the strategic environment lacked the timing to conduct the mission and the resources. His high openness and extraversion personality allowed him to see the additional Marine division's value while being assertive enough to pursue the landing at Inchon. MacArthur ordered his staff to continue planning and to adjust the execution date back a couple of months.⁹⁶ MacArthur's personality still sought out the risk at Inchon because he saw the opportunity of destroying the NKPA logistics node. In a discussion on 20 July with General Almond and General Wright, the Operations Officer for Far East Command, General MacArthur had confirmed his intentions of a landing at Inchon.⁹⁷ He then ensured that his staff would continue focusing on an amphibious landing by telling them to "keep planning" and even promised command of the landing force to his Chief of Staff, Ned Almond.⁹⁸ MacArthur's personality drove him towards the exposed NKPA flank because he saw South

⁹⁵ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1457.

⁹⁶ Goulden, *Korea*, 185.

⁹⁷ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)*, 489.

⁹⁸ Goulden, *Korea*, 185.

Korea's loss under his leadership as a disgrace that he needed to avert and was eager to defeat the NKPA besides the high risks.

On July 23, the staff proposed Operation Chromite which included three options: landing at Inchon on the west coast nearest to Seoul; a landing at Kunsan on the west coast; or a landing near Chumunjin on the east coast. They discussed the options and their hazards to determine which location would achieve their goal. The staff understood that Korea's west coast had extreme tides, narrow channels, and a “maze of islands and peninsulas” that would limit the maneuverability needed for amphibious operations. General Edwin Wright, MacArthur’s operations officer, “dictated that the landing site must be within a thirty-mile radius of Seoul.”⁹⁹ The staff quickly eliminated Chumunjin and Kunsan as possible options due to their distance from the objective. The navy planners had concerns with Inchon because the landing required a risky early morning seizure of a Wolmi-do island, the key to the defense of the port, and a twilight landing directly into the port city due to the lack of beaches. Despite these hazards, MacArthur made his determination of where to land his forces. “MacArthur knew the advantages of preemption, and he would brook no challenge, however reasonable, to his choice of Inchon.”¹⁰⁰ MacArthur chose Inchon because he saw that the NKPA would not have time to maneuver the bulk of its troops currently fighting 8th Army to engage his landing force. With his decision on the location for the landing given to his staff, MacArthur needed to convince those outside of his command of his plans future success. On August 12, MacArthur issued his guidance for Chromite with a landing at Inchon to his component commanders.¹⁰¹

MacArthur needed to ensure the continued support of his superiors in the CCS so they would approve the execution of Operation Chromite. General J. Lawton Collins (Army Chief of Staff), Admiral Forrest P. Sherman (Chief of Naval Operations), and Admiral Arthur W. Radford

⁹⁹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 208.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 208–209.

(Pacific Fleet Commander) were sent to by the JCS to review the planning for Operation Chromite with MacArthur and his staff from August 21-24. On his staff's recommendation, MacArthur likely decided to have the navy brief first led by Doyle and his staff because they assumed that Admirals Sherman and Radford needed more convincing since they controlled all the ships for the operation. Almond ensured that anyone opposed to the landing at Inchon was not in the meeting.¹⁰²

The staff explained the hazards with a landing at Inchon. The navy briefed that the tides at Inchon spanned 33 feet, which was considered one of the world's biggest tidal changes and would limit the landing craft because they needed more depth at low tide.¹⁰³ Additionally, the landing craft would have two hours of high tide before the low tide causing the vessels to sit in the mud and be sitting targets for NKPA indirect fires until the next high tide. The landing craft, because of the extreme tides, posed a considerable hazard to the troops and Operation Chromite's success. The Navy planners also discussed various threats at and around the landing sites. MacArthur's staff professed that Russian air and naval intervention was doubtful but also a possible threat that could stop the landing. Another concern was that the Russians could have mined the landing site's entrance. The hills around the harbor were also ideal for indirect fires that could threaten the landing craft, and the North Koreans might have installed artillery there. MacArthur knew that his goal's fate rested on his ability to convince and reassure others of his planning. At this meeting, Doyle and the group did not discuss the possibility of landing at Posong-myon. However, the next day after this meeting, he met General MacArthur in his office to discuss the option. General MacArthur understood that the NKPA had devoted all their troops to fight against 8th Army and thought that the Marines would meet no heavy opposition at

¹⁰² Ibid., 208–210.

¹⁰³ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1495.

Inchon.¹⁰⁴ (See Figure 3 for the potential landing sites discussed throughout the planning of Chromite.)

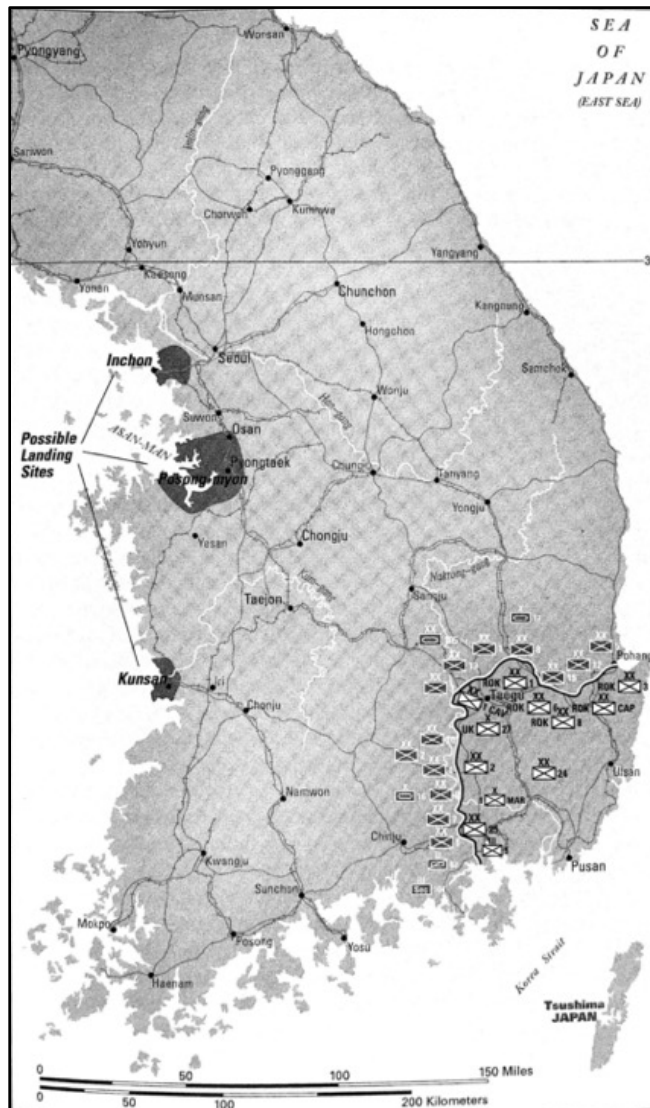


Figure 3. Planning for the Landing: The Pusan Perimeter and the Potential Landing Sites for Operation Chromite. Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 211.

After discussing all the perils associated with Operation Chromite, MacArthur made a final pitch, which Allen Millett described in *The War For Korea, 1950-1951*:

Pacing and talking, stabbing the air with his king-sized corncob pipe, MacArthur spoke about strategic surprise, great amphibious operations, his unbounded confidence that the

¹⁰⁴ James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War- Policy and Direction: The First Year*, (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 1992), 148; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 669-670; Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1495; Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 208-210.

navy and marine corps would overcome the landing's "technical" problems, and limitations of the Kunsan option. Otherwise, the battle around Pusan would continue its bloody course, for which he would not be responsible. With the world watching, United Nations Command must win quickly, decisively, and deftly. Only Chromite offered this outcome. If he underestimated North Korean resistance, MacArthur would withdraw X Corps by sea. "But Inchon will not fail!" His voice rising, MacArthur admitted that Chromite might be a 5,000 to one gamble, but he knew the odds, and they did not deter him. "We will land at Inchon, and I shall crush them!" MacArthur sat down with an audience stunned into silence by an oration that dismissed all the problems as "mere details." Instead he had louded all the imagined benefits of a high-risk victory.¹⁰⁵

Having acknowledged the perils outlined by the Navy, MacArthur did not shift the landing from Inchon because his personality compelled him towards his goal of destroying the NKPA basing exposed at Seoul and ultimately towards the exciting sensation of decisively defeating the NKPA. He saw the opportunity of attacking the enemy from a flank and was willing to commit forces up to a point where the landing might be unsuccessful. Admiral Doyle remarked, "The operation is not impossible, but I do not recommend it."¹⁰⁶ Admiral Sherman replied, "I wouldn't hesitate to take a ship up there."¹⁰⁷ General MacArthur had convinced others of the opportunity despite the risk to mission and to forces that the landing was possible.

Four days after the meeting, the JCS wired MacArthur "We concur after reviewing the information brought back by General Collins and Admiral Sherman in making preparations and executing a turning movement by amphibious forces on the west coast of Korea, either at Inchon in the event the enemy defenses prove ineffective, or at a favorable beach south of Inchon if one can be located.... We understand that alternative plans are being developed to best exploit the situation as it develops."¹⁰⁸ MacArthur had extended his influence through his personality beyond his command, ensuring that the landing would occur at Inchon. His risk-accepting personality saw the benefits of attacking the enemy's flank at a supply base due to his high openness and

¹⁰⁵ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 212; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 334-351.

¹⁰⁶ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)*, 493.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, *U.S. Marines in the Korean War*, 86.

¹⁰⁸ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1500.

extraversion. This fixation focused on achieving an ultimate goal as he ran through various scenarios to sequence events. On 30 August, General MacArthur issued Operation Chromite to his subordinate commanders describing his vision of the landing and destruction of the NKPA's logistics node at Seoul.¹⁰⁹ On September 15, X Corps and 8th Army began executing Operation Chromite, which completed the operational goal on September 19.¹¹⁰

The initial reconnaissance of the front at the start of the Korean War, Operation Bluehearts, and planning for Operation Chromite show the influence of MacArthur's risk-accepting personality. His sensation-seeking and goal-achieving tendencies, a commonality of risky personalities, drove him as he arranged the operation. While the NKPA was capturing Seoul, he watched and envisioned a dramatic the future that became Operation Chromite. Though Operation Bluehearts did not occur, he pushed his subordinates and others outside his command into accepting the immediate hazards driving them towards achieving his goal through his extraversion and openness because he saw the North Koreans' exposed logistics node. Arguing for Operation Chromite, he dismissed valid concerns by experienced planners, guaranteeing his preferred landing site because it provided his forces an advantage in time and space. As illustrated in the case study of Operation Chromite, personality can influence a leader's propensity to accept risk. Risk-seeking personalities are compelled to see the world through sensation seeking and goal achieving, which allows them to assume more significant risks.

Conclusion

The Army must identify those who can naturally accept risk when needed to gain an advantage when executing the bold action required within LSCO. Successful organizations can identify risk, effectively mitigate, and then successfully utilize it to achieve an opportunity. An individual's personality influences their acceptance or reluctance towards risk. FFM allows for

¹⁰⁹ Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War- Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 151.

¹¹⁰ Manchester, *American Caesar*, 1339.

identifying an individual's range within traits and can help determine their potential tendencies. Like sensation seeking and goal achieving, these tendencies provide a glimpse into the drivers that influence how one leads or plans operations. The case study utilizing events before Operation Chromite's execution illustrates how personality can influence risk during planning for operations.

Success at the operational and strategic levels requires those willing to take risks and ultimately to mission accomplishment. With the varying degree of an individual's character and background, a wealth of data related to personality can shed light on those who naturally accept risk. General MacArthur acknowledged the perils that others saw as dangerous, but his tendencies developed from his nature led him to see the opportunity within his goal of destroying the NKPA logistics node at Seoul. Those personalities that accept risk might see an operation from a distinct position driving them when developing operations. Identifying individual personalities who accept risk is critical to achieving results in LSCO where needed. The Army cannot afford to conduct operations with a majority of risk-averse leaders located in positions that require greater risk.

Risk involves more than mitigating hazards and implementing controls as outlined in ADP 5-19, *Risk Management*. Leaders cannot solely rely on a sequential process as a check to mitigating the hazards involved in an operation and must instead rely on their judgment, especially in a time-constrained situation. Individuals have innate qualities that give them unique perspectives, and these tendencies allow them to visualize and describe a situation partially based on their personality. Tracking individuals' personalities within the Army is crucial to managing talent and allows for their placement in an organization.

MacArthur's personality drove him to visualize operational art in a situation that required accepting more risk. Once he determined his objective, he argued his points in a spectacular fashion that convinced those with experience and risk-averse personalities of the opportunity of landing at Inchon. He mitigated the hazards and would not commit his force to either attrition at

the beachhead or focusing solely on fighting from the 8th Army's location on the peninsula.

There are times at the operational level of war where the situation requires a leader who accepts greater risk, like in Operation Chromite. However, at the strategic level, the consequences of taking more risk in a limited war could have a negative effect. After Operation Chromite, MacArthur took another considerable risk and advanced his forces to the Yalu River, the border between North Korea and China. He did not foresee that the Chinese Army was preparing to support the North Koreans and lost the opportunity of ending the war. In this case, his sensation-seeking tendency led him to believe that he could unite both Koreas, and he focused on this goal.

By understanding a leader's personality, the Army could place people into positions that require greater risk when needed. An individual's personality can offer a window into their natural tendencies and explains how they might interpret the world. Risk management is an analytical process that fails to account for a leader's personality. An individual personality will logically seek to reduce vulnerabilities and has the inherent ability to accept risk. Risk seeking and aversion in leaders' personalities inform our understanding of how they might achieve operational results. Comprehension of them allows for talent management and greater efficacy when fighting during LSCO.

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